

15th May

Memory verse

Behold, the nations are as a drop of a bucket, and are counted as the small dust of the balance: **behold, he taketh up the isles as a very little thing.** Isaiah 40:15

Something to look out for

“Flowers talk to me of Him who made them: they tell me of the old garden once in Eden, and of the brighter, fairer blossoms in the greater Paradise to come. What would earth be without them?”
Martin Luther



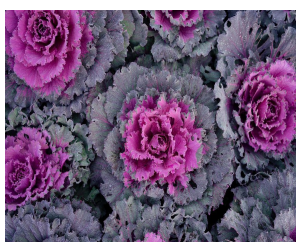
May is the month for flowers and we are right in the middle of it now. If you have a chance to walk down a country lane, take a flower identification book with and you keep your eyes wide open. Some flowers are very small indeed and can be easily overlooked. If you live in the town you might be surprised at what you can find in the way of wild flowers. Places to look where you can find flowers growing in the town include the cracks between paving stones especially in areas that are less walked on such as curbs or near walls. Some flowers grow right in the walls themselves. Also

peep down any alleyways or back entrance lanes you might pass between houses or shops. These often contain a wide variety of “weeds” – that have flowers. If you have a garden, of course, now is the time to enjoy the flowers. If you did the lesson for October 18th last year and planted some wild flower seeds you may now have a beautiful patch of colour to appreciate in your garden. We have plenty of flowery things in today's lesson. All the flowering plants we enjoy today had their origins on the third day of creation. Today's lesson also looks at an attempt to prove they started from non-living chemicals in the far distant past. What should we think of such ideas? Read on for some suggestions at the end of today's lesson!

Something to sing¹

Lady Mary Wortley Montagu (1689–1762) was born on **15th May**. She introduced *floriography* to Britain.

Floriography is the language of flowers. Flowers have long been considered symbolic and in times past it was the practice to send a message by choosing flowers to make up into a bouquet. On the right you can see a page from Kate Greenaway's² book *The Language of Flowers* in which she lists the various flowers and their meanings with illustrations in her charming style. I was surprised at some of the flowers on the list at first – would you



expect to receive a bouquet including cabbage? Then I remembered the various ornamental cabbages you can grow! They would certainly look good in a bunch of flowers. I'm still not quite sure about a cactus bouquet though!

1 Adapted from material on the Mothers' Companion flashdrive available from <https://motherscompanion.weebly.com>
2 See the lesson for 17th March for more about Kate Greenaway.

All good human qualities, such as mercy (the lilly in flower language), are gifts from God. There is an old Dutch carol *Heer Jesus heeft een Hofken*³ that points this out by means of a picture of a garden of flowers. The music for this carol is in today's optional resources files so that you can sing it. The words are below.

My Saviour has a garden fair of fragrant flowers,
Where I can wander at my will for many hours.
*There nightingales and robin sing with music sweet of cymbal
Harps and timbrel and melodious, gentle flute.
Of cymbal harps and timbrel and melodious gentle flute.*

Blue hyacinth that groweth there is constancy,
And violets sweet perfume the air with modesty.
There nightingales and robin sing etc.

There by the water willows grow that freedom show
And water lilies pure in heart beneath them grow.
There nightingales and robin sing etc.

There flourishes the chevril herb – sincerity,
And fair veronica in flower, fidelity.
There nightingales and robin sing etc.

Of joys to come the celandine doth brightly speak,
And camomile with energy makes bold the weak.
There nightingales and robin sing etc.

O Saviour take my sins away and rule my heart
Make all my life thy garden fair in every part.
*Then will I hear heav'n's music clear in heav'n's bright land for ever,
Full of glory, full of praise for heav'n's great King
Eternal, Full of glory, full of praise for heav'n's great King.*

Something to do⁴

By 15th May in 1862 the first Royal Horticultural Society Great Spring Flower Show was in full swing in Kensington. The Society, founded by Joseph Banks (1743-1820) has been holding flower shows ever since. We will meet Joseph Banks again in the lesson for 7th July; he was a keen collector of plants of all types and introduced many species into Britain that he had collected in his travels. Since 1913 the show has been held in the grounds of the Royal Chelsea Hospital, the beautiful home for retired soldiers that was founded in the 17th Century. The family of elephants in the picture on the right were one of the recent exhibits at the show. They are formed by topiary, the art of trimming and training live growing bushes and trees into ornamental shapes.



