

Biblical Commentaries with text

Jerome's Biblical Commentary

Haydock's Catholic Bible Commentary, 1859 Ed.

Barclay's Daily Study Bible Series (not Catholic)

Fourth Sunday in Ordinary Time

Lectionary: 72

Reading I

[Jer 1:4-5, 17-19](#)

The word of the LORD came to me, saying:
Before I formed you in the womb I knew you,
before you were born I dedicated you,
a prophet to the nations I appointed you.

But do you gird your loins;
stand up and tell them
all that I command you.
Be not crushed on their account,
as though I would leave you crushed before them;
for it is I this day
who have made you a fortified city,
a pillar of iron, a wall of brass,
against the whole land:
against Judah's kings and princes,
against its priests and people.
They will fight against you but not prevail over you,
for I am with you to deliver you, says the LORD.

Jerome's Biblical Commentary

11 (I) Title (1:1-3).1. *the words:* The Hebr pl. expression *dibrê* also means “actions” or “events,” and therefore “history” (preferable here). *Jeremiah:* The prophet's name, *yirmey hû*, is relatively frequent in the OT and is attested to in the Lachish letters (1, 4). Some exegetes (e.g., Rudolph, Weiser), arguing from the Gk transcription, supposed that the first part of the name is

Hebr Hebrew

OT Old Testament

Gk Greek

from the verb *rûm* and must be translated “Yahweh has exalted,” but we prefer the verb *r mâ* and translate, “Yahweh has established.” *son of Hilkiah, of a priestly family*: This Hilkiah must not be identified with the high priest of Jerusalem at the time of Josiah, who co-operated in the discovery of the Book of the Law in the Temple (2 Kgs 22). Solomon had exiled the priest Abiathar to Anathoth for having supported Adonijah’s attempt to kingship; he replaced him by Zadok (1 Kgs 2:26-35). Probably only Hilkiah was a descendant of this Abiathar. Indeed, Jeremiah will recall the destruction of Shiloh (7:14), and Abiathar was related to its priest Eli. *Anathoth*: The present village of Anata, over 3.5 mi. NE of Jerusalem, still preserves the ancient name of the Prophet’s native town; however, the precise site is to be situated on a nearby mound called Ras el-Kharrubeh. It was a Levitical town of the northern tribe of Benjamin (Jos 21:18). The name is the pl. form of the goddess Anat, very popular among the Canaanites as Baal’s sister (see C. Virolleaud, *RES* [1937] 4ff.). We might assume that a high place was dedicated to her in Anathoth.**2. in the days of Josiah...in the thirteenth year**: Josiah reigned from 640 to 609, the year he was killed in the battle of Megiddo against Neco II; thus, Jeremiah’s ministry began in 627-626. There is no reason to take this date as the year of his birth (J. P. Hyatt, *IB* 5, 779-80).**3. Jehoiakim**: Jehoahaz succeeded first to Josiah, his father. After three months, he was deposed by Neco, who put him in chains and sent him to Egypt where he died (2 Kgs 23:31-34). The Pharaoh replaced Jehoahaz by Eliakim, another son of Josiah, changing his name to Jehoiakim as a sign of vassalage. These events all occurred in 609. Jehoiakim died three months before the first downfall of Jerusalem in 597 (2 Kgs 23:30-24:6). *until the downfall...*: The LXX omits this expression and the MT reads, “Until the end of the eleventh year of Zedekiah...until the exile of Jerusalem in the fifth month.” According to 2 Kgs 24:18, Zedekiah did reign 11 years, and according to 2 Kgs 25:2-8, Jerusalem was destroyed the fifth month of the eleventh year of Zedekiah. Therefore, the redactor of the title gave here two synonymous expressions of the same date—i.e., August, 587. Zedekiah became king of Judah in 597 by the will of Nebuchadnezzar, who had also changed his original name, Mattaniah, to Zedekiah as a sign of vassalage (2 Kgs 24:17-25).

This list of kings omits two names—Jehoahaz and Jehoiachin—because their short reigns of three months each were negligible. Thus, Jeremiah preached from 627 to 587, a dating that leaves out chs. 40-44, which narrate his activity after the ruin of Jerusalem.

To clarify the problem, we can retrace the history of the title as follows. Originally, v. 2 was the introductory title of Jeremiah’s call and must be joined to vv. 4ff. Verse 3 was introduced when a longer collection of oracles was added, mainly chs. 7-39. If vv. 2-3 were from the same redactor, we would expect to find the preposition “*from* the thirteenth...,” because the last part of the title mentions “until the exile...” Finally, during the Exile or soon after, Jer took its actual form, including Baruch’s biographical notes on his master’s ministry; then v. 1 was set at the

RES Revue des études sémitiques

IB Interpreter’s Bible (12 vols.; Nashville, 1952-57)

LXX Septuagint (Greek translation of the OT)

MT Masoretic Text (of the Hebrew Bible)

beginning of the whole work, connected awkwardly to v. 2 by a rel. pronoun. Thus, three redactional stages of the title could be registered.

12 (II) Oracles Against Judah and Jerusalem (1:4-25:13b). This collection of Jeremiah's oracles of doom on Judah and Jerusalem covers the Prophet's entire ministry. A certain attempt was made to respect their chronological order, although sometimes the affinity of subjects was regarded first.

(A) Call of Jeremiah (1:4-19). Two sections can be recognized easily in this first narrative: a dialogue between Yahweh and Jeremiah (vv. 4-10, 17-19) and two visions (vv. 11-16). We do not know how these visions were inserted into the dialogue, or when they occurred in Jeremiah's life, although it must have been early. The dialogue bears almost exclusively on the personal effects of this call, for the visions insist rather on the object of the Prophet's mission.

