

Comp. 1 John 3. 16. The emphasis is on "lay down his life." The disciples are called "friends" from his stand-point rather than theirs. They are the men whom he loves. He called them so before (Luke 12. 4). They inherit the title of the Father of the Faithful (Isa. 41. 8; Jas. 2. 23). Rom. 5. 8, describes the converse—Christ's death for sinners. Here it is spoken of in its inspiring influence upon redeemed and faithful men.

**14. Ye.** Emphatic, assuring them of their right to the name, conditional on obedience. The close of the verse is better read "that which I am commanding you," the command being one solid whole.

**15. Bond-servant** (margin). Our Lord had often used this name of them in his parables, and they still proudly accepted it for themselves, the greater including the less. See the opening of most of the epistles. In verse 20 he uses it of them again. The present reference is especially to chap. 13. 16. **Knoweth.** There is no community of purpose; the slave does his part without interest or intelligence. The Christian not only knows what he himself has to do, but he is enabled to understand much of the nature of God's purposes therein. For Jesus "made known" to his followers as much as man could know of the redemptive plan. **Heard.** The tense points back to the period when Father and Son communed of the mission which should save the world. To represent it as a single occasion is a concession to human language.

### The Lesson Council.

#### Question 1. What is Christian fruitfulness?

The "fruit" which glorifies God (verse 8) is Christ-like character and conduct, fostered and cultivated first in self, and then in others to whom our example and our word appeal with success. Or, it consists, 1. In such holy tempers of mind and heart and will as render the subject like to Jesus Christ in that regard (Gal. 5. 22). 2. In such word and deed as give expression to this inward life and disposition (Matt. 7. 20). 3. In the multiplication of such character beyond the individual subject. (Rom. 1. 13).—*Salem B. Town, D.D., Greenacres, Ind.*

The figure of the vine furnishes a beautiful emblem of the believer's union with Christ. As the Saviour himself puts it, "I in them, and they in me." Or, as Paul describes the same fact, "Your life is hid with Christ in God." From this vital union with Christ flow the impulses and elements of his wondrously fruitful life. "For us to live is Christ." As the flower exhales its fragrance at the bidding of the life-principle in the plant, so our life breathes forth the winsome fragrance of the Christ-life, if we abide in him. Christian fruitfulness in its highest sense, therefore, is the

reproduction of the Christ-life in the believer.—*Rev. Robert Watt, Milford, Del.*

The starting-point of Christian fruitfulness is the revelation of the divine Christ to the human consciousness. From this indwelling Saviour there is brought forth all the products of a divine life, such as was seen in him when he lived among men, modified only by the difference of the organisms through which this divine life operates. Out of this relation to Christ there will be "fruit unto holiness, and the end everlasting life." Christian fruitfulness is what the inward divine life produces rather than the amount of work wrought out by human forces.—*Rev. W. H. Tibbles, A.M., Kings, Ill.*

Christian fruitfulness relates to the condition of the heart, the closeness of one's connection with Christ, and the grasp of suitable methods of Christian work. In Acts 11. 24, we learn what was the spiritual condition of Barnabas, so that by him "much people was added unto the Lord." It is not the occasional word or act producing fruit, but a productiveness of the heart and life which multiplies these results indefinitely. Not simply fruit on a branch here and there, but abundant fruit on every branch. A condition of fruitfulness will allow of purging. Then we shall be conscious of the indwelling fruits of the Spirit, and effectiveness in Christian service will attend the outward life.—*Rev. F. K. Stratton, East Saugus, Mass.*

### Analytical and Biblical Outline.

#### The Branches of the Vine.

##### I. LIVING BRANCHES.

*I am the vine.* v. 1.

*Every branch in me.* v. 2.

"Christ liveth in me." Gal. 2. 20.

"Dwell in your hearts." Eph. 3. 17.

##### II. PURIFIED BRANCHES.

*He purgeth it....ye are clean.* v. 3.

"Chastening....grievous....fruit." Heb. 12.

11.

"Glory in tribulations." Rom. 5. 3.

##### III. ABIDING BRANCHES.

*Abide in me....in the vine.* v. 4.

"He abideth in us." 1 John 3. 24.

"Walk, even as he." 1 John 2. 6.

##### IV. FRUITFUL BRANCHES.

*Bringeth forth much fruit.* v. 5.

"Fruits of righteousness." Phil. 1. 11.

"Israel shall blossom and bud." Isa. 27. 6.

##### V. BELOVED BRANCHES.

*So have I loved you.* v. 9.

"He laid down his life for us." 1 John 3. 16.

"Loved them to the end." John 13. 1.

##### VI. OBEDIENT BRANCHES.

*Keep my commandments.* v. 10.

"He it is that loveth me." John 14. 21.

"Dwelleth in him." 1 John 3. 24.