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John Gill's

A BODY OF PRACTICAL DIVINITY

Book 1—Chapter 8

OF THE GRACE OF GOD

Having treated of Faith in God, and of trust or confidence in him, the next in course to be considered is the Grace of Hope; for it, this order they stand, "faith, hope:— Faith is the substance of things hoped for," and therefore go together; and the same word is rendered sometimes "trust," and sometimes "hope," so near akin are these graces: thus in (Eph. 1:12 what we translate, "Who first trusted in Christ," is in the Greek text, and so in the margin, "Who first hoped in Christ." Concerning which grace, the following things may be observed:

1. The object, ground, and foundation of it, Jehovah, God, Father, Son, and Spirit. Not any creature whatever, angel or man; not the Virgin Mary, the mother of our Lord, as the papists impiously and blasphemously address her, "Salve regina, spes nostra; Save us, O queen, our hope!" Nor any creature enjoyment; "If I have made gold my hope," the object of it, says Job, meaning, he had not; though some have, placing their hope of future good in it, in this life, to the neglect of a dependence on divine providence (Job 31:24), and indeed, have carried it so far, as to hope and imagine, that they are the persons whom God will delight in to honour in the world to come with happiness and bliss, who have had so great a share of it in this; forgetting, or not knowing, that "not many noble are called." Nor creature merits; of which there are none: a creature cannot merit anything at the hand of God; he is not deserving of the least temporal mercy from him, having sinned against him; nor can he give him anything which may lay him under an obligation to him, or which God has not a prior right unto; much less can he merit eternal happiness of him, and so have any hope of it on that account; for that is "the free gift of God through Christ." Nor any creature righteousness, which is the hope of the moralist and legalist, who fancy they have kept all the precepts of the law from their youth, and that touching the righteousness of the law they are blameless, and are not as other men are; and therefore hope for eternal life and happiness; but such hope is like a

"spider's web," spun out of their own bowels, and which has no strength, solidity, and substance in it; which, if they lean upon, "it shall not stand;" and if they attempt to hold it fast, "it shall not endure" (Job 8:14,15), nor any supposed privileges of birth and education, and of profession of religion; as being born of religious parents, educated in the Christian religion, and having some notions of the principles of Christianity; and going yet further, making a profession of faith in Christ, subjecting to the ordinances of Christ, baptism and the Lord's supper, and continuing in a round of religious exercises, and yet destitute of the grace of God in truth. "What is the hope of the hypocrite, though he hath gained" a place and a name in the church of God, "when God taketh away his soul?" (Job 27:8). But Jehovah, the creator and Lord of all, and the covenant God of his people, is the principal object of hope, and the only solid sufficient ground and foundation of it; as David said, "Thou art my hope, O Lord God; thou art my trust from my youth!" (Ps. 75:50). "Blessed is the man that trusteth in the Lord, and whose hope the Lord is!" (Jer. 17:7; Ps. 146:5).

1a. First, God, essentially considered, is the object of hope; "Hope in God," says the Psalmist, "for I shall yet praise him" (Ps. 42:11). So the church speaks of him; "O the Hope of Israel, the Saviour thereof in time of trouble!" (Jer. 14:8). The grounds of which hope in God are his grace, and mercy, and goodness; he has proclaimed his name, "The Lord God, merciful, gracious, abundant in goodness;" and it is the abundance of his mercy, grace, and goodness, which lays a solid foundation for hope in him, and encourages to it; "Let Israel hope in the Lord, for with the Lord there is mercy!" he is plenteous in it, rich in mercy, there is a multitude of tender mercies with him; he takes "pleasure" in those that "hope in his mercy," and his eye is upon them to do them good; and therefore there is great encouragement to make the Lord God the object of their hope (Ps. 130:7; 147:11; 33:18).

1b. Secondly, God personality considered is the object of hope, God, Father, Son, and Spirit: God the Father, who is called, "The God of hope;" not only because he is the author and giver of that grace; but because he is the object of it (Rom. 15:13), by whom Christ is said to be raised from the dead, that "faith and hope might be in God;" that is, in God the Father (1 Pet. 1:21), and Christ the Son of God is called, "our hope," and "Christ in you the hope of glory;" that is, the object, and ground, and foundation of it; which are his blood, righteousness, and sacrifice (1 Tim. 1:1; Col. 1:27). The Spirit of God also is equally the object of hope, as of faith and confidence; that he will assist in the exercise of every grace, and the performance of every duty; and particularly, that he will carry on and finish the work of grace upon the soul.

