

Devotional Handbook No. 3.

# A TRINITY OF CHRISTIAN GRACES

A SERIES OF BIBLE READINGS  
ON FAITH, HOPE AND LOVE.



BY

*George Henderson*

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# A Trinity of Christian Graces

Being  
the Substance of a Series of Bible Readings on  
**FAITH, HOPE AND LOVE.**

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**G. F. VALLANCE,**  
Publisher Christian Literature  
Goodmayes, Essex.

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**“And now abideth Faith, Hope, Love, these three;  
but the greatest of these is Love.”**

*(1st Corinthians, 13. 13.)*



Made and Printed in Great Britain.

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## PREFACE.

WRITING on the unity and symmetry of the Bible, one of the older expositors compares the structure of the Epistles to a magnificent temple built for the worship and service of God. First, broad and deep and strong, are laid the foundations of Faith from which rises the superstructure of good works (Romans). Next, springs to Heaven the spire of Hope (1 Peter); and last, there is heard sounding forth from the inner shrine the divine music of Love (1 John).

In the following pages I have endeavoured to make clear to young believers how firm is the foundation which has been laid for their faith in God's wonderful Word; how sure and how glorious is the hope which is set before them in the gospel; and how supremely blessed is the life which is ruled by that divine quality which is at once the end of the commandment and the fulfilling of the law.

By relevant quotation I have sought to place within their reach, what many of the Lord's servants of bygone days have said about these three great themes; and I am hopeful that those extracts and sayings will demonstrate how necessary it is that we should daily appropriate the strength and help which lie hidden in these graces for us all. For:

“ Faith takes from God Salvation's cup,  
Hope waits the joys unseen,  
With lowly service love fills up,  
The little while between.

Love gives to Faith its mighty power,  
To hope its joyous ray,  
Love brightly cheers the darkest hour,  
And smooths the roughest way.

And when the fight of Faith is o'er,  
And hope fulfilled shall be,  
Love then shall reign from shore to shore  
To all eternity.”

Durban.  
Natal.

*George Harcourt.*

# A Trinity of Christian Graces



## INTRODUCTION.

**T**HOSE who are familiar with the writings of the three apostles, Paul, Peter, and John, will doubtless have observed that while they each touch on various subjects yet each of them seems to have a leading theme. Thus, for example, when we turn to the epistles of Paul we are struck with the frequency with which we find the word Faith. He tells us that we are justified by faith (Romans 5. 1), that we live by faith (Galatians 2. 20), that we are to walk by faith (2 Corinthians 5. 7), and, in short, that without faith it is impossible to please God (Hebrews xi. 6). Peter, on the other hand, emphasises Hope. He views the militant hosts of

God's elect as toiling through the wilderness where they endure suffering, privation, and sorrow; and so seeks to cheer their hearts by unfolding to their gaze the marvellous destiny which lies ahead of them. "Blessed," he says, "blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ who hath begotten us again to a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead to an inheritance incorruptible, undefiled, and that fadeth not away" (1 Peter 1. 3-5). And then when we turn to John's writings we find that his ruling theme is Love. Starting with the blessed announcement that "God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son," the last-named writer carries us on through the varied manifestations and characteristics of that Love and does not halt until he elicits from our hearts that which was the expression of his own when he said: "We love Him because He first loved us" (1 John 4. 19). Speaking generally, therefore, we may say that Paul is the apostle of faith; that Peter is the apostle of hope; and John, of love.

Now my aim in these addresses is to show you that these three graces embrace every phase of Christian character; that Christ is the proper Object for each of them; and that the Christian life will be exemplified and enjoyed precisely in the measure in which all three are possessed by the Christian heart. We shall first examine each of them separately, and afterwards look at them as a whole.

## CHAPTER I.

## FAITH.

**W**E are living in an age in which it is confidently affirmed that it matters little what a man believes so long as he is living a good life; and those who make that affirmation quote the lines of Pope as if they were the last word on the subject:

“For modes of faith let graceless bigots fight,  
He can't be wrong whose life is in the right.”

Now if by “modes of faith” Pope means “the faith which was once delivered unto the saints” (Jude 3) we dissent immediately. “Imagine the whole system of Christian truth suddenly and completely overthrown and banished. There is no longer any God. Jesus Christ, the Holy Spirit, regeneration, the witness of the Spirit, Christian experience, prayer, a future life, all are banished from the earth; no one knows anything about them, or cares anything for them; they are blotted out forever. Would it make no difference? Would the world be quite as well off as it is now? Difference? The change would be as great as if the sun should suddenly be blotted out from the heavens and the world left in darkness.” The truth in this matter is that *every man is what he is, just because of what he believes*; and Pope's clever but



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misleading dictum received its final answer from Dr. Marsh, Vicar of Beckenham, who said:

“In Christian faith let Christian men be strong,  
He can't be right whose faith is in the wrong.”

Recognising, then, the extreme importance of faith—for without it no man can please God—I propose to point out what it is, how it comes, and what it does.

### I. What it is.

In itself it is the commonest thing in the world. “The workman toiling through the week for the wage which he believes he will receive; the passenger, procuring a ticket for a distant town because he believes the statement of the time-tables; the sailor, steering his barque with unerring accuracy in murky weather because he believes in the mercantile charts and tables; the entire system of monetary credit, by which vast sums circulate from hand to hand without the use of a single coin—all these are illustrations of the immense importance of faith in the affairs of men.” It is because it is thus in constant use in every-day life that God has chosen it as the method by which salvation becomes ours. It is, indeed, the only vehicle by which salvation could reach all men. Any other would necessarily leave some excluded. If the vehicle were wisdom, power, learning, or any method other than faith, it would not have been available for all men, but only for those who possessed

these special qualifications. Whereas since all men are on one common ground of unbelief (Romans 11. 32) and since all men may believe God if they will, salvation is now within reach of all.

There would seem to be at least three essentials in the faith which receives the salvation of God: knowledge, confidence, committal.

(a) It presupposes knowledge.

“How shall they believe in Him of whom they have not heard?” (Romans 10. 14). “They that *know* Thy name will put their trust in Thee” (Psalm 9. 10). The popular idea that faith is blind is absolutely wrong. Faith—as we shall see presently—has the clearest of all forms of evidence, the strongest of all foundations—the written word of God.

(b) It implies confidence.

The question which is put to it is: “Believe ye that I am able to do this?” (Matthew 9. 28). There is a story told of some scientists in Scotland who offered a boy a handsome sum of money if he would allow himself to be let down by a rope over a cliff in a precipitous mountain gorge, to get a rare specimen of flower growing down there. The lad longed for the money, for he was poor; but when he looked down into the two hundred foot chasm he said,

“No!” After further persuasion he said: “I’ll go if my father will hold on to the rope.” That is faith. He had confidence in his father, and by an act of the will, he allowed his father to fasten the rope about him and let him down.

(c) It involves committal.

