



LIVING IN FAITH, HOPE & LOVE

The significance of these three virtues
in living and witnessing to the truth

Geoffrey C. Bingham

OTHER BOOKLETS IN THIS SERIES

Man, the Steward of Creation
How Then Shall We Tell?
The Question and Comfort of Confession
Living in the Holy Spirit
The Giving Beyond Giving
Is Prophecy For Today?
The Authority and Submission of Love
Truthing of the Truth
The Dynamics of Creature and Creation
What's All This About Angels?
Man is--What?
Commanded to Joy
Contributing To Social Action and Debate
Christ's Living Church Today
The Judgements of God
Christ's Message For Today's World
A View of Sickness & Its Healing

www.newcreation.org.au

LIVING IN FAITH, HOPE & LOVE

**The significance of these three virtues
in living and witnessing to the truth**

Geoffrey C. Bingham

Published by
New Creation Publications Inc.
PO Box 403, Blackwood, SA 5051
1997

First published 1982 by

NEW CREATION PUBLICATIONS INC., AUSTRALIA
PO Box 403, Blackwood, South Australia, 5051
Reprinted 1983, 1997

© Geoffrey Bingham, 1982

National Library of Australia card number and
ISBN 0 929851 30 2

This book is copyright. Apart from any use as permitted under the
Copyright Act 1968, no part may be reproduced by any process
without written permission. Inquiries should be addressed to the
publisher.

Wholly set and printed at
New Creation Publications Inc.
Coromandel East, South Australia

CONTENTS

1.	Introduction: There is a Triad of Faith, Hope and Love	1
2.	The Meaning and Practice of Faith	1
3.	The Practice and Meaning of Hope	4
4.	The Practice and Meaning of Love	7
5.	Why Faith, Hope and Love Must Be Genuine	10
6.	The Exhortations to the Life of Faith, Hope, and Love	11
7.	Conclusion of the Subject: The Triad Lived Out in a Hostile World	13

1. INTRODUCTION: THERE IS A TRIAD OF FAITH, HOPE AND LOVE

Classic statement is I Corinthians 13: 13, 'So faith, hope, love abide, these three; but the greatest of these is love.' With these words the equivalent statements of Col. 1:4–5, I Thess. 1:3, 3:6, 5:8, II Thess. 1:3, Romans 5:1–5, Ephes. 1:15ff, Heb. 6:10–11, 10:23–24, I Peter 1:3, 22, I John 3:1–3 cf. Titus 2:11–14, Jude 20–21.

2. THE MEANING AND PRACTICE OF FAITH

(i) What Faith Means

Faith means knowledge of God. Romans 1:25 speaks of 'the truth of God'. There is no other truth. Man lives in the lie he wishes to perpetuate against the truth of God. Truth's opposite is the lie. Sin's opposite is faith in God. In the O.T. God is true, and in this sense He is faithful, constant, dependable, reliable, consistent with His Word of creation, law, providence, prophecy. His promises are true, and His prophecies are always fulfilled. His word is dynamic, accomplishing what God intends it to do (Isaiah 55: 10ff). Faith then is not 'a leap into the dark', but reliance upon God and His word. *Faith then is trust in God, acceptance of His Word, knowledge of Him which is at the same time union with Him and obedience to what He says.*

(ii) How Man Comes to Faith

Christ is the true Word of God. He is Mediator in creation (John 1: 1–3, Colossians 1:15–17, I Corinthians 8:6,

Hebrews 1:1–2). Against man's lie he is the truth (John 1:14,17, 14:6, of. 8:40). He comes to reveal God as the truth (John 1: 18). He has unique relationship with the Father (John 3:35, Matthew 11: 27), and the Father draws men to him (John 6: 44–46, 65). Faith comes by what is heard, ie. the Word of Christ (John 1:14, II Corinthians 1: 17–20, Romans 10:17).

