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CHRISTIAN LOVE AS A LODESTAR AND A STANDARD
OF JUDGMENT, WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO YOUNG
PEOPLE AND THEIR ETHICAL LIFE

A Thesis Presented to the Faculty
of Concordia Seminary, St. Louis,
Department of Practical Theology
in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the degree of
Master of Sacred Theology

by
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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

A categorizing of youth's ethical actions into the realms of self-centered love and of self-effacing love and an evaluation of these two approaches to the ethical life of young people is one of the contributions that this paper seeks to make in the field of youth literature. Another is the setting up of Christian Love as a lodestar and as a standard of judgment for young people and their ethical life.

Youth is guided in life and makes its ethical and moral decisions either on the basis of the right kind of love or the wrong kind of love, either on the basis of self-effacing Christian Love, or on the basis of self-seeking human love. Until young people have learned how properly to apply Christian Love to all of their ethical decisions and actions, many of their actions will fall into the category of self-love. This is contrary to God's will. This young people need to realize in all its truth. They need desperately to be trained in the school of Christian Love.

Young people primarily of high school age are the ones in mind in this presentation, although the findings and conclusions may well apply to young people who are older. The discussion will be limited to the needs of unmarried youth, although, once again, many of the recommendations may be found usable also by those who are no longer single.

A good deal of the information about young people cited in this paper is the result of observing and working with Christian youth groups in various parts of the country during the past seventeen years--during

the past six years as a pastor and counsellor, prior to that as vicar for two years, and before that as a young person faced with these identical ethical problems and needs.

CHAPTER II

CHRISTIAN LOVE CONTRASTED WITH OTHER TYPES OF LOVE

The term "love," in our English language, has come to be a most versatile one. The semanticist who would endeavor to set forth in detail the historical development of how this term has accumulated the host of meanings now attributed to it and associated with it would have to conclude that "love" is beset with much confusion. This concept of "love" has become freighted with definitions many of which have succeeded in doing nothing more than beclouding and even robbing love of its true and radical meaning. We shall see in subsequent paragraphs that some of the explanations foisted upon the word "love" are actually contradictory and opposite to the true nature of this term.

In our English language, the one single term "love" is used to portray the following terms and phrases: ἀγάπη, φιλία, ἔως, caritas, and the secular, modern, romantic (erotic) idea of love. Dr. Gottfried Quell points out that "the idea of love is most commonly expressed in the Old Testament by the root 'ahabh and its derivatives 'ohebh, 'shahbhim, 'ah^abhah."¹ He notes that in the Septuagint the equivalent for these terms is usually ἀγαπᾶν; sometimes it is φιλεῖν (ten times) in secular usage, and also φιλία (five times for 'ah^abhah), ἐστῆναι and φιλιάσειν (once or twice).²

¹Gottfried Quell and Ethelbert Stauffer, LOVE, Bible Key Words from Gerhard Kittel's Theologisches Wörterbuch zum Neuen Testament (London: Adam and Charles Black, 1949), p. 1.

²Ibid.

The term love is also used occasionally in the translation of the Hebrew verb ahav in the Old Testament. In the Septuagint, Ἀγαπᾶν appears five times as a translation of ahav.³

Other roots to be considered are haphog (LXX mostly ἐθέλει, sometimes βούλεσθαι, βουλεύεσθαι, ἐθέλει, and ἄγαπᾶν) and ra'ah (LXX εὐδοκεῖ, προσδεχέσθαι, παραδεχέσθαι, εὐλογεῖ, ἄγαπᾶν), which are both followed by the preposition h^o to indicate the person or thing in which pleasure is taken; hashaq means "to be lovingly attached to" (LXX προσεγγίσθαι, ἐσθόμενόςθαι, ἐλάτσειν); h^o bhabh is common in Aramaic, but only occurs at Deut. xxxiii, 5 in the O. T.; 'aghabh, meaning woman's bodily desire (except Jer. iv, 30), is confined to secular usage, like the nouns dodhim and y^odhihoth; yadhidh (beloved) also occurs in the phrase y^odhidh Yahuwe (beloved of Yahuwe).⁴

The Old Testament uses the term love both in a secular as well as in a religious sense. In the New Testament we discover that the words used for love, chiefly ἐρεῖ, φιλεῖν, ἀγαπᾶν are words that were commonly used in pre-Biblical Greek for the concept of love.⁵ The term, ἀγάπη, for one, undergoes a major development in its meaning in the New Testament. Yet for all this, in our English language, the one word, love, is burdened with the task of serving as the supposedly identifying term for the variety of types of love current in the Old and New Testaments as well as in pre-Biblical Greek.

Otto Piper, in his analysis of sex relationships, delineates between three types of love: "social sympathy, personal love, and Christian love."⁶ Once again, love serves as a front for differing ideas.

³Ibid., p. 2.

⁴Ibid.

⁵Ibid., p. 25.

⁶Otto A. Piper, The Christian Interpretation of Sex (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1941), p. 72.

Dr. Paul Tillich submits this observation: "It is unusual to take the word 'confusion' into the title of a chapter. But if one has to write about love, power, and justice the unusual becomes natural."⁷ Tillich distinguishes between three interpretations of love: emotional, ontological, and ethical.⁸ He further concludes, "that there are not types but qualifications of love, since the different qualities are present, by efficiency or deficiency, in every act of love."⁹

Typical of the misuse and abuse which the term love has been subjected to in the past and in recent days is a comment by a "high-fidelity" sound expert, who remarked, "High-fidelity sound is like the term love. It means whatever you choose it to mean."¹⁰

In view of this wide range of ideas associated with love, what are Christian young people to understand as love? Specifically what should love mean to them? When Holy Scriptures instruct them to practice love, how are they to understand that when they are confronted with the widely divergent views as to what love is supposed to be? There can be no doubt that the confusion that exists in connection with love has affected the understanding modern young people have of love.

The purpose of this thesis is to single out Christian Love, *ἀγάπη*, as the only love worthy of the name and as that prescribed by God for young people and for people of all time. We shall contrast Christian

⁷Paul Tillich, Love, Power, And Justice, Ontological Analyses and Ethical Applications (London: Oxford University Press, 1954), p. 3.

⁸Ibid., p. 4.

⁹Ibid., p. 5.

¹⁰"Hi-Fi Takes Over," Time, February 28, 1955, p. 64.

Love with other so-called "loves" and show the distinctive differences between them. We shall, furthermore, demonstrate how Christian Love can and should be used by young people as a lodestar through all of life, as well as a standard of judgment, or test, for the solution of ethical problems and questions.

We begin our investigation with an attempt to determine the true meaning of love. Dr. Paul Tillich is quick to remind us that all problems of love must inevitably lead us to an ontological analysis. "One cannot escape ontology if one wants to know!"¹¹ Speaking of love, power, and justice, he gives to this triad a distinction of preceding everything that is, and "they cannot be derived from anything that is. They have ontological dignity."¹² Tillich's own ontology of love has life as being "in actuality, and love is the moving power of life. . . . Love is the drive towards the unity of the separated."¹³ He proceeds to describe love as the reunion of the estranged rather than as the union of the strange. He ascribes to love its greatest power in its ability to overcome the greatest separation.¹⁴ "Most of the pitfalls in social ethics, political theory, and education are due to a misunderstanding of the ontological character of love,"¹⁵ according to Tillich. Tillich's ontological study of love leads him to the basic asser-

¹¹Tillich, op. cit., p. 20.

¹²Ibid., p. 21.

¹³Ibid., p. 25.

¹⁴Ibid.

¹⁵Ibid., p. 24.

tion that "love is one."¹⁶ For him, love, not only as such, but in all its forms is the drive towards the restoration of unity of the separated. Once this is conceded, "the different qualities of the one nature of love become understandable."¹⁷

His ontology of love leads him to conclude, further, that ἀγάπη is the "depth of love or love in relation to the ground of life."¹⁸ He puts it beautifully when he continues, ". . . in agape ultimate reality manifests itself and transforms life and love. Agape is love cutting into love"¹⁹

Love, then, in all its genuine purity, perfection, and wholeness is to be found in God who is the embodiment of LOVE. "God is love," states St. John as he makes love synonymous with God.²⁰ It is possible to arrive at an absolute definition of the fundamental nature of love. What the Triune God reveals as Love through His actions and Words is the answer that we may consider as final as far as the true, basic meaning of love is concerned.

In His Word to us God reveals Himself as He who loves. Love is a quality in God that moves Him to action. Love includes within itself the desire to share with others the very best that one has. Hence, God's love leads Him to create, in His own image, man, so that man might

¹⁶Ibid., p. 27.

¹⁷Ibid., p. 28.

¹⁸Ibid., p. 33.

¹⁹Ibid.

²⁰1 John 4:8.

also participate in and enjoy fellowship with the holy God. When Satan deceives man, and man disobeys God, man senses within himself what is now in actuality so, that he is no longer worthy of fellowship with His Maker and God: "And they heard the voice of the Lord God walking in the garden in the cool of the day; and Adam and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the Lord God amongst the trees of the garden."²¹

It is now, however, that God's love begins to reveal itself in its depth and magnitude. His love shows itself to be an overall concern for the total welfare of man even when man has rebelled against Him. There is no goodness, no innate righteousness or worth, nothing at all in man that should now call out God's love for him. There is no cause whatsoever in man which influences God to act favorably toward him. "Hence, when it is said that God loves man, that is not a judgment on what man is like, but on what God is like."²²

The Greek term used for the love which emanates from God is ἀγάπη. Dr. Anders Nygren, in his brilliant and monumental exposition of the idea of Christian Love, sums up the meaning of Agape in four statements of characteristic: 1) "Agape is spontaneous and 'uncaused' 2) Agape is indifferent to human merit 3) Agape is creative 4) Agape opens the way of fellowship with God."²³

The idea of Agape permeates the Gospel accounts. Strangely enough, however, the word ἀγάπη occurs only twice in the Synoptic Gospels, Mat-

²¹Genesis 3:8.

²²Anders Nygren, Agape and Eros, Part I (London: S. P. C. K., 1932), p. 52.

²³Ibid., pp. 53-56.

thow 24:12 and Luke 6:42, and in neither case is it an especially significant use. The verb is used more frequently but not with any particular attention to the specific meaning. Nygren's findings indicate that ". . . it is used indiscriminately of love to God and to one's neighbor and of natural affection (as in Luke 6:32), and it is not used at all of God's own love . . ."24 He concludes that credit seems to belong to St. Paul for the introduction of *ἀγάπη* as a technical term.²⁵

Let us now come back to Nygren's four points about love and examine them briefly. Nygren points out that natural human affection is a love that has a cause which awakens it, but that "divine love in Jesus seeks out sinners who do not deserve it and cannot claim it because it is spontaneous and uncaused."²⁶ Christ dies for those who are weak, ungodly, sinners, and enemies of God.²⁷ Though God has every right to act according to justice and to apportion to each man his due for his disobedience, He chooses to deal with man according to love--a course of action that will result for man in permanent and perfect blessing rather than deserved total destruction. "Agape is sovereign and independent, with regard to its object, and is poured out on the evil and the good."²⁸

We proceed now to Nygren's second point, namely, that Agape is indifferent to human merit. Human merit which influences man in his deal-

²⁴Ibid., p. 83.

²⁵Ibid.

²⁶Ibid., p. 53.

²⁷Romans 5:6, 8, 10.

²⁸Nygren, op. cit., p. 165.

ings with his fellowmen is not used as God's basis for His way of dealing with man. ". . . human goodness or worthiness is left clean out of the reckoning. God's Love knows no limits God loves the sinner in spite of his sin; but He does not love the righteous on the ground of his righteousness."²⁹ Matthew 5:45 is adduced as one bit of evidence: "He maketh His sun to rise on the evil and on the good and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust." The parable of the laborers in the vineyard is another case in point. In this parable the lord of the vineyard issues to each laborer the same hire. His love and goodness are indifferent to human merit.³⁰ The fact that Jesus Christ is the propitiation for the sins of the whole world, and not only of a select few, is further conclusive proof of God's love being completely indifferent to human merit.

Nygren's third point is that Agape is also creative. Among courtship-minded young people it is often the winsome smile, the pleasing personality and the physical beauty of young ladies that are responsible much of the time for the lighting of a love for them in the hearts of young men. For girls it may be certain outstanding qualities in young men, moral or otherwise, handsomeness, and the like, that create love in their hearts for them. A quality that is desirable in one person thus often stirs up and creates love in another for that person. God's love, on the other hand, is not attracted to man by worthy qualities in man, but

. . . on the contrary, that which in itself is without value acquires value by the fact that it is the object of God's love. Agape is the direct opposite of that love which is called out by the worthiness of its object and so may be said to be a recognition of the value

²⁹Ibid., p. 54.

³⁰Matthew 20:1-16.

and attractiveness of its object. The man whom God loves has not any value in himself. His value consists simply in the fact that God loves him.

This is the central and decisive point in the Christian conception of Agape.³¹

There is sometimes attributed to man "an inward, imperishable value," which even sin could not take from him.³² God does not forgive sins because of any such already existing value in man. The forgiveness of sins is a gift of love. It is "a creative work of Divine power . . ."³³

The fourth outstanding feature of Agape as presented by Nygren is that Agape opens the way of fellowship with God. Sin is responsible for an impasse between God and man. Man cannot re-open the way to fellowship with God by himself. If there is to be any such fellowship at all, God Himself must re-create it. And God does make possible such a fellowship through His forgiveness: "the way of the Divine Agape and the Divine forgiveness. Agape is God's own way to man."³⁴

Agape in its purest and clearest form is evidenced in the life and death of our Lord Jesus. During Jesus' lifetime He followed this precept: "the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister . . ."³⁵ This stamped His approach to all of life as one of self-effacing love. His love was not always accepted as such. But even in the face of opposition and rejection he, nevertheless, witnessed to the true meaning of Agape. On this point Nygren's summary of Luther's deductions is interes-

³¹Nygren, op. cit., p. 54.

³²Ibid., p. 55.

³³Ibid.

³⁴Ibid., p. 56.

³⁵Matthew 20:28.

ting:

Christian love is by its very nature eine verlorene Liebe, a lost love. It is the direct opposite of rational calculation. Even though again and again it finds itself deceived, that is no reason why it should become hesitant and reserved. For it is of the nature of love to suffer betrayal.³⁶

The clearest revelation of Agape in all its fulness and depth is evidenced in the sacrifice of Jesus of Himself on the cross for a disobedient world of men. Dr. Emil Brunner agrees wholeheartedly with Nygren in this respect. Brunner maintains that in the cross alone do we find the meaning of the word "love" disclosed.³⁷ He states that "before Christ love was one commandment among others, and unconditioned love was not understood. It could not be understood until God Himself had defined its meaning realiter: in the Cross of Christ."³⁸

The Lord Jesus revealed many unique qualities of Agape through His death on the Cross. Several of the outstanding facets of Agape there demonstrated are these: 1) Agape does not seek its own. He was gaining no personal advantage for Himself through His physical and mental tortures sustained at the hands of loveless and hateful men. At all times His concern was for others--all others, without qualification; 2) Agape is ready to make sacrifices if others, even the unworthy, are truly to benefit; true love does not shrink loss or bemoan it.

Ellich also exalts the love at the Cross as supreme when he says, "Love manifests its greatest power there where it overcomes the greatest

³⁶Anders Nygren, Agape and Eros, Part II, Volume II (London: S. P. C. K., 1939), p. 54.

³⁷Emil Brunner, The Divine Imperative (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1947), p. 55.

³⁸Ibid., p. 56.

separation."³⁹

Nygren equates God and the Agape exemplified in the death on the Cross as one. He defines God's mind towards man as pure Agape.⁴⁰ He is quick to point out, however, that God is love also apart from His dealings with fallen man. In His own nature God always existed as Agape. "Primarily and ultimately God's Agape is the eternal love of the Father for the Son: 'Thou lovedst Me,' He says, 'before the foundation of the world,'" (John 17:24).⁴¹

A distinctive feature of Agape is that it is completely forgetful of self. Its center of attention is "the other." It is not egocentric. It is at all times self-effacing and seeks the good of others even when they do not deserve it--even when they deserve the very opposite type of treatment. This is an absolute love, love in its purest and noblest form. It is this that God means by love. This alone is the understanding He would have us hold of love, for this alone is love in its true unadulterated, root sense. It is this type of love that we are to live by. Within the Christian Church this love has come to be called Christian love, to distinguish it from the diluted and perverted human love so common in our world of self-seeking. The descriptive adjective "Christian" should strictly speaking not be necessary, since love, if it is to be genuine at all, must be Christian love, or it is not love at all--in the sense that God intends it and in which sense He has revealed it to us.

³⁹Tillich, op. cit., p. 25.

⁴⁰Nygren, op. cit., Part I, p. 108.

⁴¹Ibid., p. 112.

