

THE BIBLE ADVOCATE



AND HERALD OF THE COMING KINGDOM

"THY WORD IS A LAMP UNTO MY FEET, AND A LIGHT UNTO MY PATH."

Thoughts on the Sabbath School Lesson

LESSON FOR FEBRUARY 6, 1937

TRUE LOVE

Scripture Reading: 1 John 3:9-16.

Golden Text: 1 John 3:11.

Last week we learned from the first verse of the reading, 1 John 3:1, that we are children of God by adoption, that is, God calls us His children. Now with the beginning of the reading we have a new thought brought to us. "Whosoever is born of God..." Going to the Greek on this text we find that the word "born" comes from the Greek word "Genni" which means to beget. This agrees with what Peter says in 1 Peter 1:3, "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which according to his abundant mercy hath begotten us again unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead." If we have been begotten again by having believed in the resurrection of Christ and if He has given us His Spirit to direct us as we grow more like Him, then we do not commit sin because His seed, that is his power of making us into sinless creatures, remains in us. But if we turn away from the leading of His Spirit then we can commit sin and do because we no longer have His power but are depending on our own selves to be overcomers.

This thought further agrees with what Paul wrote to the Roman brethren, (Rom. 6:1-4). When we turn from the world and believe in the resurrection of Christ, and prove our faith by being baptized, thus having our sins forgiven and our sinful desires buried in the watery grave, then new desires, desires of righteousness, come into our lives and we start to grow like the Master, walking in "newness of life." John says (1 John 3:10) that this is the way we can know who God has begotten and who He has not. God, from the very beginning, has commanded us to love our brother and our God. And if we love God and love our brother and fellowmen we will do the will of our heavenly Father. Mark 3:35. Then if we do not love one another it shows that we are not the children of God. What we are is shown by our attitude toward our fellowmen. Cain did not have love for his brother Abel and so when he had opportunity he slew him because he had hatred instead of love. If we love God and keep His commandments we can expect the world to hate us. Christ loved all and the world hated Him and thus if we love we will be like Him. That was why Cain wanted to kill Abel. Abel was righteous while Cain was wicked and had hatred in his heart. Thus as we examine

ourselves, if we find that we love the brethren we can know that we have been begotten again and have passed from death unto life. That is, we are living that new life (Rom. 6:4). Yet, as Paul says (Gal. 2:20) it is not us living but Christ living in us. Col. 3:3.

We find as we look about at the world that a murderer is looked down upon as a terrible being, yet many of the people who have this feeling about their fellowmen are in the same condition themselves and do not know it. Of old, under the Old Covenant in order to be a murderer a man had to actually kill his fellow man, but now, under the New Covenant Christ has magnified the law and if we have a desire in our heart to violate any of the commands of God we are a sinner. Thus if we have hatred in our life toward any one, according to Christ (Matt. 5:21, 22) we are a murderer at heart. This agrees with John in our lesson. 1 John 3:15. How much should we love the brethren. And how can we show this love? Christ was our example. (1 Peter 2:21). He not only said He loved us but proved it by His life. He not only loved those who were following Him but also the wicked as well (Romans 5:8 and John 10:11). If we are God's children and thus brethren of Christ we also will lay down our life for the world to save them from sin as well as to help our brethren. Does this mean that we must be crucified or beheaded? No, I think not. If we are devoting our lives to the cause of God by preaching the gospel or working for God in some other capacity, or if we are giving of the means that God has intrusted to our care in order that some one else may carry the gospel message to the world then we are showing our love for our fellowmen. We are thus giving our life for the world. Or if called upon to die for our faith in our Savior we must not draw back but go like the martyr of old bravely to our death bearing our cross for Him. This is perfect love and if we have this perfect love then it gives us strength to endure all things for Him. 1 Cor. 13:7.

—L. I. Rodgers

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