

THE PERSONAL PENTECOST AND THE GLORIOUS HOPE

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

PENTECOST is repeated in the heart of every Believer. Let me give you a little bit of historical analogy to illustrate the text. The Lord's disciples were made to sorrow at His Cross. Sore was the tribulation which came upon them as they thought upon His death and His burial in Joseph's sepulcher. But after a little patience and experience, their hope revived, for their Lord rose from the dead and they beheld Him ascending into Heaven. Their hopes were bright concerning their Lord who had gone into Glory and had left them a promise to come again and to make them takers of His victory. After that hope had been begotten in them, they were, in due time, made partakers of the Holy Spirit, whose Divine influence was shed abroad upon them so that they were filled with His power. Then were they made bold. They were not ashamed of their hope, but proclaimed it by the preaching of Peter and the rest of them. The Holy Spirit had visited them and, therefore, they fearlessly proclaimed to the world the Lord Jesus, their hope of Glory.

Truly, history repeats itself. The history of our Lord is the foreshadowing of the experience of all His people! That which happens to the First-Born befalls, in measure, to all the Brethren. We have before us in our text an admirable example. First comes our tribulation, our agony, our cross-bearing. Out of our patience and experience there arises, in due season, a blessed hope—we are quickened by our Lord's resurrection life and come forth from our sorrow! He raises us up from the grave of our woe. Then comes the Divine visitation of the Holy Spirit and we enjoy our Pentecost—“The love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Spirit which is given unto us.” I trust we know what this means and are now enjoying it. Consequent upon that visitation, our hope becomes clear and assured—and we are led to make a full outspoken testimony concerning our hope and that blessed One who is the Substance of it. I hope that many of us have already proved that we are not ashamed and that others of you will yet do so. Our God has visited us in mercy and endowed us with the Holy Spirit who is His choice gift to His children. The Holy Spirit dwelling in us has caused us to know and feel the love of God and now we cannot but speak and tell others of what the Lord has made known to us! Thus, on a small scale, have we rehearsed a portion of early Church history in our own personal story. You shall find that not only in this case, but in all cases, the life of the Believer is in miniature the life of Christ! He who originally said, “Let Us make man in Our image,” still, in the new creation, follows the model of Christ in the new-making of chosen men!

Now let me give you a little passage of *experimental mystery*. You have it here spread before you in a little map of the inner life—“Tribulation works patience; and patience, experience; and experience, hope: and hope makes not ashamed; because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Spirit which is given unto us.” This passage can only be fully understood by those people of God who have had it written in capital letters on their own hearts. “Tribulation works patience,” says the Apostle. *Naturally* it is not so. Tribulation works *impatience* and impatience misses the fruit of experience and sours into hopelessness! Ask many who have buried a dear child, or have lost their wealth, or have suffered pain of body and they will tell you that the *natural* result of affliction is to produce irritation against Providence, rebellion against God, questioning, unbelief, petulance and all sorts of evils!

But what a wonderful alteration takes place when the heart is renewed by the Holy Spirit! Then, but not till then, tribulation works patience! He that is never troubled cannot exercise patience. Angels cannot personally exhibit patience since they are not capable of suffering. It is necessary to the possession and exercise of patience that we should be tried—and a great degree of patience can only come by a great degree of trial. You have heard of the patience of Job—did he

learn it among his flocks, or with his camels, or with his children when they were feasting? No, verily, he learned it when he sat among the ashes and scraped himself with a potsherd—and his heart was heavy because of the death of his children. Patience is a pearl which is only found in the deep seas of affliction and only Divine Grace can find it there, bring it to the surface and adorn the neck of faith with it!

