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THE DIVINE LOVE MOTIF IN
HOSEA AND JEREMIAH

A Thesis Presented to the Faculty
of Concordia Seminary, St. Louis,
Department of Old Testament Theology
in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the degree of
Bachelor of Divinity

by

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

The prophets Hosea and Jeremiah were active on the eve of two great historical crises in the life of the people of Israel. Hosea's work preceded the Assyrian Conquest of 722, while Jeremiah announced the Babylonian Captivity of 587. Each prophet foresaw the judgement of God as an imminent reality for Israel and Judah. Their message, however, was not restricted to the proclamation of doom. On the contrary both these prophets were avid preachers of divine grace. And not only did they expound their teachings of divine love, but they also related their own personal experiences with that divine love.

The main objective of this study then, is to outline clearly both the encounter and the message of each prophet over against the love of God, and to understand the basic concepts of the divine love motif as found in these two authors. On the basis of this outline certain leading conclusions can be formed by comparing the principle themes in each writer. In this way the basic unity and the significant diversity of their outlook can be summarized.

In order to achieve this goal, the material is divided into three heads, the first dealing with Hosea, the second with Jeremiah, and the third summarizing the comparative views. In the case of each prophet one chapter is devoted

to gaining an insight into that prophet's personal contact with God's love. This forms the background for the prophet's message of divine grace itself, which is then outlined in progressive and logical sequence. In addition to the overall view of the prophet on a particular theme, certain specific concepts are studied at appropriate places within the progression. Likewise the original Hebrew expression is given where the phrase or passage concerned is significant.

The principle source for this work is the Holy Bible in the original languages. Thus where a Scripture passage is quoted to attest a statement, no supporting evidence is given where the meaning of the passage is quite clear. In all other cases, however, the leading arguments and the exegetical details are supported by the findings and opinions of eminent scholars. When the phraseology of these scholars is noteworthy a quotation is given in full.

Such a study provides a groundwork for the basic understanding of the great theme of divine grace in the New Testament, and should therefore be beneficial for both author and reader.

CHAPTER II

HOSEA'S EXPERIENCE OF DIVINE LOVE IN PERSON

The personal history of Hosea forms a distinctive and significant background to his theology. This is particularly evident from a study of the divine love motif which he stresses throughout. At the outset then, it is necessary to note both the call and marital experience of Hosea.

The Personal Experience in his Call

"Go, take unto thee a wife of whoredoms!" is the initial word of Jahwe to His prophet (Hos. 1:2). This was the divine command, the prophetic impulse, the לך לך אשה זנות of God's Word, which Hosea knew and experienced. This constituted the indisputable call, a call that was personal, involving not only his message but his entire life and activity.¹ Furthermore the specific reason for this call is given by God himself, "for the land has committed great whoredom departing from the Lord." Thus both the nature and reason for Hosea's special mission are outlined briefly in this verse.

No doubt the call did not become effective until, in obedience to the voice of God, Hosea "went and took Gomer

¹Stephen L. Caiger, Lives of the Prophets (London: S.P.C.K., 1954), p. 106.

the daughter of Diblaim" (Hos. 1:3). Through that marriage the prophetic call established a symbolical act. The symbolism, however, points backwards rather than forwards.

Weiser comments that,

Sie (die Ehesymbolik) ist nicht wie die uns sonst bekannte prophetische Symbolik Vorwegnahme göttlichen Handelns, das noch aussteht, sondern rückschauende Darstellung bestehender Verhältnisse im Volk.²

This retrospective approach is positive. Hosea viewed Israel as the whore, the unfaithful wife of a loving Lord (4:12). And that was precisely Israel's position at that time. Hosea, however, recalled more of the historical past. Scanning the pages of history he could point to many beautiful acts of God's love. And just as history was one of Hosea's basic resources to exhibit the divine love motif, so also his marital experiences became an unusual springboard for further progress.³

The marriage act was both real and symbolical.⁴ When Hosea chose Gomer as his wife, his purpose was not merely to symbolize the divine truth of Israel's choice, but more especially to stress the existing relationship between the

²Artur Weiser, "Das Buch der Zwölf Kleinen Propheten," in Das Alte Testament Deutsch, herausgegeben von Volkmar Hertrich und Artur Weiser (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1952), XXIV, 6.

³H. Wheeler Robinson, The Cross of Hosea (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, c.1949), p. 18.

⁴H. A. Ironside, Notes on the Minor Prophets (New York: Loizeaux Brothers, Inc., 1909), p. 8.

loving Lord and the unfaithful Israel. It seems best then to regard Gomer as a harlot even before her marriage.⁵ Thus Hosea 1:2 gives not only the reason for the call and consequent marriage, but also expresses the status of the two parties involved.

Through this divine call, through this impulse to marry, and through this act of marriage Hosea became acutely aware of his prophetic task to exhibit God's love in message and life. The life of Hosea was to be a sermon, or "ein öffentlicher Spiegel für das Volk."⁶

The Domestic Experience in his Marriage

The first action of Hosea was to marry this Gomer, a woman who was steeped in sin even before her marriage. During this marriage Gomer gave birth to several children, children who are designated as children of whoredom (1:2), since they were born of this whore, and had imbibed the spirit of whoredom. These children were not illegitimate, but bore the disgrace and hence the stigma of their mother.⁷

⁵E. B. Pusey, The Minor Prophets (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Baker Book House, 1950), I, 20.

⁶Paul Volz, Prophetengestalten des Alten Testaments (Stuttgart: Calver Verlag, 1949), p. 162.

⁷Sydney Lawrence Brown, "The Book of Hosea," in the Westminster Commentaries (London: Methuen & Co., 1932), p. 5.

Special divine guidance was given in naming these children, for these names were to be instructive signs for Israel, and not the expression of Hosea's personal enmity toward his children.⁸ This feature already points to a certain tension existing within the marriage union of Hosea and Gomer, a tension that throws into bold relief the constancy of God's perfect love.

The first name "Jezreel" (יֵזְרְעֵל, 1:4), had historical significance. It specified a certain plain where Israel had contracted a vile blood-guiltiness that Jahwe would soon avenge. The second name "Lo-ruhamah" (לֹא-רַחֲמָה, 1:6), pointed to the internal relationship between God and His people. It presupposes that the very existence of the people was founded upon divine grace.⁹ In His wrath God had now apparently withdrawn this grace. The third child was named "Lo-ammi" (לֹא-אֲמִי, 1:9). This was the final step. With the removal of grace came also the rejection of the covenant people. Israel would become a foreigner, merely one of the אֲרָםִים.¹⁰

This was but the beginning of Hosea's bitter experience, however, for his wayward wife proved unfaithful. She apparently passed once more into the hands of some private

⁸ Ibid., p. 8.

⁹ Weiser, op. cit., p. 8.

¹⁰ Brown, op. cit., p. 9.

overlord or temple organization to serve as a prostitute.¹¹ Gomer had broken her solemn marriage vow, but even in her lowest state of degradation Hosea could not abandon her. Once more the divine call was heard, once more Hosea obeyed the divine impulse to love Gomer. But this time he had to redeem her from her slavery, induce her to return home, and correct her evil inclinations.¹²

Thus Gomer was apparently kept in seclusion, deprived of the liberty that she had previously abused, and even forbidden her own conjugal rights as a wife. With unabated love the prophet waited until his wife should repent of her sins and respond to his love with a corresponding affection.¹³

The Symbolical Significance of this Experience

The divine love motif constitutes the kernel of Hosea's theology. The symbolical marriage constitutes the high point of his life.¹⁴ The question now arises, what is the connection between the marriage and the message. What is the tertium comparationis between the prophet's expression of divine love and his personal experience?

¹¹Robinson, op. cit., p. 14.

¹²Brown, op. cit., p. 28.

¹³A. F. Kirkpatrick, The Doctrine of the Prophets (London: Macmillan and Company, 1909), p. 121.

¹⁴Weiser, op. cit., p. 2.

It is evident from the outset that the accidental relationship of sexual intercourse, a thoroughly erotic concept, can have no counterpart in the image of divine love. The relationship must be internal and personal.¹⁵ And since the image with which the comparison is made is divine, the a priori guide must be the divine commands of Hosea 3:1 and 1:2. The pertinent expression in these commands is the phrase "according to the love of Jahwe"

(וְיָשַׁב אֵלַי כִּי אֶהְיֶה לְיָהוָה) in Hosea 3:1. Accordingly a study of the word אֶהְיֶה will be necessary.

Gesenius gives the root meaning of this word as "to breathe after, to desire." The concept embraces the idea of an internal personal energy reaching out. Hence there are such variations as "longing for," "affection for," "delight in," and "sexual desire."¹⁶ When used as an action or attribute of God this root implies the favourable impulse of God's personality. Quell is emphatic in his statement that "Die Liebe Gottes ist für die alttestamentlichen Autoren stets ein Korrelat seiner Personhaftigkeit."¹⁷

¹⁵Otto Schmoller, "The Book of Hosea," in the Commentary on the Holy Scriptures by Peter John Lange, edited by Philip Schaff (New York: Charles Scribner & Co., 1874), p. 40.

¹⁶Gesenius, Hebrew and Chaldee Lexicon, translated from the German by Samuel Prideaux Tregelles (London: Samuel Bagster and Sons, 1846), p. 15.

¹⁷Gottfried Quell, "Die Liebe im Alten Testament,"

When the verb אָהַב or the noun אֱהָבָה refers to divine love, as used by the writers of the pre-Hosean era it denotes particularly God's elective love (2 Chron. 2:11). This love was the motivating cause of Israel's election as a peculiar people (Deut. 4:37). It was, however, a love unswerving in its object and eternal in its purpose (1 Kings 10:9).

Although this aspect of God's elective love is stressed in the historical references of Hosea, the greater emphasis seems to lie on the continued expression of that love. Thus in Hosea chapter three the אֱהָבָה of verse one is conditioned also by verses three and four. The purpose of the divine love was not merely to choose a people, but also to preserve and restore that people in time of distress.¹⁸ Similarly the passage stresses that the ultimate moving cause of God's love was something eternally within itself and not in the object of its love. This is evident from the contrasting expression "though they love raisin cakes" (אֲנִי אֶהְבֶּנְךָ כַּמֶּלֶךְ אֲשֶׁר אֵינְךָ אֹהֵב).¹⁹ The antithesis between God's love for Israel and Israel's love for delicacies used in the worship of other gods reveals

Theologisches Wörterbuch zum Neuen Testament, herausgegeben von Gerhard Kittel (Stuttgart: W. Kohlhammer, 1933), I, 22.

¹⁸Weiser, op. cit., p. 26.

¹⁹Brown, op. cit., p. 28.

the free and spontaneous nature of God's eternal love.²⁰

Thus the love of Hosea for his wayward wife was to resemble this, אֱלֹהִים אֲהַבֵּנִי. Hence the meaning of the initial אֱלֹהִים (3:1) must be determined by the concept of divine love that Hosea already knew, as defined above.²¹ The love of Hosea then, was to be a heartfelt inclination, desire and yearning to receive, care for, and love his wife with all the depths of the former emotion.²² In fact that love was to prove constant regardless of the setbacks it experienced. For as Brown points out,

That was the significant thing about Hosea's love for Gomer, that it could not be changed by unfaithfulness. Because he still loved her she could never be like any woman to him. She had borne his name, she had given him children and her misery appealed to him as the misery of no other woman could.²³

God's love was indeed stable, enduring, unchangeable, and unconquerable. And it was just this feature which Hosea's love portrayed so admirably. This was the focal point in the symbolical picture of God's love. Hosea's divine love motif has this as its key thought.²⁴ Procksch also stresses this fact when he writes,

²⁰Ibid., p. 120.

²¹Schmoller, op. cit., p. 44.

²²Guell, op. cit., p. 22, however, maintains that this imperative is "nichts anderes als den Geschlechtsakt, Wenn auch immerhin in unverkennbar euphemistischer Form."

²³Brown, op. cit., p. 25.

²⁴Weiser, op. cit., p. 2.

Das Gleichnis zwischen Gottes und Hoseas Liebe liegt nicht in der Umberwindlichkeit der natürlichen Liebe sondern in der Umberwindlichkeit der barmherzigen Liebe, die dieser Prophet in sich erkannte, worin er aber nur wenige Nachfolger gefunden hat.²⁵

Hosea, however, could view this central thought from two distinct angles and yet maintain the point of comparison. By considering both the author and the object of that love these two features become apparent.

God's eternal love for man was something incomprehensible, something supra-rational. It bound itself to the object of its love with unbreakable cords, regardless of the cost involved. This love then was not something that could be judged according to normal human standards.²⁶

A human parallel prevailed also in Hosea's life. He still loved his fallen and degraded spouse with all the former devotion and fervor, quite contrary to natural reason, social custom, and accepted moral standards. Here was an analogy, imperfect though it may have been, between the divine and the human attitude.²⁷

When the attitude of Israel over against its covenant Lord is considered, both the supra-rational character and the immensity of God's love becomes evident. The opposition to that love, the obstacles it had to overcome, and even the

²⁵ Otto Procksch, Theologie des Alten Testaments (New York: The Macmillan Company, c.1914), p. 241.

