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I

THE SCRIPTURAL DOCTRINE OF THE LOVE OF GOD.*

THE love of God occupies a more prominent place than any other divine attribute in present-day Christian consciousness. Obviously the causes of this prominence must not be sought in the sphere of doctrinal thinking, but in certain practical tendencies of our modern religious life. Not for the sake of its theological significance as a constituent factor in the divine character, but for the sake of its bearing upon human conduct and destiny has the love of God been exalted to this position of supremacy among its sister-attributes. It were idle to pretend that the scientific theology of to-day is more successful than the theology of previous ages in deducing from the one principle of love everything that Scripture and experience teach concerning God's method of dealing with His creatures. On the contrary, to the thinking mind the impossibility of doing this has perhaps never stood out more clearly than it stands out at present, in the light of what Biblical research has shown to be the truth of revelation, and of what modern science has shown to be the reality of life. And yet, in the very face of this impossibility, there has developed a widespread demand that God's love, and nothing but His love shall be made the keynote of every message Christianity has to bring to the world.

The shifting of the emphasis in religion from the intellect to the will and the emotions has undoubtedly had something to do with producing this result. So long as the intellect retained its

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legitimate place among the functions of the religious subject, so long as to know God was felt to be an essential part of glorifying God, the natural tendency was to make this knowledge as comprehensive and many-sided as possible—to have it mirror the full content of the divine nature, and not merely a single one of its perfections. Whatever may be charged against the intellectualism of the period when orthodoxy reigned supreme, it can claim credit at least for having been broad-minded and well-balanced in its appreciation of the infinite complexity and richness of the life of God. The music of that theology may not always please modern ears, because it seems lacking in sweetness; but it ranged over a wider scale and made better harmonics than the popular strains of to-day. On the other hand, it is plain that, where the religious interest is exclusively concentrated upon the will, and entirely exhausts itself in attempts at solving the concrete, practical problems of life, no strong incentive will exist for reflecting upon any other aspect of the nature of God than His love, because all that is required of God is that He shall serve as the norm and warrant for Christian philanthropic effort. It is a well-known fact that all heresy begins with being a partial truth. So it is in the present case. No one will deny that in the Scriptural disclosure of truth the divine love is set forth as a most fundamental principle, nor that the embodiment of this principle in our human will and action forms a prime ingredient of that subjective religion which the Word of God requires of us. But it is quite possible so to over-emphasize this one side of truth and duty as to bring into neglect other exceedingly important principles and demands of Christianity. The result will be that, while no positive error is taught, yet the equilibrium both in consciousness and life is disturbed and a condition created in which the power of resistance to the inroads of spiritual disease is greatly reduced. There can be little doubt that in this manner the one-sidedness and exclusiveness with which the love of God has been preached to the present generation is largely responsible for that universal weakening of the sense of sin, and the consequent decline of interest in the doctrines of atonement and justification, which even in orthodox and evangelical circles we all see and deplore.

But this by no means reveals the full extent of the danger to which the tendency we are speaking of has exposed us. It is impossible for any practical displacement of the balance of truth to continue for a long time without endeavoring to perpetuate and justify itself by means of a corresponding reconstruction of the entire doctrinal system. Thus what may have been at first no more than a matter of relative emphasis inevitably tends to

become a question of positive theoretical error, such as makes the return to normal conditions in practical religious life more difficult than before. In the Ritschlian theology we have before us the systematic expression of all the various currents and tendencies which have now for a considerable time been carrying the Christian spirit of our age in the direction just pointed out. Here the primacy of the love of God and the restriction of religion to the sphere of the will have ceased to be abnormalities of an unevenly distributed development. They have become the supreme maxims, clearly realized and systematically upheld, to whose sway the religious consciousness in its whole extent is made absolutely subject. Ritschlianism is the application of the principle of empiricism to the sphere of theological knowledge, and that in its extreme positivistic form. Not what God has objectively and supernaturally revealed to us concerning Himself, but only that which can enter into our subjective religious experience, forms the proper content of theology. Under the reproach of being metaphysical, all that the Church has hitherto believed concerning the Triune existence of God, concerning His transcendental attributes, concerning the preëxistence and incarnation of Christ, and many other vital facts, is ruled out of her creed. Well-nigh the whole of what used to be considered the solid substance of our knowledge of God is thus declared, not simply of secondary importance, but, so far as our apprehension is concerned, impossible and non-existent. By such radical reduction of the claims of the intellect to nothing, the way is made clear for the enthronement of the will as the sovereign organ through which the knowledge of God is obtained. For, if for knowing God we are shut up to our subjective experience, how else can His revelation enter into our consciousness except in the form of loving will? This is the only mode of the divine existence that we can actually reproduce, and consequently apprehend, without falling back upon the discredited method of metaphysical speculation. From the standpoint of this theology the proposition, God is love, assumes the literal meaning that everything we know of Him is but one of the many formulas in which His love may be expressed, according to the several relations it sustains to us. As Schleiermacher transformed all the divine attributes into so many forms of causality, in accordance with his principle that religion is a feeling of absolute dependence, so in the Ritschlian system the old names for the attributes are, to be sure, retained, but the reality designated by these names is in each case reduced to terms of love. No road leads out of this moral circle to which our cognition of God is confined. Omnipotence is defined as the love of God, which is able

to assist Him against every enemy. Omnipresence signifies that His love can help everywhere and under all circumstances. Eternity expresses the assurance that not for a single moment does God cease to cherish love for us. Righteousness means the consistency wherewith God's love pursues the goal of our salvation. In the same manner the entire rich complex of the world of redemption, which the Scriptures call the kingdom of God, is forced within the limits of such moral relationships as the divine love prescribes for us. The kingdom of God is identical with the moral order of the world. What Christ came to reveal is the Fatherhood of God, not in any Trinitarian sense, but exclusively as a moral and religious fact; and, corresponding to this, the Sonship of Christ can have no other content than that the experience of the love of God attained in Him its ideal perfection.

Paradoxical though this absorption of all other attributes into the one trait of love may be, it is but the consistent carrying out of the principle which underlies every practical tendency to ignore the Scriptural law of proportion in dealing with the divine character. There is, however, still another serious defect to be noticed in this modern exploitation of the love of God, touching not the distinction of love from the other attributes, but the internal distinction between the various kinds and degrees of affection, which in the case of a relationship so infinitely varied as that of God to the world are subsumed under the comprehensive term of love. The old theology was exceedingly careful in marking off these kinds and degrees from one another, and in assigning to each the group of objects upon which it operates. The primordial love which is exchanged between the three Persons of the adorable Trinity was distinguished from the ectypical love which goes out toward the creature. Within the latter, the general benevolence extending toward all sentient beings was separated from the specific affection God cherishes for intelligent beings made in His image. Terms like *φιλοκρίσια* and *φιλανθρωπία* were employed in order to facilitate the proper recognition of these lines of distinction. And again, within the limits of the divine affection for angels and men, notice was taken of the difference necessarily created by the physical, moral and spiritual conditions under which the love of God finds and contemplates its objects. Above all, the supreme soteriological manifestation of this love, rising in its absoluteness and sovereignty above every possibility of being either originated or checked or extinguished by aught in the creature, and particularly belonging to the sphere of the elect, was upheld in its uniqueness over against all other manifestations of a conditioned and more common character. It needs but a glance

at the average presentation of the same subject to-day, whether in popular or more scientific form, to observe that these distinctions are entirely neglected. A dull uniformity has taken the place of the wealth of form and color that used to delight the eye, not merely of the theologian, but of the simple Christian also, because both recognized in it a reflection of the infinite fulness of life in God. Thus the watchword, God is love, has not only silenced all other voices from the realm of truth, it has likewise rendered many incapable of appreciating broad distinctions in a matter where even the most delicate shadings are of importance. And, as valuation depends largely upon a well-developed sense for the specific difference of one's possessions and privileges, it is to be feared that, in consequence of this leveling process, the consciousness of the saving love of God no longer possesses for the Christian to-day quite the same preciousness it used to possess for believers of past generations. Not only this, but objectively also in the same degree as the extent of its sphere of application has been enlarged, the content of the divine love has been impoverished and depleted. The message has become one which bears the same meaning for all, but it seems less worth carrying than it did before.

In view of what has been stated, and in view of the concrete significance which these general issues have assumed for us in the present Confessional crisis, it may not seem amiss to devote the time at our disposal to a brief review of the Scriptural doctrine of the love of God. Following the historical method, we glance separately at the Old and New Testament developments of revelation on this subject. At first sight it would seem as if the Old Testament Scriptures could yield but a scanty harvest for our purpose. Looked at from one point of view the Old Covenant stands contrasted as the economy of law and righteousness, with the New as the economy of gospel and grace. We must remember, however, that the contrast so defined is a relative and not an absolute contrast. As will appear presently, the characteristic difference between the Old and the New Covenant concerns much more the emphasis thrown on Israel's love for God than on God's love for Israel. It is on the side of the subjective religious frame of mind with which the Old Testament worshiper approaches Jehovah, that the limitations under which he lives most sharply reveal themselves. As regards the other side, the love of Jehovah for His people, so far from being reticent or reserved on this subject, the Scriptures of the Old Covenant depict it with a richness of coloring and a degree of anthropomorphic realism perhaps unrivaled, certainly unsurpassed, in those of the New. It should

be remembered, however, that the Old Testament, in accordance with its Semitic genius, seldom views the divine attributes in the abstract as quiescent dispositions in God, but mostly as assuming concrete shape in their single historical manifestations. To translate these attributes from the sphere of action into the sphere of being, and thus to eternalize them, has been the task of the New Testament. From the fact that this applies also to the attribute of love, we must not allow ourselves to draw the mistaken inference that the love so described is lacking in continuity or does not form an essential element in the Old Testament conception of the character of God.

