

THE HOPE THAT PURIFIES

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*“And every man that hath this hope in him purifieth himself, even as he is pure.
1 John 3:3*

THE Christian is a man of much present enjoyment. “Beloved, now are we the sons of God and being God’s sons, we cannot be altogether unhappy.” Relationship to the ever-blessed God must bring with it a measure of joy. “Happy art thou, O Israel,” sang Moses, “who is like unto thee, O people saved by the LORD?” The men who can be truly called the sons of God are a blessed people.

Still, the main portion of the believer’s inheritance lies in reversion. It is not so much what I have as what I shall have that makes me joyful. “It doeth not yet appear what we shall be.” To the unbeliever, all that is to come is in darkness. He may expect to go from the shades of evening to the blackness of a midnight that shall never end.

But for the Christian, “light is sown.” He is in darkness now—the only darkness he shall ever know—and from the twilight of the morning he shall go on unto the perfect day—a day whose sun shall never set. We have the eyes of hope given to us, and looking across the narrow stream of death, and beyond that place where to carnal eyes hangs the curtain that shuts out the unseen, we, with these far-seeing eyes, behold the glory which is yet to be revealed, and we are blessed with the joys of hope. Let every Christian, therefore, when at any time he is downcast about the things of the present, refresh his soul with the thoughts of the future.

We have often discoursed concerning the past, and I know that some of us have frequently been cheered and comforted by seeing how kindly God has dealt with us in bringing us up out of the hole of the pit whence we have been digged. Now we shall get further consolation by seeing what is to become of us in the future yet to be revealed. But still, my object at this time will not be to impart consolation so much as to excite to holiness. Our text is a very practical one—while it deals with hope—it has more to do with the result of that hope in the purity of the believer’s life.

Let us go at once to our work. We shall note, first, *the believer’s hope*. Secondly, *the operation of that hope*, and thirdly, *use of the operation as a test of the hope*.

I. To begin, then, let us look at THE BELIEVER’S HOPE. The text speaks of men that have hope—“hope in him”—which I understand to mean hope in Jesus Christ.

The Christian has a hope peculiar to himself. As for its object, it is the hope of being like Jesus Christ. “We shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is.” Now, some would not put it in that shape—they would say that their hope, as Christians, is to pass within the pearly gates, to tread the golden streets, to listen to the harpers harping with their harps, and standing upon the sea of glass, to be forever free from sorrow, toil, and pain.

But those are only the lower joys of heaven, except so far as they indicate spiritual bliss. I do believe that there are some professing Christians who would like Mahomet’s heaven, and be perfectly satisfied if they could sit forever on a green and flowery mount, and could drink from rivers of milk and eat from hives of honey—and so on, and so on.

But after all, the real truth, the truth that is contained in these metaphors and figures, and underlies them all—the truth is, that the heaven a true Christian seeks after is a spiritual one—it is the heaven of being like his Lord. I take it that, while it will consist in our sharing in the Redeemer’s power, the

Redeemer's joy, and the Redeemer's honor, yet, from the connection of the text, it lies mainly in our being spiritually and morally like Him—being purified, even as he is pure.

I must frankly confess that of all my expectations of heaven, I will cheerfully renounce ten thousand things if I can but know that I shall have perfect holiness, for, if I may become like Jesus Christ as to His character—pure and perfect—I cannot understand how any other joy can be denied me. If we shall have that, surely we shall have everything. This, then, is our hope, that “we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is.”

Every man sees morally what he himself is. A man who is bad sees evil—he is blind to good. The man who is partially like Christ has only a partial view of Christ. You might almost know your own character by your view of Jesus. If your eye sees not inexpressible beauty in Him, it is your eye that is to blame, for He is altogether lovely.

And when the eye of our inward nature shall come to see Jesus as He is, then we may depend upon it that we are like Him. It is the pure in heart that see God, because God, the inexpressibly-pure One, can only be seen by those who are themselves pure. When we shall be perfectly pure, we shall be able to understand Christ—and when we understand Christ, or see Him as He is, as we shall do at His appearing, then we shall be like Him—like Him free from sin, like Him full of consecration to God, like Him pure and perfect.