It comes to pass that this patience works in us experience, that is, to say, the more we endure, the more we test the faithfulness of God, the more we prove His love and the more we perceive His wisdom. He that has never endured may believe in the sustaining power of Grace, but he has never had *experience* of it. You must put to sea to know the skill of the Divine Pilot and you must be buffeted with tempest before you can know His power over winds and waves. How can we see Jesus in His full power unless there is a storm for Him to turn into a calm? Our patience works in us an experimental acquaintance with the truth, the faithfulness, the love and the power of our God. We bow in patience and then we rise in happy experience of heavenly support! What better wealth can a man have than to be rich in experience? Experience teaches. This is the real High School for God's children. I scarcely think we learn anything thoroughly without the rod of affliction. Certainly we know best that which has been a matter of personal experience. We need that Truth of God should be burned into us with the hot iron of affliction before we know it effectively—after that, no man may trouble us, for our heart bears the brand of the Lord Jesus! Thus patience works experience.

It is rather amazing that it should then be said, “and experience works hope”—not amazing in the sense of being questionable, for there is no hope so bright as that of the man who knows, by experience, the faithfulness and love of God. But does it not seem singular that this heavy tribulation, this grievous affliction, this painful chastisement should, nevertheless, bring forth for us this bright particular light, this morning star of hope, this herald of the everlasting day of Glory? Brothers and Sisters, how wonderfully does Divine alchemy fetch fine gold out of metal which we thought to be worthless! The Lord, in His Grace, spreads a couch for His own upon the threshing floor of tribulation and there, like Boaz, we take our rest! He sets to music the roar of the floods of trouble. Out of the foam of the sea of sorrow He causes to arise the bright spirit of “hope that makes not ashamed.”

This passage from which we have taken our text is a choice extract from the inner life of a spiritual man! It is a fragment of the Believer's riddle—let him read it that has understanding.

Before I plunge into my subject, let me point out to you that this text is none other than the House of God and the gate of Heaven. Behold a Temple for the worship of the Divine Trinity in my text. Read the fifth and sixth verses together—“The love of God (*the Father*) is shed abroad in our hearts by *the Holy Spirit* which is given unto us. For when we were yet without strength, in due time *Christ* died for the ungodly.” Behold the blessed Three in One! It needs the Trinity to make a Christian! It needs the Trinity to cheer a Christian! It needs the Trinity to complete a Christian! It needs the Trinity to create in a Christian the hope of Glory! I always like these passages which bring us so near to the Trinity. Let us pause a while and adore—“Glory be unto the Father, and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit: as it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be, world without end! Amen.” It is most sweet to be called upon to offer special worship unto the one God in the Trinity of His Divine Persons and to feel your heart readily inclined thereto, as we do at this hour. By faith we bow with the hosts of the redeemed before the all-glorious Throne of God and worship Him that lives forever. How heartily may we do this when we think of the unity of the Sacred Three in our salvation! We have Divine Love bestowed by the Father, made manifest in the death of the Son and shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Spirit! Oh, to feel, at this moment, communion with the Triune God! Let us bow before the sacred majesty of Jehovah and then, by the teaching of the Holy Spirit, let us enter the Temple of our text!

The text runs thus: “Hope makes not ashamed, because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Spirit which is given unto us.” The Apostle had worked up the subject till he came to the hope of Glory. When he had reached that height, he could not help saying something concerning it. Turning away from his main subject, as is often his custom, he makes a diversion and gives us a few glowing sentences upon the Believer's hope.

Our first head will be *the confidence of our hope*—the hope makes not ashamed. Secondly, *the reason of this confidence*, which I hope we are enjoying, today, for we are so confident about our hope that we shall never be disappointed in it because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Spirit which is given unto us. Thirdly, we shall have a word or two to say upon *the result of this confidence of hope*, since, for this cause we bear testimony to the world and declare that we are not ashamed of the Gospel of Christ.

