

Thought for the Day, 1 May 2020

Consider the lilies of the field. (Matthew 6.28).

Where were you when I laid the earth's foundation? (Job 38.4).

A friend recently sent me some poetic words about a garden he looks after in a public place, which in normal times many people enjoy, but now: *the daffodils have wasted their fair blooms upon the empty days, and the tulips flare in sad silence, only seen by birds. The magnolias scatter their glorious petals on the unseeing ground...*

I wish I could write like that! But, however magnificent the language, it betrays a very human-centred view of creation. Of course, this gardener does his voluntary work so that other people may see the results and be cheered and refreshed and gladdened by the annual reappearance of all the plants in God's beautiful creation (or 'nature' in the language of the unbeliever). So it's a disappointment if no-one is about in a lockdown situation to appreciate what the gardener has achieved. But many people have observed recently that everything in nature is proceeding as usual, virus or no virus. It isn't a failure if no humans observe it happening; everything does what it was created to do, and does it for the glory of its Creator, not for our enrichment.

They say that 'beauty is in the eye of the beholder', and we have to admit that not everything in this world looks beautiful to us. But even a baby warthog looks beautiful to its mother! And I read an interesting article recently which demonstrated that even viruses have an essential place in ensuring that everything works properly.

So the consequence of this is that, as part of God's wonderful creation we humans should concentrate on playing our part in what we have been made for, which is to love and serve God and our neighbour (Luke

10.26-28), and to look after the plants and animals (Genesis 2.15), all the time returning praise to God for the blessings this brings (Psalm 104).

I tell you, says Jesus, that not even Solomon in all his splendour was dressed like one of these. (Matthew 6.29).

John Tiller