The passages in which love is directly predicated of Jehovah are not very numerous. They belong to Deuteronomy, the Psalter and the prophetic writings of Hosea, Isaiah, Zephaniah, Jeremiah and Malachi. It must be remembered, however, that the direct use of this one word by no means accurately measures the frequency and importance of the conception itself. In order to gain a correct estimate of these, such cognate terms as "grace," "mercy," "lovingkindness" (*Chesed*) must be taken into account. Also the verbs used to describe the elective act in which the divine love expresses itself, such as "to know" and "to choose," come under consideration. Still further, the conception of Jehovah's Fatherhood over Israel and the covenant-conception claim a share of our attention, since both obviously imply the existence of a relation of love, even where this is not explicitly affirmed or reflected upon.

In the patriarchal period of revelation no explicit use is made of the term love to designate the attitude of Jehovah toward His own. Even in the Mosaic period the word does not occur until Deuteronomy. Nevertheless equivalent forms of statement show that the conception itself is not wanting. Man is said to have been made in the image of God, and obviously the underlying idea is that in his very constitution he is adapted and designed for communion with God. The entire mode of God's seeking our first parents immediately after the fall reveals the most tender care and solicitude. In the promise that enmity will be put between the serpent and the woman and their respective seeds, the pledge of friendship with Him who puts this enmity is implicitly contained. Enoch and Noah walked with God, and Jehovah declares Himself the God of Shem in the pregnant covenant-sense of this phrase. Abraham throughout his history appears as the ideal friend of God, though only later revelation explicitly calls him so.* On the second occasion that Jehovah makes the covenant with Abraham, the import of the covenant is summed up in the formula

* 2 Chron. xx. 7; Isa. xli. 8.

that He will be a God unto the patriarch and unto his seed after him. In connection with Abraham also, the significant term "to know" is found for the first time, as descriptive of the loving condescension wherewith Jehovah chose him for a relation of special intimacy with Himself. Afterward this term reappears, where it is said of the children of Israel in Egypt that God heard their groaning, remembered His covenant with the patriarchs, looked upon them and knew them.* To Pharaoh God speaks of Israel as His first-born, *i.e.*, His dearly beloved Son.† Immediately before the making of the Sinaitic covenant and the promulgation of the Decalogue, all Jehovah's gracious dealings with His people connected with the exodus are summed up in the beautiful words: "Ye have seen what I did unto the Egyptians, and how I bare you on eagle's wings, and brought you unto myself. Now, therefore, if ye will obey my voice indeed, and keep my covenant, then ye shall be a peculiar treasure unto me above all people: for all the earth is mine: and ye shall be unto me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation."‡ In the four classical statements, where the Thora rises to the height of a description of the character of God, His benevolent attributes, such as lovingkindness (*Chesed*), mercy, grace, longsuffering, faithfulness, are strongly emphasized.§

All this sufficiently shows that there is no essential difference between the several parts of the Pentateuch in the recognition of this side of the divine nature. Still it is not accidental that in Deuteronomy the conception of Jehovah's love attains to a relatively greater prominence and clearness of expression. Deuteronomy stands on the dividing line between the legal and the prophetic types of revelation. While embodying a real law code, it at the same time approaches the character of prophecy in that it goes back from the single concrete commandments of Jehovah to certain general, spiritual principles, and varies the categorical imperative of the other codes with the winning note of persuasion and exhortation. In this light we must also interpret its emphatic assertion of the divine love. The lawgiver appeals to this, because it affords the supreme motive for that obedience from the heart which he endeavors to urge upon the people. Precisely because the conception is thus used as a motive for obedience, it attaches itself to the figure of the love of a father for his son, which we already met at an earlier place in the Pentateuch.¶ It should be noticed, however, that in thus bringing forward the thought of

* Ex. ii. 24, 25.

† Ex. iv. 22.

‡ Ex. xix. 4-6.

§ Ex. xx. 5, 6; xxxiv. 6, 7; Num. xiv. 18; Deut. vii. 9, 10.

¶ Deut. xxxii. 5, 6, 19; Ex. iv. 22, 23.

Jehovah's love for Israel, Deuteronomy throws special emphasis upon the elective character of this love. It is not so much the general fact that Jehovah now loves the people, but rather the special consideration that in the past at a definite moment He set His love upon them, to the exclusion of all other nations, upon which the book dwells. The emphasis thrown on this feature is closely connected with the practical purpose which the whole idea is made to serve. In nearly all the passages where Israel is exhorted to love Jehovah this has the specific meaning of a warning against the service of other gods. The sincerity of their affection for Jehovah must show itself in this, that it excludes all similar relationships to false deities; and it is corresponding to this that the elective discriminating element in the origin of God's love for Israel is emphasized. He also did not choose many nations, but gave His love to Israel alone.* Upon the truth that this particular love for the covenant-people is intended to become ultimately subservient to the salvation of all nations Deuteronomy does not reflect. Its point of view is indicated by the words of the Song of Moses: "When the Most High divided to the nations their inheritance, when He separated the sons of Adam, He set the bounds of the people according to the number of the children of Israel."† That the Pentateuch, as a whole, knows this wider outlook, its sublime structure exhibiting Israel's history, as the central movement of the history of the race sufficiently shows. Nevertheless, even here it would be an error to find in the service to the cause of universalism appointed for Israel the only and adequate explanation of the election of this one people to privileges from which all others are excluded. No unprejudiced reader will be able to escape from the conclusion that the manner in which the particularism of the divine love is developed proves it to be a principle of intrinsic and permanent significance. It is urged as something without which Jehovah's love for His people would not be what it actually is, nor possess the full spiritual value which in reality belongs to it. On the basis of the Old Testament statements alone, altogether apart from their New Testament interpretation, we are led to infer that the national election of Israel, besides serving a historical purpose in a larger international economy of redemption, springs also from some other mysterious reason not deducible from the facts of this world, but strictly pertaining to the hidden counsel of God, and typifying by its opera-

* Deut. iv. 19, 20, 34, 35; x. 14-16; xxxii. 8, 12.

† Cf., however, the Greek text: "according to the number of the Sons of God," in which "the Sons of God" is supposed to designate the gods of the heathen nations conceived as angels.

tion on a national scale with reference to Israel the elective, particularistic character of supernatural grace with reference to individuals everywhere.

Somewhat more difficult it is to answer two other questions, viz., whether the Thora conceives of Jehovah's love for Israel as absolute or conditioned by causes outside of Himself, and in how far the other attributes, such as wrath and justice, which are plainly conditioned in their nature, affect its operation. As regards the first origin of this love, it is easy to show that this is absolute, in that it springs from God independently of any excellent qualities, ethical or otherwise, which might be naturally inherent in Israel. It is explicitly denied that Jehovah set His love upon them because they were more in number than any other people.* The influence of ethical considerations in attracting God's choice to Israel is plainly excluded by the repeated statement that He knew them for a stiff-necked and rebellious people, and that, while the Canaanites were driven out from the land because of their unrighteousness, it by no means followed from this that Israel took their place because of its righteousness.† Thus the motives determining Jehovah's love for Israel are sought in Himself alone. The only apparent exception to this is that the ancient love for the fathers is said to lie at the basis of God's favor for the people of the Mosaic period. But in reality this only carries the sovereign initiative of the relationship on the part of God one step farther back. If He loved the posterity because He was faithful to His love for the patriarchs, His love for the patriarchs originated from Himself alone. On the other hand, it must be confessed that the permanent enjoyment of the special favor of God is made throughout dependent on faithful performance of the covenant-obligations by Israel, and in so far, therefore, appears ethically conditioned. It is true, according to the evolutionary hypothesis at present in vogue, the bestowal or withdrawal of Jehovah's favor was, in the pre-prophetic period, conceived of as a matter of pure incalculable caprice, because the stage of evolution had not yet been reached in which the ethical element in the divine character began to be regarded as central and supreme. But this, of course, rests on the opinion that those parts of the Pentateuch in which the statements under review occur belong to a much later than the Mosaic period, and reflect the ascendancy of the prophetic ideas. Hence we may safely discard it for our present purpose. It is universally acknowledged that the law as a whole, to whatever age its several documents may belong, represents the attitude of Jehovah toward Israel as governed by strictly ethical considerations. He visits

* Deut. vii. 7.

† Deut. ix. 4, 6, 24.

the iniquity of the fathers upon the children of them that hate Him, and shows mercy unto them that love Him and keep His commandments. He proclaims Himself in the ears of Moses Jehovah God, merciful and gracious, longsuffering and abundant in goodness and truth, keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin, and who will by no means clear the guilty; visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children, and upon the children's children, unto the third and to the fourth generation. But not only is the divine attitude represented as varying according to the varying conduct of individuals or families among Israel, with reference to the entire nation also the possibility of the favor of Jehovah being succeeded by his displeasure, owing to apostasy on a national scale, is contemplated. Both the prophetic chapter appended to the Book of Leviticus and the discourses in Deuteronomy are explicit on this point. Nevertheless a difference is to be observed between the manner in which the judgment to be brought upon the nation in its organic capacity is spoken of and the expressions used with reference to the punishment of individuals. While the issue of the latter is final destruction, and consequently the process leading to this purely retributive,* the national judgment has for its goal the ultimate conversion of Israel, and is characterized as bearing the nature of chastisement rather than that of retribution. It must be conceded that this distinction is not everywhere drawn with equal clearness, and sometimes even the divine procedure against the nation is referred to in terms of retribution as well as of discipline.† The law in this respect speaks the language of ordinary human life: its method is that of a father who, while fully intending to inflict punishment for the good of his child, yet naturally, in referring to it for the sake of warning, speaks of it as a just recompense for evil. It belongs also to the anthropomorphic mode of expression when the anger of Jehovah is said to replace or extinguish His love, and conversely the return of His favor is described as a repentance, or explained from the sudden remembrance of his covenant that comes to Him after the tempest of wrath has spent its force. The Semitic habit, above alluded to, of regarding the divine attributes as modes of action rather than as psychological dispositions facilitated this manner of speech. In the midst of all, however, the important fact remains, that a real continuity is ascribed to Jehovah's covenant-love for Israel. Whatever His outward attitude may be, the affection in His heart survives.

