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The Upward Look

As You Come to Him by Faith

"As ye have received Christ Jesus
the Lord, so walk ye in Him;
rooted and built up in Him;
and established in the faith, abound-
ing therein."—Col. iii. 6, 7.

In these words the apostle teaches
us the way to the heavenly kingdom, and it
is only by faith that we first come to
Christ and are united to Him, but that
it is by faith that we are to be rooted
and established in our union with
Christ. Not less essential than for
the commencement, is faith for the
progress of the spiritual life. Abiding
in Jesus can only be by faith.

Those are earnest Christians who
do not understand this; or, if they
admit it in theory, they fail to realize
its application in practice. They are
very zealous for a free gospel, with
our first acceptance of Christ, and
justification by faith alone. But after
on this they think everything depends on
our diligence and faithfulness. While
they firmly grasp the truth, "The sin-
ner shall be justified by faith," they
have hardly found a place in their
scheme for the larger truth, "The just
shall live by faith." They have never
understood what a perfect Saviour
Jesus is, and how He will each day
do for the sinner just as much as He
did the first day when he came to Him.
They know not that the life of grace
is always and only a life of faith, and
that in the relationship of Jesus the
one daily and unceasingly to the
disciple is to believe, because believing
is the one channel through which
Divine grace and strength flow out
into the heart of man. The old nature
of the believer remains evil and sinful
to the last; it is only as he daily
comes, all empty and helpless, to the
Saviour to receive of His life and
strength, that he can bring forth the
fruits of righteousness to the glory of
God. Therefore it is: "As ye have re-
ceived Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk
ye in Him; rooted in Him, and estab-
lished in the faith, abounding therein." As
you come to Jesus, so abide in Him,
by faith.

And if you would know how faith
is to be exercised in thus abiding in
Jesus, to be rooted more deeply and
firmly in Him, you have only to look
back to the time when first you re-
ceived Him. You remember well the
obstacles at that time there appeared
to be in the way of your believing.
There was first your vileness and
guilt; it appeared impossible that the
promise of pardon and love could be
for such a sinner. Then there was
the sense of weakness and death; you
felt not the power for the surrender
and the trust to which you were called.
And then there was the future; you
dared not undertake to be a disciple
of Jesus while you felt so sure that
you could not remain faithful and
would speedily again be unfaithful and
fall. These difficulties were like
mountains in your way. And how
were they removed? Simply by the
word of God. That word, as it were,
compelled you to believe that, not-
withstanding guilt in the past, and
weakness in the present, and unfaith-
fulness in the future, the promise was
sure that Jesus would accept and save
you. On that word you ventured to
come, and were not deceived: you
found that Jesus did indeed accept
and save.

Apply this, your experience in com-
ing to Jesus, to the abiding in Him.
Now, as then, the temptations to keep
you from believing are many. When
you think of your sins since you be-
came a disciple, your heart is cast
down with shame, and it looks as if
it were too much to expect that Jesus
should indeed receive you into perfect
intimacy and the full enjoyment of His
holiness in times past. When you think how
utterly, in times past, you have failed
in keeping the most sacred vows, the

consciousness of present weakness
makes you tremble at the very idea of
answering the Saviour's command
with the promise, "Lord, from hence-
forth I will abide in Thee." And when
you set before yourself the life of love
and joy of holiness and fruitfulness,
which in the future are to flow from
abiding in Him, it is as if it only
serves to make you still more hope-
less; you, at least, can never attain
to it. You know yourself too well.
It is no use expecting it, only to be
disappointed; a life fully and wholly
abiding in Jesus is not for you.

Oh that you would come and begin
simply to listen to His word, and to
ask only the one question: Does He
really mean that I should abide in
Him? The answer His word gives is
so simple and so sure: By His
almighty grace you now are in Him;
that same almighty grace will indeed
enable you to abide in Him. By faith
you became partakers of the initial
grace; by the same faith you can
enjoy the continuous grace of abid-
ing in Him.

And if you ask what exactly it is
that you now have to believe that you
may abide in Him, the answer is not
difficult. Believe first of all what He
says: "I am the Vine." The safety
and the fruitfulness of the branch de-
pend upon the strength of the vine.
Think not so much of yourself as of
the branch, nor of the abiding as of
duty, until thou hast first had thy
soul filled with the faith of what Christ
as the Vine is. He really will be to
thee all that a vine can be—holding
thee fast, nourishing thee, and making
Himself every moment responsible for
thy growth and thy fruit. It is the
thing else, that is more than any-
thing else, that will keep thee abiding
in Him. A soul filled with large
thoughts of the Vine will be a strong
branch, and will abide confidently in
Him. Be much occupied with Jesus,
and believe much in Him, as the True
Vine.

And then, when Faith can well say,
"I am the Vine," let it further say,
"I am His branch," and then it can
speak to those who say to them: "You
are Christ's disciples, and on them I can-
not too earnestly press the importance
of exercising their faith in saying, 'I
am in Him.' It makes the abiding
so simple. If I realize clearly as I
meditate: Now I am in Him, I see at
once that there is nothing wanting but
just my consent to be what He has
made me, to remain where He has
placed me. I am in Christ: This
simple thought, carefully, prayerfully,
belongingly uttered, removes all diffi-
culty as if there were some great at-
tainment to be reached.

It is astonishing how such a faith
will work out all that is further im-
plied in abiding in Christ. There is in
the Christian life great need of watch-
fulness and of prayer, of self-denial
and of striving, of obedience and of
diligence. But "all things are possi-
ble to him that believeth." This is
the victory that overcometh, even our
faith." It is the faith that continually
closes its eyes to the weakness of the
creature, and finds its joy in the suffi-
ciency of an Almighty Saviour, that
makes the soul strong and glad. It
gives itself up to be by the Holy
Spirit into an even deeper apprecia-
tion of that wonderful Saviour whom
God hath given us,—the Infinite Im-
mortal.

Some men see little, feel little, en-
joy little; and only bewail the poverty
that is under the sun. Life is
dim sickly imagery is wiped out the
better. But deploring the hollowness
of the world and the monotony of
of our days is only a declaration that
the delusions of our own spirit has
prevented us laying hold on the Infinite
richness of nature and life. Men of
purer, deeper nature, are simply be-
witched and bewildered by the endless
wealth of the world.

Nothing is easier than to dazzle the
multitude with wild thoughts that
seem new, because they are bold.



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