

LIFE, LOVE and LIGHT

The Gospel of John and First Epistle of John

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CHAPTER SIX

THE TEST OF A TRUE EXPERIENCE

"**He that saith he abideth in Him ought himself also so to walk, even as He walked**" (I John 2:6)

Utterly repugnant to the Apostle is the sham and pretense of mere profession. How futile to declare one's self in intimate communication with Light and Love if the life remains devoid of the qualities inseparably associated with Light and Love. So the Epistle proceeds at once to probe the life, using tests to which every believer must submit himself, tests that distinguish the genuine from the false. They reach finality in the words: "**He that saith he abideth in Him ought himself also so to walk, even as He walked**" (I John 2:6).

I

"He That Saith"

We are taken at our word; then a search is instituted for that which should be our experience in consequence.

Read thoughtfully I John 1:6-2:6:

- "**If we say . . .**" (1:6), testing our falsity;
- "**But if we walk . . .**" (1:7), glorying in the genuine.
- "**If we say . . .**" (1:8), probing the self-deception;
- "**If we confess . . .**" (1:9), pointing the way to a true experience.
- "**If we say . . .**" (1:10), making doubly clear to us our sham and our sin in all its seriousness.
- "**He that saith . . .**" (2:4), putting us again in the "liar" class;
- "**But whoso keepeth . . .**" (2:5), rejoicing in the love of GOD genuinely evidenced.
- "**He that saith . . .**" (2:6), the final summing up of the entire probing process.

In it our professed fellowship with Him who is Light and Love is put to practical test: Is that

Light and Love manifested in our daily walk?

II "Even as He Walked"

If we say that we are abiding in Him, His life, flowing into us and actuating us, should find a like expression in our way of living as it did in His. His walk, then, becomes the standard by which to gauge our walk. But how shall we set about conforming our walk, or manner of life, to His? Shall we single out certain of its circumstances and press ours into their mould? Ah, no, nothing so artificial! Nothing by way of imitation! It is the inwardness of His life, its controlling principles and passions, evidenced in His walk before men, that must constitute the norm of the believer's walk.

How, then, did He walk? John, in his Gospel, comprehends the wonders of that matchless walk as a manifestation of Light, Love and Life.

1. **HE WALKED IN LIGHT.** The light of His Father's presence, claimed by constant communion with Him and by a life in all things pleasing to Him; the light of His Father's favor, calling forth the commendation "**My Son, in whom I am well-pleased**"; the light of complete identification with Him, so that He could say, "**He that hath seen me hath seen the Father,**" and continue by tracing His words and works back to the Father as their source: "**The words that I speak unto you I speak not of myself: but the Father that dwelleth in Me, He doeth the works**" (John 14:10). He so walked in the light of His Father's face that when, on the cross, it must of necessity be withdrawn from Him, the experience was one of utter darkness and dismay to Him. He so walked that He was "**the light of the world**" and could invite others to follow Him with the assurance that they would "**not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life.**"

2. **HE WALKED IN LOVE.** Oh, how He loved. In the world to convey and demonstrate the love that "**so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son,**" our Lord "**went about doing good,**" ministering to the needs of men, showing GOD's love to be kind and compassionate. Under test His love never failed; it went on loving. He not only loved His own to the end, but His enemies as well. Reviled, He reviled not again, but commended GOD's love in pouring out His life for men who hated Him with cruel, malicious hatred. What a standard for His followers: "**Love one another as I have loved you!**"

3. **HE WALKED IN LIFE;** that is, in the things that make for life rather than death, that conserve to life its truest character and enable it to give itself in blessing to others. Not only did our Lord not waste His life in any unworthy purpose, but He did not vitiate it by deviating from the pole-star of a divine purpose. His walk was the constant expression of a life-purpose: to do His Father's will and finish His work, declaring that this was His very meat and drink; to walk in sinlessness, a purpose that necessitated His keeping Himself unspotted from the world, that thus He might have a sinless life to offer up for us (cf. John 6:38; 7:7; 8:46).

III "Ought Himself Also So to Walk"

There is no mistaking this language. It is the Apostle's practical appeal in his Epistle by which He presses home to all believers the Pattern - life portrayed in his Gospel. We are "**so to walk.**" Yet, Pentecost having come, the Lord JESUS CHRIST is more than a pattern, and must be if we are to walk as He walked. The secret must be inward.

1. **THE POSSIBILITY** lies in the fact that we are members of His Body. Given the control of His body, now as then, dwelling in us He will "**walk in us.**" So, as we "**abide in Him,**" He and we do the walking. It "ought" to be the same.

2. **THE RESPONSIBILITY** for so walking lies in this, that we are the manifestation of our glorified Lord for our present day. Only as we so walk can we rightly represent Him with whom we are inseparably identified, both inwardly, in the gift of His Spirit, and outwardly, in the thought of the world. In the light of the facts this responsibility is inescapable; this divine "ought" can never be removed.

3. **THE NECESSITY** for "so" walking lies hidden in the little word "also." "**Ought himself also.**" How John delights thus to couple us with Him. In the precious 14th chapter of his Gospel, recording JESUS' teaching, are five "alsos," each time linking the believer with CHRIST in a relationship that suggests incompleteness but for the act or fact so set forth. Its use has the same force here in the Epistle. Consider the case. CHRIST having finished His earthly walk, GOD the Father lifted Him to glory and "gave Him to be head over all things to the church, which is "**His body, the fullness of Him that filleth all in all**" (Ephesians 1:22, 23). As the head is not complete without the body, so is CHRIST incomplete without us. As He began His walk in the body of His flesh, so He must rely upon us, His present body, for continuing and completing that walk. His former walk is on record. Men read it and wonder. But it is remote, and doubtless He was a marvel-man. They are not convinced except as they see a corresponding walk in His followers. Upon this the faith of men waits. They must see that we "**also so walk.**"

On exhibition in Washington, D. C., is a certain copy of the Declaration of Independence. At first sight the penmanship appears much like that of any other copy. But one has only to stand in a particular position to detect the features of George Washington, the man who made the Declaration a practical reality. In its writing he is made to live again. Just so with everyone who "says," makes the declaration, that he has been set free from his past, only that he might enter into fellowship with the One who procured his freedom. The man who declares he is abiding in Him, that man's living and walking "ought" to disclose the fact to neighbors and friends in an unmistakable likeness to Him.

~ end of chapter 6 ~

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