

THREE GARDENS ... which tell their own stories
THREE GARDENS ... which tell their own stories
(Genesis 2: 8; JOHN 18: 1; 19: 41)

"And the Lord planted a garden eastward in Eden." I wish I could have seen that garden. Alas, I was born too late! Did it possess long winding paths, and were there enchanting borders of multicolored flowers? Were there shady corners where Adam sat listening to the songs of the birds? Were some of the flowering trees aflame with the Creator's art? And did the gentle breezes of evening produce music of exquisite sweetness as they played among the leaves? Yes, I wish I could have seen that garden, for it has been said, "One is nearer to God in a garden than anywhere else on earth." A garden is a mirror reflecting a world. There, we find enemies; there, we find friends. Within the confines of a garden stalks the shadow of death; but in that same shadow may be found promise of glorious resurrection. The gardens of the Bible have a wonderful story to tell.

The Garden of Tragedy . . . death commencing

It was all over, and poor Adam hardly knew where he was or what he was doing. Tears probably blinded his eyes, and a cloud on the sun sent shadows scurrying across the lawn. The time would now come when newly turned earth would announce an addition to the Creator's design. The day would eventually dawn when a grave would be found in God's wonderful world, and for a while the birds would cease to sing. Yes, it was now a certainty that some day human blood would stain the good earth: for Adam had sinned! For ever he would remember the sinister whisper which had said, "Ye shall not surely die." He frowned. Death was an unpleasant word. How could he die, when he had only just commenced to live? He shuddered as another cloud passed across his soul. He had not died physically; but his innocence, his purity, his joy had ceased to exist. Germs had invaded his soul, and the grave which some day would spoil God's countryside would only be the forerunner of myriads more. Evil had lifted an ugly head; storm-clouds loomed on the horizon; and when Adam was required to leave his lovely home, he realized he had lost more than would ever be regained.

The Garden of Testing . . . death challenged

Someone had planted another garden. It was still and serene, for night had covered it with a shadowy mantle. There is reason to believe that the moon shone from the

heavens, for men that night were able to see things at which even the angels veiled their faces. The Prince of Heaven, a Knight in the shining armour of purity, had come to challenge the monster which from Eden had stalked through God's great world. Everywhere, a trail of anguish had been left behind this raging enemy. Homes had been plunged into sorrow; hearts had been ruthlessly broken; young lives had been snapped as if they had been but tender twigs, and death had reigned supreme. The monster had been invincible, for its greatest ally, sin, had its fifth column in every challenging heart. Now the tyrant was to meet his match; this was destined to be a night of nights. There is hardly need to repeat what has been told elsewhere (Bible Pinnacles, p. 125); it is sufficient to say that although the Lord was hurt in the struggle, He succeeded in giving to His greatest enemy a fatal blow.

THREE GARDENS ... which tell their own stories

The Garden of Triumph . . . death conquered

The golden face of the sun was slowly appearing above the distant horizon; rays of scintillating brilliance were fast dispelling the shadows of the night. The silent garden was waking from sleep. Calm, dignified, radiant, an angel guarded the mouth of the sepulchre. His eyes were pools of happiness; the joy of the eternal shone from his face. When he saw the woman approaching, he smiled; he had great news to announce. "Be not affrighted: Ye seek Jesus of Nazareth, which was crucified: he is risen; he is not here: behold the place where they laid him (Mark 16:6). I should love to have been in that garden. At the appointed time the stone was rolled away, and the King of Glory came forth triumphantly. Death had been vanquished-Eden's monster had been overcome, hope had been born anew. Now, forever God's children would be able to sing, " O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory? "

It has been written that some day God will build a new world-and perhaps He will plant a new garden-and there shall be no more death (Rev. 21:4).

