

## I John 3:20–4:12

***I John 3:20 For if our heart condemn us, God is greater than our heart, and knoweth all things.***

Whatever a man thinks he knows of his sin, because God is greater, God knows more and could prosecute and bring charges, exceeding even what the human heart and conscience recognizes as sin. Consequently, to maintain both peace and fellowship with God, there can be no hiding or indulging in sin, especially so in the heart. Wherever sin is, it must be confessed, and dealt with in order for a man to maintain trust in God. A condemning heart does nothing to inspire greater confidence and trust in the Lord and His ability to come to our aid; in fact, it does quite the opposite.<sup>1</sup>

(Barnes, I John 3:20) *For if our heart condemn us - ...* The general sentiment is, that if they should so live that their own hearts would condemn them for present insincerity and hypocrisy, they could have no hope of peace, for God knows all that is in the heart. In view of the past - when the heart accuses us of what we have done - we may find peace by such evidences of piety as shall allay the troubles of an agitated soul, 1 John 3:9,<sup>2</sup> but we cannot have such peace if our hearts condemn us for the indulgence of secret sins, now that we profess to be Christians. If our hearts condemn us for present insincerity, and for secret sins, we can never “persuade” or soothe them by any external act of piety. In view of the consciousness of past guilt, we may find peace; we can find none if there is a present purpose to indulge in sin.<sup>3</sup> (END QUOTE)

***I John 3:21 Beloved, if our heart condemn us not, then have we confidence toward God.***

To properly walk with God, it is essential that our love is pure, our faith unfeigned, and our conscience free of convicting and condemning sin. The condition of the heart greatly effects a man’s faith and trust in God. To properly grow and develop in faith, we must so live that our heart does not accuse us of sin, but rather commends us for living rightly before the Lord.<sup>4</sup> Though it is not known by most, a good conscience is as critical to true piety, as love and faith are. Possessing these three godly characteristics is the ultimate end of God’s will for the Christian. (I Tim. 1:5) *Now the end of the commandment is charity out of a pure heart, and of a good conscience, and of faith unfeigned:* If our faith or love is insincere and has no real depth in it, our conscience will inform us of such. Hence, the conscience plays a very key and important role in leading our soul to God’s salvation, by exposing if insincerity exists, or our faith and love towards God is pure. When also the conscience is free from condemning sin, then greater faith and trust, can be exercised in God.

***I John 3:22 And whatsoever we ask, we receive of him, because we keep his commandments, and do those things that are pleasing in his sight.***

Here we observe the great extent that a pursuit of righteousness, a good conscience, and inward purity, will produce. All prayers asked according to God’s will, will be answered. How a man then lives will directly affect whether or not God both hears and answers his prayers.

<sup>1</sup> Matt. 5:28 *But I say unto you, That whosoever looketh on a woman to lust after her hath committed adultery with her already in his heart.*

<sup>2</sup> I John 3:9 *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.*

<sup>3</sup> Barnes’ Notes on the Bible

<sup>4</sup> Rom. 2:15 *Which shew the work of the law written in their hearts, their conscience also bearing witness, and their thoughts the mean while accusing or else excusing one another;)*

## The Word of the Lord

(Barnes, I John 3:22) We can have no hope that he will hear us unless we do so live as to please him.<sup>5</sup> (END QUOTE)

How foolish is it to believe that any can live as they will, sin as they desire, and God will still hear them. The truth is that God will not hear, nor come to the aid of any who regard iniquity in their heart.<sup>6</sup> If men then embrace sin, they should not think that they will be heard of God. (Ps.

66:18) *If I regard iniquity in my heart, the Lord will not hear me:* One of the fatal consequences of choosing to live a life of sin, is that God will not hear those who do so,<sup>7</sup> Sinners therefore should never be so presumptuous to believe that by deliberately walking in sin, that God will still hear them in their time of need. This is the truth of God's Word: absent repentant prayer<sup>8</sup> that acknowledges sin and

<sup>5</sup> Barnes' Notes on the Bible

6 Ps. 18:40&41 *Thou hast also given me the necks of mine enemies; that I might destroy them that hate me.* <sup>41</sup>They cried, but there was none to save them: even unto the LORD, but he answered them not.

Prov. 21:13 *Whoso stoppeth his ears at the cry of the poor, he also shall cry himself, but shall not be heard.*

Prov. 28:9 *He that turneth away his ear from hearing the law, even his prayer shall be abomination.*

Isa. 59:2 *But your iniquities have separated between you and your God, and your sins have hid his face from you, that he will not hear.*

Micah 3:2-4 *Who hate the good, and love the evil; who pluck off their skin from off them, and their flesh from off their bones; <sup>3</sup>Who also eat the flesh of my people, and flay their skin from off them; and they break their bones, and chop them in pieces, as for the pot, and as flesh within the caldron. <sup>4</sup>Then shall they cry unto the LORD, but he will not hear them: he will even hide his face from them at that time, as they have behaved themselves ill in their doings.*

Zech. 7:11-13 *But they refused to hearken, and pulled away the shoulder, and stopped their ears, that they should not hear. <sup>12</sup>Yea, they made their hearts as an adamant stone, lest they should hear the law, and the words which the LORD of hosts hath sent in his spirit by the former prophets: therefore came a great wrath from the LORD of hosts. <sup>13</sup>Therefore it is come to pass, that as he cried, and they would not hear; so they cried, and I would not hear, saith the LORD of hosts:*

7 Ps. 18:41 *They cried, but there was none to save them: even unto the LORD, but he answered them not.*

Ps. 34:15 *The eyes of the LORD are upon the righteous, and his ears are open unto their cry.*

Prov. 1:28 *Then shall they call upon me, but I will not answer; they shall seek me early, but they shall not find me:*

Prov. 15:29 *The LORD is far from the wicked: but he heareth the prayer of the righteous.*

Prov. 28:9 *He that turneth away his ear from hearing the law, even his prayer shall be abomination.*