St. Paul augments and amplifies the meaning of Agape with his classical and succinct presentation in his first letter to the Corinthian Christians, in chapter thirteen. He does here with Agape what a glass prism does with a ray of light. As the prism breaks down light into its component colors and reveals its true nature, so this thirteenth chapter serves as a means for further delineating the aspects of Agape.

"Charity [Agape] suffereth long and is kind"42 The center of attention is not the self but "the other." Concern is shown for the well-being of others, even though the self must experience inconvenience. "Charity envieth not"43 It is not desirous of that which is rightfully another's. "Charity vaunteth not itself, is not puffed up"44 Rather than push oneself to the fore, Agape causes one to recede from the focus of attention. Its nature is to be modest and humble, not interested in broadcasting one's personal merits and achievements but desiring only that one's services are of help to others. It is knowledge that puffs up, but "charity edifieth."⁴⁵ Agape is concerned with the genuine welfare of others. This necessarily relates Agape to that which is of a lasting nature, one's eternal welfare. Agape then is primarily active in the promotion of the spiritual growth and advancement of the neighbor. St. Paul makes this strikingly clear in his remarks to the Corinthians: "Give no offence to Jews or to Greeks or to the church of God, just as I try to please all men in everything I do, not seeking my own ad-

⁴²1 Corinthians 13:4.

⁴³Ibid.

⁴⁴Ibid.

⁴⁵1 Corinthians 8:1.

vantage, but that of many, that they may be saved."⁴⁶ The goal of Jesus' Agape was the eternal blessedness of every man. He revealed His love not only for the momentary, temporal, earthly welfare of man, but His interest was in the permanent security and salvation of all people.

St. Paul continues his portrayal of Christian love in 1 Corinthians, chapter thirteen, as follows:

. . . doth not behave itself unseemly, seeketh not her own, is not easily provoked, thinketh no evil, rejoiceth not in iniquity, but rejoiceth in the truth, beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things.⁴⁷

The common denominator which dominates this list of love's aspects may said to be self-effacement and a complete concern for the total good of others.

In comparing St. Paul's use of the term Agape with that of the Synoptists it becomes evident that St. Paul has taken over and continued the idea of Agape. But he has done far more. According to Nygren, "he has given the idea a great and important development, by connecting it with the death of Jesus on the Cross."⁴⁸

A well-compact description of this Agape type of loves comes to us from Dr. Richard R. Caemmerer. He summarizes it in this fashion:

God's love means God's entire constitution bent toward man, alive for the sake of man rather than for the sake of Himself. Man was made to have this same kind of love; sin plunged man into a frame of life in which he lived for himself alone. The renewal of the divine image in man implies the recapture of this quality of character of love. It means much more than the sentiment of friendliness

⁴⁶Holy Bible, Revised Standard Version (New York: Thomas Nelson & Sons, 1952), 1 Corinthians 10:32, 33.

⁴⁷1 Corinthians 13:5-7.

⁴⁸Nygren, op. cit., Part I, p. 89.

and affection. But it means the all-pervading will of the Christian man to put himself at the disposal of man, whatever situation he can reach him and for whatsoever need he can serve him (Matthew 5; Luke 10; 1 John 3). This will is literally an implanting of God. It is effective only as God imparts it and as it is a characteristic of God Himself at work (1 John 4; Colossians 3; Ephesians 3).⁴⁹

It is this idea and interpretation of love that God wills for youth as well as for all men when He summarizes His desire for us through His Son, ". . . love one another; as I have loved you, that ye also love one another."⁵⁰ Love, however, in coming down to us through the centuries, has not always been interpreted in the sense described in the preceding paragraphs, as pure Agape. Nygren notes that in the post-apostolic period three main types of view regarding the Christian idea of love appeared: 1) the Old Testament Nomos motif, 2) the Hellenistic Eros motif, and 3) the New Testament Agape motif.⁵¹ "Of this Clement's hymn to Agape is a concrete example. In it motifs are plainly mixed, for three fundamental motifs are represented; but the O. T. Nomos motif is ultimately predominant."⁵²

The Greek understanding of love, defined as ἔρως was of an altogether different nature from Agape. This was the type of love which Plato glorified. For him it was a heavenly Eros, "the love of the soul for the

⁴⁹Richard R. Caemmerer, "The Application of Christian Ethics to Current Social Problems," Forty-third Annual Convention Associated Lutheran Charities and Second Annual Social Work Institute, Valparaiso University, September 8 to 13, 1946 (University Campus: Valparaiso, Indiana), p. 34.

⁵⁰John 13:34.

⁵¹Anders Nygren, Agape and Eros, Part II, Volume I (London: S. P. C. K., 1938), p. 34.

⁵²Ibid.

bright world of Forms and her desire to participate in the Divine life."⁵³

A conception of the double nature of man, of the Divine origin and quality of the soul, its liberation from the fetters of sense, and its ascent to its original Divine home, is the universal basis of the idea of Eros in every form in which it appears.⁵⁴

The Platonic conception of love may be summarized to include its being a love of desire, by which man seeks to reach a Divine goal. Hence it is essentially an egocentric love. Eros is, thus, anchored in man. It does not take into account, nor does it have room for, God's love to man. Through and through it is exclusively a self-seeking effort on the part of man. This categorizes it as a direct opposite of Agape, which is God's self-effacing love for man.

As for the Nomos motif, the difference between the Jewish and the primitive Christian idea of love might be presented as follows: "love set within the scheme of law--love breaking down the scheme of law."⁵⁵ Agape in the purest sense is exemplified in the latter. The love found largely in the writings of the Apostolic fathers and Apologists is Agape squeezed into the mold of Nomos. It was easier to grasp love as a commandment, and hence, their idea took them back into the Old Testament frame of reference.⁵⁶ If love is to be a commandment given to man, then the initiative reverts to man. What we lose, then, is the "indicative of Agape

⁵³Ibid., p. 130.

⁵⁴Nygren, op. cit. Part I, Volume I, p. 122.

⁵⁵Nygren, op. cit. Part II, Volume I, p. 35.

⁵⁶Ibid.

pe," and we come up with the imperative of Nomos.⁵⁷

History reveals that the pure Agape motif was definitely in the background during post-apostolic times. The Gnostics replaced it with Eros; it survived in the Apologists but lost its original and dynamic force when it was fitted into the nominalistic plan.⁵⁸ As Nygren traces the history of the Christian idea of love through post-apostolic times he finds it undergoing its formation "under stress of the conflicts between Nomos, Eros, and Agape."⁵⁹ This is not to say that any one of the three completely displaced the others. All remain very much alive in the Church. It is interesting to note that of the three outstanding ante-Nicene theologians, Irenaeus, Tertullian, and Origen, each may be said to represent one main type.⁶⁰ Tertullian emphasized the Nomos type, Origen (and Clement) the Eros type, and Irenaeus the Agape type.⁶¹ Nygren is ready to give honors to Irenaeus for maintaining and preserving the idea of Agape in as pure a form as is found anywhere in the early Church. "His whole theology is saturated with the Agape motif"⁶²

Love took on still another meaning when Augustine fused aspects of Agape and of Eros and came up with his own distinctive understanding of love as caritas. Augustine's caritas "is a synthesis of ancient eudaemo-

⁵⁷Ibid., p. 48.

⁵⁸Ibid., p. 101.

⁵⁹Ibid., p. 119.

⁶⁰Ibid.

⁶¹Ibid., p. 177.

⁶²Ibid., p. 198.

nism with Christian love."⁶³ Augustine arrived at his conclusions by asking the ancient philosophical question, "Where shall I find my 'bonum,' my highest good?" The Christian commandment of love, according to Augustine, implied no condemnation of this egocentric and eudaimonistic question. It said rather, "Love (that is, desire), but see to it what you love; 'thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart,' for He alone is that 'bonum' which can really satisfy your desire."⁶⁴ For Augustine, all love is acquisitive love. Man is to direct his longings toward an object, by possessing which, he hopes to be made happy.⁶⁵

He did not condemn self-love since that led him to the "summum bonum," love for God. On the other hand, to love oneself and to seek one's highest good in this world and in the earthly goods of a passing nature is to be guilty of amor sui, which is "not merely one sin among others, but the sin of sins."⁶⁶

It remained for Luther to rediscover the original, pure meaning of love as Agape originating in God and exemplified at its most glorious in the Lord's sacrifice of Himself on the Cross. The Christian is to love his neighbor in the same way that God loves the Christian. Luther drew a sharp distinction between human love and God's love. He noted the basic differences as follows: "Amor Dei non invenit sed creat summ dili-

⁶³Nygren, op. cit. Part II, Volume II, p. 285.

⁶⁴Ibid.

⁶⁵Ibid., p. 258. In examining modern youth's conception of love, it becomes clearly evident that this is the only understanding many young people have of love. It is a human love that stems from a self-seeking heart.

⁶⁶Ibid., p. 319.

gibile, amor hominis fit a suo diligibili."⁶⁷

Luther dubs human love as being acquisitive love which arises as a result of desirable qualities in the object. God's love is the direct opposite, giving value and worth to that which lacks it; hence it is creative. Human love, stemming from a self-centered heart, delights in receiving good for itself rather than dispensing it to others. God's love lavishes itself upon such who are in need.

Luther continues by noting that "Christian love is spontaneous in contrast to all activity with a eudaemonistic motive."⁶⁸ He points back to Christ and holds up His example as the paragon for the Christian. As our Lord gave Himself in complete surrender to the Father's will, not pleasing Himself, so the Christian is to be guided by His heavenly Father's will. According to Luther,

. . . Christian love, too, is free from all selfish calculation or ulterior motive. It does the good, not in order to gain or increase its own blessedness, but "out of free love" and for nothing, to please God, not seeking nor regarding anything else, but that it thus pleases God! . . . It is "round and whole," the same to one as to another, and without respect of persons.⁶⁹

Quite some difference of opinion is evident in regard to self-love. The question that arises is, what place has self-love in the Christian conception of love as Agape? Is a third commandment--that one love one-self--presupposed in the Scriptural commandment, "Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself"?⁷⁰ Nygren states that this belief about self-love

⁶⁷Ibid., p. 507.

⁶⁸Ibid., p. 509.

⁶⁹Ibid., p. 509 and p. 512.

⁷⁰Matthew 22:39.

is foreign to the New Testament and has sprung from other roots.⁷¹

Man's inherited condition is precisely this, that he does love himself. Now it is this type of luxurious lavishing of attention and interest which one shows to himself that God commands should be shown to one's neighbor. God directs man to turn away from his own ego and center his attention on "the other." In occupying oneself with service to one's neighbor, man is led away from his obsession with self and overcomes the basic, self-destroying attitude of self-love.

Does love for one's neighbor presuppose and include self-love? On the contrary, "it excludes it and overcomes it."⁷² It was actually Augustine who had concluded that a commandment of self-love was included in the command to love one's neighbor as oneself. He felt that since man naturally inclined toward such an attitude about himself a specific commandment in so many words was unnecessary. Luther is in violent disagreement. As far as he is concerned, self-love is sin, in fact, "the essence of sinfulness of sin."⁷³ Luther cannot find any justification for self-love in the commandment to love one's neighbor. In-

⁷¹ Nygren, op. cit. Part II, Volume I, p. 72.

⁷² Ibid. Dr. Nygren appends a most interesting footnote in this connection as he cites Rudolf Bultmann on self-love: "It is consequently meaningless to say (as indeed, can only be said on the basis of a humanistic ideal of ethics) that love for one's neighbor must be preceded by a justifiable self-love, a necessary degree of self-respect, because we are commanded, 'Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself'; hence, self-love is presupposed. Yes, it is in truth presupposed, but not as something which man must first learn, something expressly required of him, but as the attitude of the natural man, which is simply to be overcome." (Jesus, p. 99.)

⁷³ Nygren, op. cit. Part II, Volume II, p. 492.

stead he sees in this directive to love the neighbor as oneself a judgment upon selfishness; it "involves the rejection and condemnation of all self-love whatsoever."⁷⁴ He cannot use stronger language than he does in his judgment: "Self-love is not to be ennobled and refined, but totally annihilated."⁷⁵

Why should Luther be so outspokenly against self-love? The reason lies in this that he finds it to be totally opposite to true Christian love. It is completely egocentric and lacks all the qualities of a genuine love. He furthermore is guided by the words of Jesus in John 12:25: "He that loveth his life shall lose it; and he that hateth his life in this world shall keep it unto life eternal." To love, for Luther, then, "is the same as to hate oneself."⁷⁶

Luther considers the self-love that Jesus refers to as a perverse and crooked love because man seeks only his own. He is incurvatus in se. This love becomes straight only when it unbends itself away from the self and is directed toward one's neighbor. What the Lord is, in fact, doing in this commandment, Luther feels, is exposing self-love as a vicious love.⁷⁷ Yet, while self-love is regarded as a vicious love (vitiosus amor) which must be eliminated, it can serve as a guide for the proper form of love toward one's neighbor. The Lord does, in fact, use human self-love, which is sinful, as an example of how we are to live in re-

⁷⁴ Ibid.

⁷⁵ Ibid., p. 491.

⁷⁶ Ibid., p. 493. (Luther, Ädnerbrief, ii, p. 219, 8: "Est enim diligere se ipsum odisse.")

⁷⁷ Ibid., p. 494.

lation to our neighbor when He restates the Old Testament summary of the Second Table, "Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself."⁷⁸

Not as if thou oughtest to love thyself; for if that had been the meaning, then it would have been commanded. But so far is it from being commanded, that the commandment of love to one's neighbor is, on the contrary, based on the prohibition of self-love. So thou doest ill in loving thyself. From this evil thou art delivered only when thou lovest thy neighbor in like manner--that is, when thou ceasest to love thyself.⁷⁹

Luther's exposition of human nature as a corrupt one is classical. He holds that man is born with a selfish mind and that his whole attitude toward life and others is controlled by a utilitarianism--how useful they can be to him for his purposes.⁸⁰ And because the will of man is crooked and not straight it curves back upon itself. To Luther, sin meant a selfish enslavement to oneself. Proceeding on the Scriptural promise that love does not seek its own, he finds all of natural human life to be under the rule of sin, since, rather than seek the other's good, man demonstrates that his entire quest in life is for himself.⁸¹

St. Paul sees the harm self-love can inflict on man. He bemoans a situation where self-love rules: "For all seek their own and not the things which are Jesus Christ's."⁸² Self-love draws a person into himself and withdraws him from service to his Lord and Savior. In Phil. 2:4, St. Paul teaches self-effacing love: "Look not every man on his own things, but

⁷⁸Matthew 22:39.

⁷⁹Nygren, op. cit. Part II, Volume II, p. 494. (Luther, Romerbrief, p. 337, 17 ff.)

⁸⁰Ibid., p. 495.

⁸¹Ibid., pp. 495 and 496.

⁸²Phil. 2:21.

every man also on the things of others." And in I Corinthians 13:5, "Charity seeketh not her own," the apostle, according to Luther, clearly outlaws self-love.⁸³

It is interesting to note that of all the Church fathers cited thus far, Augustine's interpretation of love has had by far the greatest influence in the whole history of the Christian idea of love. It has succeeded in overshadowing the New Testament view of love as well.⁸⁴ The amazing thing is that "in Evangelical Christendom to the present day, Augustine's view has done far more than Luther's to determine what is meant by Christian love."⁸⁵ The seriousness of this fact is demonstrated in the fact that the view of love current among most Christian and non-Christian young people today is by and large one of seeking happiness and good for oneself. Many young people understand love in the sense Augustine defined it.

It is, however, God's will that youth and for that matter all people, should be guided in life by His pattern of love, that of divine Agape. It is this that we are to understand when Jesus urges us to love one another as He has loved us. It is the Agape view that St. Paul has in mind in his frequent reminders to the early Christians that they grow and increase in love. The apostle stresses that love should be paralleled to God's love for man, and that human relations should be a fellowship similar to that which God shares with man. This is clearly borne out in Ephesians 5: 1 and 2: "Be ye, therefore, imitators of God, as beloved

⁸³Nygron, op. cit. Part II, Volume II, p. 494.

⁸⁴Ibid., p. 232.

⁸⁵Ibid.

children; and walk in love, even as Christ also hath loved us and hath given Himself for us"

What is, however, the understanding of love held by the people of our country, and especially by our youth?

The Webster New Collegiate dictionary defines love as follows:

1. a feeling of strong personal attachment induced by sympathetic understanding, or by ties of kinship. 2. The benevolence attributed to God as being like a father's affection for his children; also men's adoration of God. 3. Strong liking; fondness; good will; as, love of learning; love of country. 4. Tender and passionate affection for one of the opposite sex. 5. The object of affection; sweetheart. 6. Cupid, or Eros, as god of love; sometimes, Venus.⁸⁶

Love, here, is depicted as a human feeling originating in man toward another person or object. The Agape sense is completely lacking. The most important element of love is missing: its self-effacing quality and its overly concern for the welfare of the "other."

