

All Is Love
Fr Thomas Hopko
Upbeat
V.2, n. 10, 1969

If we were to sum up in one word the entire Christ “philosophy of life,” we would certainly do it by the one word *LOVE*. In this one word the Christian understanding of everything is contained and revealed. All is love. For God is Love. This is the Christian view of all life and reality.

GOD IS LOVE

In the first letter to all Christians, the Apostle John twice writes his famous words: *God is Love*.

God is Love. This means that the very nature of God, that which makes God to be God is the fact that His very life and being is Love. God is Love because His is perfectly Good. He is always building up and never tearing down. He is always forgiving and never condemning. He is always saving and never destroying. (If a person is torn down, condemned, and destroyed, it is always his own fault, and never God’s) God is Love because He does everything to have everything and everyone participates perfectly in His own perfection which is Love.

God is Love also as the perfect loving union within His own being of three persons, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Love unites. We all know this to be true. And the Divine Love unites so perfectly that three distinct persons are actually united into such a perfect union that there is no division at all. The Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit are in such a loving personal union with each other that we can actually say that They, being three, are one. The one God Who is Love is the union of Three Who are One in the one divine Love. This is the great mystery of all life and reality!

Commandment to Love

Because God is Love and is eternally loving the world which He made out of love, He has willed to preserve it forever. When God created men and the world and all that is in it, He called it *good*. When men spoil themselves and each other and the animals and the very earth and sea and air, God does everything possible to save it all again. We can truly say that God is “dying” to save what He has made out of love, for God so loved the world that He sent His only-begotten Son Jesus Christ” exactly to die that all things in Him might be saved, that nothing and no one would be lost. (Except, once more, those who themselves choose to be so.) Christ came. And He died. And He destroyed death forever. And He poured forth the Holy Spirit, the Spirit of Love, on the earth into the hearts of those who are also dying to live and to love with Him.

Men must imitate Christ’s love by the power of the Holy Spirit. This is our mission and task: To love everyone and everything, including our enemies, as Christ Himself has

loved. “This is the commandment that I give to you, that you should love one another. Even as I have loved you, so you should love one another.” (John 12:34)

Man’s task of love is the task to be “perfect as God is perfect,” “holy as God is holy.” These are the words of Christ and the Apostles; the fulfillment of the teachings of the Old Testament; the final most perfect summation of the meaning of man’s destiny as he arose out of dust by the will of God on the first day of his appearance on earth. This is our destiny: To be the perfect living expression of the perfect life and communion of many persons in love; just as God — Father, Son and Holy Spirit — is the perfect living union of Three Divine Persons in Eternal, Uncreated, Ever-Existing, Unchangeable Love.

Service and Sacrifice

Since all is love because God is Love; and since man’s vocation is to realize eternally the Eternal Love of God as the “living icon” of the Holy Trinity, the union of all things in love; it is obvious that love must be actively expressed.

Love is expressed always in service and sacrifice, in sacrificial service. This is how God Himself expresses His love for man and the world, by serving and sacrificing Himself just to His ultimate act of love, the crucifixion of Christ. The Son of God humbles Himself and takes on human flesh. He becomes the “servant of all.” He washes the feet of His disciples, including Judas the enemy. He gives His life on the cross. He fulfills His own words: “No greater love has any man than this that he lay down his life for his brother.” (John 15:13)

Christ commands true men, genuine persons, to imitate Him in His love. For to imitate Christ in His love, in His sacrifice and His service not only to friends and brothers, but to enemies and betrayers, this is to imitate God and to participate actively in the very salvation of the world. For what is salvation if it is not the ultimate perfection of all things – God, angels, men, animals, plants, the very galaxies of creation – in the living and loving communion of Divine Love!

The Most Excellent Way

This is the fundamental Christian insight into the mystery of life. This is the foundation of the Christian “philosophy of life:” All is love, for God is Love, and Love is, as St. Paul has said it, indeed the most excellent way:

“And I will show you still a more excellent way.

If I speak in the tongues of men and of angels, but have not love, I am a noisy gong or a clanging cymbal.

And If I have prophetic powers, understand all mysteries, and all knowledge, and if I have all faith, so as to remove mountains, but have not love, I am nothing.

If I give away all I have, and if I deliver my body to be burned, but have not love, I gain nothing.

Love is patient and kind; love is not jealous or boastful; it is not arrogant or rude.

Love does not insist on its own way; it is not irritable or resentful; it does not rejoice at wrong, but rejoices in the right.

Love bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things.

Love never ends.”

-- 1 Corinthians 13