It is an interesting fact that the word translated “commit” in John 2. 24—“Jesus did not commit Himself unto them”—is the same Greek word that in John 3. 16 is translated “believeth”—“that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish.” That seems clearly to indicate that the idea of committal is latent in faith; and a most apt illustration of it comes from the New Hebridean Islands. It appears that for some time after Dr. Paton got to his sphere of labour, he had great difficulty in finding an appropriate word for ‘faith’ or ‘trust’; and much prayer was made that God would guide the missionaries to the right word. One day while he was seated on a chair in his room an intelligent native entered. “Taea,” said the Doctor, “What am I doing now?” “Koikae ana Misi”—you are resting Master—replied the native. Dr. Paton had heard that word before but it was not the word which he wanted. He then drew up his feet, placed them upon the bar of the chair, and leaning back, said: “What am I doing now?” The man immediately replied: “Fakarongrongo Misi”—“you are leaning wholly, you have

lifted yourself from every other support." "That's it," shouted the Missionary with holy joy; and to-day, "Fakarongrongo Jesu ea anea moure"—leaning on Jesus unto eternal life—reposing wholly upon the Saviour—is the Aniwān's definition of faith in Christ.

The Scottish word "Lippen" expresses the condition of a person who, unable to protect himself, commits his life and interests to the safe-keeping of another. Dr. Chalmers frequently used it when explaining the act of trusting Christ. A man crossing a stream on a plank, a patient putting his case into the hands of a doctor, are illustrations of the same truth.

While the Scriptures speak a good deal about faith, they illustrate rather than define it; and the metaphors which they use clearly indicate that the exercise of true faith involves the use of almost every faculty which men possess. Thus, as someone has pointed out:

(1) "Look "	What is it?	Receiving with the eyes.
(2) "Come "	„ „	„ „ „ feet.
(3) "Take "	„ „	„ „ „ hands.
(4) "Taste "	„ „	„ „ „ lips.
(5) "Hear "	„ „	„ „ „ ears.
(6) "Choose "	„ „	„ „ „ will.
(7) "Trust "	„ „	„ „ „ heart.
(8) "Know "	„ „	„ „ „ mind.

These metaphors may be summed up in one word of Scripture which seems to embrace them all: "He that hath received His testimony hath set to his seal that God is true" (John 3. 33). Such an one has knowledge of God; he has confidence in God; he has committed himself to God.

"It is impossible to look at such representations without perceiving that faith does not, in any meritorious sense, procure for us Gospel blessings. It is not the reason or primary ground of their bestowal, but only the hand which receives them. Salvation is of grace; and faith is but the medium through which grace confers its gifts. Hence, notwithstanding the consequences which are attached to it, there is nothing unreasonable in the conclusion—nay, it is a conclusion to which the Scriptures shut us up—that faith is one of the simplest exercises of which the mind is capable."

## II. How it comes.

When we pause to enquire how faith comes into existence we find that the answer is clear and plain. "Faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the Word of God" (Romans 10. 17). "I know whom I have believed and am persuaded that he is able" (2

Timothy 1. 12). "Your faith groweth exceedingly" (2 Thessalonians 1. 3). From these Scriptures we learn that faith comes by acceptance of the testimony of God; that its value is determined by the trustworthiness of the One in whom it is reposed; and that, since it is a living thing, it is capable of indefinite expansion and development.

(a) It comes by listening to the Word of God.

There is nothing mysterious or perplexing about it; for it is simply the response in the heart of man to a revelation from God. "I suppose that if all the times I have prayed for faith were put together," says Mr. Moody, "it would amount to months." I used to say: "What we want is faith; if we only have faith, we can turn Chicago upside down, or rather right side up. I thought that some day faith would come down and strike me like lightning. But faith did not seem to come. One day, I read in the tenth chapter of Romans, 'Now faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the Word of God.' I had closed my Bible and prayed for faith. I now opened my Bible, and began to study, and faith has been growing ever since."

(b) Its value is determined by its object.

Faith is nothing apart from its object; indeed it derives its value entirely from its object.

“All faith is one:  
In object, not in kind, the difference lies.”

All the perplexity which has been occasioned by such questions as: Do I possess the right kind of faith? Have I believed in the proper way?—would have been obviated if this fact were recognised. When a man puts his money into a business concern which eventually proves to be worthless, the faith which he exercised in the venture was true faith, but the object upon which his faith rested proved unworthy of his confidence. If you can say: “I know Whom I have believed”—it matters little if you cannot say you know how, or even when, you believed. It is for this reason that a wise Christian worker will ever emphasize the object rather than the act of faith. Theodore Monod once heard a worker say to an enquirer: “All you have to do is to *trust* Jesus.” Monod instantly added, changing the emphasis: “All you have to do is to trust *Jesus*.” The incident reveals the danger of looking to the act of faith instead of looking through it to Christ. For, as has been said, if you look to the telescope instead of through it, you will never see the rings of Saturn or the satellites of Jupiter.

(c) It is capable of endless development.

It would appear that there are two chief methods by which Faith is developed and strengthened: (1) intelligently, by the study of the Word (Romans 10.

17); and (2) experimentally, by trial (1 Peter 1. 7). These find their supreme illustration in Paul.

When he started his Christian career he could say what he said to the mariners: "I believe God" (Acts 27. 25). But as he neared the end of his days he could say, as a result of his life-long study of the sacred writings: "I *know* Whom I have believed" (2 Timothy 1. 12). The exhortation is: "grow in grace and in the *knowledge* of our Lord Jesus Christ" (2 Peter 3. 18); and the assurance is: "the people that do know their God shall be *strong*" (Dániel 11. 32).

The other method is trial. "Tribulation worketh patience, and patience experience" (Romans 5. 3). Read the list of the trials which Paul experienced as they are described in the second epistle to the Corinthians, and see how marvellously they were used to strengthen his faith in God. During a time of peculiar testing he tells how he was practically left alone. "Notwithstanding," he adds, "the Lord stood with me and strengthened me" (2 Timothy 4. 16-17).

These two methods are available still; and as we learn our lessons both from the book of God and in the school of experience, we shall increasingly trust Him where we cannot trace Him, and find that

"When the steps of faith fall on the seeming void,  
They find the rock beneath."



## III. What it does.

From what has passed before us we learn that faith begins in experiment and ends in experience. We are now to see that these experiences are so transcendently wonderful that the Scriptural declaration—"all things are possible to him that believeth" (Mark 9. 23)—is a sober declaration of fact. Let me place before you seven things which faith does.

## (a) It opens the treasury of Heaven.

The first great blessing which comes to us from that inexhaustible storehouse is the golden casket of Salvation, which becomes ours through faith in the precious blood (Romans 3. 24; Ephesians 2. 8). Thanks be unto God for this unspeakable gift. It cancels the guilty past (Hebrews 10. 17), cleanses from defilement and sin (1 John 1. 7), and gives settled and eternal peace with God (Colossians 1. 20).

