

THE RELATIONSHIP OF LOVE TO FAITH IN ST. JOHN

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TO ATTEMPT a synthesis of Johannine teaching is to undertake a formidable task. The fourth evangelist does not develop his thoughts by direct univocal statements, but through a series of repetitions gradually reveals the spiritual depths of now one, now another of his ideas, at times altering the meaning of terms in the process.¹ It is a difficult task to organize thoughts developed in this way into a completely satisfactory synthesis.

If this holds true for St. John's teaching on many points, it is especially true of his teaching on love, to the development of which he devotes a large part of his writings. Already in his account of the public ministry (Jn 1-12) he points out the all-important role love plays in the relations between the Father and Son and between God and man. In his account of the last discourse (Jn 13-17) he sets about explaining this role. Finally, in his first epistle, in which in four short chapters the verb *agapaō* and its derivatives *agapē* and *agapētos* recur more frequently than in any other book of the *NT*, he completes his explanation by revealing the full depths of love's meaning.²

Since the three sections of John's writings just named form more or less distinct units with distinct dominant ideas, probably the simplest and most satisfactory way to study the Johannine notion of love is to examine the pertinent texts of each section in connection with the

¹ A good example of this gradual exposition of a notion is John's presentation of Christ as the life. Men have life through Christ: Jn 3:15 (cf. 1 Jn 4:9); Christ has life within Himself to give to men: Jn 5:25 f.; 6:33 ff.; He gives it to those who unite themselves vitally to Him by eating His flesh: Jn 6:47-59; He *is* the life which He gives: Jn 11:25 f.; 14:6 (cf. 17:3; 1 Jn 1:2; 5:11 f., 20). For Christ as the truth see Jn 1:17 (the truth comes through Him); 14:6 (He is the truth). Perhaps the best example of all is John's presentation of Christ as the bread of life in Jn 6.

² Whatever may be said about the inferiority of 1 John as compared with the fourth Gospel (especially by those who consider it the work of a different author; see, e.g., C. H. Dodd, *The Johannine Epistles* [London, 1953] pp. xlix and liii-lv), the epistle certainly presents a more evolved and explicit doctrine on love (at least on fraternal love) than the Gospel does—a definite advance, therefore, over the Gospel. The majority of scholars, especially those that deny that the two writings have the same author, consider the epistle posterior to the Gospel and note that it recalls and develops ideas already presented in the earlier document (cf. Dodd, *op. cit.*, p. lvi).

important idea of that section. In fact, John himself links the gradual unfolding of his notion of love to the development of these great ideas. In the first twelve chapters of his Gospel he discusses faith in great detail and love especially in its relation to faith. In his account of the last discourse he speaks in particular of the union of Christ's disciples with their Master and with God. In his first epistle he stresses the relations of Christians with one another. The present study will be restricted to the first of these problems: the relation of love to faith.

The very first passage in which the fourth Gospel mentions love treats of it in relation to faith. In fact, faith is nothing more than a response to love—man's response to God's love. Besides, a certain type of love accompanies faith, and another type of love stands in opposition to it. In order to understand these various types of love, we must understand the faith with which they are so intimately related.

JOHANNINE FAITH

St. John's account of the public ministry (Jn 1-12) and a few verses of his first epistle give the entire doctrine of the Beloved Disciple on faith. The texts are abundant and clear. As for the abundance of the texts, in the first twelve chapters of his Gospel John uses the verb *pisteuō* more often than any other NT writer, Paul included (though the noun *pistis*, Paul's preference, does not occur).³ As for the clarity of the texts, a glance at only a few of them shows the meaning of Johannine faith.

We find first of all, of course, the ordinary, untechnical sense of the verb "to believe" in John's writings: to accept on another's authority a statement which he makes. Thus, the Jews would not "believe" the man healed by Christ when he told them that he had been born blind and had been cured: they would not accept the man's word but called for his parents (Jn 9:18 f.; cf. v. 15).

The usual formula for Christian faith (the disciples' faith) is "to believe *in*" (Gk. *eis*) Christ. By believing in Christ a man becomes His disciple. Only by believing in Him can a man have the eternal life that goes to His disciples (Jn 6:29, 40). The various passages in which the expression occurs reveal the full meaning of this faith in Christ.

³ The Johannine writings (excluding the Apocalypse) contain the noun only once: 1 Jn 5:4.

They show that it is, like ordinary faith, the acceptance of truth—but a truth about Christ: His identity. In Jn 6:69 Peter declares faith the reason why the Twelve have become followers of Christ and explains their faith as faith in His identity: “We have believed . . . that thou art the Holy One of God.” In Jn 11:27 Martha points out that she is ready to accept whatever Christ may demand—in other words, that she is completely at His disposal—because of her faith in His identity: “I have believed that thou art the Christ, the Son of God come into the world.” In the same passage (vv. 42 f.) Christ tells His Father that He raises Lazarus in order to lead the Jews to faith—the saving faith that would make them disciples—and this is faith in His identity as God’s envoy: “That they may believe that thou hast sent me.” In Jn 17 Christ prays for His actual disciples (those who have already believed; v. 8) and for future disciples (those who will later believe; v. 20), expressing His desire that the world itself may be converted and believe (vv. 21 and 23). Throughout the passage the object of this faith which makes disciples is everywhere the truth of Christ’s claim to be God’s envoy: “That thou [Father] hast sent me.” Christian faith, then, means accepting Jesus for what He is, i.e., as the Christ, and this means the Son of God sent or come into the world.

