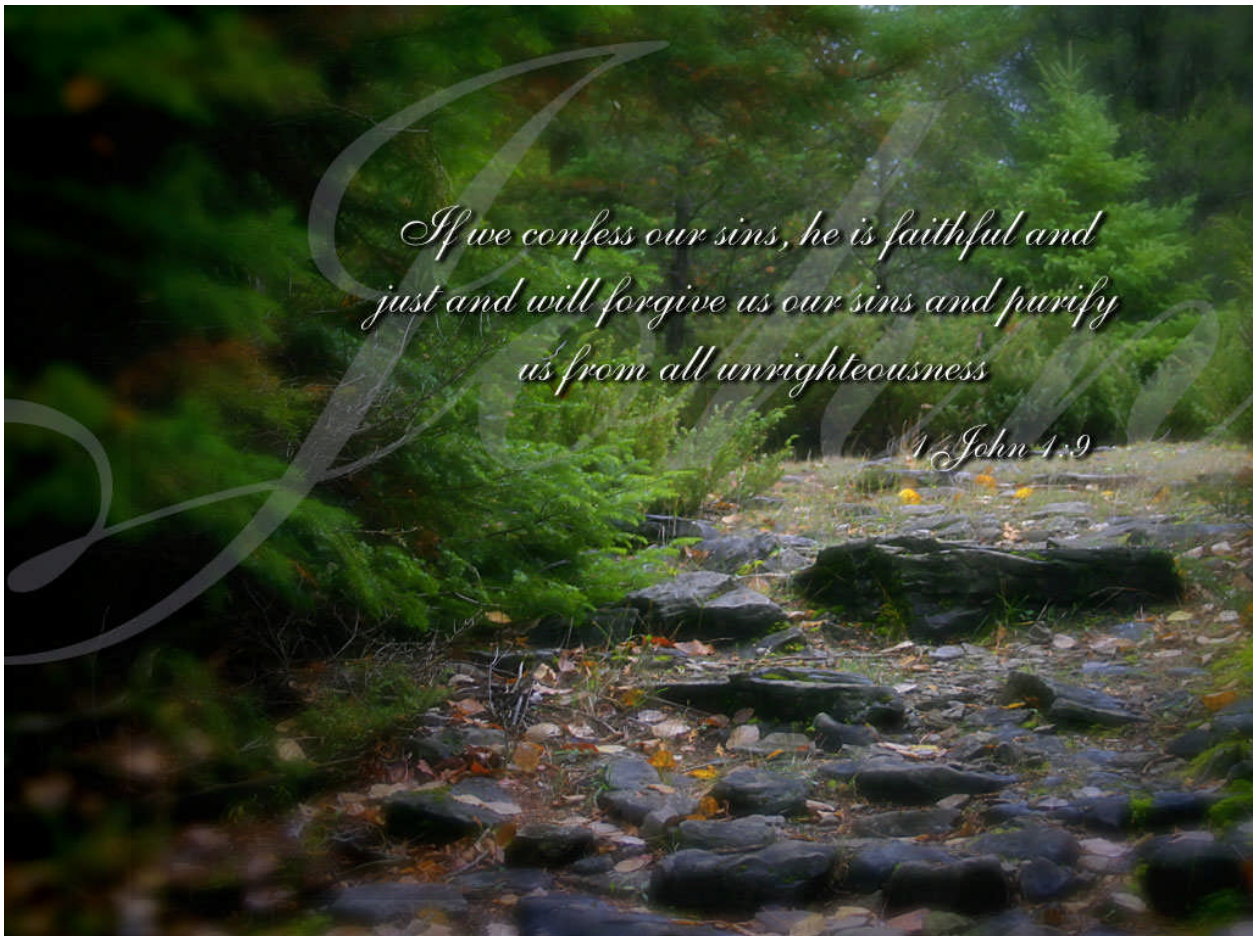


## CONCISE BIBLE NOTES ON

### 1 JOHN

**Dr. Stanford E. Murrell**



## THE FIRST EPISTLE OF JOHN

*Written: early date prior to AD 70; late date date c. AD 80-85*

### 1 JOHN 1

#### Eternal Life with the Father

#### John 1:1-4

1 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;

1:1. That which was from the beginning. In the gospel we read, *John 1:1 In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.*

1:1. the Word of life. While “Word” is capitalized, that is an interpretation by the translators based on John 1:1. However, the term that is significant is “life”. “Word of life” is a reference to the message. Of course, in the final analysis, Jesus Christ is the concrete message of the gospel. Paul said, “We preach Christ” (1 Corinthians 1:23). T. S. Eliot once cried out, "Where is the life which we have lost in living?" The Biblical response is to say that life can be found in the Word of Life.

1:1. handled. A reference to  
Luke 24:39

2 (For the life was manifested, and we have seen *it*, and bear witness, and shew unto you that eternal life, which was with the Father, and was manifested unto us ;)

1:2. and bear witness. The early church believed that this epistle was written, in part, to combat the heresy of Cyrenthus, a Gnostic teacher. Polycarp, who was the Bishop of Smyrna, tells a story about John and Cyrenthus, that was repeated by Irenaeus. One day in Ephesus, John was going to take a bath in the public bathhouse. As he entered the bathhouse he saw Cyrenthus. Believing the Gnostic leader to be a false teacher John rushed out of the bathhouse without bathing crying, "Let us fly lest even the bathhouse fall down because Cyrenthus the enemy of the truth is within."

3 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.

1:3. declare we unto you. John speaks from the authority of personal experience, and from the authority of the sense of having received a divine commission.

1:3. with the Father...with his Son. According to Gnostic teaching, two divine persons are in view. There is the one God, and there is our Lord Jesus who is the divine Son. The Gnostics denied the divinity of Christ. They believed that Jesus was simply a man. At His baptism the heaven's opened and the Christ came upon Him and then left Him at the Cross.

4 And these things write we unto you, that your joy may be full.

1:4. these things write we unto you.

#### **Six Purposes for Writing 1 John**

- To bear witness of the resurrection of Christ      1 John 1:1
- That the joy of others might be full                1 John 1:3
- That there might be fellowship                      1 John 1:4
- To define Antichrist                                      1 John 2:22
- That individuals might know eternal life        1 John 3:15
- To combat Gnosticism                                  1 John 4:2

1:4. joy. "For there is a joy that is not given to the ungodly for all those who love Thee for thy own sake, whose joy Thy self art. And this is the happy life, to rejoice in Thee" (Augustine).

1:4. "This statement of the apostolic objection to the proclamation of the gospel, namely of human fellowship arising spontaneously from a divine fellowship is a rebuke to much of our modern evangelism and church life. We cannot be content with an evangelism that does not lead to the drawing of converts into the church" (John Stott).

#### **The Eternal Light and the Father 1 John 1:5-7**

5 This then is the message which we have heard of him, and declare unto you, that God is light, and in him is no darkness at all.

1:5. we have heard of him.

#### **The Amazing Claims of Christ**

- Jesus claimed He was the Messiah.
- Jesus claimed He was the Son of God.
- Jesus claimed He was the eternal One.
- Jesus claimed He came from heaven while the rest of us came from the earth.
- Jesus claimed to be very God of very God, as well as true man.
- Jesus claimed to be without sin.
- Jesus claimed to be born of a virgin.
- Jesus claimed to be able to forgive sin.

1:5. God is light.

- Physically, light speaks of diffusive glory and splendor. *Psalms 104:1 Bless the Lord, O my soul. O Lord my God, thou art very great; thou art clothed with honour and majesty.* Because He is light, God wishes to be seen, like the sun. He wishes to be known.
- Intellectually, light speaks of truth and salvation. *Psalms 27:1 A Psalm of David. The Lord is my light and my salvation; whom shall I fear? The Lord is the strength of my life; of whom shall I be afraid?* On the great issues of life, light comes from God. *Psalms 36:9 For with thee is the fountain of life: in thy light shall we see light.*
- Morally, light is of God for light speaks of holiness. *1 John 1:5 ...God is light, and in him is no darkness at all.* Without holiness no one shall see God (Hebrews 12:14).

“Light was the first product of the divine creative energy” (Dr. S. Lewis Johnson). *Genesis 1:1 In the beginning God created the Heaven and the earth. 2 And the earth was without form, and void; and darkness was upon the face of the deep. And the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters. 3 And God said, Let there be light: and there was light.* In contrast to light is darkness which represents that which is foul, secretive, repulsive, evil, and gloomy. In darkness, there is decay and death. Men love darkness rather than light because their deeds are evil (John 3:19). It was said of Judas that he went out, “and it was night” (John 13:30). While there may be darkness in God’s presence, there is no darkness in Him.

### The First False Plea

6 If we say that we have fellowship with him, and walk in darkness [in sin], we lie, and do not the truth:

1:6. we have fellowship with him.

#### Those Who Have Had Fellowship with God

- Adam
- Abraham
- Jacob
- Moses
- Hannah
- David
- Mary
- Elijah
- Mary
- Martha
- Simeon
- Joseph etc.

The English Puritan and theologian John Owen noted that we can have distinct fellowship with each member of the trinity, God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit.

1:6. walk in darkness. While a Christian can and does sin, the believer is to walk in the light in the midst of general darkness, much like an actor on a stage who is highlighted by the spotlight. The Christian's life cannot be bent on sinning. The historian and novelist H. G. Wells said once, "A man may be a very bad musician and may yet be passionately in love with music." A Christian may love the Lord Jesus and sin, but that sin is to be confessed and is to be fundamentally hated.

1:6. we lie. The truth is not simply what we think in the intellect, but includes the kind of life we live. There is the lie of the lip when false doctrine is embraced, and there is the lie of the life when Christian virtues are violated. A person was once walking by a cemetery when he saw an inscription on a tombstone, "Not dead, just sleeping", to which he remarked, "He isn't fooling anyone but himself." The person who walks in darkness is only fooling himself if he thinks he has fellowship with God.

7 But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood [the death] of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin.

1:7. cleanseth us. The children of God are righteous and sanctified, because the Father will honor the covenant which He entered into with the Son before the foundation of the world. None of those whom the Father has given to the Son shall be lost.

1:7. Christ. This term is not found in the original text.

## **Communion and Confession**

### **1 John 1:8-10**

#### **The Second False Plea**

8 If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us.

1:8. If we say that we have no sin. With the rise of Wesleyan theology in the eighteenth century, modern Christians once more began to "say" they had no sin. This erroneous teaching is sometimes called the Doctrine of Entire Sanctification, or, Perfectionism.

1:8. we deceive ourselves. The doctrine of total depravity teaches man's total inability to come to Christ apart from sovereign grace. Those who are under the universal reign of sin are unable of their own will to repent, to believe the gospel, or to come to Christ. They have no natural spiritual power, or innate ability to change their natures, or prepare themselves for salvation. To deny a sin nature, is to deny the obvious.

## Responsibility to Divine Justice

9 If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

1:9. confess our sins. The forgiveness of temporal sin restores a person to communion with God. Union with God is based upon confessing Christ as Lord. Constant confession is to be engaged in by the believer, with the assurance that forgiveness and cleansing will be the consistent response of the Lord. The Christian is to keep a short account with God, and not let sins build in the soul.

- *Proverbs 28:13 He that covereth his sins shall not prosper: but whoso confesseth and forsaketh them shall have mercy.*
- *Psalms 32:5 I acknowledged my sin unto thee, and mine iniquity have I not hid. I said, I will confess my transgressions unto the Lord; and thou forgavest the iniquity of my sin. Selah.*

1:9. confess. To confess our sin is to say the same thing God says about it. It is admitting that sin is contrary to God's Word and contrary to His known will. To confess sin is not a burden, but one of the great privileges of the Christian life. Confession of sin is to be definite. *Leviticus 5:5 And it shall be, when he shall be guilty in one of these things, that he shall confess that he hath sinned in that thing.* Confession is to be made to God. The idea of imposing confession of sin to a priest, developed at the Fourth Council of Lateran in AD 1215, when Pope Innocent III promulgated that dogma within the Roman Catholic Church. Biblical confession of sin is to be immediate, personal, and is to be made to God.

1:9. faithful. God will consistently forgive sin, for He is love.

1:9. just. The basis for the forgiveness of sins is the redemptive work of Christ at Calvary. God is just when He forgives sin.

1:9. cleanses us from all unrighteousness. When confession is made for sins of commission, then sins of omission are also forgiven with a view to further sanctification.

1:9. The doctrine of cleansing from sin might leave some to think that it is proper to sin even more so that more grace could be exercised. Paul, too, had to address this false conclusion in Romans 6:1-2. The conclusion is that grace does not give license for sin, or for any form of antinomianism which is lawlessness.

1:9. God wants to forgive us more than we want to be forgiven, such is His nature. We tire of confessing sin more quickly than God tires of forgiving sin.

### The Third False Plea

10 If we say that we have not sinned, we make him a liar, and his word is not in us.

1:10. If we say that we have not sinned. This is a dangerous contradiction of God's Word, for the Lord says that "*all have sinned*" (Romans 3:23). The Bible says, "*There is none righteous, no, not one*" (Romans 3:10). So those people who say that "we have not sinned", they are antichrists, they are deniers of God's Word. Mary Baker Eddy, founder of *Christian Science*, taught that sin is, "the error of mortal mind." She taught that we do not sin. Millions of people today have embraced her heresy.

1:10. we make him a liar. In verse six, "we lie", and here in verse 10, we make God a liar.

1:10. The Three False Pleas represent a response to well-known Gnostic ideas prevalent in John's day.

#### Two Indispensable Conditions for Fellowship

- Walking in the light.
- Confess sin.

#### Psalm 139:23-24

"Search me, O God,  
and know my heart:  
try me, and know my thoughts:  
And see if there be any wicked way in me,  
and lead me in the way everlasting."

## 1 JOHN 2

### An Advocate with the Father

1 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:

2:1. My little children. Here is a tender expression of endearment.

2:1. that ye sin not. Like Christians today, believers in the early church struggled with sin. There was personal sin (Romans 7:24), and there was doctrinal sin. One of the doctrinal heresies was that of the neo-so-rinthians, who claimed the possibility of life, and fellowship with God, apart from the Lord Jesus Christ.

2:1. that ye sin not. The idea is not to sin less, or to sin as little as possible. John wants the believer to not sin. John understands there is progressive sanctification, and there is ultimate sanctification in death. But sanctification is designed to be a present reality as well. That is the goal of every believer. It was the standard set by Christ. *Matthew 5:48 Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect.* The Christian must seek to avoid sin.