Today, He is Conqueror over sin and death and hell. He is superlative in His virtue and His holiness, He has conquered all the powers of evil, and one day we too shall put our foot on the old dragon's head, we too shall see sin bruised beneath us, and shall come off “more than conquerors through him that loved us.” This, then, is our hope—that we shall be like our Head when we shall see Him as He is.

But why do we expect this? *What is the ground of our hope?* The context shows us that we do not expect to be like Christ because of anything that is in us by nature, or any efforts that we ourselves can make. The basis of all is divine love—for observe, the chapter begins—“Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God.” We expect to be like Christ, the Beloved of God, because we also are beloved of God. It is according to the nature and purpose of the love of God to make its object like God. We therefore expect that divine love will work with divine light and divine purity and make us into light and purity too.

The apostle goes on to say that we have been called the sons of God and that we really are God's sons. [See Sermon #1934, “And We Are”—A Jewel from the Revised Version] Well, that is another ground of our hope—we hope to be like Christ because the sons of God are like each other. It is the Lord's purpose that Jesus Christ shall be the firstborn among many brethren. “Whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brethren.” Very well then, since we are adopted into the divine family and are to be made like our Elder Brother, we, therefore, believe that we shall one day be like the Lord Jesus Christ in the perfection of His excellence.

Then we have this further buttress for our hope, if it be not a main pillar of it—that we are now one with Jesus Christ and therefore, “when he shall appear, we shall be like him.” There is an intimate connection between our souls and Christ. He was hidden from the world and the world knew Him not and therefore, we are hidden and the world knows us not. He is to be revealed—there is to be a day of His manifestation to angels and to men. And when He is manifested, we shall be manifested too. Knowing that we are united to Christ by sacred mysterious bonds, we, therefore, expect that when we shall see Him as He is, we shall be like Him.

Still, for simplicity's sake, it is well to say that the basis of our hope lies altogether in Him. “Every man that hath this hope *in him* purifieth himself.” Beloved, all true hope is the hope in Christ. If your hope lies in yourself, it is a delusion. If your hope rests upon any earthly priest, and not upon this one great Apostle and High Priest of our profession, your hope is a lie.

If your hope stands with one foot upon the work of Christ and the other foot upon your own resolutions or merits, your hope will fail you. “Hope in him” is the only hope which can be acceptable to

God, the only hope which will bear the stress of your weight, the only hope which will stand the test of your dying hour and of the day of judgment.

Our hope, then, of being like Christ is a hope in Christ. We are trusting Him. We are depending upon Him. If He does not make us like Himself, our hope is gone. If ever we are to get to heaven, it will be through Him, and through Him alone. Our hope is in Him from top to bottom. He is our Alpha and our Omega, the beginning and the end. There our hope begins and there our hope ends. You, O Christ, are all our confidence! We know of none beside.

This, then, is the believer's hope—a hope to be made like Christ, a hope based upon Christ.

II. But now, coming to the practical business of the sermon, our text speaks of THE OPERATION WHICH HOPE HAS UPON THE SOUL. "Every man that hath this hope in him purifieth himself."

It does not puff him up—it purifies him. I know there are some who will say, "Well, if I had a hope, a sure hope, a full assurance and confident expectation that I should go to heaven, I think I should feel myself to be someone very great." Yes, very likely *you* would. But then you do not possess such a hope and God does not intend to give it to you while you are in your present condition.

But when the Lord makes a man His child—then He takes away the evil heart out of his flesh. When He shows a man His great love to him, He humbles him, He lays him low, and so the expectation of heaven and of absolute perfection never exalts a man. If any man can say, "I am sure of heaven, and I am proud of it," he may take my word for it that he is secure of hell!

