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A LOOK AT LOVE

BY: C. D. COLE

"Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons [children] of God," I John 3:1.

INTRODUCTION: There is an old saying to the effect, that all the world loves a lover. If this were true all the world would love God, for He is the greatest of all lovers. Who can be compared to God as a lover whose love in its range and depth and height passeth knowledge? God loves more people than anyone else and He loves with a truer and deeper love. Outside the realm of God and truth, the proverb seems to have some basis in fact. There is something about love that attracts. The love that Edward the 8th had for Wally Simpson, that led him to give up the throne of England, had something admiring and attractive about it. We love the theme of love. We like to sing the songs that advertise the love of God and that boast of our love to Him. But I think we need to be warned that true love is something more than sweet sentiment; something more than songs from the lips; true love uses hands and feet as well as the lips.

True love goes into action for its object. And where there is true love for God there will be a life that seeks to do His will; a life that mourns over any failure to please Him.

STUDY OF WORDS

A study of words is necessary if we are to crack this coconut of truth.

A noted Bible scholar, Dr. Ragland, says the word "Behold" is not an interjection to be followed by a comma, but an imperative verb as given in the revised version. And another has called our attention to the fact that it is the aorist imperative, expressing an action complete

in itself, and the word may be rendered by a clause of several words: Just take a look at this love.

Dr. Ragland also says that the clause "that we should be called the sons of God" indicates both purpose and result. Its predominant sense is purpose but the purpose is predetermined and pre-effected. God's love intended that we should be called and effecting that we are called the sons of God. God's love has made us sons and named us sons. God purposed that we should be sons and the purpose has been actualized, that is what we are.

The word sons is more correctly translated "children." John never calls us sons of God; it is always children of God.

"Jesus saith unto them, If ye were Abraham's children, ye would do the works of Abraham," John 8:39. *"While ye have light, believe in the light, that ye may be the children of light,"* John 12:36.

"In this the children of God are manifest, and the children of the devil," I John 3:10.

"By this we know that we love the children of God, when we love God, and keep his commandments," I John 5:2. *"I have no greater joy than to hear that my children walk in truth,"* III John 4.

OUR PRESENT DIGNITY AND FUTURE DESTINY

"Beloved, now are we the sons [children] of God," I John 3:2. The world does not know us but we are somebody. We belong to the blood royal. *"Ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should shew forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light,"* I Peter 2:9.

Morally and spiritually speaking we have the blood of kings in our veins.

We make much of our first birth and

mark its anniversaries. "Happy Birthday" is a common expression and little children learn to sing it. But this natural birthday does not mean much; it marks another mile post that is a little closer to the last one. Our first birth introduced us to a dying race and gave us a depraved taste. *"Jesus answered and said unto him, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God,"* John 3:3. The second birth brought us into the realm of eternal life and gave us the nature of God.

Only a marvelous love could have made this possible and actual. We are born of God and have his nature. *"It is sown a natural body; it is raised a spiritual body. There is a natural body, and there is a spiritual body,"* I Corinthians 15:44. My child in the natural sense is my child and can never be anything else but my child. One who has been born a child of God can never be anything else but a child of God. Strange that anybody should have ever thought different.

"And it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is," I John 3:2. We are children now, but it is better ahead when we shall be manifested in Christ's likeness. *"I shall be satisfied, when I awake, with thy likeness,"* Psalm 17:15. *"For if we have been planted together in the likeness of his death, we shall be also in the likeness of his resurrection,"* Romans 6:5.

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GOD'S WORD TO THE LOST: ALL IN SIN

BY: C. D. COLE

"As it is written, There is none righteous, no, not one: There is none that understandeth, there is none that seeketh after God. They are all gone out of the way, they are together become unprofitable; there is none that doeth good, no, not one," **Romans 3:10-12.**

1. By nature - born in sin. "Behold, I was shapen in iniquity; and in sin did my mother conceive me," Psalms 51:5. "Among whom also we all had our conversation in times past in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind; and were by nature the children of wrath, even as others," Ephesians 2:3.

