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### The Concept of Love in the Johannine Writings

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THE CONCEPT OF LOVE IN THE  
JOHANNINE WRITINGS

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A Thesis Presented to  
the Faculty of Concordia Seminary  
Department of New Testament Theology

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In Partial Fulfillment  
of the Requirements for the Degree  
Bachelor of Divinity

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by

Omar Stuenkel

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Approved by:

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THE CONCEPT OF LOVE IN THE  
JOHANNINE WRITINGS

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    - 3. Love between Christ and the Father shows the culmination of harmony.

**C. Love Among Men**

1. Natural affection is expressed by the love-concept but it is not necessarily Christian love.
2. The Christian love-concept states the relation which exists in men toward their fellowmen after they realize their harmony with God in Christ.

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**THE CONCEPT OF LOVE IN THE**

**CHRISTIAN WRITINGS**

The subject of the biblical concept of love has been of interest to me for some years. This interest began with a knowledge of, and consequent meditation and reflection on, the possibility evidenced of a wife loving a drunkard husband, or a father a profligate son. This led to a liberal collection of pertinent love-passages in Scripture. Frequent personal reflection on, and repeated observation of, interesting passages during bible reading in the past several years increased my interest in the subject. This led, in the year past, to make a study of all passages in the New Testament dealing with love of any kind. In that study I reached, as I regard to me, a unifying principle in the manifestations of God's love for man, man's love for God, man's love of evil, and man's love to man. The unifying principle reached briefly stated was: All love is the manifestation of this seeking of the good of the loved one. The manifestation of this seeking of the good of the loved one is not love only evil; of

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The subject of the Biblical concept of love has been of interest to me for some years. This interest began with a discussion of, and consequent meditation and reflection on, the possibility evidenced of a wife loving a drunkard husband, or a mother a profligate son. This led to a limited consideration of pertinent love-passages in Scripture. Frequent occasional reflection on, and repeated observation of, illuminating passages during Bible reading in the past several years increased my interest in the subject. This led me, in the year past, to make a study of all passages in the New Testament dealing with love of any kind. In that study I reached, what seemed to me, a unifying principle in all manifestations of God's love for man, man's love of God, man's love of evil, and man's love to man. The unifying principle reached briefly stated was: All men seek happiness; the manifestation of this seeking of happiness we call love; man by nature loves only evil; of

himself he cannot love good; God loves man; God establishes  
 a possibility for true happiness for men in Christ; regenerate man loves God; regenerate man loves his fellowmen in Christ; in Christ he can love also when love is not returned, he can even love his enemies. When others considered this principle as stated I found that the term "happiness"<sup>2</sup> and the implication of "seeking happiness" needed clarification as well as the idea of happiness in connection with God. The desire to write a thesis leading to the degree of Bachelor of Divinity afforded me the opportunity for a re-study and clarification of, and, in several respects, a modification of, my earlier analysis of the love-concept. In this study I have gained much from the use of standard dictionaries and lexicons but especially from Nygren's three volume work Agape and Eros. Other authors also added thoughts here and there. In the later sections of this paper the commentaries listed in the bibliography proved helpful.

In the present study I have given emphasis to the Johannine writings because John provides all points necessary<sup>3</sup> for consideration. It is my hope that I can in the future expand and extend the consideration of the love-concept in

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1. J.M. Reu and P.H. Buehring, Christian Ethics, pp. 82, 83, 86, 86.

2. I have since discovered that Augustine uses much the same terminology upon occasion, though his use has somewhat different implications. Cf. Anders Nygren, Agape and Eros, v. II, 2.

3. A. Nygren, op. cit., v. I, 1 p. 110.

the New Testament to include especially the magnificent Pauline passages and the Synoptic implications. I reserve the liberty however, in this paper, to adduce passages from any part of the New Testament where these will add a unique thought to the understanding of the Johannine concept of love.

A serious study of the love-concept, such as love of God and love of evil, are to be interpreted independently. If there is a common definition or relationship of meaning we must state it. This entails a study of the concept wherever it occurs, be that love for good or for evil. It seems to me that definitions of this love-concept often fail to account for the implied contradiction in the very essence of these several manifestations of love. The implied contradiction is that the Bible says, God is love, and yet also speaks of love of evil. Although God and evil are contraries, so the scope of the problem is enlarged to include also the background of the concept and the words used to express this concept in profane Greek. Though I have not made an exhaustive study of the profane sources in regard to this concept of love, I shall at least state the findings of noted scholars.

The problem before us is a part of the problems which have faced man always. These problems are the search for truth and the search for the guiding norm in man's relations

1. Cf. G. Mittel, Neologisches Wörterbuch zum Neuen Testament, "Liebe". Cf. also H. Grosser, Lexicon of the New Testament, G. Uebersch, translator. Cf. also A. Nygren, Agape.

II. The Problem Stated

The problem facing us, then, is to discover the exact meaning which the words used by John for the concept "love" are intended to convey. We must decide whether the love-concept has a related meaning wherever it occurs or whether the various uses of the love-concept, such as love of God and love of evil, are to be interpreted independently. If there is a common definition or relationship of meaning we must state it. This entails a study of the concept wherever it occurs, be that love for good or for evil. It seems to me that definitions of this love-concept often fail to account for the implied contradiction<sup>1</sup> in the very essence of these several manifestations of love. The implied contradiction is that the Bible says, God is love, and yet also speaks of love of evil although God and evil are contraries. So the scope of the problem is enlarged to include also the background of the concept and the words used to express this concept in profane Greek. Though I have made no exhaustive study of the profane sources in regard to this concept of love, I shall at least state the findings of noted scholars.

The problem before us is a part of the problems which have faced man always. These problems are the search for God and the search for the guiding norm in man's relations

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1. Cf. G. Kittel, Theologisches Wörterbuch zum Neuen Testament, "Agape". Cf. also H. Cremer, Lexicon of the New Testament Greek, W. Urwick, Translator. Cf. also A. Nygren, op. cit., passim.

with his fellowmen. We must be clear as to the meaning of the love-concept if we want to understand what John, the apostle of love, has to say about man's relations with God and with his fellowmen. Mere observation of everyday human relationships such as community life, parental care, marriage, worship, contentment, passion, and greed show us the fundamental necessity of clarity in definition of this concept "love" which is used in connection with all these and many more human relationships. We cannot understand what John teaches us in regard to these relationships if we do not know what he means by love. Our problem is to help to eliminate the confusion and vagueness which has always surrounded the concept of love and its implications. It is a purpose of this essay to make clear what John meant in each case when he used the love-concept<sup>1</sup>.

The importance of clarity in the definition of this concept can scarcely be overemphasized. This is true because life finds its highest expression in true love. The Christian life is to be a life of love. Love remains not only in time, in historical existence, but also in eternity. Jesus stresses love both to God and to our fellowmen. Love is the evidence and the exercise of the faith in us. Love is harmony with God. Love is not a

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1. It is my conviction, not inconsidered, that the meaning of the concept "love" as it will be stated in this paper, holds for all New Testament occurrences of the love-concept. The concept, however, has a unique connotation in John which does not hold for all.

dead acceptance of fact, it is a living, working, inter-  
acting reality.<sup>1</sup>

It will be useful also to point out the practical meaning, as brought out by John, of the correct understanding of this concept. To establish the meaning of the love-concept in John we shall establish the background of the use of this concept, we shall endeavor to find the meaning of the words used to express this love-concept in general usage, note the specific use of the concept by John, and particularly we shall consider in detail just what John means in every passage where he uses the love-concept.

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1. Paul Feine, Theologie des Neuen Testaments, pp. 363f.

III. Historical Overview of the Usage of Greek Terms Used to Express the Love-Concept

I have made a distinction throughout between the love-concept itself and the words used to express that concept. Various words were used to express the love-concept in Greek. Each had its own connotations and even these connotations varied at times. When the expression "love-concept" is used in this paper that does not necessarily identify it with any one of the Greek words for love. In speaking of the word usage we must not confuse it with the concept in its entirety.

In classical Greek we find chiefly three words used for the verb "love", namely, ἐρᾶν , φιλεῖν , and ἀγαπᾶν . The verb ἐρᾶν suggests "intoxication of the senses", love which throws to the winds all reasonableness and composure. The essential characteristic of φιλεῖν is friendship and love of the gods to men. It includes, in general, the idea of approbation. ἀγαπᾶν has the meaning "to be satisfied with something", "to receive gladly". It is the love which suggests choice or discretion. In the latter two verbs the distinction is at times scarcely apparent and often non-existent in actual use. The noun ἀγάπη does

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1. G. Kittel, op. cit., "Agape" calls it "Sinnenrausch"  
2. "Romans" p. 374. International Critical Commentary, 1906.

does not occur. ἀγαπᾶν<sup>1</sup> and derivatives are frequent in classical authors. Robertson says that Plutarch uses ἀγάπησις and Deissmann once suspected ἀγάπη on an inscription in Pisidia. There is still a possibility that ἀγάπη occurs in the papyri (Prayer to Isis)<sup>2</sup>.

In Hellenistic Greek these three words underwent a change of meaning. Here we find ἐρᾶν and its cognates used very rarely, and almost always in the bad sense of lust or passion.

