

Conducted by Robert D. Brinsmead, "Down in the Garden" is a new and, we believe, a highly important section of PRESENT TRUTH. It is time that we catch a clear vision of God's plan for the home in these last days. Inspiration is clear that believers in the third angel's message should secure for themselves a home in the country where they can raise their own garden. With this in mind, we believe that our readers will find the gardening section of PRESENT TRUTH to be of vital importance, and we trust that it will be a valuable help for those who are taking a lively interest in learning to grow a good family garden of healthy fruits and vegetables.

Their is much religion in a good garden. By following God's plan in this area, a multitude of blessings will surely be reaped. We solicit the enthusiastic support and participation of our readers in "Down in the Garden." This section of PRESENT TRUTH is for the purpose of sharing together the knowledge and experience which have been gained by those who have already taken a vital interest in the soil. More specifically, we invite your contributions, questions, ideas, hints and even photos which relate to the subject of gardening.—EDITOR

DOWN IN THE GARDEN

By
ROBERT D. BRINSMEAD

There are some ascetic religionists who may imagine that a spiritual magazine on present truth would exclude a section on gardening, but we heartily disagree. There is much good religion in a good garden.



When God created man, He placed him in a garden. This was the environment God chose for the Eden school. God talked to man in the garden. Divine wisdom chose a garden as a vital part of man's education.

The soil is still a vital part of God's educational system. Those who believe that the *Testimonies* are the voice of Jesus speaking to His church today, will appreciate the tremendous force of this statement:

"Study in agricultural lines should be the A, B, and C of the education given in our schools. This is the very first work that should be entered upon."—*Testimonies*, vol. 6, p. 179.

Even though I was raised on the land and have earned my living from the soil, I never appreciated its place in the third angel's message until I met Herbert White early in 1961. I was delighted to see Sister White's grandson sitting in one of my meetings in Yucaipa, California, nodding his head approvingly as we went step by step through the meaning of the sanctuary and its service. Afterward, I learned of his great interest in organic gardening. A little later I read one of his books on the subject and also secured a set of tapes containing his lectures on gardening. In these, Herbert White presented an important phase of God's plan for His people. He kindled my enthusiasm and planted in my heart the desire to master the art of growing a good family garden.

Moving about America constantly, it was impossible to put the ideas into practice; but since returning to Australia, the Lord has granted our family this opportunity. I have been able to benefit from my own experiments and from the experience that others have gained in different places of the world.

In Australia, believers in the Awakening message have caught the challenge and inspiration of Herbert White's message. It seems that a good garden is a sort of characteristic and earmark of a good Awakening family.

For many years Sister White urged Adventists to get out of the cities, obtain a piece of land and learn to grow healthy fruits and vegetables. Today the wisdom of this inspired counsel is more apparent than ever. American civilization has become too urbanized, industrialized, organized, centralized and artificialized. Nature has been so ignored and abused that she is beginning to demonstrate that she will no longer tolerate man on this planet unless he lives more in harmony with her laws. Thousands of weary, smog-bound city dwellers are now yearning for the kind of residence that Sister White described as the ideal for the Adventist family.

The Spirit of Prophecy warned that the time would come when many would wish to leave the cities and would not be able. I am wondering if one reason could be financial. The economic and land situation today makes it much harder for a family to move out of the city onto such a piece of land as recommended in the *Testimonies*. Not many years ago these places could be secured for sums of money within the financial range of most families. But in many cases, it now requires a vast amount of money to settle on a nice piece of land outside the city. A doctor friend in a certain city of America tells me that he cannot afford to buy such a place outside of his city today. When I was in Washington State last year, I was shown a nice 20-acre piece of land about 45 miles out of Seattle. This country setting would be an ideal place for a family home, a gar-

den and a little orchard. There was one major problem—the price tag was a fabulous \$40,000. Very few families could afford to locate there. Yet when I first went to America (1961), an average Adventist family could easily have afforded to purchase that same piece of land.

It will not become financially easier to move out of the cities. The trend is bound to make conditions more and more difficult. But the way has not yet been hedged up completely. There are still areas in the United States where it is possible to secure land suitable to establish a home after Heaven's plan, and at reasonable sums of money. The following counsel is certainly applicable now:

"At such a time as this, the people of God who are seeking to keep the commandments of God should look for retired places away from the cities. . . ."—*Country Living*, p. 14.

Many have looked upon the divine directions as some sort of hardship. God's commands do not really impose hardships. The believing, obedient soul finds them loaded with blessings—often temporal as well as spiritual blessings. Back in 1962 I encouraged a family to move out of a city on the West Coast. They bought an acreage in the country with a home on it for less than \$10,000. Today their property and home have been evaluated at more than \$50,000. Even after allowing for some inflation, they have acquired a real financial asset. Eight years ago their friends looked upon them with a kind of pity reserved for those enduring some hardship. Today these same people sit on their paltry city lots and look upon this family as if they were a sort of landed aristocracy. Sister White's statement is fulfilled again and again to those who obey the Spirit of Prophecy: "Fathers and mothers who possess a piece of land and a comfortable home are kings and queens."—*Ibid*, p. 18.

Good Gardens and Believers in the Present Truth

From time to time I have revisited friends of the Awakening message in the Los Angeles area. Always there are some familiar faces missing. Upon inquiry, I have found that they have moved out of the great metropolitan area. Rather than being gratified to find a large crowd of present-truth believers if and when I return to Los Angeles, it would be wonderful to learn that they had all gone in obedience to the counsel of the Spirit of Prophecy.

While many believers are moving away from the great cities with their families, it would be real progress if just as many were becoming keen gardeners. I found that families who raised a good garden are the exception rather than the rule among Awakening believers. It is high time that we all caught a vision of God's plan for the home in these last days, and that we witness a real reformation on this point among God's people. Let none preach about his health reform program to us unless he has demonstrated that his health reform program starts from the soil up. Let every Awakening family learn what blessings God has in store for him down in the garden, and may the time quickly come when every family in the third angel's message takes a lively interest in the A, B and C of education.