

THE BLESSED HOPE

By Harry Black

"Looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ." (Titus 2:14).

Those without hope are the most miserable of all people on earth. The prisoner confined for life behind bars and without salvation surely must live a drab life with no hope of release on earth nor hope of heaven in the end. Hope is one of the three graces mentioned by Paul in the thirteenth chapter of first Corinthians where he said, "And now abideth faith, hope, charity, these three, but the greatest of these is charity."

The second coming of Christ is, according to our text, "The Blessed Hope." Why is the return of our Lord a "Blessed Hope"?

1. Because it is an "encouraging hope" to those who are tempted to be discouraged. If you feel that Jesus is coming soon, you can stick to your appointed task no matter how trying or difficult it may be. What does it matter if you are misunderstood? Jesus is coming, hence you can endure a lot of things and "suffer long" if necessary for Him. At the most it will be "yet a little while and He that shall come, will come and will not tarry." Cheer up, hard working father and mother, Jesus is coming! Cheer up, consecrated Christian young man or young woman, Jesus is coming! Cheer up, you who are of riper years, bent with age and with "the snow of many winters upon your head," Jesus is coming! Battle on! Pray on! Believe on!—at the most it cannot be very long. Many of God's saints feel that way about it when they look at the turmoil in the world, the hatred, the strife, the bloodshed and war, and when they think of the persecuted saints in atheistic, Communistic Russia and elsewhere.

2. The second coming of the Lord is a "Blessed Hope" because it is a "patient hope." "Be ye also patient; establish your hearts, for the coming of the Lord draweth nigh," said the Apostle James. What a gracious boon is the thought of the near return of our Lord to those who are shut in and on beds of affliction. One time I called upon two elderly persons who had been bedfast a long time, one of them for nearly seven years, yet what a heavenly smile upon her countenance. The other, when asked if the nights were not long and if he slept well, answered by saying, "No, I do not sleep all night, but neither did Jesus. He arose a great while before day and went out alone to pray, you know." His talk was constantly of the Lord.

Cheer up, dear afflicted ones in invalids' chairs, in hospital beds and in old people's homes, Jesus is coming and His coming brings release. You can reason, "Surely I can suffer just a little while longer, if Jesus is coming soon." The moment He comes, you will receive instant healing; for He will transform your body and fashion it like unto His own glorious body. Then you will be able to "leap like an hart" and sing like an angel! You shall "go forth and gambol like the calves of the stall!" In other words, you will be able to frisk about like a spring calf or lamb in a field of clover.

3. It is the "Blessed Hope" because it is an "evangelistic hope." You will "occupy" till He comes again. That means you will look after the Master's business, work for Jesus, be a soul winner, do personal work, and thus help to complete, the Bride of Christ. You will believe in revivals all the more if you entertain the Blessed Hope of His appearing. One of the sweetest and most tender Gospel invitations in the Book is addressed to those of this Laodecean Age in the following words, "Behold I stand at the door and

knock; if any man hear My voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and he will sup with him, and he with Me." (Rev. 3:20). That invitation is given to the lukewarm Laodecean churches here in the very winding-up of the age. Will they receive it? We can still have revivals and see souls saved as long as the blessed Holy Spirit is in the world to draw men to Christ. Thank God, He is still in the business of giving revivals to those who will meet the conditions.

4. And lastly, Christ's coming is the "Blessed Hope" because it is a "purifying hope." After the Apostle John had called our attention to the great love of God bestowed upon us, in verse one, chapter three of his first epistle, he then writes these words: "Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when He shall appear, we shall be like Him; for we shall see Him as He is. And every man that hath this hope in him purifieth himself, even as He is pure." No one can sincerely look forward to Christ's soon coming without wanting to be pure. To be pure is to be cleansed from all sin, and to be cleansed from all sin is to be sanctified wholly. (See Hebrews 13:12-13; I Thess. 5:23).

The first resurrection takes place at the coming of our Lord for His saints. To take part in this first resurrection and to reign with Christ, one must be holy for, "blessed and holy are they that have part in the first resurrection."