Now the Son of God is God’s own image. By entering into the world of men in human form, He automatically becomes God’s revelation of Himself to men, the revelation of the transcendent God whom no one has at any time seen (Jn 1:18). “He who has seen me has seen the Father,” He says to His apostles. “How canst thou say, ‘Show us the Father?’” (Jn 14:9). To accept or to reject God’s revelation of Himself means to accept or to reject God: “He who denies the Son does not have the Father either; he who confesses the Son has the Father too” (1 Jn 2:23; cf. 5:10–12). Christian faith, therefore, means accepting Jesus as God’s revelation of Himself to men.

Christ, of course, does not come simply to reveal God to men’s minds, i.e., to impart mere speculative knowledge about God through His teachings or to give men through His own behavior some idea of what God must be like. He comes to reveal God’s inner life to men by offering them an experience of it or a share in it. Men are to come to know the mysteries of God’s life through a practical, first-hand experiencing of them. If faith means fully accepting Christ for what He is, it

obviously cannot consist in mere intellectual recognition of Him as Savior, i.e., in mere intellectual assent to the truth that Jesus of Nazareth is the Son of God come into the world or the Word made flesh. It must also mean practically accepting Him as God's offer of Himself to mankind. Only when we take faith in this full sense can we understand how John can consider the consequence of faith in Christ to be intimacy with God (*koinōnia* in 1 Jn 1:3; knowledge, in the Semitic sense of intimacy or experience, in Jn 17:3), sharing in God's life, or becoming God's child. "These things are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that through faith (*pisteuontes*) you may have life in His name" (Jn 20:31). "To as many as accepted Him He gave power to become children of God, [i.e.,] to those who believed in His name" (Jn 1:12). In short, Christ's salvific mission aims at revealing God's inner life to men by making it a reality they experience: "The Son of God has come and given us understanding that we may *know* the True One and *be in* the True One through (*en*) His Son, Jesus Christ" (1 Jn 5:20).⁴ Faith is man's full practical acceptance of that salvific mission.⁵

Needless to say, for John as for Paul it is not man who through his act of faith makes himself a child of God. By faith man submits to or accepts God revealing Himself in Christ; it is God who makes man His child: to as many as accept Him by faith the Word gives power to become children of God (Jn 1:12). Unlike Paul, John does not repeatedly emphasize this point by insisting, e.g., that faith removes all grounds for boasting. He does not need to stress the gratuity of justification, since he is not like Paul writing against those who vaunt the value and merit of man's works. An evident truth needs emphasizing only when someone denies it.

Johannine faith, like Pauline faith, is evidently man's initial step

⁴ 1 Jn 5:20 may also be translated: He "has given us understanding that we may know the True One, and we are [in fact] in the True One." The sense remains substantially the same. This alternate rendering takes to "be in the True One" as synonymous with knowing Him ("knowing" in the Semitic sense of experience or intimacy, as in Jn 10:14 f.; 14:17; 17:3; 1 Jn 2:3 f., 13 f.; 3:6; 4:7 f.); the version given in the text distinguishes the two terms and considers to "be in" God as adding the idea of effective union with Him to that of knowing Him (speculatively) through Christ's revelation.

⁵ Christ Himself explains faith as acceptance of Himself in Jn 5:43 f.: "You do not accept me [as having come in my Father's name]," is equivalent to not believing in Him.

towards salvation, initial full acceptance of Christ which a man must never retract. But Paul very definitely conceives of faith as a dynamic reality which grows and develops.⁶ In fact, faith seems to mean for Paul the whole of the Christian's attitude towards God from the moment of his conversion till his entrance into heaven. John appears to have a more static concept. Certainly he considers the Christian's life dynamic. But he does not speak of growth of the Christian's faith.⁷ He usually uses the verb *pisteuō* in the aorist or the perfect when speaking of the disciples' faith.⁸ To believe, for John, means to perform the initial but definitive act of totally (speculatively and practically) accepting Christ.

The reason for this more static conception of faith lies in the great preoccupation—we might even say, the theme—of so much of the fourth Gospel, an idea expressed succinctly in the prologue and repeated and evolved in the following chapters. Christ the light, God's salvific manifestation of Himself to men, has come into the world. Men must choose between accepting and rejecting Him. Many choose to reject Him. Some accept Him by faith and are saved. The first twelve chapters of the Gospel tell the story of this momentous choice as made

⁶ For Paul faith is the initial act by which a man is justified, transferred from the state of sin to that of justice, and made a child of God (Rom 3:30; 5:1; Gal 2:16; 3:8, 26). But the Christian also lives by (*ek*) or in (*en*) faith (Rom 1:17; Gal 2:20; 3:11), stands firm by faith (Rom 11:20; 2 Cor 1:24), has Christ dwelling in his heart by (*dia*) faith (Eph 3:17). Paul hears of his converts' faith (Phm 5)—obviously not their initial acceptance of Christ which he witnessed personally. He notes that their faith grows greatly (2 Th 1:3). Throughout the Christian's life his faith must continually express itself in works of charity (Gal 5:6).

⁷ Obviously the imperfect faith of those who are not fully convinced of Christ's identity progresses. But once a man has performed the act of full and perfect acceptance of Christ, then John usually says that he *has* believed (see the following note).

