

Never Lose Your Hunger

16 - Reclaiming the Gates
Church on the Park | Sunday, 17 JAN 2016

Text: “For I am jealous for you with a godly jealousy; for I betrothed you to one husband, so that to Christ I might present you as a pure virgin” (2 Cor. 11:2).

Theme: Never lose your hunger and thirst for Jesus himself.

Intro: Today, I want to get back to talking about the spices in the anointing oil. These spices made the anointing oil fragrant, giving it a totally unique quality. For those who have eyes to see, these spices teach us about the anointing of the Holy Spirit. They will also help us to discern between a true and false anointing. In these spices we see how God works. The first spice we looked at was Myrrh and we saw how God through his anointing makes the bitter sweet. We saw this especially through the death and resurrection of Jesus.

The second spice is cinnamon and this is the spice we will focus on today. Cinnamon reminds us of the burning zeal that Bridegroom Jesus has for his bride, the church. It also speaks to us about the holy passion we as Christ’s bride should have for our Bridegroom, Jesus the King. When I was a teenager I got really sick and lost my appetite. For about six months I couldn’t eat; I was skin and bones, and dropped down to 27kgs (60 lbs). I never want you to lose your hunger for God and not be able to run after him.

1) The Holy Spirit sparks in you a holy passion for your Bridegroom, Jesus (2 Cor. 11:2).

- One of the **signs** that the **Holy Spirit** has come into your heart is that he **sparks** within you a **passion** (a **holy zeal**) for your **Bridegroom**.
 - This love for Jesus is something **beyond natural love**. It’s not something you make happen, it can only be **given** you from heaven.
 - It’s a divine heavenly **desire** for **God**, a **hunger** that comes from **deep within** (Psalm 42:1)
 - This hunger and thirst does not **die** when you are **depressed**, it only **increases**.
 - **Before** you were saved you were **like a lampstand** that was never used—covered in cobwebs, dark and tarnished. But Jesus, your high priest came along and saved you. He cleaned up your lampstand, supplied the oil and set it on fire, so that it could shine.
 - This **love** can be **cultivated** though—it can **grow**. It also needs to be **guarded**.
 - The **devil’s main tactic** is to put out this fire of love for Jesus in your heart. Remember, **Pilgrim’s Progress** (House of the Interpreter).
 - This zeal and love **starts** within us, but it’s **immature** at first.
 - **Immature zeal** can be very **dangerous**, like an **out of control fire**.
 - We need spiritual **fathers** to guide us to have a **sweet zeal**.
 - Notice the spice in the anointing oil is **sweet** cinnamon.
 - I’d like to show you how this zeal can be immature at first. Let’s look at **Joshua** (Numbers 11:24-30, *28-30).
 - Look at Joshua reaction: “Moses my Lord, **forbid** them!”
 - Moses refers to this as Joshua’s zeal, but it’s out of place.
 - Joshua needs the **guidance** of his spiritual father to learn God’s heart.

- Paul said something similar, “Do not **quench** the Spirit. Do not despise **prophecies**. **Test** all things; hold fast what is good. **Abstain** from every form of evil” (1 Thes. 5:19-22).
- The **disciples** also reacted similarly to Joshua, trying to forbid something out of zeal for their Lord (Mark 9:38-42).
 - Listen to how **Jesus responds** to them.
- **How do you keep your zeal sweet?**
 - You **focus** your **zeal** on developing a **closer relationship with Jesus**, rather than being a **police** of other people.
 - Song of songs refers to this spice of **cinnamon**—part of the **fragrance for the Bridegroom** (SOS 4:12-16).
 - You allow **Scripture** and **spiritual fathers** to correct you—especially through **preaching**.
- The Holy Spirit sparks a divine passion in you for your Bridegroom, Jesus, but **don’t let** this divine **passion** get **misdirected**.

2) Never lose your divine hunger and thirst for your King, Jesus (2 Cor. 11:3-4).

- “But I am afraid that, as the serpent deceived Eve by his craftiness, your minds will be led astray from the **simplicity** and **purity** of **devotion** to Christ”
 - In other words, from the tree of **life** (relationship) to the tree of the **knowledge** of good and evil (intellectualism, head knowledge).
 - **simplicity** (*haplotes*) = sincerity, purity, singleness of heart
 - **purity** (*hagnotes*) = purity, without moral defect
 - A **sincere** and **singleness** of **purity** to lovingly **obey** the Lord and **follow** his ways.
- There are **certain teachings**, **churches** and **groups** that will **quench** your **simple** and **pure** devotion to Jesus.
 - They will make things very **complicated**. They will think that they are **better** than others.
 - They will make you **zealous** for many **things** and **zealous** about how **others** act, rather than zealous for **JESUS HIMSELF**.
 - They will get you **away** from **God’s Word** and devoted to the **doctrines** of **popular** or **obscure** people (rather than the doctrines of Scripture that impart life).
- **Don’t be deceived!** Don’t be led astray! Seek **intimacy** with Jesus.
 - Let your fire be for the Lord and knowing him more.
- Let the **bride’s passion** for her bridegroom in Song of songs, be your passion.
 - “May he **kiss me** with the kisses of his mouth! For **your love** is better than wine.” (SOS. 1:2)
- Don’t be satisfied with **preaching alone** or **reading Scripture alone** (note: follow my reasoning here closely so you don’t misunderstand).
 - These are a **beginning**, a **foundational beginning**—without which you WILL be led astray.
 - But while you hear preaching and read Scripture, let it draw you to **FACE TO FACE encounter** with Jesus.
 - **Long** for him to kiss your soul. Long for him to make the things you **read** about **real in your life**.
 - See his love as better than anything, “better than wine.”
- Song of Songs 1:3-4
 - Love the **anointing** that is on Jesus, and that is found in his name, and let that anointing be poured on you.
- This is especially illustrated in Jesus’ words to the **Ephesians** church in **Revelation** (Rev. 2:1-7).