If your religion puffs you up, puff your religion away, for it is not worth a puff. He who grows great in self-esteem through the love of God knows not the love of God in truth, for the love of God is like the fish that the Lord put into Peter's boat—the more full the boat became, the more quickly it began to sink. O Lord, the more the glories of Your love shall strike my eyes, the humbler I shall lie!

Again, a man who has this hope of heaven in himself—let me correct myself—a man who has this hope of perfection in himself—finds that *it does not give him license to sin*. I have heard a thoughtless person say, "If I had a good hope of being saved and knew that I should go to heaven, I should live as I liked." Perhaps *you* would, but then *you* have not that hope—and God will not give it to you while you are in such a state that you would like to live in sin.

If a Christian man could live as he liked, how would he live? Why, he would live absolutely without sin. If the Lord would indulge the newborn nature of His own children with unrestricted liberty, in that unrestricted liberty they would run after holiness. The unrenewed heart would like to sin, but the renewed heart quite as eagerly loves to obey the Lord. When the Lord has changed you, He can give you not only a hope but a full assurance that that hope shall come true, and yet you will walk all the more carefully with your God, for, "every man that hath this hope in him purifieth himself, even as he is pure."

This hope, then, does not puff up and does not lead to license. You can see why it is so. *Gratitude leads to holiness*. Any man who feels, "God has saved me and I am on the way to being made like Christ"—if he be a man at all (and he must be to feel that), will say, "Now that I owe all this to God, how can I show forth my gratitude to Him?" He would be a brute, he must be a devil, he would be seven thousand devils in one who would say, "God is doing all this for me and therefore, I will continue in sin."

Well did the apostle say of such men that their damnation is just. But where there is the good hope of heaven, the man naturally says, "O my Lord, have You loved me so much, and have You provided such a glorious portion for me hereafter? Then, now I will obey You in everything, I will serve You with my whole heart and soul. Help me to run in the way of Your commandments."

Such a man, when led of the Spirit, also feels that *holiness is congruous to his expectations*. He expects to be like Christ. Very well, then, he says, "I will try to be like Christ. If I am to be the possessor of a perfect nature, the most natural thing is that I should begin to seek after it now." If the Lord intends to make you heirs of immortality to dwell at His right hand, does it seem right that you should now live as others do? Suppose you know tonight (and I hope many of you do) that, ere long you will be at God's

right hand—does it not seem a shameful thing that you should go and become a drunkard, or that you should be dishonest?

King Lemuel's mother said to him, "It is not for kings, O Lemuel, it is not for kings to drink wine; nor for princes strong drink," and surely, it is not for children of God to drink the wines of sin and go after the sweets of iniquity. It is not for princes of the blood imperial, descended from the King of kings, to play with the filthy lewdnesses of this time and with the sins of earth. Surely an angel would not stoop to become a carrion crow—neither can we suppose it congruous, nor does it appear seemly, that he who is brother to the Lord Jesus Christ, and who is to dwell forever where Jesus is, should be found in the haunts of sin. The very natural fitness of things, under the blessing of God's Spirit, leads the child of God to purify himself, since he expects to be completely like Christ ere long.

Now, without tarrying longer upon that part of the subject, let me notice that *the believer is here said to purify himself*. If we are very orthodox, we can afford to use language that does not look so, but people who are heterodox usually have to be extremely guarded in their expressions. Now we do not believe that any man actually purifies himself, yet the text says that, "every man that hath this hope in him purifieth himself." We believe that the Holy Ghost purifies sinners by applying to them the precious blood of Jesus. We sing,—

*"Let the water and the blood,
From Thy riven side which flowed,
Be of sin the double cure,
Cleanse me from its guilt and power."*

We look to God for all purity, believing that He is the Creator of it. Still, the text says that "every man that hath this hope in him purifieth himself"—that is to say, God the Holy Spirit so works in every man who has a true hope, that he labors to become purified and uses all possible means to overcome sin, and to walk in righteousness. While I am speaking upon this point, may each one of us be examining himself! When a man has a true hope in Christ, he begins to purify himself by the power of the Holy Spirit.

