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Christian Love According to 1 Cor. 13

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THE cry for love is heard today particularly in connection with the union movements.

The appeal to the principle of love in the life and work of the church is certainly in order within the Christian communion. It is well that we beseech all our brethren by the mercies of God to have fervent charity among themselves, whether in correcting those who would put a "strait jacket of legalism" on the church, or in rebuking those who would license the church to appear in the daring dress of "evangelical" liberalism. The admonition to evidence love has always been needed; the imperfect state of their sanctification has impelled the saints of all ages to lament: "The good that I would, I do not."

Moreover, weak love may be a major fault of a church body grown 100 years old and stiff, having perhaps reached a cycle of its history when the graph of spirituality may show a depression rather than a crest, when the Lord's rebuke of having left the first love must be repeated. There also is a possibility that our zeal for the orthodox teaching of justification by faith may have left us lagging in faith's life. Some may have slipped into the rut of making void the Law through their faith. And if we believe ourselves to be living in the little season of the world when the love of many shall grow cold, we may well ask, Do the heathen still point to us Christians with the exclamation: "Behold, how they love one another"? Can men still see that we are Christ's disciples by our love for one another? What Christian heart does not sigh the prayer: "More love to Thee, O Christ, and to Thy brethren"?

There was need for more love in the Corinthian Christian assembly, which with its flaws and faults was a more normal church than the ideal congregation and synod of which we often dream. In many ways the Corinthians carried on their church life and work

without too much love. Boasting, envy, and strife were lifting up their ugly heads and stifling the love of a Christian congregation. Conceit promoted factions among them; they took their grievances against Christian brethren to law before unrighteous magistrates; their rich despised and embarrassed the poor at the love feasts, and there was conceit and envy regarding the possession of greater or lesser spiritual gifts. It was a loveless attitude, exposed by Paul in chapter 12, when some took umbrage at their having, or being alleged to have, lesser gifts, while others were puffed up with a feeling of having more excellent gifts.

Calling them away from their envy and conceit Paul urges them to strive and pray for the better gifts for the edification of themselves and the church, and from there he shows them a still higher way of church life and work. He sets before them a way of surpassing eminence in Christianity in the following 13th chapter, which can be entitled "Love's Song of Songs."

We turn to this chapter for a serious personal inventory, for repentance, and for a renewed striving for the highest spiritual gift. Not for an exacting exegetical study but for a practical setting forth of Christian love we turn to this apostolic psalm of love.

Paragraphing this chapter into three parts, we have a vivid description of a beautiful thing, prefaced and concluded by praise of its necessity and its enduring excellency.

In this magnificent song of Christian love Paul presents:

1. The Necessity of Christian Love as the Soul of Christianity
2. The Excellent Character of Christian Love
3. The Everlasting Worth of It

THE NECESSITY OF CHRISTIAN LOVE AS THE SOUL OF CHRISTIANITY

In the opening three verses Paul states the worthlessness of anything we may have or do without love. He is not speaking of the way into the kingdom of grace but of living and working in it. He is beyond justification here; the chapter is definitely of sanctification—a believer's living the Christian life and his serving God and the church. We are using the word "Christianity" here in the sense of Christian life and service, as the outflow of faith.

The necessity of love for real Christianity could not have been

given greater emphasis than by stating: If you have not love, you are nothing. The first verses of the chapter, so familiar to us in the KJV, are rendered by the RSV: "If I speak in the tongues of men and of angels, but have not love, I am a noisy gong or a clanging cymbal. And if I have prophetic powers, and understand all mysteries and all knowledge, and if I have all faith, so as to remove mountains, but have not love, I am nothing. If I give away all I have, and if I deliver my body to be burned, but have not love, I gain nothing." These verses say that a pretentious Christianity may lack everything, may be only a glittering shell of a body without a soul.

There are three verses in this paragraph, each setting forth some Christian excellence and each ending with the serious refrain "With all that, if I have not love, it is nothing." We may call these three forms of activity in the church: spirited utterance, sublime knowledge and influence, and heroic sacrifices. Yet they can be dead, empty nothings.