13 (a) The Dialogue (1:4-10, 17-19).**5. I formed you:** The verb *yār* refers primarily to the modeling of pottery. Inasmuch as the J account of creation imagined God as a potter (Gn 2:7-8), the verb took the technical meaning "to create" (Am 4:13; Jer 51:19; Is 45:18; 49:5; Ps 95:5; see P. Humbert, *Fest. O. Eissfeldt* [Berlin, 1961] 82-88). *in the womb:* After Jeremiah, it became an accepted idea that God himself forms the young child in its mother's womb; the significance is that God knows man and stands as his unique master from the very first moment of his existence (Jb 10:8-12; Pss 22:10-11; 71:6; 139:13ff.). *I knew you:* The verb *yada'* does not refer exclusively to an intellectual knowledge; it involves as well an action of the will and sensibility. *I dedicated you:* The verb *qadaš* can also be translated "to sanctify" or "to consecrate." Its basic meaning refers to the separation of something or someone for a divine service. Jeremiah is set aside by God for his prophetic mission; the text does not permit us to believe that the Prophet was cleansed from Original Sin (on such an opinion, see Penna, *op. cit.*; Condamin, *op. cit.*). *to the nations:* This extension of his mission, repeated in v. 10, is not a later addition. Former prophets were also concerned with the neighboring countries for two main reasons: The history of the chosen people was always closely mingled with the history of the entire Near East; the prophets had a keen sense of the ruling power of Yahweh over the universe—he was the God of all history.**6-9.** Undoubtedly, the word (*dbr*) is characteristic of the Prophet, a witness of God's will for his people. Jeremiah is but a young man (*na'ar*)-i.e., in his early twenties; therefore, he has no authority (Is 3:4). Moses had a similar reaction when Yahweh sent him as his messenger (Ex 4:10-15), but for a different reason: He had a speech defect, which is not the case here. Yahweh's answer (vv. 7-8) shows the nature of both Jeremiah's fear and the prophetic mission quite clearly: Yahweh is the first one responsible for what has to be said; he provides the message and intimately sustains his messenger (see Ez 2:6-7; Dt 18:18; Mt 10:19-20).**9. touched my mouth:** This symbolic action realizes the promise just made, which is immediately explained: "I place my words in your mouth." In the prophetic calls of Isaiah (6:7), Ezekiel (2:8-3:3), and Daniel (10:16), a similar ritual is performed on their mouths. In each case, the same conviction of Yahweh delivering his message to the Prophet is sensibly experienced.**10. to root up...:** Some

Fest. Festschrift (generic name for any publication honoring a person)

ff. and the following verses

exegetes suppress the middle stichos (“to destroy and to demolish”), which gives a verse in chiasmus of opposite verbs; strong arguments for such a restitution have been recently proposed by Holladay (*JBL* 79, 363-64). This antithesis defines the twofold aspect of a prophet’s mission: to straighten what is crooked and to deepen the whole religious heritage, including occasionally new revelations. **17. gird your loins:** This verse and those following are the logical sequence of v. 10. They accentuate the attitude of the prophet during his ministry. The girding of loins points to the promptness in the accomplishment of an order (1 Kgs 18:46), as well as to the immediate preparation for combat (Jb 38:3; 40:7). **18. a fortified city...:** In Ezekiel’s call (3:8-9), we find the same steadfast strength expressed in similar imagery. Those who will have to encounter such a firm man of God are the leaders of Judah, both political and religious, and their subjects, even the most humble ones (cf. 4:9; 32:32).

If we compare Jeremiah’s call with those of Isaiah (6:1-13) and Ezekiel (2:1-3:15), we are struck by three distinctive notes. The predestination of a prophet to his office is clearly underlined: Yahweh’s plan for such a man originated from the first moment of his existence. This early intervention of Yahweh is found also in Samson’s story (Jgs 13:5), and will be repeated for the Servant of the Lord (Is 49:1-2), John the Baptist (Lk 1:15), and Paul (Gal 1:15-16). In these last instances, we can easily detect an influence of Jeremiah’s call. Second, this dialogue shows how intimate are the relations between Yahweh and his prophet; several other passages will prove that this intimacy never stopped growing. Jeremiah is the sole prophet who revealed to us the inner struggle that such a mission caused him. Finally, the inherent persecution following this mission is strongly stressed: The entire book is crisscrossed with such dark events.

14 (b) THE VISIONS (1:11-16). **11-12.** The first vision presents a pun. The sight of a branch from an almond tree (§ q d) means that Yahweh is watching over (§ q d) the fulfillment of his word. The oracle is comminatory, for in Jeremiah, the verb § qad always foreshadows a calamity (5:6; 31:27-28; 44:27). Recently, W. G. Williams interpreted the vision in the light of Aaron’s rod (Nm 17); thus, Jeremiah would recall the original meaning of this priestly symbol (*Fest. W. A. Irwin* [Dallas, 1956] 90-99). This is an overly complex view of a simple experience, as we shall see. **13-16.** The object of the second vision is obscure. The MT reads, “A boiling cauldron whose face is from the North,” and the versions do not help clarify its meaning. There are three main interpretations. The object of the vision is not the cauldron itself but its support over the fire, the opening of which is on the northern side. Or, Jeremiah saw a cauldron moving from N to S. Finally, some think that the cauldron was leaning to the north, the most obvious solution (Rudolph, Weiser, Gelin). The meaning of the vision is clarified by another pun, on the verb n fa ; “to boil” or “to blow.” As a result of the idolatrous practices of Judah, a sweeping invasion from the north will lay waste the entire country. The historical problem of this invasion will be discussed after ch. 6.

Great similarities exist between these visions and those in Am (7:1-9; 8:1-3; 9:1-4): We meet the same interrogations on the object of the vision, followed by the formulations of their meaning in plays on words. It has long been discussed whether these visions were real or mere literary fictions. We are inclined to think that they were ordinary perceptions described in the form of

visions; the literary genre served as a means to propose a short and striking oracle. The procedure corresponds naturally to the figurative speech of the Orientals.

Haydock's Catholic Bible Commentary, 1859 Ed.

CHAPTER I.

