

Robert Murray M'Cheyne:

Within a vineyard's sunny bound
An ample fig tree shelter found,
 Enjoying sun and showers -
The boughs were graceful to the view,
With spreading leaves of deep-green hue,
 And gaily blushing flowers.

When round the vintage season came,
The blooming fig was still the same,
 As promising and fair;
But though the leaves were broad and green,
No precious fruit was to be seen,
 Because no fruit was there.

"For three long years," the master cried,
"Fruit on this tree to find I've tried,
 But all in vain my toil;
Ungrateful tree! the axe's blow
Shall lay thy leafy honours low;
 Why cumberst thou the soil?"

"Ah! let it stand just one year more,"
The dresser said, "till all my store
 Of rural arts I've shown;
About the massy roots I'll dig,
And if it bear, we've gained the fig -
 If not, then cut it down."

How many years hast thou, my heart,
Acted the barren fig tree's part,
 Leafy, and fresh, and fair,
Enjoying heavenly dews of grace,
And sunny smiles from God's own face -
 But where the fruit? ah! where?

How often must the Lord have prayed
That still my day might be delayed,
 Till all due means were tried;
Afflictions, mercies, health, and pain,
How long shall these be all in vain
 To teach this heart of pride?

Learn, O my soul, what God demands
Is not a faith like barren sands,
 But fruit of heavenly hue;
By this we prove that Christ we know,
If in His holy steps we go -
 Faith works by love, if true.

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