Let us contemplate the grape vine
The Way of the Cross — The Way of Fruitfulness

(Guitar)

D G D A A7 D G D A A7 D

1. Let us contemplate the grape vine, From its life now let us learn, How its growth is fraught with suffering, Midst environs stern;

D7 G D E7 A A7 D G D A A7 D

How unlike the untamed flowers Growing in the wildness In a maze of wild confusion, Making patterns numberless.

2. But the blossoms of the grape vine
   Without glory are and small;
   Though they do have some expression,
   They are hardly seen withal.
   But a day since they have flowered
   Into fruit the blooms have grown;
   Never may they wave corollas
   With luxuriant beauty shown.

3. To a post the vine is fastened;
   Thus it cannot freely grow;
   When its branches are extended,
   To the trellis tied they go.
   To the stony soil committed,
   Drawing thence its food supply;
   It can never choose its own way,
   Or from difficulty fly.

4. Oh, how beautiful its verdure,
   Which in spring spreads o'er the field.
   From life's energy and fulness
   Growth abundant doth it yield.
   Till it's full of tender branches
   Twining freely everywhere,
   Stretching 'gainst the sky's deep azure
   Tasting sweetly of the air.

5. But the master of the vineyard
   Not in lenience doth abide,
   But with knife and pruning scissors
   Then would strip it of its pride.
   Caring not the vine is tender,
   But with deep, precision stroke
   All the pretty, excess branches
   From the vine are neatly broke.

6. In this time of loss and ruin,
   Dare the vine itself to show?
   Nay, it gives itself more fully
   To the one who wounds it so,
   To the hand that strips its branches,
   Till of beauty destitute,
   That its life may not be wasted,
   But preserved for bearing fruit.

7. Into hard wood slowly hardens
   Every stump of bleeding shoot,
   Each remaining branch becoming
   Clusters of abundant fruit.
   Then, beneath the scorching sunshine,
   Leaves are dried and from it drop;
   Thus the fruit more richly ripens
   Till the harvest of the crop.

8. Bowed beneath its fruitful burden,
   Loaded branches are brought low—
   Labor of its growth thru suff'ring
   Many a purposed, cutting blow.
   Now its fruit is fully ripened,
   Comforted the vine would be;
   But the harvest soon is coming,
   And its days of comfort flee.

9. Hands will pick and feet will trample
   All the riches of the vine,
   Till from out the reddened wine-press
   Flows a river full of wine.
   All the day its flow continues,
   Bloody-red, without alloy,
   Gushing freely, richly, sweetly
   Filling all the earth with joy.

10. In appearance now the grape vine
    Barren is and pitiful;
    Having given all, it enters
    Into night inscrutable.
    No one offers to repay it
    For the cheering wine that's drunk,
    But 'tis stripped and cut e'en further
    To a bare and branchless trunk.

11. Yet its wine throughout the winter
    Warmth and sweetness ever bears
    Unto those in coldness shivering,
    Pressed with sorrow, pain, and cares.
    Yet without, alone, the grape vine
    Midst the ice and snow doth stand,
    Steadfastly its lot enduring,
    Though 'tis hard to understand.

12. Winter o'er, the vine prepareth
    Fruit again itself to bear;
    Budding forth and growing branches,
    Beauteous green again to wear;
    Never murmuring or complaining
    For the winter's sore abuse,
    Or for all its loss desiring
    Its fresh offering to reduce.

13. Breathing air, untainted, heavenly,
    As it lifts its arms on high,
    Earth's impure, defiled affections
    Ne'er the vine may occupy.
    Facing sacrifice, yet smiling,
    And while love doth prune once more,
    Strokes it bears as if it never
    Suffered loss and pain before.

14. From the branches of the grape vine
    Sap and blood and wine doth flow.
    Does the vine, for all it suffered,
    Lost, and yielded, poorer grow?
    Or for all its loss desiring
    The sacrifice we bear;
    Drunkards of the earth and wanderers,
    From it drink and merry make.

15. Not by gain our life is measured,
    But by what we've lost 'tis scored;
    'Tis not how much wine is drunken,
    But how much has been outpoured.
    For the strength of love e'er standeth
    In the sacrifice we bear;
    He who has the greatest suff'ring
    Ever has the most to share.

16. He who treats himself severely
    Is the best for God to gain;
    He who hurts himself most dearly
    Most can comfort those in pain.
    He who suffering never beareth
    His joys which all surpass.

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