

Andrew Murray:

Every Branch in me that Beareth Not Fruit, He taketh It away—John 15.2

Here we have one of the chief words of the parable—branch. A vine needs branches: without branches it can do nothing, can bear no fruit. As important as it is to know about the Vine, and the Husbandman, it is to realize what the branch is. Before we listen to what Christ has to say about it, let us first of all take in what a branch is, and what it teaches us of our life in Christ. A branch is simply a bit of wood, brought forth by the vine for the one purpose of serving it in bearing its fruit. It is of the very same nature as the vine, and has one life and one spirit with it. Just think a moment of the lessons this suggests.

There is the lesson of entire consecration. The branch has but one object for which it exists, one purpose to which it is entirely given up. That is, to bear the fruit the vine wishes to bring forth. And so the believer has but one reason for his being a branch—but one reason for his existence on earth—that the heavenly Vine may through him bring forth His fruit. Happy the soul that knows this, that has consented to it, and that says, I have been redeemed and I live for one thing—as exclusively as the natural branch exists only to bring forth fruit, I too; as exclusively as the heavenly Vine exists to bring forth fruit, I too. As I have been planted by God into Christ, I have wholly given myself to bear the fruit the Vine desires to bring forth.

There is the lesson of perfect conformity. The branch is exactly like the vine in every aspect—the same nature, the same life, the same place, the same work. In all this they are inseparably one. And so the believer needs to know that he is partaker of the divine nature, and has the very nature and spirit of Christ in him, and that his one calling is to yield himself to a perfect conformity to Christ. The branch is a perfect likeness of the vine; the only difference is, the one is great and strong, and the source of strength, the other little and feeble, ever needing and receiving strength. Even so the believer is, and is to be, the perfect likeness of Christ.

There is the lesson of absolute dependence. The vine has its stores of life and sap and strength, not for itself, but for the branches. The branches are and have nothing but what the vine provides and imparts. The believer is called to, and it is his highest blessedness to enter upon, a life of entire and unceasing dependence upon Christ. Day and night, every moment, Christ is to work in him all he needs.

And then the lesson of undoubting confidence. The branch has no cure; the vine provides all; it has but to yield itself and receive. It is the sight of this truth that leads to the blessed rest of faith, the true secret of growth and strength: “I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me.”

What a life would come to us if we only consented to be branches! Dear child of God, learn the lesson. You have but one thing to do: Only be a branch—nothing more, nothing less! Just be a branch; Christ will be the Vine that gives all. And the Husbandman, the mighty God, who made the Vine what it is, will as surely make the branch what it ought to be.

Lord Jesus, I pray Thee, reveal to me the heavenly mystery of the branch, in its living union with the Vine, in its claim on all its fullness. And let Thy all-sufficiency, holding and filling Thy branches, lead me to the rest of faith that knows that Thou workest all.