

STUDIES IN JEWISH AND CHRISTIAN PIETY.

I. Love  
and the  
Messianic Age

in hitherto untranslated Hasidic writings;  
with special reference to the Fourth Gospel.

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EPISCOPAL HEBREW CHRISTIAN CHURCH PUBLICATIONS,

33, BEDFORD SQUARE,

LONDON, W.C.

[1923]

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## EPILOGUE.

### LOVE IN THE FOURTH GOSPEL.

**T**HE predominant and determining note of the life of the Early Church is *κοινωνία*, Fellowship. It is the realisation of the highest ideal of Hasidism—*i.e.* *Ahduth*. The word implies a closeness of union approaching to identity: “the multitude of the believers were of one heart and of one soul.” Love was the essential and characteristic keynote of the Messianic Fellowship. The Messiah is the personification of Divine Love. He showed what real love is, therefore to imitate Him means to love as He did.<sup>1</sup> The imitation of Him is the imitation of God.<sup>2</sup> To live for Him is to live for God.<sup>3</sup> But Christ’s love is not only an *example* for the Fellowship, but is the power which awakens love in it. His love is powerful because it is *God’s Love*: “Who shall separate us from *the love of Christ*? Neither death nor life . . . shall be able to separate us from *the Love of God* which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.”<sup>4</sup> Because of its Divine character, this Love is wonderful, “it passeth all understanding.”<sup>5</sup> The visible presentation of this love is the Death of Christ;<sup>6</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Mt. xx, 28; John xiii, 34; Rom. xv, 2ff; Eph. v, 2; 1 Cor. xi, 1.

<sup>2</sup> Eph. iv, 32-52; cf. Phil. ii, 4ff; 1 Pet. ii, 21ff; 1 John iv, 17.

<sup>3</sup> Rom. vi, 11.

<sup>4</sup> Rom. viii, 35, 39.

<sup>5</sup> Eph. iii, 19.

<sup>6</sup> Rom. v, 8. *συνίστηται*

## GOSPEL.

termining note of Church is *κοινωνία*, realisation of the *Ahduth*. The word approaching to identity were of one was the essence of the Messianic personification what real love is, s to love as He the imitation of live for God.<sup>7</sup> *example* for the which awakens love cause it is *God's* from *the love of* . . . . shall be *ve of God* which Because of its wonderful, "it The visible pre- eath of Christ;<sup>8</sup>

ff; Eph. v, 2; 1 Cor. Pet. ii, 21ff; 1 John

"He died for all that they which live should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto Him."<sup>7</sup> Therefore, coldness towards Him bars the door to God's Presence.<sup>8</sup>

But the most 'Hasidic' writing in the New Testament is probably "the Gospel according to St. John." The following is a brief summary of Love as it is presented there:—

The love of God is concentrated in the Messiah, His Son, and only through Him He loves the world. This love of the Father for His Son manifests itself in *giving*: "He gives Him all things."<sup>9</sup> The world belongs to the Messiah (cf. Ps. ii, 8); Israel, and in them humanity, are "His own."<sup>10</sup> But God's greatest gift to Him is not the world, but His Spirit, the Ruah ha-kodesh. This He gives Him beyond measure.<sup>11</sup> Through the Spirit the Father enables Him to participate in His creative and redemptive activities: "He shows Him all that He doeth."<sup>12</sup> The Father knows Him and He the Father.<sup>13</sup> This intimacy between Father and Son is the basis and the central expression of the Father's love.

The Son is the organ of God's love and the intensity of this love is shown in the gift: "So God loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son." The reason for the Father's love

<sup>7</sup> II Cor. v, 15. Cf. Rom. iv, 7; Phil. ii, 30.

<sup>8</sup> I Cor. xvi, 22.

<sup>9</sup> III, 35.

<sup>10</sup> I, 11.

<sup>11</sup> III, 34.

<sup>12</sup> V, 20.

