

I John 1:1–4

I John 1:1 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;

In a book that details what is necessary to gain fellowship with the Father and the Son, and was written to confirm if a man has eternal life or not, this verse is remarkable in that the emphasis is directly centered upon the personal, albeit spiritual, relationship the apostle John had with Jesus Christ. He is the One Whom John hopes to expose the world to, and He is the One Whom John knows holds the key to gaining eternal life. Christ is the *Word of life*, that manifested form of God Who leads to life. John gives Jesus Christ this title because through Him God's knowledge of the way to gain eternal life is revealed. As the Word, Christ is God's revelation to man, revealing God to a world completely separate from Him.

(Barnes' Notes on the Bible, I John 1:1)
The Son of God may be called "the Word," because he is the medium by which God promulgates His will and issues His commandments.

The reason that a man is saved by Jesus Christ is because He is the living Word of God. Ultimately, to hold Jesus as Lord is to obey all of God's commandments.

Where through the Mosaic Law obedience to the law is what previously was purposed to lead men to life, now the lordship of God's Son is how men can eternally be saved. *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. For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation* (Rom. 10:9–10). The Greek word for *confess* is #3670 *homologeō*. Its definition is "to speak the same, to agree."¹ *HELPS Word-studies* defines the word as "*homologéō* (from 3674 /*homouí*, 'together' and 3004 /*légō*, 'speak to a conclusion')—properly, to voice the same conclusion, i.e. agree ('confess'); to profess (confess) because in full agreement; to align with (endorse)." These definitions reveal that to confess Jesus as Lord is to agree with God that His Son is Lord. The Greek word for *Lord* is #2962 *kurios*, which is defined as "lord, master, sir; the Lord."² *HELPS Word-studies* further defines the word as "properly, a person exercising absolute ownership rights; lord (Lord)." The origin of *kurios* is "from *kuros* (authority)."³ What we observe from these definitions of both *confess* and *Lord* is that for a man to be saved, Jesus must be given full authority over the soul. Because God has given His Son authority over all things,⁴ to be saved men must agree

1 *Strong's Concordance*

2 *Strong's Concordance*

3 *NAS Exhaustive Concordance*

4 *Matt. 28:18 And Jesus came and spake unto them, saying, All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth. 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.*

*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,*⁵¹ *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:*

*Phil. 2:9–10 Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name:*¹⁰ *That at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth;*

with God's transfer of divine authority to Christ, and subsequently make Him Lord and Master of their lives. Accepting the Word and yielding fully to Christ's present heavenly authority are viewed by God as subjection to His will for man. Christ's lordship over a man's life takes the place of needing to obey every commandment of God. This obedience was necessary in the Old Testament in order to be saved,⁵ but in fact it is impossible,⁶ simply because of man's weak fleshly ability to keep divine law.⁷

(*Barnes' Notes on the Bible*, Rom. 10:9) "And that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord." Here it means to acknowledge him as Lord, that is, as having a right to rule over the soul.

To make Jesus Christ your Lord is to give Him full authority over your life. By this it is meant that both His Word and His Spirit must rule the inner being. Rejection of either Christ's words or Christ's Spirit reveals rejection of divine law and cannot result in receiving the salvation promised by God through His Son. It should also be noted that to receive Christ's lordship

partially is to receive Him not at all. Consequently, not until Jesus is given full and complete dominion over our lives can God's salvation be given to us. It is obedience to the Son of God, via His Word and His Spirit, that produces true salvation for the soul. *And being made perfect, he became the author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey him* (Heb. 5:9).

That which was from the beginning. It is important to recognize that before we were, Christ was.⁸ Just as the heavens and earth were created before man,⁹ so did Christ exist with God in the beginning. It is also at this time, before the world was formed, that God's purpose for the saved came into being. *According as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love* (Eph 1:4).

(*Barnes' Notes on the Bible*, Eph. 1:4) *In him*—In Christ. The choice was not without reference to any means of saving them; it was not a mere purpose to bring a certain number to heaven; it was with reference to the mediation of the Redeemer, and his work. It was a purpose that they should be saved "by" him,

5 Deut. 11:26–28 Behold, I set before you this day a blessing and a curse; ²⁷A blessing, if ye obey the commandments of the LORD your God, which I command you this day: ²⁸And a curse, if ye will not obey the commandments of the LORD your God, but turn aside out of the way which I command you this day, to go after other gods, which ye have not known.

1 Sam. 12:14–15 If ye will fear the LORD, and serve him, and obey his voice, and not rebel against the commandment of the LORD, then shall both ye and also the king that reigneth over you continue following the LORD your God: ¹⁵But if ye will not obey the voice of the LORD, but rebel against the commandment of the LORD, then shall the hand of the LORD be against you, as it was against your fathers.

Jer. 7:23 But this thing commanded I them, saying, Obey my voice, and I will be your God, and ye shall be my people: and walk ye in all the ways that I have commanded you, that it may be well unto you.

6 Jas. 2:10 For whosoever shall keep the whole law, and yet offend in one point, he is guilty of all.

7 Rom. 7:14–18 For we know that the law is spiritual: but I am carnal, sold under sin. ¹⁵For that which I do I allow not: for what I would, that do I not; but what I hate, that do I. ¹⁶If then I do that which I would not, I consent unto the law that it is good. ¹⁷Now then it is no more I that do it, but sin that dwelleth in me. ¹⁸For I know that in me (that is, in my flesh,) dwelleth no good thing: for to will is present with me; but how to perform that which is good I find not.

8 John 1:1–3 In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. ²The same was in the beginning with God. ³All things were made by him; and without him was not any thing made that was made.

9 Gen. 2:4–7 These are the generations of the heavens and of the earth when they were created, in the day that the LORD God made the earth and the heavens, ⁵And every plant of the field before it was in the earth, and every herb of the field before it grew: for the LORD God had not caused it to rain upon the earth, and there was not a man to till the ground. ⁶But there went up a mist from the earth, and watered the whole face of the ground. ⁷And the LORD God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul.

and share the benefits of the atonement. The whole choice and purpose of salvation had reference to him, and “out” of him no one was chosen to life, and no one out of him will be saved.

Before the foundation of the world—This is a very important phrase in determining the time when the choice was made. It was not an “afterthought.” It was not commenced in time. The purpose was far back in the ages of eternity.

The Lord’s predestination of His people is what makes the Christian’s salvation so secure. The purpose of the Son of God coming into the world was to save those purposed by God for heaven, and it has proved to be astoundingly successful. Well did Isaiah state that unto us (or for our purpose), Christ was born. *For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given: and the government shall be upon his shoulder: and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace* (Isa. 9:6).

(*Benson Commentary*, Isa. 9:6) *Unto us a child is, or, shall be, born . . .* The human nature of the Messiah is here first set forth. He shall be the *child born, the Word made flesh*, and that *for us*; not only for us *Jews*, but for us *men*, for us *sinners*, and especially for us *believers*. *Unto us a son is given*—Or, *the son*, namely, of the virgin, spoken of [in] Isaiah 7:14;¹⁰ the *Immanuel*, the *Song of Solomon of God*, so called, not only on account of his miraculous conception, but because of his eternal generation, the *Word, who was in the beginning with God*, had *glory with the Father before the world was*, was loved by him *before the foundation of the world*, and *by whom he made the worlds*, and *created all things*. See John 1:1–3; John 17:5; John 17:24; Hebrews 1:2; 1 Corinthians 8:6; Ephesians 3:9; Colossians 1:16.¹¹ This person, the *Father’s own Son, his only-begotten Son, is given*, John 3:16;¹² *sent forth*, Galatians 4:4;¹³ *sent in the likeness of sinful flesh*, Romans 8:3;¹⁴ *though rich, and in the form of God, made in the likeness of men, poor, and of no reputation*, Php 2:7; 2 Corinthians 8:9;¹⁵ given to be our infallible Teacher, our prevalent Mediator, our almighty Saviour, our righteous Ruler, and our final Judge. Accordingly, *The government*—Of the church, of the world, yea, of

10 Isa. 7:14 *Therefore the LORD himself shall give you a sign; Behold, a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel.*

11 John 1:1–3 *In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. ²The same was in the beginning with God. ³All things were made by him; and without him was not any thing made that was made.*

John 17:5 *And now, O Father, glorify thou me with thine own self with the glory which I had with thee before the world was.*

John 17:24 *Father, I will that they also, whom thou hast given me, be with me where I am; that they may behold my glory, which thou hast given me: for thou lovedst me before the foundation of the world.*

Heb. 1:2 *Hath in these last days spoken unto us by his Son, whom he hath appointed heir of all things, by whom also he made the worlds;*

1 Cor. 8:6 *But to us there is but one God, the Father, of whom are all things, and we in him; and one Lord Jesus Christ, by whom are all things, and we by him.*

Eph. 3:9 *And to make all men see what is the fellowship of the mystery, which from the beginning of the world hath been hid in God, who created all things by Jesus Christ:*

Col. 1:16 *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:*

12 John 3:16 *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.*

13 Gal. 4:4 *But when the fulness of the time was come, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law,*

14 Rom. 8:3 *For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh:*

15 Phil. 2:7 *But made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men:*

II Cor. 8:9 *For ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that, though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, that ye through his poverty might be rich.*

Born of God

all things, for the church's benefit, Ephesians 1:21–22;¹⁶ *shall be upon his shoulder*—That is, upon him, or in his hands; *all power being given to him in heaven and on earth*. In mentioning *shoulder*, he speaks metaphorically; great burdens being commonly laid upon men's shoulders, and all government, if rightly managed, being a great burden, and this especially being, of all others, the most weighty and important trust.

Which we have heard. Here John reveals what was the basis of his faith in the Son of God—it was what the apostle had *heard* Jesus speak. We can tell the depth and nature of a man by the wisdom and words that proceed out of his mouth. The words Jesus Christ spoke revealed an understanding and an enlightenment of heavenly truths previously unknown to man. Jesus revealed that for any to be saved they must be born again,¹⁷ and that for a man to save his life he must first lose it,¹⁸ and that for any man who believes upon

the Son of God, out of his belly will *flow rivers of living water*.¹⁹ To John, Christ's words and the wisdom He spoke are what became the initial proof that Jesus was in fact God's Son and God's revelation of Himself to man.

Which we have seen with our eyes. Like John, Peter equally attested that he was an eyewitness; he had seen Christ's majesty. *For we have not followed cunningly devised fables, when we made known unto you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but were eyewitnesses of his majesty* (II Pet. 1:16). As much as John and Peter had heard Jesus speak, equally did they have the same opportunity to observe Jesus' person and the Son of God's walk in this world. The apostles observed with their own eyes multiple instances of Jesus' compassion,²⁰ His divine power,²¹ and Christ in His resurrected body.²² Seeing was believing, and thus, for John, there was absolutely no doubt that Jesus was ex-

16 Eph. 1:21–22 *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: ²²And hath put all things under his feet, and gave him to be the head over all things to the church,*

17 John 3:3–5 *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. ⁴Nicodemus 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? ⁵Jesus 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.*

18 Matt. 16:25 *For whosoever will save his life shall lose it: and whosoever will lose his life for my sake shall find it.*

19 John 7:38 *He that believeth on me, as the scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water.*

20 Matt. 15:32 *Then Jesus called his disciples unto him, and said, I have compassion on the multitude, because they continue with me now three days, and have nothing to eat: and I will not send them away fasting, lest they faint in the way.*

Matt. 20:34 *So Jesus had compassion on them, and touched their eyes: and immediately their eyes received sight, and they followed him.*

Luke 7:13 *And when the Lord saw her, he had compassion on her, and said unto her, Weep not.*

21 Luke 4:14 *And Jesus returned in the power of the Spirit into Galilee: and there went out a fame of him through all the region round about.*

Luke 4:32 *And they were astonished at his doctrine: for his word was with power.*

Luke 4:36 *And they were all amazed, and spake among themselves, saying, What a word is this! for with authority and power he commandeth the unclean spirits, and they come out.*

Luke 5:17 *And it came to pass on a certain day, as he was teaching, that there were Pharisees and doctors of the law sitting by, which were come out of every town of Galilee, and Judaea, and Jerusalem: and the power of the Lord was present to heal them.*

22 Luke 24:36–37 *And as they thus spake, Jesus himself stood in the midst of them, and saith unto them, Peace be unto you. ³⁷But they were terrified and affrighted, and supposed that they had seen a spirit.*

John 20:19–20 *Then the same day at evening, being the first day of the week, when the doors were shut where the disciples were assembled for fear of the Jews, came Jesus and stood in the midst, and saith unto them, Peace be unto you. ²⁰And when he had so said, he shewed unto them his hands and his side. Then were the disciples glad, when they saw the Lord.*

actly Who He claimed to be.²³ Other miracles the apostle observed included Jesus feeding the five thousand,²⁴ His calming the sea,²⁵ His casting out demons into a herd of pigs,²⁶ and His raising Jairus' daughter to life.²⁷ Like Nicodemus, the apostle knew that no man could do these miracles except God was with him. The validity that Jesus was the Messiah rested on the wisdom of Christ's heavenly words, the power He manifested, and that God resurrected Christ from the dead. Observance of the Savior proved to John and

the other disciples that God was indeed in Christ and that Christ was in fact the Son of God. *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* (John 3:2). "His miracles were his credentials."²⁸

Which we have looked upon. This implies not simply seeing the Son of God and all that He both said and did, but an even deeper contemplation that John and the

23 John 4:25-26 *The woman saith unto him, I know that Messias cometh, which is called Christ: when he is come, he will tell us all things.* ²⁶*Jesus saith unto her, I that speak unto thee am he.*

John 11:25-26 *Jesus said unto her, I am the resurrection, and the life: he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live: ²⁶And whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die. Believest thou this?* Mark 14:61-62 *But he held his peace, and answered nothing. Again the high priest asked him, and said unto him, Art thou the Christ, the Son of the Blessed?* ⁶²*And Jesus said, I am: and ye shall see the Son of man sitting on the right hand of power, and coming in the clouds of heaven.*

24 John 6:5-13 *When Jesus then lifted up his eyes, and saw a great company come unto him, he saith unto Philip, Whence shall we buy bread, that these may eat? ⁶And this he said to prove him: for he himself knew what he would do.* ⁷*Philip answered him, Two hundred pennyworth of bread is not sufficient for them, that every one of them may take a little.* ⁸*One of his disciples, Andrew, Simon Peter's brother, saith unto him, ⁹There is a lad here, which hath five barley loaves, and two small fishes: but what are they among so many?*

¹⁰*And Jesus said, Make the men sit down. Now there was much grass in the place. So the men sat down, in number about five thousand.* ¹¹*And Jesus took the loaves; and when he had given thanks, he distributed to the disciples, and the disciples to them that were set down; and likewise of the fishes as much as they would.* ¹²*When they were filled, he said unto his disciples, Gather up the fragments that remain, that nothing be lost.* ¹³*Therefore they gathered them together, and filled twelve baskets with the fragments of the five barley loaves, which remained over and above unto them that had eaten.*

25 Luke 8:23-25 *But as they sailed he fell asleep: and there came down a storm of wind on the lake; and they were filled with water, and were in jeopardy.* ²⁴*And they came to him, and awoke him, saying, Master, master, we perish. Then he arose, and rebuked the wind and the raging of the water: and they ceased, and there was a calm.* ²⁵*And he said unto them, Where is your faith? And they being afraid wondered, saying one to another, What manner of man is this! for he commandeth even the winds and water, and they obey him.*

26 Matt. 8:28-33 *And when he was come to the other side into the country of the Gergesenes, there met him two possessed with devils, coming out of the tombs, exceeding fierce, so that no man might pass by that way.* ²⁹*And, behold, they cried out, saying, What have we to do with thee, Jesus, thou Son of God? art thou come hither to torment us before the time?* ³⁰*And there was a good way off from them an herd of many swine feeding.* ³¹*So the devils besought him, saying, If thou cast us out, suffer us to go away into the herd of swine.* ³²*And he said unto them, Go. And when they were come out, they went into the herd of swine: and, behold, the whole herd of swine ran violently down a steep place into the sea, and perished in the waters.* ³³*And they that kept them fled, and went their ways into the city, and told every thing, and what was befallen to the possessed of the devils.*

27 Luke 8:41-42 *And, behold, there came a man named Jairus, and he was a ruler of the synagogue: and he fell down at Jesus' feet, and besought him that he would come into his house: ⁴²for he had one only daughter, about twelve years of age, and she lay a dying. But as he went the people thronged him.*

Luke 8:49-56 *While he yet spake, there cometh one from the ruler of the synagogue's house, saying to him, Thy daughter is dead; trouble not the Master.* ⁵⁰*But when Jesus heard it, he answered him, saying, Fear not: believe only, and she shall be made whole.* ⁵¹*And when he came into the house, he suffered no man to go in, save Peter, and James, and John, and the father and the mother of the maiden.* ⁵²*And all wept, and bewailed her: but he said, Weep not; she is not dead, but sleepeth.* ⁵³*And they laughed him to scorn, knowing that she was dead.* ⁵⁴*And he put them all out, and took her by the hand, and called, saying, Maid, arise.* ⁵⁵*And her spirit came again, and she arose straightway: and he commanded to give her meat.* ⁵⁶*And her parents were astonished: but he charged them that they should tell no man what was done.*

28 Benson Commentary, John 3:1-2

other disciples experienced as they became illuminated to the wonderful identity of the Savior. Just as Mary pondered the glory of the Son Whom she brought into the world,²⁹ so also the apostles marveled and were amazed at Christ's person and the divine power exercised by Him.³⁰

I John 1:2 (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;)

Ultimately the apostle knew that Jesus represented to the world the eternal life of God. It was this eternal life that John sought to show and bear witness to. John confirms Christ's own words that since He possessed eternal life, He could give it to those who believed upon Him.³¹ The Son of God holds great spiritual power, such power that He can give eternal life to any who through faith believe in Him. Jesus' words *I give unto them eternal life* are authoritative and agree with Christ's purpose in coming into the world.³² Thus, if a man desires to receive eternal life,

he must share a personal relationship with Jesus Christ. This is done by hearing Christ's words and obeying them as well as by believing in the Father, Who sent Him.³³ There is but one door, one access point, by which sinners can find the hope of heaven, and it is through the very One sent by God to reveal God's spiritual and eternal life to the world. That which a man has, he can give. Jesus, the Son of Man and the Son of God, can therefore give God's eternal life to as many as make Him their Lord. *And this is the record, that God hath given to us eternal life, and this life is in his Son* (I John 5:11).

(Barnes' Notes on the Bible, I John 5:11) And this is the record—This is the sum, or the amount, of the testimony (*μαρτυρία marturia*) which God has given respecting him.

That God hath given to us eternal life—Has provided, through the Saviour, the means of obtaining eternal life. See the notes at John 5:24; John 17:2–3.³⁴

And this life is in his Son—Is treasured up in him, or is to be obtained through him.

29 Luke 2:10–19 *And the angel said unto them, Fear not: for, behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people. ¹¹For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord. ¹²And this shall be a sign unto you; Ye shall find the babe wrapped in swaddling clothes, lying in a manger. ¹³And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God, and saying, ¹⁴Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men. ¹⁵And it came to pass, as the angels were gone away from them into heaven, the shepherds said one to another, Let us now go even unto Bethlehem, and see this thing which is come to pass, which the Lord hath made known unto us. ¹⁶And they came with haste, and found Mary, and Joseph, and the babe lying in a manger. ¹⁷And when they had seen it, they made known abroad the saying which was told them concerning this child. ¹⁸And all they that heard it wondered at those things which were told them by the shepherds. ¹⁹But Mary kept all these things, and pondered them in her heart.*

30 Matt. 8:27 *But the men marvelled, saying, What manner of man is this, that even the winds and the sea obey him!*

Matt. 21:18–20 *Now in the morning as he returned into the city, he hungered. ¹⁹And when he saw a fig tree in the way, he came to it, and found nothing thereon, but leaves only, and said unto it, Let no fruit grow on thee henceforward for ever. And presently the fig tree withered away. ²⁰And when the disciples saw it, they marvelled, saying, How soon is the fig tree withered away!*

31 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.*

32 John 10:10 *The thief cometh not, but for to steal, and to kill, and to destroy: I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly.*

33 John 5:24 *Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death unto life.*

34 John 5:24 *Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death unto life.*

Labour not for the meat which perisheth, but for that meat which endureth unto everlasting life, which the Son of man shall give unto you: for him hath God the Father sealed (John 6:27). A man's labor should not merely be regulated to feeding his body and things that might please it; rather, it should be directed toward that spiritual world that leads to the saving of the soul. It is this meat, which is the real sustenance of life, that provides the opportunity to receive everlasting life.

(Barnes' *Notes on the Bible*, John 6:27) *The meat that perisheth*—The food for the supply of your natural needs. It perishes. The strength you derive from it is soon exhausted, and your wasted powers need to be reinvigorated.

That meat which endureth—The supply of your spiritual wants; that which supports, and nourishes, and strengthens the soul; the doctrines of the gospel, that are to a weak and guilty soul what needful food is to the weary and decaying body.

To everlasting life—The strength derived from the doctrines of the gospel is not exhausted. It endures without wasting away. It nourishes the soul to everlasting life.

