

LOVE OF NEIGHBOR AS GREAT COMMANDMENT IN THE TIME OF JESUS: GRASPING AT STRAWS IN THE HEBREW SCRIPTURES

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Abstract: *One’s “neighbor,” generously interpreted to include everyone else in the world, even personal and impersonal enemies, looms large in the NT, especially in the form of the second great commandment, and in various expressions of the Golden Rule. The NT also contains expansive claims that neighbors have a similar importance in the OT. The main basis that commentators cite for these claims is a half-verse in the middle of Leviticus (“You shall love your neighbor as yourself,” 19:18b), as fully justifying these claims, supported by other isolated verses, notably, Exod 23:45, on rescuing the ass of one’s enemy. Relying on these verses has the appearance of grasping at straws in order to justify the words of Jesus, but it seems clear that in the time of Jesus they had indeed been searched out and elevated to new significance. John Meier has recently argued that it was Jesus himself who gave the Levitical neighbor his high standing, but because the Gospels present the notion as already known, this article suggests that it had achieved a consensus status by this time.*

Key words: *love, neighbor, Golden Rule, Great Commandment, enemy*

In the Gospel of Matthew, Jesus is made to say two problematic statements about the importance of treating “other people” well. The first, in the Sermon on the Mount, concerns what we know as the Golden Rule. Jesus says, “In everything, do to others as you would have them do to you, for this is the Law and the Prophets” (Matt 7:12).¹ Less radical but still not justified is his later assertion that “Love your neighbor as yourself” is the second great commandment, on which (together with the first, love of God) “hang all the Law and the Prophets” (Matt 22:39–40). Nothing like the Golden Rule appears in the Hebrew Scriptures, nor does any hierarchizing or summarizing of commandments seem to be found there;² and the idea of love of neighbor is, for all practical purposes, nonexistent. In fact, all uses of “love” in a religious or moral meaning are rare in the Hebrew Scriptures.³ God’s love is spoken of on a score or so of occasions, but love for God is seen only a handful of times—although, when it does appear, it is admittedly highly signifi-

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¹ For the NT and the Hebrew Scriptures, I normally use the NRSV.

² See Klaus Berger, *Die Gesetzesauslegung Jesu: Ihr historischer Hintergrund im Judentum und im Alten Testament 1: Markus und Parallelen* (WMANT 40; Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener, 1972), 175–76, and Christoph Burchard, “Das Doppelte Liebesgebot in der frühen christlichen Überlieferung,” in *Der Ruf Jesu und die Antwort der Gemeinde: Exegetische Untersuchungen Joachim Jeremias zum 70. Geburtstag* (ed. Eduard Lohse et al.; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1970), 39–62, esp. 54, repr. in Burchard, *Studien zur Theologie, Sprache und Umwelt des neuen Testaments* (ed. D. Sänger; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1998), 3–26, esp. 18.

³ Katherine Doob Sakenfeld, “Love: Old Testament,” *ABD* 4:375–81.

cant.⁴ However, love of neighbor shows up only once in the Pentateuch, in a single half-verse, Lev 19:18b, in the midst of a miscellany of rules, with no particular emphasis.⁵ The Prophets never speak of love of neighbor (or love of God, for that matter), though they may show concern, in terms of compassion and kindness—or “loving-kindness.” Yet all commentators assume and assert that it is in fact the Levitical half-verse that is being accorded such importance by Jesus, whether regarding the Golden Rule or the explicit command to love one’s neighbor.⁶

But, apart from the matter of its actual significance or insignificance in the original compilation of Leviticus, it is beyond doubt that the verse eventually came to be highly regarded. The question is: When and by whom? Most exegetes, I would say, hold that its importance was a generally accepted view in the late Second Temple period; it was not the invention of Jesus or his followers, but rather the culmination of a general enhancement of the notion of neighborly love. But some scholars do argue for Christian originality, even specifically on the part of Jesus himself.

In this paper I would like to explore the likelihood that there was a growth of neighborly concern before or around the turn of the Christian era, which may have had no other specific source than natural human decency. It developed to the extent that it was not only seen as fitting and proper to be *considered* a mainspring of human morality and religion, but it was also deemed *in fact* to be *the basis of the Torah*. This conclusion entailed a search of the Scriptures to find justification for the notion, a grasping for golden straws in the collected sheaves of the Hebrew Scriptures. The straws that were discovered were basically three, the passages featured in Gianni Barbiero’s *The Enemy’s Ass*, which purports to be an account of the OT legislation rejecting revenge and commanding love of enemy: namely, in addition to the Leviticus text, Exod 23:4–5 (on helping to rescue an endangered ox or ass, even though it belongs to one’s enemy) and Deut 22:1–4 (the same thing, but applied not to enemies but to “brethren,” even when not personally known).⁷ The Levitical corollary of love of neighbor was seized upon especially and isolated from its surroundings and given a significance all its own.

⁴ See William L. Moran, “The Ancient Near Eastern Background of the Love of God in Deuteronomy,” *CBQ* 25 (1963): 77–87.

⁵ Heribert Rücker, “Warum wird *’ahab* (lieben) im Alten Testament selten zur Bezeichnung für Nächstenliebe gebraucht?,” in *Dein Wort beachten: Alttestamentliche Aufsätze* (ed. Joseph Reindl and Georg Hentschel; Leipzig: St. Benno, 1981), 9–15.

⁶ A more acceptable formulation is that of Gerd Theissen in his brief summary of love in the NT, *Die Weisheit des Urchristentums: Aus Neuem Testament und ausserkanonischen Schriften* (Munich: Beck, 2008), “Liebe,” 11–12: The command to love one’s neighbor originates in the OT (Lev 19:18), and from the beginning was extended to the foreigner (Lev 19:34).

⁷ Gianni Barbiero, *L’asino del nemico: Rinuncia alla vendetta e amore del nemico nella legislazione dell’Antico Testamento* (Es 23,4–5; Dt 22,1–4; Lv 19,17–18) (AnBib 128; Rome: Pontificio Istituto Biblico, 1991). Thomas Söding, *Nächstenliebe: Gottes Gebot als Verbeissung und Anspruch* (Freiberg: Herder, 2015), 67, takes Lev 19:18 as the equivalent of a command to love one’s enemy.

I. THE CONTEXT OF THE LEVITICAL COMMAND TO LOVE ONE'S NEIGHBOR

First of all, let us examine the original context of the love-your-neighbor command.⁸ As noted, it is the last half of one verse (19:18b): “and⁹ you shall love your neighbor as yourself.” The Septuagint reading is the same; and since the NT uses the Septuagint text of the OT, I will do the same here.¹⁰ It is not only not prominent, it is the very opposite of prominent.