²⁶ Ibid., p. 156.

²⁷ Quell, op. cit., p. 30.

pointed rejection of that same love were seemingly insurmountable difficulties. But the unfaithfulness of Israel could not nullify the faithfulness of God. Israel had become a rebellious, degraded, and revolting whore through her alliance with false gods and foreign powers (4:12, 9:1), yet God's perfect love and compassion still remained constant.²⁸

The corresponding part which Hosea enacts in his own life, although it may have seemed somewhat crude and grotesque, emphasized this grievous state of the people and the outraged love of God.²⁹ Gomer the harlot was a parallel to the whoring nation. Accordingly the patient affection of Hosea was to typify the divine and eternal antitype. His actions were to proclaim this message to the people. This symbolical message is summed up by Weiser in like manner when he says that "Der wesentliche Grundzug der Botschaft des Hosea ist die Verkündigung der nie verlöschenden Liebe Gottes."³⁰

In addition to this interpretation of the symbolical marriage, there is a second school of thought which makes the experience of Hosea the basic factor and his symbolical interpretation only an afterthought. Kirkpatrick for

²⁸ Moses Buttenweiser, The Prophets of Israel (New York: The Macmillan Company, c.1914), p. 241.

²⁹ Cuell, op. cit., p. 30.

³⁰ Weiser, op. cit., p. 2.

example writes,

It was only by the course of events that the significance of this act [the marriage to Gomer] was revealed to him, and he learned that that was the first step in his prophetic career.³¹

H. Wheeler Robinson goes even further in his study of Hosea's "Theology of Experience."³² Hosea, he believes, considered the human nature akin to the divine in such a way that the human personality could by its experience express a certain divine relationship and revelation.³³

Similarly he states:

The new fact is made when Hosea, the prophet, reinterprets this experience as having significance, and makes the prophetic venture of faith in saying that this is how God sorrows and loves. He could not make this venture unless he implicitly believed that God's nature was somehow like his own.³⁴

Over against this view is the emphasis by many scholars upon the transcendence of God. The divine command, the impulse to marry and restore Gomer, was something from without.³⁵

Hosea 11:2, for example, clearly distinguishes between the essential nature of the divine and the human personality. The holy love of God is divine and not human, the symbolism was formulated by God's command and not

³¹Kirkpatrick, op. cit., p. 125.

³²Robinson, op. cit., p. 12.

³³Ibid., p. 20.

³⁴Ibid., p. 21.

³⁵Pusey, op. cit., p. 19.

through human experience.³⁶

The Indirect Influence of this Experience

Nevertheless it is quite possible that this experience of Hosea may have helped to influence the form, colour, and depth of his theological concepts.³⁷ On the one hand, the sins and disgrace of his own wife would enable him to express more vividly the status of Israel at that time. When Gomer deserted Hosea, he would have realized more fully how acutely Israel had offended God. On the other hand, the tender care, the affectionate guidance, and the infinite patience required to restore Gomer, must have imbued Hosea with an even greater understanding of the immensity and depth of divine love. The mystery of divine love became even greater, but the elucidation of certain aspects became clearer. In this respect also this symbolism, a "symbolism impregnated with Hosea's blood," influenced his theology.³⁸

³⁶Procksch, op. cit., p. 155.

³⁷Quell, op. cit., p. 30.

³⁸Procksch, op. cit., p. 154.

CHAPTER III

HOSEA'S PORTRAIT OF DIVINE LOVE IN HISTORY

The Portrait as Such

The message of Hosea was not limited to the proclamation of that analogy which his symbolical marriage represented. In fact personal reproach may have hindered this method of preaching (Hos. 9:7). With retrospective eyes then, Hosea also viewed the truths of history, truths that were pertinent for the people of his day.

Repeatedly Hosea lamented the ignorance of his people (Hos. 4:6). Ignorance of God was a radical evil in Israel; ignorance of self was its natural consequence (6:4-6).

Thus

Wenn Hosea so überall in das Wesen eindringt und so sehr die Erkenntnis Gottes fordert, so verstehen wir, warum ihm die geschichtliche Führung seines Volkes so wichtig war.¹

Hosea's appeal to history presupposes his belief in Jahwe as a living personality. This attitude was an integral part of the Old Testament consciousness of history.² It was Hosea, however, who stressed especially the knowledge of God as a living historical reality, "und so schlägt

¹Paul Volz, Prophetengestalten des Alten Testaments (Gütersloh: C. Bertelmann Verlag, 1950), p. 173.

²Otto J. Baab, The Theology of the Old Testament (New York: Abingdon-Cokesbury Press, c.1949), p. 24.

Hosea fortwahrend die Blätter der Geschichte auf, um sein Volk zur Erkenntnis Gottes zu führen."³

In this study of history Hosea depicts at least three phases of divine love, namely, the elective, the paternal, and the holy.

The Portrait of God's Elective Love

The elective love of God was one aspect of the divine personality which was revealed only at specific times in history. Volz points out that,

Die Gemeinschaft Jahwes mit Israel, die Erwählung, hat ihre geschichtliche Stunde (12:9); Israel's Religion ist eine Stiftung Gottes, nicht eine Naturreligion.⁴

Jahwe delighted in that original choice of Israel. This is the point of Hosea's illustration in chapter nine verse ten. The person who finds refreshing grapes in the arid wilderness or the person who enjoys the first ripe fig is typical of Jahwe when He rejoiced in the election of Israel (9:10, 13:5). Hosea 9:13 presents another illustration of this same sensation. Here Ephraim is depicted as a palm tree, the emblem of fertility in a desolate region.⁵

³Volz, op. cit., p. 174.

⁴Ibid., p. 173.

⁵F. Hitzig, Die Zwölf Kleinen Propheten (Leipzig: Weidmannische Buchhandlung, 1838), p. 107. Render " ~ 13 " palm tree and not Tyre. "Die Palme, besonders die annoch kleine, bedeutet dasselbe Wort, *سجور* in Arab."

With profound joy Jahwe found ($\times \text{ז} \text{נ} \text{י}$), saw ($\text{י} \text{נ} \text{י}$) and knew ($\text{ז} \text{נ} \text{י}$) the youthful Israel. The $\times \text{ז} \text{נ} \text{י}$ (9:10) refers to Deut. 32:10, and implies the helpless lost condition of Israel when first chosen. On the other hand $\text{י} \text{נ} \text{י}$ (9:13) with the accusative and preposition ל , signifies selection for a specific purpose. The verb $\text{ז} \text{נ} \text{י}$ also includes the idea of personal divine love and attention for the one chosen.⁶

This divine favour was an unfailing spring, so that Israel prospered as a luxuriant vine (10:1).⁷ In Hosea 13:1 that pinnacle of prosperity is then referred to, where Israel, with vehement voice, shouts in personal exaltation.

The portrait of an $\text{י} \text{נ} \text{י} \text{ל} \text{ז} \text{נ} \text{י}$ (10:11), a young heifer generously schooled in the tasks of corn threshing, and spared the hardships of a burdensome yoke, indicates the love and mercy with which Jahwe had guided and blessed His chosen people.

Nor had Jahwe's loving direction neglected the spiritual needs of Israel. The case of their forefather Jacob (12:3,4) revealed that spiritual strength had always been available for His children. This emphasis upon the spiritual element is significant. In this connection Procksch

⁶C. F. Keil and Franz Delitsch, "The Twelve Minor Prophets," in the Biblical Commentary on the Old Testament (Edinburgh: T. and T. Clark, 1900) I, 124ff.

⁷Sydney Lawrence Brown, The Book of Hosea (London: Methuen & Co., 1932), p. 88.

also points out that "Nicht der natürlíche Mensch Jacob-Israel, sondern der weinend um Gnade flehende (12:5), ist der Begnadete."⁸

This same elective and protective love provided ministers of the divine Word to proclaim this love and will of God. Moses was that special prophetic leader who had effected the glorious deliverance from bondage (12:13).

"Nicht der Ahnherr nach dem Fleisch, sondern der Ahnherr nach dem Geist, nämlich der Prophet Mose, ist der wahre Wegweiser der Geschichte Israels."⁹ Numerous other prophets continued the work of Moses (12:10), proclaiming the divine Word (6:5) and pleading for mercy and knowledge (6:6).

These passages reveal how Hosea used history to illustrate the glory and fervor of God's elective love, and its consequent expression as God's directive love.

The Portrait of God's Paternal Love

In chapter eleven Hosea pictures Jahwe as the Father of Israel. And it is in the first four verses of this chapter that he sets forth the paternal love of Jahwe, a love that is beautiful, tender, and merciful.

The passage begins with the words "When Israel was a

⁸Otto Procksch, Theologie des Alten Testaments (Gütersloh: C. Bertelmann Verlag, 1950), p. 156.

⁹Ibid.

child then I loved him, and called my son out of Egypt." This verse refers to a definite historical episode through which divine grace was made manifest to the nation of Israel in a peculiar way. "Die Liebe Gottes zu Israel hat ihren ganz bestimmten Ort und Zeitpunkt des gottlichen Handelns."¹⁰ This feature of Israel's history had its great antitype in the life of Christ (Mat. 2:15).¹¹

Israel as a nation was chosen to be the son of Jahwe. The reference is to Exodus 4:12 where Jahwe uses the terms "my son" (אֲנִי אֶבְרָם), and "my firstborn" (אֲנִי אֶבְרָם). Hosea's concept of a full sonship is based upon this evidence of divine election. Indeed, Hosea's whole picture of the Fatherhood of God has its origin here.¹²

Hosea also views this paternal love as a motive for this choice. "I loved him (אֲנִי אֶבְרָם) and [then] I called my son out of Egypt," is the order of the text. The divine call (אֲנִי אֶבְרָם) was the external evidence of this selection. It revealed the elective love of Jahwe, of God the Father Almighty.

Weiser summarizes these two factors in the historical selection of Israel in this manner:

Am Anfang der Geschichte Israels steht für den Propheten die Liebe Gottes als die Kraft, von der alle

¹⁰Volz, op. cit., p. 174.

¹¹Keil and Delitsch, op. cit., p. 137.

¹²Brown, op. cit., p. 98.

Bewegung dieser Geschichte ausgeht, der Ruf Gottes, der dem Geschehen Plan und Sinn gibt.¹³

Verse two interrupts the main theme of this section by presenting the idolatrous practices of Israel as evidence of the ingratitude for its adoption. This evidence is in stark contrast to that produced by Jahwe Himself in verses three and four.

In these verses Hosea portrays Jahwe as a father tending his young son. Carefully the father has trained the child to take its first steps, carried it in his arms when the child was tired, and nursed its bruises when it had fallen.¹⁴ Gently the father has drawn the child to himself with cords of love (אֲרָבָה אֲרָבָה) which prevented the child from falling and gave him the feeling that he was already a man.¹⁵ Thereupon the child was lifted up to the father's cheek as a sign of affection. With similar care the child was put down again and the father bent over it to offer it food.¹⁶

¹³Artur Weiser, "Das Buch der Zwölf Kleinen Propheten," in Das Alte Testament Deutsch, herausgegeben von Volkmar Hertrich und Artur Weiser (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1949), XXIV, 70.

¹⁴Keil and Delitsch, op. cit., p. 138. אֲרָבָה אֲרָבָה is an Aramaic form of the Hiphil of אָרַב, and means to teach to walk. The third plural suffix of אֲרָבָה אֲרָבָה indicates that also the individuals of the nation may be meant.

¹⁵Ibid., p. 138.

¹⁶Brown, op. cit., p. 100. The slight emendation of the text to אֲרָבָה אֲרָבָה is plausible, and removes the necessity of changing the metaphor so abruptly.

Through this picture of Jahwe as a loving father graciously nursing Israel, the helpless child, Hosea wished to stress the reality of divine love, for

Das Bild des Vaters ist besonders eindrucksvoll, es zeigt die freie Wahl, mit der Gott gerade dieses Volk erkoren hat, und zeigt all die Fürsorge die von ihm in der Geschichte des Volkes ausgeströmt ist.¹⁷

It is interesting to note, however, that the actual word "father" never occurs in the book of Hosea, although the Fatherhood of God is constantly presupposed. Quell thinks that this omission is intentional and cites Jer. 2:27 as a possible clue.¹⁸ That word, it seems may have been used extensively in the worship of fertility cults.

It is noteworthy also that Hosea regarded the children of Israel who had practiced this "Father Idolatry" as completely fatherless when they stood before God, the true Father (14:3), yet he recognized their freedom to appeal to the tender mercies of Jahwe. Hosea was confident that the same divine Father who had taken the initiative in the wilderness long ago (9:10), would be constrained by His love to meet the peculiar needs of Israel in the present crisis.¹⁹

¹⁷Volz, op. cit., p. 174.

¹⁸Gottfried Quell, "Die Liebe im Alten Testament" in Theologisches Wörterbuch zum Neuen Testament, herausgegeben von Gerhard Kittel (Stuttgart: W. Kohlhammer, 1933), I, 31.

¹⁹H. Wheeler Robinson, The Cross of Hosea (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, c.1949), p. 49.

