

# The Baptist Examiner

An independent paper, standing foursquare for the distinguishing doctrines of Baptists,  
and shunning not to declare all the counsel of God.

"To the law and to the testimony; if they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them" (Isa. 8:20).

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## Ye Are The Branches

JOHN 15:1-10

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The Lord Jesus Christ had a delightful aptitude for using figures of speech in the illustration of truth. He was able to take the most difficult truths and convey them in the simplest terms. This is the mark of the truly great teacher. In the portion of Scripture before us He uses the figure of the vine and the branches.

Like all other Scripture, this portion has a definite interpretation and lends itself also to many applications. The interpretation we believe, in this instance, belongs to Israel. In the Old Testament (Isaiah 5) Judah is likened to the vine. Judah failed, but Christ, the Lion of the tribe of Judah, has become the true vine, and inseparably united with Him are the believers, in Israel, the true Israel (Romans 9:6-8). However in this paper we desire to confine ourselves to application rather than interpretation. In this application we wish to study the analogy between the vine and the branches—the believer in Christ and His blessed Lord. May the Holy Spirit lead us in this meditation that we may "grow in grace and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ."

### THE VINE

"I am the true vine, and my Father is the husbandman." (vs. 1.). These words were spoken by the Lord to His own disciples as He was on the way from the upper room and the last supper to the garden of Gethsemane. It is worthy of note that the only ones who heard these words were those who wholly followed Him. Judas had been with Him in the upper room but had long since departed to arrange for the betrayal of the Son of man. Thus it was that only the eleven, who were to become the witnesses to His resurrection, received this precious message.

The Lord declares Himself to be the true or real Vine. He is always the ultimate in God's purposes. When God created the first man, Adam, He had in view the second man, Christ. When He taught sinful man that redemption was possible through the shedding of blood, He was thinking of the precious blood of His Son. When He sent Moses to Egypt as a prophet to Israel, He was planning for the One who was to be like unto Moses, the greatest of all prophets. He appointed Aaron as a high priest that he might be the pattern of Him who was to be the High Priest forever after the order of Melchisedec.

*This is a studious and carefully written exposition of an interesting Scripture. Without fully committing oneself to every part of the exposition (for there are some parts of it that we wish to give further study), we wish, nevertheless, to express our appreciation of it; and to commend it to our readers for their close study.*

*We are confident with our brother that this parable does not teach that a branch that is truly in Christ can ever be separated from him. Also we are confident that every true branch in Christ will bear fruit.*

*The author of this article affiliates with the Ohio Association of Independent Baptist Churches.—Editorial Note.*

And when He spoke of Israel of old as the vine of the Lord, it was because He foresaw Christ, the Son of His love, as the true Vine.

### THE BRANCHES

"Every branch in Me. . ." (vs. 2). Here is a wonderful truth. "In Me." United with Him, one with Him. Deriving our life our sustenance and our strength from Him. What a position! Beloved of the Lord, have you begun to comprehend this glorious truth? In Christ Jesus! Members of His body! Branches in Him, the true Vine! Yet this is not all.

"Abide in Me, I also in you, for the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine; no more can ye, except ye abide in Me." (vs. 4). The first great truth for the believer is

UNION, and the second COMMUNION. Our union to Christ becomes the basis for our communion with Him. In fact the purpose of our union to Him is in order that we may enjoy communion. Just as the branch cannot produce fruit apart from the vine, even so there can be no communion with Christ if there is no union. Not only so, but the fundamental reason for our union is communion, and the end of our communion is fruitfulness.

It is sometimes said that we are saved to serve, but the message to the branches is that fruitbearing is the result of union and communion. The branch is the avenue through which the life of the vine is expressed in fruit. In like manner the believer is the one through whom our Lord expresses His divine life.

### TWO CLASSES

Two classes of branches are referred to, fruitless and fruitful. The first is mentioned in verse 2. "Every branch in Me that beareth not fruit He taketh away; . . ." Here is a believer "in Christ", having union with Him, but no communion; for there is no fruit. This kind of a believer is often confused with the unsaved members in our churches. The difference is apparent after a little careful study. In the case of the unfruitful branch the Lord has undertaken to care for it and bring it to a state of production. It may be unfruitful now, but if God is faithful, and He is, He will see to it that it is not fruitless permanently, for He hath said, "Every branch in Me that beareth not fruit He taketh away."

The verb "taketh away" is the translation of the Greek