

His loving words in the Bible, His messages by His ministers, and His gentle voice in our hearts rebuking us for sin, and sometimes drawing us to seek Him, are like the gentle rain and dew and south wind to the garden of our souls ; but unless our wills work with these heavenly influences, all that the garden of our hearts brings forth is still only weeds. Thousands are trusting to God's mercy who are doing nothing whatever to improve the garden of their hearts, except chopping off the tops of the thistles, perhaps, to make it appear a little better before men, while the roots remain ; and so year after year the garden yields no good fruit, and when harvest-time comes, and the Master calls for the produce of the garden, where will it be ? The Master has given the gardener tools and seed, and he has strength to work, but he has left his garden neglected, though his mind is his tool-basket, and God's word is full of seed.

Dear friend, ask yourself, "Am I neglecting my heart's garden ? Am I trusting to the sunshine and the dew, and not working with their help to bring forth fruit for God's glory ? Am I sowing good seed by taking into my heart the precepts and promises of God's Word, with an appetite as if they were my daily food ? Do I neglect no means of improving my heart by meeting with others to pray for the sunshine of God's grace to bless my own endeavours ?" (for without this all seed-sowing is as useless as the sunshine is without the seed). To say, "I am as safe as others, and God is merciful," will not avail you when the end comes and "the wheat is gathered into the garner, and the chaff burnt with unquenchable fire." Your garden must be dug up, your heart must be probed ; God's Holy Spirit must be allowed an entrance, as the sun must penetrate between the cold clods of earth. Do not shrink from this probing ; it may give you suffering at the time, but sin must be brought to light and laid bare before God. The prodigal did not hide his sin when he came back to the father. Oh no ! his first words were confession : "Father, I have sinned against heaven and before thee, and