

Faith, Hope, and Love

Preached at Providence Chapel, Eden Street, London, on Tuesday Evening, August 25, 1846

"Your work of faith, and labour of love, and patience of hope." 1 Thessalonians 1:3

I cannot but admire the affection and tenderness that breathe through the epistles of the Apostle Paul; and especially in those to the church of God at Thessalonica. Largely had "the God of all grace" bestowed the gift of love on his servant Paul; and largely do we see this grace manifested in every epistle that flowed from his inspired pen. But what drew this affection and tenderness forth? It lay in his bosom as the gift of God; but it was drawn forth by the grace that he saw manifested in the Lord's people. This is the case wherever love to the brethren dwells in the heart. Immediately that the image of Christ is seen in another, love spontaneously flows forth. Immediately that we believe there is grace in any person with whom we are brought into contact, a union is felt which love cements. It was so with the Apostle Paul. What drew out of his bosom the affectionate expressions to the church of God at Thessalonica, which we read in these epistles? He himself shall tell us: "Knowing, brethren beloved, your election of God." (1 Thess. 1:4.) He knew in his soul that they belonged to the election of grace. And what gave him that knowledge? Had he been up into heaven, and there seen their names recorded in the Book of Life? Had a bright messenger from the Lord of hosts appeared, and told him that the parties to whom he was writing were among God's elect family? It was by no such supernatural revelation that he knew those to whom he was writing to be the children of God. He himself, in this epistle, tells us whence his knowledge sprang: "For

our gospel came not unto you in word only, but also in power, and in the Holy Ghost, and in much assurance." The Lord had sent him to preach the gospel among them; they had received the word from his lips, "not as the word of man, but as it is in truth, the word of God, which effectually worketh also in them that believe." (2:13.) They "had turned to God from idols, to serve the living and true God; and to wait for his Son from heaven, whom he raised from the dead, even Jesus, which delivered us from the wrath to come." (1:9, 10) They had "received the word in much affliction, with joy of the Holy Ghost," (1:6); and became "followers of the churches of God, which in Judea were in Christ Jesus." (2:14.)

It was these things which drew forth the tender affection of his bosom towards them. It was because they were thus taught and blessed that he felt soul union to, and soul communion with them. And it was a feeling persuasion of what God had done for their souls, that drew forth these tender and affectionate expressions of his love to them. In consequence of this love, he tells them that he "gave thanks to God always for them all, making mention of them in his prayers." No sooner did he bow his knee before the Lord, than the churches among whom he had gone ministering came before his eyes, and fell warm upon his heart; and thus he was led—not as a matter of duty or privilege, but by the blessed Spirit laying them upon his conscience, and drawing forth the tender affections of his heart toward them—to make mention of them in his prayers before the throne of grace. And this is the only prayer for others that the Lord really indites. Persons have said to me sometimes, 'Remember me in your prayers.' I have answered, or could have answered them, 'I often cannot pray for myself, and how am I to pray for you?' But as when the Lord lays our personal wants upon our conscience, we lay them before his footstool, so when

the Lord brings those whom we love in the Spirit upon our heart, and raises up in our souls a feeling of affection toward them, we pray also for them—not as a matter of duty, nor because they have asked us to pray for them; but it springs up out of our souls, as the spontaneous presentation of our petitions on their behalf. And no other prayer but this, for ourselves or for others, will bring an answer.

There were *three* things mentioned in the text, which the apostle specially remembered; three things that dwelt more particularly upon his mind, and were laid more specially upon his heart: "Remembering without ceasing your *work of faith*, and *labour of love*, and *patience of hope* in our Lord Jesus Christ, in the sight of God and our Father."

You will observe, it was not their *faith*, nor their *love*, nor their *hope*, which rested upon the apostle's mind; but it was the *work* of their faith, the *labour* of their love, and the *patience* of their hope; these being the operations of these three Christian graces, as well as their outward marks, and their inward fruits.