Ver. 1. *Helcias*, the high priest who discovered the book of the law, (Clement of Alexandria, Strom. i., &c.) though this be uncertain. --- *Anathoth*, a village to the north of Jerusalem, to which many priests had retired, though it did not belong to them. (Calmet)

Ver. 3. *Joakim*. His immediate predecessor and successor, both called Jechonias, (Haydock) are passed over, as their reign was short, (Calmet) only lasting three months each. (Haydock) --- *Fifth*. Jerusalem was taken on the 9th of the preceding month. But the temple was not burnt, nor the captives sent off till the fifth month, or the 10th of the civil year, chap. xxxix. 8., and lii. 13., and 4 Kings xxv. 2. (Calmet) --- Jeremias also prophesied in Egypt, chap. xlv. (Worthington) --- But this title alludes to his principal predictions. (Menochius)

Ver. 5. *Knew*, with affection, and designed thee for this office for eternity. Many think (Calmet) that Jeremias was purified from original sin before his birth. (St. Augustine) --- He had this privilege, and was also a priest, prophet, virgin, and martyr. (Worthington) --- Yet to *sanctify*, often means only to set aside, Exodus xiii. 2., and Ecclesiasticus xlix. 9. --- *Nations*, whose overthrow he points out, chap. xxv. 27, 44, &c. (Calmet)

Ver. 6. *Ah*. Hebrew *ahah*. Septuagint, "thou Being." Protestants, "Then said I: Ah, Lord God." (Haydock) --- He does not imitate a child. He might be above 30 years old, though some say (Calmet) only 14, (Tirinus) or less; yet he finds himself devoid of eloquence, like Moses, Exodus xiv. 10. (Calmet)

Ver. 9. *Mouth*; perhaps (Haydock) with a coal, by means of an angel, (Isaias vi. 5.) in a sort of dream. He found himself changed into a new man.

Ver. 10. *Root up*, to announce the fall and restoration of many nations, Ezechiel iv. 2. (Calmet) --- Jeremias spoke of the Gentiles, as well as of the Jews. (Worthington)

Ver. 11. *Watching*. Hebrew, "of an almond." Septuagint, "nut-tree." (Haydock) --- The almond-tree flourishes in January, and bears fruit in March. (Theodoret) (Pliny, [Natural History?] xvi. 25.) --- Thus God will speedily send his scourge from Babylon, to punish his people. (Calmet) --- The sense is the same. (Menochius) --- God's law is outwardly bitter, but the kernel is sweet. (Theodoret) (Worthington)

Ver. 13. *North*, whence the wind blows, to make the fire burn more intensely. Assyria lay to the north, and Babylon to the east of Judea; but the troops always penetrated the northern frontier, as they could not pass through the Desert Arabia. The *caldron* represented Jerusalem, Ezechiel xi. 3., and xxiv. 3.

Ver. 14-15. *North.* The tributary kings were forced to attend, Judith ii. 7., and 3 Kings xx. 1. ---
About. The princes thus took Sedecias, and sent him to Reblatha, chap. xxxix. 3. (Calmet)

Ver. 17. *Loins.* Make haste, and take courage, Job xxxviii. 3. (Menochius)

Ver. 19. *Prevail.* God does not promise peace, but victory. (Worthington)

Barclay's Daily Study Bible Series (not Catholic)

None

Responsorial Psalm

[Ps 71:1-2, 3-4, 5-6, 15-17](#)

(cf. 15ab) **I will sing of your salvation.**

In you, O LORD, I take refuge;

let me never be put to shame.

In your justice rescue me, and deliver me;

incline your ear to me, and save me.

I will sing of your salvation.

Be my rock of refuge,

a stronghold to give me safety,

for you are my rock and my fortress.

O my God, rescue me from the hand of the wicked.

I will sing of your salvation.

For you are my hope, O Lord;

my trust, O God, from my youth.

On you I depend from birth;

from my mother's womb you are my strength.

I will sing of your salvation.

My mouth shall declare your justice,

day by day your salvation.

O God, you have taught me from my youth,

and till the present I proclaim your wondrous deeds.

I will sing of your salvation.

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Ps 71. An individual lament. The so-called anthological style characterizes the composition; it is made up of several expressions borrowed from other Pss (cf. Pss 31:2-4; 22:10-11). This is the prayer of a sick, persecuted old man who in the past experienced God's protection; now he

overcomes his fear with prayer and hope. Structure: 1-8, a plea to be delivered from enemies, and expressions of trust, concluding with a vow to praise God; 9-16, a complaint about his enemy, concluding with a vow to praise; 17-24, plea and expressions of trust, concluding with a vow to praise God. There is a fairly consistent alternating of request, confidence, and motifs of trust and vow; the Ps ends with the certainty that God has heard him (23-24).**2-3**. Cf. Ps 31:2-4.**5-6**. For this motif, see Ps 22:10-11.**7**. *portent*: One on whom God's anger has been poured out (cf. 11 and also Dt 28:46 for *môf t* as a portent and object of God's wrath).**9**. As in 18, he alleges his "old age" as a reason for Yahweh to intervene (cf. Is 46:4).**12**. His appeal is in vivid contrast to the words of his enemies in 11.**15**. *their extent*: The many individual acts of God's "justice" and "salvation" (note the parallelism, as in Dt-Is) are meant. Perhaps these embrace all the salvation history, as the *magnalia Dei* ("mighty works," 16) of the next verse suggest.

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None

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None

Reading II

[1 Cor 12:31—13:13 or 13:4-13](#)

Brothers and sisters:

Strive eagerly for the greatest spiritual gifts.

But I shall show you a still more excellent way.

If I speak in human and angelic tongues,
but do not have love,
I am a resounding gong or a clashing cymbal.
And if I have the gift of prophecy,
and comprehend all mysteries and all knowledge;
if I have all faith so as to move mountains,
but do not have love, I am nothing.
If I give away everything I own,
and if I hand my body over so that I may boast,
but do not have love, I gain nothing.

Love is patient, love is kind.
It is not jealous, it is not pompous,
It is not inflated, it is not rude,
it does not seek its own interests,
it is not quick-tempered, it does not brood over injury,

it does not rejoice over wrongdoing
but rejoices with the truth.
It bears all things, believes all things,
hopes all things, endures all things.

Love never fails.