Note: that faith is a gift, for it 'is given to us to believe' (Philippians 1:29 cf. Ephesians 2:8–10).

(iii) Faith Regenerates Man

The Spirit convicts of sin (John 16:7–11) and reveals Christ (John 16:12–15). The word of the Cross saves man (I Cor. 1: 18, 21). He believes and is saved (Acts 16:31, 10:43, 13:48). This brings forgiveness (Acts 2:38, 3:19, 10:43–44), justification (Gal. 2:16ff, Romans 5: 1, 4: 1–8), cleansing (I Cor. 6: 11, Heb. 9: 14, Titus 3:5–7), regeneration (Titus 3:3–7, II Cor. 5:17), sonship (Gal. 4:4–6), sanctification (Acts 26: 18, I Cor. 6:11), and the gift of the Spirit (Acts 2:38, Gal. 3:2, 5, 13–14). Man is now a creature of faith, ie. has the true knowledge of God (I John 4: 7–10).

(iv) The Life of Faith

To know God is to know the truth. To know the truth is *to* live the truth (Ephes. 4: 15, I John 3: 18, 1: 6). Faith is the true knowledge of God which brings union with Him and issues in genuine obedience. 'Without faith it is impossible to please God' (Heb. 11:6). Man is not only justified by faith, but 'the justified by faith shall live', or, 'the just shall live by faith'. Hebrews 11:4–39 shows what life lived in faith really is, ie. belief in God and (so) in His promises which issues in dynamic obedience. Promises to people of faith are commands and commands are promises. See the lives of those in Hebrews 11, especially verses 33–38. Notice that in all things redeemed man walks by faith and not by sight (II Cor. 5: 7).

Elements of the life of faith are as follows:–

(a) Faith in the redemptive–sanctifying work of God, ie. the cross and resurrection; hence our constant 'faith reckoning', eg. Romans 6: 10ff.

(b) Faith that overcomes evil:– I John 5:4 = I John 2:13–14, I Peter 5:6–9, James 4:7, Ephesians 6:16.

(c) Works are done in faith:– Ephesians 2:8–10, I Thess. 1:3, II Thess. 1:11, cf. Titus 2:11–14, Heb. 11, James 2:18–26.

(d) Christ dwells in the heart by faith (Ephes. 3: 17).

(e) Life is lived by faith in Christ (Gal. 2: 20).

(f) Gifts given are used according to the faith given for their exercise (Rom. 12: 3, 6).

(g) Pastoral healing requires the prayer of faith (James 5: 13–18), and in fact all prayer should be in faith.

The life of faithfulness is what matters. God is faithful. He cannot lie (Titus 1: 2). He is true. The faithful are those who rest on His truth. They live according to this truth, ie. they are dependent, constant, reliable, faithful. One of the fruit of the Spirit is faithfulness. Thus we hear of faithful servants and stewards (Matt. 25:21, 23, Luke 12:42, I Cot. 4:2), of faithful witnesses (Rev. 2: 13), and all who 'hold the testimony of Jesus' ('the faithful witness'). Paul has 'kept the faith' (II Tim. 4:7). He sees his faithfulness proved by Christ's commission (I Cot. 7:25, I Timothy 1: 12). Christ, of course, is the paradigm of the faithful one as seen in II Cot. 1: 18–20, Rev. 1: 5, 19: 11, Heb. 2: 17.

(v) Faith, Hope and Love Work Together

Hope has been called 'faith with a future look'. This accords with Hebrews 11: 1, 'Now faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen'. The context of I Corinthians 1:4–9 speaks of God's faithfulness assuring future glory for His people. I Peter 1:8–9 speaks of faith in Christ who is unseen, and already there is some experience of glory

in the present joy. In verse 9 *present* faith is linked with *future* salvation, rather than salvation in the past. In Titus 2:11–14 it is linked with salvation already come.

