

arrives at his wrong statements: for example, he puts down in the catalogue of my sins a whole day (16th March) for the embarkation (of 4 [four] persons) for Cilicia, whereas in reality the whole of the 16th March was available for seeing Smyrna, and the embarkation took place after sunset, in half an hour. Again, he puts down the 24th March for the journey to Alexandretta, whereas in reality, making the most of the night according to the German method, I went on board at Mersina on the evening of 22nd March and landed at Alexandretta at 7 a.m. on the 23rd. So too he reckons the railway journey from Mersina to Tarsus and back, which I did twice, as two days spent in trains, whereas the four journeys over a distance

of 41 kilometres (not quite 25 miles)—about the same as from Gourrock to Glasgow, a little more than from Gravesend to London—might be estimated together at about $\frac{1}{4}$ day.

The correction of Ramsay's reconstruction of my itinerary is less important, however, in my eyes than another question, to which I have now arrived: the question of the means of transport. This is bound to come into the discussion of a New Testament study-journey. Two questions especially suggest themselves: why the steamer and railway have to be seriously considered at all, and what results for the purposes of the journey are to be expected from the days spent on ship-board and in trains?

The Great Text Commentary.

THE GREAT TEXTS OF ROMANS.

ROMANS XV. 13.

Now the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, that ye may abound in hope, in the power of the Holy Ghost.

1. LANGUAGE seems inadequate to set forth all that God is to believing souls. The Apostle piles epithet upon epithet so as to express the thoughts which well up in his mind. In a previous verse he speaks of God as the God of patience, and as the God of comfort, and now he calls Him the God of hope. With such conceptions of God and His attitude toward His children it is not surprising that he should sketch the Christian experience in glowing colours and dwell upon its radiance, its riches, its glorious consummation.

2. Hope is not only one of the joys, but, in our present condition, it is the highest joy of all. And it is so because it bursts the barriers of the present existence, overleaps time's boundaries, clasps eternity in its hands, and crowns this life, though imperfectly, with the diadem of everlasting salvation. It imports into the Christian's life on earth the earnest, at least, of endless joys. Hence we are said to be 'saved by hope,' as if by the dawn of hope salvation were achieved in its completeness; and hence also hope is described as an 'anchor sure and steadfast, which enters into that within the veil,' fastening its flukes in heaven,

which is then in as close proximity to the Christian as the anchor fixed on the shore is to the boat to which the rope is bound. To him who has this hope, life in this world is uniformly joyful, though it be strewn with superficial sorrows; for it carries on its surface the luminous reflexion of the glorious endless life, as the ocean receives from the full-orbed moon the broad band of silvery light. To him who has this hope, the termination of his present existence is not a point of sadness in the prospect, but a welcome bridge that touches both worlds, conveying from joy to joy, and from glory to glory.

We have then for our subject our hope in Christ, and we shall consider:

(i.) Its source; (ii.) the means by which it is produced; and (iii.) the purposes which it subserves in Christian life.

I.

THE SOURCE.

1. 'The God of hope.' This new name for God is very characteristic of the Christian Dispensation. In the Old Dispensation, it was the God of history, He who had wrought wonders in Egypt and the Red Sea, He who had led His people like a flock through the waste howling wilderness, the God of their progenitors Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob,

who was proclaimed to Israel by prophet and psalmist. But the New Dispensation, while it does not disregard the former days with their foregleams of what was to come, fixes its gaze upon what lies before. It is a gospel, not of tradition or inheritance, but of hope with a horizon wider and more splendid than any which had disclosed itself to ancient seer. This was part of the gospel's great gift to the world. It is true that hope is a sentiment deeply implanted in the human breast, and that occasionally it found expression in some religious rite, or philosophical speculation in the heathen and pagan world. But it was only a flash out of surrounding darkness, and soon went out because men knew not God, the Father of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.

The title, the God of Hope, would not be entirely strange to the Roman Christians. In the days before they knew Christ they worshipped, among other false divinities, the goddess of Hope. In Rome many temples were erected to this goddess, and Livy, the Roman historian, records a striking fact which is suggestive of the insecurity and vanity of the hope of the heathen world. He tells us that on one occasion the temple of the goddess of Hope was struck by lightning, and again that it was burned with fire. They who once worshipped at the shrine of the false goddess have now found the true God of Hope.¹

