

THE RIGHT HOPE.

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Preached by Mr. HAZELTON,  
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AT MOUNT ZION CHAPEL, CHADWELL STREET,
CLERKENWELL,

ON LORD'S-DAY MORNING, 2nd MAY, 1886.

“And hope maketh not ashamed” {Romans 5: 5}.

This is one of the most comprehensive chapters in the Word of God; an epitome of the glorious gospel or of the covenant of grace. It is impossible to over-estimate the glorious doctrine of justification by faith. A very important question occurs in the Scriptures, “How can man be justified with God? or, how can he be clean that is born of a woman?” Yet God justifies the ungodly, and He is just in doing so. His glory is not tarnished, and none of His attributes and perfections are concealed; but the whole of His character stands out most gloriously in the justification of sinners. The chapter opens with the word “therefore,” which directs our attention to what the Apostle had previously written. The last verse of the preceding chapter reads thus:—“Who was delivered for our offences, and was raised again for our justification.” Surely this is the very marrow of the gospel, and the very spirit of the new covenant. Jesus Christ, who was delivered to death, was the Son of God. All the brightness, greatness, and glory of the Godhead are in Him ; therefore all the perfections of Jehovah are inseparable from His great sacrifice, so that there is more in the sufferings of Christ to put away

sin, than there is in sin itself to put away the sinner; and we sing of the blood of our Lord :

*"It rises high and drowns the hills,
Has neither shore nor bound;
Now if we search to find our sins,
Our sins can ne'er be found."*

It is the Spirit's work to glorify the Son of God, the dear Redeemer, in the heart, by exalting His person and His precious blood above all the sin, iniquity, and guilt of the sinner. Yes, the Son of God was delivered to death for our offences; and as He did not die in vain, but fulfilled the great purpose which He came to accomplish, He returned to heaven with those honors which He gloriously and justly won for Himself. "He was raised again for our justification." It is perhaps impossible to say which of the two branches of eternal salvation is the more important; the death of Christ, or His resurrection from the dead. Our great Lord died to put away sin, and it was put away when He said, "It is finished!" but He was afterwards buried. He is risen, however, from the dead, and is seated at His Father's right hand, and all His people are risen with Him; and if He, as the Head of the church, is justified, they are justified in Him, and for His sake. Therefore, says the Apostle; "Being justified by faith, we have peace with God, through our Lord Jesus Christ." Oh the blessedness of standing before God clothed with the righteousness of His Son, having received it by faith; and how happy are they who can say for themselves, He loved us, and gave Himself for us. It is a great thing to be all right, to stand before the throne of God without fault, and to be passed on for eternity, and for heaven itself, by the infinitely holy

Jehovah. If, my brother, you are clothed with the righteousness of the Saviour, you are for ever justified, and in that respect, you are before God all perfect and complete; for "ye are complete in Him." Therefore, being justified by faith, we have peace with God. What a privilege is this peace, not only on the earth, and in our hearts, but in heaven also. Peace with God Himself, being in harmony with all His perfections. We are rather prone, I imagine, in contemplating this subject to feel that we and mercy only are bound together. My dear friends, if we are justified ones, we have peace with God's justice, and righteousness, and holiness also. We do not more deeply adore and reverence divine mercy, than we reverence divine equity and truth. All the attributes of God concur and for ever agree in our salvation, and they all appear in everlasting harmony in the formation of our character, and in our eternal inheritance of a better world. Hence we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ. Not only so, the Apostle says, "By Him also we have access by faith into this grace wherein we stand." Wonderful arrangement! And glorious indeed is the plan of salvation. The righteousness of Jesus is put upon the sinner, who now appears before the Lord who wrought it out. And the Saviour introduces him into the presence of His Father, and our Father, who accepts him therein, and for the sake of that High Priest who introduces him into His presence. "We have access into this grace wherein we stand," as righteous persons, as individuals who are free from guilt and condemnation, "and rejoice in hope of the glory of God." And such is the influence of the grace of justification upon the heart of the justified one that the Apostle proceeds to say: "We glory in the tribulation also, knowing that tribulation worketh patience." Glorifying in grace, and in the Lord Jesus Christ, is something that we can

understand; but where is the man that can glory in tribulation? He that can say for himself, "I am justified by faith in Christ, and the love of God is shed abroad in my heart by the Holy Ghost which is given unto me;" can say also, "I glory in tribulation, knowing that tribulation worketh patience, and patience experience, and experience hope, and hope maketh not ashamed." Having preached from the latter part of this verse, I have not read the whole of it for my text this morning. Let us for a few minutes look at this portion, and try to express a few thoughts and feelings upon it. "And hope maketh not ashamed."

