

1

All You Who Have Come to Him

Come unto me.
—Matthew 11:28

Abide in me.
—John 15:4

It is to you who have heard and hearkened to the call, "*Come unto me*," that this new invitation comes, "*Abide in me*." The message comes from the same loving Savior. You doubtless have never regretted having come at His call. You experienced that His Word was truth; He fulfilled all His promises; He made you partakers of the blessings and the joy of His love. Was not His welcome most hearty, His pardon full and free, His love most sweet and precious? More than once, at your first coming to Him, you had reason to say, "*The half was not told me*" (1 Kings 10:7).

And yet you have had to complain of disappointment. As time went on, your expectations were not realized. The blessings you once enjoyed were lost; the love and joy of your first meeting with your Savior, instead of deepening, have become faint and feeble. And often you have wondered what the reason could be, that with such a Savior, so mighty and so loving, your experience of salvation could not have been a fuller one.

The answer is very simple. You wandered from Him. The blessings He bestows are all connected with His command, "*Come unto me,*" and are only to be enjoyed in close fellowship with Him. You either did not fully understand or did not rightly remember that the call meant, "*Come to Me to stay with Me.*" And yet this was indeed His object and purpose when He first called you to Himself. It was not to refresh you for a few short hours after your conversion with the joy of His love and deliverance and then to send you forth to wander in sadness and sin.

He had destined you to something better than a short-lived blessedness, to be enjoyed only in times of special earnestness and prayer and then to pass away as you returned to those duties in which the far greater part of life has to be spent. He had prepared for you an abiding dwelling with Himself, where your whole life and every moment of it might be spent, where the work of your daily life might be done, and where you might be enjoying unbroken communion with Him. This is what He meant when

to that first word, "*Come unto me,*" He added this, "*Abide in me.*" As earnest and faithful, as loving and tender as the compassion that breathed that blessed "*come*" was the grace that added this no less blessed "*abide.*" As mighty as the attraction with which that first word drew you were the bonds with which this second, had you but listened to it, would have kept you. And as great as were the blessings with which that coming was rewarded, so large, yes, and much greater, were the treasures to which that abiding would have given you access.

And observe especially, it was not that He said, "*Come to Me and abide with Me,*" but, "*Abide in me.*" The communion was not only to be unbroken, but most intimate and complete. He opened His arms to press you to His bosom; He opened His heart to welcome you there; He opened up all His divine fullness of life and love and offered to take you up into its fellowship to make you wholly one with Himself. There was a depth of meaning you cannot yet realize in His words: "*Abide in me.*"

And with no less earnestness than He had cried, "*Come unto me,*" did He plead, had you but noticed it, "*Abide in me.*" By every motive that had induced you to come did He beseech you to abide. Was it the fear of sin and its curse that first drew you? The pardon you received on first coming could, with all the blessings flowing from it, only be confirmed and fully enjoyed by abiding in Him. Was it the longing to know and enjoy the infinite love that was calling you? The first coming gave but single

drops to taste; it is only abiding that can really satisfy the thirsty soul with drinks from the rivers of pleasure that are at His right hand. Was it the weary longing to be made free from the bondage of sin, to become pure and holy, and so to find rest, the rest of God for the soul? This too can only be realized as you abide in Him—only abiding in Jesus gives rest in Him. Or, if it was the hope of an inheritance in glory and an everlasting home in the presence of the Infinite One, the true preparation for this, as well as its blessed foretaste in this life, are granted only to those who abide in Him. In very truth, there is nothing that moved you to come that does not plead with thousand-fold greater force: "Abide in Him." You did well to come; you do better to abide. Who would, after seeking the King's palace, be content to stand in the door, when he is invited in to dwell in the King's presence and share with Him in all the glory of His royal life? Oh, let us enter in and abide and fully enjoy all the rich supply His wondrous love has prepared for us!

And yet I fear that there are many who have indeed come to Jesus and who yet have to confess mournfully that they know but little of this blessed abiding in Him. With some, the reason is that they never fully understood that this was the meaning of the Savior's call. With others, though they heard the word, they did not know that such a life of abiding fellowship was possible and, indeed, within their reach. Others will say that though they did

believe that such a life was possible and did seek after it, they have never yet succeeded in discovering the secret of its attainment. And others, again, alas, will confess that it is their own unfaithfulness that has kept them from the enjoyment of the blessing. When the Savior would have kept them, they were not found ready to stay; they were not prepared to give up everything and always, only, wholly to abide in Jesus.

