

SAVED IN HOPE

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“For we are saved by hope, but hope that is seen is not hope: for what a man sees, why does he yet hope for? But if we hope for what we see not, then do we with patience wait for it.”
Romans 8:24, 25.

ACCORDING to our version “we are saved by hope,” but that is scarcely in accordance with other parts of Holy Scripture. Everywhere in the Word of God we are told that we are saved by *faith*. See the first verse of the fifth chapter—“Therefore being justified by *faith*.” Faith is the saving Grace—not hope—unless only as hope is, under some aspects, tantamount to faith. Faith is the saving Grace and the original should be rendered thus. One wonders that it is not so in the Revised Version—“We were saved in hope.” It would prevent misapprehension if the passage were so rendered, for as that eminent critic, Bengel, well says, “the words do not describe the means, but the *manner* of salvation: we are so saved that there may even yet remain something for which we may hope, both of salvation and glory.”

Believers receive the salvation of their souls as the end of their faith and it is of *faith* that it might be of Grace. They are saved *by* faith and *in* hope. At this present moment Believers are saved and, in a certain sense, completely saved. They are entirely saved from the guilt of sin. The Lord Jesus took their sin and bore it in His body on the tree. He offered an acceptable Atonement, by which the iniquity of all His people is once and forever put away. By faith we are at once saved from the defilement of evil and have free access to God our Father. By faith we are saved from the reigning power of sin in our members. As says the Scripture, “Sin shall not have dominion over you, for you are not under the Law, but under Grace.”

The crown is removed from the head of sin and the arm of its strength is broken in the heart of every Christian by the power of *faith*. Sin strives to get the mastery, but it cannot win the day, for he that is born of God does not commit sin with delight, or as his daily habit, but he keeps himself so that the Evil One touches him not. As to the *penalty* of sin, that has been borne by our great Substitute and by faith we have accepted His sacrifice. “He that believes in Him is not condemned.” We rejoice, therefore, at this moment, in salvation already obtained and enjoyed by faith which is in Christ Jesus. Yet we are conscious that there is something more than this to be had. There is salvation in a larger sense, which as yet we see not, for at the present moment we find ourselves in this tabernacle, groaning because we are burdened.

All around us the creation is evidently in travail—there are signs of birth-pangs in a certain unrest, upheaval and anguish of the creation. Things are not as God originally made them. Thorns are in earth's furrows; a blight has fallen on her flowers; a mildew on her grain. The heavens weep and saturate our harvests; earth moves and shakes our cities. Frequent calamities and disasters are portents of a great future which shall be born of this travailing present. Nowhere on earth can a perfect paradise be found. Our best things are expectant of something better. The whole creation groans and travails in pain with us. Even we that have received the first fruits of the Spirit and so are blessed and saved, nevertheless, groan within ourselves, waiting for a further *something*, a Glory not seen as yet.

We have not yet attained, but are pressing on. Our first soul-thirst as sinners has been quenched, but there are within us still greater desires by which we hunger and thirst after righteousness with longings insatiable. Before we ate of the Bread of Heaven we hungered for mere husks—but now our newborn nature has brought us a new appetite which the whole world could not satisfy! What is the cause of this hungering? We are under no difficulty whatever in answering the question. Our grief, longings and unsatisfied desires are principally gathered up in two things. First, we long to be totally free from sin in every form. The evil which is in the world is our burden—we are vexed with the evil conversation of the ungodly and are grieved by their temptations and persecutions.

The fact that the world lies in the Wicked One and that men reject Christ and perish in unbelief is a source of much affliction to our hearts. We have said with David, “Woe is me, that I sojourn in Mesech, that I dwell in the tents of Ke-

dar!” We wish for a lodge in a wilderness far off from the haunts of men, that we might in peace commune with God and hear no more of blasphemy, murmuring, lewdness and crime. This is not our rest, for it is polluted, and so far we look for a great deliverance when we shall be taken out of this world to dwell in perfect company. Yet even the presence of the ungodly were a small matter if we could be completely delivered from sin within *ourselves*. That is among the things not seen as yet.

