

THE EPISTLE OF FIRST JOHN

"What Proves Love"

1 John 3:11-17

Introduction

1. The message of God concerning the true believer on Christ is unique. This can easily be seen by observing a few thoughts:

- a. Stated (v. 11). It goes right back to the beginning of their salvation.
- b. Illustrated (v. 12). The well known account of Cain and Abel is drawn upon for this matter. Jealousy lay at the base of Cain's hatred. Is not this much of the problem today, if not all? See Heb. 11:4.
- c. Explained (v. 13). Hatred by the world is a fact for the true believer. It marks him out as distinct from others! Is this a hard saying for some?!

2. Love, therefore, proves that a believer has a unique characteristic. Here is a manner of operation which differs from all other expected behaviour. The reasons for this are given in the text. Focus your attention on the following two:-

1. Because of a NEW LIFE vv. 14, 15.

This new life is described as being:-

a. A transition. v. 14.

The "know" here is the verb of innate knowledge. Notes something which is beyond dispute.

That a transition is involved is clear from the verb "passed" which in the original actually means to migrate. Being perfect tense, the thought of actual migration having taken place is conveyed.

The proof of this migration is love for the brethren; it is not the ground of it!

b. A possession. v. 15.

Again innate knowledge is appealed to for the facts of the case here.

The continuous power of God's communicated life makes the difference between a murderer and a believer! The verb "abiding" makes it certain that the presence of eternal life expels misanthropy, especially those of the household of faith. It is what is within that is exhibited without!

2. Because of a NEW CONCERN. vv. 16, 17.

This concern is:-

a. Exemplified. v. 16.

Christ's infinite love was:-

1) Practical. "laid down"

Aorist active verb. Points to the same wonderful truth outlined by our Lord in John 10:11, 17.

2) Sacrificial. "for"

This is the only time the preposition "for" is used in the Epistle of John. Definitely marks out the idea of "in behalf of."

3) Universal. "us"

All the brethren are included here. No selection of special personages!

b. Demonstrated. v. 17.

As the love of God is perceived (known and still known through Christ's work), the question rises, how can His love be identified today? The answer is: in the same living manner as with our Lord. The be-

liever's love is to be:-

1) Practical.

This is obvious from a study of the verbs "have", "see" and "shut". The idea is that love will change the last verb to "open". So it was with Christ for He "laid down His life."

2) Sacrificial.

There is an element of taking what is one's own and passing it on here. No sense of withholding is suggested. Love begets giving!

3) Universal.

The noun "brother" is inclusive of the household of faith. None are to be exempt. True God-given love in the heart bridges the impossible!

N.B. If anyone feels that John speaks too much on outward acts, let him be aware that this is always the principle of the Word. Live faith works! True love gives! Genuine salvation is seen!

Conclusion

No study of the Bible will ever lead one to the idea that Christianity is a set of boring rules and regulations. It is furthest from this. It is in truth a life to be lived with a provided dynamic. Christ is a life! Blessed be His Name. The special sign and mark of true Christian living is love! If this is lacking, one may genuinely and legitimately question the validity of the claim made. How stands the matter with you right now?

NOTES: