only the tiller of the land, but the vine-  
planter and dresser; He who has originated  
the relation between the vine and branches  
by planting the Vine in this earth (the  
nature of man), and who looks for and  
ensures the bringing forth of fruit.

**2.**] The Vine contains *fruitful* and   
*unfruitful* branches. Who are these   
*unfruitful* branches? *Who are the branches?*Clearly, all those who, adopting the parallel  
image, are made *members* of Christ by  
baptism, Rom. vi. 3, 4; compare *“planted  
together,”* ib. ver. 5, also Rom. xi. 17 ff.  
The Vine is *the visible Church here*, of  
which Christ is the *inclusive* Head: the  
Vine *contains* the branches; hence the  
unfruitful, as well as the fruitful, are in  
Me.

Every such unfruitful branch the  
Father pulls off and casts away: and every  
one that beareth fruit He prunes, by  
cleansing it of its worthless parts, and  
shortening its rank growth, that it may  
ripen and enlarge its fruit better.

**3.**] **clean,** see ch. xiii. 10. In Eph. v. 26,  
we have both the *washing* by reason of the  
word, and the word itself, united. The  
*word* of Christ dwelling in them by Faith  
(see ver. 7) is the purifying principle (ch.  
xvii. 17). But the word **clean** here is not  
to be taken as equivalent to *cleansed*, or  
*pruned*, in the sense of ver. 2. The ad-  
verb **now** or **already** limits it to their present   
capacities and standing. There was  
more pruning at hand, when the sap should  
begin to flow,— when the Spirit should be  
shed abroad; and this future handling of  
the *husbandman* is indicated by the command,   
*“ Abide in me.”*

**4.**] **And I in you** must not be taken as a *promise*  
(*“Abide in me, and then I will abide in  
you”*), which (see on ver. 2 above) would  
be contrary to the sense: but as a clause  
dependent on the former, ‘Take care that  
ye abide in Me and I in you:’ *both these*  
being necessary to the bringing forth  
fruit: see ver. 5, where the two are similarly   
bound together.

Here the natural   
strictness of the similitude is departed  
from. The branch cannot sever itself from  
the vine: but, *such a case supposed*, every  
one will see the inevitable consequence.  
Bengel says well, “This passage plainly  
shews the difference between what takes  
place in nature and what takes place in  
grace.” It is *the permitted free-will of  
the creature* which makes the difference  
between the branches in the two cases.

**5.**] The interpretation of the allegory   
which each mind was forming for  
itself, the Lord solemnly asserts for them.  
Notice the term **the** **same** — he and no  
other: “it is he, that beareth much fruit.”

The separation indicated in the last  
clause of the verse is more than ‘*without  
Me,’* the words are best rendered **apart**, or  
**separate from Me**, from being in Me and I in  
you. The word **because** has respect rather  
to the sense, than to the words themselves:  
*because* union with Me is the sole efficient  
cause of fruit being produced, you having  
no power to do any thing, to bring any  
thing to perfection, to do any of those things  
which belong to that which ye are, separate  
from Me.

**6.**] This verse is a most important   
testimony against supra-lapsarian  
error, shewing us that *falling from grace  
is possible,* and pointing out the steps of  
the fall. Observe this is *not said of the  
unfruitful branch,* which the Father *takes*  
*away* (in judgment) : but of one *who will*