With God's blessing, then, this evening, I shall endeavour, as the Lord may enable me, to trace out these three distinct things in the experience of God's living family—*the work of faith, the labour of love, and the patience of hope*. And sure I am, if the Lord has bestowed upon us these three graces—faith, hope, and love—we shall find that *faith* has a work, *love* a labour, and *hope* a patience. And if we can find faith, and its attendant work—love, and its accompanying labour—and hope, and its handmaid, patience—we shall have some testimony that indeed we are possessed, spiritually and experimentally, of these three Christian graces.

I.—Until the Lord is pleased to begin a work of grace upon a

sinner's conscience, he has no faith. This is the express testimony of God. "Children in whom is no faith." (Deut. 32:20.) "Therefore they could not believe, because that Esaias said again, He hath blinded their eyes, and hardened their hearts, that they should not see with their eyes, nor understand with their heart, and be converted, and I should heal them." (John 12:39, 40.) So that, whilst man is in nature's darkness and in nature's death, he has not one grain of living faith in his soul.

But when the soul is divinely quickened, faith is communicated. The blessed Spirit moves upon the heart, and raises up his heavenly fruits and graces. They may be, and indeed usually are, very weak, and perhaps, to the eye of a person himself, scarcely perceptible. But just as a child is born perfect in all its limbs, though weak and infantile; and when the child becomes a man, there is no additional number, yet each has gained strength and grown up into maturity; so also is it in the kingdom of grace. There is no subsequent addition to the gifts and graces of God's Spirit. The "new man" is perfect in all its parts and all its members; but there is a growth of them—a going on to adult manhood, to Christian maturity. Thus, in the first work of grace upon the soul, the blessed Spirit raises up spiritual faith; as we read, "It is the gift of God; not of works, lest any man should boast." (Eph. 2:8, 9.) It springs out of the express operation of God the Spirit upon the heart. It is altogether a spiritual, supernatural gift. It dwells in the hearts of God's family alone. But no sooner does faith spring up, under the operation of God the Spirit, in the heart of a sinner, than there is a "work" for that faith to do; immediately that faith is created, it begins to work. Just as when a child comes into the world, it begins to breathe; and the breathing of the child is not only the first mark of life, but it goes on breathing through life, till with life breath ceases; so whenever there is

living faith raised up in the soul, immediately faith begins to work, and that faith never ceases to work till it is changed into the blissful vision of the Son of God as he is.

But what work does faith perform? The "work of faith" is, to believe God's word. But what part of God's word? The whole Bible? the complete revelation of divine truth? No; faith does not that. Faith only believes what God is pleased to communicate with his own divine power to the soul. If you have faith, you do not at once receive all God's truth; you cannot take your Bible, and read chapter after chapter, and exercise faith upon all that meets your eye. If you could, it would prove your faith to be the faith of nature, and of the flesh. But the faith which is God's gift, and springs from divine operation, only believes, credits, acts upon, and works towards that which God himself is pleased to drop with power into the heart. We see this exemplified in the case of Abraham. Abraham is called in Scripture, "the father of all them that believe" (Rom. 4:11); and his faith is recorded in the word of God as a pattern to which all true faith must be conformed. But did not Abraham's faith act only upon that which God spoke to his soul? The Lord gave him a promise that he should have a son. This word was spoken by the Lord's own mouth to Abraham's heart; and upon that Abraham's faith fixed. It did not roam up and down I know not where. It did not rove here, there, and everywhere, 'taking God at his word' (as it is called) *here*, and 'taking God at his word' *there*, which, in fact, is not taking God at his word at all. But it fixed upon a definite promise; it acted upon a word which God himself had spoken with his own mouth into Abraham's soul. And you will find, if you watch the actings of faith in your conscience, so far as you are possessed of that grace, that the "work of your faith" is, to believe what is made manifest in the light of the Spirit's teaching and the life of the Spirit's operations in your soul.

