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## The Christian Hope

By HERBERT J. A. BOUMAN

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### INTRODUCTION

THE general theme of the second assembly of the World Council of Churches at Evanston was "Christ, the Hope of the World." The theme of this essay is related to the message of Evanston. It bids us take note of the fact that we are to deal with the concept "hope" as qualified by the word "Christian." The world also has hope, or rather, hopes; for it has no single, well-defined aspiration. The hope of the world is materialistic, this-worldly, earth-bound. But the hope of the world is illusory. It has no solid basis, no tangible object or goal. It is a Christless hope. "Christ, the Hope of the World" could be a contradiction in terms, if we take "world" in the theological sense as the very antithesis of Christ and the gifts of His kingdom. The world's hope does not spring from Christ, nor does it focus on Christ. There is, therefore, a sharp cleavage, an impassable gulf fixed, between the hope of the world and the Christian hope. And yet, "Christ, the Hope of the World" is wholly relevant. Whether the world knows it or not, whether the world believes it or not, the only hope for the world is Christ. He is the only Source, and He is the only Goal.

But even among professing Christians there is no unanimity as to what constitutes the Christian's hope, what its basis, its prerequisites, its scope, its practical implications are. It was a representation of an impressive portion of Christendom, of the church in the world, that met in Evanston as the assembly of the World Council of Churches. Here was a wide diversity in color, race,

nationality; here were delegates from Iron Curtain and free countries, from congregational, episcopal, evangelical, nonevangelical, confessional, anticreedal, liturgical, unliturgical, conservative, traditionalistic, liberal groups. The one unitive factor was a relation to Christ. All were asked to take shelter under the slogan "Christ, the Hope of the World."

Obviously not all viewed the relationship to Christ in the same way. Christ, the Hope of the world? What Christ? What kind of hope? For whom? For what time? From what? How realized? These questions clamored for an answer. Two main emphases in relation to the theme were evident: (1) Christ is the Hope of the world for now, primarily, though not exclusively. This appears to include an admixture of fear. Conscious of all the threats to our civilization stemming from the atomic Frankenstein and its manipulation in the hands of unscrupulous atheistic tyrants, the church had better get busy and produce a sufficient and sufficiently influential bloc of people, who might then assume control of the terrifying complexity of our present life. (2) Christ is the Hope of the world for the time that is to come, first and foremost.<sup>1</sup>

To put these two hopes in opposition to each other is certainly an oversimplification. We are all agreed, presumably, that an emphasis on the this-worldly implication of the Christian hope to the exclusion of its eschatological aspects completely distorts the Scriptural picture. But we may get some argument if we say that an exclusively otherworldly picture is likewise a distortion. Yet this is true. Again, any commingling of the two aspects of hope, or placing them in antithetical relationship, or merely laying them side by side, or in an unrelated sequence, the one after the other, or failing to observe the proper order, will result in utter confusion and the practical diminution or even frustration of either side. The Christian hope is not a *Gegeneinander*, nor a *Nebeneinander*, nor simply a *Nacheinander*, but an *Ineinander* and a *Durcheinander*, and that not in the sense of a confused muddle, but as expressing a causal relationship. The Christian has hope for this life and for the life to come; that is to say, the Christian's hope comes to grips in a very practical way with the problems of this life, because, untrammled by the things of this world, it has first oriented itself to that which is out of this world. St. Paul, indeed, finds the pros-

pect of a hope in Christ confined to this life superlatively tragic, yet he does recognize that there is also a hope in this life: "If in this life *only*" (μόνον), he says, "we have hope in Christ, we are of all men most miserable" (1 Cor. 15:19).

Bearing in mind these few *prolegomena*, let us proceed to an investigation of "The Christian Hope."

### I. THE NATURE OF HOPE

The basic meaning of the Greek word ἐλπίς is expectation, an awaiting of some future event. In itself, ἐλπίς is a neutral word. The coming event toward which hope looks may be either good or bad. But even in classical Greek the term connoted mostly the expectation of something good. The ancients reckoned the four στοιχεῖα, the elemental principles of life, as πίστις, ἀλήθεια, ἔρως, καὶ ἐλπίς.<sup>2</sup> Hope is, in fact, a necessary attribute of life itself. "To man that is joined to all the living there is hope" (Eccl. 9:4), or, "where there is life, there is hope." The absence of hope means death and hell. "Abandon hope, all ye who enter here," is the sign of entrance to the inferno.