And shew unto you that eternal life. The purpose of the apostles' earthly ministry was that all men might know that in Jesus

John 17:2–3 As thou hast given him power over all flesh, that he should give eternal life to as many as thou hast given him. ³And this is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent.

35 John 1:4 In him was life; and the life was the light of men.

36 Prov. 4:19 The way of the wicked is as darkness: they know not at what they stumble.

John 12:46 I am come a light into the world, that whosoever believeth on me should not abide in darkness.

37 Matt. 11:27 All things are delivered unto me of my Father: and no man knoweth the Son, but the Father; neither knoweth any man the Father, save the Son, and he to whomsoever the Son will reveal him.

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.

John 14:6–11 Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me. ⁷If ye had known me, ye should have known my Father also: and from henceforth ye know him, and have seen him. ⁸Philip saith unto him, Lord, show us the Father, and it sufficeth us. ⁹Jesus saith unto him, Have I been so long time with you, and yet hast thou not known me, Philip? he that hath seen me hath seen the Father; and how sayest thou then, Show us the Father? ¹⁰Believest thou not that I am in the Father, and the Father in me? the words that I speak unto you I speak not of myself: but the Father that dwelleth in me, he doeth the works. ¹¹Believe me that I am in the Father, and the Father in me: or else believe me for the very works' sake.

Col. 1:15 Who is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of every creature:

Christ is life and that He is the light of all men,³⁵ without which they can only stumble in darkness.³⁶ *He that hath the Son hath life; and he that hath not the Son of God hath not life* (1 John 5:12). In this one single maxim is contained the entire Christian gospel. If men would believe and rely upon this truth, then very little other preaching would be needed to bring them to salvation. This also is the question that all who profess to believe in Jesus need to ask themselves, "Do I hold true belief in the Son of God in my heart, or do I merely know Christ's name in my head?" There is a great difference, then, between a man who only mentally knows the Lord's name and he who has allowed Christ's full authority over his life. The answer to this spiritual and contemplative question ultimately reveals whether a man is saved or not.

I John 1:3 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.

The Book of I John records certain immovable truths necessary for spiritual fellowship with God and the Son of God, Who came to reveal God to the world.³⁷ These divine revelations cannot be compromised if a man truly desires sincere

and genuine communion with both the Father and the Son. Each truth must be carefully considered and thoughtfully reflected upon, simply because each will reveal what is necessary for spiritual connection to the higher, heavenly, and more holy realm of the Spirit. Minimizing or neglecting even one of these great truths easily can result in forfeiting fellowship with the heavenly Father. He, then, who will not hear and choose to believe John's message, which is directly linked to John's own personal relationship with Jesus Christ, cannot be saved. For this reason, I John is an indispensable work, worthy of our highest interest and continued spiritual study. Ultimately it was Jesus Who taught John, and it is Jesus Who has chosen to use John to teach us. Therefore, not to heed the inspired and spiritual words of Jesus' apostle John, is the same as rejection of Christ Himself.

I John 1:4 And these things write we unto you, that your joy may be full.

The Greek word for joy is #5479 *chara*. Its definition is "joy, delight."³⁸ John teaches us that those who sincerely maintain fellowship with the Father through His Son will possess a joy and inward spiritual happiness not found anywhere else in the world. This is that same indescribable joy that Jesus said He would give to His true followers.³⁹ It is this spiritual joy that all who are truly pious will possess. *These things have I spoken unto you, that my joy might remain in you, and that your joy might be full* (John 15:11).

(Ellicott's Commentary for English Readers, John 15:11) These things have I spoken unto you, that my joy might remain in you.—The better reading is, ... that My joy may be in

you. The joy thought of is that which Christ Himself possessed in the consciousness of His love towards the Father, and of the Father's love towards Him. The brightness of that joy lit up the darkest hours of His own human life, and He wills that it should light up theirs. In the consciousness of their love to God, and of God's love to them, there would be in them, as part of their true life, joy which no sorrow could ever overcome. They were as men with troubled hearts. He has told them of the true source of peace. His own peace He has given to them. He tells them now of the source of joy, and has spoken the word that they may possess the very joy which was the light of His own heart.

Though Christ suffered in the flesh, He possessed a joy completely foreign to His accusers, betrayers, and political murderers. It is this joy that every believer of the Son of God will experience, filling his soul, refreshing his spirit, and encouraging his walk with God. *Thou wilt shew me the path of life: in thy presence is fulness of joy; at thy right hand there are pleasures for evermore* (Ps. 16:11). When a man truly believes, he will experience for the first time in his life the joy and peace of God that only the Son of God can impart to men.⁴⁰ He who genuinely exercises faith in the Son of God will experience spiritual joy in his soul, a heavenly joy that proves not only the existence of a heavenly Father but also the true nature and disposition of heaven itself. The joy given to us by Christ teaches us that heaven is not a gloomy or oppressive habitation but rather a place of supreme happiness, freedom, and delight. Spiritual joy is an element of the nature of God,⁴¹ and it is what all of heaven reflects. By believing in the Son of God, men can experience a portion of that joy, which will be their full possession when they are received by Christ into heaven. This

³⁸ Strong's Concordance

³⁹ John 17:13 *And now come I to thee; and these things I speak in the world, that they might have my joy fulfilled in themselves.*

⁴⁰ Rom. 15:13 *Now the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, that ye may abound in hope, through the power of the Holy Ghost.*

⁴¹ Gal. 5:22-23 *But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith,*

²³ *Meekness, temperance: against such there is no law*

joy is aptly called *the joy of the LORD*⁴² because its source is the Lord, and it is a possession that only He can give to those who believe upon Him.

⁴² Neh. 8:10 *Then he said unto them, Go your way, eat the fat, and drink the sweet, and send portions unto them for whom nothing is prepared: for this day is holy unto our LORD: neither be ye sorry; for the joy of the LORD is your strength.*

I John 1:5–8

I John 1:5 *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.*

(Ellicott's Commentary for English Readers, I John 1:5) This then is the message which we have heard of him, and declare unto you.— What the Son had received from the Father, this the Apostles were to report to the world.

THE message that John heard and declared to these early Christians, that *God is light*, came from the One sent to declare God.¹ Every honest man knows and will confess that darkness lives within himself, whether he enjoys its company or not. This is not the case with his Creator. In Him no darkness dwells nor can any evil be done in any portion or measure. Though God may and will judge evil, He is Himself totally incapable of committing it. The Lord wraps Himself in light, and through the agency of light He created the heavens. So great is God's divine light and glory that not even Moses, for fear of death, was allowed full sight of

Him. *And he said, Thou canst not see my face: for there shall no man see me, and live* (Exod. 33:20). The brightness, glory, and radiance of God's true nature are far beyond what any organic and material living being could observe and live through. Light is emblematic of goodness, purity, holiness, and righteousness.

Not until saints are transformed into the image of God's Son² will they be able to see God's face and thus not be limited to merely hearing His voice.³ Without God approaching man and revealing Himself through His Word, all men, all mankind would continue toward eternal death. There can be no true faith in God without hearing,⁴ and no hearing of God's will for man without God speaking. The means of salvation, therefore, is limited to those humble enough to hear God's voice, believe it, and ultimately through the truth be saved.⁵ *And thine ears shall hear a word behind thee, saying, This is the way, walk ye in it, when ye turn to the right hand, and when ye turn to the left* (Isa. 30:21).

1 *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.*

John 14:7 If ye had known me, ye should have known my Father also: and from henceforth ye know him, and have seen him.

I John 5:20 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.

2 *Phil. 3:21 Who shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body, according to the working whereby he is able even to subdue all things unto himself.*

3 *Deut. 4:12 And the LORD spake unto you out of the midst of the fire: ye heard the voice of the words, but saw no similitude; only ye heard a voice.*

Isa. 6:8 Also I heard the voice of the LORD, saying, Whom shall I send, and who will go for us? Then said I, Here am I; send me.

Dan. 10:9 Yet heard I the voice of his words: and when I heard the voice of his words, then was I in a deep sleep on my face, and my face toward the ground.

4 *Rom. 10:17 So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.*

5 *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 2:41 Then they that gladly received his word were baptized: and the same day there were added unto them about three thousand souls.

Eph. 1:13 In whom ye also trusted, after that ye heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation: in whom also after that ye believed, ye were sealed with that holy Spirit of promise,

(*Barnes' Notes on the Bible*, Isa. 30:21) The idea is taken either from the practice of teachers who are represented as “following” their pupils and admonishing them if they were in danger of going astray (Grotius); or from shepherds, who are represented as following their flocks, and directing them when they wandered. The Jews understand this voice ‘from behind’ to be the כּל בּתּ bath kol—‘the daughter of the voice;’ a divine admonition which they suppose attends the pious. The essential thought is, that they would not be left without a guide and instructor; that, if they were inclined to go astray, they would be recalled to the path of truth and duty. Perhaps there is the idea, also, that the admonition would come from some “invisible” influence, or from some unexpected quarter, as it is often the case that those who are inquiring on the subject of religion receive light from quarters where they least expected, and from sources to which they were not looking. It is also true that the admonitions of Providence, of conscience, and of the Holy Spirit, seem often to come from “behind” us. That is, they “recall” us from the path in which we were going, and restrain us from a course that would be fraught with danger.

Not only is God defined by the apostle as light, but He is also revealed in Scripture as Spirit and love. By these three descriptive revelations it is possible to see the great glory of God’s divine nature and the primary component components that make it up, which are Spirit,⁶ light, and love.⁷

(*Cambridge Bible for Schools and Colleges*, I John 1:5) *God is light*] . . . No one tells us so much about the Nature of God as S. John: other writers tell us what God does, and what attributes He possesses; S. John tells us what He is. There are three statements in the

Bible which stand alone as revelations of the Nature of God, and they are all in the writings of S. John: ‘God is spirit’ (John 4:24); ‘God is light’, and ‘God is love’ (1 John 4:8). In all these momentous statements the predicate has no article, either definite or indefinite. We are not told that God is the Spirit, or the Light, or the Love: nor (in all probability) that He is a Spirit, or a light. But ‘God is spirit, is light, is love’: spirit, light, love are His very Nature. They are not mere attributes, like mercy and justice: they are Himself. They are probably the nearest approach to a definition of God that the human mind could frame or comprehend: and in the history of thought and religion they are unique. . . . No figure borrowed from the material world could give the idea of perfection so clearly and fully as light. It suggests ubiquity, brightness, happiness, intelligence, truth, purity, holiness. It suggests excellence without limit and without taint; an excellence whose nature it is to communicate itself and to pervade everything from which it is not of set purpose shut out.

All that is holy, good, benevolent, merciful, forgiving, and loving is contained in this simple axiom that *God is light*. From light also comes all that can be conceived as life in the universe. Light is the very source of life, and without light, life could not exist. It is also neither remarkable nor coincidental that God, Who is Himself divine light, brought into the universe natural light as an emblem of Himself. Natural “light is made of particles called photons, bundles of the electromagnetic field that carry a specific amount of energy.”⁸ Albert Einstein’s theory of special relativity “expresses the fact that mass and energy are the same physical entity and can be changed into

6 John 4:24 *God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth.*

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

I John 4:16 *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.*

8 Francis, Matthew R. “Eight Things You Might Not Know about Light.” *Symmetry Magazine*, 19 Apr. 2016, <https://www.symmetrymagazine.org/article/eight-things-you-might-not-know-about-light>. Accessed 31 Dec. 2022.

each other.⁹ Since God is light, He is a form of energy, albeit spiritual energy. Therefore, as a form of supernatural energy, God surely would contain the ability within Himself to create matter,¹⁰ whether in the natural or spiritual realm. No doubt we are laymen in the field of physics, but it is not hard to conceive how a supernatural God, Who is Himself light and spiritual energy, could create from His own essence the universe around us. To create anything, one must have the inherent abilities within himself to do so. The nature and essence of God gives Him the ability to create from Himself, in whatever way that might entail, the world and the heavens as we know them.

Since God is *light* in every respect, then it is not reasonable that God would maintain fellowship with darkness on any level. A truly good and honorable man would never befriend or share intimate fellowship with evil men; the same can be said even more concerning a holy God. Just as God instructs those who believe in Him to depart and have no fellowship with darkness,¹¹ so it is also unreasonable to believe that He would do that which He

commands His people never to do. *The fear of the LORD is to hate evil: pride, and arrogancy, and the evil way, and the forward mouth, do I hate* (Prov. 8:13).

(*Ellicott's Commentary for English Readers*, Prov. 8:13) *The fear of the Lord is to hate evil.*—Because there can never be any truce between the kingdoms of light and darkness (Matthew 6:24),¹² so if we are the friend of one, we must be the enemy of the other.

Light and darkness have never been combined, and they are purposed never to be so. In the beginning God divided light from the darkness.¹³ It is thus by divine choice and not by mere chance that light and darkness should be separated and never be merged—if that were even practically possible, which it is not.

I John 1:6 If we say that we have fellowship with him, and walk in darkness, we lie, and do not the truth:

After declaring what Jesus Christ revealed to John and many others, that *God is light*, John now addresses the very important truth that no man can walk in darkness and maintain fellowship with Him. John

9 Perkowitz, Sidney. "E = mc²." *Encyclopedia Britannica*, 16 Aug. 2022, <https://www.britannica.com/science/E-mc2-equation>. Accessed 31 Dec. 2022.

10 "At its most fundamental level, life is made up of matter. Matter is any substance that occupies space and has mass." "Biology for Non-Majors I: Elements in Biological Matter." *Lumenlearning.com*, <https://courses.lumenlearning.com/wm-nmbiology1/chapter/elements-in-biological-matter/>.

11 *I Cor. 5:9–11 I wrote unto you in an epistle not to company with fornicators: ¹⁰Yet not altogether with the fornicators of this world, or with the covetous, or extortioners, or with idolaters; for then must ye needs go out of the world. ¹¹But now I have written unto you not to keep company, if any man that is called a brother be a fornicator, or covetous, or an idolator, or a railer, or a drunkard, or an extortioner; with such an one no not to eat.*

II Cor. 6:14–17 Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers: for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? and what communion hath light with darkness? ¹⁵And what concord hath Christ with Belial? or what part hath he that believeth with an infidel? ¹⁶And what agreement hath the temple of God with idols? for ye are the temple of the living God; as God hath said, I will dwell in them, and walk in them; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people. ¹⁷Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you.

II Thess. 3:14 And if any man obey not our word by this epistle, note that man, and have no company with him, that he may be ashamed.

12 *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.*

13 *Gen. 1:1–4 In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth. ²And 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. ³And God said, Let there be light: and there was light. ⁴And God saw the light, that it was good: and God divided the light from the darkness.*

refutes the false claims of any who, though they walked in darkness, insisted they still possessed fellowship with God. Then as now, sinners foolishly assume they can have relationship with a holy God,¹⁴ even if they live in dark behaviors contrary to Him. But all and any who make such unbiblical claims, the apostle assures us, *lie*. It is simply incompatible that God, Who is Himself light, would maintain any fellowship whatsoever with darkness. He will not, and John wants to make this abundantly clear to all who will hear what Jesus Christ Himself taught His servant about who can genuinely fellowship with the Father and who cannot. Where darkness is, true fellowship with God cannot be.

(Barnes' Notes on the Bible, I John 1:6) If we say that we have fellowship with him—If we reckon ourselves among his friends, or, in other words, if we profess to be like him: for a profession of religion involves the idea of having fellowship with God, (compare the notes at 1 John 1:3),¹⁵ and he who professes that should be like him.

And walk in darkness—Live in sin and error. To “walk in darkness” now commonly denotes to be in doubt about our religious state, in contradistinction from living in the enjoyment of religion. That is not, however, probably the whole idea here. The leading

thought is, that if we live in sin, it is a proof that our profession of religion is false.

Until a man knows both Who and what God is, he cannot worship Him properly. It is God's nature that ultimately defines what is or what is not sin. If a man therefore foolishly believes that God is not pure light, and that a degree of darkness lives within Him, then he can easily excuse the sin he knows operates within himself. Consequently, a man's view of God will directly affect what he views as sin in his own life. Therefore, those who are ignorant of God and His level of divine purity are equally ignorant of the sin that lives within themselves. He who is blind to God's true nature is also blind to seeing the corrupt nature of himself.

The point John makes cannot be overstated, simply because this evil world is filled with spiritual liars, many of whom openly claim relationship with God and yet live lives without any subjection to His Word,¹⁶ will,¹⁷ or Spirit.¹⁸ There remains a disconnect and a contradiction either in what the Word of God reveals to be sin or in the people who sin yet claim relationship with God. No doubt the error lies not in the holy Scripture but rather in those who will do their best to change

14 Lev. 11:44–45 *For I am the LORD your God: ye shall therefore sanctify yourselves, and ye shall be holy; for I am holy: neither shall ye defile yourselves with any manner of creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth.* ⁴⁵*For I am the LORD that bringeth you up out of the land of Egypt, to be your God: ye shall therefore be holy, for I am holy.*

Lev. 19:2 *Speak unto all the congregation of the children of Israel, and say unto them, Ye shall be holy: for I the LORD your God am holy.*

Ps. 99:9 *Exalt the LORD our God, and worship at his holy hill; for the LORD our God is holy.*

I Pet. 1:16 *Because it is written, Be ye holy; for I am holy.*

15 I John 1:3 *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.*

16 Luke 11:28 *But he said, Yea rather, blessed are they that hear the word of God, and keep it.*

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.*

17 Matt. 7:21 *Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven.*

Eph. 6:6 *Not with eyeservice, as menpleasers; but as the servants of Christ, doing the will of God from the heart; I John 2:17 And the world passeth away, and the lust thereof: but he that doeth the will of God abideth for ever.*

18 Ezek. 36:27 *And I will put my spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes, and ye shall keep my judgments, and do them.*

Gal. 5:16 *This I say then, Walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfil the lust of the flesh.*

Gal. 5:25 *If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit.*

the very description of good and evil, and of light and darkness. Sinners, therefore, who have chosen not to abide in what is good and holy will seek to change the definitions of both. Thus, when men refuse to abide in the truth, then they will soon seek to change in others' minds what truth actually is. *Woe unto them that call evil good, and good evil; that put darkness for light, and light for darkness; that put bitter for sweet, and sweet for bitter!* (Isa. 5:20).

(Barnes' *Notes on the Bible*, I John 1:6) And yet how many there are who are living in known sin who profess to be Christians! How many whose minds are dark on the whole subject of religion, who have never known anything of the real peace and joy which it imparts, who nevertheless entertain the belief that they are the friends of God, and are going to heaven! They trust in a name, in forms, in conformity to external rites, and have never known anything of the internal peace and purity which religion imparts, and in fact have never had any true fellowship with that God who is light, and in whom there is no darkness at all. Religion is light; religion is peace, purity, joy; and though there are eases where for a time a true Christian may be left to darkness, and have no spiritual joy, and be in doubt about his salvation, yet still it is a great truth, that unless we know by personal experience what it is to walk habitually in the light, to have the comforts of religion, and to experience in our own souls the influences which make the heart pure, and which bring us into conformity to the God who is light, we can have no true religion.

No doubt sinners think themselves sincere in their belief that they can walk

in darkness and maintain relationship with God; however, it is not men who govern anything heavenly, nor can any man enter heaven by his own standards. Heaven is God's, and the Lord sets every standard on who may, and who may not, enter His own holy world. *Know ye not that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God? Be not deceived: neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor abusers of themselves with mankind, nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners, shall inherit the kingdom of God* (I Cor. 6:9–10).

It is a clear sign of hypocrisy when men claim to know God but deny Him in their works,¹⁹ when they profess Jesus Christ as their Lord, but do not do what He says,²⁰ and when they honor God with their lips but their heart and behavior is far from Him.²¹ Therefore, very early in John's epistle we see one of his main objectives, which is to refute the erroneous claims of those both in and out of the Church who walked in darkness yet professed that they maintained fellowship with God. This is contrary to the message that John directly heard from Jesus Christ.²² If any man claims differently, he has set himself as a rival to Christ.

I John 1:7 But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin.

If men walk in the light, God promises to them that they will experience sweet

19 Tit. 1:16 *They profess that they know God; but in works they deny him, being abominable, and disobedient, and unto every good work reprobate.*

20 Luke 6:46 *And why call ye me, Lord, Lord, and do not the things which I say?*

21 Matt. 15:7–8 *Ye hypocrites, well did Esaias prophesy of you, saying, "This people draweth nigh unto me with their mouth, and honoureth me with their lips; but their heart is far from me."*

22 John 3:19–21 *And this is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil. "For every one that doeth evil hateth the light, neither cometh to the light, lest his deeds should be reprov'd. "But he that doeth truth cometh to the light, that his deeds may be made manifest, that they are wrought in God."*

John 8:12 *Then spake Jesus again unto them, saying, I am the light of the world: he that followeth me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life.*

fellowship with other Christians and have the blood of Jesus Christ cleanse them of all sin. God has promised from the very earliest of times that if men repent of sin and turn to Him, seeking to do His will, then all sin can be forgiven.²³ Such is the grace of God that He will not only forgive the penitent but also completely remove all stain of sin from him. *I, even I, am he that blotteth out thy transgressions for mine own sake, and will not remember thy sins* (Isa. 43:25). It is because of God's own holy and divine nature that He remains willing to blot out transgressions against Himself.²⁴ It is therefore because of God's own sake that He pardons sinners, and not because men remain worthy through themselves to be forgiven.²⁵

Blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered (Ps. 32:1). If a man received nothing else in this life but forgiveness of sin from God, he would be the most blessed of men.