Dr. Otto Piper, in his thoughtful study and interpretation of sex concludes that the individual in his sex relationships encounters three types of love, sexual sympathy, personal love, and Christian love. "These are not three different instincts, but different degrees of the primitive human or animal instinct of sympathy in its application to sex life."⁸⁷ He defines sexual sympathy as that feeling which occurs when the sexual desire so rules the soul that the soul has little if any influence on man. Personal love arises "when the soul reuses the instinct beyond the limits of a simple state of bodily attraction into the region of what is

⁸⁶Webster's New Collegiate Dictionary (Springfield, Mass.: G. & C. Merriam Co., 1949), p. 498.

⁸⁷Piper, op. cit., p. 72.

personal."⁸⁸ Christian love shines out and demonstrates its true power "where personal love reaches its own limits because the attitude of one or other of the partners is out of harmony with real values."⁸⁹ Christian love does not displace sexual attraction or the respect for the personality of the other party where it rules. It adds something new to the relationship. It brings God into it as Master and Lord and Father who has loved us with such overwhelming love that we now desire to forget ourselves and love others as He has loved us. Piper concludes, "Erotic or 'romantic' love . . . can never effect what is done by Christian love."⁹⁰

The world limits love to the physical, erotic, romantic aspect of life. True Love magazines and similar modern romance periodicals, which run the term love to the ground, use love almost exclusively and entirely in the secular sense with its heavy overtones and undertones of sex and physical attraction. The world has emptied love of its noble and pure meaning and has perverted it, giving it a content which is this-worldly, acquisitive, egocentric, and at times even synonymous with lust. A presentation of love in this light does much to color and shape youth's understanding of love. Television and radio dramas and stories feature, in most cases, a romantic type of love which is strongly human and completely devoid of the Agape sense.

Modern secular usage of the term love has, thus, done much to confuse the true meaning of this concept for young people and adults generally of today. Young people cannot begin to have the proper picture of

⁸⁸Ibid.

⁸⁹Ibid.

⁹⁰Ibid., p. 73.

what love really is until he has come to know Christian love. Christian love is a way of life and as such can be used as a standard of judgment in ethical matters. It is this that we propose to develop in the following chapter.

CHAPTER III

CHRISTIAN LOVE AS A WAY OF LIFE AND A STANDARD OF JUDGMENT

It is possible, on the basis of Holy Scriptures, to establish Christian love as God's recommended way of life and as the point of departure and standard of judgment for the Christian in the realm of his ethical life. The Lord Jesus speaks of love as a new commandment which He gives to His disciples and, according to John 13:34, urges them "to love one another, as I have love you, that ye also love one another." The motivation for their love for each other was to be His love for them.

St. Paul speaks of love as "a more excellent way," in I Corinthians 12:31, referring to love as a way of life. In the following chapter, the thirteenth, he proceeds to define Christian love in specific terms in a glowing fashion. Dean Alford has called this chapter "the noblest assemblage of beautiful thoughts in beautiful language extant in this world."¹

The Rev. Oswald Riess, taking his cue from St. Paul, elevates Christian love to this high position: "Love is not a way to live; it is the way to live. Not to love is not to live."²

In Romans 12:10, St. Paul repeats his encouragement of love as a way to live: "Be kindly affectioned one to another with brotherly love." He continues in chapter 13:8 and 10, "Owe no man anything, but to love

¹Quoted by Oswald Riess in his The Secret of Beautiful Living (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1953), p. 87.

²Ibid.

one another, for he that loveth another hath fulfilled the law. . . Love worketh no ill to his neighbor, therefore love is the fulfilling of the law."

In writing to the Corinthian Christians St. Paul repeatedly emphasizes Christian love; note for example, I Cor. 13:13: "And now abideth faith, hope, charity, these three, but the greatest of these is charity [love]." In I Cor. 14:1 we find this: "Follow after charity . . ." In I Cor. 16:4, he writes, "Let all your things be done with charity." In these passages, in no unmistakable terms, he urges love as a way of conducting oneself in all of life. Christian love is to be a lodestar.

Throughout his epistles St. Paul holds love up to his readers as the very necessary result of their faith: "For in Jesus Christ neither circumcision availeth anything nor uncircumcision, but faith which worketh by love"; this we find in Gal. 5:6. Then a few verses later, in verses thirteen and fourteen, he goes on to say, "By love serve one another, for all the law is fulfilled in one word, even in this, 'Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself.'"

The Ephesian Christians receive similar guidance in Eph. 3:17: ". . . that Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith, that ye, being rooted and grounded in love . . ." "Walk in love, as Christ also hath loved us," he teaches in chapter five, verse two. We find the same exaltation of love in his letter to the Colossian Christians in Col. 2:2: ". . . that their hearts might be comforted, being knit together in love . . ."

St. Paul's prayer for the Thessalonians includes a desire for their growth in love: "And the Lord make you to increase and abound in love toward one another and toward all men, even as we do toward you . . ."

This we find in I Thess. 3:12. St. Paul is concerned about a steady growth into the mature life of Christian love; to him Christian love is to be a habit, a constant way of living. He pursues this thought again in the next, the fourth chapter of this letter, in verses nine and ten:

But as touching brotherly love ye need not that I write unto you; for ye yourselves are taught of God to love one another. And indeed ye do it toward all the brethren which are in Macedonia; but we beseech you, brethren, that ye increase more and more.

One cannot help but notice the importance he attaches to Christian love in their lives. In the passage just cited St. Paul uses six words to underscore the need for growth into love: "increase . . . abound . . . increase more and more."

St. Peter likewise stressed the need for evidences of Christian love in the lives of his readers. In all five chapters of his first epistle he has references to love. Let us examine some of them: "Seeing ye have purified your souls in obeying the truth through the Spirit unto unfeigned love of the brethren, see that ye love one another with a pure heart fervently." This we have in I Peter 1:22. In chapter 2:17 he repeats, "Love the brotherhood." In chapter 3:8 he continues, "Finally, be ye all of one mind, having compassion one of another, love as brethren, be pitiful, be courteous" The last two directives in this passage are actually expressions of love. In the very next chapter, the fourth, in verse eight, he singles out the need for love as the main need: "And above all things have fervent charity among yourselves, for charity shall cover the multitude of sins."

St. John, often called the apostle of love, speaks glowingly of love and its pre-eminence in the Christian life in his first epistle: "For this is the message that ye heard from the beginning, that we should love

one another," chapter three, verse eleven. To him, love is action; in I John 3:18 we read, "My little children, let us not love in word, neither in tongue, but in deed and in truth." Chapter four of his first epistle is saturated with the concept of love. Verse seven is a good example: "Beloved, let us love one another, for love is of God, and every one that loveth is born of God and knoweth God."

The Christian life is sometimes referred to as "the life of the new man," "like in Christ," "newness of life," and similar expressions, all fitting and appropriate. In view of the overwhelming evidence for Christian love just indicated in the preceding array of Biblical excerpts, the Christian life may also be referred to as the way of Love (with a capital "L" to distinguish it from the various other types of love current in modern and secular usage).

Christian Love is the best way of life because it is God's own way-- the way in which He chooses to deal with disobedient man and the way which He directs man to live by. The Lord Jesus specified to His disciples that they were to love each other as He had loved them, according to John 13:34. In the self-effacing, self-giving way of God's Agape-Love, His Christian followers and Christian youth are to walk. Here, then, is Christ's own directive for the way of life that is patterned after that of God's and that is in perfect accord with His will.

Among faith, hope, and love, it is Agape, Christian Love, that is rated as the greatest of these.³ It is Agape that will abide forever. At the last judgment, Love will be the test of a man's faith. Was this

³I Cor. 13:13.

man's faith a true and living one? His works of Love will determine that.⁴

Going back to Luther again, it was he who had mentioned that if all citizens in a community were led only by Christian Love, government would be superfluous.⁵

Although Bertrand Russell lacked the fundamental, Scriptural understanding of Christian Love, nevertheless, in delivering a series of lectures in November of 1950, on the general impact of science on human society, he paid this tribute to Christian Love:

The root of the matter is a very simple and old-fashioned thing, a thing so simple that I am almost ashamed to mention it, for fear of the derisive smile with which wise cynics will greet my words. The thing I mean--please forgive me for mentioning it--is love, Christian love, or compassion. If you feel this, you have a motive for existence, a guide in action, a reason for courage, an imperative necessity for intellectual honesty. If you feel this you have all that anybody should need in the way of religion. Although you may not find happiness, you will never know the deep despair of those whose life is aimless and void of purpose; for there is always something that you can do to diminish the awful sum of human misery.⁶

Though a renowned critic of supernaturalism in all its forms, Russell could not find anything but high praise for the way of life recommended and urged by God, the way of Christian Love. His conception of Love is a hazy one; he is not aware of the source of this Love or its potential. However, he has to concede that it is a way of life that makes for har-

⁴See St. Matthew 25:31-46, where Love for one's fellowman may be implied to be the criterion at the last judgment.

⁵Caemmerer, op. cit., p. 44.

⁶George S. Counts, Education and American Civilization (New York: Columbia University, 1952), pp. 228 and 227, where Counts quotes Bertrand Russell, The Impact of Science on Society (New York, 1951), pp. 59 and 60. Counts himself refers to Christian Love as perhaps the most basic element in the Hebraic-Christian ethic.

mony, peace, and the welfare of one's fellowman.

Experience itself shows us that any other way of life, except that of Christian Love, brings only sorrow, dissatisfaction, and heartache, for it is usually a self-centered and self-seeking way. It does not bring a man peace of mind and contentment. Many non-Christians employ the techniques of Love, not because they recognize them as being Christian Love and belonging to God, but because, through the process of elimination, they have discovered that the only course of action that makes for their own and others' welfare, is the way of kindness, helpfulness, peaceableness, and similar such approaches to life--all of which are in reality component parts of Christian Love. In the secular world, different terminology is used to portray the Christian idea of Love: terms such as humanitarianism, philanthropy, charity, and mercy are usually used. Thus, it is possible for the non-Christian world to arrive at the proper and best approach to social relationships, the way of Christian Love, without recognizing this way as Love in the Christian sense and without being aware of its total implications, potential, or motivation.

Dr. Richard R. Caemmerer summarizes this as follows:

The Christian revelation does not take it amiss that its codes of conduct are paralleled by many others. . . . It regards it as self-evident that also man without the influence upon him of the Spirit of God should have a bent to reverence and morality, and that he should recognize that altruism and fairness are preferable to selfishness and double-dealing.⁷

Love is, however, not only designated as the way of life for man. Christian Love is not simply a code of action suggested to man. It is

⁷Caemmerer, *op. cit.*, p. 32. Dr. Caemmerer suggests referring also to Romans 2, Psalm 14, and Acts 17.

"the core of Christian ethics."⁸ It is the Christian's total outlook reaching out toward God and man. Love is regarded as God's most wonderful gift to the Christian. ". . . it is the impulse for action in his heart; it is the outgrowth of the utter change which he has undergone through the renewal of the Spirit."⁹

Dr. Nygren calls Agape not only the fundamental feature in Christianity, but "the fundamental idea par excellence . . ."¹⁰ He goes on to describe it as setting its mark on the whole of Christianity, insisting that "without it nothing that is Christian would be Christian."¹¹

As such, then, Christian Love may be set up as a standard of judgment, or a guiding principle, by which young people and all Christians may test their ethical actions and decisions to see whether they are in harmony with God's will or not. Such a "test of Love" may be applied to Christian young people's ethical questions and problems, and it is capable of producing answers and solutions that are wholly satisfying and completely trustworthy and dependable--all because Christian Love is God's own standard by which He would have us be governed.

In Philipians 1:9 and 10 St. Paul relates Love to judgment in this manner: "And this I pray, that your love may abound yet more and more in knowledge and in all judgments; that ye may approve things that are excellent; that ye may be sincere and without offence till the day of Christ."

⁸Ibid., p. 34.

⁹Ibid., p. 35.

¹⁰Nygren, op. cit., Part II, Volume I, p. 32.

¹¹Ibid.

How can the "test of Love" be put into operation? Questions of the following sort may be addressed to a situation in question: will this action that I am contemplating bring good to my neighbor? is it in the interest of his total welfare? (If it is, then it is in agreement with Christian Love, for Love worketh no ill to his neighbor, according to Romans 13:10.) Will this action contribute to and help along his Christian faith and life, or will it hurt it? (If it encourages Christian growth, then it passes the test of Christian Love, for Love is concerned with the truly good of the neighbor. If it hurts the neighbor's faith, or if it disregards possible negative effects on his faith, the proposed action is not Christian Love.) Am I going to gain by this action for my selfish purposes at the expense of my neighbor? (If so, then the action does not pass the test of Love, for "love seeketh not its own."¹²)

These and similar questions may be used to constitute a test of Love by which Christian Love becomes a standard of judgment. The average Christian young person, in all likelihood, will not take the time to ask all these questions when in a state of uncertainty or indecision. The test may possibly be boiled down to these basic facts: 1) the action must be concerned with "the good" of "the other," rather than with one's own personal gain; 2) it must be self-effacing rather than self-centered.

This standard of judgment is also an excellent means by which Christian young people may examine their past ethical actions and life to determine whether they have actually been conforming to God's way of life, that of Christian Love.

¹²I Cor. 13:5.

To know true Christian Love for what it really is means to possess a formula for blessed, happy, and God-pleasing living. It is to have a lodestar for life and a standard of judgment which will satisfactorily meet the ethical problems that confront youth and man.

Christian Love as a lodestar for all of life and as a standard of judgment are not knowledge with which young people are naturally endowed. These are matters that young people need to acquire from a source outside of themselves, from God and His Word. What are the ethical standards that young people commonly regulate their lives by, until they learn to live by Christian Love--and often, even after they have become acquainted with God's way? We are now ready to determine this and to examine these standards.

CHAPTER IV

YOUTH'S APPROACH TO ETHICAL WAYS AND STANDARDS

Young people ask a "legion" number of questions about the ethical life. The problems which are very real to youth and which they ask most frequently about can be reduced to the following, as drawn up by Martin Hegland:

- 1) relationships with others and one's self;
- 2) gaining security, status, love;
- 3) adjusting to home, school, other groups;
- 4) adjusting to physical maturations;
- 5) developing satisfying values, standards, and goals;
- 6) resolving **conflicting cultural situations**;
- 7) working, spending, achieving independence;
- 8) planning the future;
- 9) sex, courtship, and marriage.¹

Hegland points out that most of these problems are actually subheads under the first one. At the same time, these are also easily recognized as universal human problems. Adolescence is simply one period of the individual's growth when these matters are more pressing and important than they are at any other stage of life.²

Young people are generally inquisitive especially about the right and wrong of ethical actions in relation to members of the opposite sex. That this is so may be an indication that they are not in possession of a standard of judgment which would enable them to determine for themselves satisfying answers to their ethical problems. It may also indicate that

¹Martin Hegland, Problems of Young Christians (Minneapolis: Augsburg Publishing House, 1932), p. 2.

²Ibid.

they want peace of conscience and peace of mind. Christian young people want to be sure that what they do has God's approval and is pleasing to Him. They want to be clear as to what is acceptable to God and what is not, and why it is or is not. Yet their own resources are inadequate.

Christian young people want to experience and enjoy beautiful and meaningful courtships; they want to be popular with members of the opposite sex; they do want eventually to marry, but "they are often at a loss to determine how to choose the way which will lead to their desired goals."³ The advice they receive from undesirable sources does more to make them more unsure of how they ought to conduct themselves, whereas what often confuses them is that advice and direction is not always forthcoming from those whom they feel they can rely on and trust.⁴

Dr. Otto Piper suggests that not only young people but every person senses within himself that his life is not all that it might be. The individual feels that there is a better and finer as well as a richer and more fruitful life capable for him. It is this, another way of life, a better one, that all strive for.⁵ Life is incomplete and restless for man until he finds it.

Ruth Wick describes this as a search for meaning in life. She pictures most people looking for that which will meet the tests and tensions of modern living. They are seeking ". . . to build life around a central integrating purpose. For the Christian this central integrating force is

³Alfred L. Murray, Youth's Courtship Problems (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Zondervan Publishing House, 1940), p. 5.

⁴Ibid.

⁵Piper, op. cit., p. 197.

Christ and His way of life."⁶ Young people bring their problems to counsellors because they find themselves unable to solve them with the resources they possess at the time.⁷

To search for the true life apart from Christ and the Christian frame of reference is to look hopelessly and endlessly. Piper comments that to the human way of thinking man likes to picture the true life as being one that in all respects "matched all our qualities and satisfied all our desires."⁸ This is quite unlike the picture of the way of life which Jesus Christ teaches, which is for the most part one of self-denial and self-giving. Scripture is clear on this that the true life is centered in and derives from the Lord Jesus; on the other hand, states Piper, "man lives normally in a state of self-deception."⁹

What we are going to discover about youth, its ways of thinking and its ethical standards, will not be divorced from the social climate and the standards of society in which young people move. What we find will, in addition to being a revelation of the innate characteristics of youth, be a reflection of that which is prevalent in youth's environment.