If there are prophecies, they will be brought to nothing;
if tongues, they will cease;
if knowledge, it will be brought to nothing.
For we know partially and we prophesy partially,
but when the perfect comes, the partial will pass away.
When I was a child, I used to talk as a child,
think as a child, reason as a child;
when I became a man, I put aside childish things.
At present we see indistinctly, as in a mirror,
but then face to face.
At present I know partially;
then I shall know fully, as I am fully known.
So faith, hope, love remain, these three;
but the greatest of these is love.

or

Brothers and sisters:
Love is patient, love is kind.
It is not jealous, it is not pompous,
it is not inflated, it is not rude,
it does not seek its own interests,
it is not quick-tempered, it does not brood over injury,
it does not rejoice over wrongdoing but rejoices with the truth.
It bears all things, believes all things,
hopes all things, endures all things.

Love never fails.
If there are prophecies, they will be brought to nothing;
if tongues, they will cease;
if knowledge, it will be brought to nothing.
For we know partially and we prophesy partially,
but when the perfect comes, the partial will pass away.
When I was a child, I used to talk as a child,
think as a child, reason as a child;
when I became a man, I put aside childish things.
At present we see indistinctly, as in a mirror,
but then face to face.
At present I know partially;

then I shall know fully, as I am fully known.
So faith, hope, love remain, these three;
but the greatest of these is love.

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27-30. The application of the analogy of the human body, just set forth in vv. 14-26. All the gifts, like the members of the human body, were given for the good of the whole Church. The "higher" gifts are those that contribute more to the Church's welfare. Better than all the gifts is charity.

78 (iii) *A description and praise of charity* (13:1-13). This is one of the most sublime passages of the entire Bible. The loftiness of Paul's thoughts and the enthusiasm of his expression elevate his prose to an almost poetic sublimity. *love*: This is supernatural love, what theology terms the virtue of charity. It is distinguished sharply in v. 3 from philanthropy and humanitarianism. (For the term *agap* see C. Spicq, *Agape in the NT* [3 vols.; St. Louis, 1963-67].) **1.** *tongues of men and of angels*: All possible tongues; the allusion is to the gift of tongues. The rabbis speculated on the language of the angels (see Str-B 3, 449 for some of the rabbinical ideas; H. Riesenfeld, *ConNeot* 5 [1941] 17-18). **5.** *does not brood over injuries*: That is, is not resentful. Some commentators, however, would translate the phrase as in Zech 8:17 (LXX) where it means "does not plot evil" (see the MT). **6.** *is not happy when others are treated unjustly, but rejoices in the truth*: **Al theia** is a synonym here for justice, moral rectitude. **7.** *covers*: That is, "excuses" or "passes over in silence" (*stegai*). **8-11.** Charity is eternal, but the gifts (*charismata*) are transitory and temporal. There will be no need or use for them in heaven, just as a man has no use for the toys of his childhood. **12.** *then face to face*: This expression of the eschatological hope in terms of a knowledge of God is unique in Paul's writings, although it is a common Jewish theme (*4 Ezra* 7:98; *Ap* 22:3-4; *Mt* 5:8). In comparing the knowledge we have of God in this world (now) with that hoped for in the world to come (then), Paul employs two metaphors; one borrowed from the OT, "in an enigma" (*Nm* 12:6), the other from the popular Cynic-Stoic philosophy, "in a mirror." The first contrasts the privileged revelations given to Moses with those given to the prophets. Not even Moses could see God "face to face" in this world (*Ex* 32:20). The second refers to the indirect vision of an object seen in a mirror; one sees not the object itself, but its reflection. Since the passage occurs in a context devoted to a

NT New Testament

Str-B H. L. Strack and P. Billerbeck, *Kommentar zum Neuen Testament* (6 vols.; Munich, 1922-61)

ConNeot *Coniectanea Neotestamentica*

LXX Septuagint (Greek translation of the OT)

MT Masoretic Text (of the Hebrew Bible)

OT Old Testament

consideration of the spiritual gifts, the Apostle is comparing with the “face to face” vision of God the knowledge possessed through the charismatic gifts of gnosis and Prophecy. *I have been known*: This phrase refers to the prevenient and merciful love of God shown in Paul’s election to the faith and apostolate. *then I shall know*: This corresponding phrase implies a relationship between the perfect vision or knowledge of God and the charity by which we love God even in this life. So, of the three virtues that are abiding in this present life (*now*) and that are therefore greater than the transitory spiritual gifts, the greatest is charity (see J. Dupont, *Gnosis*, 105-48; G. Kittel, “*Ainigma*,” *ThDNT* 1, 178-80).

The literature on 1 Cor 13 has been well summarized by J. T. Sanders, *Interpr* 20 (1966) 159-87. Many commentators feel that the term “hymn” is not applicable to this chapter, for it is quite unlike the recognized NT hymns in christological content and parallel format. To many scholars it seems to be an afterthought added to the original sequence of the letter, since the first part of 12:31 matches the second part of 14:1 very well. Paul’s original thought would then have been that the Corinthians were not to seek after a lowly gift, like speaking in tongues, but rather a higher gift, viz. prophecy. However, on later reflection he thought of the gift that they should really seek after, which would make even prophecy insignificant by comparison, viz. love. It would also negate the tendency of the charismatics to be proud and self-seeking. So Paul added what is now ch. 13, inserting it along with 12:31b and 14:1a. The eschatological aspect of *agap* has been emphasized by K. Barth, especially in the light of the context of ch. 15. The classic treatment of love in Paul and the NT is that of A. Nygren, *Agape and Eros* (London, 1953). He stresses that unlike the highest form of human love, whereby man seeks self-perfection in what is noble and spiritual, *agap* comes from God to us in Jesus Christ. It is unmotivated and creative, seeks nothing and is unattracted by goodness. God loved us as sinners in Jesus. We must open ourselves to that love and allow God’s love to be active in us in the unmotivated love of others. (See also V. Warnach, *Agape* [Düsseldorf, 1951].)

Haydock’s Catholic Bible Commentary, 1859 Ed.