First of all, the gift of tongues was highly valued at Corinth. The Spirit enabled some, in a peculiar ecstasy, to utter the wonderful works of God with a superhuman oratory or in strange languages, suggesting even the heavenly tongues of angels. Even so the Spirit enables some men in the church today to excel in preaching ability and teaching aptitude. And now as then men glory in their unusual gifts and often feel superior because of the possession of these things rather than employ them in loving service for the edification of their fellow men. Paul says, even if a person were privileged to speak with angelic tongues, but did it without love, he would with all this excellence be as dead and lifeless a thing as a noisy gong or a clanging cymbal. Think of a carillon sounding its Christmas carols through the crowded streets, impelling the busy shoppers to hum, "Christ the Savior is born." Yet those metal chimes feel nothing of the message; they could as well be the material for a bomb or a dagger. Though trembling with heavenly vibrations, they are a dead, soulless thing. There is a tactful display of love in these words. Paul does not say: If you had all this and not love, but says, *If I speak in the tongues of angels, but have not love, my beautiful talk has no life, no heart, no soul*—showing I am nothing before God.

The apostle goes on to other excellences: prophetic powers and a heroic faith. The lesson remains the same, whether you understand these prophetic powers as the gift of extraordinary revelation and insight into divine mysteries, given to some in those days, or as the ordinary gift of prophecy, given in special measure also to theologians today, to dip deeply into the theology of grace, to understand and expound the Scriptures.

Besides this gift he also mentions a remarkable faith. He is not speaking of faith as a means by which man is justified but of faith as a power operative in the material sphere, an energy and demonstration of faith, a trust in God's Word and power that enables you to do the proverbial moving of mountains. So whatever God has enabled you to know and whatever God may be pleased to accomplish through you — be you ever so brilliant a theologian or ever so successful in church work — if you use these gifts in conceit and vainglory rather than in love to those you serve, you are nothing, a cipher, personally worthless.

The third verse lists some things that are taken as the surest evidence of charity in the world. But Paul says that you might distribute all your property to the poor until you had nothing left yourself, you might lay down your life for another without having love. Psychologists question the goodness even of some pity, saying it may be merely the selfish desire to rid one's heart of the pain it feels at seeing others suffer, and we know that natural love may be merely affection for desirables, or a seeking of gain or merit. Paul tells us here that mock charity, though it be ever so impressive, though it afford ever so much relief and good to the needy, if there be not Christian love in it, avails you nothing; you do not please God or reap a reward.

A problem in these verses is the question: Is Paul citing a real and possible case, or is he assuming an impossible case to bring out his point? If we ask how one could have gifts of prophecy and all faith without being a Christian, we must remember that some of these gifts were possessed by unbelievers. On the mountain Jesus preached: "Many will say to Me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in Thy name . . . and done many wonderful works in Thy name?" And wicked Caiaphas prophesied that Jesus should die for the people, although Caiaphas was spiritually nothing. The

Spirit prophesied through him because of his office. Some others may have received the gifts as believers and then lost faith through pride, retaining some of the gifts. Luther speaks of people who have learned the mysteries of the Gospel but, instead of lovingly serving others with them, employ them for self-glorification (SL XII 422—435). A second possibility, he suggests, is that some begin in faith to do these spiritual works but, through their conceit, fall from love and faith. But his third and favorite opinion is that St. Paul makes love so necessary that he takes an impossible case, as though he would say: Even if you were a god but had not divine patience, you would be nothing. And so Paul does not mean to say that faith could be without love but that love is so necessary that mountain-moving faith would be nothing without love, if it were possible for a faith to be without love. While the case is hardly possible, the apostle would like his readers to regard it somewhat imaginable. The thing has always occurred to the extent that people had some spiritual gifts while their spirituality had more or less faded out. The point is: What Christians do not through love is worthless. In short, loveless Christian oratory, loveless church work, loveless service and sacrifice are all equally worthless and leave you so. Your great gifts, abilities, deeds may do much good, but not for you. If you dispense them without love, they are without a Christian soul.

In such a case it is clear that you are not what you think you are, that you lack true sanctification, that you lack the life of faith. For faith also brings the Holy Ghost into you and creates a new life; faith renews and regenerates you as Luther and the Lutheran Confessions point out. Justification produces sanctification. The faith that sets all its hope on the love of God also begets love. Faith and good works are inseparably connected. While faith alone lays hold of Christ's blessings, faith never is alone; it regenerates and produces sanctification. "Faith worketh by love." "Faith is a divine work in us, which transforms us, gives us a new birth out of God, slays the old Adam, makes us altogether different men in heart, affection, mind, and all powers, and brings with it the Holy Spirit. Oh, it is a living, energetic, active, mighty thing, this faith. It cannot but do good unceasingly." (SL XIV 99) Luther also says (Stoekhardt, *Petribrief*, p. 28): "Whoever be-

lieves the Gospel that Christ died for him and rose again . . . thereby becomes born again, that is, he is created anew in the image of God, gets the Holy Ghost, acknowledges God's gracious will, has a heart, mind, and will such as no work-righteous hypocrite has." The Bible says plainly: "If any man be in Christ, he is a new creature" (2 Cor. 5:17). Sanctification, though it be always in a growing stage, is the life of a Christian.

