

flavour of fruit depends on the presence of certain chemical ingredients. If these are not developed, then the fruit wants some of its characteristics. Even after grafting, trees are apt to run to leaves in place of flowering and fruiting. In such cases pruning must be adopted; by cutting a ring out of the bark, or by stopping its roots barren trees are often made productive. The fruit, when ripe, is often detached from the tree; but sometimes remains; thus, in the orange tree, we meet with ripe and green fruit and flowers at the same time. At times the fruit appears perfect and yet contains no seeds. Thus seedless grapes, and seedless oranges are often met with. High cultivation may have a tendency to induce this state, and it may depend on the age of the trees. It is stated that the St. Michael orange owes its thinness of rind and few seeds to this cause, as the trees when, young, produce fruits with thick rinds and plenty of seeds.

From all that has been said relative to fruit many important lessons may be drawn.

Thus man in his natural state brings no fruit to perfection, (Luke viii. 14.,) it is like the crab unfit for the masters use. Hosea, in talking of Israel's attempts to exhibit fruit, says:—"Israel is an empty vine; he bringeth forth fruit unto himself." It is only when grafted by the great Husbandman into the true vine (John xv. 1.) and into the oil-bearing Olive (Psa. xi. 24.) that man can bring forth good fruit, even unto eternal life. (John iv. 36.—John xv. 4. 5.) As the graft is kept in union with the stock by the clay applied by the gardener, so is the believer united to Christ by faith which is the gift of God. The clay cement keeps the parts together, but has no virtue in itself; so faith is the means of union to Christ—it shows that the Husbandman has been there. The believer has no merit in this; faith cannot save him (Jas. ii. 14.) or make him bring forth fruit; it is

union with the stock which does this. (James ii. 17.) By the process of Spiritual grafting he is checked in his own growth—in his self-righteousness, and all his sap comes from Christ. In Him are all his well springs, and from Him alone he derives all the nourishment he needs. Thus he flourishes, and brings forth the fruit of the Spirit containing its nine ingredients, (Gal. v. 22. 23.,) every one of which is necessary for perfect fruit. Some of these may abound more than others, thus imparting a peculiar flavour, as it were to the character, but all must be there more or less. We have seen that pruning is often necessary in order to make fruit trees bear well; so is it in spiritual fruit-bearing. Too often the believer becomes elated with riches or praise, and, like the ordinary vine, produces abundance of leaves but no fruit. He requires to be pruned to have these worldly things removed, and, thus purged, he brings forth fruit to the glory of God, (John xv. 2.) When the pruning knife of affliction has cut off the luxuriant branches of pride, and the love of earthly things; then is the Christian taught not to trust in himself. Christ then says to him, "From me is thy fruit found," (Hos. xiv. 8.) even that fruit which shall remain, (John xv. 16.) As the fruit may have a great show, and yet contain no seed with the embryo spark of life, and thus fail in accomplishing the object for which it was formed, so there may be an appearance of spiritual fruit without the vitality of religion. Like seedless fruit, this spiritual state may be produced by human cultivation; but there has been no true grafting, no implanting of the heavenly life in the soul. While, however, seedless fruits are said to be some times naturally produced by old trees, this is not the case with the true Christian; for he continues to bear true fruit even in old age (Psalm cii. 14.) derived from the one source of all fruitfulness, in whom it has pleased the Father that all fulness should dwell. (Col. i. 19.)