

The Upward Look

Through the Holy Spirit

"**T**HE abiding which you have received of Him, abide in you; and even as it hath taught you, ye shall abide in Him."

How beautiful the thought of a life always abiding in Christ! The longer we think of it, the more attractive it becomes. And yet how often it is that the precious words, "Abide in Me," are heard by the young disciple with a sigh! It is as if he understands so little what they really mean, and can realize so little how this full enjoyment can be attained. He longs for some one who could make it perfectly clear, and continually again remind him that the abiding is in very deed within his reach. If such an one would but listen to the word we have from John, what hope and joy it would bring! It gives us the divine assurance that we have the abiding of the Holy Spirit to teach us how to abide in Christ.

What holds true of all spiritual truth is specially true of the abiding in Christ: We must live and experience truth in order to know it. Life-fellowship with Jesus is the only school for the acclence of heavenly things. "What I do, though knowest not now, but though shalt know hereafter," is a law of the kingdom, especially true of the daily cleansing of which it first was spoken, and the daily keeping. Receive what thou dost not comprehend, submit to what thou canst not understand, accept and expect what to reason appears a mystery, believe what looks impossible, walk in a way which thou knowest not,—such are the first lessons in the school of God. "If ye abide in my word, ye shall understand the truth;" in these and other words of God we are taught that there is a habit of mind and life which precedes the understanding of the truth. True discipleship consists in first following, and then knowing the Lord. The believing surrender to Christ, and the submission to His word to expect what appears most improbable, is the only way to the full blessedness of knowing Him.

These principles hold specially good in regard to the teaching of the Spirit. That teaching consists in His guiding the spiritual life within us to that which God has prepared for us, without our always knowing how. On the strength of His promise, and trusting in His faithfulness, the believer yields himself to the leading of the Holy Spirit, without claiming to have it first made clear to the intellect what He is to do, but consenting to let Him do His work in the soul, and afterwards to know what He has wrought there. Faith trusts the working of the Spirit unseen in the deep recesses of the inner life. And so the word of Christ and the gift of the Spirit are to the believer sufficient guarantee that He will be taught of the Spirit to abide in Christ. By faith he rejoices in what he does not see or feel; he knows, and is content that the blessed Spirit within is doing His work silently but surely, guiding him into the life of full abiding and unbroken communion.

The Holy Spirit is the Spirit of Life in Christ Jesus; it is His work, not only to breathe, but ever to foster and strengthen, and so the believer yields himself in simple trust to the unseen, but most certain law of the Spirit of life working within him, his faith will pass into knowledge. It will be rewarded by the Spirit's light revealing in the Word what is already being wrought by the Spirit's power in the life.

Apply this now to the promise of the Spirit's teaching us to abide in Christ. The Holy Spirit is indeed the

mighty power of God. In the expression, "The fellowship of the Spirit," we are taught what His highest work is. He is the bond of fellowship between the Father and the Son; by Him they are one. He is the bond of fellowship between all believers; by Him they are one. Above all, He is the bond of fellowship between Christ and believers; He is the life-spirit through which Vine and branch grow into real and living oneness; by Him we are one. And we can be assured of that if we do but believe in His presence and working, if we do but watch not to grieve Him, because we know that He is in us, if we wait and pray to be filled with Him, He will teach us how to abide. First guiding our will to a whole-hearted cleaving to Christ, then quickening our faith into ever fuller confidence and expectation, then breathing into our hearts a peace and joy that pass understanding. He teaches us to abide, we scarce know how. Then life comes through the Spirit, and life into the understanding. He makes us know the truth,—not as mere thought, but as the truth which is in Christ Jesus, the reality of the mind of the light of what He has already made a reality in the life. "The life was the light of men."

In view of such teaching, it is clear how if we would have the Spirit to guide us into the abiding life, our first need is—quiet restful faith. Amid all the questions and difficulties that may come up in connection with our striving to abide in Christ,—amid all the longings we may sometimes feel to have a Christian of experience to aid us,—amid the frequent painful consciousness of failure, of ignorance, of helplessness,—do let us hold fast the blessed confidence! We have the union of the Holy One to teach us to abide in Him.

It is impossible to live the life of full abiding without being full of the Holy Spirit; believe that the fulness of the Spirit is indeed thy daily portion. Be sure and take time in prayer to dwell at the footstool of the throne



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