I should like, in the first place, to try to show you what the believer's hope implies. I desire to dwell upon the nature and operations of this grace this morning, because we are living in a day when some very strange things are said concerning the hope of God's people. Well, what does the believer's hope imply? It implies this fact among others that more has been promised than we have yet received. So long as promises remain unfulfilled, the believer will be in a hoping condition. This is important, because there are persons, and their number is considerable, who wish to be thought very good people; and doubtless some, or many of them are so, who have some strange notions concerning the hope of God's children. They ask how you are getting on in relation to the things of God, and if in the simplicity of your minds, you answer that you hope you are right, or that you are the Lord's, or that you are a saved sinner; they stop you very suddenly, as if they were half-angry with you, with, " Hope! Hope! have you not yet got beyond hope ?" You are a professor, and have been one for many years, and you ought to be able to express yourself now more confidently. Well, my dear friends, I love the grace of hope and its operations in my heart, and

I find that the Holy Spirit in the Word has been pleased to honor that grace; and therefore I cannot speak contemptuously of it, nor of any person you says in the simplicity of his heart, "I hope that my soul is right in God's sight." Now let us look at this point for a few minutes. The promises of God are numerous and great and such is their nature, that very many of them cannot be perfectly fulfilled unto us in this world. Since the promises are revealed and recorded in the Bible, and cannot be perfectly fulfilled unto us here, we must be the subjects of hope, looking into the future, and expecting something more than we already possess. The promises of God go right into the future; they go into death, and pass quite through its valley, and enter into heaven itself, and cover all eternity. So long as there are unfulfilled promises, believers will look and hope for the promised good. The child of God cannot in the nature of things be satisfied on the earth. This is not his rest. The Lord did not create this world to be the home and the resting-place of His dear people. I do not think that our God will ever do anything to, or in the world for the purpose of constituting it the final home of His family. "Where I am, there shall ye be also." Well, Christ is at the Father's right hand, He is in that better country. "This day shalt thou be with Me in paradise." Our Lord, therefore, is in paradise, the perfect and un-losable Garden of Eden, in the kingdom of eternal bliss and glory; and where He is, there His people must be also. If this world is not their home, if it is not to be their final resting-place, if they cannot possibly find all they require here, the grace of hope in the heart is given for the purpose of keeping them, as it were, on the look-out. They are sending their thoughts and expectations into the future, into that rest which is prepared for them in heaven, and which remains for the people of God. The strongest saint, and

the most vigorous believer that has ever lived, was imperfect, and the most fruitful believer now on the earth is so also; and so long as there is a sense of imperfection, there will and must be hope. If we were brimful, and could hold no more, we should cease to hope. If we were perfectly satisfied, and required nothing more, then we should cease to hope; but although we have something in hand, we are not yet in possession of all that God has promised. Although we are saved sinners, we are not yet perfect. Therefore we are saved by hope, which maketh not ashamed. No, the child of God cannot be satisfied with his present attainments. Those persons to whom I have referred have not got beyond hope themselves, or if they have, they are living presumptuously. A humble hope in God is better than a whole heap of fleshly hollow confidence and presumption. I do not want, so long as I am here, to get beyond a good hope. I hope for help, and help comes; and I shall hope on, and on, until I am helped for the last time, which will be in death, and then I shall enter into the hoped for bliss and glory. My hope will then expire in full fruition, and I shall look forward with expectation no more. We are saved by hope which maketh not ashamed. Is it not thus with you? Am I not giving expression in a humble manner to your thoughts, and feelings, and experience? Can the child of God while he is here, and the subject of indwelling sin, be in a position in which it may be correctly said of him, that he is beyond hope. So long as there is sin in us, we shall hope for the time when it will be removed. So long as we are conscious of imperfection, we shall hope for that period when we shall be made perfect. So long as we are not perfectly like the Lord Jesus Christ, we shall hope for that change when we shall see Him as He is, and be for ever with and like Him. The hope of the child of God implies the fact that he is not yet satisfied, that

he needs more that God has promised to give him more than he has yet received, and that he is to be what he never yet has been. For,—