The experience of every child of God gives the lie to that doctrine, that faith takes God generally at his word; for if faith could take God at his word, whence arise doubts and fears? What makes the poor soul sink under legal terrors? Why does he grope for the wall like the blind, and grope as if he had no eyes? Whence come castings down? Whence springs the burden of guilt upon the conscience? Whence arise secret troubles? Why does he not believe the promises? Why does he not take Christ at his word? Why does he not apply his atoning blood to his conscience, and embrace his Person in the arms of living faith? He cannot do it; and the reason is, because faith is fixed—if I may use the expression, it is *pinned down* to what God himself is pleased to unfold to the heart in the light and life of the Spirit's teachings. Thus, there is faith in the heart of the trembling sinner, when the Lord is first pleased to arraign him at the bar of justice. There is faith then in his heart; and that faith firmly credits those truths which the Spirit bears witness to in his conscience. God's justice, that can "by no means clear the guilty;" the holiness and purity of his character that must needs hate and punish iniquity; the certainty of eternal torment against those that die in their sins; the necessity of a living faith in the Redeemer to save the soul from wrath and hell—many of the Lord's people are deeply convinced of these eternal truths, and their faith fixes upon and holds them with firm grasp, because they see them in the light of the Spirit's operation. This is a part of "the work of faith." By this you may try whether you have faith. If you can take God at his word, believe everything you read, lay hold of every promise, credit every truth, and claim everything God has pledged himself to give to his people, yours is a dead faith; it does not spring from divine operation; it is natural faith, which merely credits what God has said in his word, and believes in Christ as a man believes in Caesar. But if the Lord has created, by a powerful work upon your conscience, living

faith, you can only believe just what shines into your soul in the light of the Spirit's teachings, and is experienced in the life of the Spirit's operation. This may at present be very little, but then your faith will work upon that little and will be kept believing it, feeling it, and falling under the power of it, as being firmly convinced it is God's truth. All your feelings will work round this centre, and all the desires of your heart, so far as they are spiritual, will run in this one definite channel.

But after a time the Lord is pleased to enlarge his people's faith. We read, "Your faith groweth exceedingly." (2 Thess. 1:3.) There is then a growth of faith. Just as in nature, the babe's hand is not of the same strength, or of the same dimensions as the hand of the man; yet there is every finger and every nail the same; and as the babe grows, the hand grows and expands till with manly strength it grasps larger objects; and not only lays hold of them strongly, but retains them firmly; so with the grace of faith in the man's heart; it enlarges and grows till it lays hold of larger objects, and retains them with a firmer grasp. Thus, when the Lord has seen fit to exercise his people sufficiently with convictions of sin, a sense of guilt, with burdens that lie heavily upon a tender conscience, with fears of death and hell, with sinkings of soul in the prospect of eternity, and all those terrors that more or less alarm God's people, he is pleased to bring a blessed Saviour before their eyes, and give them some heavenly shinings-in of the glorious Person, atoning blood, and justifying righteousness of this Mediator at God's right hand. The eyes of the understanding are now enlightened to see his glorious Person; the affections of the heart are drawn forth to love him as the "altogether lovely;" and thus faith is strengthened by the power of God to receive this precious Saviour, as "of God made unto us wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption." The work of faith is the same

as before; but it acts upon different objects. But even here there are differences. Some may have the pardon of sin manifested very conspicuously; others may have "the blood of sprinkling" applied very powerfully; and others shall hear the voice of God speaking to their souls with sweet unction and savour. But these manifestations shall not be equally strong in every case. Some shall have glimpses, whilst others have a fuller view; some shall have glances, whilst others enjoy a clear manifestation; some shall have a sight of the glory of Christ as a risen Saviour, and others shall have a view of the grace of Christ as a suffering Saviour. It shall in some cases last a few moments, in another a few hours, in another a few days, in another with more or less power a few weeks, or even months. But in all it springs out of the blessed Spirit fulfilling his covenant office, in taking of the things of Christ, manifesting and unfolding them to the soul, and raising up living faith, whereby a precious Jesus is laid hold of, and brought into the heart with divine unction and power.

