

## “THINGS CONTAINED IN OUR HOPE”

(Discourse below by W. M. Batterson, given at Clinton Convention, on Hope Day, June 30, 1914, starting on page 15.)

Surely we do not know why under these favorable circumstances this morning it would not be true of all of God's people that they are filled with joys and peace and blessing and abounding in hope through the power of the holy spirit. We come together this morning on Hope Day—the time when the glorious consummation of our hopes is drawing very near. We come together rejoicing in the hope of the Kingdom this morning.

For a little time we expect just simply to call attention to these things contained in our hope—things with which we are all familiar and that have come to us to be an old and beautiful story. We are hoping this morning to soon become members of the body of Christ in glory and immortality. You know it is written in Col. 1:27: “To whom God would make known what is the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles; which is Christ in you the hope of glory.” Of this mystery—Christ in you the hope of glory. And we are hoping in Him as Paul expressed it in Titus 1:2, “In hope of eternal life.” We know of nothing to cause such great rejoicing as the hope of eternal life through God's dear Son. We need not stop to discuss with you this hope, the basis of it, the joys of it, the hope that reaches out and embraces the world of mankind, the hope that assures us in God's due time and order all tears shall be wiped away, that those in Christ shall be reigning with Him glorified beyond the veil, kings and priests unto God, and empowered with that glorious privilege with Jesus Christ of fulfilling and bringing to pass the time when all things shall be brought together in Christ Jesus, when suffering and pain shall be ended, when sin and death shall be no more, when God's grand promise to Abraham, “in thy seed shall all the families of the earth be blessed,” shall have its glorious fulfillment. We are hoping in Christ that as a part of this Abrahamic seed we may have a part in this work. “If we be Christ's, then are we Abraham's seed and heirs according to the promise.”

We are hoping then, not only for glory with Jesus Christ beyond the veil, but we are hoping to share with Jesus Christ in that glorious work of blessing all the families of the earth; and the basis of this hope is in the Oath-Bound Covenant of God. We have it in His counsel, we have it in His oath and we have it in the assurance that is given us in the resurrection and glorification of Jesus Christ our Savior. There are those three things to confirm the hope of the children of God at this time.

Now we want to talk for a little time about *the conditions of our hope*. You know we are assured that in order to become members of the body of Christ, in order to become disciples of Jesus, it is necessary that we present our bodies living sacrifices to Him. Remember how the Apostle speaks of it in Rom. 5:1 when he speaks of our justification?

“Therefore being justified by faith we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.” Also we have “Access by faith into this grace wherein we stand.” By reason of our having entered into a covenant of sacrifice with God, “presenting our bodies as living sacrifices” and when we do this, according to the language of Christ we have forsaken all. “Whoever he be of you that forsaketh not all that he has, he cannot be My disciple.” When we had forsaken all that we had, had nothing, absolutely nothing to hope for, but as Peter expressed it that, “Your faith and hope might be in God,” we did not have anything, only this hope, for we had laid on the altar of Jehovah, wealth, reputation, business, social standing—everything laid on the altar. We could not hope in good business protects, in our own good reputation, in the power of the institutions of men, in ecclesiastical institutions. Our hope from henceforth must be *in God*. We are separated from all things earthly in our covenant of sacrifice with Jesus Christ. When you have given up all things earthly in your covenant of sacrifice, you find that you have “Christ in you the hope of glory.” That is the hope of those whose hope is alone in God.

We are not hoping for the relief of human suffering, in any of the panaceas of men for the ills of this world—in prohibition, in the division of the land among the peons, or any of these things. Our hope is in God and it is the hope of glory.

How are we hoping? What are the conditions of our hope? We said we presented our bodies living sacrifices through Him. We are glad with you this morning to have made this offer through Jesus Christ, and just in measure as it becomes true in our association with Him, as we become acquainted with God, through hoping alone in Him, just in that measure will we abound in hope this morning, through the power of the Holy Spirit, not in our own wisdom. That is not what we are hoping for. Christ is made unto wisdom. We are hoping in Him. Christ is made unto us wisdom. It is not a question of how much we know, but of how much confidence we have in what He has revealed as His wisdom and His knowledge. We have rejoiced in it as we have seen the glorious perfect provision He has made for the carrying out of His purposes for the lifting up and blessing of mankind. We believe the wisdom of God and have been encouraged, and trust in His wisdom, and have decided that the God who could plan so perfectly and carry out His plans so perfectly, that the God who could do this, in His great love He has given His Son to die for us, He is worthy of our confidence; and we can lay aside our wisdom that is earthly and accept the mind of Christ and the merit that is in Christ Jesus. It will be true that just in the measure that Jesus Christ becomes to us wisdom, just in that measure will it be true that we have little time to think about our own wisdom. The more we have knowledge of all of His works, the more we are impressed with His wisdom, and as we are beholding something of the depths of His wisdom, and the breadth of His wisdom, and the length and height of this much diversified wisdom of God, we have no time to hope in our own wisdom. We get away from it more and more; and our confidence becomes firmer in the assurance that God is caring for us, and all of our interests are in His hands, “It is God that justifies, who is he that condemneth?” Just so long as God

