

# ***Faith, Hope and Charity***

***And now abideth faith, hope, charity, these  
three; but the greatest of these is charity.***

***1 Cor 13:13***

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by Carl Graham

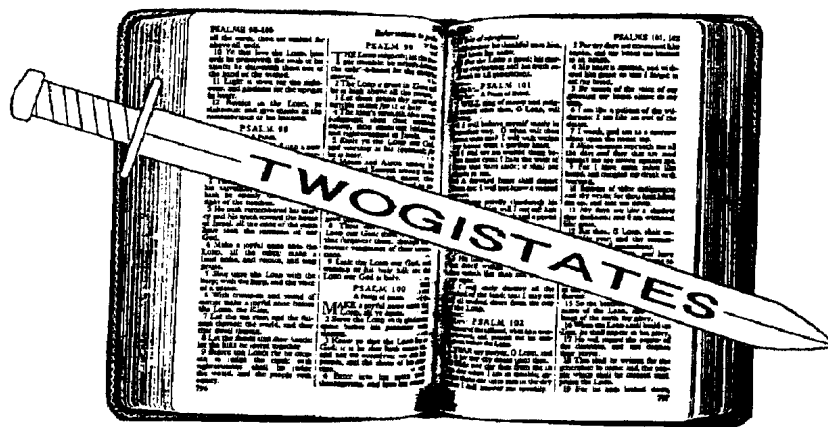
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TWOGISTATES PUBLISHERS

E-mail: [carlgraham@twogistates.com](mailto:carlgraham@twogistates.com)

Web: <http://www.twogistates.com>

TWOGISTATES Publishers advocate the King James Bible  
as the best source for God's Word in English



For the word of God is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any  
twoedged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of  
soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a  
discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart.

Hebrews 4:12

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# **FAITH, HOPE AND CHARITY**

## **Introduction**

1 Corinthians 13:13: “And now abideth faith, hope, charity, these three; but the greatest of these is charity.”

From a preceding discussion, it was seen that Faith and Hope will no longer be needed after the rapture of the church. It seems that now, during the church age, that these two are needed more than ever, but do we fully understand what is meant by faith or hope? In order to help in properly dividing the Scriptures, let's look at each one individually, starting with faith.

## **FAITH**

Faith is described in the dictionary as “firm belief in something in which there is no proof.” The Bible takes this a step further and tells us that true faith in God has all the proof one needs. It reads in Hebrews 11:1 that “faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen.” According to this Scripture faith does in fact have substance, and this is well documented throughout the Bible and the records of church history.

### **Substance**

In order to understand the realness of faith we need to understand just exactly what substance is. The dictionary defines it as “Physical material which something is made from has discrete existence.” You see substance is real matter that can be detected by the human senses. We may see, feel, hear, taste, or smell substance. It is noted that everything man invents or creates in some way uses substances available to him on this earth.

Our Scripture says that faith has substance. How is this possible for faith is not made of materials nor is it detectable by the machinery of science? Since the Bible is never in error, faith clearly then must go beyond the realm of material things to become substance in the eyes of God, and be detected as real material by the spirit of man. What God is telling us in His Holy Word that faith that does not appear just as real to the believer as the material substances of the earth is just merely imagination.

### **Evidence**

As we analyze our Scripture reference, we see that faith takes on a form that God calls evidence. We can understand the meaning of this term, evidence, because it is often used in a court of law. It must be something physically seen or understood using at least one of the five senses. Usually it has to do with seeing, but something

may be used as evidence if it has been smelled, touched, tasted, or heard by a reliable witness, or expert.

The substance and evidence of faith is illusive to most people. They never seem to grasp the realness of God and His promises. They often times think of faith as a strong feeling, of simply just imagination. Many never think of faith until they are in need and then seem to thing they can call upon God to help them during their crises and then continue on down life's road with out God until they need Him again.

Some even blame God for not answering their calls when they needed Him without understanding that faith is not something that can be summoned at will. It is something that must be grown, cultured, and preserved in people's daily lives to be available when one wishes to communicate with God. It must truly have substance and be evident in the person's life that is making the request.

## **THERE ARE MANY VARIATIONS OF FAITH,**

The Bible presents us with many variations of faith, among these are saving faith, healing faith, the gift of faith, faith as the fruit of the Spirit, and sustaining faith.

