

1 John - Commentaries by Henry Allan Ironside

Daily Sacrifice, November 3 (1:1-3)

"That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon, and our hands have handled, of the Word of life; (for the life was manifested, and we have seen it, and bear witness, and show unto you that eternal life, which was with the Father, and was manifested unto us;) that which we have seen and heard declare we unto you, that ye also may have fellowship with us: and truly our fellowship is with the Father, and with His Son Jesus Christ" —1 John 1:1-3.

"FROM the beginning." This expression, with which the first Epistle of John opens, is not the same as "In the beginning," with which the Gospel is introduced. The latter refers to the past eternity; the former to the beginning of Christianity. Note how frequently the expression is used in John's first and second letters. See 1 John 2:7, 13, 14, 24 (twice); 3:11; 2 John 5, 6. In each instance it refers definitely to that which had been made known from the beginning of the Christian era, and which we are responsible to maintain to the end. It is the revelation of God in Christ through whom we enter into fellowship with the Father and the Son.

—J. G. Deck.

Daily Sacrifice, November 5 (1:7)

"If we walk in the light, as He is in the light, we have Fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanseth us from all sin" —1 John 1:7.

IF we walk in the light." It is where we walk, not how. Believers are repentant sinners who have been brought out of darkness into the marvelous light of God's presence (Cot. 1:13), and there they walk. The light shines from the mercy-seat in the holiest of all. The vail is rent, so the light is no longer hidden. God is now "in the light," and those who honestly face their sins before Him are in the light with Him. This might naturally move the soul to fear of judgment, but "the blood of Jesus Christ His Son" is sprinkled on the mercy-seat! This tells us that every righteous demand of the throne of God has been met in the work of the cross. So the believer rests in that which has satisfied God, knowing that the blood "cleanseth... from all [or every] sin." The blood abides in all its cleansing efficacy, and ever answers to God for us.

— Horatius Sonar.

Daily Sacrifice, November 6 (2:1-3)

"My little children, these things write I unto you, that ye sin not. And if any man sin, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous: and He is the propitiation for our sins: and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world" —1 John 2:1-3.

WHERE there is divine life in the soul it will manifest itself in the life. The believer is not a sinless person. He is one whose sins have all been expiated by Christ on the cross, and if now, as a Christian, he falls into sin, his fellowship is disrupted until as a necessary result of Christ's advocacy he confesses and forsakes his evil ways. As he walks with God, the new nature will lead to obedience to the expressed will of the Lord and to love of the brethren. These are the marks of the new life. Mere lip profession counts for nothing. There must be the evidence of love in activity, which marks one out as in relation to Him who is, in His very being, love. It is His life that is reproduced in those who believe in the Lord Jesus Christ.

—Charles Wesley.

Daily Sacrifice, November 7 (3:13-14)

"Marvel not, my brethren, if the world hate you. We know that we have passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren. He that loveth not his brother abideth in death"—1 John 3:13, 14.

ALL who are born of God partake of His nature. Hence, as He is love, so they are loving. Hatred is incompatible with the new life imparted to all who believe in the Lord Jesus. Nor is this love merely a matter of sentiment or of lip-service. It is a very real experience and marks out the believer as one who like his Master loves on in spite of the world's attitude, whether of hate or of cold unconcern. God's perfect love apprehended by faith frees the soul from fear and fills the heart with love toward others.

—Isaac Watts.

"God is love" —1 John 4:8.

LOVE is the manifestation of the divine nature. God is love. His love is shed abroad in our hearts by the indwelling Holy Spirit (Rom. 5:5). As we walk in love we have fellowship with God. Observe, we are not told merely that God is loving. He is more than that. Love is the essence of the divine Being. We are told that God is merciful, but we could not say that God is Mercy. We know that He is compassionate, but it would be absurd to say God is Compassion. So with many others of His attributes. But we are distinctly told that God is light (1 John 1:5), and God is love. Light and love tell us what He is in Himself. Light is, of course, a synonym for holiness. In the cross we see both light and love fully displayed. When our souls enter by faith into this, we receive the Holy Spirit, who is also the Spirit of love (2 Tim. 1:7). And so we delight to walk in holiness (Heb. 12:14) and in love. We manifest love for God by showing love to His people (1 John 4:20). We prove our love for Christ by obeying His commandments and keeping His words (John 14:15, 23).

—Howard Kingsbury.

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