justifies we will not need to justify ourselves and then point ourselves or others to the weaknesses or mistakes or failures that we have made. We are not going to stand up and condemn ourselves or justify ourselves; but we will point to the assurance that Jesus Christ accepted us with all of our imperfections and covers us with His robe; and we are hoping in Him for our righteousness this morning and we rejoice because He has made such glorious provisions for us as to count us perfectly righteous; and we are not only hoping in Him for wisdom and righteousness and strength, but everything is found in Jesus—“My grace is sufficient for thee; for My strength is made perfect in weakness.” This is the answer God gave to Paul when he was desiring to be delivered from a thorn in the flesh, and we can take comfort in the fact that His grace is also sufficient for us. So the child of God this morning is hoping in Him for strength. The adversary may assault him with the accusation of his weakness; but hoping in Jesus Christ we are assured that “My strength is made perfect in weakness.”

The Apostle has given us a little indication of how we may learn to abound in hope when he tells us in Romans 5th chapter—speaking of our justification: “*By whom we have access by faith into this grace wherein we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God.* And not only so, but we glory in tribulation also; knowing that tribulation worketh patience, and patience experience and experience hope.” Yes, patience is bringing experience. In what way? As we learn to exercise patience through the tribulation, we can depend on it that God in His wisdom knows what is best for us, and in His great love and power He will surely provide deliverance as He has assured us that “there shall no evil befall us.” He is wise enough to know at least that the tribulation that has befallen us was no more than we could bear and we should not be suffered to be tempted above what we are able, and we can have hope in God and so we can glory in tribulation.

And patience worketh experience. We might illustrate: It was a tribulation to Abraham when he was tested and proved by God, and God asked him to take that son in whom his hopes were centered, his only son whom he so dearly loved, and offer him up. When Abraham started to Mt. Moriah with his son unquestionably it was a time of trial and tribulation. He goes on with the offering, places his son on the altar, raises his hand in which he holds the knife to slay his son, and the angel stays his hand with the voice from Heaven. “Herein is the righteousness of God revealed from faith to faith.” Abraham believed it was safe for him to leave his every interest in God’s hand, and that interest would be perfectly safe because God would deal righteously. So his hope was increased when he had submitted all of his interest in God’s hands and his son had been restored to him and he had God’s promise of blessing. Was there any reason for his hope to be increased? Yes indeed, and so it is with everyone who places his interest in God’s hands and leaves them there. We have no interests of our own to look after. He is looking after our interests.

We remember a little illustration as to how this affects the hope of God's children. Here is one person who feels that he must hope in his business. He does not say that he is doing this. He says, "I must do this in order to keep my standing with the world." And so to keep up his standing with the business world, he is doing things that are not helpful to building up Christian character. Why? Because he is depending upon them in a business way. We ask about the brother's hope and he says, "I don't know. I may need this or that after a while." We go to another brother in business in the same line. Ask him about his hope and he says, "When I came out of the church I sent a letter to every member of that congregation; I placed in it a tract telling about where the dead are, one about what the soul is, and then when they came and asked me if I would not invest in this, or assist in that entertainment, I said No, I am not interested in these things now." They did not like this and said, "You are no good to our town." "No, my citizenship is in Heaven." "You will lose your business. You will have to do this for the sake of your business." "I don't have any business. This business belongs to the Lord. I have given it to Him, and in His wisdom and power He sees it is best for me to carry it on. He can turn it my way; and on the other hand, if He understands it is best to take this business away from me I want Him to take it away. My hope is not in the business; it is in God." Ask him how his hopes are and he says, "I am abounding in hope." "I am meeting tribulation; but I am finding those adornments that will make up those who are to reign with Christ—meekness, gentleness and Christ-likeness."

