

THE VINE AND THE BRANCHES.

By Campbell Morgan, D.D.

Under the figure of the vine Jesus explained the new union between Himself and His people, to be consummated by the coming of the Spirit. The opening sentence, "I am the true Vine," is inclusive and exhaustive. It is the seventh "I am" recorded by John, and, as the Lord's own exposition will show, it now includes all His own. They were about to enter into such relationship with Him that to express the truth concerning Himself He must needs include them. His teaching here is certainly almost overwhelming in its revelation of His grace and power.

It is hardly correct to say that He made the vine the symbol of relationship. Whereas that would be the truth in some senses, such a statement would miss a deeper principle which is of great value. All earthly things are upon the pattern of heavenly things, and the names of earthly things are borrowed names. Perhaps this may be illustrated by reference to another manifestation of the same principle. Throughout this discourse the Lord spoke much of the Father; and it must ever be remembered that the name "Father," in all the fullness of its meaning, belongs only to God. He has not borrowed an earthly name to teach a heavenly truth. He has rather lent men a heavenly name to indicate to them an earthly responsibility. In this way He is the true Vine. Every vine of earth is an expression of Himself, as are in some sense or degree all created things.

In His use of the figure there are certain words which arrest the attention—"vine," "branches," "fruit." The inter-relation between these is of the closest. Indeed, it is doubtful whether "inter-relation" is not an imperfect word in this connection. The sublime teaching is that of perfect unity. In the presence of the words of Jesus, "I am the Vine," there is no understanding of His meaning save as we take in the whole fact. The vine consists of root and stem and branches and leaves and fruit. The branches are part of the vine; the fruit is also part of the vine, its ultimate issue and intention. How wondrous is this teaching and relationship of His disciples to Him; and how even more wonderful is the fact revealed that Christ fulfils Himself as to fruit through those who are His own branches! The vine needs the branch for its fruitage; the branch must be part of the vine for the production of fruit.

To take the illustration in the order of statement, He first described the union as in process. "The Father is the husbandman," and His purpose is that of fruit; toward which end He takes away the branches that fall and cleanses such as are fruitful.

He next insisted upon the conditions of fruitfulness—those of abiding in Him and of His abiding in the branches.

The blessings following such abiding He declared to be those of prevailing prayer and abounding fruitfulness.

Finally, He revealed the pattern of the union. He first declared His Father's love for Him, and then that His love for them was of the same nature. Having thus revealed the eternal depths of love, and the channel of that love toward them, He commanded them to abide therein. Not, let it be most carefully noted, to abide in their love to him, but in His love to them—that love being at once the atmosphere of their love, the impulse of their activity and the strength of their service. Having thus argued that the love of the Father was their place of safety, and so revealed a privilege, He laid upon them the consequent responsibility and emphasized it by an argument back to the Father.—The Christian (London).

There are no giants so large that they can not be conquered by him who wholly follows God.

THE DAILY ALTAR.

By the Rev. J. H. Jowett, M.A.

Mon.—Almighty God, I pray that thy light may meet with no obstructive power to-day. Let no earth-born clouds hinder its shining. Let its searching and kindling rays be felt among all thy people in every part of the world.

Tues.—Almighty God, I thank thee for the privilege of communion. May I learn the secret of praying without ceasing! Deliver me from the bondage which makes my devotion transient, and give me the liberty which makes my joy in the Lord a permanent spring.

Wed.—Eternal God, I pray that thou wouldst renew my hope in thee. May I begin this day with great expectancy, leaning upon thy promised grace! Let me go through the day with wondering eyes expecting blessing at every corner.

Thurs.—Heavenly Father, let thy blessing rest upon the common labor of men. Let all men so work that their work shall be as worship. Let the spirit of the sanctuary pervade the workshop, and let holy influences possess us while we earn our daily bread.

Fri.—Holy Spirit, help me to realize thy presence. Let it not be a beautiful rumor to me, but a gracious reality. Let me rejoice in thy strength and be buoyant in the sense of thy companionship. Let me bear everything in thy promised light.

Sat.—Gracious God, help me to dwell with thee to-day. Let all my powers be rooted and grounded in thee. Let every action draw its nutriment from divine grace. Let all my speech be pervaded with the influence of thy spirit.