God produces this new life and faith. He expects us to live in it. Faith-born sanctification makes us worth something to God. He wants it that way: "This is the will of God, even your sanctification" (1 Thess. 4:3). "We are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works" (Eph. 2:10). "He gave Himself for us, that He might redeem us from all iniquity and purify unto Himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works." (Titus 2:14)

And He takes delight in the love and sanctified life of His people. We are as lively stones built up a spiritual house, a holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God through Christ Jesus. Paul tells us how we ought to walk and please God. The pleasure God has in the sanctification of Christians is expressed in the words "There is therefore now no condemnation to them who are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the spirit" (Rom. 8:1). Your love and sanctification, though it be weak, is a beautiful thing with God. Without it your life is nothing.

Not only that, without love your faith is nothing. Love does not give the proper form to justifying faith, but since faith produces love, the absence of love indicates the absence of faith. Gal. 5:6: "For in Jesus Christ neither circumcision availeth anything nor uncircumcision, but faith which worketh by love." If faith does not work by love, it is not ineffective because it has no love but because it is not real faith. Love does not constitute faith, but it must grow out of faith. So long as a fruitful tree is alive, it will produce fruits. So long as it brings fruits, you see that it lives; when it no longer brings them, you see that it is withered. (C. F. W. Walther: *Gesetz u. Evangelium*, p. 200)

If love and sanctification are lacking, you are spiritually nothing. Where there is love, there is faith; where there is no love, there is no faith. Where there no longer is light, there is no longer

fire. "We know that we have passed from death unto life because we love the brethren. He that loveth not his brother abideth in death. Whosoever hateth his brother is a murderer, and ye know that no murderer hath eternal life abiding in him." (1 John 3:14, 15)

What a great appeal our chapter is for more love! Without love you have a soulless Christianity and only the shell of faith. Love is the token that your faith is more than a mere belief. Love, the daughter of faith, is the soul of your Christianity and gives soul to the great things in Christian life. Lack of it leaves your abilities and labors a dead thing.

But while it is the normal fruit of faith, it does often lie dormant and stifled under the jealousies and other thorns and weeds of the flesh. Hence a lively, flourishing love is not a self-evident, automatic thing in a Christian. It must be desired, sought, nurtured, as we so well know. Hence the Word of God has many appeals to our new man, many admonitions to employ the powers implanted in us in regeneration to grow in love, this chapter being one of them.

And we transmit those divine appeals to ourselves and others to have and to exercise love in our church life and work, especially in the days of controversy, when brethren must be corrected because of their aberrations in doctrine, life, or practice. We don't want to pick flaws in others, while we ourselves lack the very soul of Christianity. We don't want to rebuke and correct in a negative, cold, matter-of-fact manner but with the affectionate warmth that flows from the feeling of being patiently loved by God and with a cordial regard for the erring brethren. Thereby we do not condone the harmful errors of those we love. We want to do our church work and also fight our church battles, having the soul of Christianity: Christian love.

To stimulate our desire for it and to show us the how of it, Paul presents in verses 4-7

2. THE EXCELLENT CHARACTER OF CHRISTIAN LOVE

The central part of 1 Cor. 13 sets forth the lovely characteristics of indispensable love in its nature and workings. The Corinthians are to see what they ought to be and are not so that they will specifically see how childish are the superiorities they plumed them-

selves on. The attitude and behavior of love is outlined and portrayed in 15 exquisite and touching statements in verses 4-7. The RSV renders: "Love is patient and kind; love is not jealous or boastful; it is not arrogant or rude. Love does not insist on its own way; it is not irritable or resentful; it does not rejoice at wrong, but rejoices in the right. Love bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things."

Paul begins painting the beautiful picture of love by stating the two fundamental excellences of love: her patience toward evil and her kindly activity in good. Patience abstains from acting: "Charity suffereth long," she bears the wrong in others and the evil she receives from others and is not easily moved to disgust, anger, and vengeance. Even so Paul in Eph. 4 beseeches Christians to walk worthy of their vocation, "forbearing one another in love."