While we are inquiring about our hope, there are many who are prompt to lay all on the altar of sacrifice and hope alone in God. They are on the order of the dear sister who wondered how it was that she had to meet the same temptations and trials for the past eight years. "Well, have you been praying, 'Thy will be done?'" None can have experiences with God in temptation without saying, 'Thy will be done'." "Yes, I always pray that way." Have you not always added this, "I hope that you will get me out of this as soon as you can." "Yes." "You did not believe He was wise enough to know how long you needed to be there did you?" Those who can pray "Thy will be done," and then leave it there, are the ones who are learning to hope in God. We are so glad with you this morning that we are seeking in Jesus Christ to learn to say, "Thy will be done."

Abraham could not have enjoyed that experience, the increase of his hope in God, if he had not said, "Thy will be done." I remember an illustration along this line: We were visiting with a friend who told us why he became a Christian Scientist. He gave his experience of his son lying at the point of death and a number of physicians had given him up and he went to the Christian Scientists. And in this experience he said, "I have been praying every day for a week that God would spare my son and every day my son grew worse, and I raised from my knees declaring Christian Science was right, and I sent for the Christian Science practitioner that evening and my son recovered." "How many times did you say that week when you were praying for that son, 'Thy will be done?'" "I did not say it at all." "You thought you knew better what would be best than your God?"

“Yes, you thought you knew better than He did. You could not hope in God that He would do the best. If you had, then you could have said, ‘Thy will be done.’” No one can learn to hope in God except those who day by day are learning to say, “Not as I will, but as Thou wilt.”

The Apostle said as he would be committing his experiences into the hands of his Father, he would be proving God’s love all the time. “All things work together for good to them that love God. To those who are called according to His purpose.” Well, since that is true, what reason has his children to complain or to murmur, to find fault, to be anxious, to be troubled? “Let not your heart be troubled. Ye believe in God believe also in Me. In My Father’s house are many mansions. If it were not so I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you, and if I go to prepare place for you I will come again and receive you unto myself that where I am ye may be also.” “For all of the promises of God in Jesus Christ *are yea and amen.*” Then it will be true in all of our experiences that just in measure as we learn through tribulation that comes, to commit ourselves into God’s hands and say, “Thy will be done,” *in that proportion we will be abounding in hope.* As the poet says, “How I’ve proved Him o’er and o’er.” For no one has ever trusted Him implicitly without beholding how righteously He has dealt with them. “A mother may forget her child, but I will not forget thee.” The Lord will not forsake His people, not at any time, or in any place, or in any way. “Lo I am with you always, even unto the end of the age.” And we profess to believe in His wisdom. Since we do, we can safely let Him choose for us, can we not? and say, “Thy will be done.” We profess to believe in His love, and since we do, we can safely leave our interests in His hands and say, “Thy will be done,” can we not? “He will freely give us all things.” Yes, that is the promise. “All things are for your sakes.” Are we not glad that God has made such abundant provision for us? Surely we can abound in hope. “Enemies may strive to injure, Satan all his arts employ; God will turn what seems to harm me into everlasting joy.”

Then we do not need to think about opposition. “If God be for us who can be against us?” And since it is impossible that they can do anything against the truth, it is likewise impossible for that one that is in the shadow of the Almighty abiding in Christ, that anything shall hurt him. “Nothing shall by any means hurt you.”

Our brother called attention to the text about girding up the loins of our mind. We want them girded up with the promises of God. Also that “the word of Christ may dwell in us richly in all wisdom.” Oh, it will be true that the power of the Holy Spirit make us that we should abound in hope, that is the power of the promises of God, the power of the glorious provision He has made for us. “We shall fear no evil.” “There shall no evil befall thee.”

