

10. What is love in John's writings? What does love give and why?
11. How does John know God is light?
12. How does the truth revealed by Jesus differ from truth in other areas of investigation? How is it similar?
13. What gives meaning to truth discovered by man in the areas of science and the humanities?

### CHAPTER III

#### IF WE WALK IN THE LIGHT

##### I John 1:6-7

#### A. The Text

"If we say that we have fellowship with Him and walk in darkness, we lie, and do not the truth; 7) but if we walk in the light, as He is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus His Son cleanseth us from all sin."

#### B. *Try to Discover*

1. How is it possible for sinful men to "walk in the light as He is in the light?"
2. Why does John say "... we are not doing the truth," instead of saying "... we are not telling the truth?"
3. Why does John change from "... have fellowship with Him . . ." in verse 6 to "... have fellowship one with another . . ." in verse 7?

#### C. *Paraphrase*

"If we say We have fellowship with Him and in darkness are walking we are dealing falsely and not doing the truth; 7) whereas if in the light we are walking, as he is in the light we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus his Son is cleansing us from all sin."

D. *Comments*

## 1. Preliminary Remarks

In the two verses before us, John makes the individual's attitude toward the incarnation the test of eternal life considered as (a) *fellowship* and (b) *cleansing* from sin. In the prologue, he has established the incarnation experience of Jesus as that which made life known to men. In verse five, he has said that the meaning of that experience is "God is light."

The light of God came into the world in the person of Jesus. It became and ever shall remain, the acid test of life. Whoever comes to and remains in the light of God, shall not know condemnation, no matter how sinful he is. He who refuses to come into that light does so because his deeds are evil, and consequently he is already condemned. (Read John 3:16-21) So far as John is concerned, the *Christless* life is lived in darkness, is stained by sin, and ends in death.

## 2. Translation and comments

## a. The negative . . . v. 6

(6) "If we should say that we are having friendly, familiar communion with Him and we are walking in the darkness, we are lying, and we are not doing that which is real."

The saying of a lie and the doing of a lie are the same. Whoever *says* he is having fellowship with God while he is walking in darkness (i.e. while denying the incarnation) is not *doing* the truth. For John there is no middle ground. Truth is that which Jesus began both to *do* and to *teach*. (Acts 1:1) To deny it is to deny ultimate reality.

John has said (v.3) that the reason he is writing the message, which he both *saw* Jesus *do* and *heard* Jesus *speak*, is in order that his readers may go on having fellowship with God, *and* with His Son Jesus Christ. In chapter two, verse 23, he will say "whosoever denieth the Son, the same hath not the Father." There is no fellowship with God aside from Jesus as the incarnate light of God.

Jesus made this same claim for Himself when He said, "No one cometh unto the Father but by me." (John 14:6) To claim otherwise is to both speak and act contrary to that which is real.

To walk in the light is to walk with Christ, to order one's life according to that which He *did* as an example and *taught* as rules of conduct. *This does not imply moral perfection!* On the contrary, it involves the recognition to ourselves before God that we are guilty of sin. (I John 1:8)

However, truth as it is revealed in Christ is never *just* intellectual. It is always moral. It is not concerned so much with abstract accuracy as with concrete living. It is not just something to think about as the philosophers. It is something to *do*. A man who walks in the light as He is in the light will spend his whole time in the awareness of an obligation to make his deeds match his words. He will recognize his need of divine cleansing, and never think that sin does not matter. The nearer one comes to the understanding of God, the more terrible sin seems, as God's light reveals its evil nature. The whole universe has a moral base.

b. The positive . . . v. 7

(7) "If we go on walking in the light as He is in the light, we are continuing to have friendly familiar communion with one another, and the blood of Jesus His Son goes on cleansing us from all sins."

In verse seven, we have the positive side of the negative statement made in verse six. When our lives are lived in the light of God made available in Jesus, two things happen.

*First*, we have fellowship with one another. Notice that the phrase, "have fellowship with *Him*" of verse six changes here to "have fellowship *one with another*." The phrases are virtually synonymous. Just as men at war with God are at war with one another, so men reconciled to God are reconciled to one another.

We may illustrate like this: Suppose a group of people are confined in a strange room which is cast in pitch darkness. They do not know the shape of the room. They do not know where the furnishings are or what their purpose is. As these people begin to grope about in the darkness they stumble over the furniture. They hurt themselves against what they cannot see. In their frustration and discomfort they bump into one another. They strike out at one another in anger and animosity.

Suppose now that someone turns on the light. Each occupant of the room sees the others not as strange beings contributing to his discomfort, but as human beings, pretty much like himself. He sees the shape of the room as it was designed for human tenancy. He sees the furnishings not as obstacles over which to stumble, but as items created for his own use. So he sits down and begins to share with his fellows the blessings which the light has brought to all.

