

Full
Life
in
Christ

Andrew
Murray



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HOUSE

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This new edition from Whitaker House has been updated for the modern reader. Words, expressions, and sentence structure have been revised for clarity and readability. Although the more modern Bible translations quoted in this edition were not available to the author, the Bible versions used were carefully selected in order to make the language of the entire text readily understandable while maintaining the author's original premises and message.

FULL LIFE IN CHRIST

(previously published under the title: *Like Christ*)

ISBN-13: 978-0-88368-639-3 • ISBN-10: 0-88368-639-2

Printed in the United States of America

© 2000 by Whitaker House

Whitaker House
1030 Hunt Valley Circle
New Kensington, PA 15068
www.whitakerhouse.com

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

Murray, Andrew, 1828–1917.

Full life in Christ / by Andrew Murray.

p. cm.

ISBN 0-88368-639-2 (pbk.)

1. Jesus Christ—Example. 2. Christian life—Reformed authors.

I. Title.

BT304.2 .M87 2000

248.4—dc21

00-011310

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This book has been printed digitally and produced in a standard specification in order to ensure its continuing availability.

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Preface

In presenting this book on the image of our blessed Lord and the likeness to Him to which we are called, I have two remarks to make.

The first is that no one can be more conscious than I am of the difficulty of the task that I have undertaken and the defectiveness of its execution. There were two things I had to do. One was to draw such a portrait of the Son of God as “*in all things ...made like unto his brethren*” (Hebrews 2:17), in order to show how, in the reality of His human life, He was an exact pattern of what the Father wants us to be. I wanted to offer a portrait that would make likeness to Him infinitely and mightily attractive, arouse desire, awaken love, inspire hope, and strengthen faith in all who are seeking to imitate Jesus Christ.

Then I had to sketch another portrait, with some degree of spiritual exactness—that of the believer as he really reflects this image. And one that, amid the trials and duties of daily life, would prove that likeness to Christ is no mere ideal, but through the power of the Holy Spirit can be a most blessed reality.

How often and how deeply I have felt, after trying to explain one trait of the blessed life, how utterly insufficient human thoughts are to grasp, or human words are to express, the spiritual beauty that one can, at best, see only in faint glimpses. How often

our very thoughts deceive us as they give us some human conception of what the Word reveals, while we lack that true vision of the spiritual glory of Him who is "*the brightness of [the Father's] glory*" (Hebrews 1:3).

The second remark I wish to make is a suggestion as to what I think is truly needed to behold the glory of the blessed image into which we are to be changed. I was very much struck some time ago by the exercise a class in object lessons was put through. A picture was shown to them, which they were told to look at carefully. They then had to shut their eyes and take time to think and remember everything they had seen. The picture was removed, and the students had to tell everything they could remember. They were shown the picture again, and they had to try to notice what they had not observed before. Again, they had to shut their eyes, think, and then tell what more they had noticed. They went through this process once more, until every line of the picture had been taken in.

As I looked at the keen interest with which the little eyes now gazed on the picture, and then were pressed so tightly shut as they tried to realize, take in, and keep what they had been looking at, I felt that if our Bible reading were more like this object lesson, the unseen spiritual realities pictured to us in the Word would take much deeper hold of our inner lives.

We are too easily content with the thoughts suggested by the words of the Bible instead of giving time for the substantial, spiritual reality, which the Word as the truth of God contains, to be lodged and rooted in our hearts. Let us remember this as we

meditate on the image of God in Christ, to which we are to be conformed. When some special trait has occupied our thoughts, let us shut our eyes and open our hearts. Let us think, pray, and believe in the working of the Holy Spirit, until we really see the blessed Master in that special light in which the Word has been setting Him before us. Let us carry away for that day the deep and abiding impression of that heavenly beauty in Him that we know is to be reproduced in us. Let us gaze, and gaze again; let us worship and adore. The more we see Him as He is, the more like Him we must become. Study the image of God in the Man Christ Jesus, yield and open your innermost being for that image to take possession and live in you, and then go forth and let the heavenly likeness reflect itself and shine out in your life among your fellowmen. This is what we have been redeemed for; let this be what we live for.