(*Benson Commentary*, Ps. 32:1) *Blessed is the man, &c.*—We are here taught wherein true happiness consists, and what is the cause and foundation of it. It consists not in the possession of the wealth or honours of the world, or in the enjoyment of its pleasures, but in those spiritual blessings which flow from the favour and grace of God; *whose transgression is forgiven*—He does not say, *Blessed is the man who never transgressed*. For he knew no such man could be found;

all having sinned and come short of the glory of God, and consequently of that happiness conferred on man at his first creation. But he lays the foundation of fallen and sinful man's happiness on the only foundation on which it can be laid, and that is on the pardon of sin. For as all our misery came in by sin, so it is not likely, nay, it is not possible, it should be removed, or even alleviated, without the forgiveness of sin.

Not until sin is truly forgiven, and not just presumed to be so, will the weight and burden that sin produces in the soul be lifted. It is therefore not enough merely to *hear* of receiving forgiveness; forgiveness must actually be *gained*. If any also truly desire hope of receiving forgiveness from God, then they must acknowledge their sin before God. *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* (Ps. 32:5). To be forgiven, sin cannot be either hidden or defended but must be confessed. Therefore, it is nearly impossible for a truly self-righteous man either to be saved or to gain fellowship with the Lord, simply because he will deny the existence of sin within himself. King Saul is a noted example of this, in whom denial of sin resulted in his losing all that God had purposed for him.²⁶ Contrary to Saul is David's confession of sin, which reveals the proper path to receive actual forgiveness from God.

23 Isa. 44:22 *I have blotted out, as a thick cloud, thy transgressions, and, as a cloud, thy sins: return unto me; for I have redeemed thee.*

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.*

Heb. 8:12 *For I will be merciful to their unrighteousness, and their sins and their iniquities will I remember no more*

24 Neh. 9:17 *And refused to obey, neither were mindful of thy wonders that thou didst among them; but hardened their necks, and in their rebellion appointed a captain to return to their bondage: but thou art a God ready to pardon, gracious and merciful, slow to anger, and of great kindness, and forsookest them not.*
Ps. 51:1 *Have mercy upon me, O God, according to thy lovingkindness: according unto the multitude of thy tender mercies blot out my transgressions.*

Ps. 86:5 *For thou, LORD, art good, and ready to forgive; and plenteous in mercy unto all them that call upon thee.*

25 Rom. 3:10–12 *As it is written, There is none righteous, no, not one: ¹¹There is none that understandeth, there is none that seeketh after God. ¹²They are all gone out of the way, they are together become unprofitable; there is none that doeth good, no, not one.*

26 I Sam. 15:1–26

(*Barnes' Notes on the Bible*, Ps. 32:5) *I acknowledged my sin unto thee*—That is, then I confessed my guilt. I had borne the dreadful pressure as long as I could. I had endeavored to conceal and suppress my conviction, but I found no relief. The anguish became deeper and deeper; my strength was failing; I was crushed under the intolerable burden, and when I could no longer bear it I went and made humble confession, and found relief. The verb used here is in the future tense, “I will acknowledge my sin;” but in order to a correct understanding of it, it should be regarded as referring to the state of mind at the time referred to in the psalm, and the resolution which the psalmist then formed. The words “I said” should be understood here. This he expresses in a subsequent part of the verse, referring doubtless to the same time. “I said,” or I formed a resolution to this effect. The idea is, that he could find no relief in any other way. He could not banish these serious and troublous thoughts from his mind; his days and nights were spent in anguish. He resolved to go to God and to confess his sin, and to see what relief could be found by such an acknowledgment of guilt.

And mine iniquity have I not hid—That is, I did not attempt then to hide it. I made a frank, a full confession. I stated it all, without any attempt to conceal it; to apologise for it; to defend it. Before, he had endeavored to conceal it, and it was crushing him to the earth. He now resolved to confess it all, and he found relief.

I John 1:8 If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us.

Any who claim they are absent of sin, wrongdoing, or spiritual transgression

27 Ps. 119:47–48 *And I will delight myself in thy commandments, which I have loved.* ⁴⁸*My hands also will I lift up unto thy commandments, which I have loved; and I will meditate in thy statutes.*

Ps. 119:97 *O how love I thy law! it is my meditation all the day.*

Ps. 119:140 *Thy word is very pure: therefore thy servant loveth it.*

28 Eph. 1:13 *In whom ye also trusted, after that ye heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation: in whom also after that ye believed, ye were sealed with that holy Spirit of promise,*

29 Ps. 119:160 *Thy word is true from the beginning: and every one of thy righteous judgments endureth for ever.* John 8:31–32 *Then said Jesus to those Jews which believed on him, If ye continue in my word, then are ye my disciples indeed; ³²And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.*

John 17:17 *Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth.*

provide sure proof that they hold not the truth and that the truth does not hold them. If this is properly understood, then every man has a reliable metric by which he can determine whether or not he has true fellowship with the Lord. This is seen and made visible if the Word of God is both held and cherished within himself.²⁷ Ultimately our relationship with the Word of truth,²⁸ reveals whether or not any true relationship with God exists. He then who professes to have no sin, cannot and will not have the holiness of God’s Word living within himself. To deny sin is to practically remove all sincere relationship and affection for the truth, which has its main home in the Word of God.²⁹ Without the Holy Spirit’s influence in a man’s life, sin would remain forever undetected and subsequently denied. Practically, revealing the presence of sin is one of the great works of the Spirit in His attempt to save man. *And when he [the Holy Spirit] is come, he will reprove the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment* (John 16:8).

(*Barnes' Notes on the Bible*, John 16:8) *He will reprove*—The word translated “reprove” means commonly to demonstrate by argument, to prove, to persuade anyone to do a thing by presenting reasons. It hence means also to convince of anything, and particularly to convince of crime. This is its meaning here. He will convince or convict the world of sin. That is, he will so apply the truths of God to men’s own minds as to convince them by fair and sufficient arguments that they are sinners, and cause them to feel this. This is the nature of conviction always.

Born of God

The world—Sinners. The men of the world. All men are by nature sinners, and the term the world may be applied to them all, John 1:10; John 12:31; 1 John 5:19.³⁰

By God's own holy nature, and not by man's sinful nature, is sin known to be sin.

³⁰ *John 1:10 He was in the world, and the world was made by him, and the world knew him not. John 12:31 Now is the judgment of this world: now shall the prince of this world be cast out. I John 5:19 And we know that we are of God, and the whole world lieth in wickedness.*

I John 1:9–2:7

I John 1:9 If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

BY nature, man is born in sin and under its power. His righteousness is viewed by God as nothing more than filthy rags.¹ As far as God is concerned, there are *none righteous, no, not one, none that doeth good, no, not one*. Together, then, both Jew and Gentile *are all gone out of the way and together become unprofitable*.² The single greatest thing for a man to overcome is his belief that in his flesh, or more appropriately, by his flesh, he can be justified by God. The Word of God flatly disputes this. *So then they that are in the flesh cannot please God* (Rom. 8:8). Since it will never be by man's own merits that he can gain both fellowship and union with God, then it must come on the grounds of divine mercy.³ But for mercy to be given, there must first be a confession of sin.⁴ *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* (Ps. 32:5). Without exception, in Scripture, in every age, and in every generation, forgiveness of sin demands

that confession of sin precedes it. Thus, if a man desires divine forgiveness for his sins against God, then he must openly confess them and not deny their existence. If sin remains unrepented of and men reject God's command to repent, then it is certain that God will not hear their prayer when called upon. *If I regard iniquity in my heart, the LORD will not hear me* (Ps. 66:18).

(Barnes' Notes on the Bible, Ps. 66:18) *If I regard iniquity in my heart*—literally, "If I have seen iniquity in my heart." That is, If I have indulged in a purpose of iniquity; if I have had a wicked end in view; if I have not been willing to forsake all sin; if I have cherished a purpose of pollution or wrong. The meaning is not literally, If I have "seen" any iniquity in my heart—for no one can look into his own heart, and not see that it is defiled by sin; but, If I have cherished it in my soul; if I have gloated over past sins; if I am purposing to commit sin again; if I am not willing to abandon all sin, and to be holy.

The Lord will not hear me—That is, He will not regard and answer my prayer. The idea is, that in order that prayer may be heard, there must be a purpose to forsake all forms of sin.

1 Isa. 64:6 *But we are all as an unclean thing, and all our righteousnesses are as filthy rags; and we all do fade as a leaf; and our iniquities, like the wind, have taken us away.*

2 Rom. 3:9–12 *What then? are we better than they? No, in no wise: for we have before proved both Jews and Gentiles, that they are all under sin; ¹⁰As it is written, There is none righteous, no, not one: ¹¹There is none that understandeth, there is none that seeketh after God. ¹²They are all gone out of the way, they are together become unprofitable; there is none that doeth good, no, not one.*

3 Eph. 2:4–5 *But God, who is rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he loved us, ⁵Even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ, (by grace ye are saved;)*

Tit. 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;*

I Pet. 1:3 *Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which according to his abundant mercy hath begotten us again unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead,*

4 Lev. 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:*

II Sam. 12:13 *And David said unto Nathan, I have sinned against the LORD. And Nathan said unto David, The LORD also hath put away thy sin; thou shalt not die.*

Dan. 9:5 *We have sinned, and have committed iniquity, and have done wickedly, and have rebelled, even by departing from thy precepts and from thy judgments:*

Born of God

Without confession of sin⁵ and willingness to depart from it, all hope of receiving forgiveness is lost. Consequently, God will neither pardon nor give mercy to those who continue to engage in sin without repentance for it. For true forgiveness and pardon to be granted, there must be acknowledgment of the wrong done as well as a genuine desire not to do it again.

(*Barnes' Notes on the Bible*, I John 1:9) *If we confess our sins*—Pardon in the Scriptures, always supposes that there is confession, and there is no promise that it will be imparted unless a full acknowledgment has been made. Compare Psalm 51; Psalm 32:1–11; Luke 15:18 ff; Luke 7:41 ff; Proverbs 28:13.¹

He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins. Because God is *faithful*, then provided there is genuine and sincere confession of sin, His promise to sinners is twofold: (1) He promises forgiveness;⁶ (2) He promises complete cleansing and thorough removal of sin.⁷ In all things concerning the Christian and in every promise

made to him, including the promise of forgiveness and removal of sin, the hope of fulfillment rests on God's faithfulness. *God is faithful, by whom ye were called unto the fellowship of his Son Jesus Christ our Lord* (1 Cor. 1:9).

(*Barnes' Notes on the Bible*, I Cor. 1:9) *God is faithful*—That is, God is true, and constant, and will adhere to his promises. He will not deceive. He will not promise, and then fail to perform; he will not commence anything which he will not perfect and finish. The object of Paul in introducing the idea of the faithfulness of God here, is to show the reason for believing that the Christians at Corinth would be kept unto everlasting life.

It is the nature and character of a holy God that what He has promised He will perform. This holds true regarding both His blessings⁸ and His judgments.⁹ Those who are certain that God will judge should equally be certain that He will forgive. Likewise, those who are certain that He will forgive must not forget that God's

5 Ps. 32:5 *I acknowledge 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.*

Ps. 51:2 *Wash me thoroughly from mine iniquity, and cleanse me from my sin.*

Prov. 28:13 *He that covereth his sins shall not prosper: but whoso confesseth and forsaketh them shall have mercy.*

6 Rom. 11:27 *For this is my covenant unto them, when I shall take away their sins.*

Heb. 8:12 *For I will be merciful to their unrighteousness, and their sins and their iniquities will I remember no more.*

Heb. 10:17 *And their sins and iniquities will I remember no more.*

7 Ps. 103:12 *As far as the east is from the west, so far hath he removed our transgressions from us.*

Mic. 7:19 *He will turn again, he will have compassion upon us; he will subdue our iniquities; and thou wilt cast all their sins into the depths of the sea.*

8 Gen. 22:18 *And in thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed; because thou hast obeyed my voice. Deut. 15:6 For the LORD thy God blesseth thee, as he promised thee: and thou shalt lend unto many nations, but thou shalt not borrow; and thou shalt reign over many nations, but they shall not reign over thee.*

Deut. 28:1–5 *And it shall come to pass, if thou shalt hearken diligently unto the voice of the LORD thy God, to observe and to do all his commandments which I command thee this day, that the LORD thy God will set thee on high above all nations of the earth: ²And all these blessings shall come on thee, and overtake thee, if thou shalt hearken unto the voice of the LORD thy God. ³Blessed shalt thou be in the city, and blessed shalt thou be in the field. ⁴Blessed shall be the fruit of thy body, and the fruit of thy ground, and the fruit of thy cattle, the increase of thy kine, and the flocks of thy sheep. ⁵Blessed shall be thy basket and thy store.*

Ps. 34:8 *O taste and see that the LORD is good: blessed is the man that trusteth in him.*

Ps. 146:5 [Blessed] *is he that hath the God of Jacob for his help, whose hope is in the LORD his God:*

Eph. 1:3 *Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ:*

9 Ps. 96:13 *Before the LORD: for he cometh, for he cometh to judge the earth: he shall judge the world with righteousness, and the people with his truth.*

Eccl. 12:14 *For God shall bring every work into judgment, with every secret thing, whether it be good, or whether it be evil.*

Rom. 2:16 *In the day when God shall judge the secrets of men by Jesus Christ according to my gospel.*

faithfulness demands judgment for unconfessed sin as well.¹⁰ God's faithfulness to His people is seen throughout Scripture: He will not let them be tempted above that which they are able,¹¹ and He will likewise protect from evil those He has called to Himself.¹² Where sin, temptation, and the evil one dwell, there God's faithfulness is the strong abiding force that prohibits the called from being completely overtaken by sin.¹³ God's faithfulness also extends much further than just to one person or a group of individuals. In fact, His faithfulness has extended, and will continue to extend, to every generation born on the earth. Because of the faithfulness of God, there is not one generation or one group of people whom God has ever let down, if men heed commandments and seek to do His will. *Thy faithfulness is unto all generations: thou hast established the earth, and it abideth* (Ps. 119:90).

(*Barnes' Notes on the Bible*, Ps. 119:90)
Thy faithfulness—The accomplishment of thy promises.

Is unto all generations—Margin, “to generation and generation.” From one generation to another. The generations of people change and pass away, but thy promises do not change. They are as applicable to one

generation as to another; they meet every generation alike. The people of no one age can lay any exclusive claim to them, or feel that they were made only for them. They are as universal—as much adapted to the new generations that come upon the earth—as the light of the sun, ever-enduring, is; or as the fountains and streams, which flow from age to age.

The Greek word for *forgive* is #863 *aphiemi*. Its definition from *Strong's Concordance* is “to send away, leave alone, permit.”¹⁴ *HELPS Word-studies* defines the word as “properly, send away; release (discharge).” From this definition we can see how forgiveness mirrors the scapegoat being sent away into the wilderness, symbolically revealing how God had removed sin from Israel.¹⁵ The Greek word for *cleanse* is #2511 *katharizō*. *Strong's Concordance* defines it as “to cleanse.” *HELPS Word-studies'* definition is to “make pure (‘clean’), removing all admixture (intermingling of filth).” While forgiveness provides for separating sin from the sinner, cleansing entails its complete removal. Hence, if a man sincerely, genuinely, and deeply regrets and therefore repents of his sin, then God will honor His promise to forgive him and cleanse him from all unrighteousness.¹⁶ It is the character and nature of a holy God to forgive¹⁷ and pro-

10 II *Thess.* 2:12 *That they all might be damned who believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness.*
 11 I *Cor.* 10:13 *There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man: but God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it.*

12 II *Thess.* 3:3 *But the Lord is faithful, who shall stablish you, and keep you from evil.*

13 *Ps.* 121:7 *The LORD shall preserve thee from all evil: he shall preserve thy soul.*

I *John* 5:18 *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.*

14 *Strong's Concordance*

15 *Lev.* 16:8–10 *And Aaron shall cast lots upon the two goats; one lot for the LORD, and the other lot for the scapegoat. And Aaron shall bring the goat upon which the LORD's lot fell, and offer him for a sin offering. But the goat, on which the lot fell to be the scapegoat, shall be presented alive before the LORD, to make an atonement with him, and to let him go for a scapegoat into the wilderness.*

Lev. 16:21–22 *And Aaron shall lay both his hands upon the head of the live goat, and confess over him all the iniquities of the children of Israel, and all their transgressions in all their sins, putting them upon the head of the goat, and shall send him away by the hand of a fit man into the wilderness: And the goat shall bear upon him all their iniquities unto a land not inhabited: and he shall let go the goat in the wilderness.*

16 I *John* 1:9 *If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.*

17 II *Chrn.* 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*

vide mercy for those bound by an unholy nature contrary to divine holiness.¹⁸

Because God is man's Creator, He fully knows his weak and feeble condition. Because the Lord knows the constitution of man's fallen and weak nature, He has promised to show divine pity to the penitent. *For he knoweth our frame; he remembereth that we are dust* (Ps. 103:14). Mercy is often connected to pity,¹⁹ and because of God's pity, He gives mercy for sin.²⁰

(Barnes' Notes on the Bible, Ps. 103:14) For he knoweth our frame—Our formation; of what we are made; how we are made. That is, he knows that we are made of dust; that we are frail; that we are subject to decay; that we soon sink under a heavy load. This is given as a reason why he pities us—that we are so frail and feeble, and that we are so easily broken down by a pressure of trial.

He remembereth that we are dust—Made of the earth. Genesis 2:7; Genesis 3:19.²¹ In his dealings with us he does not forget of what frail materials he made us, and how little our frames can bear. He tempers his dealings to the weakness and frailty of our nature, and his compassion interposes when the

heal their land.

Ps. 86:5 For thou, LORD, art good, and ready to forgive; and plenteous in mercy unto all them that call upon thee.

Isa. 43:25 I, even I, am he that bloteth out thy transgressions for mine own sake, and will not remember thy sins. 18 Isa. 55:7 Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts: and let him return unto the LORD, and he will have mercy upon him; and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon.

Tit. 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;

19 Ps. 103:13 Like as a father pitieth his children, so the LORD pitieth them that fear him.

Isa. 63:9 In all their affliction he was afflicted, and the angel of his presence saved them: in his love and in his pity he redeemed them; and he bare them, and carried them all the days of old.

Jas. 5:11 Behold, we count them happy which endure. Ye have heard of the patience of Job, and have seen the end of the Lord; that the Lord is very pitiful, and of tender mercy.

20 Luke 18:13 And the publican, standing afar off, would not lift up so much as his eyes unto heaven, but smote upon his breast, saying, God be merciful to me a sinner.

21 Gen. 2:7 And the LORD God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul.

Gen. 3:19 In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread, till thou return unto the ground; for out of it wast thou taken: for dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return.

22 Rom. 5:12 Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned:

23 Eccl. 7:20 For there is not a just man upon earth, that doeth good, and sinneth not.

Rom. 3:9 What then? are we better than they? No, in no wise: for we have before proved both Jews and Gentiles, that they are all under sin;

Rom. 3:23 For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God;

24 Rom. 5:15 But not as the offence, so also is the free gift. For if through the offence of one many be dead, much more the grace of God, and the gift by grace, which is by one man, Jesus Christ, hath abounded unto many.

weight of sorrows would crush us. Remembering, too, our weakness, he interposes by his power to sustain us, and to enable us to bear what our frame could not otherwise endure. Compare the notes at Isaiah 57:16 [*For I will not contend for ever, neither will I be always wroth: for the spirit should fail before me, and the souls which I have made.*].

Human history has proven since the very earliest of time that sin abounds in all men.²² None have ever lived who did not sin repeatedly, often, and daily. The Lord speaks of the unsaved as *sinners*, simply because this defines who and what they really are.²³ If God never provided sufficient grace and mercy for sin, then all hope for heavenly union with Him would be lost. Consequently, without divine pity and grace, men could never be properly reconciled to God. *Moreover the law entered, that the offence might abound. But where sin abounded, grace did much more abound* (Rom. 5:20).

(Barnes' Notes on the Bible, Rom. 5:20) The offence—The offence which had been introduced by Adam, that is, sin. Compare Romans 5:15.²⁴

Might abound—Might increase; that is, would be more apparent, more violent, more extensive. The introduction of the Mosaic Law, instead of diminishing the sins of people, only increases them.

But where sin abounded—Alike in all dispensations—before the Law, and under the Law. In all conditions of the human family before the gospel, it was the characteristic that sin was prevalent.

Grace—Favor; mercy.

Did much more abound—Superabounded. The word is used no where else in the New Testament, except in 2 Corinthians 7:4.²⁵ It means that the pardoning mercy of the gospel greatly triumphed over sin, even over the sins of the Jews, though those sins were greatly aggravated by the light which they enjoyed under the advantages of divine revelation.

I John 1:10 If we say that we have not sinned, we make him a liar, and his word is not in us.