The Septuagint modified the connotation of the word ἀγαπᾶν somewhat, perhaps because of the Old Testament use of the concept love to express love of God to man and of man to God. ἀγαπᾶν greatly outnumbers φιλεῖν in the frequency of occurrence. It is not plain just why the authors of the Septuagint preferred ἀγαπᾶν. It seems that it was due to the fact that they sought an expression which would be distinctive of the Christian love-concept and chose ἀγάπη, which does not occur in classical or Hellenistic Greek. Such a use of the noun ἀγάπη brought with it also a modification and elevation of the meaning of the verb ἀγαπᾶν. However, in the Septuagint the noun ἀγάπη did not yet have the restricted sense which it has in the New Testament. For while elevated ἀγαπᾶν was

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1. H.G. Liddell and R. Scott, A Greek-English Lexicon, "Agape", Revised by H.S. Jones and R. McKenzie

2. A.T. Robertson, Word Pictures in the New Testament, p 176

also broadened. It is used not only of the love of father and son, of husband and wife, but also of the sinful love as the love of Samson for Delilah. Nor can there be any doubt that the Hebrew writers implied in the pure love of God something of the intensity which is the highest characteristic of human affection. In the Septuagint ἀγαπᾶν<sup>1</sup> corresponds in all its characteristics to the English "love", that is, in ranges in meaning from God's love to man's love and to human passion. Yet the establishing of the noun ἀγάπη with the Christian meaning also was an important step. The words in use had a connotation too sordid or were considered inadequate for expressing the Christian love-concept. It seems that the authors of the Septuagint looked for a term which was equally as strong as μῖσος and to express the contrast chose ἀγάπη.

To the Greek mind the Christian love-concept was new. Although we find the Koine employing a love-concept, and even older writers expressing a love-concept as energetic good-will or self sacrifice, the concept and the principle is unknown to them as the ruling principle of life. The word ἀγάπη and of course also the Christian love-concept is unknown in Philo and Josephus even. The concept conveyed by the Greek φιλανθρωπία is an entirely different concept from Christian ἀγάπη.

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1. "Romans" p 374, International Crit. Commentary 1906.

Though the Septuagint uses the word ἀγάπη, however, it is not really until the New Testament that the real connotation of ἀγάπη emerges. Cremer points out that though ἀγάπη is used in the Septuagint it does not possess any special force analgous to that which it has in the New Testament.<sup>1</sup> In the New Testament we find the love-concept used, in the strictest sense, not so much as a distinguishing attribute of humanity but rather of God. We are told that this form of love, the form of love which Christianity means by the love-concept, was first exhibited in Christ's work of redemption. In 1 John 3, 16 we read, "Hereby perceive we the love of God, because he laid down his life for us: and we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren."

Within the New Testament itself we find unique connotations given to the love-concept and the words employed to express this concept by the various writers. This can be seen from a brief consideration of the use of Paul and John of this concept. Though Paul and John differ somewhat in their particular use of ἀγάπη they both assign to the love-concept the same central position as the distinctive peculiarity of the Christian life. There is this difference however, between Paul and John, that the latter uses ἀγάπη to designate not only our conduct towards our fellowmen, but also our conduct towards God and His revelation in Christ.

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1. Op. cit. "Agape"

Thus we read in 1 John 5,3: "For this is the love of God, that we keep his commandments: and his commandments are not grievous." In the Pauline writings on the other hand, the relation of men to God is only once expressed by the substantive, namely, 2 Thessalonians 3, 5: "And the Lord direct your hearts into the love of God, and into the patient waiting for Christ." The other texts in his epistles where ἀγάπη with the genitive of the object is said to occur --- Rom. 5,5; 2 Cor.5,14; 1 Thess. 1,3 --- cannot, upon closer examination, be said to support this view. So also, John represents love to the brethren as a fruit of love to God, while Paul represents it as a fruit of πίστις. John, on the other hand, uses πίστις only once (1 John 5,4). Though he uses πιστεύειν frequently he rarely uses it without an object. As in St John love of the brethren is connected with love to God, so in St Paul it is connected with faith.

Nygren says in this connection: "In relation to God, man is never fully 'spontaneous'. Man's self giving to God is no more than a response; at its best and highest, it is but a reflection of God's own love. It lacks all the essential marks of agape; it is not spontaneous and is not creative. It requires therefore a different name: not ἀγάπη but πίστις<sup>1</sup>." It is to be remembered that Nygren spea-

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1. Op. cit. v I, 1 p 92

king of ἀγάπη always means the correct and specifically Christian concept connected with the word, not necessarily the Greek word ἀγάπη itself, which could be, and is, used for man's love for God as well as for God's love for man and for love of evil. Nygren also says it is not that God's love for man and man's love for his neighbor are two different things; they are one thing. Agape is used to denote God's love, not human love. God's love is present, however, in the Christian's heart.

Bowen points out that ἀγάπη stands out as the one emphatic ethical noun of the Fourth Gospel. It occurs there seven times and receives added emphasis in the Epistles, which use it twenty-one times, eighteen of them being in First John. The noun is given notable support by its cognate verb ἀγαπᾶν, which the Gospel (excluding ch. 21) uses thirty four times and the Epistles thirty-one times (twenty eight of them in First John), or sixty five times in all. The remaining cognate, the adjective ἀγαπητός, curiously enough, does not occur in the Fourth Gospel, though the Epistles have it ten times. If the more or less synonymous words φίλος and its cognates are added we find the Fourth Gospel uses the verb φίλει eight times, the noun φίλος six times (and Third John twice), and no other at all. It is clear that John is more generous in the use of the love-concept than

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1. C. R. Bowen, "Love in the Fourth Gospel", Journal of Religion, v. XLIII; 1933.

are Matthew, Mark, and Luke combined.

The word ἀγάπη is rare in the Synoptic Gospels. The noun occurs only in two places, Matt. 24, 12 and Luke 11, 42, neither of them especially significant; the verb is more common, but it is used indiscriminately of love to God and to one's neighbor and of natural affection (as in Luke 6,32), and is not used at all of God's own love.<sup>1</sup> Clearly, then, the idea of agape (as Nygren terms Christian love) which finds so powerful an expression in the Synoptic Gospels, nevertheless does not there appropriate to itself a proper name. The introduction of the word ἀγάπη as a technical term seems to be due to Paul, just as its widest use is found in John.

In John 3, 19 ἠγάπησαν is used when speaking of men "loving darkness" and in John 12, 43 the same word is used for the sinful love of glory of men. The Greek word and its cognates were thus not used exclusively for love of God for men, love for God, and for fellowmen, but also, especially as verb, for sinful love. The various uses of ἀγάπη and related words necessitate an individual consideration of each passage where the love-concept occurs. In Part VI of this paper every passage in which the love-concept occurs in John will be considered individually and the exact meaning given in each case.

From this history of the use of the various words we

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1. A. Nygren, op. cit. v I, 1 p.83

have seen were employed to convey the love-concept and especially by noting the use of ἀγάπη and its cognates in the New Testament we see that the love-concept is not restricted to the word ἀγάπη. We also realize that the history of the word ἀγάπη is that of the collection under one head of various conceptions of love which were different in various degrees of meaning. As regards the love-concept and its usage in the New Testament we shall see that the distinction which has to be made is not so much between the meanings of φιλεῖν and ἀγαπᾶν as used in the New Testament, but rather between the love-concept and concepts expressed by such terms as ἐπιθυμεῖν and μῖσος<sup>1</sup>.

It is a distinction of concepts; a distinction of words only insofar as they are the vehicles of the concept. We shall also see that Christianity does not shrink from the use of the same terms for Christian love that it employs for love of evil. Thereby Scripture emphasizes the irreconcilable conflict that by ordinary course of events exists between love of God and love of evil. This use demonstrates further that there must be at least an apparent relationship insofar as the manifestations of both kinds of love are concerned. The two kinds of love, love of God and sinful love of evil, are evidently recognized by men under strangely similar phenomena. This of course does not mean the two are identical.

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1. "Romans" op. cit. p. 374

#### IV. The Usage of the Love-Concept in the New Testament

In our consideration of the love-concept in the New Testament we are contrasting the essential Christian love-concept with the love-concept in relation to evil. We shall consider the concepts and for a time the words used to convey these concepts are in the background though we remain conscious of their connotations.

The New Testament uses the love-concept to denote a certain relationship of one being toward another being, idea, or thing; or toward another group of beings, ideas, or things. This relationship is spoken of in the New Testament as existing between God and man, between man and God, between man and evil, between man and good, and among men. In each of these relationships, with the exception of God's love for men, love can differ so that it calls for either the highest praise or for absolute condemnation. On the one hand we hear in Scripture, "Thou shalt love the Lord, thy God" and "Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself" and on the other hand we hear, "Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world." (1 John 2,15). Therefore the praise is due not simply because one loves or does not love. It would seem from this that the right or wrong of the love lies in the object of the love. This is also not true. Luther held correctly that, "It is one of the most disastrous perversions

love has suffered, when its value is judged by the value of its object.<sup>1</sup> That the value of the love does not lie in the object is further shown by John 3, 16 for we read there that "God so loved the world." That would be rather sorry love if it were judged by the value of its object, the sinful world. It is interesting and also thought-provoking to note that in the two passages quoted above, 1 John 2,15 and John 3,16, the same Greek word is used both for love and for world, yet in one case the love is forbidden in the other it is God's love. The reason for the praise or censure it seems therefore lies not in the object nor in the fact that love, as such, is either praiseworthy or sinful, but must lie elsewhere. The reason lies in the relation that exists between the object loved and the lover; the reason lies in whether it is true love or not, the kind of love that God is. This conclusion we now seek to demonstrate by the testimony of Scripture, especially of the Johannine writings.