But no sooner has faith thus embraced a living Lord than it has "a work" to do. And what is this work? Why, immediately it begins to find opposition, contradiction, difficulties, exercises, and perplexities; and it is the work of faith to struggle against these oppositions, difficulties, and perplexities—to "live and labour" under them. For instance: no sooner is faith divinely raised up in the heart, than *unbelief* will begin to manifest itself. You did not know what an unbelieving heart you had, before the Lord was pleased to bring light and life into your soul. It was there—in fact, there was nothing but one mass of it; but its lustings, its heavings, its actings, and all those subtle workings which you have since found, were then hidden from your view. But no sooner does living faith begin to work in a sinner's conscience than unbelief is brought to light, and its tumultuous heavings are

clearly seen and painfully felt. In many cases too, *infidelity* is stirred up. Those who never before doubted the inspiration of the Scriptures are troubled with doubts about it now. Those who never doubted the being of God, the deity of Christ, the mystery of the Trinity, or any of the glorious doctrines of the gospel, are often tried and exercised with infidel suspicions now. But where the Lord has implanted faith in the soul, "the work of faith" is to struggle against them, and by God's help and strength finally to get the victory over them.

By this we may know whether we have living faith in our souls. Dead faith never breathes, never moves, brings nothing in, carries nothing out. Dead faith has no work accompanying it. It is like a toy watch that we sometimes see given to a child, which it hangs round its neck, and fancies to be real. There is the painted dial and the gilded hands; but there are no works within the case. Such is the faith of the dead professor. There is the dial; there are the hours clearly marked; there are the hands plainly pointing; but they never turn round, never show the time of day. And why? Because there are no works within. There is no secret spring in their heart, no wheel within wheel to cause the hands to turn. But wherever there is living faith in the soul, there will be the "work of faith" in the conscience—the strugglings, heavings, actings, and breathings of the believing heart Godward.

But, besides this, *Satan will ever tempt* a living soul. This restless enemy will ever try to seduce or harass the mind where he sees living faith in exercise. But the "work of faith" is to resist and oppose him, and finally, in God's strength, to get the victory over him.

Sin, too, will be continually tempting, lusts perpetually alluring, self-righteousness constantly exalting, pride

unceasingly puffing, and hypocrisy from time to time entangling. But "the work of faith" is, in God's strength, to labour and struggle against them all. "Ye have not yet resisted unto blood, striving against sin." (Heb. 12:4.) And then, there is *the world*, sometimes with its anxieties and cares, and at others with its charms, all seeking to draw the soul away from the strait and narrow path. But the "work of faith" is to struggle and fight, and in God's strength to overcome them all. "For whatsoever is born of God overcometh the world; and this is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith. Who is he that overcometh the world, but he that believeth that Jesus is the Son of God?" (1 John 5:4, 5.)

But what so perplexes many of God's people is, to feel these intense struggles. They think that faith, if it were of the right kind, would be always looking to Jesus, always believing God's word, always enjoying sweet communion with the "Man of sorrows," always maintaining a firm, unyielding superiority over the world, the flesh, and the devil. And there are many professors, yea, ministers, who tell them it is, or it should be so. Thus, when the child of God feels in his soul such strugglings to and fro, such heavings, such workings, such contradictions, such perplexities, such mysterious paradoxes, he often concludes against himself that he is not possessed of the living faith of God's elect. For he argues, 'If I were possessed of true faith, I should not be thus.' But just as when the twins struggled in the womb of Rebekah, it was a proof that she had living children within her; so the very strugglings, heavings, gaspings, and breathings which living souls experience afford a plain proof that the work of God is going on in their hearts; that they are possessed of that living faith which will bring them safe through all, and land them in eternal glory.