The Portrait of God's Holy Love

In a study of Hosea's historical insights, verses eight and nine of chapter eleven are also significant. This passage too is deeply rooted in Hosea's knowledge of the past.²⁰ Hosea had already presented the reality, the activity and the personality of God in love. Now he was constrained for a moment, to penetrate the internal mystery of Jahwe, the living God of history, the God who was even then contemplating plans for Israel. These verses are a study of divine love at its fountain head. "In diesem Begründungssatz darf mit Fug die letzte Vollendung des alttestamentlichen Liebesgedankens gesehen werden."²¹

In verse eight Hosea visualizes God thinking in human fashion. The heart of God is deeply moved ($\text{לֵב} \text{אֱלֹהִים} \text{נִדְּבַל}$) as He considers the deplorable state of Israel, that child whom He had fostered, the bride in whom He had delighted during that honeymoon period in the wilderness.²² He abhors the thought that Israel should share the same fate as Admah and Zeboim, which perished during the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah (Deut. 29:23). With compassionate love Jahwe yearns to avert the absolute doom that

²⁰ James Philip Hyatt, Prophetic Religion (Nashville, New York: Abingdon-Cokesbury Press, c.1947), p. 101.

²¹ Quell, op. cit., p. 31.

²² Hyatt, op. cit., p. 88.

Israel deserves.

Hosea sees God tormented, suffering because of Israel's unfaithfulness. This theme is noted by Quell also when he writes, "Darum leidet er förmlich unter seines Volkes Lieblosigkeit."²³ The same idea is contained in such passages as Hos. 6:4ff. and 13:13ff. Likewise H. Wheeler Robinson poses the question,

If the love of God is more than a metaphor, must not the suffering of God be as real, though with all the qualifications in both suffering and love which come from reference to God instead of man?²⁴

A paradox confronts the reader at the end of verse eight. How can the standpoint of divine mercy be maintained over against divine holiness? The prophet, however, does not hesitate when he is relating these divine meditations. The decision of Jahwe is final; He will temper the fierceness of His divine wrath ($\text{הַיְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ אֵלֵינוּ} \text{ וְיִשְׂרָאֵל אֱלֹהֵינוּ} \text{ וְיִשְׂרָאֵל אֱלֹהֵינוּ} \text{ וְיִשְׂרָאֵל אֱלֹהֵינוּ}$). And the precise reason given for this merciful action is His own essential holiness (For I am God and not man, the Holy One in the midst of thee).

The love of God is a holy love. The $\text{הַיְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ אֵלֵינוּ} \text{ וְיִשְׂרָאֵל אֱלֹהֵינוּ} \text{ וְיִשְׂרָאֵל אֱלֹהֵינוּ} \text{ וְיִשְׂרָאֵל אֱלֹהֵינוּ}$ (zeal) of God's holiness is not merely wrath but also love.²⁵ With this concept of the holy love of God, Hosea's histori-

²³Quell, op. cit., p. 32.

²⁴Robinson, op. cit., p. 24.

²⁵Gustav Friedrich Oehler, Theology of the Old Testament (9th revised edition; New York: Funk and Wagnalls, 1883), p. 38.

cal insight reaches its deepest point. This insight is a special feature of his divine revelation. Nor does this concept involve a contradiction. "Gott beweist nicht weniger als seine Eigenschaft als Gott und Heiliger, indem er aus Liebe handelt."²⁶ It is the holiness of God that distinguishes Him from the creature,²⁷ and accords Him that position of transcendence, of unapproachableness, of being the "wholly other."²⁸ Frocksch expresses this by saying: "Gott ist heilig inmitten Israels (11:9); damit wird der konträre Gegensatz seines Wesens gegenüber aller Geschöpflichkeit ausgesprochen."²⁹

The mystery of that divine holy love is revealed when the unapproachable dares to approach, when the transcendent draws near, when, in fact, the holy love of God is recognized.

Dieser volkstümliche Gegensatz wird durch Gott bei Hosea verwandelt; denn nun bewahrt Gottes Heiligkeit ihren absoluten Gegensatz zu allem menschlichen Wesen in der barmherzigen Liebe zum sundhaftigen Volke.³⁰

This juxtaposition of love and holiness gives Hosea's love motif new depth. The mystery of a transcendent God

²⁶ Quell, op. cit., p. 31.

²⁷ Vols, op. cit., p. 178.

²⁸ Rudolph Otto, The Idea of the Holy, translated by John W. Harvey (London: Oxford University Press, 1952), p. 25.

²⁹ Frocksch, op. cit., p. 155.

³⁰ Ibid.

approaching the depths of Sheol becomes a powerful reality (13:14). Thus the divine call of Israel is seen not merely as a national choice, but basically also a spiritual election.³¹ Likewise Hosea was not content just to present a number of historical facts, for he wanted to infuse into the hearts of his hearers a consciousness of their own guilt and of God's nature. Thus he hoped to convict his audience of the historical reality of divine love.³²

³¹Volz, op. cit., p. 177.

³²Hyatt, op. cit., p. 87.

CHAPTER IV

HOSEA'S EXPRESSION OF DIVINE LOVE IN ACTION

The Expression of Divine Love over against Sin

The preceding chapters have presented Hosea's divine love motif according to his personal and historical revelation. Such an analytical presentation of divine attributes as such, however, was not the principle aim of the Hebrew prophet. He was no systematic theologian.¹ His task was to preach and to teach how God acted, and what God required of His people.

Hosea excels in this art. The active expression of God's love in and toward Israel is outlined in logical progression in chapter two. The various stages of this chapter form a basis for the study of this expression of God's love in action.

In the whole of this section it seems evident that the external form has been influenced by Hosea's domestic experiences. This striking feature is apparent already in verse two. Couched in this form the verse indicates clearly Hosea's attitude toward sin. Here he describes sin as something that violates a union (in this case a marriage union), as whoredom in 4:12, and as treachery within a

¹James Philip Hyatt, Prophetic Religion (Nashville, New York: Abingdon-Cokesbury Press, c.1947), p. 149.

covenant in 6:7. The significant factor is usually not the transgression of some specific law, but the violation of personal intimacy, the "alienation of affection."² Many critics call this "sin against love," and in this case sin against divine love.³

The negative aspect of Israel's sin was ignorance of God; the positive aspect was aggressive opposition to divine grace. Affectionately Jahwe had guided Israel (Hos. 11:3), yet Israel had rejected this love cruelly, by setting its affection upon "manufactured gods" (4:12),⁴ by placing its trust in royalty (8:4), and by seeking protection through foreign alliance (7:11). These were the visible signs of an ingratitude, of an "inner alienation,"⁵ of a reality that was equivalent to sin against divine love.

The Expression of Divine Love in Discipline

The love of God, however, is not rendered inactive by this outrageous opposition. On the contrary, it presents

²Sydney Lawrence Brown, "The Book of Hosea," in the Westminster Commentaries (London: Methuen & Co., 1932), p. 37.

³A. Cohen, The Twelve Prophets (Bournemouth: The Soncino Press, 1948), p. 2.

⁴A. F. Kirkpatrick, The Doctrine of the Prophets (London: Macmillan and Company, 1909), p. 133.

⁵H. Wheeler Robinson, The Cross of Hosea (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1951), p. 38.

a program of operation, a program of warning, discipline and punishment, which is designed to effect heartfelt repentance and a deeper understanding of divine truths. Such is the program of chapter two, verses three to thirteen.

The first word $\int \textcircled{\text{e}}$ indicates that this section is conditional. Here is a warning against the consequences of sin, and the awful threat of judgement. Such a warning, although it designates a future misery, flows from divine love. It was gracious of God even to repeat this warning. "Die Drohung soll Israels Schamgefühl wecken und es zur Selbstbesinnung führen."⁶ It is Hosea's concept of the suffering love of God that seems to have coloured his messages of doom in this way. Quell remarks: "Dies Motiv der leidenden Gottesliebe gibt allen Drohworten bei Hosea einen besonderen Klang."⁷

The punishment threatened in this section involves the loss of all blessings (2:2,3,9), and the removal of all idolatrous worship (2:6,7,11). These calamities will prove the futility of idolatry (2:6,7), and will leave Israel in miserable disgrace (2:3). In such a condition

⁶Artur Weiser, "Das Buch der Zwölf Kleinen Propheten," in Das Alte Testament Deutsch, herausgegeben von Volkmar Hertrich und Artur Weiser (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1949), XXIV, 13.

⁷Gottfried Quell, "Die Liebe im Alten Testament," in Theologisches Wörterbuch zum Neuen Testament, herausgegeben von Gerhart Kittel (Stuttgart: W. Kohlhammer, 1933), I, 32.

Israel will acknowledge Jahwe as the only and ultimate source of all its material and spiritual welfare. The nations of Egypt and Assyria will be the instruments of God in the execution of this judgement (9:3).

These and similar messages of Judgement (cf. 5:8,14) have a salutary purpose; this penalty is meant to be pedagogic and derive its meaning from the ultimate purpose of God.⁸ Hosea maintains that punishment is designed to remove those obstacles existing between God and His people, obstacles which hinder true communion with God in love, "Denn das Gericht ist nicht Gottes letztes Wort. Seine Gerechtigkeit fordert den Untergang, sein Erbarmen verlangt den ewigen Bestand."⁹

The immediate purpose of this punishment is penitence, for "das Gericht ist der Hebel um die Umkehr zu ermöglichen."¹⁰ Hosea rejects all superficial repentance designed as a temporary measure to alleviate suffering and distress (6:1-3). Only that repentance which is effected by the powerful word of divine judgement is effective and hence in accord with the divine love motive (6:5,6). Volz has this pointed remark on Hosea 6:5:

⁸Robinson, op. cit., p. 57.

⁹Paul Volz, Prophetengestalten des Alten Testaments (Stuttgart: Calwer Verlag, 1949), p. 175.

¹⁰Otto Procksch, Theologie des Alten Testaments (Gütersloh: C. Bertelmann Verlag, 1950), p. 161.

"Busse ist Tod des eigenen Lebens und Wesens, und dieser Tod geschieht durch den Spruch der Propheten."¹¹

Divine love is pure and holy; it desires a thorough purification and a holy confession. Hosea stresses this in his demand for heartfelt repentance. "Break up your fallow ground" (הַרְבֵּץ אֶת־הַשָּׂדֶה), he exclaimed. Such a thorough transformation of life is the inevitable result of true repentance. Likewise he points to the confession of personal sinfulness and absolute reliance upon God's mercy as singular signs of this true repentance (Hos. 14:2,3). The penitent cry of the sinner, "For in Thee the fatherless find mercy" (14:3), reveals that a knowledge of God's compassion prompted that cry. Compassion is that aspect of the divine love motif which flows from God's yearning heart in order to offer comfort and consolation for consciences stricken under love's pedagogic and disciplinary functions.¹² The statement of Brandt is pertinent in this connection:

Gott hat ihn [Hosea] auf den entscheidenden Punkt seiner freien Gnade geführt, mit der er den Treulosen liebt und nicht den Gerechten. Das hebt nicht das Wort vom Gericht auf: aber der letzte Ton ist es nicht. Das nimmt dem Busswort seine scharfe nicht, sondern lasst es im Gegenteil in seiner herzerreissenden Gestalt aus der Glut enttauschter Liebe hervorbringen.¹³

¹¹Volz, op. cit., p. 171.

¹²Robinson, op. cit., p. 57.

¹³L. Theodor Brandt, Das Zeugnis des Hosea und Amos (Detmold: Tölle & Co., 1948), p. 78.

Hosea's presentation of God's judgement and man's proper response, reveals not merely the divine will of justice and retribution, but also the inexplicable and unfounded love of God. From such a presentation the activities of both energies are apparent. Whether in warning, judgement, repentance, or discipline of any kind, this love motif looms as a reality in the background.¹⁴

The Expression of Divine Love as Courtship and Bethrothal

In the first part of chapter two Hosea has depicted divine love in active coordination with divine justice. In the second part this activity is seen principally in accordance with divine grace.

Once again Hosea employs the figure of the marriage relationship. Courtship, that phase which normally precedes marriage, illustrates the active beauty of divine grace in drawing the loved one to its bosom (2:14). "Therefore behold I will woo her, I will bring her [back] into the wilderness, and I will speak comfortably unto her" (2:14). These are the words that express the impulse of divine love in action. The initial $\int \int \int$ indicates that a significant thought will follow. The inferential $\int \int \int$, however, is unexpected here. Nevertheless it reveals that divine mercy can flow even through human misery.¹⁵ It indicates the

¹⁴Weiser, op. cit., p. 71.

¹⁵Brown, op. cit., p. 21.

unity that exists between divine judgement and the salvation of grace.¹⁶

The following participle וַיִּשְׁמַח embraces the idea of gentle ardour and undying devotion.¹⁷ The noun וַיִּשְׁמַח refers to the wilderness where Jahwe had wooed His people in its youth.¹⁸ The concluding phrase, $\text{וַיִּשְׁמַח בְּעַמּוֹתָיִךְ}$, "denotes a comforting by action, by manifestations of love, through which her [Israel's] grief is mitigated."¹⁹ Thus Hosea depicts in this verse, the unquenchable desire of Jahwe to win back the allegiance of Israel.