It would seem that since Scripture says, "God is love",<sup>2</sup> 1 John 4,8, no sinful love could exist, no love of evil, for "every one that loveth is born of God". (1 John 4,7). There is, however, a manifestation of a certain evil relationship of men to an object, being, or idea which, because of its

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1 1. A. Nygren, op. cit. v II, 2 p.512 quotes Luther as making this statement.

2. Definition of terms evil and good as used in this paper: evil -- whatever tends to the eternal destruction of man; good -- whatever tends to the eternal welfare of man.

resemblance in its manifestations to true love is also expressed by the love-concept.<sup>1</sup> True, pure, perfect love exists only as an attribute of God.<sup>2</sup> The highest expression of that love we find in Scripture in the relation pictured as existing between Father and Son. The basic characteristic of the love-concept is this communion which exists between the Father and the Son. One passage will suffice at present to show the essence of love. Love is harmony with God, the oneness of God with the universe,<sup>3</sup> not in the sense of identification of God with the universe or of the universe becoming God but rather that the two together form one harmonious unit. The one passage we shall quote here at present is John 17, 21-23. In this passage Jesus prays, "That they all may be one; as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us: that the world may believe that thou hast sent me. And the glory which thou gavest me I have given them; that they may be one, even as we are one: I in them, and thou in me, that they may be made perfect in one; and that the world may know that thou hast sent me, and hast loved them, as thou hast loved me." The highest thing possible, the best that Jesus can here ask for His disciples of all time is this perfect communion with God and full harmony with

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1. Cf. on this J.M. Reu and P.H. Buehring, op. cit. p.87f

2. J.M. M'Clintock and J. Strong, Cyclopedia of Biblical, Theological, and Ecclesiastical Literature, v. V.

3. The angels, confirmed in their bliss, and the elect who enter heaven are in full harmony with God.

one another,<sup>1</sup> the same communion which exists between Christ and the Father.<sup>2</sup>

Nor is God's love only there for those who believe on Christ, or the righteous. It embraces the whole world. In Rom. 5, 8 we read that God's love is shown to us in this way that "while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us." Since all men are sinners we know that they being dead in sin are yet the objects of God's love. He tells us in Eph. 2,4.5. that He loved us while we were yet "dead in sins". We are told in John 3, 16 as we heard above, that God loved the world. This love of God for the world is especially brought out in the writings of John in the one passage 1 John 2, 2. We read there, "And he is the propitiation for our sins: and not for our's only, but also for the sins of the whole world."<sup>3</sup>

The evidence for whether or not this communion and harmony with God has really been accepted in the individual life we find stated in John 15. There Jesus says, "If ye keep my commandments, ye shall abide in my love; even as I have kept my Father's commandments, and abide in his love." Love, oneness, are evidenced by the keeping of the Lord's commandments. On the other hand, not to do the commandments is the very

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1. Cf. James Moffatt, Jesus on Love to God, p.21

2. T. Zahn, 1 Johannisbrief, p 1139, "Je mehr man liebt desto naeher kommt man Seinem Ebenbilde."

3. Cf. on the other hand Bowen (op. cit.) who though wrong in some respects yet is provocative of thought and right in saying that John emphasizes love among Christians and of God to Christians.

essence of not loving God, of destroying the very possibility<sup>1</sup> of harmony. Natural man never keeps the commandments. It was to restore this possibility, to make it as though we had kept the commandments that Jesus came. From this aspect man's love for God becomes identified to a degree with faith and with righteousness. Romans 10,4 tells us that "Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth" and in verse 9 we read that if we confess the Lord Jesus and believe that God raised Him from the dead we shall be saved.

Love of evil is the opposite of true love and really the same as hatred of God. Strangely enough the manifestation of love of evil is one of communion also, of identification of self as reaching the culmination of harmony in the possession of, and communion with, the object loved, so that in Scripture the love-concept also expresses man's sinful relation to evil. In the same chapter which speaks of communion between God and man we also hear about the unity and communion among lovers of evil. In John 15,19 we read, "If ye were of the world, the world would love his own; but because ye are not of the world, but I have chosen you out of the world, therefore the world hateth you." From this passage we can see that evil desires harmony with evil and hates the good. Evil seeks harmony in making all evil,

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1. Cf. Martin Luther, Holman Ed. v II, p. 364

good in making all good. God desires harmony in his universe and among His creatures.<sup>1</sup> Man cannot institute the correct search for harmony with God. Nygren calls this search of unregenerate man for God, though he does not always clearly, concisely distinguish between regenerate and unregenerate man, eros. We cannot, without fuller exposition of the intended sense on his part, agree with Nygren in every point of his.<sup>2</sup> Yet Nygren's work is most useful in bringing out just this point, namely, that natural man cannot of himself find the way to God, and the tendency through the centuries to confuse this eros with Christian love which he designates agape. Even when natural man becomes convinced that he is subject to divine wrath and seeks reconciliation he cannot find it except in divine revelation.<sup>3</sup> This we can see from 1 Cor. 2, 14 which says that the natural man receives not the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him. By nature, communion, harmony with God, on His basis does not even seem desirable to man. We are, however, in John, dealing not so much with this futile eros search for God as we are with the sinful love of evil and the world. All men are by nature totally depraved as we learn from Gen. 8, 21. God, on the other hand, is love. We cannot love and be in harmony both with evil and with God. No one can

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1. Compare the status of the evil angels and God's love.

2. Op. cit. v. I, 2, p.127. "The N.T. has something essentially new, over and above the Old, to say about the way of salvation." An inadequate, if not wrong, statement.

3. J.M. Reu and P.H. Buehring, op. cit. p 83f

love two contradictory beings or things (Matt. 6,24). Love for evil can be dealt with only as to its manifestations. In reality, absolutely, it is possible to love good only; not, however, because no evil exists but because no such love exists. For God is love and God and evil are incompatible. (1 John 2,15). This seeing a possibility of harmony in evil does, however, have a semblance of love. This semblance has been explained above. It seems to rest on a conscious striving for communion or harmony with one thing or being. Perhaps it is money (1 Tim. 6,10); pleasure (1 John 2, 15.16) 2 Tim. 3, 2.4); fame (Matt. 6,5; Matt. 23, 5.6); popularity (Luke 11, 43; John 15, 19). Man must love something. In all his actions, premeditated or not, that goal of harmony will guide or affect his actions. Matt. 6,21.

The love-concept is also used in Scripture when speaking of natural affection.<sup>1</sup> This natural affection is neither love of evil nor is it necessarily Christian love. For there is an uprightness and decency which we call civil righteousness<sup>2</sup> but which is by no means Christianity. Natural affection and civil righteousness are indeed praiseworthy and God also promises temporal blessings to those who employ them correctly. In themselves neither of the two are evil or Christian. Man also has by nature a love of self and a love of beauty. This

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1. Cf. C.S. Lewis, Christian Behavior, p. 51

2. E. Eckhardt, Reallexikon, "Liebe" p 996 "Die natürliche Liebe treibt den schwarzen Teufel durch den weisen Teufel aus."

in itself also is neither evil nor Christian. Reflect on these, however, does not here also a degree of the desire for harmony and communion enter in?<sup>1</sup>

Love is harmony with God, this is what the love-concept expresses for the Christian. The definition of love as the realization of this harmony shows that if, as we heard, natural man loves evil, then love of man for God, harmony of man with God, cannot be instituted by man.<sup>2</sup> That men enter into communion with God, that men are saved, is certainly due to God's love for men, and that any men are saved at all is due only to God's love. He did not see only some men as worthy of communion or harmony with Him but all men as capable of harmony. There is no room here for intuitu fidei or for the Arminian view. But God saw all men capable of harmony with Him only if He would do it all; if He would prepare the salvation, call the sinner to repentance, work faith in him, and preserve this faith unto death. Nor does this hint at any solution of the question of cur alii prae aliis.

God had given man a soul. That soul could be regenerated. A regenerate soul could be in harmony with God, Man could be a son of God. God "so loved the world - - -". God did see a possibility of harmony. Harmony was all up to Him

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1. J.M. Reu and P.H. Buehring, op. cit., p84

2. Cf. Bonaventura's definition of why men love God in Anders Nygren's article in the Zeitschrift für Systematische Theologie, vol. 6, p. 730. 1929.

and He gave it to us. We by nature could not see a possibility of perfect harmony with God; God could. (1 John 4,10). God had to love us first, He had to initiate the possibility of harmony. When a sinner is called to repentance, is converted, he turns from harmony as sought after in evil to seeking it in God.<sup>1</sup> This change is wrought only by the Holy Ghost through Word and Sacrament but certainly man must love God then, must see harmony only in God's ways. We call such loving the new man.<sup>2</sup> Always in our flesh and in this life there is present the old man also who loves evil. (Rom. 7,15.17 ). A Christian, as such, can love only what is good.<sup>3</sup> For him what is good is restricted and evident. God has given him the Bible in which all good and desirable things, as well as the harmony, the communion with God is revealed. God's commandments appear then, not as rules which God gave and dared us to break, but as guides which He established for our life of harmony and as witnesses to the fact that this harmony exists in our relationship as Jesus said in John 15. At the same time they serve to show man his terrible transgression, his love of evil, and his natural disharmony with God.

Since love is harmony with God, to love God is to see in all His commands and guides for life the attainment of

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1. Cf. C. Mueller, Des heiligen Augustins Soliloquien nebst seinem Manuale, p.176.

2. As to the whole question of the interrelation of *πίστις* and *ἀγάπη* and the new life in man cf. M. Luther, Holman Ed. v I, p.195; Nygren, op. cit. v I,1 p.92.