II.—*"And labour of love."* What the apostle fixed his eye upon was, not the profession nor the pretension of love, but the "labour" by which love is accompanied. Wherever there is faith there will be a proportionate measure of love, for faith works by it. The Lord's people in their early days have a measure of heavenly love. Though perhaps they cannot say that Jesus is theirs; though they dare not declare they shall certainly go to heaven when they die; though they sometimes cannot even assert that the work of grace is really begun upon their souls; yet there is love manifested in them to God's word, God's people, God's servants, and God's truth. There is in them, in their weakest and tenderest days, a separation from the world, a casting-in of their lot amongst the people of God, a going-out in the tenderness of their heart and affection towards them. We see this in Ruth: though she was a poor heathen idolatress, no sooner was her heart touched by the finger of God, than she clave to Naomi.

But divine love can only spring from the teachings and operations of God upon the heart. Our "carnal mind is enmity against God"—nothing but implacable, irreconcilable enmity. But when the Lord is pleased to make himself in some measure known to the soul; when he is pleased, in some degree, to unveil his lovely face, and to give a discovery of his grace and glory—immediately love springs up. He is so lovely an object! As the Bride says, he is "altogether lovely." His beauty is so surpassing, his grace so rich, his mercy so free—all that he is and has is so unspeakably glorious—that no sooner does he unveil his lovely face, than he wins over all the love of the heart, takes possession of the bosom, and draws every affection of the soul to centre wholly and solely in himself.

But no sooner is love felt towards a precious Redeemer, towards his people, and towards his truth, than this love has

"a labour" to perform. Like the grace of faith, it does not lie idle in the bosom. It is not merely upon the lips, and upon the tongue, but it has an abiding place in the heart; and it is this labour which manifests its reality, and proves its genuine possession.

Just, then, in the same way as *faith* was tried by *unbelief*, its opposite—so is *love* tried by *enmity*, its opposite. Love is of spiritual birth, of divine origin, a citizen of a heavenly country; and it comes down from the Father of lights, the God of love, to dwell in a sinner's breast. But what does it meet there? It meets there with the enmity of the carnal mind—enmity against God and his Christ, enmity against everything that love delights to embrace. Can these two antagonists meet in a sinner's heart without mortal combat? Christ, on the one hand, communicates love; Belial, on the other, stirs up enmity. Can love, then, heaven's gift—and enmity, hell's flame—meet together in a sinner's breast, without engaging hand to hand in deadly strife? He that knows something of the wretched enmity of his heart against God and godliness, knows what a painful combat there is within. Is it not surprising to you sometimes to feel the enmity of the carnal mind against God—to find the most infernal blasphemies sometimes shoot through your mind, as with a flash of lightning? And have not these darts from hell sometimes so horrified you, that you would desire to plunge your thoughts into anything to get them out of your mind? Upon your knees they have rushed in, and they have stopped your prayer; in the pew, as you sat to hear God's word, in they came, and stopped everything you were hearing to your soul's profit; at the very table of the Lord, they have flooded in, and destroyed all the comfort that you longed to experience. Yet there was that in your bosom which laboured against them; there was that in your breast which struggled, as burdened by an intolerable load; there was that in your

soul which resisted them, and hated them, and cried unto God, "O wretched man that I am!" This was the "labour of love." There was that divine principle struggling against this infernal enmity—the pure water of life seeking to quench the very flame of hell in your carnal mind.

Love will sometimes seem to lie dormant in the heart. And this often tries the Lord's people, that their love is as if asleep. But let anything be spoken against God—how this love is then drawn forth! The wife, sometimes, may not think of her husband for hours; but let him be spoken against, and at once her love becomes manifest. The child may be for hours asleep in the cradle, and the mother be so engaged in her occupation as scarcely even to think of her babe; but let the infant cry, instantaneously maternal love flows forth. We may have lost sight of a dear friend for weeks, and may scarcely even think of him; but let him come into our presence, let our hearts burn with mutual interest in talking of Jesus and his precious truth, and our love is instantaneously kindled. So the grace of love often seems to lie dormant in the bosom; but let something arise to draw it out, and instantaneously it bursts forth.