1c. Thirdly, the less principal objects of hope, connected with the divine persons, are the promises of God, and the things therein promised; hence the word of God, the word of promise, is represented as the object of hope; says the Psalmist, "In his word do I hope" (Ps. 130:5), the ground and foundation of which hope is in the faithfulness and power of God. The faithfulness of God; "for he is faithful that has promised;" nor will he "suffer his faithfulness to fail;" and therefore the

performance of his promises may be hoped for; besides, he is "able also to perform;" and upon this footing Abraham believed "in hope against hope:" the hand of the Lord is not shortened that it cannot save; he is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think; and therefore may hope, yea, believe, there will be a performance of whatsoever is spoken and promised by him.

1c1. First, in general: things to be hoped for are represented,

1c1a. As things unseen, of which faith is the evidence; and gives encouragement to the exercise of hope upon them; "Hope that is seen, is not hope; for what a man seeth, why doth he yet hope for?" (Rom. 8:24,25), the glories of another world are things not seen, so as thoroughly to understand and comprehend, yet hope of enjoying them, upon the divine promise, is conversant with them, which enters into that within the veil (Heb. 6:19).

1c1b. They are things future, yet to come, and therefore hoped for; hence saints are exhorted, "to hope to the end, for the grace that is to be brought unto them, at the revelation of Jesus Christ," when he shall be revealed from heaven, and appear a second time; and therefore are directed, "to look for that blessed hope," the hope laid up in heaven, the hope of happiness to be enjoyed, "at the glorious appearing of the great God, and our Saviour Jesus Christ" (1 Pet. 1:13; Titus 2:13).

1c1c. Things hoped for are difficult to come at and possess; many tribulations lie in the way to the kingdom, through which men must enter into it; the righteous, by reason of many afflictions, trials, and temptations, are "scarcely saved," though at last certainly saved; and since the "gate is straight and the way narrow," which lead to eternal life; hence there must be a laboring and striving to enter in; of which there is hope: and therefore,

1c1d. Hope is of things possible, or otherwise it would turn to despair, as in Cain, and those who said, "there is no hope, but we will walk after our own devices" (Jer. 18:12), but "there is hope in Israel concerning this thing," eternal life and happiness, as well as concerning all things leading on to it; and which will certainly issue in it; and therefore "it is good that a man should both hope and quietly wait for the salvation of the Lord" (Ezra 10:2; Lam. 3:26), at least he has encouragement to "put his mouth in the dust, if so be there may be hope" (Lam. 3:29), or seeing hope of salvation is to be entertained.

1c2. Secondly, the things, the objects of hope, or which are to be hoped for, are more particularly salvation by Christ, pardon of sin through him, all blessings of grace, and the supplies of it for the present life; and things after death, as the resurrection of the body and eternal life.

1c2a. Salvation by Christ: as soon as ever a soul is made sensible of its lost state and condition by nature, its inquiry is, "What must I do to be saved?" and being shown the way of salvation by Christ, and directed to him for it, in whom it is complete,

perfect, and every way suitable, it is encouraged to hope in him for it, and say, as David did, "Lord, I have hoped for thy salvation" (Ps. 119:116). Salvation, though wrought out, yet the full possession of it is to come; and the difficulties in the way of enjoying it many; and yet it is possible to be had, and therefore hope is conversant about it.

1c2a1. It has been thought of, contrived, and fixed; the thoughts of God were employed about it in eternity; he resolved upon the salvation of some of the sons of men; he appointed them to salvation, and chose them to it through certain means; he contrived the scheme of it in the wisest manner, and settled and established it in the covenant of grace: all which serve to encourage hope of it.

1c2a2. And as God appointed some to salvation, he appointed one to be the Saviour of them, and a great one, even his own Son, his equal and his fellow, every way and on all accounts capable of such a work; he promised him, he sent him, and he came to seek and save lost sinners; and he is become the author of eternal salvation, and his name is called Jesus, because he saves his people from their sins, and therefore have they reason to hope in him.

1c2a3. Salvation is actually wrought out by Christ; it is entirely finished, the work is done, and completely done; it is a full salvation, nothing wanting to make it perfect; wherefore, "Let Israel hope in the Lord, for with him is plenteous redemption" (Ps. 130:7), which includes in it, and secures all the blessings of grace; as justification, forgiveness of sin, adoption, and eternal life.

