

The Hope That Is In You

Description



THE HOPE THAT IS IN YOU

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Text.—“But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts; and be ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you, with meekness and fear.” 1 Peter 3:15

Hope is a desire with expectation. It is defined by Webster, “a desire of good, accompanied with at least a slight expectation of obtaining it, or a belief that it is obtainable.” Hope, relative to worldly possessions, and to the things of this life, is often frustrated, and cut off with sad disappointments. In this way many hope against hope and are made ashamed. Hope, as entertained by the wicked who persist in wickedness and sin, is said to be “no hope;” for they are “without God in the world.” They have *no ground* for hope; can give no reason for their hope in regard to having life and immortality in the world to come. “The expectation of the wicked shall perish.” Proverbs 10:28; 11:7; Job 8:13; 11:20. Oh, solemn thought! awful doom! to be extinguished—forever cut off from the society of the holy and the pure, and from God, in whose presence is fullness of joy; at whose right hand are pleasures forevermore. God pity the sinner!

But it is not so with the hope brought to view in the text before us. “But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts.” We should give God, who is our creator, our preserver, and kind benefactor, a very large place in our hearts; hold him as supreme in our affections; acknowledge and honor his holy majesty, and reverence his character and laws; and thus love the Lord our God, with all the heart, the soul, the strength, and the mind. With this ground for it to rest upon, “hope maketh not ashamed; because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts, by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us.” Rom. 5:5. Thus we see that this hope is founded on the Rock of Ages; and the Scriptures plainly teach that we should hope in God, in Christ, in God’s promises, in the mercy of God, etc. By the resurrection of Christ from the dead, we have been begotten unto a lively hope, to an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away. And “the promises of God in him are yea, and in him, Amen, unto the glory of God by us.” This hope “we have as an anchor of the soul, both sure and steadfast, and which entereth into that within the vail.” Heb. 6:19. It brings to our view, by blessed anticipation, the glorious appearing of Christ, and the resurrection of the sleeping saints, when, with the living saints, they will put on immortality, receive their crowns of rejoicing, and finally be ushered into everlasting habitations in God’s glorious kingdom. Then

“Hope shall change to glad fruition.

Faith to sight, and prayer to praise!”

Oh, blessed hope! it takes hold of the joys of the world to come; it buoys the drooping spirits up, and cheers the lonely pilgrim on the heavenly journey.

“And be ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you, with meekness and fear.” When we are asked to give a reason of our hope, we should always be ready to give an answer, both relative to the doctrinal part of the subject, and to the practical.

In showing what is the Christian’s hope, we should present valid reasons, based on scriptural arguments and evidences. The necessity of this is seen especially in these last days, when many will not endure sound doctrine; but after their own lusts heap to themselves teachers having itching ears; and turn away their ears from the truth, and are turned unto fables. 2 Tim. 4:4. We should manifest as much earnestness and assurance now, while seeking to get at the truth on this interesting subject, as did Job, when, reasoning about his hope, he exclaimed, “Oh, that *my words were now written!* oh, that they were printed in a book! . . . for *I know* that my Redeemer liveth,”

etc.

Many are the hopes cherished by different classes, even among the religious sects of the day. But every hope, to be well grounded, must be based on the promises of God. A “thus saith the Lord” is necessary on this point, as well as on other points of truth. Now there can be many false hopes: but there can be but one true, gospel hope. Paul says, “There is one body, and one spirit, even as ye are called in *one* hope of your calling.” Eph. 4:4. Though it may have many branches, or there may be several things to be accomplished in order to the bringing in of the object for which we are hoping, it is called, “one hope.”

Again, Paul says in Col. 1:23, “And be not moved away from the hope of the gospel, which ye have heard, and which was preached to every creature which is under heaven.” This gospel hope is the same that has been preached to God’s people, and cherished by the patriarchs, prophets and apostles, under both dispensations, ever since the fall in the garden of Eden. In a general view it includes, 1. The fulfillment of the promise, that the seed of the woman shall bruise the serpent’s head, referring to Christ, who hath abolished death, and hath brought life and immortality to light through the gospel; who, in taking on him the seed of Abraham, was made, for a time, a little lower than the angels, that he should taste death for every man, and that through death he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the Devil. Gen. 3:15; 2 Tim. 1:10; and Heb. 2:9, 14. It includes, 2. The fulfillment of the promise of God made to Abraham, and to his seed, which is Christ. “And,” says Paul, “if ye be Christ’s then are ye Abraham’s seed, and heirs according to the promise.” This promise was confirmed with an oath, and has reference to the purchased inheritance—the city which hath foundations, which Abraham looked for, and the better country which he and others sought after, the New Jerusalem and the new earth, which will be the final and eternal abode of the immortal saints. Heb. 6:13-15; 11; Gal. 3:7, 9, 16, 29; Rev. 21; 2 Peter 3:13; 1 Peter 1:3-5.

