

THE RIGHT HOPE¹

A SERMON

Preached on Tuesday July 6th, 1858

By Mister JAMES WELLS (of the Surrey Tabernacle)

IN THE CRYSTAL PLACE, SYDENHAM

On Behalf of "The Christian Blind Relief Society"

REVISED BY THE AUTHOR

Price Two Pence

"And hope makes not ashamed, because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost, which is given unto us." Romans 5:5

WHAT person, under the sun, has or can have, in this life, full possession of all he can desire? And how numerous are the circumstances that would drive us to desperation, were it not "that hope springs eternal in the human breast." If then, hope saves so many ways temporally, moderating our griefs, and helping us in a thousand ways, how much more do we need a good hope for eternity, for the swelling of Jordan, for the judgment to come, for "that borne whence no traveler returns?" It is upon this hope that I shall chiefly dwell, for I shall not occupy the time in preaching what is called a charity sermon, but shall seek rather to preach a gospel sermon, for even as Englishmen, and much less as believers in the word of God, do you need persuasion to that which is generous, benevolent, and noble. The magnificent benevolent institutions of our favored land, surpassing any other upon the world's surface, show and demonstrate the vast amount of good feeling in our midst; and I can but express myself well pleased to see such a number in this far renowned Palace this morning, thus practically expressing your sympathy with the objects of the "Christian Blind Relief Society;" that you have a feeling of sympathy for the poor and needy among the thirty thousand in our island who have to endure such a solemn affliction as that of the privation of sight. Instead, therefore, of addressing this assembly upon the objects merely of this Society, I shall rather set before you those living principles which constrain to every good word and work, and in so doing, I will:

- I. Analyze the hope spoken of in my text.
- II. I will show the shame from which this hope delivers.

¹ Partridge and Co., 34 Paternoster Row. Robert Banks & Co., Dover Road.
J. Cox, 100, Borough Road.

- III. The reason of boldness herein. "The love of God is shed abroad in our hearts."
- IV. The destiny implied.

A true hope can be only by faith in the righteousness of Christ; justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ. Peace with God! Where can this be? How can this be? for there is "no peace for the wicked," and all by nature are wicked. "There is none righteous, no, not one." It is when this is seen and felt; when it is made manifest in the conscience that the law of God is spiritual; that we are carnal, sold under sin; when this is felt, and creature works found to be but a thing of naught, and the Savior appears as the end of the law for righteousness; thus driven and drawn to him, it then becomes by faith that it might be by grace. To this order of things we must, in order to be saved, be reconciled, and this justification by faith stands inseparably connected with eternal glory; and so, says the Apostle, "By whom (that is, by Christ Jesus) we have access into this grace, (that is, this grace of justification) for we are justified freely by his grace." Now we have access into this grace wherein we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God. Thus, this justification stands inseparably connected with glorification. If we have the one, the other is sure. A hope, then, for eternity, must be by a righteousness that is like eternity, but where can such a righteousness be found, but the righteousness of God which is by the faith of Christ: This is the only way of true reconciliation to God. You must be brought to feel that in any other way you must be without Christ, without hope, and without God in the world. Our real need of this righteousness of faith is hidden by the powers of darkness from us. We see not, we feel not, we care not, for our condemned, our lost, and direful condition, until God himself shows it unto us, and causes us to fly for refuge, to lay hold of the hope set before us. Oh! how dear then becomes the heavenly testimony that we are justified by faith; that it is in this way we are to look for peace with God; and here, if we are taught of God, we shall stand, like Joshua, before the Angel of the Lord until we realize change of raiment, pardoning mercy, and peace with God, through the righteousness of God our Savior.

Now this same faith by which we thus have peace with God, does not stop here, but goes on to receive the truth as it is in its own order, for it rejoices in hope, in sure hope, of the glory of God. It does not put that asunder which God has joined together, but receives the righteousness in its inseparable connection with eternal glory. "Whom he justified, them he also glorified;" and even this heartfelt conformity to the righteousness, peace, and truth of God is but one step in the path of gospel hope.