In Biblical language ἐλπίς has a constructive meaning exclusively. It is a singularly optimistic word. It is a "good" hope, an anticipation of a future development or consummation that is all good. This is true even when there is no apparent basis, yes, when all signs point to the extinction of hope. The Christian, like Abraham, "against hope" believes "in hope" (Rom. 4:18).

In the Old Testament, particularly in the Psalms, hope is seen as an anticipation of good, coupled with confidence, a longing expectation, together with patient waiting, usually from the situation of present straits, be they spiritual or physical.<sup>3</sup>

The LXX uses ἐλπίς to translate such words as תִּשְׁבָּץ, trust; פָּנֶה, flee for refuge; לָמַח, wait, hope; תִּשְׁבָּץ, that to which one flees for refuge; תִּשְׁבָּץ, expectation.<sup>4</sup>

In the New Testament this basic meaning is continued, emphasized, and associated particularly with the expectation of the ultimate and perfect deliverance at the end of our earthly life or at the return of Christ, and thus becomes emphatically eschatological.<sup>5</sup>

Ἐλπίς is construed as εἰς τινα, as directed unto someone as object; ἐπὶ τινι, as built on someone or something as its foundation; εἰν τινι,

as reposing safely within someone or something, 1 Cor. 15:19; and ἐπί with the accusative, as the direct object.

Ἐλπίς is often associated, or taken as synonymous, with: ἀπεκδέχεσθαι, be seriously receptive to; ἐπιζητεῖν, seek earnestly; ὀρέγειν, *recken*, stretch forward to grasp something; ἀποβλέπειν, look forward to; ὑπομένειν, wait patiently for.<sup>6</sup> Cremer: "The New Testament hope is the prospect of a condition that will satisfy all needs, supply all wants, liberate from all restrictions of life, all consequences of sin, since over against the uncertain present a truly satisfying future beckons, on the basis of faith in the promises and facts of salvation."<sup>7</sup> Hope from the viewpoint of time is the opposite of realization. Rom. 8:24: "Hope that is seen is not hope; for what a man seeth, why doth he yet hope for?" We are reminded of our Lord's words to Thomas, John 20:29: "Blessed are they that have not seen and yet have believed."

## II. HOPE AND FAITH

It is clear that there is an intimate connection between hope and faith, so much so that they are almost synonymous in many places. Hope and faith can never be conceived the one without the other. Hope follows from faith. Hope deals with the "not yet" aspect of trust in God's promises. Hope is faith projected into the not yet consummated, but certainly expected, future. Rom. 15:13: "Now, the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing," ἐν τῷ πιστεύειν. Heb. 11:1: "Now, faith is the substance of things hoped for," πίστις ἐλπιζομένων ὑπόστασις. 1 Peter 1:21: "Who by Him do believe in God . . . that your faith and hope might be in God." Our Confessions attempt to state the specific difference in this way: "If, however, anyone wishes to make a distinction, we say that the object of hope is properly a future event, while faith has to do with future and present matters, and accepts in the present the forgiveness of sins as set forth in the promise."<sup>8</sup> Werner Elert: "Here faith takes the form of hope, which in the specific sense of faith in the future and of patient expectation becomes a criterion of the Christians."<sup>9</sup> Elert's remark that "there can be no Christian love where there is no Christian faith"<sup>10</sup> may with equal validity be changed to read, "there can be no Christian hope where there is no Christian faith."

It therefore becomes axiomatic that where there is no faith, there is no hope. Those who are "without Christ" are described as "having no hope, and without God in the world" (Eph. 2:12). Non-Christians react to sorrow as those who "have no hope" (1 Thess. 4:13).

### III. THE BASIS OF HOPE

Since the Christian hope is so closely joined with Christian faith, we expect the ground from which hope springs and on which it rests to be the same as for saving faith. This is indeed the case.

First of all, hope rests on God's revelation of Himself in the Scriptures; "for whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning, that we through patience and comfort of the Scriptures might have hope" (Rom. 15:4). That is to say, just as God's punitive judgments upon a perverse Israel were "written for our admonition" as warning examples (1 Cor. 10:11), so the evidences of God's mercy in Bible history were written to provide the Christian with a sure ground for his hope.