If the dead in Christ must be holy to arise when the Lord comes, then the living, who are caught away to meet the Lord must likewise be holy.

Yes, beloved, Christ's coming is a purifying hope. It is a great incentive to seek holiness and live it. Have you that "holiness without which no man shall see the Lord" right now? You can receive it if you will.

Less than thirty per cent of the Protestants in the United States and Canada are giving anything at all to foreign missions, declared Dr. John R. Mott recently.—Selected.

A careful investigation recently made in New York City shows that out of fifty-five thousand below the age of sixteen who had fallen into the hands of the police, only one-sixth ever had heard of the Ten Commandments.—The Dry Legion.

We learn from Herald of Holiness that fifty feet below the ground on the site of the New York's World Fair a "time capsule" has been buried. It is an 800-pound shell, in the shape of a torpedo, holding a collection of objects showing the life on this planet in 1939. There are only two books in the capsule, a book of record describing the purpose of this venture for the information of the future, and the Bible.—Selected.

The records of the Federal Bureau of Investigation show that crime is increasing; that murders, manslaughters, robberies, sex crimes, automobile thefts are greater than ever before. Today there are in America over 4,300,000 criminals actively at work, plundering and murdering. There is an aggregate of 1,330,000 serious crimes and a national crime bill of \$15,000,000,000 a year.—J. Edgar Hoover, chief of F. B. I.

The men who succeed best in public life are those who take the risk of standing by their own convictions.—Garfield.

THE NEW TESTAMENT

Hamilton Spectator: It would be impossible to over-estimate the beneficent influence of the New Testament on human affairs. Democracy derives its inspiration and strength from Christian doctrine. From the purely secular point of view, there is no book which can be compared with the Bible for its literary value, and as a regenerative force it stands supreme. It is the right of every child to be made familiar with its contents—it is the privilege of citizens to assist in this effort to see that they are.—Sel.

A RULE FOR DOUBTS

"He would not defile himself." The story is told of a man who spent considerable time one morning debating with himself whether or not his collar was too soiled to be worn another day. Economy was not to be entirely overlooked in his affairs, yet he did not wish to wear an untidy neckpiece. His wife settled the question for him finally by remarking, "If it's doubtful, it's dirty." As a rule avoid the thing that is doubtful, and you will be on the safe side.—Sunday School Chronicle.

SEED BY THE WAYSIDE

Not all hotel managers like to have Bibles in their rooms. For example, when a hotel in western Canada changed ownership, the new proprietor had all the Gideon Bibles thrown out on the dump. Later, a poor girl went to the dump hoping to find something of value that she could sell. Noticing the books, she picked one up and took it home. Through reading it she found Christ, and this led to the formation of a Sunday school class, whose members also went to the dump and provided themselves with Bibles, so that not one copy was left unappropriated.—Sunday School Times.

RELIGIONS OF THE WORLD

The Philadelphia Evening Bulletin recently published a chart showing the numerical strength of the principal religions of the world. The population of the world is given as 1,828,000,000, of whom 639,000,000, or 34.8 per cent, are Christians. Of these, 318,000,000 are Roman Catholics and 130,000,000 Eastern Catholics. Protestants number 191,000,000, broadly classified as 81,000,000 Lutheran and 110,000,000 Reformed. Non-Christians total 1,189,000, or 65.2 per cent of the world's population. There are 15,000,000 Jews; 227,000,000 Mohammedans; 311,000,000 Confucianists; 215,000,000 Hindus; 161,000,000 Animists; 140,000,000 Buddhists, and 120,000,000 other non-Christians.—Methodist Protestant Recorder.

CRIME

And Mr. J. Edgar Hoover, declaring that "the last three years have been the most terrible period of criminal history in the life of America," says, "The records of the Federal Bureau of Investigation show that crime is increasing; that murders, manslaughters, robberies, sex crimes, automobile thefts are greater than ever before. Today there are in America over 4,300,000 criminals actively at work, plundering and murdering. There is an aggregate of 1,330,000 serious crimes and a national crime bill of \$15,000,000,000 a year." And Mr. Hoover should know whereof he speaks.—Methodist Protestant Recorder.