2. By choice. "And this is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil," John 3:19. "All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and the Lord hath laid on him the iniquity of us all," Isaiah 53:6.

3. By practice. "For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God," Romans 3:23.

CONSEQUENCES SURE:

"For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord," Romans 6:23.

1. Condemned already. "He that believeth on him is not condemned: but he that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God," John 3:18. "For as many as are of the works of the law are under the curse: for it is written, Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things which are written in the book of the law to do them," Galatians 3:10.

2. Under wrath. "He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life: and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him," John 3:36. "But after thy hardness and impenitent heart treasurest up unto thyself wrath against the day of wrath and revelation of the righteous judgment of God," Romans 2:5.

3. Death. "Where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched," Mark 9:48. "Then when lust hath conceived, it bringeth forth sin: and sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death," James 1:15.

"Who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power," II Thessalonians 1:9.

CANNOT SAVE SELF:

"He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned," Mark 16:16.

1. Not by works. "For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: Not of works, lest any man should boast," Ephesians 2:8-9.

2. Not by baptism.. "And almost all things are by the law purged with blood; and without shedding of blood is no remission," Hebrews 9:22.

3. Not by conduct. "Knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the law, but by the faith of Jesus Christ, even we have believed in Jesus Christ, that we might be justified by the faith of Christ, and not by the works of the law: for by the works of the law shall no flesh be justified," Galatians 2:16. "I do not frustrate the grace of God: for if righteousness come by the law, then Christ is dead in vain," Galatians 2:21. "And by him all that believe are justified from all things, from which ye could not be justified by the law of Moses," Acts 13:39.

SALVATION FOR ALL:

"To him give all the prophets witness, that through his name whosoever believeth in him shall receive remission of sins," Acts 10:43.

1. God's desire. "The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness; but is longsuffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance," II Peter 3:9.

2. God's proof. "Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins," I John 4:10. "But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us," Romans 5:8.

3. God's plan. "Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved," Acts 4:12.

COME AS YOU ARE:

"Come now, and let us reason together, saith the LORD: though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool," Isaiah 1:18.

1. Saves sinners. "This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners; of whom I am chief," I Timothy 1:15.

2. Ungodly. "But when Jesus heard that, he said unto them, They that be whole need not a physician, but they that are sick," Matthew 8:12.

3. Uttermost. "Wherefore he is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them," Hebrews 7:25. "Now unto him that is able to keep you from falling, and to present you faultless before the presence of his glory with exceeding joy," Jude 24.

CONDITIONS SIMPLE:

"Testifying both to the Jews, and also to the Greeks, repentance toward God, and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ," Acts 20:21.

1. Turn from sin. "I tell you, Nay: but, except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish," Luke 13:3.

2. Turn to Jesus. "But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name," John 1:12.

3. Trust fully. "For the which cause I also suffer these things: nevertheless I am not ashamed: for I know whom I have believed, and am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him," John 6:47.

DELAY IS DANGEROUS:

"But God said unto him, Thou fool, this night thy soul shall be required of thee: then whose shall those things be, which thou hast provided?" Luke 12:20.

1. Today. "(For he saith, I have heard thee in a time accepted, and in the day of salvation have I succoured thee: behold, now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation,)" II Corinthians 6:2.

2. Cut down. "Then said he unto the dresser of his vineyard, Behold, these three years I come seeking fruit on this

fig tree, and find none: cut it down; why cumbereth it the ground?" Luke 13:7.

3. No escape. "How shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation; which at the first began to be spoken by the Lord, and was confirmed unto us by them that heard him," Hebrews 2:3. "He, that being often reprov'd hardeneth his neck, shall suddenly be destroyed, and that without remedy," Proverbs 29:1.

EVIDENCES OF SALVATION:

"If ye love me, keep my commandments," John 14:15.

1. Confess Jesus. "Whosoever therefore shall confess me before men, him will I confess also before my Father which is in heaven," Matthew 10:32. "That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved," Romans 10:9.

2. Obey Jesus. "Ye are my friends, if ye do whatsoever I command you," John 15:14. "He that saith, I know him, and keepeth not his commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him," I John 2:4.