But love has its "labour." It has to maintain its hold; it has to keep its position in spite of all the enmity that dwells in the carnal mind.

So it is, also, with *love to God's people*. If the Lord has really begotten your soul unto eternal life, you love the Lord's family; you have a real affection for his saints; and sometimes they are laid upon your heart, and you feel the goings-out of kindness and sympathy towards them. But is it never interrupted? Are there never envious feelings? Is there no jealousy ever at work? Are there no suspicions? Is there no infernal enmity felt? Are there not in your breast, at

times, suspicion and dislike toward your nearest and dearest friends, whom you love for the Lord's sake? Now, these call forth the "labour of love." Love has to labour under and against this jealousy, this enmity, these suspicions, these surmises, these hard thoughts and inward dislike. If there be true love to God's people, it will not be quenched by the enmity, jealousy, and carnality of our heart. It will spring up again and again; it will "live and labour" under this and every other load.

If it were not so, love would soon be altogether lost. If the Lord did not, from day to day, revive our love to him and to his saints, our hearts, like a hot iron taken from the fire, would grow gradually colder and colder, till at last every sensation of warmth would be completely extinct. But the Lord in mercy revives the soul. He in mercy rekindles the flame of affection towards himself, towards his people, and towards his truth. But when love is rekindled, the "labour of love" begins. It is in grace as in nature. Man labours all day, and goes home to his bed at night, and there he is refreshed with sleep: but in the morning he rises, and goes out to labour again until the evening. While he is asleep, he is not labouring; but no sooner is he awake, than labour commences. So with love. There are seasons when love lies asleep in the breast; and when love is asleep, there is no labour for the hands of love to perform. But when love is awakened out of its sleep, it goes once more forth to labour until the evening. It has to labour with those things that struggle against it; and by the fruits of this labour it is clearly manifested as the work of God upon the soul.

Has not your mind sometimes been tried whether you have any love to Jesus at all? Has not your heart at times become so cold, so lifeless, so stupid, so unfeeling, as though there were not one spark remaining? And has not your love to

God's people, and your love to God's truth, sometimes sunk to so low an ebb, that you feared you never had any real love at all? But yet it came again. There was some communication of grace to your soul to draw forth the goings-out of affection towards a living Lord, and some breathings of love towards the Lord's living people; as the apostle says, "But I rejoiced in the Lord greatly, that now at the last your care of me hath flourished again; wherein ye were also careful, but ye lacked opportunity." (Phil. 4:10.)

Thus love has its labour. And what a mercy it is that love has such a labour to perform! If you and I, and the people of God, were to know nothing of this inward opposition, these inward strugglings, these inward perplexities, these inward exercises, we might appear to have much love to God's people, when in reality there was not one grain of it. It is thus that the Lord's people are distinguished from mere professors of religion. They are all love in pretension, all love in lip, but there is no "labour of love" in their hearts; there are no changes, no exercises, no fluctuations, no strugglings of love in their bosom to maintain its hold upon God and his truth: all outside, all pretence, all profession—no inward love labouring, panting, and gasping for breath.

III.—"*And patience of hope.*" The grace of hope is that third grace in living union with faith and love in the heart of God's people—"the anchor of the soul, both sure and stedfast, and which entereth into that within the veil." But what does hope take its rise from? Testimonies from God; evidences of interest in the love and blood of the Lamb; manifestations of mercy to the soul; promises applied with power; the witness of the Spirit to our spirit that we are born of God; believing and feeling the work of grace has been begun, and is going on in the heart; the revivings of God's presence, and refreshing dew and unction of his grace, the meltings of the

soul at his feet, and the breakings in of the Lord of life and glory upon the heart—these things lie at the foundation of a "good hope through grace." Not because you are members of a gospel church; not because you worship at a certain chapel; not because you have received certain doctrines; not because your life is outwardly consistent with the word of God; not because you pray, and read the Bible, and perform a number of duties;—such never can be the foundations of "a hope that maketh not ashamed." The only solid foundation of a gospel hope is, testimonies from God, marks of his favour, the application of blood to the conscience, meltings of spirit under the sweet whisperings of divine love, and a well-grounded persuasion that the work of grace with power has been begun in the conscience.