The injunction comes in the middle of chapter 19, which is in the post-Deuteronomic “Holiness” portion of the book (chapters 17–26 or 17–27). See Table 1, where it can be seen that there are echoes of the commandments, which I indicate in the Jewish numbering:

1 I am the Lord your God	6 No murder
2 No other gods, no idols	7 No adultery
3 No false oaths	8 No stealing
4 Keep sabbath	9 No false witness
5 Honor parents	10 No coveting

Table 1

Summary of Leviticus, chapter 19, Septuagint version

1	The Lord to Moses:
2	Be holy +Comm 1
3a	Fear parents Comm 5
3b	Keep sabbath Comm 4+Comm 1
4	No idols Comm 2+Comm 1
5–8	Proper sacrificial meals
9–10	Leave gleanings for poor and alien +Comm 1
11a	No stealing Comm 8
11b	No false dealing
11c	No false accusation of neighbor Comm 9
12	No unjust swearing by God's name Comm 3+Comm 1
13a	No unjust acting toward neighbor
13b	No plundering Comm 8
13c	No delaying wages
14a	No maligning the deaf
14b	No tripping the blind

⁸ For a full treatment, see Thomas Hieke, *Leviticus*, vol. 2 (chaps. 16–27) (HTKAT; Freiburg: Herder, 2014), 697–769.

⁹ I change the NRSV's adversative rendering of $\text{--}1$ as “but” to “and.” See Richard C. Steiner, “Does the Biblical Hebrew Conjunction $\text{--}1$ Have Many Meanings, One Meaning, or No Meaning at All?,” *JBL* 119 (2000): 249–67.

¹⁰ For rendering the LXX I usually use *NETS*. One exception is that I put “commandments” rather than “ordinances.”

- 14c Fear God **+Comm 1**
 15a No unjust law-judgment
 15b No partiality toward persons
 15c Judge neighbor justly
 16a No deceit among your people **Comm 9**
 16b No seeking blood of neighbor **Comm 6+Comm 1**
 17a No hating kin
 17b Reprove neighbor, to avoid his guilt
 18a No revenge, no anger against your people
 18b **AND LOVE YOUR NEIGHBOR AS YOURSELF +Comm 1**
 19a Keep my law:
 19b No mix-breeding
 19c No mixing crops
 19d No mixing cloths
 20–22 Sex with another’s slave-woman punished, but no death
 23–25 No eating from young trees **+Comm 1**
 26a No eating on mountains
 26b No bird-divining
 27a No round haircuts
 27b No mangling beard
 28a No gashing flesh for the dead
 28b No tattooing **+Comm 1**
 29 No prostituting daughter and defiling country
 30a Keep my sabbaths **Comm 4**
 30b Respect my sanctuaries **+Comm 1**
 31 No dealing with ventriloquists or enchanters **+Comm 1**
 32 Honor the old **+Comm 1**
 33 No oppressing arrived alien
 34a Resident alien to be treated as indigenous
 34b **AND LOVE THE ALIEN AS YOURSELF +Comm 1**
 35 No false weights
 36 Use good weights **+Comm 1**
 37 Keep all my commands **+Comm 1**

In fact, it is widely thought that the original form of the listing was a reformulation of the Decalogue.¹¹ Our half-verse is a positive supplement to a precept not to be resentful about offensive local kinfolk. The whole verse runs like this (in the Greek):

¹¹ Jacob Milgrom, *Leviticus 17–22: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary* (AB 3B; New York: Doubleday, 2000), 1600–1601; Gordon J. Wenham, *The Book of Leviticus* (NICOT; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1979), 264; Baruch A. Levine, *Leviticus* (JPS Torah Commentary; Philadelphia: JPS, 1989), 124–25; Samuel F. Balentine, *Leviticus* (Int; Louisville: John Knox, 2002), 160.

Your own hand shall not take vengeance, and you shall not be angry against the sons of your people, **and you shall love your neighbor as yourself.** (Lev 19:18 LXX).¹²

Just after this precept are rules that Christian interpreters would classify as “ceremonial,” rather than moral: “You shall not breed your animals to those of a different kind, and you shall not sow your vineyard with something different, and you shall not put on yourself an adulterated garment woven with two materials” (v. 19). And, just before it, comes the command to reprove troublesome clansmen: “You shall not hate in your mind your kin; in reproof you shall reprove your neighbor, and you shall not assume guilt because of him” (v. 17). And before this is a mixture of Decalogue prohibitions against stealing and lying and mistreating neighbors (vv. 11–13), and then an order not to give special treatment to rich or poor, but to judge neighbors justly (v. 15). Cases have been made for a formal and thematic unity of verses 11–18, with the love command a culmination,¹³ but whether such a unity, if it existed, was ever perceived at the time of compilation, is not evident.

After the no-mixing command of verse 19 comes a complicated rule punishing a man for sleeping with the wrong slave (vv. 20–22), and then more non-ethical rules, including not eating fruit from trees until they are five years old (vv. 23–25). Next comes a rule “not to eat on the mountains,” followed by a prohibition of bird-prognostication (v. 26). Then come vague rules on prohibited hair-styling and beard trimming and tattooing (v. 27) and laws prohibiting prostitution, commanding Sabbath-keeping, and prohibiting ventriloquists and enchanters (vv. 29–31). Neighborliness finally returns with an order to respect the elderly, coupled with a command to fear God (v. 32). Finally, love makes another brief entry, this time referring, in the original Hebrew, not to offensive neighbors but to inoffensive aliens. The Greek reads: “Now if some guest [προσήλυτος ‘newcomer’] approaches you in your land, you shall not oppress him. The guest who comes over to you shall be to you as the native among you, and you shall love him as yourself, for you were guests in the land of Egypt” (vv. 33–34).¹⁴ This is found also in Deut 10:19, but without the loving “as yourself”: “You shall also love the guest, for you were guests in the land of Egypt.” In the previous verse, love of alien is defined as helping him in his need: “doing justice to the guest and orphan and widow and loving the guest, to give him food and clothing” (Deut 10:18).

¹² Here is the Hebrew reading: “You shall not take vengeance or bear a grudge against any of your people, and you shall love your neighbor as yourself” (NRSV). Cf. the more literal translation of Everett Fox, *The Five Books of Moses* (New York: Schocken, 1995): “You are not to take-vengeance, you are not to retain-anger against the sons of your kinspeople—but be-loving to your neighbor (as one) like yourself.”

