



⁵ I am the vine, ye are the branches: He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit: for without me ye can do nothing. ⁶ If a man abide not in me, he is cast forth as a branch, and is withered; and men gather them, and cast them into the fire, and they are burned. ⁷ If ye abide in me, and my words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you. ⁸ Herein is my Father glorified, that ye bear much fruit; so shall ye be my disciples. (John 15:5-8)

It is altogether fitting our Lord should compare His people and Church to the branches of the Vine for all of our sustenance and life is derived from the Vine from which we have sprung. There is no life for man apart from that life-giving source of life and energy in the Vine. Truly the branch severed from the Vine immediately begins to die. It has lost its sustaining power. Of what worth is a dried up branch of the grapevine when it has lost any ability to produce fruit. It is worthless and is burned for no other reason than to get it out of the sight and way of laborers.

The Vine gives life to the Body of the Branch. The garden variety grapevine gives physical life to the branches in producing fruit. The Heavenly Vine gives spiritual nourishment to the Church so that it will produce fruit. If the branch produces no fruit, it will be burned just as a fruitless garden vine.

Please read with me from Isaiah: *¹ Now will I sing to my wellbeloved a song of my beloved touching his vineyard. My wellbeloved hath a vineyard in a very fruitful hill: ² And he fenced it, and gathered out the stones thereof, and planted it with the choicest vine, and built a tower in the midst of it, and also made a winepress therein: and he looked that it should bring forth grapes, and it brought forth wild grapes. ³ And now, O inhabitants of Jerusalem, and men of Judah, judge, I pray you, betwixt me and my vineyard. ⁴ What could have been done more to my vineyard, that I have not done in it? wherefore, when I looked that it should bring forth*

grapes, brought it forth wild grapes? ⁵And now go to; I will tell you what I will do to my vineyard: I will take away the hedge thereof, and it shall be eaten up; and break down the wall thereof, and it shall be trodden down: ⁶And I will lay it waste: it shall not be pruned, nor digged; but there shall come up briars and thorns: I will also command the clouds that they rain no rain upon it. ⁷For the vineyard of the LORD of hosts is the house of Israel, and the men of Judah his pleasant plant: and he looked for judgment, but behold oppression; for righteousness, but behold a cry. (Isaiah 5:1-7)

The Vineyard (Church) has been the Apple of God's Eye from the beginning. He has cherished the Church, adorned it with the finest apparel, cared for it, protected it, and cherished it. He purchased it by the Blood of the Cross. He has provided every resource for its prosperity in reaching the world with the Gospel of Christ. But has the Church not failed abysmally in its purpose and mission? Though a large part of the world has been evangelized today, there is little meaningful evangelization taking place today except to gather filthy lucre. The church today is resting on the laurels of past generations. Even those 'established' churches are wallowing in sin and compromise. They are so politically correct as to be totally spiritually unworthy. Pontius Pilate could easily apply for membership in the mainline churches of our day without objection.

Please note the care God has expended on the Church as described in the above text from Isaiah. First of all, He chose a Fruitful Hill to plant His Vineyard. Could that be Calvary where the Life-Giving Fountain was opened for us! He then erected a protective fence (doctrine) about the Vineyard to keep out varmints of unbelief. He carefully removed the stones (stumbling blocks) from the fertile soil. He used the best seed (Gospel) for the planting. He even built a Tower in the Vineyard – a common practice today in Asia. But after all of that divine planning and care, what has happened to the Vineyard? It has brought forth – not healthy and delicious grapes – but rather SOUR grapes. What has gone wrong in the Vineyard (Church)?

There is certainly nothing wrong with the Fruitful Hill the Lord chose to plant His Vineyard. It was the best on earth. The wall of defense He built was impregnable. But what happened to the Wall? It was not kept up. The great expense to which the Lord went in building the Wall was beyond man's ability to construct; but the Lord did so with ease. Now He has delegated to His ministers the duty to maintain that wall – to stand in the hedge! But no man can be found to fulfill that duty today. ³⁰ *And I sought for a man among them, that should make up the hedge, and stand in the gap before me for the land, that I should not destroy it: but I found none. ³¹Therefore have I poured out mine indignation upon them; I have consumed them with the fire of my wrath: their own way have I recompensed upon their heads, saith the Lord GOD. (Ezek 22:30-31)*

Have we in the modern Church incurred the wrath of God for not defending God's Holy Word and Biblical Doctrine from the ravages of the world? Have we stood in the gap, and kept up the hedge?