1c2a4. Salvation being wrought out by Christ, it is in him, and to be had by him, and by no other; so said the apostle Peter, "Neither is there salvation in any other" (Acts 4:12), but inasmuch as there is salvation in him, it may be hoped for from him; though there is no hope of it elsewhere; "Truly in vain is salvation hoped for from the hills and from the multitude of mountains: Truly in the Lord our God is the salvation of Israel" (Jer. 3:23), and in him only; and therefore such who are acquainted herewith, hope in him only, and will have no other Saviour.

1c2a5. Great encouragement is given by Christ to sensible sinners to hope for and expect salvation from him; "Look unto me," says he, "and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth," men in every quarter of it, and in the uttermost parts thereof, of whatsoever rank, quality, and character "For I am God, and there is none else;" and so able to save to the uttermost (Isa. 45:22), all "laboring and heavy laden sinners," burdened with a sense of sin, and the guilt of it, he invites to come to him, and promises them to give them rest for their souls (Matthew 11:28,29), and assures them, that he will, "in no wise," upon any account, reject, and "cast them out," but receive them in the most kind and tender manner; and for their encouragement to come to him, and exercise faith and hope on him, it may be observed, "This man receiveth sinners, and eateth with them" (Luke 15:2).

1c2a6. Salvation in and by Christ is to be had freely; it is wholly of free grace, and not of works; God saves and calls men according to his grace, and they are saved by grace, and not of works; not by works of righteousness done by them: but according to the abundant mercy and rich grace of God in Christ: were any conditions required on the part of sinners, qualifying them for, and entitling them unto salvation, they might despair of it; but since it is all of free grace they may be encouraged to hope for it.

1c2a7. Salvation by Christ is for sinners, even for the chief of sinners; as Christ came to call sinners to repentance, so to die for them, and by dying to save them: in this lies the high commendation of the love of God to us; that "while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us" (Rom. 5:8), and this is no small encouragement to such who see themselves polluted, guilty sinners, to hope for salvation by a dying Saviour; and the rather, since he "came into the world to save sinners, even the chief" (1 Tim. 1:15).

1c2a8. The gospel declaration gives great encouragement to sinners to hope in Christ for salvation; that he that believes shall be saved; that he that seeth the Son, and believeth on him, shall not perish, but have everlasting life: to a soul inquiring after salvation the gospel thus directs, "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved!" (Mark 16:16; John 6:40; Acts 16:31).

1c2b. Pardon of sin through the blood of Christ: this is what is immediately sought after and prayed for by a soul convinced of sin, righteousness, and judgment; with David it says, "for thy name's sake, O Lord, pardon mine iniquity: for it is great!" (Ps. 25:11), so great that a sinner cannot bear the weight of its guilt; so great that none but God can forgive it; and if he should mark iniquity, and insist on satisfaction for it, there would be no standing before him; but "there is forgiveness with him," pardoning grace and mercy with him; and therefore there is encouragement to hope in him (Ps. 130:3,4,7), and to come before him, though in the manner the publican did; saying, "God, be merciful to me a sinner!" (Luke 18:13 or propitious; and there is ground and reason to hope for pardoning mercy, through the propitiatory sacrifice of Christ.

1c2b1. Because God is a sin forgiving God; he can forgive sin, and none can do it but him; and he does "abundantly pardon!" pardons both abundance of sins and abundance of sinners; and all freely; sins of omission and commission, gross and grievous ones (Isa. 43:25), and there is none like him on this account (Micah 7:18). Jehovah has in covenant promised the forgiveness of sins: "I will forgive their iniquity; and I will remember their sin no more!" (Jer. 31:34 and he has proclaimed his name, merciful and gracious, "forgiving iniquity, and transgression, and sin," even sins of every sort and size (Ex 34:7), wherefore the greatest sinners may hope in him for pardon.

1c2b2. The blood of Christ has been shed on account of sin, and the pardon of it. God "set" him "forth" in his purposes and decrees, in his council and covenant, to

be the "propitiation, through faith in his blood, for the remission of sins;" to make reconciliation and atonement for sin by his blood, that men believing in it might have the pardon of it; and God has sent him forth in the fulness of time to shed his blood for this purpose; "And his blood is shed for many, for the remission of sins;" and hence satisfaction for sin being made by it, "God is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness" (1 John 1:9).