### **Saving Faith**

Faith is the only contribution that man makes to his own salvation. It is inexplicitly tied in with God's grace and His unfathomable love. There is a process that man must go through to develop saving faith, and it begins with accepting God at His word. The Bible says in Romans 10:17, "faith comes by hearing and hearing by the Word of God."

After hearing the Word, man must in someway logically disseminate the information in such a way that he accepts it as truth. This is the second step in saving faith, but is not the ultimate factor, for even the demons know that God's Word is true, but they are not saved.

The third step is trust. After one hears the Word, and accepts it as being true, he must then place his total trust in Jesus Christ. This is not only for his salvation, but for his daily life also.

This is saving faith. This is the same faith that Jesus spoke of in John 3:16 which is translated as believeth. The word believe here is from the same Greek word, *pistis*, translated as faith in Romans 10:17. "So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God."

John 3:16

16 For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.

Saving faith them must be real in a person's life for he/she to be saved. It must be directly tied in to God's Word, the Bible. This may come by the way of preaching, testimony, song, witnessing someone's life, or through direct revelation to the seeker, but however a sinner is saved it has to be according to God's Word or it will have no substance nor will his/her life show evidence of true conversion. It is absolutely necessary for one to believe God's Word in order to be saved.

The Bible states clearly what our faith must be directed towards Jesus Christ for it to take on a saving force. We often hear about accepting Jesus as one's person Savior in order to be saved, but the candidate for salvation most often don't have the vaguest idea what this means. On the surface, this all sounds pretty simple. All as person has to do is verbally profess that he/she believes in Jesus Christ and, like magic, instance salvation. The salvation of the Philippian jailer is often used as an example of this.

Acts 16:30-32

30 And brought them out, and said, Sirs, what must I do to be saved?

31 And they said, Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved, and thy house.

32 And they spake unto him the word of the Lord, and to all that were in his house.

He was told to believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, but it was according the Word of the Lord. This was a substantive belief and not some kind of imagination or mere profession of faith. The jailer had witnessed the power of God in the earthquake, but most of all he had witnessed the living God in the lives of Paul and Silas.

Saving faith must begin with a person truly seeking God's saving power. However, just seeking and accepting God is not enough, for with out a life changing experience with the Savior, no conversion will take place. You see one must be converted. This means that a person has accepted Jesus Christ as his person Savior, repented of his sins towards God, and has started in a new direction in life. The Bible has to take on a new importance in the life of the saved person for it is God's Word to us. Likewise, church must take on a new significance for it is the agent of Jesus Christ upon this earth.

If a person claims to be saved, but does not attend church, does not diligently study the Bible, has not demonstrated a remarkable change in his life style, he clearly does not possess saving faith.

## **Healing Faith**

What is healing faith? Ministers are often called on to pray for people in the hospital or during a sickness as if a special prayer from a man of God will induce health. I often see where faith healers tell sick people that their faith is not strong enough or they would be healed. What is this issue of faith relative to heath and sickness?

Jesus often told people whom He had healed that their faith had made them whole. The Bible also records where He healed people without mentioning faith, it appears that faith is implicit in the healings of Jesus as it is implied either before or after the healing. A few Scriptures relating various healings will demonstrate this.

Matthew 8:1-5

1 When he was come down from the mountain, great multitudes followed him.

2 And, behold, there came a leper and worshipped him, saying, Lord, if thou wilt, thou canst make me clean.

3 And Jesus put forth his hand, and touched him, saying, I will; be thou clean. And immediately his leprosy was cleansed.

4 And Jesus saith unto him, See thou tell no man; but go thy way, shew thyself to the priest, and offer the gift that Moses commanded, for a testimony unto them.

The leper was healed without any mention of faith, but it is implied in the way he approached Jesus. The Scriptures say that he worshipped Him and called Him Lord. Certainly the leper had a measure of healing faith.

Matthew 8:5-13

5 And when Jesus was entered into Capernaum, there came unto him a centurion, beseeching him,

6 And saying, Lord, my servant lieth at home sick of the palsy, grievously tormented.

7 And Jesus saith unto him, I will come and heal him.

8 The centurion answered and said, Lord, I am not worthy that thou shouldest come under my roof: but speak the word only, and my servant shall be healed.