I have yet to show that there are many more things yet essential, to make up this hope, which makes not ashamed. People think religion to be a sort of a little trifling affair, soon settled and set right. Never, my hearer, never, was there a greater mistake; true religion has in it more treasures and wonders, than can be found in the whole material universe; it is God himself in the highest, the noblest, the most durable of all his doings; his mercy, salvation, righteousness and truth, endure forever; and, therefore, it is that those who have this hope that makes not ashamed, must be put to the test not only of eternal truth, but also to a tribulatory test; and, it is because those troubles further, subserviently, their eternal welfare, that they glory therein; it is for the sake of the end, the advantage, the joy set before them, that they face the storm; yes, face anything rather than be moved away from the hope of the gospel, for tribulation teaches them to be patient, and that while they are torn to pieces, and a thousand comforts and confidences scattered to the four winds, they are brought to anchor in this testimony, "My grace is sufficient for you." This tribulation gives

them also much experience, much experience of their weakness, their vileness, "Behold I am vile," said Job, after he had been in the furnace. And then, in connection with this experience of what self is, there are the greater manifestations of mercy and power from on high. You may cast the three worthies into the fiery furnace, but the Son of God will be there, and shall, in every sense set them free. You may cast Daniel into the lion's den, but no hurt shall come to Daniel, because he believed in his God. If then, we are to be heavenly gainers by tribulation, then may we glory therein; for the Scriptures cannot be broken, which says that "all things work together for good to them that love God, and who are the called according to his purpose." If you then have that hope which makes not ashamed, you will endure anything and everything, rather than be moved therefrom; for this hope will never betray us, if we do not betray that; and, if we have a vital possession of this hope, we shall not betray it, or make shipwreck concerning it; nor it betray us, nor shipwreck us, but bring us to our desired haven. This coming forth then as gold out of the furnace of tribulation, I will call step the second in this path of that hope which makes not ashamed.

The next step in this hope, is the timeliness of the death of Christ; for when we were without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly: could anything be timelier? Thus, we were without strength and ungodly. But, my hearer, if you have never been put to the test, you know not where, or how, or in what sense, you are without strength; you even know not where, how, or in what especial sense you are ungodly. Men in our day deal falsely in this matter; the axe laid at the root of the tree, is too rough an instrument to use in this refined age; the hammer of infallible truth is too hard a way of dealing with the tender feelings of flesh and blood; and pharisaic importance; just trim the trees up as they are, lop off some of the ugly branches, and so conform them to the taste of the age, and all will be well, and the people like to have it so. This is man's way, but it is not God's way. God's way is to cut down, to root up, to pull down, and destroy every vestige of fleshly confidence, and so bring us into the path which the vulture's eye has not seen.

Has my hearer then ever from a conviction of what the law of God in letter and spirit is, ever tried to do its demands; ever tried to be spiritual as that is spiritual; holy, as that is holy; just, as that is just; good, as that is good; and infallible, as that is infallible; "for not one jot nor tittle thereof can fail;" and remember, that, "he that offends in one point is guilty of the whole." Have you, my hearer, ever been thus put to the test, if so you have found out that you are without strength, and if you have, you have in the lowest point failed; if you have run with the law merely into its precepts, and they have wearied you, you cannot keep pace with them; if here in this department you are without strength, then how will you do in the swelling of Jordan, when this holy law shall begin to roll the cold waters of death upon you; when these waters shall overflow all the banks of your hopes and confidences; when you must be carried headlong down into the dead sea; and, if in the swelling of Jordan you shall thus be helpless, how will you in the judgment contend with horses of fire? Know then that you are in this matter without strength! But this is not all, you are also in an especial sense ungodly. And where is it? Do you know where it is that you are in this especial sense ungodly? Ah! it is in the worst of all places to be ungodly; it is in that spot that an all seeing God takes more notice of than any other: it is just that which when rightly set, is the temple of the Holy Ghost; it is the rest of the Savior; it is the treasure for which God the Father asks, "my son give me your heart." Yes, it is the heart, here it is that every root of bitterness is found; this is the troubled waters that cast up mire and dirt. Without the knowledge of yourself, what care you for the death of Christ? What timeliness is there in his death? Why, just none at all: you have your rational, moral and physical powers; and you can do many good, praiseworthy things; and it is

your duty so to do. But spiritually, you are dead: dead as was Saul of Tarsus before the commandment came to him, and turned all his comeliness into corruption; then, and not till then, the death of Christ was to him above all things the timeliest. If you are not begotten of God into this vital hope; if your hope has not this root of the matter in it, then it will surely perish; and so you are merely an out-side sinner; and Jesus Christ, if he be anything at all to you, is a mere out-side Savior; and so your hope is in the letter and not in the spirit; in the form and not in the power; and as you have not been cut down, nor rooted up, nor planted by the living God; you must be rooted up at the last for the fire: for every plant which my Heavenly Father has not planted shall be rooted up.