* Deut. xxix. 21.

† Cf. Lev. xxvi. 18, 23, 24, 25, 28, 36, 38, 39, 40; Deut. viii. 5; viii. 19, 20; xxviii. 20, 22, 24, 51, 63.

The renewal of the covenant after the captivity, which is looked forward to in the prophetic discourses of the law, is on every occasion derived from the sovereign love of Jehovah alone. That such a renewal remains possible, notwithstanding the rigor with which the plan of the covenant makes its perpetuity dependent on obedience, is plainly due to the sovereign origin of the covenant in the beginning. God reserves for Himself the right to do in the future what He did in the past, viz., to love Israel freely and thus to introduce into His dealings with them a principle which cannot be explained from the ethical structure of the covenant itself. To be sure, even here the interests of God's moral government are carefully safeguarded, lest they should suffer detriment from the operation of this sovereign principle. The renewal of the covenant does not take place except after previous repentance. Such repentance, however, besides being the gift of God,* is but the prerequisite, by no means the meritorious cause, of Israel's restoration to favor. The law always gives as the true ground of the latter God's sovereign love.†

From what has been said we are able to determine in what sense the law assigns to love the central or supreme place among the divine attributes. It is evident that this cannot be affirmed after the modern fashion, as if there was nothing in God but love, and every mode of His self-revelation were a form of love. There is that in the character of Jehovah which cannot be reduced to terms of love for the creature, though undoubtedly it must be subsumable, like all that is in Him, under the categories of holiness and righteousness. It is a striking fact that the Thora, as little as the other parts of the Old Testament, contains the proposition, God is love; whereas it does contain the statement that He is a consuming fire.‡ The vocation of the law to perform a ministry of condemnation may explain this. But even though such a proposition did occur, the fact that the other occurs side by side with it should restrain us from putting upon it an interpretation which would bring the law into conflict with itself. And yet even this opening volume of Scripture recognizes with sufficient clearness that in one sense the love of Jehovah for His people transcends all His other perfections. He would not be Himself if He did not punish sin: His righteousness and wrath are necessary elements in His nature. But it would certainly not be in the spirit of the Pentateuch to say that God takes the same intense personal delight in punishing as He does in the exercise of His love. He releases His anger, if we may speak after the manner of men, because conscientiously He cannot do otherwise.

* Deut. xxx. 6.

† Lev. xxvi. 44, 45; Deut. iv. 31.

‡ Deut. iv. 24.

He loves because the entire weight of His infinite Being inclines Him to do so. Just as in our human life, what we do from inclination issues from the centre of our personality, while what we do from conscientious motives proceeds from the periphery, so in the life of God, though all is equally perfect and necessary, yet Scripture teaches us to recognize degrees in the satisfaction wherewith He contemplates the working of His various attributes in relation to the world. It is a more blessed thing for the Almighty to love than to punish. In an isolated case the strong anthropomorphic pathos of the discourse may lead to a manner of speech which would seem to ignore this principle, as when Deuteronomy says that Jehovah will *rejoice* in destroying Israel;* but, on the whole, the statement just made must be held to reflect faithfully the teaching of the Law and of the entire Old Testament on the subject. The elaborate system of sacrifices provided for the expiation of sin bears witness to this. We need not investigate here whether this expiation is conceived of as preventing or as neutralizing the burning of the divine wrath; in either case it is Jehovah Himself who, in His love, by anticipation, protects the sinner from the destructive effects of His own resentment of sin, and thus makes love triumph over wrath. Nay, the law gives formal and emphatic expression to the principle in question when it makes the mercy of Jehovah extend to a thousand generations, whilst His anger is said to reach only to the third and to the fourth of them that hate Him.†

Turning from the legal to the prophetic literature, we find the conception of the divine love used with the same implications. When the modern hypothesis endeavors to press the entire content of the prophetic preaching within the rigid scheme of the vindication of justice pure and simple, it ignores one of the most characteristic elements of this preaching, and is able to do so only by the violent excision of all promissory oracles. Faith in the sovereign love of God, which, in spite of the judgment, will not suffer Israel to perish, rather than a strongly developed conviction of the persistence of righteousness, is what inspires the prophets with hope for the future. The very abruptness with which threatening turns into promise, sometimes without reflection upon the intervening stage of repentance, shows that ethical considerations play at best a subordinate part in producing this sublime assurance. No wonder that the element under review forms the great stumbling-block in the way of the modern Pelagianizing interpretation of prophecy. It is unnecessary to point out in detail how the

* Deut. xxviii. 63.

† Ex. xx. 5, 6, 7; xxxiv. 6, 7. Cf. with Deut. vii. 9.

various features already considered in connection with the law reappear in the prophets. The exclusive reference of Jehovah's love to Israel is affirmed on every hand, most explicitly where God speaks in Amos: "You only have I known of all the families of the earth;" or in Malachi: "Was not Esau Jacob's brother? Yet I loved Jacob, and I hated Esau." * In the prophets, for the first time, the figure of the marriage-relation becomes the form in which the conception clothes itself and by means of which it is further developed in several directions,† though side by side with this the other analogy of the love of a father for his son continues to be used.‡ It is thoroughly characteristic of the religious consciousness of Isaiah, with its fundamental note of reverence for the divine majesty, that in the second part of his book, where the free love of Jehovah finds voice in the most tender accents, yet the capacity in which Israel is addressed as the object of this love remains that of Jehovah's servant, with the exception of a few passages of matchless beauty, in which the impetus of the divine affection sweeps even this last reserve away.§ This marriage-bond between God and His people bears the absolute character of a monogamic relation. Israel possesses a unique value for Jehovah, so that he sacrifices men for her and gives people for her life.|| The subserviency of Israel's election to the carrying out of God's universalistic purpose is much more clearly revealed than in the law, but it is nowhere suggested that this privilege of service is the only gift by which the object of God's choice is distinguished from other nations. The sovereign gracious origin of the divine love manifested in the people's past history, in the face of their unworthiness, lies at the basis of the confidence of the prophets in the future readoption of Israel.¶ Writers of the modern critical school, it is true, find in the prophetic literature a different account of Israel's moral and spiritual condition in the Mosaic period than that given by the Pentateuch. The days of the desert-journey, it is claimed, are here idealized as the days of the kindness of Israel's youth, of the love of her espousals, when she went after Jehovah in the wilderness, in a land not sown.** But, leaving entirely unanswered for the present the question whether

* Amos iii. 2; Mal. i. 2, 3.

† Hos. i-iii; Isa. l. 1; liv. 5; lxvi. 8, 9; Jer. ii. 1; iii. 14, 20; xi. 15; xii. 7; xxxi. 3; Ezek. xxiii.

‡ Hos. i. 10; xi. 1, 3; Isa. xlv. 9-11; xlvi. 3; lxiii. 16; lxiv. 8; Jer. iii. 4, 19; xxxi. 9.

§ Isa. l. 1; liv. 5; lxiii. 8, 9, 16; lxiv. 8.

|| Isa. xliii. 4.

¶ Jer. xxxi. 3; xxxiii. 23-26; Ezek. xvi. 1-14, 60-63; xx. 35-37.

** Jer. ii. 2.

this ideal light is the only one in which the people of Moses' time appeared to the prophets, or whether perhaps even in the writings of the eighth and seventh centuries acquaintance with a less favorable side of this early period shows itself, at any rate, we are not told that the knowledge of this youthful affection and obedience determined Jehovah to set His love upon Israel. On the contrary, Jeremiah, with whom the ideal judgment above quoted is found, is also the one who contrasts the new covenant of the future with the old Mosaic covenant in this respect, that in the latter the law was not written upon the heart; in his opinion, therefore, the internal disposition to obey was lacking both before and after the making of the covenant.* Elsewhere also the same prophet declares that the Mosaic generation was disobedient from the beginning.† Isaiah says Israel was called a transgressor from the womb.‡ Nor do Amos and Hosea judge differently.§ All these prophets know of no other explanation for the favor once shown to Israel, and to be shown to her again, than the sovereign love of God. The future manifestation of this love will include the gift of repentance.¶ Ezekiel alone prefers to name another motive for the promised restoration, viz., the desire of Jehovah to sanctify His name and vindicate His glory among the Gentiles,¶ a feature which finds its sufficient explanation in the general tone and temper of his prophecy, from which the emotional element is relatively absent.

In view of the pronounced ethical character of the prophetic preaching, we may expect *à priori* that, on the other hand, this principle of sovereign love will not only be kept in balance by the coördinated principle of righteousness, but even will be made to enter into the closest union with the latter, so as to render it every possible service. This is actually the case. The love of God is never allowed to swallow up the attribute of His justice, as if justice were a mere instrument in the hands of love for the pursuit of its own ends. Even in Hosea and Jeremiah, who both view the approaching judgment as a discipline of love designed for the people's conversion, this mode of viewing it is by no means the only one employed. The judgment has at one and the same time a double meaning: it is referred to love and justice as coëxistent divine modes of dealing. In fact, the perception begins to dawn that in reality there are wrapt up in the one national organism two

* Jer. xxxi. 33.

† Jer. xi. 7, 8.

‡ Isa. xlviii. 8.

§ Amos v. 25, 26; Hos. ix. 10; xi. 1, 2.

¶ Jer. xxxii. 7, 8; Ezek. xi. 19, 20; xxxvi. 25-27.