⁸ The passages in which John employs the present tense in Jn 1–12 can all be understood of the act of initial acceptance of Christ; and they certainly should be taken in this sense, since these chapters treat precisely of that initial choice as made or refused by those to whom Christ presented Himself during His public ministry. The *future* faith of the apostles mentioned in Jn 13–17 (e.g., 13:19; 14:29) must also be understood of their initial acceptance of Christ; the context and many other passages (e.g., Jn 2:22; 12:16; 20:8 f., 25–29) make it clear that their faith or initial acceptance of Christ remained very imperfect, i.e., they did not accept Him perfectly and fully, till after the resurrection; see, e.g., Jn 14:10 ff. on the imperfection of their faith. Only in 1 Jn 5 do we find the present tense (the participle) used of the faith of Christians and referring not to the initial act of believing but, apparently, to the habitual attitude resulting from that act (in v. 13 and perhaps also v. 10).

by Christ's contemporaries. They describe in great detail the incessant efforts of Christ to offer Himself to men, the acceptance of some, and the enormity of the refusal of the many. Throughout this twelve-chapter account of the public ministry John is wholly intent upon this all-important initial response to Christ's offer: the choice for Him by faith or against Him by refusal to believe. In other parts of his writings, where he gives more attention to other points, the thought of the far-reaching consequences for the world of that initial choice which men make never slips from his mind. Thus, the last discourse, though concerned principally with the disciples and their relations with Christ, does not merely present the rest of men as a group which stands in more or less active opposition to Christ's followers, but quite clearly indicates what has divided men into these two opposed camps: their choice to accept or to reject Christ. The first epistle too presents this view of mankind divided over Christ. John's vivid realization of the consequences of man's initial response to Christ's offer focuses his attention on faith as that first act which makes a man a disciple. Johannine faith, then, is more properly man's initial but total and definitive acceptance of Jesus for what He is: the Christ, the Son of God come into the world as God's salvific manifestation of Himself to men.

FAITH IS MAN'S RESPONSE TO GOD'S LOVE

Jn 3:14-21 is the first detailed text which explicitly discusses faith in the fourth Gospel after the prologue. And in this very first detailed text faith stands in a context of love: it is man's response to the advances of God's love; it is opposed by love of the darkness; it is accompanied (so the implication seems to be) by love of the light.

(14) And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the desert, even so must the Son of Man be lifted up, (15) that everyone who believes in Him may have life everlasting. (16) For God so loved the world that He gave His only-begotten Son, that everyone who believes in Him may not perish, but may have life everlasting. (17) For God did not send His Son into the world in order to judge the world, but that the world might be saved through Him. (18) He who believes in Him is not judged; but he who does not believe has already been judged, because he has not believed in the name of the only-begotten Son of God. (19) Now this is the judgment: the light has come into the world, yet men have loved the darkness rather than the light, for their works were wicked. (20) For everyone who does evil hates the light and does not come to the light, that his deeds may not be accused, (21) but he who does

the truth comes to the light that his deeds may be made manifest, for they have been performed in God.

Verse 16 is clear: God's sending His Son into the world on His salvific mission is an act of love for the world. The verb standing in the aorist presents the divine love as something past. John certainly does not mean to imply that God's salvific love has ceased or that His love no longer offers salvation to all through Christ (cf. Jn 12:44-50; 17:20, 23). But the act of love as expressed in the Son's coming into the world (the Father "gave" Him) is past.

"God loved the world." The universality of God's love expressed in Christ's coming is undeniable. Christ comes not "to judge the world" but only "that the world might be saved through Him" (v. 17). If anyone fails to receive the salvation offered by the Son, all responsibility lies with him and none with Christ: condemnation does not come from the Son, but those who reject Him condemn themselves by rejecting their only hope of salvation (v. 18). The universality of Christ's mission implies the universality of the divine love which inspires it.

The text just considered is the sole passage in the Johannine writings which speaks of God's *love* for all men. John refers frequently to divine benevolence for men but avoids using the word "love." He reserves the term to describe God's relations with Christ's disciples.⁹ Even in the present text he does not leave divine love for "the world" unqualified: the advances of God's love call for correspondence on man's part. Without that response divine love will not, or cannot, realize its designs. By corresponding, man allows God's love to bestow upon him eternal life (v. 16) or salvation (v. 17). By refusing, man rejects the concrete expression of God's love, Christ. John says nothing about God's continued love for those who have spurned His love's advances. In not speaking of God's love for the wicked, he differs from the Synoptics, who hold up God's persistently kind treatment for the wicked, the unjust, and the ungrateful as the model of the Christian's love of

⁹ 1 Jn presents Christ as Savior of "the world" (4:14), expiation for the sins not only of His followers but for those of the whole world (2:2; cf. Jn 1:29). Since the Father's love has sent the Son into the world on this salvific mission (1 Jn 4:9), there seems to be no reason why John should not say that God "loved" the world. Yet he does not. Why not, if not to reserve the term to designate God's benevolence for those who have accepted the advances of His love (note especially 1 Jn 3:1—God has "given" love to those who have accepted)?

enemies (Mt 5:44 f.; Lk 6:35).¹⁰ John's limiting his usage of the term "love" in this way has important implications, to which we shall allude later.

Man, then, must respond to God's love so that divine love can achieve its aims. This response is faith: "God so loved the world . . . that everyone who believes . . . may have eternal life." Faith, therefore, which means acceptance of Christ, is acceptance of the concrete manifestation of God's salvific love.

1 Jn 4 presents faith in the same way but with greater clarity. Verse 9 reads: "In this was manifested God's love for (*en*) us: that God sent His only-begotten Son into the world that we may live through Him." Christ's coming to save us is, therefore, the great and unique manifestation of God's love for us. After the brief development of another idea, John sets about explaining how man accepts the offer of God's love in Christ. "The Father has sent the Son as Savior of the world. If anyone confesses that Jesus is the Son of God, God dwells in him and he in God" (vv. 14 f.). In other words, by confessing Christ as the Son of God come into the world, i.e., by accepting Him as God's revelation and offer of Himself to men, man comes to share God's intimacy: "God dwells in him and he in God." This "confession" of Christ is, of course, faith. Since faith means acceptance of Christ and Christ is the concrete manifestation of God's love for us, faith means acceptance of God's love for us. However, John does not merely let us draw this conclusion for ourselves. He states explicitly: "[By confessing Christ] we have known and believed the love which God has for (*en*) us" (v. 16a).

