

**PERSPECTIVES IN JOHANNINE THEOLOGY. THE LOVE COMMAND IN
JOHN 13: 34-35: FROM ORTHODOXY TO ORTHOPRAXIS FOR THE
CHURCH IN NIGERIA**

Peter H. KAMAI, PhD

Faculty of Theology

Veritas University, Bwari, Abuja

Janibanibu@gmail.com; [Kamaip @veritas.edu.ng](mailto:Kamaip@veritas.edu.ng)

DOI: 10.13140/RG.2.2.17689.19041

Abstract

It is fair to observe that ‘Love’ is the most misunderstood and bastardized word in the religious vocabulary. Be that as it may, ‘Love’ still remains at the center of the Christian proclamation. The Evangelist John brings the centrality of love to its logical conclusion by insisting that ‘God is love’ (4:8, 16), thereby making love the foundation of all reality. Unfortunately, fundamental principles tend to be difficult to grasp, perhaps because there is nothing more basic that one can use to define them. Hence, for the Christian, love must in some sense always remain both a mystery and a gift, especially since love is the supreme expression of God who himself is the supreme mystery and gift in our lives. The Status Questionis of this research is an attempt to examine the concept of Christian ‘love’ from a particularly Johannine perspective. The concrete implications of the imperative to love are, therefore, identified with a view to proper and relevant orthopraxis. This is the gap the research intends to address or fill. The methodology employed include the study of the passage of John 13: 34-3, which is the Locus Classicus on the subject, from an exegetical, theological, Philosophical and sociological perspectives or points of view. Other relevant texts will also be examined. This will bring out the implications or the concrete imperatives the injunction to love imposes on the believer and this, effectively will serve as the results of the study. It is hope, when all is said and done, the believer will begin to see this characteristically Johannine injunction in a new light and will be challenged to begin to live them out in new way. This would be the singular, albeit non-exhaustive contribution of the study. The research begins by establishing how love is an attitude which manifests itself in concrete ways. It also makes a comparison of the two important models of Christian love and their strengths and weaknesses. From the Christian perspective what is ‘real’ is the eschatological and our freedom to choose. Therefore, Christian love must begin with self-sacrifice. At the risk of

making an artificial synthesis, the Johannine position is summarized by affirming that the foundation of Christianity is love, and that love is only real if it manifests itself in sacrificial acts. Consequently, love grounds the importance of the incarnation and of Christian ethics (e.g., 1 Jn. 3:16). Furthermore, the research explores how Christian love always looks forward in hope to union with the beloved, a union that will be an unspeakable blessing to all believers. As love looks forward, however, it respects the freedom of the other to accept or reject love and the growth which this love would empower. Consequently, as we look forward, we can see evil people as “beautiful,” but yet be realistic. An important implication of what we have reviewed so far, which is also the concluding reflection of this research, is that the doctrine of the incarnation and a life of practical ethics reinforce each other and are not mutually exclusive. This has proven and continues to remain a challenge to the Church in Nigeria and beyond. As a practical demonstration of the thesis of this research, concrete circumstances within the Nigerian socio-political, religious and cultural scenario are indicated where the Johannine injunction to Love can be actualized.

Keywords: Love, Theology, Mystery, Eschatological, Sacrifice, Hope

Introduction

The foundational Christian claims propose radical interpretations of reality; to put it more philosophically, the New Testament has ontological consequences. Through God’s eternal Word “all things came to be, and nothing came to be saved through the Word” (Jn. 1:3). Weinandy fully recognizes this point—a crucial recognition in light of modernity’s ontological deficit: the one-dimensional worldview both spawned and reinforced by its constricted sense of reason as merely utilitarian and technocratic. Thus art, poetry, and music, not to mention religious experience, are not deemed to convey any cognitive content²⁶. The New Testament scholar Luke Timothy Johnson asserts that, “Perhaps because of a distaste for—and ignorance of—ontology, and the flat epistemological monism that shapes modernity, it is difficult for many to hold together the human and divine in Christ, whether in profession or in piety or in politics”.²⁷ It is a commonplace that the Gospel of John exhibits a “realized eschatology,” the bringing of eternity into the present— “the one who eats my flesh and drinks my blood *has* eternal life” (Jn. 6:54a). The believer already shares the new life that Jesus brings, that Jesus is. Yet the appropriation of this new life, its “realization, is a process that is not yet fully

²⁶ Imbelli, Robert, P. (2021). “The Hour of Jesus”, First Things, Vol.6 No.5.

