**BROOKS BY THE TRAVELLER'S WAY - ADDRESSES BY JOHN H. JOWETT**

**05. THE SECRET OF HOPE by JOHN H. JOWETT**

*"Now the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, that ye may abound in hope, in the power of the Holy Ghost."*

*Romans 15:13*

What a radiant assembly of jewels! It would scarcely be possible to bring together into two short sentences a larger company of resplendent words,--"God," "hope," "joy," "peace," "believing," "power," "Holy Ghost"! A prayer which in almost one sentence encompasses these spacious benedictions must have issued from a very exultant spirit, and one deeply acquainted with "the unsearchable riches of Christ." If we re-arrange the members of the text in vital and logical order, the two extreme limbs would appear to be these: "The God of Hope," and "That ye may abound in hope." The one expresses the creative ministry, the other expresses the created result. The text describes the making of optimists,--the "God of Hope" fashioning the children of hope. The remainder of the passage points out the gracious intermediaries by which the divine purpose is accomplished.

**I. The Great Creative Source. "The God of Hope."**

There are some matches which can only be kindled on one kind of surface. We may rub them on an unsuitable surface through a very long day, and no spark will be evoked. The fine effective flame of hope can only be kindled upon one surface. The human must come into contact with the divine. Where else can the holy fire be kindled? A mother is in despair about her son. His face is set in the ways of vice, and his imagination is being led captive by the devil. How shall I quicken the mother's hope, the hope which is so fruitful in loving devices? I will tell her that it is a long lane that has never a turning. I will tell her that the fiercest fire burns itself out at last. But these worldly proverbs awaken no fervent response. The depression remains heavy and cold. The match does not strike. I must lead her to "the God of Hope." A brother is discouraged because of his moral and spiritual bondage. How shall I kindle his hope? I will point out to him the lofty ideal, and let the dazzling splendour of the supreme heights break upon his gaze. But the ideal only emphasises and confirms his pessimism. I will then turn his eyes upon inferior men, and point out to him men who are more demoralised than himself. But the vision of the inferior is only creative of self-conceit A fine efficient hope is not yet born. The match does not strike. I must lead him to "the God of Hope." It is in God that assurance is born, and a fruitful optimism sustained. We must get our fire at the divine altar.

**II. The Gift of Inspiration. "In the Power of the Holy Ghost."**

The "God of Hope," in the pursuit of his purpose to create children of hope, plants in their life the inspiring presence of the Holy Spirit. The Scriptures compare the ministry of this presence to the influence of a wind, an atmosphere, a breathing.

**1.** It is quickening. Like the air of the spring time. Buried or sleeping powers awake and bud, and clothe themselves in grace and beauty. I become conscious of new and increased capacities, new powers of love, and faith, and spiritual discernment. "In Christ shall all be made alive." "The last Adam was made a quickening spirit."

**2.** It is bracing. How easy it is to make long journeys in fine, bracing air! Five miles in the city wearies one more than twenty miles in the Lake District. The Holy Spirit breathes through the life a bracing, invigorating influence. My powers are at their best. I am able to persist, able to endure. "They shall walk and not faint."

**3.** It is revealing. It is the clean, clear air which unveils the panoramas. When the Holy Spirit possesses me I "see visions." I "grow in knowledge." "He shall lead you into all truth."

These are some of the ministries which are implied in the gift of the Holy Ghost. They are the primary requisites in the production of an optimist.

**III. The Creation of an Equable Temperament.**

Filled with all Joy and Peace."

The life that is possessed by the pervasive "power of the Holy Spirit" will acquire the fruitful, equable temperament of "joy and peace."

**1.** Joy. Not a scintillating, transient happiness, but a permanent cheeriness. Life shall be lived in the light. "Lift upon us the light of Thy countenance." It is that light, the light of the countenance, which rests upon the life. What a difference the sunlight makes to the landscape! It transfigures and beautifies the commonplace. What a difference a smile makes upon a plain face! The plain face is glorified. The sunshine of the Lord's favour upon the life--that is, Christian cheeriness and joy. "Now are ye light in the Lord." "The God of Hope fill you with all joy." Every room in the house illumined! God's grace resting upon everything! The sunshine in every corner--upon the affections, upon the judgment, upon the conscience; everything suffused in the "light of life."

**2.** Peace. A deep, quiet sense of rightness in the background. It does not imply the absence of tribulation, but it suggests an abiding consciousness that fundamentally we are right with God. A man can go happily through a hard day's work if everything is right at home. If things are wrong there, all the work of the day is haunted and impaired, and every moment is weighted with the burden of years. A man can encounter much tribulation, and encounter it calmly if everything is right at home, if all is well between him and his God. "Peace" is just that sense of rightness with God. "It is well, it is well with my soul!" The presence and power of the Holy Spirit are creative of a temperament of mingled joy and peace.

**IV. The Consequent Optimism. "That Ye may abound in Hope."**

Surely this appears as quite an inevitable issue. If life is inspired by the presence of the Holy Ghost, quickened, braced, and taught by His power, and possessed of a temperament of joy and peace, it will "abound" in large and fructifying hope. I shall "abound in hope" concerning myself, that at length I shall stand before my God clothed in the white robes of a perfected life. I shall "abound in hope" concerning my brother. I shall never regard him as "past praying for." I shall hope "all things," even when confronted with the stupendous power of majestic vice. "The day will dawn and darksome night be past." The "God of Hope," through the ministry of the Holy Spirit, and the creation of a cheery and equable disposition, will make me to "abound in hope."

There are two words in the great text which have not yet been quoted--"In believing." They describe the link which binds the despondent and the pessimistic soul to the "God of Hope." Shall we rather say, they describe the channel by which the quickening and cheering influence of "the God of Hope" is conveyed to the depressed and disquieted life? Belief is an attitude of soul which implies both alliance and reliance--a surrender and a trust. To lay down the will at the King's feet: to make His will my choice: to attempt obedience in dependence upon His grace: this is the very secret of practical belief. "Believing," I receive "the power of the Holy Ghost"; and "the God of Hope" fills me with all joy and peace, that I "may abound in hope," and in all the sanctifying energies of this endless life.