1c2b3. Christ's blood being shed, and forgiveness of sin through it obtained, Christ is exalted as a "Prince and a Saviour, to give repentance to Israel, and forgiveness of sins" (Acts 5:31), and to whomsoever he gives the one he gives the other; so that penitent sinners have great reason to hope in him for pardon, and which they may expect to have of him freely; he gives, and he gives it freely; pardon of sin is according to the riches of grace, and is owing to the tender mercy of God, and the multitude of it.

1c2b4. The declaration of it made in the gospel gives great encouragement to hope for it. Christ gave orders to his apostles, before his ascension to heaven, "that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name, among all nations;" to all sorts of men in them, "beginning at Jerusalem," where some of the chief and greatest of sinners lived; even such who had been lately concerned in the shedding of his blood (Luke 24:47), and according to this commission given them, wherever they came they made it known to men, that "through" Christ was "preached unto them the forgiveness of sins;" and in this both they and the prophets agreed and bore witness, "That through his name," the name of Christ, "whosoever believeth in him shall receive remission of sins" (Acts 13:38; 10:43).

1c2b5. The instances of pardon recorded in scripture, and of some notorious sinners, serve much to encourage hope of pardon likewise; as a Manasseh, guilty of the grossest of crimes; a Mary Magdalene, out of whom Christ cast seven devils; the woman a sinner, who washed Christ's feet with her tears, and wiped them with the hairs of her head, and loved much because much was forgiven her; Saul the blasphemer, persecutor, and injurious person, who obtained mercy; and many of the Corinthians, described as the worst of sinners, and yet were pardoned and justified in the name of the Lord Jesus.

1c2c. The blessings of grace, and supplies of it in the present life, and through it, are the objects of hope, and about which that is conversant, and in the exercise of which there is much encouragement; for as long as there is a throne of grace standing, and the God of all grace sitting on it, inviting souls to come to it for grace and mercy to help them in every time of need, bidding them ask and it shall be given, there is good and sufficient ground and reason to hope in him for it; and so long as there is a fulness of grace in Christ, and the communication of it not cut off, as it never will be from his people, they may most comfortably hope, yea, be assured, that their God in Christ will "supply all their need, according to his riches in glory by Jesus Christ" (Phil. 4:19). And seeing there are such exceeding great and precious promises of grace and strength from the Lord, that their strength shall be renewed; that they

shall go from strength to strength; and that as their day is, their strength shall be; there is abundant reason to hope in his word for the fulfillment of it.

1c2d. There are blessings to be enjoyed after death, which are the objects of hope, not only of soul, of its being with Christ immediately, and in a state of happiness and bliss; but of the resurrection of the body also; and of eternal life in soul and body for evermore.

1c2d1. The resurrection of the body is an object of hope, and is often so represented; "Of the hope and resurrection of the dead," that is, of the hope of it, "I am called in question," says the apostle; and again, "And have hope towards God, which they themselves also allow, that there shall be a resurrection of the dead, both of the just and of the unjust:" once more, "And now I stand and am judged for the hope of the promise made of God unto our fathers:---for which hope's sake, king Agrippa, I am accused of the Jews;" and then adds, "Why should it be thought a thing incredible with you that God should raise the dead?" (Acts 23:6; 24:15; 26:6-8), and the description of the object of hope entirely agrees with it, it being future, yet to come, what is unseen to carnal sense and reason, and difficult how it should be; and yet possible, considering the omniscience and omnipotence of God, and not to be reckoned incredible; it may be hoped for, and there is good ground and reason for it from scripture testimonies of it; from the resurrection of Christ, and from the union of his people to him; and they are represented as "waiting for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of the body" (Rom. 8:23), which they have reason to expect, and is worth waiting for, and the happiness that will follow upon it.

1c2d2. Eternal life to be enjoyed both in soul and body, is a grand object of hope; and which is therefore called, the hope of eternal life, and hope of glory, the blessed hope, and hope laid up in heaven; all intending the happiness hoped for (Titus 1:2; 2:13; Rom. 5:2; Col. 1:5), and for which there is good ground and reason,

1c2d2a. From its being a free gift; not to be obtained by the merits of men, or the works of the creature; but is entirely owing to the free grace of God; "The gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord" (Rom. 6:23), if it was to be acquired by doing, it might be despaired of; but since it is the good pleasure of our heavenly Father to give us the kingdom, it may be hoped for.