Whenever a man denies his sin, it is evident that God's Word does not live in,

nor is it adhered to, his soul. By this it is easy to discern whether men have either confessed or denied their sin. Practically, denial of sin and holding the truth are set in contrast with one another in order that sinners may know that embracing one will exclude the other. Whenever the truth of God's Word truly resides in believers of Christ, then confession of their sin will follow. But if man denies his sin and will not agree with God that he is a sinner, then he cannot possess any true relationship with God, and neither will he possess any true affection for the truth. This is because no one can truly and genuinely hold the truth of God's Word in his heart, love its purity, and rejoice in its message while denying the uncleanness that lives within himself.

(*Barnes' Notes on the Bible*, I John 1:10) *We make him a liar*—Because he has everywhere affirmed the depravity of all the race. Compare the notes at Romans 1; 2; 3. On no point have his declarations been more positive and uniform than on the fact of the universal sinfulness of man. Compare Genesis 6:11–12; Job 14:4; Job 15:16; Psalm 14:1–3; Psalm 51:5; Psalm 58:3; Romans 3:9–20; Galatians 3:21.²⁶

²⁵ II Cor. 7:4 *Great is my boldness of speech toward you, great is my glorying of you: I am filled with comfort, I am exceeding joyful in all our tribulation.*

²⁶ Gen. 6:11–12 *The earth also was corrupt before God, and the earth was filled with violence. ¹²And God looked upon the earth, and, behold, it was corrupt; for all flesh had corrupted his way upon the earth. Job 14:4 Who can bring a clean thing out of an unclean? not one.*

Job 15:16 How much more abominable and filthy is man, which drinketh iniquity like water?

Ps. 14:1–3 The fool hath said in his heart, There is no God. They are corrupt, they have done abominable works, there is none that doeth good. ²The LORD looked down from heaven upon the children of men, to see if there were any that did understand, and seek God. ³They are all gone aside, they are all together become filthy: there is none that doeth good, no, not one.

Ps. 51:5 Behold, I was shapen in iniquity; and in sin did my mother conceive me.

Ps. 58:3 The wicked are estranged from the womb: they go astray as soon as they be born, speaking lies.

Rom. 3:9–20 What then? are we better than they? No, in no wise: for we have before proved both Jews and Gentiles, that they are all under sin; ¹⁰As it is written, There is none righteous, no, not one: ¹¹There is none that understandeth, there is none that seeketh after God. ¹²They are all gone out of the way, they are together become unprofitable; there is none that doeth good, no, not one. ¹³Their throat is an open sepulchre; with their tongues they have used deceit; the poison of asps is under their lips: ¹⁴Whose mouth is full of cursing and bitterness: ¹⁵Their feet are swift to shed blood: ¹⁶Destruction and misery are in their ways: ¹⁷And the way of peace have they not known: ¹⁸There is no fear of God before their eyes. ¹⁹Now we know that what things soever the law saith, it saith to them who are under the law: that every mouth may be stopped, and all the world may become guilty before God. ²⁰Therefore by the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified in his sight: for by the law is the knowledge of sin.

Gal. 3:21 Is the law then against the promises of God? God forbid: for if there had been a law given which could have given life, verily righteousness should have been by the law.

Born of God

And his word is not in us—His truth; that is, we have no true religion. The whole system of Christianity is based on the fact that man is a fallen being, and needs a Saviour; and unless a man admits that, of course he cannot be a Christian.

I 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:

Because of their sin and their own inability to enter God's presence in a state of sin, sinners need an *advocate*, someone to plead their cause to God. This advocate is *Jesus Christ the righteous*.

The Greek word for *advocate* is #3875 *paraklétos*. *HELPS Word-studies* defines the word as “(from 3844 /*pará*, ‘from close-beside’ and 2564 /*kaléō*, ‘make a call’)—properly, a legal advocate who makes the right judgment-call because close enough to the situation. 3875 / *paraklétos* (“advocate, advisor-helper”) is the regular term in NT times of an attorney (lawyer)—i.e. someone giving evidence that stands up in court.”

As an advocate, Jesus gives divine evidence in God's heavenly court that His death for sin²⁷ is sufficient to appease divine judgment for it. He who sins, God's Word states, must die.²⁸ Because of Christ's death for sin in taking the place of the sinner's death, God's judgment has been fulfilled and His punishment for sin exercised. By paying the cost for sin, Jesus, as an Advocate, pleads that divine judgment has been met, and the justice of God was upheld.

²⁷ Rom. 5:8 *But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us. Rom. 5:10 For if, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by his life.*

¹ Cor. 15:3 *For I delivered unto you first of all that which I also received, how that Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures;*

²⁸ Ezek. 18:20 *The soul that sinneth, it shall die. The son shall not bear the iniquity of the father, neither shall the father bear the iniquity of the son: the righteousness of the righteous shall be upon him, and the wickedness of the wicked shall be upon him.*

The Son of God is more than able to enter God's divine presence and plead mercy for the penitent. It is here that we observe the great importance and significance of Jesus Christ's ministry as the sinner's advocate.

(*Barnes' Notes on the Bible*, I John 2:1) The nature of his advocacy may be stated in the following particulars:

(1) He admits the guilt of those for whom he becomes the advocate, to the full extent charged on them by the law of God, and by their own consciences. He does not attempt to hide or conceal it. He makes no apology for it. He neither attempts to deny the fact, nor to show that they had a right to do as they have done. He could not do this, for it would not be true; and any plea before the throne of God which should be based on a denial of our guilt would be fatal to our cause.

(2) as our advocate, he undertakes to be security that no wrong shall be done to the universe if we are not punished as we deserve; that is, if we are pardoned, and treated as if we had not sinned. This he does by pleading what he has done in behalf of people; that is, by the plea that his sufferings and death in behalf of sinners have done as much to honor the law, and to maintain the truth and justice of God, and to prevent the extension of apostasy, as if the offenders themselves had suffered the full penalty of the law. . . .

(3) as our advocate, he becomes a surety for our good behavior; gives a pledge to justice that we will obey the laws of God, and that he will keep us in the paths of obedience and truth; that, if pardoned, we will not continue to rebel. . . .

Jesus Christ the righteous—One who is eminently righteous himself, and who possesses the means of rendering others righteous. It is an appropriate feeling when we come before God in his name, that we come pleading the merits of one who is eminently righteous, and on account of whose righteousness we may be justified and saved.

For the believer, the grounds for being both forgiven and made righteous by God reside in the holiness,²⁹ righteousness,³⁰ and obedience³¹ of Jesus Christ. Jesus Christ was in all respects holy and without sin. *Who did no sin, neither was guile found in his mouth* (1 Pet. 2:22). *Who did no sin* reveals the true character of the Savior. On the grounds of Christ's perfect righteousness, fallen man is redeemed. Because Christ is holy, righteous, and without sin, His people can be made those things through Him. The eminence of the Son of God's own pure and holy righteousness is what provides the means of His being able to impart righteousness to those who believe upon Him.

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

The Greek word for *propitiation* is #2434 *hilasmós*. *HELPS Word-studies* defines it as “properly, propitiation; an offering to appease (satisfy) an angry, offended party. 2434 (*hilasmós*) is only used twice (1 Jn 2:2, 4:10)³²—both times of Christ's atoning blood that appeases God's wrath, on all confessed sin. By the sacrifice of Himself, Jesus Christ provided the ultimate 2434 /*hilasmós* (‘propitiation’).”

At its core, sin breaks, disregards, and sets at nothing divine will. In sin, men know the will of God but abandon it in favor of doing their own will instead.³³ *All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and the LORD hath laid on him the iniquity of us all* (Isa. 53:6). He who does not go God's way goes his own way. Thus, if Christ did not seek out sinners,³⁴ then men would forever remain estranged from Him. The

29 Luke 1:35 *And the angel answered and said unto her, The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of the Highest shall overshadow thee: therefore also that holy thing which shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God.*

Heb. 7:26 *For such an high priest became us, who is holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners, and made higher than the heavens;*

Rev. 3:7 *And to the angel of the church in Philadelphia write; These things saith he that is holy, he that is true, he that hath the key of David, he that openeth, and no man shutteth; and shutteth, and no man openeth;*

30 Acts 7:52 *Which of the prophets have not your fathers persecuted? and they have slain them which shewed before of the coming of the Just One; of whom ye have been now the betrayers and murderers:*

Acts 22:14 *And he said, The God of our fathers hath chosen thee, that thou shouldest know his will, and see that Just One, and shouldest hear the voice of his mouth.*

31 John 5:30 *I can of mine own self do nothing: as I hear, I judge: and my judgment is just; because I seek not mine own will, but the will of the Father which hath sent me.*

Rom. 5:18–19 *Therefore as by the offence of one judgment came upon all men to condemnation; even so by the righteousness of one the free gift came upon all men unto justification of life. ¹⁹For as by one man's disobedience many were made sinners, so by the obedience of one shall many be made righteous.*

Phil. 2:8 *And being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross.*

Heb. 5:8 *Though he were a Son, yet learned he obedience by the things which he suffered;*

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

33 Ps. 58:3 *The wicked are estranged from the womb: they go astray as soon as they be born, speaking lies. Prov. 1:30–31 They would none of my counsel: they despised all my reproof. ³¹Therefore shall they eat of the fruit of their own way, and be filled with their own devices.*

Prov. 14:14 *The backslider in heart shall be filled with his own ways: and a good man shall be satisfied from himself.*

34 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.*

fallen nature of the sinner is never to initially turn to the Lord for forgiveness but rather to hide from God and deny that sin was ever committed. Adam and Eve's behavior in the garden after sinning against the Lord illustrates this point.³⁵

It is both right and righteous that God is greatly displeased with sinners,³⁶ and men should not try to diminish the truth that His anger exists toward all who transgress His laws.³⁷ But because Jesus Christ took the place of both sin and the sinner, then Christ's death is the substitution for the

sinner's death.³⁸ Through His Son's death the Lord deems that the penalty for man's sin has been met and God's justice has been satisfied.³⁹

I John 2:3 And hereby we do know that we know him, if we keep his commandments.

Those who have come to truly know God will keep His commandments. One also who has been cleansed of his sin and has come to know the Son of God will willingly, joyfully, and with great desire keep God's commandments.⁴⁰ For the truly

Mark 2:17 When Jesus heard it, he saith unto them, They that are whole have no need of the physician, but they that are sick: I came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance.

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

35 Gen. 3:8-14 And they heard the voice of the LORD God walking in the garden in the cool of the day: and Adam and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the LORD God amongst the trees of the garden. ⁹And the LORD God called unto Adam, and said unto him, Where art thou? ¹⁰And he said, I heard thy voice in the garden, and I was afraid, because I was naked; and I hid myself. ¹¹And he said, Who told thee that thou wast naked? Hast thou eaten of the tree, whereof I commanded thee that thou shouldest not eat? ¹²And the man said, The woman whom thou gavest to be with me, she gave me of the tree, and I did eat. ¹³And the LORD God said unto the woman, What is this that thou hast done? And the woman said, The serpent beguiled me, and I did eat. ¹⁴And the LORD God said unto the serpent, Because thou hast done this, thou art cursed above all cattle, and above every beast of the field; upon thy belly shalt thou go, and dust shalt thou eat all the days of thy life:

36 Ps. 7:11 God judgeth the righteous, and God is angry with the wicked every day.

Nah. 1:2-3 God is jealous, and the LORD revengeth; the LORD revengeth, and is furious; and is furious; the LORD will take vengeance on his adversaries, and he reserveth wrath for his enemies. ³The LORD is slow to anger, and great in power, and will not at all acquit the wicked: the LORD hath his way in the whirlwind and in the storm, and the clouds are the dust of his feet.

Rom. 1:18 For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who hold the truth in unrighteousness;

37 Josh. 23:16 When ye have transgressed the covenant of the LORD your God, which he commanded you, and have gone and served other gods, and bowed yourselves to them; then shall the anger of the LORD be kindled against you, and ye shall perish quickly from off the good land which he hath given unto you.

Jdgs. 2:20 And the anger of the LORD was hot against Israel; and he said, Because that this people hath transgressed my covenant which I commanded their fathers, and have not hearkened unto my voice;

Zech. 7:12 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.

II Chrn. 36:16 But they mocked the messengers of God, and despised his words, and misused his prophets, until the wrath of the LORD arose against his people, till there was no remedy.

38 John 10:11 I am the good shepherd: the good shepherd giveth his life for the sheep.

John 10:18 No man taketh it from me, but I lay it down of myself. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again. This commandment have I received of my Father.

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.

39 Rom. 3:25 Whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God;

Rom. 5:9-10 Much more then, being now justified by his blood, we shall be saved from wrath through him. ¹⁰For if, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by his life.

Heb. 2:17 Wherefore in all things it behoved him to be made like unto his brethren, that he might be a merciful and faithful high priest in things pertaining to God, to make reconciliation for the sins of the people.

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.

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

saved, subjection to divine will is neither arduous nor difficult. It is not a burden but a blessing for the redeemed to yield obedience to God.⁴¹ It is He Who has saved them, and they will manifest no resistance whatsoever in yielding their entire lives to Him.

The two most significant commandments given by Jesus Christ are revealed in Matthew's gospel: *Master, which is the great commandment in the law? Jesus said unto him, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. This is the first and great commandment. And the second is like unto it, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself* (Matt. 22:36–39). The greatest evidence that a man has truly kept Christ's Word is that he abides in God's love, directed toward both God and the people of God. Hence, those who genuinely and sincerely love God will equally, and with a similar affection, love His people.⁴² Ultimately, it is by the possession of divine love that men can accurately gauge if they are true disciples of Jesus Christ or not,⁴³ since he who does not love neither knows God⁴⁴ nor has any true relationship with Him.

I John 2:4 He that saith, I know him, and keepeth not his commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him.

For the second time, the apostle reveals whom God considers liars: (1) those who refuse to confess themselves as sinners;⁴⁵ (2) those who falsely claim and assume

to know God and yet do not keep His commandments. Thus, he who denies the presence of sin in himself is a liar, just as he who claims to know God but does not keep His commandments is also by divine revelation defined in Scripture as a *liar*. There is no ambiguity on this point, and none should be looked for—that he who professes to know God but does not keep His commandments is a liar. The Greek word for *liar* is #5583 *pseustés*. *HELPS Word-studies* defines the word as “properly, a liar; a person who falsifies, misrepresents (distorts, misleads).” To lie and seek to deceive others about one's true relationship with God proves that spiritual regeneration has never taken place. For none can truly love the Lord and at the same time fail to keep His commandments. Thus, there are none, not even one, who truly know God, who will not keep His commands. This sin is specific to those who either have no interest in the Lord, or falsely claim relationship with Him but actually have none.

(*Barnes' Notes on the Bible*, I John 2:4) *He that saith, I know Him*—He who professes to be acquainted with the Saviour, or who professes to be a Christian.

And keepeth not his commandments—What he has appointed to be observed by his people; that is, he who does not obey him.

Is a liar—Makes a false profession; professes to have that which he really has not. Such a profession is a falsehood, because there can be no true religion where one does not obey the law of God.

41 I John 5:3 *For this is the love of God, that we keep his commandments: and his commandments are not grievous.*

42 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.*

I John 4:11–12 *Beloved, if God so loved us, we ought also to love one another.* 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.*

I John 4:21 *And this commandment have we from him, That he who loveth God love his brother also.*

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

44 I John 4:8 *Whoever does not love does not know God, because God is love.*

45 I John 1:9–10 *If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.* ¹⁰*If we say that we have not sinned, we make him a liar, and his word is not in us.*

I John 2:5 But whoso keepeth his word, in him verily is the love of God perfected: hereby know we that we are in him.

The Greek word for *perfected* is #5048 *teleioó*. Strong's Concordance defines it as "to bring to an end, to complete, perfect. . . . Usage: (a) as a course, a race, or the like: I complete, finish (b) as of time or prediction: I accomplish, (c) I make perfect; pass: I am perfected." True obedience to divine law gives its fruit in the perfection of love in the obedient one. If God's Word is kept by His people, then God's own love will be perfected in them. Love is a fruit of the Holy Spirit,⁴⁶ and all who are truly led by this Spirit⁴⁷ will manifest divine fruit in their lives. The increase and expansion of God's love in the Christian's heart causes him to know that he is in God and that God is in him. Ultimately, love and obedience cannot be separated. Therefore, whenever there is an absence of divine love in those who profess to know God, there cannot nor ever will be any true obedience to Him.

(Barnes' Notes on the Bible, I John 2:5) In him verily is the love of God perfected—He professes to have the love of God in his heart, and that love receives its completion or filling up by obedience to the will of God. That obedience is the proper carrying out, or the

exponent of the love which exists in the heart. Love to the Saviour would be defective without that, for it is never complete without obedience.

I John 2:6 He that saith he abideth in him ought himself also so to walk, even as he walked.

If any claim relationship with Jesus Christ, the Scriptures reveal they should walk as He walked. The standard for the Christian's behavior is modeled in their Savior. Through Christ the believer has been born again,⁴⁸ given a new spiritual heart,⁴⁹ and become a completely new creature.⁵⁰ It is this spiritual transformation of becoming a new man through faith in the Son of God that allows for the believer to walk as his Savior walked. So also, when men sincerely walk as Jesus walked, they will, like their Savior, be about the Father's business.⁵¹

(Barnes' Notes on the Bible, I John 2:6) Ought himself also so to walk, even as he walked—Ought to live and act as he did. If he is one with him, or professes to be united to him, he ought to imitate him in all things. Compare John 13:15. [For I have given you an example, that ye should do as I have done to you.]

When believers become imitators of Jesus Christ through pursuing His love and

⁴⁶ Gal. 5:22–23 *But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance: against such there is no law.*

⁴⁷ Rom. 8:14 *For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God.*

⁴⁸ John 3:3–5 *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. ⁴Nicodemus 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? ⁵Jesus 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.*

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

⁵⁰ Jer. 24:7 *And I will give them an heart to know me, that I am the LORD: and they shall be my people, and I will be their God: for they shall return unto me with their whole heart.*

⁵¹ Ezek. 11:19 *And I will give them one heart, and I will put a new spirit within you; and I will take the stony heart out of their flesh, and will give them an heart of flesh:*

⁵² Ezek. 36:26 *A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you: and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you an heart of flesh.*

⁵³ II Cor. 5:17 *Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new.*

⁵⁴ Gal. 6:15 *For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision availeth any thing, nor uncircumcision, but a new creature.*

⁵⁵ Luke 2:49 *And he said unto them, How is it that ye sought me? wist ye not that I must be about my Father's business?*

obedience to God, then they prove themselves as true followers of God.

I John 2:7 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.

(*Benson Commentary*, I John 2:7) “The new commandment,” says Macknight, “of which the apostle speaks, is that contained in 1 John 2:6. That Christ’s disciples ought to walk even as he walked; and in particular

that, as Christ laid down his life for his people, they ought to lay down their lives for one another, chap. 1 John 3:16.⁵² Thus, to walk as Christ walked, St. John, with great propriety, termed a new commandment, because, notwithstanding the precept to love one another was strongly enjoined in the law of Moses, consequently was not a new commandment, the precept to love one another as Christ loved us, was certainly a new commandment, and so is termed by Christ himself, (John 13:34,⁵³) and is thus explained and inculcated 1 John 3:16: He laid down his life for us, therefore we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren.”

⁵² *I John 3:16 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.*

⁵³ *John 13:34 A new commandment I give unto you, That ye love one another; as I have loved you, that ye also love one another.*

Endnote

Ps. 51 Have mercy upon me, O God, according to thy lovingkindness: according unto the multitude of thy tender mercies blot out my transgressions. ²Wash me thoroughly from mine iniquity, and cleanse me from my sin. ³For I acknowledge my transgressions: and my sin is ever before me. ⁴Against thee, thee only, have I sinned, and done this evil in thy sight: that thou mightest be justified when thou speakest, and be clear when thou judgest. ⁵Behold, I was shapen in iniquity; and in sin did my mother conceive me. ⁶Behold, thou desirest truth in the inward parts: and in the hidden part thou shalt make me to know wisdom. ⁷Purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean: wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow. ⁸Make me to hear joy and gladness; that the bones which thou hast broken may rejoice. ⁹Hide thy face from my sins, and blot out all mine iniquities. ¹⁰Create in me a clean heart, O God; and renew a right spirit within me. ¹¹Cast me not away from thy presence; and take not thy holy spirit from me. ¹²Restore unto me the joy of thy salvation; and uphold me with thy free spirit. ¹³Then will I teach transgressors thy ways; and sinners shall be converted unto thee. ¹⁴Deliver me from bloodguiltiness, O God, thou God of my salvation: and my tongue shall sing aloud of thy righteousness. ¹⁵O LORD, open thou my lips; and my mouth shall shew forth thy praise. ¹⁶For thou desirest not sacrifice; else would I give it: thou delightest not in burnt offering. ¹⁷The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit: a broken and a contrite heart, O God, thou wilt not despise. ¹⁸Do good in thy good pleasure unto Zion: build thou the walls of Jerusalem. ¹⁹Then shalt thou be pleased with the sacrifices of righteousness, with burnt offering and whole burnt offering: then shall they offer bullocks upon thine altar.