<sup>13</sup> X, 15.

to the world is the world's danger of perishing from want of 'Light' and 'Life,' *i.e.*, of true knowledge of, and communion with, Him.<sup>14</sup>

God's love for His Son brings forth a corresponding love of the Son for Him. It expresses itself in the glorification, or sanctification, of God's Name by the Son. This highest motive of Jewish piety, "Kiddush Ha-shem," is His supreme objective. When He summarises the work that He has done on earth, He does not refer to any empirical success, as the love and faith which He had awakened among men, but the service which He had rendered to God: "I have *glorified* Thee on Earth" (xvii, 4). He lives and dies for God's honour. His love is a conscious self-oblation to the will of God.<sup>15</sup>

His will is "to finish the work of Him who sent Him."<sup>16</sup> He must help men in their misery and need, in order to reveal the love, and do the work, of God. It is His duty towards the Father, for through it He makes God's goodness visible. Herein also is shown the love of the Father towards Him, that He entrusts Him with the accomplishing of His work in those whom He sends to Him. They are God's gifts to Him. The Father Himself, by giving them to Him, establishes Jesus' Messiahship: "He who has the

<sup>14</sup> Light and life, perfect knowledge of God, and communion with Him, which, as we have seen, is expected of the Messianic Age, is given through the Messiah. The expectation is founded chiefly on Jer. xxiv, 7. Cf. with this the Hebraic expression in 1 John v, 20.

<sup>15</sup> The words about self-denial in xii, 25, refer not only to the disciples but also to the Master.

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bride, is the Bridegroom.<sup>17</sup> And the fact that they come to Jesus is a proof that the Father has already begun His work in them. They are of the Truth. Jesus, by accepting them, reveals His love for the Father,<sup>18</sup> for, by awakening in those who are of the Truth, faith in, and love to, Him, He "finishes" the Father's work.

Thus, Jesus' love for men is grounded in the love of God. "As the Father hath loved me, so also have I loved you."<sup>19</sup> In these words He not only compares His love for the disciples with God's love for Him, but also expresses the thought that His love to them is *founded* on God's love to Him. He repays this love by loving them. What God gives to Him, He gives to them that are His.

As His love for men has its source solely in God, men's desires do not move Him to action. The people could not force Him to do "signs and wonders" against His will. Even towards His Mother He maintained His independence.<sup>20</sup> Similarly, at first he leaves the request expressed in ii, 3, unanswered. The same is true of vii, 3. In all these cases it is not mere caprice that rules Him, but each case shows His intense determination only to obey the will of the Father, however much He was moved personally. His independence of men is rooted in His dependence on God. Further, Jesus' love to men is independent of their intrinsic worth. Those that the

<sup>17</sup> III, 29.

<sup>18</sup> VI, 37.

<sup>19</sup> XV, 9.

<sup>20</sup> II, 4.

Father has given to be "His own" take on a new transcendent value to the Son, namely, that of being a gift of God: "The Good Shepherd loveth His sheep because they are His." Therefore, His love to them is not caused by their moral condition. It proceeds out of His own Nature and purpose. It is grace: "Him who cometh to Me I shall in no wise cast out."

The compassion of Jesus for human suffering and need is in no instance a mere emotion, but is always translated into action. His miracles are acts of His all-powerful love, revealing the will of the Father.

All His works, although primarily deeds of Love, are 'signs,' intended to reveal His glory and to awaken men's faith in His Messiahship. In the miracle at Cana, for instance, this is revealed through the gift of joy, which was symbolical of that mystic marriage-joy which is to belong to the Messianic Times. The same is true of the feeding of the people in the desert, which also has a Messianic *motif*; the Messiah being the last Redeemer, as Moses was the first.<sup>21</sup> In the healing of the blind He reveals Himself as the Light of the World. In the awakening of Lazarus, as the Resurrection and the Life. Thus, His miracles are, in their immediate, as well as in their ultimate purpose, a revelation of His love; for the awakening of faith is a higher proof of love than the healing of the sick and the feeding of the hungry.

