

April

I see the plackets of the spring come
glimmering into blue
I know them by their uniforms, I see
their colours shine,
The azure flash of birds in blue, the
robins in their red
And fleets of pearl and purple at anchor
overhead
The plumed videttes begin to play the
pasture brooks to sing
The April gate is open and resurrection
king.
The world is glad to be alive the Easter
door ajar,
All Christendom is Bethlehem, and
lighted by a star—
And lighted by the star that gave a
birthday to the race,
And showed a grave dismantled and a
glory in its place.
And wrought amid the gloom a miracle
instead
That added to the calendar the birthday
of the dead!
The world comes smiling to the door
with ansies in its hand,
Remembering all the times before that
spring has blessed the land,
The muffled streets grow musical, the
surrounded paths are bare,
The children hunt the pavements, their
cadences the air.

LESSON NOTES.

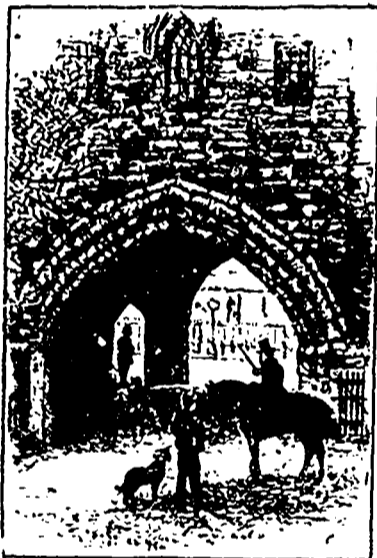
SECOND QUARTER

STUDIES IN THE GOSPEL BY JOHN

LESSON VI. MAY 7

THE VINE AND THE BRANCHES.

John 15. 1-11. Memory verses, 6-8



ABBEY GATE, CHESTER.

GOLDEN TEXT.

I am the vine, ye are the branches.—
John 15. 5.

OUTLINE.

1. Fruitful Branches, v. 1-8.
2. Faithful Friends, v. 9-11.

Time.—Thursday evening, April 6,
A.D. 30.

Place.—Jerusalem.

LESSON HELPS.

1. "I am the true vine —Not true as
opposed to false in this phrase, but true
as answering to the perfect ideal. "The
husbandman"—Compare with Matt. 21.
33. The owner of the soil who himself
cultivates it.

2. "Every branch"—That is, every
vine-branch, every one who is by origin
a Christian. If such give no fruit they
are cut off. "He purgeth it"—Better,
he cleanseth it, to bring out the connec-
tion "ye are clean," verse 3. He taketh
away useless shoots which impede
growth. The false feelings of men which
retard spiritual growth are cut away by
the pruning knife of suffering.

3. "Clean through the word"—Better,
on account of the word. By the word is
meant the whole teaching of Christ
through the moral power of which they
were made pure.

4. "Abide in me, and I in you"—Here
is cause and effect. The promise will
not fall if the command be kept. The
branches of the spiritual vine can cut
themselves off as Judas had done.
"Cannot bear fruit of itself"—In the
spiritual life men apart from Christ have
no original source of life and fruitfulness.

5. "Without me"—Better, apart from
me. "Ye can do nothing"—This does
not exclude all moral power apart from
Christ. The persons compared are true
and false Christians, and nothing is here



STANLEY HOUSE, CHESTER.

said of the wider teaching of God. A
moral power is outside the limits of
Christianity as seen in Rom. 2. 14, 15

6. Cast forth as a branch "The
thought here passes from the fruitful to
the fruitless branch, from the man who
abides to him who will not abide in
Christ. How sad his history will be"

7. "Ye shall ask what ye will"—The
promise in all its width is the same as
that in chap. 14. 13, 14. He who abideth
in Christ cannot ask what is amiss

8. "So shall ye be my disciples"
Rather, and may become my disciples.
Useful Christians make God glorious, for
they are illustrations of his saving power.

9. "Continue ye in my love"—Abide is
a better word.

10. "If ye keep my commandments"—
This keeping not only proves our love for
him, but secures his love for us. "Even
as"—The love of the Father shines upon
the Son because he was obedient to the
will of the Father, even unto death.

11. "My joy"—The joy which Christ
had in communion with the Father and
which sustained him in suffering.
"Might be full"—No higher happiness
for man than to share the joy which
Christ felt.

HOME READINGS.