2. The hope which St. Paul desired for his readers was a living hope (as St. Peter describes it), to which they had been begotten by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead. What it must have been in its first coming to those who hitherto knew of no life but that which was being wasted in frivolity and vanity, and which would so soon end in a darkness none had penetrated, it is not possible for us to picture even dimly. We have some glimpses, as, for example, in Plato's wonderful Dialogues, of the way in which the most profound thinkers among the Greeks were exercised on the possibilities of another life, but how far these extended among the less cultured classes in paganism we do not know. At least, however, it must be said that in their speculations, if they had them at all, there was nothing beyond the vaguest dream. They trod the weary path of life, and to numbers of them it must indeed have been sad and weary. They were born, they married and gave in marriage, they toiled or they fought as their lot was, they had their occasional gleam of passing brightness in the public games, they amassed fortunes or they lost them, they were

¹ J. E. Compton.

elated by their country's successes or perhaps panic-stricken by its defeats—and the end! While in the higher civilization of the ancient world there were these occasional flashes, the lower nations and races even to the present time were and are without hope.

A message comes from a friend lately returned from Africa, 'The more I think about it, the more I begin to feel how little a part hope of any kind plays in the life of the people among whom I have been working. They are without hope and without God.' His words recall a gloomy forenoon drive this summer in a Scottish valley when the hills were like black-hooded monsters with an inky sky surrounding them, and he wondered, 'Shall we get home before the storm?' We dared not hope for sunshine. Another day we climbed to where these very hills could be seen in the distance. Why was that patch of yellow corn on the hillside so bewitching? Why were the hills in front of us so restful and so bright, with their green velvet knolls slipping into each other's arms, and kissing each other like wavelets on the sea? Why was that red-leaved tree towering above its green and yellow neighbours like a flag of victory? It was because the sun had risen; and with him hope had sprung up in nature and in our hearts. Over the greater part of Africa the Sun has not yet risen.²

3. Some in sheer despondence are asking the strange question, 'Is life worth living?' And those who ask this dismal question are not persons upon whom poverty, sickness, hard work, the infirmities of age, and other ills of life press heavily. It is not only, nor chiefly, the man who scarcely knows how to get bread to eat, nor the man who has long been tormented with disease, nor the man who has to toil like a slave, literally earning his bread in the sweat of his brow, nor the man who is burdened with the weight of many years; it is not only nor chiefly these, or such as these, who are in so despairing a condition. No; the question, 'Is life worth living?' is asked by the rich, by the healthy, by the people who have abundance of leisure, and, saddest of all, it is asked by young people. And it betrays a very unwholesome state of mind.

In God, as revealed to us by Jesus Christ, is our hope. The beliefs and the experience which produce hope all centre in Him. 'Our spiritual raiment,' as Spurgeon beautifully puts it, 'is never homespun.' It is God who has begotten us again to a living hope, and whenever the heart turns to Him in humble faith, this hope begins to move and operate within the soul. And the stronger the faith, the more fervent is the hope.

² Mrs. A. R. Simpson, *These Three*, 26.

There are some matches which can only be kindled on one kind of surface. We may rub them on an unsuitable surface through a very long day, and no spark will be evoked. The fine effective flame of hope can only be kindled upon one surface. The human must come in contact with the divine. Where else can the holy fire be kindled? A mother is in despair about her son. His face is set in the ways of vice, and his imagination is being led captive by the devil. How shall I quicken the mother's hope, the hope which is so fruitful in loving devices? I will tell her that it is a long lane that has never a turning. I will tell her that the fiercest fire burns itself out at last. But these worldly proverbs awaken no fervent response. The depression remains heavy and cold. The match does not strike. I must lead her to 'the God of Hope.' A brother is discouraged because of his moral and spiritual bondage. How shall I kindle his hope? I will point out to him the lofty ideal, and let the dazzling splendour of the supreme heights break upon his gaze. But the ideal only emphasizes and confirms his pessimism. I will then turn his eyes upon inferior men, and point out to him men who are more demoralized than himself. But the vision of the inferior is only creative of self-conceit. A fine efficient hope is not yet born. The match does not strike. I must lead him to 'the God of Hope.' It is in God that assurance is born, and a fruitful optimism sustained. We must get our fire at the divine altar.¹

II.

THE MEANS.

Christian hope is to be attained through joy and peace in believing and in the power of the Holy Ghost.