But there are some among you to whom the death of Christ is timely; and by faith in him you have strength. "In the Lord (says one) have I righteousness and strength." And the soul united by faith and hope to him becomes godly; his death atones for us, and is the end of sin. Here then is hope; hope substantively, and hope objectively, a vital, living hope in the soul, and Christ the foundation, the object of hope. This time of need is "the set time to favor Zion."

But we have yet more steps to take in this path of hope; namely, the commendation of the love of God: "for God commends his love to us, in that while we were yet sinners Christ died for us." Now here the death of Christ and the love of God meet us, while with us there is nothing but evil: "while we were yet sinners;" while we were the worst thing in his sight that we possibly could be; it was while "we were yet sinners." Now it is not possible to put the love of God and death of Christ into a more attractive form than they are here presented: here is a sinner who, while his sins certainly cannot make the Lord love him, so neither can they make the Lord hate him; for he not only loved us, but "commended his love towards us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us." This commendation of his love has in it, depths deeper than hell; high as heaven; broader than the sea; and longer than the earth. So then rightly to hope in his love, we must be nothing before him but sinners, receiving the truth here stated in the love of it. And the Apostle strengthens his position by contrast: by showing that among men "scarcely for a righteous man will one die; yet, peradventure, for a good man some would even dare to die." But we are neither righteous men nor good men; but sinners, only sinners: and "truly this is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptance, that Jesus Christ, came into the world to save sinners."

I may just mention the distinction the apostle notices between "a righteous man," and "a good man." He alludes to a distinction of this kind made by the ancients: a righteous man was one who did no wrong to any one; at least, no injustice; and took equal care that no one should do any injustice to him; he would put every law in force to maintain his rights; he was a kind of cast iron sort of man; scrupulous both ways to the last degree; and he could be, as far as his bare justice-laws reached, well trusted. Not trusted for mercy: O, no! mercy was no part of his character; but, nevertheless, his hardness would make some admire him; but scarcely for such a kind of righteousness man would one die. But a good man was one who was just, but at the same time, overlaid iron-justice with golden-mercy, kindness, benevolence, forgiving, ministering to the poor, and in every way, both commanding respect and endearing himself to those that know him: "for such an one peradventure some would even dare to die." But God, before whom we have done nothing but sin, "commends his love towards us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us;" and now that by his blood we have hope, we who have hope are safe, and saved from wrath through Him.

We are saved from falling back again into wrath against God; we can no longer say, “depart from us we desire not the knowledge of your ways.” We can no more hate his truth; we can no more be enmity against him; we love him, and he “having loved his own which were in the world, he loved them unto the end.” And so, though hated of all men, we shall endure unto the end.

The all-sufficiency of his atonement is our security; “being justified, (says the apostle,) by his blood, we shall be saved from wrath.” Through him, the law works wrath; but he who has this hope is not under the law, but under grace; and the blood of Jesus being infinitely more able to plead for such, than their sins to plead against them, they will, by faith in the blood of Christ, stand fast in the peace and love of God.

But being justified by his blood we shall also, through him, be saved from the wrath of man; and wrath with you (if you have this hope) men certainly will be; but you will overcome by the blood of the Lamb. This, to a poor self-condemned sinner, stronghold of the blood of the everlasting covenant, takes you away from all the devices, inventions and follies of men. Women who have this hope are not silly, but sensible women, not led captive by Puseyite confessors, for all who are so led are what the word of God calls “silly women.” But while the life and true light of the gospel shall remain in our midst, you will never suffer these auxiliaries of Rome to extort from you your personal and family secrets; and thus, suffer your souls to be enslaved to these ministers of Satan. No! Mr. Papist or Puseyite, you shall have the last drop of our blood, rather than we would part with one inch of gospel ground we now occupy. We laugh at the wrath of man, for the wrath of man shall go just so far as shall be for our good, and for the glory of our God, and no further: “Here shall your puny waves be stayed.” And, also, it is by his blood that we are saved from the wrath of Satan: he knows he has but a short time with us, and therefore his wrath is greater; he cannot endure to see a poor sinner standing before the angel of the Lord, with a hope in the all atoning blood, and having in his heart, and on his lips, the prayer, “Lord, if you will, you can make me clean!” Now take away the blood of Christ, and then with what terrible and fatal force would all the accusations of Satan, the accuser of the brethren, fall upon us! But the blood of Christ invalidates all Satan’s accusations, so that his labor is worse than in vain. And thus, “through death, has Jesus destroyed his power who had the power of death, that is the devil.” And by faith in the blood of the Lamb we are defended against Satan’s wrath, and rejoice still in hope of the glory of God.