Ps. 32:1–11 Blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered. ²Blessed is the man unto whom the LORD imputeth not iniquity, and in whose spirit there is no guile. ³When I kept silence, my bones waxed old through my roaring all the day long. ⁴For day and night thy hand was heavy upon me: my moisture is turned into the drought of summer. Selah. ⁵I acknowledge 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. ⁶For this shall every one that is godly pray unto thee in a time when thou mayest be found: surely in the floods of great waters they shall not come nigh unto him. ⁷Thou art my hiding place; thou shalt preserve me from trouble; thou shalt

compass me about with songs of deliverance. Selah. ⁸I will instruct thee and teach thee in the way which thou shalt go: I will guide thee with mine eye. ⁹Be ye not as the horse, or as the mule, which have no understanding: whose mouth must be held in with bit and bridle, lest they come near unto thee. ¹⁰Many sorrows shall be to the wicked: but he that trusteth in the LORD, mercy shall compass him about. ¹¹Be glad in the LORD, and rejoice, ye righteous: and shout for joy, all ye that are upright in heart.

Luke 15:18–24 I will arise and go to my father, and will say unto him, Father, I have sinned against heaven, and before thee, ¹⁹And am no more worthy to be called thy son: make me as one of thy hired servants. ²⁰And he arose, and came to his father. But when he was yet a great way off, his father saw him, and had compassion, and ran, and fell on his neck, and kissed him. ²¹And the son said unto him, Father, I have sinned against heaven, and in thy sight, and am no more worthy to be called thy son. ²²But the father said to his servants, Bring forth the best robe, and put it on him; and put a ring on his hand, and shoes on his feet: ²³And bring hither the fatted calf, and kill it; and let us eat, and be merry: ²⁴For this my son was dead, and is alive again; he was lost, and is found. And they began to be merry.

Luke 7:41–48 There was a certain creditor which had two debtors: the one owed five hundred pence, and the other fifty. ⁴²And when they had nothing to pay, he frankly forgave them both. Tell me therefore, which of them will love him most? ⁴³Simon answered and said, I suppose that he, to whom he forgave most. And he said unto him, Thou hast rightly judged. ⁴⁴And he turned to the woman, and said unto Simon, Seest thou this woman? I entered into thine house, thou gavest me no water for my feet: but she hath washed my feet with tears, and wiped them with the hairs of her head. ⁴⁵Thou gavest me no kiss: but this woman since the time I came in hath not ceased to kiss my feet. ⁴⁶My head with oil thou didst not anoint: but this woman hath anointed my feet with ointment. ⁴⁷Wherefore I say unto thee, Her sins, which are many, are forgiven; for she loved much: but to whom little is forgiven, the same loveth little. ⁴⁸And he said unto her, Thy sins are forgiven.

Prov. 28:13 He that covereth his sins shall not prosper: but whoso confesseth and forsaketh them shall have mercy.

I John 2:8–18

I John 2:8 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.

NEW commandment. Though Scripture previously spoke of love,¹ it was not fully manifested, nor could it be truly comprehended, until the coming of God's only-begotten Son.² John's commandment is new because of the divine love that led Christ to lay down His life for the brethren.³ It was this depth of love, where one was willing to die for the sins of others,⁴ that reveals, the true essence of love. *Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends* (John 15:13). Jesus laid down His life not for family but for friends. One could perhaps fathom dying for those we have blood relationship with, such as children and other close family members, yet Jesus died for the ungodly:⁵ those who were strangers to God, alienated from Him,⁶ and Who had lived lives completely contrary to divine

will.⁷ Life is the most precious thing a man has. In fact, it is all he really has, and is his most priceless possession. To give it up, is to give up all that one has. This is the divine love Jesus manifested. It is this manner of love, of being willing to lay down our life for the brethren (if not unto death, then surely in life), that any who claim relationship with the Son of God are commanded to walk in.⁸

*(Barnes' Notes on the Bible, I John 2:8) Which thing is true in him—*In the Lord Jesus. That is, which commandment or law of love was illustrated in him, or was manifested by him in his contact with his disciples. That which was most prominent in him was this very love which he enjoined on all his followers.

The darkness is past, and the true light now shineth. This light that now shines is Jesus Christ and the love He openly manifested in the world. This divine love can still be felt in those who have been given Christ's own divine nature⁹ in the

1 Lev. 19:18 *Thou shalt not avenge, nor bear any grudge against the children of thy people, but thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself: I am the LORD.*

Lev. 19:34 *But the stranger that dwelleth with you shall be unto you as one born among you, and thou shalt love him as thyself; for ye were strangers in the land of Egypt: I am the LORD your God.*

Deut. 6:5 *And thou shalt love the LORD thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy might.*

2 John 15:9 *As the Father hath loved me, so have I loved you: continue ye in my love.*

Eph. 3:18–19 *May be able to comprehend with all saints what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height; and to know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge, that ye might be filled with all the fulness of God.*

Eph. 5:2 *And walk in love, as Christ also hath loved us, and hath given himself for us an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweetsmelling savour.*

Eph. 5:25 *Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it;*

3 I John 3:16 *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.*

4 Gal. 1:4 *Who gave himself for our sins, that he might deliver us from this present evil world, according to the will of God and our Father:*

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

5 Rom. 5:6 *For when we were yet without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly.*

6 Col. 1:21 *And you, that were sometime alienated and enemies in your mind by wicked works, yet now hath he reconciled.*

7 Isa. 53:5 *But he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed.*

Rom. 5:8 *But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.*

I Pet. 3:18 *For Christ also hath once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh, but quickened by the Spirit:*

8 I John 2:6 *He that saith he abideth in him ought himself also so to walk, even as he walked.*

9 Matt. 5:16 *Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven.*

form of the Holy Spirit today.¹⁰ When a man is baptized by Jesus Christ, and has been given the Spirit of God, then God's love will be shed forth,¹¹ and the glory of the Savior, is again revealed in the world.

I John 2:9 He that saith he is in the light, and hateth his brother, is in darkness even until now.

No man who truly abides in the light, by abiding in Christ and His love, *hateth his brother*. Hate blinds; it does not enlighten. Where hate is, darkness is, and all who hate remain in darkness even now. Light and hate are incompatible. Thus, it is impossible to hate the brethren and have any connection to divine light whatsoever. Nowhere also is maintaining a false profession of the Lord more tolerated than in today's churches. Sadly, merely claiming that one is a Christian is enough for most people to accept you as such. Yet it is not merely a profession of faith that saves a man¹² if there is no true obedience to the Son of God and His will for man.

*(Barnes' Notes on the Bible, I John 2:9) And hateth his brother—*The word "brother" seems here to refer to those who professed the same religion. The word is indeed sometimes used in a larger sense, but the reference here appears to be to that which is properly brotherly love among Christians.

*Is in darkness even until now—*That is, he cannot have true religion unless he has love

to the brethren. The command to love one another was one of the most solemn and earnest which Christ ever enjoined, John 15:17;¹³ he made it the special badge of discipleship, or that by which his followers were to be everywhere known, John 13:35;¹⁴ and it is, therefore, impossible to have any true religion without love to those who are sincerely and truly his followers. If a man has not that, he is in deep darkness, whatever else he may have, on the whole subject of religion. Compare the notes at 1 Thessalonians 4:9 [*But as touching brotherly love ye need not that I write unto you: for ye yourselves are taught of God to love one another.*].

In true Christian behavior, there is no substitute for divine love. It is heralded as greater than even faith and hope.¹⁵ Love is what God is,¹⁶ and none can claim true relationship with Him, who do not possess the same love as God. Love led Jesus' ministry while on the earth, and all who are called to heaven through Him, will manifest this same love.¹⁷ Because of their proximity to the Master, those saved by the Son of God, will manifest the same generous love as Him. By love we know that a man has passed from death unto life, but if a man does not genuinely possess Christ's love in his heart, then it is certain he remains spiritually dead. Where love therefore is, life is; where love is absent, life also is as well. *We know that we have passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren. He that loveth not his brother abideth in death.* (I John 3:14)

10 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.*

Gal. 4:6 *And because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father.*

11 Rom. 5:5 *And hope maketh not ashamed; because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us.*

12 Matt. 7:21–23 *Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven.* ²²*Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name have cast out devils? and in thy name done many wonderful works?* ²³*And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity.*

13 John 15:17 *These things I command you, that ye love one another.*

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

15 I Cor. 13:13 *And now abideth faith, hope, charity, these three; but the greatest of these is charity.*

16 I John 4:16 *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.*

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

I John 2:10 He that loveth his brother abideth in the light, and there is none occasion of stumbling in him.

When a man loves his brother with sincerity and genuineness, then he abides in God's light and reveals himself as a true child of God. God is love, and there is not anyone who truly abides in Him, who will not naturally walk in His love. Since love is what constitutes God's very own holy nature, then men are foolish to believe that they can have any true connection to the Lord, if they lack the very essence of His being. Hence, the foundation of any true knowledge of God, both must, and will, include the possession of God's love. If a man does not possess this divine fruit, then he is surely not a true Christian, and should never be recognized as such. *He that loveth not knoweth not God; for God is love.* (I John 4:8)

None occasion of stumbling in him. If a man truly loves both God and those born of Him,¹⁸ then little in this life will cause him to stumble. By pursuing Christ's love, men avoid sin, and will do nothing ill to their neighbors. Thus, he who truly loves both God, and the people of God, will neither create a stumbling block to himself, in his own spiritual walk, nor be a stumbling block to other Christians, in theirs. Wherever also true love for God

and other Christians exists, the Lord's divine law has been fulfilled. *Love worketh no ill to his neighbour: therefore love is the fulfilling of the law.* (Rom. 13:10)

(Ellicott's Commentary for English Readers, Rom. 13:10) Fulfilling of the law.—The form of the Greek word implies not only that love helps a man to fulfil the law, but that in the fact of the presence of love in his heart the law is actually fulfilled.

So great is the divine commandment to love¹⁹ that when men walk in it, practice it daily, and pursue its expansion in their lives, it fulfills God's complete purpose for their lives. Thus, if a man truly desires to do God's will in his life, he should pursue walking in the very nature of God.²⁰

If it is truly love that rules a man, forms his character, and is the underlying force behind all his actions and decisions, then he will be filled with boldness, and not timidity, when Jesus returns to judge the world in righteousness. *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.* (I John 4:17)

(Barnes' Notes on the Bible, I John 4:17) That we may have boldness in the day of judgment—By the influence of love in delivering us from the fear of the wrath to come, 1 John

18 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.

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.

19 Matt. 22:36–40 Master, which is the great commandment in the law? ³⁷Jesus said unto him, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. ³⁸This is the first and great commandment. ³⁹And the second is like unto it, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. ⁴⁰On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets.

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: ³⁰And 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. ³¹And the second is like, namely this, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. There is none other commandment greater than these.

Luke 10:26–28 He said unto him, What is written in the law? how readest thou? ²⁷And he answering said, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy strength, and with all thy mind; and thy neighbour as thyself. ²⁸And he said unto him, Thou hast answered right: this do, and thou shalt live.

20 Eph. 5:1–2 Be ye therefore followers of God, as dear children; ²and walk in love, as Christ also hath loved us, and hath given himself for us an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweetsmelling savour.

I Born of God

4:18.²¹ The idea is, that he who has true love to God will have nothing to fear in the day of judgment, and may even approach the awful tribunal where he is to receive the sentence which shall determine his everlasting destiny without alarm.

There is no fear in love. (I John 4:18) Love's divine presence drives out not only the fear of man, but also all fear of God. The greatest shame that sinners will have at Christ's judgment, is their disobedience to Christ's very clear and direct message to love. Since love is Christ's greatest commandment, then not to love is the greatest sin. And though most do not believe that the absence of love is sin, in truth there is no greater sin that can be committed. Not to love, in the Lord's eyes, is the greatest sin of all.

I John 2:11 But he that hateth his brother is in darkness, and walketh in darkness, and knoweth not whither he goeth, because that darkness hath blinded his eyes.

This truth the apostle states with undeniable clarity, that those who hate possess absolutely no affinity to the light whatsoever, and as a result have no closeness, resemblance, or association either with God or the Son of God. Not only, though, do those who hate the brethren both live and walk in darkness, but they also, as a further result of their sin, possess no true compass by which to govern their own lives. *The way of the wicked is as darkness: they know not at what they stumble.* (Prov. 4:19) A wise and truly righteous man can sin and see the error of his way, but the wicked have no heavenly light to make known their sin. Hate, therefore, so blinds a man's soul that all ability to navigate properly in this life is lost. The

willful sinner, then, is blind not only to God and His light, but also equally to any true wisdom regarding how to govern his own life properly. There is a great and dangerous consequence for abandoning God's will; it is that darkness will completely overtake the sinner. He also who sins, has no idea whatsoever of the great error he is committing, nor the final death that sin will produce.

(*Pulpit Commentary*, Prov. 4:19) The expression, *they know not at what they stumble*, carries with it the idea that they are so ignorant that they neither know wickedness as wickedness, nor do they apprehend the destruction which it involves. "Sins, however great and detestable they may be, are looked upon as trivial, or as not sins at all, when men get accustomed to them" (St. Augustine, 'Enchiridion,' cap. 80).

If evil is perceived as light,²² then darkness will encompass a man's entire soul. *But if thine eye be evil, thy whole body shall be full of darkness. If therefore the light that is in thee be darkness, how great is that darkness!* (Matt. 6:23)

(*Vincent's Word Studies*, Matt. 6:23) "Seeing falsely is worse than blindness. A man who is too dim-sighted to discern the road from the ditch, may feel which is which; but if the ditch appears manifestly to him to be the road, and the road to be the ditch, what shall become of him? False seeing is unseeing, on the negative side of blindness" (Ruskin, "Modern Painters").

Who also can really be saved if they view hate as a form of enlightenment? With all devilish deception, the illusion is given that one is following the light. Indeed, those most in the dark often view themselves as the most enlightened men of all.

²¹ I John 4:18 *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.*

²² Isa. 5:20 *Woe unto them that call evil good, and good evil; that put darkness for light, and light for darkness; that put bitter for sweet, and sweet for bitter!*

Luke 11:34–35 *The light of the body is the eye: therefore when thine eye is single, thy whole body also is full of light; but when thine eye is evil, thy body also is full of darkness.*³⁵ *Take heed therefore that the light which is in thee be not darkness.*

Many also have ignorantly believed they were following God, while being filled with hate, when in fact it was only Satan's deception that created their illusion. *And no marvel; for Satan himself is transformed into an angel of light.* (II Cor. 11:14)

(Barnes' Notes on the Bible, II Cor. 11:14) *For Satan himself is transformed. . .* —That is, he who is an apostate angel; who is malignant and wicked; who is the prince of evil, assumes the appearance of a holy angel. Paul assumes this as an indisputable and admitted truth, without attempting to prove it, and without referring to any particular instances. Probably he had in his eye cases where Satan put on false and delusive appearances for the purpose of deceiving, or where he assumed the appearance of great sanctity and reverence for the authority of God. Such instances occurred in the temptation of our first parents Genesis 3:1–6,²³ and in the temptation of the Saviour, Matthew 4.²⁴ The phrase "an angel of light," means a pure and holy angel, light being the emblem of purity and holiness. Such are all the angels that dwell in heaven; and the idea is, that Satan assumes such a form as to appear to be such an angel. Learn here:

(1) His power. He can assume such an aspect as he pleases. He can dissemble and appear to be eminently pious. He is the prince of duplicity as well as of wickedness; and it is the consummation of bad power for an individual to be able to assume any character which he pleases.

(2) His art. He is long practiced in deceitful arts. For six thousand years he has been practicing the art of delusion. And with him it is perfect.

(3) We are not to suppose that all that appears to be piety is piety. Some of the most plau-

sible appearances of piety are assumed by Satan and his ministers. None ever professed a profounder regard for the authority of God than Satan did when he tempted the Saviour. And if the prince of wickedness can appear to be an angel of light, we are not to be surprised if those who have the blackest hearts appear to be people of most eminent piety.

(4) We should be on our guard. We should not listen to suggestions merely because they appear to come from a pious man, nor because they seem to be prompted by a regard to the will of God. We may be always sure that, if we are to be tempted, it will be by someone having a great appearance of virtue and religion.

(5) We are not to expect that Satan will appear to man to be as bad as he is. He never shows himself openly to be a spirit of pure wickedness; or black and abominable in his character; or full of evil and hateful. He would thus defeat himself. It is for this reason that wicked people do not believe that there is such a being as Satan. Though continually under his influence and "led captive by him at his will," yet they neither see him nor the chains which lead them, nor are they willing to believe in the existence of the one or the other.

I John 2:12–14 I write unto you, little children, because your sins are forgiven you for his name's sake.

¹³I 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.

¹⁴I 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

23 Gen. 3:1–6 *Now the serpent was more subtil than any beast of the field which the LORD God had made. And he said unto the woman, Yea, hath God said, Ye shall not eat of every tree of the garden?*² *And the woman said unto the serpent, We may eat of the fruit of the trees of the garden:*³ *but of the fruit of the tree which is in the midst of the garden, God hath said, Ye shall not eat of it, neither shall ye touch it, lest ye die.*⁴ *And the serpent said unto the woman, Ye shall not surely die:*⁵ *for God doth know that in the day ye eat thereof, then your eyes shall be opened, and ye shall be as gods, knowing good and evil.*⁶ *And when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was pleasant to the eyes, and a tree to be desired to make one wise, she took of the fruit thereof, and did eat, and gave also unto her husband with her; and he did eat.*

24 Matt. 4:1–11

the word of God abideth in you, and ye have overcome the wicked one.

Because the Holy Spirit is Himself light, He will detect and identify when darkness is only parading itself as light.²⁵ Discerning of spirits is that spiritual ability and gift of God, which enables those saved by Him, to detect not only the true workings of the Holy Spirit in their own souls, but also all other deceptive and erring spirits,²⁶ seeking to lead them away from God. Through the possession of the Holy Spirit, and the discernment and power He produces in the believer, Christians will be brought to know God, and that they have overcome the wicked one.

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.

Previously the apostle warned of the danger of hate; now he speaks of the ever-present danger of loving a carnal and sinful world. He who loves the world cannot truly love God, and he who loves God, will forsake any true love or affection he might have for the world. This world is corrupt; therefore, any true love or affection for it, reveals that there is no true affection for God, or the spiritual holiness that He seeks to lead men toward.²⁷ Hence,

²⁵ *Matt. 23:27 Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye are like unto whited sepulchres, which indeed appear beautiful outward, but are within full of dead men's bones, and of all uncleanness. John 5:42 But I know you, that ye have not the love of God in you.*

Acts 5:1-6 But a certain man named Ananias, with Sapphira his wife, sold a possession, ²And 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. ³But 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? ⁴Whiles 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. ⁵And Ananias hearing these words fell down, and gave up the ghost: and great fear came on all them that heard these things. ⁶And the young men arose, wound him up, and carried him out, and buried him.

²⁶ *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.*

²⁷ *II Pet. 1:4 Whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises: that by these ye might be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust.*

²⁸ *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.*

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.

just as saints love God and will forsake the world for Him, those who love the world, will gladly forsake God for it. It is impossible to love the world, and at the same time properly claim any true and sincere love for its Creator.

(Barnes' Notes on the Bible, I John 2:15) If any man love the world . . . —If, in this sense, a person loves the world, it shows that he has no true religion; that is, if characteristically he loves the world as his portion, and lives for that; if it is the ruling principle of his life to gain and enjoy that, it shows that his heart has never been renewed, and that he has no part with the children of God. See the James 4:4 note; Matthew 6:24 note.²⁸

If a man also seeks to be a friend of this world, he has positioned himself as God's enemy. To be a friend of the world is to align oneself with it. Thus, wherever and whenever, men choose fellowship with the world, they have made themselves the Lord's enemies. *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.* (Jas. 4:4)

(Barnes' Notes on the Bible, Jas. 4:4) Is enmity with God—Is in fact hostility against God, since that world is arrayed against him. It neither obeys his laws, submits to his claims, nor seeks to honor him. To love that world is, therefore, to be arrayed against God; and

the spirit which would lead us to this is, in fact, a spirit of hostility to God.

Whosoever therefore will be a friend of the world—“Whoever” he may be, whether in the church or out of it. The fact of being a member of the church makes no difference in this respect, for it is as easy to be a friend of the world in the church as out of it. The phrase “whosoever will” implies “purpose, intention, design.” It supposes that the heart is set on it; or that there is a deliberate purpose to seek the friendship of the world. It refers to that strong desire which often exists, even among professing Christians, to secure the friendship of the world; to copy its fashions and vanities; to enjoy its pleasures; and to share its pastimes and its friendships. . . .

Is the enemy of God—This is a most solemn declaration, and one of fearful import in its bearing on many who are members of the church. It settles the point that anyone, no matter what his professions, who is characteristically a friend of the world, cannot be a true Christian.

I John 2:16 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.

Lust of the flesh. The Greek word for *lust* is #1939 *epithumia*. Strong’s Concordance defines it as “desire, passionate longing,

lust.” The unsaved have a great longing to satisfy not God, but the fallen nature of self. Since those unsaved are nothing but flesh, then they will seek to live their lives solely by its desires and appetites.