Without having a disposition to dwell to any great length upon the false hopes cherished by many, I will here notice some of the popular sentiments which are received by the mass of professors of Christianity. In doing this I shall call the attention of the friends to instructions that I with others received at a French Baptist Educational Institute, in Canada, several years ago. While taking Bible lessons, we were taught by Prof. Roux,

1. That God is an infinite and eternal Spirit, without person, body, shape, or parts; is everywhere and nowhere present; or, is everywhere as a Spirit, and nowhere as a tangible being. I ask, Is not this making God almost a mere nothing?
2. That Jesus Christ is God himself; the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, are one identical being; hence in describing one, we describe the other. Certainly this is doing no better by the Son than by the Father.
3. That man enters upon his reward at death. Then the immortal soul, which is the man proper, drops the mortal body, and goes directly to Heaven, or, if unjust, to hell. The just are then like the angels in Heaven.
4. That the angels and the saved in Heaven, before and after the resurrection, are spirits, having no person, form, nor parts; their nature is such that nothing can obstruct their way: they can with ease pass through the most dense, and the solidest wall in existence, and are so constituted that *“des milliards”*

—millions of them (of the angels and the saved) can be placed on the point of the sharpest needle. Truly they must be very *delicate*! It is wonderful how such beings (?) can exist! Let us add to this the testimony of Luther Lee. He describes the immortal soul as follows:

“It is a simple, spiritual essence; immortal, immaterial, intangible, indissoluble; having no exterior or interior surface; cannot be extended; it is analagous to God; cannot come in contact with matter, and does not occupy space; and we might add, *does not weigh anything*.” Could any one do any better in trying to define nothing than to give it this description?

5. That Heaven is a spirit world, inhabited by spiritual beings; hence is not a tangible place: yet is filled with bliss and joy unspeakable, etc. To this add the words of the poet:

“Beyond the bounds of time and space,
Reach forward to that heavenly place—
The saints’ secure abode.”

Is this not spiritualizing away God, Christ, angels, saints, and Heaven? burning them down to nothing, as it were, by the fire of Spiritualism? Yet this constitutes the Christian’s hope as taught by popular orthodoxy. Heaven save us, and open our eyes, that we may see the truth.

Now many of the texts already quoted and alluded to, show that these views are not in accordance with the teachings of the sacred word; though, as we have seen, many professed ministers of the gospel preach them as truths. However, let us briefly examine these points in the light of Scriptures. We are clearly shown.

1. That God is a material, organized intelligence, possessing both body and parts. In Gen. 1:26, 27, we read: “And God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness.” “So God created man in his image, in the image of God created he him.” If this text proves the immortality of man, as some claim, it proves also by the same mode of reasoning which is used to do this, that man is omnipotent, omniscient, and omnipresent. This cannot be done; therefore “image” here must mean physical form, and this scripture proves that God has a form.

In Ex. 33:20-23, we read that the Lord said to Moses, "Behold, there is a place by me, and thou shalt stand upon a rock: and it shall come to pass, while my glory passeth by, that I will put thee in a cleft of the rock, and will cover thee with my hand while I pass by; and I will take away mine hand, and thou shalt see my back parts; but my face shall not be seen." Thus Moses was permitted to see some "parts" of God's person. Though he could not see God's face, yet "the Lord spake unto Moses face to face, as a man speaketh unto his friend," verse 11, or, "mouth to mouth, even apparently." Num. 12:5-8. In the Bible God is represented as having eyes, ears, arms, hands, feet, etc. He wrote his law with his own finger on two tables of stone. God is a Spirit, or spiritual, as he also is said to be love, and the hope of his people. The Bible certainly represents God as located in Heaven; "For he hath looked down from the height of his sanctuary: from Heaven did the Lord behold the earth." Ps. 102:19. Christ taught his disciples to pray, "our Father which art in Heaven," etc. Matt. 6:9. God is represented to be everywhere: (1.) by virtue of his omniscience, and, (2.) by virtue of his Spirit, which is his representative, and is manifested wherever he pleases. Ps. 139:1-10. But personally God is in Heaven.