But above all that, being justified by his blood, we are saved from the wrath to come, that wrath which would cast both body and soul into hell, that wrath which shall destroy the universe. In no other way, “for there is no other name under heaven, given among men, whereby we shall be saved, but by the name of Jesus;” his blood is the only way of holiness and peace.

But we are to be saved also by his life; for, if “when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, how much more we shall be saved by his life;” so then here is no vital reconciliation to God but by the death of his Son; and eternal safety, but by his resurrection life. Well then, if you have found peace in any way, but by the death of the Son of God, your peace is a false peace; and even by his death there is no peace with God, only as the Holy Spirit is pleased to bring home the word with power; and, if divinely taught, you will have no other hope of peace, you will, in this way, by faith and prayer, seek peace; nor rest content until “the peace of God

which passes all understanding,” shall flow into your soul; and then, if you be thus reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more shall you be saved by his resurrection life; for he has said, “because I live, you shall live also.” Your eternal safety lies in those various relations in which the Savior lives; as Son of God, he lives to bring you into an eternal inheritance: as a Priest, he lives to present you before the eyes of eternal glory, into everlasting joy: as a Husband, he lives to give you an eternal home: as a Shepherd, he lives to feed you, and lead you to living fountains of water: as a Surety, he lives to see that you have all the freedom he has wrought for you; and, as a King, he lives to cause you to inherit the throne of glory. And so, you are saved by his resurrection life; yes, he is your life, and he lives to “change your vile body, and fashion it like unto his glorious body.”

But we have yet another word to say upon this hope that makes not ashamed. For not only being justified by faith, we have peace with God, not only do we glory in tribulations, not only do we glory in the timeliness of the death of Christ, not only in commendation of the love of God unto us, not only in the victory we have by the blood of Christ, not only in the glorious resurrection life of Christ, but we also glory in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom we have received the atonement. The matter is settled, never again to be unsettled: forever, O Lord, your word is settled in heaven, and as it is settled in heaven, so it becomes settled in the heart of him who has this hope that makes not ashamed, the reconciliation is completed, it is done, it is finished, the tower is built, the king with ten thousand has stood against the king that comes against him with twenty thousand: such, then, is the nature of that hope which makes not ashamed.

II. I now notice the shame from which this hope delivers. It delivers from everlasting shame; for some must rise from the dust of the earth, to shame and everlasting contempt. And so, it is, that those who would put the people of God to shame, and treat his truth with contempt; they themselves must be put to public shame and everlasting contempt. Shall I say to these enemies, “seek the Lord while he may be found call you upon him while he is near!” Yes, I may say so long enough, and may as well say nothing: such can no more spiritually and truly seek the Lord, or in faith (and whatsoever is not of faith is sin: and, without faith it is impossible to please God, and faith is the gift of God,) than a dead man be the author of his own resurrection. It is only where the living God sends with quickening power his own word, that it prospers. When he says to a sinner, “seek the Lord while he may be found,” such an one will seek him fast enough, and he then goes up into a mountain, and calls to him whom he will, they come unto him. His word when thus sent by himself never returns void. And all conversion short of this is merely natural, and does not implant from on high that living hope which makes not ashamed. That it is the duty of men to act in accordance with the light the Word of God affords them, no one denies; but you may depend upon it, that “the natural man receives not the things of the Spirit of God, neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned.” It is, therefore, one thing for the letter of the word to say, “seek you the Lord while he may be found; call you upon him while he is near.” It is one thing for the letter of the word to say this, and another thing for God to quicken the dead soul, and so give that supernatural life by which a sinner becomes a spiritually hungry and thirsty man; the words then become his welcome; he sees he may call upon him while he is near: he is nearby his word; he is nearby his dear Son; he is nearby his Spirit; he is nearby his mercy. Now, the sinner is past from death unto life: he has forsaken his way; and given up his former thoughts and hopes, and he has turned to the Lord; and he has met with just what he needs, namely, pardon, and with

mercy which endured forever. "Let the wicked forsake his way," is God's imperative mood. "Let there be light and there was light." He commanded the light to shine into the heart.