2:1. And if any man sin. “The moment we sin, we have an advocate. Not the moment when we confess our sin, the moment when we sin” (S. Lewis Johnson).

2:1. an advocate. A defense attorney. Jesus Christ the Righteous One, is the believer’s advocate. He was pictured and foreshadowed in the Old Testament economy by the High Priest.

#### The Ephod (A Sacred Vestment)

- *Exodus 28:12 And thou shalt put the two [onyx] stones upon the shoulders of the ephod for stones of memorial unto the children of Israel: and Aaron shall bear their names before the Lord upon his two shoulders for a memorial.* The shoulders were the place of strength.

#### The Breastplate of Judgment

- *Exodus 28:29 And Aaron shall bear the names of the children of Israel in the breastplate of judgment upon his heart, when he goeth in unto the holy place, for a memorial before the Lord continually.* The breastplate was the place of love.

The office of a priest of grace was threefold. He was a representative. On the Day of Atonement the High Priest stood between God and the people to represent the people. He brought offerings. He engaged in intercession. Jesus is our priest. He is not only a priest, but He is a high priest. And not only that, but Christ is a great high priest. As our Great High Priest, Jesus offers offerings for us. He intercedes for us. And, He prays for us.



2:1. Father. Sin breaks the communion, but not the union. We are still in the family and God deals with us as Father. The restoration to fellowship is not on bare asking terms, but on the basis of the offerings of Christ, who is the propitiation for our sins.

### **The Propitiation for Sinners**

2 And he is the propitiation for our sins: and not for ours only, but also for *the sins of the whole world*.

2:2. propitiation. satisfaction.

2:2. the whole world. It can be argued that Christ died for all men, without distinction, in that He died for Jew and Gentile alike. Christ did not die for all men without exception, for the purpose of saving each and every lost sinner, for then, all would certainly be saved. The motive for this divine act of propitiation was love. “*God so loved the world (John 3:16).*” To say “God so loved the world” is not to suggest “that the world is so big that it takes a great deal of love to embrace it all, but that the world is so bad, that it takes a great kind of love to love it at all, and much more to love it as God has loved it when He gave His Son for it” (B.B.Warfield).

"Though the restless foe accuses,  
sins recounting like a flood,  
every charge our God refuses,  
Christ has answered with his blood.

What though the accuser roar,  
of sins that I have done;  
I know them all, and thousands more,  
Jehovah findeth none.”

### **Knowing God and Keeping His Commandments**

#### **1 John 2:3-6**

3 And hereby we do know that we know him, if we keep his commandments.

2:3. The true test of the spiritual life is that all true spiritual experience is evident to men and to God. Christian rhetoric is to be matched by spiritual reality lest there be a counterfeit life, like Judas. He could claim to be an apostle of the Lord Jesus Christ, but he was not truly of God.

#### **A Prayer for Spiritual Authenticity**

**S. Lewis Johnson**

“Father, we are indeed grateful to Thee that the apostles wrote so plainly under the guidance of the Holy Spirit to our needs, and exhorted us, and encouraged us, and consoled us with the words of God. We so need, Lord, to be exhorted, to live in accordance with the profession of faith that we make. Deliver us from hypocrisy, and from cant, the pious statements which we often make as believers, but to which we do not yield complete allegiance.

We ask that through the ministry of the word of God, we may be encouraged, lifted up, and blessed to the extent that we keep the commandments of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. O God, help us to remember that sin breaks our communion with Thee. Enable us, because of the greatness of the atoning work of Christ, to desire truly to please Thee in all of the daily life which we are called upon to live.”

2:3. if we keep His commandments. The Deeper Life, the Keswick Life, the Spiritual Life must not just be proud, pious claims of seeking holiness.

4 He that saith, I know him, and keepeth not his commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him.

2:4. He that saith. John has found a way to probe through a person’s profession of faith to discern a genuine spiritual life and that is by keeping God’s commandments. Knowledge of God is not by intellectual reasoning alone, or through emotional experiences, nor through sensual music, perfumed incense, majestic liturgy, and crying out, “I am thou, and thou are I.” Nor is knowledge of God through revelation alone, as many Jews maintained. John says that we know God by keeping His commandments.

2:4. I know Him. It is possible to know God and it is possible to know that one knows God. But there is a condition. We must keep God’s commandments. Apart from obedience, all religious knowledge, feelings, and experiences, is deemed a lie and the truth is not present. If Jesus is not Lord as the first principle, then all other spiritual life is a lie. Read again the first principle of the Lordship of Christ.

*Romans 10:9 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.*

*2 Corinthians 4:5 For we preach not ourselves, but Christ Jesus the Lord; and ourselves your servants for Jesus' sake.*

5 But whoso keepeth his word, in him verily is the love of God perfected: hereby know we that we are in him.

2:5. verily. truly.

2:5. the love of God perfected.

### **The Covenantal God**

- The Father covenants to give to the Son a people, a specific people and to keep those people forever.
- The Son covenants to become incarnate, to make an atoning sacrifice once and for all, to come again in the future, and to complete the mediatorial work, and to hand it over to God the Father, that God, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit may be all in all.

- The Holy Spirit covenants to regenerate the people the Father gives to the Son. He promises to bring them to repentance and to faith, giving them faith to believe. The Spirit promises to sanctify those who are the heirs of salvation, to keep and preserve them in the holy faith, to bring them into likeness to the Son of God, and to guide them. The Spirit promises with the Son to present this people to God, holy, without blemish and without spot.

2:5. the love of God perfected. A person's profession of faith is completed in the obedience that the Christian gives to God.

### **The Moral Obligation of Salvation**

6 He that saith he abideth in him ought himself also so to walk, even as he walked.

2:6. abideth. lives.

#### **How Christ Walked**

*Mark 10:32 And they were in the way going up to Jerusalem; and Jesus went before them: and they were amazed; and as they followed, they were afraid. And he took again the twelve, and began to tell them what things should happen unto him.*

Jesus walked with a fixed determination in the known will of the Father, and in communion with Him. And the disciples were afraid. "How may I know that I know him, and am in him? Experience? No. Science and wonders? No. Tongues? No. Voices from heaven á la contemporary religious medicine men, quacks, and charlatans? No, it's as simple and as hard as keeping his word, keeping the commandments" (S. Lewis Johnson). With Samuel let us say, "*Speak Lord, for thy servant heareth*" (1 Samuel 3:9, 10).

### **No New Commandment**

#### **1 John 2:7-11**

7 Brethren, I write no new commandment unto you, but an old commandment which ye had from the beginning. The old commandment is the word which ye have heard from the beginning.

2:7. Brethren. Some early Greek manuscripts have the word, "beloved."

#### **Three Tests of True Spiritual Fellowship**

- Moral Test            1 John 1:3-6; 1 John 2:6
- Social Test            1 John 2:7-11
- Love Test             1 John 2:9-10; see also 1 Corinthians 13:13

2:7. I write no new commandment. Jesus summed up the Law by saying that man is to love the Lord thy God and to love one's neighbor as thyself. Before Moses, the love of God was revealed. So John is teaching no new commandment.

8 Again, a new commandment I write unto you, which thing is true in him and in you: because the darkness is past, and the true light now shineth.

2:8. which thing is true. The new commandment is true in Christ, and true in the believers, which means that it exists in both. The new commandment is new in expression. It is new in emphasis. It is new in extent. The new commandment now included the Gentiles and not just the Jews. The new commandment can be written, "*because the darkness is past, and the true light now shineth.*"

### **The Danger of Dead Orthodoxy**

9 He that saith he is in the light, and hateth his brother, is in darkness even until now.

2:9. He that saith. It is good to make a confession and to say, "This is I." John actually writes a startling statement. It is possible to be in darkness, while professing to walk in the light.

10 He that loveth his brother abideth in the light, and there is none occasion of stumbling in him.

2:10. abideth. Greek, lives.

2:10. of stumbling. The stumbling is his own. He does not make others to stumble. No Christian will stumble who walks in the light. *John 12:35 Then Jesus said unto them, Yet a little while is the light with you. Walk while ye have the light, lest darkness come upon you: for he that walketh in darkness knoweth not whither he goeth.*

### **Heartless Lovers of Mankind**

- Percy Bysshe Shelley. In his arrogance Shelley advocated what he called, "The divine right of intellectuals." "Poets," Shelley wrote, "are the unacknowledged legislators of the world."
- Karl Marx. Marx once received a letter from his father saying, "In your heart egoism is predominant." While Marx helped to provide the blueprint of the Soviet State Policy, along with Lenin, individuals were hated. His wife rebuked him constantly for his financial improvidence and finally she remarked, "What a pity it is that you didn't try to acquire capital rather than writing about it."
- Sigmund Freud. Freud was the dominant patriarch all of his life. There was no love for those who were around him.

- Advocates of Pro Choice. These people murder babies without remorse.

"I love mankind, its people I can't stand." -- Linus  
Charlie Shultz

In contrast to the heartless lovers of the world are the Christians. "They love before they know each other," said Minucius Felix of the early Christians.

11 But he that hateth his brother is in darkness, and walketh [lives] in darkness, and knoweth not whither he goeth, because that darkness hath blinded his eyes.

**A Three-fold Assurance of Salvation**  
**1 John 2:12-14**

12 I write unto you, little children, because your sins are forgiven you for his names sake.

2:12. little children. A reference to little begotten ones. This is a word of affection.

2:12. for his name's sake. All that Christ is and all that He has done for us, is the basis for the Christian's life. This concept is illustrated in the Old Testament era when David wanted to do something for Mephibosheth, for Jonathan's sake (2 Samuel 4:4; 9:6-13; 16:1-4; 19:24, 25, 30; 21:7, 8). Grace was shown to a cripple for Jonathan's sake. So the Christian, who is a spiritual cripple, is shown grace for Jesus' sake.

13 I write unto you, fathers, because ye have known him *that is* from the beginning. I write unto you, young men, because ye have overcome the wicked one. I write unto you, little children, because ye have known the Father.

2:12-13. Several times John says, "I write."

**To Whom Addressed**

**The Reason Why**

- |                                      |  |
|--------------------------------------|--|
| • I write unto you, little children. | Because your sins are forgiven you.      |
| • I write unto you, fathers.         | Because ye have known Him [Christ].      |
| • I write unto you, young men.       | Because ye have overcome the Wicked One. |
| • I write unto you, little children. | Because ye have known the Father.        |

The Christian life only begins at the moment of salvation. There is much more to enjoy. *Hebrews 6:1 Therefore leaving the principles of the doctrine of Christ, let us go on unto perfection; not laying again the foundation of repentance from dead works, and of faith toward God.*

2:13. ye have known the Father. By grace the Christian knows God as Father. The world knows God by other names, unworthy names.

#### **Unworthy Names for God**

- Moloch
- Mars
- Jupiter
- Neptune
- Abacus
- Shiva
- Juggernaut
- Buddha
- Allah
- Tor
- Oden

Elizabeth Barrett Browning called God, "A skillful mathematician." Sir Thomas Brown called Him, "The unconcerned spectator." Francis Bacon called Him, "An unutterable sigh planted in the depth of the soul." Thomas Hardy, a British humanist, called God, "the President of the immortals." H.G. Wells called God, "the force, not ourselves that make it for righteousness." Thomas McCauley called him, "The great mathematician." Sir James Jeans called him, "the eternal." Judaism has frequently referred to the Lord in that way.

14 I have written unto you, fathers, because ye have known him *that is* from the beginning. I have written unto you, young men, because ye are strong, and the word of God abideth [lives] in you, and ye have overcome the wicked one.

2:14. I have written unto you.

#### **More Reasons for Writing**

- Fathers.                    Because ye have known Christ.
- Young men.                Because ye are strong.  
                                       Because the Word of God abideth in you.  
                                       Because ye have overcome the Wicked One.

2:14. Jesus overcame Satan, not by signs and wonders, but by the Word of God. The secret of spiritual strength is to abide in the Word of God. By the Word we live. By the Word we minister. By the Word we overcome the Wicked One.

#### **When Love is Wrong** **1 John 2:15-17**

15 Love not the world, neither the things *that are* in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him.

2:15. Love not the world. Question: “What is the world?” Is worldliness a list of taboos which are drawn up to be avoided? Is worldliness a life of violated “oughtness”? The command to not love the world means that there is such a thing as worldliness. Jesus noted this, and gave counsel about it in John 15. The things that characterize the world should not characterize Christians. The world is the reign of the carnal mind. The world of which John writes, refers to a prevailing spiritual and moral order of human affairs. The world is the system of thinking which is hostile to God. The world is characterized by lusts and vanities.

### **Worldly Believers**

- Noah. Following the flood, Noah was found in a drunken state.
- Lot. Though he knew better, Lot pitched his tent towards Sodom. Later, he had to be delivered. *2 Peter 2:7 And delivered just Lot, vexed with the filthy conversation of the wicked: 8 (For that righteous man dwelling among them, in seeing and hearing, vexed his righteous soul from day to day with their unlawful deeds ;)*
- David. When he became enamored with his power, position, and the population of the people, David, for a time, was tempted to love the world.

2:15. Loving the world and loving the Father, are incompatible. *Matthew 6:24 No man can serve two masters: for either he will hate the one, and love the other; or else he will hold to the one, and despise the other. Ye cannot serve God and mammon.*

16 For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world.

2:16. the pride of life. A reference to self-promotion.

2:16.

### **A Trinity of Evil “The Harpies of the Soul”**

- lust of the flesh. A reference to physical desires.
- lust of the eyes. A reference to personal longings.
- pride of life. A reference to self-promotion.

#### ***Special Note.***

Harpy. In Greek mythology, a harpy was one of the winged spirits best known for constantly stealing all food from Phineus. The literal meaning of the word seems to be "that which snatches" (Greek, ἁρπάζειν, *harpazein*).

2:16. These three temptations were presented to Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden, and to Christ in His wilderness temptations. It is possible for our God given senses, our appetites, to become excessive, and get out of order. Therefore, when there is a lack of occupation with Christ, when there is self-indulgence, when there is coveting, when there is self-promotion, then John speaks to the heart. But we need to be careful, for even in our religious acts we can sin.