This impetus of divine love is not restricted to the mitigation of grief, or mere verbal encouragement, however. This is an active love, a love that provides a new "Heilsschöpfung"²⁰ with unbounded blessings, renewed hope, and positive response (2:15). God will transform the valley of trouble, Achor, into a new doorway of hope, and arouse an active and grateful reaction in the heart of

¹⁶Weiser, op. cit., p. 18.

¹⁷E. B. Pusey, The Minor Prophets (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Baker Book House, 1950), p. 35.

¹⁸Brown, op. cit., p. 20.

¹⁹C. F. Keil and Franz Delitsch, "The Twelve Minor Prophets," in the Biblical Commentary on the Old Testament (Edinburgh: T. and T. Clark, 1900), p. 61.

²⁰Weiser, op. cit., p. 19.

Israel.²¹

This moving reply to the divine manifestation of love is further emphasized in verse sixteen. Weiser aptly sums up the verse in this way:

Israel wird nun, überwunden von der göttlichen Liebe, auch seinerseits diese Liebe erwidern, indem es als liebende Ehefrau "Mein Mann" (' W ' X) nimmt, und nicht mehr wie bisher "Mein Baal" (' 3 Y 3).²²

The name Baal became objectionable because of its association with heathen deities. Accordingly the annihilation of all other Baal names completes this picture of this new era of salvation (2:17).

By using this analogy of courtship Hosea has emphasized the power of the divine love impetus. As a result the active phase of the divine love motif becomes more cogent. For the manifestation of this love involves not merely a personal expression over against its object (2:14; 14:1), but also a transforming and creative activity within this object (14:4a, 2:15b, 16).

Upon the basis of this new internal relationship a new covenant can be formed. Such a covenant is distinctive, for it involves a union "der einzig und allein auf der ungreiflichen Barmherzigkeit Gottes steht."²³ This covenant (' 3 Y 3) is absolute, solely dependent upon Jahwe

²¹Keil and Delitsch, op. cit., p. 62.

²²Weiser, op. cit., p. 19.

²³Brandt, op. cit., p. 53.

(כֶּרְתָּהּ אֶת־יְהוָה), and stands in antithesis to the old covenant which could be rendered ineffectual through man's unfaithfulness (6:7, 8:1).

This covenant involves, first of all, Israel's active enjoyment in the harmonious new world order (2:18). It is through the figure of betrothal that Hosea discloses the idea of union involved in a special way. This covenant is to be a thing of divine beauty, an everlasting joy (2:17). This beauty, the beauty of divine love in its betrothal to Israel, is expressed by Volz in an unusual way. He writes:

Der Eheherr tritt hervor in seiner herrlichen Gestalt. Er trägt ein Diadem, das mit Edelsteinen geschmückt ist, und diese Edelsteine heissen Recht und Gerechtigkeit, Huld und Erbarmen und Treue, und in dieser herrlichen Gestalt wird die Braut den Eheherrn erkennen.²⁴

An analysis of the structure of this covenant exposes אֶהְיֶה לָהּ as the central concept.²⁵ "Der Grundton, auf den das Gottesverhältnis in der predigt Hosea abgestimmt ist, ist die Liebe (אֶהְיֶה לָהּ); hier öffnet der Prophet den Blick in Gottes innerstes Wesen."²⁶ אֶהְיֶה לָהּ is one of the specific terms for covenant love in the Old Testament.²⁷ A study of just how Hosea uses this term may prove useful

²⁴Paul Volz, Prophetengestalten des Alten Testaments (Stuttgart: Calwer Verlag, 1949), p. 176.

²⁵Robinson, op. cit., p. 49.

²⁶Weiser, op. cit., p. 21.

²⁷Norman Henry Snaith, The Distinctive Ideas of the Old Testament (London: The Epworth Press, 1953), p. 95.

at this point.

The basic etymological meaning of this word $\aleph \text{ } \text{ } \aleph$ is "eagerness," "keenness," but in the Hebrew it was in connection with the covenant in particular. Thus it came to mean "loving kindness" and "faithfulness" to those within the covenant. It is quite distinct from $\aleph \text{ } \text{ } \aleph \text{ } \aleph$ which is the free and spontaneous elective love of Jahwe (Deut. 4:37).²⁸

The same fundamental meaning of $\aleph \text{ } \text{ } \aleph$ is also evident in Hosea. Although Israel had transgressed the covenant (6:7), and lacked $\aleph \text{ } \text{ } \aleph$ on its own part (6:6), the covenant love of Jahwe was constant. It is the persistent steadfastness of this $\aleph \text{ } \text{ } \aleph$ that Hosea stresses.²⁹ Israel's rejection of God did not nullify that covenant love. On the contrary, God's love arises anew to establish a fresh covenant in order to express to His people this very covenant love (2:19).

The remaining features of this covenant (2:19) are also valuable for determining the precise meaning given to $\aleph \text{ } \text{ } \aleph$ in this context. These other features describe the various divine attributes which render the covenant indissoluble.³⁰ Righteousness ($\aleph \text{ } \text{ } \aleph$) and judgement ($\aleph \text{ } \text{ } \aleph$) are those attributes whereby God would keep Israel pure and holy, by removing any obstacles that might

²⁸Ibid., p. 98.

²⁹Ibid., p. 108.

³⁰Keil and Delitsch, op. cit., p. 64.

locus classicus for such a study; it is the expression

הַקָּדוֹן הַגָּדוֹל הַגָּדוֹל הַגָּדוֹל which is pertinent at this point.

The activity of the divine הַקָּדוֹן הַגָּדוֹל הַגָּדוֹל, however, is not limited to the sphere of the covenant, but extends to all, desiring to heal all (14:4). The term הַקָּדוֹן הַגָּדוֹל הַגָּדוֹל, here translated "freely," is a significant addition in this place, since that term is nowhere else used in the Old Testament to elucidate an action of Jahwe.³⁴ Nevertheless, the normal use of the word points up three distinct features that are relative here also.

As a noun, הַקָּדוֹן הַגָּדוֹל הַגָּדוֹל is used to specify a free-will offering (Lev. 22:23). The corresponding implication points to the divine הַקָּדוֹן הַגָּדוֹל הַגָּדוֹל as a free gift from above. As an adjective this term may indicate freedom of expression and spontaneity of feeling toward someone or concerning something (Ps. 110:3, 54:8). It is evident also that this concept of spontaneity is a fitting attribute to describe the divine הַקָּדוֹן הַגָּדוֹל הַגָּדוֹל. In other contexts this word is used to stress the active operation of the will and heart. Whatever a person does or expresses must flow from the heart and the personal conviction of the will, it must be carried out הַקָּדוֹן הַגָּדוֹל הַגָּדוֹל (1 Chron. 29:5; 2 Chron. 35:8). In this sense הַקָּדוֹן הַגָּדוֹל הַגָּדוֹל is almost equivalent to הַקָּדוֹן הַגָּדוֹל הַגָּדוֹל.

³⁴ Solomon Mandelkern, Veteris Testamenti Concordantiae Hebraicae atque Chaldaicae (Leipzig: F. Margolin, 1925), p. 723.

(willing), in Exodus 35:5. Accordingly when Jahwe loves הוֹרָאָה , he is expressing his inner will, his personality.³⁵ A concept closely akin to the one under discussion is found in Psalm 51:5. There the term רוּחַ חָפְזִים occurs and may be translated "willing spirit" or "free spirit."

This elective love of God, then, is something unmotivated, indifferent to the value of its object; it is free and direct, the ultimate cause of the divine covenant; it is something הוֹרָאָה . "Dagegen hat Hosea mit voller Klarheit in der Tiefe des Erwählungs- und Bundesgedankens die quellende Liebe des handelnden Gottes erkannt."³⁶

The Expression of Divine Love in Blessing

After both of these high points (14:4 and 2:19,20), there follows a description of the blessings that accompany this divine love as visible and tangible realities. Those names which God had given Israel to express the outflow of divine wrath will be changed into new names that designate the movement of divine compassion.

This blessed reversal is summed up by Procksch in a rather interesting way. He says:

Es ist also eine paradoxe Liebe, die Gott zum Volk hegt. Es ist die Barmherzikeit, die aus Jezreel eine

³⁵Quell, op. cit., p. 22.

³⁶Ibid., p. 30.

Gottessaat, aus der Erbarmungslosen eine macht, die Erbarmen findet, aus Nichtmeinvolk ein Volk Gottes.³⁷

There will also be a new era of material and spiritual prosperity under the guidance of Jahwe (2:21,22; 14:5-7), an era free from the contamination of idols (14:8a). Israel will find the source of its strength in Jahwe (14:8b), and reflect His attributes in its own personal fellowship (2:19,20; 14:2,3), for "Die göttlichen Eigenschaften sind aber zugleich göttliche Gaben an sein Volk."³⁸

In that fellowship there will be unity under one head (1:11), wherein all the members will be called "the sons of the living God" (1:10). The love of Jahwe will effect an eternal salvation for these sons through their trust in the Messiah and King (3:5).

In this glorious salvation the active expression of God's love culminates for Hosea. It is that same love which Hosea knew from personal experience, recognized in the history of his nation and portrayed as active and cogent for the people of his day.

³⁷Procksch, op. cit., p. 155.

³⁸Volz, op. cit., p. 176.

CHAPTER V

JEREMIAH'S EXPERIENCE OF THE DIVINE LOVE ENCOUNTER

The Experience in his Call and Commission

At first glance it may appear that the very title of this chapter is inappropriate. Was not Jeremiah the slave of abject miseries? Was he not the preacher of cruel denunciations? To recognize only this spirit in the life and work of Jeremiah, however, is to disregard certain vital issues.

Jeremiah knew the power of divine love and the dynamic of divine grace as living realities. And these realities were indeed forces that exercised a vigor in his life; they were not something insipid or sentimental. They were the eternal hand of God confronting a man in time.¹

Jeremiah's first great encounter with this dynamic force was somewhere within the environs of his simple and quiet home town of Anathoth. Timid and retiring, he might well have cared for his relatives with tenderness, and felt a certain warmth of divine blessing upon his secluded life (Jer. 1:1-7). "Jeremiah was not the man upon whom human choice would have fallen for so difficult, nay, desperate a

¹Paul Volz, Prophetengestalten des Alten Testaments (Stuttgart: Calwer Verlag, 1949), p. 261.

mission."²

Suddenly his life became tense. His simple soul lay in the palm of the almighty hand of God, as the voice of his Lord spoke to him in decisive terms, "Before I formed you in the belly I knew you; even before you came forth out of the womb I knew you" (1:5). Here was the voice of eternal love; God had chosen Jeremiah as the special vessel of His grace.³

וְיָדַעְתָּ יְיָ? was the eternal word spoken to him (1:5). Jeremiah was indeed face to face with divine knowledge, a nosse cum affectu et effectu. Divine love had chosen him, divine will destined his course, and divine wisdom endowed his personality. Jeremiah was one וְיָדַעְתָּ, one set apart from eternity.⁴

What an abrupt and staggering revelation! Why should God choose one so meek and unassuming? Because the plans of God are drawn up in the school of love, because this

tender, shrinking, sympathetic heart could more fully feel and more adequately express the ineffable divine sorrow over the guilty people, the eternal love which was never stronger than at the moment when it seemed to have been metamorphosed into bitter wrath and implacable vengeance.⁵

²A. F. Kirkpatrick, The Doctrine of the Prophets (London: Macmillan and Company, 1909), p. 302.

³John Skinner, Prophecy and Religion (Cambridge: The University Press, 1951), p. 28.

⁴Theo. Laetsch, Biblical Commentary: Jeremiah (Saint Louis, Missouri: Concordia Publishing House, c.1952), p. 21.

⁵Kirkpatrick, op. cit., p. 302.

Jeremiah's commission (1:5,10) reveals a further striking aspect of divine love. The prevailing world crisis demanded drastic measures. The old covenant would be superseded, the chosen flock would be scattered, and an opportunity for international testimony would arise. Was Israel ready for this? Indeed no! But Jahwe had made His prophet ready, a prophet prepared for all the nations (1:10). The message of Jeremiah was one of Judgement and mercy; his mission was one to all mankind.

That God should love the Gentile nations also, that He should extend His message freely to all men, and that He should select a feeble lad like Jeremiah to begin this task, alarmed Jeremiah somewhat.⁶

He shrank from the enormity of the task. In genuine humility he pleaded his cause, that of inability (1:7). Such a plea carried no weight before the Almighty Judge. His eternal love could provide abiding assurance. And this assurance was threefold. Divine guidance (1:7), divine presence (1:8), and divine messages (1:9) were the provisions for his mission.⁷

"He is chosen as God's ambassador, and God will map out his paths and his work."⁸ God Almighty is the subject

⁶C. Adam Welch, Jeremiah: His Time and His Work (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1951), p. 41.

⁷Laetsch, op. cit., p. 24.