1c2d2b. It is in the hands of Christ to give it; he has power to give it to as many as the Father has given him, and he does give it to all his sheep; he is a sun and shield, and gives both grace and glory; and therefore it may be hoped for from him; yea, he himself is the ground of it; and is therefore called, "our hope," and "Christ in us the hope of glory" (1 Tim. 1:1; Col. 1:27), whose righteousness entitles to it; and his grace makes meet for it.

1c2d2c. From the promise of it in Christ, called, "The promise of life which is in Christ Jesus" (2 Tim. 1:1), and which was put into his hands as soon as made, where it is safe and secure, firm and stable; and which was very early made; "In hope of

eternal life; which God, that cannot lie, promised before the world began;" who is faithful that has promised, and therefore it may be hoped for, expected, and depended on; and this is the declared will of God, that "whosoever seeth the Son, and believeth on him, may have everlasting life" (John 6:40), hence all such persons may steadily hope and wait for it.

1c2d2d. From the preparations and prayers of Christ for it; he is gone to prepare heaven and happiness for his people, by his presence and mediation; and has promised to come again and take them to himself, that they may be with him, where he is; and for this he prays and makes intercession, and which is always prevalent, and he is always heard (John 14:2,3; 17:24).

1c2d2e. From the Spirit's work in the hearts of men, who works them for that self-same thing, eternal glory, whose grace is a well of living water, springing up unto eternal life; and between grace and glory is an inseparable connection, and to whom grace is given glory is also; whom God calls, justifies, and sanctifies, he also glorifies; therefore those who are partakers of the one may hope for the other.

2. The subjects of the grace of hope, or who they are that are partakers of it.

2a. Not angels, good or bad; not good angels, they are in the full enjoyment of God and of all felicity, they see God, and what is seen is not hope; they are in the present possession of happiness; and so that is not future; nor is there anything about them, or attends them, to make their happiness difficult or doubtful: nor evil angels, the devils; there is a kind of faith ascribed to them, the belief of a God, of one God, at whom they tremble; but have no hope; there is not the least ground and reason for them to hope for a recovery out of their apostate state, or of their being ever restored to the favour of God; for as soon as they fell they were cast out of heaven, and cast down to hell, and laid up in chains of darkness, reserved for the great and last judgment, when they will receive their final sentence and full punishment, which they expect, and have no hope of escaping; hence they said to Christ in the days of his flesh, "Art thou come hither to torment us before the time?" (Matthew 8:29), they have no foundation of hope of salvation by Christ; he took not on him the nature of angels, nor obeyed nor suffered for them, nor redeemed any of them by his blood; these were only men, out of every kindred, tongue, people, and nation: nor was the gospel, the good tidings of salvation by Christ, nor any messages of grace sent to them; nor any repentance given them; and so no remission of sins to be hoped for by them.

2b. Only men, and these not all men; some are described as, "those without hope," and who live and die without it; and all men are "without hope" while in a state of nature and unregeneracy (1 Thess. 4:13; Eph. 2:12), for however they may feed themselves with a vain hope, they have no solid, well grounded hope; and dying in such a state, they die without hope; and some, through the force of their own corruptions, and the power of Satan's temptations, give into despair, and abandon themselves to a vicious course of living, saying, "There is no hope" (Jer. 18:12).

2c. Only regenerate men are subjects of the grace of hope. In regeneration every grace is implanted in the soul, and this with the rest; yea, to this, and the exercise of it, they are particularly regenerated; for, "according to the abundant mercy of God," souls are by him, "begotten again unto a lively hope" (1 Pet. 1:3), hence when first quickened by the Spirit and grace of God, and see themselves lost and undone, in a captive state, and as it were, prisoners to sin, Satan, and the law; they are yet "prisoners of hope," and are enabled to hope for deliverance; and are directed to "turn to the strong hold," Christ, where they find salvation, safety, and comfort.

2d. Believers in Christ are partakers of this grace, and they only; faith and hope always go together; they are implanted at the same time, and grow up and thrive together; though one may be in exercise before the other; and one may be more in exercise at one time than the other; yet they are always together, and assist each other; Abraham "believed in hope against hope;" and the "experience" of faith, works or exercises "hope;" hence we read of them together; "That your faith and hope might be in God: now abideth faith, hope, charity," or "love" (1 Pet. 1:21; 1 Cor. 13:13), faith is the ground work of hope, lies at the bottom of it, and is its support; "Faith is the substance of things hoped for" (Heb. 11:1).