¶ Ezek. xxxvi. 22, 23.

Israel—*that of the reprobate mass, for which destruction is determined, and that of the elect remnant, to which the love and the promises belong.** Though in Amos and Isaiah the representation of the judgment as retribution stands in the foreground, while in Hosea and Jeremiah it is more definitely viewed as chastisement, this is on the whole but a difference of emphasis, not a diversity of teaching. All agree that as little as the execution of righteousness can destroy the sovereign love of Jehovah, so little can His sovereign love supersede His justice. Still, no less than in the law, it is here recognized that the inner delight of the divine heart is in the exercise of love rather than in that of judgment.† Most characteristic of prophecy is the manner in which it makes the conception of God's love for Israel do service as a positive factor in the great struggle for righteousness. Jehovah's love from the outset posited for Israel the ideal of righteousness as the only destiny worthy to be the end of such a relationship. When God says in Amos: "You only have I known of all the families of the earth: *therefore* will I visit upon you all your iniquities," the presupposition clearly is, that His loving knowledge of Israel had for its express purpose the training of Israel to moral excellence. But in a more specifically religious direction also the same principle is made to operate. Hosea uses the figure of the marriage-union, based on mutual love, in order to contrast most vividly the physical nature of the Baal-cult and the spiritual nature of the relation between Jehovah and Israel. The former constitutes a necessary bond to which the deity and its worshipers both find themselves subject by the very law of their existence. The latter, on the contrary, springs from free choice of love, and therefore dates from a definite point in history, previous to which both Jehovah and Israel existed without such mutual relationship. It is obvious that for bringing out this important idea the analogue of conjugal love was better adapted than that of paternal love. The relation between father and son is in its origin a necessary one, whereas that between husband and wife rests on the free consent of both, and in so far more faithfully reflects the historical and spiritual character of the covenant. Here, then, the idea of love has become determinative of the specific difference of the revealed religion of Israel as distinct from the nature-religions of the surrounding peoples. And it ought to be noticed that what Hosea, in virtue of this principle, demands of Israel is not confined to the sphere of ethics, but covers likewise the religious attitude toward

* Isa. iv. 3, 4; vi. 13; x. 20-22; xxviii. 5; Micah i. 12, 13; iv. 7; v. 8; vii. 18; Jer. xxiv, xxix; Ezek. xiv. 22, 23.

† Hos. xi. 8, 9; Jer. xxxi. 20.

Jehovah. What God desires of His people is that they shall answer to the love which He bears them with a like affection. The prophetic polemic against the ritualism of the popular cult proceeds from a twofold motive. On the one hand, its watchword is, Not sacrifices but righteousness; on the other, Not the external service of the altar, but the internal devotion of the heart. In a religion determined by the supreme principle of free spiritual love, every species of ritualism presented an insufferable anomaly. Thus it must be understood when the prophet puts into the mouth of Jehovah, expostulating with Israel, the words: "I have desired lovingkindness, and not sacrifice; and the knowledge of God more than burnt offerings."* The knowledge of God here is that affectionate regard for Jehovah which shall be the reflex of His elective knowledge of Israel. The exact correspondence of the two conceptions may be seen from another passage, where the demand, "Thou shalt know no God but me," is immediately followed by the reminder, "I did know thee in the wilderness, in the land of great drought."† In Amos and Isaiah the protest against the externalism of the day springs more largely from ethical motives, though in the latter at least the application of the principle in question to the specifically religious sphere is not entirely wanting—witness the divine complaint: "This people draw near me with their mouth, and with their lips do honor me, but they have removed their heart far from me, and their fear toward me is taught by the precept of men."‡

The Psalter adds no original view-points to those already discovered in the law and the prophets. If anything, we expect to find here the subjective religious response to the revelation of the divine love made in the history of Israel. Undoubtedly utterances like that in the Seventy-third Psalm: "Whom have I in heaven but thee, and there is none upon the earth that I desire beside thee," or that in the Forty-second: "As the hart panteth after the water brooks, so panteth my soul after thee, O God. My soul thirsteth for God, for the living God," mark not only the highest point to which the aspiration of the pious heart has attained under the Old Testament, but, we may safely affirm, the highest point to which it can ever attain in the form of pure, disinterested spiritual love. These are voices coming, as it were, from the world of ideal religion, in which the soul is lifted for a moment above the consciousness even of her own soteriological need and tastes the enjoyment of God as such. But passages of this character are rare: explicit reference to the love of the saints for Jehovah is made no more

* Hos. vi. 6.

† Hos. xiii. 4, 5.

‡ Isa. xxix. 13.

than six times in the entire Psalter.* More easily the Psalmists rise to the consciousness of an indirect relation, such as is expressed by the phrases to love "the Name," "the commandments," "the salvation," "the house of Jehovah."† This is all the more significant in view of the fact that the Psalter is full of the recognition of the divine love both for Israel and for individuals. But it should be observed that Chesed, the term chosen for this, designates specifically the duteous affection of a superior toward an inferior, therefore a form of love which cannot be reciprocated by man in kind. There seems to be only one well-established instance of the use of this word to describe the love of man toward God, viz., in the passage of Jeremiah where Jehovah declares that He remembers the Chesed of Israel's youth, the love of her espousals. And even here the true nature of the conception still clearly reveals itself. By an exquisitely conceived turn of speech God represents Himself as having sued for the love of Israel, and as having regarded her first answering affection in the light of a favor she condescended to bestow upon Him. In the mind of a Psalmist no such thought could have originated.‡

Even more marked is the absence of the subjective human response to the divine love from the entire wisdom-literature. As might be expected from the reflective, practical scope of this class

* Ps. xviii. 1; xxxi. 23; xci. 14; xevii. 10; cxvi. 1; cxlv. 20.

† Ps. v. 4; xl. 16; lxix. 36; lxx. 4; cxix. 132, 165.

‡ It might seem as if the above statement did not sufficiently take account of the fact that the adjective Chasid occurs some twenty times in the Psalter to designate the pious from the point of view of their faithful attachment to the cause of Jehovah. The passive interpretation of the word has been generally abandoned: it is intransitive: a Chasid is he who exercises, not who receives Chesed; this the fact that Jehovah is called Chasid toward man clearly proves. But the question arises, whether this specifically religious quality designated by Chasid has back of it the same conception of a personal Chesed exercised toward God directly, as when Jehovah is said to show Chesed toward man. It is possible that the religious sense was developed out of the ethical sense, that the Chasid was first the one who showed Chesed in his intercourse with other men, and that thence the word came to be applied to the upright as a religious designation. This would explain why the noun Chesed is practically never used in the sense of love shown from man to God, whereas in the two other senses of love from God to man and love from man to man it is quite common. At any rate, even the specifically religious usage of Chasid reflects rather an indirect attachment to the law and worship of Jehovah than a direct affection for Jehovah Himself. In regard to the noun Chesed, Hos. vi. 4, 6, is a disputed passage. Cf. on this and the whole subject Winter, in *Z. A. W.*, IX, 215 seq.; Smend, *Alt. Relig.* (2d Ed.), 213; Cheyne, *Bampton Lectures*, 378. Winter, in the article just cited, goes too far in eliminating the conception of man's love for God entirely from the pre-Deuteronomic sources (*i. e.*, according to his view of the date of Deuteronomy, from everything older than the close of the seventh century B.C.). This involves the violent removal of it from Judges v. 31 (Song of Deborah) and Ps. xviii. 2 (one of the oldest Psalms).

of writings, the fear rather than the love of Jehovah is here the controlling idea. The direct, personal relation to God, of which the Psalter is so full, remains throughout in the background. Only once in Proverbs is mention made of those that love Jehovah.* In two other places of the same book the divine love is spoken of as extending to certain classes of men.† Even on the divine objective side the conception assumes a more or less impersonal character. To love becomes equivalent to taking delight in, approving of, just as elsewhere the impersonal object of certain qualities, such as righteousness and judgment, is directly substituted for the personal one.‡

Before taking leave of the Old Testament doctrine, whose bare outlines have just been sketched, we must note one fact which stands out quite prominently, viz., that wherever the specific term or the specific conception of the love of Jehovah appears, the reference is always to the sphere of the covenant. It would be an inadequate explanation to say that the Old Testament, on the whole, concerns itself with the relation of God to Israel exclusively, and that consequently its silence on His love for other nations is a mere negative datum, from which no doctrinal inference to the particularistic character of the divine love as such can be drawn. In point of fact the Old Testament has a great deal to teach on the benevolent side of God's self revelation to the world at large. The strongest of terms are used on occasion to emphasize this truth. Even the covenant-conception is not deemed too sacred to be employed for the purpose of describing the solemn manner in which God pledged to the whole of creation, in the day of Noah, His abundant, ever-flowing kindness in the sphere of natural life, His long-suffering in the view of universal sin, His common grace working for the restraint of sin. It is attributed to His righteousness, universally revealed, that He keeps this covenant and preserves man and beast. As Jonah took pity on his gourd, so He pities and spares the Ninevites and their cattle. His mercy is wider and deeper than the ocean of human misery. But when the Old Testament seeks for a general category under which these several manifestations of universal benevolence are to be subsumed, it does not choose the term love. Whatever may be true of later revelation, is certainly not in harmony with the Old Testament *usus loquendi* to classify all the benevolent attributes as so many forms of love. Love in the Old Testament is not a genus but a species, be it the highest species in which the genus unfolds itself. On the other hand, the generic name for the several forms belong-

* Prov. viii. 17.

† Prov. iii. 12; xv. 9.

