

Sin has had the effect of separating us from God, cutting us off from his favor, and rendering us obnoxious to his displeasure. And we would have remained in this state of excision, or banishment, from God's favour, and all intercourse with him, for ever, had not God himself been pleased to come to us by a ministry of reconciliation, and revealed himself as waiting to be gracious, for the sake of his son, whom he manifested to take away sin, to destroy the works of the devil, and exalt man again to the participation of the Divine favour, and ultimately to the enjoyment of the Divine presence. Any one who sees himself to be a sinner, may now see that there is hope for him in God, in the provisions of his grace or mercy, when he might otherwise have despaired of finding mercy, and had no hope before God. A sinner awakened to a sense of sin, naturally has a difficulty in supposing that for him there can be any thing but wrath. His first tendency is to despair. He sees the law of God in all its hostility to him as a transgressor. He sees the nature of sin to be in irreconcilable opposition to God himself, and that God cannot but be angry with the sinner. The first thought is that all hope is cut off, that there can be nothing for the sinner, or for him individually, but wrath, the punishment due to his sins. He feels as if he had no hope, and was not entitled to cherish any; nor, in himself, is he entitled to cherish any hope. He feels that he deserves only the wrath and curse of God to all eternity. If he had his desert, he knows he would endure the divine vengeance; and that is poured out without alleviation in the place of woe. He can, therefore, only expect Hell to be his doom. He looks forward to the blackness and darkness for ever; from which he cannot see it to be possible that he should escape.— But in this state he is bid *hope*. He has God's character presented to him in another aspect than that of anger against sin, vengeance for his broken and insulted law. He has him revealed as forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin, from while he can by no means pardon the guilty. He beholds the mercy of God in Christ: he sees God through his Son: he is let into all the provisions of the gospel. These are unfolded in all their promising and encouraging aspect: there is hope; and that hope has its origin or cause in the character of God himself. It is because God is merciful and gracious while he is holy and just,

that there is hope. The sinner could not otherwise hope. His hope is in God. His hope is not in another. His hope is for salvation; and that hope he can cherish because God is merciful as well as righteous, and because he can be both in perfect consistency, without infringing the one, or in any degree abating the other. God is a just God, and yet a Saviour. His hope is thus well founded; and he can say with the utmost confidence, of God: "My hope is in thee"; and contrasted with every other object of confidence or hope: "Now, Lord, what wait I for? My hope is in thee!"

So the Psalmist could say: His hope was in God. He had seen God in his character of a just God and yet a Saviour. He had beheld him in that very aspect which might inspire hope, and he had been drawn to repose his hope in him. From an early period he had set his trust in God, for we find him in another psalm saying: "Thou art my hope, O Lord God: thou art my trust from my youth." The work of grace had been early begun in his soul, so that from his youth his hope was in God. His hope was in God when he slew the lion and the bear. His hope was in God when he went out to meet the Philistine, who defied the armies of Israel. His hope was in God when he assumed the reins of government. God was his hope in all those difficult and trying emergencies which would have upset any mind which had not its hope in God. And there is this important remark to be borne in mind, that it is when we hope in God for salvation, when we have our hope in his mercy, when we are able to look to him through Christ, that we are able to hope in him for every thing that we need, and in every time of need. And thus the words of the Psalmist are not to be taken in the limited sense, as if the Psalmist trusted in God, for salvation only. God was his confidence at all times, and in respect of every thing that he needed.— He is to be understood as saying, that for whatever he required, for every assistance, for every blessing, for every comfort, for all happiness, both for time and eternity, his hope was in God.— "Now, Lord, what wait I for? My hope is in thee." And what happiness did not this give the Psalmist? What courage in the hour of battle! What comfort in the season of trial! What support in the hour of desertion! "My hope is in thee!"

Is it so with us? Can we say our hope