The Scriptures with which we opened show that faith works in the context of hope and love. For faith and hope see Romans 5: 1–5. For faith and love see I Thessalonians 1:3, 3:6, 5:8, I Corinthians 13:13, II Thessalonians 1: 3.

Later we will see why the three are inextricably linked; why each is indispensable to the others.

3. THE MEANING AND PRACTICE OF HOPE

(i) What Hope Means

Hope, we have said, is faith with a future look. It is a fixed assurance based on the truth of God. It relates to God's intentions for His creation which arise from, and work out according to, His nature. Man, through faith in the truth of God, comes to hope. He lives in hope in the present as he looks to (a) the near future, and (b) the far-distant future. In this sense God was called 'the Hope of Israel' (Jer. 14: 8, 17: 13). The downcast Psalmist could admonish himself, 'Hope in God:' (Psalm 42: 5, 11). Whilst God is God there is always hope for the future.

Man inevitably hopes, whatever may be the *objects* of his hope. These can be vanities, personal riches, one's righteousness or idols (Jer. 17:5, Job 31:24, Ezek. 33: 13). The question is whether the object can fulfil one's 'fixed assurance' regarding the future. In fact only God can be the true Object of hope for us since He is the Subject who works hope in us.

(ii) Man Comes to Hope

In Ephesians 2:12 the Gentiles are 'without hope,

and without God in the world'. Romans 8:24 says, 'We are saved in hope'. This means that we are saved by faith, but that salvation has within it the ingredient of hope. Romans 5:5 confirms this. We hope and this hope does not mock us because already we have experienced God's love. We can, then, anticipate its coming fulness. In Romans 8:18–25 the ones hoping already have 'the first fruits of the Spirit'. Without salvation, love and the Spirit we would not (and could not) hope. We come to hope then through faith. Initially then, faith and hope work together, and both on the basis of love, that is the love of God manifested in redemption.

(iii) The Life of Hope

In I Peter 1:3 Peter speaks of us being 'begotten unto a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead'. He is alive, never to die again. Our hope is based on life. This hope then is our life because we share in the life of Christ. Man without hope is hopeless. The reality of hope depends upon the reality of the object of hope. God and His intentions in Christ are our object of hope.

(a) What We Hope For

Glory. Romans 5:2, 8:18–25, I John 3:1–3. In I Peter 1:13 this glory is called 'the grace that is coming to you'. Colossians 1:27 speaks of 'Christ in you, the hope of glory'.

Inheritance. Colossians 1:5, Ephesians 1: 12, 18. The term 'hope' is not always stated in references to inheritance but is implied. In Galatians 5:21, Ephesians 5:5 and I Corinthians 6:9 believers are warned that those who do evil shall not inherit the Kingdom. The inheritance is resurrection to eternal life and being glorified in the likeness of Christ.

Sonship. I John 3:1–3 (cf. Rom. 8: 29–30). In Romans 8:18–25 the hope is of sonship in glorification. Revelation 21:7 makes it clear that inheritance and sonship are inseparable.

Resurrection. Eternal life and resurrection are bracketed together. So Titus 1:2, 3:7, II Timothy 1:1, I Peter 1:3, Acts 24:14f, 26:6, cf. 28:20. I Corinthians 15 needs to be read fully. In it Paul says, 'If *for this life only* we have hoped in Christ, we are of all men to be pitied'. Resurrection will see the glory, the sonship, eternal life and inheritance come into their fulness.

(b) How We Live in Hope

Romans 15:13 tells us that *we live in hope*, and *how* that living can be abundant: 'May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, so that by the power of the Holy Spirit you may abound in hope'.

We also have seen in various references that *hope operates in the context of faith and love*. In I Corinthians 13:13 they are together. In I Corinthians 13:7 'love *hopes* all things'. In Romans 5:5 love is the basis for hope. In I Thessalonians 5:8 the hope of salvation is linked with faith and love. In Hebrews 6:11–12 the writer insists that dynamic faith is essential for true hope.