¹³ Barbiero, *L’asino*, 244; George Keeranker, *The Love Commandment in Mark: An Exegetico-Theological Study of Mk 12,28–34* (AnBib 150; Rome: Pontificio Istituto Biblico, 2003), 59–61, 134.

¹⁴ Hubert Meisinger, *Liebesgebot und Altruismusforschung: Ein exegetischer Beitrag zum Dialog zwischen Theologie und Naturwissenschaft* (Freiburg: Universitätsverlag, 1996), 14, argues that the Greek narrows the alien to a Gentile convert, but this hardly gibes with the allusion to the Jews in Egypt.

II. LOVE OF NEIGHBOR ACCEPTED AS SECOND GREAT COMMANDMENT

We can begin our investigation of the singular enhancement of neighbor-love by studying the NT discussion about the great commandments. There is some debate about whether Jesus was anticipated in arriving at two fundamental commandments. Some commentators believe that Jesus was entirely original,¹⁵ among whom John Meier is especially prominent.¹⁶ Although there are respectable reasons for believing that both Matthew and Luke reflect original traditions in their presentations of the episode,¹⁷ since Meier strongly believes that it is only Mark's account that approximates the historical Jesus, let us begin there.

Meier employs a number of criteria to determine the historicity of a given episode, and I would like to cite one of them, multiple attestation,¹⁸ to point up my own argument: that the teaching about the double commandment was not new. The criterion might not seem applicable, since the theme appears only in the three Synoptic Gospels, until we realize that we actually have six different points of view in these appearances: those of Jesus in each scene, and those of his interlocutors in each scene. As a whole, they agree that Jesus is not introducing something innovative or revolutionary but is recalling a teaching that is accepted by all.

In Mark 12:28–34, in contrast to the hostility of the previous speakers in the chapter, the interlocutor is a friendly scribe who admires the way in which Jesus has responded to his opponents. He asks, "Which commandment is the first of all?" Jesus responds, "The first is, 'Hear, O Israel: the Lord our God, the Lord is one; you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind, and with all your strength.'" It seems quite clear that the scribe has some notion of a mandate that is not only of supreme importance but also compendious in its scope.¹⁹ But even if Jesus's particular response were original to him, there could be little argument about it, because of the prominence the passage is given in Deuteronomy, being spoken by Moses just after he has imparted the Ten Commandments: "Hear, O Israel: the Lord our God is one Lord. And you shall love the Lord your God with the whole of your mind and with the whole of

¹⁵ William Klassen, "Love: New Testament and Early Jewish Literature," *ABD* 4:381–96, esp. 385–86, cites Jürgen Becker, "Feindesliebe-Nächstenliebe-Bruderliebe: Exegetische Betrachtungen als Anfrage an ein ethische Problemfeld," *ZEE* 25 (1981): 5–18, esp. 6, as a notable supporter of the originality of Jesus, as opposed to the consensus that the notion was already present in pre-Christian Jewish ethical teaching.

¹⁶ John P. Meier, *A Marginal Jew: Rethinking the Historical Jesus*, vol. 4: *Law and Love* (Anchor Yale Bible Reference Library; New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2009), chapter 36, "Widening the Focus: The Love Commandments of Jesus," 478–646.

¹⁷ Meier gives multiple instances of interpreters who accept this premise: 522–26, 611 n. 158. His own view is that Matthew and Luke are dependent only on Mark, and not additionally on some other source. For a recent elaboration of a similar position, see Jarmo Kivilinen, *Das Doppelgebot der Liebe in synoptischer Sicht: Ein redaktionskritischer Versuch über Mk 12.28–34 und die Parallelen* (Helsinki: Suomalainen Tiedekatemia, 1989).

¹⁸ Meier, *Marginal Jew*, 4:15.

¹⁹ Jean-Gaspard Mudiso Mbâ Mundla, *Jesus und die Führer Israels: Studien zu den sog. Jerusalemer Streitgesprächen* (Münster: Aschendorff, 1984), 174.

your soul and with the whole of your power” (Deut 6:5).²⁰ Furthermore, the command is repeated or alluded to several times later on in Deuteronomy (10:12; 11:1, 13, 22; 13:4; 19:9; 30:6, 16, 20), and also in Joshua (22:5; 23:11). What other commandment had a good claim to being first?

The idea of there being a first commandment might indicate only a status of preeminence; but it could also signify a sequence, followed by next most important, and so on. Likely candidates for number 2 might be one of the follow-up commands in Deuteronomy, for instance, v. 6: “These words that I command you today shall be in your heart and in your soul.” But Jesus volunteers a completely different command: “The second is this, ‘You shall love your neighbor as yourself.’” He adds: “There is no other commandment greater than these.”

Meier concludes that Jesus is being entirely original here, showing great knowledge of the Hebrew Scriptures in finding and pairing up the rare instances of the command “thou shalt love,” using an “equalizing” method that will become common among rabbinical exegetes.²¹ Plucking Lev 19:18b out of “the string of social commandments” in which it appeared and putting it alongside “the basic obligation of the covenant,” he says, “is daring halakic interpretation,”²² an example of the historical Jesus “who thinks long and hard about the Mosaic Law and who comes up with some startling and at times unprecedented pronouncements about it.”²³

If this were true in this case, we would expect some sign that the scribe was surprised, if not startled, whether accepting it as a brilliant new advance in understanding, or expressing wonderment or puzzlement or skepticism or curiosity as to how he arrived at this conclusion. Instead, however, we see calm agreement, or, at the most, the sort of “Well done!” approval he expressed earlier at Jesus’s responses to the Pharisees and Sadducees. He says: “You are right, Teacher, you have truly said that ‘He is one, and besides Him there is no other’; and ‘to love Him with all the heart, and with all the understanding, and with all the strength,’ and ‘to love one’s neighbor as oneself—this is much more important than all whole-burnt offerings and sacrifices” (Mark 12:32–33). Jesus congratulates the scribe for giving a wise response, and Mark ends by saying that this exchange had the effect of silencing all further questioning on the part of others.

We can easily conclude that the scribe has heard it all before, except perhaps wrapped up in a single commandment and contrasted, not with other moral imper-

²⁰ Note that the “love-faculties” in Deuteronomy are “mind-soul-strength,” with “heart” added in the follow-up command of v. 7: “And these words that I command you today shall be in your heart and in your soul.” Mark 12:30 has four in this order: “heart-soul-mind-strength,” while Luke 10:27 has: “heart-soul-strength-mind,” but Matt 22:37 has only three: “heart-soul-mind.” See Gerd Theissen, “Das Doppelgebot der Liebe: Jüdische Ethik bei Jesus,” in Theissen, *Jesus als historische Gestalt: Beiträge zur Jesusforschung: Zum 60. Geburtstag von Gerd Theissen* (ed. Annette Merz; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2003), 57–72, esp. 59–61; Meier, *Marginal Jew*, 4:586–88 n. 31.