9 For I am a man under authority, having soldiers under me: and I say to this man, Go, and he goeth; and to another, Come, and he cometh; and to my servant, Do this, and he doeth it.

10 When Jesus heard it, he marvelled, and said to them that followed, Verily I say unto you, I have not found so great faith, no, not in Israel.

11 And I say unto you, That many shall come from the east and west, and shall sit down with Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, in the kingdom of heaven.

12 But the children of the kingdom shall be cast out into outer darkness: there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth.

13 And Jesus said unto the centurion, Go thy way; and as thou hast believed, so be it done unto thee. And his servant was healed in the selfsame hour.

The centurion certainly had healing faith for Jesus tells us he did. However, it was necessary for him to come to Jesus to activate it.

Matthew 8:14-15

14 And when Jesus was come into Peter's house, he saw his wife's mother laid, and sick of a fever.

15 And he touched her hand, and the fever left her: and she arose, and ministered unto them.

There is no mention of faith or believing in the healing of Peter's mother in law. It seems that Peter's faith was the catalyst in this case.

Matthew 16

16 When the even was come, they brought unto him many that were possessed with devils: and he cast out the spirits with his word, and healed all that were sick:

The referenced Scripture mentions that many were healed, but no mention of their faith. It seems that the healing faith of Jesus was sufficient. It is also noted that in the Acts of the Apostles that the healings documented were not related the healing faith of the ones being healed. However healing faith of the ones instigating the healings was necessary.

There is a reference in James regarding healing that is very appropriate for this discussion, for it is related to the healing process for the church today, and confirms the need for healing faith for miraculous healings to be induced.

James 5:13-15

13 Is any among you afflicted? let him pray. Is any merry? let him sing psalms.

14 Is any sick among you? let him call for the elders of the church; and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord:

15 And the prayer of faith shall save the sick, and the Lord shall raise him up; and if he have committed sins, they shall be forgiven him.

The prayer of faith mentioned above has to do with the faith of the elders. It seems that God is telling us that if we had elders of the church who were full of faith, we would see many healing induced by their prayers. Healing faith is available for the church today, but it takes a substantive faith on the part of the ones who are praying for it to be effective.

## **The Gift of Faith**

How could faith be listed a gift from God if saving faith originates with he believer?

1 Corinthians 12:4-11

4 Now there are diversities of gifts, but the same Spirit.

5 And there are differences of administrations, but the same Lord.

6 And there are diversities of operations, but it is the same God which worketh all in all.

7 But the manifestation of the Spirit is given to every man to profit withal.

8 For to one is given by the Spirit the word of wisdom; to another the word of knowledge by the same Spirit;

9 **To another faith by the same Spirit;** to another the gifts of healing by the same Spirit;

10 To another the working of miracles; to another prophecy; to another discerning of spirits; to another divers kinds of tongues; to another the interpretation of tongues:

11 But all these worketh that one and the selfsame Spirit, dividing to every man severally as he will.

This may seem like a paradox at first glance for God places faith on the same plane as many other gifts of the Spirit, but He never makes mistakes, we just sometimes don't understand what He is trying to tell us. The gifts of the Spirit in the early church, as well as today, were not permanent possessions of the believers, but were given to them as the need arose. The gift of healing was given on occasions where God wanted someone healed to testify about His power and to confirm the authority of the one inducing the healings. No one in the New Testament was able to heal at will. This is how the normative gifts operate even today.

The gift of faith is a special endowment from God when it is needed for His special purpose. There are times when God places us in situations where our faith alone cannot withstand the wiles of Satan. In these instances He gives us an extra measure of faith to get us through the situation that testifies of Him and His power. This is not the same as saving faith but is a God endowed gift.

### **Faith As The Fruit Of The Spirit**

According to the God's Word faith may be displayed in such a way that it may be a part of the attributes of our lives that display a Spirit filled life totally dedicated to God.

Galatians 5:22-25

22 But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, **faith**,

23 Meekness, temperance: against such there is no law.

24 And they that are Christ's have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts.

25 If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit.

You see others can see our faith if we are truly walking the path that God wants us to be on. We display the first three of the fruit, love, joy, and peace, if we are in the right relationship with God, for these three can only come from Him. We display the next three, peace, longsuffering, and gentleness as evidence of our inner lives being changed. We display the last three, faith, meekness, and temperance as a natural result to the other six. Faith can be seen as a substantive fruit of the spirit and a direct result of one being totally dedicated to God and His work.

