

Love

It is a matter of historical record, that while love has been the dominant theological element, in the religious development of the 'West,' other theological categories—kindness, patience, meditative development, friendship--have played relatively stronger roles, in the Eastern effort to characterize the supreme religious virtues. To what would such a cultural split be due? Is there--—to pick a possibility-- something about love that might seem to align it with the spiritual dynamic of the west, while the putatively gentler feeling tones of eastern religions align rather with the more affective aesthetic cultures of the east?

The dynamism of the West—its commitment, from Greek times on, to capital enlargement, individual empowerment material creativity—all these concomitants of the western perspective—has rendered the individualism of the Abrahamic religions a ready to hand co-partner, and (especially Christianity) has rendered the cult of love a fitting partner in the formulation of the Western dynamic. The Christian scriptures recur continually to love as the pathway to eternal life. Why did the Christian emphasis on love, as the guiding virtue, fit so organically into the western dynamic? The Christian drive to build a City of God on earth aligned perfectly with the command to love one another.

History directs us to review those Christian scriptures in which Jesus Christ himself exalts love as mortality's noblest feeling; the point at which we live for one another. It has to be added, to this brief encomium on love, that St. Paul's formulations of love—patient, long suffering, never ceasing—added to the western canon on love an immortally persuasive description of this emotion under whose influence we are exhorted to live dynamically and creatively for one another. Love, as St Paul reads it, is the fundamental driver for a dynamic society.