⁸Ibid.

of the verbs of commission in 1:7 (לֹא אֶפְרָח) and 1:10 (לֹא אֶפְרָח). In the face of every tribulation the covenant God of everlasting לֹא אֶפְרָח would never forsake him. Jeremiah always had the divine assurance: "For I am with you alway" ($\text{אֲנִי אֶפְרָח אִתְּךָ}$ 1:8). Likewise the word which Jeremiah must utter is not his own creation, but the creative word itself, the word that cannot return void. And the divine seal for this promise was the unsealing of his lips to speak divine truths ($\text{אֲנִי אֶפְרָח אִתְּךָ}$ 1:9). And it was this same loving hand which touched his tongue, which also sustained his spirit. Under the protective hand of God Jeremiah was a city of defence (בְּיָדַי אֶפְרָח), a pillar of iron (בְּיָדַי אֶפְרָח), and walls of brass (בְּיָדַי אֶפְרָח) (of. 1:15, 15:20).

This revelation of divine assurance and divine love made a sharp imprint upon the prophet's mind. In every adversity he could recall its source and find solace in divine grace.⁹ The initial impact of divine grace upon the prophet's inner self was full and lasting. Volz expresses this fully:

Wie wogt es im Herz des Jünglings bei diesem gewaltigen Umsturz seines Lebens! Er spürt die zärtliche Liebe Gottes: eh du geboren wardst, habe ich dich erkannt, zum Propheten geweiht; er spürt den besorgten Trost und Rat des Herrn, die Kraft die ihm von der Gewissheit des göttlichen Wortes zuströmt, den unerbittlichen Marschbefehl, die gewaltige Hoheit, die kein Zaudern und kein Zurückweichen duldet; er spürt,

⁹Volz, op. cit., p. 243.

wie der starke Gott ihn, den Schwachen, zu einer festen, unbezwingbaren Burg macht, und er spurt zuletzt, wie Gott ihn ganz nah umfaßt: ich bin mit dir und schütze dich! Es ist, wie wenn der Vater den Arm um den Sohn legt, da er ihn zum erstenmal hinaus-schickt ins Amt.¹⁰

Perhaps the other revelations of Jeremiah were not as personal as this one, yet his discovery of the potter's power (18:1ff.), and the joy of finding good figs prepared by God in the basket of history (24:1ff.), must have found a personal echo in his own experience. The God who had loved and sanctified His prophet could do the same for His people.¹¹

There is one other pointed revelation which ought to be noted. In this encounter God drew the prophet's attention to an old dry twig, which upon closer examination proved to be the twig of an almond tree, a $\overline{\text{ר.ש}} \overline{\text{ר.נ}}$ (1:11). Thereupon Jahwe announced that he too was $\overline{\text{ר.ש}}$ (1:12), awake, alert, watching over his word with purpose and intent. This meant a new and fuller joy. The long years of waiting were over, the God of justice was about to reveal His hand so that His grace might gain the victory through this imminent judgement.¹²

¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹ Welch, op. cit., p. 189.

¹² Ibid., p. 147.

The Experience in his Public Preaching

As a preacher Jeremiah could sustain himself by the very revelations, by the very messages which he proclaimed. From his own lips came the lifegiving word of power, a power that had the force of an imperative. And although Jeremiah recognized the urgency of this message of divine grace, he knew also its sufficiency for every task.¹³

Baughman speaks of Jeremiah as a man "possessed of God,"¹⁴ as one overcome by the very word itself. This word had become part of him, a burning fire within (אֵשׁ בְּרִיטָה), a force that gripped his soul (20:9), and

Wo die zwingende und unüberwindliche Macht Gottes in solchen Tiefenschichten menschlicher Existenz erlebt ist, da kann kein Zweifel mehr an der absoluten Wirklichkeit Gottes und der unbedingten Gehorsamspflicht ihm gegenüber aufkommen.¹⁵

God had taken Jeremiah, he had assigned him an irremovable yoke. Jeremiah the preacher was yet another sacrifice of God's love for His people.¹⁶

Jeremiah also knew the force and fulness of this divine

¹³Volz, op. cit., p. 241.

¹⁴Harry F. Baughman, Jeremiah for Today (Philadelphia: The Muhlenberg Press, c.1947), p. 33.

¹⁵Artur Weiser, "Das Buch des Propheten Jeremia," in Das Alte Testament Deutsch, herausgegeben von Volkmar Hertrich und Artur Weiser (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1952), XX, 177.

¹⁶Otto Procksch, Theologie des Alten Testaments (Gütersloh: C. Bertelmann Verlag, 1950), p. 264.

message (23:29) as the outflow of a greater source. And to know this source was to rejoice in it (15:16).

Es ist seine grösste Seligkeit (15:16), und sein grosstes Elend (20:9), Gottes Mund zu sein (15:19); in seinem Rat ist die höchste Gnade, die er erfahren kann, obwohl sie mit höchsten Leiden verbunden ist.¹⁷

Here then was a prophet who experienced the real presence of the word, a spokesman who could view "with scornful amazement the pretensions of the false prophets."¹⁸ For such a one who had sensed the true purpose of divine , namely the purpose of salvation through transformation, the superficial cries of the false preachers who had pampered the national pride, were tantamount to blasphemy (14:14). God's mercy was a convenient refuge for them (14:8); God's peace and forgiveness was a gift they demanded without reserve (8:11; 14:7).

Jeremiah even attacked the personal lives of these prophets. Their life, he maintained, was quite incompatible with genuine service of God (23:11,12). He demanded that the preacher also live his message by loving and serving his hearers.¹⁹ He demanded purity, integrity, and truth. Jeremiah could tolerate no spirit of Schwärmerei.²⁰

In direct contrast to the hypocrisy of the prophets of

¹⁷Ibid., p. 265.

¹⁸Skinner, op. cit., p. 200.

¹⁹Skinner, op. cit., p. 195.

²⁰Volz, op. cit., p. 225.

his day was Jeremiah's own intense love for his people, a love that reflects the greater divine love which he had experienced. His message too stems from his inner self. He is a Seelsorger at heart, a true shepherd of Israel.²¹

To such a servant of souls the sin of his people became a personal agony. The lament of 13:17 is a personal cry: "But if you will not hear it, mine eye shall weep sore and run down with tears." It was a misery caused by the degrading captivity of his Master's flock, the flock whose welfare he cherished and whose downfall he foresaw (13:17).

Nor did Jeremiah limit the scope of his audience. With diligence he searched the streets of Jerusalem (5:1), approaching both great (5:5) and small (5:4). His message rang through the temple (7:1ff.), and through the gateways of the cities (17:19). He could rebuke the arrogance of the prophets (28:12,13) and the pride of the royal household (13:18), as well as instruct his private secretary (45:1ff.). His voice was directed to the nations (chapters 46-49) and to the scattered exiles among those nations (29:4ff.). No one was overlooked in his effort to find a penitent soul.

Er sucht mit unermüdlicher Liebe und mit schier unerschütterlichem Vertrauen; er vernimmt mitten im Lärm der Baalfeste die leisen Klage-töne bussfertiger Gemüte (3:21ff.), "er horcht hin und lauscht," ob er nicht Regungen der Einkehr und Umkehr finde (8:6).²²

²¹Ibid., p. 245.

²²Ibid., p. 246.

Jeremiah's love for his nation was an obsession. It was his life's work to love as he had been loved, to purify as he had been purified.²³ His own confession, wrung from a bleeding heart, is ample testimony:

As for me, I have not hastened from being a pastor
(יָרֵךְ) to follow after Thee, neither have I de-
sired the woeful day (יָדָא יָדָא יָדָא); Thou knowest!
That which came out of my lips was right before Thee
(יָרֵךְ יָדָא יָדָא יָדָא , 17:16).²⁴

Here is deep emotion; the love of God and the love of souls are burning issues.

The Experience in his Private Confessions

A similar depth of emotion is found in Jeremiah's so-called private confessions. Here he has unburdened his soul and laid bare the recesses of his heart. With a certain "strange boldness toward God"²⁵ he seems to throw everything at God. And this he does because he is God's, the special object of divine grace. Or as Baughman puts it, "the God of Jeremiah was One with whom the soul of man had actual transactions."²⁶

By studying these confessions it is possible to obtain some idea of what it meant to possess such intimacy

²³Leonard Elliot Binns, "The Book of the Prophet Jeremiah," in the Westminster Commentaries (London: Methuen, 1919), Introduction, p. 51.

²⁴Weiser, op. cit., p. 154.

²⁵Binns, op. cit., Introduction, p. 38.

²⁶Baughman, op. cit., p. 95.

with God, the God of grace. His first confession comes in 11:19ff. By the date of that utterance Jeremiah was a marked man, branded as he claims, with the name of Jahwe himself (15:16). Even his own family sought to destroy him (11:19ff.), and it was under the shadow of this danger that his soul was tormented by the "why" of wicked prosperity. The significance of his plea lies on the one hand in the frankness with which he can speak to the One whom he knows,

andererseits ist ihm das an Gott ganz hingeebene Vertrauen so elementares Lebensbedürfnis, dass er nur in der restlosen Offenheit des Gebetsverkehrs den Weg sieht, aus dem Zwiespalt zwischen Glauben und Denken an diesem Punkt herauszukommen.²⁷

Perhaps the most moving confession is found in 15: 10-21. With poignant concern he thrust his agonies before the Lord. The day of his birth became a day of bitter woe in his sight (15:10). He cried for vengeance upon his foes, and relief from his suffering (15:15). Even the joy of speaking the truth (15:16) was overruled by his misery (15:18), so much so in fact, that he accused the Lord of deception (וְיִשְׁמַח אֱלֹהֵינוּ בְּדֵעַוָּתוֹ, 15:18).

Here Jeremiah's impertinence and boldness reached its climax. It was tantamount to irreverence and distrust. At length, however, he detected that foreign element, that note of bitterness,

und in dem Augenblick, da er gegen Gott anstürmt, wird es ihm göttlich klar, wie weit er sich verirrt

²⁷Weiser, op. cit., p. 109.

hat, und auch das Gefühl volliger Verlassenheit ist keine Entschuldigung für ihn.²⁸

The divine reply is full of the same love that characterized his call from Anathoth. Thus Volz is constrained to call these following verses "die zweite Berufung des Propheten."²⁹

The section begins with an inferential וְגַם . It was in view of Jeremiah's bitter indictment that Jahwe confronted him with a final either-or. Yet any such reconciliation had to be mutual; both Jeremiah and Jahwe had to be willing to effect a union.³⁰

On the part of Jeremiah there was a dual obligation. He had to face God directly, and purge himself thoroughly. His renewal was to be indicative of its source, the almighty grace of God.³¹

Gott hat den Propheten nicht verworfen, sondern erweist ihm seine gleichbleibende Liebesgesinnung, indem er ihm die verlorengegangene Perspektive wieder zurechtrückt, und an die Stelle des "ich muss", unter dem Jeremia leidet, das "du darfst" setzt.³²

Yet this dual obligation became somewhat insignificant

²⁸Volz, op. cit., p. 258.

²⁹Ibid.

³⁰Laetsch, op. cit., p. 150. The conditional אִם particle is to be taken with both וְיָשָׁב and וְיָשָׁב . The apodosis then simply stands as וְיָשָׁב , thus removing the need to insert a ו here, as in Luther's translation.

³¹Ibid., p. 153.

³²Weiser, op. cit., p. 141.

in view of the fourfold gift of grace which followed (15:19-21). Jeremiah regained his former status as a mediator for his people, as the intercessor who stood face to face with Jahwe ($\text{וַיִּשְׁמַע יְהוָה אֶת כְּלַם יְרֵמְיָהוּ}$). He was reinstated as the official spokesman of Jahwe ($\text{וַיִּשְׁמַע יְהוָה אֶת כְּלַם יְרֵמְיָהוּ}$). He was accorded the same protection as formerly ($\text{וַיִּשְׁמַע יְהוָה אֶת כְּלַם יְרֵמְיָהוּ}$). He found special courage for the time of adversity ($\text{וַיִּשְׁמַע יְהוָה אֶת כְּלַם יְרֵמְיָהוּ}$). And above all the vital presence of the eternal "I AM" ($\text{וַיִּשְׁמַע יְהוָה אֶת כְּלַם יְרֵמְיָהוּ}$) was proof positive that the covenant God was still gracious to him.³³

In the consequent confessions the same note of absolute reliance is present (cf. 17:14-18), even when the prophet despairs of his own ability (20:14-18). In order to realize the full impact of these prayers, however, several direct questions may be posed. For example, why did Jeremiah challenge the judgements of God, why did he query the divine procedure (12:1; 14:19ff.)?

The answer to this question lies in Jeremiah's basic idea of Jahwe as a God of love.

Die innerliche, gewissenhafte Art des Jeremia bekundet sich auch darin, dass er immer wieder nach dem Grund des göttlichen Gerichts fragt; die blosse Verkündigung genügt ihm nicht. Es steht ihm fest, dass der Wille Gottes ein sittlicher, heiliger ist und dass in Gott keine Spur naturhaften Zorns, sondern nur Gerechtigkeit und Liebe ist.³⁴

³³Laetsch, op. cit., p. 154.

³⁴Volz, op. cit., p. 244.