When we hope *we must be consistent with the things for which we hope*. In I John 3:1–3 the one hoping for sonship 'purifies himself'. In I Peter 1:13 the idea of sobriety and determination of holiness is present. Likewise in Romans 13:11–13, I Peter 4:7, 5:8 and Ephesians 6:14f. Titus 2:11–14, II Peter 1:10–11 and Hebrews 6:9–20 all point to persistent godliness as the basis for experimental and living hope.

Believing is the basis of hope, as Romans 15:13 shows us. Thus in Romans 15:4 'encouragement of the Scriptures', ie. the truth, is what fortifies hope. This is natural. The more we know of God and His truth the more securely based is our hope. In I Timothy 1: I Christ is our hope. In Titus 1:1–2 hope is linked with *faith and knowledge of the truth*.

In I Timothy 4: 7–10 Paul reiterates the point we

have made above that hope and godliness go together, '...train yourselves in godliness...because we have set our hope on the living God'. In fact ethical living in the NT is firmly rooted in hope. In the light of what we will be we seek now to live true lives (I John 3: 1–3). The writer of Hebrews tells us that in the New Covenant, because of the better Mediator we have a better covenant, and. so a better hope – hence we have a better dynamic for godly living.

(iv) Conclusion on Hope

Hope then is dynamic in the context of faith and love, as they are in context with it. All three constitute the intrinsic way of truth. They are the basis for living truth and living them is truth.

4. THE MEANING AND PRACTICE OF LOVE

(i) What Love Means

The statement, 'God is love' (I John 4:8, 16) is unique. God is not faith, nor is He hope. These two find their basis in Him, ie. in His love.. In practical terms God's love is shown by the acts He does, such as creation, providence, redemption and the unifying of all things at the end when man will inherit life, glorification and sonship in the Kingdom of God. Romans 1:18–23 shows that man rejected God, and thus rejected Him as being love. Exchanging the truth of God for a lie man lost the knowledge that God is love.

The kind of love God has is shown particularly by the act of atonement. We see this in I John 4: 9–10, I John 3:16, John 3:14–16, Romans 5:5–10, cf. Ephes. 2: 4–9. The nature of that love is shown in I Corinthians 13: 4– 8a.

(ii) Man Comes to Love

Man comes to see God as love by the revelation of the incarnation and the cross (I John 4:9–10). God so

loves that He sends His Son into the world and redeems man. This love is shown only by a revelation of the Holy Spirit (Romans 5: 5). It is realised in the response of man when he receives (and uses) the gifts of faith, repentance, and conversion. These are gifts of grace. Through them he thus receives the gifts of forgiveness, cleansing, justification, new life, and sonship. Thus man is regenerated and becomes a new creation. As a new creation in Christ he is called upon to love (I John 2:7ff, 3:10ff, 4:19ff, I Peter 1:22), and this call is legitimate. Man comes to love God, his fellow creatures and himself (II Corinthians 5:14, I John 4:19, etc.).

(iii) The Life of Love

I John 4:19 is the basic principle. 'We love because He first loved us', ie. we love God and our low creatures. The kind of love we love is that of I Corinthians 13:4–8a. We share what we have (I John 3:17–18, 4:7). Such love gives itself for others (John 15: 13, I John 3: 16). All life is serving one another in love (Gal. 5: 13, cf. Phil. 2: 1–9). In fact loving is fulfilling God's moral law (Rom. 13:8–10, Gal. 5:13–14). This moral law is also called 'the law of Christ' (John 13:34, John 15:12, I Cor. 9:21, Gal. 6:2). This love is also a family love (I John 3: 10–17), but at the same time embraces all men (I Thess. 3: 12, I Tim. 2: 1–4, Gal. 6: 10).