Lust of the eyes. It was the lust of the eyes that led to Eve’s sin, when she saw the tree was good for food, pleasant to the eye, and able to make one wise.²⁹ Much sin and rebellion begin with the eye, and then they expand themselves so that the entire body is consumed by them. Many a man has looked upon something with lust, which then ultimately led him to turn away from God and His will for his life.³⁰

Pride of life. There is nothing more dangerous and able to prevent salvation than pride. The Lord detests pride.³¹ It was this that led to Satan’s fall,³² and countless men have followed his rebellious example. No doubt the devil’s main attribute is his pride.³³ Consequently, the one thing he seeks to promote above all other things in this world is leading men to imitate his own evil character. Pride is that deceptive sin that God seeks to hide from men, simply because if most get a taste of it, they will value it so much more, than the pursuit of holiness. *For God speaketh once, yea twice, yet man perceiveth it not. In a dream, in a vision of the night, when*

29 Gen. 3:6 *And when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was pleasant to the eyes, and a tree to be desired to make one wise, she took of the fruit thereof, and did eat, and gave also unto her husband with her; and he did eat.*

30 II Tim. 4:10 *For Demas hath forsaken me, having loved this present world, and is departed unto Thessalonica; Crescens to Galatia, Titus unto Dalmatia.*

31 Prov. 16:5 *Every one that is proud in heart is an abomination to the LORD: though hand join in hand, he shall not be unpunished.*

32 Ezek. 28:15–18 *Thou wast perfect in thy ways from the day that thou wast created, till iniquity was found in thee. 16 By the multitude of thy merchandise they have filled the midst of thee with violence, and thou hast sinned: therefore I will cast thee as profane out of the mountain of God: and I will destroy thee, O covering cherub, from the midst of the stones of fire. 17 Thine heart was lifted up because of thy beauty, thou hast corrupted thy wisdom by reason of thy brightness: I will cast thee to the ground, I will lay thee before kings, that they may behold thee. 18 Thou hast defiled thy sanctuaries by the multitude of thine iniquities, by the iniquity of thy traffick; therefore will I bring forth a fire from the midst of thee, it shall devour thee, and I will bring thee to ashes upon the earth in the sight of all them that behold thee.*

33 Isa. 14:12–15 *How art thou fallen from heaven, O Lucifer, son of the morning! how art thou cut down to the ground, which didst weaken the nations! 13 For thou hast said in thine heart, I will ascend into heaven, I will exalt my throne above the stars of God: I will sit also upon the mount of the congregation, in the sides of the north: 14 I will ascend above the heights of the clouds; I will be like the most High. 15 Yet thou shalt be brought down to hell, to the sides of the pit.*

deep sleep falleth upon men, in slumberings upon the bed; then he openeth the ears of men, and sealeth their instruction, that he may withdraw man from his purpose, and hide pride from man. (Job 33:14–17)

(Ellicott's Commentary for English Readers, Job 33:17) From his purpose.—Rather, That He may withdraw man from carrying out his evil actions, and may remove that pride from man which he secretly cherishes. This is the main point of Elihu's teaching: that the purposes of God are disciplinary, to keep man from the sin which otherwise he would be prone to commit.

At the core of all pride is an inward desire to be worshiped as God. Practically, this is first evidenced when men worship themselves. This is what Satan desired, and so will all those who have chosen to follow his apostate example, engage in as well.

The nature by which a man is ruled is what ultimately determines his appetites and passions. Consequently, those born of the *flesh*³⁴ will have no other desires than those that are both worldly and fleshly. But God's Word reveals that all who choose to be led by the sinful nature of the flesh will die. To be *carnally minded is death*; thus when a man is ruled by the *lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life*, he has no other end than the grave and complete separation from all things eternal. This undoubtedly includes God Himself. To be led by the flesh, and its unholy desires, is to ultimately separate oneself from any true hope of receiving the eternal life presented through Jesus Christ. *For to be carnally minded is death*;

but to be spiritually minded is life and peace. (Rom. 8:6)

(Barnes' Notes on the Bible, Rom. 8:6) For to be carnally minded—Margin, "The minding of the flesh." The sense is, that to follow the inclinations of the flesh, or the corrupt propensities of our nature, leads us to condemnation and death. The expression is one of great energy, and shows that it not only leads to death, or leads to misery, but that it is death itself; there is woe and condemnation in the very act and purpose of being supremely devoted to the corrupt passions. Its only tendency is condemnation and despair.

It makes no difference what men love in the world—whether it is wealth, leisure, hobbies, or any other worldly affection; to love this world, is to forfeit any hope of receiving God's eternal spiritual life.

I John 2:17 And the world passeth away, and the lust thereof; but he that doeth the will of God abideth for ever.

What a man does, how he lives, and what he cherishes ultimately determine his destiny.³⁵ It is therefore only those who *[do] the will of God* that God has promised will *abideth for ever*. Sin is temporary, and though it sprouts, blooms, and has its day, it quickly fades and passes away. Of this God's Word is certain: the wicked will perish, and only the righteous are given the hope of living forever.³⁶ Obedience to the eternal God³⁷ has as its heavenly reward, receiving the same spiritual life as Him.

I John 2:18 Little children, it is the last time: and as ye have heard that antichrist shall come, even now are there many an-

34 *John 3:6 That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit.*

35 *Prov. 28:18 Whoso walketh uprightly shall be saved: but he that is perverse in his ways shall fall at once. Matt. 24:13 But he that shall endure unto the end, the same shall be saved.*

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

36 *Ps. 1:4 The ungodly are not so: but are like the chaff which the wind driveth away.*

Ps. 37:9–10 For evildoers shall be cut off: but those that wait upon the LORD, they shall inherit the earth. ¹⁰For yet a little while, and the wicked shall not be: yea, thou shalt diligently consider his place, and it shall not be.

Ps. 37:20 But the wicked shall perish, and the enemies of the LORD shall be as the fat of lambs: they shall consume; into smoke shall they consume away.

37 *Heb. 5:9 And being made perfect, he became the author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey him;*

tichrists; whereby we know that it is the last time.

The phrase *the last time* makes no determination regarding the length of time that needs to be completed before Christ's appearance.³⁸ It is enough to know that both *antichrists* and the *antichrist* will come before the Son of God is revealed to the world, of which He also is to ultimately rule.³⁹

(Matthew Henry's Concise Commentary, I John 2:18) Every man is an antichrist, who denies the Person, or any of the offices of Christ; and in denying the Son, he denies the Father also, and has no part in his favour while he rejects his great salvation.

To reject Christ's lordship is itself a form of antichrist. Hence, if a man does not submit to Christ's rule, he rejects Christ's government⁴⁰ and the overall authority⁴¹ God has given to His Son. It is God's right to transfer authority to whom He wills, and His will is that His Son will reign over mankind forever.⁴² Thus, all who are properly labeled antichrist, are those resistant to Christ's divine rule. To be anti-Christ is to reject the rule of Christ, and the power and authority that God has now given to His Son.⁴³ By this truth, it is easily observed, that those who choose to reject Jesus as Lord of their lives are by God's definition antichrist. The more also the Son of God is rejected on the earth, the closer time draws, for Christ's judgment to come upon her.

38 Luke 12:40 *Be ye therefore ready also: for the Son of man cometh at an hour when ye think not.*

Matt. 25:13 *Watch therefore, for ye know neither the day nor the hour wherein the Son of man cometh.*

I Thess. 5:2 *For yourselves know perfectly that the day of the Lord so cometh as a thief in the night.*

39 I John 2:18 *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.*

I John 4:3 *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.*

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.*

40 Isa. 9:6 *For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given: and the government shall be upon his shoulder: and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace.*

41 Dan. 7:14 *And there was given him dominion, and glory, and a kingdom, that all people, nations, and languages, should serve him: his dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and his kingdom that which shall not be destroyed.*

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.*

42 Eph. 1:22 *And hath put all things under his feet, and gave him to be the head over all things to the church, Col. 1:18 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.*

Heb. 1:8 *But unto the Son he saith, Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever: a sceptre of righteousness is the sceptre of thy kingdom.*

43 Matt. 28:18 *And Jesus came and spake unto them, saying, All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth. Phil. 2:9–11 Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name:*

¹⁰*That at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth; ¹¹And that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father. Heb. 1:2 Hath in these last days spoken unto us by his Son, whom he hath appointed heir of all things, by whom also he made the worlds;*

I John 2:19–24

I John 2:19 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.

THEY went out from us, but they were not of us. John's words prove that those who depart from the faith were never really of it. Apostates can and will remain with true believers for a time, but then there will arrive a day when their false professions of faith become manifest. Impure motives are not enough to keep men faithful to their religion for their entire lives. Jesus' disciple Judas is an example of this. Though he walked with the Lord Jesus for a number of years, his true inward character eventually came to be made known. Spiritual counterfeits therefore cannot and will not remain faithful to Christ unto the end—as their allowed departure from the faith is purposed to be revealed by God that they never were true saints.

A little leaven leaveneth the whole lump (Gal. 5:9). Even a small amount of religious hypocrisy will affect the growth of a Christian assembly. Because the Lord allows the departure of those who once called themselves Christians, the influence they once had or could have had in the true church of Christ is greatly diminished. Thus, when men depart from Christ, Whom they once professed to follow, they soon lose their authority to influence all who remain loyal to Him. To understand apostasy properly, it is important to know first that those who leave the faith were once considered part of it. They took on the habits of conversion, but they were never truly converted. Second, God allows their departure so

that their false profession of faith might be fully known, removing any confusion as to what true faith really is. Third, with the departure of these counterfeit believers, the true church of Christ is better able to grow in the divine qualities of love and spiritual unity. When schisms are removed, even if they were undetected by many, then harmony and peace are more freely able to flourish among the redeemed.

A long-standing practical military tactic in warfare is to infiltrate the enemy and cause as much internal disruption as possible. Satan does this by planting people with false motives among those whose hearts are pure toward their Savior. Planting tares among the wheat is a common devilish practice in the spiritual realm. *But while men slept, his enemy came and sowed tares among the wheat, and went his way* (Matt. 13:25).

(Barnes' Notes on the Bible, Matt. 13:25) While men slept, his enemy came . . . —That is, "in the night," when it could be done without being seen, an enemy came and scattered bad seed on the new plowed field, perhaps before the good seed had been harrowed in. . . .

Sowed tares—By "tares" is probably meant a degenerate kind of wheat, or the darnel-grass growing in Palestine. In its growth and form it has a strong resemblance to genuine wheat; but it either produces no grain, or that of a very inferior and hurtful kind. Probably it comes near to what we mean by "chess." It was extremely difficult to separate it from the genuine wheat, on account of its similarity while growing.

"The tare abounds all over the East, and is a great nuisance to the farmer. It resembles the American 'cheat (chess),' but the 'head' does not droop like cheat, nor does it branch

out like oats. The grain, also, is smaller, and is arranged along the upper part of the stalk, which stands perfectly erect. The 'taste' is bitter, and when eaten separately, or even when diffused in ordinary bread, it causes dizziness, and often acts as a violent emetic. Barn-door fowls also become dizzy from eating it. In short, it is a strong soporific poison, and must be carefully winnowed, and picked out of the wheat grain by grain, before grinding, or the flour is not healthy. Even the farmers, who in this country generally 'weed' their fields, do not attempt to separate the one from the other. They would not only mistake good grain for them, but very commonly the roots of the two are so intertwined that it is impossible to separate them without plucking up both. Both, therefore, must be left to 'grow together' until the time of harvest."—(Thomson) "The Land and the Book," vol. ii. pp. 111, 112. Thus, "tares" aptly represented hypocrites in the church. Strongly resembling Christians in their experience, and, in some respects, their lives it is impossible to distinguish them from genuine Christians, nor can they be separated until it is done by the Great Searcher of hearts at the day of judgment. An enemy the devil hath done it. And nowhere has he shown profounder cunning, or done more to adulterate the purity of the gospel.

Men depart from anything because there is someplace more pleasing to them where they wish to go. When men depart from faith, however, there is no place to go but back to the world. There are but two forms of government that men will ultimately choose to align themselves with. First, it is the government through which the god of this world,¹ Satan, sets the parameters of how men can live while in it. In this worldly government Satan promises much freedom. Not only can men live as they will, with no judgment, but they are also encouraged to embrace self-will and

self-government. In Satan's world, self-love and self-will are far more preferable than love for God and subjection to divine will. Those who love the world and are willing to depart from the faith for it reveal themselves as preferring human government, or the government of self, man, and Satan, over the heavenly rule of God. Human will is embraced over divine will, and rejection of God is chosen over obedience to God's commandments. By leaving the faith and the body of believers who still practice it, apostates reveal that they never really possessed true piety at all. Though they may have walked among the saved, their love for the world ultimately reveals that no sincere love for God and the higher spiritual realm was ever held. What men love they will always eventually serve, and those who love the world will possess no compunction in leaving God and His people for the world.² The true test of discipleship, therefore, is whether a man be willing to forsake all for Christ, or if he will forsake Christ for earthly and worldly affections. *So likewise, whosoever he be of you that forsaketh not all that he hath, he cannot be my disciple* (Luke 14:33).

(*Ellicott's Commentary for English Readers*, Luke 14:33) *Whosoever he be of you that forsaketh not* . . . —Better, that renounceth not. This, then, was the immediate lesson which the company of eager disciples had to learn: to say good-bye to their "all," whatever that might be. Fishing-nets and hired servants, or great possessions, or ease and safety, or besetting sins, or fancied righteousness—all had to be renounced. The word for "forsake" is that which was afterwards used in the baptismal formula, "I renounce the devil and all his works," and the same as that which is translated "bidding farewell" in Luke 9:61, Acts 18:18.³

1 *II Cor. 4:4 In whom the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them.*

2 *II Tim. 4:10 For Demas hath forsaken me, having loved this present world, and is departed unto Thessalonica; Crescens to Galatia, Titus unto Dalmatia.*

3 *Luke 9:61 And another also said, Lord, I will follow thee; but let me first go bid them farewell, which are at home at my house.*

The standard of leaving everything to follow Christ is the true test of discipleship.⁴ This standard is that which Jesus Christ Himself set, and it should never be lowered by men, who do not possess sufficient divine love to keep it. To ultimately be saved by the Son of God, a man must be willing to leave everything for Him. There can be no compromise on this great spiritual truth. To properly follow the Son of God, the penitent must be willing to leave and give up everything contrary to Christ's will for his life. There can remain nothing between the Lord and those purposed to be of His fold. If there is, then this only proves that Jesus Christ is not his Lord.

(Barnes' Notes on the Bible, Luke 14:33) [So likewise, whosoever he be of you that forsaketh not all that he hath, he cannot be my disciple.] 1. Every man who becomes a follower of Jesus should calmly and deliberately look at all the consequences of such an act and be prepared to meet them.

2. Men in other things act with prudence and forethought. They do not begin to build without a reasonable prospect of being able to finish. They do not go to war when there is every prospect that they will be defeated.

3. Religion is a work of soberness, of thought, of calm and fixed purpose, and no man can properly enter on it who does not resolve by the grace of God to fulfil all its requirements and make it the business of his life.

4. We are to expect difficulties in religion. It will cost us the mortification of our sins, and a life of self-denial, and a conflict with our lusts, and the enmity and ridicule of the

world. Perhaps it may cost us our reputation, or possibly our lives and liberties, and all that is dear to us; but we must cheerfully undertake all this, and be prepared for it all.

5. If we do not deliberately resolve to leave all things, to suffer all things that may be laid on us, and to persevere to the end of our days in the service of Christ, we cannot be his disciples. No man can be a Christian who, when he makes a profession, is resolved after a while to turn back to the world; nor can he be a true Christian if he "expects that he will" turn back. If he comes not with a "full" purpose "always" to be a Christian; if he means not to persevere, by the grace of God, through all hazards, and trials, and temptations; if he is not willing to bear his cross, and meet contempt, and poverty, and pain, and death, without turning back, he "cannot" be a disciple of the Lord Jesus.

When men leave the faith, they will return to the world, which in fact they never really left. There is no other place to go than this, and apostates are more than comfortable with their choice. Whenever, then, men leave the faith, this is purposed by God to reveal that they were never really of it, since no man truly saved by the Son of God would depart from Him to again gain fellowship with a world that has rejected God and desires no true intimacy with Him.

(Barnes' Notes on the Bible, I John 2:19) They went out from us—From the church. That is, they had once been professors of the religion of the Saviour, though their apostasy showed that they never had any true piety. John refers to the fact that they had once been in the church, perhaps to remind those to whom he wrote that they knew them well,

Acts 18:18 And Paul after this tarried there yet a good while, and then took his leave of the brethren, and sailed thence into Syria, and with him Priscilla and Aquila; having shorn his head in Cenchrea: for he had a vow.
4 Matt. 4:20 And they straightway left their nets, and followed him.

Matt. 19:27 Then answered Peter and said unto him, Behold, we have forsaken all, and followed thee; what shall we have therefore?

Mark 10:21 Then Jesus beholding him loved him, and said unto him, One thing thou lackest: go thy way, sell whatsoever thou hast, and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven: and come, take up the cross, and follow me.

Luke 9:23 And he said to them all, If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow me.

and could readily appreciate their character. It was a humiliating statement that those who showed themselves to be so utterly opposed to religion had once been members of the Christian church; but this is a statement which we are often compelled to make.

But they were not of us—That is, they did not really belong to us, or were not true Christians. See the notes at Matthew 7:23.⁵ This passage proves that these persons, whatever their pretensions and professions may have been, were never sincere Christians. The same remark may be made of all who apostatize from the faith, and become teachers of error. They never were truly converted; never belonged really to the spiritual church of Christ. . . .

But they went out, that they might be made manifest that they were not all of us—It was suffered or permitted in the providence of God that this should occur, “in order” that it might be seen and known that they were not true Christians, or in order that their real character might be developed. It was desirable that this should be done:

(a) in order that the church might be purified from their influence—compare the notes at John 15:2;⁶

(b) in order that it might not be responsible for their conduct, or reproached on account of it;

(c) in order that their real character might be developed, and they might themselves see that they were not true Christians;

(d) in order that, being seen and known as apostates, their opinions and conduct might have less influence than if they were connected with the church;

(e) in order that they might themselves understand their own true character, and no longer live under the delusive opinion that they were Christians and were safe, but that, seeing themselves in their true light, they might be brought to repentance.

I John 2:20 But ye have an unction from the Holy One, and ye know all things.

In contrast to those who were never true followers of Christ and who departed from the fellowship of the godly, true Christians are those who have the anointing of the Holy Spirit.⁷ Practically, for men to be destroyed they must first be deceived, and God’s Holy Spirit provides spiritual discernment so that the true children of God will not be.⁸ Hence, the Holy Spirit not only makes personal sin known to the Christian, but It also allows him to discern where God’s true Spirit abides, and where it does not. This unction, this anointing from the Holy Spirit, is what ultimately allows Christians to discern between truth and error.

(Jamieson-Fausset-Brown Bible Commentary, I John 2:20) Those anointed of God in Christ alone can resist those anointed with the spirit of Satan, Antichrists, who would sever them from the Father and from the Son. Believers have the anointing Spirit from the Father also, as well as from the Son; even as the Son is anointed therewith by the Father. Hence the Spirit is the token that we are in the Father and in the Son; without it a man is none of Christ. The material unguent of costliest ingredients, poured on the head of priests and kings, typified this spiritual unguent, derived from Christ, the Head, to us, His members. We can have no share in Him as Jesus, except we become truly Christians, and so be in Him as Christ, anointed with

5 Matt. 7:23 *And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity.*
6 John 15:2 *Every branch in me that beareth not fruit he taketh away: and every branch that beareth fruit, he purgeth it, that it may bring forth more fruit.*
7 I John 2:27 *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.*
8 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.*

that unction from the Holy One. The Spirit poured on Christ, the Head, is by Him diffused through all the members.

I John 2:21 *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.*

The apostle understood that the people to whom he was writing knew the truth. Because of the Spirit's anointing and influence on their lives, they could discern between truth and error, as well as any false and deceiving spirits, impersonating themselves as being of God. Having actually come to know God, true Christians therefore are brought to know the truth, and because of this, the chance for spiritual deception can be avoided.

(*Barnes' Notes on the Bible*, I John 2:21) Error often appears plausible. It seems to be adapted to relieve the mind of many difficulties which perplex and embarrass it on the subject of religion. It seems to be adapted to promote religion. It seems to make those who embrace it happy, and for a time they apparently enjoy religion. But John says that however plausible all this may be, however much it may seem to prove that the doctrines thus embraced are of God, it is a great and vital maxim that no error can have its foundation in truth, and, of course, that it must be worthless.

