

places—the Heavenlies. They are celestial blessings to be received, not earned. They are the gifts of God.

But notice also, they are in Christ, they are ministered to us by Him.

Nov. 29-30; Dec. 1-5.—HOPE.

For the hope which is laid up for you in heaven, whereof ye heard before in the word of the truth of the gospel.—Colossians i. 5.

Here is a snatch my eye fell on :

“With all his learning and accomplishments, his knowledge of nature and science, when confronted with the problem of immortality Huxley turned his face away from the Bible and said : ‘I do not know.’ And then he died, an agnostic. So died Huxley, but the Bible lives. And it will always live to cheer the despondent, help the weary, strengthen the tempted, and point humanity heavenward.”

Behold a contrast—the poor, sick, manacled, imprisoned apostle at Rome. Yet, writing amid such plights to these Colossian Christians, almost his first word is that of hope, a hope laid up in Heaven !

Which is the better creed ?

I. Consider, first, some of the elements of this hope.

(a) A triumphant death.

“A pilgrim once—so runs an ancient tale—
Old, worn, and spent, crept down a shadowed vale !

On either side rose mountains bleak and high,

Chill was the gusty air, and dark the sky,
The path was rugged, and his feet were bare ;

His faded cheek was seamed with pain and care ;

His heavy eyes upon the ground were cast,
And every step seemed feebler than the last.

“The valley ended where a naked rock
Rose, sheer from earth to heaven, as if to mock

The pilgrim who had crept that toilsome way ;

But while his dim and weary eyes essay
To find an outlet in the mountain side,
A ponderous, sculptured, brazen door he spied,

And, tottering toward it with fast-falling breath,

Above the portal read, ‘The Gate of Death.’

“He could not stay his feet that led thereto ;
It yielded to his touch, and, passing through,

He came into a world all bright and fair ;
Blue were the heavens, and balmy was the air ;

And, lo ! the blood of youth was in his veins,

And he was clad in robes that held no stains

Of his long pilgrimage. Amazed, he turned ;
Behold, a golden door behind him burned
In that fair sunlight, and his wondering eyes,

Now lusterful and clear as those new skies,
Free from the mists of age, of care, of strife,

Above the portal read, ‘The Gate of Life.’”

It is Christianity which sets before men such “Gate of Life.” Therefore they may hope.

(b) A further element of this hope is a blessed immortality beyond death.

An immortality of power over the self. That is the meaning of the promised “crown of life.” Crown means authority.

An immortality of chance and room. That is a meaning of the many mansions in the Father’s house.

An immortality of vigor. Neither disease nor age can there set fatal hindrances.

An immortality of wordless glory. You get hint of it in St. Paul’s rapture to the third heaven, where he heard things impossible to present human speech.

II. Consider, second, the certainty of this hope. “Whereof ye heard before in the word of the truth of the Gospel.” And that truth is based upon the character, life, death, resurrection of Jesus Christ. You must overthrow Him before you can damage the truth of the Gospel.

III. Consider, third, what ought to be some of the practical results of this hope.

(a) Let me test myself by it. Do I prefer heavenly things, things consonant with such hope, tho I may sometimes fail and fall? Where are my preferences really set?

I think this admirably said :

“Preferences are the sign manual of