- The Ephesians had a **zeal** for what is **good, right and true**.
- But, they **forgot** their **zeal** for the **Lord himself**, their **devotion** to him.
 - “But I have this against you, that you have left your first [most important] love [agape]”
 - Your first ministry is to Jesus.
- The promise Jesus gives in the end of his address to the Ephesians is to overcome.
 - **Overcome** what?
 - Overcome their **busyness** and **distractions**, even their **distractions** from **good things**.
 - **What does a life devoted to Jesus himself look like?**
 - It looks like **Mary** sitting at the feet of Jesus’ **drinking** in his words (Luke 10:38-42).
 - It looks like **prayer, worship** and **love** for God’s Word.
 - It pursues God’s face, seeking **intimacy** with Jesus.
 - “I am coming to you and will remove your **lampstand** out of its place—unless you repent”
 - Churches are lampstands
 - However, the light of our good deeds only shines through Jesus being our first love.
 - Just like the priests of old had to continually **tend** the lampstand, providing fresh oil and trimming the wicks, you also need to cultivate your love for Jesus.
- “**Draw me** [seize me, take hold of me] and let us run together! The king has brought me into his chambers”
 - Compare with **Matthew 6:6**

3) Surround yourself with friends who foster your love for Jesus rather than sap it away (SOS 1:4b, 8; 5:1c, 9; 6:1, 10, 13; 8:5, 8-9 etc).

- Listen to the **friends** in the Song of Songs.
 - “**We will rejoice** and delight in you; We will praise your love more than wine” (NIV)
 - The **friends** of the **Bridegroom** are those who help arrange and aid the wedding/ marriage.
 - They are the main **supports**.
 - These are the **type of friends** you **need** in your spiritual life
 - Those who are going to **help** you **draw near** to Jesus and rejoice with you as you get **closer** to him.
- Notice how the friends **celebrate** the **love** of the King. See how happy they are.
 - “We will rejoice in you and be glad; we will extol your love more than wine. Rightly do they love you.”
 - There are those who will not rejoice with you be zealous for Jesus. But, you need spiritual friends who see Jesus’ worth and **spur you** on.
- This **journey** with Jesus is **nearly impossible** without **godly friends**.
- Those you **surround** yourself with will either aid or fight against your relationship with the Bridegroom.
- As believers, we are both the bride and friends of the Bridegroom, helping others walk with Jesus.

Conclusion: When your saved the Holy Spirit **sparks** a divine love in you for Jesus. Let no one **steal** that love away through complicated religion. Never lose that hunger for Jesus himself. **Surround** yourself with godly friends that will foster your intimacy with Jesus, rather than distract you.

END NOTES

The five-fold cry to come birthed in your heart through the Holy Spirit (see personal journal)

11:2 Paul puts the matter in the framework of betrothal and marriage. He sees himself as the father of the congregation (1 Cor 4:15), and as their father he has betrothed them to Christ—to one man, not a slew of husbands. Among the Jews, betrothal was the first stage of marriage, and it took place at a very early age.¹⁵⁹ Unlike betrothal in the modern era, Jewish betrothal in the first century was not something that was entered into lightly, nor was it easily broken. The betrothal could be canceled only by an official bill of divorce. If a betrothed woman had sexual relations with any other man, it was treated as adultery.¹⁶¹ The betrothed couple did not live together until the marriage ceremony when they entered the wedding canopy and the marriage blessings were recited. A year therefore normally passed before the woman moved to her husband's home where they would take up common residence. The responsibility of safeguarding his daughter's virginity fell to the father (see Deut 22:13–21). This image of betrothal suggests that the Corinthians' marriage to Christ awaits consummation when Paul will present them to him at the Parousia. In the meantime they keep the spiritual father of the bride on tenterhooks lest she be defiled and disqualified for the marriage.¹⁶⁴ He feels a divine jealousy, as any father would, to preserve the purity of the bride for her husband. Unlike the Judaizers whom Paul accuses of having a dishonorable zeal for his Galatian converts (Gal 4:17), a divine zeal for the Corinthians motivates Paul.

Barnett correctly attempts to check confusing Paul's zeal for the Corinthians with "the petty possessiveness that mars human relationships" by connecting it to the theme of God's covenantal care for his people (LXX Isa 9:6; 37:32; 63:15–16)." Before his conversion, Paul zealously sought to preserve the purity of Israel by violently trying to purge Christians (Gal 1:16–17). His former zeal has now been converted by Christ's love. He no longer resorts to violence, and he zealously strives to preserve purity and devotion to Christ rather than to Jewish tribal traditions. (Garland, David E., *NAC Commentary*)

Agape Word Study

25. ἀγαπάω *agapáō*; contracted *agapō*, fut. *agapēsō*. To esteem, love, indicating a direction of the will and finding one's joy in something or someone. It differs from *philéo* (5368), to love, indicating feelings, warm affection, the kind of love expressed by a kiss (*philēma* [5370]).

(I) To love, to regard with strong affection (Luke 7:42; John 3:35; 8:42; 21:15; 2 Cor. 9:7; Rev. 3:9; Sept.: Gen. 24:67; Ruth 4:15). With the acc. of the corresponding noun, "his great love wherewith he loved us" (Eph. 2:4 [cf. 2 Sam. 13:15]). Perf. pass. part. *ēgapēménos*, beloved (Eph. 1:6; Col. 3:12).

(II) As referring to superiors and including the idea of duty, respect, veneration, meaning to love and serve with fidelity (Matt. 6:24; 22:37; Mark 12:30, 33; Luke 16:13;

Rom. 8:28; Sept.: 1 Sam. 18:16). The pres. act. part. used substantively of those loving the Lord, meaning faithful disciples or followers of the Lord (Eph. 6:24; James 1:12; 2:5; Sept.: Ex. 20:6; Deut. 5:10).

(III) To love, i.e., to regard with favor, goodwill, benevolence (Mark 10:21; Luke 7:5; John 10:17). In other passages the effects of benevolence are expressed as to wish well to or do good to. To love one's neighbor, one's enemies (Matt. 5:43; 19:19; 22:39; Luke 6:32). The fut. imper., *agapéseis*, especially in regard to one's enemies, should not necessarily be taken to mean doing that which will please them, but choosing to show them favor and goodwill (Matt. 5:43, 44). One should realize the need of people to be changed through Christ's grace, and do everything possible to bring them to a knowledge of the Lord. This may involve expressions of benevolence or even discipline and punishment, all as the outworking of this love. In 2 Cor. 12:15 it means, "even if, having conferred greater benefits on you, I receive less from you" (a.t.).