I. First then, consider THE CONFIDENCE OF OUR HOPE. *We are not ashamed of our hope.* Some persons have no hope, or only one of which they might justly be ashamed. Ask many who deny the Scriptures, what is their hope for the future. “I shall die like a dog,” says one. “When I am dead that’s the end of me.” If I had such a wretched hope as that, I certainly would not go about the world proclaiming it! I would not think of gathering a large congregation like this and saying to you, “Brothers and Sisters, rejoice with me, for we are all to die like cats and dogs.” It would never strike me as being a matter to be gloried in. The Agnostic knows nothing and, therefore, I suppose he hopes nothing. Here, also, I do not see much to stir enthusiasm. If I had no more hope than that, I would be ashamed.

The Romanist’s best hope when he dies is that he may come right in the end, but that, in the meantime, he will have to undergo the purging fires of “purgatory.” I do not know much about that place, for I cannot find mention of it in Holy Scripture—but those who know it well, because they invented it, and keep its keys—describe it as a dreary region to which even great bishops and cardinals must go! I have seen, *personally seen*, invitations to the faithful to pray for the repose of the soul of a late eminent cardinal—and if such is the lot of the princes of the church of Rome, where must ordinary people go? There is no great excellence in *this* hope. I do not think I should call you all together in order to say to you, “Rejoice with me, for when we die we shall all go to ‘purgatory.’” You would fail to see the special ground of rejoicing. I do not think I would say much about it and when anybody questioned me about it, I would endeavor to evade the point and declare that it was a deep mystery which had better be left to the clergy!

But *we are not ashamed of our hope*, we Christian people who believe that those Believers who are absent from the body are present with the Lord! We look for a city which has foundations, whose Builder and Maker is God! We are not ashamed to hope for Glory, immortality and eternal life!

We are not ashamed of the object of our hope. We do not believe in gross carnal delights as making up our Heaven. We do not believe in a Muslim paradise of sensual delights, or we might very well be ashamed of our hope! Whatever imagery we may use, we intend, thereby, pure, holy, spiritual and refined happiness such as the False Prophet would not have regarded as a sufficient bait for his followers. Our hope is this—that our Lord will come a second time and all His holy angels with Him. Then shall the righteous shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father! We believe that if we fall asleep before that time, we shall sleep in Jesus and shall be blessed with Him. “Today shall you be with Me in Paradise,” is not for the thief, only, but for all of us who have trusted our souls with the crucified Savior. At His coming we expect a glorious resurrection. When He shall descend from Heaven with a shout, with the trumpet of the archangel and the voice of God, then shall our souls be restored to our bodies and our complete manhood shall live with Christ! We believe and are sure, that from that day we shall be forever with Him. He will give us to be partakers of His Throne, of His crown and of His Heaven—and that forever and ever!

The more we talk about the promised bliss, the more we feel that we could not be ashamed of the hope of Glory! The ultimate reward of faith, the ultimate reward of a life of righteousness, is such that we joy and rejoice in prospect of it. Our glorious hope contains, within it, purity and perfection, freedom from all sin and the possession of every virtue. Our hope is that we shall be like our perfect Lord and shall be with Jesus where He is, that we may behold His Glory. Our hope is fulfilled in that promise, “Because I live, you shall live, also.” We shall not merely exist, but *live*, which is another and a higher matter. Our life shall be the life of God in our spirits forever and ever! We are not ashamed of this hope! We press forward to the attaining of it!

Furthermore, *we are not ashamed of the ground of our hope.* Our hope rests upon the solemn promises of God which He has made to us by His Prophets and Apostles—and confirmed in the Person and work of His dear Son. Inasmuch as Jesus Christ died and rose from the dead, we that are one with Him by faith, are sure that we shall rise again from the dead and live with Him. The fact of Christ’s Resurrection is the assurance of our resurrection! And His entrance into Glory is the pledge of our glorification because we are made one with Him by the purpose and Grace of God. As we fell in Adam by virtue of our being in him, so we rise and reign with Jesus because we are in Him. God is not the God of the dead, but of the living—yet is He the God of Abraham, of Isaac, of Jacob and, therefore, these men are yet alive! Even thus do we believe concerning all who die in the faith that they have not ceased to be, but they all live unto Him. Our hope is founded not upon reasoning, which, possibly, may dimly prove the immortality of the soul and the future reward of the righteous, but upon God’s Revelation which states it clearly and plainly and leaves no room for question. If this Book is a lie, our hope must be given up. But inasmuch as we have not followed cunningly devised fables, but have re-