2e. They are the Israel of the Lord, whose hope the Lord is; and who are encouraged to hope in him, and do, even the whole Israel of God; his spiritual Israel, Jews and Gentiles, sooner or later, hope in the Lord; the Israel whom God has chosen for his peculiar treasure, and whom he has redeemed from all iniquity, and effectually calls by his grace, and who appear in due time to be Israelites indeed; and even all sensible sinners, who are quickened and born again, come under this character, and are encouraged to hope in the Lord for mercy and salvation; "Let Israel hope in the Lord" (Ps. 130:7), hence he is called, "The hope of Israel" (Jer. 14:8).

2f. The separate souls of saints, after death, in heaven, seem to be possessed of, and to be in the exercise of, the grace of hope, particularly with respect to the resurrection of their bodies; as "the flesh" of Christ, by a figure, is said to rest in hope of its resurrection, that is, his soul rested or waited in hope of the resurrection of his body, while in the grave, being confident of it (Ps. 16:9), so the souls of the saints, while in a separate state in heaven, and during the abode of their bodies in the grave, rest, wait, and hope for the resurrection of them; and this may be what Job has a reference to when he says, "If a man die shall he live again?" He shall, in the resurrection morn; "All the days of my appointed time" of lying in the grave, "will I wait till my change come," until Christ changes the vile bodies of his people, and makes them like his glorious one (Job 14:14), and something of this kind may be observed in the answer to the souls under the altar, crying, "How long, O Lord," &c. to whom it was said, that they should "rest yet for a little season," be still and quiet, hope and wait, "until their fellow servants and brethren, that should be killed as they were, should be fulfilled" (Re 6:9-11).

3. The causes of the grace of hope, or from whence it springs; and the rather this should be inquired into, because all men in a state of nature are without it.

3a. The efficient cause of it is God; hence he is called, "the God of hope" (Rom. 15:13), not only because he is the object of it, but because he is the author of it; even God, Father, Son, and Spirit. It is the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ who begets men again to a lively hope of a glorious inheritance; and this is owing to the virtue of the resurrection of Christ from the dead (1 Pet. 1:3), and indeed it is the gift both of the Father and of Christ; "now our Lord Jesus Christ himself, and God, even our Father, who hath given us good hope through grace" (2 Thess. 2:16), and as it is "through the power of the Holy Ghost" that saints "abound in hope," in the exercise of the grace of hope; it may well be thought that it is by this same power that it is first produced in them (Rom. 15:13).

3b. The moving cause of it is the grace and mercy of God; hence it is called, "good hope through grace:" it is not of nature; for it is not naturally in men; but is owing to the grace of God, it is not through the merits of men, nor any motives in them; but entirely through the grace of God, it is "given;" it is a gift of free grace, and is sometimes ascribed to the "abundant mercy" of God, as the spring of it (1 Pet. 1:3), it is owing to mercy, and to the aboundings of mercy.

3c. The gospel is the means of it, by which it is wrought, encouraged, and confirmed, and therefore called, "the hope of the gospel" (Col. 1:23), the doctrines of it greatly animate to it, the good news and glad tidings the gospel brings of free and complete salvation by Christ, of full pardon of sin by his blood, of peace, reconciliation, and atonement by his sacrifice, and of the fulness of grace that is in him, give great encouragement to hope in the Lord, as do the many exceeding great and precious promises in it; by means of which the "heirs of promise have strong consolation" (Heb. 6:18), these are that "on which God causes his people to hope," what are the ground and foundation of it, support it, and encourage to the exercise of it (Ps. 119:49).

3d. There are many things which serve to promote and increase it; the whole scripture has a tendency thereunto, which is written that men, "through patience and comfort of the scripture might have hope" (Rom. 15:4), particularly the promises contained in it; and the goodness, power, and faithfulness of God displayed both in making and fulfilling them; and especially when opened and applied by the Holy Spirit of promise, serve greatly to cherish the grace of hope; the things said concerning the person, offices, and grace of Christ, his resurrection from the dead, ascension to heaven, session at the right hand of God, intercession for his people, and the glorification of him in heaven, are all subservient to this end, "that our faith and hope might be in God" (1 Pet. 1:21), the experience of the saints in all ages, of the grace, goodness, &c. of God, and particularly the saints own experience of the same in times past, greatly strengthen the grace of hope, and encourage to the exercise of it; "experience, hope;" that is, works it, exercises it, and tends to increase it (Rom. 5:4).