If a man were free from all tendency to sin, he would no longer be liable to temptation, or under necessity to watch against it. That which cannot possibly be burned or blackened has no need to dread the fire. We feel that we must shun temptation because we are conscious that there is material within us which may soon take fire. “The Prince of this world comes,” said our Lord, “and has nothing in Me.” But when he comes to *us* he finds not only something, but much congenial to his purpose. Our heart all too readily echoes to the voice of Satan! When he sows the tares, the furrows of the old nature soon produce a harvest. Evil does remain, even in the regenerate, and it infects all the powers of the mind. Oh that we could get rid of the memory of sin! What a torment it is to us to remember snatches of loose songs and words of ill savor.

Oh, that we were rid of the *imagination* of sin! Do we mourn enough over sins of thought and fancy? A man may sin, and sin horribly, in thought and yet may not have sinned in act. Many a man has committed fornication, adultery, theft and even murder in his imagination by finding pleasure in the thought thereof and yet he may never have fallen into any of the overt acts. Oh that our imagination and all our inward parts were purged of the corrupt matter which is in them and which ferments towards foulness! There is in us that which makes us cry out from day to day, “O wretched man that I am; who shall deliver me?”

If any man here says, “I feel no such emotions,” I pray God that he may soon do so! Those know very little of true spiritual perfection who are content with themselves. A perfect child *grows* and so does a perfect child of God. The nearer we come to perfect cleanness of heart, the more shall we mourn over the tiniest spot of sin—and the more shall we see that to be sin which once we excused. He who is most like Christ is most conscious of imperfection and most weary that the least iniquity should hang about him. When a man says, “I have reached the goal,” I fear he has not *begun* to run. As for me, I endure many growing pains and feel far less pleased with myself than I used to be. I have a firm hope of something better, but were it not for hope, I should account myself truly unhappy to be so conscious of need and so racked with desires. This is one great source of our groaning. We are saved, but we are not completely delivered from tendencies to sin, neither have we reached the fullness of holiness. “There is yet very much land to be possessed.”

Another cause of this winter of our discontent is our body. Paul calls it a “vile body” and so, indeed, it is when compared with what it shall be when fashioned in the image of Christ Jesus. It is not vile in itself, viewed as the creature of God, for it is fearfully and wonderfully made. There is something very noble about the body of a man, made to walk erect and to look upward and gaze toward Heaven. A body so marvelously prepared to be the tenement of the mind and to obey the soul’s behests is not to be despised. A body which can be the Temple of the Holy Spirit is no mean structure, therefore let us not despise it! It is a thing for which to be eternally grateful, that we have been made men if we have been also made *new men* in Christ Jesus.

The body came under the power of death through the Fall and it remains so. And, remaining so, its lot is to die, sooner or later, unless the Lord should suddenly appear—and even then it must be changed—for flesh and blood, as they are, cannot inherit the kingdom of God. And so, poor Body, you are not well matched with the newborn soul since you have not been born again. You are a somewhat dull and dreary dwelling for a Heaven-born spirit! What with aches and pains, weariness and infirmity, your need of sleep and food and clothing, your liability to cold, heat, accident, decay—as well as to excessive labor and exhausting toil—you are a sorry servant of the sanctified soul! You drag down and hamper a spirit which otherwise might soar aloft!

How often does poor health repress the noble flame of high resolve and holy aspiration! How often do pain and weakness freeze the genial current of the soul! When shall we be emancipated from the shackles of this natural body and put on the wedding dress of the spiritual body? What with the sin dwelling in our breast and this vesture of mortal clay, we are glad that now is our salvation nearer than when we believed—and we long to enter into the full enjoyment of it! Here my text gives us good cheer. From the sources of our present groaning there is a full deliverance, a salvation so wide

that it covers the whole area of our needs, yes, of our desires! A salvation awaits us whose sweep is eternity and immensity. All our capacious powers can wish are compassed within it and of this the text says, “We are saved in hope.”

That most grand, most wide salvation we have seized by hope. Glory be to God for this! This, then, is the subject of our present meditation—the hope which embraces the salvation for which we long.

I. Let us begin by recapitulating under the first head, THE OBJECT OF THIS HOPE. I have already gone over the principal points. Our hope, first of all, embraces our own absolute perfection. We have set our faces towards holiness and, by God’s Grace, we will never rest till we attain it. Every sin that is in us is doomed, not only to be conquered, but to be slain. The Grace of God does not help us to *conceal* our infirmities, but to destroy them. We deal with sin as Joshua did with the five kings when they went into the cave at Makkedah. While he was busy in the battle, he said, “Roll great stones upon the mouth of the cave.”