ceived the testimony of faithful eyewitnesses of our Lord's Resurrection and Ascension, we believe the Holy Record and are not ashamed of our hope! What God has *promised* is sure—and what God has *done* fully confirms the same and, therefore, we have no fear.

And, Brothers and Sisters, *we are not ashamed of our personal appropriation of this hope*. Somebody may sneeringly say to us, “You expect to be in Glory, do you?” Yes, we do and we are not ashamed to acknowledge the soft impeachment, for our confidence is well grounded. Our expectation is not based upon any proud claim of personal merit, but upon the promise of a faithful God! He has said, “He that believes in Him has everlasting life.” We do believe in Him and, therefore, we know that we have eternal life! He has declared in His Word that, “whom He justified, them He also glorified”—and we are justified by faith, therefore we shall be glorified! Our hope is not based on mere *feeling*, but on the *fact* that God has promised everlasting life to them that believe in His Son, Jesus. We have heard our Lord pray, “Father, I will that they, also, whom You have given Me, be with Me where I am; that they may behold My Glory.” We believe that the Father gave us to Jesus because we have been led to put our trust in Him and *faith* is the sure sign and token of Divine election. Therefore, being Christ's, we expect to be with Him where He is. Reading in the Word of the Lord the words, “that whoever believes in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life,” we hold on to that promise and know that we have everlasting life! This seems to us to be a strictly logical argument. Unless it is a mistake and God has not said that the Believer shall live forever, then we are under no delusion in expecting so to live. God's Word is the most sure thing that can be and we are not ashamed to hold on to any claim which truthfully arises out of it! We dare believe that God will keep His Word to us and to all other Believers.

Brethren, *we are not ashamed as to the absolute certainty that our hope will be realized*. We believe that if, indeed, we are justified by faith and have peace with God, we have a hope of Glory which will not fail us in the end, nor on the way to the end. We do not expect to be deserted and to be left to fall from Grace, for, “He has said, I will never leave you nor forsake you.” We do not expect to be left to ourselves, which would mean our sore and certain ruin, but we expect that He who has begun a good work in us will perfect it unto the day of Christ—we are certain that He who has worked this hope in us will justify that hope by fulfilling it in due time. He will preserve us through long life if we are to live long; will maintain a living hope in us when we come to die and will remember, even, our dust and ashes when these are hidden in the tomb. “Who shall separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord?” It is written, “He that believes and is baptized shall be saved.” And so it shall be. He shall not perish *from* the way, nor *in* the way. Has He not said, “I will put My fear in their hearts, that they shall not depart from Me?” He keeps the feet of His saints. “I give unto My sheep,” He says, “eternal life and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of My hand.” Never shall we be deceived in our trust in Jesus! No man shall say, “I trusted the Lord Christ to keep me, but He has not kept me. I rested in Jesus to preserve me in spiritual life, but He has not preserved me.” Never! We shall not be ashamed of our hope!

II. As I have introduced to you that confidence which makes Believers—especially tried and experienced Believers—full of hope which makes us not ashamed, my second objective is to dwell upon THE REASON OF THIS CONFIDENCE. Why is it that men who possess the good hope are so far from being ashamed of it that they rejoice in it?

