The Lord Will Provide

“Consider the lilies, how they grow: they neither toil nor spin. . . Your Father knows that you need these things. But seek the kingdom of God, and all these things shall be added to you.” (Luke 12:27-31 NKJV)

November typically has me meditating on what I’m thankful for; and this year I’ve been especially struck by God’s provision for my library’s collection—not just in the last few months, but throughout the past twenty years.

When I first started at the seminary there was no catalog and no shelf list—there were just books on shelves, and most of the best books were on loan from a professor. Two years later we merged our library collection and functions with the college across the street, and I withdrew the seminary’s duplicate volumes because of space constraints. Later, we learned that the college was moving to a new campus and the library collections would be split—the deduping from more than a decade before had to be reversed primarily through donations.

The library’s theological collection is not built solely on donations; that’s just bad library practice. However, the library acquisitions budget has had its good years (when I got to spend it) and bad years (when I didn’t). Sometimes I joke that I feel like I’m making bricks without straw, but that isn’t entirely true; my library has received some amazing donations from former-students, faculty, and others. This summer I was told that the seminary intends to hire an Old Testament professor (new faculty usually provide new opportunities for collection use) and just about the same time, a retired professor of Religion and Jewish Studies donated his large, academic, professional collection covering subjects most likely to be of interest to our new hire.

Each of us has a story about how we “coincidentally” solved a problem in our libraries; this month I ask you to reflect on who orchestrated that solution. I have come to realize that God has sent specific donations of books to the library that have fulfilled specific collection needs. Luke 12:27–31 asks us to consider how God provides for the lilies that are here today and gone tomorrow. God knows what we need, and He will provide it—even for a library collection, for which I am very thankful.

—Jennifer Ewing
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