*“It doth not yet appear
How great we must be made;
But when we see our Saviour here,
We shall like our Head.”*

Again; the believer’s hope implies righteousness on the one hand, and spiritual relationship on the other. It implies righteousness. What is before and behind the child of God? His sin, his guilt, his transgression? Then he cannot hope. If sin has not been put away, if guilt has not been expiated, if God, in relation to transgression, has not been atoned, then there is no ground whatever for a sinner to hope for God and for heaven. But what is really behind and before the child of God? The atonement of the Saviour. His well done and finished work. Then he may and will hope. If sin has been carried out, and righteousness brought in, if the offence has disappeared, and that which is infinitely pleasing to God has taken its place, then one says, who can tell? I am a guilty sinner, but I venture to hope that God will have mercy on me. He can be merciful to sinners without injuring Himself, or dimming His character and glory; and since he can show mercy to the guilty, I will hope for mercy, and,

*“I’ll go to Jesus, though my sins
Have like a mountain rose;
I know His courts, I’ll enter in,
Whatever may oppose.”*

Well, here is the atonement, trembling sinner, and you who have recently been convinced of sin may cast yourself upon it. The Lord help you to build

your hopes for pardon and for heaven, upon the precious blood and glorious righteousness of God's dear Son. But I said, there must, be righteousness on the one hand, and relationship on the other, before there can be true comfort in connection with our hope. Where are you, and what are you doing? You are resting upon the atonement of Jesus. But what are you hoping for? Heaven, the inheritance? The heavenly inheritance goes to the heirs of God, even the joint-heirs with Christ; all these heirs are God's sons and daughters. If you are His child, hope for the heavenly inheritance; but if you are not spiritually related to Him, there is no ground whatever upon which you may hope for heaven. "Ah sir, Jesus died for me, and I stand there! The Holy Ghost bears witness with my heart, not only that Jesus died for me, but that I am a son of God, and joint-heir with Jesus Christ." Then, hope for all God has promised, and for all He has prepared. In the first place, your guilt has been expiated, and God will never curse you. In the second place, you stand related to God as a son or a daughter, and He will for ever bless you. Such a hope maketh not ashamed. Again, this hope implies faithfulness and fullness on the part of God. Suppose God should alter His mind? If that were possible, our hope would shake and give way. If His nature and love could change, we could not confidently hope; but He is in one mind, and none can turn Him. He loves with an everlasting love, and will never cease to be our Father, and we shall always be His children. He is the ever faithful God, and here you may build your hopes. But you are hoping for so much; yes, but not for more than there is in God. He is faithful to His promises and faithful to His children; and He has not surpassed or gone beyond His fullness with His promises. They are large, but His resources are infinite, and therefore we hope for great things, and for the

best, even for the best world, and the richest bliss and joy, all of which shall be everlasting. "And hope maketh not ashamed." I have made these observations on this point for the purpose of attempting to comfort the little ones in the family of heaven. Do not be cast down, my brethren, if you meet some of those strong and gigantic Christians who are always on the mount, always above doubt and fear, and who have got beyond hope. If you meet them, and they condemn you for your hope, do not be dejected. Look at the great man David. "Why art thou cast down, O my soul? And why art thou disquieted within me? Hope thou in God; for I shall yet praise Him, who is the health of my countenance and my God." Yes, we rejoice in hope of the glory to God. We have not yet received all; we have much in hand, and much in possession, but there is more in hope and in the future. Hope, therefore, for the perfect fulfillment of the whole Bible; for this grace must abide and prevail until the whole volume of heaven is divinely fulfilled. So much for the implication which the existence of a good hope carries with it. In the second place, let us say a word or two upon the nature of this hope. The germ of it comes into the heart in regeneration or the new birth, and it is inseparable from that principle of divine life, the possession of which constitutes one a Christian. The new birth is a perfect birth. The infant, notwithstanding its smallness, is perfect, and possesses all its parts and members at once. Development and growth will follow the birth. Its little arms and legs will become larger. And as it is in nature, so it is in grace in this respect. The new-born child of God is perfect as to his nature and parts, though not as to his strength and development. Therefore when the new birth has taken place, the germ of hope, and faith, and love, and patience, and joy, is in the heart. These graces are all latent, if I may so speak, in the