Davies sounds out the truth that people of every period of history are unconsciously dominated by the society in which they live and of which they are a part. This makes of the individual a sample of what the whole is. Determine the nature of any civilization, urges Davies,

⁶Ruth C. Wick, Toward Understanding Youth (Rock Island, Ill.: Augustana Book Concern, 1948, p. 14.

⁷Ibid., p. 11.

⁸Piper, op. cit., p. 197.

⁹Ibid.

and you will arrive at a fairly reliable picture of what the individual person also is like in his make-up, standards, values, ideas, and purposes.¹⁰ Thus, for example, when we consider a home where legalism is largely the parents' method of child rearing, we are going to find there young people accustomed to law and authoritarianism rather than to love. The product may be young people who have not learned how to evaluate ethical problems for themselves.

What is the climate in which our young people of today are living and growing, and what accounts for youth's particular needs of today?

Hegland cites western civilization and human biology "in an oftentimes unholy alliance" as being responsible for many of the problems our young people are faced with today.¹¹ He is blunt and to the point in his further analysis of the underlying cause for youth's uncertainties:

Our entire culture seems to be in conspiracy to make life as difficult as possible for young people in their relation to the opposite sex. Annually we change our minds about which portion of the female anatomy shall be concealed or revealed. Vast cosmetic campaigns help mothers to drill their daughters in the techniques of tease and capture, but these activities must be carried on by sets of rules that vary with time and place. We consider, for instance, that a boy may embrace a girl with complete propriety, no matter how possessive his grip, provided he presents the illusion of listening to dance music. Five seconds after the music stops, this act becomes indecent.¹²

Youth in adolescence meets up with various views as to the nature of love and sex. Many of these views are devoid of God's interpretation; originated in the unregenerate, corrupt mind of man. The modern view of

¹⁰D. R. Davies, The Sin of Our Age (London: Geoffrey Bles, The Century Press, 1947), p. 6.

¹¹Hegland, op. cit., p. 1.

¹²Ibid., p. 2.

sex, in fact, "refuses to take account of any standard or of the fact of guilt," states Piper.¹³

What is more often than not at the bottom of young people's ethical questions which they present to their elders, parents, and counselors, and which they frequently discuss among themselves, is their own physical growth and transition they are forced to make from being children to becoming adults. While they are still in grade school, they are considered as children. As seventh and eighth graders they are the oldest in the student body; but even though they are the seniors in this social group, they are, for the most part, not considered mature enough socially or physically for the activities common among the high school set. Physically, many have not entered upon the period of puberty and hence their attraction to or their desire for fellowship with the opposite sex has not been fully awakened as yet.

As they grow into puberty, and their sex powers begin to blossom, they experience the inner, natural, human desire and need for fellowship with members of the opposite sex, and especially for the completion of their own selves through and with another person of the opposite sex. This is the case even though they are still quite unaware of the true nature of their sex make-up.¹⁴ In the case of some, this attitude toward the opposite sex is a reality much earlier.

Sex is a mystery and puzzle to youth, maintains Piper, since young people are aware of the impulses of sex but are not acquainted with their

¹³Piper, op. cit., p. 198.

¹⁴Ibid., p. 41.

place or meaning for the total life. There are those well-meaning instructors who feel that if the sex life can be portrayed to young people as being "clean and natural", then problems and difficulties would be resolved.¹⁵ Piper disagrees. He is of the mind that young people are able to receive assistance in their sex problems and questions only when they are made to realize "how enticing and uncanny sex is in itself," a characteristic which remains with it through all of life.¹⁶ "For the desire to enter into the inner secret of sex exists quite independently of the strength of the instinct," adds Piper.¹⁷

What young people, then, unconsciously desire is "completion," though in their dating and social fellowship with the opposite sex this may not enter their minds at all. It is, nevertheless, the goal and end which the sex instinct within them seeks and leads them to. To understand the function of this natural drive and to keep it under control and in its proper place is one of the great needs of young people. God has given us the marriage relationship for the full expression of this aspect of life. In youth, prior to marriage, there must necessarily be controls for an expression of one's inner desires and an understanding why such controls are important. Christian Love will supply such an understanding.

Piper contends that once a person has come to understand the mystery of sex through personal experience, many of the questions and uncertainties surrounding it in the minds of young people are cleared up:

¹⁵Ibid., p. 58.

¹⁶Ibid.

¹⁷Ibid.

The awareness of this enigma [what meaning for myself has the fact that I am a man, not a woman, or vice versa?] of one's existence and the impossibility of finding a satisfactory solution of one's maleness or femaleness rather than the sudden urge of sexual impulses is the reason why adolescence is such a disturbing experience for most people. At the same time it is this very experience of the riddle carried around by each of us in his own existence that makes adolescence the period in which philosophical questions about the meaning of one's life arise spontaneously in young people and seem imperatively to demand an answer. Once the person has acquired sexual experience, the metaphysical problem of one's personal existence loses its urgency.¹⁸

The sex life of marriage reveals to man and woman that individually they are but fragments; they need each other for their own completeness. The sex impulse exercises pressure in young people toward this end. That is why they are often under tension in their social relationships with each other. They are in a seemingly impossible situation. What their inner sex drive hungers for, they are not ready for as unmarried people who are still dating and still seeking a life's partner. When Christian Love is used as a lodestar and standard of judgment, young people will avoid situations that encourage temptations to let the sex drive get out of hand. Christian Love will lead young people to exercise great care as to how they occupy their time when with the opposite sex, so that the genuine welfare of "the other" is kept in mind.

Piper notes that because some young people tie up in their minds all their life's problems with their sex impulses, they unfortunately resort to negative means "in order to resolve their enigma (onanism, dirty literature, prostitution). Another fact connected with the same perplexity is the relative frequency of suicides . . . between 17 and 22."¹⁹

¹⁸Ibid., p. 59.

¹⁹Ibid., p. 60.

Another problem confronting young people is the fact that the patience and ability to control their sex drive until they are ready for the solution of the secret of sex are "at their lowest ebb in young people."²⁰ Sex, furthermore, develops and flowers gradually in young people and since this gradual growth affects their entire life without their having a full understanding of its intended meaning, they are constantly in danger of tainting their purity by a negative curiosity. To get to the bottom of the mystery of sex leads many young people to probe into various unlikely means of securing information about sex. "Novels, pictures, scientific works dealing with the human body and its functions, are used for securing information . . . in order to spur sex imagination."²¹

Piper's suggested remedy for such temptations is a concentration of the young person's thoughts on a person of the other sex worthy of his highest admiration and respect, such as a father or mother--while a child is in early age.²² We are going to see that Christian Love as a lodestar and standard of judgment, and its source, the Lord Jesus Christ, offer a finer solution.

Another result of the biological upheaval during adolescence is the feeling of self-consciousness and insecurity. These growing folks are no longer children, nor are they adults as yet. They feel displaced during this period of transition. A resulting induced feeling of inferiority and a growing awareness of this situation are common among youth.

²⁰Ibid., p. 150.

²¹Ibid.

²²Ibid.

To offset this, young people on their part resort to the defense mechanism of doing that which is unusual, different, and daring. They want to make up for what they lack socially and physically by a distinctiveness along other lines. They seek to attract attention to themselves by these excursions into the new and untried realm. This accounts for the many fads common to youth. In the past these have included zoot suits, unusual types of hair styles and haircuts, color and type of shoes, ukuleles, headline clippings, and other generally unorthodox ways of doing things.²³

Some groups seek similar recognition by singing out loud when travelling together somewhere in a city bus or trolley. The normal and proper behavior is that people are considerate of each other and refrain from anything that might disturb. Christian Love teaches us this. That which will attract people's attention is just some such demonstration of singing or rowdiness.

²³The following examples may be cited as samples of this desire for recognition: In May of 1947, the Rev. Robert Weller, speaking to the Cascade Zone, at a Walther League rally in Lorain, Ohio, mentioned that some time ago he had spoken to a group of Junior Walther Leaguers in Cleveland, Ohio. His subject was "Puppy love and Guppy love." As he told his several humorous stories and jokes in connection with his subject, there was no laughter or response of any sort from the gathering. When they should have laughed they maintained poker-faces. What had happened is that they had decided beforehand deliberately not to laugh at any of the jokes to be told. In this way they hoped to show their uniqueness and gain for themselves a distinctiveness all their own.

At Camp Luther, Three Lakes, Wisconsin, in August of 1954, during a week of L. S. V. school, a number of Junior Walther League girls attending the school ventured daringly one afternoon into the boys' dormitory. They were promptly ordered out. When they dared the boys to evict them, they were taken out to the lake and in short order dropped into the lake. Far from being offended, the girls considered this as somewhat of a unique achievement on their part. They had done something unusual and daring.

Rather than being the exception, these cases are typical of what commonly occurs during adolescence.

Being different is rated among many young people as being exclusive and worthy of attention. Through these means they become a people unto themselves and hope to overcome and counterbalance their feeling of self-consciousness and of not fitting in with adults as yet.

A further cause and underlying reason for this desire for recognition is the human frailty of pride--that characteristic which expressed itself so strongly among those who set out to build the tower of Babel. Their motive was, "Come . . . let us make a name for ourselves . . ."24 Pride puffs up a person. When young people seek to make a name for themselves through their uniqueness, they are revealing the strength of self-centeredness. They indicate that their love is directed largely, sometimes completely, toward themselves.

The desire for a place in the sun and for prestige is a dominating one among young people as well as among adults. Marcus Rieke and Gordon Huffman jointly declare that "youth's increasing desire for fame and worldly acclaim is another indication of a bankrupt moral standard."25 Michael Reu describes unbelief, pride, and lust as constituting the three areas of sin that repeatedly reappear as basic trends in the history of natural man.26

The Christian way of life, the way of Christian Love, seeks to lead

²⁴Genesis 11:4 (R. S. V.).

²⁵Marcus Rieke and Gordon Huffman, From Flight to Power (Columbus, Ohio: The Wartburg Press, 1951), p. 43.

²⁶Johann Michael Reu and Paul H. Buehring, Christian Ethics (Columbus, Ohio: The Lutheran Book Concern, 1935), p. 107.

seeks to lead young people out of themselves into the service of "the other." Thus it offers them opportunities to overcome the self-consciousness and inferiority so common during adolescence by self-effacing service to the Lord and one's neighbor. The way of Christian Love is the way of humility rather than of pride. Young people who seek help for their basic needs during adolescence in the Lord Jesus, will find in His Love strength to overcome their natural, undesirable characteristics of egocentricity and desire for acclaim and to dedicate themselves to a pursuance of His ways of Love.

Young people, in their contacts among themselves, meet up with varying approaches to life and ethical standards. As adolescents move out of grade school into the high school society, they find themselves no longer the oldest in the group as was the case in grade school. They are no longer those of senior age; they are now the youngest in the new group. They are now invited to participate in activities and engage in relationships which are for the most part new to them, such as dating, high school homecomings, spring reversals, proms, and similar social parties. Teen Towns and other organizations of that type invite them to spend more and more of their time in recreational activities there. Sororities, Junior lodge organizations, such as Job's Daughters, Rebekahs, Rainbow Girls, DeMolays and others invite Christian youth to attach themselves to them. The instructed young person, who is a member of the Lutheran Church, will understand why he should not attach himself to any such organizations. In the Lutheran Church's mission program among young people, it often is the case that a group of young people, who form a class for instruction purposes in order to

become members of the Lutheran Church, will include such who may, at the time, belong to one or more organizations which the Church objects to on Scriptural grounds.

In all of these non-Church fellowships much emphasis is laid on the mixing with the opposite sex. Most of these organizations, especially the public high schools, resort to dancing as the simplest and best, in their minds, means for furthering this goal. What sponsors of such mixers often overlook is that many young people may not be aware of the power and meaning of the sex drive and may through so-called "innocent" contacts as in dancing be led into temptations that they may not be equipped to meet and overcome. What the sponsors as well as young people who themselves suggest such dances and arrange for them are not aware of or deliberately blind themselves to is that young people are not, by nature, in possession of the strength necessary to cope with the tensions that arise as a result of dancing and other close physical intimacies. What is often completely ignored is that young people also have hearts that are diseased with sin and out of which lust tends to flow when a tempting situation presents itself.

Young people at this stage of life and usually after confirmation are invited to become active in Church youth groups, in Walther and Lutheran Leagues as well as in local young people's societies unaffiliated with youth Leagues. Here the Church has before it a grand opportunity to influence young people for good and to equip them with spiritual strength for the good fight of faith in a world of materialism and secularism. In its educating of children and young people the Church has the glorious privilege and occasion of teaching them God's method for

testing their ethical actions according to His standard of judgment. Young people sorely need this because now, as adolescents, they become confronted with temptations they may not have previously been trained to resist. On their own, they may not be able to recognize worldly and secularistic ways of life and the products of secular minds for what they really are. Many may be tempted beyond their strength. The Christian Church and Christian home have a grave responsibility facing them. It remains for them to prepare youth for life in a world where many will beckon to them to live and think by standards other than those of the holy Triune God. In the last chapter of this thesis we shall examine ways of how the Church and home can approach this responsibility.

As Christian young people see themselves surrounded by differing attitudes toward life and by various ethical standards which they see in operation, they are often confused. Which standards and principles are acceptable and which are not? Surely there are definite distinctions. They themselves lack the ability and knowledge to weigh these matters and arrive at satisfactory conclusions. They grope and search for the truth; hence, they ask. This uncertainty in their minds as to which course they ought to take in varying circumstances is a consequence of sin, which since man's regrettable venture in the Garden of Eden has distorted and beclouded God's standard in man for the only acceptable and proper way of life, which God had incorporated into man's heart from the very outset.

No young person is today born with a clear-cut idea or knowledge of God's design of life for him--which is the way of Christian LOVE. Young people as well as all humanity are born 100% self-centered, with

self-love as the ruling principle. Young people are in many cases unaware of this and live their lives according to the standard within them which is egocentric.

When young people are guided by their own ideas about conduct, unless they are instructed in the ways of Christian Love, they will be subject to the ruling power of the natural, physical, and emotional drives within themselves. They will do that which seems to come naturally, and they will justify themselves and approve of their procedure simply on the basis of the fact that their actions come naturally. They will interpret natural ways to be proper, accepted ways. They will be guided by a naturalistic standard of judgment. This standard of judgment is commonly found among young people. What Christian young people need to realize is that natural ways are carnal ways and that "the carnal mind is enmity against God."²⁷

The natural way of thinking, having been crippled by sin, is a self-centered way. The essence of sin, as Dr. Reu points out, and as Luther had already strongly asserted, is selfishness, or more exactly, "the desire of the human will to seek satisfaction in something besides and outside of God, the highest good, and therefore in opposition to the norm of God."²⁸

This opposition need not reveal itself openly or even consciously; a simple ignoring of God's absolute norms and a disregard of them, as well as the lack of interest in determining what they are all amount to

²⁷Romans 8:7.

²⁸Reu and Buehring, op. cit., p. 93.

an opposition or hostility to God.

As the fingers of an arthritic curve in and are disfigured, so natural man becomes incurvatus in se. The heart is infested with the weeds of sin and produces "evil thoughts, murder, adultery, fornication, theft, false witness, slander."²⁹ To be guided by a mind and heart so undermined by sin is disastrous and self-deceiving. How unfortunate that many young people reason this way: "It must be all right if it comes naturally to me."

C. S. Lewis gives us a brilliant exposition of what "natural" behavior is in his Miracles, in the second chapter, which is entitled "The Naturalist and the Supernaturalist."³⁰ He describes natural behavior as the behavior which would be in evidence if people took no pains to change it. "The natural kiss is the kiss which will be given if moral or prudential considerations do not intervene."³¹ He lists other examples, then concludes the following:

Nature means what happens "of itself," or "of its own accord"; what you do not need to labor for; what you will get if you take no measures to stop it. . . . The Natural is what springs up, or comes forth, or arrives, or goes on, of its own accord; the given, what is there already; the spontaneous, the unintended, the unsolicited.³²

When young people allow their "natural" desires and drives to lead them into "natural" courses of action, they are often surprised and frightened. They find themselves doing things which they had not really intended to do. They experience what St. Paul wrote about in Romans 7:15: "For that which I do I allow not; for what I would, that do I not;

³⁰Clive Staples Lewis, Miracles, A Preliminary Study (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1947), p. 16.

³¹Ibid.

³²Ibid.

but what I hate, that do I." Young people learn by experience that to be guided by a naturalistic ethical standard is to be guided by something that does not truly satisfy or bring peace of mind and peace of conscience.

The original departure from God has left man handicapped with a derailed will. His will is no longer in harmony with the standards and norms of God. Its corrupt condition consists in this that man invariably desires that which God opposes and warns against. Even though some small amount of moral consciousness still remains, even that is warped, since "the source of the true moral life is to him not faith which worketh by love."³³ Natural man does not see that only that is actually good and acceptable which is in agreement with God's holy will. He is guided not by Christian Love, which derives its strength and meaning from God, but by a self-centered love which seeks only its own.