The second question is intimately connected with the first. Why, when Jeremiah had interceded so fervently, did Jahwe forbid him to continue (7:16, 11:14)?

The answer to this question lies in the realization of how truly sympathetic this prophet was by nature. This virtue was indeed an admirable prerequisite for pastoral care. And the consequent intensity of his intercession was but the expression of his personal love, and his belief that God loved Israel also. It is understandable then that a repeated message of doom must have run against the prophet's grain. Yet it is precisely through this tension that God taught Jeremiah how divine grace must plan its course through chastisement when necessary. And the conflict of this tension became far more real to the prophet when he could no longer pray for his people.³⁵

There is yet another problem which cannot be overlooked in this study. How could Jeremiah, who had such a profound insight into divine wisdom and love, become so vehement in denouncing his personal foes, and in calling down divine vengeance upon them?

Such denunciations, of course, must be taken in their proper perspective and setting. The indictment of 18:18-23 is a good example to consider. Verses one to eleven of this chapter depict the prophet in the school of divine wisdom, joyfully learning a lesson from the potter at work.

³⁵ Ibid., p. 245.

Verses twelve to seventeen reveal the cruel contrast, apostate Israel frustrating the divine plans. Jeremiah with sharpness and clarity had demanded repentance. The reply of the people was an attack upon his life. This Jeremiah interpreted as rebellion against God Himself. Thus he calls upon God to vindicate His cause. And although the cry may be tinged with some personal bitterness, in itself it is but the desire to hasten the divine purpose motivated by divine love.³⁶

The Experience in his Cruel Persecutions

Merely to emphasize this one aspect of Jeremiah's suffering, however, would be doing him an injustice. For in this adversity his fellowship with God, the God of grace, became more intimate, and his own self-sacrifice over against the people more complete. The former aspect is recognized by Skinner:

Disowned by men and driven in upon himself, he found in the truth of his rejected prophecy an indissoluble link of communion between his own soul and God. Amid all tribulations and the defeat of his lifework it was a blessedness of which nothing could rob him, that Jahwe, the God of Israel, had spoken to him, and received him into his fellowship.³⁷

The second feature is summarized by Volz in this way:

Auch Jeremia war Gehorsam bis zum Tode, und auch er hat die Probe grösster Liebe gegeben; einem unver-

³⁶Weiser, op. cit., p. 164.

³⁷Skinner, op. cit., p. 219.

ständigen, trotzigen Volk hat er nicht bloss sein äusseres Leben, sondern Zug um Zug seines Wesens geopfert.³⁸

This study reveals, then, that in every phase of his life as a servant of God, Jeremiah reflects his knowledge and expression of God as a God of love. As a prophet or a preacher, in his prayers and in his revelations, whether protected or persecuted, he gripped the hand of God in faith, believing that the loving purpose of God would be manifest at length.

³⁸Volz, op. cit., p. 244.

CHAPTER VI

JEREMIAH'S TREATMENT OF THE DIVINE LOVE MOTIF

The Motif in Outline

Although Jeremiah was officially entitled the prophet to the nations, his teaching, concept, and understanding of divine love are conditioned by the intervention of Jahwe into the history of one nation, namely, Israel. Here is the starting point for the study of the divine love motif in Jeremiah.

The love of Jahwe was revealed through His covenant relation, a relation dependent upon an eternal election of this people. Thus the very first message of the prophet is focused upon this covenant love as the significant revelation of history (Jer. 2:1-3). Similarly the glorious climax of his book in chapter thirty-one depicts this same love in its fullest and most perfect covenant relationship.¹

This is the sweep of Jeremiah's concept of God's love as intimately connected with the covenant. The basic criterion for the understanding of this concept, however, is found in the dynamic oracle of 31:3. This verse becomes a gauge for the study of all relevant references to the love of God. This oracle is indeed "eine herrliche

¹Otto Procksch, Theologie des Alten Testaments (Gütersloh: C. Bertelmann Verlag, 1950), p. 619.

Vision reinstater Prophetie."²

This significant verse reads, "I have loved you with an everlasting love, therefore I have drawn you [unto me] in loving kindness" ($\text{אֶהְבֶּנְךָ בְּאַהֲבָה עוֹלָמְיָהּ} \text{ וְלָכֵן אֶרְצֶנְךָ} \text{ בְּחַסְדֵי} \text{ רַחֲמֵי} \text{ אֱלֹהִים} \text{ וְאֶהְבֶּנְךָ} \text{ בְּאַהֲבָה עוֹלָמְיָהּ} \text{ וְלָכֵן אֶרְצֶנְךָ} \text{ בְּחַסְדֵי} \text{ רַחֲמֵי} \text{ אֱלֹהִים}$). And the context shows that this love is the connecting link between the old and the new covenants.

In this verse Jeremiah penetrates into the very source of the covenant relationship. He points to the covenant love ($\text{רַחֲמֵי} \text{ אֱלֹהִים}$) as the outflow of a deeper essence, namely, the $\text{אֶהְבֶּנְךָ} \text{ בְּאַהֲבָה}$ of God. The divine $\text{אֶהְבֶּנְךָ} \text{ בְּאַהֲבָה}$ is the cause of the covenant, $\text{רַחֲמֵי} \text{ אֱלֹהִים}$ is the means of its continuance.³

The sentence structure here has the $\text{אֶהְבֶּנְךָ} \text{ בְּאַהֲבָה}$ as a cognate accusative to the main verb אֶרְצֶנְךָ . The stress therefore lies on the intensity and absolute nature of God's love. Likewise the עוֹלָמְיָהּ emphasizes the eternal duration of that love. The $\text{אֶהְבֶּנְךָ} \text{ בְּאַהֲבָה}$ then is the basic love, that essential love which is the ground and pledge of God's faithfulness.⁴ The inferential $\text{וְלָכֵן אֶרְצֶנְךָ}$ bears out this observation; the latter is the outcome of

² Ibid., p. 432.

³ Norman Henry Snaith, The Distinctive Ideas of the Old Testament (London: Epworth Press, 1953), p. 95.

⁴ Gottfried Quell, "Die Liebe im Alten Testament," in the Theologisches Wörterbuch zum Neuen Testament, herausgegeben von Gerhard Kittel (Stuttgart: W. Kohlhammer, 1933), I, 32.

the former.⁵ Also in the verb קָוַה the active participation of Jahwe is dominant. The basic root of this word is given by Gesenius as "pull" or "draw" (in Arabic *كواه*).⁶ Jahwe draws man to himself and thereby effects a closer relationship, one that manifests His covenant love more fully, through this קָוַה .⁷ Weiser crystallizes the central idea of this passage by stating that "Die Liebe Gottes zu seinem Volk ist trotz allem, was dazwischen liegt, nie erloschen."⁸

A precise distinction between these two aspects of divine love is fundamental in this study of Jeremiah. The divine קָוַה is the unchanging love, the eternal divine purpose.⁹ It must be noted, however, that Jeremiah nowhere else uses the actual root קָוַה as an activity of God,¹⁰

⁵Theo. Laetsch, Biblical Commentary: Jeremiah (Saint Louis, Missouri: Concordia Publishing House, c.1952), p. 295.

⁶Gesenius, Hebrew and Chaldee Lexicon translated from the German by Samuel Prideaux Trigelles (London: Samuel Bagster and Sons, 1846), p. 516.

⁷C. W. Nagelsbach, "The Book of the Prophet Jeremiah," in the Commentary on the Holy Scriptures, by Peter John Lange, edited by Philip Schaff (New York: Charles Scribner and Co., 1871), p. 262. קָוַה is here an instrumental accusative.

⁸Artur Weiser, "Das Buch des Propheten Jeremia," in Das Alte Testament Deutsch, herausgegeben von Volkmar Hertrich und Artur Weiser (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1952), XX, 284.

⁹Snaith, op. cit., p. 134.

¹⁰Solomon Mandelkern, Veteris Testamenti Concordantiae Hebraicae atque Chaldaicae (Leipzig: F. Margolin, c.1925), p. 17.

although the execution of God's purpose which flows from divine grace is the chief concern of Jeremiah throughout.

Divine $\aleph \text{ } \text{ } \aleph$ on the other hand, is God's covenant love, that love which has been manifest to Israel in many and varied forms.¹¹ By studying these two themes, the divine $\aleph \text{ } \text{ } \aleph$ and the divine $\aleph \text{ } \text{ } \aleph$ respectively, the full import of Jeremiah's love concept will become clear.

The Treatment of Divine Love as Mercy and Compassion

Mercy and compassion are a prominent feature of divine $\aleph \text{ } \text{ } \aleph$ in Jeremiah. The idea of compassion is best expressed by the Hebrew term $\aleph \text{ } \text{ } \aleph$. This word refers to the bowels of a person, the seat of a person's emotions. In use it has come to designate especially the idea of pity, sympathy, and heart-felt emotion for those in distress.¹² Merciful compassion is perhaps the best English equivalent to express the meaning of this word. This idea is also evident in Jeremiah, for as Baughman says, "the God of Jeremiah was a God of mercy,"¹³ even though his perspective of divine vengeance appears a little distorted at times.

For Jeremiah, history was an absolute testimony of

¹¹Snaith, op. cit., p. 95.

¹²Gesenius, op. cit., p. 766.

¹³Harry F. Baughman, Jeremiah for Today (Philadelphia: The Muhlenberg Press, c.1947), p. 92.

this truth. The bridal days in the wilderness revealed a reciprocal tenderness and compassion between the covenant God and the covenant people (2:2,6). The days of yore were illustrative of divine blessing and sympathy (6:16). The penitent could always find mercy in God (3:12). In this verse (3:12) the divine "I AM" posits $\text{אֲנִי ה' אֱלֹהֶיךָ}$ as a personal attribute. And that feature of $\text{אֲנִי ה' אֱלֹהֶיךָ}$ which is stressed here is long-suffering, the compassionate restraint of anger.¹⁴ Thus even to the Israelites then in Assyria God could proclaim this same message, that He was still merciful and no longer conscious of His former wrath (3:12).

Yet for Judah as a whole the measure of divine forbearance had run out. The voice from above had adopted a sterner tone: "I am weary of pitying" ($\text{אֲנִי אֶפְשָׁה מִרַחֵם$, 15:6). That very life of peace ($\text{אֲנִי אֶפְשָׁה מִרַחֵם}$) wherein God's mercy and compassion were living realities, would become one of turmoil (16:5). Even Jeremiah, the messenger of the evil tidings, was permitted no tears of sympathy (16:5). The cup of consolation ($\text{כּוּפַי הַיַּיִן מִיְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ}$), both human and divine would be snatched from the nation of Judah (16:5-7). God would no longer pity ($\text{אֲנִי אֶפְשָׁה מִרַחֵם}$), spare ($\text{אֲנִי אֶפְשָׁה מִרַחֵם}$), or even show compassion ($\text{אֲנִי אֶפְשָׁה מִרַחֵם}$, 13:14).¹⁵

Such passages indicate an apparent tension. Has the

¹⁴Elmer A. Leslie, Jeremiah (New York: Abingdon Press, c.1954), p. 40. The reading " $\text{אֲנִי אֶפְשָׁה מִרַחֵם}$ " is used.

¹⁵Laetsch, op. cit., p. 157.

love of Jahwe become a dead issue? Has the fire of divine compassion been extinguished? The answer to this question depends upon the basic distinction made between the several aspects of divine love. The eternal $\text{אֵלֹהִים אֱלֹהִים} \text{ (31:3)}$ cannot change, for it involves the eternal divine purpose of grace. Nor has Jahwe been unfaithful in his covenant love ($\text{אֱלֹהֵינוּ} \text{ (1:1)}$). It is the question of visible divine compassion that is at stake. This compassion which had been so evident in the life of the people, would now disappear. Not that it had perished, for it still burned in the bosom of Jahwe, God still loved them and suffered with them, but in righteousness he withheld the manifestation of this mercy from them (12:16f.; 31:20). Jeremiah reflected this compassion in his own weeping (13:17; 14:17; 8:21). This inner mystery of divine compassion is depicted anthropomorphically in 31:20, "My bowels are yearning for him ($\text{אֲנִי אֲנָחֵם} \text{ (31:20)}$), I must deal with him in boundless mercy" ($\text{אֲנִי אֲנָחֵם} \text{ (31:20)}$).¹⁶ Truly this expression

enthält den geheimnisvollen Vorgang, der sich in Gott selbst vollzieht und das eigentliche Mysterium seines Willens zum Heil in seiner lebendigen Dynamik offenbart.¹⁷

The divine $\text{אֱלֹהִים אֱלֹהִים} \text{ demanded, as it were, that the divine } \text{אֱלֹהֵינוּ} \text{ be invisible for a time, that the people might learn what its presence really meant (14:8). And although$

¹⁶Leslie, op. cit., p. 105.

¹⁷Weiser, op. cit., p. 289.

the people saw this as only a past glory, its future exhibition would be even more glorious (12:15, 30:18ff.). Divine compassion was truly alive but the time of its full revelation had not yet come (31:6ff.). The tender love of the Father could never die (31:9).¹⁸

The Treatment of Divine Love as Personal

Another aspect of divine $\text{לֹוּ} \text{לֵי}$ which Jeremiah stresses is its personal quality, that vital quality which demands direct communion with God in the fullest encounter of love. Jahwe was unique and the demands of His being were absolute. For intimacy with God excluded intimacy with evil.¹⁹ It is this problem of intimacy with sin that must first be considered in order to understand the approach of Jeremiah.

