

God Is Able to Keep You

Many people admit that it is a sacred duty and a blessed privilege to abide in Christ but shrink back continually before the question: Is a life of unbroken fellowship with the Savior truly possible? Eminent Christians, to whom special opportunities of cultivating this grace have been granted, may attain to it; but for the large majority of disciples, whose lives, by divine appointment, are so fully occupied with the affairs of this life, it can scarce be expected.

The more such disciples hear of this life, the deeper their sense of its glory and blessedness, and there is nothing they would not sacrifice to be made partakers of it. But they are too weak, too unfaithful—they never can attain to it.

Dear souls! If they only knew that abiding in Christ is meant for the weak and beautifully suited to their feebleness! It is not the doing of some great thing and does not demand that we first lead a very holy and devoted life.

No, it is simply weakness entrusting itself to a Mighty One to be kept—the unfaithful one casting self on One who is altogether trustworthy and true. Abiding in Him is not a work that we have to do as the condition for enjoying His salvation but a consenting to let Him do all—for us and in us and through us.

It is a work He does for us, the fruit and the power of His redeeming love. Our part is simply to yield, to trust and to wait for what He has engaged to perform.

It is this quiet expectation and confidence, resting on the word of Christ that in Him there is an abiding place prepared, which is so sadly wanting among Christians. They scarcely take the time or the trouble to realize that when He says "Abide in Me," He offers Himself, the Keeper of Israel that slumbers not nor sleeps—with all His power and love—as the living home of the soul, where the mighty influences of His grace will be stronger to keep than all their feebleness to lead astray.

The idea they have of grace is this—that their conversion and pardon are God's work, but that now, in gratitude to God, it is their work to live as Christians and follow Jesus. There is always the thought of a work that has to be done, and even though they pray for help, still the work is theirs.

They fail continually and become hopeless; and the despondency only increases the helplessness. No, wandering one; as it was Jesus who drew you when He said, "Come," so it is Jesus who keeps you when He says, "Abide." The grace to come and the grace to abide are both from Him alone.

Believe the One Who Loves You

Abide in Me": These words are no law of Moses, demanding from the sinful what they cannot perform. They are the command of love, which is ever only a promise in a different shape. Think of this until all feeling of burden and fear and despair pass away, and the first thought that comes as you hear of abiding in Jesus is one of bright and joyous hope: It is for me; I know I shall enjoy it.

You are not under the law, but under grace. Therefore, believe what Christ will do for you. And if the question is asked, "But surely there is something for us to do?" the answer is, "Our doing and working are simply the fruit of Christ's work in us."

It is when the soul becomes utterly passive, looking and resting on what Christ is to do, that its energies are stirred to their highest activity and that we work most effectually—because we know that He works in us. It is as we see in that word "in Me" the mighty energies of love reaching out after us to have us and hold us that all the strength of our will is roused to abide in Him.

This connection between Christ's work and our work is beautifully expressed in the words of Paul: "I follow after, if that I may apprehend that for which also I am apprehended of Christ Jesus" (Phil. 3:12, KJV). It was because he knew that the mighty and the

faithful One had grasped him with the glorious purpose of making him one with Himself that he did his utmost to grasp the glorious prize.

Paul's expression and its application to the Christian life can be best understood if we think of a father helping his child to mount the side of some steep precipice. The father stands above and takes the son by the hand to help him on. He points him to the spot on which he will help him to plant his feet.

The leap would be too high and dangerous for the child alone; but the father's hand is his trust, and he leaps to get hold of the point for which his father has taken hold of him. It is the father's strength that secures him and lifts him up, and so urges him to use his utmost strength.

Such is the relation between Christ and you, oh weak and trembling believer! Fix first your eyes on the purpose for which He has apprehended you. It is nothing less than a life of abiding, unbroken fellowship with Himself to which He is seeking to lift you up.

All that you have already received—pardon and peace, the Spirit and His grace—are but preliminary to this. And all that you see promised to you in the future—holiness and fruitfulness and glory everlasting—are but its natural outcome.

Intimate Fellowship

Union with Himself, and so with the Father, is Christ's highest object. Fix your eye on this, and gaze until it stands out before you clear and unmistakable: Christ's aim is to have me abide in Him.

And then let the second thought enter your heart: For this I am apprehended of Christ. His almighty power has laid hold on me and offers now to lift me up to where He would have me.

And as you think of the spot to which He points—the blessed purpose for which He apprehended you—and keep your gaze fixed on Him, holding you and waiting to lift you up, take the upward step, and rise to enter upon this blessed life of abiding in Christ. Begin at once, and say, "Oh my Jesus, if You bid me, and if You undertake to lift and keep me there, I will venture. Trembling, but trusting, I will say: 'Jesus, I do abide in You.'"

Go and take time alone with Jesus, and say this to Him. I dare not speak to you about abiding in Him for the mere sake of calling forth a pleasing religious sentiment. God's truth must at once be acted on.

Yield yourself this very day to the blessed Savior in the surrender of the one thing He asks of you: Give up yourself to abide in Him. He will work it in you. You can trust Him to keep you trusting and abiding.

And if ever doubts again arise, or the bitter experience of failure tempts you to despair, just remember where Paul found His strength: "I am apprehended of Christ Jesus" (Phil. 3:12, KJV). In that assurance you have a fountain of strength.

From that you can look up to that on which He has set His heart, and set yours there, too. From that you gather confidence that the good work He has begun He will also perform. And in that confidence you will gather courage afresh, day by day, to say, "I follow on, that I may also apprehend that for which Christ Jesus apprehended me. It is because Jesus has taken hold of me, and because Jesus keeps me, that I dare to say: 'Savior, I abide in Thee.'"

Andrew Murray (1828-1917) was raised in what was then considered one of the most remote corners of the world—Graaff-Reinet (near the Cape), South Africa. At the age of 9, he was sent with his elder brother to Aberdeen, Scotland, to receive a formal education. In 1845 both received their master's degrees from Aberdeen University and went on to Utrecht University in Holland to pursue their theological training.

After three years of study in Holland, Murray returned to South Africa as a minister and missionary. And in 1860 he accepted a call to Cape Colony, where he began the writing of his many devotional

books. In his 88 years he wrote more than 240 books and tracts, including classics such as Humility, The Secret of Intercession and Abide in Christ, which have been read by millions and continue to transform lives today.

Murray spent much time in itinerant evangelism. He laid great emphasis on a theme to which many of his books are devoted—the “deeper Christian life.” He defined this as God’s desire and commitment to reveal Himself more fully to those who would seek Him. The last 12 years of Murray’s life were devoted to speaking at conventions and evangelistic meetings around the world.

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