<sup>21</sup> The traditional Jewish idea of the Messiah being the second Moses (cf. Midrash Ex. R.), is also suggested in Acts; cf. iii, 22-23; vii, 35ff.

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All these 'works,' His *ἔργα*<sup>22</sup> He does in the name of the Father.<sup>23</sup> They are the works of God;<sup>24</sup> they come from the Father (x, 32), for the Father who is in Him worketh them (xiv, 10). They are all *one work* which God gave Him to do (xviii, 4). However, although His works bear witness of Him that the Father has sent Him,<sup>25</sup> He prefers the faith which is awakened by His *word* to that which is based on His *works*<sup>26</sup> His words are Spirit and Life.<sup>27</sup>

He gives to them His whole *πλήρωμα* : " of His *fullness* we all received and grace for grace " (i, 16), which means, grace succeeding grace perpetually. All that God has given to Him, He gives to them : His freedom (viii, 36), His peace (xiv, 27), His joy (xv, 11), His glory which the Father gave Him (xvii, 22), and He declares unto them the Father's Name, *i.e.*, His character, " that the love wherewith Thou hast loved Me may be in them, and I in them." As the Messiah, He gives grace and truth (cf. i, 17 with Micah vii, 20). He gives all this by giving Himself. He is the Way, the Truth, " He and the Life. that eateth Me shall live by Me " (vi, 56).

<sup>22</sup> This designation is characteristic of the Fourth Gospel; with the exception of Mt. XI, 2, it is not found anywhere else in the N.T.

<sup>23</sup> x, 25; iv, 34; v, 36; ix, 3; x, 37.

<sup>24</sup> x, 32.

<sup>25</sup> Cf. v, 36; x, 25, 37ff; xv, 24.

<sup>26</sup> ii, 23ff; iv, 41, 48.

<sup>27</sup> vi, 63, 68.

The consummation of His "giving Himself" is His Death. It is not only the highest expression of His Love, it is its perfection. "He loved them *eis telos*, i.e., perfectly.<sup>28</sup>

Jesus, by His love, expects to awaken in men love to Himself and to each other. "If God were your Father you would love Me" (viii, 42). "If ye love me" (xiv, 15). In this expectation of love the whole Messianic consciousness of Jesus is expressed. He seeketh not His own glory (vii, 18), but, as by awakening faith in Himself, he awakens faith in God, so God Himself is either loved or hated in Him (xv, 23).<sup>29</sup> The world hates Jesus because He reveals its sin. He convinces of sin. The consequence is that those who come in contact with Him either hate *Him* or *themselves*. He whose works are wrought in God, his love Jesus wins, "he cometh to the light" (iii, 21).

It has been rightly observed<sup>30</sup> that "opulent as the New Testament is in the experience and the expression of love, tracing as it does that marvelous river to its fountain-head in Christ, nevertheless, for Christ Himself it has not one fond word, not one endearing phrase."<sup>31</sup> While the Apostles readily applied their expressions of endearment

<sup>28</sup> xiii, 1. Cf. for this meaning of the word Lk. xviii, 5; 1 Thes. ii, 16.

<sup>29</sup> Cf. Mechilta on Ex. XIV, 31: They proved their faith in God by believing in Moses.

<sup>30</sup> Expositor, Sept., 1913, p. 244ff.

<sup>31</sup> The "Beloved" in Eph. i, 6, expresses the heart of God towards the Messiah cf. Is. 5, XLI, 8.



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to one another, yet with a fine reticence they refrained from applying them to Him. They were conscious of a relationship with Him which was something quite above and apart from their relation with their fellows. In Him they were aware of a passion towards them of such a quality that they lost sight of their derivative passion towards Him. His love towards them was of such a kind as to leave them without a name for the extraordinary response it awakened in their own hearts. It was the very depth of their emotion that made them dumb. They were "but as vessels swept onwards to their haven by an irresistible tide of unfailling love."