So it is with the fellowship of the redeemed. When we were outside of Christ we did not understand the moral laws of the world in which we lived. We banged ourselves against the spiritual realities which were

created for our benefit, and in our bafflement we struck out at each other. But in Christ, when we walk in the light as He brings it, we realize that the world in which we live was ordered for our occupancy to the glory to God. We understand that the moral laws of God are not designed to make us miserable and filled with guilt complexes, but are rather for our spiritual benefit. By the light of Christ we see that all men are created in the image of God, that all are lost in and victims of the same darkness, that aside from God's light there is no hope for any, but that in it there is hope for all. (See II. Cor. 5:14-21) In these realizations we become reconciled to one another and begin to share the blessings which Christ has revealed.

The person who walks in darkness, and especially one who leaves the light and returns to the darkness, cannot have fellowship with those who remain in the light. (II. Cor. 6:14-16) So, to be outside the proper relationship with those who are in the light is evidence that one is also cut off from God. Truth begets fellowship with both God and man.

The *second* result of walking in the light is that the blood of Jesus Christ, the Son of God, continues to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. From this, it is apparent that "walking in the light as He is in the light" does not indicate a state of moral perfection equal to that of God. On the contrary, the first thing the life of Jesus says to us is that we are sinners, and personally responsible for the guilt of our own sin. By His sinlessness, He reveals our sin.

The reason no child of God has any right to a guilt complex is that, just as surely as the light reveals our guilt, so does the blood of Jesus cleanse us from it, so long as we remain in the light! One of the greatest blessings of the Christian life is *realized forgiveness*. (Rom. 8:1)

We fail often in our attempt to follow the example of Jesus' sinless life, but it is not the following of His example that removes the guilt of sin. It is His blood! Cleansing is *not* affected by having the right attitude toward sin. However, when one comes, in the light of God, to have the correct attitude toward sin, he is then within the scope of the cleansing power of the blood of Jesus.

Nothing could be more diametrically opposed to the Gnostic than this statement about the blood of Jesus. It is the most "anti-Gnostic" terminology possible. It is also repugnant to today's "liberal" theologian.

The summary statement of these two verses is intended by John to set the tenor of the remainder of the epistle. From this point on he begins to demonstrate precisely *how* we may know we are remaining in

God's fellowship by the application of God's light to our personal lives. *Hereby we know we have life.*

The affirmation of these verses is very relevant to the religious atmosphere of our day. There are those who would say that fellowship with God is determined solely by God's love. There are those to whom the "Fatherhood of God and the brotherhood of man" are completely divorced from the identity of Jesus as God's only begotten son. These assumptions, according to John's factual declaration here, are not made in accordance with the reality brought to light in the incarnation. Men are at war with men because they are at war with God, and the only Prince of Peace is the Word Who became flesh.

Similarly, there are those modern theologians who tell us that the "blood" belongs to a primitive "slaughterhouse religion" and has no place in the socially adept Christianity of modern man. The person who thinks thus of the blood walks in the darkness. As in the first century, so today, the person who says he is a Christian while denying the truth of the Word lies and does not think or live according to that which is real.

#### E. *Questions for Review*

1. What are the two practical results of walking in the light as He is in the light?
2. How does the Light of God come into our lives?
3. Why do men refuse to walk in this light? (John 3:16-21)
4. Verse six and verse seven represent the \_\_\_\_\_ and the \_\_\_\_\_ side of the same truth.
5. Does "walking in the light" imply moral perfection equal to that of God? Explain.
6. How is the truth of I John 1:6 related to that of John 14:6?
7. To walk in the light as He is in the light is to \_\_\_\_\_.
8. Reality as it is revealed in Christ is never just \_\_\_\_\_ but always \_\_\_\_\_.
9. What does God's light in Christ reveal about personal guilt?
10. Men are at war with men because \_\_\_\_\_.
11. In what practical way does God's revelation of the nature of sin bring about fellowship among those who walk in the light?
12. To leave the fellowship of those who walk in the light results in broken fellowship also with \_\_\_\_\_.

13. The first thing the Gospel message says to anyone is what?
14. How does the life of Jesus reveal the guilt of others?
15. One of the greatest blessings of the Christian life is \_\_\_\_\_ forgiveness.
16. What is meant by the statement, "Nothing could be more diametrically opposed to the Gnostic than John's statement about the blood?" How is this the most "anti-Gnostic" terminology possible? (See Words We Must Understand . . . Gnosticism)
17. How is the summary statement of I John 1:6-7 relevant to the religious atmosphere of our day?

## HEREBY WE KNOW

## PART II

I John 1:8—2:29

God Is Light . . . To Walk In The Light  
Is To Have Fellowship With Him  
Fellowship Is Tested By Our Sharing  
of God's Attitude Toward:

1. Personal Guilt
2. Our Brothers
3. His Son