

thoughts, and affections and wills. "Ye shall ask what ye will." Abiding in Him, their petitions will be in harmony with His will and therefore will be answered. This is the first privilege. (Compare ch. 14: 13; 1 John 5: 14, 15.)

V. 8. "Herein is my Father glorified"; in the fruitfulness of Christ's disciples. "Man's chief end is to glorify God"; and he does so by living for God,—fruit-bearing. This fruit-bearing again is the first of the great duties enumerated. "The Father is glorified in everything which demonstrates that through Christ His grace reaches and governs men." (Dods.) "So shall ye be my disciples." Fruitfulness is a test of discipleship, and the more fruitful in every good word and work the Christian is, the more truly does he enter into the spirit and privileges of discipleship.

V. 9 "As the Father hath loved me." He now encourages them to abide in Him and to bring forth fruit, by showing them the greatness of His love towards them. What God the Father's love is to Christ, such is Christ's love for His disciples. To be the object of such love is a privilege of un-

told preciousness. It carries with it a corresponding duty, "Continue ye in my love."

V. 10. "If ye keep—ye shall abide." The words were spoken for encouragement. How to abide in Christ's love is reduced to a practical everyday maxim, "Keep My commandments." Obedience unlocks the fragrant chambers of Christ's love. "Even as I have kept"; a further encouragement. The disciple is not required to do anything that his Master had not done. Is obedience hard? Christ answers, "I, too, bore the burden. Why complain?" Does the reward of obedience appear small? "Then," says our Lord again, "behold how great it is! To Me, the Father's love; to you, My love."

V. 11. "These things"; the allegory of the vine just spoken. "That my joy might remain in you." This is the purpose of His teaching, as it is also the great longing of His heart, that, abiding in Him, we may share His joy, the joy of fellowship with God. Human happiness can reach no higher than to share that joy which Christ ever felt in being loved by His Father and doing His will." Camb. Bible.

ILLUSTRATION AND APPLICATION

"I am the true vine," v. 1. We are still in the atmosphere of the upper room. The tenderness of leave-taking mingles with the strenuousness of the Master, who is committing a great task, on the accomplishment of which His heart is set, to His servants. The chapter, as Reith points out, embraces three leading themes: (1) The relation of the disciples to their Lord; (2) Their relation to one another; and (3) Their relation to the world; and the first of these of chiefest importance, because it underlies the other two. Let them be right with Him, and the disciples will be right with one another and will stand together and steadfastly for Christ in the world. It is somewhat idle to speculate as to what led Christ to use the simile of the vine. The fact is that all visible objects spoke to Him of the unseen. He had the poet's insight; nay, the deeper insight of the One who created both things unseen and seen and therefore knew the secret of their harmonies. The chief emphasis of the allegory, for such it is, of the vine is to make plainer the nature of the union of Christ and the believer.

"My Father is the husbandman." This in-

troductory or basic truth is sometimes overlooked, viz., that the vine belongs to and is under the nurture and care of the Great Husbandman, or vine-dresser, God the Father, and that He longs for its fruitfulness. "Herein is my Father glorified that ye bear much fruit." How exquisite the relationship between Jesus and His Father in heaven. "I do always those things which please him" (John 8: 29). "I came down from heaven, not to do Mine own will, but the will of Him that sent Me" (ch. 6: 38).

"Every branch . . . that beareth not fruit," v. 2. Our Lord's tenderness never shut His eyes to the stern facts of life, and there is no fact sterner or more real than that judgment waits close upon uselessness. The unfruitful branch the Divine Husbandman "taketh away." It is significant that the note of judgment is the first note to be struck. But it is after the manner of the Almighty. Ere man can be allowed to partake of the fruits of the Garden he is warned concerning the fruits of one certain tree that "in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die" (Gen. 2: 17). Jehovah through the prophet sternly cries "Cease to do evil" before He adds in softer

M. G. W.
6