

March 3, 1983

HOPE

The KJV in 1 Cor. 13 ends with the words "And now abideth faith, hope add love these three but thegreatest of these is love." 1 Cor. 13 is the great chapter about love in the NT. Then we have Heb. 11 which is the great chapter on faith. So we have a great chapter on faith, and a great chapter on love but 1 Cor. 13 ends with these words, "And now abideth faith, hope and love.."

We talk much about faith. We talk much about love. I don't think we say a great deal about hope. Yet there is a great deal about it in the NT. In 1 Cor. 13 we find the three put together. Faith, hope, and love. In 1 Thess. 1:3 we have a similar combination. Paul wrote to the Thessalonians, "We continually remember before our God your work prompted by faith, your labor prompted by love, and your endurance inspired by hope in our Lord Jesus Christ." You endurance inspired by hope, in our Lord Jesus Christ.

In 1 Thess. 5:7-8 we read: "For those who sleep sleep at night and those who get drunk get drunk at night, but since we belong to the day let us be self controlled putting on faith and love as a breastplate and the hope of salvation as a helmet. Faith on love as the breastplate. And you have hope as a helmet.

How can hope be one of the three great? You plan a picnic and you say I hope it won't rain the day of our picnic. You hear somebody tell what he thinks is going to happen, and you don't believe he's correct and you say, I hope he's (not) right." The word hope in language is a very very weak word. It is pretty hard for us to see how it can be one of the three graces. But language is always changing. The word hope in the Bible is entirely different from the word hope as we use it today.

In the OT in the KJV the word hope translates nine different Hebrew words. One of them expresses the idea of a refuge. Three of them express the idea of expectation. Four of them have the idea of confidence. I believe that all five of these words-- the general ideas that they express-- are combined together in the usage in the NT of the word elpis or elpidzo. The verb is elpidzo and the noun elpis. It refers to a refuge. It has in it a great note of expectation, and its central idea is confidence.

Faith is confidence in the present. Hope is confidence in the future, and is greatly stressed in the NT, the importance of hope. Fifty-three times in the NT the KJV translates elpis as hope. There is one case in which the makers of the AV translated it as faith. They did not quite believe the word hope there conveyed the idea which they knew was in the original--the idea of confidence. Being confident in what is ahead.

In 1 Thess. 5:8 we had this statement: Putting on thez faith and love as a breastplate and the hope of salvation as a helmet. The breastplate covers the heart, the vital organs. The breastplate protects you against the fiery darts of the wicked. The helmet protects your head. You remember how President Reagan's press agent was shot through the head? Marvellously he has recovered to a very great extent. But the last I heard his emotions