



"TRUE DISCIPLES"

*Jesus said: "Herein is My Father glorified,
that ye bear much fruit: so shall ye be My disciples." John 15:8*

Are those who do not bear much fruit not disciples? They may be, but in a backward and immature stage. Of those who bear much fruit, Christ says: *"These are My disciples, such as I would have them be—these are true disciples."*

Just as we say of someone in whom the idea of manliness is realized—that is a man! So our Lord tells who are disciples after His heart, worthy of the name—those who bear much fruit.

We find this double sense of the word *disciple* in the Gospel. Sometimes it is applied to all who accepted Christ's teaching. At other times it includes only the inner circle of those who followed Christ wholly, and gave themselves to His training for service. The difference has existed throughout all ages. There have always been a smaller number of God's people who have sought to serve Him with their whole heart, while the majority have been content with a very small measure of the knowledge of His grace and will.

And what is the difference between this smaller inner circle and the many who do not seek admission to it? We find it in the words: *much fruit*. With many Christians the thought of personal safety, which at their first awakening was a legitimate one, remains to the end the one aim of their religion. The idea of service and fruit is always a secondary and very subordinate one. The honest longing for much fruit does not trouble them. Souls that have heard the call to live wholly for their Lord, to give their life for Him as He gave His for them, can never be satisfied with this. Their cry is to bear as much fruit as they possibly can, as much as their Lord ever can desire or give in them.

Bear much fruit: so shall ye be My disciples. Let me beg every reader to consider these words

most seriously. Be not content with the thought of gradually doing a little more or better work. In this way it may never come. Take the words, *much fruit*, as the revelation of your heavenly Vine of what you must be, of what you can be.

Accept fully the impossibility, the utter folly of attempting it in your strength. Let the words call you to look anew upon the Vine, an undertaking to live out its heavenly fullness in you. Let them waken in you once again the faith and the confession: "I am a branch of the true Vine—I can bear much fruit to His glory, and the glory of the Father."

We need not judge others. But we see in God's Word everywhere two classes of disciples. Let there be no hesitation as to where we take our place. Let us ask Him to reveal to us how He asks and claims a life wholly given up to Him, to be as full of His Spirit as He can make us. Let our desire be nothing less than perfect cleansing, unbroken abiding, closest communion, abundant fruitfulness—true branches of the true Vine.

The world is perishing, the church is failing, Christ's cause is suffering, Christ is grieving on account of the lack of wholehearted Christians, bearing much fruit. Though you scarce see what it implies or how it is to come, say to Him that you are His branch to bear much fruit—that you are ready to be His disciple in His own meaning of the word.

My disciples. *Blessed Lord, much fruit is the proof that Thou the true Vine hast in me a true branch, a disciple wholly at Thy disposal. Give me, I pray Thee, the childlike consciousness that my fruit is pleasing to Thee, what Thou countest much fruit.*

