

not," thus differing from the positive clause below. The meaning is, "when it ceases to bear," for the branch could not remain in the true Vine without bearing. **Fruit.** Especially of Christian work, but referring also to the "fruits of the Spirit," the Christian graces. **Cleanseth.** That is, "prunes it;" the word anticipates the "clean" in next verse. The vine especially needs pruning! The stricter translation of this clause would run, "All that beareth fruit, he cleanseth it." "St. John loves to look on the totality of Christians when he thinks of them as they should be. Comp. chap. 17. 2, 24." (M.) Moreover, Heb. 5. 8, suggests that the Son himself in his human life needed this "cleansing" from the infirmities, not the sins, of human nature.

**3. Clean.** And yet in daily need of further cleansing. The *ye* is emphatic, bringing out their representative position as the first of an endless succession. **Because of the word.** The revelation of God in Jesus was the origin, not merely the instrument ("through" in Authorized Version) of their cleansing; it had originally united them with Christ, and so made the cleansing possible. There is, of course, a close reference to chap. 13. 10.

**4. Except.** By an ellipsis common in Greek we must read this, "and cannot bear fruit at all . . . except." Comp. chap. 5. 19; Luke 4. 26, *sq.*; Gal. 2. 16.

**5.** The truth is repeated to emphasize the personal application, and the fact that no casual and temporary union with Christ will suffice; it must be a permanent "abiding." **The same.** "He, and he only." **Much.** The responsibility of the fruit-bearing rests with the Vine, if the vital union is maintained, and so the vintage must be great. **For apart from me.** The proof is the converse of the statement just made. The word "do" in Greek means also "produce" fruit, so that there is no violent transition, while the wider word suggests the universal applicability of this principle.

**6. Abide not.** The symbol falls out of prominence here, returning in the next clause. Literally, this runs, "he was cast out"—from the vine the moment the vital union ceased—"like the branch"—the severed branch of the parable—"and withered." **They gather.** The same impersonal plural as in Luke 12. 20, the agent not needing to be set forth in the parable. **Burned.** Comp. Heb. 6. 8. The wood of the vine is of no use for any other purpose. The thought was familiar in the teaching of the Baptist, repeated earlier by our Lord (Matt. 3. 10; 7. 19).

**7.** Here the figure is finally dropped, except for the mention of fruit. **Abide.** Literally, "shall have abode," the change of tense indicating that the establishment of a prior condition is enforced. **Ask.** The "if" clause just preceding expresses exactly what is meant by "in my name," so that

this command is identical with that in chap. 16. 24. The asking is unlimited, simply because the "will" of the believer will absolutely coincide with the purpose of Christ, and he cannot therefore ask any thing which Christ must refuse him for his own good. His prayers, in fact, will be echoes of the "sayings" of the Lord which "abide in him" in order that they may be used in prayer.

**8.** Adopting the better attested reading of the margin, we may translate: "In this was my Father glorified, that ye may bear much fruit and become my disciples." The manifestation of God was made in the union between Christ and his members, described in the preceding verses. The purpose of this manifestation was that they might abound in Christian work for others, and for themselves win the privilege of daily learning from Him who was meek and lowly of heart, daily "becoming" his disciples for some fresh lesson.

**9.** This verse tells us that the sap of the Vine is love. **I also loved.** So read in each case. The Lord speaks here, as often in this discourse, of his earthly life as lying in the past. **Abide.** Explains the abide of verse 4. The element of union is emphatically described as "the love that is mine," a phrase found only here, but answering to "a peace that is mine" (chap. 14. 27), "the commandment that is mine . . . the joy that is mine" (verse 11, *sq.*), etc., all which appropriate the attributes to Christ as peculiarly and essentially his own. "His love" is not only his love to men; it is the very principle of love itself, which in him became incarnate.

**10.** The exact counterpart of chap. 14. 15: "Love assures obedience, obedience assures love" (W.). Note how practical real love is. We must love with the heart, but it must be also with "all the life and all the mind and all the strength;" not only emotion, but a devotion of life, intellect, energies of every kind.

**11.** What the Lord's "joy" was Heb. 12. 2, strikingly explains. It is the joy of perfect self-sacrifice, the loftiest passion that can ever enter a human heart. Their joy, including all the elements of true human joy, would be "fulfilled," completed, by the infusion of this divine element of love and self-surrender.

**12.** The "new commandment" of chap. 13. 34, is repeated to show whence the inspiration of this self-sacrifice is to come. Not as isolated reformers, liable to constant discouragement from their sense of loneliness, but as members of a band linked together by the strongest possible tie and inspired by the memory of a perfect Example, they are to go forth to the struggle confident of success.

**13. No one.** So read for "no man," which risks a false emphasis. The word "man" does not occur in this verse. The words are a proof of the immensity of the love with which he loved them, the model of their love to one another.