That, however, does not exhaust the contents of this wonderful treasury, the door into which is now wide open to all believers. The storehouse is full, the provision is unlimited, grace is free. But we must appropriate that fulness, we must lay hold of that provision; and faith is the hand which does this.

## (b) It makes God a living reality.

It is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen (Hebrews 11. 1). Lady Henry

Somerset tells how in her garden at Reigate a message came to her from the Lord which said: "My child, act as if I were, and you shall know that I am." That message changed the whole aspect of her life and made her the wonderful woman which she ultimately became. Did we but enter into their full significance, these words would have a similar effect upon us; they would enable us, like Brother Lawrence, to "practise" the presence of God; and they would make our Saviour and Lord

"More dear, more intimately nigh,  
Than e'en the sweetest earthly tie."

**(c) It links us with Omnipotence.**

To use a modern illustration: A Christian is not like a motor car which carries its power within it; rather is he like the electric tram which can do its work only as it is in touch with the power above it. A piece of thin frail wire in touch with electric power will flood a room with burning brilliance, radiating light and cheer. And the man with the weakest will, if only he is in living union with Him into whose hands all power has been committed, can do "all things" (Philippians 4. 13).

**(d) It achieves marvels.**

Hebrews 11 is generally spoken of as the great chapter on faith; but it is as full of works as it is

of faith—of works as the fruit of faith. The inspired historian tells us of those “who through faith subdued kingdoms, wrought righteousness, obtained promises, stopped the mouths of lions, quenched the violence of fire, escaped the edge of the sword, out of weakness were made strong, waxed valiant in fight, turned to fight the armies of the aliens” (Hebrews 11. 33-34).

(e) It suffers uncomplainingly.

That same chapter (verses 35-40) goes on to tell us that “others were tortured not accepting deliverance, that they might obtain a better resurrection; and others had trial of cruel mockings and scourgings, yea moreover of bonds and imprisonment; they were stoned, they were sawn asunder, were tempted, were slain with the sword . . . And these all having obtained a good report through faith, received not the promise.” On the tombstones of these patient sufferers God has inscribed these words:

“Of whom the world was not worthy.”

When only 23 years of age Dr. Moon of Brighton was struck with total blindness. When prayer for cure failed, he cried: “I thank Thee for the talent of blindness; may I so invest it that at the coming of the Lord Jesus He may receive His own with usury.” He at once applied his cultured intellect to devising the

Moon system for the blind, now used in 492 languages and dialects, by which thousands of the sightless are said to have found their way to Heaven.

“ Faith came slogging into my room,  
 And other guests took flight;  
 Fear and Anxiety, Grief and Gloom,  
 Sped out into the night.

I wondered that such peace could be;  
 But Faith said gently, “ Don't you see,  
 They really cannot live with me ? ”

(f) It overcomes the world.

“ This is the victory which overcometh the world, even our faith ” (1 John 5. 4). Destitute of the open vision, unconverted men think that the world is everything, and consequently they become slaves to the things which are in it (1 John 2. 16). But faith, which makes divine things real, enables the believer to place the world in its true perspective, and restrains him from bartering eternal wealth for the pleasures of an hour. It does more; for it not only enables us to overcome the seductions of the world, but also to scorn its persecution. When the three young men in Daniel 3 were threatened with a fearful death because of their refusal to become idolators they replied: “ If it be so, our God whom we serve is able to deliver us out of thine hand, O king. But if not ”—this is uncommonly fine—“ but if not, be it known unto thee, O King, that

we will *not* serve thy gods, nor worship the golden image which thou hast set up" (verses 17-18).

(g) It works by love.

"Faith which worketh by love" (Galatians 5. 6). An old writer has said: "Faith first worketh love, and then worketh by it. Just as at first the workman sets an edge on his tools, and then carves and cuts with them; so faith sharpens the soul's love to God and then acts by it. Faith brings the soul to the meditation of the peerless, matchless love of God in Christ, and at this fire stays the Christian's thoughts till his affections begin to kindle; after which he bestirs himself for God with might and main."

#### FAITH AND FEELING.

Dr. Mackay of Hull, was on one occasion speaking on the assurance of salvation, and at the conclusion of his address was accosted by a lady who said: "Doctor, I would give everything I possess if like you I could feel that I am saved." "Well, Madam," replied the preacher, "I cannot speak for other people; but speaking for myself I have never felt saved for one moment in my life." "What!" she replied, "do you, sir, who so continually bask in the sunshine of God's love, tell me that you have never felt saved?" "I do," was the answer; "never for one moment have I felt that I am saved."

"But," he added instantly: "I will tell you what I have often felt: I have often felt happy because I know that I am saved, which knowledge I get, not from the changeful feelings of my own heart, but from the unchanging word of our unchanging God."

That simple incident may show the relation of faith to feeling. The real order is: fact—which is the platform upon which we are to stand; faith—which is the step that takes us on to that platform; feeling—which is the glad consciousness of security that becomes ours as in childlike faith we repose on God's facts. Then,

"Cease of feelings to be thinking, nor of fitness fondly dream,  
The only fitness He requireth, is to feel your need of Him:  
This He gives you—'tis the Spirit's rising beam."

### FAITH AND WORKS.

Hebrews 11—the great chapter on faith—speaks a great deal about works; the epistle of James—the great book on works—has a great deal to say about faith. These facts indicate that God has inseparably joined these two things, and that faith is the most practical thing in the world. Before we pass from this subject, therefore, it may be well briefly to define the relation of the one to the other.

Observe at the outset that the New Testament speaks of three kinds of works: wicked works (Colossians 1. 21); dead works (Hebrews 9. 14); and good works (Ephesians 2. 10). The first of these are the

fruit of the heart of unregenerate man; the second are those things which men do in order as they think to purchase salvation; the third are the evidences of animate faith and love as flowers are the evidence of springtide. The first two precede salvation; the third follows salvation.

No one so sternly condemns works as a means of salvation as does Paul; no one so strenuously insists upon them as the necessary evidence of salvation as does he. While on the one hand he definitely affirms that it was "not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to His mercy He saved us" (Titus 3. 5); on the other hand he charges Christians who are wealthy that they be rich in good works (1 Timothy 6. 17-18); he exhorts believers to separate themselves from all that hinders, so that they may be vessels meet for the Master's use and prepared unto every good work (2 Timothy 2. 21); and he counsels those who have believed in God that they might be careful to maintain good works (Titus 3. 8).

To sum up: Without faith one is not a believer; without works there is no evidence that one is a believer. It is faith alone that saves; the faith that saves is never alone. "Workless faith God never regards; faithless work God never rewards." On earth we are rewarded according to our faith (Matthew 9. 29); in heaven we are rewarded according to our works (1 Corinthians 3. 11-15).

