

THE QUIET HOUR

A GARDEN FOR GOD

Rev. G. H. Grose

The *Mali* has just pulled up the last of the winter flowers and the flower beds look rather barren. He tells me it is necessary to do this in order that the hot season plants can be put in. Meanwhile I continue to nurse the few flower pots that I call my own and appreciate the brave show made by the flowers that remain. It reminds me that, although I am not an enthusiastic gardener, I too must plan for the summer and take these pots to a cool place where they will not be blasted by the scorching heat.

How is your garden shaping? It is not the green growth outside your window that I am enquiring about. It is the very personal garden that you keep for God. The garden that grows where you live and which blossoms where you work. Think of some of the flowers you have there.

What about the flower of *Thankfulness*? It grows best as a border plant that is laid out right round the garden. It is made up of a mass of small blossoms, each one a reminder of some goodness that you have realised in life. There are the gifts that you are using even while you read this article—a hand to turn the pages, eyes that you read with, a moment of leisure, provision for the day's needs, the ability to appreciate colour, the ability to write, to sing. There is the person pictured in the photograph on your table. There are the happy memories of days when you were much younger. There are fears that you had earlier and which have now been overcome. One small flower after another—a beautiful setting to the rest of the garden.

Another flower is *Forgiveness*. Difficult to cultivate is this one. It tends to wither in the hot winds. The only thing to do is to keep it in a cool place and see that it is frequently watered. The thing which prevents its growth is a sort of pride, the pride which must be satisfied before *Forgiveness* can be mentioned. The fact is, of course, that *Pride* is a prolific weed which poisons the area around it and which has to be rooted out before anything beautiful can grow.

Gentleness is a flower which is worth cultivating. It grows in some gardens better than others, mainly because it is given plenty of room. *Gentleness* does not grow well in a cramped position and likes to have plenty of sun. There are different varieties, too, some suitable for the hills, some for the plains, yet others for the coastal areas. The flower is worth all the effort you can put into its growing. It seems fresh every morning as if each flower is made anew at the beginning of each new day.

Contentment is easily grown in most gardens and goes along well with *Thankfulness* and, strangely enough fits in with *Ambition*. *Ambition* is a fast-growing climber and must be kept well cut back, but with orange flowers of *Ambition* in the background, and the deep blue of *Contentment* alongside, there can be a beautiful blend. *Contentment* is strong and hardy once it is well established. This is best done by realising that there is an ongoing work of God in this world and that He cares for you.

Joy is another most attractive blossom. It has deep roots and bears its flowers even when the heat of May is blasting us.

'Red roses for *love*' they say, and love cannot but be appreciated, both for its beauty and for its fragrance. The best way to grow *Love* is to cut the flowers and give them away as soon as they are opening. Strange to say, it seems the plant thrives in this way, and often where one blossom is cut another two will grow even within a day. Some people call *Love* the 'give away' flower. Don't let the *Mali* plant the wrong cutting, by the way. There's a *kachcha* plant somewhat similar when it is only a few inches high, though even then it can be easily distinguished if you give it careful examination. This other plant is called *Lust*, has almost untamable growth and rapidly creates a thorny tangle that will choke the other plants.

Don't forget the ornamental shrubs. *Hope* is an overgreen type of a herb. A little piece of this can be put by a patient's bedside and its fragrance will be a little reminder of the wonder and beauty of the rest of the garden.

These are but a few of the immense variety of flowers that we can grow in our gardens. Of course, they must be watered regularly, with prayer, preferably night and morning.

Finally, although you have to work in your own garden, and in a sense it is your own, don't forget that primarily your garden is for God.