3. G. Kittel, op. cit., p 45 "Gott lieben heisst aber auch: sein ganzes Dasein auf Gott gründen -- aus seiner Hand leben."

the harmony which all seek. (1 John 5, 23). That means, practically, that anyone who loves God will follow any commandment of God once he is assured that it is really God's rule. He will not reason but will accept the guide because of his love of God. Human love is always imperfect. Therefore even Christians -- professed God-lovers -- may doubt, contradict, or not follow God's commands.

The command "Love thy neighbor as thyself" (Matt. 22,39) means then, that just as you do not despair of harmony for yourself and in yourself so you should also realize that there is a possibility of harmony for you and all men, also among yourselves. <sup>1</sup> That possibility exists only under the rules of God. God is love. Only a Christian can love. <sup>2</sup> "Love your enemies" (Matt. 5,44), yes, if they and you would both perfectly follow God's laws you could live in harmony, in Christ <sup>3</sup> you can see them as lovable persons. Realization of this then necessitates an examination of self also, not only a program for the change of others (sometimes we call that program war). Since we first of all love God, as Christians, we can see why it is so self evident that a Christian ought naturally to seek the companionship of other Christians first of all. If he does not, let him examine himself whether he

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1. Cf. C.S. Lewis, op. cit., p.50

2. Consider Luther's statement as to the necessity that a Christian love. M. Luther, Holman Ed. v.II, p.342f

3. J. Hastings, Dictionary of the Bible, has pertinent information here under "Love".



### V. John's Specific Use of the Love-Concept.

In his writings John brings out clearly this harmony concept of love. Love between God and man is shown to promise harmony so that man is attuned to God's ways (John 14, 15). John delights in picturing the harmony, the sweet communion that exists between the Father and the Son (John 17, 21) and that is to exist between God and his people (compare picture of vine and branches in John 15), and among God's people (John 17, 21). John dwells on this and shows the completeness of a life that loves, that loses itself in love to others, that has no fear (1 John 4, 18). On the other hand, John also speaks much of hate contrasting the fearful results of not loving and showing that those who truly love will be hated by those who love evil. He condemns those who love darkness rather than light. It is also in the connection of hate that John again brings out the universal desire for harmony of existence: to love evil always necessitates to hate God and the good and all who love God; to love God and the brethren means to hate darkness and evil. "If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him." 1 John 2, 15.

It is in this way that John pictures sin to us, as the love of evil, the desire for harmony in a way that tends to eternal destruction. Complete self-love is shown to be the sin of making one's self the original to which all else must be attuned (John 12, 25). Such a love leads to destruction and eternal death. John points out that if some one loves God the world will hate him. We thus have in John

the essence of Christianity's message, that of sin and salvation, brought out in this way that the one is the natural love of evil, the other the true love, God-given in Christ Jesus. As soon as a man is changed from loving evil to loving God he has laid hold on life and enters into that harmony and communion with God and his fellow-men which culminates in heaven. In John's writings, as throughout Scripture, the message is the same though the statement of that message may be in a different garb. For example, the word *πίσις* is exceedingly rare in John's writings (1 John 5, 4) but what is expressed by *πίσις* in other New Testament books is included by John under *ἀγάπη*.

It has been charged that John has a right to the designation "apostle of Love" only in a very narrow and limited sense. This is said because, though he speaks much of love it seems always to be a love among friends so that he even seems to say that the greatest love possible is that among friends<sup>1</sup> (John 15, 13). Or again when he speaks of God's love to men and of the desire of communion and harmony between man and God as in John 17 it seems always to be only between God and the believers and not a love of God which desires also to have the evil world to be brought to harmony with him. It is held that even John 3, 16 speaks of love not for the world which perishes but only for that part of it which comes to the love of God.<sup>2</sup> This view of John as to his deserving the

1. In a sense this is true for mutual love among men certainly reaches its culmination there.

2. C. Bowen op. cit. p 39ff

title of "apostle of Love" is true insofar as it states that he emphasizes and takes delight in dwelling on the sweet communion of love between God and his people and among God's people but it is false in saying that John does not state God's love for the world. What was stated earlier in the paper can well be restated here: God says that in a sense we are not to love the world nor the things in the world and explains what is meant by that 1 John 2, 15.16; but also God in another sense says that he loves the world (John 3, 16). And it is to be noted that He points out why He loves it, and under what circumstances and in what sense the passing away, the perishing, of the world will not take place. The perishing will not take place for those individuals who believe in Christ. In both passages the identical Greek words are used for both "love" and "world". Also John 17, 21 gives a statement that all this harmony of God and the church is also to have the effect of causing the world also to believe. But the clearest statement of the inclusion of all men in God's love we find in 1 John 2, 2-5. Here John makes it clear that as the atonement of Christ was for all men so also it was a demonstration of God's love for all men.<sup>3</sup>

Not only does John make clear the fact that God wants all men to be saved, to be in harmony with Him, and enter into communion with Him but he also has much to say of the believer's attitude toward God and his love for God.

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1. F. C. Cook, Holy Bible with Commentary p 312 for a classification of the difference of meaning of "world" in John.

According to John this love expresses itself chiefly in love for the brethren since this love is really the same as love for God, since it demands harmony with God and with His universe. But John particularly emphasizes the relationship that is to exist among the brethren of the church so that he states that if anyone love not his brother whom he hath seen how can he love God whom he hath not seen (1 John 3, 10). As the perfect example of this harmony and communion John gives the love between the Father and Christ (John 10, 17; John 14, 31.).

However, in John besides the ἀγάπη or the specifically Christian love there is also natural affection which God has placed in man's heart. This may or may not be purified by the realization of the true harmony. It is particularly in the Gospel of John that we find this and it is there usually used of the love of Christ for the disciple "whom He loved" or others in which case it is most certainly the natural affection in harmony with God.

Though Paul is just as rich in the delineation of love,<sup>1</sup> yet it is true that John's identification of God with love adds an additional light to the concept of love. It is the very essence of God to be and to desire harmony and to realize where and how it can be found.<sup>2</sup> John, as it were, places the copingstone on the New Testament teaching of love.

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1. Compare Cremer op. cit. as to particular use of ἀγάπη in Paul and John and for a division of the uses of the word ἀγάπη.

2. Compare A. Nygren op. cit. v I, 1 p 109ff

The two apostles, John and Paul, and the synoptic writers here too, complement and illuminate one another's messages, yet each retains a unique and particular emphasis.<sup>1</sup> For John this emphasis is on the love, the harmony and communion between God and the church and among the believers. Love is living in harmony with God.

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1. See F. Godet's Gospel of John p 185 as to Baur's distinction of the God of righteousness in Paul from the God of love in John.

## VI. Specific Connotations of Love in its Context in John.

Since we have now considered in general the meaning of the concept love with special reference to John's writings it is in place to consider the exact implications of the use of the concept wherever it occurs in John's writings. Every passage where the love-concept occurs in John will be considered. These passages will demonstrate clearly what the significance of the love-concept is in John. To that end we shall, in turn, discuss first those passages dealing with love of evil, then those pertaining to God's love for men and man's love for God, thirdly, the love among men, and finally, some oft recurring evidences of the working out of this love. We shall consider all passages from the Gospel, Epistles, and Revelation which employ the love-concept as they appear pertinent, not in the order in which they appear in the books themselves. Though we might also have treated the matter in section units as they follow in John's writings, we believe the present approach is more effective.

It is not true, as even a cursory reading of the Greek text of John will reveal, that in every instance where the word ἀγάπη appears or one of its cognates or of a synonym that Christian love is meant. As was pointed out early in this paper, there really exists no love outside of God since God is love. Yet there is a manifestation in man's relation to evil and to self which bears such similiarity to the manifestation of real love, Christian love, that it is called love. Natural affection also is called love.

### Love of Evil in John's Writings.

Just as love means harmony with God, so love of the world means harmony with the world. One who loves God can never have the love of the world. Even as a cog-wheel cannot be driven by two wheels spinning in opposite directions simultaneously. John stresses throughout that one love cannot tolerate the other.<sup>1</sup> If you love the one you must hate the other. This is brought out very clearly in John 15, 19 where Jesus tells His disciples that "If ye were of the world, the world would love his own: but because ye are not of the world, but I have chosen you out of the world, therefore the world hateth you."<sup>2</sup> This fifteenth chapter is the beautiful chapter in John's Gospel that tells of the complete harmony that exists between Christ and His church. It is such unity and harmony of being as exists in a natural plant as for instance in a vine and its branches. Yet this very harmony compels disharmony of the disciples with the unbelieving, world-loving men. Jesus points out that if His disciples would be of the world the world would love them. Yes, if the followers of Christ do not continue in harmony with God, if they either go over entirely to the world or remain only outwardly with Christ and do not insist on being out of harmony with the world, then the world is glad to receive them. The world likes to have harmony with evil. If the church does not condemn too strongly, does not demand that the world change, does not demand that the world change,

1. Cf. "Romans" *op. cit.*, p 374 ff.

2. Concerning *φιλῆν* and *ἀποδοῦν* more will be said later.

does not insist on exact harmony with God then the world welcomes the church. The church insists on harmony only when it insists on obedience to God's commands for therein is love to God made manifest.