My answer, is first, because *that hope has for one of its main supports the love of God*. I expect, one day, to sit among the angels and to behold the face of my Best-Beloved, but I do not expect this because of anything *in* me, or anything which may ever be done *by* me, but simply because of the infinite love of God! I trust not to my love of God, but to God's Love to me! We trust Him because He loves us. We are sure that He will fulfill our hope because He is too loving to fail us. It is from the love of God that all our hopes begin and it is upon the love of God that all our hopes depend! If it were not for the Father's love, there had never been a Covenant of Grace. If it were not for His infinite love, no atoning Sacrifice had been provided. If it were not for His active love, no Holy Spirit would have quickened and renewed us. If it were not for His unchanging love, all that is good in us would soon pass away. If it were not for love almighty, love immutable, love unbounded, we would never hope to see the face of the King in His beauty in the land that is very far off. He loves us and, therefore, He leads us, feeds us and always keeps us. Do not your hearts confess this? If that love could be suspended for a moment—if its power were, for an instant, to cease, where would we be? We fall back upon the love of God as the final reason of our hope in Him.

Observe, dear Brothers and Sisters, the actual cause of our confidence is that *the love of God has been shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Spirit*. Let me try and explain what this means. The Holy Spirit is in the heart of every Believer and He is occupied in many gracious acts. Among other things, He sheds abroad the love of God in the heart in which He resides. The figure is taken from a box of precious perfume being poured out in a chamber. There lies the slumbering scent within the alabaster box—it is a very choice thing, but no one has yet perceived its odor. The love of God brought within the soul is that rare fragrance, but till it is shed abroad, it is not enjoyed. Now the Holy Spirit takes that box, opens it and the sweet savor of Divine Love streams forth and fills all the capacity of the Believer. This love penetrates, permeates, enters and occupies the entire being. A delightful perfume streams through the entire room when the odor of roses is poured out and even so, when the love of God is thought upon by the devout heart and the Holy Spirit helps its meditations, the theme fills the mind, the memory, the imagination, the reason and the affections! It is an engrossing subject and is not to be confined to any one faculty any more than you could keep the aroma of spices within a certain narrow space.

Moreover, as perfume gives delight to the nostrils, so the love of God, when shed abroad in the power of the Holy Spirit, *imparts a singular sweetness to our emotions*. All the garments of the Lord of Love smell of myrrh, aloes and cassia. Where can such sweetness be as in the love of God? That the eternal and the infinite One should really love men and love them at such a rate as He has done, is a Truth of God at once surprising and gladsome! It is a root from which springs the lily of perfect joy. This is an ivory palace wherein every dweller is made glad. You may meditate upon that love till you are ravished and carried away by it—and your soul, before you are aware, becomes like the chariots of Amminadib!

Yet again, wherever perfume comes, it not only spreads itself abroad and gives delight to all who are in the place, but *it abides there*. Take the ointment away if you will, but the sweet odor remains for many an hour in the room which was once filled with it. Some scent appears to abide forever. You went to your drawer the other day and there was a delicious flavor of lavender, yet there had been no lavender there since last summer—fragrance lingers! A few drops of the true oil will perfume a wide space and remain long after the vase from which it was poured has been taken away. The love of God, when it comes into the heart and is shed abroad by the Holy Spirit, who is the great Master of the art of diffusing love, abides in the heart world without end! All other things may cease, but love abides. For a moment we may seem to forget the love of God amidst the business of the world, but no sooner is the pressure removed than we return unto our rest. The sweet perfume of Divine Love overcomes the rankness of the odor of sin and never quits the heart that has once known its exceeding deliciousness.

If I change the figure, I may say that the love of God is shed abroad in the heart by the Holy Spirit like one of yonder rain clouds, black with exceeding blessing, which pours forth a shower of innumerable silver drops, fertilizing every place on which they fall, making the drooping herbs to lift up their heads and rejoice in the Heaven-sent revival! After a while, from that spot where the rain fell, there rises a gentle steam which ascends to Heaven and forms fresh clouds—thus is the love of God poured upon our heart and shed abroad in our nature till our spirit drinks it in and its new life is made to put forth its flowers of joy and fruits of holiness and, by-and-by, grateful praise ascends like the incense which in the Temple smoked upon Jehovah's altar. Love is shed abroad in us and it works upon our heart to love in return.