4. The effects of hope; which are produced through it, and follow upon it.

4a. It is said of it, that it "maketh not ashamed" (Rom. 5:5), the reason given of which is, because the love of God is shed abroad in the hearts of such who have it, which supports it and gives it life and vigor; so that a soul possessed of it is not ashamed to appear before God and men; is not ashamed in his present circumstances; nor will be ashamed at the coming of Christ: this grace makes not ashamed, because it does not disappoint those that have it, who will most certainly enjoy the things that are hoped for: and as this grace makes not ashamed, those who have it need not be ashamed of it; as David prays, "Let me not be ashamed of my hope" (Ps. 119:116), when hope is a good one, he that has it has no reason to be ashamed of it; nor will he.

4b. It weans from the world, and the things of it, and makes a man esteem them lightly, when he knows that he has in heaven a better and a more enduring substance, and can rejoice in hope of the glory of God; when he seeks those things that are above, and has hope of enjoying them, his affections are drawn off of things on earth, and are set on things in heaven; and he longs to be unclothed, that he might be clothed upon with his house from heaven, and chooses rather to be absent from the body that he might be present with the Lord.

4c. It carries cheerfully through all the difficulties of this life, and makes hard things sit easy; whereas, if "in this life only saints had hope," they would be "of all men the most miserable;" but hope of a future state of happiness beyond the grave bears them up under all the troubles of the present state, and carries them comfortably through them, so that they glory in tribulations (Rom. 5:3-5).

4d. It yields support in death; for "the righteous hath hope in his death" (Prov. 14:32), not founded on his own righteousness, but on the righteousness of Christ; a hope of being with Christ for ever, and of enjoying eternal life and happiness with him; and which gives him peace and joy in his last moments, and causes him to exult in the view of death and the grave. There are many other fruits and effects of a good hope; some of which may be gathered from what follows under the next point.

5. The properties and epithets of the grace of hope; which will more fully show the nature, excellency, and usefulness of it.

5a. First, it is called a good hope; "and hath given us—good hope through grace" (2 Thess. 2:16).

5a1. In distinction from, and in opposition to, a bad one. A bad one is that which is the hope of the moralist and legalist, which is founded on their own works of righteousness and deeds, done in obedience to the law; and is but a sandy foundation to build an hope of eternal salvation upon; and such is the hope of a carnal and external professor of religion, which is laid on birth privileges, education principles, a bare profession of religion, subjection to external ordinances, and a performance of a round of duties; and the hope of a profane sinner, formed upon

the absolute mercy of God, without any regard to the merits, blood, and righteousness of Christ.

5a2. A good hope is that which has God, his grace and promises, for its object, Christ and his righteousness for its foundation, the Spirit of grace for its author, and is a part of the good work of grace begun upon the soul, and is an hope of good things to come, of which Christ is the high priest: in this, hope differs from expectation; hope is an expectation of good things; and he that fears expects, but he does not expect good things, for fear is an expectation of evil things; but hope is of good things; wicked men expect things which have no substance and solidity in them, and their hope perishes.

5a3. A good hope is that which is of great use both in life and death; it is the Christian sailor's anchor, and the Christian soldier's helmet; it carries through all the troubles in life, as before observed, and supports in the hour of death; while the hope of the hypocrite is like the giving up of the ghost, and expires with him; this continues, and the man that has it is saved eternally; for "we are saved by hope" (Rom. 8:24).

5b. Secondly, it is also a "lively" or "living" one (1 Pet. 1:3). So called,

5b1. Because the subject of it is a living man, one spiritually alive: a man dead in trespasses and sins is without hope; but a man regenerated and quickened by the Spirit of God is begotten again to a lively hope.

5b2. Because it has for its object eternal life: one that is justified by the grace of God, is made an "heir according to the hope of eternal life" (Titus 3:7).

5b3. Has for its ground and foundation a living Christ, and not dead works; as faith lives upon a crucified Christ, hope receives its virtue and rigor from the resurrection of Christ; Christ, as risen, and at the right hand of God, greatly encourages to seek and hope for things above, where he is.

5b4. It is of a cheering and enlivening nature; "hope deferred maketh the heart sick; but when the desire cometh it is a tree of life" (Prov. 13:12), it causes gladness and joy; hence we read of the "rejoicing of the hope," and of "rejoicing in hope" (Heb. 3:6; Rom. 5:2; Prov. 10:28).

