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## Hope as a Saving Element in Life.

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I Cor. 13: 13

**M**ANY are the agencies divinely given to lessen the burdens of earth's toiling pilgrims, and aid them in preparation for a higher state of existence, but no one has such saving influence as the element of hope in human life. Admirably has the poet set forth the primacy of hope in the following sublime strain:

With the sweet hope, resides the heavenly light  
That pours remotest rapture on the sight;  
Thine is the charm of life's bewildered way,  
That calls each slumbering passion into play;  
Waked by thy touch, I see the sister band,  
On tip-toe watching, start at thy command.  
And fly where'er thy mandate bids them steer,  
To pleasure's path or glory's bright career.

When the foundations of earth were laid, love was there to impart design and beauty to the wondrous plan; faith, too, was there, who saw through distant ages a glorious future for creation. But it was when sin had snapped the sacred chord which bound the creature to the Creator in that fair paradise, that faith's sister, hope, was born. In the announcement of final redemption through the "Seed of the Woman," "hope's joyous youth began—but not to fade."

Hope painted the course of time from a lost Eden to Calvary, and illumined the night with her bright stars of prophetic portent; and over the quicksands of sin built a highway for the redeemed to march on their shining way through the centuries. The first announcement of the incarnate Son brought with it that gentle spirit—one of the three sent to give victory in life's battle, and lead mankind back to a lost paradise. Faith, Hope and Love represent to us the divine Trinity seeking the redemption of the race, and working in man toward an ideal life. This trinity found expression in the three great Apostles of our Lord. Paul excels as a teacher in faith, whether in doctrinal statement or the practical life. Peter is the preacher of hope, and it breathes through all his utterances; while John is master in the realm of love. If faith is the mightiest, and love the greatest, hope may be regarded as the "last thing in the world."

An inquiry into the nature of hope will reveal the large place it holds in human experience. It has in it the element of expectation united to that of desire—the offspring from the union of faith and love. Faith sees in the distance the promised land of earthly achievement; hope anticipates it and makes it a present possession, for "we live not in what we hear, but in what we remember and what we hope." Faith beholds from exalted pinion the "palace of the King," the home of the soul; hope brings the sweetness of that home into all of earth's pilgrimage.

Anticipation is said to be more than possession, but this is true in the world of the unreal and shadowy, where men only dream of the ideal, but is not true in the realm of the real. To anticipate that which is true and eternal is a solid and ever enriching pleasure. It unites the present with the future, and gives it undying interest; it gives a divine meaning to the common task, and assuages the grief of mortals. Through hope's beaming eye we can see far into the distance. Through her aid we get visions of the future, big with realization and achievement; her hand beckons us to hasten our steps toward rich fields of wisdom and untrod paths of deep and glad experience. She lends us eyes to behold the battlements of the shining city, whose glory lights up the shores of time and illumines the pathway of earth's pilgrims; and thus the blessings of unborn ages heal time's deepest sorrows. And yet, through the clear vision that hope lends, we see as "through a glass darkly;" at best we now "know in part"—the half remaining untold.

In defining its true place in human existence, it may be regarded as the life of the heart. Very suggestive are the two Latin words, *Spero*—I hope, and *spiro*—I breathe, for they are really one in origin. It may not be the breath of the soul, but it is the strength of the heart. He who

ceases to hope, ceases to live—further advancement is impossible. But "reduce a man to a beast's level, and leave him the friendship of hope, and from the lowest depths of degradation he will mount up higher and higher, until he stands with cherubs in wisdom, and excels seraphs in love."

## The Sunday School.

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To begin with this issue to give a brief comment on the Sunday school lessons, in which the most salient points are brought out. They will be found very helpful both to teachers and scholars in getting ready for the class exercises and will not take much time in the study of them. They will be found very suggestive of thoughts which the teacher can make his own and use with good effect. We believe our many readers will appreciate them, whether they are teachers of Sunday schools or not, for the points given in them are helpful to any one interested in the study of Scripture.

AUGUST 10.

Nadab and Abihu.

Leviticus 10: 1-11.

TEMPERANCE LESSON.

GOLDEN TEXT. Let us watch and be sober, I Thess. 5: 6.

It was just a year from the exodus of the Israelites from Egypt. The week of consecration for the tabernacle had just ended, and it was the afternoon of the first day upon which the priests had entered on the regular services of the tabernacle.

THE CRUELIEST SIN OF NADAB AND ABIHU.