I entrust this book to the gracious care of the blessed Lord, of whose glory it seeks to tell. May He let us see that there is no beauty or blessedness like that of a Christlike life. May He teach us to believe that, in union with Him, the Christlike life is indeed for us. And as each day we listen to what His Word tells us of His image, may each one of us have grace to say, "O my Father, even as Your beloved Son lived in You, with You, and for You on earth, I would also live."

—Andrew Murray
Wellington, Cape of Good Hope



Chapter 1

Because We Abide in Him

*He that saith he abideth in him ought himself
also so to walk, even as he walked.*

—1 John 2:6

Abiding in Christ and walking like Christ are two blessings of the new life presented here in their essential unity. The fruit of a life *in Christ* is a life *like Christ*.

To the first of these expressions, “abiding in Christ,” we are no strangers. The wondrous parable of the Vine and the branches, with the accompanying command, “*Abide in Me, and I in you*” (John 15:4), has often been a source of rich instruction and comfort. And though we feel as if we have only imperfectly learned the lesson of abiding in Him, yet we have tasted something of the joy that comes when the soul can say, “Lord, You know all things. You know that I do abide in You.” He also knows how often this fervent prayer still arises, “Blessed Lord, grant to me complete, unbroken abiding.”

The second expression, “walking like Christ,” is no less significant than the first. It is the promise of the wonderful power that abiding in Him will exert. As the fruit of our surrender to live wholly in Him,

His life works so mightily in us that our walk—the outward expression of the inner life—becomes like His. The two are inseparably connected. The *abiding in* always precedes the *walking like* Him. Yet the desire to walk like Him must equally precede any large amount of abiding. Only then is the need for a close union fully realized. The heavenly Giver is free to bestow the fullness of His grace, because He sees that the soul is prepared to use it according to His design. When the Savior said, “*If ye keep my commandments, ye shall abide in my love*” (John 15:10), He meant this: The surrender to walk like Me is the path to the full abiding in Me. Many will discover that this is the secret of their failure in abiding in Christ: they did not seek it with the idea of walking like Christ. The words of John invite us to look at the two truths in their vital connection and dependence on each other.

The first lesson they teach is: he who seeks to abide in Christ must walk even as He walked. We all know that it is a matter of course that a branch bear fruit of the same sort as the vine to which it belongs. The life of the vine and the branch is so completely identical that the manifestation of that life must be identical, too. When the Lord Jesus redeemed us with His blood and presented us to the Father in His righteousness, He did not leave us in our old nature to serve God as best we could. No, in Him dwelt the eternal life—the holy, divine life of heaven—and everyone who is in Him receives that same eternal life in its holy, heavenly power. Hence, nothing can be more natural than the claim that he who abides in Him, continually receiving life from Him, must “*also so to walk, even as he walked.*”

This mighty life of God in the soul does not, however, work as a blind force compelling us ignorantly or involuntarily to act like Christ. On the contrary, the walking like Him must be the result of a deliberate choice—sought in strong desire, accepted by a living will. With this view, the Father in heaven showed us, in Jesus' earthly life, what the life of heaven would be when it came down into the conditions and circumstances of our human life. With the same objective, the Lord Jesus—when we receive the new life from Him, and when He calls us to abide in Him so that we may receive that life more abundantly—points us to His own life on earth. He tells us that the new life has been bestowed so that we may walk even as He walked. "Even as I, so ye also." (See John 15:10.) These words of the Master take His whole earthly life and very simply make it the rule and guide of all our conduct. If we abide in Jesus, we may not act other than He did. This one short, all-inclusive word *Christlike* contains the blessed law of the Christian life. A Christian is to think, to speak, and to act as Jesus did; as Jesus was, even so he is to be.