“R.C. Chapman was a gospel preacher who came from a very wealthy family. His father was a very wealthy man, had every kind of convenience you could have. He had a carriage with horses and drivers. He grew up that way. He went out, preached for many years when the time came for him to retire, he actually could have retired on a large country estate like one of those manor homes like you see when you go to England. He determined he was not going to parade his wealth. So he went to the little city which was near where he had grown up, and he bought himself a small home, like a laborer in a factory might have on a back street. He said afterwards that he never got over his pride. See it's even possible for us to be worldly in our self-denial” (S. Lewis Johnson).

17 And the world passeth away, and the lust thereof: but he that doeth the will of God abideth for ever.

2:16, 17.

### **Two Grounds for the Prohibition**

First Ground: All that is in the world is not of the Father, but is of the world.  
 Second Ground: The world will pass away.

John's point is that the Christian's victory has been won. Consider an illustration from World War II. On D-Day, June 6, 1944, the Allied victory was won. But it was not realized fully until VE-Day, May 8, 1945. John says that what is passing should not overshadow that which is coming.

### **The Last Hour 1 John 2:18-21**

18 Little children, it is the last time: and as ye have heard that antichrist shall come, even now are there many antichrists; whereby we know that it is the last time.

2:18. the last time. Literally, a last hour.

2:18. antichrist shall come.



**The Perseverance of the Saints**  
**1 John 2:19**

19 They went out from us, but they were not of us; for if they had been of us, they would *no doubt* have continued with us: but *they went out*, that they might be made manifest that they were not all of us.

2:19. they went out from us. A reference to the antichrists that went out.

2:19.

**Doctrine of Perseverance**

1. The Doctrine of the Perseverance of the Saints is expressed in 1 John 2:19.
2. This doctrine does not advocate the position that a person is saved no matter what his practice may be.
3. Rather, the emphasis is much more positive.
4. The doctrine argues that since a person has a new nature by virtue of the new birth, God Himself will, in grace, secure the salvation of true believers by keeping them from sinning as a practice, as a bent of life, and from final apostasy.
5. There will be a continuous operation of the Holy Spirit in the believer, by which the work of the divine grace that is begun in the heart through the Spirit, is continued and brought to completion.
6. When someone has come to faith in Christ, genuine faith in Christ, that person will not apostatize from the faith. That is impossible. *John 10:27 My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me: 28 And I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand.*
7. Jonathan Edwards said, "The sure proof of election is that one perseveres until the end." Continuance is the test of reality.

2:19. *no doubt*. These words have been added by the translators for they are italicized. John had no doubt about leaving Christ. "*They would have continued with us,*" says John.

2:19. continued with us. All who are truly born of God will remain within the sphere of Christian fellowship and service for the Saviour.

2:19. manifest. Literally, obvious.

**The Unction**

20 But ye have an unction from the Holy One, and ye know all things.

2:20. unction. Literally, anointing. This is a reference to the indwelling of the divine pedagogue, the Holy Spirit. *John 14:16 And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you for ever.*

2:20. and ye know all things. Some ancient manuscripts have, "*ye have all things*". If that is the meaning, then the sense of the thought is that, "ye know all things concerning the subject of which we are speaking." What John is speaking about, in context, is the Sonship and Messiahship of the Lord Jesus Christ.

21 I have not written unto you because ye know not the truth, but because ye know it, and that no lie is of the truth.

2:21. because ye know it. John teaches dogmatically it is possible to know truth. Modern society says it is not possible to know the truth, and even if it were possible, we should be open minded and consider other points of views. According to Professor Allan Bloom's book, *The Closing of the American Mind*, "the only virtue" is openness. In contrast, John Leith, who was Pemberton Professor of Theology at Union Theological Seminary in Richmond, Virginia, has written *The Reformed Imperative*. Professor Leith argues that there are certain things that only the church can say, and no one else. There is a spiritual truth that is not open to any other point of view, if a person is to be saved. *Acts 4:12 Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved.*

### Identifying Anti-Christ

22 Who is a liar but he that denieth that Jesus is the Christ? He is antichrist, that denieth the Father and the Son.

2:22. Who is a liar. Literally, Who is the liar.

2:22. denieth that Jesus is the Christ. The Gnostics were doing this. It is possible for people to have a view of Christ which seems to be very refined, favorable, and conservative, but in reality it denies the divinity of the Lord. An incomplete view of the Lord is dangerous. John is not being too dogmatic, unkind, or opinionated to point out that it is possible for a person to have the spirit of an antichrist.

23 Whosoever denieth the Son, the same hath not the Father: he that acknowledgeth the Son hath the Father also.

2:23. hath not the Father. It is a foundational facet of Christian dogma that we cannot have God the Father without Jesus. Those who embrace Hinduism, Judaism, or any other religion must understand this distinctive of the Christian faith. No Jesus, no God. "The Christian, the genuine Christian, is always a conservative Christian" (John Stott).

2:23. acknowledgeth the Son. To acknowledge the Son is to affirm what Jesus said of Himself. "He said he was the Son of God. He said that he was the divine Son of God. He affirmed that he had accomplished the atoning work. He said he was the one of whom the Scriptures speak, and that he successfully carried out his work. He even spoke, after his resurrection, to the apostles and taught them about the consummation of all things. He has given us, in the New Testament, an unfolding of how he will assume authority over all of this universe" (Dr. S. Lewis Johnson). This is what the Christian must affirm.

24 Let that therefore abide in you, which ye have heard from the beginning. If that which ye have heard from the beginning shall remain in you, ye also shall continue in the Son, and in the Father.

2:24. therefore abide. Literally, therefore remain.

25 And this is the promise that he hath promised us, *even* eternal life.

2:25. He hath promised. Because God cannot lie, the promise of eternal life guarantees the salvation of believers.

**The Sufficiency of the Anointing of the Holy Spirit  
As Confirmation of the Truth  
1 John 2:26-27**

26 These *things* have I written unto you concerning them that seduce you.

2:26. seduce. Literally, deceive. Many Christians are easily seduced because they are impatient. Impatience is the curse of modern Christianity. Impatience drives men to look without, to signs and wonders, to seek religious experiences, instead of looking to the Word of God and the movement of the Holy Spirit. We must learn to wait upon the Spirit. In Burma, the Baptist missionary and Bible translator Adoniram Judson (1788-1850) laborer for seven years before he saw his first convert. Once writing to his home country, England, Mr. Taylor urged the churches to have patience. "If a ship were here to carry me to any part of the world, I would not leave my field. Tell the brethren, success is as certain as the promise of a faithful God can make it."

2:26. have I written unto you. John records the events of the Upper Room prior to the Lord's death. *John 14:16 And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you for ever; 17 Even the Spirit of truth; whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth him not, neither knoweth him: but ye know him; for he dwelleth with you, and shall be in you.* The world cannot receive the Holy Spirit apart from regeneration. John continues.

*John 16:12 I have yet many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now. 13 Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth: for he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak: and he will shew you things to come. 14 He shall glorify me: for he shall receive of mine, and shall shew it unto you. 15 All things that the Father hath are mine: therefore said I, that he shall take of mine, and shall shew it unto you.*

27 But the anointing which ye have received of him abideth in you, and ye need not that any man teach you: but as the same anointing teacheth you of all things, and is truth, and is no lie, and even as it hath taught you, ye shall abide in him.

2:27. the anointing. A reference to the anointing of the Holy Spirit who will teach us all things.

### **The Anointing**

- It is an inward anointing, in contrast to the outward anointing of the Old Testament.
- It is a permanent anointing. It is not a fitful emotion or a wayward impulse. It abides.
- It is a sufficient anointing. “*ye need not that any man teach you.*” The Holy Spirit is sufficient. No authority can be higher than the direct testimony of the triune God.
- It is an anointing of truth, “*the same anointing teacheth you of all things, and is truth, and is no lie.*”
- It is a continuous anointing, “*even as it hath taught you.*” John Wimber, of the Vineyard movement, made the statement that experience alters theology. Nothing could be more erroneous than this idea that experience alters theology. The apostolic teaching is still applicable to us.
- It is an abiding anointing, “*ye shall abide in him.*” Our faith does not stand in the wisdom of men, but in the power of God.

2:27. ye need not that any man teach you. “What does he mean then? He is talking about essential truth, especially the truth of which he is speaking here. We do not need instruction from those outside the Christian fellowship. We do not have to rush off to some scientist to tell us about scientific things as far as the Word of God is concerned. We do not look to a scientist to explain to us Holy Scripture. We do not look to a philosopher who is not one of us, you understand, we can understand a great deal from philosophers in their sphere, and we can learn a great deal, and we ought to learn a great deal from scientists when they speak of their sphere of study, but when a philosopher tries to tell us what the Word of God means and does not have the anointing, or a scientist tell us that, then we are not being contrary to the Word of God when we express doubt about their conclusions. That is what John means” (Dr. S. Lewis Johnson).

2:27. shall abide. shall remain.

### **Never Ashamed 1 John 2:28-29**

#### **The Judge is Coming**

28 And now, little children, abide in him; that, when he shall appear, we may have confidence, and not be ashamed before him at his coming.

2:28. A life of moral excellence is encouraged by the second coming.

2:28. And now. Though the apostle of love, John was called in the early church, The Theologian. John was concerned that the Christian keeps the commandments of God as a rule of life. To see if a person was even within the sphere of saving faith, John sets forth several tests. The first test is a doctrinal test and concerns the incarnation. The second test is a moral test. v. 3. *"And hereby we do know that we know him, if we keep his commandments."* The third test is a social test and concerns love for the Lord, and love for other believers.

Now, in the final two verses, John returns to the moral test. He desires that every Christian live in such a way that family discipline is not needed, and the believer shall not be ashamed before Christ at His second coming. The evidence of being a Christian is to be like the father. This is true in the natural world, and it is true in the Christian world.

2:28. abide.

### Abiding in Christ

- To dwell in Christ
- To remain in Christ
- To continue in Christ
- To abide in Christ

"To put it very simply, to abide with Christ is to stay where grace puts the believer in touch with the Lord Jesus Christ" (Dr. S. Lewis Johnson).

2:28. not be ashamed. "Build your nest upon no tree here; for ye see God hath sold the forest to death; and every tree whereupon we would rest is ready to be cut down, to the end we may fly and mount up, and build upon the Rock, and dwell in the holes of the Rock. Set not your heart on the flowers of this world; for they have all a canker in them. Prize the Rose of Sharon and the Lily of the Valley more than all; for He changeth not. Live nearer to Christ than to the saints, so that when they are taken from you, you may have Him to lean on still" (Samuel Rutherford, 1600-1661).

2:28. his coming. The King is coming.

"The Market place is empty  
No more traffic in the streets  
All the builders tools are silent  
No more time to harvest wheat.

Busy housewives cease their labors  
in the courtroom no debate  
Work on earth has been suspended  
As the King comes thro' the gate.

The King is coming  
The King is coming  
I just heard the trumpet sounding  
And now his face I see.

The King is coming  
 The King is coming  
 Praise God  
 He's coming for me

Happy faces line the hallway  
 Those whose lives have been redeemed  
 Broken homes that He has mended  
 Those from prison He's set free.

Little children and the aged  
 Hand in hand aglow  
 Those who were crippled broken ruined  
 Clad in garments white as snow.

I can hear the chariots rumble  
 I can see the marching throng  
 And the flurry of God's trumpets  
 spell the end of sin and wrong.

Regal robes are now unfolding  
 Heaven's grandstands all in place  
 Heaven's choir is now assembled  
 Start to sing Amazing Grace.”

Bill and Gloria Gather

2:28. we may have confidence. John includes himself when he speaks of the “little children.” All are to follow that which is just or righteous. *Deuteronomy 16:20 That which is altogether just shalt thou follow, that thou mayest live, and inherit the land which the Lord thy God giveth thee.*

Jesus Himself followed after that which is just, revealed in three instances in the life of the Lord.

When the rich young ruler turned away from the Lord, Jesus let him, even though the Lord loved him (Mark 10:17-21). Why? Because righteousness demanded no special exceptions for gospel terms. We must meet God on God's terms.

Christ loved the city of Jerusalem. He wept over it. And yet, the righteous Son of God did not relax the requirements of God, and pronounced judgment on the Holy City. *Luke 19:41 And when he was come near, he beheld the city, and wept over it, 42 Saying, If thou hadst known, even thou, at least in this thy day, the things which belong unto thy peace! But now they are hid from thine eyes. 43 For the days shall come upon thee, that thine enemies shall cast a trench about thee, and compass thee round, and keep thee in on every side, 44 And shall lay thee even with the ground, and thy children within thee; and they shall not leave in thee one stone upon another; because thou knewest not the time of thy visitation.*

In Gethsemane, three times Jesus prayed for the cup of suffering to pass from Him, but the Father said, “No!”, to each petition. Why? Because His holiness, His righteousness, His justice had to be satisfied without compromise. And so Jesus bowed and said, “*Nevertheless, not my will, but Thine be done*” (Luke 22:42).

29 If ye know that he is righteous, ye know that every one that doeth righteousness is born of him.

2:29. ye know that he is righteous. Every Christian can say, “I know the Lord is righteous.”

“Jesus, Thy blood and righteousness,  
My beauty are, my glorious dress;  
Midst flaming worlds, in these arrayed,  
With joy shall I lift up my head.

Lord, I believe Thy precious blood,  
Which, at the mercy-seat of God,  
Forever doth for sinners plead,  
For me, e'en for my soul, was shed.

Lord, I believe were sinners more  
Than sands upon the ocean shore,  
Thou hast for all a ransom paid,  
For all a full redemption made.

Bold can I stand in every way,  
For who aught to my charge shall lay?  
Fully, by Thee, absolved I am  
From sin and fear, from guilt and shame.

This spotless robe the same appears,  
When ruined nature sinks in years;  
No age can change its glorious hue,  
The robe of Christ is ever new.

Oh, let the dead now hear Thy voice;  
Bid, Lord, Thy mourning ones rejoice;  
Their beauty this, their glorious dress,  
Jesus the Lord, our Righteousness.”

Nicolaus L. Zinzendorf  
1700-1760

2:29. doeth righteousness. Question: "What is a good work?" The Bible defines a good work as that which is a product of faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. Human works are insufficient to please God and obtain salvation. *Ephesians 2:8 For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: 9 Not of works, lest any man should boast.* The world does not define what is a good work, God does. *Titus 3:5 Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost;*

2:29. every one that doeth righteousness is born of him. Good works are the consequence, not the condition, of sonship. When the Jews thought they were children of God because they were the children of Abraham, Jesus said unto them, "*If ye were Abraham's children, ye would do the works of Abraham, but now ye seek to kill me, a man that hath told you the truth which I have heard of God. This did not Abraham*" (John 8:4). "God's sons reflect Him and His righteous act. The rule then for the seducers of the professing people in John's day is like father, like son. How important it is my Christian friends, for us to recognize that we demonstrate our relationship by the actions that characterize our lives" (Dr. S. Lewis Johnson).