Nadab and Abihu were priests of the most High God. We do not know the exact details of their transgression, but we have the statement of the Scriptures that they offered strange fire before the Lord, which he commanded them not. This indicates that their offering was in some way contrary to the divine commandment, a fact which they must have known, and which they doubtless would have obeyed but for the indulgence in strong drink, which the context plainly suggests were their besetting sin.

THEIR AWFUL PUNISHMENT.

Greivous was the sin of these two priests, who were sons of Aaron, and therefore all the more culpable because of their splendid parentage. Awful was the punishment visited upon these two men, who had outraged the divine law. Sin always brings dreadful punishment in its train, but in this case the external features of the divine visitation of wrath were terrible to contemplate. Fire from heaven destroyed Nadab and Abihu, and in their tragic death the people of Israel received an object lesson concerning the awfulness of sin.

A SOLEMN INJUNCTION.

As a divine commentary upon the striking and awful occurrence which had just taken place, we hear the voice of the Lord speaking unto Aaron, and saying, "Do not drink wine nor strong drink, thou, nor thy sons with thee, when ye go into the tabernacle of the congregation, lest ye die: it shall be a statute forever throughout your generations: and that ye may put difference between holy and unholy, and between unclean and clean."

THE NEED FOR TEMPERANCE.

From earliest times the need of temperance has been demonstrated beyond all possibility of dispute. It was shown in the case of Noah; it is shown in our lesson in the case of Nadab and Abihu; it is shown in almost innumerable cases that come within our daily observation. Intemperance is the source of a vast a nount of crime. It leads men to sin against themselves, against their families, against society, against the nation, as in the case of Nadab and Abihu against God himself.

## THE REWARDS OF TOTAL ABSTINENCE.

It is an old and true saying that virtue is its own reward. Abundantly has this saying been verified in the case of total abstinence. No one ever heard of a home wrecked by total abstinence, nor have we ever known of a soul driven to perdition by refraining from indulgence in strong drink. Inestimable indeed are the blessings which flow from total abstinence, which is in itself a virtue tending to enhance and exalt all the other virtues. Perhaps the most blessed reward that comes from the practice of total abstinence is the assurance we have that in abstaining from the use of strong drink ourselves, we may be also helping some brother who is weaker than ourselves to walk in the path of sobriety and happiness.

AUGUST 17.

Journing Toward Canaan.

Numbers 10: 11-13, 29-36

GOLDEN TEXT. For thy name's sake lead me and guide me. Psalm 31: 3.

Since the Israelites had left the Land of Egypt they had received various lessons of trust, of obedience, of worship and of temperance. They had stayed for over a year in the vicinity of Mount Sinai. They were now prepared to go forward on their way toward Canaan. Instead of being a disorganized horde of escaped slaves, they were a well organized nation, with an orderly system of government and divinely appointed order of worship. Humanly speaking, they were well equipped for the arduous journey which faced them.

HEAVENLY GUIDANCE.

There is something at once very striking and very impressive about the method by which the Israelites were led forward on their way. The signal for their going or their staying was given by the movements of the cloud which rested above the ark of the covenant, and which served as the token of the divine presence. The people of Israel needed some visible token of the divine leadership, and the cloud which they could see both by day and by night was a constant reminder to them that God was their guide.

MOSES AND HOBAB.

An interesting episode is given in our lesson in the interview between Moses and Hobab. The latter was one of the Kenites, who were also known as Midianites, and sometimes as Amalekites. Between the Kenites and the Israelites a lasting friendship had already been sealed by a sacrifice offered by Jethro on behalf of the Kenites. Moses now entreats Hobab to throw in his entire lot with the Israelites, using the words which have become so familiar to us, "Come thou with us, and we will do thee good."

What the result of Moses' plea with Hobab was we are not told, but the fact that there are later references to the Kenites as forming a part of the Hebrew nation would seem to indicate that Hobab with his followers did unite with the people of Israel.

OUR JOURNEY TOWARD CANAAN.

In the journey of life, we find as did the Israelites, some things to help and some to hinder us on the way to the Promised Land. Among the hindrances are our own sinful passions. The greatest obstacles to our onward progress in the spiritual life are these with which we meet in our own nature. Pride, selfishness, ambition, intemperance, lust—these are giant mountains which bar the way for us to the Celestial City.

But there are helps as well as hindrances, and if we will but avail ourselves of the helps we shall find that we are more than a match for all the hindrances that we meet. Among these helps are prayer, the study of God's Word, the teaching and example of our blessed Lord and most of all the abiding presence and power of the Holy Spirit. Let us use all the helps which God has provided for us in the journey toward heaven, and let us trust in Christ for that strength and power which shall win for us an abundant entrance into the kingdom above.