## Sustaining Faith

Sustaining faith is that which sees us through life as we meet our daily challenges. This is somewhat different than faith as a gift, but is the direct result of a growing faith as we seek to obtain a closer relationship with God. We see evidences of this as the Lord talked to Peter.

Luke 22:31-32

31 And the Lord said, Simon, Simon, behold, Satan hath desired to have you, that he may sift you as wheat:

32 But I have prayed for thee, that **thy faith fail not**: and when thou art converted, strengthen thy brethren.

There are other examples of sustaining faith as found in Paul's Life. This was exactly what he was referring to when he addressed the Corinthian believers regarding spreading the Gospel, and again to the Thessalonians about their lack of faith.

2 Cor 10:15-16

15 Not boasting of things without our measure, that is, of other men's labours; but having hope, when your **faith is increased**, that we shall be enlarged by you according to our rule abundantly,

16 To preach the gospel in the regions beyond you, and not to boast in another man's line of things made ready to our hand.

1Thessaloin 3:8-10

8 For now we live, if ye stand fast in the Lord.

9 For what thanks can we render to God again for you, for all the joy wherewith we joy for your sakes before our God;

10 Night and day praying exceedingly that we might see your face, and might **perfect that which is lacking in your faith?**

Peter refers to the trial of faith which by implication means the sustaining faith of the saints of God.

1 Peter 1:1-9

1 Peter, an apostle of Jesus Christ, to the strangers scattered throughout Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia,

2 Elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, through sanctification of the Spirit, unto obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ: Grace unto you, and peace, be multiplied.

3 Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which according to his abundant mercy hath begotten us again unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead,

4 To an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for you,

5 Who are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation ready to be revealed in the last time.

6 Wherein ye greatly rejoice, though now for a season, if need be, ye are in heaviness through manifold temptations:

7 That the trial of your faith, being much more precious than of gold that perisheth, though it be tried with fire, might be found unto praise and honour and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ:

8 Whom having not seen, ye love; in whom, though now ye see him not, yet believing, ye rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory:

9 Receiving the end of your faith, even the salvation of your souls.

### **The Faith Once Delivered To The Saints**

The Bible also speaks of faith as if it is the Gospel of our Lord. This is necessary because salvation, communications with God, and holy living are all so interrelated with faith.

Jude 1:1-3

1 Jude, the servant of Jesus Christ, and brother of James, to them that are sanctified by God the Father, and preserved in Jesus Christ, and called:

2 Mercy unto you, and peace, and love, be multiplied.

3 Beloved, when I gave all diligence to write unto you of the common salvation, it was needful for me to write unto you, and exhort you that ye should earnestly contend for the **faith which was once delivered unto the saints**.

## **RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN FAITH AND WORKS**

Often times the discussion comes up regarding the relationship between faith and works. Many seem to think that one has to work their way to heaven, or into God's graces. Actually, faith and works are interrelated, but not to the extent that our salvation depends on our works. James writings about faith and works is often misunderstood or deliberately misinterpreted to give a false idea about works and salvation.

James 2:14-26

14 What doth it profit, my brethren, though a man say he hath faith, and have not works? can faith save him?

15 If a brother or sister be naked, and destitute of daily food,

16 And one of you say unto them, Depart in peace, be ye warmed and filled; notwithstanding ye give them not those things which are needful to the body; what doth it profit?

17 Even so faith, if it hath not works, is dead, being alone.

18 Yea, a man may say, Thou hast faith, and I have works: shew me thy faith without thy works, and I will shew thee my faith by my works.

19 Thou believest that there is one God; thou doest well: the devils also believe, and tremble.

- 20 But wilt thou know, O vain man, that faith without works is dead?  
21 Was not Abraham our father justified by works, when he had offered Isaac his son upon the altar?  
22 Seest thou how faith wrought with his works, and by works was faith made perfect?  
23 And the scripture was fulfilled which saith, Abraham believed God, and it was imputed unto him for righteousness: and he was called the Friend of God.  
24 Ye see then how that by works a man is justified, and not by faith only.  
25 Likewise also was not Rahab the harlot justified by works, when she had received the messengers, and had sent them out another way?  
26 For as the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without works is dead also.