THE LOVES OPPOSED TO FAITH

Love of the Darkness—Jn 3: 16–21

Jn 3:16–21 not only treats of man's response to God's love by faith, but also indicates what it is that holds men back from making that response. Man refuses to respond to God's love because of another love. Opposed to faith stands love of the darkness. John explains man's refusal to believe in these words: "The light has come into the world, yet men have loved the darkness rather than the light, for their works

¹⁰ Matthew and Luke, however, do not explicitly call God's kind treatment of the wicked "love."

were wicked (*ponēra*). For everyone who does evil (*phaula*) hates the light and does not come to the light that his works may not be accused, but he who does the truth comes to the light that his deeds may be made manifest, for they have been performed in God"; or: "that his works may be shown to have been done (*hoti . . . estin eirgasmēna*) in God."

Christ declares Himself the light of the world (Jn 8:12; 9:5; cf. also 12:46). The evangelist, too, describes Christ in the same way (e.g., Jn 1:9). The metaphor is well chosen to describe Him whose role is to reveal or manifest God to men. Refusal to accept the light that has come into the world merely means refusal to accept or believe in Christ. Motivating this refusal we find love of the darkness.

Darkness in its ordinary acceptance means absence of light; hence in John it should mean absence of the light which is Christ. And in fact, it is precisely the world without God—without the manifestation of God which is Christ—that is in the darkness.¹¹ At Christ's coming "the light shines in the darkness" (Jn 1:5). Men are free to leave the darkness and come to the light (cf. Jn 12:35 f.). If they refuse, they remain in the darkness. The darkness, then, is man's state without Christ and therefore without God. To remain in the darkness means to remain by one's own choice in the sad state of man without God (Jn 12:46; cf. 1:5). To walk in the darkness means to live and act in accord with this state of separation from God (1 Jn 1:6; Jn 8:12; 12:35; cf. 1 Jn 2:9–11).¹²

Our verses suggest in addition that this state of man without God is a state of man's own making. Verse 19 points out that "men have loved the darkness rather than the light, for their works were wicked." And to explain the connection between love of the darkness and evil-doing, John continues, "Everyone who does evil hates the light" and flees from it so as not to have his evil deeds accused. Men's unwilling-

¹¹ Darkness in the Johannine writings is certainly not a subsistent evil principle; John was not a Manichean or a dualist. For the opening verses of Genesis, darkness is merely the absence of light (God creates only the light; the darkness does not need to be created: Gn 1:1–5). So too for John, who in his prologue alludes to Gn 1 and then immediately introduces Christ as the light shining in the darkness, this darkness is the absence of the light—Christ the light—and, of course, includes what results from the absence of this light: sin. (Paul speaks in the same way in Eph 5:8; cf. 2 Cor 4:6.)

¹² Paul speaks of evil deeds as "the works of darkness" (Rom 13:12; Eph 5:11).

ness to have their evil works accused means attachment to these works, refusal to give them up, or at least unwillingness to undergo the humiliation involved in having these works shown to be evil.

Darkness, then, is simply the state resultant on a man's attachment to works done in the opposition to God. In accord with a principle which John later treats as self-evident and fundamental, the principle that a person loves what is "his own,"¹³ we may consider love for the darkness on the part of evil men as simply love for a state of their own making, love for what they have or are apart from and without God. Because of attachment to what they have independently of God, they refuse to accept the offer which God's love makes to them of a share in His life.

Love for the Glory of Men—Jn 12:43

The twelfth chapter of John's Gospel, the conclusion of his account of Christ's public ministry, echoes the thoughts which the passage we have been examining presents at the ministry's start; it also considerably clarifies many particular points; among others, the nature of the love opposed to faith. In Jn 3:16-21 we find a pair of clearly defined and diametrically opposed series. At the head of one stands God, who out of love sends His Son into the world as the light of men, i.e., as His offer to men of a share in His divine life; at the head of the other stands the darkness: all that men have independently of God. At the term of the one lies eternal life: an unending share in divine life given by God; at the term of the other lies (eternal) loss incurred by men: the sad fate of being forever left with what man has without God. Between the principle and the term of each series intervenes an act of man: acceptance of God's offer through faith in Christ the light leads to eternal life, while attachment to what is opposed to God (and Christ) but proper to man without God results in eternal loss. In Jn 12 the same pair of contrary series occurs. At the head of one stands the Father offered to the world by and in Christ the light (vv. 44-46, 49 f.; cf. 35 f.); at the head of the other stands the darkness (vv. 35 f., 46).

¹³ If the apostles were "of the world," the world would surely cherish them since they would be "its own" (Jn 15:19). The same holds true of Christians in general (1 Jn 3:7-15). See also Jn 8:42-47, where this principle underlies the explanation given of the Jews' lack of love for Christ.

At the term of one lies salvation or eternal life (vv. 47, 50); at the term of the other lies judgment or condemnation and loss (v. 48). An act on man's part intervenes to link the principle and term of each series: in the one, faith in Christ; in the other, remaining in the darkness, which results in not believing or rejecting Christ (vv. 44–48). The principal difference between the two passages lies in the great emphasis which the later passage (ch. 12) lays on the enormity of men's criminal rejection of God offering Himself to them in Christ—an emphasis easily explained by this chapter's role as epilogue to the account of the public ministry, which itself has been hardly more than the story of a long series of repeated refusals to believe in Christ on the part of men. Because John here insists more on men's refusal to believe, he naturally gives a fuller explanation of their rejection of Christ or their remaining in the darkness. Refusal to believe and the will to remain in the darkness come from love for the glory of men.