Tell Me about My New Body

I met her in the garden alongside my church in Wales. Her children attended my Sunday-school, but I was disappointed when my efforts failed to attract the mother into the services. She came to the anniversaries when her youngsters took part, but I suspected she was not very happy in crowds. As I remember her now, I know my youthful inexperience failed to appreciate her problems. She was an abnormally stout woman, and was easily embarrassed. Yet I discovered hidden depths of spiritual wealth in that lady; deposits of true worth,

the existence of which I never even suspected. I was working among the tulip beds one day, when she paused by the fence to express her appreciation of the way we had transformed waste land into a garden. As I listened to her, I began to realize that she also grew flowers-of another and rarer kind.

Months had passed; my friend was dying. I sat beside her bed, and was startled when she casually said, " Mr Powell, I'm dying. I know I haven't long to stay." Then in a whisper, as though she were trusting me with a great secret, she continued, "To tell you the truth, this old body has already started to die. My feet and my ankles have turned black, and the deadness is creeping up my legs. Oh yes, Mr. Powell, I'm dying; my old body was never much good, anyhow." Then she looked into my face and added, " Tell me about my new body - the one I'm going to have in heaven. Surely it will be far better than this old thing. Come, Mr. Powell, tell me about it."

I began to explain that the saints have bodies " like unto His glorious body," and reminded her that Christ retained His human body even after His resurrection-but it had been glorified. It was indeed the same body, for the marks of the nail-prints were still visible. Yet because it had been changed, locked doors were unable to prevent His entry into a room. I explained that His body was no longer sensitive to pain; that when He ascended into the sky, the laws of gravity were unable to pull Him back. His body would never age. I explained further that since angels were created before Adam, they were thousands of years old, and yet it was written of the angel who rolled away the stone from the tomb of Christ, he was a young man. Eternal bodies are ageless,

THREE GARDENS ... which tell their own stories insensitive to pain, glorious. Her face was shining; but when her daughter entered to ask a question, momentarily the radiance vanished. It seemed sacrilegious to speak of mundane matters after she had been hearing of eternal treasures. Quickly she answered the question, and then said, "Go on, Mr. Powell; you were saying about my new body. Tell me more." I told her all I knew, and after we had prayed together, left her supremely happy. Within a few days her mortal remains were lowered into a grave; but even as I watched, I knew "she was absent from the body and at home with the Lord." Within the garden of her soul she had produced blooms of rare beauty; she had already shared a resurrection of superlative worth.

The Underground Orchid

Western Australia is famous for wild flowers, and to be there in Springtime is to know an unforgettable experience. Much of the country appears to be desert, but a shower of rain performs miracles. A little moisture germinates the seeds, and soon the wild flowers cover the ground with a carpet of sheer loveliness. Then, most of the city people arrange trecks into the country to see these unrivalled gems of nature. The Perth Daily Newspaper Office has produced a book of "Australian Wild Flowers," and the colorful reproductions are a joy to behold. Toward the end of the book, reference has been made to the most famous of all the wild flowers-the underground orchid. This wonderful plant with its small purple flowers actually blossoms beneath the ground; its exquisite beauty is produced in the dark. At the time of my visit a complete specimen had not been obtained, for the only ones found had been brought to the surface and cut by the blades of a slough. It would hardly be permitted for naturalists to dig up thousands of acres in the hope of finding a complete orchid; yet it is now an ascertained fact that beneath the surface of the ground are little horticultural treasures the like of which the world has not known. They grow and blossom in the darkness. Their very existence was unsuspected, and only a great upheaval revealed the fact they were there.

This illustration perfectly expresses what I discovered in my friend of the garden. I did not realize that choice blooms lay hidden in her inner life. Possibly I should not have discovered these secrets if the rough blades of the sloughs of illness and circumstance had not thrown into bold relief the underground orchids of her soul.

One is nearer to God in a garden
Than anywhere else on earth.

This document was created with Win2PDF available at <http://www.daneprairie.com>.
The unregistered version of Win2PDF is for evaluation or non-commercial use only.