

## THE BRANCH AND THE VINE.

Rev. Alfred Cookman.

"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."

Observe here, the branch is in the vine, as the believer is in Christ. He derives his spiritual life from Him. He partakes of His nature. He bears fruit, and yet the Saviour speaks of the need of purging, or cleansing, that he may bring forth more fruit. Is not this in harmony with our own convictions and consciousness? Do we not believe, do we not feel, that if we were holy we would be more useful? Benjamin Abbott, when forty years of age, experienced religion. A preacher, visiting him one afternoon, said: "Brother Abbott, the Lord has a greater blessing in store for you yet. He will satisfy your soul, as He has freed you from condemnation." His reply was: "I will have it right away." Going down on his knees he never ceased praying until he found it. As soon as he had found it he sprang from his knees and began a revival, and his labors for the Lord continued twenty years. Some one says, the devil never had a more difficult enemy to deal with in America. Now, if this cleansing is necessary to our fruit-bearing, it is reasonable to conclude that we may realize it now, for God expects and requires us to bear fruit now. I know that some think and suggest that death completes this work of our salvation. Is death, then, mightier than the power of Jesus? This influence of the Spirit to the truth of God? What is death? Is it not the absence of life, just as darkness is the absence of light? It is nothing, and can this nothing destroy sin, the greatest of somethings? But sin may be destroyed.

## TO LIVE FOREVER.

That for which we were made is immortality, and our journey is rough, straight, sharp, burdensome, with many tears. Our journey is not to the grave. I am not growing into old age to be blind, and to be deaf, and to be rheumatic, and to shrink a miserable cripple into the corner, shaking and tottering, and forgetting all that I ever knew. The best part of me is untouched. I sit enshrined within the me. The soul, the reason, the moral sense, the power to think, the power to will, the power to love, the power to admire purity and to reach out after it—that is not touched by time, though its instrument and means of outer demonstration be corroded and failing. No physical weakness touches the soul.—Henry Ward Beecher.

"Get it into your head and heart and have it a fixed principle there, that if you are going to be a man of God and walk with Him, there is a fixed gulf between you and the world, and the gulf will grow wider and deeper the nearer you live to God. It is a sure sign of religious deterioration to see religious people begin to edge up toward the world, and tone down to please the ungodly, or rather to avoid their displeasure. Ye cannot serve God and mammon at the same time."

## A SABBATH WITH BELIEVERS.

Rev. Alfred Cookman.

Yesterday, dear friends, I spent very delightfully in Baltimore. In the morning I tried to preach on the subject of the Higher Christian Life. In the congregation I observed a large number of ministers and prominent laymen, indicating a decided interest respecting the matter of Christian privilege. In the afternoon they had a service similar to the one we are holding now. There was a large number of most refreshing testimonies, besides quite a number who were concerned to realize the fulness of Christ's great salvation. One brother, quite advanced in life, said that seven months since he had been helped to trust Jesus in a fuller sense, and that then, as in a moment, or by a single stroke, all his sinful dispositions, or tendencies, had been taken away; nor had they been permitted to return, and during all that time he had been sweetly resting in Jesus. Another said: Amid the contingencies of life it was remarkable but reasonable to suppose that God had a grace that would render us every moment ready and competent in the prospect of our change. He had proved this to be true. Full salvation took away the fear of death, and he walked the earth assured that if he lived he was the Lord's, and if he died he was the Lord's. A pastor of one of the principal churches said, and I thought with great impressiveness, that he was tired of growing into the experience of full salvation. He had been trying that plan for thirty years, and it was slow work. He was satisfied that a special exercise of Divine power was necessary to lift the soul up into the plane of the higher Christian life. Friends, does not his experience correspond with your own? Ten, fifteen, twenty, perhaps longer. Look back upon your development or growth. Has it brought you into the Beulah region, the Canaan of perfect love? Has it? Nay! Some of you will feel, after twenty years of growth, you are not much nearer the blessing today than you were in your earlier Christian life. Oh, come today and ask for the Holy Spirit's power, that will lift you higher than you can ever lift yourself, and cause you to triumph now in Christ as a perfect Saviour, a Saviour from all sin. Oh, how this experience pays when sickness lays its blighting hand upon us and we are dragged to the very portals of eternity. I had an illustration of this yesterday. Sister Inskip is seriously ill, a victim of pneumonia. There was a consultation of physicians in her room. I went in to see her about the noon hour, remaining but a few moments. We conversed and prayed together. Oh, what a precious place it seemed! She said: "I am perfectly satisfied; good, aye, lost in the will of the Lord. Dying all will be well. I am not to be saved. I am saved, already saved."

"The church is not a refrigerator for preserving perishable piety. It is a dynamo for charging human wills." "The object of the church is not to tell how to dodge difficulties, but to furnish strength and courage to meet and master them." "The business of the church is not to furnish hammocks for the lazy. It is rather to offer well-fitting yokes for drawing life's loads."

## THE IDEAL PASTOR.

There was a noble preacher, with a lot of common sense,  
Who landed on his circuit with a dollar ninety cents;  
He didn't use tobacco, nor attend the picture show,  
But used his time and talent to make his church work go.

He is out among his members and calls on Brother Frye,  
Who speaks of all the troubles they've had in days gone by,  
"It ain't no use of tryin', of this church I've little hope,"  
When the pastor, smiling, asks him, "Do you take the Telescope?"

He gets his first subscription from this cold, complaining fellow,  
Who reads the daily paper, and soon his heart is mellow;  
He visits a poor sick sinner, then calls on Brother Blair,  
Who gives him much encouragement, and then they kneel in prayer.

His face is cleanly shaven, his clothes are brushed with care,  
His shoes are neatly polished and he always combs his hair;  
He represents the Master to the flock he oversees  
And often in his study he is found upon his knees.

He gets a nice donation from the people on the charge,  
A nice increase in salary, although it isn't large,  
Yet he lives within his income, and of course has cash to pay,  
And he doesn't owe a dollar when at last he goes away.

He is much in love with missions, and the new financial plan,  
And his members soon decide that he's a manly business man;  
He doesn't scold his people, but gives them Gospel food,  
And soon endears himself to them as every pastor should.

He has plan for study and many books he reads,  
He visits friends and members of all beliefs creeds,  
He doesn't discuss the differences, but acts as tho' they're one,  
And talks free salvation, through Christ, God's only Son.

He is clean in conversation, his face aglow with joy,  
He talks with all the children, and especially the boy;  
He is known in all the country for his ministries of love,  
And God is now preparing him a splendid home above.

—S. M. Snider, in Religious Telescope.

"Neglect in prayer is the beginning of decline in devotion and piety and usefulness with God's people. Constant, daily, secret prayer is essential to vigor of spiritual life and the abiding of the Spirit within."