²⁷ Johnson, Luke Timothy, (2006). Hebrew: A commentary, Westminster John Knock Press, Louisville, Kentucky,55

accomplished. It will be complete only when Jesus returns in glory to raise up the believer “on the last day” (Jn. 6:54b)²⁸.

1. A Synthesis of the Johannine Corpus

After the death of Jesus Christ, there was the need to document about the concrete events of the life and ministry of Jesus, not just for the community of faith but more importantly for missionary and apologetical purposes. Some of the writers claimed to be eyewitness (1 Jn 1:1-3) while others claimed to have gathered their information from other sources, especially those who were first hand witnesses. All the writers viewed their teachings of Jesus from their peculiar perspectives and socio-cultural and theological standpoints. Any document worthy of its name presupposes that its readers have a wealth of prior knowledge and understanding. John's Gospel and Epistles presuppose that their readers know the Hebrew Scriptures (the Old Testament), and at least some of the history of early Christianity²⁹.

Weinandy further observes that, John offers a Spirit-inspired exegesis of the inexhaustible riches of the mystery of the Word made flesh. Hence, he does not hesitate to affirm that the Gospel communicates Jesus's “*ipsissima sententia*”: Jesus's own understanding and judgment of who he is, the beloved Son of the Father³⁰. Most obviously, it is announced in the Prologue to the Gospel: “To as many as received him, he gave power to become children of God” (Jn. 1:12). Indeed, the Prologue anticipates the entire movement of what is to come, revealing its mystical significance and cosmic scope. He summarizes the point with admirable concision: “The eternal Word through whom God created all that is, the Word who is the life-giving light, is the same Word through whom God will now re-create the world and transform men and women, through the Holy Spirit, into his children.”³¹

Traditionally the church has attributed five New Testament books to John, the fisherman who followed Jesus and became part of the inner circle of the twelve apostles: Revelation, 1, 2, 3 John, and the Gospel. All of these books are in koine Greek, the dominant language of the Eastern Mediterranean during the first century. According to Stott, “it is widely

²⁸ Imbelli, Robert, P. (2021). “The Hour of Jesus”, First Things, Vol.6 No. 5.

²⁹ Brown, R.E. (1986) *The Gospel and Epistles of John*. A Concise Commentary. Bombay: St Paul.

³⁰ Imbelli, Robert, P. (2021). “The Hour of Jesus”, First Things, Vol.6 No.5.

³¹ Imbelli, Robert, P. (2021). “The Hour of Jesus”, First Things, Vol.6 No.5.

agreed that the Gospel and the letters came from the pen of the same author.”³² There are many striking theological phrases which are recurring in the writings, phrases such as “the spirit of truth,” “light” and “darkness”, “of the world”, “children of God”, “born of God”, “abiding in Christ”, “love”, “witness”, “life” and “death” are common in these writings. This only lend credence to the fact that they must have originated from a common source otherwise known as the Johannine School Community.³³

To attempt a synthesis of Johannine teaching is to undertake a daunting 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 his ideas, at times altering the meaning of terms in the process. 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, 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. Furthermore, in his first epistle, in which in four short chapters the verb *agapao* and its derivatives *agape* and *agapetos* recur more frequently than in any other book of the New Testament, he completes his explanation by revealing the full depths of love's meaning³⁴.

Among the Evangelists, only John does not recount the scene of Jesus's Transfiguration. But, as many scholars have noted, the whole Gospel is the manifestation of the transfigured Jesus. Each of the signs narrated displays the power of the transfigured One and bears witness to the Prologue's exultant confession: “We have seen his glory!” (Jn. 1:18). But also distinctive of John's Gospel, and underscored by Weinandy, is that the believer is called to participate in Jesus's own filial identity, to share in his transfigured glory. The Eastern Christian tradition of *theosis*, the divinization of the believer, finds nourishing soil in this most contemplative of the Gospels.