The entire Scripture above is not presenting the necessity of works in earning salvation, but the natural production of works because of salvation. James is telling us that it is impossible to be saved and not do good works. How can a God of love dwell in us through the power of the Holy Spirit and fail to display that love by good works?

We know that we will be judged according the things we have done for Christ here on this earth, but our salvation depends entirely on Him and our faith in the work He has done.

#### 1 Corinthians 3:13-15

- 13 Every man's work shall be made manifest: for the day shall declare it, because it shall be revealed by fire; and the fire shall try every man's work of what sort it is.  
14 If any man's work abide which he hath built thereupon, he shall receive a reward.  
15 If any man's work shall be burned, he shall suffer loss: but he himself shall be saved; yet so as by fire.

#### 2 Corinthians 5:10

- 10 For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad.

Then Paul puts an end to this matter in his letter to the Corinthians.

#### 2 Corinthians 5:17

- 17 Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new.

## CONCLUSIONS

It is concluded that faith is the only issue in the Christian life. It is through faith that we are saved, it is through faith that we accept God at His Word; it is through faith that we are sustained, and it is through faith that we are assured of a home in heaven.

## HOPE

In reference to the Christian life, the Bible word hope means certain, sure, confident salvation. Hope is called:

**1. An anchor both sure and steadfast.** (Hebrews 6:19) “Which hope we have as an anchor of the soul, both sure and stedfast, and which entereth into that within the veil”;

**2. A strong consolation.** (Hebrews 6:18) “That by two immutable things, in which it was impossible for God to lie, we might have a strong consolation, who have fled for refuge to lay hold upon the hope set before us:”

**3. An everlasting consolation.** (2 Thessalonians 2:16) “Now our Lord Jesus Christ himself, and God, even our Father, which hath loved us, and hath given us everlasting consolation and good hope through grace,”

**4. The hope of eternal life.** (Titus 1:2) “In hope of eternal life, which God, that cannot lie, promised before the world began;”

**5. A helmet.** (1 Thessalonians 5:8) “But let us, who are of the day, be sober, putting on the breastplate of faith and love; and for an helmet, the hope of salvation.”

**6. A living hope.** (1 Peter 1:3) “Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which according to his abundant mercy hath begotten us again unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead,”

The biblical view of hope is the very opposite of the way the word “hope” is used in everyday conversation. Normally we use the word to express something uncertain. Salvation in Jesus Christ is exactly the opposite of this. The believer can be absolutely certain his sin is forgiven and that he has eternal life.

### IF IT IS NOT UNCERTAIN, WHY IS IT CALLED A HOPE?

Our salvation in Christ is called a hope, not because it is uncertain, but because we do not yet enjoy the fullness of it. (Romans 8:24-25) “For we are saved by hope: but hope that is seen is not hope: for what a man seeth, why doth he yet hope for? But if we hope for that we see not, then do we with patience wait for it.”

### WHY CAN A CHRISTIAN HAVE SUCH CONFIDENCE?

**1. God’s promise.** (Hebrews 6:17-19) “Wherein God, willing more abundantly to shew unto the heirs of promise the immutability of his counsel, confirmed it by an

oath: That by two immutable things, in which it was impossible for God to lie, we might have a strong consolation, who have fled for refuge to lay hold upon the hope set before us: Which hope we have as an anchor of the soul, both sure and stedfast, and which entereth into that within the veil;" (Titus 1:2) "In hope of eternal life, which God, that cannot lie, promised before the world began;"

**2. Jesus' blood.** (Rom 3:24-25) Being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus: Whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God;

**3. Jesus' resurrection.** (1 Peter 1:3) "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which according to his abundant mercy hath begotten us again unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead,"

**4. Jesus' priesthood.** (Hebrews 6:19-20) "Which hope we have as an anchor of the soul, both sure and stedfast, and which entereth into that within the veil; Whither the forerunner is for us entered, even Jesus, made an high priest for ever after the order of Melchisedec."