Jeremiah depicted Israel with its back to God ($\text{אָפַיְתָה} \text{אֶת} \text{פָּנָי} \text{לְעִדֹלִים}$, 2:27). Israel had turned its face to idols, rejected its God and gone backwards ($\text{וַיִּפְּטֹוּ} \text{אֶת} \text{פָּנֵיהֶם} \text{לְעִדֹלִים}$, 15:6). In fact there was an actual movement in the opposite direction (7:24). Thus Jahwe could point to that damning distance between Israel's sinful ancestors and himself ($\text{וַיִּפְּטֹוּ} \text{אֶת} \text{פָּנֵיהֶם} \text{לְעִדֹלִים}$, 2:5). Jeremiah found the ultimate reason for this movement in the inherent sinfulness, in the obstinacy of the heart ($\text{וַיִּפְּטֹוּ} \text{אֶת} \text{פָּנֵיהֶם} \text{לְעִדֹלִים}$).

¹⁸Baughman, op. cit., p. 94.

¹⁹Adam C. Welch, Jeremiah: His Time and His Work (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1951), p. 60.

7:24, 17:9).

At such a distance from God, alienated from divine grace, true fellowship with God was impossible. A complete reversal and an absolute surrender was the only solution.²⁰

Jeremiah equated death with the turning of the eyes from the source of grace. To see Jahwe face to face was, for him, the fullest expression of spiritual life.²¹

Likewise the people had been commanded to remain in the salutary presence of Jahwe, and turn to Him alone.²² The demand for repentance was absolute and real, its hope full, and its issue sure.²³

The fullest communion of divine love requires purity on both sides. Man must be like God. The children of Israel had to become holy as in their youth (2:3). And it is precisely this purification which Jeremiah assessed as vital for internal unity with God (4:3). It had to be thorough and radical (רָצַץ רַגְלֵיךָ וְרַגְלֵי אֲחֵיךָ, break up your fallow ground), internal and personal (סִיּוּן לֵב, circumcise the foreskins of your heart), and properly directed (סִיּוּן לְבָבְךָ אֶל יְהוָה, circumcise yourselves unto Jahwe, 4:4).

²⁰Ibid., p. 74.

²¹Hubert Schrader, Der Verborgene Gott (Stuttgart: W. Kohlhammer, 1949), p. 197.

²²Welch, op. cit., p. 72.

²³Ibid., p. 71.

Such circumcision was itself only possible through divine grace, yet only through such circumcision could the beauty of divine love be experienced fully. For the spirit surrendering itself to God, commits itself to One in whom is the secret of all renewal.²⁴

Against this background of sin and repentance the various figures employed to express the divine human relationship assume a deeper significance. Thus Jahwe is depicted as a Father and intimate companion (3:4), the everpresent "I AM" (30:11), whose love is keenly personal (3:19). Israel on the other hand is seen as the daughter who has received special attention (14:17; 4:11; 8:11). Zion was, indeed, the chosen daughter of Jahwe (6:2; 6:23).

The personal intimacy of this fellowship is also expressed by the marriage symbolism. Jahwe had rejoiced in that pure communion with Israel in the desert (2:2), but lamented the inordinate lusts and harlotry in Canaan (2:32f.). Yet even this apostasy could not nullify the ultimate love attendant upon Jahwe's marriage with Israel (3:14, אֵלֹהִים אֶת־יִשְׂרָאֵל אֵלֹהֵינוּ אֵלֹהֵי אֲבוֹתֵינוּ). The interrelation was something direct. It involved the cogent activity of divine grace in history.²⁵

The parable of the girdle also illustrates this idea of personal contact (13:1ff.). The divine will still want-

²⁴Ibid., p. 74.

²⁵Weiser, op. cit., p. 36.

ed to draw the people to itself, as "the girdle clingeth to the loins of a man" (**כִּי אֶפְרָיִם יִדְבַּק בְּצִדּוֹת אִשְׂרָאֵל**, 13:11). Through such proximity, such personal experience, the bonds and blessings of love would become a vital reality.²⁶

These illustrations reveal how basic Jeremiah's view of a personal love really was. It is in the historical crisis of his day, however, that these principles attain their fullest impact. For the Josianic reform had itself been an attempt to restore communion with God. And noble as the original endeavor may have been, the result was nothing but organized hypocrisy. Sacrifice and ritual had become an integral part of worship (7:21), in fact that was the worship of the people (7:4). Hence without ritual worship Jahwe "would no longer have a raison d'être."²⁷

Thus when the people of Judah taught that the temple and its ritual were a sine qua non of religion, Jeremiah "took up the strong position of branding these things as a hindrance to true fellowship with God (17:22ff.)."²⁸ His position was unrelenting. In the future glory of Israel even the ark of the covenant would be dispensed with (3:16); the real presence in fellowship would supersede the symbol-

²⁶ Procksch, op. cit., p. 263.

²⁷ John Skinner, Prophecy and Religion (Cambridge: The University Press, 1951), p. 180.

²⁸ A. F. Kirkpatrick, The Doctrine of the Prophets (London: Macmillan and Company, 1909), p. 320.

ical presence in the ark. God's love would tolerate no hindrance between itself and its object.²⁹

For genuine communion, for the fullest encounter of divine love, man must know God personally (24:7), trust in Him as the covenant Lord (17:7), and acknowledge His unique personality (9:24).

It is an intimate spiritual fellowship between the repentant pardoned people and the God who loves them with an indomitable love, in spite of all their perversity, to which Jeremiah looks forward.³⁰

In his letter to the exiles Jeremiah upheld this same ideal (25:9). Here he maintains that the loving hand of God is not restricted by any national or ritualistic bounds. Where man is there is God's presence, and where God is there is His appealing grace. Prayer then becomes the personal communion of man with God (29:12f.).

Die tiefe Innerlichkeit eines geistigen Gottesverhältnisses wird hier Herr über die dinghafte Bindung des Verkehrs zwischen Mensch und Gott.³¹

Herein is the fullest experience of divine לֹוֹ . When united with its source, love becomes real for man (29:1ff.).

The Treatment of Divine Love as Righteous and Sovereign

If the divine לֹוֹ offered compassion and mercy for the people of Israel, and if the divine לֹוֹ provided

²⁹ Ibid.

³⁰ Ibid., p. 321.

³¹ Weiser, op. cit., p. 262.

the motive for an internal communion with the covenant God, it was the divine אֱלֹהֵינוּ which would direct the history of God's people for their eternal welfare. Thus also Jeremiah saw the divine אֱלֹהֵינוּ as the eternal divine cause, the dynamic purpose of the Almighty Creator. He saw "Die gewaltige Liebe Gottes," and not merely "weichmütige Gnade."³²

Jeremiah recognized the force of this conquering love because he recognized also the depth of Israel's sin which it had to overcome. Sin, he taught, was something ingrained in the life of the people (2:22), engraven in their hearts (17:1), integrated into their very being (8:7, 13:23), unrecognizable to their minds (2:35). Thus despite the rebukes and invitations of Jahwe's messengers (3:12,22), the reply was the inevitable אֵין עֹשֶׂה . (It is hopeless, 18:12.)

This obstinacy had frustrated the plans of Jahwe (3:19,20), so that Jeremiah's search for a righteous nucleus proved futile (5:1ff.). Even the supplications of Moses and Samuel would have been of no avail (15:1). The divine purpose had to assume a new character in the eyes of men. The day of visitation had arrived (14:10; 12:17).

Is this new character another phase of the divine אֱלֹהֵינוּ ? Weiser pictures this wrath as "die Kehrseite

³²Paul Volz, Prophetengestalten des Alten Testaments (Stuttgart: Calwer Verlag, 1949), p. 261.

seiner Gnade."³³ Welch feels that for a "man of this character, judgement must have appeared, in Isaiah's memorable phrase, Jahwe's strange work."³⁴

Judgement appears to be conditioned by divine love; indeed there is a close relation between the two, for "oft genug stehen Grauen und Gnade ganz unvermittelt nebeneinander."³⁵ It is this relation that Weber terms "die schwerste Spannung"³⁶ of the book of Jeremiah. Jeremiah, however, saw no real conflict here. For him the love of God and the righteousness of God were coordinate realities. The divine אֱלֹהִים was itself a righteous love. It was the eternal "I AM" who executed אֱהָבָה (covenant love), as well as מִשְׁפָּט (judgement) and צְדָקָה (righteousness, 9:24). The love of God lay at the very root of His righteousness.³⁷

A righteous God demanded a pure people. The righteous love of God, then, also had its salutary and cleansing function. Or, as Volz puts it, "die barmherzige Liebe ist zugleich schärfste Zucht."³⁸ The soothing had to follow in the wake of the righteous

³³Weiser, op. cit., p. 41.

³⁴Welch, op. cit., p. 215.

³⁵Schrade, op. cit., p. 205.

³⁶Otto Weber, Bibelkunde des Alten Testaments (Berlin: Furche Verlag, 1936), p. 97.

³⁷Nagelsbach, op. cit., p. 115.

³⁸Volz, op. cit., p. 261.

Gnade kann erst kommen, wenn das Gericht geschehen ist; zuerst muss die Gerechtigkeit Gottes eingepägt werden, sonst würde die Gnade misbraucht.³⁹

Chastisement was the lever which could turn Israel to God (31:18). Justice must exact its measure, for Israel had no redress.⁴⁰

For Jeremiah, however, justice was but the narrower function of righteousness, it was a foreign function of the divine דָּיָק . For righteousness was indicative of the loving will of God in action.⁴¹ Jeremiah, in fact, appears to have used this term almost as a synonym of salvation (51:10). If this is so, then the juxtaposition of righteousness and love is significant (9:24). In any case the ultimate goal of God's righteous love was the salvation of His flock (3:17, 16:14).

Der Heilige arbeitet aber auch unablässig an den erlesenen Knechten, und während er sein Volk verloren geben muss, wählt er Bausteine für einen neuen Tempel und bebaut sie mit äusserster Sorgfalt. Immer wieder sehen wir, wie Jeremia, die erziehende Hand Gottes spürt.⁴²

God's purpose was always a salutary and gracious one (29:10, 46:27f.).

In chapter thirty Jeremiah deals with this same purification and salvation of the righteous דָּיָק . The

³⁹ Ibid.

⁴⁰ Ibid.

⁴¹ Snaith, op. cit., p. 70.

⁴² Volz, op. cit., p. 251.

captivity of Israel, the correction inflicted, and the ultimate healing applied are but phases of the righteous purpose of God (30:12-17).

So dient die Gerechtigkeit Gottes, die sich in der Züchtigung seines Volkes auswirkt, letztlich seiner höheren Gerechtigkeit, die im Heil vollendet.⁴³

This glorious truth reaches a climax in the Messiah, the Saviour, who is the expression of God's love and who is entitled "The Lord our righteousness" (23:5,6).

There is, however, another step which Jeremiah takes to depict the absolute purpose of the divine יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ . This high note might be termed the sovereign love of God. The illustration of the potter's power is the finest example (18:1-6). While in the workshop of a certain potter, Jeremiah observed how this artisan had disfigured a vessel by accident. Yet such disfigurement did not render the clay useless, nor did it curb the potter's power. He could form a similar vessel with the same clay. So too Israel was clay in the hands of its moulder, Jahwe. Israel was not at the mercy of fate, but in the hands of God who could fashion by His sovereign will.⁴⁴

The everlasting King (10:10), the Almighty Workman (18:6), would not forsake the labour of His hands, but would work persistently and in the end effectually to accomplish His purpose of love. Indeed the sovereign pur-

⁴³Weiser, op. cit., p. 280.

⁴⁴Welch, op. cit., p. 225.

pose of Jahwe was the outflow of the divine הוֹרָאָה . For Jeremiah this was always the final and ultimate truth.⁴⁵

The Divine Love Motif in the New Covenant

It is this sovereign Lord who has power to establish a new relationship between God and man, and it is this sovereign love which desires it. The love of God, made manifest in the old covenant, had been spurned (11:1ff.). The repeated invitation of grace, "I will be your God, and you shall be my people," was rejected (7:23; 11:4). The old covenant had lost its force and meaning for Israel.

Hence it is significant that Jeremiah, who saw the cessation of the old covenant, also saw the need for a new relationship. It is significant also, that he set this new relationship on the same basis as the old, namely, upon the grace of God. It was the same intervention of Jahwe, the covenant God. It would again be a covenant relationship, but it would be a covenant with a difference.⁴⁶

The several features of Jeremiah's love motif are reflected in this new covenant relationship as it is depicted in chapters thirty-one and thirty-two. This is the grand finale, the fullest expression of God's love.⁴⁷

⁴⁵Skinner, op. cit., p. 164.

⁴⁶Welch, op. cit., p. 229.

⁴⁷Skinner, op. cit., p. 329.