2. That Jesus Christ is the Son of God. He is not his own son, nor his own father; did not proceed from himself, pray to himself on the mountain, in the garden, and on the cross when he exclaimed, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" "Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do;" and did not sit down on the right hand of himself when he was received up into Heaven. But Jesus Christ is a material intelligence, possessing body and parts, with immortal flesh and immortal bones (See Luke 24:34-43); and is a distinct being from God the Father. He is like his Father, "being the brightness of his glory, and the express image of his *person*." Heb. 1:3. He came from, and prayed to, his Father; when he was baptized of John in Jordan, he heard a voice which came from his Father in Heaven, saying, "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased;" and "when he had by himself purged our sins," he "sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high." "He was received up into Heaven, and sat on the right hand of God." Mark 16:19. He and his Father are one in the same sense that his followers should be one. Said Christ, while praying for his apostles, "Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on me through their word; that *they all may be one; as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee*, that they also may be one in us; that the world may believe that thou hast sent me. And the glory which thou gavest me I have given them; that they may be one, even as we are one." John 17:20-22.

3. That man will enter upon his reward, the righteous, at Christ's second coming and the resurrection of the just, and the wicked, at the resurrection of the unjust. The just shall inherit eternal life in the kingdom of God; but the unjust will be punished with the second death. Luke 14:14; John 5:28, 29; 14:1-3; Rev. 20:5, 6.

Those who follow the channel of popular sentiment, hope, if they are Christians, to go to Heaven at death. We have seen that it is the duty of all to give a reason of their hope. Readers of the Bible are not to resort to inferences, but to a promise of God. Now, I ask, where is the promise in the Bible that a Christian shall go to Heaven at death? Such a promise cannot be found in the Bible; neither are we there instructed that man is in possession of an immortal soul, an inherent entity in the body, which goes to Heaven, or to hell, when he dies. God only hath immortality; and immortality is held up before us as an object for which we are to seek, and all who do so will obtain it at the resurrection of the just. 1 Tim. 6:16; Rom. 2:7, and 1 Cor. 15:51-54.

Man, formed of the dust of the ground, whose breath is in his nostrils, is said to be mortal. Gen. 2:7; 3:19; Job. 4:17. In death he exercises no power of mind, "His breath goeth forth, he returneth to his earth; in that very day his thoughts perish." Ps. 146:4. "For the living know that they shall die; but the dead know not anything. . . . also their love, and their hatred, and their envy, is now perished." Eccl. 9:5, 6.

Job says, "If a man die, shall he live again? All the days of my appointed time will I wait, till my change come. Thou shalt call and I will answer thee," etc. Chap. 14:14, 15. Where will you wait, Job? "If I wait, the grave is mine house. I have made my bed in the darkness. I have said to corruption, Thou art my father. . . . And where is now my hope? as for my hope, who shall see it?" Chap. 17:13-15. Now comes the answer to his question in regard to his hope: "Oh, that my words were now written! . . . for I know that my Redeemer liveth, and that he shall stand at the latter day upon the earth; and though after my skin worms destroy this body, yet in my flesh shall I see God; whom I shall see for myself, and mine eyes shall behold, and not another; though my reins be consumed within me." Chap. 19:23-27; Isa. 26:19. Oh, blessed hope! David says, "As for me, I shall behold thy face in righteousness; I shall be satisfied, when I awake with thy likeness." Ps. 17:15. In Acts 2:34, we see that Peter, on the day of Pentecost, says, "For David is not ascended into the Heavens." David, though he had been dead for several centuries, had not yet entered upon his reward, or gone up to Heaven.

Christ met the Sadducees with the following forcible argument to prove that there will be a resurrection, which also proves that Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, had not gone to Heaven, and that they could have life only by being raised from the dead. He said, "And as touching the dead, that they rise; have ye not read in the book of Moses, how in the bush God spake unto him, saying, I am the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob? He is not the God of the dead, but the God of the living; ye, therefore, do greatly err." Mark 12:26, 27. He starts on the ground that the Sadducees hold to, 1. That these patriarchs are dead—"As touching the dead." 2. God says he is their God. 3. Yet he is not the God of the dead, but of the living. Conclusion: Therefore they will be raised to life, and ye do greatly err in saying, "There is no resurrection."