To leave the figures—the shedding abroad of the love of God in the heart by the Holy Spirit means this—He imparts to us an *intense appreciation* and sense of that love. We have heard of it, believed in it and meditated upon it and, at last, we are overpowered by its greatness! “God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son.” We cannot measure such love! We become affected by it. We are filled with wonder and admiration. Its greatness, its singularity, its specialty, its infinity—all these amaze us! It is shed abroad in our hearts. Then there comes an *appropriation* of it. We cry, “He loved me and gave Himself for me.” We begin to feel that God's love was not only love to men in general, but love to ourselves in particular and we are now fairly carried off our feet! In a belief of this special love to us we are ready to dance for joy. Faith perceives that it is even so and then we praise the Lord upon the high-sounding cymbals.

Then follows, as a matter of course, that *return of love* which the human heart must feel—we love Him because He first loved us. We doubted His love once, but we cannot doubt it now. If we were asked three times, “Do you love Me?” we would answer humbly, but most emphatically, “Lord, You know all things, you know that I love You. I could not live without loving You. I would rather a thousand times that I had never been born than be without love to You and, though I do not love You as I ought, and my heart craves after a far greater love, yet I do love You in deed and in truth.

You know that I do and I should be false to my own consciousness if I denied it.” This is to have the love of God shed abroad in the heart by the Holy Spirit which is given to us—to know it, enjoy it, appropriate it, rejoice in it—and come under its Divine influence. May this bundle of myrrh never be removed from the chamber of my soul!

But I want you to notice *the special sweetness which struck our Apostle* as being so amazingly noteworthy. He goes on to tell us what most affected him. He says, “When we were yet without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly.” That is the first point to be dwelt upon—that God should give His Son to die for the *ungodly*. That God should love those who love Him, that God should love His renewed people who are striving after holiness is, indeed, delightful. But the most overpowering thought of all is that He loved us when there was nothing good in us whatever! He loved us from before the foundation of the world! Regarding us as being fallen and lost, His love resolved to send His Son to die for us! Jesus came not because we were good, but because we were evil! He gave Himself, not for our righteousness, but for our sins! The moving cause of love in God was not excellence in the creature then existing or foreseen to exist, but simply the good pleasure of the God of Love! Love was born of God, Himself. It was so great in the heart of God that—

*“He saw us ruined in the Fall
Yet loved us notwithstanding all.”*

He loved us when we hated Him! He loved us when we opposed Him, when we cursed Him, when we persecuted His people and blasphemed His ways. Marvelous fact! Oh, that the Holy Spirit would bring home that Truth of God to our hearts and make us feel its energy! I cannot put the thought fitly before you, much less shed it abroad within you, but the Holy Spirit can do it—and then how charmed you will be, how humbled and yet how full of praise to the Most High God!

The Apostle is not content with bringing that point before us—he would not have us forget that Christ *died for us*. Brothers and Sisters, that Christ should love us in Heaven was a great thing. That He should then come down to earth and be born in Bethlehem was a greater thing. That He should live a life of obedience for our sakes was a wonderful thing. But that He should *die*—this is the climax of Divine Love’s sacrifice—the summit of the Alp of love! Some sights in the world astonish us once or twice and then grow commonplace, but the Cross of Christ grows upon us. The more we know of it, the more it surpasses knowledge! To a saint who has been saved 2,000 years, the sacrifice of Calvary is even more a marvel than when first he saw it! That God, Himself, should take our nature and that in that nature He should die a death like that of a felon upon a gallows to save us, who were His enemies, is a thing which could not be believed if it had been told us on less authority than the Divine! It is altogether miraculous! And if you let it take possession of your soul until it is shed abroad in your heart by the Holy Spirit, you will feel that there is nothing worth knowing, believing, or admiring when compared with this! *Nothing* can ever rival in interest the Cross of Christ. Let us study what books we may, the knowledge of a crucified Savior will still remain the most sublime of all the sciences.