*Supplemental Material.*

**Doctrine of the Propitiation of Christ**

1. John urges us to a sin-judged life, but he has also said that we have an advocate in case we sin. That raises some questions.
  - First, the competence of the Advocate. Is He competent for the task of serving as our advocate with the Father?
  - Second, the ground of His advocacy. Is it sufficient?
  - Third, the sufficiency of His advocacy. Is it simply available for us, or is it fair to say that what Christ has accomplished is available for all, whether Jews or Gentiles?
  
2. The Advocate is competent for the task of serving as our defense attorney because:
  - He is Jesus, which means, “Savior.” *Matthew 1:21 And she shall bring forth a son, and thou shalt call his name JESUS: for he shall save his people from their sins.* When the heart thinks of Jesus in this way, it cannot help but pray, “Jesus, save me from my sin, not just the penalty, but the power of the indwelling principle of sin.”
  - He is Christ, which speaks of His Mediatorship as the Messiah. He is the One who stands between the wrath of God and pleas for mercy. He stands for His people. He does not mediate on the basis of a plea bargain, but on the basis of justice satisfied.
  - He is the Righteous One. *1 John 2:1 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.* Jesus Christ does not act like a cunning shyster lawyer. He is the Righteous One advocating a righteous cause.
  
3. The Advocate is not only competent for His great task as defense attorney, but He has a basis for His important work. The ground on which He argues is sufficient because:
  - He has something to offer the Judge. As the High Priest, Jesus acts for the people of God. And, as the writer of Hebrews notes, the priest must have something to offer. He must have an offering, and He does. *Hebrews 5:3 And by reason hereof he ought, as for the people, so also for himself, to offer for sins. He offers Himself. That is the ground of His advocacy.*
  - He is the Substitute for Sinner. *John 1:29 The next day John seeth Jesus coming unto him, and saith, Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world.* The penalty for sin has been paid by Christ at Calvary. Therefore, if the Father will impute His righteousness to the sinner, then there is a legal basis for forgiveness, because the Law has been propitiated, the Law has been *satisfactio*, which is Latin for, satisfied. The soul that sins must die, and has died, legally, in Christ at Calvary.

- He is the Continual Propitiation. The text does not say that Jesus was, past tense, the propitiation, but that He is, present tense, the propitiation for sin. Moment by moment, day after day, year after year, for all eternity Jesus is the continual satisfaction for sin. His satisfactory work at Calvary allows sin to be forgiven, and fellowship, or communion with God the Father to be constant.

***Special Note.***

God is not satisfied because He is mean and cruel and demands a bribe. God is satisfied because justice has been rendered, and He is free to be merciful, kind, and forgiving. There is mercy in God in allowing a substitute for sin. Salvation is of the Lord. Salvation, forgiveness of sin, is the plan of God the Father, executed by God the Son, and applied by God the Holy Spirit to those who are the heirs of redemption.

4. With the Lord's death at Calvary the work of redemption was completed. But there is an unfinished work and that is the work of intercession. That work continues and in that endeavor, Jesus Christ the Righteous One will not, indeed, cannot fail.
5. Lest anyone despair, John writes that Christ is the propitiation for our sins, and also for the whole world.

***Special Note.***

The term "world" has at least ten meanings in Scripture, some believe thirteen. "To affirm that it means everybody without exception is, again, to beg the question. One must prove that. The contexts give us the clues. There isn't anything in the context that suggests this. In fact, if it means everybody without distinction, it makes perfectly good sense. That is either Jews or Gentiles" (S. Lewis Johnson).

6. This does not mean that Christ is the propitiation for every person in the world without exception, for not all men will be saved. But the text does mean that Christ is the propitiation for every person without distinction.
7. Jew and Gentile, rich or poor, free or slave, can come to Christ. The way of salvation is the same. The ground of salvation is the same.
8. For a person who asks, "Am I one for whom Christ has died? Am I among the elect?", the answer is simple. *Acts 16:31 And they said, Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved, and thy house.*
9. When addressing the question of, "For whom did Christ die?" John Owen said the following.

"The Father imposed his wrath due unto, and the Son underwent punishment for either, one, all the sins of all men. Two, all the sins of some men, or three, some of the sins of all men, in which case it may be said, if the last be true, all men have some sins to answer for, and so none are saved. That if the second be true, that is that he died for all the sins of some men, then Christ in there stead suffered for all sins of all the elect of the whole world, and this is the truth.

But if the first be the case, he died for all the sins of all men, why not all men free from the punishment due unto their sins? You answer because of unbelief. I ask is this unbelief or sin? Or is it not? If it be, then Christ suffered the punishment due unto it, or he did not. If he did, why must that hinder them more than their other sins for which he died? If he did not, he did not die for all their sins."

10. The conclusion of the matter is this. In the Old Testament, atonement and priesthood were co-extensive. So here in John's epistle.
11. Jesus Christ died for those for whom He exercises His priesthood, and He exercises His priesthood for the people of God.
12. Christ has died for all men in an ethnological sense. He has died for the Jew and for the Gentile. He has died for all men without distinction, but not for all men without exception.
13. If Christ died for all men without exception then:
  - His work of redemption has failed, for not all men are saved.
  - there is no basis on which to judge the unbeliever, for all sin of all men, has been satisfied, including the sin of unbelief.
  - there is no distinction between the elect and the non-elect and Universalism can be advocated.
14. Rather than diminish the atoning work of Christ and its sufficiency to save, let the Church believe that, "The substitution set forth in the Word of God is always an effectual substitution" (J. I. Packer).
15. There is a point on which both Calvinist and Arminians agree, and that is salvation is by faith in Christ. *Acts 4:12 Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved.*

## Doctrine of Abiding in Christ

1. The Christian is instructed to abide in Christ.
2. The word abide (Greek, *meno*), is rendered in other ways. It means, “dwell”, “remain”, “continue”, “endure”, “be present”, “stand”, and, “tarry (for)”.
3. The Lord wants men to believe in Him so that they will not abide in moral and spiritual darkness.
4. The Lord has prayed to the Father to send the Comforter so that He may abide in the believer for ever.
5. There are spiritual blessings associated with abiding in Christ.
  - Much fruit. *John 15:4 Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine; no more can ye, except ye abide in me.*
  - Occupation with the Person of Christ through His Word. *John 15:7 If ye abide in me, and my words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you.*
  - Answered prayer. *John 15:7 If ye abide in me, and my words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you.*
  - Glorification of the Father. *John 15:8 Herein is my Father glorified, that ye bear much fruit; so shall ye be my disciples.*
  - Loved by Christ. *John 15:10 If ye keep my commandments, ye shall abide in my love; even as I have kept my Father's commandments, and abide in his love.*
  - Imitate Christ. *John 15:10 If ye keep my commandments, ye shall abide in my love; even as I have kept my Father's commandments, and abide in his love.*
  - Fulfilled joy. *John 15:11 These things have I spoken unto you, that my joy might remain in you, and that your joy might be full.*
  - Capacity to love others. *John 15:12 This is my commandment, That ye love one another, as I have loved you. 13 Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends.*
  - Friendship with the Living Lord. *John 15:14 Ye are my friends, if ye do whatsoever I command you. 15 Henceforth I call you not servants; for the servant knoweth not what his lord doeth: but I have called you friends; for all things that I have heard of my Father I have made known unto you.*

- Doctrinal integrity. *1 John 2:22 Who is a liar but he that denieth that Jesus is the Christ? He is antichrist, that denieth the Father and the Son. 23 Whosoever denieth the Son, the same hath not the Father: (but) he that acknowledgeth the Son hath the Father also. 24 Let that therefore abide in you, which ye have heard from the beginning. If that which ye have heard from the beginning shall remain in you, ye also shall continue in the Son, and in the Father.*
6. Those who do not abide in Christ are cast forth.
- *John 15:6 If a man abide not in me, he is cast forth as a branch, and is withered; and men gather them, and cast them into the fire, and they are burned.*
7. One strong motive for abiding in Christ, is so that there will be no shame at His second coming, when we must all stand before the Lord as Judge.
- *1 John 2:28 And now, little children, abide in him; that, when he shall appear, we may have confidence, and not be ashamed before him at his coming.*

## 1 JOHN 3

### The Confidence of the Child of God

#### 1 John 3:1-3

1 Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God: therefore the world knoweth us not, because it knew him not.

3:1. Behold. To be the sons of God speaks of the greatness of the divine birth which is an exposition of 2:29, "born of Him."

3:1. Behold. John uses this word again in 1 John 4:9 – 14. It is a word of amazement. What a privilege it is to be a child of God.

3:1. sons. Literally, children. Some manuscripts add the words, "and we are." When the Revised Version was published in 1881, Mr. Spurgeon preached a message entitled, "A Jewel from the Revised Version" and laid great stress on the words, "and we are," which was the apostle's way of emphasizing the fact that we are the children of God. The point John makes is that the divine life cannot be separated from moral excellence.

3:1. sons of God. The children of God are those who have been born of God and have His character. We are His children now. We may not always feel that we are born of God. Martin Luther was once asked, "Do you feel you are a child of God this morning?" He said, "I cannot say that I do, but I know I am." That is a good Christian attitude because feelings are subordinated to the Word of God. Experience should never alter our theology. Theology should always alter human experience. John says, "and we are", the sons of God despite how we feel.

#### Two Ways to become a Child of God

- By virtue of adoption
- By the regenerating work of the Holy Spirit

When we are born of God we are given the nature of God. That nature will express itself in the daily life in moral excellence, if we are truly converted.

2 Beloved, now are we the sons of God, 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.

3:2. when he shall appear. Here, some early manuscripts have the expression added, "when it is disclosed".

3:2. it doth not yet appear. There is a glory for the Christian that we do not know. There is the glory of having no more sin. There is the glory of seeing Christ. There is the glory of our spiritual inheritance. There is the glory of dwelling in heaven. There is the glory of the resurrection body, which the apostle Paul speaks of elsewhere in the image of a plant and a seed. The body of the seed dies in order that the life principle might grow. There must be death in order for there to be life. But the seed is the plant even though it is different. There is continuity. The body we now possess is the body of the resurrection. It is the seed before death. For John, the best was yet to come.

There was a young woman who had been diagnosed with a terminal illness and had been given three months to live. So as she was getting her things 'in order,' she contacted her Pastor and had him come to her house to discuss certain aspects of her final wishes.

She told him which songs she wanted sung at the service, what scriptures she would like read, and what outfit she wanted to be buried in.

Everything was in order, and the Pastor was preparing to leave, when the young woman suddenly remembered something very important to her.

'There's one more thing,' she said excitedly.

'What's that?' came the Pastor's reply?

'This is very important,' the young woman continued. 'I want to be buried with a fork in my right hand.'

The Pastor stood looking at the young woman, not knowing quite what to say.

That surprises you, doesn't it?' the young woman asked.

'Well, to be honest, I'm puzzled by the request,' said the Pastor.

The young woman explained. 'My grandmother once told me this story, and from that time on I have always tried to pass along its message to those I love, and those who are in need of encouragement. In all my years of attending socials and dinners, I always remember that when the dishes of the main course were being cleared, someone would inevitably lean over and say, 'Keep your fork.' It was my favorite part because I knew that something better was coming....like velvety chocolate cake or deep-dish apple pie. Something wonderful, and with substance!'

So, I just want people to see me there in that casket with a fork in my hand and I want them to wonder 'What's with the fork?' Then I want you to tell them: 'Keep your fork ...the best is yet to come.'

3:2. we shall be like him. The believer is the reflected image of Christ. There is a transformation in the believer to see Christ in a way that could not be known apart from a self-transformation. Jesus said that without holiness no man shall see the Lord. The pure in heart shall see God.

The purpose of the process of sanctification in the believer is for the ultimate purpose of one day seeing the Lord as He really is. There are many great sights in life, but nothing will compare to seeing Jesus.

3 And every man that hath this hope in him purifieth himself, even as he is pure.

3:3. this hope. “If in the future, as our Lord's and the prophets' and the apostles' prophecies come to pass, and the moon above is shaken, the sun is removed from its place, heaven and earth flee away, the graves are open, this whole earth flows away from the presence of God, in the midst of all of that, this anchor of the soul holds” (Dr. S. Lewis Johnson). We are the children of God.

3:3. purifieth himself. This is in the present tense. The Christian is expected to purify himself in some sense in the present. While salvation and sanctification is ultimately the divine work of God the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, nevertheless, the Christian purifieth himself from moral stain. Self-purification is a daily work of the believer priest. This work of purification is enhanced by the indwelling Holy Spirit.

3:3. even as he is pure. The purity, the holiness, the absolute righteousness of Christ is self-evident. *John 8:46 Which of you convinceth me of sin? And if I say the truth, why do ye not believe me?*

### **The Scriptural Definition of Sin** **1 John 3:4-8**

4 Whosoever committeth sin transgresseth also the law: for sin is the transgression of the law.

3:4. for sin is the transgression of the law. Greek, “sin is lawlessness.” Sin includes transgression of the Mosaic Law, but it is more inclusive. Here are the Scriptures blunt words on sin and morality.

3:4. In speaking about sin and lawlessness, John follows a pattern. He declares the theme (v.4). He defines the theme as being the purpose of the coming of Christ (v.5). He determines a logical conclusion (v. 6).

3:4. The Cyrenthian Gnostics taught that matter was evil. Since matter is evil, a person must withdraw from society and have no contact with evil. Moreover, since matter is evil, Jesus could not have really come in the flesh.

3:4. For John, righteousness of conduct is no small matter of indifference. It is important. It is so important that Christ was manifested to take away sin.



3:4. The essence of sin is unbelief, as demonstrated by Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden. But that unbelief reveals itself in lawlessness. The reason we do what we do is because we do not believe God means what He says about the judgment He will render on a specific behavior. Out of this unbelief comes the freedom to rebel and engage in immorality. To put a salve on sin we use euphemisms about behavior by saying, “that is just a peccadillo”, or, “they have a personality disorder”, or that is a “sickness.” We use these words so that we do not feel guilty. Because there is no guilt, there is no need to behave differently or be better.