In this connection Maclaren points out, "A half-Christianized world and a more than half-secularized Church get on well together. - - -And it is a miserable thing to reflect that about the average Christianity of this generation there is so very little that does deserve the antagonism of the world." In the same connection he remarks, "Be sure it is your goodness and not your evils or your weaknesses, that men dislike. - - -Many well-meaning Christian people, by an injudicious use of Christian phraseology in the wrong place, and by the glaring contradiction between their prayers and their talks and their daily life, bring down a great deal of deserved hostility upon themselves and of discredit upon Christianity; and then they comfort themselves and say they are bearing the 'reproach of the cross'. Not a bit of it! They are bearing the natural results of their own failings and faults."<sup>1</sup>

In John 3, 19 we hear the reason why it is so difficult to convince men that they must be in harmony with God; the reason is that they have a natural antagonism to it. Men do not want to be told that being out of harmony with God results in total destruction. They love the darkness. They love

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1. Gospel of John commentary Chap. XV 18-20.

it because they do not feel out of harmony, they love it because they dare not realize their disharmony if it fore-shadows destruction. Man's deeds are evil. Therefore he loves the darkness rather than light lest his deeds should be reproved. He prefers to remain in carnal security where he has a sense of well-being even though at times he lives in fear. Natural man cannot love God, he cannot mount up to God nor enter into communion with God.<sup>1</sup> Jesus says in John 3, 19: "And this is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil." It is this darkness, this love of the darkness because of evil deeds that we are warned against in 1 John 2, 15. Here, in the context, we hear that the evil of the world is "the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life." These, and the pursuit of these, are what separate man from God. When man establishes harmony with these, when he loves these, the love of the Father cannot be in him. Therefore John here says, "Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world." He stresses the utter futility of love of the world since both the world and these deeds must pass away, and since only they in whom the love of the Father dwells will abide forever. But this love cannot abide in such as love the world. Here again John defines world as the evil of the world, those things which tend to eternal destruction. Christians, regenerate men, as Christians hate sin and evil. Hate is, then, to see

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1. This Nygren again brings out so well in his description of *έρας*, the futile movement of man up to God.

certainty of destruction and disharmony in the communion with, or pursuance of, a being or idea. [A true child of God cannot even see a remote possibility of harmony with sin. There can be <sup>no</sup> compromise of sin and righteousness, of good and evil. The one demands the exclusion, yes, the extinction, of the other.

Jesus states it as a fact in John 14, 24 that whoever does not love Him will not keep His sayings; and goes on to say that the word He speaks is not His but the Father's. In contrast to what has just preceded, namely that Jesus has spoken of the wonderful communion which He and His followers will have with the Father if they keep His words in love to Him, He here points out that if they do not keep His words they thereby show that they do not love Him. If we do not love Christ, if we do not realize that true harmony exists only in Him we will not follow His words. Indeed, that is not strange, why should any one follow Christ's words if he sees no possibility of that harmony for which he strives in this Christ. Yet those who do not follow Christ's words do not find the harmony they seek, in their love of evil they encounter fear. Such as love evil cannot escape fear for perfect love alone casts out fear. In chapter 4 of 1 John we hear in verse 18, "There is no fear in love; but perfect love casteth out fear: because fear hath torment. He that feareth is not made perfect in love." Anyone who is overwhelmed by fear knows nothing of Christian contentment and trust, at best he lives in carnal security and self-righteousness.

But all who do not have love in their hearts, that love which God is, have fear in their hearts. Even Christians, since they are not yet made perfect in love, must deal with fear. Love for evil still remains in the old Adam. In Christians there is a constant state of war between two loves. Yet the power of God keeps them in God's love and in harmony and communion with Him.

The evidence of the love of evil we see all about us. Christians experience it in their own struggles against temptation. John gives us two manifestations of this love of evil. In 3 John 9 is pictured a church member, Diotrephes, who had placed his love in a high place, he clung to the pride of life. John writes, "I wrote unto the church but Diotrephes, who loveth to have the preeminence among them, receiveth us not." Ambition still enticed him, self love promised harmony. In John 12, 43 we hear of others who, though they believed on Jesus, yet did not confess him "for they loved the praise of men more than the praise of God."

The final end of those who possess false love, those who love evil and darkness John describes in the last chapter of Revelation. Jesus is presented by John as saying that the evidence of God's love in man is that they do His commandments. Christians manifest this by love of the brethren. However those who love their life, who are filled with self love shall lose their life. This is demonstrated in Revelation 22 where John again repeats that those are blessed who do the commandments

of God for they have a right to the tree of life and may enter into the gates of the city. Then he continues in verse 15, "For without are dogs, and sorcerers, and whoremongers, and murderers, and idolaters, and whosoever loveth and maketh a lie." This is the way in which also all who love their life, who are in harmony with evil, shall end. What greater love of falsehood is imaginable than to believe harmony to exist apart from God and in darkness.

#### Love of God

In his work Agape and Eros Nygren differentiates between the essential Christian concept of love which he calls "agape" and the essential work-righteous and enthusiastic man-to-God concept of love of all other religions which he calls "eros". He shows the difference between the nature of the two, the conflict necessary between them, and yet how the Christian concept was misinterpreted and confused in dogmatic theology with the concept in other religions. All true love must be motivated by God's undeserved love to the sinner. This point can scarcely be over-emphasized. It is the crux of the difference between Christianity and all man-made religions, it is the essence of the atonement and of salvation.

Man, by nature, loves the darkness into which he as a child of Adam is born; ordinarily it indicates harmony for him. It is only when the fear brought about by a realization of his guilt before a Holy Maker has become conscious

with him that he realizes the lack of harmony. Then he turns to seek God. Yet, at best, he finds but a capricious god, who lets men fret and fume, laugh and cry, and deals inevitably with them, or he seeks to appease an angry god by trying to establish harmony either by sacrifices or a better life or by both. Fear is never absent. The struggle of the Christian religion, as evidenced in both Old and New Testaments, is in contrast to such a man-made religion as much as to the darkness-loving world. Always, individuals, and groups also, have been influenced by the "eros" motif. John speaks much of man's love to God especially as man evidences it by the keeping of the commandments and by love of his fellowmen. However, he does not do this without also pointing out emphatically that this love is only in the reborn, that God must first love us, that he must place this love in us.

We do well to remember that wherever God is there is harmony; without him there can be no harmony. God is love. There can be no love where God is not, no God where there is no love. God is love. This John tells us in 1 John 4, 8. There we read: "He that loveth not knoweth not God; for God is love." To say that God is love means of course that everything that is not of love is opposed to God, is sin. Sin, disharmony, God must hate. We often say, however, God hates sin but loves the sinner. We can see from our understanding of love what meaning this is to carry. God sees no possibility of harmony with sin. It is not part of the essential nature of man to be sinful. Therefore it is possible

for harmony to be established. Yet every man is by nature sinful and because of sin he is the object of God's hate and wrath. This sin must be removed. This is done in Christ Jesus. Now God sees men in harmony with Him through the removal of sin in Christ. God can love the sinner as a human being, yet only in Christ Jesus is the harmony established. But certainly God must also hate the sinner as a sinner, as one who loves sin and sees harmony in it.

God is under no compulsion because He is love to save men. God could be, and remain, a God of love and still have destroyed man for his sin. We know that He has reserved the evil angels in chains under darkness unto judgment, we know that many men will spend eternity in hell. If God were under compulsion because He is love to be in harmony with all the universe this would not be possible. But Scripture says it will happen. By the punishment of sin and evil, by the separation of it from Himself God remains a God of love and harmony. If God were not to punish sin or were to allow the slightest taint of it to enter heaven or into communion with Him He would not be a God either of love or harmony or justice.

Yet God as a God of love was moved to send His Son, to give up His Son for us. Yes, "God so loved the world," His desire for harmony for man was so great that He sent His Son. God's harmony, His essence of love, would have remained undisturbed, yet He wanted man, too, to be in this harmony for man's sake and therefore "He gave his only-begotten Son that

whosoever believeth on Him should not perish but have everlasting life." The harmony with God is there, man can have communion with God. Yet man loves darkness. Now that he can have harmony with God he is unable of himself even to accept it, yes, he runs from it, he hates it. So that God again must do it. God must give man the power and the will to accept, man must be born a new creature. God has to establish the harmony, He must initiate it, must bring man into it, must keep man in it. Yes, God is love, and 1 John 4, 10 tells us, "Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins." We cannot love God, indeed, we by nature oppose even God's love for us. We are so filled with love of evil, so filled with hatred, that the real love is entirely foreign to us. For love is of God, but we are by nature the devil's, the enemy of God. "For love is of God; and every one that loveth is born of God, and knoweth God." 1 John 4, 7.

We were dead; we were out of harmony with God and dead in sin. Yet God loved us, yet He established harmony and communion with Himself for us. He made his love manifest to us. "In this was manifested the love of God toward us, because that God sent his only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through him." 1 John 4, 9. Though we were dead we can live. Once again, to really live, to be born again, and that of God, and to live with Him in harmony. Though dead to live and to live eternally for he that liveth and believeth shall never die, he shall never be out of harmony

with God as long as he believes. In this coming of Jesus we see God's love, it is an active, living thing. "Hereby perceive we the love of God, because he laid down his life for us: and we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren." 1 John 3, 16. Because He loved us God the Son came into the world and took the punishment for the sin that separated us from God, so that we say, "Unto him that loved us and washed us from our sins in his own blood,---be glory and dominion for ever and ever" (Rev. 1, 5). God has again established harmony for man, man loves and lives. He is born again; he is born of God. Because of this relation of love, of harmony and communion with God we are now sons of God. So great is this harmony between us and God that we are God's sons, for 1 John 3, 1 says, "Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God: therefore the world knoweth us not, because it knew him not." The living God now dwells in us, so deep is our communion with Him. All who believe the love of God, the essential harmony that God has established in Christ dwell in harmony. In this harmony we have all God's gifts to His children. We have peace in God. This is described to us in 2 John 3 "Grace be with you, mercy and peace, from God the Father, and from the Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of the Father, in truth and love."