Our sins, for a while, are shut up by restraining Grace, as in a cave, and great stones are rolled at the cave’s mouth, for they would escape, if they could, and once more snatch at the reins. But in the power of the Holy Spirit, we mean to deal with them more effectually by-and-by. “Bring out those five kings unto me,” said Joshua, and he smote them, and slew them, and hanged them.” By God’s Grace we will never be satisfied till all our natural inclinations to sin shall be utterly destroyed, loathed and abhorred. We expect a day when there will not remain in us a taint of past sin, or an inclination for future sin! We shall still be possessed of will and freedom of choice, but we shall choose only good. Saints in Heaven are not passive beings, driven along the path of obedience by a power which they cannot resist, but as intelligent agents they freely elect to be holiness unto the Lord.

We shall enjoy forever the glorious liberty of the children of God which lies in the constant voluntary choice of that which should be chosen and a consequent unbroken happiness. Ignorance also shall be gone, for we shall all be taught of the Lord and we shall know, even as we are known. Perfect in service and clean delivered from all self-will and carnal desire, we shall be near our God and like He is. As Watts has it—

*“Sin, my worst enemy before,
Shall vex my eyes and ears no more!
My inward foes shall all be slain,
Nor Satan break my peace again.”*

What a Heaven this will be! I think if I could be sure of getting free from every liability to sin, I would not have a choice as to where I should live, whether on earth or in Heaven, at the bottom of the sea with Jonah, or in the low dungeon with Jeremiah. Purity is peace—holiness is happiness! He who is holy as God is holy will, in consequence, be happy as God is happy! This is one main object of our hope.

The other object of our desire is the redemption of the body. Let us read the verses in which Paul teaches us that Truth of God—“And if Christ is in you, the body is dead because of sin; but the spirit is life because of righteousness. But if the Spirit of Him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwells in you, He that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies by His Spirit that dwells in you.” When we die we shall leave our body behind us for a while—we shall not, therefore, as to our entire manhood, be perfect in Heaven till the Resurrection—we shall be morally perfect, but as a complete man is made up of body as well as soul, we shall not be *physically* perfect while one part of our person shall remain in the tomb.

When the Resurrection trumpet shall sound, this body will rise, but it will rise redeemed! And as our soul regenerated is very different from our soul under the bondage of sin, so the body, when it is risen, will be widely different from the body as it now is. The infirmities caused by sickness and age will be unknown among the glorified, for they are as the angels of God. None shall enter into Glory halt or maimed, or decrepit or malformed. You will have no blind eyes there, my Sister! No deaf ears there, my Brother! There shall be no quivering of paralysis or wasting of consumption. There we shall possess everlasting youth! The body which is sown in weakness shall be raised in power and shall at once fly upon the errands of its Lord!

Paul says, “It is sown a natural (or soulish) body,” fit for the soul. “It is raised a spiritual body,” fit for the spirit, the highest nature of man! I suppose we shall inhabit such a body as cherubs wear when they fly upon the wings of the wind, or such as may be fit for a seraph when, like a flame of fire, he flashes at Jehovah’s bidding. Whatever it is, poor frame of mine, you shall be very much changed from what you are now! You are the shriveled bulb which shall be put into the earth—but you shall arise a glorious flower—a golden cup to hold the sunlight of Jehovah’s face! The greatness

of your glory you know not as yet, except that you shall be fashioned like the glorious body of the Lord Jesus! This is the second object of our hope—a glorified body to consort with our purified spirit.

Viewed in another light, the object of our hope is this—that we shall enter upon our inheritance. Paul says, “If children, then heirs; heirs of God; joint heirs with Christ.” Whether we have little or much in *this* life, our estate is nothing when compared with that which we have, in the future, secured to us against the day when we shall come of age! The fullness of God is the heritage of the saints—all that can make a man blessed, noble and complete is laid up in store for us. Measure, if you can, the inheritance of the Christ, who is heir of all things! What must be the portion of the well-beloved Son of the Highest? Whatever that may be, it is ours, for we are joint heirs with Christ! We shall be with Him and behold His Glory! We shall wear His image; we shall sit upon His Throne.

I cannot tell you more, for my words are poverty-stricken. I wish we all meditated upon what the Scripture reveals upon this subject till we knew all that can be known. Our hope looks for many things, yes for *all* things. Rivers of pleasure, of pleasures forevermore, are flowing for us at God’s right hand! Paul speaks of, “the glory which shall be revealed in us,” and tells us in another place that it is, “a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory.” What a word is that—Glory! Glory is to be ours! Even ours, poor sinners as we are! Grace is sweet, but what must glory be? And it is to be revealed in us, and about us, and over us, and through us to all eternity! Paul also speaks of, “the glorious liberty of the children of God.” O charming word, liberty!