## CHAPTER II.

## HOPE.

**D**R. Thomas has well said that "the prominence given to Faith in the New Testament, and rightly emphasised in Christian experience, should not allow us to forget that Hope is also distinctly brought before us in the Holy Scriptures, and should therefore have its due force in our daily life. As Faith is a primal necessity for the very existence of the Christian life, so is Hope for the full growth and ripeness of the Christian character. Faith and Hope are both essential; and, though they have an intimate connection with each other, it is possible to distinguish them so that the precise value and force of Hope may be clearly seen and appreciated. Faith looks backward and upward; Hope looks onward. Faith is concerned with the Person who promises; Hope, with the things the Person promises. Faith accepts; Hope expects. Faith appropriates; Hope anticipates. Faith believes and takes; Hope desires and waits. Faith comes by hearing; Hope by experience. Faith is a root of which Hope is a fruit. Faith has an attitude towards good and against evil; Hope is concerned only with that which is good."



“Hope springs eternal in the human breast,” says the poet; and in doing so, he expresses a truth which finds illustration in every sphere of life. It is the inspiration of the mother who anticipates a brilliant future for the little one whose cradle she rocks; of the patriot and the martyr as they suffer for national and religious freedom; of the Church as she prosecutes her mission on behalf of those who are out of the way. “Hope throws her bow on the stormiest cloud, and kindles her star in the darkest sky; for the deadliest malady she has a medicine, and for the deepest wound a balm.” The darkest hour precedes the dawn; the longest road has a turning; when things are at their worst they mend—by these and similar proverbs is revealed the fact that Hope is the last thing that dies in the heart of man.

In ordinary usage by men of the world, Hope has in it the elements of uncertainty and transience; and that fact finds eloquent expression in a stanza of one of the best known poems in the English language:

“The worldly hope men set their hearts upon  
Turns ashes; or it prospers; and anon,  
Like snow upon the desert’s dusty face,  
Lighting a little hour or two—is gone.”

But the Biblical usage of this word is altogether different. In the Scriptures it is spoken of as an

anchor both sure and steadfast (Hebrews 6. 19), and is thus set forth as the equivalent of an absolute certainty. The essential difference between an uncertain hope and one which is absolutely sure, therefore, is that the former precedes faith in God, and the latter follows it.

Dr. Thomas has pointed out that the elements of Hope are three in number: desire, expectation, and patience. "Not desire only, for we may desire what we do not expect; not expectation only, for we may expect what we do not desire; but desire and expectation combined and exercised with that patience which can wait for the full realization."

We are to examine three things about Christian hope: the foundation upon which it rests; the objects around which it entwines itself; and the effects which it produces.

### **I. Its foundation.**

It is essential that this should be well and truly laid; for, apart from the revelation of God, men are destitute of hope in life (Ephesians 2. 12) and in death (1 Thessalonians 4. 13). In proof of that last statement let me briefly quote from outstanding representatives of Infidelity, Philosophy, and the great natural Religions.

Colonel Ingersoll was one of the most cultured infidels that the world has ever known; and in the following sad words he tells us his thoughts about the future. "Life is a narrow vale between the peaks of two eternities. We strive in vain to look beyond the heights. We cry aloud, and the only answer is the echo of our wailings." And again: "Whether in mid-seas or among the breakers of the further shore, a wreck must mark at last the end of each and all. Every life, no matter if its every hour is rich with love, and every moment jewelled with joy, will at its close become a tragedy as sad, and deep, and dark, as can be woven of the warp and woof of mystery and death."

Marcus Aurelius was one of the noblest of the men who wore the purple of imperial Rome, and a recognised exponent of the Stoic philosophy. Yet all the inspiration he can place before his followers as they battle with the sorrows of life is this: "When thou art much vexed or grieved, consider that man's life is only for a moment, and after a short time we are all laid out dead."

Buddhism is the religion of nearly 500 millions of the human race; but whatever value may be attached to it by its devotees, it is a religion that is absolutely devoid of Hope. The prospect which it places

before them is one of blank and unrelieved despair. After innumerable reincarnations, each of which is associated with sadness and sorrow, the highest that the Buddhist can hope for is Nirvana—extinction of being.

From these depressing facts and utterances we turn with a sense of relief to the joyous confidence which characterises the hope of the Christian. "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ Who hath begotten us again unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead to an inheritance incorruptible, undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for you" (1 Peter 1. 3-4). "For *we know* that if our earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved we have a building of God, an house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens" (2 Corinthians 5. 1). "These things have I written unto you that believe on the name of the Son of God that ye may know that ye have eternal life" (1 John 5. 13). "We know that when He shall appear we shall be like Him" (1 John 3. 2). The foundation on which the believer's hopes repose, therefore, is of a twofold character: (1) the resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ from the dead, which is the most clearly attested fact in history; and (2) the written Word of God—the imperishable utterance of the Eternal.

## II. Its objects.

“If in this life only we have hope in Christ we are of all men most miserable” (1 Corinthians 15. 19). “Hope that is seen is not hope; for what a man seeth why doth he yet hope for?” (Romans 8. 24). These words tell us that the chief objects of our hope lie beyond earth and time; and it is for this reason that Hope has been described as “faith with outstretched wing looking towards the dawn.”

In the presence of the infinities revealed to us in the Bible, human language utterly breaks down. Thus, if the peace of God is spoken about, it is described as passing all understanding (Philippians 4. 7); if Christian joy is mentioned it is affirmed to be unspeakable and full of glory (1 Peter 1. 8). The love of Christ is said to transcend human knowledge (Ephesians 3. 19), and His riches to be unsearchable (Ephesians 3. 8); while the ways of God are declared to be past finding out (Romans 11. 33). If these things—which, for the most part, relate to our present experience—are entirely beyond us, how much more so are the things which God has prepared for us in the coming ages of eternity?

Whilst, however, it is clearly impossible to describe the phenomena of one world in the phraseology of another, there are three well-defined events placed before us in the New Testament to which the tendrils of Hope may cling: (1) The coming of the

Lord (1 Timothy 1. 1); (2) the redemption of the body (Romans 8. 23-24); (3) our entrance into the palace of the King (John 14. 1-3). Deep heart comfort is associated with the first of these (1 Thessalonians 4. 13-18); life-long patience with the second (Romans 8. 25), and abounding joy with the third (Romans 5. 2).

(a) **The coming of the Lord.**

The New Testament brings before us a threefold testimony on this matter, namely, the testimony of Christ Himself (John 14. 2-3), the testimony of the angels (Acts 1. 9-11), and the testimony of the apostles (1 Thessalonians 4; James 5. 8; 1 Peter 1. 7). Observe how these testimonies coincide. "*I will come again,*" said the Master; "*This same Jesus shall come again,*" say the angels; "*The Lord Himself shall descend,*" say the apostles. And I am sure that when that event takes place we shall feel as Rutherford felt in anticipation of it. Just as the eye of the bride rests, not on her garment, however rich or gorgeous it may be, but on the face of the beloved of her heart, so

"We will not gaze on glory, but on our Saviour's face;  
Not at the crown He giveth, but on His pierced Hand,  
For the Lamb is all the glory of Immanuel's land."