5 And ye know that he was manifested to take away our sins; and in him is no sin.

3:6. in him is no sin. "How do we conceive of him as without sin? He is before us as one in whom there is no sympathy with what is vile and polluting; or with what is mean and base; or with what is unfair and untrue ; or with what is dishonorable and unhandsome; or with what is unkind, ungenerous, unloving. Not a thought, not a feeling, not an affection is in him that could offend the purest taste, the most fastidious delicacy. Benevolence without the slightest alloy of selfishness; integrity such as the breath of suspicion cannot touch; seraphic mildness, sweetness, calmness, that no storm of passion has ever ruffled; a soul attuned to all the melodies of heaven, on which no jarring note of earth's discord can ever strike; a divine dignity; a divine gracefulness in look and mien, in air and carriage, infinitely removed from man's uncertain temper and the rude strife of tongues;—some such ideal, some such picture, rises before our eyes. See, it is no mere negation; no mere abstinence from evil, or absence of evil. Nor is it any mere spontaneous development of native, innate good. It is positive, practical, perfect obedience to God's holy law. It is the doing of his will with the whole heart. It is to live for no other end but that his will be done. So in his life did he manifest his sinlessness who said, "I must be about my Father's business" (Author Unknown, quoted by Dr. S. Lewis Johnson).

#### **Jesus, Why Did You Come?**

- He was manifested to take away our sins (v. 5).
- For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that He might destroy the works of the devil (v. 8).

#### **The Conclusion**

6 Whosoever abideth in him sinneth not: whosoever sinneth hath not seen him, neither known him.

3:6. “One can see here the utter incongruity, the utter incompatibility, the absolute intolerable inadmissibility of sin. That's what the apostle is saying” (Dr. S. Lewis Johnson). A life based only on a profession of faith and knowledge of the Word is not sufficient to have confidence one is a Christian. There must be gospel obedience and holiness of life.

The text is plain. "Whosoever sinneth hath not seen him." Sin, as understood here, means to have a bent for sin, a practice of sin, a love for sin. Sin is a ruling principle in life. John teaches that it is impossible to abide in Christ and sin with intent and deliberateness. *Romans 13:14 But put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make not provision for the flesh, to fulfil the lusts thereof.* The morality of the Law of the Spirit must be set against our lives.

7 Little children, let no man deceive you: he that doeth righteousness is righteous, even as he is righteous.

3:7. John's pattern is repeated here. First, he declares the theme, which is that sinners belong to the devil. Second, he defines the theme, as it relates to the devil. Third, he determines a logical conclusion by giving a divine remedy.

8 He that committeth sin is of the devil; for the devil sinneth from the beginning. For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that he might destroy the works of the devil.

3:8. the works of the devil. These words indicate a well-organized plan which the Lord will unloose. God's children can no more live in sin, than the devil can live apart from sin. The nature of a child of God is to love the things of God. The nature of the devil is to love sin. The Son of God is determined to destroy the works of the devil. How? By dying at Calvary to loosen individuals from the bondage of sin. Jesus came to set the captives free.

### **The Works of the Devil**

The Devil Comes:

- |                                   |                                 |
|-----------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| • To Be Like God                  | Isaiah 14:12-14                 |
| • To Tempt                        | Genesis 3:1-7                   |
| • To Possess the Body of Moses    | Jude 9                          |
| • To Ascribe False Motives        | Job 2:8-9                       |
| • To Resist the Righteous         | Zechariah 3:1-3                 |
| • To Produce Inordinate Guilt     | 2 Corinthians 7:10              |
| • To Accuse                       | Revelation 12:10                |
| • To Deceive                      | Revelation 12:9                 |
| • To Destroy                      | Revelation 12:7                 |
| • To Rule                         | 2 Corinthians 4:4               |
| • To Establish a False Religion   | Revelation 2:9                  |
| • To Pervert the Word of God      | Matthew 4:6, 7 (Psalm 91:11,12) |
| • To Establish his Own Ministers  | 2 Corinthians 11:13-15          |
| • To Establish a False Fellowship | 1 Corinthians 10:20             |
| • To Receive Worship              | Revelation 13:4                 |
| • To Send Forth False Messiahs    | Matthew 24:5                    |
| • To Sow Tares                    | Matthew 13:39                   |

• To Possess and Oppress	Matthew 17:18; Acts 10:38
• To Lie	John 8:44
• To Kill Jesus	John 13:2
• To Cause Christians to Sin	Ephesians 4:27; 1 Timothy 3:7
• To Bring Death	Hebrews 2:14
• To Imprison Saints	Revelation 2:10

9 Whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin; for his seed remaineth in him: and he cannot sin, because he is born of God.

3:9. doth not commit sin. John uses the present tense in the Greek. "*Whosoever is born of God does not go on doing sin.*" Those who are born of God cannot, and will not, continually practice sin as a way of life. The new nature will not allow a sinful way of life. Christians do sin. David sinned. Peter sinned. Paul sinned. But the Christian must not, cannot persist in sin. Life cannot be characterized by sin. Sin cannot have dominion over a Christian's life. The reason why a Christian cannot practice sin is because the seed of God is in Him. Second, such a person cannot sin because "he is born of God." The new birth brings regeneration and a new bent of life towards righteousness. "To believe in Christ and to believe in sin, to love Christ, and to love sin, to live in Christ, and to live in sin as one's element is as unthinkable as that one should face north and south at the same moment" (Robert Law).

### **God as Father and the Devil as Father** **1 John 3:10-12**

10 In this the children of God are manifest, and the children of the devil: whosoever doeth not righteousness is not of God, neither he that loveth not his brother.

3:10. the children of God. All of humanity is divided into two classes. There are the children of God, and there are the children of the devil. There is for John only darkness and light, there is no twilight (Brooke Foss Westcott). Paul would have agreed. Confronting Elymas the sorcerer, the apostle called him the child of the devil. *Acts 13:10 And said, O full of all subtilty and all mischief, thou child of the devil, thou enemy of all righteousness, wilt thou not cease to pervert the right ways of the Lord?*

3:10. doeth not righteousness. The natural inclination of the unregenerate heart is to love neither God nor man, all the while performing acts of unrighteousness.

3:10. Doing righteousness and loving the brethren must be united. When separated, one leads to legalism, a person can do righteous acts without love, while loving the brethren without righteousness results in social sentimentalism. So both are needed.

**The Natural Inclination of the New Heart  
Resulting in the Signs of Salvation**

- Gospel obedience
- Moral excellence
- Christlikeness
- Submission to the Word of God
- Confession of sin

11 For this is the message that ye heard from the beginning, that we should love one another.

3:11. For this is the message that ye heard from the beginning. The message of love is the message that is found from Genesis to Revelation. Paul reminds the Church of Rome of this fact. *Romans 13:9 For this, Thou shalt not commit adultery, Thou shalt not kill, Thou shalt not steal, Thou shalt not bear false witness, Thou shalt not covet; and if there be any other commandment, it is briefly comprehended in this saying, namely, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself.*

3:11. John also speaks here of the new commandment of love, which Jesus gave. This new commandment is new in kind, not new in time. It is a love for one another grounded in the love of Christ which was manifested at Calvary. From the root of Christ's love will grow a love which is distinctive, for it is characterized by law-abiding, sin-hating obedience.

3:11. love one another. "There is not clearer proof of the great transition from death to life, than love of the brethren, but the absence of such love is not only the absence of such proof, it's the proof that the transition has not taken place" (Robert Law).

12 Not as Cain, *who* was of that wicked one, and slew his brother. And wherefore slew he him? Because his own works were evil, and his brothers righteous.

3:12. Not as Cain. Cain represents the natural man. The natural man is a selfish man who is filled with jealousy, anger, and hatred for those who are righteous. Murder is in his heart. Every person is born an outlaw, a rebellion against God and His law. This is why something must be done about sin. This is why Christ had to die. This is why the Christian has a new commandment to love one another. So John is saying again that loving the brethren, and doing righteousness, is grounded in the fact of the death of Christ. We accept that, and change, because we do not want to be like Cain. We do not want to walk in the way of Cain.

3:12. Cain. In Jude 11 "*the way of Cain*" is condemned. The way of Cain is the way of hostility to the known will of God. It is a rebellious spirit filled with a pride that is easily offended. It is a way that is filled with hatred in the heart, and murder, when given an opportunity.

3:12. Cain...slew his brother. The word for slew is the word used for slaughter. It is the word used for the lamb slain. But why? Why did Cain kill Abel? "*Because his own works were evil, and his brothers righteous.*" All hatred of righteousness is embryonic murder.

**The Natural Fruit of Divine Love**  
**1 John 3:13-18**

13 Marvel not, my brethren, if the world hate you.

3:13. Marvel not. The Christian should not be amazed at the hatred of the world for the principles and practices of the believer. Christian love belongs only to the new life. Only a Christian can properly love, according to the Scripture. The world can imitate love as it identifies love with romance, or sex, or sentimentality. But authentic Christian love is only possible by way of the new birth. "Christian love," as someone has put it, "is no plant of natural growth in the soil of corrupt humanity" (Source Unknown). "Christian love, in the soil of lost humanity, just will not grow. You can change the soil or try to change the soil by natural means, but it will not work" (Dr. S. Lewis Johnson).

3:13. the world hate you. The world loves Ishmael rather than Isaac. The world loves Esau rather than Jacob. The world prefers Haman rather than Mordecai. The world hates the Word of God, because, as John says in the 5th chapter, "*The whole world lieth in wickedness.*" Like the prophet Micaiah (1 Kings 22:8), like Christ Himself, the Christian will be hated by the world (John 15:18).

**Love is the Burden of the Gospel**

14 We know that we have passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren. He that loveth not *his* brother abideth in death.

3:13, 14. my brethren...We know. As hatred is natural to the unbelieving heart, love is natural to the believing heart. The love of God is shed abroad in our hearts. When a person hates the gospel, and hates the church, that heart is not converted.

3:14. abideth. Literally, remains.

15 Whosoever hateth his brother is a murderer: and ye know that no murderer hath eternal life abiding in him.

16 Hereby perceive we the love *of God*, because he laid down his life for us: and we ought to lay down *our* lives for the brethren.

17 But whoso hath this worlds good, and seeth his brother have need, and shutteth up his bowels *of compassion* from him, how dwelleth the love of God in him?

18 My little children, let us not love in word, neither in tongue; but in deed and in truth.

3:18. neither in tongue. Balaam claimed to love God and His people, but he was a false prophet. He loved “in tongue”, but not in deed and in truth. Balaam loved the wages of unrighteousness. He is not linked with the men of God, but with those who rebelled against divine authority. Jesus Himself was against Balaam, because the prophet taught others to sin (2 Peter 2:15; Jude 11; Revelation 2:14).

**Comfort for Concerned Hearts**  
**1 John 3:19-24**

19 And hereby we know that we are of the truth, and shall assure our hearts before him.

3:19. and shall assure. Literally, “to convince by giving confidence or courage to.” Those who stand beneath the cross of Jesus can know they are sinners in need of salvation. Salvation is given to all who believe in Christ. For those who have an uneasy conscience, there can be assurance of salvation to those who believe.

**Beneath the Cross of Jesus**  
**(As Originally Written)**

“Beneath the cross of Jesus I fain would take my stand,  
The shadow of a mighty rock within a weary land;  
A home within the wilderness, a rest upon the way,  
From the burning of the noontide heat, and the burden of the day.

O safe and happy shelter, O refuge tried and sweet,  
O trysting place where Heaven’s love and Heaven’s justice meet!  
As to the holy patriarch that wondrous dream was given,  
So seems my Savior’s cross to me, a ladder up to heaven.

There lies beneath its shadow but on the further side  
The darkness of an awful grave that gapes both deep and wide  
And there between us stands the cross two arms outstretched to save  
A watchman set to guard the way from that eternal grave.

Upon that cross of Jesus mine eye at times can see  
The very dying form of One Who suffered there for me;  
And from my stricken heart with tears two wonders I confess;  
The wonders of redeeming love and my own worthlessness.

I take, O cross, thy shadow for my abiding place;  
I ask no other sunshine than the sunshine of His face;  
Content to let the world go by to know no gain or loss,  
My sinful self my only shame, my glory all the cross.”

Elizabeth C. Clephane, 1868

3:19. and shall assure our hearts. Obedience and heart persuasion, based on the promises of God, will bring assurance.

20 For if our heart condemn us, God is greater than our heart, and knoweth all things.

3:20. For if our heart condemn us. Whenever our heart condemns us in the form of self-condemnation, when we have an uneasy conscience, the Lord will deal in mercy with us. The heart of Peter condemned him after he denied the Lord three times. Like Judas, he betrayed the Lord of glory, but unlike Judas, Peter engaged in evangelical repentance. He wept bitter tears. What happened? Jesus allowed Peter to express love for Him three times. And then Jesus said. "Simon, son of Jonas, feed My sheep." Deep down in his heart, Jesus knew all things. Jesus knew Peter loved Him. Oh, how lovely it is to have a Lakeside Conversation where the Lord comes to speak words of comfort to reassure the heart (John 21:1-17).

21 Beloved, if our heart condemn us not, then have we confidence toward God.

22 And whatsoever we ask, we receive of him, because we keep his commandments, and do those things that are pleasing in his sight.

3:22. we ask...we receive of him. Two conditions must be met in order for prayers to be answered. First, the commandments of God must be met, especially the command to love. Second, a life must be lived which is pleasing to God. In His sight there must not be a lifestyle of sin, for then our heart would condemn us.

23 And this is his commandment, That we should believe on the name of his Son Jesus Christ, and love one another, as he gave us commandment.

3:23. we should believe on the name of his Son. The word "on" should not be in the verse. The Greek says, "That we should believe the name of his Son."

3:23. commandment. It is not the Ten Commandments that John has in mind. Nor is it the new commandment of love to which John refers. The Lord's commandment here emphasized is the commandment of God to "*believe on the name of his Son Jesus Christ.*" *John 6:29 Jesus answered and said unto them, This is the work of God, that ye believe on him whom he hath sent. Believe, and love. Believe, and you will love. Believe, you cannot help but love.*

24 And he that keepeth his commandments dwelleth in him, and he in him. And hereby we know that he abideth in us, by the Spirit that he hath given us.

## 1 JOHN 4

### Testing the Spirits 1 John 4:1-6

1 Believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God: because many false prophets are gone out into the world.

4:1. Believe not. As belief is a great virtue in the Christian faith, so unbelief in certain things is also a great virtue indicating mature wisdom.