(37) Now, though He had worked so many signs in their presence, they did not believe in Him, (38) that the word which the prophet Isaiah spoke might be fulfilled, "Lord, who has believed our report, and to whom has the arm of the Lord been revealed?" (39) This is why they could not believe, because Isaiah said again, (40) "He has blinded their eyes, and hardened their hearts, lest they see with their eyes, and understand with their hearts, and be converted, and I heal them." (41) Isaiah said these things when he saw His glory and spoke of Him. (42) Yet, even among the rulers many believed in Him; but because of the Pharisees they did not acknowledge it, that they might not be put out of the synagogue. (43) For they loved the glory of men more than the glory of God.

The two citations from Isaiah in vv. 37–41 show that God had already predicted men's disbelief in the *OT*. Verse 42a qualifies the situation as not being one of total disbelief: many of the Jewish leaders themselves, John notes, were convinced of the truth of Christ's claims, though they refused to profess this conviction.¹⁴ Verse 42b gives the reason: "because of the Pharisees . . . that they might not be put out

¹⁴ Is this "belief" in Christ on the part of many of the Jewish leaders to be understood as the faith that makes disciples? So it would seem, but it is evidently only incipient and imperfect faith, even more imperfect than that of the disciples (see note 8), since, by refusing even to manifest itself outwardly, it does not go so far as theirs. Jn 8:30 ff. furnishes us with a parallel case where many "believe in" Him and then immediately reject Him when He explains His claims a little further, even taking up stones to put Him to death.

of the synagogue." And verse 43 analyzes this fear of exclusion from the synagogue as fear of losing human glory: "For they loved the glory of men rather than the glory of God." The ultimate reason for their unwillingness to profess faith in Christ was their love for the glory of men.

This present passage, though the only text which ascribes refusal of faith directly to a *love* of glory, is not the only one which mentions the glory that prevents men from believing in Christ. In three other places Christ finds the obstacle to faith in men's concern over glory (Jn 5:41-44; 7:18; 8:50). By comparing these passages with our own, we can form a clear idea of the nature of this glory. 5:41 and 44 present it as honor, praise, or approval given by men. After declaring that He does not seek glory from men, Christ demands from His hearers: "How can you believe [in me], since you receive glory from one another . . . ?" 7:18 and 8:50 describe the man who seeks such glory as a man interested in self-advancement or self-exaltation: he who "speaks of himself" (i.e., according to 5:43, on his own authority or to win credence, admiration, and the like for himself) is seeking "his own glory." Since according to 5:44 seeking such glory necessarily implies abdicating all desire for the glory that comes from God, the "glory of men" must mean honor or exaltation given a man by other men independently of God. Love for the glory of men is a man's love for a (false) greatness, a greatness enjoyed apart from God. Like man's love for the darkness, i.e., for his state without God, a state of his own making, it is love for something which man has independently of God. This love of something possessed independently of God prevents acceptance of God's offer of himself in Christ.

Love for One's Own Life—Jn 12:25

In 12:25 another mention of culpable love occurs: "He who loves (*ho philōn*) his life (*psychēn*) loses it, and he who hates his life in this world will keep it for (*eis*) eternal life (*zōēn*)." The word *psychē* can be rendered either as "life" (present physical life) or, following Semitic usage (*nephesh*), as "self." Whichever rendering we adopt, the sense remains substantially the same: it is love for self or love that would spare self which leads to losing eternal life.

In this verse Christ enunciates the *NT* paradox of self-renunciation and self-denial,¹⁵ which the Synoptics report in a slightly different way (Mt 10:39; 16:25; Mk 8:35; Lk 9:24; 17:33). The differences between their version and John's help clarify the exact meaning of the principle. The Synoptics' contraries are sacrifice of self (losing one's life, *psychē*) for the sake of Christ (all the texts just cited except Lk 17:33) and seeking to save self. John's opposites are loving one's life or self in this world and hating it. John's hating the life one has in this world corresponds to their sacrificing self for Christ's sake. His love of self is equivalent to their seeking to save or spare self. Self-love, a love which values what a man is and has in this world above Christ Himself, leads to losing eternal life.¹⁶ The love that Christ condemns in Jn 12:25 is this inordinate love of self in preference to Himself.

The immediate context does not set this self-love in opposition to faith; faith is not even mentioned. Evidently, however, if this love results in losing eternal life, it must, like the love in Jn 12:43, be opposed to the faith by which a man lays hold on eternal life.

The fourth Gospel, then, mentions three loves as opposed to faith: love of the darkness (3:19), love of the glory of men (12:43), and love of self in this world (12:25). The first is the sinner's love of his unhappy state of separation from God: an attachment to self and what the self has independently of God. The second is love for self-exaltation—but for a glorification of self independent of the glory that comes from God. The third is a man's love for what he is and has in this world in preference to Christ. In short, all three of them are inordinate self-love, love of self independently of God. This is the love which results in hatred of Christ the light (Jn 3:20) and makes acceptance of Him by faith impossible.

Love of the World—1 Jn 2:15 f.

In his first epistle too, John speaks of a love that excludes union with God (and therefore excludes the faith which makes union with God

¹⁵ In Jn 12:23 ff. Christ enunciates this principle and applies it both to Himself (in His impending passion) and to His disciples (who must follow Him). The Synoptics apply it to the disciples only but give it immediately after noting that in taking up his cross the disciple is merely following Christ.

¹⁶ The principle is expressed in a way quite similar to Jn 12:25 in Ap 12:11: those conquer the dragon who "did not love *tēn psychēn autōn achri thanatou*."

possible): love of "the world and what is in the world." To understand this love, we must first understand John's notion of "the world." In his account of the last discourse and especially in the first of his three epistles, he presents the world as the personification of the human forces which oppose the realization of God's salvific designs (1 Jn 3:1, 13; 4:4 f.; 5:4 f., 19). He explains this opposition by the activity of God's archadversary, the devil, who holds full sway over the world (1 Jn 3:8, 10; 4:4 f.; 5:18 f.). Only faith in Christ, which unites a man with God, can conquer the world and "him who is in the world" (1 Jn 5:4 f.; cf. 2:13 f.; 4:4). Love of the world, then, means love of the forces that oppose God's aim to give Himself to men. It therefore necessarily excludes faith and union with Him.