God is harmony, God is love. So that we can say, 1 John, 4, 16, "And we have known and believed the love that God hath to us. God is love; and he that dwelleth in love dwelleth

in God, and God in him." Christians still sin, daily the love of darkness and the desire for harmony with the world opposed to God rises in them. This love of darkness, this sin, God wishes us to be cleansed of. That is why we are told in Rev. 3, 19, "As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten; be zealous therefore, and repent."

Once we have entered into this harmony with God which He has established for us in Christ we have fellowship and communion with God.<sup>1</sup> "And he that loveth me shall be loved of my Father, and I will love him, and will manifest myself to him. Judas saith unto him, not Iscariot, Lord, how is it that thou wilt manifest thyself to us, and not unto the world? Jesus answered and said unto him, If a man love me, he will keep my words: and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him." John 14, 21-23. And again in John 15, 9-10 "As the Father hath loved me, so have I loved you: continue ye in my love. If ye keep my commandments, ye shall abide in my love." And so Jesus speaks to His disciples and to all believers and tells them of their communion with the Father, John 16, 27, "For the Father himself loveth you, because ye have loved me, and have believed that I came out from God." In the beautiful prayer of John 17 where Jesus has much to say of the unity and the harmony of the Father and the Son, God and the church, and the church among itself this fellowship and harmony with

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1. Note here the relation of  $\pi\acute{\iota}\epsilon\rho\iota\varsigma$  to  $\alpha\gamma\acute{\alpha}\pi\eta$  .  $\pi\acute{\iota}\epsilon\rho\iota\varsigma$  is man's side of  $\alpha\gamma\acute{\alpha}\pi\eta$  . Love is the greater.

God is demonstrated in all fullness in verses 21-23: "That they all may be one; as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us: that the world may believe that thou hast sent me. And the glory which thou gavest me I have given them; that they may be one, even as we are one: I in them and thou in me, that they may be made perfect in one; and that the world may know that thou hast sent me, and hast loved them, as thou hast loved me." That the whole world is to know that God loves His church is also brought out in Rev. 3, 9, "Behold I will make them of the synagogue of Satan which say they are Jews, and are not, but do lie; behold, I will make them to come and worship before thy feet, and to know that I have loved thee."

God, the God who is love, loved us. Outside of Him there is no love or harmony. Man loves darkness but God establishes harmony in Christ so that men are brought into harmony with God. It is none of their own doing. Man, of himself, cannot find harmony with God. It is none of their own doing. Man, of himself, cannot find harmony with God, cannot love God. God had to love us first and make our love for Him possible. Those who believe, who are in harmony, are now in God's love. They love God. It is not man's movement up to God but God's harmony for men. "We love him, because he first loved us." 1 John 4, 19. So it had to be, so it must be in every case of man's loving God.

### Man's Love to God.

God established a harmonious universe. All was very good. Then the devil sinned and disharmony and hate came. When man saw the harmony in ways other than God's ways and united himself with them disharmony entered into man's relation with God. Perfect love is synonymous with perfect harmony. Love is seeking harmony in some being or idea. To love God is to find harmony for yourself in whatever God says you should do. To love your neighbor then is to seek to establish harmony between yourself and your neighbor. Because we and all men keep God's rules imperfectly we show that we love imperfectly. God gave us the rules for harmony in His Word that all men might know on what basis they must meet to love perfectly, that all men might see their failure, that all men might accept the only true way to God, who is love and harmony.

Since the Fall man does not love God. Jesus once said in speaking to the Jews, "But I know you that ye have not the love of God in you." John 5, 43. Since they refused to accept Him whom God had sent to reveal His love, namely, Christ Jesus, they had neither God's love in them nor the love in their hearts to God which results from such acceptance of Christ. They were not in harmony with God; and Jesus knew it, and knew that it was for this reason that they persecuted Him. It is for the same reason that John issues the warning in 1 John 2, 15, "Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world the love of the Father is not in him." As long as man is in harmony with the world and wants to remain in harmony with the

world the love of the Father is not in him. The two loves cannot exist side by side, if you love one you must hate the other, if you cling to one you will lose the other. That is why John can say 1 John 4, 8.10 "He that loveth not knoweth not God; for God is love. --- Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins." We are not the originators of love. We can claim no credit for it if we love. Love is not of us, it is of God. Even after He has established harmony for us in Christ we still cannot be in harmony unless His Holy Spirit brings us into harmony. For "we love him because he first loved us." (1 John 4, .19.) Even after harmony with God is realized by us we sometimes falter and neglect that harmony.

In John 14, 28 Jesus reproves the disciples by saying, "Ye have heard how I said unto you, I go away, and come again unto you. If ye loved me ye would rejoice, because I said, I go unto the Father: for my Father is greater than I." Yes, the love, the realization of harmony with Jesus and the Father should have made them rejoice. Jesus in His state of humiliation was saying that He was going to His Father and be united with Him in full fellowship and communion, and viewing the Father from Jesus' humiliation Jesus said, He is greater than I. Jesus had said more; He said He was going unto the Father, who is greater, but He would come again to the disciples. Therefore they should rejoice; first, because in His

full fellowship with the Father the hiding of His full glory would cease; and second, He would come again to unite them also in fellowship with the Father. God indeed loves the world in the sense that He wishes to establish harmony with them in Christ Jesus. He loves the sinful world for while we were yet sinners Christ died for us. For those who accept this established harmony the Father continues in harmony, in love, so that they are sons of God and are to come to the Father in prayer. "For the Father himself loveth you," says Jesus, "because ye have loved me, and have believed that I came out from God." John 16, 27. We are sons of God only if we are born of God; all those who believe that Jesus is the Christ are born of God, are in harmony with God. If, however, they are sons of God and are in harmony with Him they must also be in harmony with all other sons of God. This is pointed out in 1 John 5,1 where John says, "Whosoever believeth that Jesus is the Christ is born of God: and every one that loveth him that begat loveth him also, that is begotten of him."

Jesus has told us how we may examine ourselves to see if we love Him and the Father. He said, "If ye love me, keep my commandments." John 14, 15. These commandments are for us Christians guides for harmonious living. The best way to have love is to practice love or, as someone has said, "If you don't love someone deal with him as you would if you did love him." Love is the end and love is the means.

Perfect love between us and God is the goal. Jesus says to get to this perfect love, "Keep my commandments." His commandments are summed up in the word "love." To show that we really love Jesus let us keep His commandment of love toward our fellowmen. To show that we are in harmony with God let us establish harmony with our fellowmen. We can know whether or not we are in communion, in harmony, with God if we examine ourselves whether or not we keep the commandments. This John tells us in 1 John 2, 5, "But whoso keepeth his word, in him verily is the love of God perfected; hereby know we that we are in him." To keep God's commandments means to realize the fullest harmony and fellowship with him. "He that hath my commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me; and he that loveth me shall be loved of my Father, and I will love him, and will manifest myself to him. - - - Jesus answered and said unto him, If a man love me, he will keep my words: and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him." John 14, 21.23.

Once we have harmony with God, once we realize that in Christ Jesus God's love has established this harmony the effect of it must also show towards our brother. "And this commandment have we from him, that he who loveth God love his brother also." 1 John 4, 21. Now this love may evidence itself in any way which is in accord with harmonious living. In a physical way it may be demonstrated by our helping

our neighbor with temporal goods, for "whoso hath this world's good, and seeth his brother have need, and shutteth up his bowels of compassion from him how dwelleth the love of God in him?" 1 John 3, 17. In a spiritual way we see what love of God and of our Savior Jesus requires of us in the story of Christ questioning Peter in John 21, 15-17.<sup>1</sup> Here Peter is told that if he really loves Jesus, his Savior, then Jesus was sending him to feed His lambs and sheep. These lambs and sheep, under another picture, were to be brothers of Peter. He would exercise love to them by bringing them the full revelation of God's harmony for them in Christ Jesus. He would tell them of their Savior who made the harmony possible and of God's commands for them. These commandments all who are in harmony with God will keep, thus

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1. The present writer is aware of the variance as to the shades of meaning of *φιλῆν* and *ἀγαπᾶν*. We are convinced that on the basis of the instances of their uses occurring no exact distinction can be reached. Both *φιλῆν* and *ἀγαπᾶν* are used for God's love for men (though *φιλῆν* in this sense occurs but once in John's gospel and once in Revelation); both are used for man's love to God, for God's love to Christ, for love of evil, and for love of the world for evil men. *φιλῆν* is never used otherwise than in the latter sense for love among men. The difficulty of distinction is seen when "the disciple whom Jesus loved" is usually rendered by a form of *ἀγαπᾶν* yet once by a form of *φιλῆν* in John 20, 2. Likewise the *φιλῆν* is used of Jesus' love for Lazarus but *ἀγαπᾶν* when Lazarus, Martha, and Mary are spoken of. At any rate, if a shade of distinction can be drawn it is not such as would affect our exposition here of the love-concept since that is evidently expressed by both *φιλῆν* and *ἀγαπᾶν* in sense of harmony, communion.

men can examine themselves whether they be in harmony with God. "By this we know that we love the children of God, when we love God and keep his commandments. For this is the love of God that we keep his commandments." 1 John 5, 2.3. We are to live in love. Love is harmony with God. If upon examination we find that we do not love God or do not love our brother we are not in harmony with God. For "if a man say, I love God, and hateth his brother, he is a liar; for he that loveth not his brother whom he hath seen, how can he love God whom he hath not seen?" 1 John 4, 20. Harmony, to be perfect, must be complete both with God and with the brother. We can ascertain if it is complete by seeing if we keep God's commandments.