Ver. 31. *Be zealous for the better gifts*: which are to be more or less esteemed, as they are accompanied with charity, as he is going to *shew* in the next chapter. (Witham)

CHAPTER XIII.

The apostle here shews the necessity of the great virtue of charity, that is, of the love of God, and of our neighbour. (Witham)

ThDNT G. Kittel, ed., *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament* (Grand Rapids, 1964-). English version of *ThWNT*

Interpr Interpretation

Ver. 1. *A tinkling cymbal.* Which may give notice, and be beneficial to others, but not to itself. (Witham) --- Without charity, both towards every individual, and especially towards the common body of the Church, none of the aforesaid gifts will be available. (Bristow)

Ver. 2-3. These prove that faith without good works, and especially charity for God and our neighbour, cannot avail to eternal life; faith and charity are both essentially necessary. Hence St. Augustine declares, that where there is not true faith, there cannot be justice; because the just man liveth by faith: and where charity is not, there can be no justice, which if they had, they would never tear in pieces the body of Christ, which is the Church. (De fid. ad Pet. chap. xxxix.)

Ver. 4. *Charity....dealeth not perversely.* [1] The Greek word here seems taken from the Latin. St. Chrysostom expounds it, is not rash, but acteth prudently and considerately. Others, it is not light or inconstant. Others, it *braggeth*, or *vaunteth not*, as in the Protestant translation. (Witham)

Ver. 5. *Is not ambitious;*[2] which is also the sense of some Greek copies, but in others, and in St. Chrysostom, it signifies, it is not ashamed of any one. (Witham)

Ver. 8. *Prophecies and tongues last no longer than this life. --- Knowledge shall be destroyed,* that is, that imperfect knowledge we have in this world. For now we *know only in part*, we only see, as it were, through a *glass*, and imperfectly. --- *Faith*, which is of things *that appear not*, and *hope*, which is of things that we enjoy not, will *cease* in heaven, but *charity*, the greater, or *greatest* even of *these* three, will remain, and be increased in heaven. (Witham)

Ver. 10. St. Augustine proves from this text, that the saints in heaven have a more perfect knowledge of what passes here below, than when they sojourned on earth. (De Civit. Dei. lib. xxii. chap. 29.)

Ver. 11. *When I was a child.* I, like you, formerly judged of the goodness and excellency of these spiritual gifts by the advantages the procured; but after the Almighty had bestowed upon me his particular light, my opinion was far otherwise. Prophecy, and the gifts of languages are certainly very estimable gifts, yet charity is much more excellent. (Calmet) --- It is by charity we approach near to God, that we become his true image. Can we, then, wonder at the magnificent praises, glorious prerogatives, and surprising effects St. Paul gives to this all necessary virtue?

[1] Ver. 4. Non agit perperam, *ou perpereuetai*. St. Chrysostom says, *toutesti ou propeteuetai*, non est præceps, aut temeraria.

[2] Ver. 5. Non est ambitiosa. Some Greek copies, *philotimeî*. In the ordinary Greek, and in St. Chrysostom, *ouk achemonei*. It is not ashamed to undergo any disgrace for God, or our neighbour's sake.

Barclay's Daily Study Bible Series (not Catholic)

1 Corinthians 13:4–7

IN verses 4–7 Paul lists fifteen characteristics of Christian love.

Love is patient. The Greek word (*makrothumein*) used in the New Testament always describes patience with *people* and not patience with circumstances. Chrysostom said that it is the word used of the man who is wronged and who has it easily in his power to avenge himself and who yet will not do it. It describes the man who is slow to anger and it is used of God himself in his relationship with men. In our dealings with men, however refractory and however unkind and hurting they are, we must exercise the same patience as God exercises with us. Such patience is not the sign of weakness but the sign of strength; it is not defeatism but rather the only way to victory. Fosdick points out that no one treated Lincoln with more contempt than did Stanton. He called him “a low cunning clown”, he nicknamed him “the original gorilla” and said that Du Chaillu was a fool to wander about Africa trying to capture a gorilla when he could have found one so easily at Springfield, Illinois. Lincoln said nothing. He made Stanton his war minister because he was the best man for the job and he treated him with every courtesy. The years wore on. The night came when the assassin’s bullet murdered Lincoln in the theatre. In the little room to which the President’s body was taken stood that same Stanton, and, looking down on Lincoln’s silent face, he said through his tears, “There lies the greatest ruler of men the world has ever seen.” The patience of love had conquered in the end.

Love is kind. Origen had it that this means that love is “sweet to all.” Jerome spoke of what he called “the benignity” of love. So much Christianity is good but unkind. There was no more religious a man than Philip the Second of Spain, and yet he founded the Spanish Inquisition and thought he was serving God by massacring those who thought differently from him. The famous Cardinal Pole declared that murder and adultery could not compare in heinousness with heresy. Apart altogether from that persecuting spirit, there is in so many good people an attitude of criticism. So many good Church people would have sided with the rulers and not with Jesus if they had had to deal with the woman taken in adultery.

Love knows no envy. It has been said that there are really only two classes of people in this world—“those who are millionaires and those who would like to be.” There are two kinds of envy. The one covets the possessions of other people; and such envy is very difficult to avoid because it is a very human thing. The other is worse—it grudges the very fact that others should have what it has not; it does not so much want things for itself as wish that others had not got them. Meanness of soul can sink no further than that.

Love is no braggart. There is a self-effacing quality in love. True love will always be far more impressed with its own unworthiness than its own merit. In Barrie’s story Sentimental Tommy used to come home to his mother after some success at school and say, “Mother, am I no’ a wonder?” Some people confer their love with the idea that they are conferring a favour. But the real lover cannot ever get over the wonder that he is loved. Love is kept humble by the consciousness that it can never offer its loved one a gift which is good enough.

