

“ Unto the great Twin Brethren
 Let all the people throng,
 With chaplets and with offerings,
 With music and with song,
 And pass, in solemn order,
 Before the sacred dome,
 Where dwell the great Twin Brethren
 Who fought so well for Rome.”

While in substance our memories of Goodness and Mercy are a contrast with those of the old pagan world,—for they were false, but ours are true,—in effect, they afford a noble comparison; and not so exciting to the spirit of chivalry in the breast of a Roman warrior could be the thought of Castor and Pollux, as have often been to the spirit of faith and hope in the breast of the Christian pilgrim the remembrance of Goodness and Mercy.

Hope rests also on *divine promises*. “Although,” as Calvin says, “experience encouraged David to hope, yet his principal stay was the promise which he embraced, and which confirmed divine blessings to the last.” Promises would suffice, even without experience. Were the whole past as dreary as a wet winter’s day, still one word from God might suffice to throw sunshine over the future. How steadily does David, in the 119th Psalm, look to the divine word as a source of comfort! It is not the past which he there dwells upon, but the word. “Let Thy mercies come also unto me, O Lord, even Thy salvation, according to Thy word.” “Remember the word unto Thy servant, upon which Thou hast caused me to hope. This is my comfort in my affliction, for Thy word hath quickened me.” There are times when all comfort is cut off from the believer, save that which comes from the divine promise, when past and present are as black as a stormy night at sea; but at such times the sight of a promise is as the rising of the moon. How much more, then, when promises come in aid of experience, when memory and faith testify together to the love of God, should the joy of hope fill the heart of the believer, and cause him, with an unflinching hand, to steer the helm of his vessel for the port of heaven!

What are the *inspirations* of this hope? It should inspire *praise*. That such consolations as we have noticed should awaken praise, is plain enough. But are we not defective here? We sing—

“ When all Thy mercies, O my God!
 My rising soul surveys,
 Transported with the view, I’m lost
 In wonder, love, and praise.”

But are we transported? Is this subject like an eagle coming down from its nest to fetch and carry our thoughts and our affections up to heaven? Does meditation on the divine goodness and mercy bear us away as on wings? Are we by this view transported, as we have been sometimes by grand and beautiful prospects? Does the spiritual and divine excite more intensely, as it does more purely, than the natural and the sensible, the grand in form and the magnificent in colour? Are we lost in wonder? Does surprise at God’s mercy and goodness to us sinners really drown and swallow up our spirits? Are we lost in love—in grateful emotion—in admiration of the infinite excellence of the Giver of all good? Are we lost in praise—in the devout and joyful celebration of the Lord’s ways, the Lord’s character, the Lord’s glory? Oh, how defective we are in this divine admiration, and in the feeling out of which it springs! What poor harps are the hearts of some of us! How wretchedly out of tune! how rusty the wires! how ill-strung at the best! What imperfect and feeble, and often harsh and discordant, music it is which we send up to heaven! We find fault with one another’s singing at church. What cause has God to find fault with the praise of us all! Miserable as we are sometimes in prayer, we are worse in praise.