To define the world merely by its opposition to God is to define it negatively. In our present text, however, John presents a positive definition.

(15) Do not love the world or the things that are in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him; (16) because all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh and the lust of the eyes and the pride of life, is not from the Father, but from the world.

In verse 15 John forbids love of the world to Christians. In verse 16 he justifies the prohibition by noting the irreconcilability of love of the world and love of the Father; love for the world and what is in it means love for what is by its very nature opposed to God, what by its very nature is not and cannot be "of (*or* from) the Father." To show this irreconcilability John needs only to list the things that the world contains: the longing of the flesh, the longing of the eyes, and the haughty airs of this life. The first two are evidently craving for self-satisfaction; the third is self-exaltation. The remark that these three are "not of the Father" identifies them as a self-love that seeks the self's satisfaction or exaltation independently of God or without regard for Him.

To sum up. In John's first epistle as in his Gospel the culpable love which serves as the great obstacle to faith and union with God is inordinate self-love. Termed love of the darkness or love of what is in the world, it means the sinner's love for his sad, godless state—a state of unbridled self-seeking of his own making. Called love of the glory of men or love of one's own life (or self) in this world, it is just as clearly love of something for the self independently of God. This is the love

which by its very nature makes union with God through faith impossible and even leads to hatred of Christ the light.

THE LOVES ASSOCIATED WITH FAITH

Love for the Glory of God—Jn 12:43

In several Johannine passages, we find opposed to the self-love which impedes faith a contrary love closely associated with acceptance of Christ. One text which shows us these contrary loves in opposition is Jn 12:43. When explaining why many of the Jewish leaders, though convinced of Christ's mission, refused to profess faith in Him, John says, "They loved the glory of men rather than the glory of God." The obvious implication is that, had they loved rather the glory of God, they would not have hesitated to proclaim themselves believers in Christ. Love for the glory of God, then, stands allied to faith and opposed to love for the glory of men.

Since love for the glory of men is love for honor or approval given by men, love for the glory of God would seem to be love for honor or approval given by God. In the very texts in which Christ blames the desire of glory from men, He praises or justifies seeking the glory that comes from God (Jn 5:41, 44; cf. 8:50, 54). However, the expression "love for the glory of God" can equally well convey the idea of love for glory given to God: had the Jewish leaders preferred rather to give glory to God than to receive it from men, they would have professed faith in Christ. Nor is this idea of giving glory to God absent from the fourth Gospel.¹⁷ If we hope to determine the precise meaning John wishes this love of the glory of God to have, we must examine what notion he has of the glory of God and of giving glory to God or receiving it from Him.

The word *doxa*, deriving from *dokēō*, occurs regularly in the LXX for the Hebrew *kābōd*. In OT usage the "glory of God" is usually an outward manifestation of the transcendent divine excellence.¹⁸ In the

¹⁷ See Jn 9:24: the Pharisees demanded that the blind man cured by Christ "give glory to God" by denying that Jesus, whom they branded as a sinner, had performed the miracle. The man would have glorified God by acknowledging that in His holiness He had not cooperated with a sinner (cf. 1 S 6:5).

¹⁸ See a concordance to the LXX under the word *doxa*. For a brief study of the semantics underlying the NT usage of this word, see A. J. Vermeulen, *The Semantic Development of Gloria in Early-Christian Latin* (Utrecht, 1956) pp. 6-18.

NT the Apocalypse contains the expression with precisely this *OT* idea. Thus the glory of God illumines the earth (Ap 18:1) or the new Jerusalem (21:11, 23), or it fills the heavenly temple with smoke (15:8). The transition from a manifestation of the divine excellence to the excellence itself is easy and natural. We find the transition made in the expression "to give glory to God." Men give glory to God or glorify Him by admitting or acknowledging His divine excellence (Ap 11:13; 14:7; 16:9; 19:7): they glorify Him by recognizing His glory. Fundamentally the same idea of the glory of God is found in the fourth Gospel.

Divine glory is the divine excellence proper to God. The Son of God made man has it but, like everything which He has, He has it from the Father; His glory is the glory which the Father also has and which the Father has given Him as Son (Jn 1:14; 17:5). Christ "manifests His glory" by manifesting His own proper excellence, i.e., by showing Himself to men for what He really is: the Son of God made man (Jn 1:14; 2:11; 11:4). Now His very carrying out of His salvific mission, as we saw above, includes leading men to faith or to the recognition of Him for what He is. By simply carrying out this mission, therefore, He reveals His identity (and therefore His excellence) to men; in other words, He manifests His glory. "The Word was made flesh . . . and we have seen His glory, the glory which He has as only-begotten Son from the Father: *doxan hōs monogenous para patros*" (Jn 1:14).

This manifestation of the Son's glory is of itself a manifestation of the Father's glory; for the Son's glory is only the same divine excellence which the Father has and which He has received from the Father as Son (cf., e.g., Jn 7:18; 14:13; and especially 17:4, 6). In theological terminology the two have one same divine nature, in which the divine excellence lies, but the Son has received it from the Father: by passing on the one divine nature to a consubstantial Son, the Father gives this Son the excellence or glory which is His own. As soon, therefore, as the Son's excellence is known, the Father's is necessarily known. "He who has seen me has seen the Father" (Jn 14:9). The Son become man—become visible or manifest to men—is necessarily a manifestation to men of the Father's divinity, since His own divinity is also the Father's. The Father, therefore, is necessarily glorified with the Son; the two cannot be glorified separately because the glorification, i.e., the man-

ifestation of the excellence, of either one is of itself a manifestation of the excellence or glory of the other.