4:1. try the spirits. Like John, Paul instructed the church to “*prove all things.*” *1 Thessalonians 5:21 Prove all things; hold fast that which is good.* In the wheat there are tares, and in the world every sphere can be counterfeited. Every Christian is a believer-priest and has the responsibility to exercise a private judgment. So serious is this matter that Paul said a person should go to hell if he proved to be a false teacher of God. *Galatians 1:8 But though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed.*

4:1. many false prophets are gone out. The reason for the need to “test the spirits” is because many false prophets were already going out into the world. Jesus had warned this would happen. Peter also said this would happen.

#### The Need to Prove all Things

- The Magicians of Egypt were able to duplicate some of the miracles of Moses.
- The Witch of Endor was able to conjure up the dead.
- Elymas the Sorcerer was able to deceive a large number of people.
- Simon Magnus set himself before people as someone who was very great.
- The Beast of Revelation 13 performed great miracles, but they were not of God.

#### Several Modern Day False Appeals

- An appeal is made to accept the verdict of the pope when he speaks *ex cathedra* (“from the chair”) on matters of faith and dogma.
- An appeal is made to accept the baptism of the Holy Spirit evidenced by speaking in tongues as the sign and seal of salvation.
- An appeal is made to include children into the covenant of grace even though the New Covenant has been promised only to those in whom the Lord has put His law. The New Covenant was, “Not according to the covenant” made with the nation of Israel (Jeremiah 31:31).
- An appeal is made to accept the doctrine of baptismal regeneration by both Catholics, and many within the Protestant churches.
- An appeal is made by Charismatic leaders, such as John Wimber, for all Christians to accept his premise that experience can stand in judgment on doctrine, and may actually prove doctrine, instead of the reverse.



### False Prophets Who Have Given New Revelation

- Mohammed 570 – 632
- Emanuel Swedenborg 1688 – 1772
- Edward Irving 1702 – 1834
- Joseph Smith 1805 – 1844
- Mary Baker Eddy 1821 – 1910
- Oral Roberts 1918 – 2009
- Hal Lindsey 1929 – present
- Herbert W Armstrong 1892 – 1986
- Garner Ted Armstrong 1930 – 2003
- Jack Van Impe 1931 – present

2 Hereby know ye the Spirit of God: Every spirit that confesseth that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is of God:

4:1. is come. Greek, this is in the perfect tense. Jesus was not created, but He came in the flesh as the eternal Logos, the Son of God. Jesus said He was sent. And then He said, “*I came.*” *John 16:28 I came forth from the Father, and am come into the world: again, I leave the world, and go to the Father.*

4:1. in the flesh. “The theological implications of this are magnificent. The genuine humanity of our Lord is involved in that expression. The full deity of our Lord is implied within it. The priesthood and mediatorship of the Lord Jesus, the real union between humanity and deity is suggested by that fact, the ground of an atoning sacrifice. In fact, most of the interpreters who are orthodox would affirm that that statement itself implies the penal substitutionary sacrifice of the Lord Jesus Christ, the savior hood of our Lord, the resurrection of the body, and in fact the Second Advent of the God-man all found implicitly in, ‘*Every spirit that confesseth Jesus Christ as having come in flesh is of God*’” (Dr. S. Lewis Johnson).

3 And every spirit that confesseth not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is not of God: and this is that *spirit* of antichrist, whereof ye have heard that it should come; and even now already is it in the world.

### The Overcomers

4 Ye are of God, little children, and have overcome them: because greater is he that is in you, than he that is in the world.

4:4. and have overcome. The victory of the church comes by withstanding the seducers, not in the power of the flesh, but in the might of God.

4:4. greater is he that is in you. There are two great personages in the universe. There is our Great God, and there is the great god of this world, Lucifer, the devil.

5 They are of the world: therefore speak they of the world, and the world heareth them.

4:5. They are of the world. Oh, how tragic it is to be earth bound. In her book, *Living Above the Average*, Mary Wood tells of an incident she witnessed one day while travelling in Canada. She said, "All day long we feasted our eyes upon the beauty of the mountains, the canyons, the forests, the rivers, and the marvel of the creator's handiwork. As we walked back through the [railroad] coach we saw a girl seated in a corner of the coach with her eyes riveted on a film magazine. The wonder of the mountains, the rivers, the rocks, the forests, meant nothing to her, glamour had blinded her eyes to true beauty. God's handiwork had left her unmoved. All she cared for was the fantasy of the artificial, the bewitchment of the screen, she was earthbound."

6 We are of God: he that knoweth God heareth us; he that is not of God heareth not us. Hereby know we the spirit of truth, and the spirit of error.

4:6. We are of God. This is a reference, not of every believer, but of the apostles themselves.

4:6. the spirit of truth...the spirit of error. The question is which spirit will be embraced. Men live by truth, and die by error. Truth is found in the words of Christ, and in the words of His apostles. "Our Lord's incarnate Godhead is the test of every creed and system. His word is the stone of foundation on which who so falleth will be broken to pieces, and that wall is built standeth fast forever" (George Finley). Therefore live by God's truth. Confess with the apostle and say, "I do believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God. I do believe that Jesus is the Messiah who has come in the flesh. I have trusted in Him as the One who saves sinners." Let that be your heart's confession.

### **The Origin of True Love 1 John 4:7-12**

7 Beloved, let us love one another: for love is of God; and every one that loveth is born of God, and knoweth God.

4:7. let us love one another. Emphasis on divine love is proper. "The love of God occupies a more prominent place than any other divine attribute in present-day Christian consciousness" (Geerhardus Vos, Princeton Theologian). But herein is a concern for one attribute of God must not be exalted or stressed at the expense of other divine attributes, such as God's holiness and righteous, which is why Vos went on to note, "It is a well-known fact that all heresy begins with being partial truth. This great emphasis on love will lead to such a one-sidedness and exclusiveness that the result will be a universal weakening of the sense of sin and consequent decline of interest in the doctrine of atonement and the doctrine of justification by faith."

4:7. love is of God. Love has its source in God. It is one of His own attributes. It does seem harsh to say, but John teaches that no one can possibly love, biblically, who has not been born again. The unbeliever can love despite the effects of the fall and because of common grace. Human love does exist. But the depth of love, the unique love of God, the love from God, is reserved to those who have been born again. Human love is noble. Human love can be sacrificial. But human love falls short of the divine ideal when Jesus Christ is rejected and the Father is not honored as the supreme object of a person's affection. The Bible says, *Deuteronomy 6:5 And thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy might.*

4:7 knoweth God. The Christian has a true and intimate knowledge of God, but it is a limited knowledge.

8 He that loveth not knoweth not God; for God is love.

**Authentic Love Made Manifest**  
**1 John 4:9-10**

9 In this was manifested the love of God toward us, because that God sent his only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through him.

**Love Specifically Defined**

10 Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins.

4:10. Herein is love. The gospel is revealed in the love of God for here is love, that God sent his Son into the world to be the satisfaction for our sins. Here is the hidden heart of God revealed. The Father sent His "Isaac" to be an offering for the sins of sinners. God sent no prophet, no servant, no created creature, but His own eternal Son. Those who wonder about the heart of God, are invited to reflect on this passage. "We are never nearer Christ than when we find ourself lost in holy amazement at his unspeakable love" (John Owen).

4:10. Herein is love. God takes the initiative in showing His love. "*Not that we loved God*", for natural men do not love God. To love God is the work of regeneration.

4:10. Herein is love. The divine purpose is revealed and is specifically stated, "*that we might love through him.*" The life that is offered is not only eternal life, but a quality of life." To the unconverted the church says, "Come to Christ. Let God love you. Receive His gift of eternal life."

11 Beloved, if God so loved us, we ought also to love one another.

4:11. we ought. What God is, becomes a holy "ought", an obligation to Christians for the child must reflect the character of the Father.

12 No man hath seen God at any time. If we love one another, God dwelleth in us, and his love is perfected in us.

4:12. If we love one another. Here is the test of salvation. Love must be shown to others.

**How to Know One is an Authentic Believer**  
**1 John 4:13-16**

13 Hereby know we that we dwell in him, and he in us, because he hath given us of his Spirit.

4:13. know we. By the blessing of the New Covenant the believer knows that he dwells in Christ, and he knows that Christ dwells in the Christian. *John 14:20 At that day ye shall know that I am in my Father, and ye in me, and I in you.* Here is the Covenantal Union.

4:13. he hath given us of his Spirit. Every Christian has the perfect presence of the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit has come to indwell every believer.

14 And we have seen and do testify that the Father sent the Son *to be* the Saviour of the world.

4:14.

**The Father sent the Son**

- The Father sent the Son to be Incarnate and True Humanity
- The Father sent the Son to Accomplish Redemption
- The Father sent the Son to be a Propitiation

Theologians talk about The Impassibility of God, meaning that God cannot suffer. But the Father can suffer voluntarily. The giving of Christ by the Father was a real sacrifice, typified by father Abraham giving up Isaac (Genesis 22:10).

4:14. the Father sent the Son. Love does need to be propitiated, but it is the Father who sent the proper Sacrifice, His Son. *John 6:38 For I came down from heaven, not to do mine own will, but the will of him that sent me.* The Son is full of the love of the Father that sent Him.

4:14. the Saviour of the world. Whenever a soul is saved in the world, it is because the Father has given the Son to be the Saviour. Here is another mark of the apostolic faith. This confirms the interior witness in an external testimony. Let the Christian go forth and proclaim that the Father has sent the Son to be the Savior of the world.

4:14. the world. The meaning here is that the world means everyone without distinction, not everyone without exception. If this means everyone without exception then Jesus failed. But Christ did not fail. He saved His people from their sins (Matthew 1:21). Jesus saves both Jews and Gentiles. Jesus anticipated this would happen. *John 4:22 Ye worship ye know not what: we know what we worship: for salvation is of the Jews. 23 But the hour cometh, and now is, when the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth: for the Father seeketh such to worship him.*

4:14. the Savior of the world. This expression is found one other time. And speaks of the Samaritans, the Gentiles. *John 4:42 And said unto the woman, Now we believe, not because of thy saying: for we have heard him ourselves, and know that this is indeed the Christ, the Saviour of the world.*

15 Whosoever shall confess that Jesus is the Son of God, God dwelleth in him, and he in God.

4:15. Whosoever shall confess. Here is another affirmation of the authentic Christian. The believer will confess that Jesus is the Son of God. In time of doubt, Christian, say to yourself, "I do confess that Jesus is the Son of God. I do believe that God dwelt in Him. I do believe that Christ is in God and is very God of very God. I am an authentic Christian!" Jesus is the Son of God that offered a propitiation for sin. That too is important to confess for without the shedding of blood there is no remission of sins.

### **The Sin of Denying Jesus is the Son of God**

- The Christian faith is weakened and the whole church suffers
- God is robbed of the glory of His love
- Man is robbed of any hope for salvation
- Christ is robbed of His godhead

4:15. Jesus is the Son of God. "Perhaps, too, in this enlightened age, as his mind expands and as he takes a comprehensive view of this period of progress, the pupil of Moses may ask himself whether all the princes of the house of David have done so much for the Jews as that Prince who was crucified on Calvary" (Benjamin Disraeli, a Prime Minister of England)

16 And we have known and believed the love that God hath to us. God is love; and he that dwelleth in love dwelleth in God, and God in him.

### **Holy Confidence on the Day of Judgment 1 John 4:17-21**

17 Herein is our love made perfect, that we may have boldness in the Day of Judgment: because as he is, so are we in this world.

4:17. Herein. This participle connects v. 17 to what John has said in v. 16. "Herein, (in this mutual dwelling in love, God in us, we in God) is our love made perfect, that we may have boldness in the Day of Judgment; because as He is, so are we in the world" (Translated by Dr. S. Lewis Johnson). The question arises, "Can others see love for others in your life?"

4:17. that we may have boldness. The Day of Judgment is the day of shame and terror for those who are not in Christ, but it is a day of boldness, a day of confidence for those who are a covenant relationship to Christ.

"Arise, my soul, arise, shake off your guilty fears;  
The bleeding sacrifice, in my behalf appears;  
Before the throne my Surety stands,  
Before the throne my Surety stands,  
My name is written on His hands.

He ever lives above, for me to intercede;  
His all redeeming love, His precious blood, to plead;  
His blood atoned for every race,  
His blood atoned for every race,  
And sprinkles now the throne of grace.

Five bleeding wounds He bears; received on Calvary;  
They pour effectual prayers; they strongly plead for me:  
"Forgive him, O forgive," they cry,  
"Forgive him, O forgive," they cry,  
"Nor let that ransomed sinner die!"

The Father hears Him pray, His dear anointed One;  
He cannot turn away the presence of His Son;  
The Spirit answers to the blood,  
The Spirit answers to the blood  
And tells me I am born of God.

My God is reconciled; His pardoning voice I hear;  
He owns me for His child; I can no longer fear  
With confidence I now draw nigh,  
With confidence I now draw nigh,  
And "Father, Abba, Father," cry."

Charles Wesley, 1742

John Bunyan was comforted by the words of Romans 3:24, "*Being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus*".

18 There is no fear in love; but perfect love casteth out fear: because fear hath torment. He that feareth is not made perfect in love.

4:18. There is no fear. On March 4, 1933, President Franklin Delano Roosevelt expressed in his first inaugural address that, "The only thing we have to fear is, fear itself." Mr. Roosevelt was trying to calm a country in the throes of economic panic and distress. His thought was not original. Henry David Thoreau had already said in 1851, "The thing I fear most, is fear." In the 17<sup>th</sup> century, Francis Bacon said, "Nothing is terrible except fear itself."

### **Christians are to Show Proper Fear**

- Christians are to fear and reverence God. *1 Peter 2:17 Honour all men. Love the brotherhood. Fear God. Honour the king.*
- Christians are to fear and respect Government. *Romans 13:7 Render therefore to all their dues: tribute to whom tribute is due; custom to whom custom; fear to whom fear; honour to whom honour.*

### **Christians are to Show Proper Lack of Fear**

- Christians are not to fear God as Father. *Romans 8:1 There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit.*
- Christians are not to fear certain circumstances of life. *Matthew 14:27 But straightway Jesus spake unto them, saying, Be of good cheer; it is I; be not afraid.*
- Christians are not to fear death. *Psalms 23:4 Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil: for thou art with me; thy rod and thy staff they comfort me.*
- Christians are not to fear any man. *Psalms 27:1 A Psalm of David. The Lord is my light and my salvation; whom shall I fear? The Lord is the strength of my life; of whom shall I be afraid?*

4:18. perfect love casteth out fear. "Love flings fear out of doors." (Robert Law).