²¹ Meier, *Marginal Jew*, 4:493–94.

²² *Ibid.*, 4:594 n. 60. He emphasizes that no one before Jesus had singled out the Levitical half-verse for attention (4:502–3).

²³ *Ibid.*, 4:527.

atives, but rather with the sacrificial demands of the Temple, echoing the common teaching of the prophets. As Victor Furnish puts it, “In Mark there is a missionary-apologetic concern to contrast obedience to the moral law with cultic performance and to link morality with belief in one God.”²⁴

It would seem natural to draw a similar conclusion concerning Matthew’s presentation, where the Pharisees put Jesus to the test by asking him to name the greatest commandment. By responding, “You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind,” saying that this is the greatest and the first commandment (Matt 22:37–38), he might seem to have passed the test with flying colors. However, he adds: “And a second is like it: ‘You shall love your neighbor as yourself.’ On these two commandments hang all the Law and the Prophets” (vv. 39–40), and he is met with silence—the sort of silence, it would seem, that signifies assent, as in the dictum cited by Thomas More, “Qui tacet consentire videtur.”²⁵ It suggests that there was a well-known tradition of a two-part or double commandment that was the fountainhead of all other commandments, of the whole Torah, in fact, and the pronouncements of the prophets.

In Luke (10:25–28), the *ὑποκριτής*²⁶ or straight-man is a lawyer, who tests Jesus by asking what one must do to inherit eternal life. This time Jesus responds by asking him what the Law says. The lawyer recites the double-love requirement as one command: this is what is written in the Law. As Furnish says, “The double command is already known by Jesus’s questioner, and Jesus’s function in the dialogue is to urge obedience to the command.”²⁷

As presented in the Synoptic Gospels, then, Jesus is not seen as inventing a new doctrine about the primary importance of love of neighbor joined to love of God. But he does seem to insist on speaking about two commandments rather than a single complex mandate.

III. LOVE OF GOD SUMMING UP THE LAW, COMBINED WITH LOVE OF NEIGHBOR

Perhaps a first step in elevating the significance of neighbor-love was to consider the love of God as encompassing all of the Law. It is easy to see how the command to love God with all of one’s faculties could be taken to sum up not only the First Table of the commandments (those directed towards God), but all of the commandments.²⁸ Moreover, at the end of the second commandment, obedience is

²⁴ Victor Paul Furnish, *The Love Command in the New Testament* (Nashville: Abingdon, 1972), 59.

²⁵ See Henry Ansgar Kelly, “A Procedural Review of Thomas More’s Trial,” in *Thomas More’s Trial by Jury: A Procedural and Legal Review, with a Collection of Documents* (ed. Henry Ansgar Kelly, Louis W. Karlin, and Gerard B. Wegemer; Woodbridge: Boydell & Brewer, 2011), 1–52, esp. 22–23.

²⁶ In the original sense of the actor secondary to the *πρωταγωνιστής*.

²⁷ Furnish, *Love Command*, 60.

²⁸ Whether the division of the commandments into the two tables of the covenant was a widespread notion at the time of the NT is not clear, but Philo assumes it; see *Decal.* 50–52. The first pentad “begins with God the Father and Maker of all, and ends with parents who copy His nature by begetting particular persons. The other set of five contains all the prohibitions, namely, adultery, murder, theft, false witness, covetousness or lust” (LCL).

framed in terms of love: God shows mercy to thousands of generations “for those who love me and keep my commandments” (Exod 20:6; Deut 5:10).

Then, we can speculate, the love of neighbor was added to the command to love God, as we see in the Testament of Issachar in the Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs: “Love the Lord and your neighbor.”²⁹ I am assuming, as seems likely, that this verse is not a Christian interpolation.³⁰

The next step would be for the command of love for neighbor to be taken as encapsulating the second part of the Decalogue, dealing with our relations with others.³¹ It seems to have just this function, of summarizing the Second Table, in the incident of the rich young man, as told by Matthew. As in Mark (10:19) and Luke (18:20), Jesus names the negative commandments: “You shall not murder,” “You shall not commit adultery,” “You shall not steal,” “You shall not bear false witness,”³² and finishes with the positive command, “Honor your father and mother,” which Philo considered to belong to the First Table.³³ But then he adds, in Matthew: “Also, ‘You shall love your neighbor as yourself’” (Matt 19:18–19). The young man avers that he has obeyed all of them, including therefore the final one of love of neighbor.³⁴

It has been alleged that Philo sets forth a similar paradigm, but his treatment is not quite the same. He speaks of persons who limit themselves to either serving God (the earlier commandments) or doing justice to men (the other commandments): the former can be called “God-lovers” (φιλόθεοι), the latter “man-lovers”

²⁹ T. Iss. 5:2 (*OTP* 1:803); cf. T. Gad 6:1, 3: “Now, my children, each of you love his brother. . . . Love one another from the heart, therefore, and if anyone sins against you, speak to him in peace” (1:816). This hearkens back to Lev 19:17 on reproving a misbehaving neighbor. See James L. Kugel, “On Hidden Hatred and Open Reproach (Lev 19.17),” *HTR* 80 (1987): 43–61, and Jeremy Corley, *Ben Sira’s Teaching on Friendship* (BJS; Providence: Brown University, 2002), 163–65, as well as Meier, *Marginal Jew*, 4:504.

³⁰ The possibility of Christian tampering seems stronger with a later verse, T. Iss. 7:6: “The Lord I loved with all my strength; likewise I loved every human being as I love my children” (1:804), of which the editor, H. C. Kee, says: “Universal love and brotherhood are here commanded rather than merely neighborly obligation to one’s fellow covenant member.” Jürgen Becker, editor of *Die Testamente der zwölf Patriarchen* (JSRZ 3; Gütersloh: Mohn, 1974), 15–163, esp. 84, judges it to be a secondary reading. See Klassen, “Love,” 386.

³¹ Heikki Sariola, *Markus und das Gesetz: Eine redaktionskritische Untersuchung* (Helsinki: Suomalainen Tiedeakatemia, 1990), 203–8, deals with the question of the two great commandments summing up the Decalogue.

³² Mark adds here, “You shall not defraud,” paralleling Lev 19:13, coming after not swearing falsely; cf. Greek Sir 4:1.