The second lesson is the complement of the first: he who seeks to walk like Christ must abide in Him. There is a twofold need of this lesson. With some, there is the earnest desire and effort to follow Christ's example, yet they have no sense of how impossible it is to do so without a deep, real abiding in Him. They fail because they seek to obey the high command to live like Christ, without having the only power that can make this experience a reality: the power that comes from living in Christ. With others, there is the opposite error. They know their own

weaknesses, and they think that walking like Christ is an impossibility. Those who seek to do it and who fail need the lesson as much as those who do not seek because they expect to fail. To walk like Christ, one must abide in Him. He who abides in Him has the power to walk like Him—not in himself or his own efforts, but in Jesus, who perfects His strength in our weaknesses (2 Corinthians 12:9).

It is when I feel my utter weakness most deeply, and fully accept Jesus in His wondrous union to myself as my life, that His power works in me. Then I am able to lead a life completely beyond what my own power could obtain. I begin to see that abiding in Him is not a matter of moments or special seasons, but the deep life process in which—by His keeping grace—I continue without a moment's intermission, and from which I act out all my Christian life. I feel encouraged to really take Him as my entire example, because I am sure that the hidden, inner union and likeness must work itself out into a visible likeness in walk and conduct.

Dear reader, if God gives us grace, in the course of our meditations, to truly enter into the meaning of His words and what they teach about a life like Christ's, we will more than once come into contact with the heights and depths that will make us cry out, "How can these things be?" If the Holy Spirit reveals the heavenly perfection of the humanity of our Lord as the image of the unseen God, and speaks, "So also you ought to walk," the first effect will be that we will begin to feel how far we are from Him. We will be ready to give up hope, and to say with so many, "There's no reason to even try. I can never walk like Jesus." At such moments, we will

find our strength in this message: he who abides in Him must and can walk even as He walked. These words of the Master will come with new meaning as the assurance of sufficient strength: "*He who abides in Me, and I in him, bears much fruit*" (John 15:5 NKJV).

Therefore, abide in Him! Every believer is in Christ, but every one does not abide in Him in the consciously joyful and trustful surrender of his whole being given up to His influence. You know what abiding in Him is. It is to consent with our whole souls to His being our lives, to depend on Him to inspire us in all that goes to make up life, and then to absolutely give up everything so that He may rule and work in us. It is resting in the full assurance that He does, each moment, work in us what we are to be. He Himself enables us to maintain that perfect surrender, in which He is free to do all His will.

Let all who do indeed long to walk like Christ find courage in the thought of what He is and will prove Himself to be if they trust Him. He is the true Vine; no vine ever did so fully for its branches what He will do for us. We have only to consent to be branches. Honor Him by a joyful trust that He is, beyond all conception, the true Vine, holding you by His almighty strength, supplying you from His infinite fullness. As your faith thus looks to Him, instead of sighing and failure, the voice of praise will be heard repeating the language of faith: Thanks be to God! He who abides in Him walks even as He walked. Thanks be to God! I abide in Him, and I walk as He walked. Yes, thanks be to God! In the blessed life of God's redeemed, these two are inseparably one: abiding in Christ and walking like Christ.

Blessed Savior, You know how often I have said, "Lord, I do abide in You!" Yet I sometimes feel that the full joy and power of a life in You is lacking. Your Word this day has reminded me of what the reason for my failure might be. I sought to abide in You more for my own comfort and growth than for Your glory. I did not fully understand how the hidden union with You had as its objective perfect conformity to You. I didn't realize how only he who wholly yields himself to serve and obey the Father as completely as You did can fully receive all that the heavenly love can do for him. I now see something of it: the entire surrender to live and work like You must precede the full experience of the wondrous power of Your life.

Lord, I thank You for the discovery. With my whole heart I accept Your calling, and I yield myself in everything to walk even as You walked. To be Your faithful follower in all that You were and did on earth is the one desire of my heart.

Blessed Lord, he who truly yields himself to walk as You walked will receive grace to wholly abide in You. O my Lord, here I am. To walk like Christ! To this I do indeed consecrate myself to You. To abide in Christ! For this I trust in You with full assurance of faith. Perfect in me Your own work.

And let the Holy Spirit help me, O my Lord, each time I meditate on what it is to walk like You, to hold fast to this blessed truth: As one who abides in Christ, I have the strength to walk like Christ. Amen.