We love it even as we hear it rung from the silver bugles of those who fight with tyrants. But what will it be when the trumpets of Heaven shall proclaim eternal jubilee to every spiritual bond slave! Liberty? The liberty of the children of God! Liberty to enter into the holiest, to dwell in God’s Presence and behold His face forever and ever! The Apostle speaks, also, of, “the manifestation of the sons of God.” Here we are hidden away in Christ as gems in a case, but by-and-by we are to be revealed as jewels in a crown! As Christ had His time of manifestation to the Gentiles after He had, for a while, been hidden, so we who are now unknown are to have a manifestation before men and angels! “Then shall the righteous shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father.”

What our manifestation shall be, O my Brothers and Sisters, I cannot tell you. Eye has not seen it, nor ear heard it, neither has it entered into the heart of man. And though God has revealed it unto us by His Spirit, yet how small a part of that revelation have our spirits been able to receive! I suppose that only he who has seen the home of the perfect can tell us what it is like and I conceive that even he could not do so, for language could not set it forth. When Paul was in Paradise he heard words, but he does not tell us what they were, for he says they were not lawful for a man to utter—they were too Divine for mortal tongue! Not yet, not yet, but by-and-by the object of our hopes shall be clear to us.

Do not think the less of it because we say, by-and-by, for the interval of time is a trifling matter. It will soon be gone. What are a few months or years? What if a few hundred years should intervene before the Resurrection? They will soon have swept by us like the wing of a bird and then! Oh, then! The invisible shall be seen! The unutterable shall be heard! The eternal shall be ours forever and ever! This is our hope!

II. Let us now muse upon THE NATURE OF THIS HOPE. We are saved in hope. What kind of hope is it in which we are saved? First, our hope consists of three things—belief, desire, expectancy. Our hope of being clean delivered from sin as to our soul and rescued from all infirmity as to our body arises out of a solemn assurance that it shall be so. The revelation of Him who has brought life and immortality to light bears witness to us that we, also, shall obtain glory and immortality. We shall be raised in the image of Christ and shall partake in His Glory! This is our belief because Christ is risen and glorified and we are one with Him. This, also, we desire, O how ardently! We so desire it that we, at times, wish to die that we may enter into it!

At all times, but especially when we get a glimpse of Christ, our soul pines to be with Him. This desire is accompanied with a confident expectation. We as much *expect* to see the Glory of Christ, and to share it, as we expect to see tomorrow morning! No—perhaps we shall not see tomorrow’s sun—but we shall certainly see the King in His beauty in the land that is very far off! We believe it, we desire it and we expect it! That is the nature of our hope. It is not an indefinite, hazy, groundless wish that things may turn out all right, such as those have who say, “I hope it will go well with me,” though they live carelessly and seek not after God. But it is a hope made up of right knowledge, firm belief, spiritual desire and warranted expectancy.

This hope is grounded upon the Word of God. God has promised us this and, therefore, we believe it, desire it and expect it. He has said, “He that believes and is baptized shall be saved,” and the widest sense that we can give to that word, “saved,” must be *God’s* sense of it since His thoughts are always above our thoughts. We expect God to do as He has said to the fullest extent of His promise, for He will never run back from His Word, nor fail in His engagement. We have committed our souls to the keeping of the Savior who has declared that He will save His people from their sins. We are trusting in our Redeemer and our belief is that our Redeemer lives! And that when He shall stand, in the last day upon the earth, though after our skin, worms destroy this body, yet in our *flesh* we shall see God!

Many and precious are the Words of God to the same effect and we lay hold upon them, being certain that what He has promised He is able, also, to perform. We will die, never doubting that we will rise again, even as we have already committed to the dust many of our beloved ones in sure and certain hope of *their* resurrection to eternal life. As the farmer drops his grain into the ground and does not doubt to see it rise again, so do we bury the bodies of the saints and so shall we resign our own bodies in the certain expectation that they shall as surely live again as they have lived at all! This is a hope worth having, for it is grounded on the Word of God, the faithfulness of God and His power to carry out His own promise and, therefore, it is a hope most sure and steadfast which makes no man ashamed who has it.