To all such I come now in the name of Jesus, their Redeemer and mine, with the blessed message: "Abide in me." In His name, I invite them to come and, for a season, meditate with me daily on its meaning, its lessons, its claims, and its promises. In connection with this message, I know that it suggests many difficult questions to the young believer. There is especially the question, with its various aspects, as to the possibility, in the midst of wearying work and continual distraction, of keeping up, or rather being kept in, the abiding communion. I do not undertake to remove all difficulties; Jesus Christ Himself alone must do this by His Holy Spirit. But what I would gladly, by the grace of God, be permitted to do is to repeat day by day the Master's blessed command, "Abide in me," until it enters the heart and finds a place there, no more to be forgotten or neglected. I desire that, in the light of Holy Scripture, we would meditate on its meaning until the understanding—that gate to the heart—opens to apprehend something of what it offers and expects. So we will discover the means

of its attainment and learn to know what keeps us from it and what can help us to it; so we will feel its claims and be compelled to acknowledge that there can be no true allegiance to our King without simply and heartily accepting this one of His commands as well. So we will gaze on its blessedness until desire is inflamed and the will, with all its energies, is roused to claim and possess the unspeakable blessing.

Come, my fellow believers, and let us day by day set ourselves at His feet and meditate on this word of His, with an eye fixed on Him alone. Let us set ourselves in quiet trust before Him, waiting to hear His holy voice—the still small voice that is mightier than the storm that rends the rocks—breathing its quickening spirit within us, as He speaks, “*Abide in me.*” The soul that truly hears Jesus Himself speak the word receives with the word the power to accept and to hold the blessing He offers.

And may it please You, blessed Savior, indeed, to speak to us; let each of us hear Your blessed voice. May the feeling of our deep need and the faith of Your wondrous love, combined with the sight of the wonderfully blessed life You are waiting to bestow upon us, constrain us to listen and to obey, as often as You speak, “*Abide in me.*” Day by day, let the answer from our heart be “Savior, I do abide in You.”

2

And You Shall Find Rest to Your Souls



Come unto me...and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls.

—Matthew 11:28-29

Rest for the soul: such was the first promise with which the Savior sought to win the heavy-laden sinner. Though it appears simple, the promise is indeed as large and comprehensive as can be found. Rest for the soul—does it not imply deliverance from every fear, the supply of every need, the fulfillment of every desire? And now nothing less than this is the prize with which the Savior woos back the wandering one—who is mourning that the rest has not been as abiding or as full as he had hoped—to come back and abide in Him. Nothing but this was the reason that the rest has either not been found or, if found, has been

disturbed or lost again: you did not abide with, you did not abide in, Him.

Have you ever noticed how, in the original invitation of the Savior to come to Him, the promise of rest was repeated twice, with such a variation in the conditions as might have suggested that abiding rest could only be found in abiding nearness. First, the Savior said, "*Come unto me...and I will give you rest*"; the very moment you come and believe, I will give you rest—the rest of pardon and acceptance—the rest in My love. But we know that all that God bestows needs time to become fully our own; it must be held fast and appropriated and assimilated into our inmost being; without this, not even Christ's giving can make it our very own in full experience and enjoyment. And so the Savior repeats His promise, in words that clearly speak not so much of the initial rest with which He welcomes the weary one who comes, but of the deeper and personally appropriated rest of the soul that abides with Him. He now not only said, "*Come unto me,*" but also, "*Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me*": become My scholars, yield yourselves to My training, submit in all things to My will, let your whole life be one with Mine—in other words, "*abide in me.*" And then He adds, not only, "*I will give,*" but also, "*ye shall find rest unto your souls.*" The rest He gave at coming will become something you have really found and made your very own—the deeper, abiding rest that comes from longer acquaintance and closer fellowship, from entire surrender and

deeper sympathy. "*Take my yoke...and learn of me,*" "*Abide in me*" (John 15:4)—this is the path to abiding rest.

Do not these words of the Savior reveal what you have perhaps often sought in vain to know, how it is that the rest you at times enjoy is so often lost? It must have been this: you had not understood how entire surrender to Jesus is the secret of perfect rest. Giving up one's whole life to Him, for Him alone to rule and order; taking up His yoke and submitting to be led and taught, to learn from Him; abiding in Him, to be and do only what He wills—these are the conditions of discipleship, without which there can be no thought of maintaining the rest that was bestowed on first coming to Christ. The rest is in Christ and not something He gives apart from Himself, and so it is only in having Him that the rest can really be kept and enjoyed.