To speak to men as though they could help themselves in these matters, is to delude them, deceive them; and make their delusion, doubly strong, converting men to such delusion, is making them two-fold more the children of hell than they were before. If a man be not by the quickening power of Christ converted to God's truth, he is not truly or savingly converted to God; but dying in that state, must lie down in sorrow: yes, in shame and everlasting contempt. I have this morning no hopes of doing any good to the souls of men but by the power of God. My eyes are up unto him; and, therefore, I shall not ask the creature to do that which can be done only by the Creator; and he has said, "I will work;" and who shall let or hinder? It was when in his humiliation that his own arm brought salvation unto him; and so now in his exaltation his own arm brings salvation unto him; vain is the help of man; and for a man to work out his own salvation, he must first be a saved man, and the salvation of God must be made his own before he can work it out; and he who is saved, works out his own salvation by simply abiding by the truth. Timothy was to continue in the truth, and so save himself and them that heard him, and as the Israelites in Canaan worked out their freedom just in proportion as they abode steadfast in their hearts with the true God, so does the real Christian, by abiding steadfast in Christ, steadfast in the truth, hereby work out his freedom. The Egyptians, Amorites, and Canaanites would have labored in vain, for the land was given only to Israelites, so the kingdom of God is given to those for whom it is prepared. Thus, then, men may deceive themselves, and think anything will do for religion, but there never was a greater mistake; for nowhere are the honors and solemnities of Jehovah's name so concerned, as in this, the greatest of all matters, eternal salvation. Well, then, may that hope which makes not ashamed be called a good hope, and a glorious hope, and a blessed hope, and, to crown all, it is a sure hope.

But this delivers also from the shame of disappointment. Who shall undertake to describe the sorrows, even in this life, arising from disappointment: What losses, what reverses, what separations of the dearest ties! What thousands of gourds are blasted! What numberless springs of consolation run dry, and we become ashamed that we have hoped for so much in sources of such uncertainty. Alas! "Vanity of vanities, all is vanity." But shall the hope, the true hope of eternal life disappoints? Shall the hope of salvation, the hope of the gospel, the hope of righteousness, the hope of glory, disappoint? No! there is no uncertainty in any of these. The life is sure, the salvation certain, the gospel infallible, the righteousness of God eternal, the glory of the Lord endures forever. This hope is then indeed, more precious than rubies, and all things you can desire, are not to be compared unto it.

But this hope delivers also from the fear of man, so that we cannot be shamed out of our religion. The fear of man brings a snare, and into this snare thousands have fallen, and that, too, without being very conscious of it. They see that to belong to the sect everywhere spoken against, would be a most inconvenient sort of thing, and therefore lest their names should be altogether cast out as evil, they shape their course according to the spirit of the times, and thus hope to go on comfortably; but alas, their hope must, sooner or later, make them ashamed. But he who has that hope which makes not ashamed, knows he must bear the cross, and he desires to despise the shame, saying, "The Lord is my light and my salvation, whom shall, I fear! The Lord is the strength of my life, of whom shall I be afraid?" This is the hope that makes not ashamed.

In many, many more senses this hope delivers from shame, but as we are so limited to time, I must say no more upon this part of our subject, but notice

III. That which so especially emboldens the possessor of this hope that makes not ashamed, because the love of God is shed abroad in our heart, by the Holy Ghost, which is given unto us. Now a hope unconnected with the love of God must, to all intents and purposes, be a false hope; a dead hope; a mere delusive phantom. What then is this love of God shed abroad in the heart? It is the love of the truth, my hearer, that is the love of God. To the law of truth, and to the testimony of God, if they speak not according to this word, there is no light in them. All professed love to God must be tested by his truth. But what do I mean by his truth? I mean that truth where the love of God is in contrast to that truth where his wrath is. His love is in Christ, and here it is we are brought into an everlasting covenant, even the sure mercies of David. Now it is as these sure mercies are revealed and ministered to us that we love God. We love him not where he is wrath, or where he “is a consuming fire;” but where he is love. Now, he is love in eternal election in Christ. His absolute and eternal choice of our souls to salvation, stands as a declaration of his love. Also, in predestination he is love, his love is the reason of his decreeing. In vocation he is love, “God who is rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he loves us, when dead in sin;” again, “I have loved you with an everlasting love, therefore in loving kindness, have I drawn you.” He is love in justification, for what but love could put this best robe upon us. He is love in the life, and death, and resurrection, of his dear Son. He is love in all the counsels and instructions of his holy word. And in the end, it will prove that he is love in all the afflictions he lays upon his people, or suffer others to lay upon them. And “he rests in his love for ever.” Now then, here it is, we love God where he first loved us. Now where the truth is thus known in the life and love of it, there is more or less assurance of interest in the same; and this will make a man feel that “the Lord of Hosts is with him, that the God of Jacob is his refuge;” and this will make him bold as a lion. What cares he for fiery furnaces, or lion's dens! Take the 11th chapter of Hebrews, see with what divine and holy boldness holy men of old stood out for God, not “counting their lives dear unto them, that they may finish their course with joy.” It was the love of God shed abroad in the heart that so strengthened their faith and hope in God, so far so, that in some cases, it seemed to matter but little what they had to encounter or to endure, there was not anything seemed able to daunt them, and why should it! Moses, by faith in God, overthrew Pharaoh and all his host; Joshua divided Jordan, threw down the walls of Jericho, put mighty armies to flight, and no man was able to stand before him all the days of his life; and thus, through faith they subdued kingdoms in Egypt, in the wilderness, and in Canaan; and Daniel wrought righteousness in Babylon, obtained promises, and stopped the mouths of lions. And such was the love they had to God, that for the truth sake they willingly underwent all that an ungodly world could inflict upon them: many waters could not quench their love, to the truth, neither could floods drown it.