‡ Ps. xi. 7; xxxiii. 5; xxxvii. 28; xcix. 4.

ing to this aspect of the divine character is that of "goodness." "The earth is full of the goodness of Jehovah;"* "His goodness endureth continually;"† "O that men would praise Jehovah for his goodness!"‡ It is interesting to observe how delicate is the feeling of some of the sacred writers for this distinction. Not seldom where the universal benevolence of God has been dwelt upon and the circle of vision contracts to Israel, immediately the lovingkindness of Jehovah is substituted for the terms used before.§ Obviously the reason for this phenomenon lies in the absolute character the Old Testament ascribes to the divine love. In His general goodness God bestows various gifts upon the creature; in His love He gives Himself and holds nothing back. Consequently it was felt that, wherever such absolute, unreserved covenant self-communication was lacking, the term love could not properly apply. The Scriptural terminology on this point was not the product of any abstract theological speculation, but the faithful transcript of the simple facts of experience as interpreted by the Holy Spirit to the mind of the sacred writers.

Passing over from the Old to the New Testament, it needs but a rapid glance to perceive that in the teaching of our Lord, both in its Synoptical and Johannine form, the conception of the love of God occupies a central and controlling place. Not, to be sure, as if the other attributes of the divine character were resolved into the primary element of love. This is no more the case here than anywhere else in Scripture. While Jesus invites us to love the heavenly Father, He, on the other hand, also exhorts us to fear the God who is able to destroy both soul and body in hell. So long as the doctrine of eternal punishment is recognized as an integral part of our Lord's message, it will also have to be admitted that He knows of a relation of God to man determined not by the principle of love but by that of justice. Nevertheless by the prominence given to the truth of the divine Fatherhood objectively and to the call for faith subjectively, the conception of the gracious love of God is not only drawn into the centre, but also made the principal theme of Jesus' preaching. In order rightly to appreciate the significance of this fact, we must take into account the historical circumstances under which the first Gospel was proclaimed. Our Lord was confronted with the abnormal spectacle of a religious system which claimed to be the product of special soteriological revelation, and in which, nevertheless, God had been so far removed from man as to be no longer the object of trust and love. In Judaism everything had been put on the basis of com-

* Ps. xxxiii. 5.

† Ps. lii. 1.

‡ Ps. cvii. 15, 21.

§ Ps. xxxvi. 6, 7, 8; cvii. 15, 21, 43; cxlvii. 19, 20; cxlviii. 13, 14.

mercial intercourse with the Almighty. Over against this it was necessary before all else to awaken the religious consciousness to the recognition of the fact that God is personally interested in man; that instead of merely exploiting man in His service, He lovingly gives Himself to man, and desires to be met in the spirit of trust and affection. But it were utterly wrong to infer that Jesus, by what He taught in this direction, wished simply to brush aside all that previous revelation had inculcated with regard to other aspects of the divine character. The indirect polemic of this teaching is aimed not at the Old Testament, but at its perversion in Judaism. By taking our Lord's Gospel out of its historic environment and by refusing to construe it in harmony with the larger movement of revelation as a whole, we may be easily led to impute to Him principles which He would have repudiated. From the fact that to a generation which knew God only as a righteous Judge, and in an atmosphere surcharged with the sense of retribution, He made the sum and substance of His preaching the love of God, it does not follow that, if He were in person to preach to our present age so strangely oblivious of everything but love, His message would be entirely the same. It is quite possible to conceive that in such a case the emphasis would be somewhat differently distributed.

A real advance beyond the Old Testament must be noted in two other respects. Under the Old Covenant the nation collectively was the object of the love of Jehovah. In our Lord's teaching the possession of this privilege is individualized. God is the Father of every disciple in the kingdom. There had been approaches to this in prophetic revelation, but how partial they were may be gathered from the fact that the Messianic King is the only individual whom the Old Testament represents as calling God His Father in prayer. In all other instances of this kind the theocratic congregation is the praying subject. In the second place, what is even more important, the conception of the divine love is universalized. First of all, this means that it is denationalized. It was not our Lord's calling to engage during His earthly life in missionary activity among the Gentiles. As a preacher He was sent to the lost sheep of the house of Israel only. And as a preacher He conscientiously kept within the limits prescribed by the Old Testament, to the extent even of reserving the title of children for the members of the covenant nation, as His discourse with the Syro-Phœnician woman shows. At the same time He distinctly foretold that in virtue of the completion of His own work the Gospel would soon be preached to all the nations. And in an indirect way this tendency toward denationalization may be seen

at work even in His treatment of Israelites. In the Israelite it is the man as such, the universal man, sin as a universal human phenomenon, salvation as a universal human need, that the Saviour deals with.

But the question may further be put, whether, besides in this national and qualitative sense, our Lord also taught the universality of the love of God in the numerical sense of appropriating it to every individual man. The answer to this requires careful discrimination. It must be admitted that what the Old Testament used to call the goodness of Jehovah, in the sphere of natural life, is drawn by our Lord within the circle of God's love. In commanding the disciples to love their enemies He lays at the basis of this duty the example of the heavenly Father, who makes His sun to rise upon the evil and the good and sends rain on the just and the unjust. Although this benevolent attitude toward mankind universally is not explicitly called love, the reasoning implies that it may be correctly so designated. The more abstract form of New Testament truth opened the way for employing the term in a wider sense than had been possible with the Old Testament conception, from which the thought of marriage or fatherhood was practically inseparable. Undoubtedly, by thus emphasizing the universality of common grace and making it flow from the love of God, our Lord sought a point of contact for the approaching universalism of the Gospel. That God loves the world in its natural existence, even outside the sphere of the covenant, contains a pledge of the bestowal upon the same world of an infinitely higher redemptive love.

For it should be observed, in the second place, that the work of redemption itself bears in our Lord's representation a broad cosmical character. This is true already of the Synoptical teaching. Especially the doctrine of the kingdom in its eschatological aspect clearly reveals that the divine love sets for its goal not the saving of isolated individuals out of the world, but the salvation of the world as an organic whole. The coming of the kingdom in glory will bring a *παλιγενεσία* of the universe. But it is especially in the Johannine discourses, with their characteristic method of unfolding truth in its large fundamental aspects, that the principle in question is brought out with great distinctness. It is here that the statements occur: "God so loved the world, that he gave his only-begotten Son," and "God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through him might be saved." Christ is called the light of the world, and the Saviour of the world. He gives His flesh and His blood for the life of the world. From the nature of the case, however, this cosmical love,

though in certain of its effects pertaining to every man, does not permit in its absolute sense of being individualized. It involves a purpose to save the world organically, not a purpose to save every single person in the world individually. I am well aware that such a qualification of the sense of these passages has come to be regarded in many quarters as a subterfuge inspired by dogmatic prejudice.* In point of fact, however, the reasons which compel this intrepertation are purely biblico-theological, and consist of a number of Johannine utterances giving the saving love of God a special reference to the elect. This will appear presently. How little ground there is for the charge of dogmatic bias against those who adopt the proposed exegesis may be seen, meanwhile, from the fact that men like Holtzmann and Pfleiderer are among its advocates,—obviously not from any dogmatic motive, but because they see no other way of making the Johannine teaching consistent with itself.†

There is, however, still a third sense, in which Jesus leads us to ascribe universality to the divine love. This is done not so much in explicit form, as by the implications of His attitude toward sinful men in general. We must never forget that our Lord was the divine love incarnate, and that consequently what He did, no less than what He taught, is a true revelation adapted to shed light on our problem. If the Son of God was filled with tender compassion for every lost human soul, and grieved even over those whose confirmed unbelief precluded all further hope of salvation, it is plain that there must be in God something corresponding to this. In the parable of the prodigal son the father is represented as continuing to cherish a true affection for his child during the period of the latter's estrangement. It would be hardly in accord with our Lord's intention to press the point that the prodigal was destined to come to repentance, and that, therefore the father's attitude toward him portrays the attitude of God toward the elect only, and not toward every sinner as such. We certainly have a right to say that the love which God originally bears toward man as created in His image survives in the form of compassion under the reign of sin. This being so, when the sinner comes in contact with the Gospel of grace, it is natural for God to desire that he should accept its offer and be saved. We must even assume that over against the sin of rejection of the Gospel this love continues to assert itself, in that it evokes from the divine heart sincere sorrow over man's unbelief. But this universal love should be always so conceived as to leave room for the

* In the Meyer-Weiss *Commentary*, e. g., it is so characterized.

† Holtzmann, *Lehrbuch d. N. T. Theol.*, II, p. 479, note 1.

fact that God, for sovereign reasons, has not chosen to bestow upon its objects that higher love which not merely desires, but purposes and works out the salvation of some. It may be difficult to realize from any analogy in our own consciousness how the former can exist without giving rise to the latter; yet we are clearly led to believe that such is the case in God. A logical impossibility certainly is not involved, and our utter ignorance regarding the motives which determine the election of grace should restrain us from forming the rash judgment that, psychologically speaking, the existence of such a love in God for the sinner and the decree of preterition with reference to that same sinner are mutually exclusive. For, let it be remembered, we are confronted with the undeniable fact that this universal love of God, however defined, does not induce Him to send the Gospel of salvation to all who are its objects. If the withholding of the Gospel is consistent with its truthfulness, then *à fortiori* the withholding of efficacious grace must be. That there are good reasons for the former is true: but undoubtedly God has also His wise and holy reasons for the latter. The Scriptures do not assert that election and preterition are arbitrary decrees to the mind of God. All they insist upon is that the motives underlying them are inscrutable to us, and have nothing whatever to do with the worthiness or unworthiness of man.