principle of grace which the Holy Ghost at first communicates to the soul, and circumstances and facts will, under the influence of the Holy Spirit, developed them. A new-born child of God sees and feels he is a guilty sinner, and a sense of guilt makes way for hope ; and in proportion as the character and nature of sin are felt, hope, is intensified, and as God reveals His mercy in harmony with His justice, faith rises high, and the soul becomes hopeful and sings,—

*"I can but perish if I go;
I am resolved to try;
For if stay away, I know
I must for ever die.
"But if I die with mercy sought,
When I the King have tried,
That were to die—delightful thought!
As sinner never died."*

And therefore, if I perish I will perish at the feet of Christ; if I die, I will die in His presence; and if I am cast into hell, I will humbly hope until the last. Delightful thought! No sinner with this hope was ever lost. This is the nature of this hope. But I want to tarry a moment or two on a point which I feel is important, viz., that this hope is sure and steadfast. I have reached the conclusion that this is the only hope in the universe, so far as we know what is in the universe that is absolutely sure and certain. When I speak of the believer's hope, I do not refer to something uncertain, but to that which can never be lost. There is no room for doubt as to the final fruition of the believer's hope, and I am speaking solemnly; the believer must sooner or later possess, as the Lord liveth, all that God teaches his heart to hope for.

Our God is the God of hope, and it is not like Him to induce a heart to hope for that which He does not absolutely intend to give. It is not like Him to bring us to expect blessings which we shall never receive. It is not like Him to create a desire and then to quench it; for "He shall fulfill the desire of them that fear Him." It is sure and certain. What other hope is so? "I hope I shall live and see certain things." But you are not sure that you will live to see them, for life is uncertain. You hope for health and strength, but you are not sure of them. You hope when you commence a journey that you will reach your destination, whether it be by land or sea; but that is uncertain, for you may die before the end is reached: you may, and you may not. These are words which will not apply to the believer's hope. One is going to Australia, the captain of the vessel is an experienced man, the vessel is said to be a faultless one, and there seems to be no human reason why Australia should not be reached. The voyage is commenced, and hope fills the breast; but it is an uncertain one. Now look at the believer, the child of God, in whose heart there is a heavenly hope. Grace has turned him, and hell and the world are behind him, and heaven and glory are before him. May there not be some failure? No. May there not be some disappointment? Certainly not. God has started him for heaven, and heaven must be reached, for his hope is sure and steadfast. God has set him in the way, and given him to hope for grace until the end of the journey, and has said to him, "I will never leave thee nor forsake thee, until I have done that good thing which I have spoken to thee of." Walk on, my brother, and let us travel together. The way is straight and safe, and our Leader is infallible, and perpetually with us, while the hope He has given us is inseparably connected with God's honor. Nothing can quench it, nothing can disappoint it, for it is the hope mentioned

in my text; it maketh not ashamed, but is sure and steadfast. "But all hopes are not uncertain, are they?" Yes, all are. You have a dear brother, on whose love and resources you are resting important hopes. Have you never known brothers to become helpless or treacherous? Ah, but there is the wife or the husband, and we may confidently hope in such relations. But have you never heard of a husband or a wife, after living in peace and pleasure a number of years, becoming changed? There is no absolute certainty, no absolute fixedness connected with any hope, but that which is heavenly and Divine. Yet natural hope is a pleasure, and we could not live without it. The world would be dark and miserable indeed, if it were a hopeless world ; yet the hopes of the world are all of them, more or less, uncertain, unfixed, and unsteady. This is the only hope that maketh not ashamed, I had some important hopes a few years ago, but I have lost them; I will not tell you what they related to, but they were strong, and I felt as sure and certain about them as any person can feel about earthly matters. Disappointment has taken place. Oh! hope thou in God, for I shall yet praise Him, who is the health of my countenance and my God. First, then the implication which hope carries with it, and secondly, the nature of this hope.