Sun.—Heavenly Father, I pray that thou wouldst bind me to my fellows in deeper and more spiritual kinship. Let nothing be done to-day which shall increase the alienation, but let every act and word be a minister of healing and of strength. Let me so live to-day as to promote the brotherhood of man.

SPEAK NO EVIL.

How carefully it hath been said,
"Speak no evil of the dead."
Why not, then, take care in giving
Grievous hurts unto the living?

For the dead are far away,
And hear no unkind word we say;
But living hearts may be crushed and broken
By unjust, cruel words we've spoken.

Speak, then, kindly of your dead,
But let some good of the living be said.
Save not all your flowers for the tomb,
Give them to dispel life's gloom.

THE DOMINANT MELODY.

If we be Christians at all we are all joining, or trying to join, somehow, in the one great Psalm of Life. To one who hears it near at hand many of our notes may seem hideous and most discordant; but a little farther off in time and space, as with a Scotch psalm "amid the mountains, the true notes alone support one another, all following the one true rule; the false notes, each following its own false rule, quickly destroy one another, and the psalm, which was discordant enough near at hand is a perfect melody when heard from far." Oh, that our lives might add to the dominant melody, might help to subdue and drown those disproportionate and jarring notes!—Phillips Brooks.

DAILY BIBLE READINGS.

M.—Different standpoints, Luke 13: 24-30.
T.—Receiving power, Acts 1:1-8.
W.—A Saviour promised, Isa. 9:1-7.
Th.—Who is my neighbor? Luke 10: 25-37.
F.—The Word made flesh, John 1: 1-14.
S.—The childlike spirit, Matt. 18:1-10.
Sunday Topic—Pointe-aux-Trembles Schools, Acts 2:10-21.

POINTE-AUX-TREMLES SCHOOLS.*

By Rev. J. Prevost.

It is not my intention to write the history of our Mission Schools, but only a page to show their moral influence upon the French population. So why, perhaps, but surely, the Pointe-aux-Trembles Schools have infused a new life in all the parishes of French Canada. More than that, they have created an enthusiasm which enriches the hearts of thousands of men and women who are fighting to-day the hard but noble battle of life.

In looking back through the history of the Schools I find the following statistics: Over 75 ministers of the gospel received their education at Pointe-aux-Trembles. Besides the colporteurs and evangelists, who are numerous, I count over 100 school teachers, and several eminent professors.

Started amidst opposition and baptized under the cloud of persecution and poverty, these Schools are a splendid monument of the Protestant faith, a glorious enterprise with a great aim—the upraising of French-Canadian society by toning the moral character of the individual.

To measure the importance of the Schools, let us take a survey of their work. Over 5,000 pupils have passed through the Institute and were invigorated with a new spirit. Think of it: Five thousand! What a power and what a stimulus to the cause of education, not among the Protestants only, but among the Catholics! We must not forget that the priests, seeing their young people going to Pointe-aux-Trembles, realized the necessity of establishing schools in all their parishes. So the evangelical Institute became a liberating power and a means to diffuse and enlarge the spirit of investigation and research.

It is interesting to study the life of the Schools. Here are upwards of two hundred and fifty scholars. We find among them a great variety of feelings and dispositions. Some are hostile to the message of grace; some are indifferent; some are full of enthusiasm, easily affected, but without knowledge of a real change of heart,—they are Christians by imitation or contagion; some are well prepared for the kingdom of God. During my three years stay at Pointe-aux-Trembles, I noticed that the first thing done for a new scholar is to establish in his heart the knowledge of God, and the authority of the Bible, and to place him under the law of conscience and of love. Then he begins to learn what personal religion is, what a personal faith is, and a personal knowledge of the duties of life. By coming in close contact with the gospel, he realizes that his influence in society, his happiness in this world and in the world to come, depend largely on his conception of eternal truth.

Let us be loyal to this good old Pointe-aux-Trembles Institute. It stands there as an intellectual, moral and religious necessity. The young people want these Schools, the family need them, the church cannot do without them, the nation demands them.

Never before, in the history of French Canada, has the need of what these Schools represent been more pressing. We are facing a period of transition. What shall become of our French society? Will it be a God-fearing society, or a society without God? It is for the Christian church to decide. The School is a vital force in the process.

A lover of missions, Principal Gandler could not refrain from urging the needs of this cause, even though speaking upon systematic giving.

* Y. P. S. Topic for July 25, 1909—Pointe-aux-Trembles Schools, Acts 2: 20-21.