I apologize to the reader if my writings always seem dark and foreboding, but I sincerely believe with all my heart that we as a church and as a nation have fallen far short of the minimum threshold of faith. I believe we have remained silent too long while evil has triumphed. By doing so, evil has begun to appear to us as the new norm in conduct and living. That is what compromise does to a people and church.

There was nothing at all wrong with the seeds which the Lord planted for they were tried seven times as silver in a furnace. They were seed of the Gospel of Christ. But we of the modern church have corrupted the seed with our phony new versions of the Bible. Not only have we committed fraud against God's Word, but we have redefined it to mean something altogether different from what God has intended. Just a few verses down in the same chapter of Isaiah, God sternly condemns this practice: ²⁰ *Woe unto them*

that call evil good, and good evil; that put darkness for light, and light for darkness; that put bitter for sweet, and sweet for bitter! ²¹Woe unto them that are wise in their own eyes, and prudent in their own sight! (Isaiah 5:20-21) The modern church is guilty of both of these offenses. We now call the abominable sin of homosexuality 'Gay' and have given it the respectability of God-ordained marriage. What blasphemy! I have actually read the writings of so-called Higher Critics who claim to know more than Jesus knew because of their superior academic preparation. What undiluted hogwash!

The Tower in the midst of the Vineyard has not been manned by faithful watchmen. The enemy (the world) has danced beyond the gates and enticed the keepers to allow them admission. The watchmen did not sound the alarm, but rather joined in the decadent revelry. Aaron's Golden Calf would be perfectly suited for the mess we have made of spiritual worship. Should we not man the Tower today and at last call the Church into repentance?

Now last of all, the Lord placed a Winepress in the Vineyard. The blood of our Lord Jesus Christ was the purchase price of the Vineyard. But there is no grapes in the Vineyard from which the wine is made for want of a healthy harvest of domestic grapes. The grapes are SOUR! So the church today is filled with sour-pusses. They do not diligently search the Scriptures for the marks of Christ. They do not carry their Sunday morning morality with them out the door of the Church, and neither do they carry Christ with them in their hearts. The Keeper of the Winepress awaits the harvest of whole grapes, but He waits on, for the churches are sound asleep.

God asks a very searching question: *⁴What could have been done more to my vineyard, that I have not done in it? wherefore, when I looked that it should bring forth grapes, brought it forth wild grapes?* There was no good thing withheld by the Lord to His people. He has provided EVERYTHING including the blood of His only Begotten Son!

How will the Lord respond to this revolting development? *⁵And now go to; I will tell you what I will do to my vineyard: I will take away the hedge thereof, and it shall be eaten up; and break down the wall thereof, and it shall be trodden down: ⁶And I will lay it waste: it shall not be pruned, nor digged; but there shall come up briars and thorns: I will also command the clouds that they rain no rain upon it. ⁷For the vineyard of the LORD of hosts is the house of Israel, and the men of Judah his pleasant plant: and he looked for judgment, but behold oppression; for righteousness, but behold a cry.* (Isaiah 5:5-7)

Part of this prophecy seems to be in the process of present-day fulfillment. The hedge of biblical doctrine has been removed leaving the church defenseless to dismaying error. The walls of faith have been eroded and in their place humanistic wistfulness and vainglory have been instituted. In the place of healthy branches of the Vine, we now see briars and thistles of the sinful. The days of God's pruning and chastisement are over. He will give us free rein now to commit the sins of desire and omission. The land of the vineyard has taken on the appearance of a desert wilderness for lack of refreshing rains from Heaven.

We have reached the point, even in the once vaunted judiciary of the United States, in which disregard for the equal application of law has been rejected. It is not as if we did not have enough law - we have too much! This condition allows the despot to prosecute the people selectively depending on their political leanings. Oppression is now beginning to raise its head in the once Fare Haven of the World. Instead of righteousness, in which men rejoice, we find only the cry of injustice and suffering from those who have been deprived of Constitutional guarantees - the aborted (murdered) baby no less among these. Heed the Clarion Call:

Awake thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall give thee light. (Eph 5:14)