

with us, as even here, we know, among the spiritual worshippers, and the Lord seeketh such to worship Him. These are to be found among the lowly ones, of whom man taketh no count. But God knoweth, and He will manifest them when He cometh to make up His jewels.

O, then, let us, as fellow-believers, cry mightily unto God to revive his own works, and make us willing and obedient, that we may eat of the fruit of the land, and find health to our souls, so shall we be satisfied when we wake up in His image, whose we are, and whom we serve.

### THE PRUNED VINE.

"Every branch that beareth fruit, he purgeth it, that it may bring forth more fruit."—John xv. 2.

Do you wonder why repeated bereavements, losses, sufferings befall you, till nearly all your life seems cut away? Go look at the vine dresser as he cultivates his vine. For what purpose has he planted the tender shoot? That it may grow strong and sturdy and bring forth abundant fruit! Yet see him after the first year cut back nearly all its growth, and after the second year prune it down again, so year by year cutting it back, never leaving it to its own will in its luxuriance. Why is this? That its sap may be concentrated, its strength matured, its wild straggling exuberance restrained, and a compact growth of rich fruit be perfected. Has the vine bled in vain? Was not the pruner's knife a kindly one?

Eat of the wild grape of the fields, and then of the carefully pruned and cultivated fruit of the garden, and see if there did not concentrate sweetness after every wound.

Yet though Christ says, "I am the vine, and my Father is the husbandman. Every branch in me that beareth not fruit, he taketh away; and every branch that beareth fruit, he purgeth it, that it may bring forth more fruit," you wonder that you are wounded by God's afflictive hand! See you not that your happiness, your pleasures, your riches, your health, your affections, were the overabundant branches, by whose many clinging tendrils you were attaching yourself to weak earthly supports. Winding, climbing, clinging around these in free natural growth, all your use was lost. Your use in growth is not your own untrained development; it is to bring forth much fruit for the Master's hand.

Be rather thankful that you are not left as the wild vine, unworthy the pruner's knife.

It is the husbandman's *mark of value that he sets upon you.*

"Every branch that beareth fruit, he purgeth it." "Whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son that he receiveth. If ye endure chastening, God dealeth with you as with sons; for what son is he whom the father chasteneth not? Now no chastening for the present seemeth to be joyous, but grievous; nevertheless, afterward it yieldeth the peaceable fruit of righteousness unto them that are exercised thereby."

FROM THE INDEPENDENT.

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