First, *he puts away all the grosser sins*. Perhaps before conversion, he had been unchaste. He had been lewd in language and in act, or he had been dishonest, or he had been a blasphemer. Conversion does away with all that. I have sometimes been astonished and delighted when I have seen how readily these sins are put to death. They are taken out to the block and executed. Many a man who had never lived a day without swearing, has never had a temptation to it from the moment of his conversion. So thoroughly does God renew the heart that these grosser sins go at once.

But there are sins of the flesh which, though we are purged from them, will endeavor to return—and hence the man who has a hope of heaven will purify himself every day from them. He will hate the very thought of those sins, and any expressions or actions that might tend towards them. He abhors them, he flees from them, for he knows that, if he begins to dally with them, he will soon go from bad to worse. He understands that, in this warfare, to fly is the truest courage, and therefore, from such sins of the flesh he daily flees, like Joseph fled from Potiphar's wife, even though he would leave his garment behind him, that he may get away from them. So he "purifies himself."

Then *he purifies himself from all evil company*. Those spirits that he once thought choice, he now avoids. If they will go with him to heaven, he will be glad that they should join his company. But if they will neither repent of sin nor believe in Jesus, he says to them, "You can be of no service to me." If he can help them to heaven, he seeks them out and tries to win them—but when they ridicule him, he is afraid lest their example may be injurious to him, and he shuns them and seeks better company. So he "purifies himself."

Then *he begins, from that day forth, and till he dies, he continues seeking to purify himself*. Perhaps, first, he does not know some things to be sin which he afterwards finds out to be so. As the light gradually shines into his soul, he puts away this, and that, and the other with a strong and resolute

hand—and if there was some sin that pleased him much—which was to him like a right hand or a right eye, he cuts it off, or tears it out, for having a hope of heaven in him, he knows he cannot take any sin to heaven—and he does not want to do so. He puts it away. He knows that he must put it away before he can enter into eternal life.

Soon, he finds out that there are certain sins in his nature which more readily overcome him than any others do. Against these he sets a double watch. Possibly he has a quick temper. Over this he grieves very much and he earnestly prays to God, “O Lord, subdue my evil temper! Guard my tongue, lest I say bitter words, and my heart, lest I indulge in unkind feelings.”

He finds himself in a certain trade, and if in such a trade there is sin (and most trades have some peculiar sin), he feels, “Then I will have nothing to do with it. If I cannot make money without sin, I will lose money, or change my business, but I will not do what is wrong.”

He observes some sin that runs in his family—he knows that his household has some peculiar fault. Here, again, he cries to God, “Lord, purify me and purify my house from this evil thing!” He observes that there are certain sins in the district where he lives. Against these he cries aloud. He knows that there are sins peculiar to his position. If he is a rich man? He is afraid of growing worldly. Is he a poor man? He is afraid of becoming envious. He looks at his position and he observes what the peculiar sins of that position are, and then, in the power of the Eternal Spirit, he seeks to purify himself from all these sins.

Perhaps he is travelling for his health and he knows that many travelers, though they profess to be Christians, never observe the Sabbath and forget to a large extent the regular habits of devotion which they had at home. So he sets a double watch over himself in that respect.

Is he in great trial? Then he knows the temptation to impatience and murmuring will come and he tries to purify himself from that. Has he great pleasure? Then he knows the temptation will be to make this world his home and so he tries to purify himself from that. You see, brethren, under the power of God’s Spirit, this purifying of the life is a great work to be done, but it is a work that every man that hath this hope in Christ will do. If he be indeed hoping in the Lord Jesus, this will be the great struggle and warfare of his life—to get rid first of this sin, and then of that other, that he may be wholly sanctified unto the Lord—a holy man, fitted for a holy heaven.