As G. B. M. Clouser says: "The most sustaining feature in the Christian's hope is the hour of home-

coming, when the wilderness shall be forever past, and the One whose words ever quickened the soul to new affection, becomes an eternal possession. To reach the goal of all earthly toil and longing, and stand at last in the presence of the most sublime Object in the universe; to hear His words of approval and praise, and rest in the warm sunshine of His love—that will be realization! The power of His holy presence will repay for all the trials of life's weary journey; the experience of His unhindered love will atone for all of earth's disappointments; and a moment's gaze upon His matchless form will compensate for all of life's sorrows and anguish."

(b) The redemption of the body.

We are told that "the creature itself also shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God. For we know that the whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together until now; and not only so but ourselves also which have the first-fruits 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" (Romans 8. 21-24, R.V.). Then earth's retardings and the clinging clay shall hinder no more; the last link that binds us to the old creation will be snapped; pain and weariness will be things of the past; and in the full vigour of eternal youth we shall enter on scenes brighter

far. But that leads me to the third event for which we wait, namely, our entrance into

(c) The palace of the King.

“ Let not your heart be troubled: ye believe in God, believe also in Me. In My Father’s house are many mansions: if it were not so I would have told you: I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you unto Myself; that where I am, there ye may be also ” (John 14. 1-3).

These are among the closing words spoken by the Lord Jesus on the eve of His passing to Calvary. He speaks of the eternal dwelling-place of the redeemed as His Father’s house; and in humble but confident anticipation of our ultimate arrival there, we remind ourselves that His Father is our Father, and His God our God (John 20 17).

“ My Father’s House. No strange and foreign land  
No wonderful new world, too coldly grand:  
But Home, and a Father’s outstretched welcoming hand.”

Bernard describes these words as a message of consolation and of revelation. “ He reveals in order to console. The words not only meet the need of the hour, but have also shed light on the future for every age. Scarcely can one cite them without pass-



ing at once beyond the limits of the historic situation. They breathe with unchanging freshness through all the long centuries of faith; and to-day are bringing a new sense of a lasting Home to souls that have not found one upon earth. Of all words spoken on earth these have done the most to dispel the darkness beyond the grave, and to give secure expectation as we approach it." With that eloquence which characterises all his writings he goes on to say that "the whole army of the faithful from every tribe of the peopled earth and from every age of the history of man" shall enter the palace of the King; and that there they shall find "mansions of eternal abode, couches of eternal rest, and the board of an eternal festival." "This is for you, man of the broken heart, and tear-stained cheek, and reddened eyes, and furrowed brow."

Verily, ours is a hope which triumphs over death and which exults in the vision of immortality.

### III. Its effects.

I shall now point out briefly some of the effects which, if we embrace this Hope in living power, will manifest themselves in our lives. Far from being visionary and inoperative as it is sometimes said to be, we shall find that it is the most practical thing in the world. Gibbon in his "Decline and

Fall of the Roman Empire" says: "There can be no doubt that the purity of doctrine and of morals and high tone of Christian living which marked the early Church was, to a large extent, the result of belief in this subject of the return of the Lord Jesus."

The fruit of the Spirit—that lovely ninefold cluster which is the perfection of Christian character—is described in Galatians 5. 22-23. Examine these virtues and what is said about them in the New Testament, and you will find that in each case the supreme incentive to their exemplification is the Hope which is set before us—the coming of the Lord.

- |     |                    |      |                        |
|-----|--------------------|------|------------------------|
| (1) | It is a quickening | Hope | 1 Peter 1. 3, R.V.     |
| (2) | „ „ gladdening     | Hope | Romans 12. 12.         |
| (3) | „ an emboldening   | Hope | Romans 5. 5.           |
| (4) | „ a purifying      | Hope | 1 John 3. 3.           |
| (5) | „ „ steadying      | Hope | Hebrews 6. 19.         |
| (6) | „ „ comforting     | Hope | 1 Thessalonians 4. 18. |
| (7) | „ „ blessed        | Hope | Titus 2. 13.           |

“The true test of the possession of pure and celestial hope is the extent to which it renders us independent of the circumstances of our outward life. Shall the petty vexations of the world discomfit the child of the great King? Shall the perturbations and eddyings of the currents of this fleeting life toss the barque from her moorings, when her hope as an

anchor of the soul sure and steadfast may enter within the veil? Shall losses and crosses and changes here cloud the brow of him who holds fast and firm the title to an inheritance incorruptible, undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for him? If we hope for that we see not, then do we with patience wait for it?"

"A hope so great and so divine, may trials well endure,  
And purge the soul from sense and sin, as Christ Himself  
is pure."



## CHAPTER III.

## LOVE.

“The love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Spirit which is given unto us.” (Romans 5. 5.)  
“We love Him because He first loved us.” (I John 4. 19.)  
“Every one that loveth Him that begat, loveth him also that is begotten of Him.” (I John 5. 1). The first two of these scriptures explain the third; and 1st Corinthians. chapter 13 is a description of how the third works itself out into the practical details of daily life. To the examination of that last-named chapter, therefore, we now turn.

“**E**VERY one who reads through the first epistle to the Corinthians, when coming to the thirteenth chapter, that prose-poem in praise of love, must feel like one passing suddenly into a new and balmy atmosphere. It is an unexpected outburst of song, and stands unique among the writings of the apostle. He had been writing of many questions that had occasioned strife and division in the Corinthian church. His reasonings had been cogent and his appeals urgent. But for a moment he turns aside from them and breaks out into a beautiful eulogy of love. What started his mind in this direction? What was the underthought which moved his spirit? We fancy that a half-formed feeling like this passed over his mind: ‘O Corinthians,

you are vexing yourselves over many questions—you have divisions and rivalries, you are proud of this gift and that gift, but if you only had the chief of all graces, the divinest of all qualities, and acted under the most God-like of all principles—if you had love in fulness—these questions would soon be answered and your divisions and contentions would soon pass away—love will solve and cure everything.’ Love is the greatest need in our churches where divisions and misunderstandings are perennial. It will clarify the understanding, mollify chafed spirits, soothe irritabilities, balance the judgment, promote leniency and patience, root out selfishness and foster magnanimity, and make it possible for people of diverse temperaments and views and social affinities to dwell together in harmony and work in happy co-operation.”

The theme of 1 Corinthians 12 is the gifts; of chapter 13, love; of chapter 14, power; and the thought suggested by their connection with each other is that “the gifts of chapter 12, must be baptized in the love of chapter 13, before they can be exercised in the power of chapter 14 ” (see 14, 24-25). Chapter 12 is the verb “to have”; chapter 13, the verb “to be”; and chapter 14, the verb “to do.”

Two preliminary words need to be said about 1 Corinthians 13. The first is that the epistle of which it forms a part was written exclusively to believers

in the Lord Jesus Christ. The address on the envelope is: "Unto the church of God which is at Corinth, to them that are sanctified in Christ Jesus, called to be saints, with all that in every place call upon the name of Jesus Christ our Lord, both their's and our's" (chapter 1, verse 2). The second is that the word which is there translated "Charity," should really be translated "Love"—Charity is the old English word for Love.