9 Num. 24:19 *Out of Jacob shall come he that shall have dominion, and shall destroy him that remaineth of the city.*

Ps. 2:7–9 *I will declare the decree: the LORD hath said unto me, Thou art my Son; this day have I begotten thee. ⁸Ask of me, and I shall give thee the heathen for thine inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for thy possession. ⁹Thou shalt break them with a rod of iron; thou shalt dash them in pieces like a potter's vessel.* Isa. 42:1 *Behold my servant, whom I uphold; mine elect, in whom my soul delighteth; I have put my spirit upon him: he shall bring forth judgment to the Gentiles.*

10 Dan. 7:13–14 *I saw in the night visions, and, behold, one like the Son of man came with the clouds of heaven, and came to the Ancient of days, and they brought him near before him. ¹⁴And there was given him dominion, and glory, and a kingdom, that all people, nations, and languages, should serve him: his dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and his kingdom that which shall not be destroyed.* I Cor. 15:24–25 *Then cometh the end, when he shall have delivered up the kingdom to God, even the Father; when he shall have put down all rule and all authority and power. ²⁵For he must reign, till he hath put all enemies under his feet.*

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.*

11 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.*

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.*

I John 2:22 *Who is a liar but he that denieth that Jesus is the Christ? He is anti-christ, that denieth the Father and the Son.*

Denieth that Jesus is the Christ. The word for Christ is #5547 *Christos*. *Strong's Concordance* defines this word as “the Anointed One; the Messiah, the Christ.” From this we can see that to deny Christ is to deny the Messiah. Anti-Christ is actually anti-Messiah. To deny Christ is to deny Him Whom God has declared will rule the world. Recognizing the critical truth that Jesus is the Messiah means both believing in and subjecting oneself to the power and lordship God has said now is the Son's.⁹

In recognizing Jesus Christ's person as the Messiah, two important revelations from God must be believed. The first is that Jesus is God's appointed Ruler of the world.¹⁰ The second is that His right to rule the world stems from His relationship with God as God's only-begotten Son.¹¹ Jesus' divine sonship was proven by God raising Him from the dead. *And declared to be the Son of God with power, according to the spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead* (Rom. 1:4). Not to recognize Jesus as the Son of God, and not to subject oneself to Him, Whom God has declared will rule the world, is to be anti-Christ.

Therefore, it is not enough to know Jesus as nothing more than a historical figure, nor only profess His name to be saved. This is insufficient for salvation. For God will save no one who is not willing to yield to, and subject himself to the Lord's purposed Ruler of the world. *Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly, that God hath made the same Jesus, whom ye have crucified, both Lord and Christ* (Acts 2:36). It is God Who has made and established Jesus to be the Christ; thus, any who reject Him must also reject the heavenly Father in the process. To be anti-Christ is ultimately recognized as anti-God, Who sent His Son.

He is antichrist, that denieth the Father and the Son. When men deny the Son and His authority over their lives, they must subsequently deny the Father. The Father and Son are one;¹² thus, to reject Jesus as Messiah is to reject the Father Himself.¹³ No bond is more important in Christianity than the one between God and His only begotten Son.¹⁴ If any remove Jesus Christ and deem Him unessential in knowing the Father, then he is left with nothing but human and vain imagination as the foundation of his faith.¹⁵ Without also the light of the Son of God revealing the true essence of God, God's ways, His judgments,

and His purposes for man would forever remain a mystery.¹⁶ It is in Christ that God has chosen to make Himself both known and seen,¹⁷ and only through God's Son can men be saved by God.¹⁸

Recognizing Jesus as the Christ, God's promised Messiah, is critical in order to gain salvation from God. It was first this belief, that Jesus is the Messiah, that led Peter to become one of the Lord's disciples. *When Jesus came into the coasts of Caesarea Philippi, he asked his disciples, saying, Whom do men say that I the Son of man am? And they said, Some say that thou art John the Baptist: some, Elias; and others, Jeremias, or one of the prophets. He saith unto them, But whom say ye that I am? And Simon Peter answered and said, Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God. And Jesus answered and said unto him, Blessed art thou, Simon Barjona: for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven* (Matt. 16:13-17). Peter's recognition of Jesus as *the Christ, the Son of the living God* reveals that he knew the true nature of Jesus and the authority that God had given Him. *Christ* and *Lord* cannot be separated. Thus, to sincerely believe in the Son of God must result in making Jesus Lord of your life. The birth of Jesus signified that Jesus was purposed

¹² John 10:30 *I and my Father are one.*

¹³ *I* John 2:23 *Whosoever denieth the Son, the same hath not the Father: he that acknowledgeth the Son hath the Father also.*

¹⁴ Matt. 11:27 *All things are delivered unto me of my Father: and no man knoweth the Son, but the Father; neither knoweth any man the Father, save the Son, and he to whomsoever the Son will reveal him.*

John 5:23 *That all men should honour the Son, even as they honour the Father. He that honoureth not the Son honoureth not the Father which hath sent him.*

II John 1:9 *Whosoever transgresseth, and abideth not in the doctrine of Christ, hath not God. He that abideth in the doctrine of Christ, he hath both the Father and the Son.*

¹⁵ Rom. 1:21 *Because that, when they knew God, they glorified him not as God, neither were thankful; but became vain in their imaginations, and their foolish heart was darkened.*

¹⁶ Mark 4:11 *And he said unto them, Unto you it is given to know the mystery of the kingdom of God: but unto them that are without, all these things are done in parables:*

¹⁷ John 14:9 *Jesus saith unto him, Have I been so long time with you, and yet hast thou not known me, Philip? he that hath seen me hath seen the Father; and how sayest thou then, Show us the Father?*

¹⁸ John 3:16-18 *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. ¹⁷For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through him might be saved. ¹⁸He 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* Thess. 5:9-10 *For God hath not appointed us to wrath, but to obtain salvation by our Lord Jesus Christ,**

¹⁰*Who died for us, that, whether we wake or sleep, we should live together with him.*

to be not only this world's Savior but also her Lord.¹⁹ *For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord* (Luke 2:11).

(*Cambridge Bible for Schools and Colleges*, Luke 2:11) *Christ the Lord*] “God hath made that same Jesus whom ye crucified both Lord and Christ,” Acts 2:36; Php 2:11.²⁰ ‘Christ’ or ‘Anointed’ is the Greek equivalent of Messiah.²¹ . . . “We preach Christ Jesus the Lord,” 2 Corinthians 4:5 (see Php 2:11; Romans 14:9; 1 Corinthians 8:6;²² “No one can say that Jesus is the Lord but by the Holy Ghost,” 1 Corinthians 12:3²³).

I John 2:23 Whosoever denieth the Son, the same hath not the Father: he that acknowledgeth the Son hath the Father also.

Whosoever denieth the Son, the same hath not the Father. To deny the Son is to deny God's authority over your life. This denial ultimately means to refuse to submit to God's rule or follow His person. In the Son, God has made Himself known; consequently, to deny the Son is to reject the very one God sent to reconcile men to Himself. *To wit, that God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself,*

not imputing their trespasses unto them; and hath committed unto us the word of reconciliation (II Cor. 5:19). Sinners often foolishly believe that they can casually believe in God, and be saved by Him, without any true subjection to God's Son. Time will reveal this to be a great spiritual miscalculation.

(*Barnes' Notes on the Bible*, I John 2:23) *Whosoever denieth the Son, the same hath not the Father*—That is, has no just views of the Father, and has no evidence of his friendship. It is only by the Son of God that the Father is made known to people, Matthew 11:27; Hebrews 1:2–3,²⁴ and it is only through him that we can become reconciled to God, and obtain evidence of His favor.

He that acknowledgeth the Son hath the Father also. A true relationship with God begins when one accepts the Son of God and genuinely believes in His heavenly authority. *But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name* (John 1:12). It is the Son of God Who provides the privilege of being brought into the family of God. Therefore not until Jesus Christ is fully received can

19 Dan. 2:44 *And in the days of these kings shall the God of heaven set up a kingdom, which shall never be destroyed: and the kingdom shall not be left to other people, but it shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms, and it shall stand for ever.*

Luke 1:33 *And he shall reign over the house of Jacob for ever; and of his kingdom there shall be no end.*

Heb. 1:8 *But unto the Son he saith, Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever: a sceptre of righteousness is the sceptre of thy kingdom.*

20 Acts 2:36 *Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly, that God hath made the same Jesus, whom ye have crucified, both Lord and Christ.*

Phil. 2:11 *And that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.*

21 *Cambridge Bible for Schools and Colleges*, Luke 2:11

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

Phil. 2:11 *And that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.*

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.*

I Cor. 8:6 *But to us there is but one God, the Father, of whom are all things, and we in him; and one Lord Jesus Christ, by whom are all things, and we by him.*

23 I Cor. 12:3 *Wherefore I give you to understand, that no man speaking by the Spirit of God calleth Jesus accursed: and that no man can say that Jesus is the Lord, but by the Holy Ghost.*

24 Matt. 11:27 *All things are delivered unto me of my Father: and no man knoweth the Son, but the Father; neither knoweth any man the Father, save the Son, and he to whomsoever the Son will reveal him.*

Heb. 1:2–3 *Hath in these last days spoken unto us by his Son, whom he hath appointed heir of all things, by whom also he made the worlds; Who being the brightness of his glory, and the express image of his person, and upholding all things by the word of his power, when he had by himself purged our sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high:*

men possess any true hope of becoming sons of God themselves. *He that acknowledgeth the Son* and is spiritually baptized by Him²⁵ is given the Spirit of God, confirming his adoption into the family of God. By receiving the Holy Spirit through Christ, it is confirmed and verified that spiritual sonship has occurred. But if a man lacks receiving the Holy Spirit from Christ, then God has declared that he is none of His.²⁶ Ultimately, only when men have been given the Holy Spirit through belief in the Son of God can they know they have been made to become sons of God themselves. *And because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father* (Gal. 4:6).

(*Barnes' Notes on the Bible, Gal. 4:6*) *And because ye are sons*—As a consequence of your being adopted into the family of God, and being regarded as his sons. It follows as a part of his purpose of adoption that his children shall have the spirit of the Lord Jesus.

I John 2:24 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.

Once a man has been made a son of God, he must remain loyal to Christ's calling in order to maintain both fellowship and relationship with the Father and Son.²⁷ In no place does Scripture allow for unfaithfulness after conversion. Since the Lord provides no second renewal, nor adding of mercy for any who, once exposed to the Son of God, then walk away from Him.²⁸ To make Jesus Christ Lord is to make Him the ultimate authority, not only presently over your life, but also throughout the entirety of your life.²⁹ Continuance of faith, and loyalty to Jesus Christ are essential to entering the eternal life offered by Him. *But he that shall endure unto the end, the same shall be saved* (Matt. 24:13).

(*Matthew Poole's Commentary, Matt. 24:13*) It is a promise to perseverance, especially to such perseverance as is joined with fortitude. He that shall not be tempted to apostasy through the afflictions of the gospel, but shall patiently and courageously endure all the sufferings which shall follow the profession of the gospel, shall be saved; if not preserved, and so saved with a temporal salvation, yet he shall be eternally saved.

25 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 19:5 *When they heard this, they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus.*

Gal. 3:27 *For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ.*

26 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.*

27 I Cor. 1:9 *God is faithful, by whom ye were called unto the fellowship of his Son Jesus Christ our Lord.*

28 Heb. 6:4–6 *For it is impossible for those who were once enlightened, and have tasted of the heavenly gift, and were made partakers of the Holy Ghost, ⁵And have tasted the good word of God, and the powers of the world to come, ⁶If they shall fall away, to renew them again unto repentance; seeing they crucify to themselves the Son of God afresh, and put him to an open shame.*

29 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.*

I John 2:25–3:2

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

THE promise spoken of is that promise of the Son of God proclaiming that whosoever believed in Him would be given God's eternal life. This heavenly promise was personally given to John by Jesus Christ Himself.¹ Hence, the apostle seeks to assure his readers that what *he* (Jesus Christ) *hath promised*, pertaining to receiving eternal life, was given to John while Christ tabernacled in the flesh—the one also Whose bosom John leaned upon² and He Who, it is recorded, loved John.³

*(Barnes' Notes on the Bible, I John 2:25) And this is the promise that he [Jesus Christ] hath promised us, even eternal life—*This is evidently added to encourage them in adhering to the truths which they had embraced respecting the Son of God. In maintaining these truths they had the promise of eternal

life; in departing from them they had none, for the “promise” of heaven in our world is made only to those who embrace one class of doctrines or opinions.

I John 2:26 These things have I written unto you concerning them that seduce you.

The believers to whom John was speaking had not been actually seduced, but many false teachers were attempting to accomplish such a purpose. There have always been, and always will be, those who try to turn people from the faith.⁴ Elymas the sorcerer was such a man.⁵ Thus, whenever the Holy Spirit and His power and spiritual fruit are drawing men to God,⁶ those with unholy spirits, who themselves have already rejected God, will exert great energy to influence others to leave the faith.⁷ If they are successful and men are deceived and depart

1 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 5:24 *Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death unto life.*

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

2 John 13:22–25 *Then the disciples looked one on another, doubting of whom he spake. ²³Now there was leaning on Jesus' bosom one of his disciples, whom Jesus loved. ²⁴Simon Peter therefore beckoned to him, that he should ask who it should be of whom he spake. ²⁵He then lying on Jesus' breast saith unto him, Lord, who is it?*

3 John 19:26 *When Jesus therefore saw his mother, and the disciple standing by, whom he loved, he saith unto his mother, Woman, behold thy son!*

John 20:2 *Then she runneth, and cometh to Simon Peter, and to the other disciple, whom Jesus loved, and saith unto them, They have taken away the Lord out of the sepulchre, and we know not where they have laid him.*

John 21:7 *Therefore that disciple whom Jesus loved saith unto Peter, It is the Lord. Now when Simon Peter heard that it was the Lord, he girt his fisher's coat unto him, (for he was naked,) and did cast himself into the sea.*

John 21:20 *Then Peter, turning about, seeth the disciple whom Jesus loved following; which also leaned on his breast at supper, and said, Lord, which is he that betrayeth thee?*

4 Eph 4:14 *That we henceforth be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive;*

5 Acts 13:8 *But Elymas the sorcerer (for so is his name by interpretation) withstood them, seeking to turn away the deputy from the faith.*

6 Gal. 5:22–23 *But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, ²³Meekness, temperance: against such there is no law.*

7 Num. 16:1–3 *Now Korah, the son of Izhar, the son of Kohath, the son of Levi, and Dathan and Abiram, the sons of Eliab, and On, the son of Peleth, sons of Reuben, took men: ²And they rose up before Moses, with*

from God, as the Greek word for *seduce* implies, then endless wandering will be the result. The Greek word for *seduce* is #4105 *planōntōn*, “to cause to wander, to wander.”⁸ Israel’s unbelief in God’s promises led to their wanderings in the desert,⁹ and ultimately only two, Joshua and Caleb, were allowed to enter the promised land.¹⁰ Hence the judgment for not believing in the Son of God and His purpose for coming into the world will result, as with Israel, in an endless state of wandering. This is what transpired

with the Jews,¹¹ and the same result will occur if men willfully reject Christ today.

I John 2:27 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.

Previously the apostle spoke of the knowledge of Christ (v. 24); now he references the anointing given by Him in the form of the Holy Spirit,¹² which allows saints

certain of the children of Israel, two hundred and fifty princes of the assembly, famous in the congregation, men of renown: ³And they gathered themselves together against Moses and against Aaron, and said unto them, Ye take too much upon you, seeing all the congregation are holy, every one of them, and the LORD is among them: wherefore then lift ye up yourselves above the congregation of the LORD?

Acts 13:8 But Elymas the sorcerer (for so is his name by interpretation) withstood them, seeking to turn away the deputy from the faith.

Luke 5:21 And the scribes and the Pharisees began to reason, saying, Who is this which speaketh blasphemies? Who can forgive sins, but God alone?

8 Strong’s Concordance

9 Heb. 3:15–19 While it is said, To day if ye will hear his voice, harden not your hearts, as in the provocation.

¹⁶For some, when they had heard, did provoke: howbeit not all that came out of Egypt by Moses. ¹⁷But with whom was he grieved forty years? was it not with them that had sinned, whose carcases fell in the wilderness?

¹⁸And to whom sware he that they should not enter into his rest, but to them that believed not? ¹⁹So we see that they could not enter in because of unbelief.

10 Num. 14:29–30 Your carcases shall fall in this wilderness; and all that were numbered of you, according to your whole number, from twenty years old and upward which have murmured against me. ³⁰Doubtless ye shall not come into the land, concerning which I swear to make you dwell therein, save Caleb the son of Jephunneh, and Joshua the son of Nun.

Num. 32:11–12 Surely none of the men that came up out of Egypt, from twenty years old and upward, shall see the land which I swear unto Abraham, unto Isaac, and unto Jacob; because they have not wholly followed me: ¹²Save Caleb the son of Jephunneh the Kenezite, and Joshua the son of Nun: for they have wholly followed the LORD.

Josh. 14:10–14 And now, behold, the LORD hath kept me alive, as he said, these forty and five years, even since the LORD spake this word unto Moses, while the children of Israel wandered in the wilderness: and now, lo, I am this day fourscore and five years old. ¹¹As yet I am as strong this day as I was in the day that Moses sent me: as my strength was then, even so is my strength now, for war, both to go out, and to come in.

¹²Now therefore give me this mountain, whereof the LORD spake in that day; for thou heardest in that day how the Anakims were there, and that the cities were great and fenced: if so be the LORD will be with me, then I shall be able to drive them out, as the LORD said. ¹³And Joshua blessed him, and gave unto Caleb the son of Jephunneh Hebron for an inheritance. ¹⁴Hebron therefore became the inheritance of Caleb the son of Jephunneh the Kenezite unto this day, because that he wholly followed the LORD God of Israel.

11 Hos. 9:17 My God will cast them away, because they did not hearken unto him: and they shall be wanderers among the nations.

Num. 14:33–35 And your children shall wander in the wilderness forty years, and bear your whoredoms, until your carcases be wasted in the wilderness. ³⁴After the number of the days in which ye searched the land, even forty days, each day for a year, shall ye bear your iniquities, even forty years, and ye shall know my breach of promise. ³⁵I the LORD have said, I will surely do it unto all this evil congregation, that are gathered together against me: in this wilderness they shall be consumed, and there they shall die.

Deut. 1:34–36 And the LORD heard the voice of your words, and was wroth, and sware, saying, ³⁵Surely there shall not one of these men of this evil generation see that good land, which I swear to give unto your fathers.

³⁶Save Caleb the son of Jephunneh; he shall see it, and to him will I give the land that he hath trodden upon, and to his children, because he hath wholly followed the LORD.

12 Acts 2:1–4 And when the day of Pentecost was fully come, they were all with one accord in one place.

²And suddenly there came a sound from heaven as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled all the house where

to be spiritually taught of God.¹³ Christ's Spirit would teach them and introduce caution not to trust the deceptive words of the religious counterfeits. The Spirit of God consequently teaches those born of God, not only to recognize and repent of sin, but also to discern between truth and error. *But the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you* (John 14:26).

(*Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible*, John 14:26) *he shall teach you all things*: this is the proper work and business of the Spirit, to teach, interpret, and explain all things which Christ had said to them; to make them more plain and easy to their understandings; to instruct them in all things necessary to salvation, and to be known by them, that they might teach them others:

A Christian can possess no greater teacher than the Holy Spirit. The Spirit is the Christian's great spiritual tutor and can enlighten him on so many things concerning God and the higher spiritual realm. *But God hath revealed them unto*

us by his Spirit: for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God (I Cor. 2:10). No mere fleshly man can come to know the deeper things of the Lord through his own natural ability. This is because the spiritual realm noticeably is separate from the material realm; as such, the Holy Spirit is needed to unlock its hidden truths and mysteries. *But 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* (I Cor. 2:14). The Lord's Spirit is necessary for instruction in the invisible spiritual world.¹⁴ To truly learn of God, Who is Spirit,¹⁵ one must be taught by Him, and this can occur only through the illumination¹⁶ and enlightenment produced by the Holy Spirit.¹⁷ Spiritual things can be communicated only through spiritual means,¹⁸ and the Holy Spirit is Whom God employs for this purpose. Thus, for God, Who is Spirit, to make Himself known to man, His own divine nature is necessary to be possessed, so that what cannot be seen or perceived through physical sight, can be grasped through spiritual illumination. Ultimately, God has chosen to make Himself known through His Son,¹⁹ His

*they were sitting.*³ *And there appeared unto them cloven tongues like as of fire, and it sat upon each of them.*⁴ *And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance.*

II Cor. 1:21–22 Now he which stablisheth us with you in Christ, and hath anointed us, is God;²² *Who hath also sealed us, and given the earnest of the Spirit in our hearts.*

13 *John 14:26* *But the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you.*

Mark 13:11 *But when they shall lead you, and deliver you up, take no thought beforehand what ye shall speak, neither do ye premeditate: but whatsoever shall be given you in that hour, that speak ye: for it is not ye that speak, but the Holy Ghost.*

Luke 12:12 *For the Holy Ghost shall teach you in the same hour what ye ought to say.*

14 *I Cor. 2:14* *But 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.*

15 *John 4:24* *God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth.*

16 *Dan. 5:14* *I have even heard of thee, that the spirit of the gods is in thee, and that light and understanding and excellent wisdom is found in thee.*

17 *I John 2:10* *He that loveth his brother abideth in the light, and there is none occasion of stumbling in him.*

I Cor. 2:12 *Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the spirit which is of God; that we might know the things that are freely given to us of God.*

18 *I Cor. 2:11* *For what man knoweth the things of a man, save the spirit of man which is in him? even so the things of God knoweth no man, but the Spirit of God.*

19 *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.*

Word,²⁰ and His Spirit. It is through these three holy entities, which are all directly connected to the Father and part of His own divine nature, that God makes Himself known to the world.

I 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.

This verse teaches us that if men have not abided in Christ while on earth, then they will be ashamed at Christ's return to it. Thus, only those who actually abided in the Son of God, will possess confidence at His coming from heaven. Mere professors of religion will have no such internal spiritual assurance, even as all who have willfully chosen to go their own

way will realize the fateful consequence of their error.