Many young people reveal the truth of this fact when they fall in love. When they say to a member of the opposite sex, "I love you," in many cases their love is based on physical attraction of the other person and is strongly prompted by human feelings and emotions. More often than not what they mean by their profession of love is that they want this particular person for themselves. They want nobody else to have her or him. The love expressed is frequently a self-centered love rather than a self-effacing love. What many young people do not realize is that there is far more to true love than simply the physical aspect. If it is to be love at all it must be made to include the features expressed

³³Reu and Buehring, op. cit., p. 84.

by Jesus in His Love for us.

Whatever of moral conduct that still exists in sin-stricken man is directed by the wrong motive and is limited in scope. "In his blindness, he even judges that to be morally good which in fact is morally evil."³⁴

. . . His moral life is sporadic and fragmentary in character (cf. Romans 2:14: *8'ar*), it represents a mere putting away of excrescences, the curbing but not the conquering of evil propensities, a mere external conformity to the law, not a morality that comes from the heart and permeates the whole life. The motive is wrong, for it is either fear lest hidden sin or shame be revealed or a craving for glory and honor.³⁵

We might picture what goes on within the heart of a person by using the example of a weed. A weed grows without any necessary cultivation or assistance of any sort. In fact, it is at its best when left completely alone. The longer it is permitted to grow unmolested, the more wildly it will grow and the more firmly will it root itself in the ground. In figure one, on the following page, we are depicting sin as such a weed. At birth, sin is like a tiny seed which begins its growth slowly. It continues its growth slowly but surely during childhood and during adolescence seems to get a sudden burst of strength as it shoots up strongly. The newly-felt desire for independence, the fresh, new emotional drives within, the ability to accept more and more responsibility and to some extent draw an income, all encourage the self to push itself to the fore and become more demanding.

What young people need is a new life which would grow up alongside of the natural, sin-corrupted, "old" life of self-love, which in time

³⁴Ibid.

³⁵Ibid., p. 86.

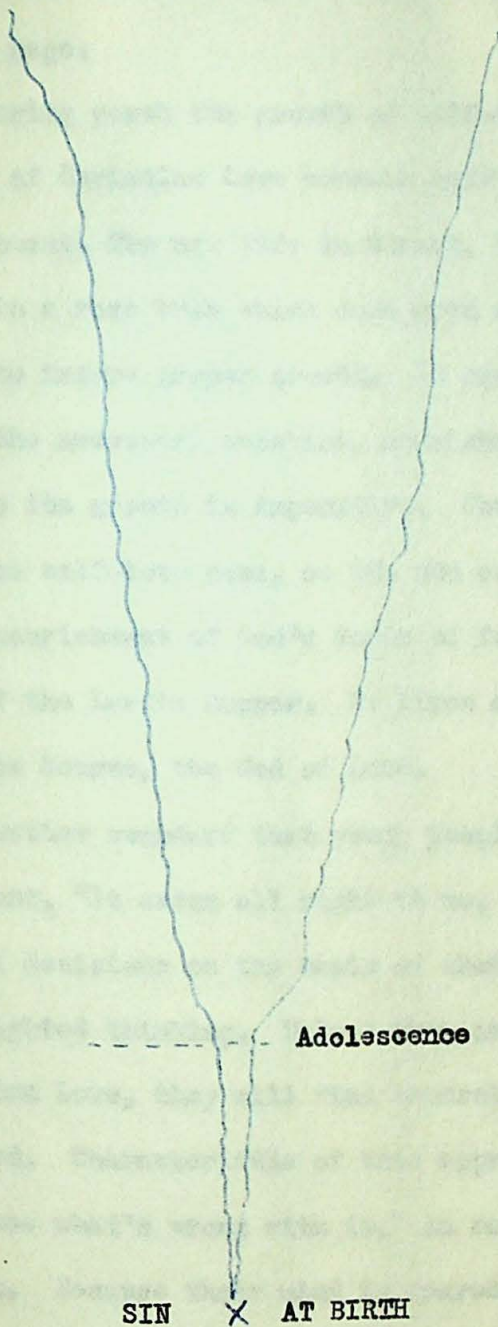


Figure 1.

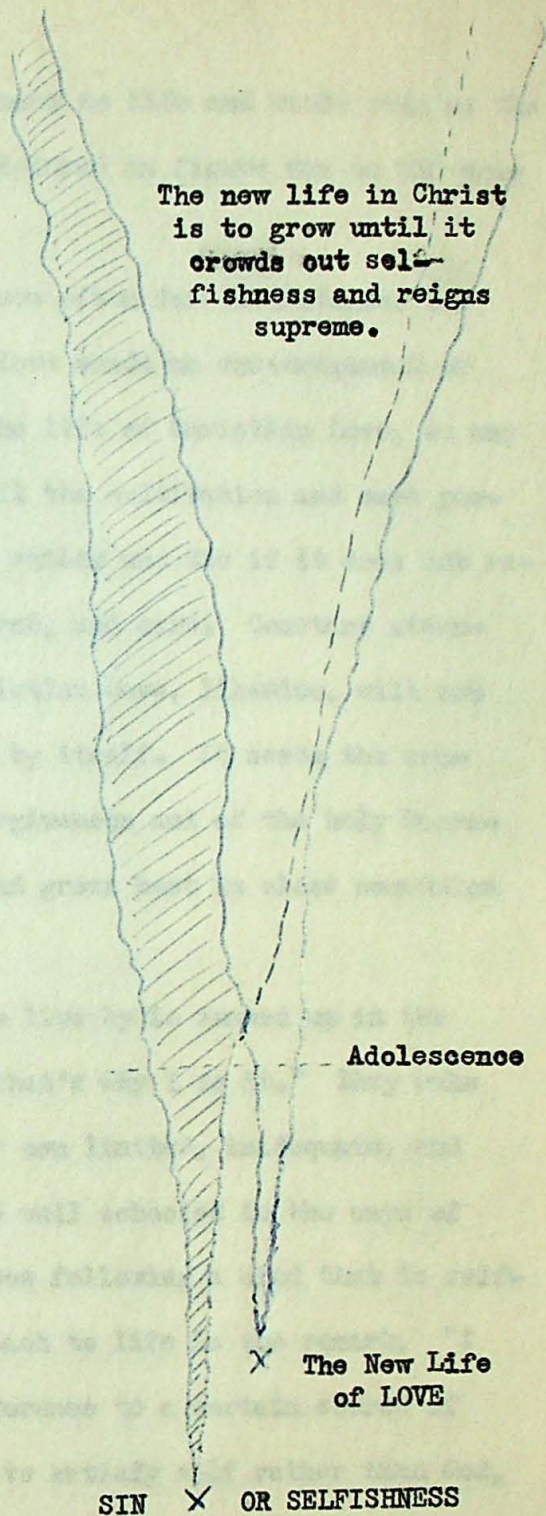


Figure 2.

would crowd out the self-centered approach to life and would rule as the new life of Christian Love. This is pictured in figure two on the preceding page.

During youth the growth of self-love often far outdistances the growth of Christian Love because self-love needs no encouragement or nourishment. The new life in Christ, the life of Christian Love, we may liken to a rose bush which does need all the cultivation and care possible to insure proper growth. It can wither and die if it does not receive the necessary sunshine, nourishment, and care. Constant attention to its growth is imperative. Christian Love, likewise, will not grow, as self-love does, on its own or by itself. It needs the constant nourishment of God's Words of forgiveness and of the holy Sacrament of the Lord's Supper. It lives and grows best in close communion with its Source, the God of Love.

Another standard that young people live by is summed up in the statement, "It seems all right to me, that's why I do it." They make ethical decisions on the basis of their own limited, inadequate, and sin-blighted thinking. Unless they are well schooled in the ways of Christian Love, they will find themselves following a mind that is self-centered. Characteristic of this approach to life is the remark, "I don't see what's wrong with it," in reference to a certain course of conduct. Because their mind is geared to satisfy self rather than God, much that is not edifying or constructive or desirable for their Christian growth seems acceptable to them. Instead of ascertaining definitely what is right and what is not acceptable to God, many young people play the part of their own judges and masters. Where this occurs, the

pride of life is at the root of the matter.

There are also those who "let conscience be their guide." Conscience, however, is intended to judge on the basis of the Creator's standard which is Christian Love. As young people set up their own norms and standards built on their "natural" mind, conscience cannot perform its true work in them. "These [muddled standards], as it were, draw a veil over the eyes of conscience, dim its vision, and make it weak and vacillating."³⁶ What conscience does not reveal is exactly what the standard is that it was made to operate on.

We find this also to be the case among young people: some approach life and ethical matters without any standards at all to speak of. Let us take the example of a young person going out on a date. He is not sure just how to act or how far to go in his intimacies with the person of the opposite sex. In his "innocence" he goes into such a situation blindly, without a definite standard by which to determine the course of his actions. He intends to do that which is right, but he himself is not exactly sure what that will be. By having no fixed standard in his mind, he will find himself guided by "that which comes naturally," that which is egocentric and devoid of true Christian Love. He will go into the situation as a slave to his sin-infested heart.

Rieke and Huffman point to youth's insistence on setting up their own standards for their ethical life as being in great measure responsible for the moral breakdown current among much of today's youth. They quote a teen-ager who revealed the mind of modern, worldly youth in a

³⁶Rou and Buehring, op. cit., p. 88.

letter to the Ladies' Home Journal:

I simply know, from the normal contacts which are common to all young Americans, that the esteem in which virginity is held by the rising generation is dropping and dropping fast.³⁷

Then he goes on to say that among the majority of young people who no longer believe in premarital chastity, it is not lack of knowledge which leads youth into this way of thinking, but he says, "We have failed to see what is wrong with it."³⁸ He errs in his statement about possessing adequate knowledge. He and those who think similarly are lacking in the knowledge of what Christian Love is and why Love is the only course of action acceptable to God. His type have set themselves up as judges of their ethical actions and have chosen to be guided by their uninformed, self-centered, natural hearts. It is precisely such an approach to life that is responsible for the number of unwed mothers in so many cities. Petting, necking, immodest dress in evening wear and in swimming suits, and promiscuity in general flourish when young people choose to ignore standards and truth other than what they discover in their own minds.

What many young people are doing is choosing the wrong standards to live by, or, if they are Christian, they sometimes fail or refuse to apply those standards which they know to be those that God intends for them, and this, contends Piper, is wherein their sin lies.³⁹ Davies calls this the radical sin of western civilization.⁴⁰

³⁷Riecke and Huffman, op. cit., pp. 37 and 38.

³⁸Ibid., p. 38.

³⁹Piper, op. cit., pp. 185 and 186.

⁴⁰Davies, op. cit., p. 33.

Another standard of judgment found in practice among some young people is contained in the statement, "As long as I'm not hurting anybody by my actions, they surely can't be wrong." Sometimes a person hurts another without realizing it, (as for example, through immodest dress). A girl that dresses immodestly may do it to be popular among young men, not realizing or considering that she may thus be responsible for impure and lustful thoughts in their minds. When one's approach is self-centered and concern is expressed primarily for one's own welfare without too great a concern for the good of the other, self-love is in control, and offense and hurt to "the other" may easily result. In modern, social dancing a person cannot tell whether he or she are inducing lustful thoughts in the mind of the other by the way they are conducting themselves. It may not seem that they are hurting each other and perhaps in some cases they are not. In other cases, however, a young woman may do much to lead a young man into temptation, yet she may feel that she is pleasing him rather than hurting him.

This type of standard of judgment is unacceptable since it sets up man as the judge as to whether one is hurting another or not, rather than God. God knows and sees far more than what inadequate man sees on the surface of things.

We proceed to the case of those young people who attempt to make a compromise between Christ and the world. They have not experienced all that life and the world offer to youth, and there are those that choose not to part with their individuality until they have sampled a little of everything in the world. They don't want to miss anything. This attitude is summed up thus: "I am afraid it would cost me too much. I don't

want to give up that right to my own individuality."⁴¹ They sincerely want to serve Christ, but they also want to participate in that which the world has to offer. They are not ready to give themselves in an all-out surrender to Christ. They ignore the fact that "no man can serve two masters; for either he will hate the one and love the other; or else he will hold to the one and despise the other!"⁴² To hold out on Christ and to reserve a part of life for oneself is to indicate that no true love exists in such a person's heart for the Savior.

Seeing so many varying approaches to life and ethical standards in young people about them, many Christian young people are thoroughly confused and therefore ask a host of questions about these ethical matters. They want to know how properly to evaluate what they see of ethical standards of judgment; they want definite, satisfying answers as to how they are to conduct themselves in order to be in harmony with God's will.

Still another reason why much of Christian youth is unsure about the best course in ethical matters is that it has not always received satisfying answers or guidance from their parents and instructors. This may be due to the fact that many parents themselves have never had a clear picture of the meaning and proper use of Christian Love as a guiding principle and as a standard of judgment. More often than not the rule in many homes has been legalism and authoritarianism rather than Christian Love as a guiding principle. And even when parents have thought that they were doing the very best for their children and youth, even

⁴¹Kenneth Friebe, compiler, The Call to Youth (Minneapolis: Augsburg Publishing House, 1952), p. 55.

⁴²Matthew 6:24.

when they have thought that they were showing love for them, their method has more frequently been law rather than true Christian Love.

Adolescence and the period of youth should not have to be periods of uncertainty. There are correct, definite, satisfying answers to young people's ethical questions and problems. God has given us His formula: Christian Love as a lodestar and norm, or test, or standard of judgment. Historical conditions and environment vary from time to time, but youth's basic needs will remain the same, for the human heart, human limitations and inadequacies remain the same. Given foolproof direction, being equipped properly with God's directive of Christian Love, young people can cope with the varying problems and needs time may bring.

The setting peculiar in current days for youth is the fact that times are good. Today's youth, born largely during post-depression days and coming out of a somewhat trying period in their childhood, now find themselves with opportunities unheard of in the past for youth. Prosperity has hit all-time peaks during the past several years. The standard of living is at its highest. Youth is able to get its hands on money more easily than ever before. Jobs are available to many after school hours and after graduation which offer the highest remuneration ever offered to youth for its services. Youth is able to have more things than ever before: more clothes, even cars; it can allow itself privileges that were completely out of reach to their parents in their days of youth. In times where both parents have been working young people have found even more laxity resulting on the part of parents as far as guidance and direction in ethical matters is concerned.

All of this places present-day youth into a precarious position.

Youth often exposes itself to more responsible situations. It is confronted far more frequently with ethical decisions it must make. Youth needs to be equipped to face these temptations and ethical problems. There have been times when youth had far less conveniences, less luxuries, less free time, no cars, and hence, less opportunity to pursue the world and to follow the beckoning of the flesh and world. More opportunities mean more serious decisions that have to be made. Without Christian Love as a guiding principle in their make-up, youth is not ready to make them successfully. And even though youth does possess a knowledge of Christian Love and how to use it properly, the flesh is still weak and youth can still succumb to the world and to self-rule.

Youth must be instructed thoroughly in the weakness of its own human nature, especially along the lines of Romans, chapter seven. They need to be made aware that their first need is to be anchored in their Lord Jesus Christ through whose power they can overcome the world and self and put His way of life into practice.

The Christian young person is to grow up to be mature in Christ so that his mind is controlled by God's kind of Love rather than by his own. Since teen-agers are still a long way from such a maturity, the tension within them between the self-centered approach to life and the new approach of self-effacing Love is all the more acute. Self-love is not easily relegated to the background of one's life. It refuses to be dealt with lightly. It opposes efforts to replace it with anything else.

We may use the following diagrams to portray this situation. (figures three and four).

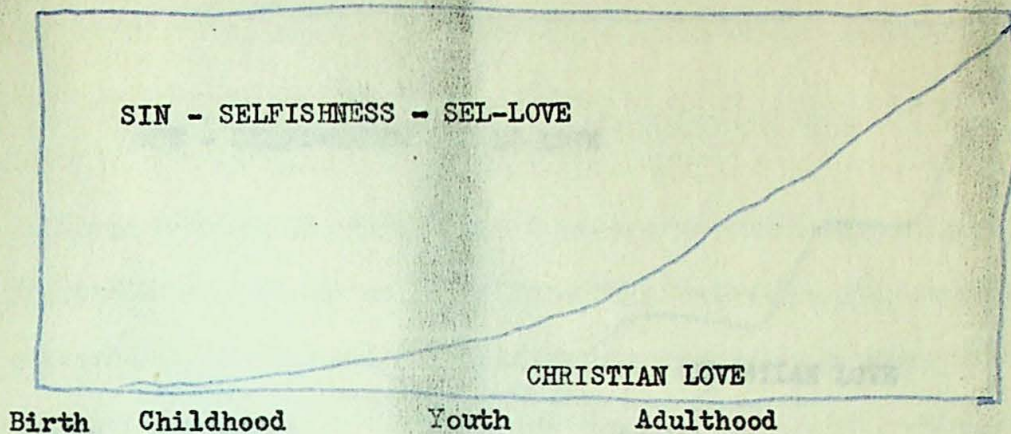


Figure 3.ree

This is, of course, an arbitrary chart, but it may depict more clearly this all-important need of youth. A child is born totally disabled by sin. It contains one hundred per cent worth of self-love and zero per cent worth of Christian Love. As a child grows in a Christian home, Christian parents should begin early to teach it God's ways of Love as contrasted with their own sinful ways of self-centeredness. This training should continue at home, Sunday School, Christian Day School, if there is one, and at the Church. Christian Love should grow steadily in the child so that it gradually takes over more and more areas of its life, until in maturity it rules as supremely as is possible in imperfect man.