With this in mind we can understand what John says about the glorification of the Son by the Father and the Father by the Son. The Father glorifies the Son in that He communicates His own excellence or glory to the Son and, sending Him into the world, manifests it in Him. But by that very manifestation of the Son's glory he also manifests His own glory or glorifies Himself (Jn 11:4, 40; 12:23, 28; 13:31 f.; 17:1). The Son glorifies the Father by "manifesting the Father's name," i.e., the Father's identity or excellence, but by so doing He necessarily manifests His own glory at the same time (Jn 17:1; cf. 1:14; 7:18; 8:50, 54), since this very same "name" or excellence "the Father has given Him" (17:7, 11 f.).¹⁹ All this is true especially of Christ's passion and resurrection, which appear both as Christ's own glorification by the Father (Jn 7:39; 12:16, 23 [v. 28 shows that the passion is included]; 13:31 f.; 17:1) and as Christ's principal means of glorifying the Father (cf. especially 13:31 f.; 17:1 f.). By the very same act the Son is honored and glorified by the Father and honors and glorifies the Father, because the glory, the excellence, that is manifested is the one same glory possessed by both.

What is true of the relations of the Son and the Father is true also of the relations of the disciples and Christ. If the Father has given glory to Him, Christ has given that very same glory to them (Jn 17:22). Through Christ they have a share in God's life, divinity, excellence—in His glory. They therefore have glory from God which is a share in God's own glory. By living as Christians should, the disciples manifest, in the very way in which they live, the life, the divine reality, which they have from Him. This outward manifestation in their daily actions by the disciples of the divine life within them glorifies Christ (Jn 17:10) and the Father (15:8) or, in other words, manifests the divine glory or excellence in which they have received a share (17:22). In short, the disciples' Christian lives glorify God because they are a manifestation of divine life or glory.

On the other hand, God "honors" (a rare word in John and ap-

¹⁹ Note Jn 16:14, where the Spirit glorifies the Son because He receives of what is the Son's and announces it.

parently equivalent to "glorify")²⁰ the disciples by uniting them intimately with Christ, by letting them "see," i.e., share in, *Christ's* glory (cf. 17:24).²¹ The Christian life is a share in the divine life (or divine excellence). The disciples have this Christian life from God, who does not give it to them once and for all (i.e., at their initial acceptance of Christ) but continually communicates it to them.²² God's giving them this share in His own life (or excellence or glory) is obviously a "glorification" of them by God. When, therefore, they do anything that manifests their union with Christ, the disciples not only honor or glorify God (by manifesting His divine life, or glory, in their action); they *are glorified* by God (who is giving them this share in His life or glory).

If we ask, then, whether love for the glory of God refers to the will to glorify God or the will to have glory and approval from Him, we must answer that it is both. God is glorified by the very thing by which He glorifies us: by our living and manifesting His own life, His own glory, in which He gives us a share.

In our text, then, love for the glory of God is man's disposition and will to have a borrowed glory, a glory that comes from God and whose possession glorifies God (and, we might add, this is really the only kind of glory that befits or is even possible for a creature, a being which is by its very definition totally dependent on God for all that it is and has). Love for the glory of God stands in quite clear opposition to the inordinate self-love by which a man seeks honor for himself independently of God. Any such desire for an independent glory excludes of itself all

²⁰ John never says that God "glorifies" (*doxazō*) the disciples. In Jn 12:26 the Father "honors" them. This word (*timāō*) in the two other places where it occurs in the Gospel (5:23; 8:49 f.: of men's honoring the Father and the Son) seems to be equivalent to *doxazō*. (Note especially the second text, which seems to equate the two ideas: Christ does not seek His own glory but honors the Father.) The noun *timē* occurs only once in Jn (4:44) but six times in Ap, where it is always linked with *doxa*.

²¹ Cf. Jn 3:36 where "seeing" life is equivalent to having it; see also 8:51 on "seeing" death. On the Christian's share in God's glory, present and eschatological, according to Paul as well as John, see Vermeulen, *op. cit.*, pp. 15 f.

²² Several passages of the fourth Gospel mention the active abiding presence of the divine Persons in the disciples. See Jn 14:23 on the abiding presence of the Father and the Son; 6:57 f. on the abiding, vivifying presence of the Son; 7:37 ff.; 14:16, 26; 15:26; 16:13 on the Spirit's active presence; according to 17:11 the Father must "keep" the disciples in His name.

readiness to accept a borrowed glory from God. On the other hand, readiness to receive a share in God's glory evidently inspires and makes possible the faith which accepts Christ for what He is: the Son of God come to give men a share in God's life and glory.²³

Love for the Light—Jn 3:19

In the verse just studied (Jn 12:43), the Jewish leaders refused to make profession of faith in Christ the light because they "loved the glory of men rather than the glory of God." A closely parallel text occurs in Jn 3:19, where men refuse to draw near to the light come into the world because they "have loved the darkness rather than the light." If those who reject the light love the darkness rather than the light, then the obvious implication is that those who accept the light have the contrary disposition: love of the light rather than the darkness. "Now this is the judgment: the light has come into the world, yet men have loved the darkness rather than the light, for their works were evil." The context identifies the men who come to the light by faith (the men, therefore, who love the light) as those who "do the truth," those whose works have been "done in God" (v. 21). Works "done in God" must mean works done under divine inspiration and guidance or at least done in accord with God's will. Men who have "done their works in God" have had or have something of God within them (His passing inspirations or at least acts that have fulfilled His will). They are responsive to His advances and therefore prepared to accept His offer of Himself in Christ. Comparing this readiness to accept Christ with the evil man's stubborn clinging to the darkness or love of the darkness, John calls it love of the light.