All the promises of God are to them that love him. “Yes, eye has not seen, nor ear heard, nor has it entered the heart of man, the things God has prepared for them that love him.” Those who love him are reckoned as his friends. Abraham was the pattern of these; and is called “the friend of God.” As what the Lord said to Abraham belongs unto all who love him: “Fear not, Abraham, I am your shield and your exceeding great reward.” God here gives himself as our reward and portion; and of this portion can we ever be ashamed? Can it in any one thing ever fail us, so that we may indeed say, “I will not fear what man can do unto me.” But this love is said to be “shed abroad in the heart.” It is not shut up in one corner of the heart, but ranges all through it; it is the

very life, health, and strength of the heart, for without “this love of God shed abroad,” how dead, how sickly, and how weak are we.

But when this love shines like the sun into every part, when this love, like a refreshing breeze, diffuses itself abroad; or, like the flowing brook, soften and fertilizes the soul, making it “a well-watered garden.” When this love is thus shed abroad, how it brings mountains down, valleys up, rough places plain, and shows forth the salvation and glory of God. And where his love is thus shed abroad, it is sure to show itself, for it works no ill to its neighbor. It was in love that God gave us his Son; it was love unto us that Jesus died for us; and love to us the Holy Spirit quickened us; and in love to us the Lord abides by us. And I am glad, as I before said, to see so goodly a number here this morning (Supposed to be nearly 3000) practically sympathizing with the objects of this Society. Where love is shed abroad, it will set the heart and hands to work; and we shall glory in doing good.

But this love is shed abroad by the Holy Ghost, which is given unto us; showing that none but the Lord himself can do this. But here is one more thing of essential importance implied in these last words, which in conclusion, I will notice: namely, the Spirit of God is called the Holy Spirit; not merely because he is holy, but also because he is a Spirit of holiness in all who have this “hope that makes not ashamed.” “Behold, (says John) what manner of love the Father has bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God; therefore, the world knows us not, because it knew him not. Beloved, now are we the sons of God; and it does not yet appear; but we know that when he shall appear, we shall be like him, and see him as he is.” “Every man that has this hope purifies himself as he is pure.” Now the Holy Spirit shedding abroad the love of God in the heart, uniting the soul to Christ, the soul becomes purified in obeying the truth: so that here is the spirit of true holiness, being a spirit of faith in the cleansing blood of Christ, and a spirit of love to the truth; and so by this spirit of vital faith in the blood of Christ; or, in other words, that they are by this spirit of faith in God by the blood of Christ; and by this spirit of love to the truth “made meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light.” But without the Holy Spirit of God they could not have faith in the blood of Christ, nor true love to the truth; and as we can have oneness with God by the blood of Christ; and as the temple of old was dedicated to the people by sacrificial blood, and the people also were consecrated to God by blood; so heaven is dedicated to us by blood; and we are consecrated to and for heaven by the blood of Christ. And so, the Savior by entering heaven itself by his own blood, has prepared a place for them. For where that atoning blood is not, there they cannot come; for of all the things which God has prepared, we cannot have access to any of them but by the blood of Christ. And nothing short of this spirit of faith in the blood of Christ, and love to his truth, constitute the spirit of true holiness which makes us citizens of heaven, and fits us to be inhabitants of the Jerusalem which is above. And so, the Holy Spirit guides into all truth; testifies of Christ; and thus, leads us into the way of holiness where there is an end to sin and death, and that way is CHRIST.

And now may grace be with all them that love our Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity. Amen.