Free from ill will toward the brethren, she is full of good will, she is kind. She bestows lovely things. She is affectionate toward the brethren, seeks their welfare, and proves it by actions: she has good things to say to the brethren and about them; she is helpful and promotes their welfare. In doing so Christians are merely imitating the God of love, "Therefore be imitators of God as beloved children, and walk in love" (Eph. 5:1 f. RSV). God is patient with sinners, postpones His wrath, gives time for repentance. He is very patient with the frailties of His children. He showers physical and spiritual blessings on them. By being patient and kind Christians are doing a divine thing and show forth the praises of our loving Sanctifier.

Paul is holding up this jewel of patient kindness for us to admire. Like a jeweler he takes the gem out of its case, and turning it in his fingers, he wants us to be thrilled by the sparkle of each new facet that reflects its beauty to the eye.

He next shows us four outward manifestations in the behavior of love. "Charity envieth not, charity vaunteth not itself, is not puffed up, doth not behave itself unseemly," or RSV: "Love is not jealous or boastful, it is not arrogant or rude."

"Envieth not, is not jealous." There may be an eagerness for advancement, but not for the purpose of excelling others. Zeal for self-improvement may be a laudable ambition, but it dare not be motivated by envy of others. Desire for excellence, when we see it

manifest in others, should arouse not ill will but admiring love. Love is not envious of the excellences of others. It can stand to have others amount to something and even to surpass us in gifts and honors. What makes us unhappy about the superiorities of others is not the prompting of love. For love does not deny, minimize, or otherwise slander the knowledge, abilities, and deeds of others.

"Charity vaunteth not itself, is not boastful." Unlike the Corinthians, who made a display of their gifts, it avoids boasting even of things which it really possesses. Love avoids showing off and ostentation, vain talk and attitude. There is no parading of superior intelligence, abilities, and successes, real or otherwise.

Nor is love "puffed up," the root of vaunting oneself. Love does not permit one to be inflated with the feeling of his knowledge, ability, or achievements. Such self-worshiping pride in the heart prevents one from seeing the abilities and good in the brethren and is poison to the love of God and the brethren.

Nor is love rude, behaving itself unseemly. Luther says of this quality of love: "Sie stellet sich nicht ungebaerdig, wie die zornigen, ungeduldigen, stoerrigen Koepfe tun, welche allezeit und wider jederman recht haben und niemand weichen, und doch jederman ihnen weichen soll, und wo nicht, so ist die Welt entbrannt, toben und wueten mit Schreien, Klagen, und Rachgier" (SL XII 429). Rudeness to others in their faults, mistakes, ignorance, and sin is a mark of bad taste, a moral indecency which love shuns. Love has the instinct for the seemly, the proper, the befitting. Love imparts a delicacy of feeling that goes beyond the outward rules of politeness. It is sheltering and sparing toward a brother. And such polite avoidance of rudeness is not a mere varnish or veneer but a sincerity of the heart.

The next four characteristics proceed from the external behavior to the attitude of the heart and show how love is minded. "Seeketh not her own, is not easily provoked, thinketh no evil; rejoiceth not in iniquity, but rejoiceth in the truth." The RSV has: "Love does not insist on its own way; it is not irritable or resentful; it does not rejoice at wrong but rejoices in the right."

Love seeketh not her own, is not selfish, neither grasping things nor insisting on her own ways. The person motivated by love is

not required to neglect his welfare and rights in a proper way, but a loving heart never seeks its advantage at the neighbor's disadvantage or is interested solely in its own prosperity and honor. Selfishness of any sort is the antithesis of love. If we love others, we will sacrifice honors, advantages, and rest, rather than deprive the brother or neighbor of anything. And when the neighbor does not reciprocate this loving unselfishness, but crosses our desires, plans and honors, love does not let itself be provoked to become irritable or resentful. It curbs exasperation, bears the provocation, and exercises the meekness of love. Luther: "Sie laeszt sich nicht erbittern durch Unrecht and Undankbarkeit, sondern ist sanftmuetig." (SL XII 429)

Because love is so constituted, it also "thinketh no evil." An interlinear translation renders: "It reckons not evil." It doesn't charge the neighbor up with it and hold it against him, but forgives and forgets. The RSV has, "Love is not resentful." Instead of letting the hurt done to one's feelings rankle, nursing a grudge, waiting for a chance to get even and feeling gratification when the one who has stepped on our toes gets similar treatment from some other quarter, love sterilizes its lesion of resentment and soothes it.