(IV) Spoken of things, to love, i.e., to delight in (Luke 11:43; John 3:19; Heb. 1:9; 1 John 2:15). The expression "not to love" means to neglect, disregard, condemn (Rev. 12:11, meaning they condemned their lives even unto death, i.e., they willingly exposed themselves to death). Other references: Matt. 5:44, 46; Mark 12:31; Luke 6:27, 35; 7:47; 10:27; John 3:16; 11:5; 12:43; 13:1, 23, 34; 14:15, 21, 23, 24, 28, 31; 15:9, 12, 17; 17:23, 24, 26; 19:26; 21:7, 16, 20; Rom. 8:37; 9:13, 25; 13:8, 9; 1 Cor. 2:9; 8:3; 2 Cor. 11:11; Gal. 2:20; 5:14; Eph. 5:2, 25, 28, 33; Col. 3:19; 1 Thess. 1:4; 4:9; 2 Thess. 2:13, 16; 2 Tim. 4:8, 10; Heb. 12:6; James 2:8; 1 Pet. 1:8, 22; 2:17; 3:10; 2 Pet. 2:15; 1 John 2:10; 3:10, 11, 14, 18, 23; 4:7, 8, 10–12, 19–21; 5:1, 2; Rev. 1:5; 20:9.

(V) Contrast with *philéō* (5368), to be content with, denoting common interests, hence to befriend. Most scholars agree that *agapáō* is used of God's love toward man and vice versa, but *philéō* is rarely used by God of the love of men toward Him. In John 21:15, 16, it is a statement by Peter to Jesus and in verse seventeen it is only a question by Jesus to Peter. In verses fifteen and sixteen while Jesus was asking Peter, *Agapás me?* "Do you love me?" (a.t.) Peter was answering, *Philó se*, "I am your friend" (a.t.). In verse seventeen for the third time Jesus asked Peter, but this time He said, *Phileís me?*, "Are you my friend?" (a.t.). Jesus indeed makes us His friends in His great condescension, but for us to call ourselves His friends is somewhat of a presumption.

In the first question of Jesus to Peter in John 21:15, there is the comparison of love (*agápē*) toward Himself versus love toward material things, possibly the fish and bread which all were eating. The expression "more than these" may very well refer to the love of the other disciples present (John 21:2). Jesus was asking whether Peter's love was greater than that of the other disciples. In this question of Jesus to Peter in John 21:15 there is also the comparison of love (*agápē*) toward Himself versus the love of the other disciples present (John 21:2). Again Jesus was asking whether Peter's love was greater than that of the other disciples. Peter in his answer used the expression *sú oídas hóti philó se*, "thou knowest [*oída* (1492), to know intuitively] that I am your friend [*philéo* (5368)]" (a.t.). That was an upgrading by Peter of his devotion to Christ. The Lord, however, intuitively knew that Peter had not accepted His determination to die while He could avoid death (Matt. 16:22, 23). Not only did Peter not acknowledge Jesus as his friend, but denied that he even knew Him (Matt. 26:69–75), even as Jesus had predicted Peter would (Matt. 26:31–35). The Lord did not accept Peter's self-upgraded

love from *agápē* (26) to *phília* (5373), friendship. We love (*agapáō*) God because He first loved us (1 John 4:10). But none of us, especially Peter, earn the right to declare ourselves friends (*phílos* [5384]) of God. He alone can declare us as such, even as He did Abraham (James 2:23).

The second question Jesus asked Peter was not the same as the first. It was not a question of comparison. He did not ask Peter, “Do you love [*agapáō*] me more than these?” but simply “Do you love me [*agapáō*]?” (author’s translations). The Lord would be pleased with a personal statement of reciprocation of His love without a comparison of oneself to others. Jesus, being God incarnate, has intuitive knowledge of each one of His children. Thus the Lord would not accept Peter’s confession of personal attachment to Himself as that of friendship. Jesus intuitively knew that Peter was not always His devoted friend, for He knew that Peter would deny Him. Some have suggested that in this passage Christ was providing an opportunity for Peter to “redeem” himself from the earlier denial of the Lord.

The third question of Jesus to Peter was different, “Do you love me [*philéō*, Are you my friend]?” (a.t.). Are your interests, now that you have seen Me risen from the dead, different than before the resurrection? Peter became sorrowful because he understood the deeper meaning of Jesus’ question (John 21:17). His answer utilized two similar, but distinct verbs, *oída*, to know intuitively, and *ginóskō* (1097), to know experientially: “Lord, thou knowest, [*oídas*, intuitively] all things. Thou knowest [*gínōskeis*, know experientially] that I love thee [*philō*, that I am now your friend].” When it comes to the expression of the love of the Father God to the Son God, both verbs, *agapáō* and *philéō*, are used. John 3:35 states, “The Father loveth [*agapá*] the Son and hath given all things into his hand.” In John 5:20 we read, “For the Father loveth [*philei*] the Son, and showeth him all things that himself doeth.”

Agapáō and never *philéō* is used of love toward our enemies. The range of *philéō* is wider than that of *agapáō* which stands higher than *philéō* because of its moral import, i.e., love that expresses compassion. We are thus commanded to love (*agapáō*) our enemies, to do what is necessary to turn them to Christ, but never to befriend them (*philéō*) by adopting their interests and becoming friends on their level.

Deriv.: *agápē* (26), love; *agapētós* (27), beloved, dear.

Syn.: *philéō* (5368), to befriend, love.

Ant.: *miséō* (3404), to hate.

26. ἀγάπη *agápē*; gen. *agápēs*, fem. noun from *agapáō* (25), to love. Love, affectionate regard, goodwill, benevolence. With reference to God’s love, it is God’s willful direction toward man. It involves God doing what He knows is best for man and not necessarily what man desires. For example, John 3:16 states, “For God so loved [*ēgápēsen*] the world, that he gave.” What did He give? Not what man wanted, but what God knew man needed, i.e., His Son to bring forgiveness to man.

