

THE ANCHOR OF THE SOUL (or The Soul's Sure Anchor)

"We may have a strong encouragement, who have fled for refuge to lay hold of the hope set before us: which (hope) we have as an anchor of the soul, (a hope both sure and steadfast and entering into that which is within the veil; whither as a forerunner Jesus entered for us, having become a high priest for ever after the order of Melchizedek." Hebrews 6:18b-20.

The writer of this epistle had just been speaking of the hope of eternal life being set before us as a refuge and to which we can flee when in danger. But here he changes the figure from a city of refuge, and speaks of hope as an anchor. The anchor has always been a favorite Christian symbol. It is found sculptured in the catacombs of Rome, where the first Christian martyrs are buried, signifying their Christian hope. Our text clearly teaches that :---

I. Life is a Voyage

The voyage of life, even to the good, is tumultuous. There are at least two prominent sources of peril:--

1. From drifting

It is far easier to drift with the current than to go against it. Many are carried into the worst condition of peril by simply permitting themselves to drift. Perhaps the gravest danger in one's life is that of simply drifting. A secret process of drifting, trifling and carelessness always precedes a fall.

2. From storms which we must meet

On the voyage of life we must encounter : --

- (1) Blasts of temptation
- (2) Physical infirmities
- (3) Secular anxieties
- (4) Temporal losses
- (5) Domestic trials
- (6) Outward adversity
- (7) Family bereavements
- (8) Spiritual conflicts

All of these storms dash upon the Christian and put him in peril.

II. The Soul is a Ship

A vessel is capable of progress and of reaching the haven; and so is the soul capable of progress, and under the proper guidance able to reach the right haven. Like a ship, too, the soul needs to be anchored. The whole question of safety sometimes rests upon whether or not the soul is anchored and the strength of the anchor used. That the soul needs an anchor none will deny.

III. Hope is an Anchor

Hope resting on faith is the anchor of the soul. The hope which every true Christian has is like an anchor which has caught firm hold and is holding on. Why does a ship need an anchor? ---

1. To keep it from losing the headway it has made
2. To keep it from being carried away by wind and tide
3. To keep it from being wrecked

There is all the difference in the world between having an anchor and not having one. A good hope in Christ is an anchor to the soul. Christian hope is the only sufficient anchor. It does not quell the storm but it does hold fast and secure the vessel in the midst of the storm. This anchor of hope will not slip or lose its grip for it is both sure and **steadfast**. The true Christian hope is absolutely strong and reliable. It is not constructed of doubtful materials. Its cable will not snap in the tempest. It is strong in itself, so, you can well afford to trust it. It is strong in its place of anchorage for it is fixed upon Christ. The anchor has laid hold of that solid anchorage beyond all that is seen.

Concerning this Christian hope which is the anchor of the soul we should observe : ---

1. It's Object

- (1) Freedom from sin and suffering
Deliverance from:--
 - a. Pains of body
 - b. Distress of mind
 - c. Sorrow of spirit
- (2) Attainment of spiritual perfection
More clear, correct, and comprehensive knowledge
Actually be like the Lord Jesus Christ
- (3) Enjoyment of heavenly blessedness
This alone will entirely satisfy. Nothing else will.

2. It's Importance

- (1) It is important for our Christian characters
- (2) It is important for our Christian labors
- (3) It is important for our happiness

3. It's Value

- (1) It prevents our drifting
With the currents of human opinions
- (2) It produces constancy and usefulness
One who is easily moved, and believeth this today and that tomorrow, is a fickle creature. Nobody knows where to find such a one.
- (3) It prevents sinking in despair
When tempted, tried, tested, and troubled.
- (4) It steadies the soul
When tossed by the waves of trouble and sorrow.
- (5) It inspires us to better living
Waiting in joyful expectation of becoming like Him.
- (6) It enables us to always face the tide
World needs Christians anchored to God, filled with His Spirit and willing to steadfastly face the tide of this world.
- (7) It holds in the dying hour
How sad for the one who has no hope in that hour
A dying sailor was near the end. A friend said, "Well, mate, how is it with you now?" The dying man with a smile, made answer, "The anchor holds; the anchor holds." All hope for us rests in what Jesus has done by His sacrifice. God grant that every one of us may be able to say this both in life and death, "The anchor holds." How miserable life would be for us without this blessed hope.

MY ANCHOR HOLDS

"Tho' the angry surges roll
On my tempest-driven soul,
I am peaceful, for I know,
Wildly though the winds may blow,
I've an anchor safe and sure,
That can ever-more endure.

Mighty tides about me sweep,
Perils lurk within the deep,
Angry clouds o'ershade the sky,
And the tempest rises high;
Still I stand the tempest's shock,
For my anchor grips the Rock.

I can feel the anchor fast
As I meet each sudden blast,
And the cable, though unseen,
Bears the heavy strain between;
Thro' the storm I safely ride,
Till the turning of the tide.

Troubles almost 'whelm the soul;
Griefs like billows o'er me roll;
Tempters seek to lure astray;
Storms obscure the light of day:
But in Christ I can be bold,
I've an anchor that shall hold."