#### Love between Christ and the Father

All references to love between the Father and Christ in the Johannine writings are found in the gospel and all are spoken by Jesus himself. The love relation is pictured chiefly between Christ and the Father while Christ is in His humiliation. However, in John 17, 24, we read, "For thou lovedst me before the foundation of the world."

In the love between Christ and the Father we have a picture of perfect harmony, of the ideal relationship and the results of it. It is a picture of such harmony that the Father and Son are one, there is no particle of separation between them. Whoever sees Christ sees God. And such unity of purpose and of will, such oneness, Jesus also prays

for for the church of all time. In John 17, 21-26 Jesus prays, "That they all may be one; as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us: that the world may believe that thou hast sent me. And the glory which thou gavest me I have given them; that they may be one, even as we are one: I in them and thou in me, that they may be made perfect in one; and that the world may know that thou hast sent me, and hast loved them, as thou hast loved me. Father, I will that they also, whom thou hast given me, be with me where I am; that they may behold my glory, which thou hast given me: for thou lovedst me before the foundation of the world. O righteous Father, the world hath not known thee: but I have known thee, and these have known that thou hast sent me. And I have declared unto them thy name, and will declare it; that the love wherewith thou hast loved me may be in them, and I in them." Love is harmony with God. Within the Godhead there is perfect harmony.

#### Love Among Men

There is, of course, in men a natural affection, a liking of one for certain other people. This particular attraction of one for the other God has placed in man. It exists also among the unregenerate. Examples of such affection are love of parents for children, particularly mother love; affection of husband and wife; friend and friend; self-love. This affection may be increased or lessened by social mores,

environment, or personal disposition. It differs from specifically Christian love in this that it is not controlled by the commandments of God, that is, it does not seek love as found in the harmony of following God's directions. When it subjects itself to the commands of God in the individual case it is either following God's law written in man's heart or, being of faith, has become not natural affection only but a species of Christian ἀγάπη. In the unregenerate it is personal inclination and natural disposition rather than ἀγάπη. In the Christian, it adds to the love which all Christians have for one another and towards others the element of natural inclination and personal attraction, modified by past experiences, for that person for whom the natural affection is felt. Thus the harmony in actual life situations among men is encouraged and reaches greater perfection in the relation toward some due to this natural affection. In the unregenerate it is often mistaken for true harmony. In the case of Christ it is true, as in His other human relationships, that He was in all His parts and ways as a man, save without sin. So we also read of Him having natural affection for some.

In the Johannine writings natural affection is referred to only in the Gospel and there virtually all the references are to Christ's relationship to certain persons, especially to the disciple whom He loved. Thus on five occasions we read of this natural affection which Jesus had for the one disciple, an affection so intimate that at the Lord's Supper

on that last Thursday this disciple, in response to that love, leaned on the breast of Jesus. Concerning this we read in John 21, 20: "Then Peter, turning about, seeth the disciple whom Jesus loved following; which also leaned on his breast at supper, and said, Lord, which is he that betrayeth thee?" The other instances where this relationship is spoken of are: John 13, 23; 19, 26; 20, 2; (ἐρέλει); and 21, 7. In John 15, 13 Jesus makes the statement, "Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends." Certainly one's own life is the greatest sacrifice that one can make for harmony, for love of a friend. Yet unregenerate man also, upon occasion, lays down his life for another. Jesus here states a general truth. There is no greater thing a man can do to show his love. That does not contradict that there might be a more laudable thing even than that, namely, when a man lays down his life for an enemy. Yet from the individual's viewpoint, to show his desire of establishing harmony or of showing it exists, there is nothing he can give that so shows his love as his life. The context would indicate that Jesus here spoke of Christian love perhaps strengthened by natural affection.

An instance of natural affection combined with love of evil is found in John 15, 19. Naturally, evil is attracted to evil for communion; both love and natural affection are found here. "If ye were of the world, the world would love his own; but because ye are not of the world, but I have chosen you out of the world, therefore the world hateth you."

The final instance of natural affection is the instance of Jesus' affection for Lazarus, Mary, and Martha. Now certainly Jesus also loved them as their God and Savior, and loved them as Christians, but certainly also natural affection, personal attraction is indicated. We read in John 11, 3 that the sisters sent unto Jesus telling him, "Lord, behold, he whom thou lovest is sick." In verse 5 we read that "Jesus loved Martha, and her sister, and Lazarus." We know that Jesus often visited at the home of this brother and sisters. When Jesus wept at the tomb of Lazarus the Jews said, "Behold how he loved him." John 11, 36.

Natural affection is indeed good but by itself it is not Christian. It is found also among the unregenerate. Yet also the natural affection when Christians have it, is placed into the plan of God's harmony and considered in the light of God's commands. We must not consider natural affection by itself as equal to Christian love. Christians bring also natural affection under the guide of God's commands.

#### Christian ἀγάπη among Men

Love is harmony with God. Harmony with God means also harmony with all others who are in harmony with God. God establishes the harmony, it is revealed in Christ Jesus, the Holy Spirit brings us into this harmony. Ordinarily our will is changed by Word and Sacrament from one that hates God and loves evil to one that loves God and our fellowmen. Once man has become conscious of, and has been brought into, the

harmony which God has established for him in Christ, he wants all men to share this harmony. Once man has been born again as a son of God he is in harmony with all his brothers. It is impossible to love God and not to love one's brother who is also in harmony with God. No one can love God, be a son of God, without also loving all who are sons of God. Jesus once pointed this out by saying, John 8, 42, "If God were your Father, ye would love me: for I proceeded forth and came from God; neither came I of myself, but he sent me." Christians, sons of God, love all other sons of God.

Christ was perfect in His love for men, He laid down His life not for His friends but for His enemies, for sinners. He is to be the norm and guide of our love for men, His commands are our guides. "As the Father hath loved me, so have I loved you: continue ye in my love. This is my commandment, that ye love one another, as I have loved you. Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends." John 15, 9.12.13. We read in John 13, 1 about the faithfulness of the love of Jesus which is to be our guide: "Now before the feast of the passover, when Jesus knew that his hour was come that he should depart out of this world, unto the Father, having loved his own which were in the world, he loved them unto the end." He tells us again and again that we should love the brethren, as in John 15, 17: "These things I command you, that ye love one another." The same harmony which exists between Christians and God is also to exist among Christians, John 17, 26, "And I have declared unto them thy

name, and will declare it; that the love wherewith thou hast loved me may be in them, and I in them."

There are a number of instances in the epistles of John where he uses the expression "beloved". This expression seems to indicate a combination of natural affection and Christian love, but the Christian love is much more prominent. In other words, they are beloved of him because they are fellow children of God rather than because he is personally, unusually attracted to them. Instances where the Christian love is especially apparent are: 1 John 3, 2.21; 1 John 4, 1.7.11. We shall here quote only one of these, namely 1 John 4, 7 as typical of them: "Beloved, let us love one another: for love is of God; and everyone that loveth is born of God, and knoweth God." Instances where the natural affection is perhaps also found are in 3 John 1.2.5.11. where John is speaking to Gaius. We quote verse 1, "The elder unto the well-beloved Gaius, whom I love in the truth."

Jesus desired love among men for one another. Especially did He admonish the disciples to love one another. Jesus tells His disciples in John 13, 34 that He is giving them a new commandment: "A new commandment I give unto you, that ye love one another; as I have loved you, that ye also love one another." Since Old Testament times the commandment had existed and was common among the Jews that they were to love their neighbor. The command which Jesus here gives is then not essentially new but rather new in its particular application

which Jesus here indicates. It is henceforth to be the unique distinction of the Christians that they love one another, that since the harmony is established they realize it and perfect it among themselves. Towards those outside they must still seek to establish it, but these brethren, being all born of God, are already in harmony and must realize and bring it to perfection. For this love toward the Christians, in another sense, also new, Jesus has been an example. This example had not been there before but now since Jesus had come to earth they had the example to follow that they love one another as Jesus had loved them and perfected harmony with them. He tells them what is to be the peculiar distinction of Christians from other men. John 13, 35: "By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another." This command is the same as the commandments of the Father under which we are in harmony for John tells us in 1 John 3, 23 what this command is, "And this is his commandment, that we should believe on the name of his Son Jesus Christ and love one another, as he gave us commandment."

Certainly if God established this harmony for us we ought to preserve it with the brethren and endeavor to bring it to the same perfection. 1 John 4, 11.12 says, "Beloved, if God so loved us, we ought also to love one another. No man hath seen God at any time. If we love one another, God dwelleth in us, and his love is perfected in us." The love of God to us is to be the motive of our love for our fellowmen. This also, namely that God dwells in us and His love is perfected

in us, will give us boldness in the day of judgment. In 1 John 4, 17 we read, "Herein is our love made perfect, that we may have boldness in the day of judgment: because as he is, so are we in this world." In the story of the last judgment it is made plain that accepting God's forgiving love in Christ means also that Christians will demonstrate love toward their fellowmen. It is impossible to have God's love perfected in us unless we love our brothers. 1 John 4, 20.20. "If a man say, I love God, and hateth his brother, he is a liar: for he that loveth not his brother whom he hath seen, how can he love God whom he hath not seen?" This is self-evident for to be in harmony with God necessitates also being in harmony with all the sons of God who are in harmony with Him, 1 John 5, 1.2. "Whosoever believeth that Jesus is the Christ is born of God: and every one that loveth him that begot loveth him also that is begotten of him. By this we know that we love the children of God, when we love God, and keep his commandments." Here is the glorious truth of how we enter into this harmony with God, namely, by believing that Jesus is the Christ. We must then also be in harmony not only with God but also with all others who are born of God by believing that Jesus is the Christ.