19 We love him, because he first loved us.

4:19. He first loved us. The beginning of the work of God in our hearts begins with the Divine love. God loved us, past tense, and He loves us, present tense (Greek, Revelation 1:5).

20 If a man say, I love God, and hateth his brother, he is a liar: for he that loveth not his brother whom he hath seen, how can he love God whom he hath not seen?

4:20. hateth his brother. The love of God does not end with Him, but overflows to the brethren.

21 And this commandment have we from him, That he who loveth God love his brother also.

4:21.

### **Reasons to Love the Brethren**

- The brethren are to be loved because grace has been shown, so grace must be shown.
- The brethren are to be loved because the love of God is extended to the undeserving.
- The brethren are to be loved because they too belong to Christ.
- The brethren are to be loved because they too have been bought with the precious price, the precious blood of our Lord.
- The brethren are to be loved because his name is in the Lamb's Book of Life.
- The brethren are to be loved because the heart loves the Lord.
- The brethren are to be loved because it is the divine nature to love.
- The brethren are to be loved because Scripture commands it.
- The brethren are to be loved because the Bible tells us we have received the divine nature. We must love the brethren if we have truly received the divine nature.



## 1 JOHN 5

### The Victory Cry of the Believer 1 John 5:1-5

1 Whosoever believeth that Jesus is the Christ is born of God: and every one that loveth him that begat loveth him also that is begotten of him.

5:1. Whosoever believeth. The Christian's confession is rooted in divine activity. God the Holy Spirit must bring conviction, regeneration, and faith.

5:1. Whosoever believeth. "*Whosoever believeth*" is in the present tense, but the next phrase is in the perfect tense.

5:1. is born of God. The Greek text reads literally, "*has been born of God.*" John uses the perfect tense which speaks of an event in the past with the results going on forever. What John is teaching is that regeneration precedes believing or the new birth. The natural man does not have the capacity to believe in the Lord Jesus Christ for salvation though he is commanded to do just that. Therefore, in order to comply with the divine command, he must be born of God.

This is a logical order more than a chronological order, but it does teach something divine. The truth is that regeneration does not come as a result of believing for, "*the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned*" (1 Corinthians 2:14).

Why is this so? "*Because the carnal mind is enmity against God: for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be*" (Romans 8:7). What then is the conclusion of the matter? "*So then they that are in the flesh cannot please God*" (Romans 8:8). Regeneration comes so that a person can believe. An appetite for food presupposes health, and an appetite for gospel food, for salvation, presupposes spiritual life.

When speaking to Nicodemus, Jesus told him that it is possible for a man to be born naturally, but he must be born again, he must be born of the Spirit, and that is a divine work. Nicodemus, "*except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God*" (John 3:1). Nicodemus was astonished and asked how could this be. The answer is that only by the drawing of the Spirit is the new birth possible. Jesus would later say that no one can come to the Father apart from divine activity. *John 6:44 No man can come to me, except the Father which hath sent me draw him: and I will raise him up at the last day.*

What John is teaching is what Jesus, and Paul taught, and that is, "*no man can say that Jesus is the Lord, but by the Holy Ghost*" (1 Corinthians 12:3). Therefore, whosoever believeth that Jesus is the Christ has already been the recipient of a divine, regenerating work of God. Such a person is born of God. Here is a lost truth in modern evangelism. "*Whosoever believeth that Jesus is the Christ has been born of God.*"

Is this point important? It is for two reasons. First, it will give the believer a greater appreciation of what God has done in the soul. Second, the heart comes to understand that salvation is of the Lord. Herein is spiritual truth, and a sign of the new birth. "Christian belief, which is essentially the spiritual recognition of spiritual truth, is a function of the divine life imparted to men." (Robert Law).

5:1. is born of God. To be born of God is to enjoy a new nature so that it can never be said, "*Ye are of your father the devil*" (John 8:44).

### **What Does it Mean to Believe that Jesus is the Christ?**

- It means to believe that Jesus is the Messiah.
- It means to believe that Jesus is the Anointed One of all the Old Testament prophecies.
- It means to believe that Jesus was born true humanity.
- It means to believe that Jesus is the unique Son of God.
- It means to believe that Jesus died for sins, was buried, and rose again on the third day.
- It means to believe that Jesus is the Saviour of the world.
- It means to believe the Scriptures, the Word of God, for they spoke of Him.
- It means to believe that Jesus is who He claimed to be, co-equal with the Father.
- It means to believe that Jesus has divine authority over one's life and is to be called, Lord.

Herein is a personal confession.

2 By this we know that we love the children of God, when we love God, and keep his commandments.

5:2. keep his commandments. The commandments of God regulate holiness, which is the primary basis of fellowship, righteousness, and love. The love of which John writes is not sentimental love, nor romantic love, nor human love of any kind. It is divine love of moral obedience which is grounded in propitiation. It is the love of God shed abroad in the heart. We want to keep His commandments more than we want to do wrong. When the heart comes to the point that it loves God more than it loves momentary sinful pleasure, then His commandments will be kept. Jesus put it this way, *Luke 6:46 And why call ye me, Lord, Lord, and do not the things which I say?* Question for all Christians, "When will we start to love God, and obey Him, more than we love ourselves, and our own self pleasures?" True love will make a difference in life.

3 For this is the love of God, that we keep his commandments: and his commandments are not grievous.

5:3. and his commandments are not grievous. The story is told of a Scottish lad going to school long before the days when it was possible to get into a car and drive to school. The young man was often seen carrying a little boy on his shoulder. One observer noticed the little boy that was being carried on the shoulder was lame. He walked up to the young lad who was carrying the other one and he said, "Do you carry him to school every day?" And he said, "Yes sir, I carry him every day." "Well that's a very heavy burden for you to carry," said the stranger. And the young man replied in his Scottish brogue, "He's no a burden, he's my brother." What a difference love does make in the commandments of the Lord God. Do you love God? Will you not carry his commandments? They are much lighter than the carrying a burden of secret shame, and guilt, and remorse. All that is needed is the courage of one's convictions, a desire for moral excellence, and a heart of love – for God.

For those who need strength to obey, there is a simple prayer to be offered. "Pass me not, O Gentle Savior. Hear my humble cry! While on others Thou art calling, do not pass me by." This was the prayer of Fanny Crosby after she had a dream. Though blinded as a young child, Fanny Crosby dreamed one night that the Lord Jesus was walking among the people in her church and touching each of those who would go to Heaven with Him. As He got closer she started to fervently pray that He would not pass her by. When she awoke she penned the words to this lovely song and was able to describe in surprising detail the people in her church even though she had never seen them. She later said that was the only dream she had where she could see. Truly, our Savior works in marvelous ways His wonders to perform. Who wants to keep His commandments, which are not grievous? Who will pray, and plead, to that end?

"Pass me not, O gentle Savior  
Hear my humble cry!  
While on others Thou art calling,  
Do not pass me by.

Savior Savior, Hear my humble cry!  
While on others Thou art calling,  
Do not pass me by.

Let me at a throne of mercy,  
Find a sweet relief:  
Kneeling there in deep contrition  
Help my unbelief.

Savior, Savior, Hear my humble cry!  
While on others Thou art calling  
Do not pass me by.

Trusting only in Thy merit  
Would I seek Thy face:  
Heal my wounded, broken spirit,  
Save me by Thy grace

Savior, Savior, Hear my humble cry!  
 While on others Thou art calling,  
 Do not pass me by.

Thou the spring of all my comfort,  
 More than life to me!  
 Whom have I on earth beside Thee?  
 Whom in heav'n but Thee?

Savior, Savior, Hear my humble cry!  
 While on others Thou art Calling,  
 Do not pass me by."

4 For whatsoever is born of God overcometh the world: and this is the victory that overcometh the world, *even* our faith.

5:4. overcometh the world. In matchless mercy a new heart is instilled in the soul of the person dead in sin so that the heart walks in the ways of God.

5:4. overcometh the world. The madness of Nero, the political turmoil of the times, the impending destruction of Jerusalem in AD 70, the cynicism of the Roman poet, Juvenal, and the writings of the Roman historian Tacitus, could not diminish the victorious proclamation of John. No matter the situation in society, the Christian can overcome the world.

5 Who is he that overcometh the world, but he that believeth that Jesus is the Son of God?

5:5. overcometh the world.

"Though the sons of night blaspheme,  
 More there are with us than them;  
 God with us, we cannot fear;  
 Fear, ye fiends, for Christ is here!

Lo! To faith's enlightened sight,  
 All the mountain flames with light;  
 Hell is nigh, but God is nigher,  
 Circling us with hosts of fire."

Charles Wesley

5:5. the world.

### **What is the World?**

- Immoral pleasures.
- The standards of a godless society.
- The lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life.
- Intellectual ideas that are opposed to God such as humanism, evolution, and the lifestyle of the homosexual community.
- Doctrinal heresy.
- Pharisaical legalism.
- Religious persecution for righteousness sake.

In summary, worldliness may be defined this way. "Let it be fixed in your minds as a great truth, that the world to be overcome comprehends all that you come in contact with which has any tendency to awaken in you the feeling that 'God's commandments are grievous'" (Source Unknown, quoted by Dr. S. Lewis Johnson).

5:5. Who is he that overcometh the world. John was saying to the early church in particular, "Rome does not have the victory. "Whatsoever is born of God overcomes the world." The believer overcomes the world by faith, faith in Christ, faith in God, faith in the promises of the Word. The believer overcomes the world by remembering the gift of eternal life so that even the sting of death is removed. Jesus said, "*I am the resurrection, and the life: he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live: 26 And whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die. Believest thou this?*" (John 11:25-26). Christian, will you, right now, commit yourself to being an overcomer? Will you commit yourself to keeping His commandments? Will you seek moral excellence? Heaven awaits an answer. Right now, love is "chasing" the believer to God's grace, as Robert Bruce, the 17<sup>th</sup> century Scottish minister once said.

### **A Pastoral Prayer Dr. S. Lewis Johnson**

"Father, we are so grateful to Thee for these marvelous words that the apostle wrote near the end of his life. How our hearts are drawn to Him and through Him to Thee. O God, our Father, how marvelous to be Thy child, a son of God. Lord, help us to truly respond in the kind of keeping of the commandments that will please Thee, for Jesus sake. Amen.

### **By Water and By Blood 1 John 5:6-12**

6 This is he that came by water and blood, *even* Jesus Christ; not by water only, but by water and blood.

5:6. This. This pronoun is a reference to Jesus.

### **The Manner of the Lord's Coming**

5:6. by water. A reference to the baptism of Jesus at the River Jordan where He was anointed as the Messiah. *John 1:29 The next day John seeth Jesus coming unto him, and saith, Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world. 30 This is he of whom I said, After me cometh a man which is preferred before me: for he was before me. 31 And I knew him not: but that he should be made manifest to Israel, therefore am I come baptizing with water. 32 And John bare record, saying, I saw the Spirit descending from heaven like a dove, and it abode upon him. 33 And I knew him not: but he that sent me to baptize with water, the same said unto me, Upon whom thou shalt see the Spirit descending, and remaining on him, the same is he which baptizeth with the Holy Ghost. 34 And I saw, and bare record that this is the Son of God.*

Old Testament prophecy was fulfilled. *Isaiah 61:1 The Spirit of the Lord God is upon me; because the Lord hath anointed me to preach good tidings unto the meek; he hath sent me to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to them that are bound;*

5:6. and blood. A reference to the cross of Calvary where Jesus accomplished redemption for sinner. Christ became the propitiation for our sins. The Messiah came in water. He came by blood. The union of water and blood refuted the Cerinthian's assertion that Jesus came in water, received the anointing, but died a man. No, Jesus came through water and through the blood. All who will be saved must come to the blood, to the cross, and pass through the waters of baptism to be buried with Christ in the likeness of His death, and raised again in the likeness of His resurrection to walk in the newness of life.

5:6. Jesus Christ. Jesus the Messiah. *1 John 5:1 Whosoever believeth that Jesus is the Christ is born of God: and every one that loveth him that begat loveth him also that is begotten of him.*

7 And it is the Spirit that beareth witness [record], because the Spirit is truth. For there are three that bear record in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost: and these three are one.

5:7. This seventh verse is not a statement written by the apostle John. No Greek manuscript contains this statement prior to the fourteenth century. This text was never cited by the early church councils in defense of the Trinity, or the divinity of Christ. This verse is first found in the fifth century in a Latin manuscript.

8 And there are three that bear witness in earth, the spirit, and the water, and the blood: and these three agree in one.

5:8. And. Greek, For.

5:8. in earth. This phrase was also added and is not found in the Greek text.

### Three Witnesses

- The Spirit
- The water
- The blood

The Spirit testifies to the anointing of the Messiah and to His work of propitiation by the shedding of His blood at Calvary.

5:8. the water.

### The Baptisms of the Bible

- |                              |                     |
|------------------------------|---------------------|
| • Baptism of John            | Matthew 21:25       |
| • Baptism of Jesus           | Matthew 3:15-16     |
| • Baptism of the Holy Spirit | 1 Corinthians 12:13 |
| • Baptism of the Believer    | Romans 6:4          |
| • Baptism of the Cross       | Luke 12:50          |
| • Baptism of Fire            | Luke 3:16           |
| • Baptism of Moses           | 1 Corinthians 10:2  |

5:8. these three agree in one. The Father, Son, and Holy Spirit converge to affirm the work of redemption has been accomplished and can now be applied. Designed by the Father, executed by the Son, applied and sustained by the Holy Spirit, the plan of redemption is settled. Salvation is of the Lord.

### The Importance of Believing in the Son 1 John 5:9-10

9 If we receive the witness of men, the witness of God is greater: for this is the witness of God which he hath testified of his Son.

5:9. the witness of men. Unfortunately, the witness, or teaching of men, concerning Christ can be in error. It is possible that John was writing against the teachings of the Cerinthian Gnostics who said that Jesus was merely a man, and that at His baptism, the divine Christ, or anointing, came upon Him. Jesus finished His ministry and then, shortly before His crucifixion, the divine Christ departed from Him so that Jesus died simply as a man. The Cerinthian Gnostics could never sing the words of that great song by Charles Wesley.

