

“YE, THE BRANCHES”

Jesus said: “I am the Vine, ye are the branches.” John 15:5



Christ had already said much of the branch; here He comes to the personal application: **“Ye are the branches of whom I have been speaking. As I am the Vine, engaged to be and do all the branches need, so I now ask you, in the new dispensation of the Holy Spirit whom I have been promising you, to accept the place I give you, and to be My branches on earth.”**

The relationship He seeks to establish is an intensely personal one—it all hinges on the two little words *I* and *You*. And it is for us just as intensely personal as for the first disciples. Let us present ourselves before our Lord, until He speak to each of us in power, and our whole soul feels it: *“I am the Vine; you are the branch.”*

Dear disciple of Jesus, however young or feeble, hear the voice. ***“You are the branch.”*** You must be nothing less. Let no false humility, no carnal fear of sacrifice, no unbelieving doubts as to what you feel able for, keep you back from saying: “I will be a branch, with all that may mean—a branch, very feeble, but yet as like the Vine as can be, for I am of the same nature, and receive of the same spirit. A branch, utterly helpless, and yet just as manifestly set apart before God and men, as wholly given up to the work of bearing fruit, as the Vine itself. A branch, nothing in myself, and yet resting and rejoicing in the faith that knows that He will provide for all. Yes, by His grace, I will be nothing less than a branch, and all He means it to be, that through me, He may bring forth His fruit.”

You are the branch. You need be nothing more. You need not for one single moment of the day take upon you the responsibility of the Vine. You need not leave the place of entire dependence and unbounded confidence. You need, least of all, to be anxious as to how you are to understand the mystery, or fulfill its conditions, or work out its blessed aim. The Vine will give all and work all. The Father, the Husbandman,

watches over your union with and growth in the Vine. You need be nothing more than a branch. Only a branch! Let that be your watchword. It will lead in the path of continual surrender to Christ’s working, of true obedience to His every command, of joyful expectancy of all His grace.

Is there anyone who now asks: “How can I learn to say this aright, ‘Only be a branch!’ and to live it out?”

Dear soul, the character of a branch, its strength, and the fruit it bears, depend entirely upon the Vine. And your life as branch depends entirely upon your apprehension of what our Lord Jesus is. Therefore never separate the two words: *“I the Vine—you the branch.”* Your life and strength and fruit depend upon what your Lord Jesus is!

Therefore worship and trust Him. Let Him be your one desire and the one occupation of your heart. And when you feel that you do not and cannot know Him aright, then just remember it is part of His responsibility as Vine to make Himself known to you. He does this not in thoughts and conceptions—no—but in a hidden growth within the life that is humbly and restfully and entirely given up to wait on Him.

The Vine reveals itself within the branch—thence comes the growth and fruit, Christ dwells and works within His branch. Only be a branch, waiting on Him to do all. He will be to thee the true Vine. The Father Himself, the divine Husbandman, is able to make thee a branch worthy of the heavenly Vine. Thou shalt not be disappointed.

Ye are the branches. *This word, too Lord! O speak it in power unto my soul. Let not the branch of the earthly vine put me to shame, but as it only lives to bear the fruit of the vine, may my life on earth have no wish or aim, but to let Thee bring forth fruit through me.*