It is because so many young believers fail to lay hold of this truth that the rest so speedily passes away. Some really did not know; they were never taught how Jesus claims the undivided allegiance of the whole heart and life, how there is not a spot in our entire lives over which He does not wish to reign, how in the very least things His disciples must only seek to please Him. They did not know how entire the consecration was that Jesus claimed. With others, who had some idea of the holy life a Christian ought to lead, the mistake was a different one: they could not believe such a life to be a

possible attainment. Taking, bearing, and never for a moment laying aside the yoke of Jesus appeared to them to require such a strain of effort and such an amount of goodness as to be altogether beyond their reach. The very idea of always, all the day, abiding in Jesus, was too high—something they might attain to after a life of holiness and growth, but certainly not what a feeble beginner was to start with.

They did not know how, when Jesus said, "*My yoke is easy*" (Matt. 11:30), He spoke the truth; how the yoke gives rest, because the moment the soul yields itself to obey, the Lord Himself gives the strength and joy to do it. They did not notice how, when He said, "*Learn of me,*" He added, "*I am meek and lowly in heart,*" to assure them that His gentleness would meet their every need and bear them as a mother bears her feeble child. Oh, they did not know that when He said, "*Abide in me*" (John 15:4), He only asked the surrender to Himself; His almighty love would hold them fast and keep and bless them. And so, as some had erred from the lack of full consecration, so these failed because they didn't fully trust. These two, consecration and faith, are the essential elements of the Christian life—the giving up all to Jesus, the receiving all from Jesus. They are implied in each other; they are united in the one word: surrender. A full surrender is to obey as well as to trust, to trust as well as to obey.

With such misunderstanding at the outset, it is no wonder that the disciple life was not one of

the joy or strength that had been hoped. In some things, you were led into sin without knowing it because you had not learned how wholly Jesus wanted to rule you and how you could not keep right for a moment unless you had Him very near you. In other things, you knew what sin was but did not have the power to conquer because you did not know or believe how entirely Jesus would take charge of you to keep and to help you. Either way, it was not long before the bright joy of your first love was lost, and your path, instead of being like the path of the just, shining more and more unto the perfect day, became like Israel's wandering in the desert—ever on the way, never very far, yet always coming short of the promised rest. Weary soul, like the panting deer, driven to and fro for so many years, come and learn this day the lesson that there is a spot where safety and victory, where peace and rest, are always sure, and that spot is always open to you: the heart of Jesus.

But, alas, I hear someone say, it is this abiding in Jesus, always bearing His yoke, learning of Him, that is so difficult, and the very effort to attain to this often disturbs the rest even more than sin or the world. What a mistake to speak thus, and yet how often the words are heard! Does it weary the traveler to rest in the house or on the bed where he seeks repose from his fatigue? Or is it a labor to a little child to rest in his mother's arms? Is it not the house that keeps the traveler within its shelter? Do not the arms of the mother sustain and keep the

little one? And so it is with Jesus. The soul has but to yield itself to Him, to be still and rest in the confidence that His love has undertaken—and that His faithfulness will perform—the work of keeping it safe in the shelter of His arms. Oh, it is because the blessing is so great that our little hearts cannot rise to comprehend it. It is as if we cannot believe that Christ, the Almighty One, will indeed teach and keep us all the day. And yet this is just what He has promised, for without this He cannot really give us rest. It is as our hearts take in this truth that, when He said, *“Abide in me,” “Learn of me,”* He really meant it, and that it is His own work to keep us abiding when we yield ourselves to Him, that we will venture to cast ourselves into the arms of His love and abandon ourselves to His blessed keeping. It is not the yoke, but resistance to the yoke, that causes the difficulty; the wholehearted surrender to Jesus, as both our Master and our Keeper, finds and secures the rest.

Come, my friend, and let us this very day commence to accept the word of Jesus in all simplicity. This is a distinct command: *“Take my yoke...and learn of me”*; *“Abide in me.”* A command has to be obeyed. The obedient scholar asks no questions about possibilities or results; he accepts every order in the confidence that his teacher has provided for all that is needed. The power and the perseverance to abide in the rest and the blessing in abiding—it belongs to the Savior to see to this. It is mine to obey; it is His to provide. Let us this

day, in immediate obedience, accept the command and answer boldly, *“Savior, I abide in You. At Your bidding I take Your yoke. I undertake the duty without delay; I abide in You.”* Let each consciousness of failure only give new urgency to the command and teach us to listen more earnestly than ever until the Spirit again allows us to hear the voice of Jesus saying, with a love and authority that inspire both hope and obedience, *“Child, abide in Me.”* That word, coming from Him, will be an end of all doubting—a divine promise of what will surely be granted. And with ever increasing simplicity, its meaning will be interpreted. Abiding in Jesus is nothing but the giving up of oneself to be ruled and taught and led, and so resting in the arms of Everlasting Love.