“And can it be that I should gain  
An interest in the Savior’s blood?  
Died He for me, who caused His pain—  
For me, who Him to death pursued?”

Amazing love! How can it be,  
That Thou, my God, shouldst die for me?  
Amazing love! How can it be,  
That Thou, my God, shouldst die for me?"

In the twentieth and twenty-first centuries, heresy continues, within the church, reflected by the British scholars from the Universities of Cambridge, Oxford, with others from the University of Birmingham, entitled *The Myth of God Incarnate*. Such scholars know nothing of the mystery of the divinity of Christ, and so they deny what they cannot comprehend. But those who are truly born of God can sing about the mysteries of grace knowing they have received God's mercy.

"'Tis mystery all: th'Immortal dies:  
Who can explore His strange design?  
In vain the firstborn seraph tries  
To sound the depths of love divine.

'Tis mercy all! Let earth adore,  
Let angel minds inquire no more.  
'Tis mercy all! Let earth adore;  
Let angel minds inquire no more."

5:9. the witness of God is greater.

"He left His Father's throne above  
So free, so infinite His grace—  
Emptied Himself of all but love,  
And bled for Adam's helpless race:  
'Tis mercy all, immense and free,  
For O my God, it found out me!

'Tis mercy all, immense and free,  
For O my God, it found out me!"

Herein is good news. There is hope for every sinner. Forgiveness of sins, and freedom from the power and pollution of sin becomes a present reality.

"Long my imprisoned spirit lay,  
Fast bound in sin and nature's night;  
Thine eye diffused a quickening ray—  
I woke, the dungeon flamed with light;  
My chains fell off, my heart was free,  
I rose, went forth, and followed Thee.



My chains fell off, my heart was free,  
I rose, went forth, and followed Thee.”

Still the small inward voice I hear,  
That whispers all my sins forgiven;  
Still the atoning blood is near,  
That quenched the wrath of hostile Heaven.

I feel the life His wounds impart;  
I feel the Savior in my heart.

I feel the life His wounds impart;  
I feel the Savior in my heart.

No condemnation now I dread;  
Jesus, and all in Him, is mine;  
Alive in Him, my living Head,  
And clothed in righteousness divine,  
Bold I approach th’ eternal throne,  
And claim the crown, through Christ my own.

Bold I approach th’ eternal throne,  
And claim the crown, through Christ my own.”

10 He that believeth on the Son of God hath the witness in himself: he that believeth not God hath made him a liar; because he believeth not the record that God gave of his Son.

5:10 He that believeth. A rejection of the biblical record is a rejection of Christ. An acceptance of Christ will produce internal certitude. He “hath the witness in himself”. “An accredited revelation like an oath among men should put an end to controversy” (James Henely Thornwell, Southern theologian, 1812-1862).

11 And this is the record, that God hath given to us eternal life, and this life is in his Son.

5:11. God hath given. The gifts of God are for the people of God.

5:11. eternal life. If this life is eternal, then it is not temporary and so cannot be lost. Thinking of the fullness and duration of this wonderful life, W. B. Hinson, a great preacher of a past generation, spoke from his own experience just before he died. He said, “I remember a year ago when a doctor told me, ‘You have an illness from which you won’t recover.’ I walked out to where I live 5 miles from Portland, Oregon, and I looked across at that mountain that I love.

I looked at the river in which I rejoice, and I looked at the stately trees that are always God's own poetry to my soul. Then in the evening I looked up into the great sky where God was lighting His lamps, and I said, ' I may not see you many more times, but Mountain, I shall be alive when you are gone; and River, I shall be alive when you cease running toward the sea; and Stars, I shall be alive when you have fallen from your sockets in the great down pulling of the material universe!'"

12 He that hath the Son hath life; and he that hath not the Son of God hath not life.

### **The Purpose of this Epistle**

13 These things have I written unto you that believe on the name of the Son of God; that ye may know that ye have eternal life, and that ye may believe on the name of the Son of God.

5:13. and that ye may believe on the name of the Son of God. This clause is not genuine and should be omitted.

14 And this is the confidence that we have in him, that, if we ask any thing according to his will, he heareth us:

5:14. he heareth us. This means that God will hear us in a favorable way. He hears and answers our prayers.

5:14. according to his will. Prayer should not violate the known will of God. We can know the will of God by reading the Word of God.

15 And if we know that he hear us, whatsoever we ask, we know that we have the petitions that we desired of him.

### **The Sin Unto Death**

16 If any man see his brother sin a sin *which* is not unto death, he shall ask, and he shall give him life for them that sin not unto death. There is a sin unto death: I do not say that he shall pray for it.

5:16. sin. The word sin is in the present tense and may have a durative sense. This is continuing sin.

5:16. I do not say that he shall pray for it. There are certain situations that we are not to "pray" or ask information about. It is not our job to judge but to pray. We must be careful not to be the judges of the spiritual fruit of others. Years ago Mr. Schulz had a cartoon in the Sunday paper. Lucy is looking at Linus who has his little finger like this, and she says "What's the matter with you?" And Linus says, "I have a sliver in my finger." "Ah ha." Lucy says, "That means you are being punished for something. What have you done wrong lately?"

And Linus says, "I haven't done anything wrong." "You have a sliver haven't you? That's a misfortune isn't it? You are being punished with misfortune because you have been bad." And Charlie Brown's looking at all of this, and he says, "Now, wait a minute" and she interrupts him, "What do you know about it Charlie Brown? This is a sign. This is a direct sign of punishment. Linus has done something very wrong, and now he has to suffer misfortune. I know all about these things. I know." And as she is halfway through the sentence, Linus is looking and he says, "It's out. It just popped right out." And Lucy, very disappointed turns away with a frown on her face, and starts walking off and Linus says, "Thus endeth the theological lesson for today."

5:16. a sin unto death. In the Old Testament there were specific sins that brought physical death, such as picking up sticks to build a fire on the Sabbath ( Numbers 15:32-36). Roman Catholic theologians recognized this and made the distinction between moral or greater sins, and lesser, venial (Latin *venia* meaning pardon sins).

5:16. a sin unto death. The article "a" is not found in the Greek text. Therefore, John is teaching that there are certain sins, which, if persisted in, lead to physical death. Such a premature death is the chastisement by a loving, but righteous Father as a form of divine discipline. Such a death may be the result of the soul being saved in the day of the Lord Jesus (1 Corinthians 5:5).

### **There is a Sin Unto Death**

- Not obeying the known will of God in a specific area. *Exodus 4:24 And it came to pass by the way in the inn, that the Lord met him [Moses], and sought to kill him. 25 Then Zipporah took a sharp stone, and cut off the foreskin of her son, and cast it at his feet, and said, Surely a bloody husband art thou to me. 26 So he let him go: then she said, A bloody husband thou art, because of the circumcision.*
- Eating the Lord's Supper in an irresponsible way. *1 Corinthians 11:28 But let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of that bread, and drink of that cup. 29 For he that eateth and drinketh unworthily, eateth and drinketh damnation to himself, not discerning the Lord's body. 30 For this cause many are weak and sickly among you, and many sleep.*
- Inappropriate sexual relations. *1 Corinthians 5:1 It is reported commonly that there is fornication among you, and such fornication as is not so much as named among the Gentiles, that one should have his father's wife. 2 And ye are puffed up, and have not rather mourned, that he that hath done this deed might be taken away from among you. 3 For I verily, as absent in body, but present in spirit, have judged already, as though I were present, concerning him that hath so done this deed, 4 In the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, when ye are gathered together, and my spirit, with the power of our Lord Jesus Christ, 5 To deliver such an one unto Satan for the destruction of the flesh, that the spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus.*

- Lying to the Holy Spirit. *Acts 5:1 But a certain man named Ananias, with Sapphira his wife, sold a possession, 2 And kept back part of the price, his wife also being privy to it, and brought a certain part, and laid it at the apostles' feet. 3 But Peter said, Ananias, why hath Satan filled thine heart to lie to the Holy Ghost, and to keep back part of the price of the land? 4 Whiles it remained, was it not thine own? And after it was sold, was it not in thine own power? Why hast thou conceived this thing in thine heart? Thou hast not lied unto men, but unto God. 5 And Ananias hearing these words fell down, and gave up the ghost: and great fear came on all them that heard these things.*
- Showing disrespect to one's parents. *Ephesians 6:2 Honour thy father and mother; (which is the first commandment with promise;) 3 That it may be well with thee, and thou mayest live long on the earth.*

### Persistent Sin Brings Death

17 All unrighteousness is sin: and there is a sin not unto death.

5:17. All unrighteousness is sin. As John speaks about a Christian brother persisting in sin, it is as if John is saying to the church, "You have been warned." *Proverbs 29:1 He, that being often reprov'd hardeneth his neck, shall suddenly be destroyed, and that without remedy.* The Christian cannot persist in sin without being severely disciplined, even to the point of a premature and sudden death. Therefore, it is imperative to keep oneself so "*that the wicked one toucheth him not.*" Sometimes we are fit for heaven, when we are not fit for earth, lest we bring a reproach upon the name of Christ. This is a very solemn subject to think about, sin unto death.

5:17. Lest sin have dominion over us, lest we bring reproach to the name of Christ, lest we die prematurely, lest we die the sin unto death, let us pray the prayer of David and ask God to change our hearts and our behavior.

*Psalm 19:12 Who can understand his errors? Cleanse thou me from secret faults. 13 Keep back thy servant also from presumptuous sins; let them not have dominion over me: then shall I be upright, and I shall be innocent from the great transgression. 14 Let the words of my mouth, and the meditation of my heart, be acceptable in thy sight, O Lord, my strength, and my redeemer.*

### Keeping the Heart 1 John 5:18-21

18 We know that whosoever is born of God sinneth not; but he that is begotten of God keepeth himself, and that wicked one toucheth him not.

5:18.

#### A Creed of Three Articles of Sure Knowledge

- We know v. 18 We know that whosoever is born of God does not persist in sin. "I believe in holiness."

- We know v. 19 We know we are of God.  
“I believe in the new birth.”
- We know v 20 We know the Son of God has come.  
“I believe in the incarnate Jesus Christ,  
the Son of God.”

By this threefold creedal statement, John gives the order of human experience. He speaks of spiritual truths that are sure. John speaks in the language of certainty. Worldly philosophers insist there is nothing certain.

"We can say nothing with certainty about anything, because the picture presented to us is not constant" (Philo, c. 20 BC – AD 50).

“But in this world nothing can be said to be certain except death and taxes” (Benjamin Franklin).

The worldly philosophers are wrong. The Christian can know with certainty what God has revealed to the heart.

5:18. but he that is begotten of God. Some biblical scholars believe that the pronoun reference “he” should be capitalized and is a reference to Jesus. The thought of verse 18 would then be a reference to our Lord keeping the one who has been born of God, or an individual such as you and me. *“We know that no one who is born of God sins; but He who was born of God keeps him, and the evil one does not touch him” (New American Standard).*

5:18. sinneth not. The divine provision for the prevention of repetitive sinning is the new birth and a realization of one’s new position in Christ. By coming to understand all that a believer is in Christ (a son, an heir, a representative, a priest etc.), there is the opportunity to be transformed in the mind so that sin ceases, because Christ is honored in the heart (Romans 12:1-2). The soul does not want to violate the integrity of its self-image in Christ.

5:18. keepeth himself. Paul taught this same concept and used the imperative. *1 Timothy 5:22 Lay hands suddenly on no man, neither be partaker of other men's sins: keep thyself pure.* The Doctrine of Self Sanctification is a biblical concept when it is understood that sanctification is ultimately the work of God. *Philippians 1:6 Being confident of this very thing, that he which hath begun a good work in you will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ:*

19 *And we know that we are of God, and the whole world lieth in wickedness.*

5:19. we know. The honest heart knows two truths: whether or not one is born of God, and whether or not the world lives in the sphere, strength, and power of wickedness, and therefore, the evil one. Like a great ship stranded on the sands of a beach, like a sow lying in the mud with contentment, like Samson in the arms of Delilah, *“the whole world lieth in the wicked one.”*

### The Wicked One

- The Wicked One comes to take away the good seed sown in the heart. Matthew 13:19
- The Wicked One has many children, even the whole world. Matthew 13:38
- The Wicked One may be overcome. 1 John 2:13, 14

20 And we know that the Son of God is come, and hath given us an understanding, that we may know him that is true, and we are in him that is true, *even* in his Son Jesus Christ. This is the true God, and eternal life.

5:20. And we know that the Son of God is come. Jesus has come to give us eternal life. Jesus has come to destroy the works of the devil. Jesus has come to make propitiation for sin. Jesus has come to reveal the fullness of the Godhead bodily. Jesus has come to set captives free. Jesus has come to reconcile man to God. There are so many reasons for why Jesus has come, but here, John stresses that Jesus has come to give us an understanding of God the Father that we might know Him, that we might love Him, and that we might obey Him.

“I stand amazed in the presence  
Of Jesus the Nazarene,  
And wonder how He could love me,  
A sinner, condemned, unclean.

O how marvelous! O how wonderful!  
And my song shall ever be:  
O how marvelous! O how wonderful!  
Is my Savior's love for me!

He took my sins and my sorrows,  
He made them His very own;  
He bore the burden to Calvary,  
And suffered and died alone.

When with the ransomed in glory  
His face I at last shall see,  
'Twill be my joy through the ages  
To sing of His love for me.”

Chris Tomlin

5:20. In the New Testament there are two words in the original language, two adjectives that mean, true. One, *alēthēs*, means, true, as over or against that of which is false. Another word, *alēthinos*, means true in the sense of genuine. That is the word that is used here three times in this paragraph, genuine. Jesus has come so that we may know Him, the genuine one, the genuine God in opposition to the idols who are not genuine. Jesus Christ has come so that we may know Him who is genuine.

5:20. we are in him. Because God has chosen individuals without condition, and with Divine certainty, to salvation and eternal life, His Spirit must, and will, apply the benefits of redemption to those whom the Father has given to the Son.

5:20. *even*. This italicized word should be omitted from the Authorized Version, it was added by the translators.

21 Little children, keep yourselves from idols. Amen.

5:21. Idols. Idols include false concepts about God, such as the Gnostics held, and the Ebionites. They denied the deity of the Lord Jesus Christ. The gods of their imaginations were nothing more than theological idols, a figment of fertile imaginations.

5:21. Amen. This word is not universal in the Greek manuscripts, and so it should be left off. But by way of application we can say, and we do say, "Amen", as we affirm the words of the apostle.