³³ Philo, *Decal.* 51, cited above; also 106–7: “This commandment He placed on the border-line between the two sets of five; it is the last in which the most sacred injunctions are given and it adjoins the second set which contains the duties of man to man” (LCL), between the mortal and immortal sides of existence.

³⁴ Love enters into Mark’s account in a different way: Jesus looks at the young man and *loves* him, 10:21). See Ceslaus Spicq, *Agape in the New Testament* (2 vols.; St. Louis: Herder, 1963–65), 1:59–62, and Klassen, “Love: New Testament,” 385. The only others Jesus is said to love in the Gospels are Lazarus and his sisters and the beloved disciple. But, of course, in John 13:34 and 15:12, he commands his apostles to love one another as he has loved them. See Raymond F. Collins, *Christian Morality: Biblical Foundations* (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 1986), chapter 5, “A New Commandment I Give to You, That You Love One Another. . . .” (Jn 13.34),” 101–36.

(φιλάθρωποι). Philo declares both categories to be defective: the lovers of neighbors fail in their obligation to love God, and the lovers of God alone fail in their duties to men. The fully virtuous are those who obey all the commandments.³⁵

IV. ANOTHER TRADITION: NEIGHBOR-CONCERN SUMMING UP *ALL* THE LAW

Let us now examine the alternative tradition in which proper dealings with others form the basis of other laws. The negative form of the Golden Rule, sometimes called the Silver Rule, was known to the author of Tobit (before 200 BC): near the beginning of a series of injunctions that Tobit gives to Tobias, he says, “What you hate, do to no one” (Tob 4:15).³⁶ Philo, too, gives it as the first of a series of important written and unwritten laws (as opposed to other trivial ones): “Let no man himself do what he hates to have done to him.”³⁷

According to the Babylonian Talmud, Hillel the Elder (perhaps first century BC) made the negative Golden Rule of supreme importance: “What is hateful to you, do not do to your neighbor [תבֵר ‘fellow’]: that is the whole Torah.”³⁸

Jesus, unusually for his time and place, has a positive rendering of the rule,³⁹ in the Sermon on the Mount/Plain: “Do to others as you would have them do to you” (Matt 7:12; Luke 6:31), to which, as we saw at the beginning, Matthew adds: “for this is the Law and the Prophets.” But in Luke, Jesus immediately goes beyond the Rule and “exhorts his disciples to a way of life that transcends mere reciprocity,” commanding them to love their enemies.⁴⁰

³⁵ Philo, *Decal.* 108–10.

³⁶ See Carey A. Moore, *Tobit: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary* (AB 40A; New York: Doubleday, 1996), 171, and see 178–80 for parallel expressions.

³⁷ Philo as reported by Eusebius, *Praeparatio evangelica* 8.7, 358d (ed. and trans. Edwin Hamilton Gifford, *Evangelica praeparatio*; 4 vols. in 5; Oxford: Typographeus Academicus, 1903), 1:457 (Greek), 3:1:388 (English), 4:262 (notes).

³⁸ *Šabb.* 31a.

³⁹ Gerd Theissen, “Die Goldene Regel (Matthäus 7:12/Lukas 6:31): Über den Sitz im Leben ihrer positiven und negativen Form,” *BiblInt* 11 (2003): 386–99, esp. 393, finds only two examples of the positive form in Jewish tradition: Let. Aris. 207: “Insofar as you do not wish evils to come upon you, but to partake of every blessing, [it would be wisdom] if you put this into practice with your subjects, including the wrongdoers, and if you admonished the good and upright also mercifully. For God guides all men in mercy” (*OTP* 2:26), and 2 En. 61:2: “Just as a person makes request for his own soul from God, in the same manner let him behave toward every living soul” (*OTP* 1:186). However, neither is a straightforward rendering of the rule, and the first seems more negative than positive, while the second may be medieval; see Maier, *Marginal Jew*, 4:542–43.

⁴⁰ Raymond F. Collins, “Golden Rule,” *ABD* 2:1070–71. See also Bernd Kollmann, “Die Goldene Regel (Mt 7,12/Lk 6,31): Triviale Maxime der Selbstbezogenheit oder Grundprinzip ethischen Handelns?,” in “*Er stieg auf den Berg—und lehrte sie*” (*Mt* 5,1f): *Exegetische und rezptionsgeschichtliche Studien zur Bergpredigt* (ed. Hans-Ulrich Weidemann; Stuttgart: Katholisches Bibelwerk, 2012), 97–113, esp. 102–3, citing Maier, *Marginal Jew*, 4:556, who speaks of a “withering” contrast between reciprocity and the command to love one’s enemies. See also Wolfgang Harnisch, “Die Goldene Regel und das Liebesgebot: Mt 7,12 im Kontext der Bergpredigt,” in *Rhetorik und Hermeneutik in der Apokalyptik und im Neuen Testament* (Stuttgart: Katholisches Bibelwerk, 2009), 204–22.

It seems too much to say, as many commentators do, that the Golden Rule is a variant of Lev 19:18b,⁴¹ but at least it can be seen as a step toward considering proper action toward one's neighbor as an expression of love, and it can also be seen as an illustration of taking expectations concerning ourselves as the measure of proper treatment of others: loving them *as oneself*.

Paul's understanding in effect combines the ideas found in Luke and Matthew: He moves the discourse from doing to loving and takes the maxim as summary. Writing to the Galatians, he makes the bald declaration: "The whole Law is summed up in a single commandment: 'You shall love your neighbor as yourself'" (Gal 5:14). In Romans he explains: "The one who loves another has fulfilled the Law. The commandments, 'You shall not commit adultery,' 'You shall not murder,' 'You shall not steal,' 'You shall not covet,' and any other commandment, are summed up in this word, 'Love your neighbor as yourself.' Love does no wrong to a neighbor; therefore, love is the fulfilling of the law" (Rom 13:8–10). Like the Gospel recitations of the commandments in the episode of the rich young man, Paul's list is limited to the Second Table, but he includes the no-coveting commandment, which actually mentions neighbors; and then makes love of neighbor all-encompassing—including therefore the commandments of the First Table.⁴²

Paul's explanation shows us the kind of thinking that must have been involved in the elevation of neighbor-love to supreme mandate. Rules of doing no wrong to others (murder, theft, etc.) are an inadequate way of expressing our obligations to our fellow man. Treating others justly—Philo's formulation—is stronger. But loving them is strongest of all and corresponds to the general commandment of loving God.