True loving is giving (John 3: 16, II Cor. 8: 9), and God has given gifts to men by which they can love, for gifts fulfil a need. I Corinthians 13: 1 – 3 shows that gifts are to be used only in love and for love's purposes: otherwise they are futile. Love is not only giving but forgiving one another 'from the heart' (Matt. 18:35, Col. 3:13, Ephes. 4:32). As we know God's love by forgiveness, so others know our love for them by our forgiving them.

Love is the element which matures man, bringing him to true fulfilment. This is seen in I Corinthians

13: 8–13, Philippians 1: 9–11, I Thessalonians 3: 12–13.

(iv) Love and Faith

I Corinthians 13:7 says, 'Love...believes all things'. That is love never loses faith. Primarily it is faith in God, but then one has faith for others. Without love faith has no worth (I Cor. 13: 2). Faith works by love (Gal. 5: 6). In I Timothy 1:5 Paul talks about love which issues from 'a pure heart, and a good conscience and a sincere faith'. Love is man's response to the love of God because man believes the truth, ie. God as He is, and so he loves Him (I John 4: 19). That is why John says, 'We have known and believed the love God has for us. God is love...' (I John 4:16). Paul speaks about 'trusting it in love' (Ephes. 4: 15), meaning that truth and love are the one. Faith sees this and affirms it. Hence love issues out of faith. That is why in I Timothy 1:14 Paul says, 'and the grace of our Lord overflowed for me with the faith and love that are in Christ Jesus'. In 2:15 of the same letter, Paul speaks of the woman who 'continues in faith and love and holiness, with modesty'. Again in 4:12 and 6:11 he links faith with love.

We conclude that love and faith are only authentic when linked. One without the other is deficient.

(v) Love and Hope

We have seen above that love is linked with hope. Romans 5:5 shows that having known God's love in our hearts we have hope for the future. Hence 'Love hopes all things'. That is, its reality is in the nature of God, and especially in what God has planned and promised for the future, be that future close at hand in time or far away in time. God's promises are as God is Himself, and so hope is based on the knowledge of His Being as love.

Love has its hope based in God. It also hopes for others: that is it is not only concerned for itself, but for others and knows its hope for others is not in vain.

God will do for them what He has promised. He will do for them those things which are consistent with His nature. He is true and will not fail man. If His children must 'truth it in love' then God will do no less. Hence love is based upon hope as well as faith.

5. WHY FAITH, HOPE AND LOVE MUST BE GENUINE

Whilst the survey above has showed the inseparable nature of faith, hope and love, *the importance* of this relationship is underlined by warnings against having faith, hope and love which are insincere or hypocritical. It must be evident from this that there cannot be a true triad where one of these three elements is false. The absolute indispensability of the triad to true Christian living is thus shown. Also the dynamic of the triad is thus emphasised.

In regard to faith Paul says he preaches the Gospel as it *is* so that men's faith should stand in the power of God and not the wisdom of men, ie. that it shall be genuine faith (I Cor. 2: 5). In I Timothy 1:5 he speaks of love which issues from *a sincere faith*. True love is thus dependent upon sincere (true) faith. In II Timothy 1:5 he speaks of the *sincere faith* that is in Timothy. In Titus 1:13 and 2:2 he speaks of soundness of life which comes from (sincere) faith.

In regard to hope we have seen that to trust in riches, vanities, oneself, men, and idols is all vain hoping. The object of hope must be God, His nature, His intentions, and so His acts and His promises prophetically given. When in I Thessalonians 1:3 Paul speaks of 'your... steadfastness of hope', he is saying two things; (a) the steadfastness which hope brings, and (b) the steadfastness of those hoping. Hence Paul speaks of 'good hope through grace', meaning genuine hope which comes through grace. In this sense he speaks of the Colossians '...not shifting from the hope of the gospel', ie. not placing their hope in

another object. In I Timothy 6:17 he speaks of those who 'set their hope on uncertain riches'. Peter speaks of his readers setting their hope fully upon the grace which was to come to them at the revelation of Jesus Christ. A complete object demands a full hope.