Coming to the light (by faith) means fully accepting God's offer of Himself in Christ. But by accepting this offer a man gives up his own independent life in order to become God's child and share in and live His life. The love of the light which lies in readiness to accept God's offer in Christ implies nothing less than the will or readiness to have a

²³ Certain Johannine texts (e.g., Jn 2:11, as also 1:14 compared with 1:7-13) make faith man's response to the manifestation of Christ's glory. This is only another way of expressing the idea around which Jn 1-12 centers: the Word, the Son, comes into the world as God's manifestation and offer of Himself to men, and men must accept Him by faith for what He shows Himself to be (and is).

borrowed glory, a glory given by God. In other words, love for the light implies love for the glory of God.

Love for Christ—Jn 8:42-47

Jn 8:42 also speaks of a love which only those have who come by faith to Christ the light. It is no longer love of the light, however, but explicitly love of Christ.

(42) Jesus therefore said to them, "If God were your Father, you would surely love me. For from God I came forth and have come; for neither have I come of myself, but He sent me. (43) Why do you not understand my speech? Because you cannot listen to my word. (44) The father from whom you are is the devil, and the desires of your father, it is your will to do. He was a murderer from the beginning and has not stood in the truth because there is no truth in him. When he tells a lie, he speaks from his very nature, for he is a liar and the father of lies. (45) But because I speak the truth, you do not believe me. (46) Which of you can convict me of sin? If I speak the truth, why do you not believe me? (47) He who is of God hears the words of God. The reason why you do not hear is that you are not of God."

The context is practically the same as in 3:19. In 8:43-47 the Jews refuse to believe Christ's words; in 3:20 men refuse to come to Christ the light. In 8:44, 47 Christ's hearers reject Him because they are "of (*ek*) the devil" and not "of (*ek*) God," i.e., they have the devil for father, follow his example, and do his desires; in 3:19 men do not come to the light because they love the darkness and do evil deeds. On the other hand, in 8:47, 40, 42 the man who has God as father—the man, then, who has something of God within him—loves Christ and listens to and accepts God's words as they are spoken by Christ. So too in 3:19, the man whose works have been "done in God" (under God's inspiration or in accordance with His will) loves the light and comes to it. There is, however, a difference between the two passages: chapter 8 *explains* the connection between love for Christ and readiness to put oneself at God's disposal, while chapter 3 only *implies* it. Those who are of (*ek*) God "love me," Christ says, "for from (*ek*) God I have gone out and come" (8:42). The man who is "of God" or has God as his father loves Christ precisely because Christ Himself is "of God." This man accepts Christ (by faith) as coming from God, as God's manifestation and offer of Himself to men, as God's offer of a share in His own

life to men; he accepts Christ so as to accept God. His love of Christ is nothing other than love for the glory of God.

Love of God—Jn 5:40–44 and 1 Jn 2:15

After having examined these loves which accompany faith, we may well ask ourselves whether they are not all simply manifestations of love for God. Love for the glory of God, in the sense of readiness to accept a share in God's life which will glorify Him, seems nothing other than benevolence or love for God Himself. Love for Christ as God's manifestation and offer to men of a share in His glory amounts to love for God who reveals Himself in Christ. John himself actually presents the "love of God" as being the ultimate explanation of these loves which accompany faith. The phrase occurs in his Gospel in 5:40–44. The genitive is, of course, ambiguous. The love of God can mean *God's own* love (with which God Himself loves), love *from* God (come from or given by God), or love *for* God. Since John seems deliberately to avoid the more natural and unequivocal verbal phrase "to love God," his use of the noun phrase bears investigation.

Christ declares the Jews' rejection of Himself a proof that they do not have the "love of God" within them. "I know you," He tells them, "that you do not have the love of God in you" (Jn 5:42). The proof follows: "I have come in my Father's name, and you will not receive me." If they had the "love of God," they would accept Him and show interest in the glory of God (v. 44). Since acceptance of Christ and especially concern over God's glory imply benevolence towards God, we would naturally tend to interpret this love of God as love *for* God. The only reason for hesitating is the somewhat unusual expression. John could easily have said, "You do not love God." He preferred, "You do not have the love of God in you." This somewhat awkward construction with the genitive seems all the more unusual in view of the fact that the noun *agapē* occurs with relative rarity in the fourth Gospel. Besides, John speaks of the disciples' loving God (using the verb with direct object) in only one place in the whole of his writings (1 Jn 5:2), the climactic passage which explains the full depths of his concept of love. We may wonder, therefore, whether he does not here deliberately choose a somewhat ambiguous circumlocution in order to reserve the unambiguous expression for then. Perhaps he wishes to

imply to his readers that his thought has deeper meaning than the merely obvious sense suggested by the context.²⁴

The "love of God" reappears in 1 Jn 2:15: "If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him." Here, as in Jn 5:42, it stands in unequivocal opposition to love *for* the world. But here too John expresses his meaning by the same ambiguous phrase: "the love of *the Father* is not in him."

CONCLUSION

In Christ God offers Himself to men out of love. Christ is the concrete manifestation of God's love in the world. To believe in Christ means to accept Him as God's offer of Himself; in other words, it means to comply with the advances of God's love. Those who love themselves inordinately, who desire a glory independent of the borrowed glory they can have from God in Christ or who love the evil which they have apart from God, can only reject the offer of God's love and refuse to believe. Only those who love God's glory and who therefore love Christ, the manifestation and offer of that glory, will accept the advances of God's love. These are the men who have the "love of God" within them.

²⁴ We reserve to a later study the final solution to the problem of the precise meaning of the ambiguous genitive. For this, a more thorough investigation of the nature of love in the Johannine literature is imperative.