Christianity and the Challenge of Agape Love

“Love” is the center of the Christian proclamation. Jesus insisted that the two great commandments were to love God with all one's being and to love one's neighbor as oneself (e.g., Mark 12:28-31). Paul, the consummate missionary, insisted that the center

³²Stott, John. *Basic Introduction to the New Testament*, (Revised by Stephen Moetyer) William B Eerdmans Publishing Company, Grand rapid, Michigan, 77.

³³Brown, Raymond E. (1979). *The Community of the Beloved Disciple*. New York: Paulist Press, 204.

³⁴Han, E. Nathan. (1971). *A Parsing Guide to The Greek New Testament*. Scottsdale: Herald Press, 212

of Christian life was “faith, hope, and love” and, “the greatest of these is love” (1 Cor. 13:13). The John brings the centrality of love to its logical conclusion by insisting that “God is love” (4:8, 16), thereby making love the foundation of all reality both in the old and new creations³⁵. Unfortunately, fundamental principles, like love, justice and compassion tend to be difficult to grasp, perhaps because there is nothing more basic that one can use to define them. Hence, for Christian love must in some sense always remain both a mystery and a gift, especially since love is the supreme expression of God who himself is the supreme mystery and gift in our lives. Nevertheless, we should make some attempt to understand Christian “love.” This is the main objective of this research.

St. Thomas Aquinas defines love as, “Willing the Good of another and doing something concrete about it”. Love, is therefore, an attitude which manifests itself in concrete ways or realities. Love clearly, is an inner state, a “feeling” or “commitment,” and to some extent we can perceive that inner state directly in others. We pick up the “feelings.” However, if we perceive that this inner state is lacking, things which otherwise express love no longer feel like love. For example, birthday greetings from a computer do not make us feel loved. Therefore, love must manifest itself in concrete actions. Saying that a husband who always mistreats his wife loves her borders on the ludicrous. At this point it would be worth our while to attempt a comparison on the two important models of Christian love and their strengths and weaknesses.

The Two Models of Christian Love

As a working proposition, some scholars have suggested two models on how to live out the Christian imperative to love. These models, which are by no means exhaustive, have their strengths and weaknesses, but when explored, they portray the different dimensions of love which have hitherto remained untapped, unused and dormant and they also open up vistas of the concept that could help the believer live out the injunction to love in a prophetic way.

Self-Sacrificing Love

According to this model there are several kinds of love for which it is customary in theological discussion to use the Greek terms:

Eros: Romantic love that gratifies the need for a sexual relationship. By extension eros can be any passionate, ecstatic love that longs to possess and be possessed. It is to be

³⁵Pheme, Perkins. (1997). "The Gospel According to John" in The New Jerome Biblical Commentary. Wellington: Geoffrey Chapman.

noted that eros is exclusive. We do not want to share our spouse or even our favorite outfit. Indeed, *eros* also separates us from other animals, because the human sexual urge is different and more complicated than the animal's "structure of hunger and thirst." We want to relish and cherish the other *person*, to know and be known.

Philia: The affection between friends that gratifies our general need for fellowship. It is to be noted that *philia* is inclusive. We want our friends to be friends with each other.

Storge: The Enhanced Strong's Lexicon defines *storge* love as "cherishing one's kindred, especially parents or children; the mutual love of parents and children and wives and husbands; loving affection; prone to love; loving tenderly; chiefly of the reciprocal tenderness of parents and children." Many examples of family love and affection are found in Scripture, such as the love and mutual protection among Noah and his wife (Genesis 7), their sons, and daughters-in-law in Genesis; the love of Jacob for his sons (Genesis 35) and the strong love of the sisters Martha and Mary in the gospels had for their brother Lazarus (Luke 19)³⁶.

Agape: Self-sacrificing love that primarily gratifies the needs of someone else without giving us any selfish benefit. Christian love is *agape* and this kind of love was especially shown by Jesus's death on the cross. The crucifixion was therefore a classic demonstration of *Agape* love³⁷.