But wherever this hope is, there will be "patience" attending it. Love has its labour, faith has its work, hope has its patience. But what is meant by the expression "patience?" It means *endurance*; as though hope had to endure, faith to work, and love to labour. Hope stays at home, patiently enduring. If I may use the figure—faith is the active husband who goes out to work with his hands; hope is the suffering wife, who lies upon the bed patiently enduring pain. By this patience, hope in the sinner's soul is manifested. Just in the same way as faith has to work against unbelief, and love to labour against enmity, so hope has to endure every thing that contradicts it, and that would, but for the grace of God, effectually crush it. Would unbelief, without the power of God, effectually crush faith? Would enmity, without the power of God, utterly extinguish love? So would despair strangle hope in its very cradle, unless sustained by the mighty power of God. Each of these graces in the soul has then its separate antagonist. Unbelief fights hand to hand with faith; enmity foot to foot with love; and despair front to front with hope. And as the strength of faith is manifested by

the power with which it fights against unbelief, and the strength of love is manifested by the power with which it labours against enmity; so the strength of hope is manifested by the power with which it endures the contest with despair. But what causes despair or despondency in the sinner's soul? Is it not because he finds so much in himself that is utterly opposed to God and godliness? If there were no inward adulteries, no secret idolatries, no darkness of mind, no deadness of soul, no hardness of heart, no tempting devil, no alluring world, no body of sin and death—you would not feel despondency set in upon you as a flood. But this is it which causes despondency in a feeling soul—to find in himself so much of everything that is opposite to the work of God upon the heart; so much of everything that is the very opposite to what a saint desires to be, and what he believes every saint should be. But as long as he can see his signs, as long as he can feel the power of God's testimonies, as long as he can believe he is treading in the footsteps of the flock, hope maintains its hold. But no sooner does the Lord hide his face, testimonies sink out of sight, evidences give way, and the evils of his fallen nature manifest themselves, than despondency begins to work. It must be so. If I had no sinful heart, no unbelief, no infidelity, no inward adultery or idolatry, no pride, no hypocrisy, no covetousness, no powerful lusts, no boiling corruptions, no harassing enemy, no alluring world, no wicked heart, why need I despond? But it is because there is such opposition to vital godliness in the sinner's heart, because there is so much in him that he knows and feels to be contrary to grace, and the work of grace, that makes him doubt.

But these very things call forth hope's peculiar work—to *endure*. It is the "patience of hope" that proves its reality and genuineness. Hope does not go forward fighting and cutting its way. Hope is like a quiet sufferer, patiently bearing what

comes upon it. Hope is manifested in enduring, as faith is manifested in acting. For instance: when the Lord hides his face, when testimonies sink out of sight, when signs are not seen, when Satan tempts, when the work of grace upon the soul seems to be all obscured, and in consequence a feeling despondency begins to set in, then the "patience of hope" is needed to endure all things—not to give way, but to maintain its hold. It acts in the same way, according to the beautiful figure of Paul, as the anchor holds the ship. What is the main value, the chief requisite in the cable that holds the anchor? Is it not endurance? The cable does nothing: it simply endures. It does not make a great ado in the water; its only good quality (the only quality wanted in it) is strength to endure, not to break. When the waves rise, the billows beat, the storm blows, and the tide runs strongly, then the work of the cable is not to part from the anchor, not to break, but firmly to maintain the hold it has once taken. And thus with the anchor too. It does nothing, and is wanted to do nothing. To hold fast is all its work and all its excellence. Thus it is with a hope in a sinner's breast. Has the Lord ever shown himself gracious unto him? Has the Lord ever made himself precious to his soul? ever dropped a testimony into his conscience? ever spoken with power to his heart? Has his soul ever felt the Spirit inwardly testifying that he is one of God's people? Then his hope is manifested by enduring patiently everything that is brought against it to crush it, and, if God did not keep, utterly to destroy it.