The cessation of the old covenant also received divine sanction (31:32). Yet the critical need for a new and living source of life was soon met by God's love. God remembered His people with longing (יָדָבֵר אֲדֹנָי, 31:20), and with loving compassion (יְיָ אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֵיִן, 31:20).

The oracle of Jahwe was the categorical וְיִדְבָר אֲדֹנָי. (I must deal with them in boundless compassion, 31:20.)⁴⁸

And the glorious reality of this mercy becomes pertinent in the forgiveness of sins. Once again the divine oracle testifies, "I will forgive their guilt, and their sins will I remember no more" (וְיִסְחָר אֲדֹנָי וְיִסְחָר אֲדֹנָי וְיִסְחָר אֲדֹנָי וְיִסְחָר אֲדֹנָי, 31:34). The imperfects are worthy of note here, for as the sin arises daily, so the mercy of God is ever anew and ready to forgive.⁴⁹

This is a high point in Jeremiah's concept of mercy and compassion. Forgiveness becomes the very foundation of the new covenant, it is a basic prerequisite; "Der Heilszustand hat nur feste Bestand wenn er auf diesem Grund gebaut ist."⁵⁰ Likewise Weiser comments:

Der Wille Gottes zur Vergebung der Sünde . . . , wird nicht nur die Grundlage für den neuen Bund bilden, sondern in ihm die tragende Kraft und Gewähr seines Bestandes sein.⁵¹

⁴⁸Leslie, op. cit., p. 105.

⁴⁹Laetsch, op. cit., p. 257.

⁵⁰Volz, op. cit., p. 261.

⁵¹Weiser, op. cit., p. 296.

Thus in these three phases the sum and total of Jeremiah's love concept maintains a fitting unity and design.

COMPARATIVE CONCLUSIONS

The various characteristics of divine love as expressed by Hosea and Jeremiah have been outlined in the foregoing chapters. On the basis of this study it is now possible to arrive at certain conclusions concerning the relationships and divergence between the views of these two prophets.

Fundamental for such a comparison is a brief survey of Jeremiah's dependence upon Hosea in Jeremiah, chapters two and three. These two chapters are full of the theology and content of Hosea's love motif. Here Jeremiah reflects a keen insight into the theology of his predecessor. This dependence and interrelation is recognized by such exegetes as Wilson¹ and Smith.²

The profound historical approach of Hosea, his appreciation of God's intervention into the life of Israel, his picture of divine love made manifest in time (Hos. 2:10; 10:11; 11:1), is reflected in the initial strategy of Jeremiah 2:2,3. And apart from the precise terminology of לֵב אֱלֹהִים and לֵב יִשְׂרָאֵל as the responsive attributes of Israel

¹Adam C. Wilson, *Jeremiah: His Time and His Work* (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1911), pp. 61ff.

²Norman Henry Smith, *The Religious Ideas of the Old Testament* (London: The Epworth Press, 1903), p. 115.

CHAPTER VII

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¹Adam G. Welch, Jeremiah: His Time and His Work (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1951), pp. 61ff.

²Norman Henry Snaith, The Distinctive Ideas of the Old Testament (London: The Epworth Press, 1953), p. 115.

in Jeremiah 2:2, which are parallel to the response of Israel in Hosea 2:15, there is a direct reference made to the wilderness era as the time of special attention, a time in which Israel was regarded as the first-fruit of Jahwe's love (Hos. 9:10; Jer. 2:2).

Similarly Israel's lamentable sin, the rejection of God's love, is depicted by the figure of harlotry in both cases (Hos. 4:13; Jer. 2:20). The consequent demand for repentance is almost identical in each. The expression "break up your fallow ground" ($\text{קִרְעוּ אֶת-אֲדָמַתְכֶם}$) is the same in Hosea 10:12 and Jeremiah 4:3. And in each case healing is promised ($\text{אֲרַפֵּא אֶת-בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל}$, Hos. 14:4; Jer. 3:22).

But not only is there a similar terminology in words. The same concepts and figurative ideas are also expressed. Thus the picture of the paternal relationship of Hosea 11:1 is reflected in Jeremiah 2:2, 2:32, and 3:14. Another very striking reference to Hosea is seen in Jeremiah 3:1. The idea of Jahwe taking back his apostate wife is parallel to the domestic experience of Hosea as outlined in chapters one to three.

These specific references show that in his youth, at least, Jeremiah had imbibed much from his predecessor Hosea. Such a background is reflected throughout the remainder of his book also. In those fundamental concepts of divine love as outlined above, this same unity is apparent. The same groundwork is basic for each of them.

The elective love of God, the eternal purpose of grace and good will, the divine לֵב אֱלֹהִים , is the motivating cause behind the entire love motif in both books. And although this term is used sparingly by both prophets, the essence of the concept is paramount in their whole outlook of God's hidden and revealed purpose. The idea is positive and normative for both of them.

Thus Hosea traced the election of Israel to this source, the elective love of God (9:10, 11:1ff.), and sought to model his own gracious purpose toward Gomer upon the perfect pattern of Jahwe (3:1). Jeremiah also saw this elective love motivating the first selection of Israel and its glorious restoration in the future (31:3ff.).

The divine לֵב אֱלֹהִים is something free and unrestricted, yet its purpose is one. This is the way that both of these prophets conceived of the eternal divine essence which was expressed in its ultimate form by the prophet John (1 John 4:8). They would say that God's purpose was one of grace, His will the impulse of love for the people. לֵב אֱלֹהִים was the eternal control of God's purpose.

Hence it is in these two prophets that the idea of discipline as a phase of love became more prominent. For them, the divine indignation did not nullify the divine invitation. It was the same loving hand that chastised, that also offered grace. The anger of God was righteous, and the discipline of God was salutary. The will of Jahwe was

always positive even if the process was sometimes slow (Hos. 2:1-13; Jer. 30:11-18).

It might be argued from the sparing use of אֱלֹהֵינוּ, that the people were more concerned with the actual manifestation of God's love, than with meditation about its ultimate cause. And the terminology of the prophets under consideration seems to bear out this observation. Thus there is a great emphasis upon אֱלֹהֵינוּ, the covenant love manifested in the covenant life and worship of Israel.

אֱלֹהֵינוּ has been defined as covenant love. For both prophets it is that steadfast love of God which becomes manifest when it confronts its object. Thus Hosea saw this love as the active expression of the God who ever sought to restore His bride. The invitations, the blessings, the protection, and the unremitting care, were manifestations that Israel had known unceasingly. Jeremiah used this same covenant love as the impulse for life, devotion, full fellowship, and blessed reunion as it could be known to man. Israel could always recognize this אֱלֹהֵינוּ, for its picture was ever before her, the covenant ever present, and the communion ever a living reality.

Again, in both of these prophets, the fullest revelation of this אֱלֹהֵינוּ is found in a covenant that lay on a higher plane than the one they had known formerly, in a covenant that is maintained by this very אֱלֹהֵינוּ alone (Hos. 2:18-20; Jer. 31:31ff.). And in both formulations of

this covenant mercy and compassion, kindness and joy, favour and blessing are united. And in each case there is the same categorical $\square \text{זִי}$ (Hos. 2:19; Jer. 32:40).

This then became the clearest idea of זִי as expressed in these prophets, namely, that זִי denotes a bond, an attraction that Israel could enjoy, an affection that is steadfast. It is the visible covenant seal of God's love.

In such basic principles as these, the two prophets are indeed united. But it would be overlooking certain vital issues if the distinctive features of each were not noted also. That such a distinction and progression of thought from Hosea to Jeremiah does exist, is borne out by the research of scholars such as Volz³ and Welch.⁴

A significant difference is evident in the lives of these prophets. Hosea's whole life was to be an expression of God's love for Israel. His attitude toward his apostate wife was to symbolize God's relationship to Israel. Thus eventually Hosea found reconciliation with his wife. Jeremiah, on the other hand, was entirely destitute of friends, he found no response among the people, he was allowed no wife of comfort, for God alone was the source of his compassion. God had given Jeremiah into the hands of His peo-

³Paul Volz, Prophetengestalten des Alten Testaments (Stuttgart: Calwer Verlag, 1949), p. 259.

⁴Welch, op. cit., p. 230.

ple as the offering of divine love. Thus Hosea was the mirror of God's love; Jeremiah was the sacrifice of God's grace!

The first interesting progression of thought arises out of the way that these two prophets use history and pro- pound its lesson. The retrospective approach of Hosea con- ditioned many of his concepts. Thus he took great pains to show how God's elective love had sought Israel in time, how God's paternal love had offered specific blessings, and how God's compassionate love had often spared Israel. The epi- sodes of history were his proofs of God's care. The call from Egypt (11:1), and the joys of the wilderness (9:10) are typical examples. For Jeremiah, however, history was but one event. Israel owed everything to Jahwe; His love for Israel was never absent. It was God who had planted Israel (2:21); it was God who had given them everything (2:4-7). He was their only fountain of life (2:13). In- deed it was impossible to separate God and history. Yet history was only a subsidiary issue, for it but served to point up the absolute claims of Jahwe for the present and the future. Thus Hosea stressed the intensity and constan- cy of God's love in history; Jeremiah stressed its absolute nature for all time!

The same mysterious compassion of Jahwe is also por- trayed in both prophets. Both speak with anthropomorphic expressions concerning the inner feeling of God. The suf- fering love of God is a pertinent theme in Hosea, especial-

ly when it is linked with holiness (Hos. 11:8,9). The emphasis of the mystery lies in the fact that the One transcendent should be moved to compassion for man, that the Creator should find kinship with the creature. Jeremiah, on the other hand, seems to stress the immanence of this divine yearning more. His own weeping was a reflection, a part of God's compassion for Israel (13:17; 14:17). God's tender mercies were a reality close to the heart of every true Israelite. Thus it hurt God to remove them. And when God did remove them Israel felt that God had forsaken them, that He had become an unconcerned wayfarer (14:8). Likewise in many cries of doom the everpresent compassion evokes the cry "I cannot go the whole way" ($\text{אֲנִי לֹא אֶשְׁלַח$, 4:27; 5:10; 5:18). In Jeremiah 31:20 also, the bowels of God's mercy are moved by the child of His bosom. Thus Hosea sees the mystery of God's suffering love in its alien nature: Jeremiah sees it in the proximity of its embrace!

In both Jeremiah and Hosea God's love is always related to His personality. Yet in the past Israel was often inclined to view Jahwe as a national deity, as the God who was bound to a certain nation. Hosea took a big step when he revealed the true spirit of God's love as something unrestricted by class distinction. God's covenant love did not exist merely because of the covenant. Every class in Israel needed a personal knowledge of God and His love

(Hos. 4:1; 4:6; 5:4). It is those in need who find mercy, regardless of the position of Israel as a whole (14:3). Jeremiah followed this idea of God's personal love to an even higher level. He regarded even the ritual and temple worship as unnecessary for true communion with God. He believed that for man to experience the love of God, only man and God need to be present (3:16; 29:5). God's love is personal and direct. Thus in Hosea God's love broke the barrier of national restriction and reached every class of people; in Jeremiah it broke the barrier of ritualism and form and reached the heart of any who would listen!

Similarly each prophet delved deeper than the visible לֹא יִרְאוּ to the divine לִי אֱלֹהִים , to the root purpose of divine grace. Hosea saw this love as the holy and elective love which chose Israel, and would through the ultimate purpose of its discipline save its elect (Hos. 11:9). In Jeremiah an even stronger element is evident. God's almighty love is cosmic. All the history of the world is directed for the welfare of His elect (Jer. 29). Thus in both prophets God's righteousness and God's love are united. But in Hosea it is the elective nature of God's love which is stressed; in Jeremiah the sovereign aspect predominates!

It is evident, then, that the final covenant which is to embrace the new and fullest experience of this love will also differ for each prophet. Hosea saw in this covenant the expression of God's attributes and personality. Man

would learn to know and experience God's love as something freely given (Hos. 2:19f.; 14:4). Here indeed there was an emphasis on the spontaneity of God's love. In Jeremiah this covenant became even fuller and richer. He maintained that man's personal experience of God's love will be deeply imbedded within the heart, while the glory of God's spontaneous love will be seen through the free forgiveness of sins (Jer. 31:31ff.).

These comparisons are some of the principle conclusions that arise from such a study of these two prophets. In each a fundamental unity exists. Each prophet knows God's love as a personal force in his life, yet each one sees new and fuller implications of God's love. Each one understands the meaning of God's love for His people, yet each one searched deeper into its source. It is within this framework that the striking differences become apparent. Thus Hosea found a merciful Lord, while Jeremiah discovered a gracious Sovereign. In Hosea God confronts His bride with a rich love, while in Jeremiah God embraces each person with His free grace. The idea of God as Father and Lord is fundamental in Hosea, while in Jeremiah the relationship of blood ties are but secondary concepts. Hosea saw God's love coming from above, while Jeremiah felt it living within.

This striking progression makes the dominant unity more significant. This same unity is evident in the later

writings of the Scriptures. Thus any further study of this divine love motif would move into the sphere of the New Testament. It would involve an assessment of the New Testament dependence upon the basic principles of these two prophets, and the subsequent progression of thought involved.

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