However, in evaluating this school of thought it has to be admitted that the Greek language does have different words for love, and usually (though certainly not always) the New Testament uses "agape" for Christian love. What is more, the New Testament makes it clear that self-sacrifice is central to Christian faith and practice.

Nonetheless, there are besetting problems with this model of love. To begin with, Christian love is not merely self-sacrificing but longs for fellowship, (*koinonia*). Note that in early Christianity an "agape" was a fellowship meal. Secondly, Love that is purely self-sacrificing will inevitably begin to become either patronizing or masochistic.

The Ideal Love

According to this model, Christian love is the ideal blending of every type of legitimate love. Two American Scholars, Otto Bird and Donald Gelpi are the chief proponents of this school of thought. This model underscores the fact that there are several types of love, for

³⁶ Lewis, C. S. *The Four Loves*. New York: Harcourt, Brace, Jovanovich, 1960. <https://www.cslewis.com/four-types-of-love/> [Accessed 14/6/2022].

³⁷ Peschke, K.H. (2016). *Christian Ethics* vol. II. New Delhi: Rekha.

example a. *Gift love*: I love you because you are in need. b. *Appreciative love*: I love you because you are beautiful. c. *Need love*: I love you because you satisfy my needs. The deepest form of love must combine all of these dimensions³⁸.

However, in evaluating this school of thought one has to admit that all of these dimensions are necessary for the deepest kind of love. Nonetheless, there are problems: 1). The other school of thought is surely correct in emphasizing the primacy of self-sacrifice in the Christian proclamation. 2). In many cases this combination of love is virtually impossible looking at the objective reality and our context. Thus, it is simply untrue that everyone is “beautiful.”

In my estimation, I think that we can combine the strengths of the two schools of thought by remembering that from a Christian perspective “the really real” is the eschatological and our freedom to choose. Therefore, Christian love must begin with self-sacrifice. 1. Our love is itself a response to the self-sacrifice of Jesus who died for us while we were sinners. 2. This self-sacrifice allows us to become lovers. 3. In our own lives we must bestow undeserved love on others so that they too may have the opportunity to grow. This self-sacrifice includes:

- a. Bearing the spiritual and psychological pain of others (e.g., as we listen to their problems. In recent times Pope Francis advocated that Christians should embark on the Apostolate of listening. Quietly listening is a strong form of communication. We don’t always need to be the one giving opinions. Sometimes creating space, giving attention, and validating someone else is more valuable than anything we could say.
- b. Bearing the social pain of others (as we accept criticism for associating with them).
- c. Bearing the financial burden of others. e.g., as we see them wallowing in penury. Nevertheless, Christian love always looks forward in hope to union with the beloved, a union that will be an unspeakable blessing to us. It has to be noted, especially, that God looks forward to us becoming his “friends” when we will be utterly “beautiful” (John 15:13-15).

As love looks forward, however, it respects the freedom of the other to accept or reject love and the growth which this love would empower. We can also equally see evil people as “beautiful,” but yet be realistic.

³⁸Bird, Otto.(1964). “The Complexity of Love”. Thought 39: 210-220

1. Their beauty consists in the following facts:
 - a. Through God's power (including God loving them through us) they can choose to become better.
 - b. Because they are not yet living up to their potential, they are suffering now or are numb.
2. Nevertheless, we must respect their freedom to choose not to answer God's call, and we must realize that in and of themselves they may not be beautiful and they may choose not to become so. It has to be admitted that this understanding of "Christian love" goes much deeper than the self-sacrifice that "Agape" implies.

Literary Context of John 13: 34-35.

It is now commonly asserted that John 13: 31-16: 33 is written according to the literary genre of the farewell discourse³⁹. Farewell discourses typically contain exhortations to keep the commandments of God, especially the commandment to love one another, and thus manifest the unity of the brethren. John F. Randall⁴⁰ has demonstrated that *agapē* (charity) is one of the most commonplace words in the whole literature. Love is sometimes expressed in service. Love serves as a sign for the nations. Joseph is the example or image of fraternal love. Randall's study thus points to fraternal charity as a characteristic trait of the farewell discourse genre.

