

- (4) **“Much fruit”** refers to the maximum production of Christ-like character in the believer by the Holy Spirit.

“Take away” is the verb *airo*, which actually means, “to lift up.” To conserve moisture in a dry land vines were allowed to run on the ground until the blossoms began to appear. It was then necessary for the gardener to lift the vines off the ground so that the blossoms could germinate. Vines were lifted up either on sticks or on stones and thus were put in a place where they could produce fruit. Thus, Christ was saying that the Father had the responsibility of putting each branch in a place where it could bear fruit.

Now, since every vine will produce some sterile branches, the gardener must trim away unproductive branches lest the vitality of the vine be used to produce leaves and be diverted from its function of bearing fruit. And since fruit is produced only on new growth, the gardener had to cut away all the old growth so that fruit could grow. Christ asserted that the Father would do His work of pruning the vine so that it would be more fruitful.

What are the means of pruning?

- (1) Word of God (Heb. 4:12, 2 Tim. 3:16-17).
- (2) Divine Discipline (Heb. 12:1-11).
- (3) Undeserved suffering (Jn. 15:2).

John 15:3, “You are already clean because of the word which I have spoken to you.”

The cleansing of the vine required not only the removal of sterile branches, or old growth, but also the removal of insects that would consume the vine. This had to be done tediously by hand. In the dry climate in which the vine would grow, the leaves would accumulate a thick layer of dust. This dust would weaken the vine. It was necessary for a gardener to sponge