There is a difficulty, however: God deserves our love because he has given us everything, but what about our neighbor? Why should we love other humans, many of whom have harmed us? One reason can be seen in the counsel of the First Epistle of John: "Since God loved us so much, we also ought to love one another" (1 John 4:11). That is, in loving others we acknowledge God's love for us.⁴³

V. TAKING LEVITICUS 19:18B BROADLY; FORGIVENESS AND ONE'S SELF

As I have noted, many modern commentators confidently assume that the NT discussions of loving one's neighbors as oneself and treating them as one would wish to be treated are direct references to Lev 19:18b, for the most part

⁴¹ Kaufmann Kohler instead says that the negative form of the Golden Rule was "the accepted Targum interpretation" of Lev 19:18 ("Brotherly Love," *Jewish Encyclopedia* [12 vols.; New York, 1901–6], 3:397–98).

⁴² Raymond Collins in a private communication cautions that Paul nowhere speaks of our love for God; for him, love describes what should be the attitude of believers toward humans. When dealing with God, he speaks of "faith."

⁴³ Cf. Söding, *Nächstenliebe*, who says that there is no love of God without love of neighbor (124–25). This perhaps is a way of reconciling his two statements: that on the one hand neighbor-love is the key to Jesus's ethics (120) and on the other the double commandment is the center of Jesus's ethics (p. 126).

without making an issue of the obscure status of the half-verse in Leviticus and the Torah. For myself, I have little doubt that the half-verse was eventually put into service of the great neighbor-love mandate, since it is the only text that comes close to filling the bill. But I suggest that its recognition may have been something of an afterthought, and that, once noticed, there may have been a gradual expansion of its application: from its original setting of local “neighborhood” politics to a broader scope.

Chapter 19 of Leviticus was addressed to the Israelite laity, as opposed to the priesthood, and this particular rule deals, as we saw, with an acquaintance who has committed something against you: you are instructed not to bear a grudge, but to love him as yourself; in other words, “Do not” is followed by “Do.” However, the rationale for loving *ὡς σεαυτόν* is not stated here, but in the later injunction in the same chapter, verse 34: “The guest who comes over to you shall be to you as the native among you, and you shall love him as yourself, for you were guests in the land of Egypt.” The principle asserted here is not so much self-love as *reciprocity*—treating others as one wishes to be treated—the motivation we saw enunciated in the Golden Rule.⁴⁴

“In this context,” we are told, “such love means a person is to forgive a neighbor’s wrongs as quickly as his or her own.”⁴⁵ But it is hardly a question of our forgiving our own wrongs; rather, it is a matter of our neighbors—the victims of our wrongs—forgiving what we have done against them, and also of God forgiving these deeds because they are violations of God’s commandments. In the Psalms we seek God’s forgiveness by expressing self-abasement and sorrow, and begging for mercy. There is never any concern for forgiveness of others in the Psalms; instead, the constant refrain is that the wrongs that others have committed should be severely punished.⁴⁶ The Leviticus verse could certainly have been taken as a step forward; but there was much further to go.

We find something new in the Lord’s Prayer: Jesus makes forgiveness of others’ wrongs against us a condition of God’s forgiveness of our own wrongs—including not only our offenses directly against God but also our sins against our

⁴⁴ For a discussion of the original meaning of “as yourself,” see Bob Becking, “Love Thy Neighbour . . . : Exegetical Remarks on Leviticus 19:18, 34,” in *Gerechtigkeit und Recht zu üben* (*Gen 18,19*): *Studien zur altorientalischen und biblischen Rechtsgeschichte, zur Religionsgeschichte Israels und zur Religionssoziologie: Festschrift für Eckart Otto zum 65. Geburtstag* (ed. Reinhard Achenbach and Martin Arneht; Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 2009), 182–87. Martin Buber’s interpretation, “[For your neighbor is] like yourself,” has been largely abandoned for “in the same way as yourself.” Becking himself suggests the meaning, “As [you hope he will love] you,” bringing it close to (or even beyond) the spirit of the Golden Rule. A. Schenker, “Das Gebot der Nächstenliebe in seinem Kontext (Lev 19,17–18): Lieben ohne Falschheit,” *ZAW* 124 (2012): 244–48, reads the command as an antidote to “deceitful vengeance,” which he finds (rather unconvincingly) to be prohibited in vv. 11–18.

⁴⁵ Jay Sklar, *Leviticus* (TOTC; Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2014), 247.

⁴⁶ While there seems to be no concern for forgiveness of either private or public enemies in the OT, there are, of course, efforts to intercede for sinful fellow Israelites.

neighbors. In Matthew, Jesus specifies the wrongs in terms of debts;⁴⁷ but in the explanation he gives after the prayer, he construes debts as transgressions: “For if you forgive others their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you; but if you do not forgive others, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses” (Matt 6:14–15). This clarifies the text of the prayer itself, where it might seem that we are asking God to imitate our generosity towards others by forgiving us: “Forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors” (v. 12). Luke’s version is similar, except that our offenses against God are characterized as sins: “Forgive us our sins, for we ourselves forgive everyone indebted to us” (11:4).

But surely the love of neighbor advocated in the new Great Commandment extends beyond mere forgiveness of our debtors. We see this, somewhat indirectly, in Luke’s version of the discussion. When the lawyer asks who his neighbor is, Jesus responds by giving an example of a loving neighbor, the Good Samaritan: “Which of these three, do you think, was a neighbor to the man who fell into the hands of the robbers?” (10:36). But this is not what the lawyer asked. He wanted to know what kinds of persons he was required to love. But we get the idea; when Jesus replies, “Go and do likewise” (v. 37), we infer that we should love all who are in distress, like the hungry and thirsty and homeless in Matthew’s account of the judgment of the sheep and the goats, where helping others is made the sole criterion of salvation (Matt 25:32–46).

Or we can say that it includes the poor in general: The rich young man should give his money to them. But in the case of the Good Samaritan, it obviously extends even to members of mutually disliked social groups: Samaritans and Israelites at odds with each other.

Among neighbors with whom we have dealings should be listed those who are inoffensive, the subject of the negative commandments of the Second Table (we are not to kill them, or steal from them, or covet their wives and goods); also, those who have offended us and whom we are to love (Lev 19:18), or those who have run into debt with us and have not paid up, or who have transgressed against us, whom we are to forgive (Lord’s Prayer), and those to whom we should be merciful, in order to receive mercy (the beatitude, Matt 5:7). We are to love our enemies and persecutors (Matt 5:44; Luke 6:27), and Jesus extends forgiveness to those who crucify him, “for they do not know what they are doing” (Luke 23:34). We are to give our slaves and the aliens among us a Sabbath rest, as we do to our work animals (third commandment, Deut 5:14–15), and we are to love unoffending resident aliens as ourselves (Lev 19:33–34).