We rejoice this morning that all who are here have been studying these gracious and glorious provisions, studying them not to apply them to others, but to themselves. We are glad the Lord has given the admonition, “Study to show thyself approved unto God,” not to show others approved, but to show ourselves approved to God. As we learn in the wisdom of Christ to know the good and acceptable, and perfect will of God, we are not studying to prove other people, but ourselves. 2 Cor. 13:5, “Examine *yourselves* whether ye be in the faith; prove your own selves.” We are so glad we do not have to examine our brethren. He does not say examine your brethren, but “Examine yourselves whether ye be in the faith or not. Prove your own selves.” Yes, prove your own selves. How? We come to the Word of God and learn that those who were abounding in hope were those who were learning with a perfect submission to the will of God. They were learning with patience. What we hope for we do with patience wait for it. We are learning patience in the school of Christ. When we have found that we won’t want anything. “Let patience have her perfect work that ye may be perfect and entire wanting nothing.” We surely want that; we should like to get to the place where there is nothing we want. We want our hopes increased. “Tribulation worketh patience, and patience experience and experience hope.” So we want our hopes enlarged because we are learning to know God better, who is wise enough to make provisions for the blessing of all of the families of the world, and able to carry out the provisions, and in His great love He has made provisions so extensive as to release mankind from sin. We have learned to believe in His righteousness. We are learning to know Him better. “For this is life eternal that they are learning to know Thee.” We are learning to know Him through the experiences that come. In every temptation He has made a way of escape for us. In every temptation there is the way provided. As a dear sister had been praying to get away from temptation for eight years. We are sure when He has made a way it will be a satisfactory one. “His ways are ways of pleasantness and all of His paths are peace.” As we find the way He has made we find the way of peace, of satisfaction. Our hopes are increased, for He said He would make a way of escape that we might be able to bear these things. Not that we would get away from them or be able to bear them like we wish we would. Through our tears we will discover that the quickest way to find His way or will is through submission. “In everything give thanks, for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you.” Thank God for the tribulation? No. And for the temptation? No. Thank God for the opportunity for trusting in His wisdom. Thank Him for the privilege of trusting in His love. Thank God for the assurance that the power which He showed in Christ when He raised Him from the dead is the power exercised on behalf of those that believe. The power which He showed in Christ when He raised Him from the dead and set Him at His own right hand in the heavenly places. We can be assured that the very worst of our enemies or anyone else can do, affords God the opportunity to do greater things for us. Then God lifted Him to His own right hand. This is the power that we read is to be exercised on behalf of those that believe. When in Christ we have all of our interests taken care of. We can look up to Him and thank Him because we know of His wondrous love and power to deliver us, and we leave our interests there. We do not thank

Him for the tribulation or temptation, but for what these have enabled us to know of His glorious character; and as we put ourselves in His hands and prove His glorious promises, we have had some visions of His character that have led us to an increased hope.

The righteousness of God is revealed as it were from faith to faith, step by step, for those who commit themselves unto Him. Now we note that through tribulation God was working that He might bring us to a plane where we would not want anything. If we would give thanks to God in the time of tribulation, we could glory, not just because of the tribulation, but we could glory because we are in His keeping and know that in Jesus Christ He has provided a way of escape in the trial to make us more than conquerors. "Let him that glorieth glory in the Lord," and we can rejoice in hope in measure as we do this. How? Not as we were in the world. We were hoping, some of us, that through the various systems ecclesiastical that the thing we desired could be brought about. We were hoping that possibly through other means, some means of human device, these things could be brought about.

That we are hoping in God we come to inquire what we should want. What should a child of God want? The Apostle tells us what we consecrated for, that we might prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God. That is what he prays for the Colossian Church for, that they might be given the spiritual wisdom and understanding and increased in the knowledge of God's will, and as they come to the understanding of it, they see what His will concerning them is. Just think about it. Think about what His will is concerning an experience that shall come to them.

The Apostle prays for the Church at Ephesus to know and understand that they might know what is the hope of His calling and exceeding riches of the glory of their inheritance in the saints. This is what the Lord says that the body of Christ should be, a peculiar treasure that they should be exalted with Christ.

"I shall be satisfied when I awake with Thy likeness." Nothing else shall satisfy. We have peace in Him, joy in Him, rest in Him, all that we are we find in Him. We look forward as longingly and expectantly as the bride and groom look forward to the consummation of their hopes; and we think, "I shall be satisfied when I awake with Thy likeness." That will be full fruition, won't it? Beloved, if we shall find that full fruition it will be because as we knew Him before we tried to grow into His likeness—imperfect as we may be, slow as we may have been to develop, it will be the desire that we shall learn to be like Him. As He was in the world even so are we in the world. That is where we shall be made perfect as we set before us our Brother Jesus, our glorious pattern. As our first thought day by day and year by year let us remember that resolve morning by morning—the morning resolve—and at the same time continuing the work of crucifying the flesh and laying down our lives that we may attain the Heavenly Kingdom. We will get what we are expecting. If we desire to be more and more like Him as we behold Him

more fully and clearly all the time, the more strong that desire becomes within us and more and more it becomes true of us as the Psalmist expresses it, "As the hart panteth after the water brook, so panteth my soul after Thee, Oh, God." Then we will be awakened in His glorious likeness and the consummation will come when all are gathered into Christ, of all things in Heaven and in earth, and joy, peace and love will abound on every hand. Thank God for the hope of the glorious fruition!