**5. God's grace.** (2 Thessalonians 2:16) "Now our Lord Jesus Christ himself, and God, even our Father, which hath loved us, and hath given us everlasting consolation and good hope through grace,"

The Christian can have certainty of eternal salvation because such is not the reward for faithful service and good works, but is the gift of God's grace through the blood of Christ. The believer's security does not depend upon his own goodness and faithfulness, but upon that of the Savior. The Christian's hope is not his faithful service, but the Lord Jesus Christ Himself. (Titus 1:1-2) "Paul, a servant of God, and an apostle of Jesus Christ, according to the faith of God's elect, and the acknowledging of the truth which is after godliness; In hope of eternal life, which God, that cannot lie, promised before the world began;"

He is our hope! And the fact that Christ lives within the Christian is his certainty of future glory. (Colossians 1:27) "To whom God would make known what is the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles; which is Christ in you, the hope of glory:"

## WHAT IS THE CHRISTIAN'S HOPE?

**1. Eternal life is the Christian's hope.** (Titus 1:2) "In hope of eternal life, which God, that cannot lie, promised before the world began;"

**2. Christ's coming is the Christian's hope.** (Titus 2:13) "Looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ;"

**3. Resurrection is the Christian's hope.** (Romans 8:23-24) "And not only they, but ourselves also, which have the firstfruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of our body. For we are saved by hope: but hope that is seen is not hope: for what a man seeth, why doth he yet hope for?"

**4. The glory of God is the Christian's hope.** (Romans 5:2) "By whom also we have access by faith into this grace wherein we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God." (Colossians 1:27) "To whom God would make known what is the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles; which is Christ in you, the hope of glory:"

This is a reference to the splendor and wealth of Christ's kingdom and also to the moral perfection which we will share at resurrection. (Colossians.3:4) "When Christ, who is our life, shall appear, then shall ye also appear with him in glory." (1 John 3:1-3) "Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God: therefore the world knoweth us not, because it knew him not. 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."

**5. Perfect righteousness is the Christian's hope.** (Galatians 5:5) "For we through the Spirit wait for the hope of righteousness by faith."

**6. Rich inheritance is the Christian's hope.** (Ephesians1:18) "The eyes of your understanding being enlightened; that ye may know what is the hope of his calling, and what the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints,"

**7. To be like Jesus is the Christian's hope.** (1 John 3:2-3) "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."

All of these things are the certain possession of every true Christian. This is our hope. It is not God's will for the believer to be unsure about whether or not he possesses these things; rather it is His express will that we "abound in hope" (Romans 15:13) "Now the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, that ye may abound in hope, through the power of the Holy Ghost. "

Praise God for such a salvation!

## THE EFFECT OF DENYING THE BELIEVER'S HOPE.

To teach that the Christian cannot be certain of eternal life, resurrection, glory, etc., is to ignore the meaning of the Bible word *hope* and causes the following spiritual injury:

**1. It takes away the believer's sure and steadfast anchor of the soul.** (Hebrews 6:19) "Which hope we have as an anchor of the soul, both sure and stedfast, and which entereth into that within the veil;"

The thing which makes it possible for a Christian to stand fast through storms of doubt and fear and problems is the sure knowledge that the blood of His Savior has made him eternally right with God. Believers who do not understand their true position in Christ are left to drift about on life's stormy seas without an anchor. They have no security or stability. They do not know exactly where they stand with God. Their souls are often troubled and fearful, because they have a wrong understanding of salvation.

**2. It takes away the believer's helmet.** (1 Thessalonians 5:8-10) "But let us, who are of the day, be sober, putting on the breastplate of faith and love; and for an helmet, the hope of salvation. For God hath not appointed us to wrath, but to obtain salvation by our Lord Jesus Christ, Who died for us, that, whether we wake or sleep, we should live together with him."

The Christian who is not taught his certain hope in Christ has no helmet to protect him from Satan's lies. (Ephesians 6:10-17) "Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might. Put on the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places. Wherefore take unto you the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand. Stand therefore, having your loins girt about with truth, and having on the breastplate of righteousness; And your feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace; Above all, taking the shield of faith, wherewith ye shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked. And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God:"

It is the Christian's mind which is thus exposed to Satan's darts. When the devil comes with his accusations and doubts, the Christian who has no helmet of a know-so salvation is defeated and tossed about.

**3. It takes away the believer's consolation.** (2 Thessalonians.2:16) "Now our Lord Jesus Christ himself, and God, even our Father, which hath loved us, and hath given us everlasting consolation and good hope through grace,"

God desires the Christian to enjoy the comfort of knowing he is eternally safe in Jesus. Those who teach an uncertain salvation rob Christians of this priceless comfort. The true Christian cannot be robbed of his secure blessings in Christ, but he can be

robbed of the comforting knowledge of these blessings in this life if not properly instructed.