M. The vine and the branches.—John 15.
1-11.

Tu. Saying and doing.—1 John 2. 1-9.

W. Proof of abiding in Christ.—1 John
3. 18-24.

Th. Known by fruit.—Matt. 7. 15-23.

F. Spiritual fruit.—Gal. 5. 16-26.

S. One in Christ.—Rom. 12. 1-5.

Su. Christ the Head.—Eph. 4. 1-16.

QUESTIONS FOR HOME STUDY.

1. Fruitful Branches, v. 1-8.

To what does Jesus liken himself and
his Father?

How does the Father treat the
branches?

How are the disciples made clean?

Where did Jesus bid them abide?

Why?

How only can the branches bear fruit?

What is the Golden Text?

What will be done with those who
abide not in Christ?

What promise of answer to prayer did
Jesus make?

How could the disciples glorify the
Father?

What fruit ought every Christian to
bear? Gal. 5. 22, 23.

2. Faithful Friends, v. 9-11.

In what are we urged to continue?

What is the condition of abiding?

What relations existed between Christ
and his Father?

Why had Jesus thus spoken to them?

PRACTICAL TEACHINGS.

Where in this lesson are we taught—

1. How to be useful?
2. How to be joyful?
3. How to be blessed?

THE WASP AS AN ENGINEER.

Several members of the United States
engineer corps were interested witnesses
of a feat of insect engineering near the
road on which they were working. One
of their number found a blue ground
wasp dragging along the ground a dead
swamp spider, one-quarter the size of a
full-grown tarantula. Whether the wasp
killed the spider or found it dead is a
question beyond solution. He was hav-
ing a hard time dragging his prey along,
and presently left it to go prospecting
for his abode. The discoverer of the
wasp called his companions, and one of
them in coming stepped upon the wasp's
ground hole, crushing down some blades
of dried grass across it. This caused
no little trouble to the insect, who, upon
locating the hole, nipped away at the
obstructing stalks with his strong man-
dibles until he had cleared a passage.
Then he went back and sized up the
spider, walking around the big body and
surveying it from all sides.

"He's reckoning that the hole isn't
big enough," said one of the engineers.

"That's all right, he'll fix it," said
another, as the insect went back and
commenced vigorously widening the en-
trance to his domicile.

Again he turned to the spider, seized
it, and dragged it to within a foot of the
orifice. To the spectators it was evident
that more work would have to be done
before the spider could be dragged in.
This struck the wasp, too, for again he
ran around the body, examining it care-
fully, and returned to the hole to take
measurements. He went to digging a
second time. Having dug for two min-
utes, he brought his prey up to the edge
of the hole, nipped out a piece of dirt
here, cut away a grass stem there, and,
after fifteen minutes of hard and skilful
labour, disappeared underground, drag-
ging the spider after him, doubtless to
form the "piece de resistance" in a winter
storehouse. The engineers then resumed
their work, exchanging comments of ad-
miration.—Chicago Inter-Ocean.

NO EXCUSE ALLOWED.

A successful business man told me
there were two things which he learned
when he was eighteen, which were ever
afterward of great use to him, namely,
"Never to lose anything, and never to
forget anything." An old lawyer sent
him with an important paper, with cer-
tain instructions what to do with it.
"But," inquired the young man, "sup-
pose that I should happen to lose it, what
shall I do then?"

"You must not lose it," said the law-
yer, frowning.

"I don't mean to," said the young
man, "but suppose I should happen to?"

"But I say you must not happen to.
I shall make no provision for such an
occurrence; you must not lose it."



OLD LAMB ROW, CHESTER.

This put a new train of thought into
the young man's mind, and he found
that if he was determined to do a thing
he could do it. He made such a pro-
vision against every contingency that he
never lost anything. He found this
equally true about forgetting. If a cer-
tain matter of importance was to be re-
membered, he pinned it down on his
mind, fastened it there and made it
stay. I once had an intelligent young
man in my employment who deemed it
sufficient excuse for neglecting an im-
portant task to say, "I forgot." I told
him that would not answer; if he was
sufficiently interested, he would be care-
ful to remember. It was because he did
not care enough that he forgot. I
drilled him with this truth. He worked
for me three years, and during the last
of the three he was utterly changed in
this respect. He did not forget a thing.
His forgetting, he found, was a lazy and
careless habit of the mind, which he
cured.—Country Gentleman.



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