This hope is worked in us by the Spirit of God. We should never have known this hope if the Holy Spirit had not kindled it in our bosoms. Ungodly men have no such hope and never will have. It is only when men are renewed that this hope enters into them, the Holy Spirit dwelling in them. And herein do I exult with unspeakable joy, for if my hope of perfection and immortality has been worked in me by *God*, then it must be fulfilled, for the Lord never could inspire a hope which should put His people to shame! The true God never gave men a false hope. That cannot be! The God of hope who has taught you, my Brothers and Sisters, to expect salvation from sin and all its effects, will do unto you according to the expectation which He has, Himself, excited! Therefore be very confident and patiently wait the joyful day of the Lord’s appearing.

This hope operates in us in a holy manner, as every gracious and holy thing that comes from God must do. It purifies us. As John says, “He that has this hope in him purifies himself, even as God is pure.” We are so certain of this inheritance that we prepare for it by putting off all things contrary to it and putting *on* all things which suit it. We endeavor to live as in the prospect of Glory! How often has it occurred to me and I doubt not to you, my Brothers and Sisters, to say of such-and-such a thing, “How will this look in the Day of Judgment?” And we have done this act of generosity or that act of consecration, not because we cared a whit what men would think of it, but because we looked at it in the light of the coming Glory. To us the most grand stimulus is that there is laid up for us a crown of life that fades not away.

This blessed hope makes us feel that it is a shame for us to sin, a shame that princes of the blood imperial of the skies should dabble in the mire like children of the gutter! We would gladly live as those who are destined to dwell in the blaze of the ineffable Light of God. We cannot walk in darkness, for we are to dwell in a splendor before which the sun grows pale—in the very Godhead, itself, are we to baptize ourselves in fellowship! Shall we, therefore, be the slaves of Satan, or the serfs of sin? God forbid! This blessed hope draws us towards God and lifts us out of the pit of sin!

III. Having described the object and the nature of this blessed hope, I come more closely to the text to observe THE ANTICIPATORY POWER OF THIS HOPE, for the Apostle says in our text, “We were saved in hope”—that is to say we got the greater salvation, about which we are now speaking, when we were taught to *know* this hope. We obtained the first part of salvation, the forgiveness of sin and justification of our persons, by faith. And we have fellowship with God and access into countless blessings by faith—some of us are as conscious of this as that we eat and drink. But, beside all this, we have, in *hope*, the fuller range of salvation—total deliverance of the soul from sin and complete redemption of the body from pain and death. We have this salvation in hope and we rejoice in hope of the Glory of God.

How is this? Why, first, Hope saw it all secured by the promise of Grace. As soon as ever we believed in Christ our faith secured forgiveness and we cried, “I am not yet free from tendencies to sin, but inasmuch as I have believed in Christ unto salvation I shall surely be perfected, for Christ could not have come to give me a partial and imperfect salvation—He will perfect that which concerns me.” Thus Hope saw within the promise of salvation much that as yet was not actually experienced. Knowing that the whole of the promise is of equal certainty, Hope expected the future mercy as surely as Faith enjoyed the present blessing!

Moreover, Hope saw the full harvest in the first fruits. When sin was subdued by Grace, Hope expected to see it utterly exterminated. When the Holy Spirit came to dwell in the body, Hope concluded that the body would be delivered as surely as the soul. The moment that Faith introduced Hope into the heart she sang, "I have the complete salvation not in actual enjoyment, but in sure future in Christ Jesus." Hope waved the first sheaf and so took possession of the harvest. Ask any farmer who holds up a little handful of ripe wheat ears whether he has ripe wheat and he tells you that it is even so. "But you have not reaped it yet." "No, not yet, but it is mine and in due season I shall reap it—these full ears are a full assurance of the existence of the wheat and of the fact that it is ripening."

So when God gave to you and me love to Jesus and deliverance from the dominion of evil, these first fruits betokened a perfect salvation yet to be revealed in us. Our first joy was the tuning of our harps for everlasting song. Our first peace was the morning light of a never-ending day. When first we saw Christ and worshipped Him, our adoration was the first bowing before the Throne of God and of the Lamb. So that in hope we were saved—it brought us the principle of perfection, the pledge of immortality, the commencement of glorification.