1. Hope is the outcome of the life of faith. Joy and peace spring up in the soul as the result of simple trust in the Lord Jesus Christ, and so instead of self-introspection or despondency arising out of comparative failure, or absorption in the life-conflict, the soul looks forward and hope becomes a dominant emotion. The heart is at leisure from itself, its poor struggles and attainments, and can live in the region of the unseen and its infinite possibilities. This is the way in which Christian experience, in contrast to the experience of the worldly and selfish, produces a living hope, feeding it day by day. This joy and peace, the pleasures of faith, from their very nature, raise the soul above itself, and enable it to yield itself without fear or distraction to the influence of hope. The joy is not restricted to what is already possessed in Christ, the peace is not bound within the narrow limits of the seen and temporal; on the contrary, the soul is constrained to expand its wings and to anticipate the

¹ J. H. Jowett, *Brooks by the Traveller's Way*, 35.

'much more' which the future promises to those whose faith is fixed on Him who has the keys of Hades and of Death.

He might have set the apple on the bough
Without the rose-white coronal of May;
The corn in rows, the clusters on the vine,
Without the season's alchemy divine—
But it was not His way. *

He might have stood the cedars on the hills,
The strong night watchmen by the sounding sea,
Without the tardy growth from slender spires,
To the crowned heads against the sunset fires—
But other plans had He.

He might have placed His children on a height,
Strong men for God, His mission to fulfil,
Without the upward climb, the baffled flight—
The halting step slow mounting toward the light—
But such was not His will.

It pleased Him that in nature, or in grace,
Seed-germ, or soul, toward Him should all things grow,
Reaching, aspiring, from beginnings small,
Till the sweet day when Christ is all in all,
And we His will shall know!

2. The Christian hope is nurtured in the power of the Holy Ghost. The Scripture compares the ministry of this presence to the influence of a wind, an atmosphere, a breathing.

(1) *It is quickening.*—Like the air of the spring-time. Buried or sleeping powers awake and bud, and clothe themselves in grace and beauty. I become conscious of new and increased capacities, new powers of love and faith, and spiritual discernment. 'In Christ shall all be made alive.' 'The last Adam was made a quickening spirit.'

(2) *It is bracing.*—How easy it is to make long journeys in fine, bracing air! Five miles in the city wearies one more than twenty miles in the Lake District. The Holy Spirit breathes through the life a bracing, invigorating influence. My powers are at their best. I am able to persist, able to endure. 'They shall walk and not faint.'

(3) *It is revealing.*—It is the clean, clear air that unveils the panoramas. When the Holy Spirit possesses me I 'see visions,' I 'grow in knowledge.' 'He shall lead you into all truth.'

These are some of the ministries which are implied in the gift of the Holy Ghost. They are the primary requisites in the production of an optimist.

In Equatorial Africa one great lake is fed from mountains by waters that never fail, and through obscure channels; another lake receives its bounteous stores of water, and out

of this flows the Nile, and the rich green valleys of Egypt are created by its gifts. The fulness of the believer's joy is fed from beyond the hills, and joy replenishes hope, and from this abounding virtue the believer's own soul is enriched, and he becomes a benefactor of the world.¹

III.

THE USES.

Every emotion of which our human nature is susceptible, every motive which through them plays upon our life, is utilized by the religion of Christ to the highest ends. The Churches, indeed, in their attempt to embody the gospel, have run into hurtful extremes, and have brought pressure to bear upon the human heart in a way which has been most pernicious. For example, the Roman Church has appealed too much to the feeling of fear, and has done so not in the interests of true religion but so as to maintain ascendancy over its votaries and secure implicit obedience. Others, like the Pietists of Germany and France, resolved all emotions into that of love, ignoring the rest, and so producing a weak sentimentalism in which the more vigorous virtues grew sickly and perished. But the religion of Christ recognizes every emotion and engages them all in the promotion of piety, and for the progress of the gospel.

1. Hope *encourages and comforts the soul* amidst the sorrows of life. How much do we all owe to hope! It is the mainspring and stay of life, from infancy to old age. The little child is inspired by it, and forgets a thousand troubles by the hope of some promised though, it may be, distant good. It makes tolerable, and even light and joyous, many a drudging bitter task, and carries him forward through a sea of difficulties to success and distinction and happiness. Manhood, likewise, with all its cares and energies, feels the magic power of hope, and often when scheme after scheme has failed, and every well-planned effort has ended in disappointment, the bright star of hope leads him forward to ultimate, and more than before expected, blessing. And old age, worn and weary, is sustained and cheered by the same inspiring cause. 'The righteous has hope in his death.' A future, glorious beyond conception, lies before him, and he rejoices in a hope full of immortality.

She was a hardened optimist, and because of her cheerful courage she appeared to many like a favourite of fortune

on whom good things regularly fell. Fortunate indeed she was, but chiefly in her power of discovering a soul of good in things evil. Hope in her view is—

The paramount duty that Heaven lays
For its own honour on man's suffering heart.

