

An Essay On Divine Love

I CORINTHIANS 13:13 – We Live by Faith, Hope and Charity

Robert Baral, MDiv,RN,BCC,OFS
6/11/2018

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I. The Nature of True Love

What is the nature of True Love? Saint Paul writes in The HOLY SPIRIT This Scripture:

I CORINTHIANS 13:13

And now abideth faith, hope, love, these three; but the greatest of these is love. ¹

I CORINTHIANS 13:1-13 holds a wealth of instruction from The LORD Himself to men on what love is, what it is not, how it is to act and its place in the Divinely-ordained order of life. Spiritual gifts of languages, prophecy and the deepest wisdom are as nothing before the throne of GOD without love.

Good works without love are also as nothing, even to the extremities of giving away all one has to the poor and dying a martyr's death for The Faith. Love is not self-centered nor harsh, but is others-centered and gentle. Love abhors evil and takes joy in what is upright in others.

True love, as is GOD's Love for us - and the love which He calls us to have for Him and for others - is long-suffering under extremity for the sake of others. Love outlasts all other spiritual graces. By GOD's love, Christian men shall come to know GOD face-to-face in Heaven because of The Father's love for mankind in the sacrifice made by The Son.

II. How Much Does CHRIST Love Us?

How much does GOD love us? He loves us so much that He came to suffer and die on The Cross to redeem our lives and our souls back to Himself! This is The Perfect sacrificial Love of CHRIST for us which He calls us to live in Him for others, as Saint John writes

I JOHN 3:16

Hereby perceive we The Love of GOD, because He laid down his life for us: and we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren. ²

¹ KJV, I CORINTHIANS 13:13.

² KJV, I JOHN 3:16.

Is this not why all other spiritual gifts may pass away, but love remains? All other spiritual graces are desirous, but love is the greatest of them. The Almighty offers His love to the sons and daughters of men at The Cross of CHRIST, expecting that we would love Him and love each other in return. So Saint John declares in

III. What Does The Lord Call Us To?

JOHN 15:12-14

This is My Commandment, That ye love one another, as I have loved you. Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends. Ye are My friends, if ye do whatsoever I command you. ³

A Carmelite lay religious, Brother Lawrence (1614-1691) found profound delight in awareness of, and conversation with, GOD in the everyday works and moments of daily life, both in The Holy and in the mundane, serving as a cook for decades in his monastery's kitchen. ⁴

Brother Lawrence that going to GOD with an open heart in all things "...consists in one hearty renunciation of everything which we are sensible does not lead to GOD; that we might accustom ourselves to a continual conversation with Him, with freedom and in simplicity. That we need only to recognize GOD intimately Present with us..." ⁵

³ KJV JOHN 15:12-14.

⁴ Brother Lawrence (c. 1614 - 1691) was a lay brother in a Carmelite monastery, who is today most commonly remembered for the closeness of his relationship to GOD as recorded in the classic Christian text, "The Practice of The Presence of GOD."

⁵ Brother Lawrence, "The Practice of The Presence of GOD," Fourth Conversation, 4th & 5th sentences. The Prayer Foundation, http://www.prayerfoundation.org/booktexts/z_brother_lawrence_04.htm.

In answering CHRIST's Commandment to love as He loves us, we find His friendship invites us "...to address ourselves to Him every moment, that we may beg His assistance for knowing His will in things doubtful, and for rightly performing those which we plainly see He requires of us, offering them to Him before we do them, and giving Him thanks when we have done." By being "...in this conversation with GOD, we are also employed in praising, adoring, and loving Him incessantly, for His infinite goodness and perfection." ⁶

IV. The Sureness of GOD's Perfect Love

Matthew Henry comments, "Those border most upon the heavenly state and perfection whose hearts are fullest of This Divine Principle, and burn with the most fervent Charity. It is the surest offspring of GOD, and bears His fairest Impression. For GOD is love, I JOHN 4:8, I JOHN 4:16. And where GOD is to be seen as he is, and face to face, there charity is in its greatest height - there, and there only, will it be perfected." ⁷

This assurance in GOD's love - a love superior to all spiritual gifts and other spiritual graces - that the Psalmist wrote in

PSALM 117:2

For His merciful kindness is great toward us: and the truth of The LORD endureth for ever. Praise ye The LORD. ⁸

V. Why Is Love The Greatest Spiritual Gift?

Why then is Love the greatest Spiritual Gift? Perhaps the reason for the superiority of love over all other graces and gifts bestowed upon mere men by The LORD is that love is part of the very essence of our Creator. Because – as is declared in

I JOHN 4:8b

for GOD is love. ⁹

⁶ Brother Lawrence, "The Practice of The Presence of GOD," Fourth Conversation, 4th & 5th sentences. The Prayer Foundation.

http://www.prayerfoundation.org/booktexts/z_brother_lawrence_04.htm

⁷ Matthew Henry Commentary, I CORINTHIANS 13:3, part IV.

<https://www.studylight.org/commentaries/mhm/1-corinthians-13.html>

⁸ KJV, PSALM 117:2.

The closer The Church and the Christian man draw to our Lord JESUS CHRIST, the greater The Image of GOD implanted in us shines out the light love - not a passing and flawed love as the world defines it - but a permanent and pure love as The King of The Universe defines it! That love is of the very nature of GOD! For it is because of the superiority of Divine love above all other graces that, as we find in

JOHN 3:16

GOD so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life. ¹⁰

VI. Divine Love The Key To Human Happiness

What then is the key that we hunger for to the consumation, building and preservation of happy and godly marriages? What is this Perfect Love Which builds joyful and blessed marital bliss and blessing, and that casts down into the dust the hurtful spectre of marital strife and divorce from the family?

It is Divine Love, Which is the key to all human happiness. It is GOD's Love Incarnate, in The Person of our blessed Saviour JESUS CHRIST, Who is The One Who personally calls us to The Cross of salvation and new birth, to be as He is, to be remade into His loving Image and Likeness as in

PSALM 86:15

But thou, O Lord, art a GOD full of compassion, and gracious, longsuffering, and plenteous in mercy and truth. ¹¹

⁹ KJV, I JOHN 4:8b.

¹⁰ KJV, JOHN 3:16.

¹¹ KJV, PSALM 86:15.

VII. If We Learn To Love As GOD Loves Us

What happens in men's lives when we learn to love as GOD loves us? If a man and woman can understand how GOD defines love in The Holy Scriptures, and that He desires to be born again and live in CHRIST, then we will find the antidote to any severing of our marital bonds to each other, to our children and to The LORD. As Saint John records The Words of JESUS our Messiah in

JOHN 15:5

I am the vine, ye are the branches: He that abideth in Me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit: for without Me ye can do nothing. ¹²

VIII. In Conclusion

Let us therefore remember that, if we have not love, we are as nothing, no matter what else we may possess before GOD and men. O Lord, purge us of all things that are not of You, and remake our hearts, souls and minds into Your Image and Likeness, that we may learn to love You, our spouses, our children and our fellow man as You love us! For then we may come to not only more deeply understand, but more faithfully live out These Words in

I CORINTHIANS 13:13

And now abide faith, hope, love, these three; but the greatest of these is love! ¹³

¹² KJV, JOHN 15:5.

¹³ KJV, I CORINTHIANS 13:13.