

The Choice Vine May Become a Strange Vine

The knowledge of God without the love of God is totally barren, and can produce no fruit—the love of God is the only soil in which the truth of God can possibly grow and flourish—"If a man love me," saith the blessed Jesus, "he will keep my words:" the reason is, the love of Jesus delights in the words of Jesus, and therefore cherishes and keeps them; but if this love be wanting, there is then nothing left by which the words or truth of Jesus can be kept; the consequence is, they become barren, and unfruitful, and dead.

Here then we may see a reason why the *choice vine* may become a *strange vine*, and instead of bringing forth *good grapes*, may bring forth *wild grapes*. If the knowledge of God be not cherished by *the love of God*; or in, other words, if the manifestation of the truth of God in man's understanding, be not cherished by the desire of heavenly good in his will, the consequence must certainly be, that the knowledge and the truth will be perverted and corrupted through the natural evils predominant in the mind.

In this case there will either be no fruitfulness at all, or a fruitfulness in much evil and iniquity, as it is expressed in the prophet, "He looked for judgment, but behold oppression; for righteousness, but behold a cry." ...and thus the *noble vine* will be turned into a *strange vine*, as it is written in another prophet, "I had planted thee a noble vine, wholly a right seed; how then art thou turned into the degenerate plant of a strange vine unto me?"

(Sermons on Various Subjects by John Clowes, New York: T. & W. Mercein, Printers, 1815, ebook, Location 700 of 3591, Text and Paragraph Structure Modified)