Specifically, then, it is the Gospel, the good news of God, that creates hope, "the hope which is laid up for you in heaven, whereof ye heard before in the word of the truth of the Gospel" (Col. 1:5). Abraham's hope depended on "that which was spoken, So shall thy seed be" (Rom. 4:18). St. Paul knew himself accused before Agrippa "for the hope of the promise made of God unto our fathers" (Acts 26:6); he directly calls the Christian hope "the hope of the Gospel, which ye have heard" (Col. 1:23).

Now, hope arising from trust in God's promises involves confidence in God Himself, as He is and as He has revealed Himself in His attributes. "Hope," says St. Paul, "maketh not ashamed, because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts" (Rom. 5:5); he prays that Christians "may abound in hope through the power of the Holy Ghost" (Rom. 15:13); he reminds the Thessalonians that God "hath given us everlasting consolation and good hope through grace" (2 Thess. 2:16); and St. Peter emphasizes that our "lively hope" rests on God's "abundant mercy" (1 Peter 1:3). This is an unshakable foundation because of God's faithfulness. We have "hope of eternal life," because "God, that cannot lie, promised" it "before the world began" (Titus 1:2).

To say that the Christian hope is based on God's promises and

God's attributes is the same as saying that our hope rests on our Lord Jesus Christ (cf. 1 Thess. 1:3) and His redemptive activity; for Christ is the consummate exegesis of God's being and purposes as they concern mankind (ἐκεῖνος ἐξηγήσατο, John 1:18). Our hope is ἐν Χριστῷ, and again, specifically, in His resurrection, as the comprehensive summary and guarantee of all He is and does for us. It is "by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead" that God "hath begotten us again unto a lively hope" (1 Peter 1:3). Christians "believe in God, that raised Him up from the dead . . . that your faith and hope might be in God" (1 Peter 1:21). Indeed, "if in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all men most miserable. But now is Christ risen from the dead" (1 Cor. 15:19,20). So completely and exclusively is Christ the embodiment of the Christian hope that St. Paul directly makes this identification: "Christ Jesus our hope" (cf. 1 Tim. 1:1), and flatly equates those "without Christ" with those "having no hope" (Eph. 2:12).

However, Christ and His work, no matter how precious, are of no help to us unless what Christ accomplished is directly pertinent to us in our condition of sinfulness and hopelessness. Thank God, it is. Christ not only died and rose again, but He did it "for our sins" (1 Cor. 15:3). Christ "was delivered for our offenses and was raised again for our justification" (Rom. 4:25). And our boasting of hope is in the context of our "being justified by faith" (cf. Rom. 5:1, 2). Our hope is the "hope of righteousness by faith" (Gal. 5:5), "that, being justified by His grace, we should be made heirs according to the hope of eternal life" (Titus 3:7).

In establishing the saving contact between Christ and us, the work of the Holy Spirit is already implied. It is also expressly stated. The love of God which provides so excellent a ground for the Christian hope is "shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost, which is given unto us" (Rom. 5:5). We are to "abound in hope through the power of the Holy Ghost" (Rom. 15:13). We wait for the hope of righteousness "through the Spirit," ἐν πνεύματι (Gal. 5:5). One of the marks of that inner unity that brings all Christians together is "one Spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling" (Eph. 4:4). It is due to the regenerating and renewing activity of the Holy Ghost "that we should be made heirs" (Titus 3:5-7).

To recapitulate: the basis of the Christian hope is God, the Triune God, in His attributes, His wondrous works, His self-revelation in Christ, as communicated to us in His Word by the operation of the Spirit, who takes us—children of wrath, captives of Satan, blind, dead in trespasses and sins—and begets us again through the Gospel and the washing of regeneration and makes us the children of God, “heirs of God, joint-heirs with Christ.” Where this Scriptural basis is lacking, there can be no good hope. The hope of the Emmaus disciples that Jesus of Nazareth “should have redeemed Israel,” i. e., in an earthly sense, was proved false, because there was no Scriptural warrant for this kind of Messianic hope (Luke 24:21).

#### IV. THE GOAL OF HOPE

It is of the essence of hope to look and stretch forward to a blissful future. Having considered that which gives rise to the Christian hope, we now focus our attention on the goal to which it is directed.

