

Andrew Murray:

Abide in Me, and I in You—John 15.4

When a new graft is placed in a vine and it abides there, there is a twofold process that takes place. The first is in the wood. The graft shoots its little roots and fibers down into the stem, and the stem grows up into the graft, and what has been called the structural union is effected. The graft abides and becomes one with the vine, and even though the vine were to die, would still be one wood with it. Then there is the second process, in which the sap of the vine enters the new structure, and uses it as a passage through which sap can flow up to show itself in young shoots and leaves and fruit. Here is the vital union. Into the graft which abides in the stock, the stock enters with sap to abide in it.

When our Lord says: “Abide in me, and I in you,” He points to something analogous to this. “Abide in me”: that refers more to that which we have to do. We have to trust and obey, to detach ourselves from all else, to reach out after Him and cling to Him, to sink ourselves into Him. As we do this, through the grace He gives, a character is formed, and a heart prepared for the fuller experience: “I in you,” God strengthens us with might by the Spirit in the inner man, and Christ dwells in the heart by faith.

Many believers pray and long very earnestly for the filling of the Spirit and the indwelling of Christ, and wonder that they do not make more progress. The reason is often this, the “I in you” cannot come because the “abide in me” is not maintained. “There is one body and one spirit”; before the Spirit can fill, there must be a body prepared. The graft must have grown into the stem, and be abiding in it before the sap can flow through to bring forth fruit. It is as in lowly obedience we follow Christ, even in external things, denying ourselves, forsaking the world, and even in the body seeking to be conformable to Him, as we thus seek to abide in Him, that we shall be able to receive and enjoy the “I in you.” The work enjoined on us: “Abide in me,” will prepare us for the work undertaken by Him: “I in you.”

In—The two parts of the injunction have their unity in that central deep-meaning word “in.” There is no deeper word in Scripture. God is in all. God dwells in Christ. Christ lives in God. We are in Christ. Christ is in us: our life taken up into His; His life received into ours; in a divine reality that words cannot express, we are in Him and He in us. And the words, “Abide in me and I in you,” just tell us to believe it, this divine mystery, and to count upon our God the Husbandman, and Christ the Vine, to make it divinely true. No thinking or teaching or praying can grasp it; it is a divine mystery of love. As little as we can effect the union can we understand it. Let us just look upon this infinite, divine, omnipotent Vine loving us, holding us, working in us. Let us in the faith of His working abide and rest in Him, ever turning heart and hope to Him alone. And let us count upon Him to fulfill in us the mystery: “Ye in me, and I in you.”

Blessed Lord, Thou dost bid me abide in Thee. How can I, Lord, except Thou show Thyself to me, waiting to receive and welcome and keep me? I pray Thee show me how Thou as Vine undertaketh to do all. To be occupied with Thee is to abide in Thee. Here I am, Lord, a branch, cleansed and abiding—resting in Thee, and awaiting the inflow of Thy life and grace.