

of hope,—for “what a man seeth why doth he yet hope for?”

“Hope shall to full fruition rise,  
And faith be sight above.”

Hope, then, is for this dark, troubled, sinful world. It is like the stars of heaven,—when the sun shines there is no need of the stars, but the stars are blessed comforters and friends during the dark night. Just so, when the full blaze of the glory of heaven will burst upon us, there will be no need of hope,—but hope is a blessed gift of God to cheer us while we are in this dark and sorrowful state. This is the mission of hope. It is a divine friend sent down from heaven to accompany us through this world. In affliction it whispers: “the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory that shall be revealed.” In bereavement, it points us to heaven,

“Where death-divided friends at last  
Shall meet to part no more.”

In short, like a true friend, hope accompanies the christian all through life, comforting and sustaining him, enabling him to do and to suffer nobly, and it leaves him only when he enters heaven, and is safe at home!

We must not forget, however, that mere hoping to get to heaven does not bring us there. There may be a certain kind of hope in the sinner's soul,—but in the end it will be found false and baseless. There may be a hope that will be disappointed,—a hope that will make ashamed, as well as a living, a sure and certain hope. There is nothing more dreadful than for a man to be living in expectation of heaven, while at the same time he is sinking to hell! Still there are thousands who have a kind of hope that they will be saved, who at last, as they knock at the door of heaven and say “Lord, Lord, open unto us,” will hear the awful *mandati*: “Depart, I never knew you.” It is sad when the sailor, who thought that he was steering aright and was safe, hurls his vessel on to the rocks, and all is lost! It is sad when the trader in a distant land dreams of his home and of happy intercourse with those he loves, and awakens to find all a dream! It is sadder still when the man, on whose vitals consumption has laid its ghastly grasp, and on whose cheek it has stamped its awful seal, a hectic feverish flush, still thinks that he is not very ill, and is going to get better! But it is infinitely more saddening for a sinner to spend his life in a kind of dreamy hope of heaven, and to awake at death to the awful reality,—to find his hope disappointed, and his soul forever lost! Yet such is the case with many. They hope that all is right, but death will show that all is wrong!

Not all hope, then, is true christian hope. That hope which will stand the test of the sorest trials here, and which will end in glory hereafter, must follow faith in Jesus Christ, and be followed by an earnest striving to advance in holiness and every christian grace.

“He that hath this hope in him purifieth himself even as He is pure.” Our hope may be well tested by our conduct. The hope of that man who lives in sin and loves it must be false! But our text leads us to test our hope by that which causes it. Let us, then, consider:—

II. The source or cause of true christian hope. “Christ in you, the hope of glory.” If any one wishes to know whether his hope of heaven is a true and a living Hope,—a hope that will never be disappointed, let him seriously and earnestly ask himself the question: “Is Christ in me?”

As we think of the source of the christian's hope, two questions arise: First, what is meant by “Christ being in us?” and second, how does “Christ in us” produce “the hope of glory?”

Taking the first of these, what is meant by “Christ being in us?” It is right to mention that there is another translation of the text—viz.:—“Christ among you.” As, however, “Christ being in man” is quite a common expression in scripture, and as it is undoubtedly true that there can be no true hope till Christ is within us,—it is well to retain the translation before us. The corresponding scriptural expressions are such as these:—“I am crucified with Christ, nevertheless I live, yet not I, but Christ liveth in me.” “That Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith.” “Ye are the temple of the living God.” “Behold I stand at the door and knock: if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me.” In all these cases the meaning is not at all that Christ is literally and personally in christians,—the meaning simply is that their souls are under the influence of Christ,—their thoughts, desires, affections and aims are all Christ-like.

Christ may be said to be in the christian, because he ever *thinks* of Christ and what is Christ like. If we are forever thinking of some friend, it may be said that he is in our thoughts. The mother who by day and by night watches by the bedside of her sick child, and cannot bear to leave it, may be said to have that child continually in her thoughts,—that child lives in her. Just so, if we are thinking continually of Christ, of the glory of His person, of the merit of His blood, of the greatness of His love, and of the perfectness of His example, He may be said to “dwell in us.” Yes, and, whatever good thought passes through our minds is so much of Christ in us. We may not always be thinking of Christ Himself,—but if we are thinking of good, whatever it may be, then really Christ is in us, for there is no goodness apart from Christ.

Further, Christ may be said to be in the christian, when he *desires* and *loves* Christ, and what is Christ-like. When we desire and love what is evil, the devil may be said to have his seat within us,—but if we earnestly desire and love Christ Himself, and what-