“We are saved by hope,” says St. Paul (Rom. 8:24). Christians are exhorted to put on “for an helmet, the hope of salvation” (1 Thess. 5:8). In St. Peter’s grand hymn of praise concerning the “lively hope” the realization of hope is described as “reserved” for those “who are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation” (1 Peter 1:5). This aspiration of the child of God finds expression in the Psalmist’s longing sigh, “Lord, I have hoped for Thy salvation” (Ps. 119:166).

The Christian’s hope of salvation is not confined to an expectation of future bliss for the soul only, while the body lies a-mouldering in the grave, but it includes the whole man. Hope in the resurrection of the body is emphatically affirmed. “Of the hope and resurrection of the dead” St. Paul was “called in question” (Acts 23:6). Together with his fathers, the Apostle has “hope toward God . . . that there shall be a resurrection of the dead” (Acts 24:15). Christians grieving over the fate of their departed loved ones are admonished not to sorrow hopelessly, but to believe that on the basis of Christ’s resurrection God will also bring with Him all who “sleep in Jesus” (1 Thess. 4:13, 14). Therefore the believer faces his death unafraid, because “my flesh shall rest in hope” (Acts 2:26), and is ready to insist with Job that when the

*Goel*, the Redeemer, "shall stand at the latter day upon the earth," he, the believer, in his "flesh shall see God" (Job 19:25). This is certain beyond debate. Jesus Himself (Luke 20:36) calls the believers the "children of the resurrection."

The Christian hopes for the resurrection not as an end in itself, but as an entrance into eternal life, the full enjoyment of the blessed inheritance that the Father has prepared for His own from the foundation of the world. Though still like a minor who is under tutors and governors (Gal. 4:1, 2), the child of God nevertheless has the sure prospect of entering upon the unlimited exercise of his inheritance in the Father's good time. That will be glory indeed!

How the New Testament writers love to dwell on this theme! St. Paul prays "that ye may know what is the hope of His calling, and what the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints" (Eph. 1:18), and he thanks God "for the hope which is laid up for you in heaven" (Col. 1:5). The result of our justification is that "we should be made heirs according to the hope of eternal life" (Titus 3:7). The ground for the disciples' rejoicing is to be that their "names are written in heaven" (Luke 10:20). Having suffered here with Christ, it is the Christians' hope that they "may be glorified together" (Rom. 8:17). So transcendently beautiful is this prospect that "the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us" (Rom. 8:18).

Radiant with ineffable glory is St. Peter's picture of the Christian hope. It looks forward "to an inheritance incorruptible and undefiled and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for you" (cf. 1 Peter 1:3, 4). St. John the Divine was given a glimpse of that glorious inheritance and recorded it for posterity in Rev. 7:9ff. (Cf. also Hebrews 11 for its many implications for the Christian hope.)

The final phase of the Christian's hoped-for goal is expressed in our Creed in the words: "From thence He shall come to judge the quick and the dead." This return of Christ in glory is given powerful emphasis in Scripture. To fan the flame of hope in the Christian breast, St. Paul declares that "the Lord Himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God" (1 Thess. 4:16). This is the Apostle's

own confident hope as he knows the hour of his departure to be approaching; for "there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, shall give me at that day" (2 Tim. 4:8). This is but an echo of our Lord's own statement: "Then shall they see the Son of Man coming in a cloud with power and great glory. And when these things begin to come to pass, then look up, and lift up your heads, for your redemption draweth nigh" (Luke 21:27, 28). On that great day of the Lord the tensions between the "now" of assured possession and the "not yet" of full fruition will be finally and forever resolved, as St. John says, "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" (1 John 3:2).

To sum up: The goal of the Christian hope is overwhelmingly eschatological, otherworldly, winged, and soaring far above the lyrical capacity of the most inspired poet. The goal of the Christian hope is complete reunion with God,<sup>11</sup> the total restoration of the *status paradisiacus*. And that means ἐν Χριστῷ forgiveness and salvation and resurrection and life and glory and bliss and the crown of eternal victory, in the presence of *Agnus Rex*, the exalted Lamb upon the throne. "Even so, come, Lord Jesus!" "As the sum of all, deliver us from evil; from every evil of body and soul, property and honor, and finally, when our last hour has come, grant us a blessed end, and graciously take us from this vale of tears to Thyself in heaven."