Love is not inflated with its own importance. Napoleon always advocated the sanctity of the home and the obligation of public worship—for others. Of himself he said, “I am not a man like other men. The laws of morality do not apply to me.” The really great man never thinks of his own importance. Carey, who began life as a cobbler, was one of the greatest missionaries and certainly one of the greatest linguists the world has ever seen. He translated at least parts of the Bible into no fewer than thirty-four Indian languages. When he came to India, he was regarded with dislike and contempt. At a dinner party a snob, with the idea of humiliating him, said in a tone that everyone could hear, “I suppose, Mr. Carey, you once worked as a shoe-maker.” “No, your lordship,” answered Carey, “not a shoe-maker, only a cobbler.” He did not even claim to make shoes—only to mend them. No one likes the “important” person. Man “dressed in a little brief authority” can be a sorry sight.

Love does not behave gracelessly. It is a significant fact that in Greek the words for *grace* and for *charm* are the same. There is a kind of Christianity which takes a delight in being blunt and almost brutal. There is strength in it but there is no winsomeness. Lightfoot of Durham said of Arthur F. Sim, one of his students, “Let him go where he will, his face will be a sermon in itself.” There is a graciousness in Christian love which never forgets that courtesy and tact and politeness are lovely things.

Love does not insist upon its rights. In the last analysis, there are in this world only two kinds of people—those who always insist upon their privileges and those who always remember their responsibilities; those who are always thinking of what life owes them and those who never forget what they owe to life. It would be the key to almost all the problems which surround us today if men would think less of their rights and more of their duties. Whenever we start thinking about “our place”, we are drifting away from Christian love.

Love never flies into a temper. The real meaning of this is that Christian love never becomes exasperated with people. Exasperation is always a sign of defeat. When we lose our tempers, we lose everything. Kipling said that it was the test of a man if he could keep his head when everyone else was losing his and blaming it on him, and if when he was hated he did not give way to hating. The man who is master of his temper can be master of anything.

Love does not store up the memory of any wrong it has received. The word translated *store up* (*logizeshthai*) is an accountant’s word. It is the word used for entering up an item in a ledger so that it will not be forgotten. That is precisely what so many people do. One of the great arts in life is to learn what to forget. A writer tells how “in Polynesia, where the natives spend much of their time in fighting and feasting, it is customary for each man to keep some reminders of his hatred. Articles are suspended from the roofs of their huts to keep alive the memory of their wrongs—real or imaginary.” In the same way many people nurse their wrath to keep it warm; they brood over their wrongs until it is impossible to forget them. Christian love has learned the great lesson of forgetting.

Love finds no pleasure in evil-doing. It might be better to translate this that love finds no pleasure in anything that is wrong. It is not so much delight in doing the wrong thing that is meant, as the malicious pleasure which comes to most of us when we hear something derogatory about someone else. It is one of the queer traits of human nature that very often we prefer to hear

of the misfortune of others rather than of their good fortune. It is much easier to weep with them that weep than to rejoice with those who rejoice. Christian love has none of that human malice which finds pleasure in all reports.

Love rejoices with the truth. That is not so easy as it sounds. There are times when we definitely do not want the truth to prevail; and still more times when it is the last thing we wish to hear. Christian love has no wish to veil the truth; it has nothing to conceal and so is glad when the truth prevails.

Love can endure anything. It is just possible that this may mean “love can cover anything,” in the sense that it will never drag into the light of day the faults and mistakes of others. It would far rather set about quietly mending things than publicly displaying and rebuking them. More likely it means that love can bear any insult, any injury, any disappointment. It describes the kind of love that was in the heart of Jesus himself,

“Thy foes might hate, despise, revile,

Thy friends unfaithful prove;

Unwearied in forgiveness still,

Thy heart could only love.”

Love is completely trusting. This characteristic has a twofold aspect. (i) *In relation to God* it means that love takes God at his word, and can take every promise which begins “Whosoever” and say, “That means me.” (ii) *In relation to our fellow men* it means that love always believes the best about other people. It is often true that we make people what we believe them to be. If we show that we do not trust people, we may make them untrustworthy. If we show people that we trust them absolutely, we may make them trustworthy. When Arnold became headmaster of Rugby he instituted a completely new way of doing things. Before him, school had been a terror and a tyranny. Arnold called the boys together and told them that there was going to be much more liberty and much less flogging. “You are free,” he said, “but you are responsible—you are gentlemen. I intend to leave you much to yourselves, and put you upon your honour, because I believe that if you are guarded and watched and spied upon, you will grow up knowing only the fruits of servile fear; and when your liberty is finally given you, as it must be some day, you will not know how to use it.” The boys found it difficult to believe. When they were brought before him they continued to make the old excuses and to tell the old lies. “Boys,” he said, “if you say so, it must be true—I believe your word.” The result was that there came a time in Rugby when boys said, “It is a shame to tell Arnold a lie—he always believes you.” He believed in them and he made them what he believed them to be. Love can ennoble even the ignoble by believing the best.

Love never ceases to hope. Jesus believed that no man is hopeless. Adam Clark was one of the great theologians but at school he was very slow to learn. One day a distinguished visitor paid a visit to the school, and the teacher singled out Adam Clark and said, “That is the stupidest boy in the school.” Before he left the school, the visitor came to the boy and said kindly, “Never mind, my boy, you may be a great scholar some day. Don’t be discouraged but try hard, and keep

on trying.” The teacher was hopeless, the visitor was hopeful, and—who knows?—it may well have been that word of hope which made Adam Clark what he one day became.

Love bears everything with triumphant fortitude. The verb used here (*hupomenein*) is one of the great Greek words. It is generally translated *to bear* or *to endure*; but what it really describes is not the spirit which can passively bear things, but the spirit which, in bearing them, can conquer and transmute them. It has been defined as “a masculine constancy under trial.” George Matheson, who lost his sight and who was disappointed in love, wrote in one of his prayers that he might accept God’s will, “Not with dumb resignation but with holy joy; not only with the absence of murmur but with a song of praise.” Love can bear things, not merely with passive resignation, but with triumphant fortitude, because it knows that “a father’s hand will never cause his child a needless tear.”

One thing remains to be said—when we think of the qualities of this love as Paul portrays them we can see them realized in the life of Jesus himself.

THE SUPREMACY OF LOVE

1 Corinthians 13:8–13

IN verses 8–13 Paul has three final things to say of this Christian love.