3. Follow Jesus. "Then said Jesus unto his disciples, If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me," Matthew 16:24. "And why call ye me, Lord, Lord, and do not the things which I say?" Luke 6:46.

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Some things about our future we do not know now; we could not stand it if it were revealed; it would be too glorious for us to comprehend. We know our future will be glorious, but what the nature of the glory will be, we do not know. We do not know the kind of place heaven will be. "And I saw a new heaven and a new earth: for the first heaven and the first earth were passed away; and there was no more sea. And I John saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband." Revelation 21:1-2. I could not draw you a picture of it. We do not have a photo of what we will look like in our new bodies; we only know "that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body," Philippians 3:21. But we have not seen his body and we have no photo of it. We know it will

be free from pain and disease and death. We know heaven will be a place free from sin and everything that defileth. "And there shall in no wise enter into it any thing that defileth, neither whatsoever worketh abomination, or maketh a lie: but they which are written in the Lamb's book of life," Revelation 21:27.

The spiritual can only be described in terms of the natural, and heaven is described by the most beautiful things on earth. "Come hither, I will shew thee the bride, the Lamb's wife. And he carried me away in the spirit to a great and high mountain, and shewed me that great city, the holy Jerusalem, descending out of heaven from God, Having the glory of God: and her light was like unto a stone most precious, even like a jasper stone, clear as crystal; And had a wall great and high, and had twelve gates, and at the gates twelve angels, and names written thereon, which are the names of the twelve tribes of the children of Israel; On the east three gates; on the north three gates; on the south three gates; and on the west three gates. And the wall of the city had twelve foundations, and in them the names of the twelve apostles of the Lamb. And he that talked with me had a golden reed to measure the city, and the gates thereof, and the wall thereof. And the city lieth foursquare, and the length is as large as the breadth: and he measured the city with the reed, twelve thousand furlongs. The length and the breadth and the height of it are equal. And he measured the wall thereof, an hundred and forty and four cubits, according to the measure of a man, that is, of the angel. And the building of the wall of it was of jasper: and the city was pure gold, like unto clear glass. And the foundations of the wall of the city were garnished with all manner of precious stones. The first foundation was jasper; the second, sapphire; the third, a chalcedony; the fourth, an emerald; the fifth, sardonyx; the sixth, sardius; the seventh, chrysolite; the eighth, beryl; the ninth, a topaz; the tenth, a chrysoprasus; the eleventh, a jacinth; the twelfth, an amethyst. And the twelve gates were twelve pearls; every several gate was of one pearl: and the street of the city was pure gold, as it were transparent glass," Revelation 21:9-22. "Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth," Colossians 3:2.

We shall see Christ as He is and be like Him. If he is precious to us this will

be good news. If he is our ideal of what we wish to be that will make us happy. This is the promise for the future.

This hope of being like Christ has a purifying effect. "And every man that hath this hope in him purifieth himself, even as he is pure," I John 3:3. Does this mean that believers are or can be here and now as pure as Christ? Actually and literally no: in aim and desire yes. In the absolute sense no; in the relative sense, yes. To know that we are going to be like Him that makes us want to be like Him now.

Now our text calls upon us to look at this love in action. And love can only be seen when it is in action. As a grace it can only be seen when it is doing something for its object. Divine love is seen at Calvary. "Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do," Luke 23:34. "It is finished: and he bowed his head, and gave up the ghost," John 19:30. And in our conversion; in dealing with the guilt of our sin and in dealing with the defilement of our sin. Sin charged to us and sin inherent in us. In dealing with the sin charged to us Christ settled it by being made sin for us; by becoming our surety and accepting its penalty. This is the justification we have through faith. "Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ: By whom also we have access by faith into this grace wherein we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God," Romans 5:1-2. But in dealing with the sin inherent in us by which our disposition and nature are ruined; the Son effects our second birth giving us a new nature that makes us a dual creature with both flesh and spirit, each striving for the mastery. "For the flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh: and these are contrary the one to the other: so that ye cannot do the things that ye would," Galatians 5:17.