## V. THE CHARACTERISTICS OF THE CHRISTIAN HOPE

From the contexts in the New Testament, hope emerges in singular richness and versatility. The Christian hope is joyful: "Rejoicing in hope" (Rom. 12:12; see also Rom. 5:2; Rom. 15:13; Acts 2:26; Heb. 3:6); patient: "Remembering without ceasing your . . . patience of hope in our Lord Jesus Christ" (1 Thess. 1:3; cf. Rom. 5:4; 8:25; 12:12; 15:4; Gal. 5:5); confident: "Knowing that tribulation worketh patience; and patience, experience; and experience, hope; and hope maketh not ashamed" (Rom. 5:3-5); blessed: "Looking for that blessed hope" (Titus 2:13); living: "Who hath begotten us again unto a lively hope" (1 Peter 1:3); persevering: "If we hold fast the confidence and the rejoicing of

the hope firm unto the end" (Heb. 3:6; cf. 1 Peter 1:13; Heb. 6:11); resilient: "This I recall to my mind, therefore have I hope" (Lam. 3:21; cf. Is. 57:10). Hope is associated with peace: "The God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing" (Rom. 15:13; cf. Rom. 5:1, 2); love: "Charity hopeth all things" (1 Cor. 13:7; cf. 1 Thess. 1:3; 5:8); courageous frankness: "Seeing, then, that we have such hope, we use great plainness of speech," πολλῆ παρρησίᾳ (2 Cor. 3:12). And, finally, it must not be overlooked that the Christian hope is doxological. It inspires the believer to lift up his soul in adoring worship and praise to God, the Author of every blessing: "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which . . . hath begotten us again unto a lively hope" (1 Peter 1:3; 2 Cor. 1:3f.; Ps. 43:5). What a host of shining, positive, constructive attributes!

Thus we see the Christian hope as it really is. It is not colored by chiliastic dreams, nor is it a "God's in His heaven, all's right with the world" superficial optimism, nor an enthusiastic binge of self-intoxication. On the contrary, the Christian hope is marked by an intense realism, a highly sober appraisal of the increasing evil of this present world, and a knowledge that it cannot but arouse vehement opposition on the part of the world (Acts 23:6, 7; see 1 Peter 3:15, 16; 4:7, 13; 5:8f. in the light of 1 Peter 1:3).

The Christian hope flowers with especial beauty and vigor in a soil of tribulation and affliction (Rom. 12:12). (Cf. Luther's coat of arms — *Des Christen Herz auf Rosen geht*. . . .) Hope has been permitted to glimpse enough of the glory behind the veil to realize the firmness of its foundation, to enable it to exercise itself in joyful expectation and in a calm patience that has learned it can afford to wait.<sup>12</sup>

## VI. THE CHRISTIAN HOPE IN ACTION

Be it understood at once that, like faith, hope can never be quiescent or inactive. The impact of the end of the world and the Lord's return, yes, of all the tremendous facts of eschatology, clothe hope with a sense of urgency and provide the impetus for tireless activity. It is St. Peter, the Apostle of hope, who asks us: "What manner of persons ought ye to be in all holy conversation and godliness?" With both eyes fixed on objects beyond the stag-

gering distances of interplanetary space, we must still keep both feet on the ground of this earth and have eyes for it, too. We, indeed, according to His promise, look for a new heaven and a new earth. At the same time, "beloved, seeing that ye look for such things, be diligent that ye may be found of Him in peace, without spot, and blameless" (cf. 2 Peter 3:10-14).

This already indicates that one activity of hope has to do with the individual Christian's personal sanctification. "Every man that hath this hope in him purifieth himself, even as He [Christ] is pure" (1 John 3:3; cf. Titus 2:12,13). All the appeals to the Christian's holiness of life on the basis of his relation to Christ through faith apply equally as necessary fruits of the Christian hope. In whatever life situation the Christian may be, pleasant or painful, constructive or potentially destructive, the remembrance of his hope compels him to adopt an attitude consistent with it.

The Christian's entire life in relation to his fellow men must be lived in the light of his eschatological hope. The Christian has only one hope, but it demands expression also in relation to men and things here and now. As a member of the church the Christian will let his hope motivate him to "do good unto all men, especially unto them who are of the household of faith" (Gal. 6:10), his self lost in love and concern for the neighbor's welfare and the edification of the body of Christ, manifested in whole-hearted participation in the church's entire program of education, stewardship, evangelism (cf. 1 Cor. 16; 2 Cor. 8; 1 Cor. 1:7).