Thirdly, the objects of it. The objects of hope are unseen as we read at the commencement of the service this morning. "For hope that is seen is not hope, for what a man seeth, why doth he yet hope for? If we hope for that we see not, then do we with patience wait for it." The hope of a believer goes through clouds, and beyond death, and the grave, and time. In the nature of things, the believer's hope must get into some bright place, and it remains on the wing until some fixed point is reached, or some desirable position appears. Hope cannot sit quietly and calmly in the midst of

darkness and danger. One may be in these circumstances, but hope goes forward into the future; through the fog, and the cloud, and time, and out of this world into heaven, and rests in God, the invisible Jehovah. Guided by His word and directed by His Spirit, hope finds God and rests in Him. Faith believes the Word, and hope stands upon the threshold and looks out for the fulfillment of it. The soul sends its expectation forward into heaven, and into the future, beyond impossibilities and possibilities, into the omnipotence of God, and says, "I shall yet praise Him."

Fourthly, the influence of hope upon its possessor. Now you know, the object of hope is always desirable and attractive. We may expect evil, but we cannot hope for it. Hope longs for that which is good, excellent, valuable, necessary, precious; and this hope has an influence upon its possessor. In proportion as the attractions of the objects of hope are great and powerful, the heart is drawn towards them. God in Christ is the object of hope and heaven; and heavenly glory are the objects of our hope. Christ draws hope; for souls are neither driven nor dragged to God. "Draw me: we will run after Thee." The beauties of the Saviour, and the attractions of heaven draw and influence our spirits. Then the very spirit and character of the object of hope are impressed upon hope itself. I beg your attention to this point, which I trust I have clearly put before you, Hope imbibes the spirit of its object, is impressed with it. If the object of hope is something earthly, the hope is an earthly one, and if something sinful and vile, the hope is an impure one. Thus if Christ is the object of hope, He is stamped upon the hope itself; and hence "every man that hath this hope in him, purifieth himself even as He is pure." As the object of the believer's hope is a pure Christ, so the person that hopes in Christ would be perfectly holy, and he is hoping for the period

when all his impurity and imperfections will be lost, and he will be for ever like his Lord. Do not think that a hope so much Divine, so good, and so excellent, can be unclean or impure. Imperfect it is as to its operations and influence; but it is a pure hope, like its object, Jesus Christ. He who possesses it is not a perfectly pure character; but the grace itself, like its Author and object, is holy.

I thought I would say in the fifth place, a word or two, if time permitted, on the final fruition of this hope. It must be swallowed up, absorbed, and lost in perfect and full fruition; but I cannot now attempt to go into that subject. The last point is that which is so prominent in the text, viz., the fact itself, "Hope maketh not ashamed." Adam was ashamed when he fell, in the Garden of Eden. Jesus Christ, however, was not ashamed, though He gave Himself up to shame and ignominy; and he who hopes in the suffering dying and risen Saviour shall never be ashamed. The believer can never be ashamed of the foundation of his hope, who is Christ; nor of the object of his hope, who is God; nor of the company which hope carries him into, which is good company; nor of the loss which his hope may involve him in.

*"For why should I complain
Of want or distress,
Temptation or pain,
He told me no less."*

"Blessed are they that are persecuted for My name sake." Paul says, I am not ashamed of the gospel." Though I am a prisoner, I am not ashamed of this chain, for I wear it for Christ's sake. No, this hope maketh not ashamed, because the love of God is shed abroad in the soul. And not ashamed of its fruition at last. My brother, the believer's hope is not greater than its object,

and hence he will never be ashamed. You and I often hope as creatures for more than we get. Our hope is larger than the object when it is obtained. But our God is the object of this hope, and He infinitely exceeds the hope He gives. Methinks when we get to heaven we shall be constrained to say with the Queen of Sheba: I heard of Thy glory in my own land, and believed it not; but now I see it all with my own eyes, behold, the half of it was not told me. "Now unto Him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we can ask or think." Brethren, we shall be surprised when we get to heaven. We believe a little that heaven is a wonderful world, and that Christ is a wonderful person, and that the pleasures and glories of Jerusalem above are truly great, but when we see heaven, and our Lord and enter into that bliss, perhaps we shall feel, as I said just now, that we did not half-believe it, nor half hope for it, and that the half of what God has provided for us was never told us. The Lord command His blessing, for Christ's sake. Amen.