

## THE DIVINE INVESTMENT

In chapter 5 of Isaiah, the people of Israel are described in the figure of a vineyard. God had planted His vineyard with the choicest vines. He fenced it and removed the stones. A winepress was built and everything was prepared for a fruitful harvest. But the vineyard only brought forth wild grapes. Then the Lord asked: "What could have been done more to my vineyard that I have not done in it? " In other words, God wanted to know what else could He have done to make the vineyard produce as it should. Obviously, He had made a great investment. Still, it yielded only wild grapes.

The lesson for the people of Isaiah's time was that God had greatly blessed them. He had done all that should have been necessary to make them fruitful in His service. But they had failed. They were producing wild grapes. The lesson for us is that God continues to invest in men that they might be fruitful. Awareness of what God provides should make us want to serve Him.

Have you considered what God has invested in you? We might think at first of the blessings of life, health ability, income, and other earthly provisions. Then we especially recognize that God invested His own precious Son-and that investment was in us. "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life." John 3: 16

We like to make this comparison. A teacher in school gives an assignment. She then provides an example of the work she wants. When the students begin, she assures them that she will be ready to help them when they cannot work on their own. God has assigned to us the duties of a Christian life. He has even given Christ as an example that we might follow in His footsteps. And, He is always near us when we are too weak to go alone. Now what could be done more? The truth is that God has made a complete investment. If we fail, it will not be because the Lord didn't do His part.

In Isaiah, where God said Israel was a vineyard that produced nothing but wild grapes, He made it clear such a vineyard would be destroyed. Men who do not respond to God's merciful provisions cannot go unpunished. In the New Testament, Jesus said: "I am the true vine, and my Father is the husbandman. Every branch in me that beareth not fruit he taketh away: and every branch that beareth fruit, he purgeth it, that it may bring forth more fruit. " (John 15: 1-2) He added in verses 5 and 6: "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. 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."

We cannot REPAY God for His kindness, but we can give ourselves to Him as evidence of gratitude. The return He expects for His investment is only that we

accept His goodness with faith and love. The Bible says that the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, long suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, and temperance. Galatians 5:22-23

What kind of fruit are you bearing for God? What kind of return are you making for His investment in you?