To proceed arbitrarily, once again, we may say that a Christian child at five or six years of age operates about five to ten per cent of the time by Christian Love and 90 to 95% by self-love. As it grows the percentage of self-love should decrease and the amount of Christian Love should increase.

This is the idealistic picture of the situation, the goal to work toward. In actual fact, the diagram above probably ought to be more correctly charted as follows:

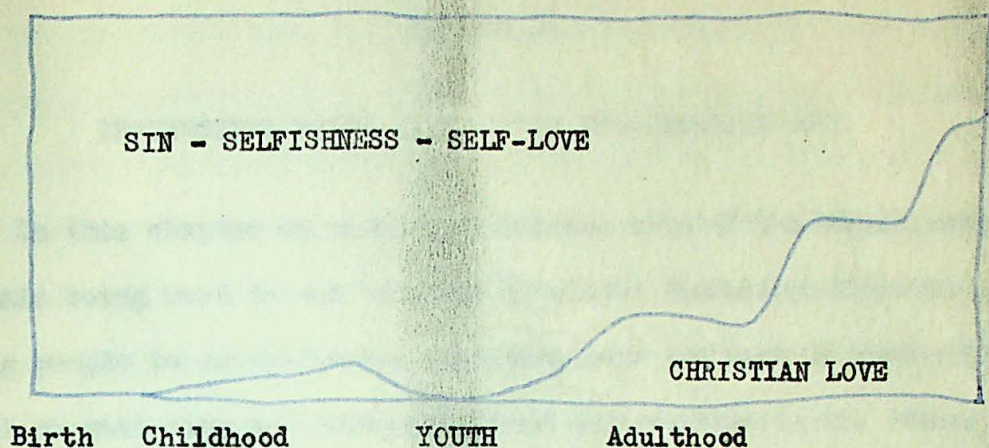


Figure 4.

Christian Love gets a good start in a child in the home from parents who are Christian, in Sunday School, at confirmation instruction, and at Church. In adolescence, however, with self-centeredness asserting itself strongly for reasons already cited earlier, Christian Love may easily lose its influence and place temporarily, and self-love may come to rule exclusively. Some authorities contend that youth is 100% selfish, guided entirely by egocentric motives and goals.

A primary need among young people is that they become "rooted and grounded in Love."⁴⁷ In order to accomplish this, it is necessary that they be first rooted and grounded in their Lord, Jesus Christ.⁴⁸ Being thus firmly established in their Savior they will be able to break the hold and grip which self-love binds them with and pursue the way which the Lord has prescribed for them and into which He would lead them.

In the following chapter we shall center our attention on how this rooting and grounding in Christ and in Love can be carried out.

⁴⁷Ephesians 3:17.

⁴⁸Colossians 2:7.

CHAPTER V

INSTRUCTING YOUTH IN THE WAYS OF CHRISTIAN LOVE

In this chapter we propose to examine some of the educational materials being used in our Lutheran Synodical Conference Churches among young people to determine how Christian Love can best be presented to youth so that they may truly be rooted and grounded in it. Where the textbooks reveal shortcomings, suggested additions or improvements will be noted. Other methods of training young people in Christian Love at Church and home will also be referred to.

We shall begin with an analysis of textbooks used in preparation for confirmation, since it is at this point that young people spend their first concentrated study of God's Word under the close supervision and guidance of a pastor or teacher. It is here, so to speak, that youth receives its "send-off" into life, the life of youth as such.

The following materials will be examined: A Short Explanation of Dr. Martin Luther's Small Catechism (The Synodical Catechism of 1945),¹ Catechetical Helps, by Erwin Kurth,² and Living God's Word, A Workbook in Religion, by Edwin A. Jiede.³ A Short Explanation of Luther's Small Catechism will receive first attention.

¹A Short Explanation of Luther's Small Catechism (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1945).

²Erwin Kurth, Catechetical Helps (Brooklyn, New York: The Studio Press, 1944).

³Edwin A. Jiede, Living God's Word (Brooklyn, New York: The Studio Press, 1947).

At the very outset it might be well to restate what has been earlier said, namely, that we cannot speak of love for our fellowman unless we first speak of our love for God. Nor can we speak of a love for God until we first speak of God's Love for us. The history of Love, then, begins in and with God. Our love for God is created by His Love for us; our love for our fellowman is likewise motivated by God's Love through Christ for us; our love for each other is an expression of our love for God. The Synodical Catechism, as well as the other textbooks to be examined, deal with love in this manifold sense, as God's Love for us, our love as a response to His, and our love for our neighbor as a result of God's Love for us. In our analysis we shall limit ourselves to a study of the references made to Christian Love for one's fellowman only, since this presentation is concerned primarily with Christian Love as a way of life and as a standard of judgment for young people.

Love receives its first mention as the summary of all the Commandments.⁴ This is repeated under the explanation of the Second Table.⁵ The general summary is given as this: "Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself," as stated in Matthew 22:39. "Who is our neighbor?" is the question that follows. Two excellent choices of Scripture passages are cited: one is Galatians 6:10, "As we have therefore opportunity, let us do good unto all men, especially unto them who are of the household of faith." Although it is not stated in the textbook, this is Christian Love in action. This is an ideal spot for the instructor to bring Love to the fore as a way of life.

⁴A Short Explanation of Dr. Martin Luther's Small Catechism, p. 45.

⁵Ibid., p. 63.

Matthew 5:44, "Love your enemies," is the second passage cited, further showing the extent of love in all of life. The good Samaritan is listed as an exemplary exhibit 4.⁶

The very next question is, "How should we love our neighbor?" The answer given is, "We should love our neighbor as ourselves and show this love by keeping the Commandments of the Second Table."⁷ "The Golden Rule," as given in Matthew 7:12, is listed as prooftext.⁸ At this point, the instructor may well expand on this matter by pointing to the directive of Jesus that we are to love one another as He has loved us.

Love is next referred to under the Fourth Commandment, letter D: (God requires us) "To love and esteem our parents and superiors as precious gifts of God."⁹ Interestingly enough, no prooftext is given, although I Peter 5:5 might have been used: "Likewise, ye younger, submit yourselves unto the elder. . . ."

Under the Fifth Commandment, the positive part of God's will is given as helping and befriending our neighbor in every bodily need and being "merciful, kind, and forgiving towards our neighbor."¹⁰ Appropriate passages are given. A choice passage that would have given closer relation to the Love-concept and that could have been used especially in connection with this Commandment is Romans 13:10: "Love worketh no ill to

⁶Ibid.

⁷Ibid.

⁸Ibid.

⁹Ibid., p. 66

¹⁰Ibid., p. 69

his neighbor"

In the case of each Commandment from the Fourth to the Tenth, greater emphasis could be given to Christian Love. One of the questions that would fit in under all of these Commandments is one such as this: "How do we show Love according to this Commandment?" Tying Love in with the explanations of these Commandments would keep the thought of Love as a summary of the Commandments central and would tend to unify the exposition. The Commandments would not then tend to appear as separate rules or rules. Under the Commandment that we are studying, the Fifth, it might also have been pointed out that kindness, mercy, and forgiveness are facets and attributes of Love.

Many of youth's ethical problems come under the sphere of the Sixth Commandment. Youth, during adolescence, is especially concerned about how many and what kind of liberties it may allow itself in dating and courtship. Christian Love is concerned about the purity of "the other" as well as about that of the self (for the sake of "the other"). A few remarks about the welfare of "the other" would have been in place in the discussion of the Sixth Commandment.¹¹ Once again, the passage, "Love worketh no ill to his neighbor," would have been ideally situated here, but it is not listed. Also in keeping with Love is the "submit" idea as presented in Ephesians 5:22 ff.

The Seventh Commandment carries detailed explanations of what God requires of us.¹² Instead of the question, "What does God require of us in the Seventh Commandment?" page seventy-four, we might ask, "How are we

¹¹Ibid., pp. 70-72.

¹²Ibid., pp. 73-75.

we to show Christian Love to our neighbor according to this Commandment?" Then what follows would come logically as subdivisions of Love.

Love is adduced as a corrective to our depraved human nature under the Eighth Commandment, where, under the question, "What does God require of us under the Eighth Commandment?" letter C states, "We should put the best construction on everything, that is, we should cover up his faults and explain in his favor whatever can be so explained."¹³ Two references to Love are used to substantiate these points: "Charity shall cover the multitude of sins,"¹⁴ and "Charity believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things."¹⁵

Christian Love is brought to the fore under the Ninth Commandment's question number 73: "What will such holy desires move us to do?"¹⁶ The answer is, "Such holy desires move us to help our neighbor and be of service to him in keeping his inheritance or house."¹⁷ The proof-text is properly Galatians 5:13: "By love serve one another."

The Ninth and Tenth Commandments actually deal with self-love, a type of love that is harmful, since it is a desiring of things for oneself that one cannot rightfully have. This is a good place for the instructor to point out the great contrast between Christian Love and self-love. In the textbook under examination, no reference is made to self-love at this point, although concrete examples of it are noted: David

¹³Ibid., p. 77.

¹⁴I Peter 4:8.

¹⁵I Corinthians 13:7.

¹⁶A Short Explanation of Dr. Martin Luther's Small Catechism, p. 79.

¹⁷Ibid.

coveting Uriah's wife and taking her. (David showed no love for Uriah; his love was directed wholly to himself.) The case of Absalom estranging the hearts of the people from David is also cited. (In this case, Absalom showed love for himself rather than for his father. He was gaining for himself at the expense of his father--something that in no way passes the test of love.) Matthew 5:46-48 and Romans 13:10 might have been included here also.

Under the subject, "SIN," we have a description of man's inherited corruption: "Man by nature is without true fear, love, and trust in God. He is without righteousness, is inclined only to evil, and is spiritually blind, dead, and an enemy of God."¹⁸ The instructor has an opportunity to add at this point that man's love has been distorted and is bent in toward himself and that man is now infected and afflicted with self-love, making himself the center of his life rather than God.

Under question # 118, where the image of God is described, it might be added that man's love was at first directed wholly toward God, but that sin changed the direction of that love away from God toward the self.¹⁹

The next reference to Christian Love in the Synodical Catechism might have occurred under the Second Article, specifically under question # 135, where the question put is as follows: "What is the purpose of Christ's entire work of redemption?"²⁰

The purpose of Christ's entire work of redemption is--

A. That I may be His own, that is, I am now righteous and blameless in the sight of God. B. That I may live under Him in His kingdom, and

¹⁸Ibid., p. 87.

¹⁹Ibid., p. 96.

²⁰Ibid., p. 121.

serve Him in everlasting righteousness, innocence, and blessedness; that is, that I willingly serve Him by an active Christian life and enjoy His blessings, now on earth and hereafter in heaven.²¹

A most appropriate opportunity to introduce Christian Love is at this point, at letter B. The instructor must supply what is lacking in the Catechism. In this textbook there is no reference here to the new life of the Christian as a life of Christian Love, nor do any of the passages listed contain any references to Love, though John 13:34 would be ideal at this point: "that ye love one another; as I have loved you, that ye also love one another." The discussion immediately prior to this deals with Christ's deep Love for us as evidenced in His all-sufficient sacrifice of the Cross. It is His overwhelming Love for us that stirs us to a Love for Him and for our fellowman. This ought to be included.

Under the Third Article, on sanctification, further place might be given to Love. Question # 168 asks, "Why do you say that the Holy Ghost has done this in you by the Gospel?"²² The answer is, "The Gospel is the means whereby the Holy Ghost offers us the blessings of Christ and works in our hearts that faith by which we accept Christ and His salvation."²³ The Gospel is a power because God's Love is involved. Jesus' Love is so unspeakably great and deep that it acts as a sun which shines on man's cold, icy heart, filled with self-love, and melts it. His Love softens the heart so that man is able to and wants to love Him and his fellowman. It is this that the Holy Ghost effects within man. This might be inserted

²¹Ibid.

²²Ibid., p. 128.

²³Ibid.

in the instructor's explanation under this point. An appropriate passage that might be added is the following:

Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins. Beloved, if God so loved us, we ought also to love one another. . . . We love Him, because He first loved us.²⁴

In question # 169, sanctification in the narrower sense is explained as the renewing of the heart through faith in Christ and the ability to overcome sin and do good works.²⁵ Question # 170 asks, "What is a good work in the sight of God?" The answer given is fairly complete, although here again some reference to Christian Love might be entered. The answer reads, "In the sight of God a good work is everything that a child of God does, speaks, or thinks in faith according to the Ten Commandments for the glory of God, and for the benefit of his neighbor."²⁶ The spirit of Love permeates this whole thought, but Love is not specifically mentioned. The instructor may make up for this deficiency. One of the six passages used here does highlight Love; that one is Galatians 5:13: "By love serve one another." Another good one that might be used in this connection is Galatians 5:6: "For in Jesus Christ neither circumcision availeth anything nor uncircumcision, but faith which worketh by love." Faith in itself is invisible. It must reveal itself through expressions of Love, hence, Love is all-important since it proves the existence of a true and living faith. Perhaps this passage has been omitted from the Catechism because of the length of the words "circumcision" and

²⁴I John 4:10, 11, 19.

²⁵A Short Explanation of Dr. Martin Luther's Small Catechism, p. 129.

²⁶Ibid.

"uncircumcision" and because of the probability that these terms may have little if any significance for young people of pre-high school age. If it is deemed desirable to omit these words, that is easily possible. The passage could then be cited as follows: "For in Jesus Christ . . . avail-
loeth . . . faith which worketh by love."

In the section on the Holy Ghost some reference ought surely to be made to the fruits (gifts) of the Spirit--possibly somewhere between ques-
tions # 166 and # 170²⁷--as listed in Galatians 5:22 and 23. The first of
them listed is LOVE! "But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace,
longsuffering" Colossians 3:12-14 also rightfully belongs with
in the discussion on good works and the sanctified life. In this passage
we have the following summary: "And above all these things put on cha-
rity, which is the bond of perfectness." St. Peter's highlighting of
Christian Love may also lay its claims to inclusion here: "And above all
things have fervent charity among yourselves" This special em-
phasis rendered Christian Love in Scriptures can hardly be overlooked
when discussing the life of good works or the work of the Holy Spirit.
Love is recommended as a lodestar for all of life in these texts.

Love might also possibly be included under Prayer.²⁸ Question # 204
reads, "What should we ask of God in our prayers?"²⁹ "We should ask for
everything that tends to the glory of God and to our own and our neigh-
bor's welfare, both spiritual and bodily blessings."³⁰ It is Christian

²⁷Ibid., pp. 127-130.

²⁸Ibid., p. 147.

²⁹Ibid.

³⁰Ibid.

Love that moves us to pray for "the other," whether friend or enemy. A reference to this effect is in place.

Under the Fifth Petition, where the forgiveness of sins is discussed, no tie-up is made with Love in the text.³¹ There ought to be one, since, forgiveness is actually one of the major characteristic of Love.

While the Catechism makes no reference to Christian Love in connection with Holy Baptism,³² the instructor might note in his exposition that children by nature have no Christian Love in them. They are not born in God's image. Their image is patterned after that of self-centered love. It is the Holy Spirit who is given in Baptism who begins the growth into the life of Christian Love within a person.

The Holy Spirit's work is mentioned also in the answer to question # 258: "Why do the Scriptures call Baptism the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Ghost?"³³ "In Baptism the Holy Ghost works faith and thus creates in us new spiritual life."³⁴ This is fine as far as it goes. Christian Love may, however, be given an important role here. To simply say "a new spiritual life" does not say "new" in what respect. To add, "new in respect to Christian Love" is more specific, Scriptural, and more complete. It is true that a discussion of this type as given in the Synodical Catechism must necessarily be limited. This is granted. However, if we want to do justice to Christian Love and to

³¹Ibid., pp. 162 and 163.

³²Ibid., pp. 170-180.

³³Ibid., p. 178.

³⁴Ibid.

Scriptures, which repeatedly lay an exalting emphasis on Love, then wherever the opportunity presents itself, Love ought to be mentioned.