(i) He stresses its *absolute permanency*. When all the things in which men glory have passed away love will still stand. In one of the most wonderfully lyrical verses of scripture *The Song of Solomon* (8:7) sings, “Many waters cannot quench love, neither can floods drown it.” The one unconquerable thing is love. That is one of the great reasons for believing in immortality. When love is entered into, there comes into life a relationship against which the assaults of time are helpless and which transcends death.

(ii) He stresses its *absolute completeness*. As things are, what we see are reflections in a mirror. That would be even more suggestive to the Corinthians than it is to us. Corinth was famous for its manufacture of mirrors. But the modern mirror as we know it, with its perfect reflection, did not emerge until the thirteenth century. The Corinthian mirror was made of highly polished metal and, even at its best, gave but an imperfect reflection. It has been suggested that what this phrase means is that we see as through a window made with horn. In those days windows were so made and all that could be seen through them was a dim and shadow outline. In fact the Rabbis had a saying that it was through such a window that Moses saw God.

In this life Paul feels we see only the reflections of God and are left with much that is mystery and riddle. We see that reflection in God’s world, for the work of anyone’s hands tells us something about the workman, we see it in the Gospel and we see it in Jesus Christ. Even if in Christ we have the perfect revelation, our seeking minds can grasp it only in part, for the finite can never grasp the infinite. Our knowledge is still like the knowledge of a child. But the way of love will lead us in the end to a day when the veil is drawn aside and we see face to face and know even as we are known. We cannot ever reach that day without love, because God is love and only he who loves can see him.

(iii) He stresses its *absolute supremacy*. Great as faith and hope are, love is still greater. Faith without love is cold, and hope without love is grim. Love is the fire which kindles faith and it is the light which turns hope into certainty.

Gospel

[Lk 4:21-30](#)

Jesus began speaking in the synagogue, saying:
“Today this Scripture passage is fulfilled in your hearing.”
And all spoke highly of him
and were amazed at the gracious words that came from his mouth.
They also asked, “Isn’t this the son of Joseph?”
He said to them, “Surely you will quote me this proverb,
‘Physician, cure yourself,’ and say,
‘Do here in your native place
the things that we heard were done in Capernaum.’”
And he said, “Amen, I say to you,
no prophet is accepted in his own native place.
Indeed, I tell you,
there were many widows in Israel in the days of Elijah
when the sky was closed for three and a half years
and a severe famine spread over the entire land.
It was to none of these that Elijah was sent,
but only to a widow in Zarephath in the land of Sidon.
Again, there were many lepers in Israel
during the time of Elisha the prophet;
yet not one of them was cleansed, but only Naaman the Syrian.”
When the people in the synagogue heard this,
they were all filled with fury.
They rose up, drove him out of the town,
and led him to the brow of the hill
on which their town had been built,
to hurl him down headlong.

But Jesus passed through the midst of them and went away.

Jerome’s Biblical Commentary

.21. *in your hearing of my words, Scripture has been fulfilled:* These words are spoken out of the biblical understanding of the power of the word of God (Is 55:10f.). Again, the pf. tense of the verb (*pepl r tai*) indicates that the moment of salvation is already being achieved in the person of Jesus; the effects of his presence, or rather, his continuing presence through the gift of the Spirit in the preaching of prophets and apostles (Eph 2:20), keeps the divine word always being felt (see H. Conzelmann, *Theology of St. Luke*, 36-37).22a. *kept wondering:* With the impf. tense

of the verbs, Lk indicates the continuing admiration and astonishment of the people at the charm and eloquence of Jesus. Although the phrase “words of grace” is ordinarily understood in an aesthetic sense, still the close connection with the Isaian citation leads some commentators to give it a more spiritual meaning: words proclaiming God’s good pleasure.

22b-24. The abrupt change in the attitude of the Nazarenes is best explained by a lapse of time. Luke is now relating a subsequent visit (Mk 6:1-6; Mt 13:54-58 par.). *is not this Joseph’s son?*: Luke has already recorded very clearly the original conception (1:26-38) of Jesus, and so he can afford to give the normal reaction of the Nazarenes. Mt 13:55 has “son of the carpenter,” whereas Mk, which lacks any infancy Narrative, has the people speak in a way contrary to Jewish custom, “the son of Mary” (6:3). **23.** *you will surely quote at me this proverb*: Luke purposely employs the fut. tense, for in his Gospel Jesus has not yet appeared in Capernaum. After his miracles in this other city of Galilee, the Nazarenes will want to see Jesus (8:19-21), i.e., to see some miracles, though like Herod they lack faith (9:9; 23:8). At this, point, Mk (6:5) has “one of the boldest statements in the Gospels” (V. Taylor, *The Gospel According to St. Mark* [London, 1953] 301): “he was not able to perform any miracle there.” The implied reason: because of their unbelief. Evidently, Jesus’ miracles were intended to deepen faith in Messianic salvation and not to exert external force on a person’s freedom. **24.** *Amen I say to you*: Lk usually omits this Semitism; *amen* is a transliterated Hebr word meaning “true, steadfast.” It is used as an adverb, and the entire phrase always introduces a solemn declaration uttered only by Jesus in the Gospels (31 times in Mt; 13 times in Mk; 6 times in Lk). **25-27.** These verses may introduce us to a third visit of Jesus to Nazareth. But they are not only without parallel in Mt and Mk but their whole theology is distinctly Lucan. Scholars, therefore, will always suspect here an independent Lucan composition summarizing the entire work of Jesus. **25.** *in the days of Elijah*: Jesus compares himself to Elijah and the drought (17:1-18:45) and to Elisha and the cure of Naaman (2 Kgs 5). Like both of these prophets, Jesus too will eventually direct his apostles beyond Judaism to the entire Gentile world. We must accept the comparison as it is intended, for the parallel is not complete. Elijah was not greatly honored at Zarephath, nor was Elisha ever rejected by Israel. Nazareth does not necessarily represent all Israel, nor Capernaum the Gentile country. Clearly implied here is a theology of election. The Gentiles may not be as worthy as the Jews, but God in his mercy has chosen them for his own. *three years and six months*: Although 1 Kgs 17:1 announces a three-year drought, Lk, like Jas 5:17, extends the time to three and one-half years. The latter, number echoes the classic figure used in apocalyptic literature for the duration of persecution and distress, even the eschatological struggle (Dn 7:25; 12:7; Ap 11:2; 12:6, Ap 12:6, 14). **28-30.** The conclusion of the episode is written in language very similar to the rejection of Stephen (Acts 7:58) and of Paul (Acts 13:50). Luke evidently sees universal Church history already taking place in Jesus, for the spirit of Jesus is responsible for whatever happens in the Church. **29.** *to the brow of the hill*: Nazareth, clinging to a hillside, had several steep slopes from which a man could fall to his death. *passed through their midst and went away*: This does not necessarily imply a miracle. At the decisive moment no Nazarene dared to molest him. Such spasmodic changes of attitude are recorded in many social revolutions (M. J. Lagrange, *Luc*, 146). Similar incidents are more frequent in Jn (Jn 7:30, 45f. 8:59), with the theological