## CHARITY

There are three well-known Greek words for “love”: *eros*, *phileo*, and *agape*. *Eros* you will recognize at once as the name we are familiar with in Greek mythology, as the god of love, the son of Aphrodite.

***Eros*** is the word ordinarily used in classical Greek for love between the sexes, the love of sweethearts, the love of husband for wife and wife for husband.

***Phileo*** is a broader word, generally used for the love of friends. It speaks of a kindly friendly affection, and is also used for the love of parents to children and children to parents, and the love of citizens for the state to which they belong.

Then the other word, ***agape***, is used for a higher type of love, a love that is all absorbing, that completely dominates one’s whole being. This is the word that expresses God’s love for mankind.

It is very significant that in the writing of the New Testament word *eros* is never used. This word representing the love between the sexes had been so abused, so degraded by the Greeks that God knew that it would be totally misunderstood if placed on the pages of His Holy Word.

The word, *phileo*, is used in its verbal form in many places in the New Testament, but always for friendliness, kindly feeling one toward another, and brotherly love, or fraternal affection. When it comes to a question of that which is divine, the Holy Spirit has chosen most carefully, and He uses this word, *agape*. “God is *agape*”—“God is love”—in this highest, most utterly unselfish sense. It is used in the New Testament for God’s love to us and our love to God, and for the love we have for anything we put in place of God

The love of 1 Corinthians, Chapter 13 is *agape*, divine love. It is not that which is in the heart of the natural man; it is not a love that you can pump up out of your heart if you are not a child of God, because it is not there. You may have “*phileo*.” Take that poor heathen mother, she loves her child, and she may even love her husband. That unsaved man and woman love their country, they love those that love them in this lower sense, but it is only when one has been born of God that he loves in the high sense represented in this chapter. This is the word that the Holy Ghost uses when we read; “*The love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Spirit which is given unto us*” (Rom. 5: 5). It is He, dwelling in the believer, who sheds abroad this love in our hearts.

In verses one to three we have the unique value of love. ***“Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, and have not love, I am become as sounding brass, or a tinkling cymbal.”*** Here you see the warning is against substituting mere talent for love. A man might preach and be so talented that he could stir his audience to deepest emotion, but there might be nothing there for God, nothing that would reach the needy hearts of men. To speak with the eloquence of an angel apart from divine love will accomplish nothing.

***“And though I have the gift of prophecy, and understand all mysteries, and all knowledge.”*** You say, “Is it possible to have the gift of prophecy and not have love?” Oh, yes! They said of Saul, and he was not a child of God, “Is Saul also among the prophets?” When associating with prophets, he talked like a prophet; when associating with the world, he talked like a worldling. And then you have the tragic case of Balaam to whom God actually gave the gift of foresight. He was able to look on down through the years and utter marvelous prophecies, yet his heart was exercised by covetous practices; he wanted Balak’s money and therefore desired to curse Israel, but the Lord forbade him. So one may have the gift of prophecy and yet not have love.

***“Though I have all faith, so that I could remove mountains, and have not love I am nothing.”*** Of course he is not speaking of saving faith here, but rather the gift of faith spoken of in chapter twelve. And though it were possible for God to give me faith that would scatter the hills from their places, yet without love I am nothing. How solemn the words of our Lord Jesus, *“Ye must be born again,”* for it is absolutely impossible for any man to produce such love in himself apart from divine grace. The apostle is not speaking of mere sentiment. He was speaking of the manifestation of divine life in the soul, a love that is absolutely unselfish.

***“Though I bestow all my goods to feed the poor, and though I give my body to be burned, and have not love, it profiteth me nothing.”*** You may say, “But I can’t give my goods to feed the poor apart from love; can I?” Pharisees of old did their charity that way, and they sounded trumpets before them so people could see them. There was no love there. It was merely hypocrisy.

And then we read, ***“Though I give my body to be burned, and have not love, it profiteth me nothing.”*** I may be a religious zealot, so wedded to an idea that I am willing to die for it, and yet there may be no real love behind it all. Of course it took the love of Christ in the soul to enable the Christian martyrs to go to the stake singing for Jesus’ sake, it took the love of Christ to cause those devoted believers to go forth to the lions, ready to die with a song of love in their hearts. But it is quite possible to die for an idea, to yield your body to the stake because of some great principle, and yet have no real love in the heart. So we see the uniqueness of love; it stands alone.

