

Christian Retirement

Part 62

By [Thomas Reade](#)

1837

ON HOPE

Paul, when writing to the Corinthians, declared, "Some of you have not the knowledge of God; I speak this to your shame." And may not the same reproof be directed to multitudes of professing Christians of our day? The ignorance of many is lamentably great. Light is in the dwellings of the righteous, and the spiritual Goshen is illuminated by the beams of heavenly truth; but what an awful extent of territory still remains enveloped in Egyptian darkness, under the tyranny of Satan and in bondage to sin! With Isaiah we must lament, while casting our eyes over the world, that "darkness covers the earth, and gross darkness the people."

With what fervency, then, should true believers supplicate for the promised out-pouring of the Holy Spirit, who alone can enlighten the understanding, and guide the wretched slave to Jesus Christ for spiritual redemption. Too many, it is to be feared, seek their knowledge from human sources, rather than from the fountain of divine wisdom. The writings of good men may be lawfully used as little rills flowing from the sacred fountain of inspiration; but woe be to that church or people, who substitute them for the blessed spring itself. It is a never-failing mark of a fallen church, when human traditions or human systems are raised above, made equal with, or set in opposition to, the revealed word of God.

The Bible is the grand depository of every truth that is necessary to be known, believed, and practiced, in order to eternal salvation. But even the Holy Bible itself is but a dead letter, without a spiritual discernment of its doctrines, and a spiritual relish for its precepts. "The natural man receives not the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness unto him; neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned." But, says the apostle, "God has revealed them unto us by his Spirit; for the Spirit searches all things, yes, the deep things of God."

How affectionately did Paul pray for the Ephesian converts, that God "would give unto them the Spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of him; that the eyes of their understanding being enlightened, they might know what is the hope

of his calling, and what the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints." Many professing Christians would be at a loss to give a reason of the hope that is in them. They tell us, indeed, that God is merciful; that they trust to Jesus Christ; that they do the best they can, and want to injure no one; and therefore hope that all will end well at the last; though they do not pretend to so much religion as some people, who are perhaps no better than others, notwithstanding their preciseness and apparent sanctity of character.

This is a creed which satisfies the consciences of thousands, while their affections are glued to the world, and the love of Christ is a stranger to their hearts. Such people have no sublime views of the Christian hope. A mist of ignorance rests upon it, which obscures its glory and damps its joy.

Lord, give me, through the teaching of your Spirit, a sweet realizing view of this blessed hope, which bears up your people under all their trials, and enables them to glorify you, even in the fires.

The hope of the believer in Jesus flows from the free, sovereign love of Almighty God; therefore it is called "a good hope through grace;" "good," because it issues from the fountain of goodness; "through grace," because it originates solely in unmerited mercy. This hope rests upon an immovable foundation, even on the divinity and atonement of Jesus Christ, who is called by the Spirit of Truth "our hope;" because all our hope of salvation is treasured up in him, and flows from him. All who possess this hope, have Christ dwelling in their hearts by faith; therefore, says the apostle, "Christ in you, the hope of glory." The Spirit of Christ is the pledge and seal of future glory, and abides in the hearts of all the faithful in Christ Jesus.

But how are we to know when we truly possess this hope of glory? John informs us, "Every man that has this hope in him, purifies himself, even as God is pure." It is therefore a holy principle, sanctifying and cleansing the soul. He who has the hope of dwelling with Christ in glory, cannot delight in the service of Satan, or in the pleasures of sin. They are an offence unto him. To live in sin, while professing to enjoy the hope of glory, forms an indisputable mark of hypocrisy, or self-delusion.

Oh! with what jealous care should real Christians watch against those destructive tenets, which, under the cloak of evangelical doctrines, would break down the barrier of Gospel holiness, and let in the wild boar of the woods, or trample under feet the sacred ground of Zion. "He that says, I know him, and keeps not his commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him."

The believer, who is taught from above, well knows that sin separates between him and his God; and prevents the communication of his gracious beamings on the soul. He, therefore, hates and loathes this infinite evil. He longs for more of his Savior's presence and love; and mourns over every corruption of his nature,

and every contracted defilement, of which his heart is made conscious. Knowing what numberless deviations from the holy law of God his Savior's eye beholds continually in his daily walk and conversation, he lifts up the prayer of David with self-abasement; "Cleanse me from secret faults." He pants after that blessed period, when sin shall no longer rebel against the Spirit dwelling within him; and therefore the "hope of glory" is to him a glorious hope and makes him long to be dissolved, that he may be with Christ.

The Christian's hope is "a living hope." It gives the believer vigor in running the race that is set before him. It animates him in his arduous warfare. It enables him to endure, with patience and fortitude, the rugged path through which he has to travel Zionward.