Blessed rest, the fruit and the foretaste and the fellowship of God’s own rest, found by those who come to Jesus to abide in Him! It is the peace of God, the great calm of the eternal world, that passes all understanding and that keeps the heart and mind (Phil. 4:7). With this grace secured, we have strength for every duty, courage for every struggle, a blessing in every cross, and the joy of life eternal in death itself.

O my Savior, if my heart would ever doubt or fear again, as if the blessing were too great to expect or too high to attain, let me hear Your voice to quicken my faith and obedience: *“Abide in me”*; *“Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me...ye shall find rest unto your souls.”*

3

Trusting Him to Keep You



*Not as though I had already attained, either
were already perfect: but I follow after, if that
I may apprehend that for which also I am
apprehended of Christ Jesus.*

—Philippians 3:12

More than one Christian admits that it is a sacred duty and a blessed privilege to abide in Christ, but they shrink back continually before the question: Is a life of unbroken fellowship with the Savior 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 a divine appointment, are so fully occupied with the affairs of this life, it can scarcely be expected. The more they 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, little do they know that the abiding in Christ is meant only for the weak and is so beautifully suited to their feebleness. It does not demand the doing of some great thing or that we first lead a 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, 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, that is so sadly lacking among Christians. They scarcely take the time or the trouble to realize that when He said, "*Abide in me*" (John 15:4), He offered Himself, the Keeper of Israel who neither slumbers 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 the Christians' 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 spoke, "*Come*" (Matt. 11:28), so it is Jesus who keeps you when He said, "*Abide*" (John 15:4). The grace to come and the grace to abide alike are from Him alone. That word *come*, heard, meditated on, accepted, was the cord of love that drew you near; that word *abide* is likewise the band with which He holds you fast and binds you to Himself. Let the soul but take time to listen to the voice of Jesus. "*In me*," He said, "is your place—in My almighty arms. It is I who love you so, who speaks '*Abide in me*'; surely you can trust Me." The voice of Jesus entering and dwelling in the soul must call for the response: "Yes, Savior. In You, I can, I will abide."

"*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 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 when you hear of abiding in Jesus is one of bright and joyous hope: it is for me; I know I will achieve it. You are not under the law, with its inexorable *do*, but under grace, with its blessed *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 but 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 we work most effectively because we know that He works in us. It is as we see in those words *in me* the mighty energies of love reaching out after us to have us and to hold us that all the strength of our will is called 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.*" It was because he knew that the mighty and 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. The faith, the experience, the full assurance, "Christ has apprehended me," gave him the courage and the strength to press on and apprehend that for which he was apprehended. Each new insight of the great end for which Christ had apprehended and was holding him stirred him afresh to aim at nothing less.

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 has taken 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, as he leaps upward. The leap would be too high and dangerous for the child alone; but the father's hand is his trust, and he leaps to attain 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, O weak and trembling believer! First, fix your eyes on that 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. Union with Himself, and so with the Father, is His highest object. Fix your eyes on this, and gaze until it stands out before you clear and unmistakable: Christ's aim is to have me abiding in Him.

And then let the second thought enter your heart: unto 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. Fix your eyes on Christ. Gaze on the love that beams in those eyes and that asks whether you cannot trust Him, who sought and found and brought you near, now to keep you. Gaze on that arm of power, and say whether you have reason to be

assured that He is indeed able to keep you abiding in Him.

And as you think of the spot where He points—the blessed place for which He apprehended you—and keep your gaze fixed on Him, holding you and waiting to lift you up, could you not this very day take the upward step and rise to enter upon this blessed life of abiding in Christ? Yes, begin at once, and say, “O my Jesus, if You bid me, and if You engage to lift and keep me there, I will venture. Trembling, but trusting, I will say, ‘Jesus, I do abide in You.’”

My beloved fellow believer, go, 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. Oh, 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 Himself will work it in you. You can trust Him to keep you trusting and abiding.

And if doubts ever rise again, or the bitter experience of failure tempt you to despair, just remember where Paul found His strength: “*I am apprehended of Christ Jesus.*” In that assurance you have a fountain of strength. From that you can look up to that for 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, day by day, afresh to say, “*I follow after, if that I may apprehend that for which also I am apprehended of Christ Jesus.*” It is because Jesus has taken hold of me, and because Jesus keeps me, that I dare to say: Savior, I abide in You.”