

I use the term garden not outwardly, but figuratively. The garden of the Lord is the heart of man. I have no anxiety about the outward place, as I believe it refers specially to that part of man that is co-existent with its Maker. He tells me, if I believe the inspired writers, that "all nature dies," that "all flesh is as grass."

I do not feel myself in duty bound to believe in all the assertions of mankind. They have had their opinions based somewhat upon circumstances and surroundings. I trust I shall not be characterized with selfishness. It is with all due charity I dissent from the views and opinions of others when I must, but I must, nevertheless, be honest to the convictions of my own heart. I believe that God is the same in His commandments to us to-day, that we are to dress the garden of the heart and keep it clean. But as the result of our own actions the heart may become unclean, and God may see the necessity of using other means. But it is not so in the beginning of life. In Adam our text implies that the garden, which, as I understand it, means his heart, was created clean. For God pronounced all his creation good, very good. And as God is unchangeable, is not everything that is created by his laws good, very good. Take it home, and if the light of divine truth dawning upon our minds to-day confirms it, may we be willing to accept it. If through that light there dawns a new channel of thought are we afraid of it? Cannot He inspire now as well as in earlier days? Scripture is: "I will put my law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts." The Word of God is spoken to every soul. Some call the Scriptures the Word of God, but they are at the best only corroborative to the Word, which was before the Scriptures were. In the beginning was the Word, the Christ of God which was before the man Jesus came.

The religious world has been teaching me that all men are sinners, because one man sinned. But He leaves us all

free agents; He did not say thou *shalt* not eat of it; He does not compel us to do right, but leaves us blessed with free agency. Some go so far as to say that God knew when he gave the command that Adam would eat of the fruit. But I do not know it. God knew well the temptation and the liability in man's nature to err, and that he was not able to regulate his actions alone, and He consequently gave him a law to be governed by. But Adam disobeyed the law, and hence the sin originated in him. I am a firm believer in original sin, and I believe there has been no change in the origin of sin from that day to this. It is the result of our individual actions. The results of our acts recoil upon our own shoulders. Our Heavenly Father is too kind to taint us with sin in consequence of the transgression of another, but He rejoices that we can and do mourn over the shortcomings of our fellow-man. It is only when man knowingly disobeys the law that he is accountable for the fault and will feel the evil results.

When Cain had slain his brother, God saw it in his very countenance, and asked: "Why art thou wroth? and why is thy countenance fallen? If thou doest well shalt not thou be accepted? and if thou doest not well sin lieth at the door." So God sees in the countenance whether there is sin there or not.

The effects that follow sin may not fall alone upon the person who has committed it, as is found in the case of Jonah. I do not ask you to speculate about the literal; come to the inner man. The letter killeth. Jonah was alone in the sin, but he endangered those around him. I want us to watch that we may not by example, or influence, or effect, bring, not sin, but trouble and sorrow upon those around us.

I and you are held responsible for the sin in our own hearts—I was about to say in our own natures, but I exonerate God from that charge, for He