Now, then, how does he purify himself? I have shown you what he does, but by what means does he do it? *He does it, first, by noting the example of Christ.* The hoping man reads Christ’s life and he says, “Here is my model, but I am far short of it. O God, give me all that there was in Christ! Take off from my character all the excrescences, for these must be excrescences if they were not in Christ.” Familiarizing himself with the life of his Savior and getting to commune with Christ, he is thus helped to see what sin is and where sin is, and to hate it.

Then *he prays God to give him a tender conscience.* Oh! I wish that all Christians had tender consciences! I have heard of persons who are blind beginning to read with their fingers, but beginning late in life they have had some manual labors to perform which have hardened their fingers, so they could not read.

I am afraid that some of you have hard consciences, with two or three thicknesses or horny skin over them. You want to have the lancelet used to make your conscience tender again. It is a blessed thing to have a conscience that will shiver when the very ghost of sin goes by—a conscience that is not like our great steamships at sea that do not yield to every wave, but like a cork on the water, that goes up and down with every ripple, sensitive in a moment to the very approach of sin. May God the Holy Spirit make us so!

This sensitiveness the Christian endeavors to have, for he knows that, if he has it not, he will never be purified from his sin. He prays,

*“Quick as the apple of an eye,
O God, my conscience make!
Awake my soul, when sin is nigh,
And keep it still awake.*”

*“Oh may the least omission pain
My well-instructed soul;
And drive me to the blood again,
Which makes the wounded whole!”*

He tries always to keep an eye to God and not to men. That is a great point in purity of life. I know many persons whose main thought is earning other people’s opinions. Their question is, “What will So-and-so say? What will the neighbors say? What will Mrs. Grundy say? What will be commonly thought of it?” You will never be a holy man till you do not care a fig what anybody says except your God—for a thing that is right is right anywhere. If it is right before the Lord, it is right although all the world should hiss it down.

Oh! that we had more moral courage, for moral courage is essential to true holiness! The man who has this hope in him will not say, “If the door is shut and nobody hears of it, I may feel free to do evil,” or, “I am in a foreign country where the customs differ from those at home, therefore I will do as others do.” No—such hypocrisy shows a rotten heart.

The man of God will say, “This is right before the Lord, and though no eye sees me to commend me, and though every tongue should speak against me to blame me, I will do the right and I will eschew the evil.” This is one way in which the Christian “purifies himself.”

And then *he notes the lives of others and makes them his beacons.* If you were sailing down the Thames, and saw a boat ahead of you that had run upon a shoal, there would be no necessity for you to go there to find out where the true channel was—you would let other shipwrecks be your beacons. So the Christian, when he observes a fault in another, does not stand and say, “Ah, see how faulty that man is!” Rather he says, “Let me shun that fault.”

And when he sees the virtue of another, if his heart is right, he does not begin to pick holes in it and say, “He is not as good as he looks,” but he says, “Lord, there is a sweet flower in that man’s garden—give me some of the seed of it—let it grow in my soul.” So other men become both his beacon and his example.

A wise Christian tries to purify himself *by hearing a heart-searching ministry.* If the ministry never cuts you, it is no use to you. If it does not make you feel ashamed of yourself—aye! and sometimes half-angry with the preacher—it is not good for much. If it is all smoothing you the way the feathers go and making you feel happy and comfortable, be afraid of it, be afraid of it.

But if, on the contrary, it seems to open up old wounds and make the sores fester and the soul bleed before the living God, then you may hope it is a ministry which God is using for your lasting good. The true Christian not only wishes the preacher to search him, but his prayer is, “Search me, O God, and know my heart, try me, and know my thoughts.” He does not want to live in sin, thinking it not to be sin, but he wants to get away from it.

I am afraid some Christians do not want to know too much of Christ’s commands. There might be some very awkward ones and they do not want to attend to some of them. They are very pleased if they can get some minister to say that some of Christ’s commands are non-essential and unimportant. Ah, dear friends, he is a traitor to his Master if he dares to say that anything that Christ says is unimportant. It is always important for a servant to do as his master tells him, and it is essential to comfort and to obedience that whatever the Lord has spoken, we should endeavor to perform in His strength.