The Christian's hope is "full of immortality." It traverses the valley of the shadow of death, and opens to his view the boundless prospect of eternal glory. It gathers by delightful anticipation many a precious cluster of the grapes of Eshcol, and thus gives a foretaste of the joys of heaven.

The Christian's hope "makes not ashamed, because the love of God is shed abroad in his heart, by the Holy Spirit who is given unto him." It forms a divine evidence of his union to Christ. He can now say with Paul, "I am not ashamed of the Gospel of Christ, for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believes." He is not ashamed to confess Christ before men, as his only hope of glory. He can declare with humble confidence and heartfelt sincerity, "I know whom I have believed, and am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him against that day."

The Christian's hope is "a helmet of salvation," which covers his head in the day of battle, when the fiery darts of Satan are leveled against him. It is "an anchor of the soul," both sure and steadfast, which preserves the tempest tossed soul from being driven into the ocean of doubts and despondencies, or dashed against the rocks of presumption or despair. Surely, then, it is "a blessed hope." All who possess it are blessed. This made the apostle pray so sweetly for the Roman converts; "Now the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, that you may abound in hope, through the power of the Holy Spirit."

Diligence and privilege are inseparably united by the wisdom of God. Hence Paul thus exhorts the Hebrews; "God is not unjust; he will not forget your work and the love you have shown him as you have helped his people and continue to help them. We want each of you to show this same diligence to the very end, in order to make your hope sure. We do not want you to become lazy, but to imitate those who through faith and patience inherit what has been promised." Hebrews 6:10-12. Examine well, Oh my soul, what is the hope of your calling. You have been and are continually called by the outward preaching of the word; but here is the turning point—have you been drawn to Christ by the inward, effectual call of the Holy Spirit?

To ascertain this important fact, inquire what is the nature of your hope? Is it a good hope? a blessed hope? a hope full of immortality? Have you cast the anchor of hope within the veil? Have you put on the helmet of salvation? Do you find your hope to be a lively hope, animating and invigorating your endeavors after the attainment of everlasting life? Does the hope which you possess purify all your affections? Is Jesus really dwelling in you as the hope of glory? Are you resting on him as the only foundation of hope? And, in the full assurance of this Christian hope, do you enjoy that peace which passes understanding; that joy which is unspeakable and full of glory? If this be your experience, then rejoice and be exceeding glad; for happy, unspeakably happy, will be your lot through the countless ages of eternity.

But Oh! have you not reason to mourn over the little progress which you have made in the divine life, since the bright beams of grace first dawned upon you? "You know, blessed Lord, that I want to love you more than I have ever yet done; yes, I want those unerring marks of real love, which never fail to prove it to be genuine. I want to feel a greater delight in prayer; to pour out my heart before you with more childlike simplicity; to tell you more freely all my needs; to mourn more deeply over all my corruptions; to trust more unreservedly to the blood of Jesus; to dread all approaches to sin, and earnestly to covet the best gifts of faith, hope, and charity; humility of mind; holiness of heart; deadness to the world; and an entire subjection of the soul to you. You can in a moment impart these blessings. Thousands have been partakers of them, without diminishing your fullness. Open the doors of my heart, enlarge it by your grace, and let it be filled with your grace and heavenly benediction."

You will be inquired of by your people; not that you need to be informed, but that they may feel their need of you. Oh that I may approach you at all times sprinkled with the atoning blood, until the angel of death shall bear me to the mansions of glory, where hope shall be swallowed up in the enjoyment of your everlasting love.

Unite, you saints, in cheerful praise,
To heaven your joyful voices raise;
Unite in melody divine,
Until all in heartfelt chorus join.

Let sacred hope your breasts inspire;
While love, that pure celestial fire,
Burns with an undiminished blaze,
Amid the symphonies of praise.

Praise Him, who gave his only Son,
For crimes which rebel worms have done;
Praise Him, who died upon the tree,

Who bled and groaned on Calvary.

Praise Him, who long in patient love
Our stubborn hearts has sought to move;
Praise Father, Son, and Holy Ghost,
You ransomed souls, you heavenly host

O! may our praises never cease,
While journeying towards the realms of peace;
Where saints in lovelier accents raise
A never-ending song of praise!

This article is provided as a ministry of [Third Millennium Ministries](#) (Thirdmill).
If you have a question about this article, please [email](#) our *Theological Editor*.

Subscribe to *Biblical Perspectives Magazine*

BPM subscribers receive an email notification each time a new issue is published. Notifications include the title, author, and description of each article in the issue, as well as links directly to the articles. Like BPM itself, *subscriptions are free*. To subscribe to [BPM](#), please select this [link](#).