OT Roots (Kittle, TDNT) - of Love

ἀγαπάω, ἀγάπη, ἀγαπητός → φιλέω

A. Love in the OT.

1. Lexical analysis shows that the main word employed to express the concept of love in the OT is the root **בָּהֵל** with its derivatives **הִבְהִיל**, **מִבְהִיל**, **בָּהֵל**. Like the English word, this is used with reference to persons as well as things and actions, and there is a most informative religious as well as a profane use. LXX mostly renders it *ἀγαπᾶν*, and only seldom and in a secular context *φιλεῖν* (10 times; *φιλία* 5 times for **הִבְהִיל**), *ἐρᾶσθαι* (twice) or *φιλιάζειν* (once). The next term which calls for notice is the common Semitic root **חָנַן** which is used as a verb in the OT with one exception³ in the piel. In most cases this restricts the concept of love to that of pity for the needy, and it is often used, therefore, to denote the love of God. In almost every case God alone is called **חַנּוּן** (“merciful”). In translation of **חָנַן** the LXX uses *ἀγαπᾶν* only 5 times, in other cases using *ἐλεεῖν* as the most common rendering (26 times) or *οἰκτεῖρειν* (10 times). To this circle also belong the roots **נָחַם** (in the LXX mostly *ἐθέλειν*, otherwise *βούλεσθαι*, *βουλεύεσθαι*, *εὐδοκεῖν* and *ἀγαπᾶν*) and **רָצַח** (LXX *εὐδοκεῖν*, *προσδέχεσθαι*, *παραδέχεσθαι*, *εὐλογεῖν*, and *ἀγαπᾶν*). These cause the person or thing by which the emotion is evoked to be followed by **בְּ** “to have pleasure in.” Mention may also be made of **קָשַׁח** “to adhere to someone in love” (LXX, *προαιρεῖσθαι*, *ἐνθυμεῖσθαι*, *ἐλπίζειν*), and **בָּבַח** which in the OT is found only in Dt. 33:3, but which is common in Aramaic. Limited to the secular sphere is **גָּבַח** which denotes the sensually demanding love of the female, being used of the male only in Jer. 4:30. So, too, are the nouns **מִדְּבָר** and **דְּבָר**. **דְּבָר** “beloved” is used only in the phrase **דְּבָר יְהוָה** “beloved of Yahweh.”

From this analysis we learn that love in the OT is basically a spontaneous feeling¹² which impels to self-giving or, in relation to things, to the seizure of the object which awakens the feeling, or to the performance of the action in which pleasure is taken. Love is an inexplicable power of soul given in the inward person: **לֵבָב** (Dt. 6:5). One loves “with all one’s heart and soul and strength” (Dt. 6:5; 13:4) if one does justice to the feeling of love. Love and hate are the poles of life (Qoh. 3:8; 9:6). To the natural basis residing in sexuality it best corresponds that the power of love is directed to persons, so that the numerous statements about love for things or actions seem at once to belong to a weaker or more metaphorical usage.¹⁵ Indeed, it may be concluded that only where there is reference to the love of persons for persons does the living basis emerge on which the concept rests. This is present, of course, in the religious use. For the authors of the OT the love of God is always a correlative of His personal nature, just as love for Him is quite strictly love for His person, and only for His Word or Law or temple etc. on this basis of love for His person. Nevertheless love is such a powerful expression of personal life that even the metaphorical use of the term in relation to things hardly ever loses its passionate note except perhaps in the case of lesser objects.¹⁶

In the OT the thought of love is both profane or immanent and religious or theological. The former usage relates primarily to the mutual relation of the sexes, then to parents and children, then to friends, to masters and servants and society generally. It is natural that we should use this group to interpret the numerically less frequent but

for that very reason much more significant passages in which it is used religiously. For it is easier to grasp the content of the thought in the immanent sphere, and to judge the scope and bearing of the religious statements accordingly.

2. The Profane and Immanent Conception of love.

a. The most obvious passages calling for notice are those in which love unambiguously signifies the vital impulse of the sexes towards one another. For here we can see at a glance the impelling element behind it and its uniqueness, especially its complete difference from law. Sexuality is often strongly emphasised, and most strongly by Ezekiel, who uses אהב almost exclusively in the piel to denote sexual desire. Hosea and Jeremiah, too, often speak of love in this sense,¹⁸ and when the imperative אהב occurs in Hos. 3:1 it is simply denoting the sexual act even if in an obviously euphemistic form.

But even where there is no emphasising of its unrestricted nature, the love of man and woman, and particularly of husband and wife,²¹ is generally recognised quite simply as a given natural reality, and the fact that in Israel, too, it contributed to the ennoblement of life may be seen from its elevation to the theme of poetic glorification. The most forceful expression of the passion of love, almost hymnic in style, is to be found in the Song of Solomon 8:6: עֹהָ כַמּוֹת אֶהְבָּה Love is the positive power which in the erotic sphere is confronted by negating hatred as a primitive force of equally unknown origin. The story of Amnon and Tamar presents the brutal nature of both impulses with undisguised clarity (2 S. 13:1–22), and in the hysterical words of the bride of Samson: וְלֹא אֶהְבֵּתֵנִי וְרַק שִׁנְאַתֵּנִי וְלֹא אֶהְבֵּתֵנִי (Ju. 14:16; cf. 16:15; Gn. 29:31, 33), the same element finds haunting expression. Finally, even the Law has had cause to concern itself with the erotic symptoms of love and aversion (Dt. 21:15 ff.; 22:13 ff.; 24:1 ff.).

b. We seem to be dealing with something quite different when the same words אהב, רצה or חפץ are used to denote personal relationships which have no connexion with sexuality. Parenthood, blood relationship, friendship and legal partnership are the spheres in which the love which is free of the libido applies. Their connexion with sexual love is admitted to be very difficult to explain psychologically, and it may be that OT usage, like our own, relates under these modes of expression things which intrinsically have nothing to do with one another, so that in the analysis of such expressions we are rightly forced to speak metaphorically. That is to say, using the same words for sexual love and for non-sexual social relationships, we necessarily compare the latter with the love which bears an erotic emphasis. Yet this is perhaps going too far when we remember that in Hebrew, so far as we can see, there is absolutely no possibility of expressing, even though it may be felt (2 S. 1:26), the distinction between the two magnitudes of ἔρως and ἀγάπη. This means that the element common to both must have controlled the conceptions of the OT authors so strongly that they did not feel any need for verbal variation. Hence we should find particularly instructive for a perception of this normative element in the content of the word those passages which indicate the spontaneous and irrational nature of love as a feeling which wells up from personality. Jonathan loves David אֶהְבֵּת נַפְשׁוֹ, i.e., with the love which is proper to his own soul and which flows out from it (1 S. 20:17). Saul

loves David מֵאֵד, i.e., after the manner of a force which asserts itself in him (1 S. 16:21). Or Jonathan loves David כְּנַפְשׁוֹ (“as his own soul,” 1 S. 18:1, 3), i.e., his relation to David was not merely close, but just as much impelled by and necessary to life as his relationship to his own soul. He was identical with David in the same way as a man is identical with his soul. If it would seem that there could be almost no way of emulating this simple comparison as an expression of spiritual communion, the poetic form of the same thought in David’s lament for his friend is the more impressive: לִי נִפְלְאָתָה אֶהְבֵּתְךָ לִי (“thy love to me was wonderful”). For here the irrational element in the experience is more strongly emphasised, though there is not strictly any religious connexion.