"But when thou makest a feast," says our Saviour, "call the poor, the maimed," etc.; "for they cannot recompense thee; for thou shalt be recompensed [not at death, but] at the resurrection of the just."

Paul clearly represents, in 1 Cor. 15, that if the dead rise not, then Christ is not raised; "then they also which are fallen asleep in Christ are perished." See also 1 Thess. 4:13-18, which shows Paul's hope concerning them which are asleep. Many more passages of Scripture might be

adduced here to substantiate this view of the subject, but we pass on to our next point.

4. That angels in Heaven are literal persons, possessing body and parts, as may be seen from the fact that they have been entertained, and fed, and have been seen by many, Gen. 18:19; Ps. 78:25; and that the saints in the “resurrection are as the angels which are in Heaven.” Mark 12:25. They shall then resemble Christ. “For our conversation is in Heaven, from whence also we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body,” &c. Phil. 3:20, 21. “We shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is.” 1 John 3:2.

Man, in his present fallen condition, is considered a degenerate being; he has become corrupt, deformed, and dwarfed. In this respect we bear the image of the earthy. But in the perfect day, “when this corruptible shall have put on incorruption, and this mortal shall have put on immortality,” we shall bear the image of the heavenly. 1 Cor. 15:47-54.

5. That the righteous shall inherit substance. Prov. 8:20, 21. It is not a Heaven “beyond the bounds of time and space” that they will inherit; for this would be *no* Heaven. God sits on a literal throne in Heaven, and occupies space; angels that excel in strength, and that do his commandments, are there too; and our Saviour, at his ascension, went to his Father’s house, the New Jerusalem, “which *hath foundations*” in Heaven, to prepare mansions for his people; and when he comes, with all the holy angels, to gather the resurrected and living saints from every land, he will take his children unto himself, that where he is there they may be also. John 14:2, 3.

At Christ’s coming the wicked are all destroyed, the earth is desolated, and the saints are caught up in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. 2 Thess. 2:9; Isa. 24; 1 Thess. 4:13-18. From this point a period of one thousand years is measured off before the resurrection of the wicked, which is the period that the saints remain in the city above. Rev. 20:4, 5. While they reign there with Christ they say, “We shall reign on the earth.” Chap. 5, 10. “Nevertheless we,” says Peter, “according to his promise, look for new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness,” (or, wherein will dwell the righteous. *Greek*.) 2 Pet. 3:13. Our Saviour said, “Blessed are the meek; for they shall inherit the earth.” Matt. 5:5; Rom. 4:13.

Abraham received the promise that he should be heir of the world. Those that are Christ’s are Abraham’s seed, as we have seen, and “heirs according to the promise.” Abraham and the ancient worthies who obtained a good report through faith, “died in faith, not having received the promises, but having seen them afar off,” &c. We are clearly instructed that God hath prepared for them a city, and that they desired a better country. Heb. 11.

Now during the thousand years, while the saints are in the city above, Satan is bound, or confined to the earth, which is desolated and without an inhabitant, having no one to tempt or to deceive. When the thousand years are expired, the great city, the holy Jerusalem, comes down, and is located upon the earth, and becomes the camp of the saints. Then Satan is loosed out of his prison; and as the wicked are raised numberless as the sand of the sea, he goes out to deceive the nations in the four quarters of the earth, and gathers them together to battle, to fight against the saints; but as they compass the beloved city, fire comes down from God out of Heaven and devours them. Rev. 20:3-9. This is the time when all the wicked are punished, and are burned up root and branch, when Satan and all his host endure the dreadful sufferings of the second death; the time when the elements shall melt with fervent heat, and become as though they had not

been; the earth also, and when the works that are in the earth shall be burned up. 2 Pet. 3:1, 10. It is then that the Lord makes “all things new;” that the first heaven and the first earth pass away, and a new heaven (atmospheric heaven) and a new earth are created; that the saints with Christ possess the kingdom under the whole heaven; and that God’s people have a full, a complete, fruition of their hope. Oh, yes! Then it is that the dominion, which Adam lost through transgression, and which Satan has controlled in a great measure these many centuries, but which our Redeemer has purchased by his death and resurrection, is completely restored through Jesus Christ, to the people of the saints of the Most High, to be possessed by them throughout the endless ages of eternity. Then there will be no Devil to deceive, no enemy to tempt; nothing shall hurt or destroy in all God’s holy mountain; for the earth shall be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the Lord as the waters cover the sea. Isa. 11:9, Hab. 2:14. Certainly this will be a glorious kingdom! It will have,

1. A King. Our Lord Jesus Christ, the second Adam, will reign as a ruling monarch over every living thing in the kingdom. All things shall be subdued unto him, except God that put all things under the Son, that God may be all in all. 1 Cor. 15:27, 28.