The test of true love for Him is love to the brethren. This is His only commandment to His disciples. That those whom the Father has given Him should "all be one, as Thou Father art in Me and I in Thee" (vii, ii, 21-23), is His ultimate and highest aim. He died in order "to gather together in one the children of God that were scattered abroad" (xi, 32). All His gifts to them: "the name of God,"<sup>32</sup> His glory, have this end in view (xvii, 6, 11-22). This mystical one-ness of the Church, this perfect *Ahduth*, is founded on the one-ness of Jesus with the Father. It is a reciprocal giving and receiving. This unity of the disciples will be the best proof

<sup>32</sup> The "hidden Divine Name" (cf. Ethiopic Enoch lxix, 14), which belongs to the essence of traditional Jewish Mysticism, was probably *Ani we-hu*, "I and He" (Man and God), signifying the closest relationship between God and Man. Cf. Rabbi Klein, *Der älteste christl. Katechismus*. This is revealed by the Messiah.

to the world that God has sent Him (v, 21). The world cannot *awaken* true love and unity among men, but it can recognise them. The world will know that "Thou *lovedst* them (the disciples) even as Thou *lovedst* Me" (*ἠγάπησας*). Only he who is loved can love, and only he can love like Jesus who is loved like He is. The love where-with the Father loved Jesus was a love in eter-nity (v, 24), and believers were loved by God with the same love "before the foundation of the world."

The power to bring forth fruit, that is, to be active in love, rests on communion with Him (xv, 1-7). He not only gives the will, but also the power, to love. Love is creative action. In him-self man is not productive, he is unable to give and to work. Communion with Him creates a productiveness which brings forth real results. He lets them participate in His creative power. If the disciples do not bring forth fruit, they are separated from Him; if they do, He 'purges' them. The 'purging' means the freeing from sin; sin will be removed because it disturbs the growth of love. Love is thus the aim, freedom from sin only a means to an end.

As God's love enables Jesus to love, so does the love of Jesus enable them to love; as Jesus cannot work without God, so cannot they without Jesus; as Jesus gives them what God has given Him, so they give to one another what Jesus has given them. The love which He awakens in them consists in this willingness and ability to give

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(verses 9, 10, 12 and 17). From this reciprocal giving and receiving the Fellowship's unity is derived.

Hence, love is a reality only in the Messianic community, in the Church; "Love one another as I loved you" (xv, 12). Hatred separates the Church from the world (xv, 18). This is indeed an inner necessity; for the same reason that the world hated the Messiah, it hates His followers, and they will be as little able to conquer this antagonism as was Jesus Himself. The proof of the immensity and the satanic character of this hatred is the Cross of Christ. Between God and the world, and therefore also between the Church and the world, between Life and Death, Light and Darkness, Truth and Falsehood, Love and Hatred, children of God and children of the Devil, there are only absolute contrasts, between which there can exist no compromise. There are no *nuances* and intermediate shades. Because of this antagonism there cannot be any love to the world on the part of the Fellowship. The conception of love here is not a 'humanitarian' one, in the Hellenic sense, but is an Israelitish Covenant-relationship. God loves him who loves Jesus (xiv 21, 23). He loves the disciples as He loves Jesus (xvii, 23). Jesus declared unto them God's Name, "that the love wherewith Thou hast loved Me may be in them and I in them" (xvii, 26). The love of God to the world remains to the world something outside itself. His love to the believers expresses itself in the fact that He gives them His spirit, as He does

to the Son. This the world cannot receive (xiv, 17). The bestowal of His Spirit, the basis of the New Covenant,\*brings forth a new birth; God in His Spirit makes the heart of the believer His habitation, and thus the highest expectation of the Messianic Age is fully realised.

However, the purpose of the Divine Love is not anything that might be selfishly appropriated and rejoiced in by its recipients, *but is for the sake of the world*, in order that the Discipleship may be extended to all—"that the world might believe."

\*Cf. Jer XXXI, 33; Ez. XXXVI, 27.