c. We cannot always gather from the language the same intensity of feeling, nor perhaps is it always present, when the friend or relative²⁶ is simply described as אֶהֱבֵב. But it constitutes the greatness of the OT ethos that it can always orientate itself by the thought of love. Love is regarded as the inalienable constituent of humanity, and for this reason it is declared to be the norm of social intercourse and set under the impress and protection of the theonomic law. Basically, it is of little consequence that such regulations apply only to compatriots and fellowcitizens. The legal character of the statements, their claim to validity within a definite circle of jurisdiction, makes it necessary that there should be specific reference to certain legally defined persons—a form which is necessarily felt to be an alien restriction when the living basis of the term אֶהֱבֵב reminds us of the inner paradox of attempting to apply a non-legal word in a legal direction. Hence a statement like Lv. 19:18: וְאֶהְבֵּתָ לְרֵעֶךָ כַּמּוֹךְ, although couched in the legal style of the usual demand, and containing the legally very closely circumscribed term רֵעִי, is not really a legal statement, because the attitude denoted by the word אֶהֱבֵב is one of natural feeling which cannot be legally directed. If the statement were really to have the force of law, then the word אֶהֱבֵב would have to be taken purely phenomenologically as an injunction to act as one usually does in love. It is obvious, however, that even on this side it cannot be taken seriously as a legal ordinance, and in the analogous command to hate the observation בְּלִבְבְּךָ reveals that what is envisaged is a disposition. Hence all claim to legal competence must be renounced, and we are not to see in the legal form any more than an oxymoron designed to make the reader sharply aware that the ultimate concern of social legislation is to protect, foster and sometimes awaken the sense of brotherliness. This should be the basis of the legal relations, and to fulfil the command of love can only consist in not hindering the feeling of love, the rise of which is not connected with any act of will, but rather in accepting it in relation to the רֵעִי as though dealing with oneself: כַּמּוֹךְ. If the concern of the legislator is to order social life, he knows that all his ordinances in this direction can only be half measures if they are purely legal, and that the thought of power will always have a disruptive effect on society. Hence, whether or not he perceives its legal incongruity, he formulates the paradoxical command to love.

There is the obvious danger that in this way there might be established a much weakened and therefore legally competent concept of love in the sense of favouring etc.

But if we tried to interpret it along these lines, we should have great difficulty in proving it from analogous legal expressions. For Lv. 19:34, which gives us in the same form a command to love in relation to resident aliens (גֵּר), is burdened with the same difficulties. It seems rather that the conception of Jesus, namely, that this is one of the two commands on which the whole Law depends (Mt. 22:40), does more justice to the meaning of what is said. Jesus isolates the command to love from the other legal materials, and protects it from all attempts at juristic interpretation, which in any case can only be forced. For a command to love arrayed in the garb of law reduces the law *ad absurdum*, since it indicates the limit at which all divine or human legislation must halt, and demands a moral direction of life transcending that of law.

This observation leads us to a definite judgment concerning particularism, which lies in a restriction to fellow-nationals rather than to fellow-residents. In his apparently exclusive concern with the wholly concrete relations of law, the legislator introduces into his definitions a thought which presses rather beyond the actual wording when he specifically envisages as neighbours not merely those who are such by law but simply men who are worthy of an act of love. The LXX translator is hardly guilty of a material error when he greatly weakens the legal sound of גֵּר with his rendering ὁ πλησίον σου. The real concern is in fact with men who live in the most immediate vicinity.

On this basis the interpretation can move confidently to the conclusion that the גֵּר or גֵּרָא can from the human standpoint signify an enemy or hater and yet the attitude to him must be determined by love. The remarkable mutual interrelation of the two passages Dt. 22:1–4 and Ex. 23:4 f. seems at any rate to be concerned with and to give grounds for some such consideration. The passage in Dt. imposes an obligation of assistance in the case of a brother, i.e., a fellow-national, that in the book of the covenant in the case of an enemy. Whether we understand Ex. 23:4 f. as a development of Dt. 22:1–4, or the latter conversely as a weakening of the former, there can be no doubt that a comparison of the passages indicates the possibility of love of enemies as well being incorporated into the command to love in Lv. 19:18. The גֵּר may be a friend or a foe, but he is to be the object of the feeling of love and not of legal definition. This implies a primacy of the man over the legal person. In this form the demands of Ex. 23:4 f., and perhaps to an even higher degree the basic statements in Prv. 25:21: לֹחֵם וְאִם-צָמָא הַשָּׂקֵהוּ מִיָּם אִם רָעַב שִׁנְאַךָ הֶאֱכִילֵהוּ are designed to serve the practical inculcation of love for enemies, not being concerned directly with the disposition towards them, but making obligatory a specific line of conduct. The example of Joseph in the Joseph stories provides a practical illustration of the repayment of evil with good which also calls attention to Joseph's obedience to God (Gn. 50:19).

It is also true, of course, that the OT indicates the limits of love towards enemies,³⁴ most impressively in the anguished 109th Psalm. The petitioner remembers his love, but this can only serve to nourish his hate in dreadful illustration of the sentence in Sir. 37:2: הֲלֹא דִין מְגִיעַ עַד-מוֹת רִיעַ כִּנְפֵשׁ נִהְפֵךְ לָצָר. Even to the poor it often happened as described in the cutting saying in Proverbs (14:20), and it seemed almost impossible to attain a personal and human relation to the foreigner in view of the tribal organisation and cultic exclusivism.³⁷ Yet the occasional visible clashes between theory

and practice cannot destroy the greatness of the ethical demand, especially when it is recalled that it is proclaimed with divine authority and that there is also a place in the OT for the living value of love in religious experience as well.