The writer of Hebrews is constantly urging his readers to 'hold fast [your] confidence and pride in your hope', 'to realise the full assurance of hope to the end', 'to seize the hope set before you', 'to hold fast the confession of your hope without wavering (3:6, 6: 11, 18, 10: 23). Hope is not for the indolent but the faithful, and the obedient.'

In regard to sincere love, Paul speaks in Romans 12: 9, II Corinthians 6:6 and 8:8 of love that is 'without pretence', ie. 'genuine love'. In I John 3:18 the writer warns against love that is a matter only of thought and word, but not of practice. It is no love at all! Peter points to the new birth as having its goal in 'a *sincere love* for the brethren', this implying that there can be insincere love. In Philippians 1:9-10 Paul speaks of a love which 'abounds more and more with all knowledge and discernment'. This love, he says, 'tests what is excellent', and he implies that untrue love could not do this. When he says in I Corinthians 13:6 that love does not rejoice in the wrong but only in the right, then he is saying that love fights against that which is evil, fighting only for that which is true, ie. the truth. When love is not genuine then that which is evil has its entrance.

6. THE EXHORTATIONS TO THE LIFE OF FAITH, HOPE AND LOVE

The injunction against insincere faith, indolent hope, and imitation love are at the same time exhortations to faith, hope and love which are true. We have seen that these three are inseparable, and interdependent. We have also seen that they constitute true Christian living. Faith is knowledge of the living God

(John 17:3, I John 5:20), but knowledge which comes through love. Hope is born with the coming of love through faith, for hope is sure it will share in the glory of God in the ways of eternal life, resurrection, inheritance and glorification.

(i) Exhortations to Faith

Christ's statement 'Have faith in God!' was born of the fact that God is true, and that His word is truth. He himself was the living truth of God. Truth came by him. Hence the basis of faith is authentic. Christ had to exhort to faith. We have seen how faith works. Firstly it comes from hearing the Word of God. The Word breaks through into man who lives in his lie. It then informs him of the true God, and so it initiates faith in God. Christ is the true Word of the true God and so he is the pioneer or initiator of faith in the personal sense. The Word continues (by the Spirit) to inform the person of faith. Thus he lives by faith, ie. in the Word, in the Son, and in the Father.

In the N.T. there are many exhortations to have faith, to increase in faith (II Cor. 10: 15), to stand firm in faith (II Cor. 1: 24), to hold to the faith (II Cor. 13: 5), to walk by faith (II Cor. 5: 7), to excel in faith (II Cor. 8:7), to be encouraged by faith (Rom. 1:12). Whilst these are not all written in the form of exhortations they virtually constitute such for they show the true ways of faith. In this way the NT speaks of being 'sound in the faith', or 'furthering the faith', of being 'nourished on the words of faith', of 'the divine training that is in the faith', and many such statements.

It is clear then that faith takes a prominent place in the inseparable triad.

(ii) Exhortations to Hope

Paul says, 'Rejoice in your hope' (Rom. 12: 12). He speaks of the Scriptures being the basis for hope, and of believing which will increase hope (Rom. 15:4, 13), thus implying attention to the Scriptures and believing.

He exhorts them not to shift from the hope of the gospel (Col. 1: 23). Also they are to put on the helmet which is the hope of salvation (I Thess. 5: 8). We have seen in Hebrews that we have to hold fast, and seize the hope that is ours, realising the full assurance of hope. This will help us to account for the hope that is within us, as Peter enjoins us to do (I Peter 3: 15).

It is because we are born anew to a living hope (I Peter 1: 3) that we can so continue and develop in hope.

