

(John 15:1-5, NIV84)

"I am the true vine, and my Father is the gardener. He cuts off every branch in me that bears no fruit, while every branch that does bear fruit he prunes so that it will be even more fruitful. You are already clean because of the word I have spoken to you. Remain in me, and I will remain in you. No branch can bear fruit by itself; it must remain in the vine. Neither can you bear fruit unless you remain in me. "I am the vine; you are the branches. If a man remains in me and I in him, he will bear much fruit; apart from me you can do nothing."

July 28

Afraid of Adversity?

Every branch that beareth fruit, he purgeth it, that it may bring forth more fruit. John 15:2

We are told that in the botanical gardens at Oxford, England, a fine pomegranate was cut down almost to the root because it bore nothing but leaves. Some time later, the keeper was able to report that a marvelous transformation had taken place, and that the tree was now bearing fruit in abundance. All that it had needed was to be cut back, and to be cut back severely.

Our heavenly Father sometimes finds it necessary to cut back the trees that are growing in his garden. "Every branch that beareth fruit, he purgeth it [he prunes it], that it may bring forth more fruit." Notice: this pruning is done on the branch that is bearing fruit so that it may bring forth more fruit. The heavy growth of brittle brush and useless twigs must constantly be cut away to safeguard, assure, and multiply the yield.

Has our heavenly Father perhaps found it necessary to cut back drastically some branch in our life on which we had pinned our highest hopes? The loss of health? The loss of wealth? The loss of a loved one? The painful emptiness of bitter disillusionment? These are drastic cut backs, to be sure! But they are cut-backs with a gracious purpose. God is not cutting down the tree; he is improving one of its promising branches.

We, who have come to God through Christ, have learned to know a Father's love. Could his love send us any sorrow which, in his wisdom, was not intended for our good? If ever we doubt his gracious plan for us, we will do well to remember the beautiful hymn of reassurance:

Beloved, "It is well!" God's ways are always right,
And perfect love is o'er them all, Tho' far above our sight.

Beloved, "It is well!" Tho' deep and sore the smart,
The hand that wounds knows how to bind And heal the broken heart.

(Devotion from: Daily Walk With God - Meditations for Every Day, by Herman
W. Gockel)