

## THE ORTHODOX WEEKLY BULETIN . . . . VESTAL, CLIFFWOOD, NEW JERSEY

### GOD IS LOVE

One of the most simple yet profound statements about God is given by St. John in his Epistle: “**GOD IS LOVE.**” Perhaps this comes as close as anything else to define the nature or being of God. But “*love*” is one of the most overworked words in the English language. It can mean so many things. When St. John used that word in speaking of God, he was using it in a specific sense. The Greek language of the New Testament has several words which are all translated by the English “love”. Today we examine the particular meanings.

There is “**FILEO,**” which means friendship. This is the love that exists between friends, and it can be a true and lasting relationship. The Old Testament tells of the remarkable friendship of David and Jonathan at the time that King Saul ruled in the land. Philadelphia is named after this word for love, and so that place is referred to as the “city of brotherly love.”

Then there is the word “**EROS,**” from which our word eroticism is taken. It means carnal or sexual love. It is this form of love which fills our literature, television, movies, and advertising these days. There is a rightful place for this form of love, and it is in Holy Marriage.

Finally, there is in the New Testament that greatest expression of all for Christian love – “**AGAPE.**” This love differs from all the others and far surpasses all others. It has a spiritual dimension. It means to love the unlovely.

God showed this kind of love when “*He sent His only-begotten Son*” to this world to become man, and to do for mankind what it could not do for itself. The Father sent His Son to us, a sinful race. It was love of the unlovely.

And the Son showed that same agape love during His years on earth, and especially when HE died on the Cross for man’s salvation. St. Paul says: “. . . . *while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.*” Again, love for the unlovely.