However, this divine love is not a weak, unprincipled thing that has only honeyed smiles and tacit approvals for anything. "It rejoiceth not in iniquity, but rejoiceth in the truth." The RSV has: "It does not rejoice at wrong, but rejoices in the right." Luther and many others apply this rejoicing in iniquity to *Schadenfreude*, malicious joy at the misfortunes of others. He says: "Sie lacht nicht in die Faust, wenn dem Frommen Gewalt mit Unrecht geschieht" (Nebe, *Epistelauslegungen*, II, 96). However, he also gives this meaning to the words: "The false teachers are so venomous that they love to hear others are erring and doing wrong so that they may appear the holier" (SL XII 430). Luther goes on to explain "rejoicing with (in) the truth" as being happy when someone does right, just as love is concerned when someone does wrong.

The text does not say that we are to be concerned with persons who either do or suffer unrighteousness. It simply states that love does not like unrighteousness. It is characteristic of love to abhor unrighteousness wherever it is encountered. She does not tolerate

unrighteousness in loved ones, does not accept it as part of the bargain in the person she loves, does not condone it with weak, unprincipled softheartedness or out of respect of persons. Love rather rejoices in the progress and vindication of the truth of God, whether it be in doctrine or life, in theory or practice.

Love is for peace, wherever and whenever possible, but not at any price. Concern for the truth can involve love in uncompromising clashes and hot debates with the neighbor or the brother. He who was "perfect Love" could hurl woes at the Pharisees, rebuke His unjust judges, drive out the defilers of the temple with a whip, and reprove His unbelieving, erring disciples, and even name one a devil, while He prayed for His enemies and rejoiced over everyone that repented.

To correct and rebuke evil in men, whether it be wicked life, doctrinal error, indifference to truth, or unscriptural practice, is not loveless; love for God and His Word as well as for the brethren requires remedial treatment of the erring and a furthering of what is true and right. It is not love weakly to leave the neighbor's errors unopposed as if he were in health and safety. It is not love to let him drink from a polluted well or even to let him pollute the well for others. Tolerance of evil and error is lovelessness toward the best interests of the offender and those whom he endangers; it is a flagrant sin of omission. Love is a holy thing that "rejoiceth not in iniquity, but rejoiceth in the truth." So John says: "I rejoiced greatly that I found thy children walking in truth" (2 John 2:4). But love also realizes that those will "be damned who believed not the truth but had pleasure in unrighteousness." (2 Thess. 2:12)

Once more the apostle turns the gem of love in his fingers and lets it sparkle in his hand. He sums up: No difficulty can move love to deny her beautiful character of love: "Love beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things." She forbears and forgoes; she will allow no burden, injury, discouragement, to make her stop her activity.

She believes all things. Love is a genuine thing and believes everyone is as true as she is. This does not mean that love is credulous, but that she is not suspicious, fearing wrong motives in the actions of men, unless she *must*. She puts the best con-

struction she can on everything and takes the kindest view of men's actions.

She hopeth all things. Like the gardener with the fruitless tree, she still believes in digging about it and dunging it in the hope of ultimate fruit bearing. So love does not easily give up a sinner and despair of him. Love springs eternal for the erring lost.

She also *endures* much abuse. No matter how hard it becomes for her to do it, she continues to love. Patient, enduring love — not a straw fire but lasting coals of devotion that are hard to extinguish.

If there were more of this heavenly thing in Christendom, more exercise of this regenerated nature, more of this faith working by love, church life would more nearly approximate heaven and many of the present troubles would vanish. God portrays charity in this chapter to humble us, to bring us to our knees in pleas for mercy and grace for our great lack of love. But he would also give us a pattern into which to grow more and more and encourage us to show the genuineness of our faith by walking more and more in the way of love that is to be our perfect nature in glory.

For this love, beginning and growing in the regenerate children of God in the kingdom of grace, is never to cease. In its perfected nature it will be present in eternity. So in the rest of the chapter Paul shows us

3

THE EVERLASTING WORTH OF LOVE

Paul swings into the third part of his psalm of love with "Charity never faileth," or "Love never ends" (v. 8a RSV). The love that bears all things also outwears all things. It has everlasting worth. "All things else have but their day, God's great love abides for aye" applies also to Christian love. It is a part of heaven here that we shall have in full measure there. While other things are left behind at death, love accompanies the Christian to his blessed eternity.