Neither this indiscriminate goodness in the sphere of nature, however, nor the collective love which embraces the world as an organism, nor the love of compassion which God retains for every lost sinner, should be confounded with that fourth and highest form of the divine affection which the Saviour everywhere appropriates to the disciples. This is represented under the figure of fatherhood. Notwithstanding all that has been asserted to the contrary by a host of modern writers, an impartial examination of the facts discloses the principle that the Fatherhood of God in its specific sense is realized in the kingdom, so that His Fatherhood and Kingship appear coëxtensive. Where both are soteriological conceptions, that is, in by far the majority of cases, they cover the disciples only. That the religious sonship begins with discipleship, and is realized in proportion to the progress made in the latter, Jesus more than once affirms in so many words. The extreme form of the modern theory, according to which all men as such, indiscriminately, are the children of God, certainly cannot claim our Lord's authority in its favor. But even the less extreme form of this theory, according to which God is absolutely and equally the Father of all mankind, whilst men may become partially and relatively His children by spiritual transformation after

His image, is not in harmony with the facts. Not merely the sonship, also the fatherhood is given an exclusive reference to the disciples. Jesus always speaks of *your* Father, *their* Father, never of *the* Father absolutely, except where the altogether unique trinitarian relation between Himself and God is meant. This is at least the Synoptical usage. In the Johannine discourses it is different. Here *the* Father is quite frequent as applying to the disciples. But precisely here it is also easy to show that this form of expression rests on an entirely different basis from that of a universal Fatherhood of God. It is because the disciples are coadopted into the relation of love which exists between the Father and the Son, that God in a derivative sense becomes to them also *the* Father, as He is to Christ in a primordial sense. This, therefore, is a widening application of the term, such as would be inconceivable if the idea of a universal Fatherhood were the starting-point. Besides this, in the Fourth Gospel the divine Fatherhood is more than once associated with the begetting of believers and consequently a definite, historical beginning assigned to it. The most convincing proof of the correctness of our position lies in this, that our Lord derives certain specific privileges, which He appropriates to the disciples, from the source of God's Fatherhood in reference to them. He reminds them that it is natural for the Gentiles, who do not stand in this close relationship to God, to be anxious about meat and drink and clothing; "but *your* heavenly Father," He adds, "knoweth that ye have need of all these things."

The love of this gracious Fatherhood is infinitely richer than that pertaining to the three other spheres previously mentioned. It would be wrong, of course, to keep them mechanically separated. For those who are to be received into the inner sanctuary the privileges of the court serve as a preparation. But whatever there is of organic adjustment between the sphere of nature and of the kingdom, between that of common and of special grace, between the love of compassion and the love of adoption, cannot justify us in identifying the one with the other. In our Lord's teaching this is never done.* So far as the actual manifestation

* From the parable of the prodigal son the identity of the general love of God preceding conversion with the special love following conversion might be inferred. But this would be an undue straining of a point obviously given with the parabolic setting of the representation as such. The parable itself does not fail to indicate, that the sinner through conversion attains to the enjoyment of an altogether new and higher kind of love from the side of God than was his before. The prodigal is formally re-adopted and reinvested with the insignia of sonship. Cf. the excellent discussion of this subject by the late Dr. King, in THE PRESBYTERIAN AND REFORMED REVIEW for 1899, pp. 590-599.

of the love of God in human consciousness is concerned, a fundamental difference lies in this, that the enjoyment of the common love of God outside of the kingdom does not exempt man from being subject at the same time to the divine wrath on account of sin. Love and wrath here are not mutually exclusive. Within the circle of redemption, on the other hand, the enjoyment of the paternal love of God means absolute forgiveness and deliverance from all wrath. Even this, however, is not sufficient clearly to mark the distinction between these two kinds of love, the wider and the narrower. For, previously to the moment of believing, those who are appointed for salvation, no less than the others, are subject in their consciousness to the experience of the wrath of God. It would seem, therefore, that in his pre-Christian state the one who will later become a child of God is not differentiated from the one who never will, inasmuch as both are in an equal sense the objects of the general benevolence of God and of His wrath in their experience. Thus a representation would result as if the line of God's general love ran singly up to the point of conversion, there to pass over into the line of His special love. The general love of God, as a common possession of all men, would then be the only factor to be reckoned with outside of the sphere of the kingdom; and a special love of God could be spoken of only with reference to those who have actually become His children. And on this standpoint the temptation would always be strong to view the special love as conditioned by the spiritual character of man, since it does not apply to any except the regenerate. In order to clear the subject thoroughly, therefore, we must note the further fact that, according to our Lord's teaching, even before the divine wrath is lifted off the sinner at the moment of his believing, there exists alongside of the general benevolence which embraces all mankind a special affection in the heart of God for certain individuals, who are destined to become subsequently His children, and who are in their subjective consciousness as yet the objects of His wrath. Already during the pre-Christian state of the elect there are two lines, that of general and special love, running parallel in God's disposition toward them. It is not the special love itself which originates at the moment of conversion, but only the subjective realization and enjoyment of it on the part of the sinner. The Fourth Gospel, in which so many at present profess to find an indiscriminate universalism of the redemptive love of God, is the most emphatic on this point of all the New Testament writings, Paul alone excepted. Not merely is sovereign election taught here in unequivocal terms: it is also brought into organic connection with the love of God. Those who are

appointed unto life are children and sheep of the fold antecedently to their own acceptance of the Gospel. They belong to the Father in a special sense, and in virtue of this ownership are given by Him to the Son. Because this special relation between the Father and them exists, the Son, who is in His whole appearance and activity the exact reproduction of the Father, chooses them out of the world, and makes them the objects of that High-priestly intercession from which the world is on principle excluded. Believers know that they love God, because He loved them first. And, what is strongest of all, in a context where the Saviour dwells upon the Father's love, which was His before the foundation of the world, He identifies the disciples with Himself even in this unique possession : " In order that the world may know that thou hast sent me, and hast loved them, as thou hast loved me."

Next we must briefly glance at the teaching of St. Paul so far as it bears on our subject. It is universally acknowledged that in his doctrine of the believer's gracious relation to God the apostle makes the principle of the divine love absolutely supreme. But it is contended by many modern writers, that Paul does not consistently adhere to this, because he continues to construe the pre-Christian natural and Jewish-legal religious status of man on a merititious basis, determined by the principle not of love but of righteousness; and in his theory of atonement and justification even permits this discarded principle to reassert itself in the specifically Christian sphere. So far as this professes to be a dogmatic or philosophical criticism of the apostle's position, we have nothing to do with it here. From a biblico-theological point of view, however, the question may be raised, whether Paul failed to think out the ultimate consequences of his system in this respect, or whether perhaps he had in his own mind and to his own satisfaction so adjusted the attributes of love and righteousness to one another that they did not appear to him mutually exclusive.

We believe that the latter view is the correct one. In the act of atonement at least Paul finds the harmonious embodiment and revelation of both love and righteousness as coëxistent and equally fundamental attributes of God. "And, this being so, there is no reason to deny that the apostle so conceived of the scheme under which eternal life might hypothetically be secured, by fulfillment of the law, as to allow a place in it also for the manifestation of the divine love. We must not overlook that Paul hardly ever speaks of this scheme in the abstract, as it would operate under ideal conditions, but nearly always *in concreto*, as it operates under the actual conditions of the reign of sin. Where he does approach it from the former point of view, there is nothing to indicate

that, after the extreme Jewish fashion, he eliminates from it the principle of love as well as of grace. Paul nowhere condemns the law-method of securing life as unworthy of God and irreligious in itself: on the contrary, the fact that he transfers it bodily to the relation to God which Christ assumed in our place proves that it appeared to him ideal from a religious point of view. On Christ as the substitute of sinners the love and righteousness of God terminated in perfect harmony, both so far as God and the Saviour's own religious appreciation were concerned.

In the Pauline epistles, if anywhere, we might expect a deduction of the catholicity of the Gospel from the principle of the universal love of God, if such a deduction could be logically made. For it goes without saying that to Paul, as the great universalizer of the Gospel, a principle of this import would have possessed immense practical value, not to speak of the theoretical interest his mind would naturally bring to its elucidation. The roots of Paul's universalism may be traced along the whole line of his doctrinal thinking. Here, however, we have only to inquire in how far this universalism can be said organically to proceed from the apostle's theology in the narrower sense, from his doctrine of the nature and attributes of God. Confining ourselves to this, we find the principle of monotheism used as an argument in the plea for extension of the Gospel to the Gentiles: "Is He the God of the Jews only? Not also of the Gentiles? Yes, of the Gentiles also: seeing it is one God, which shall justify the circumcision by faith, and the uncircumcision through faith." At another time it is the apostle's conception of the spirituality and righteousness of the divine character which leads him to the conclusion that, if the uncircumcised Gentile were to keep the law, while the circumcised Jew transgressed the law, the former would be justified and the latter condemned. But this, of course, is spoken from the purely hypothetical standpoint of what we would call the covenant of works, and does not necessarily involve the applicability of the same principle to an order of grace. Nevertheless, in another passage Paul actually argues from the universal Lordship of God over the world to the catholicity of the Gospel: "There is no difference between the Jew and the Greek, for the same Lord over all is rich unto all that call upon Him." Still, it will be observed that the richness of grace stands here not in the premise, but in the conclusion. The fact remains, and it ought to teach us caution, that Paul has nowhere based even the denationalization of the Gospel on some such syllogism as this: God is essentially love, therefore He must embrace in His saving purpose both Jews and Gentiles. On the contrary, so deeply was

the apostle impressed with the sovereign character of the universalism of grace, even in this national sense, that he celebrates the reception of the Gentiles into the covenant as the great *μυστήριον* of Christ which for ages had been hid in God, because it sprang from an eternal purpose which He purposed in the Redeemer.