Impelled by the otherworldly goals of his hope, the Christian man is characterized by an intensive participation in the affairs of the world around him. He can never hide his light under a bushel, but, given the proper perspective by the expectation that nourishes his soul, he is intent upon letting his light shine among men, not in misguided withdrawal, but in transforming influence on his fellow men — in the home, in the factory, in the market place, in the councils of government, holding himself ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh him a reason of the hope that is in him, with meekness and fear (cf. 1 Peter 3:15).

In his address at Evanston, Dr. Edmund Schlink gave a thought-provoking exposition of this aspect of the Christian hope. It may be briefly summarized as follows: As debtors to all men, we must

preach the Gospel to every creature. Christians must manifest a concern for just order in this world, and can never be indifferent to any of the inequities that cast a pall over our social structure. Realistically aware of the fact that earthly welfare is not to be equated with the realization of Christ's kingdom, nor a political peace on earth with the peace of God, the Christians will, nevertheless, be tirelessly active in promoting these goals. They are concerned for the unhindered preaching of the Gospel, not primarily, to be sure, to achieve the preservation, prosperity, and civilization of this world, but to save men *from* the world. And since the disunity within Christendom scandalizes the unchurched and thus creates a hindrance to the free course of the Gospel, Christians can never shrug their shoulders at this situation, but must be ready to use every God-given and God-pleasing means to remove the scandal.<sup>13</sup> This is not at all the same as preaching the so-called social gospel. A clear distinction must be made between the social gospel and the application of the one saving Gospel to social problems.

#### VII. THE CHRISTIAN PASTOR AND THE CHRISTIAN HOPE

It is the Christian pastor's holy obligation to perform all the functions of his ministry, to deal with his congregation as a whole and with individual members, and to discharge his office with respect to those that are without, ever in the light of the nature, basis, and object of the Christian hope. This surely calls for a right perspective and sense of values on his part. He must learn to be very discriminating in his attitude toward the multitudinous demands upon his time and energy. Starting at the center, his own and his people's relation to Christ, the minister must extend himself radially from there only as far as his limitations allow. Hence he must refuse to let himself become involved in ephemeral, transitory, mundane matters that may in any way encroach upon the essentials and that may so easily divert him from concentration on the true goal of the Christian hope.

The glory of the light of eternity on which the Christian hope is focused must illuminate the pastor's entire public ministry. Let him remember that he is a messenger of hope in the midst of hopelessness and despair, that the Gospel which he is commissioned to preach is the message of hope. His preaching must be truly escha-

tological. So St. Peter states (Acts 10:42): "He commanded us to preach unto the people and to testify that it is He which was ordained of God to be the Judge of quick and dead." This makes Scriptural, doctrinal preaching indispensable. Every false hope, such as arises from work-righteousness or attaches itself to materialistic goals, must be ruthlessly demolished by the Scriptural preaching of the Law. It is only the terrified conscience, which has reached the nadir of self-hopelessness, that is lifted up by hope in Christ.

"In order, then, that hearts may have a true, certain comfort and hope, we point them, with Paul, to the divine promise of grace in Christ."<sup>14</sup> The Christian hope can begin, live, grow, and culminate only in Christ. This must give direction to all preaching. What does my sermon do to the Christian hope? Does it stimulate, strengthen, make it vital? Or hinder, discourage, thwart it? The admonition of the Apology (IV, 119) should be heeded: "And in the church (if there is to be a church, if there is to be a Christian Creed) it is necessary that there should be the (preaching and) doctrine (by which consciences are not made to rely on a dream or to build on a foundation of sand, but) from which the pious may receive the sure hope of salvation."<sup>15</sup> Furthermore, Article XI of the Formula of Concord (*Sol. Decl.*) points to the destructive effect on the Christian hope brought about by a false exposition of a Scripture doctrine, as, for instance, the doctrine of God's eternal election.<sup>16</sup>

All applications of Scripture doctrine to the Christian life must also be geared to the Christian hope, as Scripture does whenever it relates sanctification to eschatology. Christians are to remember that their citizenship is in heaven, and hence their earthly life is but a pilgrimage, and they should lay up for themselves treasures in heaven. Meanwhile their hope should find expression in simple, everyday, bread-and-butter deeds of kindness to the neighbor, such as feeding the hungry, visiting the sick and imprisoned, clothing the naked, etc., always bearing in mind that on the basis of these deeds of love our Lord will justify His verdict in the great Judgment.

