



"THE FRUIT"

*Jesus said: "Every branch in Me that beareth not fruit,
He taketh it away ..." John 15:2*

Fruit. This is the next great word we have: the Vine, the Husbandman, the branch, the fruit. What has our Lord to say to us of fruit? Simply this: fruit is the one thing the branch is for, and that if it bear not fruit, the husbandman takes it away.

The vine is the glory of the husbandman; the branch is the glory of the vine; the fruit is the glory of the branch; if the branch bring not forth fruit, there is no glory or worth in it; it is an offense and a hindrance; the husbandman takes it away.

The one reason for the existence of a branch, the one mark of being a true branch of the heavenly Vine, the one condition of being allowed by the divine Husbandman to share the life of the Vine is **bearing fruit**.

And what is fruit? Something that the branch bears, not for itself, but for its owner. Something that is to be gathered, and taken away. The branch does indeed receive it from the vine sap for its own life, by which it grows thicker and stronger. But this supply for its own maintenance is entirely subordinate to its fulfillment of the purpose of its existence—bearing fruit.

It is because Christians do not understand or accept of this truth, that they so fail in their efforts and prayers to live the branch life. They often desire it very earnestly. They read and meditate and pray, and yet they fail, and they wonder why. The reason is very simple—they do not know that fruit-bearing is the one thing they have been saved for.

Just as entirely as Christ became the true Vine with the one object, you have been made a branch too, with the one object of bearing fruit for the salvation of men. The Vine and the branch are equally under the unchangeable law of fruit-bearing as the one reason of their being.

Christ and the believer, the heavenly Vine and the branch, have equally their place in the world exclusively for one purpose, to carry God's saving love to men. Hence the solemn word: *"Every branch that beareth not fruit, He taketh it away."*

Let us specially beware of one great mistake. Many Christians think their own salvation is the first thing; their temporal life and prosperity, with the care of their family, the second; and what of time and interest is left may be devoted to fruit-bearing, to the saving of men. No wonder that in most cases very little time or interest can be found.

No, Christian, the one object with which you have been made a member of Christ's Body is that the Head may have you to carry out His saving work. The one object God had in making you a branch is that Christ may through you bring Life to men. Your personal salvation, your business and care for your family, are entirely subordinate to this. Your first aim in life, your first aim every day, should be to know how Christ desires to carry out His purpose in you.

Let us begin to think as God thinks. Let us accept Christ's teaching and respond to it. The one object of my being a branch, the one mark of my being a true branch, the one condition of my abiding and growing strong, is that I bear the fruit of the heavenly Vine for dying men to eat and live. And the one thing of which I can have the most perfect assurance is that, with Christ as my Vine, and the Father as my Husbandman, I can indeed be a fruitful branch.

Our Father, Thou comest seeking fruit. Teach us, we pray Thee, to realize how truly this is the one object of our existence, and of our union to Christ. Make it the one desire of our hearts to be branches, so filled with the Spirit of the Vine, as to bring forth fruit abundantly.