As a positive fact, on the other hand, Paul distinctly recognizes the universal character which the manifestation of the divine love in its various aspects has assumed. The benevolence pertaining to the sphere of common grace has received its classical description in the words, that God has not left Himself without witness, in that He does good and gives from heaven rain and fruitful seasons, filling the hearts of all men with food and gladness. There is a general goodness of God adapted to lead men to repentance. Great prominence is given to the cosmical scope of the plan of redemption. Christ has been made by God not the Saviour of separated individuals, but the head of a new humanity, the second Adam. The whole organism of creation, including its irrational part, will be raised to the liberty of the glory of the children of God. Some of the passages falling under this head have such a wide sweep that they are easily misunderstood, as if the apostle meant to affirm in them a reference of God's saving purpose to every individual, and not merely to the world collectively. A careful examination, however, shows that this is nowhere intended. Thus in the well-known passage of Romans, where a parallel is drawn between the first and second Adam and the spread of sin and righteousness in the world through the transgression of the one and the obedience of the other, Paul speaks of the operation not merely of the former principle, but also of the latter as extending to all. But if this were to be interpreted in a distributive sense, as applying to every man individually, then plainly not the loving desire of God to save all, but the actual salvation of all would be affirmed, for the apostle expressly declares that by the righteousness of the one the free gift has come upon all men unto justification of life. We are thus forced to assume that the "all" covers the totality of those who belong to the new human race which springs from the second Adam. To find in the word "many" alternating with "all" in the context a reminder of the particularism of grace would be surely unwarranted, for this "many" is also used where the consequences of Adam's sin are spoken of; but it would be equally unwarranted to conclude, as others have done, from the use of "all" that Paul advocated a doctrine of absolute universalism. Another instructive example of the manner in which the apostle's wide outlook upon the cosmical reach of the grace of God influences his mode of expres-

sion is found in Rom. xi. 32, where, speaking of Jews and Gentiles in their mutual relation to the Gospel, he declares: "God has concluded them all in unbelief, that He might have mercy upon all." On the same principle we must also interpret the statement in the First Epistle to the Corinthians that "as all die in Adam, so in Christ all shall be made alive."

Room for difference of opinion exists in regard to such passages as bring the principle of universalism in connection with the atonement. The apostle declares that in the death of Christ God was reconciling the world to Himself; and by the side of this Pauline utterance may be placed that of John the Baptist concerning the Lamb of God taking away the sins of the world, and that of John the Evangelist affirming Christ to be a propitiation not merely for our sins, but also for the whole world; as well as the passage in Hebrews in which Christ is said to have tasted death for every one. Two possibilities here suggest themselves. We may have to take the term "world," or the other universalistic expressions used, in the collective organic sense, as in the instances already discussed. Or, we may have to interpret them as teaching a certain reference of the atoning work of Christ to all men individually. Some of the passages quoted clearly require the former exegesis. In the mouth of the Baptist the word "cosmos" seems intended to cover the two divisions of the human race, Jews and Gentiles, because the saying alludes by way of contrast to the representation of the servant of Jehovah in Isaiah bearing the sins of Israel alone. To 1 John ii. 2 the old distinction between the sufficiency and the intended efficacy of the expiatory sacrifice of Christ properly applies: the writer's purpose is not to enlighten his readers about the extent to which the atonement is actually operative, but to assure them of its inexhaustible richness so far as their own sins are concerned.* For Hebrews ii. 9 the context, which speaks of "many sons" and of "the brethren" of the Saviour, requires a reference of *παντός* to the partakers of that new humanity of which Jesus had been just set forth as the ideal representative. As regards more particularly the Pauline passage, the absence of the article before *κόσμος* should be carefully noted: God was in Christ reconciling a *κόσμος* to Himself. God's grace embraces a whole kosmos in its organic capacity, including the Gentiles; not one branch, but the whole tree of the human race is the object of his reconciling act. The exegesis which would find here a reference to benefits which flow from the atonement to every man as such, is open to two objections. On the one hand, not some lesser benefit, but actual justification is specified as the

* Cf. Holtzmann, *Lehrb. d. N. T. Theol.*, II, 479.

main effect of the atonement: God was in Christ reconciling a cosmos unto Himself, *not imputing unto them their trespasses*. On the other hand, in the immediate context the words "one died for all" have their correlate in "all are dead," which latter statement refers, if not exclusively, at least in part, to the believer's ethical death to sin. It appears, therefore, that Paul's thought was dwelling here upon an efficacy of the Saviour's death which extends to believers only. But believers are, according to Paul, involved in the sin and guilt of the race, and consequently the reconciliation which disposes of their sin and guilt must from the nature of the case bear also a racial, cosmical aspect.

It must be granted, however, that, altogether apart from the exegesis of these passages, some sort of reference of the atonement to every man may be affirmed; and inasmuch as this reference is a beneficial one, we are led to posit back of it a form of love equally comprehensive and effective, which will have to be coördinated with the three other forms of universal love previously distinguished. The Bible gives us no right to say, that Christ in His atoning work acted as the legal substitute of every individual human being. But certainly neither does it require us to assert, that for the non-elect the atonement is void of all benefit or significance. Every man is indebted for great privileges to the cross of Christ. The continued existence of the race in spite of sin, but for it, would have been impossible. The atonement by its universal sufficiency renders the Gospel a message which can be preached to every human being, and the offer of the Gospel illumines the entire earthly existence of every one to whom it comes by the hope that he may find himself through faith one of the actual heirs of redemption. It makes an immense difference whether our present life be spent in the consciousness of this hope or without it. This may be best realized by making clear to ourselves what a tremendous change the withdrawal of the offer of the Gospel would produce in the entire outlook upon life, even for those who do not accept its terms. On the other hand, the love from which these universal benefits of the atonement flow should never be so defined as to obscure the fact that it falls short of the intention to bestow efficacious grace. We must also remember that, as it embodies itself in the offer of the Gospel, it can be called universal in a qualified sense only, since its field is circumscribed by the actual spread of the Gospel at any given time.

So far, then, there is in Paul nothing to lead us beyond the general statement that the redemptive love of God transcends all national bounds, that it aims at the reconstruction of a new humanity out of the chaos into which sin has plunged the present

human race. All the great epistles are at one on this point, the only difference being that in Ephesians and Colossians the circle of reconciling love is drawn with a still wider radius so as to encompass things both in heaven and on earth, a representation admirably adapted to throw light on the collective cosmical trend of Paul's thought, and to teach us caution in the matter of individualizing such utterances. In the Pastoral Epistles, however, a more pronounced form of universalism seems to find expression. Here we read not only that Christ gave Himself a ransom for all, but also that God quickens all things (or keeps alive all things), that God will have all men to be saved and to come unto the knowledge of the truth, that the living God is the Saviour of all men especially of those that believe, that in Christ the kindness (*χρηστότης*) and *φιλανθρωπία* of God our Saviour toward men appeared. In the case of some of these passages the context clearly indicates that a reference of God's saving grace or Christ's saving work to all classes of men, rather than to all men numerically considered, is meant to be affirmed. When the apostle first exhorts that supplications, prayers, intercessions and giving of thanks be made for *all men*, then specializes this as including kings and all that are in authority, and finally assigns as the ground for this duty the fact that God will have *all men* to be saved, it is not only allowed but demanded by the principles of sound exegesis to interpret the second "all men" in the same sense as the first. This also applies to the passage in Titus, where in succession the classes of old men, old women, young women, young men and servants are named and the manner of life appropriate to each described, whereupon the apostle adduces as the most forcible and comprehensive motive for obedience to this exhortation the fact that the grace of God which brings salvation has appeared to all men, teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lust, we should live soberly, righteously and godly in this present world. Similarly in another passage of the same Epistle the appeal to the *χρηστότης* and *φιλανθρωπία* of God follows immediately upon the instruction to be subject to principalities and powers, to obey magistrates, to speak evil of no man, to show all meekness unto all men.

In these cases, therefore, the context supplies an adequate reason, such as would be always and everywhere in force, for urging the principle in question. Nevertheless, the emphasis and frequency with which this principle is brought forward render it probable that something more specific in the historical situation to which the epistles address themselves was in the apostle's mind and determined the mode of statement even in the passages

already quoted. Of a polemic against Judaizing particularistic tendencies in the ordinary sense we cannot think in this connection, for there is no further trace of such in the Pastoral Epistles. In so far only as the pronounced nationalism of certain Jewish Christians may have betrayed them into taking the ground that it was unlawful to pray for the Gentile magistrates, can the exhortation to include in the common petitions of the Church kings and all that are in authority be explained as a protest against error of a Judaizing type. There is absolutely no reason to ascribe to the writer any intention to weaken or neutralize by these universalistic passages Paul's doctrine of predestination. Besides involving denial of the Pauline origin of the Epistles, this would leave unexplained why, in other passages, the principle of predestination is enunciated with all desirable distinctness. The only possibility that remains, therefore, is to find in the passages under review a warning against the dualistic trend of that incipient Gnosticism, to whose early presence in the apostolic period also the Epistles of the first captivity bear witness. In a twofold sense it might become of importance to vindicate over against this heresy the universalism of saving grace. On the one hand, in so far as Gnosticism on principle excluded from salvation those who lacked the pneumatic character which predisposes for the reception of the truth; and, on the other hand, in so far as those belonging to the pneumatic part of the human race might be considered to carry the power of salvation by nature in themselves, and consequently to stand in no absolute need of the objective saving grace of God revealed in Christ. In other words, it might become necessary to emphasize that God saves all men, in so far as no man is by his subjective condition either sunk beneath the possibility or raised above the necessity of redemption. Reading again with this theory in mind the passages already quoted, we cannot but be struck with the light it throws upon their general meaning and even upon the concrete forms of expression. God will have all men to be saved and come to the knowledge of that truth which the Gnostics reserve for the pneumatici. The living God is the Saviour not of one class of men, but of all men, especially of those that believe, for believers do not stand in less need of His grace than others: on the contrary, they are those in whom it most fully manifests itself. It is God's kindness and love toward men as such—his *εὐαγέλιον*—which the Gospel reveals, not His preference for any aristocracy of the Spirit. God quickens all things and does not exclude the sphere of matter from the influence of the regenerating power. If this should be really the key to a correct understanding of the statements in question, it needs no lengthy

argument to show that they were never intended either to affirm or deny the absolute universalism of redemptive love with reference to individuals. All they can be fairly construed to teach is, that no subjective spiritual characteristics divide the human race for God into two generations. God extends His grace to man as man; whether to all men without exception in the same manner, or to all in one sense, to some in a special sense, these are questions the answer to which would lie entirely outside the scope of the writer's intention.

