

some one has well said, "Hope is the msinspring of labouring love, hope in the Lord, first for yourself, then for your neighbour. Despondency clogs exertion more and more, as it sinks, until it reaches despair, and then exertion entirely ceases." But, brethren, if our hope is to be a living hope; if we wish it to grow into expectation, and to culminate in certainty, it must depend on faith, on a faith which is itself based upon the sure Word of God. Now let it be remembered, that the Spirit's presence, power, and grace have been promised to the Church in the execution of the great commission, "Go ye into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature," let it not be forgotten that God's promise is the stable foundation of faith, that faith is the sure basis of hope, and that hope is one of the most essential elements of success, and you will readily perceive why (on such an occasion as this) we are asked to consider for a little "The Spirit's Presence, Power and Grace as the Church's hope in prosecuting Missions."

That the manifest presence, omnipotent energy, and infinite grace of the Holy Spirit are the Church's hope in the prosecution of Missions, seems to me to be clear from the fact that the gift of the Spirit is the great promise for the present dispensation.

The hopes of believers under former dispensations were sustained by faith in the predictions and promises of a coming Messiah. The birth of Christ was emphatically the consolation of Israel. But the hopes of believers during the current dispensation, so far as all events as these hopes centre in the evangelization of the world, are sustained by faith in the promise of the gift of the Spirit. To this gift the Saviour, after His resurrection, directed the expectation of His disciples, and He spoke of it with emphasis as the promise of the Father. It was by the impartation of the Spirit that they were to "be endued with power from on high." It was by the manifested abiding presence, energy, and grace of the Holy Spirit that He intended to fulfil His blessed promise, "Lo I am with you alway." So import-

ant indeed was the presence of the Spirit, that in the estimation of our Lord Himself it was more than an equivalent for His own. He knew and taught what we instinctively perceive and feel to be true, that those who saw and heard, and talked with Him, were highly favoured. "Blessed are the eyes that see the things that ye see, for I tell you that many prophets and kings have desired to see those things which ye see, and have not seen them, and to hear those things which ye hear, and have not heard them."

But He also knew and taught, what we ought to perceive and feel to be equally true, that those who should enjoy the presence of the Spirit would be even more highly favoured. To cheer the sorrowing hearts, and to dry the tearful eyes of His immediate followers who were utterly cast down in prospect of His departure, He said, "It is expedient for you that I go away, for if I go not away the Comforter will not come, but if I depart I will send him unto you."

But again, you will perceive that the presence, power, and grace of the Spirit are the hope of the Church in carrying on the work of Missions when you think of the obstacles to be overcome before the gospel can achieve its complete and final triumphs. Every Christian believes that no mere human power is equal to the task of saving even a single soul. The truth is that the mind of man everywhere is dark, that his heart is cold, and hard, and dead. Now if sinful humanity is universally afflicted with spiritual blindness, an operation of Divine power is necessary to restore spiritual vision. "God who at first shined out of darkness must shine into the mind, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Christ Jesus." If the human heart in a state of nature, is cold, as cold as ice, then the sun-light and fire-heat of the Almighty Spirit alone can thaw it out, and make it flow down in Godly sorrow and genuine contrition. If the heart of man is hard, as hard as the flinty rock, nothing but the blows of a hammer wielded by the energy of Omnipotence can reduce it to the broken heart,