Yet I must let it be seen that she had her full share of hardships and was abundantly acquainted with grief. Moods of despondency came to her as truly as to others, and she did not hesitate to express them. . . . But she was not absorbed or misled by them. She went straight on. . . . She put her mind elsewhere than in her moods, and these soon took their suitable place. To duty she gave herself gladly, counting it the voice of a friend, and in its exhilarating companionship she found a way through even physical ills. Her 'radiance' was therefore no product of ignorance, but of a deeper insight into things human and divine. She often quoted some lines of Emerson's which will describe her own mood of meeting good and ill; only she understood them as expressing no mere Stoicism but the Christian joyous acceptance of a complex and hallowed world:

Let me go where'er I will,
I hear a sky-born music still,
It sounds from all things old,
It sounds from all things young;
From all that's fair, from all that's foul,
Peals out a cheerful song.
It is not only in the rose,
It is not only in the bird,
Not only where the rainbow glows,
Nor in the song of woman heard;
But in the darkest, meanest things,
There alway, alway, something sings.²

2. Christian hope *nourishes true piety*. This it does in two ways—by purifying the heart, and by stimulating the pursuit of holiness. When the sun is left free to shine it purifies the filth, dries up the marshes and the stagnant pools, and changes the very nature of the soil on which it beams; so that, as Ruskin says, the clay and sand and soot that may be found everywhere on the outskirts of our manufacturing towns, the sun, if it has only time enough, will so transform, as that the clay becomes the sapphire, and the sand becomes the opal, and the soot becomes the diamond. Thus hope illumining the soul with the vision of things to come, and filling it with a desire for their realization, destroys the corrupt dispositions which lurk within by supplanting them.

3. Christian hope is a *powerful influence in the service of Christ*. How important it is, therefore, that we should 'abound in hope.' Those who work for Christ often feel that their efforts are useless and unavailing. But let them hope on and have faith in human nature; and that hope,

¹ T. G. Selby, *The Commonwealth of the Redeemed*, 91.

² George Herbert Palmer, *Alice Freeman Palmer*, 82.

shining through their efforts, may be the very means of saving some from sin and despair.

Christianity has a much more extended scale of colours than any other systems of belief have. It goes further down into blackness for the tints with which it paints man as he is, and further up into flashing glories of splendour for the gleaming hues with which it paints him as he may become. They move within narrow limits of neutral tints. The gospel alone does not try to minimize man's evil, because it is triumphantly confident of its power to turn all that evil into good.¹

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The Christian Message about Prayer.

BY THE REV. FREDERICK J. RAE, M.A., ABERDEEN.

AMONG the questions that are before our common Christianity to-day few are more urgent than that which concerns the subject of prayer. What is its place in the Christian life? Does it really achieve anything? Has it definite results? Can it be said to modify or change events or affect people? Why should we pray? and why is it urgent that we should pray?

Well, to begin with, there is, I think, a new attitude to prayer in our own generation. I will give you two proofs of that. One is the way in which the subject is haunting Christian minds. Prayer used to be regarded as a characteristic act of rather pietistic people, almost a monopoly of weak-kneed religion. But to-day it is dawning upon us that prayer is in reality the most strenuous act of the soul. And whenever Christian men get together in any intimacy, and begin to talk, they inevitably drift into the subject of prayer. Prayer-groups are springing up all over the country, meeting for definite intercession. A new belief in prayer is rising in the Church, and a new and eager sense of expectancy in connexion with it. The other evidence of this new attitude is fully as remarkable. It is the change in the *intellectual* or scientific world. The other day, a commission,

composed to a considerable extent of eminent doctors, presented a report on the subject of healing by suggestion. The report is interesting in many respects, but the most interesting feature of it is this, that the commission unanimously express their belief in the efficacy of prayer as among the healing agencies to be taken into account. Alongside this fact may be placed such utterances as those of Sir Oliver Lodge, that 'a child-like attitude in prayer is in harmony with science,' and that it may quite possibly be true that prayer is one among the 'directive forces' by which the world is governed. So that when one approaches this subject to-day it is in an atmosphere that is favourable to its discussion.

What, then, is the teaching of the Bible about prayer? There are two separate and well-defined statements to be made in answer to this question which may be said to condense the teaching of the Scriptures. I will deal with them in turn, but only slightly with the first, as it may almost be taken for granted. (1) That prayer is simply fellowship with God, a spiritual exercise; and (2) that prayer is a way of getting things done, a force by which the course of events may be modified,