

## OUR INNER ENVIRONMENT

*By Verna Kwiatkowski, with fond memories of my father, William Ziegler,  
who was always happy when showing, working on, or eating and sharing from  
his literal, bountiful garden. Also for Andrea, whose hand-painted  
“fruit of the Spirit” planter graces my room.*

Our inner life is like a garden  
Where all sorts of qualities grow.  
See! There’s mercy, grace, and hope,  
And the fruit of the Spirit, row upon row.

You recognize the plants, I’m sure,  
For they bloom in your garden, too:  
Love, joy, peace, patience, kindness,  
Goodness – each with a heavenly hue.

Faithfulness and gentleness are here  
And there is the lovely self-control.  
Pleasing and useful though each may be,  
Don’t they make a beautiful whole?

ANY time is TIME WELL SPENT  
Surveying our inner environment!

Adam and Eve tended their garden  
Before there were thorns or weeds.  
What a pleasure it must have been  
To cultivate, and perhaps plant seeds!

Now weeds abound, without and within.  
They must go, if our gardens are to flourish.  
Our inner lives can be weedy or fruitful;  
It all depends on which plants we nourish!

Pull out sexual immorality, impurity, lust,  
Evil desires, and greed. Also anger, rage,  
Malice, slander, and filthy language –  
In NONE of these should we engage.

ANY time is TIME WELL SPENT  
Cleansing our inner environment!

With the weeds all gone, at least for now,  
Let’s pause in our gardening endeavor  
To thank the Lord, who gardens with us,  
Saying, “Keep on! You are mine forever!”

We nourish godly qualities by our thoughts.  
Whatever is true, noble, right, pure, lovely,  
These are the things we should think about –  
All that’s admirable, excellent or praiseworthy.

When our sights are set on things above  
And God is nourishing our inner graces,  
Something interesting begins to happen –  
The inside beauty starts to show on our faces!

ANY time is TIME WELL SPENT  
Nurturing our inner environment!

Then we are ready for our lifelong occupation:  
Benefitting others with an overflow of godliness.  
Imagine the scene if we were ALL to overflow:  
What hope! What peace! What a burst of holiness!

The great salvation that God is working in us  
Would show up on the outside as good deeds.  
We’d encourage one another daily, and with  
Lovingkindness, take care of each other’s needs.

May our words and anything we meditate upon  
Please you, Lord, our Rock and our Pardoner.  
We find much joy in sharing your love, but give  
All the glory to YOU, our Chief Inner Gardener!

Amen.

ANY time is TIME WELL SPENT  
Sharing from our beautiful, weed-free,  
Well-nourished INNER ENVIRONMENT!

P.S. to OUR INNER ENVIRONMENT

*By Verna & George Kwiatkowski. Additional thoughts  
by George, to which I give my blessing!*

My son George was not satisfied  
With how my poem had ended.  
“It is not finished yet,” he mused,  
And then this ending he appended:

Our gardens here are shadows  
of the heavenly garden above,  
where thorns and toil are banished  
and we rest in our Father’s love.

So enjoy the earthly gardens –  
what you taste and what you see;  
but long for the heavenly garden  
where the best is yet to be!

ANY time is TIME WELL SPENT  
Anticipating our heavenly environment!