Moreover, Hope is so sure about this coming favor that she reckons it as obtained already. You get advice from a merchant with whom you have traded beyond the seas. He says, "I have procured the goods you have ordered and will send them by the next vessel which will probably arrive at such a time." Another trader calls in and asks you whether you wish to buy such goods and you reply, "No, I have them." Have you spoken the truth? Certainly, for though you have them not in your *warehouse*, they are invoiced to you—you know they are on the way and you are so accustomed to trust your foreign correspondent that you regard the goods as yours. The deed is done that makes them yours. So it is with Heaven, with perfection, with immortality—the deed is done which makes these the heritage of saints.

I have advice from One whom I cannot doubt, even my Lord, that He has gone to Heaven to prepare a place for me and that He will come again and receive me to Himself! So sure is Hope of this fact, that she reckons it and makes comparisons and draws practical conclusions. A good old proverb tells us, "Never count your chickens before they are hatched," but here is a case in which you may count as accurately while the bird is in the egg as when it is fledged, for the Apostle says, "I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us."

He is so sure of it that he keeps a debtor and creditor account about it! He puts down the sufferings of this present time in his *expenditures* and the glory which shall be revealed among his *assets*—and he declares that the one is so vast and the other so utterly insignificant as not to be worth notice! No, he is not only so sure as to count upon it, but to groan after it! We that are in this body groan for the full adoption! Our groans do not arise from doubt, but from eagerness—we are urged, by our confident expectancy, to vehemence of desire! It is idle to cry for that which you will never have. The child is foolish which cries for the moon. But to groan for what I am sure to have is proper and fit—and shows the strength of my faith.

The Apostle is so sure of it that he even triumphs in it. He says that we are more than conquerors through Him that loved us—that is to say, although we are not yet perfect and although our body is not delivered from pain, yet we are so sure of perfection and complete deliverance that we joyfully endure all things, triumphing over every difficulty! Friend, you will not be poor many weeks longer—you shall dwell where the streets are paved with gold! Your head will not ache many months longer, for it shall be surrounded with a coronet of glory and of bliss! Never mind shame—they will not be able to laugh at you long—you shall be at the right hand of God, even the Father! And the Glory of Christ shall clothe you, world without end! Oh, it is an infinite blessing to have such a hope and to be so sure of it as to anticipate its joys before they actually come to us! "We are saved in hope."

IV. Let us for a moment observe THE PROPER SPHERE OF HOPE. The sphere of hope is "things not seen." Hope that is seen is not hope, for what a man sees, why does he yet hope for it? Therefore, Brothers and Sisters, a Christian's real possession is not what he sees. Suppose God prospers him in this world and he has riches? Let him be grateful, but let him confess that these are not his treasure. One hour with the Lord Jesus Christ will bring more satisfaction to the Believer than the largest measure of wealth!

Although he may have been prospered in this world, the saint will ridicule the idea of making the world his portion. A thousand worlds with all the joy which they could yield are as nothing compared with our appointed inheritance! Our

hope does not deal with trifles—it leaves the mice of the barn to the owls and soars on eagle wings where nobler joys await her—

*“Beyond, beyond this lower sky,
Up where eternal ages roll;
Where solid pleasures never die,
And fruits immortal feast the soul.”*

But it is clear that we do not, at present, enjoy these glorious things for which we hope. The worldling cries, “Where is your hope?” And we confess that we do not *see* the objects of our hope. For instance, we could not claim to be already perfect and neither do we expect to be so while we are in this body. But we believe that we shall be perfected in the image of Christ at the time appointed of the Father.

By no means is our body free from infirmity at this moment—aches and pains and weariness remind us that the body is under death because of sin. Yet our firm conviction is that we shall bear the image of the heavenly even as we now bear the image of the earthly. These are subjects of hope and, therefore, outside of present experience. Let us not be cast down because it is so. We must have something reserved for hope to feed on. We cannot have all of Heaven and yet remain on earth. Dearly Beloved, if you feel tormented by indwelling sin and your holiness seems battered and blotted, yet be fully persuaded that He who has promised is able to perform! Away, then, with judging by what you do, or see, or feel, or are! Rise into the sphere of the things which *shall* be. Can you do that?

When there is no joy in the present, there is an infinite joy in the future. Do not say, “Oh, but it is a long way off.” It is not so! Many among you are 60, 70, or even 80 years of age—your time for the sight of Christ in your disembodied state cannot be far away, for the thread of life is snapping. Some of us are in middle age, but as we have already reached the average of life, we are bound to reckon that our lease is far advanced—and as so many are snatched away in their prime, we may at any moment be caught up to the land for which we hope! We ought not to fret about what we shall do 10 years from now, for it is very likely that we shall, by that time, have entered into the promised rest and shall be serving the Lord day and night in His Temple and beholding His face with unspeakable joy!