³ The words given here are freely based on a translation of the original. The Carol comes from *Geestlijke Harmonie*, 1633.

⁴ Image: By Eva Rahman Nishi - Own work, CC BY-SA 3.0, <https://commons.wikimedia.org/w/index.php?curid=32557857>

Don't worry if you can't get to the Chelsea Flower Show yourself – why not hold your own? Spruce up whatever outdoor space you have and put what you have grown this year on display. Weed the flower beds and make some attractive plant labels to identify your flowers and vegetables. Plan a special meal with some fresh raw fruit or salad in each course to be eaten outdoors. Or how about a garden party with cups of tea in the prettiest cups you can find? Use your imagination to have a garden event that, even if it is not quite as slick as the Chelsea Flower Show, will be all your own work.

Something to think about

Flowers do not last for ever. They fade very quickly despite their beauty. Isaiah 40:8 makes this point “The grass withereth, the flower fadeth:” he says and then adds “but the word of our God shall stand for ever.” We are like grass that withers and flowers that fade. But if our foundation is based on the solid rock of God’s unfailing Word, our future is eternally secure.

Some science history for older children⁵

I have highlighted some words you might like to look up in your dictionary or science text book.

On 1st May 1953 Stanley Miller published his article “A Production of Amino Acids under possible primitive earth conditions” in *Science* Journal. It reported the results of the so called Miller-Urey experiment conducted the previous year. What was this experiment, why was it needed and what did it show?

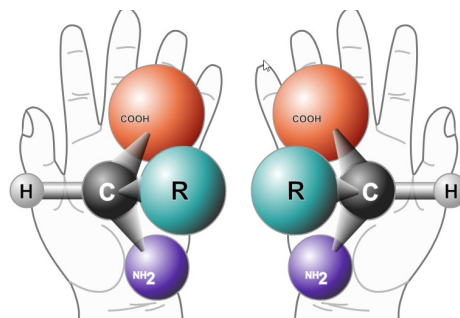
If you did the lesson for 20th April last month, you will remember the work of Louis Pasteur who discovered that life could not arise from non-living matter. But how *did* life begin then? For those who do not believe the account of creation in the opening chapters of Genesis this is a difficult question to answer. Various theories were put forward as to how this abiogenesis, as it is called, occurred.

To test these ideas two biologists, Stanley L. Miller and Harold C. Urey, designed an experiment. Could the building-blocks for life arise on their own they wondered? Perhaps the early earth’s atmosphere could make amino acids, the building blocks of life, from inorganic matter. They used methane, water, hydrogen, and ammonia, claiming that these were found in the atmosphere of the early earth. They sealed these chemicals inside sterile glass tubes and flasks connected together in a loop so that they could circulate inside. To imitate the earth's atmosphere water vapour was added to the chemical mixture. Electrodes were used to create sparks in imitation of lightning.

The vapours were cooled and the water condensed. Miller and Urey examined the cooled water after a week. They observed that 10-15% of the carbon produced was in the form of organic compounds. Also 2% of the carbon had formed 13 amino acids.

BUT...

Getting amino acids to combine themselves into something like a protein (needed to make a cell) would be very difficult. In reality, there are a number of things which would stop amino acids from building themselves into proteins. Not the least of these is the fact that amino acids are all either “left-handed” or “right handed” as in the



⁵ Information from <https://askjohnmackay.com/origin-of-life-since-all-chemicals-needed-for-life-occur-by-natural-processes-do-we-need-a-creator-to-make-life/> and other sources.

picture on the right above. Normally (and this is the case with the results of the Miller-Urey experiment) there are an equal number of left and right handed amino acids. However, a living cell *only uses the "left-handed" ones*. So a protein "trying to form itself" would have to somehow "select" only the "left-handed" acids from the mix! Even if a protein could somehow form, that is a long way from a "simple" cell. For even if *everything* was in place that was needed to form a cell, where would the information come from to make it?

Christians have the answer. Life did not arise from non-life. The Living God created it all.