To speak of the love commandment as a "new commandment" is to speak the language of the Johannine school. The Johannine phraseology "new commandment" appears not only in Jn 13: 34 but also in 1 Jn 2: 7-8 and 2 Jn 5: 3⁴¹. The commandment of love has been given for those who abide in the light by none other than the Lord himself. The commandment is new because it is the commandment for the new age. Thus, the author of 1 John affirms that the newness of the commandment owes to the fact that its truth⁴² derives from Christ himself ("truth in him" - v. 8), and that its fulfillment is pertinent to

³⁹ Among the characteristic traits of the farewell discourse found in John are the use of direct style ("I-you") and the characteristic expression, "little children" (John 13: 33. Cf. T. Gad 4: 1-2; 6: 1; T. Rub. 1: 3, 4: 5; T. Iss 5: 1, 6: 1). Cf. Noël LAZURE. "Louange au Fils de l'homme et Commandement nouveau. Jn 13, 31-33a.34-35," *Assemblées du Seigneur* 26 (1973) 73-80, p. 74. For a brief exposition of the literary genre, one might consult R.E. BROWN, pp. 597-603.

⁴⁰ RANDALL, John, F., (1962). *The Theme of Unity in John XVII: 20-23*. Louvain, 63-X3.

⁴¹ Cullpepper, R. Alan. (1975). "The Johannine School. An Evaluation of the Johannine-school Hypothesis based on an Investigation of the Manual of Ancient Schools", SBL Dissertation Series, 26, Missoula.

⁴² Bultmann's comment is apropos. He writes: *HALéthesis* therefore does not mean 'true' in the sense of 'correct', but characterizes the 'new commandment' as something verifying itself as real. That it verifies itself as real in the congregation is also said in 3: 14." R. BULTMANN, a.c., p. 27, n. 20.

the lives of Christians ("and in you") who live in the new age. In effect, the love commandment is new because it is the eschatological commandment, the commandment for the new age ethics for the final times.

These brief reflections on the context of the love commandment in the Fourth Gospel have served to show that the evangelist has truly integrated the theme of mutual love into the farewell discourses. As a result, the entirety of the farewell discourses is encompassed by the theme of love, which occurs at their outset (13: 1) and their conclusion (17: 26). The most obvious lesson to be learned from the author's redactional efforts is that he would have the love command understood in reference to Jesus' Passion-glorification. It is the Passion-glorification which imparts meaning to the love commandment; the love commandment is Jesus' legacy for his own to be fulfilled during the period of his absence. Such are but a few elements connoted by the rich Johannine formulation of the love commandment.

Exegetical Analysis of John 13:34-35

Agapate "you love!": Etymologically *agapate* is second (2nd) person plural, present indicative, active mood, subjunctive, but used here as imperative – you, love! It comes from the Greek word *agapaō*. It is a Greco-Christian term referring to love. It is the highest form of love, charity, and the love of God for mankind and mankind for God. In Christian parlance, it is seen as the love originating from God or Christ for humankind. It is a love that is beyond reason⁴³.

Allēlous "one another": Etymologically, it is accusative masculine plural. It is a reciprocal Pronoun from the word *allos*. It means "one another", "each other" (Rom 2:15, John 13:34)⁴⁴. The Concept of one another is firstly particularized to the apostles of Jesus, not the immediate people of the outside world. According to the New Jerome Biblical Commentary (2000), "The formulation of the Commandment as the distinctive mark of Christian Community among outsiders in John 13:35, differs from its use in 1 John to castigate those who create internal division within the Community". In John 17:20-23, Jesus prays for unity among the apostles and those who will believe in him through the apostles' words, that is, the later followers of Christ. In other words, what Jesus means in the issue of one another would mean the apostles first and other subsequent believers or followers. The implication is that you ought to love another so as to attract others who are

⁴³Perschbacheer, Wesley J. (ed). (1990). *The New Analytical Greek Lexicon*. Massachusetts: Hendrickson, 2.