2. Subjects. All the righteous who shall be accounted worthy, at the appearing of Jesus, to receive immortality and eternal life, shall dwell with Christ in the kingdom. “And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain; for the former things are passed away.” Rev. 21:4.

3. A capital, or metropolis. The holy city of God, the New Jerusalem, which is of pure gold, and which has a wall great and high, built on twelve foundations of twelve manner of precious stones, has twelve gates, three on each side, each gate of pearl; streets of pure gold, as it were transparent glass; a pure river of water of life, clear as crystal, proceeding out of the throne of God and of the Lamb; in the midst of the street of it, and on either side of the river, the tree of life, which bears twelve manner of fruits, yielding fruit every month; the throne of God and of the Lamb shall be in it, and his servants shall serve him; there shall be no night in the city, &c., &c.;—this beautiful city, I say, will be the seat of the government, the center of the kingdom. Rev. 21. “Then the moon shall be confounded, and the sun ashamed, when the Lord of hosts shall reign in Mount Zion, and in Jerusalem, and before his ancients gloriously.” Isa. 24:23.

4. A territory. The whole earth made new, surrounded with a pure, clear atmosphere, which will cause the light of the moon to be as the light of the sun, and the light of the sun to be sevenfold, as the light of seven days (Isa. 30:26), will constitute the territory of the kingdom. The saints shall build houses and inhabit them, and they shall plant vineyards, and death the fruit of them; as the days of a tree [the tree of life] shall be the days of God’s elect, and they shall long enjoy the work of their hands; the wolf and the lamb shall feed together, &c. Isa. 65:21-25.

5. Laws, or a rule of government. The royal law of God, the statutes of Heaven, will constitute the rule of God’s government in the new earth, in Eden restored. Then the Sabbath of the fourth commandment will be observed as it was in Eden before the fall. All *flesh shall* come and worship before the Lord at the holy city every Sabbath, and every month. Isa. 66:20-24. Once a month they shall pluck the delicious fruit of life’s fair tree, and *eat* freely, &c.

Thus we have a clear and beautiful delineation of truth on the subject of hope brought to view in God’s sacred word, not based on inferences and false premises, after the opinion and

understanding of erring and finite men; but founded upon stern facts, and the immutable declarations of God's revealed will to man, according to reason, judgment, and wisdom, known and possessed by the Father of mercies in whom is no variableness or shadow of turning.

Some say that the texts that are here presented, are figurative, and are not to be taken in a literal sense; that is, that we should not give them a literal meaning. Well, this is one way to evade the point; and we are not disposed to quarrel with any that choose to *figure* on this wise—who hold to immateriality. They are welcome to their god, their life, their Heaven, and their all. It all seems very small and of no consequence to us. We choose all substance, and hold to materiality relative to God, Christ, the redeemed, and the “everlasting inheritance” that the saints will possess to all eternity.

Now the fulfilling signs and fulfilling prophecies clearly denote, as represented in the prophetic word, that we are living in the last days, that the last message of warning to sin-fallen man is being proclaimed, and that our dear Redeemer shall soon appear, to be glorified in his saints, and to be admired in all them that believe. To those who love Christ's appearing, this is truly cheering. It rejoices the weary pilgrim to know that soon, very soon, we shall rest. God help us to be ready to hail him with joy at his coming. “Looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ.” Titus 2:13.

In conclusion, dear friends, let me call your attention again to the text. We are instructed to give a reason of our hope with meekness and fear. This requires us to do more than to theorize on this subject. Our practice has a great deal to do in giving a reason of our hope. It is of *no use* for us to express any hope of obtaining eternal life, *unless we comply with the conditions of life* held out before us in the Scriptures. “And every man that hath this hope purifieth himself, even as he is pure.” “if thou wilt enter into life, keep the commandments.” Only those who do the will of God can consistently cherish any hope of entering into the kingdom of Heaven. Be entreated, then, as you love life, to flee to Jesus, cease to do evil, and learn to do well, and so live as to secure a part in the first resurrection. May God help us to thus show a *full assurance* of our hope. Amen.