Before we examine the contents of this chapter in detail, it may be helpful to look at what some of the expositors have said of it as a whole. Dean Alford speaks of it as "a pure and perfect gem; perhaps the noblest assemblage of beautiful thoughts in beautiful language extant in this our world." Dr. Meyer says that "this beautiful gem of Love lies between two chapters of argument and expostulation like a pure lakelet mirroring the blue sky, set as a jewel in an encasement of rocks." And another declares that "Paul tells them of a more excellent way; of a path more transcendent than any gifts; and then, rising on the wings of inspired utterance, he pours forth as from the sunlit mountain heights, his glorious hymn to Christian love."

The divisions of the chapter are clearly marked. In verses 1-3 the apostle contrasts love with the various things which men prize but which may exist

without it; in verses 4-7 he describes it; and in verses 8-13 affirms that, while faith and hope and love are all great, the greatest of them is love. And so, as an American preacher has put it, we have set forth here, its relative value, its incomparable character, its imperishable influence.

### I. Love is pre-eminent (verses 1-3).

It is greater than anything we can say (verse 1); than anything we can possess (verse 2); than anything we can bestow (verse 3). It is contrasted with eloquence, illumination, insight, knowledge, faith, benevolence, and martyrdom. That sevenfold contrast brings out the solemn lesson that endowment is no substitute for character; that it is not brilliance but goodness that counts in the estimation of heaven; and that

"No works shall find acceptance in that day,  
When all disguises shall be swept away,  
That square not truly with the Scripture plan,  
Nor spring from love to God, nor love to man."

### II. Love is incomparable (verses 4-7).

Having demonstrated the superiority of love to the things most highly valued among men, Paul goes on to give a full description of it. As we come to look more closely at that description we shall find

that "love is to the heart what summer is to the year: it matures all the noblest and grandest fruits of the soul; that it is the brightest star in the Christian firmament, the fairest flower in the garden of God."

Sixteen things are predicated of it, on each of which I shall briefly touch. Love is:

(a) Long-suffering.

"Love suffereth long." The Stoic philosophy will teach a man to suffer—manfully; Christianity will teach him to suffer—joyfully (Colossians 1. 11). The one grins and bears it; the other sings and bears it. A bright Christian soldier in one of the Scottish regiments was asked how he was brought to Christ. He answered as follows: "There is a private in the same company who was converted in Malta before the regiment came on to Egypt. We gave that fellow an awful time. The Devil got possession of me and I made that man's life a positive burden to him. Well, one night, a terribly wet night, he came in from sentry-go. He was very tired and very wet, and before getting into bed he got down to pray. My boots were heavy with wet and mud, and I let him have one on one side of the head and the other on the other side; and he just went on with his prayers. Next morning I found those boots beautifully polished by the side of my bed. That was his



reply to me; it just broke my heart, and I was saved that day."

(b) Kind.

"Love is kind." Our supreme Exemplar here is God Himself (Titus 3. 5), who allows His sun to shine on the garden of the infidel as well as on that of the Christian (Matthew 5. 45), and Who is kind to the unthankful and to the evil (Luke 6. 35).

Repeatedly does He urge His children to be kind in thought (1 Corinthians 13. 4), in word (Proverbs 31. 26), and in deed (Ephesians 4. 32). Kindness is the key to the human heart and will often succeed when everything else fails. In one of the large convict prisons was a well-educated man who was a thorough agnostic, and no amount of argument or pleading could move him from his belief. He remained, in spite of all attempts to get into touch with him, hard and dour as ever. But one day, while the chaplain was talking to him, his attention was drawn to the convict's wounded foot. It was evidently a source of pain, and the chaplain left off speaking, bent down and examined it, then bound it up more comfortably. As he did so, he felt a great tear drop upon his head. That little act had done what no amount of pleading could accomplish.

"Be kind," was the counsel of an eminent preacher; "be kind, for every man is fighting a hard battle." "I wonder," says another, "why it is that we are not all kinder than we are? How much the world needs it? How easily it is done? How spontaneously it acts! How infallibly it is remembered! How superabundantly it pays itself back!"

(c) Generous.

"Love envieth not." Far from regretting the advancement of others, love rejoices in it; and in so doing calls down reflex blessings upon herself. This is a test which each can apply to his own heart. Do we really rejoice when our friend is preferred before us? When God uses another's preaching more than He does ours? When material blessing is granted to our acquaintances while we ourselves remain poor? If we do not, then ought we to pray with Henry Van Dyke:

"These are the sins I fain would have take Thee away:  
Malice, and cold disdain; hot anger, sullen hate;  
Scorn of the lowly, envy, of the great,  
And discontent casts a shadow grey  
On all the brightness of the common day."

(d) Unobtrusive.

"Love vaunteth not itself." If envy is the vice to which life's unsuccessful ones are specially prone,

to act vauntingly, boastfully, is the temptation of the rich. It was said of a prominent personage of last century that he was a self-made man and that he adored his maker. But "love has no trumpeter in her train to proclaim her virtues: the Sermon on the Mount has abolished that time-honoured official" (Matthew 6. 2).

**(e) Humble.**

"Love is not puffed up." She is not conceited, or inflated with vanity. The tendency in Corinth was to pride themselves in the men whom God had provided for their help (1 Corinthians 4. 6-7); in oratorical gifts although these were destitute of power (4. 18-20); and in that little knowledge which is a dangerous thing (8. 1-2).

The antidote to all this is love: like the Master Himself she is lowly in heart. This indeed is one of her most beautiful traits. She neither praises herself nor depreciates others; in lowliness of mind she esteems others better than herself. The outward expressions of such a condition of heart will be modesty and meekness.

"It was my custom in my youth," says a celebrated Persian writer, "to rise from my sleep, to watch, pray, and read the Koran. One night as I was thus

engaged my father, a man of practised virtues, awoke. "Behold," I said to him, "thy other children are lost in irreligious slumber, while I alone wake to praise God!" "Son of my soul," said he, "it is better to sleep, than to wake to remark the faults of thy brethren."

(f) Courteous.

"Love doth not behave itself unseemly." Love will lead us "studiously to avoid in conduct and speech whatever seems unbecoming to ourselves or offensive to others." It will make us respectful to superiors, polite to equals, kind to inferiors. Courtesy is like an air-cushion: there is nothing in it but it eases the jolts of life. "The very heart of courtesy is the delicate, mental consideration of others: breeding does it by training; love does it by instinct. Louis XIV., telling a story before his courtiers at Versailles, suddenly ended it very flatly. A few minutes after, a prince left the room. The King then said: "You must have noticed how lamely my story ended. I forgot that it reflected on an ancestor of the prince who has just left the room; and I thought it better to spoil a good story than to distress a good man."

(g) Unselfish.