I might continue thus to show you the way by which the Christian, who has a good hope, endeavors to purify himself, but I must just notice this one thing, that *he sets before himself Christ as his standard.* He purifies himself, even as Christ is pure. My dear friends, we shall make a mistake if we make anyone our model save the Lord Jesus Christ, for in any other life but His there will be sure to be something in excess.

I am sure it will be best for us, if we are Wesleyans, not always to try and do everything as John Wesley would do it. And if we are Calvinists, as much as we honor John Calvin, to remember that we

shall go wrong if we try to season everything with the spirit of John Calvin. No man is fit to be a model for all men except the Savior who redeemed men.—

*“Lord, as to Thy dear cross we flee,
And plead to be forgiven,
So let Thy life our pattern be,
And form our souls for heaven.*

*“Help us, through good report and ill,
Our daily cross to bear;
Like Thee, to do our Father’s will,
Our brethren’s griefs to share.”*

In white, all the colors are blended. A perfectly white substance combines all the colors of the rainbow merged in true proportion, but green and indigo and red are only the reflections of a part of the solar rays. So John, Peter, Paul are parts of the light of heaven. They are differing colors and there is a beauty in each one of them. But if you want to get the whole of the rays of light, you must get to Christ, for all light is in Him.

In Him is not simply the red or the blue, but in Him is light—the true light, the whole of light. You are sure to get a lopsided character if any man shall be the copy after which you write. If we copy Christ, we shall, through the power of His Spirit, attain to a perfect manhood. O brethren, what a life-task is here for you! “Every man that hath this hope in him purifieth himself, even as he is pure.”

We shall never be able, beloved, to throw down our weapons and say, “Now I have no more sin to fight with, no more evil to overcome.” I have heard of some brethren who say that, but I think it must be a mistake. If there be a possibility of getting to that condition, I mean to get to it—and I would recommend you all to try after it.

But I think that till you die, you will have some evil to struggle with. As long as you are in this body, there will be enough tinder for one of the devil’s sparks to set it alight. You will have need to keep on damping it and every moment be on the watchtower, even till you cross the Jordan. This is our life’s business, and brethren, I do not know that you can have a better business, for while you are contending against sin—purifying yourselves by the precious blood of Jesus—you will be bringing honor and glory to God. Your heart will become a field in which the power and grace of God will be displayed, for He will come and purify you, He will be the real Purifier while He is using you to purify yourself.

III. I must stay no longer. But in the last place, USE THE TEXT AS A TEST. “Every man that hath this hope in him purifieth himself.” Dear hearers, the question is, have we a true hope in Christ? If we have, we purify ourselves—we labor to purify ourselves even as Christ is pure.

There are some professors of religion who do the opposite to this—*they defile themselves*. I repeat it—they defile themselves. It is a shame that I should have to say it. They were baptized on profession of their faith, but they were never cleansed from their old sins. I have heard of persons who come to the communion table yet go to the table of the drunkard, too, but he that has the true hope in Christ purifies himself.

How can you be said to have that hope if you love such sin? I have heard of professed Christians and my cheek has blushed when I have heard it of them, who could sing wanton songs and do wanton acts, and yet say they had a hope of heaven. O sirs, do not deceive yourselves. You do lie! If you are not pure and chaste, you are none of God’s children. You may fall into sin by surprise, but if you calmly and deliberately go to that which is unclean, how dwells the love of God in you?

I have known a man like to hear a good sermon, and also like to mingle with those who frequent the alehouse, and like to sing “a jolly good song.” He was a boon companion of the wicked. Well, labor under no mistake, sir, “He that committeth sin is of the devil.” It is no use making excuses and apologies—if you are a lover of sin, you shall go where sinners go.

If you who live after this fashion say that you have believed in the precious blood of Christ, I do not believe you, sir. If you had a true faith in that precious blood, you would hate sin. If you dare to say you are trusting in the atonement while you live in sin, you lie, sir. You do not trust in the atonement—for where there is a real faith in the atoning sacrifice, it purifies the man and makes him hate the sin which shed the Redeemer's blood.