⁴⁴Perschbacheer, Wesley J. (ed) (1990). *The New Analytical Greek Lexicon*. Massachusetts: Hendrickson, 2.

outside the fold. Effectively, the love we show one another, has a witness value. By their comportment, the early Christians elicited the following remarks from the pagans: “See how the love one another”.

The Johannine love commandment is not so much a precept as it is a gift. It does not so much imply a dictate from above as a presence from within. Looked at as one of the salvific gifts which Jesus gives to his own, the love commandment is indeed for those whom he has chosen and to whom Jesus gives the gifts of salvation. The salvific gifts are given to those who are his disciples, for it is among and with them that Jesus abides. Thus, Jesus' love for his disciples, as the revelation of the Father's love, is made present in the love which they have for one another. It is this pregnant theological reflection which constitutes the new commandment as an expression of that Revelation which the Revealer has come to make known. It is the reality of this participatory love which is Jesus' abiding in them, that is significant for all men, past and present: "By this ail men will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another" (J n 13: 35).

From Orthodoxy to Orthopraxis

There are nuances to be cognizant about this all-important Johannine injunction, they include among others, that firstly, it is a Command. It is not an invitation. It is not a request and it is not an option it is a command or an order. This being the case, it calls for total obedience on our part. In other words, it is an obligation to love one another.

Secondly, the Lord says to us: “Love one another.” He did not say, “Love one another when you are both young and/or when you are both healthy.” He did not say: “Love one another when the other one has stopped offending you.” He did not say: “love one another when the other loves you or good to you or he/she is cute or he/she is rich,” and others. The Lord only says, “Love one another,” without any conditions or limitations. He might say: “Lover one another even if she/he doesn’t love you or like or refuses to forgive you or he/she doesn’t need you anymore or she/he is no longer cute and desirable”. In other words, to love is forever.

Thirdly, the Lord says: “Love one another as I have loved you.” In this statement, once again, Jesus reminds us that love is the soul of our Christian life. It is not the liturgy or the cultic worship but love which is the core and the soul of our Christian life. When St. Bernard was asked, what is the measure of love, he answered: “The measure of love is to love without measure.” Our Lord Jesus Christ gave us an example of a love without measure. He did not condemn Mary Magdalene (John 20: 11-18). He called St. Matthew to be His apostle even though Matthew was a tax collector and a sinner (Matthew 9:9-12). He even was not afraid to touch and heal the sick and stretched out his hands to the lepers

who were considered as 'untouchables' during that time because nobody wanted to touch them and be near to them (Matthew 8:3).

This is the reason why we have to love one another not in the measure of our human ability to love or on account of how others can return our love but as God has loved us. A typical example would be; for wives, your husbands may not be perfect husbands yet you have to love them not because they have met your expectations but as Jesus loved us. For husbands, your wives may have weaknesses and shortcomings, but as Jesus loved us you must love them. You may have frustrations with your children but you continue to love them because of the love of Jesus that you experience in your life. This Christian principle is applied even to our enemies (Matthew 5:44).

Love is, therefore, the Christian identity. Love is the Christian uniform. Love is the Christian habit. If you are wearing the habit of love, you are in. If you are not wearing love as a habit, you are out. Jesus wants the world to recognize us as Christians. We need to evangelize and witness to people around us. But effective evangelization and witnessing has less to do with how fluently we speak and more to do with how faithfully we live. In the evangelization of Africa, many missionary groups came early and focused on making converts. Others came later but focused on service to the people, providing needed Medicare and integral education. These latter groups succeeded where the former groups failed. Words are only a small part of our witnessing for Christ. As St Francis of Assisi told his friars, "Preach the gospel at all times and use words if necessary."

The great Mahatma Gandhi was asked about his view of Christianity. What he said could show us what probably is keeping two-thirds of the world away from the Good News of Christianity: I have a great respect for Christianity. I often read the Sermon on the Mount and have gained much from it. I know of no one who has done more for humanity than Jesus. In fact, there is nothing wrong with Christianity, but the trouble is with you Christians. You do not begin to live up to your own teachings⁴⁵. The greatest homage we can pay to the Christian faith is to live in such a way that through us people begin to have a glimpse of the unbounded and unconditional love that God has shown us in Christ.