The administration of the Sacraments relates definitely to the Christian's eschatological hope. In connection with Holy Baptism, the washing of regeneration results in this, that "being justified

by His grace, we should be made heirs according to the hope of eternal life" (Titus 3:5-7). As for Holy Communion, Christians dare never forget that "as oft as ye eat this bread and drink this cup, ye do show the Lord's death till He come" (1 Cor. 11:26).

Finally, the pastor in his private *Seelsorge* must relate his treatment of all the manifold physical, psychological, emotional, spiritual, domestic, social problems of the individual to the Christian hope, whether it be instruction, reproof, correction, encouragement, or consolation (cf. 2 Cor. 1:3ff.; 1 Thess. 4:18; Rom. 14:10).

For his own and his members' consolation and encouragement the pastor will find wonderful material in the poetic expressions of the goal of the Christian hope as found in the treasures of Lutheran hymnody. The hymns of "Cross and Comfort" are particularly rich. Thus in the midst of great trials and heavy crosses Paul Gerhardt could say:

My heart for joy is springing  
And can no more be sad,  
'Tis full of mirth and singing,  
Sees naught but sunshine glad.  
The Sun that cheers my spirit  
Is Jesus Christ, my King;  
The heaven I shall inherit  
Makes me rejoice and sing.<sup>17</sup>

"May the hope which Thou hast given us, O Lord, be our consolation in our low estate, as it will fill us with glory in the day of our rejoicing; through Jesus Christ, Thy Son, our Lord, who liveth and reigneth with Thee and the Holy Ghost, ever one God, world without end. Amen."<sup>18</sup>

St. Louis, Mo.

#### NOTES AND REFERENCES

1. For a report on the program, addresses, reports, etc., of the Evanston assembly the reader is referred to *The Christian Century*, November, 1953 to September, 1954, *passim*; especially March 31, June 16, August 4 and 11, September 22, 1954.
2. Cf. the article on ἐλπίς by R. Bultmann in *Theol. Woerterbuch zum Neuen Testament*, Stuttgart, 1935.
3. Cf. Bultmann, loc. cit.: "Ein Erwarten des Guten," "Vertrauen," "ein verlangend ausschauendes Erwarten," "geduldiges Harren."
4. Bultmann, loc. cit., and Hermann Cremer, *Biblisches-theologisches Woerterbuch der neutestamentlichen Graezitaet*. Gotha, 1872.

5. Cf. Luther's explanation of the Seventh Petition: "As the sum of all." Also Luther's remark: "*Die Hoffnung ist der grosse Mut, der in aller Anfechtung fest bleibt,*" quoted in Cremer, op. cit., page 255.
6. Bultmann, loc. cit.
7. Op. cit., page 254. Translation by the writer.
8. Cf. Apology IV. *Die Bekenntnisschriften der Ev. Lutherischen Kirche*, Goettingen, 2. verbesserte Auflage, 1952, Latin, p. 220; German, p. 221; *Concordia Triglotta* (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1921), p. 207.
9. *Das christliche Ethos*, Furche-Verlag, Tuebingen, 1949, p. 379; translation by writer. Cf. Luther's remark: "*Glaube ist die Dialektika, Hoffnung die Rhetorika,*" quoted in E. Eckhardt, *Homiletisches Reallexikon*. (St. Louis: Success Printing Co., 1907—1914.)
10. Op. cit., p. 357.
11. Cf. 1 Tim. 4:10: ". . . because we trust in the living God, who is the Savior of all men." See also Cremer, op. cit.: "*Danach ist also das Objekt die σωτηρία in dem ganzen Umfang ihres Begriffs.*"
12. Cf. Bengel: *Justitia jam est praesens eaque nobis spem in reliquam praebet*. Quoted in Cremer, op. cit. p. 255.
13. Cf. *Evangelische Welt*, Bielefeld, 16. August 1954.
14. Apology IV, *Triglot*, p. 215; *Bekenntnisschriften*, p. 225.
15. *Triglot*, p. 155; *Bek.*, p. 184.
16. *Triglot*, p. 1,092; *Bek.*, pp. 1,089, 1,090.
17. *The Lutheran Hymnal* (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1941), No. 528, st. 15; tr. based on Richard Massie.
18. Paul Zeller Strodach, ed., *Oremus* (Philadelphia: The United Lutheran Publication House, 1925), p. 34.