If this be the mark and stamp which the Holy Ghost has put upon "hope," what shall we say of the hope that knows no changes, endures no trials, passes through no exercises, suffers no strains?

Have I this evening found out any case? put my fingers into any heart? touched any secret spring in a sinner's

conscience? There may be those here who are ever doubting, doubting, doubting, whether a work of grace is yet begun upon their souls. They know they must have faith, hope, and love, if ever they are to be with Christ in glory. But they are exercised in their minds whether they are in possession of these three graces. And this chiefly tries them, that their faith is not ever in exercise, that their love is not ever flowing forth, that their hope is not continually anchoring within the veil, and bringing out therefrom sweet manifestations into their conscience. But you perhaps have mistaken its nature. If you expect to have faith, hope, and love at your pleasure, and always stationary, and at one point, you have mistaken the matter; this is not the faith of God's giving, the love of God's shedding abroad, nor the hope of God's communicating. Wherever there is true faith, there will be a work for it to do; wherever there is heavenly love, there will be labour accompanying it; wherever genuine hope, there will be patience waiting upon it.

Thus, in the heart of a poor broken down sinner, there is more true faith, more real hope, and more genuine love, than in all the dead professors, with all their assurance, put together. They have faith, such as it is, but it has no work; they have love, such as it is, but it has no labour; they have hope, such as it is, but it has no patience. But the Lord's family, in whose hearts these three sister graces dwell, and round whose souls the Lord has entwined this threefold cord that shall not be quickly broken, will find, that in proportion to faith, will be its work; in proportion to love, will be its labour; and in proportion to hope, will be its patience. So that my friends, you are not to expect to arrive at a state where faith has no work, love no labour, hope no patience. Could you or I get there, it would prove that our faith, love, and hope were a delusion. Rather expect the contrary. Is your faith to grow? You will have work growing in

correspondence with it. Is your love to be enlarged? You will have more labour accompanying it. Is your hope to be strengthened? You will have more to endure than before. It is in grace as in nature. The child, the boy, the youth, does not perform the work of a strong healthy man. The boy does *his* work, the youth *his* work, and the man *his* work; and the work of each is proportioned to the strength of each. Who would think of setting a boy or a youth to do the work of a man? He has not power to do it if set him. So it is spiritually, with respect to faith in a sinner's bosom. Weak faith cannot do strong faith's work; weak love cannot labour as strong love labours; and weak hope has not the endurance and patience of strong hope. So that, if you desire the Lord to carry on his work in your heart with power, and bring forth these blessed graces in your soul, never expect that you will be brought into a state where your faith will be so easy, so pleasant, and so delightful as to have no work to do; your love so heavenly, so full, and so glorious, as to have no labour; and your hope so strong and so vigorous as to have no patience. No rather, the more faith you have, the more opposition, the more difficulty, the more struggling against it, and the more faith will have to work against them; the more love you have, the more manifestation of the inward evil of your heart, the more workings of internal enmity, and the more labour of love against these opposing evils; and the stronger your hope is, the more you will have need of patience and endurance to bear the opposition that will rise up against it.

Is not this true in experience? I know it is contrary to all that we once thought of as religion. I know it is contrary to all that is generally considered as religion. Such faith as this will never meet with acceptance, except amongst the tried family of God; such love as this will never be hailed with universal approbation; such hope as this will never be received with a

shout of applause by dead professors. But the Lord's own people, who have no more vital religion than God is pleased to work with divine power in their souls, know from experience—sometimes painful, sometimes pleasurable—that they never had a grain of faith without an accompanying work for faith to perform; never a spark of love, without love having a labour and never a grain of hope, without that hope having much to endure. It is "the work of faith, the labour of love, and the patience of hope," which prove the genuineness of these graces. And the Lord who has given them, will one day crown their happy possessor with eternal glory.