"Love seeketh not her own." Addressing a gathering of young people, an eminent preacher referred to the

grammatical rule: first person I; second person, thou; third person, he; and then went on to say that while that may be grammatically right, it is spiritually wrong. The proper order, he said, is: first person, he; second person, thou; third person, I. And, as has been said, that is the secret of all true joy:

J esus first  
 O thers next  
 Y ourself last.

(h) Patient.

“Love is not easily provoked.” When the great dramatist describes one of his characters who was particularly good tempered, he speaks of him as one “who carries anger as the flint bears fire; which much enforced doth show a hasty spark and straight is cold again.”

There are two great classes of sins described in the New Testament: sins of the flesh—of which the prodigal of Luke 15 is the illustration; and sins of the mind—of which his brother is the embodiment (Ephesians 2. 3; 2 Corinthians 7. 1). Bad temper is a sin of the mind; it is the vice of the virtuous. “Be ye angry and sin not”: how is that possible? By being angry at nothing but sin. Such anger should never see two suns (Ephesians 4. 26).

## (i) Unsuspicious.

"Love thinketh no evil"; or, as Dr. Orr translates it: "Love does not impute evil motives." If the Criminal Investigation Department has to regard every man as a rogue until he proves himself to be an honest man, the Christian should regard every man as an honest man until he proves himself to be a rogue.

"Suspicion lurks not in Love's artless breast,  
The worst ~~suggested~~, she believes the best."

## (j) Upright.

"Love rejoiceth not in iniquity." Her winsomeness and gentleness do not lead her to forget that there is an eternal difference between right and wrong; and since God is of purer eyes than to behold iniquity (Habukkuk 1. 13) she has no pleasure in it.

## (k) Sincere.

"Love rejoiceth in the truth"; or, as Weymouth translates it: "Love joyfully sides with the truth." General Grant, a great American soldier, was once asked his opinion of a certain officer under his command. He spoke of him in the warmest terms. "But, sir," said his questioner, "do you know that he said this and that of you?" Calmly came the reply: "You asked me my opinion of him, not his of me."

**(l) Steadfast.**

“Love beareth all things.” In one of those ecstatic moments which he so frequently enjoyed while bearing imprisonment for his Master, Samuel Rutherford said: “What power and strength are in His love: I am persuaded it can climb a steep hill, with hell upon its back; and swim through water and not drown; and sing in the fire and find no pain; and triumph in losses, prison, sorrows, exile, disgrace, and laugh and rejoice in death.”

**(m) Trustful.**

“Love believeth all things.” She believes that, as George Muller used to say, out of a thousand troubles, nine hundred and ninety-nine work together for good to them that love God—and one more; and that should the hour of dissolution arrive, the valley of the shadow will prove to be an avenue to God.

**(n) Cheerful.**

“Love hopeth all things.” “Resting on faith’s certainties, love looks through hope’s keen vision to the realization of a glorious future.”

**(o) Strong.**

“Love endureth all things.” Of the four virtues described in verse 7, Bengel has said: “All that

can be borne Love will bear; all that can be believed she will believe; all that can be hoped she will hope; all that can be endured she will endure." "Four ways Love looks and dominates them all: she looks towards the bitter East, with its biting blasts, and is unchilled—Love beareth; toward the sunny South, with its inviting landscape, and basks in its certainties—Love believeth; toward the glowing West, with its promise of the morrow, and smiles with expectancy—Love hopeth; towards the grey North, with its dour hardness and stands undaunted—Love endureth."

(p) Unfailing.

"Love never faileth"; and for this reason it is contrasted with three outstanding things that shall fail—prophecy, tongues, and knowledge (verse 8). The word of prophecy will become the fact of history; earthly tongues shall cease, and the innumerable multitude out of every kindred and nation and people shall sing the anthem of eternity in the language of heaven; our fragmentary knowledge will give place to knowledge which is complete, and we shall know as we are known. But love will never pass or fail; it will abide eternally.

"Such was the portrait an apostle drew,  
Heaven held his hand, the likeness must be true."



It is a picture, contemplation of which will drive every Christian to his knees in lowly penitence as he discovers how unlike it is his life. These lovely traits of Christian character mark the perfect Christian lady, the true Christian gentleman. They were seen in blended perfection only in one Man—the Man Christ Jesus; they will be seen in us precisely in the measure in which we follow His steps. “These fine touches,” says Canon Evans, “these fine touches and features of love are not drawn like an exquisite painting that may be carried into a gallery, and hung up on a wall and left there. Rather we behold in this unequalled picture a breathing original, to be translated into daily and hourly life, a living power and divine principle communicated to the human spirit and working in the human will, conquering by constant counteraction, planting noble opposites to meet inferior, checkmating earth with heaven, overcoming evil by good, vanquishing arrogance by gentleness, insolence by courtesy, peevishness by patience, malice by guilelessness, vindictiveness by alacrity in forgiving, and all sorts of ghostly enemies by a steady front of determined resistance and invincible courage.”

The Editor of “The Ram's Horn” once offered a thousand dollars for the best design of a badge to be worn only by Christians. One who answered the Editor said he could not offer much in the way of

designs, but would call the attention of the Editor to one verse of Scripture—John 13. 35: “By this shall all men know that ye are My disciples, if ye have love one to another.”

### III. Love is eternal.

Faith will be required only until the close of our earthly career (2 Corinthians 5. 7); Hope will find fulfilment at the coming of the Lord (1 Thessalonians 4. 13-18; Titus 2. 13); but love will live on in heaven her native sphere eternally. Throughout our earthly history, therefore, all three of them abide (verse 13); and verily, in the midst of the limitations by which we are at present beset, we shall need every one of them. For, as the apostle goes on to show, there are three things which characterise our existence on the earth, namely, imperfect knowledge, limited understanding, distorted vision.

#### (a) Our knowledge is imperfect (verses 9-10).

“We know in part” (verse 9). “Lo these are but the outskirts of His ways, and how small a whisper do we hear of Him” (Job 26. 14, R.V.). Sir Isaac Newton, with all his wonderful stores of knowledge, had to confess: “I seem to have been only a boy playing on the seashore, and diverting myself by now and then finding a smoother pebble or a prettier

shell than ordinary, while the great ocean of truth lay all undiscovered before me." Browning with all his philosophical lore had to say: "On earth the broken arcs, in heaven the perfect round." It is said that on his return to Scotland after twenty-two years unbroken service for God in Central Africa, Dan Crawford called on his old teacher who had in the interim become Lord Kelvin. "Well, Lord Kelvin," said the missionary, "what are you studying now." "Dan," replied the great scientist, "we are getting to know more and more about less and less." The inevitable consequence which follows the recognition of how little we really know, is humility of heart.

"Now I know in part, but then shall I know even as also I am known" (verses 10, 12). The knowledge which we now acquire by patient study and investigation is partial, fragmentary, incomplete; but then we shall now intuitively and perfectly even as also we are known. "Then shall I know." What joy, and exultation, and ardour, and longing, are in these words. Then—when time and change and varying seasons are past; when the alternations of cloud and sunshine are over; when doubt and difficulty and perplexity have been left behind—then shall I know even as also I am known."