VI. NARROW INTERPRETATIONS OF LEVITICUS 19:18

When Jesus speaks of the Second Great Commandment, he may have had a broad understanding of Lev 19:18 in mind. But on one occasion, at least, it seems

⁴⁷ Gary A. Anderson, *Sin: A History* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2009), 27, aims to show that in the period leading up to the time of Jesus there was a general shift from regarding sins as burdens to seeing them as debts to be repaid.

likely that he is referring to the specific context of this verse: namely, when in the Sermon on the Mount he says, “You have heard that it was said, ‘You shall love your neighbor and hate your enemy’” (Matt 5:43). That is, he may be asserting that this is the interpretation that some scribes and Pharisees give to the verse,⁴⁸ viz., that we are to love *only* our neighbors and not our enemies—and, in fact, we are to hate our enemies. We see something of this in Sirach 12: “Give to the pious person but do not assist the sinner” (v. 4); “Because also the Most High hated sinners, and on the impious He will render punishment” (v. 6).⁴⁹ If so, Jesus further notes that the neighbors to be loved are commonly restricted to “those who love us” and to our brethren. This is the way Jerome understood the Levitical verse, taking the Hebrew נָר and Greek $\delta \text{ πλῆσιον}$ to mean *amicus*: “Non quaeres ultionem nec memor eris injuriae civium tuorum; diliges *amicum* tuum sicut temetipsum”—that is, “Seek not revenge, nor be mindful of the injury of thy citizens; thou shalt love thy *friend* as thyself” (Douai-Rheims-Challoner).⁵⁰ There is no merit in loving friends, Jesus says, since even publicans and Gentiles do this. You should rather “love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you” (v. 44).

William Klassen says that an examination of contemporary sources “leads to the conclusion that the idea of ‘love your enemies’ was not original with Jesus. The illustrations Jesus uses in the Gospels are already present in either the Hellenistic or the Jewish traditions. What then is new? The command *form*, the *focus* it receives, and the *consistency* with which Jesus lived out this idea.”⁵¹ But it turns out that no one other than Jesus actually uses the word “love.” In admitting this “large step” that Jesus took, Klassen says that it “was consistent with the long steps which had already been taken by many Jews in the direction of rejecting the idea of retaliation.”⁵²

Jesus does not specify here that this love is to be “as you love yourself”; and we might think that the prayer for one’s enemies is to be for their repentance as a necessary condition for their forgiveness. However, the reason given is imitation of God who makes the sun to shine on good and bad alike (that is, without requiring repentance). “Be perfect, therefore, as your heavenly Father is perfect” (Matt 5:48), or, as Luke puts it, “Be merciful, just as your Father is merciful” (Luke 6:36). It is similar to the reasoning of First John: “Since God loved us so much, we also ought to love one another” (1 John 4:11), and to that of Jesus in the new commandment

⁴⁸ So Reinhard Neudecker, “‘And You Shall Love Your Neighbor as Yourself—I Am the Lord’ (Lev 19,18) in Jewish Interpretation,” *Bib* 73 (1992): 496–517, esp. 501–2.

⁴⁹ Elsewhere, Sirach comes close to the Lord’s Prayer: “Forgive your neighbor the wrong done to you; then when you pray, your own sins will be forgiven” (Sir 28:2).

⁵⁰ On Challoner’s editing of Gregory Martin’s Douai-Rheims translation, see Leslie K. Arnovick and Henry Ansgar Kelly, “Bishop Challoner’s Ecumenical Revision of the Douai-Rheims Bible by Way of King James,” *Review of English Studies* 66 (2015): 698–722. In this case, Challoner left Martin’s rendition intact.

⁵¹ William Klassen, “The Novel Element in the Love Commandment of Jesus,” in *The New Way of Jesus: Essays Presented to Howard Charles* (ed. William Klassen; Newton, KS: Faith and Life Press, 1980), 100–114, esp. 104.

⁵² *Ibid.*, 108.

that he gives to his apostles: “Just as I have loved you, you also should love one another” (John 13:34).

There is another instance in the NT of a specific reference to Lev 19:18, and that is in the Epistle of James: “You do well if you really fulfill the royal law according to the Scripture, ‘You shall love your neighbor as yourself’” (Jas 2:8). Why he calls it a royal or kingly law, νόμος βασιλικός, is puzzling,⁵³ but it shows that it has come up in the world, in contrast to the laws surrounding it in Leviticus 19. In this instance, James is harking back to verse 15b: “You shall not favor the person of the poor or admire the person of a high official,” for his remark comes after an exhortation not to show favoritism.⁵⁴

Yet another specific invocation of Lev 19:18 may be Paul’s command to the Romans not to avenge themselves, since vengeance belongs to God; rather, if their enemies are in need, they should help them, thereby heaping burning coals on their heads (Rom 12:19–20). His clear citations of Deut 32:35⁵⁵ and Prov 25:21–22 (“If your enemy is hungry, nourish him; if he is thirsty, give him to drink; for by doing this you will heap coals of fire on his head”) have overshadowed the similarity to Lev 19:18: “Your own hand shall not take vengeance, and you shall not be angry against the sons of your people, and you shall love your neighbor as yourself.” Paul’s meaning has been interpreted contradictorily: “You will thereby make sure that your enemies are punished,” or, “You will thereby make them feel ashamed and repent.” His follow-up comment (“Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil by good,” v. 21) as well as the purport of Lev 19:18 and his general attitude indicate that the latter interpretation is correct: enemies are to be loved, not retaliated against.

VII. CONCLUSION

The originality of Jesus on the subject of love has been argued for (and against) under various headings.⁵⁶ From what we have seen above, we can say specifically that the three statements that Matthew has Jesus make—that the love of God is the first and greatest of the commandments, that love of neighbor as self is like it, and that together they sum up the Law and the Prophets—are, so far as we know, unprecedented. But the lawyer who speaks with Jesus in Luke indicates an existing tradition of a single combined commandment of love of God and neighbor, considered as the Law’s key to salvation; and the scribe in Mark agrees, at least to

⁵³ See Dale C. Allison Jr., *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Epistle of James* (New York: Bloomsbury, 2013), 401–5.

⁵⁴ Allison gives the title of “Partiality Condemned” to the whole passage, 2:1–13 (pp. 367–424).

⁵⁵ Paul’s “Vengeance is mine, I will repay” is a mix of the Hebrew (“Vengeance is mine, and recompense”) and the Greek (“In a day of vengeance, I will repay”).