"But whether there be prophecies, they shall fail; whether there be tongues, they shall cease; whether there be knowledge, it shall vanish away" (v. 8b). The great spiritual gifts that benefit the church, of which men are often so proud, shall cease and pass away. In their extraordinary manifestation in the primitive church they have already passed away, and all our theological acumen and

breadth, our oratory and church activity, are only temporary things to foster faith, love, and hope, the abiding treasures.

Our present knowledge and exposition of the written revelation of God is transitory because it is imperfect, fragmentary, partial, as were the extraordinary knowledge and prophetic powers of the apostle's day. We do not have the full knowledge of the things of our God, we do not see how many things fit together, nor can we explain all apparent discrepancies. The light of heaven, where knowledge by the Word is changed to sight, will be much brighter. Dawn will be followed by noonday. "For we know in part, and we prophesy in part. But when that which is perfect is come, then that which is in part shall be done away."

This fact is illustrated by two examples from life. V. 11: "When I was a child I spake as a child, I understood as a child, I thought as a child; but when I became a man, I put away childish things." Through the transition from childhood to manhood there takes place the abolition of the partial by the perfect in speech, in disposition and aim, and in mental activity. Our knowledge and understanding, too, is to be different. The second example is v. 12: "For now we see through a glass darkly, but then face to face. Now I know in part, but then shall I know even as also I am known," RSV: "Now we see in a mirror dimly." The ancient mirrors of polished metal did not reflect one's image so plainly as when men looked directly on one's face. So our present knowledge of God and salvation by means of the Word is not direct sight, and many things remain indistinct and puzzling. Seeing face to face is immediate knowledge, the most perfect knowledge possible for a creature.

Having shown these highly prized gifts to be temporary, Paul now returns to the thought: "Charity never faileth." RSV: "Love never ends." But he predicates the same enduring quality also of faith and hope.*

*He comes to this conclusion, *now, so*; we understand the "And now" in v. 13 to mean *but now, or so* (RSV). "And now abideth faith, hope, charity, these three; but the greatest of these is charity." We are aware that many great scholars since Chrysostom, including Luther and C. F. W. Walther, have taken Paul's adverb of time, *νῦν*, literally of time. Taking it in the temporal sense, they understand Paul to mean that faith, hope, charity abide for the present time and that love alone remains to eternity. For that reason they believe love to be the greatest. We, nevertheless, incline with Irenaeus, Meyer,

These three remain forever. Saving faith will remain with us into eternity. We are forever given to believe ourselves to be the redeemed by the blood of Christ, and never will we stop singing the new song "Thou wast slain and hast redeemed us to God by Thy blood." In this form, faith abideth forever. And hope will never end in the enjoyment of things hoped for and in looking from one glory to another. And love in its beautiful perfection will also be the everlasting nature, the continual image of the God who is Love.

It is difficult for us to think of these excellences as abiding because they are so imperfect in our life. Stoeckhardt meets this difficulty by saying: "The apostle does not say of these three, that we believe in part, hope in part, love in part. Faith, also weak faith, although it may know God in part, still as *fiducia* grasps the whole God, the whole Christ, the whole salvation and forgiveness. And though hope may see only rays of the future glory, it still has the entire future world for its object. And love touches the entire God, not just a part of Him."

And love is the greatest even of these three greats. No one ever stressed justification by faith alone more than Paul. But here he is speaking of excellences of Christian life and activity, and among these love is the greatest. Faith is great, but its goal is love. Besser says: "Faith grasps eternal life, but love is eternal life. For God is Love; therefore it never ends, and is the greatest."

The chapter is a great appeal for Christians to have and exercise love. Without love our Christianity would be a soulless thing; with it, it is sublimely beautiful. By living in love we are living and learning to live more fully in a prelude of heaven's life itself.

While living as Christians we should love, and while desiring the better gifts for service, while trying to build the church, also while fighting the battles of the church within and without, "Follow after charity" — "Make love your aim."

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Stoeckhardt, Engelder, and others, to take the $\nu\upsilon\iota$ $\delta\acute{\epsilon}$ as a conclusion. Lenski says: "But now, considering all the gifts that shall be put away completely . . . these three remain, and not merely one of them." So also the Lexicon by Arndt and Gingrich recognizes that while $\nu\upsilon\iota$ is primarily an adverb of time, it is also used "with the idea of time weakened or entirely absent — $\nu\upsilon\iota$ $\delta\acute{\epsilon}$ but now, as the situation is Rom. 7:17; 1 Cor. 13:13; 14:6."