(b) Our understanding is limited (verse 11).

"I understood as a child." The faculties by which understanding is possible lay undeveloped in the

little Tarsus boy; but at the end of his earthly life the great apostle had reached noble conceptions of God; had attained to deep understanding of His ways, and had experienced things which the language of earth was incapable of expressing (2 Corinthians 12).

The difference between earthly childhood and the most exalted type of developed manhood is not greater than the difference between our life on earth and our life in heaven. "Time is but a school for eternity, and our life on earth a nursery." Faced as we are, from time to time, with the great problems of life and destiny, we are frequently baffled, perplexed, puzzled; we are

"Like infants crying in the night,  
Like infants crying for the light,  
And with no language but a cry."

But that too will pass away. Just as imperfection of knowledge will give place to a nobler and wider intelligence, so will our present immature conceptions be corrected, adjusted, expanded. The partial will lose itself in the complete, as the dawn merges into the perfect day.

(c) Our vision is distorted (verse 12).

"Now we see through a glass darkly," or "in a riddle" (verse 12). Mr. Darby translates the words: "For we see now through a dim window obscurely,

but then face to face; now I know partially, but then shall I know according as I also have been known." The windows of these days were not made of transparent material as ours are, but of semi-transparent talc; and the objects seen through them appeared dim, shadowy, vague.

The classic example of distorted vision is Psalm 73. The man described there beheld dark enigmas of permitted wrong; saw that right was frequently on the scaffold and that wrong was as frequently on the throne; and in consequence he was sorely puzzled. But the lens through which he looked was adjusted when he went into the sanctuary of God (Psalm 73. 16-17); and so will ours, when we see our Saviour face to face (1 Corinthians 13. 12; Revelation 22. 4).

These, then, are the things which surround and handicap and limit us during our stay on earth; and the only way by which we can overcome the depression of spirit which they may occasion, is by the exercise of the three great Christian graces at which we have been looking. For Faith will lead us to believe where we cannot know, and to trust where we cannot trace; Hope will exultingly anticipate the moment when the childhood of time will give place to the manhood of eternity; and Love—which possesses the highest capacity for the knowledge of God—will keep ever advancing to the hour of the beatific vision (1 John 3. 2).

## CHAPTER IV.

**FAITH, HOPE, AND LOVE.**

**W**E come now to view this charming trinity of Christian graces as a whole. Some ten times are they found together in the New Testament Scriptures; while in the writings of the apostle Paul, one whole chapter is devoted to the exposition of each of them. Hebrews 11 is his outstanding exposition of Faith; Romans 8, of Hope; and 1 Corinthians 13, of Love. They form "the three great cardinal subjective forces of Christianity." Faith is the strongest shield in the world (Ephesians 6. 16); Hope is the safest anchor in the world (Hebrews 6. 19); Love is the greatest thing in the world (1 Corinthians 13. 13). "To have faith," says Dr. Jowett, "is to believe that in the midst there is One like unto the Son of Man. To have hope is to expect that in His own time the Lord will unveil Himself in grace and glory. To have love is to take Christ's life and live it again with all children of the mist whom we may meet along the cloudy way. With that faith, and that hope, and that love, we can pass through the time of mystery with the walk of kings and queens, and while we are walking we shall be preparing our souls for the glorious unveiling when we shall see Him face to face."

Faith looks backward to the Cross and that saves;  
Hope looks onward to the Coming and that sanctifies;

Love looks upward to the throne and that satisfies. The first gives us a flawless title; the second, a cloudless prospect; and the third, a changeless Friend. Faith believes and toils; Hope anticipates and waits; Love enjoys and serves (1 Thessalonians 1. 3).

In the daily active exercise of these three graces lies the secret of safety, of certainty, and of enjoyment. They will support us in the calamities of life, constrain us to unwearied service for our Lord, and enable us to antedate the hallelujahs of eternity. As an aged Christian lay dying in the city of Glasgow, a friend called to say farewell. "I have just had three other visitors," said the dying man, "and with two of them I have parted, but the third I shall keep with me forever." "Who were they?" "The first was Faith, and I said: 'Goodbye, Faith! I thank God for your company ever since I first trusted Christ, but now I am going where faith is lost in sight.'" Then came Hope. 'Farewell Hope!' I cried. 'You have helped me in many an hour of battle and distress; but now I shall not need you; for I am going where hope passes into fruition.' Last of all came Love. 'Love,' said I, "you have indeed been my friend: you have linked me with God and with my fellow men; you have comforted and gladdened all my pilgrimage. But I cannot leave *you* behind; you must come with me through the gates into the city of God, for love is perfected in heaven."

“ Faith works with God;  
Endures, as seeing Him man cannot see;  
Sows, oft in tears, the precious seed abroad  
Foretasting harvest-gladness yet to be.

Hope waits for One  
Whose faithfulness, unfathomed, cannot fail;  
In quiet confidence her task is done,  
Her eyes intent on Him within the veil.

Love knows no fear—  
Love's simple purpose ne'er is put to shame,  
Love doth the Father worthily revere:  
Thou God, art Love, Love thinks upon Thy Name.

And now abide  
Faith, Hope, and Love—not one alone, but three—  
Each challenged often, often let and tried;  
Each more than conqueror, living Lord, through Thee.'







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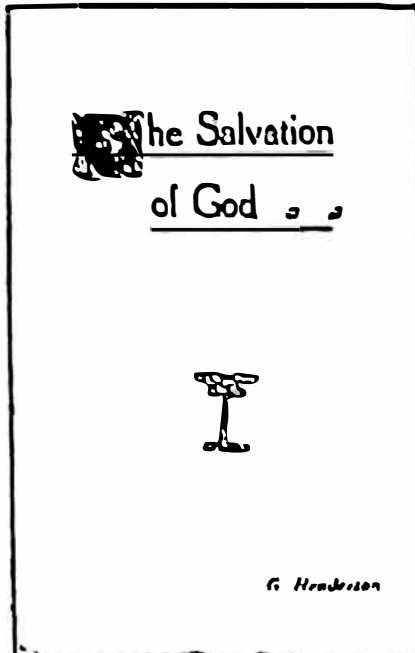
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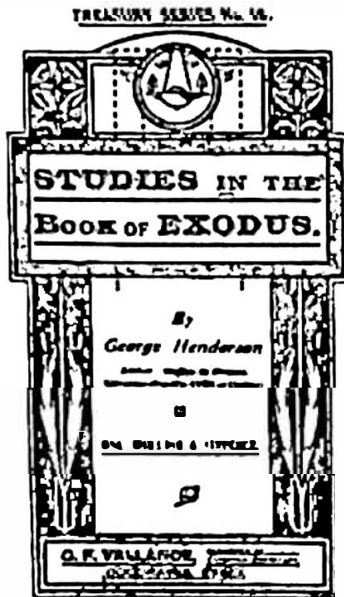
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