

OUR HOPE – "AN ANCHOR TO THE SOUL"

"Let us hold fast the profession of our faith without wavering; for He is faithful that promised." – Hebrews 10:23.

NEARLY ALL that God has given us as New Creatures is by faith or hope. When we become followers of Jesus and take up our cross to follow Him, a sacrifice is involved, if the step be taken intelligently – along the lines of Divine instruction and invitation. No one would voluntarily undertake to sacrifice unless he had a hope or a conviction of some blessing that would result or of some reward that would come to him as the outcome of that sacrifice. In every proper action there must be a motive or object. The fact that the Church has been invited to follow Jesus indicates that there was something in His course which brought the blessing and favor of God – some special reward; and that if we will follow Him, we shall share that same blessing and reward – glory, honor and immortality.

So when we take up our cross to walk in our Master's footsteps, it implies that we are inspired with the hope of thus sharing in the glory and honor conferred upon Him. The character of our God assures us that any offer coming to us from Him, with rigid conditions attached, must be infinitely worthy of our acceptance; and the "exceeding great and precious promises" accompanying this offer assure us of His assistance and sustaining power. So by availing ourselves of His strength and of His aid, we shall be able to meet all the conditions and to attain the glorious reward set before us. Hence our faith has a strong and sure foundation upon which to rest; "faith can surely trust Him, come what may."

INWARD FAITH – OUTWARD CONFESSION

We exercise faith in the heart before we make an outward profession – before we confess the Lord with our mouth. And we have no right to confess Him with our mouth until we have believed "unto righteousness"; for "with the heart man believeth unto righteousness, and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation." (Romans 10:10.) So we have the declaration of the Lord that He will not consider that we have a proper faith or hope unless we confess it. He has declared that if we refuse or fail to confess Him before men, He will account us unworthy to be confessed before the Father and the holy angels. There is, then, no salvation without a confession of the Lord; the two are inseparable.

It is in vain that any entertain a hope of being accepted of the Lord and of winning His final approval who hides his light under a bushel and shrinks from the reproach of the Cross. "No cross, no crown," is the Lord's inflexible decision. All who have received the Truth in the love of it will be glad to let their light shine to the glory of God and the blessing of others. If the glorious Message of the Lord has filled our own hearts and blessed our lives, we shall rejoice to carry the living water to other thirsty souls. If the good seed has found our hearts fruitful soil, it will surely germinate and bring forth fruitage to the glory of our God.

In harmony with the terms of our consecration, we confess to men that we have a faith that reaches beyond the present life, a hope that "entereth into that within the veil," whither Christ, our Forerunner, has entered for us. We confess our hope that we shall have a part in His resurrection; that "we shall be changed in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye," and like Him be spirit beings, see Him as He is and share His glory on the Divine plane. We confess that we hope with Him to be instruments in the Father's hands, bringing life and joy and blessing to all the world of mankind, the living and the dead; that we hope to uplift them from

death, to raise them from all the sin and blight and sorrow and tears that have oppressed them for these six thousand years. Truly ours is a wonderful hope! Who would not rejoice to tell it!

If, then, we have this faith, this hope, and are properly confessing it before men, let us "hold fast." Tests of our loyalty will continually come. The flesh will be inclined to rebel strongly at times. The questions will present themselves: Are you willing to confess Christ? Are you ashamed to own His name before the world, or do you esteem this your chiefest honor? There will be temptations to become discouraged. Our weaknesses will rise up before us, and the Adversary will take advantage of these circumstances to further dishearten us. And not only will there come these temptations along the line of our faith and hope, but there will come certain reproaches and persecutions, permitted for the purpose of proving our loyalty. Ours is a marvelous calling, and only heroic souls are wanted to fill the places in this elect class – only those who have the Spirit of the Master.

DANGER OF WITHHOLDING THE LIGHT

If any are disloyal or weak, and fail to take a firm stand for the Lord and the Truth, for fear that they will be disesteemed amongst their fellow-men, or for any other reason, it will prove that they are not worthy to share with Christ the glories of His Throne as members of His Body. All who hope to be of this number have professed His Name; and they must be steadfast, must **[R5497 : page 212]** hold fast their confidence and profession of their faith even unto the end.