In 2 John 1 emphasis is laid on the harmony of all Christians. "The elder unto the elect lady and her children, whom I love in the truth; and not I only, but also all they that have known the truth." In verse 5 of 2 John John tells

us that he is repeating a commandment which from the very beginning of the Christian brotherhood had been given them: "And now I beseech thee, lady, not as though I wrote a new commandment unto thee, but that which we had from the beginning, that we love one another." This is love, in this we have harmony, that we walk according to His commandments. "And this is love, that we walk after his commandments. This is the commandment, That as ye have heard from the beginning ye should walk in it. For many deceivers are entered into the world, who confess not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh." 2 John 6.7.

In 3 John, verses 1 and 2, we hear of the love of John for a particular brother Gaius and how he wishes him all good things: "The elder unto the well-beloved Gaius, whom I love in the truth. Beloved, I wish above all things that thou mayest prosper and be in health, even as thy soul prospereth." He praises Gaius for the good that he does and that to brethren who are not even personal acquaintances of his. 3 John 5.6. "Beloved, thou doest faithfully whatsoever thou doest to the brethren, and to strangers; which have borne witness of thy charity before the church: whom if thou bring forward on their journey after a godly sort, thou shalt do well." Such is the harmony of the Christian life.

1 John 2 brings out that it is a Christian necessity to love the brethren. This is both an old and a new commandment. It is an old commandment in the sense that it is only what is

contained in the Word of God. It is a new commandment because a new revelation of the working out of that commandment has been given. The true light now shineth, this light is Jesus Christ. Those living before His coming, even though they became children of God only by faith in Christ, yet they did not have His living example of how to deal with the brethren and their fellowmen in general. We have that example. In 1 John 2, 7-11 we read: "Brethren, I write no new commandment unto you, but an old commandment which ye have heard from the beginning. Again, a new commandment I write unto you, which thing is true in him and in you: because the darkness is past, and the true light now shineth. He that saith he is in the light, and hateth his brother, is in darkness even until now. He that loveth his brother abideth in the light, and there is none occasion of stumbling in him. But he that hateth his brother is in darkness, and walketh in darkness, and knoweth not whither he goeth, because that darkness hath blinded his eyes."

By the rule given in 1 John 3 we can test ourselves to see whether we are children of God and in harmony with Him or children of the devil and bound for destruction. 1 John 3, 9-11. "Whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin; for his seed remaineth in him: and he cannot sin, because he is born of God. In this the children of God are manifest, and the children of the devil: whosoever doeth not righteousness is not of God, neither he that loveth not his brother. For this is the message that ye heard from the

beginning, that we should love one another." Unless we love our brother we have not been born again, we do not have eternal life but though living, are still dead. 1 John 3, 14.15. "We know that we have passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren. He that loveth not his brother abideth in death. Whosoever hateth his brother is a murderer: and ye know that no murderer hath eternal life abiding in him." This love must show in our conduct towards our brethren. 1 John 3, 16-18. "Hereby perceive we the love of God, because he laid down his life for us: and we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren. But whose hath this world's good, and seeth his brother have need, and shutteth up his bowels of compassion from him, how dwelleth the love of God in him? My little children, let us not love in word, neither in tongue; but in deed and truth."

Concerning this loving in word only Luther says, "Let us beware lest Wittenberg become Capernaum. I notice that you have a great deal to say of the doctrine which is preached to you, of faith and of love. This is not surprising; an ass can almost intone the lessons, and why should you not be able to repeat the doctrines and formulas? Dear friends, the kingdom of God, --and we are that kingdom -- consists not in speech or in words, but in deeds, in works and exercises. God does not want hearers and repeaters of words, but doers and followers who exercise themselves in the faith that worketh by love. For a faith without love is not enough--rather it is not faith

at all, but a counterfeit of faith, just as a face seen in a mirror is not a real face, but merely the reflection of a face."<sup>1</sup>

**1. Holman Edition v II, p 392.**

This has applications for our daily living. We use God's love upon a lot of them here. (However, if we remember that love is harmony with God, we can draw the conclusion for each individual situation ourselves if we keep in mind the three types. Christian love, love of self, and natural affection. Every action of our life is due to one of these or to a combination of them with varying emphasis on one or the other.)

Let us view ordinary community life in the light of the ideal harmony relation. A Christian community is the best community for it realizes that the goal of life is harmony with God. Realization of this means recognition of personal sin and inadequacy for harmony, and dependence on the grace of God in Christ. It means further that the only possibility for harmony is under the rules which God has given us. The Christian message has great social implications for it states that only if men live under God's rules can he live in harmony.

There is the basic unit of the community, the family. Christian marriage comes about when, to the love which all

### Practical Implications

The realization that God is love and that love is harmony with God gives us a new understanding of the purpose and highest possible attainment of life. For God says that the sum of the commandments is love, that to love God and one's neighbor is the law the the prophets. Love, then, is man's highest goal; there is nothing better than to be in harmony with God.

This has implications for our daily living. We can but touch upon a few of them here. (However, if we remember that love is harmony with God, we can draw the conclusion for each individual situation ourselves if we keep in mind the three forces: Christian love, love of evil, and natural affection. Every action of our life is due to one of these or to a combination of them with varying emphasis on one or the other.)

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There is the basic unit of the community, the family. Christian marriage comes about when, to the love which all

Christians have for one another, there is added a mutual natural affection of a particular person of one sex for a person of the other sex. This combination is the basic reason though such things as proximity in environment and conditioning, may all affect the natural affection. It is quite understandable how natural affection can be felt for more than one person. After marriage a spouse must devote his or her affection to the mate in accord with the Biblical injunctions. Certainly after years of marriage, love should have deepened to such an extent that all other loves for humans seem petty beside it. Often, however, in triangle divorce proceedings the point that the man loves (natural affection) another girl and she returns the love is thought of as unnatural and motivation for divorce. Well, that depends. We must, of course, distinguish between lust and natural affection and certainly between adultery and natural affection in reaching a conclusion. But the fact that one already married is attracted to one not his mate should not be motivation for divorce proceedings but for a re-examination of husband-wife ideals and practices. For Christians that means a realization that for God's children the most perfect love is found in the most perfect obedience to God's commandments. Confusion enters in because of man's imperfections which causes him to mistake lust or infatuation for love. The Bible forbids unfaithfulness; it commands love, respect, cherishing between husband and wife. It commands Christians to love one another. Is it so unusual if one finds in himself a natural affection for

someone else? The wrong comes in that it does not lead to the proper result, namely, re-examination, as stated above. Divorce is so incongruous with the Christian life because love and harmony is always possible under obedience to God's laws. That helps to explain the Bible's stand on divorce.

In the unregenerate we have natural affection evidenced in marriage and in parental care for the children. Of course, in some cases these are due to reasons less justifiable than natural affection. In a Christian home this parental care also is placed under the guides which God has given us; for, being in harmony with Him, we know that no harmony exists outside of Him. If a youth realizes by the working of the Holy Spirit, that the highest goal of life is harmony with God and that God is love, then he will strive to attain the fulfillment of God's guides. That is Christian living. We realize that in Christ we are in harmony with God, therefore we want to follow God's commands. Education today has been too materialistic, too utilitarian, too bread alone. Juvenile delinquency certainly cannot prevail where the juvenile loves God. So then this realization, that love is not only a beautiful feeling but a compelling, driving force makes the instillation of that love primary in education. The youth must realize that harmony with God is <sup>his</sup> highest goal. The Holy Spirit works only through the Word of God.

Since we are in harmony with God as Christians we ought also to be in harmony with all others who are in harmony with God, with all the sons of God. A Christian ought naturally

to find his dearest friends, his most intimate loves, among Christians. If he does not, let him examine himself whether he be a child of God. A Christian can feel natural affection for an unregenerate person but he can love him only as God loves him, namely, as a saved soul in Christ. Realization of this carries an implication for mixed marriages which explains the statement that the believing spouse should sanctify the unbelieving.

Our church services are to be opportunities to learn about the harmony with God in Christ and our inability to attain it otherwise; to learn more concerning the rules God has given us for harmonious living; and to express our thanks to God together with the brethren for the harmony He has established.

This fact, that love is the goal of life, and that love is harmony with God, has implications also for wider relationships. It shows us why we must do mission work among all men, since in Christ God has established harmony with Himself for them all. It tells us to look for greed as the cause of wars and if we remember love of evil, natural affection, and Christian love we can see what promises peace, namely following of God's commandments. In the race problem we encounter a phenomenon where, due perhaps to conditioning, Christian love must overcome a feeling which militates against natural affection and so Christian love must be all the stronger. A Christian must overcome this feeling. For all races the goal of life is harmony with God, all sons of God of whatever race are our brothers.

God is love. He has sent His Son so that harmony between Himself and us could be re-established. God establishes the harmony, He brings us into it and keeps us in it. All who believe that Jesus is the Christ are sons of God. We are to live in harmony with all who are sons of God and thus our brothers. We are to bring the Word through which the Holy Spirit brings men to a knowledge of true harmony to all men. We can expect ill will and opposition from the world and from all who love evil. The highest goal our life can have, the essence of eternal life, is harmony with God. Love is harmony with God.

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