par. Parallel pasage(s) in the Synoptic Gospels

Hebr Hebrew

implication that the hour had not yet come. Only in 9:51 will Lk admit that the days were completed for his “being taken up.”

Haydock’s Catholic Bible Commentary, 1859 Ed.

Ver. 21. By this Christ wished to shew that he was the Messiah foretold by the prophet Isaias, whom they so anxiously expected: he declares himself to be the person pointed out by the prophet. There seems also to be a secret reprehension in these words of Christ; as if he were to say: Why are you so desirous to behold the Messiah, whom, when he is before your eyes, you will not receive? Why do you seek him in the prophets, when you neither understand the prophets, nor perceive the truth of their predictions, when they are fulfilled before you eyes? (Maldonatus)

Ver. 23. I see you will object to me this similitude, (*parabolen*) or trite saying, applied to such as attended to the concerns of others, and neglected their own. (Menochius)

Ver. 30. *Passing through the midst of them, went his way.* Perhaps by making himself on a sudden invisible, or by striking them with blindness, or by changing their minds, and hearts, as he pleased. (Witham) --- All commentators observe on these words, that the evangelist wished to shew that Christ worked a miracle on this occasion, and by it proved his divinity. This is the opinion of Sts. Euthymius, Ambrose, and Thomas Aquinas. St. Ambrose says, we must observe that Christ did not suffer from necessity, but because he wished it. He was not taken by the Jews, but delivered up himself; at his own pleasure he is seized, and at his own pleasure he escapes; when he wills it, he is condemned; and when he wills it, he is freed. The most common opinion is, that he rendered himself invisible on this occasion; though others imagine that he changed their wills, or withheld their hands. (Maldonatus) --- When we observe the outrageous treatment Jesus Christ met with from the people of Nazareth, we are not surprised that he should shut up the fountain of his beneficence against them for their incredulity, and return to Capharnaum. (Haydock)

Barclay’s Daily Study Bible Series (not Catholic)

ONE of Jesus’ very early visits was to Nazareth, his home town. Nazareth was not a village. It is called a polis which means a town or city; and it may well have had as many as 20,000 inhabitants. It stood in a little hollow in the hills on the lower slopes of Galilee near the Plain of Jezreel. But a boy had only to climb to the hilltop above the town and he could see an amazing panorama for miles around.

Sir George Adam Smith described the scene from the hilltop. The history of Israel stretched out before the watcher’s eye. There was the plain of Esdraelon where Deborah and Barak had fought; where Gideon had won his victories; where Saul had crashed to disaster and Josiah had

been killed in battle; there was Naboth's vineyard and the place where Jehu slaughtered Jezebel; there was Shunem where Elisha had lived; there was Carmel where Elijah had fought his epic battle with the prophets of Baal; and, blue in the distance, there was the Mediterranean and the isles of the sea.

Not only the history of Israel was there; the world unfolded itself from the hilltop above Nazareth. Three great roads skirted it. There was the road from the south carrying pilgrims to Jerusalem. There was the great Way of the Sea which led from Egypt to Damascus with laden caravans moving along it. There was the great road to the east bearing caravans from Arabia and Roman legions marching out to the eastern frontiers of the Empire. It is wrong to think of Jesus as being brought up in a backwater; he was brought up in a town in sight of history and with the traffic of the world almost at its doors.

We have already described the synagogue service and this passage gives us a vivid picture of it in action. It was not a book which Jesus took, for at this time everything was written on rolls. It was from Isaiah 61 that he read. In verse 20 the Authorized Version speaks misleadingly of *the minister*. The official in question was the Chazzan. He had many duties. He had to take out and put back the sacred rolls of scripture; he had to keep the synagogue clean; he had to announce the coming of the Sabbath with three blasts of the silver trumpet from the synagogue roof; and he was also the teacher in the village school. Verse 20 says that Jesus sat down. That gives us the impression that he was finished. In point of fact it means that he was about to start, because the speaker gave the address seated and Rabbis taught sitting down. (cp. our own phrase, a professor's *chair*).

What angered the people was the apparent compliment that Jesus paid to gentiles. The Jews were so sure that they were God's people that they utterly despised all others. They believed that "God had created the gentiles to be fuel for the fires of hell." And here was this young Jesus, whom they all knew, preaching as if the *gentiles* were specially favoured by God. It was beginning to dawn upon them that there were things in this new message the like of which they had never dreamed.

We must note two other things.

(i) It was Jesus' habit to go to the synagogue on the Sabbath. There must have been many things with which he radically disagreed and which grated on him—*yet he went*. The worship of the synagogue might be far from perfect; yet Jesus never omitted to join himself to God's worshipping people on God's day.

(ii) We have only to read the passage of Isaiah that Jesus read to see the difference between Jesus and John the Baptist. John was the preacher of doom and at his message men must have shuddered with terror. It was a *gospel*—Good News—which Jesus brought. Jesus, too, knew the wrath of God but it was always the wrath of love.

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