Even suppose that any of us should be doomed to exile from Heaven for another 50 years, the time of our sojourn will soon fly away. Let us labor to our utmost for the Glory of God while we are here, for the moments flash away. Do you not remember this time last year when autumn’s ripeness was all around? It seems but the other day! You boys and girls think it a long year, but the old folks are of another opinion. We have no long years, now that we are growing gray! For me, time travels so fast that its axles are hot with speed! Fear cries—“Oh, for a little breathing space!” But Hope answers—“No, let the years fly! We shall be Home the sooner!” There is but a step between us and Heaven—do not let us worry ourselves about things below. We are like people in an express train who see a disagreeable sight in the fields, but it is gone before they have time to think of it!

If there should be some discomfort in the carriage. If they have been put into a third-class compartment when they had a first-class ticket, they do not trouble if it is a short journey. “See,” says one, “we have just passed the last station and shall be in the terminal directly, so never mind.” Let us project ourselves into the future. We shall not need much dynamite of imagination to send us upward—we can leap that little distance by hope and seat ourselves among the thrones above! Resolve, my Brothers and Sisters, that, at least for today you will not tarry in this cloudy, earth-bound time, but will mount unto the bright, cloudless eternity! O to leave these turbid streams and bathe in the river of Hope, whose crystal floods flow from the pure fountain of Divine joy!

V. Our time has fled and we must close by merely glancing at THE EFFECT OF THIS HOPE which is thus described—“Then do we with patience wait for it.” We wait and must wait, but not as criminals for execution! Our tarrying is rather that of the bride for the wedding. We wait with patience, constancy, desire and submission. The joy is sure to come—we have no doubt about it—therefore we do not complain and murmur, as though God had missed His appointment and put us to needless delay. No, the time which God has settled is the best and we are content with it. We would neither desire to tarry here nor to depart at any time but the Lord’s.

Dear Rowland Hill is said to have searched out an aged friend who was dying, that he might send a message up to Heaven to John Berridge and other beloved Johns who had gone before him. He playfully added a word of hope that the Master had not forgotten old Rowland and would let him come home in due time. Yet he never dreamed that he could be passed over. Among the last expressions of the famous John Donne was this—“I were miserable if I might not die.” This

would be a horrible world, indeed, if we were doomed to live in it forever! I saw a gentleman sometime ago who told me that he would never die, but should, at certain intervals, cast off the effects of age and start on a new term of life. He kindly came to tell me how I might enjoy the same favor, but as I am not ambitious of earthly immortality, such an offer did not tempt me.

He told me I could renew my youth and become young, again, for the space of hundreds of years, but I refused his offer and declined the gift at any price. I have no desire for anything of the sort! My most comfortable prospect about this life is that it will melt away into *eternal* life! It seems to me that the most joyous thing about the most joyous life is that it leads upward to another and a better state. I am not unhappy or discontented, but since I have a good hope of perfection for my soul and body and a sure prospect of face-to-face fellowship with *God*, how can I speak well of anything which divides me from my joy? Yes, it will come, surely come—therefore let us patiently wait for it.

When Satan would buffet us; when temptation would overcome us; when affliction would wear us down; when doubts would torment us, let us bear the temporary trial with constancy, for we shall soon be out of range of gunshot. The consummation shall come and must come—and when it comes we shall remember no more our travail for joy that our Heaven is born to us and we to it!

Now, then, you that do not believe in God, tell us what your hope is. Publish it in the world and let all men estimate it. What is your hope? To live long? Yes, and what then? To bring up a family? Yes, and what then? To see them comfortably settled in life? Yes, and what then? To be a grandfather to a numerous progeny? Yes, and what then? To reach extreme old age in peaceful retirement? Yes, and what then? The curtain falls! Let me lift it. The *cemetery*. The Throne of God. Sentence on your soul! The trumpet of Resurrection. Final doom. Body and soul in Hell forever! You have no better prospect! Pray look out of the window and see what is to be seen. The Lord have mercy upon you and give you a better hope!

As for you believers in Christ, I charge you, begin to sing, today, the sonnets of the hereafter! Charm your pilgrim life with the minstrelsy of hope!

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