Concluding Reflection

The Christian life in John is a series of stages leading to final blessedness. The stages are conversion, baptism and Eucharist, committed discipleship, martyrdom or taking Jesus's place in this world. Each of these steps has an increasing price. Conversion requires

⁴⁵ Gandhi M. K. (1998), *The Message of Jesus Christ* (Mumbai: Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan, 97

coming and seeing (John 1. 39-41); the sacraments require the humble acceptance of paradox (6:52-66) and coming forward for a public confession; committed discipleship, the acknowledgment that we are in darkness and slavery (8:31-37) and the willingness to accept rejection from any community that abides in darkness (9); martyrdom is death in this world (12:9-11); the cost of taking Jesus's place in this world is loving as Jesus loved. Therefore, there is judgment at each stage of the Christian pilgrimage, because we can say no to the invitation to grow and thereby, reject life (6:66, 7:45-52, and 8:31)⁴⁶.

The various models of how Jesus and the Father are one are also models of how we enter into the divine life, for example the perfect imitation allows us to imitate God; we love one another as the Father loved Jesus. We may summarize the argument by saying that the love which unites the father and the son is always reaching out to include us. It is to be noted that the ultimate goal of human life is to see the eternal glory of Jesus and the Father (17:24) and to become God's friends (15:13-15).

Love is not easy, it is often very demanding; it requires a heroic effort, a heroic strength, a heroic courage to carry out, to live. It also requires that we ultimately see our lives within the context of the Cross; that everything is meaningless unless it is lived according to such self-gift. You and I — we are capable of such love — because it is what God calls us to, it is what he makes us to be Christians. “I give you a new commandment: love one another.” He means it, and nothing less. This is a mandate; an imperative; He is not giving us an alternative. We are either bought in entirely, and are offering our lives to each other in heroic self-gift *constantly*, or we are not loving as he has commanded us to. We either love as Christians or cease to be what we are, or what God calls us to be.

Bibliography

- Brown, R.E. (1986), *The Gospel and Epistles of John. A Concise Commentary*. Bombay: St Paul.
- Brown, Raymond E. (1979). *The Community of the Beloved Disciple*. New York: Paulist Press.
- Bird, Otto.(1964). “The Complexity of Love”.Thought.
- Countryman, William, L. (1998).*Forgiven and Forgiving*, More House Publishing, Harrisburg, P.A.
- Countryman, William, L. (2005).*New Dictionary SCM Dictionary of Christian Spirituality*, ed. Philip Sheldrake, SCM Press.
- Cullepper, R. Alan. (1975). “The Johannine School.An Evaluation of the Johannine-school Hypothesis based on an Investigation of the Manual of Ancient Schools”, SBL Dissertation Series, 26, Missoula.
- Gandhi M. K. (1998).*The Message of Jesus Christ* (Mumbai: Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan.

⁴⁶ Countryman, William, L. (1998),*Forgiven and Forgiving*, More House Publishing, Harrisburg, P.A.; Countryman, William, L. (2005), *New Dictionary SCM Dictionary of Christian Spirituality*, ed. Philip Sheldrake, SCM Press.

Peter H. KAMA

- Han, E. Nathan. (1971). *A Parsing Guide to The Greek New Testament*. Scottsdale: Herald Press.
- Imbelli, Robert, P. (2021). "The Hour of Jesus", *First Things*, Vol.6 No.5 August.
- Lewis, C. S. (1960). *The Four Loves*. New York: Harcourt, Brace, Jovanovich.
- Perschbacheer, Wesley J. (ed). (1990). *The New Analytical Greek Lexicon*. Massachusetts: Hendrickson.
- Peschke, K.H. (2016). *Christian Ethics vol. II*. New Delhi: Rekha.
- PHEME, Perkins. (1997). "The Gospel According to John" in *The New Jerome Biblical Commentary*.
Wellington: Geoffrey Chapman.
- RANDALL, John, F. (1962). *The Theme of Unity in John XVII: 20-23*. Louvain.