Under the Sacrament of the Altar, and the question, "Why should we receive the Lord's Supper frequently?" three reasons are given.³⁵ A fourth may be added: "Our supply of Christian Love needs replenishing." This is alluded to in question # 315 and its answer.³⁶ The question reads, "For what purpose then do we approach the Lord's Table?" Three are given; the second of these is as follows: "B. to obtain strength for a holier life."³⁷ We have here a reference to the sanctified life and the need for growth in it. This new life includes the life of and in Christian Love. This ought to be made clear in the instructor's explanations. It is all-important for youth to realize that knowledge of Christian Love as a way of life and standard of judgment does not guarantee a resultant life along these lines. A regular and careful nourishing of this life of Love is necessary through Word and Sacrament.

We now proceed to an examination of Catechetical Helps, by the Rev. Erwin Kurth, to see how this textbook may be used to foster growth into the ways of Christian Love. This particular manual was prepared to serve as a further exposition of Luther's Small Catechism. In some cases it is used in conjunction with the Synodical Catechism, in others, as a textbook by itself.

Pastor Kurth's first reference to Love is in lesson one, "The Law."³⁸

³⁵Ibid., p. 199.

³⁶Ibid., pp. 200 and 201.

³⁷Ibid.

³⁸Kurth, op. cit., p. 15.

Here we find this: "The requirement of the Law is LOVE, toward God and toward man."³⁹ His elaboration of man's love for God receives thorough treatment under the first Three Commandments. A sample may be noted. Under the Third Commandment, Kurth asks this question, "Where is your LOVE?"⁴⁰ He proceeds:

That is the big question. Christ made no excuse for not saving us. He did not say, "The way is too long, the cross is too heavy." He said, "I love My people; therefore, I will die for them." Let us say, "I love my Savior; therefore, I will live for Him."⁴¹

The Second Table of the Law requires Love towards man. Kurth points out that while everyone who needs our Love is our neighbor, some people necessarily must rate preference. He writes, "Of course, some people are closer to me than others, as my fellow-Christians, my kith and kin, my countrymen. If preference must be shown these are to receive it."⁴² Galatians 6:10 is cited as proof: ". . . let us do good unto all men, especially unto them who are of the household of faith." We note here that Kurth goes into somewhat more detail than does the Synodical Catechism to present the meaning of Love in this sense.

A fine quotation from Washington Irving is carried under the Fourth Commandment to define mother-love, which also falls within the scope of Christian Love.⁴³ Several examples of obedience and Love are listed by Kurth which the Synodical Catechism doesn't carry: "Jesus on the cross,

³⁹Ibid.

⁴⁰Ibid., p. 30.

⁴¹Ibid.

⁴²Ibid., p. 35.

⁴³Ibid., p. 37.

Joseph, Solomon, Elisha, Presidents Washington and Garfield."⁴⁴ These serve to make the meaning of Love clearer in the minds of the readers and learners.

In the "Catechetical Review" at the close of this chapter two further reasons for Love are introduced under the Fourth Commandment.⁴⁵ Question # ten is, "What other reason have we for loving and serving our parents?" Answer: "They have done so much for us."⁴⁶ Question # eleven reads, "When especially do our father and mother need our love?" Answer: "When they are old, lonely, or sick."⁴⁷ This clarifies Love more.

Karsh subdivides the Fifth Commandment and several of the others (the Seventh and the Eighth) under two headings, "The Prohibition," and "The Command Proper," a negative command as well as a positive one.⁴⁸

No references to Love are made on the positive side where we might have expected them. It remains for the instructor to fill in here.

"The Command Proper" might also have been headed "Christian Love, according to this Commandment," or with some other such similiar heading containing the word Love.

A definition of Love in marriage and courtship and how such Love differs from other loves current in our modern world would be most helpful in any exposition of the Sixth Commandment. This is not offered in this textbook. Only the directive to Love is stated. Here is a key op-

⁴⁴Ibid.

⁴⁵Ibid., p. 39.

⁴⁶Ibid.

⁴⁷Ibid.

portunity for the pastor or teacher instructing youth to lead them into a clear-cut picture of the nature of true self-effacing and self-giving Christian Love.

Several fine examples are presented to direct the Christian to a proper understanding of the Seventh Commandment, but no tie-up is made with Christian Love.⁴⁸ If Love is the sum of all the Commandments, it ought to appear in some form in them all, or some mention, at least, of a connection with Love ought to be included in each.

The same may be said of Kurth's treatment of the Eighth Commandment. It is done very well. A unifying of the explanation with the thought of Christian Love would have completed the discussion into a compact whole.

To proceed, the Second Article of the Creed is portrayed beautifully, highlighting the meaning of the sacrifice of God's Son for man and for his forgiveness.⁴⁹ There is, however, a conspicuous absence of the word Love. The entire work of Christ's fulfilling of the Law and suffering for man is the greatest example of Love in all history. St. Paul summarizes the atoning work of Christ in the few words, "And walk in love, as Christ also hath loved us and hath given Himself for us an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweet-smelling savour"⁵⁰ He takes time to describe its beauty. Here, under the Second Article, is an ideal opportunity to elevate Love to its heights. Here we have the most touching reason for loving each other--because Christ has loved us so deeply,

⁴⁸Ibid., p. 48.

⁴⁹Ibid., pp. 77 ff.

⁵⁰Ephesians 5:2.

so overwhelmingly. It is glaringly omitted in this text. The instructor should not overlook this spot for a due emphasis on the source of Christian Love and its dependence on Christ.

Reference is made to Love in one sentence at the conclusion of the discussion on the Second Article: "Service under the taskmaster is one of compulsion; under Christ, it is one of love."⁵¹

In discussing the benefits of the Lord's Supper, Kurth includes the need for a restocking of our supply of Christian Love.⁵² He lists as the second benefit the following: "It strengthens us to love God and our neighbor."⁵³ The instructor may well follow through and describe how easily and how quickly one's supply of Love can dwindle without proper spiritual nourishment.

What can be said of the treatment given Christian Love in the Synodical Catechism and in Kurth's Catechetical Helps? In both, Christian Love is mentioned occasionally. Christian Love is not, however, treated as a major theme that recurs repeatedly as God's will for our entire Christian life. The references to Christian Love are often detached, sporadic, and not always related to the Christian Life in terms of a life of Love.

It would seem that the Scriptural emphasis on Christian Love as made by St. Paul in his words, "that ye increase, abound, increase more and more . . . (in Love),"⁵³ and by St. Peter, ". . . above all things have fervent charity among yourselves," as written in I Peter 4:8, as

⁵¹Kurth, op. cit., p. 94.

⁵²Ibid., p. 155.

⁵³I Thessalonians 4:9 and 10.

well as the Lord's own emphasis on Love in the Gospel of John, chapters thirteen to seventeen, would warrant a far more thorough and emphatic handling of Christian Love than is the case in the two textbooks examined thus far. Where deficiencies are discovered with regard to Love, there the instructor will have to fill in with supplementary materials of his own so that Christian Love may come into its own in the training of our youth. The instructor will not want to overlook the presentation to youth of Christian Love as a test or standard of judgment. While the two manuals discussed so far speak of Love as a way of life, they at no time make reference to Love as a possible guiding principle or test for ethical questions.

A Workbook in Religion, by Edwin A. Jiede, is another text used in many confirmation classes. On the title page it is suggested that this book be used in conjunction with Catechetical Helps, by Erwin Kurth. Let us see what opportunities it offers for the portrayal of Christian Love to youth as a lodestar and standard of judgment.

The pastor or teacher have fine opportunities to permit Christian Love to permeate the discussions on the basis of Jiede's materials in that they can lead youth to answer questions that require solutions, in terms of Love. For example, on page six, point V is "Disobeying the First Commandment."⁵⁴ Five examples are given of people sinning against the First Commandment. The second example is as follows: "Lucy put a nickel into the Church collection and spent fifty cents for a show and ice cream that afternoon."⁵⁵ A suggested answer might be, "She was show-

⁵⁴Jiede, op. cit., p. 6.

⁵⁵Ibid.

ing more consideration and love for herself than she was for God." Here is a chance to show up self-love in its true light and to contrast it with genuine Christian Love.

Many of the questions Jiede carries and leaves for the student to answer may be answered by using Christian Love as a test or standard of judgment. For example, under the Fifth Commandment, Jiede has a set of ten cases in which the Fifth Commandment was either kept or not kept.⁵⁶ He suggests, "circle the names of those who truly kept the Fifth Commandment."⁵⁷ "Harry saved a part of his allowance for the collection his school was raising for the orphans' home."⁵⁸ If the instructor guides youth to answer in terms of Love, then he is doing justice to Christian Love. He should not be content simply to have the students circle the proper numbers. Elaboration as to why number one was circled should bring out the facts that Harry was showing Love for the orphans. He was denying himself; this is in keeping with Christian Love, for "Charity seeketh not its own."⁵⁹ He kept the Commandment because he showed true Love for others. Thus Love is the standard by which he acted.

Similar expansion on all of the ten statements given would give to youth ample time to discuss how Christian Love is to come into play as a standard of judgment or guiding principle in the keeping of the Commandments and in the doing of God's will. Jiede repeatedly leaves much room for Christian Love to be brought into the picture. It remains for

⁵⁶Ibid., p. 14

⁵⁷Ibid.

⁵⁸Ibid.

⁵⁹I Corinthians 13:5.

the instructor to lead the class into thinking along the lines of Christian Love when and where that is possible.

Let us take, for instance, his suggested discussion under point III. of the Sixth Commandment.⁶⁰ His directions are, "Tell why each of these actions could lead to gross impurity."⁶¹ Ten are listed. One is "dressing scantily." The discussion should include the fact that a girl who does so is not practicing Christian Love. She may be showing no concern whatsoever about the purity of the opposite sex. By hoping to become popular and "in demand," she may actually become guilty of leading some into lustful thoughts and desires. She would be showing a so-called "love" for herself but no true Christian Love for the opposite sex.

Likewise, under "dancing, telling dirty stories, and others,"⁶² the door is left open for a clear testing of these actions by the standard of Christian Love. This is an excellent if not the best means of determining the status of such practices. The responsibility of directing the discussion into the realm of Christian Love is the task of the teacher.

Jiede lists five aids in avoiding impurity under the Sixth Commandment: 1) God's Word; 2) prayer; 3) hard work and play; 4) good companions and environment, and 5) moderation in all things.⁶³ He then has a set of statements which are to be connected with these five points. He might have included, "using Christian Love as a standard of judgment or test," as one of his aids.

⁶⁰Jiede, op. cit., p. 14.

⁶¹Ibid.

⁶²Ibid.

⁶³Ibid., p. 16.

While Jiede's presentation allows for greater expansion on the Love theme, once again Love is not treated as a definite motif which flows throughout his workbook. At the close of the Sixth, Seventh, Eighth, Ninth, and Tenth Commandments he might have brought in Love as a unifying agent, and thus Love might truly have been identified as the sum of all the Commandments. This is not to find fault with what he offers. The suggestion being made here is that more could have been said in Christian Love's favor to justify the Scriptural emphasis given it.

Just as religion in a Christian Day School is not simply to be one of the subjects but must be allowed to permeate the entire curriculum, so Christian Love is not simply to be one chapter in a presentation of Christian doctrine. It is to permeate the whole as God's Love, which reveals itself most strikingly on the Cross and which creates in man a responsive Love for Him and for others.

Jiede's lesson nine, which treats of the Ninth and Tenth Commandments, is another instance where Christian Love as contrasted with self-love could be brought out beautifully.⁶⁴ The ten examples under point III. offer ideal materials for such a discussion.

Jiede has a commendable feature under the Second Article in which Christian Love is urged for daily use as motivated by Christ.⁶⁵ He lists ten ways "in which we can show our thankfulness to Christ for His boundless Love. Place a check in the column to indicate your degree of Love and service to Christ."⁶⁶

⁶⁴Ibid., p. 22.

⁶⁵Ibid., p. 34.

⁶⁶Ibid.

Under Prayer, room is provided for a discussion into the area of Christian Love.⁶⁷ Question II. asks, "What is unhealthy in the prayer life of these people?"⁶⁸ Eight persons are described. Number seven is as follows, "Kenneth prays only for himself and his family."⁶⁹ Using Christian Love as the point of departure, explanation could be made that he is being guided by self-love rather than by Christian Love. Other examples under this heading and under the Lord's Prayer also leave room for delving into Love as a standard of judgment for our prayer life as well.⁷⁰

The second petition's exposition lists seven cases for discussion.⁷¹ The direction is, "Circle the names of those who show that they want the Christian Church to grow":⁷²

"Howard prayed that God would give courage and health to missionaries at home and abroad."⁷³ While praying for God's Kingdom to come, Howard is also revealing Christian Love for those still in spiritual darkness as well as for missionaries with their particular needs. This should be brought to the surface.

Under Jiede's discussion of Baptism and the types of people that should or should not be chosen as sponsors at a Lutheran Baptism, the in-

⁶⁷Ibid., p. 47.

⁶⁸Ibid.

⁶⁹Ibid.

⁷⁰Ibid.

⁷¹Ibid., p. 49.

⁷²Ibid.

⁷³Ibid.

structor has a good opportunity to use Love as a standard of judgment.⁷⁴ He might ask, "What does Christian Love suggest?" The answer would be that we arrange to have such sponsors who will best be able to discharge the true functions and responsibilities of this office. We are also showing Christian Love for the child to be baptized by means of this test.

Jiede offers ten examples, under Baptism, of some who live in newness of life and some who do not.⁷⁵ As these are being worked out, the pastor or teacher may point out in certain cases, as for example, case # two, "Mary causes her parents untold worry through her disobedience,"⁷⁶ that she is also failing to live by Christian Love and that her actions do not pass the test of Love. The same test may be applied to case # four: "Herbert is always willing to serve the Church on special committees,"⁷⁷ and case # ten: "Alice always tries to speak up for someone who is being slandered."⁷⁸ Both are living up to the standards of Christian Love.

Jiede specifically brings Christian Love to the fore in his presentation of the Office of the Keys.⁷⁹ Here he states under point V., "Write 'Yes' before those sentences which tell of love, honor, and service toward the pastor. Write 'No' before those which tell of disrespect and lack of service."⁸⁰

⁷⁴Ibid., p. 53.

⁷⁵Ibid., p. 56.

⁷⁶Ibid.

⁷⁷Ibid.

⁷⁸Ibid.

⁷⁹Ibid., p. 58.

⁸⁰Ibid.

"Marcella prayed that her pastor would have a large adult confirmation class."⁸¹ Christian Love may be used as a test in all of these ten examples, an excellent opportunity for Christian Love to be impressed on the minds of young people. Whether it is recognized as such will be up to the instructor.

Likewise, where Confession and Absolution are treated, in the nine case examples under point III., Christian Love may be used to determine the correct answers.⁸² Let us take one as an example: "Harland carries a secret grudge against the boy who told on him."⁸³ Harland is not being guided by Christian Love. He is ignoring it and hence is breaking the Law of Love and specifically the Fifth Commandment.

In Jiede's final chapters on the Lord's Supper, no mention is made of replenishing one's supply of Christian Love.⁸⁴ If this would have been included as one of the very important reasons why we should approach the Lord's Table, the discussion would have been even more complete.

Jiede gives far more opportunities for a study of how Christian Love may be applied to actual life situations than do the other two textbooks examined; however, the application remains only a possibility. The instructor must make the connection between Jiede's splendid examples and Christian Love. Love does receive more attention in Jiede than in the previously cited texts. Missing in all three books, however, is a discussion of how Christian Love may be used as a standard of judgment, or test,

⁸¹Ibid.

⁸²Ibid., p. 59.

⁸³Ibid.

⁸⁴Ibid., pp. 61-64.

or guiding principle.

Training youth in ways of Christian Love ought also to be an integral part of the youth program within the local Church. Topic discussions ought to be carried out with Christian Love as the constant background thought. Love ought to permeate the whole atmosphere of youth fellowship.

In his private counselling of young people the pastor has glorious openings for leading youth to a proper understanding of Christian Love as a test which they themselves may make in working toward a solution of their problems.

At Lutheran Service Volunteer Schools, at summer camps, and at youth outings, youth counsellors have grand opportunities to highlight Christian Love as a lodestar and standard of judgment for the ethical life.⁸⁵

Above all, the Christian home needs to be a training-ground in ways of Christian Love for youth. There seems to be fairly common agreement on the fact that the home is the basic educational agency chiefly because of the greater influence that parents are able to wield over their children over a greater period of time than any other agency. If Christian Love is to become a habit with Christian youth and if young people are to come to understand Love as a standard of judgment, then it is highly important that parents also are trained in the particular ways in which Love ought to come into play in the home. They themselves need to practice it and show young people how to use it effectively as a standard of judgment or test.

⁸⁵See the Appendix for an outline on Christian Love used at two L. S. V. Schools, at Carlinville, Illinois, in June, 1952, and at Camp Luther, Three Lakes, Wisconsin, in August, 1954. The writer of this thesis prepared the outline and led the discussions.