3. The Religious Conception of Love.

a. From what we have seen already of the nearness to life of the concept of love it is surely obvious that it must have high theological value once it comes to be used in the language of religion. This is generally true even in the OT, although it is applied here only in statements concerning the mutual relation between God and man which are either very restrained or constricted by theological speculation and therefore easily underestimated. This restraint has its basis in the powerful predominance of the concept of the covenant, which asserts itself so strongly in the theological thinking of the biblical writers that they can seldom free themselves from the legal way of thinking which conditions this theory, and represent in its religious significance and with its unique force the thought of love as an expression of physical reality alien to the legal world. Nevertheless, there can be no doubt that the thought of the covenant (→ διαθήκη) is itself an expression in juridical terms of the experience of the love of God. Hence the concept of love is the ultimate foundation of the whole covenant theory. It is a mark of Israelite religion that this connexion is for the most part only tacitly recognised, as though there were a fear of finding so typical a creaturely emotion and its resultant power in the nature of God, or of estimating too highly such an experience in dealings with God. No less striking are the attempts to approximate the thought of love to such concepts, imported into theology from law, as **אֱמֶת**, **צֶדֶק**, **מִשְׁפָּט**, **חֶסֶד**. etc., which are preferred to describe ethical and religious conduct. These do, in fact, bring about a levelling of the whole heritage of religious thought, and effectively hinder the fruitfulness of the concept of love in the OT. Yet they do not block it so completely that it cannot emerge in its full greatness in occasional statements.

These statements tell us on the one side that man loves God, and on the other that God loves man. Rather strikingly, no logical relationship is established between the two groups, and only the teacher of Deuteronomy attempts anything along these lines, sometimes demanding Israel's love for Yahweh on the ground of Yahweh's love for the fathers (Dt. 10:14–16), and sometimes promising Yahweh's love as a reward for covenant faithfulness (Dt. 7:14). It is not advisable, however, to investigate a thought in the light of its hortatory evaluation. Hence in what follows we shall take each group alone irrespective of any order of rank.

b. Love as a basic feeling of the pious in relation to the Godhead is accepted in the OT without any attempt to define the content of this feeling by way of instruction. If sometimes it is brought into connexion with fear,³⁹ this is obviously an improper use for the sake of plerophory of expression. **For love in the OT is a contrary feeling to fear, ⁴⁰ striving to overcome distance and thus participating as a basic motive in prayer.⁴² To love God is to have pleasure in Him and to strive impulsively after Him. Those who love God are basically the pious whose life of faith bears the stamp of originality and genuineness and who seek God for His own sake. If, then, Abraham is called a אֱלֹהֵי יְהוָה on account of his intimate intercourse with God, he is a model of piety.** As men of a distinctive inner life, members of the community of Yahweh in general can then be called ⁴⁵אֱלֹהֵי יְהוָה This designation

embraces religion on its active side, although without slipping over into the cultic and ethical. Quite evidently it is not in any sense a mere theologoumenon, but its origin lies in simple experience. It attempts to describe a vital religious process of an active kind which leads beyond or even apart from passive creaturely feeling to the distinctive joy of faith which the pious man needs and to which he gives expression in every hymnic motif.⁴⁷ Love finds salvation in the Godhead, and is the strongest basis of confidence. The wealth of hymnic motifs which we find in the OT allows us to deduce the high significance and rich cultivation of this form of piety in the religion of Yahweh, which we might otherwise fail to appreciate in view of the fact that when the formal concept of love occurs, especially outside the prophetic books, it is almost always turned to exhortatory or confessional use and thus seems to be more of a rational product than is really the case. Thus we find such favourite combinations as to love Yahweh and keep His commandments,⁴⁹ or to love Him and serve Him (Dt. 10:12; 11:13; Is. 56:6), or to love Him and walk in His ways (Dt. 10:12; 11:22; 19:9; 30:16; Jos. 22:5; 23:11). These powerfully link love with cultic and ethical conduct and thus militate to some degree against a deeper understanding. As against this, Dt. 30:6 impressively teaches us to understand love for God as a deeply inward and finally God-given experience. Yahweh circumcises the heart of Israel so that Israel loves Him with all its heart and soul. The prophetic picture (Jer. 4:4), which is in every respect a polemic against the secularisation of the concept of the covenant, serves, with a characteristic modification in sense of Jer. 31:33 (and also of Ez. 11:19), to indicate the irrational origin of the most powerful vital forces of the community.

But often the usage, as our examples have shown, is utterly alien to this thought. When the love of God is considered, the tendency in most authors is for the act, i.e., the ethical expression, to be ranked above the feeling, so that the impression is left that man himself decides whether or not to love. This impression is most strongly left by the command which Jesus calls the greatest in the Law: **יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ בְּכָל־לִבְבְּךָ** **וּבְכָל־נַפְשְׁךָ וּבְכָל־מְאֹדְךָ וְאֶהְבֵּת אֹתוֹ**. (Dt. 6:5). The paradoxical element is the same as in the commands of Lv. 19:18, 34, and what we said in relation to these applies here too. There is ordered as a law that which cannot be the subject of legal enactment. This cannot, of course, be understood by those who lack the spiritual power to which the command refers. The command presupposes and demands this in order to be raised. All the emphasis is placed on the threefold **כָּל** (totality), and we may rightly paraphrase as follows: Thou shalt recognise the totality of the power indwelling thee, producing from the emotion of love a disposition which determines the total direction of thy life, and placing thy whole personality, **לִבְּךָ** and **נַפְשְׁךָ** in the service of the relationship to Yahweh. It is true that this relationship already exists as a wholly personal (**אֱלֹהֶיךָ**) one. Man loves his God. But the concern of the law-giver is to make clear that there is contained therein a demand and a duty. As an instructor and leader he realises that whatever does not issue in action is worthless. He thus seeks by paradoxical formulation to make the most positive power in religion fruitful for covenant faithfulness. Yahweh Himself will test the seriousness of love (Dt. 13:3). In such thoughts the Deuteronomist is at one with Jeremiah, who bases the new fellowship between God and the people, the covenant of the coming age, on the law inscribed

upon the heart and therefore on a law which is no true law any more (Jer. 31:33). He means nothing other than the free impulsion of love for God.