Isa. 15:1-9 *The burden of Moab. Because in the night Ar of Moab is laid waste, and brought to silence; because in the night Kir of Moab is laid waste, and brought to silence; <sup>2</sup>He is gone up to Bajith, and to Dibon, the high places, to weep: Moab shall howl over Nebo, and over Medeba: on all their heads shall be baldness, and every beard cut off. <sup>3</sup>In their streets they shall gird themselves with sackcloth: on the tops of their houses, and in their streets, every one shall howl, weeping abundantly. <sup>4</sup>And Heshbon shall cry, and Elealeh: their voice shall be heard even unto Jahaz: therefore the armed soldiers of Moab shall cry out; his life shall be grievous unto him. <sup>5</sup>My heart shall cry out for Moab; his fugitives shall flee unto Zoar, an heifer of three years old: for by the mounting up of Luhith with weeping shall they go it up; for in the way of Horonaim they shall raise up a cry of destruction. <sup>6</sup>For the waters of Nimrim shall be desolate: for the hay is withered away, the grass faileth, there is no green thing. <sup>7</sup>Therefore the abundance they have gotten, and that which they have laid up, shall they carry away to the brook of the willows. <sup>8</sup>For the cry is gone round about the borders of Moab; the howling thereof unto Eglaim, and the howling thereof unto Beerelim. <sup>9</sup>For the waters of Dimon shall be full of blood: for I will bring more upon Dimon, lions upon him that escapeth of Moab, and upon the remnant of the land.*

Isa. 58:3-7 *Wherefore have we fasted, say they, and thou seest not? wherefore have we afflicted our soul, and thou takest no knowledge? Behold, in the day of your fast ye find pleasure, and exact all your labours. <sup>4</sup>Behold, ye fast for strife and debate, and to smite with the fist of wickedness: ye shall not fast as ye do this day, to make your voice to be heard on high. <sup>5</sup>Is it such a fast that I have chosen? a day for a man to afflict his soul? is it to bow down his head as a bulrush, and to spread sackcloth and ashes under him? wilt thou call this a fast, and an acceptable day to the Lord? <sup>6</sup>Is not this the fast that I have chosen? to loose the bands of wickedness, to undo the heavy burdens, and to let the oppressed go free, and that ye break every yoke? <sup>7</sup>Is it not to deal thy bread to the hungry, and that thou bring the poor that are cast out to thy house? when thou seest the naked, that thou cover him; and that thou hide not thyself from thine own flesh?*

Jer. 11:11 *Therefore thus saith the LORD, Behold, I will bring evil upon them, which they shall not be able to escape; and though they shall cry unto me, I will not hearken unto them.*

Jer. 14:12 *When they fast, I will not hear their cry; and when they offer burnt offering and an oblation, I will not accept them: but I will consume them by the sword, and by the famine, and by the pestilence.*

Zech. 7:13 *Therefore it is come to pass, that as he cried, and they would not hear; so they cried, and I would not hear, saith the Lord of hosts:*

John 9:31 *Now we know that God heareth not sinners: but if any man be a worshipper of God, and doeth his will, him he heareth.*

8 II Chron. 7:14 *If my people, which are called by my name, shall humble themselves, and pray, and seek my face, and turn from their wicked ways; then will I hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin, and will heal their land.*

does not defend and attempt to hide it from God, a sinner's pleas will not be heard. For God to hear men, they must keep His commandments and do those things pleasing in His sight. It is only by living this way, that they can be sure that all asked of God will be granted.

It is the righteous that God hears and has promised to come to their aid, and not those harboring and committing sin in both their heart and life.<sup>9</sup> Where the Lord's ears are open to the righteous, His face is against all engaged in evil. (I Pet. 3:12) *For the eyes of the Lord are over the righteous, and his ears are open unto their prayers: but the face of the Lord is against them that do evil.*

A righteous man therefore need not fear that God will not hear his prayer nor come to his aid in time of need. Simply because God sees, knows, and will hear all who seek His own righteousness as a standard of living.<sup>10</sup>

*I John 3:23 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.*

This is His (God's) *commandment*, that we should not only believe on the name of His Son, Jesus Christ, but also love one another, as Jesus commanded His followers to do.<sup>11</sup> Though there are two things spoken of, (1. *That we should believe on the name of his Son Jesus Christ* and 2. *love one another, as he gave us commandment*) the apostle John reveals that God has both connected and combined faith in Christ, and love for our brethren as one commandment. Belief in the Son of God and love for the brethren are therefore eternally bound.<sup>12</sup> To obey one, will lead to embracing the other. Just as disregarding one, ensures that there can be no true possession of the other. This teaches us that whenever there is true belief in Jesus Christ, there will always be love for those born of Him.<sup>13</sup> Hence, whenever there is sincere faith in the Savior, there will be

*II Cor. 7:9–11 Now I rejoice, not that ye were made sorry, but that ye sorrowed to repentance: for ye were made sorry after a godly manner, that ye might receive damage by us in nothing. <sup>10</sup>For godly sorrow worketh repentance to salvation not to be repented of: but the sorrow of the world worketh death. <sup>11</sup>For behold this selfsame thing, that ye sorrowed after a godly sort, what carefulness it wrought in you, yea, what clearing of yourselves, yea, what indignation, yea, what fear, yea, what vehement desire, yea, what zeal, yea, what revenge! In all things ye have approved yourselves to be clear in this matter.*

*Jas. 4:8–10 Draw nigh to God, and he will draw nigh to you. Cleanse your hands, ye sinners; and purify your hearts, ye double minded. <sup>9</sup>Be afflicted, and mourn, and weep: let your laughter be turned to mourning, and your joy to heaviness. <sup>10</sup>Humble yourselves in the sight of the Lord, and he shall lift you up.*

*9 Ps. 18:6 In my distress I called upon the Lord, and cried unto my God: he heard my voice out of his temple, and my cry came before him, even into his ears.*

*Ps. 34:17 The righteous cry, and the Lord heareth, and delivereth them out of all their troubles.*

*Jer. 29:12&13 Then shall ye call upon me, and ye shall go and pray unto me, and I will hearken unto you. <sup>13</sup>And ye shall seek me, and find me, when ye shall search for me with all your heart.*

*I John 5:15 And if we know that he hear us, whatsoever we ask, we know that we have the petitions that we desired of him.*

*John 9:31 Now we know that God heareth not sinners: but if any man be a worshipper of God, and doeth his will, him he heareth.*

*10 Ps. 5:12 For thou, Lord, wilt bless the righteous; with favour wilt thou compass him as with a shield.*

*Ps. 37:17 For the arms of the wicked shall be broken: but the Lord upholdeth the righteous.*

*Ps. 146:8 The Lord openeth the eyes of the blind: the Lord raiseth them that are bowed down: the Lord loveth the righteous:*

*Prov. 15:9 The way of the wicked is an abomination unto the Lord: but he loveth him that followeth after righteousness.*

*Matt. 5:6 Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness: for they shall be filled.*

*Heb. 1:9 Thou hast loved righteousness, and hated iniquity; therefore God, even thy God, hath anointed thee with the oil of gladness above thy fellows.*

*11 Mark. 12:29–31 And Jesus answered him, The first of all the commandments is, Hear, O Israel; The Lord our God is one Lord: <sup>30</sup>And thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and with all thy strength: this is the first commandment. <sup>31</sup>And the second is like, namely this, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. There is none other commandment greater than these.*

*12 Col. 1:4 Since we heard of your faith in Christ Jesus, and of the love which ye have to all the saints,*

*Eph. 1:15 Wherefore I also, after I heard of your faith in the Lord Jesus, and love unto all the saints,*

*13 John 13:35 By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another.*

*I 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.*

corresponding love for His brethren.<sup>14</sup> This is especially so regarding those created in Christ's own image via the Spirit of God residing in them.<sup>15</sup>

(Jamieson-Fausset-Brown, I John 3:23) Summing up of God's commandments under the Gospel dispensation in one commandment.

*this is his commandment*—singular: for faith and love are not separate commandments, but are indissolubly united. We cannot truly love one another without faith in Christ, nor can we truly believe in Him without love.<sup>16</sup> (END QUOTE)

***I John 3:24 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 which he hath given us.***

*And he that keepeth his commandments dwelleth in him, and he in him.* Jesus promised His followers that if He was loved, and His words were kept, then both He and the Father would come and live within their hearts. By the presence of the Spirit given to the saved, they are assured and daily comforted that God in Christ, lives in them.<sup>17</sup> (John 14:23) *Jesus answered and said unto him, If a man love me, he will keep my words: and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him.*

Where in the Old Testament it was observed that God would dwell among His people,<sup>18</sup> now the promise of the Son of God is, that both the Father and the Son will come and make their abode in them. By keeping God's commandments, we dwell in God, and as a result, God dwells in us—a reality, with even much deeper implications beyond even God's revelation to Israel.

Once the Holy Spirit enters into a man's heart, there is created a spiritual oneness between him, and the Father and Son. It is this oneness that Christ Himself possessed with the Father that He prayed for regarding those who will believe upon Him. (John 17:20&21) *Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on me through their word; That they all may be one; as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us: that the world may believe that thou hast sent me.* For the true Christian, God is much more than simply around him, He is in all respects now living within him.<sup>19</sup> The true church of Christ is not formed when men enter churches, but rather when the Father and Son, enter them.

(Ellicott, John 17:21) *That they all may be one; as Thou, Father, in Me, and I in Thee, that they also may be in Us;* and the meaning is that the

14 Heb. 2:11 *For both he that sanctifieth and they who are sanctified are all of one: for which cause he is not ashamed to call them brethren,*

15 Rom. 8:29 *For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brethren.*

Col. 3:10 *And have put on the new man, which is renewed in knowledge after the image of him that created him:*

16 Jamieson-Fausset-Brown Bible Commentary

17 Rom. 8:10 *And if Christ be in you, the body is dead because of sin; but the Spirit is life because of righteousness.*

I Cor. 3:16 *Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you?*

Eph. 2:22 *In whom ye also are builded together for an habitation of God through the Spirit.*

Col. 1:27 *To whom God would make known what is the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles; which is Christ in you, the hope of glory:*

18 Exod. 29:45&46 *And I will dwell among the children of Israel, and will be their God. <sup>46</sup>And they shall know that I am the LORD their God, that brought them forth out of the land of Egypt, that I may dwell among them: I am the LORD their God.*

Lev. 26:11 *And I set my tabernacle among you: and my soul shall not abhor you.*

Num. 35:34 *Defile not therefore the land which ye shall inhabit, wherein I dwell: for I the LORD dwell among the children of Israel.*

I Kgs. 6:13 *And I will dwell among the children of Israel, and will not forsake my people Israel.*

19 Rom. 8:10 *And if Christ be in you, the body is dead because of sin; but the Spirit is life because of righteousness.*

II Cor. 13:5 *Examine yourselves, whether ye be in the faith; prove your own selves. Know ye not your own selves, how that Jesus Christ is in you, except ye be reprobates?*

Gal. 1:15&16 *But when it pleased God, who separated me from my mother's womb, and called me by his grace, <sup>16</sup>To reveal his Son in me, that I might preach him among the heathen; immediately I conferred not with flesh and blood:*

Gal. 2:20 *I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me.*

Col. 1:27 *To whom God would make known what is the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles; which is Christ in you, the hope of glory:*

union of the Church may be of the same essential nature as that between the Father and the Son; yea, that the union of the Church may result from the union of individual members with the Father through the Son.<sup>20</sup> (END QUOTE)

*And hereby we know that he abideth in us, by the Spirit which he hath given us.* The means by which the Christian knows and is certain that God dwells in him, is through the Spirit of God given to him. Because of the Spirit's presence and continued influence, those saved by God are made to know that they are of God, and God is in them. Every true child of God will possess a certainty of his standing in heaven. This certainly is due to the fact, of the Spirit's presence in his heart. It is this Spirit, this Holy Spirit, which allows the saved to cry, Abba Father, something that mere slaves, and those still in bondage, were never allowed to do. (Gal. 4:6) *And because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father.*

(Barnes, Gal. 4:6) *Abba, Father* - See the note at Romans 8:15.<sup>21</sup> It is said in the Babylonian Gemara, a Jewish work, that it was not permitted slaves to use the title of Abba in addressing the master of the family to which they belonged. If so, then the language which Christians are here represented as using is the language of freemen, and denotes that they are not under the servitude of sin.<sup>22</sup> (END QUOTE)

***I John 4:1 Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God: because many false prophets are gone out into the world.***

The warning here is to *believe not every spirit*; this includes every spirit, or man who claims to be walking by It, and professes to come in God's name. The reason

that all spirits should be tried, is because many, a vast amount of false prophets are gone out, and operate in the world. All spirits are not holy spirits. Neither are all men who profess to speak by the Spirit of God, actually of Him. This revelation the apostle seeks to make especially clear, simply because, both in the world, and in the church, false ministers of the Christian faith abound. Hence, if a man has not the Spirit of Christ,<sup>23</sup> and a degree of discernment of spirits,<sup>24</sup> then that which is not of God, can easily be confused as having come from Him. False prophets also do not simply deceive the world, but are purposed to infiltrate God's true body of believers, and lead them down paths, contrary to divine will. Sadly, if these counterfeit spirits are listened to by men professing to come in Christ's name, then even saints can be led away from the simplicity which is in Christ. (II Cor. 11:3) *But I fear, lest by any means, as the serpent beguiled Eve through his subtilty, so your minds should be corrupted from the simplicity that is in Christ.*

(Barnes, II Cor. 11:3) *But I fear* ... The mention of this seems to have suggested to him the fact that the first woman was deceived and led astray by the tempter, and that the same thing might occur in regard to the church which he was so desirous should be preserved pure. The grounds of his fear were:

(1) That Satan had seduced the first woman, thus demonstrating that the most holy ones were in danger of being led astray by temptation; and,

(2) That special efforts were made to seduce them from the faith. The persuasive arts of the false teachers; the power of philosophy; and the attractive and corrupting influences of the world, he had reason to suppose might

<sup>20</sup> *Ellicott's Commentary for English Readers*

<sup>21</sup> Rom. 8:15 *For ye have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear; but ye have received the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father.*

<sup>22</sup> *Barnes' Notes on the Bible*

<sup>23</sup> Rom. 8:9 *But ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you. Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his.*

<sup>24</sup> I Cor. 12:8–11 *For to one is given by the Spirit the word of wisdom; to another the word of knowledge by the same Spirit; <sup>9</sup>To another faith by the same Spirit; to another the gifts of healing by the same Spirit; <sup>10</sup>To another the working of miracles; to another prophecy; to another discerning of spirits; to another divers kinds of tongues; to another the interpretation of tongues: <sup>11</sup>But all these worketh that one and the selfsame Spirit, dividing to every man severally as he will.*

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be employed to seduce them from simple attachment to Christ.<sup>25</sup> (END QUOTE)

The Christian doctrine, that which leads to the new birth<sup>26</sup> and eternal life,<sup>27</sup> is a very simple doctrine. It is a call to repent for sin,<sup>28</sup> believe in the Son of God,<sup>29</sup>

and be baptized with the Holy Spirit by Him. (Acts 2:38) *Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost. False prophets and false teachers will stress what God will*

<sup>25</sup> Barnes' Notes on the Bible

<sup>26</sup> John 1:12&13 *But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name: <sup>13</sup>Which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.*

John 3:1-8 *There was a man of the Pharisees, named Nicodemus, a ruler of the Jews: <sup>2</sup>The same came to Jesus by night, and said unto him, Rabbi, we know that thou art a teacher come from God: for no man can do these miracles that thou doest, except God be with him. <sup>3</sup>Jesus answered and said unto him, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God. <sup>4</sup>Nicodemus saith unto him, How can a man be born when he is old? can he enter the second time into his mother's womb, and be born? <sup>5</sup>Jesus answered, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God. <sup>6</sup>That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit. <sup>7</sup>Marvel not that I said unto thee, Ye must be born again. <sup>8</sup>The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh, and whither it goeth: so is every one that is born of the Spirit.*

I Pet. 1:23 *Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever.*

I John 3:9 *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.*

<sup>27</sup> John 3:15&16 *That whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have eternal life. <sup>16</sup>For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.*

John 3:36 *He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life: and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him.*

John 6:54 *Whoso eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, hath eternal life; and I will raise him up at the last day.*  
John 10:28 *And I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand.*

John 12:25 *He that loveth his life shall lose it; and he that hateth his life in this world shall keep it unto life eternal.*  
Rom. 5:21 *That as sin hath reigned unto death, even so might grace reign through righteousness unto eternal life by Jesus Christ our Lord.*

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

I John 2:25 *And this is the promise that he hath promised us, even eternal life.*

I John 5:11 *And this is the record, that God hath given to us eternal life, and this life is in his Son.*

<sup>28</sup> Matt. 3:1&2 *In those days came John the Baptist, preaching in the wilderness of Judaea, <sup>2</sup>And saying, Repent ye: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.*

Matt. 4:17 *From that time Jesus began to preach, and to say, Repent: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.*

Matt. 9:13 *But go ye and learn what that meaneth, I will have mercy, and not sacrifice: for I am not come to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance.*

Mark 1:4 *John did baptize in the wilderness, and preach the baptism of repentance for the remission of sins.*

Mark 1:15 *And saying, The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand: repent ye, and believe the gospel.*

Mark 6:12 *And they went out, and preached that men should repent.*

Luke 3:3 *And he came into all the country about Jordan, preaching the baptism of repentance for the remission of sins;*

Luke 5:32 *I came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance.*

Acts 2:38 *Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost.*

Acts 3:19 *Repent ye therefore, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, when the times of refreshing shall come from the presence of the Lord.*

Acts 8:22 *Repent therefore of this thy wickedness, and pray God, if perhaps the thought of thine heart may be forgiven thee.*

Acts 26:20 *But shewed first unto them of Damascus, and at Jerusalem, and throughout all the coasts of Judaea, and then to the Gentiles, that they should repent and turn to God, and do works meet for repentance.*

<sup>29</sup> John 6:40 *And this is the will of him that sent me, that every one which seeth the Son, and believeth on him, may have everlasting life: and I will raise him up at the last day.*

John 20:31 *But these are written, that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing ye might have life through his name.*

Acts 19:4 *Then said Paul, John verily baptized with the baptism of repentance, saying unto the people, that they should believe on him which should come after him, that is, on Christ Jesus.*

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

I John 5:13 *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.*

do for men, without men needing to do really anything for God. Man is the real subject of their preaching, and it is human desire that is catered to. In all false religion it is man who is at the center, and what man wants to hear, that is taught. Ultimately, if it is not Jesus Christ and His lordship<sup>30</sup> which is at the core of faith; it is man. By men's carnal appetites they will accumulate teachers to satisfy their own lusts.<sup>31</sup>

***I John 4:2&3 Hereby know ye the Spirit of God: Every spirit that confesseth that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is of God: <sup>3</sup>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.***

There was a great debate among the Jews and early Christians, as to the true

nature of Jesus Christ. Was Jesus actually born of God, come in flesh, and God's promised Messiah? The debate therefore was not about mere doctrines of faith, but rather in the genuineness of its Author.<sup>32</sup> A man's opinion, view, and belief in Jesus Christ, will ultimately determine his destiny. There is but One that sits and reigns over all the sons of men, and this One, is God's promised Christ.<sup>33</sup> To be *antichrist*, is to be against and not subject to, God's true Christ. Ultimately, he who rejects the Son, rejects not only the Savior of this world, but the Ruler of the next.<sup>34</sup> (John 1:18) *No man hath seen God at any time, the only begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared him.* Because Jesus, God's only begotten Son, revealed God to the world, then it is impossible to reject Him, and not reject God. To also reject Christ's rule<sup>35</sup> and the power God has given to Him<sup>36</sup> is to reject the divine authority of God.

<sup>30</sup> Matt. 28:18 *And Jesus came and spake unto them, saying, All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth.* Rom. 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.*

Rom. 14:9 *For to this end Christ both died, and rose, and revived, that he might be Lord both of the dead and living.*

<sup>31</sup> II Tim. 4:3&4 *For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears; <sup>4</sup>And they shall turn away their ears from the truth, and shall be turned unto fables.*

<sup>32</sup> Heb. 12:2 *Looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith; who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God.*

<sup>33</sup> Phil. 2:9–11 *Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name: <sup>10</sup>That at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth; <sup>11</sup>And that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.*

Rev. 11:15 *And the seventh angel sounded; and there were great voices in heaven, saying, The kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord, and of his Christ; and he shall reign for ever and ever.*

<sup>34</sup> Eph. 1:21 *Far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come:*

<sup>35</sup> John 3:18 *He that believeth on him is not condemned: but he that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God.*

I 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.*

II John 1:7 *For many deceivers are entered into the world, who confess not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh. This is a deceiver and an antichrist.*

Jude 1:4 *or there are certain men crept in unawares, who were before of old ordained to this condemnation, ungodly men, turning the grace of our God into lasciviousness, and denying the only Lord God, and our Lord Jesus Christ.*

<sup>36</sup> Matt. 28:18 *And Jesus came and spake unto them, saying, All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth.* John 3:35 *The Father loveth the Son, and hath given all things into his hand.*

Eph. 1:20&21 *Which he wrought in Christ, when he raised him from the dead, and set him at his own right hand in the heavenly places, <sup>21</sup>Far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come:*

Col. 1:15–18 *Who is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of every creature: <sup>16</sup>For by him were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers: all things were created by him, and for him: <sup>17</sup>And he is before all things, and by him all things consist. <sup>18</sup>And he is the head of the body, the church: who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead; that in all things he might have the preeminence.*

I Pet. 3:22 *Who is gone into heaven, and is on the right hand of God; angels and authorities and powers being made subject unto him.*

(Benson, John 1:18) ... neither Moses, nor any of the Old Testament prophets, were so well qualified to make God and his will known to mankind, as our Lord Jesus Christ was. They never saw, nor perfectly knew the Divine Being, and his eternal counsels, and therefore could not make a full discovery thereof to men. The only person who ever enjoyed this privilege was the only-begotten Son of God, *the Word*, which was in the beginning with him, or, as it is here expressed, was, and is, *in the bosom of the Father*: that is, always was, and is the object of his tenderest, yea, of his infinite affection, complacency, and delight, and the intimate partner of his counsels. And this circumstance recommends Christ's holy religion to us unspeakably before any others; that it was founded by one that had seen God, or that had clear and perfect knowledge of him, and of his mind and will, which no other person ever had, or could have.<sup>37</sup> (END QUOTE)

***I John 4:4 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.***

The “*overcome them*” has specific relationship to those who were listed as *antichrist* in the previous verse. It is tempting to believe, because of the vast amount of sinners who reject God, and oppose Him in the earth, that the people of God are inferior to a world of sin. Yet, this is undoubtedly not true. Because Christ lives within His people; they have been made more than conquerors<sup>38</sup> through Him. Because Jesus has been given by God all authority in both heaven and earth,<sup>39</sup> He is supreme and over all other powers in these regions. It is also not because we as Christians are strong in ourselves and have any personal strength to overcome anything, but only because of the presence and Person of the Son of God, Who lives in us. Greater is He (Christ) Who is in the believer, than any antichrist, in the

world. The believer's strength therefore to overcome not only sin, but also all evil forces in the world, lies in the fact that the Son of God, through the presence of the Holy Spirit, lives within him. Because Christ lives in His people, they are made to overcome all evil spirits and men influenced by them.

(Benson, I John 4:4) *Because greater is he that is in you — Namely, the Spirit of Christ; than he — The spirit of antichrist; that is in the world — The Son of God, who stands at the head of that interest in which you are embarked, and who aids you by the mighty communications of his Spirit, is infinitely too strong for Satan, the great head of the apostacy, and for all his confederates. Thus, the issue of the divine government will be, that truth and virtue shall be finally victorious over error and wickedness, because God, the Patron of truth and virtue, possesseth far greater power and wisdom than the evil spirits who promote error and wickedness.*<sup>40</sup> (END QUOTE)

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(Barnes, I John 4:4) *Because greater is he that is in you, than he that is in the world - God, who dwells in your hearts, and by whose strength and grace alone you have been enabled to achieve this victory, is more mighty than Satan, who rules in the hearts of the people of this world, and whose seductive arts are seen in the efforts of these false teachers. The apostle meant to say that it was by no power of their own that they achieved this victory, but it was to be traced solely to the fact that God dwelt among them, and had preserved them by his grace.*<sup>41</sup> (END QUOTE)

Understandably, the Christian is not made by his own power to be victorious. This could never be the case, since this would imply trust and confidence in self, which always leads to failure.<sup>42</sup> Rather, that which causes God's new sons to overcome, lies in the strength of their Savior.

<sup>37</sup> Benson Commentary

<sup>38</sup> Rom. 8:37 *Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him that loved us.*

<sup>39</sup> Matt. 28:18 *And Jesus came and spake unto them, saying, All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth.*

<sup>40</sup> Benson Commentary

<sup>41</sup> Barnes' Notes on the Bible

<sup>42</sup> Prov. 28:26 *He that trusteth in his own heart is a fool: but whoso walketh wisely, he shall be delivered.*

Isa. 5:21 *Woe unto them that are wise in their own eyes, and prudent in their own sight!*

Isa. 47:10&11 *For thou hast trusted in thy wickedness: thou hast said, None seeth me. Thy wisdom and thy knowledge, it hath perverted thee; and thou hast said in thine heart, I am, and none else beside me. <sup>11</sup>Therefore shall evil come upon thee; thou shalt not know from whence it riseth: and mischief shall fall upon thee; thou shalt not be able to put it off: and desolation shall come upon thee suddenly, which thou shalt not know.*



This is a reality that every true Christian can attest to by personal experience, that because of God's presence in his or her life, things that should have overcome and defeated them, in the end, never did.

There is a treasure, a very precious treasure, that lives in the people of God. This treasure allows God to unleash His power, both in and towards the Christian. (I Cor. 4:7) *But we have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the excellency of the power may be of God, and not of us.* The excellency of the power, exercised both in and towards the Christian is of God, and vastly superior to any opposing power arrayed and assembled against Him. All victory is undoubtedly the Lord's, and due to God's power being exerted in the Christian's life, they will overcome. In the people of God, God is the source of their strength and not themselves.<sup>43</sup> (Ps. 44:3–7) *For they got not the land in possession by their own sword, neither did their own arm save them: but thy right hand, and thine arm, and the light of thy countenance, because thou hadst a favour unto them. Thou art my King, O God: command deliverances for Jacob. Through thee will we push down our enemies: through thy name will we tread them under that rise up against us. For I will not trust in my bow, neither shall my sword save me. But thou hast saved us from our enemies, and hast put them to shame that hated us.*

The believer's strength does not lie in his own personal power to overcome, but in his God. And though God's presence is often invisible, and not able to be seen

in achieving the victory, still the results prove that He alone produced it. The Lord is indeed the strength, power, Deliverer, and Redeemer of His people, and they more than anyone else, know this, even if a corrupt and sinful world does not. For the people of God, God is the reason for all success, both in this life, and that which is to come. (Ps. 28:8&9) *The Lord is their strength, and he is the saving strength of his anointed. Save thy people, and bless thine inheritance: feed them also, and lift them up for ever.*

(Benson, Ps. 28:8) *The Lord is their strength* — That is, the strength of his people, mentioned in the next verse. *He is the saving strength* — Hebrews *יְשׁוּעוֹת מַעֲוֹן*, *the strength of the preservations, deliverances, or salvations; of his anointed* — Of me, whom he hath anointed to be king, and whom therefore he will defend. He signifies that it was by God's strength alone that his victories, deliverances, and preservations were wrought.<sup>44</sup> (END QUOTE)

***I John 4:5 They are of the world: therefore speak they of the world, and the world heareth them.***

One of the great characteristics of antichrists is that this world is their true home.

(Barnes, I John 4:5) *They are of the world* - This was one of the marks by which those who had the spirit of antichrist might be known. They belonged not to the church of God, but to the world. They had its spirit; they acted on its principles; they lived for it.<sup>45</sup> (END QUOTE)

Ezek. 33:13 *When I shall say to the righteous, that he shall surely live; if he trust to his own righteousness, and commit iniquity, all his righteousnesses shall not be remembered; but for his iniquity that he hath committed, he shall die for it.*

43 Deut. 20:1–4 *When thou goest out to battle against thine enemies, and seest horses, and chariots, and a people more than thou, be not afraid of them: for the LORD thy God is with thee, which brought thee up out of the land of Egypt.* <sup>2</sup>*And it shall be, when ye are come nigh unto the battle, that the priest shall approach and speak unto the people,* <sup>3</sup>*And shall say unto them, Hear, O Israel, ye approach this day unto battle against your enemies: let not your hearts faint, fear not, and do not tremble, neither be ye terrified because of them;* <sup>4</sup>*For the LORD your God is he that goeth with you, to fight for you against your enemies, to save you.*

II Chron. 20:15 *And he said, Hearken ye, all Judah, and ye inhabitants of Jerusalem, and thou king Jehoshaphat, Thus saith the LORD unto you, Be not afraid nor dismayed by reason of this great multitude; for the battle is not yours, but God's.*

Ps. 60:11&12 *Give us help from trouble: for vain is the help of man.* <sup>12</sup>*Through God we shall do valiantly: for he it is that shall tread down our enemies.*

Prov. 21:31 *The horse is prepared against the day of battle: but safety is of the LORD.*

I Cor. 15:57 *But thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.*

44 Benson Commentary

45 Barnes' Notes on the Bible

Antichrists are at their core, worldly. It is the world they are of, the world they will speak of, and those of the world who will hear them. This teaches us that whom a man hears, listens to, and enjoys the company of, reveals whom he is really of. If it is the world, then he is of it; if it is God, then he is of Him. By this simple criterion, is revealed, the children of God,<sup>46</sup> and the children of the world.<sup>47</sup> If any also have made themselves friends of this world, they have by choice become God's enemy. (Jas. 4:4) *Ye adulterers and adulteresses, know ye not that the friendship of the world is enmity with God? whosoever therefore will be a friend of the world is the enemy of God.* When one is a friend of anything, and especially with that which is evil and rebellious towards the Lord, this reveals a kinship with it. It is this kinship and friendship with the world, which confirms that antichrists are worthy of divine judgment.

(Ellicott, Jas. 4:4) *Know ye not that the friendship of the world is enmity with God?—i.e., the state of being an enemy to God, not one of simpler enmity with Him. There cannot be a passive condition to the faith of Christ: "he that is not with Me is against Me" (Matthew 12:30). Renunciation of the world, in the Christian promise, is not forsaking it when tired and clogged with its delights, but the earliest severance from it; to break this vow, or not to have made it, is to belong to the foes of God, and not merely to be out of covenant with Him. The forces of good and evil divide the land so sharply that there is no debatable ground, nor even halting-place between.*<sup>48</sup> (END QUOTE)

The Christian's call through Jesus Christ is to come out and separate himself from the world.<sup>49</sup> If this is not done,

and a man believes that he can straddle the fence between love for God and love for the world, then it is certain that true love for the Father does not exist. (I John 2:15) *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.* No man can have two masters,<sup>50</sup> even as no man can love an evil and sinful world which rejects divine rule, and at the same time hold any true affection for a Holy God.

***I John 4:6 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.***

By simple reality, of who hears the true gospel of Jesus Christ can the Spirit of truth and the spirit of error be made visible. No man can turn a deaf ear to the truth, and still be of God. There are also none truly of the Lord, who will not hear the gospel when it is presented to them, by Christ's own apostles and prophets. Since it is Christ Himself that has placed these gift ministries in His church, then those called to Him, will recognize Christ's presence in their ministries. (Eph. 4:11–13) *And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers; for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ: till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ:*

(Ellicott, Eph. 4:11) *He gave.*—In the original "He" is emphatic—He and He alone, as the ascended Head of humanity. The word

<sup>46</sup> John 1:12–13 *But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name: <sup>13</sup>which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.*

<sup>47</sup> Luke 16:8 *And the lord commended the unjust steward, because he had done wisely: for the children of this world are in their generation wiser than the children of light.*

Luke 20:34 *And Jesus answering said unto them, The children of this world marry, and are given in marriage:*

<sup>48</sup> Ellicott's Commentary for English Readers

<sup>49</sup> Rom. 12:2 *And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God.*

Jas. 1:27 *Pure religion and undefiled before God and the Father is this, To visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction, and to keep himself unspotted from the world.*

Jas. 4:4 *Ye adulterers and adulteresses, know ye not that the friendship of the world is enmity with God? whosoever therefore will be a friend of the world is the enemy of God.*

<sup>50</sup> Matt. 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.*

“gave,” instead of the more obvious word *set*, or *appointed* (used in 1Corinthians 12:28),<sup>51</sup> is, of course, suggested by Ephesians 4:8.<sup>52</sup> They who are ministers of His gifts are themselves gifts from Him to the Church.<sup>53</sup> (END QUOTE)

It is Christ’s will that He is Himself more fully known to His church, His gifts to the church, aid in this *knowledge* of Himself being spread and developed.

(Barnes, I John 4:6) *Know we the spirit of truth, and the spirit of error* - We can distinguish those who embrace the truth from those who do not. Whatever pretensions they might set up for piety, it was clear that if they did not embrace the doctrines taught by the true apostles of God, they could not be regarded as his friends; that is, as true Christians. It may be added that the same test is applicable now. They who do not receive the plain doctrines laid down in the word of God, whatever pretensions they may make to piety, or whatever zeal they may evince in the cause which they have espoused, can have no well-founded claims to the name Christian. One of the clearest evidences of true piety is a readiness to receive all that God has taught. Compare Matthew 18:1–3; Mark 10:15; James 1:19–21.<sup>54, 55</sup> (END QUOTE)

Whether a man will hear the true gospel of Jesus Christ or not, reveals what spirit he is under the influence of. It is by this we can know those being led by the Spirit of truth, and those governed by the spirit of error.

***I John 4:7 Beloved, let us love one another: for love is of God; and every one that loveth is born of God, and knoweth God.***

There is a great importance placed on love, because of its direct relationship to God. *Love is of God* reveals that all love

has its source and origination in God. From Him flows all the love present in His creation. Love therefore is the primary test to determine whom God has saved and made His sons, and whom He has not. This is why there is no such thing as a true Christian, if divine love is lacking in them. Even as those who lack love do not hold any true knowledge of God. Love is therefore that quality that reveals both being born of God, and coming to know a genuine knowledge of Him. Because God is love,<sup>56</sup> He will birth children that manifest the very essence of Himself. If a man then has God’s love lacking in him, you can be sure he has never been born again, by God. There is also nothing that will give a man more confidence that he is of the truth, than when God’s love abounds both in his heart and his life. By the evidence of love within himself, the believer is assured that he is both born of God, and has accurately come to know Him. He also who sincerely loves both God and those born of Him, knows that he is fulfilling God’s will for his own life.

(Barnes, I John 4:7) *And everyone that loveth, is born of God* - Is a regenerated man. That is, everyone who has true love to Christians as such, or true brotherly love, is a true Christian. This cannot mean that everyone that loves his wife and children, his classmate, his partner in business, or his friend - his house, or his farms, or his horses, or his hounds, is a child of God; it must be understood as referring to the point under discussion. A man may have a great deal of natural affection toward his kindred; a great deal of benevolence in his character toward the poor and needy, and still he may have none of the love to which John refers. He may have no real love to God, to the Saviour, or to the children of God as such; and it would be absurd for such a one to argue because he loves his wife and

51 I Cor. 12:28 *And God hath set some in the church, first apostles, secondarily prophets, thirdly teachers, after that miracles, then gifts of healings, helps, governments, diversities of tongues.*

52 Eph 4:8 *Wherefore he saith, When he ascended up on high, he led captivity captive, and gave gifts unto men.*

53 *Ellicott’s Commentary for English Readers*

54 *Matt. 18:1–3 At the same time came the disciples unto Jesus, saying, Who is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven? And Jesus called a little child unto him, and set him in the midst of them, And said, Verily I say unto you, Except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven.*

*Mark 10:15 Verily I say unto you, Whosoever shall not receive the kingdom of God as a little child, he shall not enter therein.*

*Jas. 1:19–21 Wherefore, my beloved brethren, let every man be swift to hear, slow to speak, slow to wrath: For the wrath of man worketh not the righteousness of God. Wherefore lay apart all filthiness and superfluity of naughtiness, and receive with meekness the engrafted word, which is able to save your souls.*

55 *Barnes’ Notes on the Bible*

56 *I John 4:8 He that loveth not knoweth not God; for God is love.*

children that therefore he loves God, or is born again.<sup>57</sup> (END QUOTE)

***I John 4:8 He that loveth not knoweth not God; for God is love.***

(Jamieson-Fausset-Brown, I John 4:8) *knoweth not*—Greek aorist: not only knoweth not now, but never knew, has not once for all known God.<sup>58</sup>(END QUOTE)

It is love which is the heavenly standard that reveals who in this world actually knows the Lord, and who does not: who are born again of the Christ Spirit, and those who are not. Hence, it is not religious attendance, nor biblical study, that provides men a true knowledge of God, but only if God's love dwells within them. By this they come to know God, and visibly see God's purpose for their life.

A man could live his entire life, give every possession he ever possessed to the poor, manifest the gift of prophecy, and even perform wonders and miracles in Christ's name, yet without love, God accounts him as nothing. (I Cor. 13:2) *And though I have the gift of prophecy, and understand all mysteries, and all knowledge; and though I have all faith, so that I could remove mountains, and have not charity, I am nothing.* It is love that determines a man's true worth. And if a man has not this divine quality both in his heart, and in his life, then the life lived, even if religious, will be ultimately counted as vain.

***I John 4:9 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.***

The greatest manner in which God has both shown and proved that He is love, is

by sending Jesus Christ, His only begotten Son, into the world in order that men might live through Him. Pardon and not punishment, when it was deserved, proves the depth of God's love to man. There is nothing so precious that can be given, than life itself. Nothing that reveals divine generosity and goodness more, than when eternal life is imparted to a sinner. By this act of grace, compassion and pity, the very nature of God is made manifestly known to the world. Thus, whenever a man or woman is born again through the reception of the Holy Spirit, and spiritual life sprouts in them<sup>59</sup> then God's love is seen and again manifested in the world.

***I John 4:10 Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins.***

It is one thing to show and demonstrate love for those who love us or have done something to merit our goodness being done to them. It is quite another thing whereby God's love and the gift of salvation<sup>60</sup> is given to those who are sinners, and who previously had no real affection for God. (Rom. 5:8) *But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.* The timing of when God sent Jesus Christ to die for sin, reveals the undeniable goodness that dwells in God. Before then men ever developed love for God, God loved them. Many a man also has wondered why God would absolve him of sin. The answer is because goodness and generosity are the essence of God's holy character. Consequently, it was not because men deserved Christ dying for their sin, but rather that they were in need of compassion, lest they die in their sins. Ultimately, men are saved, forgiven for sin,<sup>61</sup> made

<sup>57</sup> Barnes' Notes on the Bible

<sup>58</sup> Jamieson-Fausset-Brown Bible Commentary

<sup>59</sup> John 20:22 *And when he had said this, he breathed on them, and saith unto them, Receive ye the Holy Ghost: Acts 2:38 Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost.*

Acts 8:17 *Then laid they their hands on them, and they received the Holy Ghost.*

<sup>60</sup> Acts 10:45 *And they of the circumcision which believed were astonished, as many as came with Peter, because that on the Gentiles also was poured out the gift of the Holy Ghost.*

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

Eph. 2:8 *For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God:*

<sup>61</sup> Acts 26:18 *To open their eyes, and to turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins, and inheritance among them which are sanctified by faith that is in me.*

Eph. 1:7 *In whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace;*

righteous before God,<sup>62</sup> and given the hope of eternal life,<sup>63</sup> because God is love. There is no other reason for these acts of grace, beyond the reality that love dwells in God, and He wishes to manifest His divine love to the world.

***I John 4:11 Beloved, if God so loved us, we ought also to love one another.***

Having been made recipients of God's love, it should be very easy to expand it to others. Freely we have received, and just as freely should we give.<sup>64</sup> This teaches us that none should share the love of God more, than those who have been saved by Him. It is divine love that has been shown to them, and they should do their best, to freely give it to others.

***I John 4:12 No man hath seen God at any time. If we love one another, God dwelleth in us, and his love is perfected in us.***

(Barnes, I John 4:12) *If we love one another, God dwelleth in us* - Though we cannot see him, yet there is a way by which we may be assured that he is near us, and that he even dwells in us. That way is by the exercise of love.<sup>65</sup> (END QUOTE)

No man is more assured that God dwells within him, than the man whose love is perfected, and begins to resemble God's own perfect love. The more then that we mature in living in love, the more we will become aware that God lives and

has taken residence in our own hearts. It is this confidence in the soul that assures us that we are God's, and He is ours.

(Poole, I John 4:12) The essence of God is to our eyes invisible, incomprehensible to our minds; but by yielding ourselves to the power of his love, so as to be transformed by it, and habituated to the exercise of mutual love, we come to know him by the most pleasant and most apprehensible effects, experiencing his indwelling, vital, operative presence and influences, whereby he is daily perfecting this his own likeness and image in us. This is the most desirable way of knowing God, when, though we cannot behold him at a distance, we may feelingly apprehend him nigh us, and in us.<sup>66</sup> (END QUOTE)

Love is purposed to increase more and more in the believer.<sup>67</sup> As it does, then the greater the reality becomes of God's own existence. By coming to both experience and manifest divine love we know that God not only lives, but that He lives in us. Ultimately, there is no man who has had God's love grow and develop within himself, that has not at the very same time been made increasingly aware of the reality of God. Hence, the more Christians love, the more they will become aware that God is real, and lives not only in the world, but also within themselves. By divine and benevolent love is the reality of God revealed to His people. This is also why it is understandable that when men do not love, they also lack faith in God—simply because by love does God make

Col. 1:14 *In whom we have redemption through his blood, even the forgiveness of sins:*

Col. 2:13 *And you, being dead in your sins and the uncircumcision of your flesh, hath he quickened together with him, having forgiven you all trespasses;*

62 Rom. 5:19 *For as by one man's disobedience many were made sinners, so by the obedience of one shall many be made righteous.*

I Cor. 1:30 *But of him are ye in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption:*

II Cor. 5:21 *For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him.*

63 John 3:15 *That whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have eternal life.*

John 6:54 *Whoso eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, hath eternal life; and I will raise him up at the last day.*

John 10:28 *And I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand.*

John 17:2 *As thou hast given him power over all flesh, that he should give eternal life to as many as thou hast given him.*

Titus 1:2 *In hope of eternal life, which God, that cannot lie, promised before the world began;*

Titus 3:7 *That being justified by his grace, we should be made heirs according to the hope of eternal life.*

I John 2:25 *And this is the promise that he hath promised us, even eternal life.*

64 Matt. 10:8b *... freely ye have received, freely give.*

65 Barnes' Notes on the Bible

66 Matthew Poole's Commentary

67 I Thess. 3:12 *And the Lord make you to increase and abound in love one toward another, and toward all men, even as we do toward you:*

*The Word of the Lord*

Himself known to the world, and through  
it, do men come to believe upon God.