It is heartening to note that in the past several years the Board for Parish Education of the Lutheran Church--Missouri Synod has prepared several Parent Guidance manuals which aim to better equip Christian parents for their highly responsible tasks of bringing up children into God's ways of Love.

In summary, the following suggestions are offered in the spirit of Love, whereby youth counsellors and parents might the more effectively instruct young people how Christian Love may be used as a lodestar and as a standard of judgment:

1) More time might be devoted to detailed definitions as to what Christian Love actually is, and especially how it differs from the love so current in our world of secularism with its magazines, modern novels, and the like. A clear understanding ought to be established in the minds of young people as to what self-love is and how it is the basic opposite of Christian Love. (Many young people consider hate to be the true opposite of Christian Love. While hate may be deemed an opposite in one sense, the primary opposite of Love for the neighbor is love for the self.)

2) More emphasis ought to be given to the use of Christian Love as a test or standard of judgment. References to Love as a test of ethical actions are extremely rare in our Lutheran educational materials. It is not enough to place a musical instrument in a child's hands and expect that child to learn how to play that instrument on its own, without any coaching. Similarly, it is not enough to tell youth to practice Christian Love without explaining specifically how this is to be done. Youth needs to know HOW to apply Love to life situations.

3) Due emphasis ought also to be placed on the Word and Sacrament

as most necessary for a maintenance of Love in one's life and as a stimulus for its expression. Young people ought to be taught to come to the Lord's Supper regularly and often so that the life of the Spirit may be steadily enlarged in them and their will to live by Love might grow and be properly shaped. In order to root and ground young people in Christian Love, they must first be rooted and grounded firmly in Christ. The more fully their life becomes integrated into that of Christ, the more quickly will their lives be patterned according to the ways of Love.

In conclusion, it may be noted that young people by nature are not equipped to handle ethical problems effectively and satisfactorily as far as God is concerned and as far as they themselves are concerned. The muddled and perverted ethical standards they meet up with in their dealings with each other serve only to confuse them more. They themselves make it evident through their inquisitiveness about solutions to ethical matters and questions that they are looking for a standard by which they may be guided and which they can rely on as being dependable and wholly trustworthy. Christian Love is the answer to their groping and searching. As Christian Love is presented to them as a lodestar for all of life and as God's own recommended standard of judgment, they will be lead into a clearer understanding of how to meet life's problems head-on and successfully cope with them. This is the task that faces the home and Church. However, since this training into ways of Love is God's own will for His youth, redeemed by the blood of Christ, all efforts directed to these ends may be sure of His heavenly blessing.

APPENDIX

CHRISTIAN LOVE AS "THE WAY" TO LIVE

A Study based on God's Word

I. "The W A Y."

A. The Christian life is a certain "W a y" of living, thinking, and speaking. It is different from the natural or world's way of life.

1. Acts 9:2 "And (Paul) desired of him letters to Damascus to the synagogues, that if he found any of this _____, whether they were men or women, he might bring them bound to Jerusalem."
2. Acts 19:8,9 "And Paul went into the synagogue and spake boldly... concerning the kingdom of God. But when some were hardened and believed not, bit spake evil of that _____, he departed from them."
3. Acts 19:23 " And the same time there arose no small stir about that _____."
4. Acts 22:4 "And I (Paul) persecuted this _____ unto the death, binding and delivering into prisons both men and women."
5. Acts 24:14 "But this I (Paul) confess unto thee, that after the _____ which they call heresy, so worship I the God of my fathers."
6. Acts 24:22 "And when Felix heard those things, having more perfect knowledge of that _____, he deferred them..."
7. 1 Corinthians 12:31 "But covet (desire) earnestly the best gifts; and yet show I unto you a more excellent _____."
8. This more excellent W a y, according to 1 Corinthians 13, is the Way of _____.
(See also Psalm 1.)

II. This Way of life, the Way of LOVE, is the Way which the Lord Jesus and Holy Scriptures teach. Because it is God's Way, it is not a way to live; it is THE Way to live. It is the ONLY Way we ought to walk in. It is the ONLY Way that looks out for the good of everybody and that brings glory to God, and hence, it is the ONLY Way of life acceptable to God.

A. The following Scripture passages urge us to walk in the Way of LOVE:

1. John 13:34 "A new commandment I give unto you, that ye _____"
2. Romans 12:9f. "Let _____ be without dissimulation (pretense)... Do kindly affectioned one to another with _____"
3. Romans 13:8 "Owe no man anything, but to _____ for he that _____"

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4. Romans 13:9,10 "For this...is briefly comprehended in this saying, namely,
'Thou shalt _____
LOVE _____
_____."
5. 1 CORINTHIANS 13:13 "And now abideth faith, hope, _____, those three;
but the greatest of these is _____."
6. 1 Corinthians 14:1 "Follow after _____..."
7. 1 Corinthians 16:14 "Let all your things be done with _____."
8. Galatians 5:6 "For in Jesus Christ...availeth (counts)...faith which
_____."
9. Galatians 5:13,14 "By LOVE _____ . For all the
law is fulfilled in one word, even in this: _____
_____."
10. Ephesians 3:17 "That Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith, that ye
_____, may be able..."
11. Ephesians 5:1,2 "Do ye therefore followers of God...and _____
_____."
12. Colossians 2:2 "That their hearts might be comforted, being _____
_____."
13. 1 Thessalonians 3:12 "And the Lord make you to _____
_____."
14. 1 Thessalonians 4:9,10 "But as touching _____ ye
need not that I write unto you, for ye yourselves are taught of God _____
_____, and indeed ye do it...but we beseech you
brothron, that ye _____"
15. 1 Peter 1:22 "...see that ye _____"
16. 1 Peter 2:17 "Honor all men. _____"
17. 1 Peter 3:8 "Finally, be ye all of one mind, _____
_____"

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18. 1 Peter 4:8 "And above all things have _____

19. 1 John 3:11 "For this is the message that ye have heard from the beginning: _____"

20. 1 John 3:18 "My little children, let us not love in word, neither in tongue; but in _____"

21. 1 John 3:23 "And this is His commandment, that we should believe on the name of His Son, Jesus Christ, and _____"

22. 1 John 4:7 "Beloved, _____"

23. 1 John 4:11 "Beloved, if God so loved us, we ought also _____"

24. 1 John 4:12 "No man hath seen God at any time. If we _____"

25. 1 John 4:16 "And we have known and believed the love that God hath to us. God is _____, and he that _____"

26. 1 John 4:21 "And this commandment have we from Him, _____"

III. What is Christian L O V E ?

A. Christian LOVE is like a tool or an instrument. A tool has little value for you until you learn how to use it correctly.

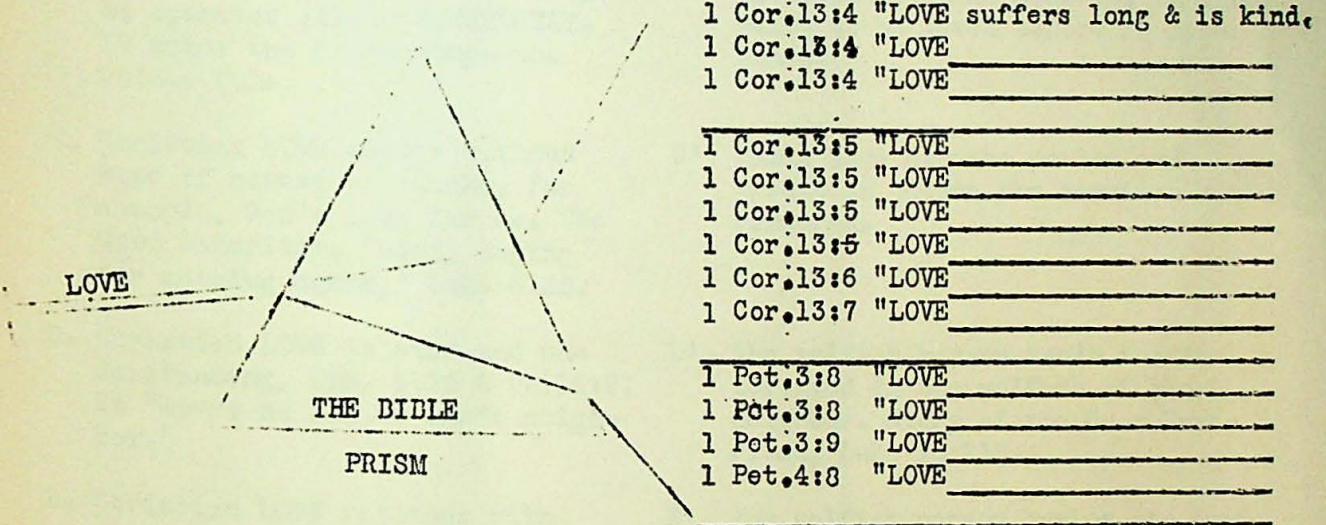
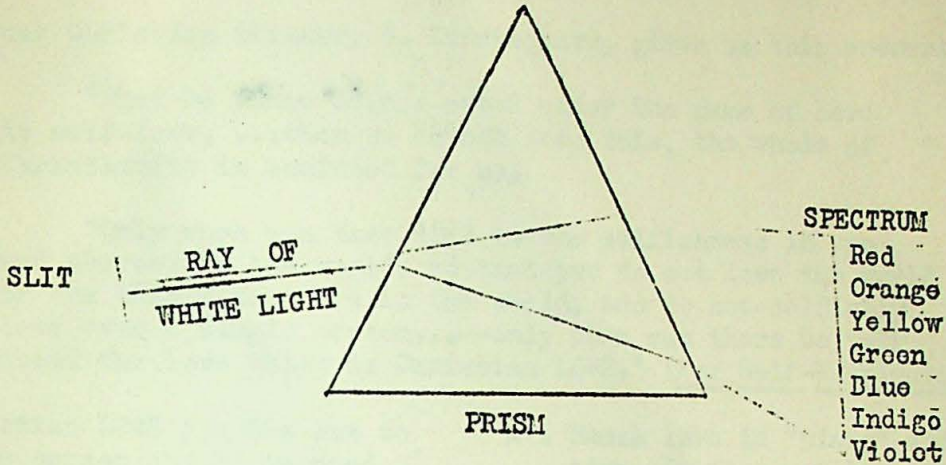
B. If we want to know what real, genuine LOVE is, we have to watch how God deals with people, for "God is LOVE."

1. See Romans 5:8; Eph. 2:4; Lk. 23:34; 1 John 3:16; 4:10.

- a. God's Love _____
- b. God's Love _____
- c. God's Love _____
- d. God's Love _____
- e. God's Love _____

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C. The experiment of the PRISM will further clarify and open up to us the meaning of Christian LOVE:



D. In making decisions, let LOVE guide you. A good rule: "When in doubt, apply the TEST Of LOVE."

1. The TEST Of LOVE:

- a. Will this action bring good to my neighbor? Is it in the interest of his welfare? (and similar questions)
- b. Will this action help along his Christian faith and life, or will it hurt it?
- c. OR, will this action bring harm of any sort to my neighbor?
- d. Am I going to gain by this action for my selfish purposes at the expense of my neighbor?

E. A brief summary of the meaning of LOVE:

- 1. CHRISTIAN LOVE is always ACTION, not just words, always for the good of others. It is not centered on oneself; it is self-effacing. It works no ill to anybody. It does not seek any returns of any sort, neither repayment, reward, praise, or thanks.

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7. How different is Christian LOVE from human love or what the people of this world call love?

A. A great Christian thinker, S. Kierkegaard, gives us this answer:

"What we human beings extol under the name of love is self-love; ...when we do not heed this, the whole of Christianity is confused for us.

"Only when you have died to the selfishness in you and thereby to the world, so that you do not love the world or the things that are in the world, and do not selfishly love even a single person...--only then can there be talk about the love which is Christian LOVE." (For Self-Examination, p.99.)

B. Christian LOVE reaches out to every person who is in need, whether he deserves it or not. It operates like a THERMOSTAT. It takes the first step--the Golden Rule.

D'. Human love is "picky" and selective. It does not love or forgive enemies. See Luke 6:32-35. It often waits to be loved before it responds.

C. Christian LOVE serves without hope of reward or thanks, for example, God's Love for us, The Good Samaritan. "Lend, hoping for nothing again," Luke 6:35.

C'. Human love expects praise and credit in return for services rendered.

D. Christian LOVE is kind and understanding, Eph. 4:15 & Phil 2:2. It "works no ill to one's neighbor."

D'. The selfish person isn't too interested in the welfare of his neighbor. Story of the Good Samaritan, Luke 10:25f.

E. Christian LOVE rejoices with those who rejoice and weeps with those who weep. Rom. 12:15.

E'. The selfish person envies the person who gets ahead. He does not rejoice with him; rather, he wishes him failure.

F. Christian LOVE is consistent. It lasts.

F'. Human love is limited. It grows cold and fades away.

G. Christian LOVE does not use force. It is not legalistic or demanding.

G'. Human nature is demanding and legalistic. It tries to make man conform to demands.

V. What should urge us to choose and to live this WAY of life?

A. Jesus' LOVE for us! We have been treated with LOVE, when we have deserved no LOVE; hence, we are to treat others in the very same way. 1 John 4:7, 2 Cor. 5:14.

B. Christian LOVE is our way of responding to God's Love. It is our way of showing our Love and thanks to Him for His Love. See Matthew 25:31-46.

C. Faith without works is dead. Love is the proof of our faith. "He that loveth not his brother abideth in death," 1 John 3:14.

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VI. How can we become "rooted and grounded" in LOVE? (Eph. 3:17)

- A. We must first become "rooted and grounded" in Jesus. Colossians 2:7.
- B. We need to replenish our supply of LOVE often. God's Words of forgiveness, & His holy Sacrament of the altar are fuel for our Christian LOVE. The Church is the spiritual storeroom. See Galatians 5:22.

1. We are to "grow" into this way of life.

2. We are born into this world 100% selfish. There is 0% LOVE in us.

Christian LOVE must	90% selfish	10% LOVE
increase,	50% "	50% "
Self-love must	25% "	75% "
decrease.	10% "	90% "

LET'S APPLY THE TEST OF LOVE.

- 1) You arrive at a summer camp. In your cabin there is space for two only, but you are told that three are to share the cabin. What should you do? Apply the test of LOVE:
- Should you choose the best bed and closet before the others get there?
 - Should you wait until all three arrive and then flip a coin to see who gets first pick on a closet and bed?
 - Should you share the 2 closets equally among the 3 and discuss the preference of each in regard to the beds?
- 2) It is past curfew time at LSV school. Lights are out. Some young people are in the mood to sing, so they do, quite loudly, for a good long while. Does this pass the test of LOVE?
- 3) Your young people's society is going to wash all the dishes at the Church as a gesture of Love for their mothers (for Mothers' Day). You would like to go to a movie that same night. What does LOVE suggest that you do?
- 4) You are a Sunday School teacher. One Sunday morning relatives invite you to an all-day barbecue and picnic out in the country. If you go, you will have to miss Sunday School and Church. Apply the Test of LOVE.
- 5) It is the night before LSV school closes. Some want to stay up all night and celebrate noisily. Apply the test of LOVE.
- 6) A youth is angry at his brother, yet he claims he still loves God. Can he feel two ways at the same time? See 1 John 4:20,21.
- 7) You have a job, but you aren't satisfied with it. You apply for another job at another place of business. You are offered a better job there immediately. You can't accept the new job until you have given your present employer two weeks' notice; yet you want badly to begin at your new work at once. Apply LOVE:
- Should you quit your present job immediately and disregard the 2 weeks' notice?
 - Should you serve your remaining two weeks patiently and inform your new employer that you will not be available until the 2 weeks are up?

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- 8) At the dinner table or at any meal, there is a pleasant, cheerful atmosphere when
- each member of the family is interested in what the others experienced that day, or what they think about certain matters; or,
 - when each member talks only about himself, his likes and dislikes. Which is the Way of LOVE?
- 9) Which of the following does Jesus teach us?
- The older you are, the more rights you have in the home, and therefore, you may insist on them.
 - Love doesn't make any distinctions between the ages of people. It is respectful and courteous to all.
- 10) A girl wants to go out. Her parents don't want her to because they disapprove of the young man she is dating. What should she do? Apply LOVE.
- Go out anyway;
 - Stay home but refuse to speak to her parents;
 - Get angry and insist that she's old enough to choose her own friends;
 - Discuss with her parents why they don't approve of her choice of the young man.
- 11) Which is the way of LOVE?
- I shall always be ready to do all I can for others in my family to help them and to make their lives richer and fuller in every way that I can. I shall take the first step. I shall not wait for others to serve me first.
 - If members of my family want me to do things for them, they must first do things for me.
- 12) Whose welfare should come first in family living? in youth work at Church?
- | | |
|------------------|---|
| a) your own? | a) that of your young people's society? |
| b) the family's? | b) your own? |

In your own words, how would you explain to a friend or stranger what Christian LOVE is?

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