The flesh needs to be dealt with rigorously, and be brought into subjection and held there. According to the inclinations of the flesh, the Lord's children would wish to refrain from what would bring contumely and adverse criticism. The flesh would prefer to keep quiet, where the speaking forth of the Truth might bring reproach or persecution or ostracism. But the New Creature would

feel "a burning fire shut up in his bones" if he were to withhold the Message of Truth when a suitable opportunity was granted, and he would find that he must be faithful and let his light shine. Otherwise, the light would grow feeble and would finally die out altogether, and he would be in utter darkness. And "if the light that is in thee become darkness, how great is that darkness!"

Let us not grieve the Holy Spirit of God which is within us. The Lord gives us a solid basis for our hope, for our faith. It is a hope which He has Himself inspired. This hope is backed by all His sure promises and by His Oath; and He reminds us that "He is faithful that promised." (Hebrews 10:23.) It is as yet a promise only; it is all of faith. We have now but the begetting of the Holy Spirit to this new nature, and the sealing of the same Spirit, "the earnest of our inheritance." (Ephesians 1:13,14.) But we have learned to know our God and to trust His faithful Word. We have proven His gracious promises in many a time of stress and danger, and we know that He will not fail us. And "he that hath this hope in him purifieth himself, even as He is pure."

OUR ANCHOR SURE AND STEADFAST

If we were to let go this hope, this anchor to our souls, we should be adrift upon a shoreless sea, whose mighty billows would sweep us down to eternal death. A great Time of Trouble is now about to break upon the whole world, and any of the Lord's people whose faith and hope are not firmly anchored to the Rock of Ages, any who are fearful to trust His promises, will be overwhelmed in the storm. Shall this be our experience?

"The Time of Trouble nears, 'it hasteth greatly,'
E'en now its ripples span the world-wide sea;
Oh, when its waves are swoll'n to mountains stately,
Will the resistless billows sweep o'er *me?*"

Some of the Lord's real children will have their part in the great trouble-time; yet none who are faithful, who are obedient, will suffer thus. These will be kept in perfect safety to the end of their course, and will, we believe, be gathered "within the veil" before the great storm breaks in its fury. Because of our faith in the Master, because of our strong confidence in Him, our knowledge that *He* has been an overcomer, and that the Father has rewarded Him and that He is now our Advocate, our great High Priest, who "ever liveth to make intercession for us," therefore our hearts have good courage. We know that He will shortly "stand up" in power and great authority to establish His Kingdom and to exalt all His faithful to reign with Him in that Kingdom; therefore our hope is firm; it is indeed an anchor to our souls. We are "strong in the Lord, and in the power of His might." – Ephesians 6:10.

We shall never lose our courage if we keep our eyes continually fixed on Him, and our hand closely clasped in His. God's eternal promises are the foundation upon which all that we hope, either of character, or of coming glory, is built. And what a strong foundation! Let us be faithful to Him who hath called us. Let us hold the glorious Truth not only in the letter, but also in the spirit. Let us hold it in the love of it, because it *is* the Truth, as well as because of its matchless beauty and grandeur.

Let us ever remember the importance of patient endurance, constancy, that we may develop the fruits of the Holy Spirit, that we may take joyfully every trial, every persecution, every difficulty, which our God in His infinite Wisdom and Love may permit to come upon us for our testing and the ripening of that character which is of paramount importance, and without which we can never hope to see our Father's face, nor partake of the glory to which we have been called with Christ. Let us indeed "hold fast the profession of our faith without wavering; for He is faithful who hath promised." Let us "hold fast the confidence and the rejoicing of the hope, firm unto the end." Yea, "we desire that every one of

you do show the same diligence to the full assurance of hope" unto death. – Hebrews 3:6; 10:23; 6:11. [R5498 : page 212]

"Will your anchor hold in the storms of life,
When the clouds unfurl their wings of strife?
When the strong tides lift, and the cables strain,
Will your anchor *drift*, or *firm remain*?"

Surely by the grace of God our anchor will *hold*; for

"We have an anchor that *keeps the soul*
Steadfast and sure while the billows roll;
Fastened to the Rock which cannot move,
Grounded firm and deep in the Savior's love!"