5b5. It is an abiding, ever living grace, and is always more or less in exercise; as water that is always flowing and running is called "living water;" this grace is lively or living when others seem to be ready to die; and though it is sometimes in a low state itself, and a man puts his mouth in the dust, "if so be there may be hope," yet still there is hope; and when he is in the worst case, a saint cannot give up his hope; nor will he part with it for all the world; it is one of the abiding graces (1 Cor. 13:13).

5c. Thirdly, it is represented as of a purifying nature; "every man that hath this hope in him," of appearing with Christ, and being like him, and seeing him as he is, "purifieth himself even as he is pure" (1 John 3:3), that is, as Christ is pure: all men are by nature and through sin impure: no man can purify himself by any thing that he can do; it is peculiar to the blood of Jesus to cleanse from sin. Neither faith, nor hope, nor any other grace, have such virtue in them as to make a man pure from his sin; no otherwise can they purify from it, but as they deal with the blood of Christ; and he that has hope in the blood and righteousness of Christ for justification and salvation, and expresses it, does thereby declare that he is righteous, as Christ is righteous (1 John 3:7), being made the righteousness of God in him.

5d. Fourthly, hope is sometimes compared to an anchor, because of its great usefulness to the Christian in this life; "which hope we have as an anchor of the soul both sure and steadfast" (Heb. 6:19), this world is a sea; the church, and so every believer, is like a ship sailing on it; Christ is the pilot that guides it; hope is the anchor of it; and a good hope is like an anchor cast on a good foundation, where remaining fixed, it is sure and steadfast; and as the ground on which an anchor is cast is out of sight; so Christ, on which hope is fixed, is unseen; as are also the glories of a future state, it is concerned with; and as an anchor is of no service without a cable; so not hope without faith; which is the substance and support of it: a ship when at anchor is kept steady by it; so a soul by hope: none of the things it meets with, afflictions, troubles, and temptations, can move it from the hope of the gospel, from the service and cause of Christ; but it remains steadfast and immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord. In some things hope and an anchor disagree; an anchor is not of so much use in storms and tempests at sea as when in a calm, or in danger near rocks and shores; but hope is of use when the soul is in a storm sadly ruffled, discomposed, disquieted, and tossed about with sin, temptation, and trouble; hence David, in such a spiritual storm, cast out the anchor of hope; "Why art thou cast down, O my soul? and why art thou disquieted within me? Hope thou in God!" (Ps. 42:11), and says the prophet Jeremiah (Jer. 17:17). "Thou art my hope in the day of evil." A cable may be cut or broke, and so the anchor useless; but faith, which is that to hope as the cable is to the anchor, will never fail, can never be destroyed; an anchor is cast on what is below, on ground underneath; but hope has for its objects things above where Jesus is; when a vessel is at anchor it continues where it is, it moves not forward; but a soul, when it abounds in the exercise of the grace of hope, through the power of the Holy Ghost, it is moving upwards, rejoicing in hope of the glory of God, and enters into that within the veil; and what gives it the preference is, that it is "the anchor of the soul," and its epithets, sure and steadfast, serve to recommend it; and which certainty and steadfastness of it arise from the author, object, ground, and foundation of it.

5e. Fifthly, hope of salvation by Christ is compared to an helmet; "and for an helmet the hope of salvation" (1 Thess. 5:8), this is a piece of armor that is a defence of the head, a cover of it in the day of battle, and an erector of it: of such use is hope of salvation by Christ; it serves to defend the head from false doctrines; a man whose hope of salvation is fixed on Christ, cannot give into errors contrary to the

proper Deity and eternal Sonship of Christ, to justification by his righteousness and atonement, and satisfaction by his sacrifice; for these take away the foundation of his hope; and therefore he whose hope is sure and steadfast cannot easily be carried away with various and strange doctrines, nor with every wind of doctrine. Hope of salvation by Christ is like an helmet which covers the head in the day of battle; it makes a man courageous to fight the Lord's battles, and fear no enemy; to engage even with principalities and powers, having on the whole armor of God, the shield of faith, the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, and particularly having such an helmet, an enemy cannot hurt his head, or give him a mortal wound on it. Hope, like an helmet, is an erector or lifter up of the head; in the midst of difficulties hope keeps the head above water, above the fear of danger; so that the hoping, believing soul, can even glory in tribulation (Rom. 5:3).