After all, holiness is *the* test. So let the great fan throw up the chaff and the wheat together—and let the wind go through it, and blow the chaff away. You come here and sit as God's people sit, and sing as God's people sing, but ah, some of you are a disgrace to the profession you make—I know you are! May God forgive you and give you grace to repent of this your sin, and come to Jesus Christ and find pardon in His precious blood! This is, after all, the test, “Every man that hath this hope in him purifieth himself.” How can he have that hope in Him if he defiles himself?

But there are some others who, while they do not actually defile themselves, yet *they let things go very much as a matter of course*. They do not purify themselves, certainly, but they float down the stream. If there is a good tone at home, they do not object to it—if there is an evil one, they do not rebuke it. If they are in the shop and someone speaks upon religion, they chime in. If anybody ridiculed it, perhaps they would not join in it, but they would get up in a corner and say nothing.

They never take sides with Christ, except when everybody else is on His side. True, they do not take sides with the devil, but they mean to be betweenites, and neutrals, and slippers-in. Well, you will slip, one of these days, into your appointed place and that, I think, ought to be a particularly low place in hell. A sinner who sins openly and honestly is a respectable sort of a fellow, but those mean creatures who try to get enough religion to cheat the devil with, but never come straight out and acknowledge Christ—why, I think they deserve a double perdition.

They know better. They prove their knowledge by a little sneaking affection to the right and yet they cleave to the evil. The dead fish that float down this stream have only one fault, but down the stream it goes for that one fault. And the man who gives himself up to the current in which he is, proves himself to be spiritually dead.

What, sir? Did you never say, “No”? Did you never put your foot down and say, “I will not do this”? Others have to fight to win the crown and you expect to get it by lying in bed? Do you think there are crowns in heaven for those who never fight their sins? Do you believe that there are rewards in heaven for those who never followed Christ and never endured hardship for His sake? Nay, make no mistake—you know not what the truth is.

The truth is in that famous picture of John Bunyan's. While I tell it to you again in my own words, may some of you be moved to make that picture true! He tells us that the Pilgrim saw, in the Interpreter's house, a beautiful palace. And on the top thereof there walked many persons clothed in gold. And from the roof there came the sweetest music that mortal ear had ever heard.

He felt that he would fain be on the top of that palace with those that there so happily basked in the sun. So he went to see the way thither and saw at the door that there stood a number of armed men who pushed back every person who sought to enter. Then he stood back in amazement. But he noted that there sat one at a table having a writer's ink-horn, and a brave man from the crowd, of stout countenance, came up and said, “Set down my name, sir!”

And when his name was set down on the roll, he at once drew his sword and began to cut his way through the armed men. The fight was long and cruel and he was wounded, but he gave not up the conflict till he had cut his way through, making a living lane through those that had opposed him. So he pressed his way in and the singers at the top of the palace welcomed him with sweet music, singing,—

*“Come in, come in!
Eternal glory thou shalt win.”*

Now, sir, if you would go to heaven, it is all of grace and through the precious blood of Christ. It is all by simple faith in Christ, yet every man who gets there must fight for it. There is no crown except for warriors. There are no rewards except for those who contend for the mastery against flesh and blood, against Satan, and against sin.

Whose name shall we set down tonight? Is there a man of stout countenance whom God has made resolute against sin? Let us set his name down. Only, when you put down your name, remember that he that puts on his harness must not boast as though he were putting it off. There is much that you will never perform unless the Eternal God be at your back.

Nevertheless, if you have this hope in you, if you have received this hope from God, if it is a hope based upon divine sonship, upon divine love—a “hope in *him*,” even in Christ, you shall win the day—you shall purify yourselves, even as he is pure. And when He shall appear, you shall be like Him, for you shall see Him as He is.

I pray the Lord to bless this sermon to the preacher, and bless it to every one of his hearers, and He shall have the glory. Amen and Amen.

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