⁵⁶ Klassen, “Novel Element,” citing G. Schneider, “Die Neuheit der christlichen Nächstenliebe,” *TTZ* 82 (1973): 257–75, esp. 257–58, lists five: (1) combining love of God and neighbor; (2) reducing all commands to this single (i.e. double) command; (3) expanding love of neighbor to love of enemy; (4) positivizing the Golden Rule; (5) basing love of neighbor on God’s love for us.

the extent of affirming that this combined commandment is very important, valued by God more than sacrifices.

There was also a precedent for the notion that attention to neighbor summed up all the Law. Hillel put it negatively, saying it is the whole Torah. But Jesus expressed it positively, enunciating what we know as the Golden Rule, asserting (in Matthew) that it constitutes the Law and the Prophets. Paul, however, stated that it was *love* of neighbor, not simply reciprocal concern, which was the whole Law. There is no overt attempt, in the NT or elsewhere, to explain the logic behind this rival claim, that other-concern or other-love alone summed up the Law. It is hard to understand how it could be thought to cover the first commandments: of acknowledging God and guarding his name and observing the Sabbath. However, God's love for us, rather than our love for God, is brought into the picture in First John: God by His love for us shows us how to love one another (1 John 4:11).

It is probable that the half-verse of Lev 19:18b was somehow thought of as the scriptural basis for the monumental precept of love of neighbor as self, in spite of its humble context; but only after the idea of love came into its own. When Kaufmann Kohler says, "Love being the essence of God's holy nature, the law of human life culminates in the commandment, 'Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself' (Lev. xix. 18),"⁵⁷ I take the sequence to be: once the importance of love was realized, the Levitical verse was emancipated from its narrow limits and elevated to a place of honor.

VIII. FUTURE DEVELOPMENTS

It has been suggested that the discussions of commandments in the Gospels were affected by the growing tradition of the "613 Commandments" incumbent on all Jews, consisting of 248 prescriptions and 365 prohibitions.⁵⁸ But in their final form, reached in the third century AD or later, loving God (Deut 6:5) indeed comes early, just after knowing God's existence (Exod 20:2) and acknowledging God's uniqueness (Deut 6:4); but loving your fellow as yourself (Lev 19:18b) is well down the list, no. 206, followed by loving the proselyte (based on Deut 10:19 rather than Lev 19:34, since no "as yourself" is included). Leviticus 19:18a is isolated from 19:18b, producing two additional commandments much further along the line, among the negative commands: no bearing grudges and no taking revenge, nos. 552 and 553 (i.e. nos. 304 and 305 of the prohibiting commandments).⁵⁹

Taking the love commandment in isolation from its context remained the rule in the Talmudic period. Reinhard Neudecker says, "Although reading Lev 19. (17-)18 as one unit ought to have been fairly common in rabbinic Bible interpretation, especially since it is a known rabbinic method to read and explain individual passages together with the text which precedes and follows them, only very occa-

⁵⁷ Kaufmann Kohler, "Love," *JE* 8:188-90, esp. 189.

⁵⁸ Raymond F. Collins, "Commandment," *ABD* 1:1097-99; see his *Christian Morality: Biblical Foundations* (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 1986), 131 n. 90.

⁵⁹ Schematic lists of the 613 Commandments are given in *EncJud* 5:74-84 and *JE* 4:181-85.

sionally does one encounter evidence of such a reading in the early sources.”⁶⁰ But contextual readings became more common in the medieval period.⁶¹

Among Christians, of course, there was no need for debate, since the NT definition of neighbor extended to friend and foe alike. Occasionally we find an interesting interpretation of what it means to love others as oneself, namely taking one’s own self as a criterion of love. For the most part, the phrase was left uncommented upon, doubtless because of the assumption that it indicated simple reciprocity, which was explicitly stated in the Golden Rule, therefore meaning, “As you would wish yourself to be loved.” But another possible meaning is: “As you love yourself.” We find it in Ambrosiaster (ca. 380),⁶² Augustine,⁶³ and Caesarius of Arles (d. 542),⁶⁴ and, in the Middle Ages, in Aelred of Rievaulx (d. 1167),⁶⁵ Marguerite Porete (d. 1210),⁶⁶ and Reginald Pecock.⁶⁷

In all cases, the principle of love of neighbor remained prominent in Christian thought, and there was never any need to bolster it by taking a half-verse of Leviticus out of context, since its universal application was on full display in the Scriptures of the new covenant. When the *Didache* opens by stressing love of God and love of neighbor (“First, love the God who made you, and second, your neighbor as yourself”),⁶⁸ it is surely not citing Deut 6:5 and Lev 19:18⁶⁹ but rather the Gospels.⁷⁰ In Christian times, Leviticus 19:18 had returned to the insignificance it must have had before what used to be called “the intertestamental period,” unremarked in the midst of now-obsolete ceremonies and regulations of local relationships.

⁶⁰ Neudecker, “And You Shall Love,” 509.

⁶¹ *Ibid.*, 509–11.

⁶² Ambrosiaster, *Commentaria in XIII Epistolas Pauli*, PL 17:309CD.

⁶³ Augustine, Sermon 128.3 (PL 38:715), citing Ps 10:6.

⁶⁴ Ps.-Augustine, Sermon 368.5 = Caesarius of Arles (PL 39:1655).

⁶⁵ Aelred of Rievaulx, *De spiritali amicitia*, ed. Anselme Hoste, in *Aelredi Rievallensis opera omnia* (CCCM 1, Turnhout, Belgium: Brepols, 1971), 279–350: book 3, section 69, p. 331 (also PL 195:688C); also, *Liber de speculo caritatis*, ed. C. H. Talbot, *Opera omnia*, 3–161: book 3, chap. 37, no. 100, p. 154 (also PL 195:615C).

⁶⁶ Marguerite Porete, *Le miroir des simples ames*, ed. R. Guarini, along with the Latin version, *Speculum simplicium animarum*, ed. P. Verdeyen (CCCM 69; Turnhout, Belgium: Brepols, 1986), 16–17 (chap. 3).

⁶⁷ Reginald Pecock, *The Reule of Crysten Religijoun* (ed. W. C. Greet; London: EETS, 1927), book 3, chap. 13, pp. 303–4. See Jennifer A. T. Smith, “Reginald Pecock and Vernacular Theology in Pre-Reformation England” (Ph.D. diss., University of California, Los Angeles, 2012), 198–207.

⁶⁸ *Did.* 1:2.

⁶⁹ So Allison, *Epistle of James*, 407.

⁷⁰ It is noteworthy, however, that the verse continues with a negative form of the Golden Rule: “And whatever you do not want to happen to you, do not do to another.”