

"The Blessed Hope"

By Harry Black, D.D.

"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 in which 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. "Wherefore comfort (encourage) one another with these words," said Paul. If you believe 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 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 various parts of the world.

2. The second coming of the Lord is a blessed hope because it is a "patient hope." "Be ye also patient; establish your heart, 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 for 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 invalid's 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! Hallelujah!

3. It is the "Bessed 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 Laodicean 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 will sup with him, and he with Me." (Rev. 3:20). That invitation is given to the lukewarm Laodicean churches here in the very winding-up of the age. Will they receive it? We can still have revivals and see souls saved so 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; 1 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.

"Oh joy, Oh delight! Should we go without dying,

No sickness, no sadness, no dread and no crying;
Caught up with the Lord in the clouds into glory!

When Jesus receives His own!"

—Midnight Cry

"HOW DID YOU LIKE THE SERMON?"

Asking that question has become a habit which it will probably take centuries to eradicate. It is a demon which can be cast out only by prayer and fasting. No wonder spiritual results of preaching are so meagre. What can be expected from work of persuasion by driving home the word set forth by the preacher? Sermons are not toys to be played with, or pretty pieces of rhetoric on which every member of the congregation is expected to pass judgment. A sermon is not an exquisite bit of literary bric-a-brac to be chattered over and judged by the technical rules of art. It is not a dumpling into which every self-constituted critic is invited to stick his fork that he may praise or condemn the cook. A sermon is a solemn warning, a bugle call to duty, a burning condemnation, an earnest stroke against

Quarterly Meeting

The quarterly meeting of District No. 3 convened with the Church at Black's Harbour, Nov. 30th to Dec. 3rd.

The opening message was brought by Rev. J. A. Owens, who took his text from Daniels 12:3.

Friday evening Rev. S. G. Hilyard brought the message from Acts 28:2. Theme: "Building Fires."

The regular business session was held on Saturday afternoon at 2.30, with Rev. H. S. Wilson in the chair. Mrs. Frank Justason was elected secretary pro tem. Minutes of previous meeting were read and accepted.

Roll call found the following ministers and delegates present: Revs. J. A. Owens, S. G. Hilyard, and H. S. Wilson. Delegates: Jonesport—Brother and Sister James Beal. Wood Island—Brother Eugene Wilcox. Black's Harbour—Mrs. Frank Justason and Miss Hazel Cook.

Election of officers as follows: President, Rev. H. S. Wilson; vice-president, Rev. S. G. Hilyard; treasurer, Mrs. Thomas Clifford; Highway Agent, Brother Eugene Wilcox.

The Devotional Committee was appointed by the chair.

Letters were read from the following churches: Black's Harbour, Crawford, Calais, Jonesport, North Head. Brother Wilcox gave a verbal report from the Wood Island Church.

Resolved that all visiting members be given voice in meeting.

Resolved a vote of thanks be extended Black's Harbour Church for their kind entertainment.

An invitation from the North Head Church for the March quarterly was accepted.

Resolved that Rev. S. G. Hilyard be assistant treasurer of the Extension Fund.

Contributions were received for the Extension Fund as follows: Calais, Crawford, Jonesport, North Head, Wood Island and Black's Harbour.

Meeting adjourned with prayer by Rev. J. A. Owens.

On Saturday evening Brother Owens brought the message from Matt. 5-48.

On Sunday morning the Love Feast was in charge of Brother E. Wilcox, basing his remarks on Psalm 132.

Brother Hilyard brought the message at 11 a. m. from Matt. 5-16.

At 2.30 p. m. Brother Owens brought the message from II. Cor. 5:18-19.

The closing service was in charge of Brother Hilyard, using as his text Gen. 6-3. This service closed with three seekers testifying to definite victory.

Our brethren preached well in all the services, and we felt it to be a profitable meeting. MRS. FRANK JUSTASON, Secy.

a giant wrong, an exhortation to high endeavor, the illumination of a majestic truth. Sermons are preached, not to be liked, but to be accepted and lived. Suppose, pray, you did not like the sermon! What of it? The preachers in the New Testament were not anxious that their sermons should be liked.

Never ask that insipid question, 'How did you like the sermon?' Such a question injures the one who asks it, and debauches the person who answers. It trains men to measure sermons by false standards, and to seek for entertainment rather than for truth.—Selected.