(iii) Exhortations to Love

There are so many injunctions to active love that we cannot possibly cover them in this brief paper. Christ's commands are in line with the OT exhortations to love God, man and oneself. See John 13:34, 15:12-14, Matthew 5:43-48, Ephesians 5:1-2, Romans 13:8-10, Galatians 5:13-14, I John 2:7ff, 3:10ff, 4:7ff, 4:19 - 5:3, I Peter 1: 21-22. Paul, Peter and John many times exhort us to love. Indeed the commands to love far exceed exhortations which are linked with faith and hope. Love is undoubtedly primary as I Corinthians 13:13 indicates. This makes sense when we realise that faith and hope spring from love, and both of these work by love; otherwise they 'are futile.

7. CONCLUSION OF THE SUBJECT: THE TRIAD LIVED OUT IN A HOSTILE WORLD

Lying Deceit is the Order of the Evil Age

We are driven to see the importance of love when we see that the truth of God exists in a hostile world. This evil aeon (age, world; Gal. 1:4, I Cor. 1:20, Ephes. 6: 12) lives in the lie it has devised. Satan is the arch-deceiver, seeking to deceive the whole world (Rev. 12:9, 19:20, 20:3, II Cor. 4:4). With him is his creation, the Beast, who raises up another deceitful creature - also a beast - which 'deceives those who dwell on the face of the earth' (Rev. 13, especially

verses 13–15). Allied with Satan and his evil Beasts are lying spirits, unclean demonic creatures who are part of the deceitful system. The vast system known as Babylon deceives the nations by its sorceries (Rev. 18:23).

Satan rebelled against God, taking to himself in that rebellion a third of the angelic powers (Rev. 12: 3–4). In being cast out of heaven (Rev. 12: 7ff), Satan has sought to draw humanity into his operations which are against God. Christ spoke of him as a liar and a murderer from the beginning (John 8:44). Rebellious man has been caught into his evil aeon or system, so that ‘the whole world lies in the Evil One’ (I John 5: 19). Man is caught in the ‘deceit of sin’ (Heb. 3: 13). Man becomes caught in the grip of ‘the deceitful lusts’ and continually corrupts himself through their operations (cf. James 1: 13–15).

Does Evil Triumph in God’s Creation?

What we have just recounted can be summed up in the words of Romans 1:25, ‘They [man] exchanged the truth of God for a lie’. It is against this lie that redeemed man has to live continually. The lie is that faith is ridiculous and unfounded, whilst ‘sight’ is the truth. The lie says that the only hope is that given by Satan, namely that he has virtually defeated God, and will achieve ultimate triumph over Him. Hope can only be in the things of sight. The lie is that love is foolish and hatred is strong.

The Power and Witness of Faith, Hope and Love

We can see now the enormous importance of faith, hope and love in the world where evil powers and sinful man insist upon their lie, seeking to deceive mankind that the lie is the truth, and the truth the lie. In this situation faith which is the true knowledge of God, trust in the truth, and then obedience to the truth, is the dynamic witness to the truth. Hope is based upon the assured outcome of God’s action in

history, namely the judgement and destruction of evil and the eternal triumph of the Kingdom of God. Love is the revelation of the true nature of God, and the functional nature of created man under God.

Put in other words, every time redeemed man insists on living by faith he is a witness to the truth of God. Each time he hopes it is an assertion of the same truth. When he loves he is saying that hatred is not the true order of the day. It can be seen then that man witnesses truly to the truth of God by his participation in the triad of faith, hope and love. Greater than mere words and thoughts are his actions (I John 3: 18), for they are the dynamic witness to the truth.

This makes the fact that the truth is something which we do (I John 1:6/John 3:21, I John 3:18, Ephes. 4: 15), and not merely something we know in the mind. The statement of Ephesians 4: 15, ‘speaking the truth in love’ should be translated ‘trusting it in love’, for it uses the verb ‘to trust it’. Thus to live the truth in love is the only way to live, and such living gives the lie to the lie.

We conclude then by saying that to live in faith, hope and love is to assert the truth of God. There is no other way of living, for this is the only way of life, as it is the only way of witness to the truth.