But, whether this interpretation be adopted or not, in either case it will have to be acknowledged that the Pastoral Epistles do not identify this general love with the specific affection whose sole objects are the elect. In the midst of an apostasy which had carried away prominent members of the Church, and might well make others doubt their own power of perseverance, Paul appeals for the encouragement of believers to the sovereign principle: "The Lord knoweth them that are His." And what is true of the Pastoral Epistles is true of the Pauline Epistles in general. Nowhere in the New Testament does it appear more clearly than in Paul that the love associated with fatherhood and sonship is the Christian's exclusive privilege. Religious sonship begins with justification, for justification is in its very conception an adoptive act. And the objective side of the relation, the divine fatherhood, also is realized only in the sphere of Christianity. In the salutations of nearly all the epistles grace and peace are invoked upon believers from God *our* Father. The phrase "the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ" serves as a constant reminder that only to those who are in Christ is God a Father-God. The saints are addressed as the beloved of God. The love of God is shed abroad in their hearts through the Holy Spirit given unto them. It is put on a line with the peace which not merely subjectively, but objectively also, is an exclusively Christian possession. Nor does the apostle represent this unique love which rests upon believers as something first originated at the moment of their introduction into the Christian state. On the contrary, with the greatest possible distinctness, and in entire harmony with our Lord's Johannine teaching, he prolongs it backward to a point where it enters the region of the absolute eternal life of God. With the several forms of His general benevolence it may be intertwined as strands into a cord, but it never becomes identical with any of these. It is a principle not merely rendering the salvation of all the elect certain, but also rendering their salvation the supreme concern around which God's all-comprehensive decree makes the history of the world revolve. The apostle ascribes to

it such a character, that it would cease to be what it is were it to leave one single step in the *ordo salutis* subject to uncertainty. Most clearly this finds expression in Paul's doctrine of foreknowledge, predestination, election. By whichever of these terms the eternal choice of God may be designated, it is to the mind of the apostle, in its origin, essence and purpose, in its entire compass, a choice of love. For this reason it is impossible to maintain that the decree of predestination has no bearing whatever on the question of the love of God, as if from the totality of mankind He selected certain persons to be saved with a choice resting on grounds unknown, but into which a loving preference of these persons did not enter as a motive. The word foreknowledge is employed where the deepest source of the act of election comes under consideration, that beyond which nothing has been revealed to us or can be understood by us. But at this very earliest moment, when the mysterious decree of God passes within the ken of mortal eye, it bears already the signature of love, for this word "foreknowledge" expresses nothing else than that God by an act of condescension draws a person into the circle of His special notice and interest. And that this love has an absoluteness which will not let it be satisfied with less than the totality of what it can do for its object is taught by the other conception, that of predestination, and by the manner in which Paul connects it with that of foreknowledge. When saying, in the well-known passage of Romans, that those whom God foreknew He also predestinated to be conformed to the image of His Son, the apostle means to ascribe by this to the foreknowledge an intensity of love, such as in predetermining the destiny of believers made God seize upon the highest conceivable ideal of power and glory and blessedness, the image of God's Son—i. e., the mediatorial glory of the exalted Christ. Finally, the idea of election involves the same truth, since it designates an act whereby God chooses for Himself, or unto holiness, with the definite purpose that those chosen shall stand in a relationship of the closest appurtenance and most intimate love to Himself. How fundamental a principle this precedence of love over every other element in shaping God's eternal purpose was to Paul, may be seen from the fact that He places it back even of that mercy which to our human conception would naturally seem the first sentiment to be stirred up in the heart of God by the sight of fallen man. To the Ephesians he writes that God was rich in mercy, owing to the great love wherewith He loved us. The implication is that the sense of mercy, while naturally present in God toward such as are in misery, assumes toward the elect a richer and more tender character, and this on account of the love

which antecedently He cherishes for them. Accordingly the divine redemptive love bears with Paul throughout a pronounced personal character, more so than would be the case if it were identical with that general feeling of compassion which takes little account of individuality, but responds, as it were, to suffering human nature in the abstract. The words "who loved *me* and gave Himself for *me*" undoubtedly express what is true for every single believer. Nor must we regard this carrying back of the most individualized form of love into the very origin of the purpose of redemption a subordinate or accidental feature of the Pauline system. It is the natural expression of that absolutism which characterizes the apostle's view of the bond between the believer and God. Religion, which by its very nature seeks to eternalize its possession of God, feels the need of doing so not merely with reference to the future, but also with reference to the past. In his consciousness of election the believer carries within himself the sublime assurance that in the eternal life of God Himself there has never been a moment in which even the idea of his personality was indifferent to God.

A few words may be devoted to the First Epistle of John, because in it the idea of the divine love attains to greater prominence than in any other New Testament writing. The cause for this is probably the same as that which explained to us the universalistic tenor of the Pastoral Epistles, a polemic against Gnostic tendencies. Still the point of attack is here a different one, viz., the one-sided intellectualism of the Gnostic method of salvation, and the one-sidedly metaphysical conception of God underlying it. Over against this the absolute importance of appreciating the ethical aspect of the divine character and the indispensableness of applying to the profession of Christianity the practical ethical test found in love toward the brethren are emphasized. Hence such statements as: "He that loveth not knoweth not God, for God is love," "God is love; and he that dwelleth in love dwelleth in God and God in him," "He that saith, I know Him, and keepeth not His commandments, is a liar and the truth is not in him." If these sublime utterances are taken out of the historical environment for which the writer intended them and pressed into the service of other trains of thought great abuse may result. Especially the saying "God is love" has in this manner been misapplied in several directions. Even so well-balanced an interpreter as Holtzmann lets himself be carried away to the extreme of declaring, that in this word the conception of God has been entirely cut loose from the category of substance and removed from the sphere of nature-religion,—a thoroughly modern posi-

tivistic idea, to which John, who calls God light and eternal life as well as love, would certainly not have assented.* The epistle itself administers the corrective for such extravaganzas of interpretation. It clearly teaches that the love of God, which it makes the centre of His revealed character, belongs in its highest sense to believers only: "Behold, what manner of love the Father has bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God: therefore the world knoweth us not, because it knew Him not." If God were nothing but love, to the exclusion of all other modes of being, no difference would be possible between His attitude toward the world and His attitude toward His own.

The remaining New Testament types of revelation add little of importance to what has been gathered from the teaching of our Lord, of St. Paul and of St. John. We may, therefore, proceed to close this discussion with a brief suggestion touching the bearing of what we have found on the present desire to introduce into the Confession of the Church a statement which shall authoritatively formulate the Biblical doctrine on the universal redemptive love of God. That there is something which on sound biblico-theological grounds may be so designated our inquiry has shown. But even more clearly than this it has, we believe, brought out two other facts. In the first place, that that form of love which the Bible everywhere emphasizes and magnifies, so as to be truly called one great revelation of love, is not God's general benevolence, but His special affection for His people. This distribution of emphasis ought to be preserved in every credal statement which professes to reflect the Biblical proportions of truth. And in the second place, we have had occasion to observe, that the Scriptures do not leave room for the opinion that at any point, either in the eternal decree or in its historical unfolding, God's love for those intended to become His people has been undifferentiated from His love for wider groups of humanity. Every formula which would efface or even tend to obscure this fundamental distinction ought to be at the outset rejected as unbiblical. The divine love for the elect is different not only in degree but specifically from all the other forms of love, because it involves a purpose to save, of which all the other forms fall short. It was the great fault of the Amyraldian system that, on the one hand, it ascribed to the universal redemptive love which it assumed, the character of a purpose to save; and that, on the other hand, by doing so it

* Holtzmann, *Lehrb. d. N. T. Theol.*, II, 395. It might be asserted with equal justification that the categories of personality or even of existence were here eliminated. As is well-known, the necessity of asserting the former (*i. e.*, that we cannot affirm God to be a person) from its positivistic standpoint has actually been charged against the Ritschlian theology by some of its critics.

made the special relation of God to the elect emerge at a secondary stage in the decree of redemption. This is not only destructive of the principle that the purpose of God cannot under any circumstances be frustrated ; it also strikes at the root of the specifically religious significance of the doctrine of election. The love of God for His own thus becomes an afterthought and loses the better part of its value. The fact that the one historic attempt to reduce the principle we have been considering to a theological formula has been a signal failure, ought to fill the Church of to-day with great humility and to make her proceed with extreme caution in the task which, wisely or unwisely, she has set herself ; the more so since, as we have seen, the air is rife with extravagant un-Calvinistic, unscriptural notions on the subject. Nor is there need of any undue precipitancy. The great practical issues of to-day are in no wise staked on the solution of the delicate theological questions involved in our problem. There can be no difference of opinion as to what is the revealed will of God concerning our duty to bring the Gospel to every creature. After all it is from obedience to this plain commandment that our zeal and faithfulness in preaching the Gospel must spring. The secret things belong unto the Lord our God ; but those things which are revealed belong unto us and to our children, that we may do all the words of His law. May God grant that, whatever the outcome of the present crisis, we may firmly hold to this, and that the year's work upon which we are entering may help us all to become more efficient and abounding in the execution of this solemn charge of our Lord.

PRINCETON.

GEERHARDUS VOS.