c. The message of the love of God takes on a national and an individual form in the OT. If chronological priority must be ascribed to the former, the nature of love finds purer and more instructive expression in the latter. It is striking how seldom the OT says that God loves a specific person. Only on two occasions do we meet with the expression **יְדִיד יְהוָה**, loved of Yahweh, while turns of phrase with **אָהַב** are to be found only three times, and they are there used in relation to the rulers Solomon (2 S. 12:24; Neh. 13:26) and Cyrus (Is. 48:14?), so that they may well be linked with the theory of the divine sonship of kings which came to be accepted in Israel but which had an indisputable origin in pagan mythology in spite of the purification of its form. For this reason these passages can hardly be explained from within the circle of ideas proper to the religion of Yahweh. Elsewhere **אָהַב** is completely avoided in statements concerning God's love. Instead, **רָצָה** is used, which as a sacrificial expression does not indicate anything like the same immediacy of feeling, or **נָחַם**, which does at least carry within it the element of recognition. It may thus be concluded that basically the love of Yahweh is not usually related to individuals. For even those who pray prefer the thoughts of Yahweh's majesty, power or kindness to that of His love when they seek favour in respect of their personal affairs, or else in addresses like **מִלְכִי**⁵⁶ they conceal as it were in the suffix "my" their desire for the loving remembrance of their God.

To this there corresponds the fact that for the most part only collective objects of the love of God are mentioned. On the borderline there stand the designations in the singular of certain types of persons such as fellow-citizens, the pure in heart, those who seek after righteousness etc., whom God loves or directs as does a father his son (Prv. 3:12). Behind such instructive statements there may perhaps stand certain experiences of faith such as emerge in the motifs of confidence in the Psalms, but their true religious content is hard to fix, since in them love approximates so closely to recognition or even to patronage in the case of the people of the land. Again the pedagogic debasement of the father-son relationship in its more pedantic application⁵⁹ militates against a deeper conception of love in such a connexion. The thought of fatherhood does not penetrate to the private piety of ancient Israel.

d. What the OT has to say about the love of God moves for the most part in national trains of thought, where it finds its natural soil. Love as a basic motif in Yahweh's dealings with His people seems first to have been experienced and depicted by Hosea, so far as we can see. To be sure, the thought of the Father-God is also found in Isaiah (1:4; 30:1, 9), but for him the emphasis falls rather on the element of authority than on the inner feeling of attraction, as may be seen in the bitter words of Yahweh concerning the ingratitude of His sons. As against this, Hosea clearly perceives at the depths of the thought of the election and the covenant the spontaneous love of the acting God. Seeing that the forms and guarantees of law are inadequate to express the way in which Yahweh is bound to His people, he depicts this God as a man who against custom, legal sense and reason woos a worthless woman (Hos. 3:1). Hosea has to love the adulteress as Yahweh loves the children of Israel. This means that the whole of official religion has long since disintegrated, and that only an unfathomable power of

divine love, apparently grotesque to sound common-sense, still sustains the existence of His people. Even the experience with Gomer, if we do not include chapter 3 in this, expresses something of the same. The prophet is to take a harlot to wife, for only a marriage which is nonsensical in the eyes of men and dishonouring to the husband can really give a faithful picture of the relationship of Yahweh to the land of Israel (Hos. 1:2). The threatening character of the names of the children, Not-beloved and Not-my-people, gives us an insight that the attitude of the husband is, of course, far from passive or supine, that the adulterous wife is lightly playing with fire, that she is unsuspectingly (2:8: “she did not know”) moving towards the fate of one who is accused by her own children (2:2). She becomes an object of pity. The One who stands over the whole miserable situation knows her wretched plight better than she does herself, and takes her under His legal protection (2:19: אֲרֵשׁ) for ever (בְּרַחֲמִים). Then she will “know” Him in the full sense (2:20). This is how Hosea seeks to understand the rule of God. He pulls down the structure of the covenant theory in order to lay bare its foundation in the love of God and then to build it again with צֶדֶק, מִשְׁפָּט, חֶסֶד and אֱמוּנָה. But the foundation stone is רַחֲמִים or mercy.

With the same tenderness and depth Hosea introduces the thought of God’s love in other motifs which cause us to think of fatherly love, although the actual terms father and son are perhaps deliberately avoided and we are simply given a picture of the fatherly instructor who is disappointed but who for this very reason loves the more passionately, Israel has had a time of childhood and has thus won the love of Yahweh (11:1). Ephraim has learned to put its arm in His (11:3), and thus to be drawn by cords of love, with no calling nor direction. Hence when he stands before a destruction brought upon himself, and it seems to be for Yahweh almost a duty to fulfil His righteous wrath, the love of God breaks through in terms of lament: “How shall I give thee up, Ephraim? how shall I deliver thee, Israel? ... mine heart is turned within me, my repentings are kindled within me. I will not execute the fierceness of mine anger, I will not turn to destroy Ephraim: for I am God and not man; the Holy One in the midst of thee” (11:8–9). In this basic statement we may justly see the final fulfilment of the OT thought of love. A precedence of divine love over human is affirmed. It is to be found only in the fact that divine love does not let itself be affected by emotions or doubts which threaten it. It works irresistibly as an original force in the nature of God. When He acts in love, God demonstrates no less than His proper character as the holy God. Hence He suffers under the lovelessness of His people, whose covenant faithfulness is only like the morning dew which quickly dispels (6:4). In face of its sin He is overcome by a kind of helplessness: “O Ephraim, what shall I do unto thee? O Judah, what shall I do unto thee?”

This motif of the suffering love of God gives a peculiar note to all the threats in Hosea. It helps us to understand the degree of comfortlessness in such sayings as 9:15: לֹא אוֹסֵף אֶהְבֶּתָם “I will love them no more.” They have for him the significance of God’s ceasing to be God, and therefore of absolute chaos. If the concluding chapter withdraws all these threats with the saying: 14:4 אֶהְיֶם נְדָבָה), there can be no doubt that this is spoken in the sense of the basic tendency of his message, whatever may be the relation of this chapter to the rest of the prophecy.

