



"THE HUSBANDMAN"

Jesus said: "And My Father is the Husbandman." John 15:1

A vine must have a husbandman to plant and watch over it, to receive and rejoice in its fruit. *Jesus says: "My Father is the husbandman."* He was "the vine of God's planting." All He was and did, He owed to the Father — in all He only sought the Father's will and glory. He had become man to show us what a creature ought to be to its Creator. He took our place, and the spirit of His life before the Father was ever what He seeks to make ours: *"Of him, and through him, and to him are all things."*

He became the true Vine, that we might be true branches. Both in regard to Christ and ourselves the words teach us the two lessons of absolute dependence and perfect confidence.

My Father is the Husbandman. Christ ever lived in the spirit of what He once said: "The Son can do nothing of himself." As dependent as a vine is on a husbandman for the place where it is to grow, for its fencing in and watering and pruning. Christ felt Himself entirely dependent on the Father every day for the wisdom and the strength to do the Father's will.

As He said in the previous chapter (14:10): *"The words that I say unto you, I speak not from Myself; but the Father abiding in Me doeth his works."* This absolute dependence had as its blessed counterpart the most blessed confidence that He had nothing to fear — the Father could not disappoint Him. With such a Husbandman as His Father, He could enter death and the grave. He could trust God to raise Him up. All that Christ is and has, He has, not in Himself, but from the Father.

My Father is the Husbandman. That is as blessedly true for us as for Christ. Christ is about to teach His disciples about their being branches. Before He ever uses the word, or speaks at all of abiding in Him or bearing fruit,

He turns their eyes heavenward to the Father watching over them, and working all in them.

At the very root of all Christian life lies the thought that God is to do all, that our work is to give and leave ourselves in His hands, in the confession of utter helplessness and dependence, in the assured confidence that He gives all we need.

The great lack of the Christian life is that, even where we trust Christ, we leave God out of the count. Christ came to bring us to God. Christ lived the life of a man exactly as we have to live it. Christ the Vine points to God the Husbandman. As He trusted God, let us trust God, that everything we ought to be and have — as those who belong to the Vine — will be given us from above.

"A vineyard of red wine. I the LORD do keep it; I will water it every moment: lest any hurt it, I will keep it night and day." Isaiah 27:2b-3

Ere we begin to think of fruit or branches, let us have our heart filled with the faith — as glorious as the Vine, is the Husbandman. As high and holy as is our calling, so mighty and loving is the God who will work it all. As surely as the Husbandman made the Vine what it was to be, will He make each branch what it is to be. Our Father is our Husbandman, the Surety for our growth and fruit.

Blessed Father, we are Thy husbandry. Oh, that Thou mayest have honor of the work of Thy hands! O my Father, I desire to open my heart to the joy of this wondrous truth: My Father is the Husbandman. Teach me to know and trust Thee, and to see that the same deep interest with which Thou caredst for and delightedst in the Vine, extends to every branch, to me too.