In verses four to seven we have the character of love. What is this love of which he is speaking? How may we know it? How may we recognize it when we see it? As we examine these verses phrase by phrase, I wish you would think of one blessed Person. If the apostle Paul had tried to give us a pen portrait of the Lord Jesus Christ, he could

not have done better than to use the Words that we have here. As you read these verses you can see the blessed Saviour of men moving about in this world on His mission of love.

**“Love suffereth long.”** It does not become impatient when tried, when wronged, when it has to face misunderstanding, and when people disapprove. Love moves on just as sweetly and graciously as when people do approve, and *“Love suffereth long, and is kind.”* Remember, if you are not very kind, you are not very holy, because holiness and kindness cannot be separated.” *“Love is kind.”* Oh, the kindness of God as seen in the Lord Jesus Christ!

And then, **“Love envieth not,”** or really, “Love is never jealous.” Did it ever occur to you that jealousy implies selfishness? Love delights to see another honored and esteemed. Of course there is a holy jealousy. The Lord is a jealous God. He would have us altogether for Himself. But this is a very different thing to a carnal jealousy that makes us unhappy when others are preferred before us. Jesus ever took the lowest place and was content to be despised and rejected.

**“Love vaunteth not itself.”** In plain English, love never brags. Love never exalts itself or its ability; it never tries to draw attention to itself. And love *“is not puffed up.”* There is a scripture that says, “Knowledge puffeth up, but love edifieth,” or buildeth up (1 Cor. 8: 1). I think I know a great deal more than other people and so become conceited, puffed up over it, but real love does not puff up, it builds up.

**“Doth not behave itself unseemly,”** or literally, “is never boorish.” The finest gentleman in the world is the man who knows Christ best. What is a gentleman? Is it somebody born heir to some vast estate and perhaps having the right to put a title to his name? Not necessarily. A man might be heir to millions but be a perfect boor. A man might be the poorest of the poor and yet be controlled by divine love and so be a perfect gentleman. Have you never noticed the refining influence of the Lord Jesus Christ? Take a man brought out of the gutter and saved by grace, see how the Spirit of God quiets him, changes him, until his whole character becomes different. Love never behaves in a boorish way.

**“Love seeketh not her own.”** The apostle’s word to those quarreling women in Philippi was, *“Look not every man on his own things, but every man also on the things of others” (Phil. 2: 4).* When divine love controls the heart, it will be others first instead of self first.

**“Love is not easily provoked.”** We read, *“Be ye angry, and sin not.”* A Puritan once said, “I am determined so to be angry as not to sin; therefore to be angry with nothing but sin.” Sin may well stir my indignation but “Love is not easily provoked.”

**“Love thinketh no evil.”** How apt we are to make snap judgments of people Love credits people with the best possible motives.

And therefore because of that, **“Love hopeth all things.”** Love may see something upon which a very bad construction may be put, but it waits a moment and says, “Could I put a better construction upon that? I will not put the wrong one if I can possibly find a good one. I will hope for the best. I will never be guilty of marring a brother’s or a sister’s reputation because of something said or done that looks unwise to me and yet might be innocent.” That is love.

And so, **“Love endureth all things”**—it is willing to suffer, for that is just the character of love.

In verses eight to thirteen we have the *permanence* or finality of love. Everything else may disappear but love abides, for **“Love never faileth.”**

**“Now abideth faith”**—because “faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen” (Heb. 11: 1). “Hope”—because I am living in hope of the coming of the Lord Jesus and our gathering together unto Him. “Love”—for this is the manifestation of the divine life. **“These three; but the greatest of these”—even at the present moment here on earth, before I enter eternity—is love.”**

May God give us the grace to manifest the love of Christ through yielding ourselves wholly to Him, that He may live out His life in us and then by-and-by when faith has changed to glad fruition, when our most wonderful hopes have all been accomplished, when we stand face to face with our blessed Lord, love will abide throughout all the ages to come, and we shall understand then what we cannot understand now, the love that moved the heart of God and led Him to send His only begotten Son into this dark world that we might live through Him. What a wonderful thing to know Christ. Let us go out and live Him before men!

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