

THE EPISTLE OF FIRST JOHN

"The Groundfloor - - Love"
1 John 4:7-10

Introduction

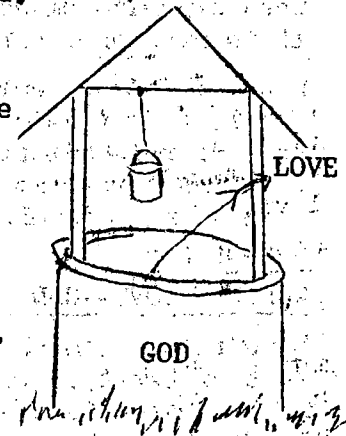
1. Love between believers is one of the distinguishing features of true Christianity. It is a contrast to the antichristian spirit which also denies the mediatorial position of Christ.

2. John has been named the apostle of love. Three times he hits hard upon it in this epistle: 2:7-11 where it is a sign of walking in the light; 3:10-18 where it is a sign of true righteousness before God; here where it is a sign of the spirit of truth!

3. Three marvelous statements are made about love in this text. They merit the faithful and earnest interest of all who love the Lord.

1. SOURCE OF LOVE—GOD. v. 7.

The blanket statement is made by John that love is of God. That means God is the Source of all love. Whatever love a man has in him comes from God, be he saved or unsaved. In this sense, God's grace is seen in an unusual manner. The Greek preposition used here points to love's Source as God.



In a particular sense, however, when love is seen amongst believers it gives evidence of two truths:

- a. New birth. The full sense of the perfect tense here—has been begotten and still remains so!

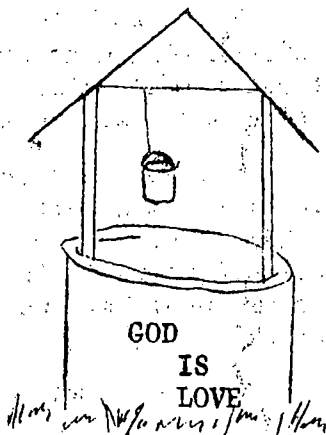
- b. New knowledge. The present tense suggests growth in knowledge. A loyal child must increase in the knowledge of his father.

2. ESSENCE OF LOVE—GOD v. 8.

John avers that a man who does not love simply never knew God (timeless aorist tense!) What an indictment. Not to know love is not to have known God. If love is not part of one's being, let him not affirm his relation to God!

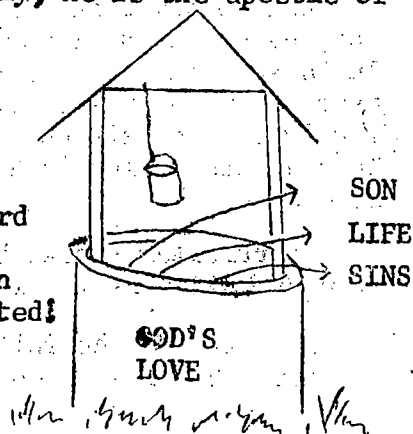
The reason for the firm word about love and knowing God is that God IS love. It is not something which He possesses, but what He IS. It tokens His personality and bears the idea of self-communication. It is His innermost nature!

N.B. The noun love does not occur anywhere in the New Testament as many times as in the last 2 chapters of this Epistle. The verb is found more times in these two chapters than anywhere else save John's Gospel. Truly, he is the apostle of love.



3. WORK OF LOVE—GOD

Love is not some dormant sort of entity: it is a matter which is seen and known. The phrase "toward us" should read "in us" for this is the sphere in which His love is exhibited! The work moves in three directions:



a. Son.

The perfect tense of the verb accents the permanent mission of our Lord (i.e. aorist in v. 10 where the simple fact of His mission is stated).

b. Life.

This is where God's love is so conspicuous and so unique. We should have died had it not been for Him. Abundant life is ours through HIM!

c. Sins.

Love is seen in its full perfection in His love to us—through sending Christ to us. This is Divine love! But His love is also disinterested—not love in return for love. It is entirely spontaneous! Christ is the satisfaction to God for our sins. Amen!

Conclusion: What are the reasons for loving another believer in Christ, or for that matter, anyone? They are three, at least: 1. Since we are born again and know God, we draw our flow of love from Him.

2. God Himself is love. Being His children, we share His Being.

3. God's love has been manifested in a transcendent way. It behooves us to take stock of this perfect example of Divine love! The appeal is to believers for the section begins with "beloved" (v. 7) and this is a reference to those who are His. But if you are not one of His, this sort of real living can never be fully realized. You must come to Christ as your Saviour first—then you will know the abundant life in the Lord and the glory of loving because of your union with Him. Come, come today to Christ!