Furthermore, the Apostle then goes on to say that *the Lord must always love us, now that we are reconciled*. He puts it thus—If God loved us when we were enemies, He will surely continue to love us, now that we are friends. If Jesus died for us when we were rebels, He will refuse us nothing, now that He has reconciled us. If He reconciled us by His death, surely He can and will save us by His life. If He died to reconcile enemies, surely He will preserve the reconciled. Do you see the whole argument? It is very full of reasons for the upholding of our hope of Glory and causing us not to be ashamed of it. When the great God makes us feel the exceeding greatness of His love, we banish all doubt and dread. We infer from the Character of His love as seen in the past that He cannot possibly cast us away in the future! What? Die for us and then leave us? What? Pour out His heart’s blood for our redemption and yet permit us to be lost? Will He manifest Himself to us as He does not to the world, robed in the crimson of His own Atonement through death, and then will He, after all, say to us, “Depart, you cursed”? Impossible! He changes not! Our hope has for the keystone of its arch the unchanging love of Jesus Christ, the same yesterday, today and forever! The Holy Spirit has so shed abroad the love of God in Christ Jesus in our hearts that we feel quite sure that no one can separate us from it and, so long as we are not divided from it, our hope of Glory is sure as the Throne of the Eternal!

Once more—the Apostle reminds us in the 11th verse that, “*we have now received the atonement.*” We already feel that we are at one with God. Through the Sacrifice of the Lord Jesus we are at peace with God. We love Him—our quarrel with Him is ended—we delight in Him, we long to glorify Him. Now this delightful sense of reconciliation is a satisfactory assurance of Grace and Glory. The hope of Glory burns in the golden lamp of a heart reconciled to God by Jesus

Christ. Inasmuch as we are now in perfect accord with God, longing only to be and to do just what He would have us to be and to do, we have the beginnings of Heaven within us, the dawn of the perfect day! Grace is Glory in the bud. Agreement with God is the seed-corn of perfect holiness and perfect happiness. If we are under the dominion of holiness. If there is no wish in our soul but what we would take back if we knew it to be contrary to the mind of our holy Lord, then are we assured that He has accepted us and that we have His life in us and shall finally come to His Glory. He that has brought His enemies to be His hearty friends will not permit this gracious work to be undone, or His holy purpose to fail! In our present delight in God we have the earnest of our endless joy in Him and, therefore, we are not ashamed of our hope.

One word more on this point—note well that the Apostle not only mentions the love of God and its being shed abroad in our hearts, but he mentions *the Divine Person by whom this has been done*. The shedding abroad of God's love in the heart has been worked by the Holy Spirit who has been given to us. Only by the Holy Spirit could this have been done. Would you ever have been charmed with the love of God through the influence of the devil? Would you ever have been overpowered and filled with excessive joy in the love of God through the power of your own fallen human nature? You judge! They that have felt the love of God shed abroad in their heart can say without a doubt, "This is the finger of God; the Holy Spirit has worked this in me." Nothing short of the Holy Spirit can effect it. "Thank God," says one, "I sat under an earnest ministry!" So you might and yet have never felt the love of God within your heart! We can shed that love abroad by preaching, but we cannot shed it abroad *in the heart*. A higher influence than that of human orator must deal with the inner nature!

Perhaps you were alone in your chamber, or walking by the roadside when the sweet savor of Divine love stole into your soul. Oh the love of God! The amazing, immeasurable, incomprehensible love of the Father! Oh, to feel this till our very souls are inflamed with it and our unloving nature is all on fire with love to the great Lover of the souls of men! Who can do this but the Holy Spirit? And how come we to have the Holy Spirit but by the free gift of God, whose gifts and calling "are without repentance"? God does not give and take—His gifts are ours forever. If the Holy Spirit has been given to you, is He not the pledge of God's love? Does not the New Testament describe Him as the earnest of the inheritance? Is not an earnest the security for all the rest? Does the Holy Spirit set His seal to a document which, after all, is so faulty that it will not effect its purpose? Never! If the Holy Spirit dwells in you, He is the guarantee of everlasting joy. Where Grace is given by His Divine indwelling, Glory must follow it. The Holy Spirit, when He comes into the soul, comes that there He may take up His dwelling place—and there He will abide till we shall be caught up to the higher realms, to behold our Lord's face forever!

III. Lastly, let us hint at THE RESULT OF THIS CONFIDENT HOPE. Let the context instruct us.

First, this confident hope breeds *inward joy*. The man that knows that his hope of Glory will never fail him because of the great love of God, of which he has tasted, that man will hear music at midnight! The mountains and the hills will break forth before him into singing wherever he goes! Especially in times of tribulation he will be found "rejoicing in hope of the Glory of God." His most profound comfort will often be enjoyed in his deepest affliction because then the love of God will especially be revealed in his heart by the Holy Spirit, whose name is, "the Comforter." Then he will perceive that the rod is dipped in mercy, that his losses are sent in fatherly love and that his aches and pains are all measured out with gracious design. In our affliction, God is doing nothing to us which we should not wish for ourselves if we were as wise and loving as God is. O Friends! You do not need gold to make you glad! You do not even need health to make you glad—only get to know and feel Divine love and the fountains of delight are unsealed to you—you are introduced to the banquets of happiness!

This brings with it the Grace of *holy boldness* in the avowal of our hope. Christian people do not often enough show worldlings the joy of their hope. We do not wear our best liveries, nor say enough of the joy of being in the Lord's service, nor speak enough of the wages which our Lord will pay at the end of the day. We are as silent as if we were *ashamed* of our hope! We even go mourning, although we have reason to be the happiest men on God's earth. I fear we have not enough experience of Divine love shed abroad in our hearts. If the perfume were within, it would be perceived by those who are around us. You pass a factory of perfume and at once perceive that sweetness steals abroad. Let us make worldlings know the fragrance of our joyous hope—especially let us tell those who seem most likely to laugh at us—for we have learned by experience that some of these are most likely to be impressed. Often has a new convert written to a

worldly friend to tell him of his great change and of his new joy—and that worldly friend has put the letter aside with a sneer or a jest. But after a while he has thought it over and he has said to himself, “There may be something in it. I am a stranger to this joy of which my friend speaks and I certainly need all the joy I can get, for I am dull enough.” Let me tell you that all worldlings are not such fools as some would take them for—they are aware of an unrest within their bosoms and they hunger after something better than this vain world can give them! So that it frequently happens that as soon as they learn where the good is, they accept it.

Even if they do not hunger, I do not know any better way of making a man long for food than yourself to eat. The looker-on feels his mouth water. All of a sudden his appetite arrives. In the parable of the prodigal son, the servants were ordered to bring forth the best robe and put it on him and to put a ring on his hand and shoes on his feet—but the father did not tell them to take the son and make him eat! What he said was, “Let us eat and be merry.” He knew that at the sight of others feasting, his hungry son would eat. When you who belong to the Divine family, eat and drink in happy fellowship and are merry with the Lord in feasting upon love Divine, the poor hungry brother will desire to join you and he will be encouraged to do so.

Come, then, you that have a hope of Glory, let all men see that you are not ashamed of it! Act as decoys to others—let the sweet notes of your happy life charm them to Jesus! May the Lord cause you to spread abroad what He has shed abroad and may that which perfumes your heart also perfume your house, your business, your conversation and your whole life! May we so enjoy true godliness that we may never bring shame upon it, nor feel shame concerning it!

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