In a rather different and, as it seems to be, somewhat weakened form, the motif of the suffering love of God is also used in Jeremiah (12:7–9). Yahweh hates His heritage because it roars against Him like a lion. Nevertheless He calls it יְדֹתַי נִפְשֵׁי and the whole poem is a lament. Yahweh Himself cannot say why Ephraim is to Him such a dear son that He is inwardly moved when He thinks of him and has to have mercy on him. He loves His wife Israel with an eternal love, and this love is the basis of His faithfulness (31:3). In other places, too, Jeremiah adopts the motif of Hosea—whether consciously or unconsciously we need not decide. He thinks of a youth of Jerusalem-Judah celebrated with Yahweh in love like a honeymoon, and in this connexion he describes the Word of Yahweh as the fountain of living water (2:2 f.), 13). He shows how Yahweh waited in vain to hear from His beloved the tender word “my father” (3:19), and how He must feel it that she speaks to Him only hypocritically (3:4), and yet how He does not cease to call her to repentance (4:1).

Deutero-Isaiah, too, takes up the theme of the beloved of youth adopted again by God with eternal mercy (Is. 54:5–8), but he distinctively rejects the motif of the harlot. Instead, the wife of Yahweh has been left by her Husband for a עֲזוּבָה וְעֶצְוֹנֶת רוּחַ, a moment. It is not she who has left Him; He has left her in wrath, as is now sadly interjected, though without specifying the reason for this wrath. The conception of Zion as the wife of Yahweh is perhaps also in the background when Deutero-Isaiah gives his emotionally most effective description of God’s love in comparing it to, and even rating it above, motherly love. It may be, says Yahweh to Zion, that mothers sometimes forget their children, “yet will not I forget thee.” The theme of the father and son is also introduced as a variation when Yahweh addresses Israel in the masculine and declares to him his redemption: “I gave Egypt for thy ransom, Ethiopia and Seba for thee, since thou wast precious in my sight, and art worthy, and I love thee” (Is. 43:3f.).

If in spite of varying estimates of their originality the prophetic passages all prove to be elemental expressions of piety untrammelled by theorising, the sayings in Deuteronomy concerning the love of God display a different character. They attempt to make the lofty thought fruitful by pedagogic presentation, though this necessarily entails a certain weakening, since the fulness of experience out of which the prophets speak is obscured by the style of Torah. The experience is transformed into dogma. As we have seen already, the thought of love in Dt. serves predominantly to undergird the thought of election and the covenant. The irrational singularity of love is presented, therefore, in a way which is strictly formal and ineffective. Thus we are told that Yahweh has chosen Israel of all the nations on earth as His peculiar people. It was not because Israel was more numerous than others, on the contrary, it is the smallest of all peoples—but because He loved Israel that He bound Himself (קָשַׁח) to it (Dt 7:6 ff.). In the same breath, however, we go on to read of the oath which Yahweh swore to the fathers, so that the impression is only too easily given that the legal guarantee given in the oath is the truly valuable and estimable feature, and the expression can thus become and be used as an exhortation to perceive from all this that Yahweh, the true God, is also the faithful God, who binds Himself by covenant to all those who for their part love Him and keep His commandments. Indeed, Dt 7:13 links the love of God with blessing as a reward which Yahweh will give for covenant faithfulness. Hence the thought of love unintentionally acquires a note of *Do ut des* which it does not have in the prophets. It is

integrated into the way of life of the pious man, and thus robbed of its best part, of its freedom. The integration is more happily made in Dt. 10:14 f.), because there the thought of the oath is dropped and it is simply stated that Yahweh had a delight in the fathers to love them, and that He elected their seed after them. If the circumcision of the foreskin of the heart is demanded, this seems to be more in keeping with the message of the love of God, since it does not enter the sphere of law. The thought of the father best corresponds to the educative purpose of Dt “Consider also in thine heart,” we read in Dt 8:5, “that, as a man brings up (רִי pi) his son, so Yahweh will bring up thee.” But obviously even in this form the thought is rather different from what we find in Hosea.

The clear development of the concept of love into a dogma in Dt. has some most important consequences. This fact is bound up specifically with the close interrelating to the dogma of election, so that it is involved in the process of hardening which the latter doctrine undergoes. We can see this by way of example in the use made of the thought in Malachi. At the beginning, we have a statement which startles us by its very simplicity: “I love you, saith Yahweh” (1:2). This message, however, is not understood with the depth and consequent breadth to be found in the word אָהַב, but it provides the occasion for a remarkable discussion of the question how this love works itself out and what is its basis. This can hardly be meant as a question of truth, but only as a question of law. Enquiry is made into the circumstances which have the fact אֲחֻבְתֶּנּוּ as consequence or presupposition. Thus the tenderness of the thought is violated and its force shattered. As the continuation shows, the good news is unfortunately estimated according to its legal implications. These are shown to consist in the privileged status of Jacob as compared with Esau. The misfortune of Esau-Edom discloses that he is hated by Yahweh, whereas Jacob should learn to regard the fact that he is spared the same fate as a proof of the “love” of Yahweh. If the use of the usual marital terms אֶהְיֶה and שְׂנוֹאָה may have had some influence in producing this antithesis, there is still every reason to deplore the distortion of the thought of love in the argumentation: Yahweh loves because He hates. Even the thought of the father is mutilated in this book. It is expounded as a legal claim against the priests: “If then I be a father,” says Yahweh to them, “where is mine honour?” (Mal. 1:6). Or it is almost completely reduced to a relationship of service such as obtains between a father and the son who works in his business (Mal. 3:17).

e. Yet the prophetic concept of the love of God is powerful enough of itself to be able to paralyse such distortions. To the same degree as the prophetic thought of God, it ultimately bears within itself the tendency to universality. Naturally, we do not find in the OT any direct expressions of a love of God which reaches beyond Israel. To interpret it in this way we should have to try to see it against Messianic contexts in which it may perhaps be presumed.⁷³ Yet this would mean wresting our exposition, since even where Messianic conceptions escape from particularism and lead to the idea of humanity they are too pale and general to find a place for such a vital motif.

The short statement in Dt 33:3: אֲךָ הִבֵּב עַמִּים can in itself, according to Mas. and most versions, be interpreted in an absolutely universalist sense. But the context shows that it is not intended in this way, and that there is thus some corruption in it. In any case it is

questionable whether **גוֹיִם** can mean “nations.” Again, the international question of Malachi 2:10: “Have we not all one father?”, does not refer to the love of God but to His creative work, as is shown by the second question: “Hath not one God created us?” The story of the tower of Babel in Gn. 11:1–9 indicates actual opposition to the idea of humanity.

Quell