The reasons for the sinners' shame when having to give account for the carnal lives they have lived, will be numerous:

1. They will be ashamed of their unbelief, which they once thought little of.²¹
2. They will learn that Jesus is exactly Who He said He was,²² and was never an impostor.
3. They will discover that a higher spiritual realm of God not only exists, but also rules and overrules all things worldly.
4. They will discover with alarm, that they now have to give account for their sin.²³

John 14:9 Jesus saith unto him, Have I been so long time with you, and yet hast thou not known me, Philip? he that hath seen me hath seen the Father; and how sayest thou then, Show us the Father?

Col. 1:15-20 Who is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of every creature: ¹⁶For 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: ¹⁷And he is before all things, and by him all things consist. ¹⁸And 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. ¹⁹For it pleased the Father that in him should all fulness dwell; ²⁰And, having made peace through the blood of his cross, by him to reconcile all things unto himself; by him, I say, whether they be things in earth, or things in heaven.

20 I Sam. 3:21 And the LORD appeared again in Shiloh: for the LORD revealed himself to Samuel in Shiloh by the word of the LORD.

21 John 3:18-19 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. ¹⁹And this is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil. II Thess. 2:10-12 And with all deceivableness of unrighteousness in them that perish; because they received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved. ¹¹And for this cause God shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie: ¹²That they all might be damned who believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness.

Heb. 3:12 Take heed, brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief, in departing from the living God. 22 John 6:35 And Jesus said unto them, I am the bread of life: he that cometh to me shall never hunger; and he that believeth on me shall never thirst.

John 8:12 Then spake Jesus again unto them, saying, I am the light of the world: he that followeth me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life.

John 10:7 Then said Jesus unto them again, Verily, verily, I say unto you, I am the door of the sheep.

John 8:58 Jesus said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Before Abraham was, I am.

John 10:11 I am the good shepherd: the good shepherd giveth his life for the sheep.

John 11:25 Jesus said unto her, I am the resurrection, and the life: he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live:

John 14:6 Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me.

John 15:1 I am the true vine, and my Father is the husbandman.

Acts 10:42 And he commanded us to preach unto the people, and to testify that it is he which was ordained of God to be the Judge of quick and dead.

Rom. 2:5 But after thy hardness and impenitent heart treasurest up unto thyself wrath against the day of wrath and revelation of the righteous judgment of God;

Rom. 14:10 But why dost thou judge thy brother? or why dost thou set at nought thy brother? for we shall all stand before the judgment seat of Christ.

5. Their lives will be seen to have been lived in vain, with no respect for the hereafter, and this will be recognized as a great unchangeable error.

6. They will be publicly ashamed for the carnal motives that led them, and the hidden and selfish desires they were governed by.²⁴

7. They will be distraught for believing lies over the truth, since now the truth will be made clearly visible to them.²⁵

8. They will learn that things they foolishly thought could be hidden from God, could not be, once Jesus reveals their true hearts.

9. Sinners will learn that the way to heaven was not nearly as broad as they had once hoped it would be.²⁶ But at this time, there will remain no means to reverse their previous decisions or the fact that they willingly rejected divine rule.

I John 2:29 If ye know that he is righteous, ye know that every one that doeth righteousness is born of him.

Righteous spiritual obedience is the true fruit of divine birth. Just as God is righteous, so those born of Him will seek to walk in His righteousness. Thus, pursuing God's righteousness is credible evidence of being born of God and being made a Son of God; this is because the new birth

gives a man the ability to walk righteously in order that he may keep God's commandments²⁷ while also gaining sufficient internal spiritual desire to remain faithful to God.²⁸ Because God has given His sons new spiritual hearts, pursuing righteousness will be their preferred way of living.

(Matthew Poole's Commentary, I John 2:29) do righteousness, which alone would evidence their Divine birth, since God hath no children destitute of his image, or who resemble him not.

I John 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.

No greater manifestation of divine love is revealed than when, by grace,²⁹ God enables previous sinners to become sons of God through Jesus Christ. It is this spiritual love that John directs his readers to *behold* and dwell upon so that they might more fully recognize the great act of grace that has been bestowed upon them. No emperor, ruler, conqueror, or king who has ever lived will exceed the glory given to God's true children. To be accounted as a son of God is the highest office, most exalted position, and greatest honor ever given to men, and it was only divine love that produced such a heavenly blessing. God has evidenced many other acts of grace and favor throughout the dispensa-

II Cor. 5:10 For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad.

24 Rom. 2:16 In the day when God shall judge the secrets of men by Jesus Christ according to my gospel.

25 Ps. 52:3 Thou lovest evil more than good; and lying rather than to speak righteousness. Selah.

26 Matt. 7:14 Because strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it.

27 Ezek. 36:26–27 A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you: and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you an heart of flesh. ²⁷And I will put my spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes, and ye shall keep my judgments, and do them.

28 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.

29 Eph. 2:5–8 Even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ, (by grace ye are saved;)⁶ And hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus:⁷ That in the ages to come he might shew the exceeding riches of his grace in his kindness toward us through Christ Jesus. ⁸For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God:

tions of the world.³⁰ Yet none compare to His grace in imparting heavenly sonship to those who through themselves could never be worthy of it.

I John 3:2 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.

Beloved, now are we the sons of God. In Christ's kingdom all are one in Him,³¹ and none are lesser than another. When any are saved, they receive the very same rights and privileges as all the other sons of God. This includes even Jesus' early apostles and disciples. Thus, John emphasizes the wonderful revelation that those he is writing to now will fully share in the same honor as himself. This is evidenced by the apostle's repetition of *we* in regard to not only his own hope at Christ's return, but also all God's new sons, to whom he is addressing his epistle.

And it doth not yet appear what we shall be. There is a certain mystery regarding the transformation that will occur to saints at Christ's appearance. *It doth not yet appear.* It is not visible; it cannot be seen. The secret things belong unto the Lord,³² and this is one of those hidden secrets. Perhaps what awaits the saint is beyond

present human understanding, so that even if God attempted to reveal it to us, the reality would far exceed anything we could ever grasp. Thus, just as the full extent of Christ's own glory remains a mystery, so also is the coming glory of what His people will be made to be through Him, likewise largely a mystery. Yea, it *doth not yet appear* what true Christians shall be, but only that they will be made to share in the same glorious image as their Savior.

When he shall appear, we shall be like him. No truth more exemplifies the incredible oneness that Christ shares with His people than the fact that at His return they will be made to share in the same glorious and spiritual image as Himself. Ultimately Christ became flesh so that we could be made spiritual beings through His death, resurrection, and ascension. By Jesus taking on our physical nature, we are afforded the glorious opportunity to share in His own eternal and spiritual nature. What God has made the Head³³ to be will be passed on to each and every one of His members.³⁴ As the Head is, so will the body be. Thus, when Jesus Christ is fully glorified and made known to the world, then will the full and complete glorification of His people also be made visible. They will be as He is, even as He became as they were. And this will be practically

30 Matt. 4:24 *And his fame went throughout all Syria: and they brought unto him all sick people that were taken with divers diseases and torments, and those which were possessed with devils, and those which were lunatick, and those that had the palsy; and he healed them.*

Luke 9:11 *And the people, when they knew it, followed him: and he received them, and spake unto them of the kingdom of God, and healed them that had need of healing.*

Luke 9:16-17 *Then he took the five loaves and the two fishes, and looking up to heaven, he blessed them, and brake, and gave to the disciples to set before the multitude. ¹⁷And they did eat, and were all filled: and there was taken up of fragments that remained to them twelve baskets.*

31 Eph. 2:14 *For he is our peace, who hath made both one, and hath broken down the middle wall of partition between us;*

32 Deut. 29:29 *The secret things belong unto the LORD our God: but those things which are revealed belong unto us and to our children for ever, that we may do all the words of this law.*

33 Col. 1:18 *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.*

Col. 2:10 *And ye are complete in him, which is the head of all principality and power:*

34 John 17:22 *And the glory which thou gavest me I have given them; that they may be one, even as we are one: Rom. 8:17 *And if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ; if so be that we suffer with him, that we may be also glorified together.**

Eph. 2:6 *And hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus:*

demonstrated when all those chosen by the Son of God are made to share in the same heavenly image as Himself.

See him as he is. The believer's promised glorification is expressly linked to the sight of his Savior. Scripture does not contain a more beautiful revelation than this, the revelation that when believers observe the glorified Lord Jesus, at His return in glory, they will at that very moment, be changed into His own glorious image.³⁵

*(Barnes' Notes on the Bible, I John 3:2) For we shall see him as he is—*Which it would be impossible we should do if we were not like him. Or rather, as perhaps the apostle chiefly means, the great privilege being granted us, of seeing him as he is, the sight of him will transform us into his likeness.

The Book of Romans reveals that the whole of creation both waits and anticipates the future revealing of the sons of God. *For the earnest expectation of the creature waiteth for the manifestation of the sons of God* (Rom. 8:19). A new heaven and earth will emerge, in which holiness and righteousness will dwell.³⁶ *And he that*

sat upon the throne said, Behold, I make all things new. And he said unto me, Write: for these words are true and faithful (Rev. 21:5). Commentators differ as to what the creature spoken of in Romans rightfully refers to. One school of thought is that the reference is to the new creation formed in the Christian at conversion. Romans 7 speaks of the conflict between the old and new nature in the Christian,³⁷ which lasts until a total transformation of his body has taken place.³⁸ Another more embraced interpretation is that the creature spoken of is all created things, the entire realm of God's creation. In truth, both interpretations are valid, and both can be believed; thus, we need not throw one out, in order to maintain confidence in the other. This is simply because the liberty that the Christian will experience at Christ's second coming will simultaneously be felt in the whole of creation. Hence, both the saint, and the fallen world around him, will be changed and readied for the ushering in of the kingdom of God. Practically, all must be made new for the spiritual reign of God's Son to commence.³⁹ And just as there will be a new world order, so will the entirety

35 I Cor. 15:52 *In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed.*

Phil. 3:21 *Who shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body, according to the working whereby he is able even to subdue all things unto himself.*

36 II Pet. 3:13 *Nevertheless we, according to his promise, look for new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness.*

37 Rom. 7:14–25 *For we know that the law is spiritual: but I am carnal, sold under sin. ¹⁵For that which I do I allow not: for what I would, that do I not; but what I hate, that do I. ¹⁶If then I do that which I would not, I consent unto the law that it is good. ¹⁷Now then it is no more I that do it, but sin that dwelleth in me.*

¹⁸*For I know that in me (that is, in my flesh,) dwelleth no good thing: for to will is present with me; but how to perform that which is good I find not. ¹⁹For the good that I would I do not: but the evil which I would not, that I do. ²⁰Now if I do that I would not, it is no more I that do it, but sin that dwelleth in me. ²¹I find then a law, that, when I would do good, evil is present with me. ²²O I delight in the law of God after the inward man: ²³But I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members. ²⁴O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death? ²⁵I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord. So then with the mind I myself serve the law of God; but with the flesh the law of sin.*

38 I Cor. 15:48–49 *As is the earthy, such are they also that are earthy: and as is the heavenly, such are they also that are heavenly. ⁴⁹And as we have borne the image of the earthy, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly.* II Cor. 5:1 *For we know that if our earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God, an house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens.*

39 II Cor. 5:17 *Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new.*

Rev. 21:1 *And I saw a new heaven and a new earth: for the first heaven and the first earth were passed away; and there was no more sea.*

of creation be liberated from its present increasing decay and corruption.⁴⁰

The promise that God will make all things new, is not itself fully new, as Isaiah prophesied of this coming event. *For, behold, I create new heavens and a new earth: and the former shall not be remembered, nor come into mind* (Isa. 65:17).

Once believers are made completely new spiritual beings through Christ's power, they will no longer remember their previous and painful earthly troubles. The past will be over, forgotten, erased, and so totally removed from the consciousness of the saved, that even if they looked for previous sorrow, it could not be found. With a new spiritual world, and new heavenly bodies, saints will create new memories, hopes, and affections fit for their new heavenly environment. All former things will have passed, and all things shall be

made new. *And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away* (Rev. 21:4).

(Benson Commentary, Rev. 21:4) From the first mention of him that sat upon the throne, (Revelation 5:1) this is the first speech which is expressly ascribed to him. [Rev. 5:1 *And I saw in the right hand of him that sat on the throne a book written within and on the backside, sealed with seven seals.*] He [God in Christ] is the author of this second, as he was of the first creation; and he commands these things to be *written* for the edification, support, and consolation of his people, with a full assurance of their certainty and importance. *And he*—The same person; *saith to me, Write*—Namely, as follows: *These words are true and faithful*—This includes all that went before. The apostle seems again to have ceased writing, being overcome with ecstasy and the voice of him that spake.

Rev. 21:5 *And he that sat upon the throne said, Behold, I make all things new. And he said unto me, Write: for these words are true and faithful.*

Isa. 65:17 *For, behold, I create new heavens and a new earth: and the former shall not be remembered, nor come into mind.*

⁴⁰ Rom. 8:21 *Because the creature itself also shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God.*

I John 3:3–19

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

WHEN men draw near to Christ by faith, a bond is created between them and Christ. This divine act creates a union between the sinner and the Lord. The hope of being united with the Savior and sharing in His heavenly image ultimately purifies the soul.

Whatever a man sets his mind on and journeys toward, directly affects the inside of his soul. This is especially true when the hope is spiritual and the focus is becoming like the Savior. *And as we have borne the image of the earthy, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly* (I Cor. 15:49).

(Barnes' Notes on the Bible, I Cor. 15:49)
The argument here is, that the connection which is formed between the believer and the Saviour is as close as that which subsisted between him and Adam; and as that connection with Adam involved the certainty that he would be subjected to pain, sin, sickness, and death, so the connection with Christ involves the certainty that he will like him be free from sin, sickness, pain, and death, and like him will have a body that is pure, incorruptible, and immortal.

Even as he is pure. The glory and beauty of the Savior reside in His purity. It is not just that Jesus did not sin¹ and was able to resist the sinful urges of His body,² but rather in Him is no sin. He was sinless, holy, and without blemish or defect. *For such an high priest became us, who is holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners, and made higher than the heavens* (Heb. 7:26). It is this purity, this cleanliness of heart and soul, that Christ passes on to those who believe on Him. *Now ye are clean through the word which I have spoken unto you* (John 15:3). What begins on earth with Christ's words cleansing the soul, and the Holy Spirit enlightening the heart,³ will be finished when Jesus returns from heaven to completely transform the saint's body.⁴ In short, the ministry of the Son of God is purposed to bring repentant sinners into Christ's own divine image and purity. Just as *He is pure*, so shall all those who believe upon Him, by His power, share in His own divine, celestial, and eternal holy nature.

I John 3:4 Whosoever committeth sin transgresseth also the law: for sin is the transgression of the law.

Sin is contrary to divine law, and in opposition to God's holy nature. It prompts,

1 I Pet. 2:22 *Who did no sin, neither was guile found in his mouth:*

2 Heb. 4:15 *For we have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin.*

3 Eph. 1:17–18 *That the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give unto you the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of him: ¹⁸The eyes of your understanding being enlightened; that ye may know what is the hope of his calling, and what the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints,*

4 I Cor. 15:49–52 *And as we have borne the image of the earthy, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly.*

⁵⁰*Now this I say, brethren, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God; neither doth corruption inherit incorruption. ⁵¹Behold, I shew you a mystery; We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, ⁵²In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed.*

Phil. 3:21 *Who shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body, according to the working whereby he is able even to subdue all things unto himself.*

I John 3:2 *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.*

leads, influences, and even controls men to do as they desire and not as God wills. If a man remains indifferent to his sin and perceives no harm in breaking God's commandments, you can be sure that Jesus Christ is not his Lord.⁵ One can recognize those born of God and filled with His Spirit, by their obedience and subjection to the gospel, and surely not their rejection and breaking of it.

(*Barnes' Notes on the Bible*, 1 John 3:4) It seems evident that the apostle is here combating an opinion which then existed that people might sin, and yet be true Christians, 1 John 3:7;⁶ and he apprehended that there was danger that this opinion would become prevalent. On what ground this opinion was held is unknown. Perhaps it was held that all that was necessary to constitute religion was to embrace the doctrines of Christianity, or to be orthodox in the faith; perhaps that it was not expected that people would become holy in this life, and therefore they might indulge in acts of sin; perhaps that Christ came to modify and relax the law, and that the freedom which he procured for them was freedom to indulge in whatever people chose; perhaps that, since Christians were heirs of all things, they had a right to enjoy all things; perhaps that the passions of people were so strong that they could not be restrained, and that therefore it was not wrong to give indulgence to the propensities with which our Creator has formed us. All these opinions have been held under vari-

ous forms of Antinomianism, and it is not at all improbable that some or all of them prevailed in the time of John.

Antinomianism is "the belief that Christians, by virtue of divine grace, are freed not only from biblical law and church-prescribed behavioral norms, but also from all moral law."⁷ Historians have noted, "The ideas of antinomianism had been present in the early church, and some Gnostic heretics believed that freedom from law meant freedom for license."⁸

While it is true that a person is saved by grace through faith,⁹ it is equally true that neither grace nor faith allows men to continue in sin and break divine law. Grace gives no man the right to sin; if it did, it would totally negate the purpose of God imparting to men His Spirit, Who infuses recipients with the strength, power, and ability to flee iniquity in order to keep God's will and statutes. *A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you: and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you an heart of flesh. And I will put my spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes, and ye shall keep my judgments, and do them* (Ezek. 36:26–27). When a man is truly saved the Holy Spirit will convict him of sin¹⁰ and surely not give him license to continue living in it. The

5 Matt. 7:20–23 *Wherefore by their fruits ye shall know them.* ²¹Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven. ²²Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name have cast out devils? and in thy name done many wonderful works? ²³And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity.

Luke 13:25–27 *When once the master of the house is risen up, and hath shut to the door, and ye begin to stand without, and to knock at the door, saying, Lord, Lord, open unto us; and he shall answer and say unto you, I know you not whence ye are:* ²⁶Then shall ye begin to say, We have eaten and drunk in thy presence, and thou hast taught in our streets. ²⁷But he shall say, I tell you, I know you not whence ye are; depart from me, all ye workers of iniquity.

6 1 John 3:7 *Little children, let no man deceive you: he that doeth righteousness is righteous, even as he is righteous.*

7 "Antinomianism Definition & Meaning." *Dictionary.com*, Dictionary.com, <https://www.dictionary.com/browse/antinomianism>.

8 "Antinomianism." *Encyclopedia Britannica*, Encyclopedia Britannica, Inc., <https://www.britannica.com/topic/antinomianism>.

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

10 John 16:8 *And when he is come, he will reprove the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment:*

Holy Spirit gives men the desire, power of will, and inward determination to do God's will in their lives, not the freedom to abandon it. Only this spiritual transformation of the heart proves salvation has been granted and a new son of God has been born.

(*Barnes' Notes on the Bible*, I John 3:4) (a) all sin is a violation of the law of God, I John 3:4;

(b) the very object of the coming of Christ was to deliver people from sin, I John 3:5;

(c) those who are true Christians do not habitually sin, I John 3:6;

(d) those who sin cannot be true Christians, but are of the devil, I John 3:8;¹¹ and,

(e) he who is born of God has a germ or principle of true piety in him, and cannot sin, I John 3:9.¹²

I John 3:5 And ye know that he was manifested to take away our sins; and in him is no sin.

Jesus was manifested to take away sin and free men from its dreadful end,¹³ not to provide the carnal freedom for men to practice it.¹⁴ If men profess to follow the Son of God while excusing themselves of sin, and therefore continue living in it, they never were truly Christ's followers. *In [Christ] is no sin*; thus, if a man claims a close relationship with the Savior, yet endorses sin, he only confirms that he never actually possessed true piety. The Lord Jesus came to remove sin from the

world,¹⁵ not to provide for any the right to continue living in it. Consequently, if a man gives himself to sin, Christ is certainly not his Lord. There is no ambiguity in this truth, and to think otherwise only proves that one does not know the Son of God, or the real reason and purpose for His sacrifice.

(*Barnes' Notes on the Bible*, I John 3:5) *To take away our sins*—The essential argument here is, that the whole work of Christ was designed to deliver us from the dominion of sin, not to furnish us the means of indulgence in it; and that, therefore, we should be deterred from it by all that Christ has done and suffered for us. He perverts the whole design of the coming of the Saviour who supposes that his work was in any degree designed to procure for his followers the indulgences of sin, or who so interprets the methods of his grace as to suppose that it is now lawful for him to indulge his guilty passions.

(*Geneva Study Bible*, I John 3:5) An argument taken from the material cause of our salvation: Christ in himself is most pure, and he came to take away our sins, by sanctifying us with the Holy Spirit, therefore whoever is truly a partaker of Christ, does not give himself to sin, and on the contrary, he that gives himself to sin does not know Christ.

Jesus came into the world to deliver people from their sin. *And she shall bring forth a son, and thou shalt call his name Jesus: for he shall save his people from their sins* (Matt. 1:21). No man will be drawn to the Son of God until he first desires

11 I John 3:8 *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.*

12 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.*

13 Rom. 6:23 *For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.* Rom. 7:5 *For when we were in the flesh, the motions of sins, which were by the law, did work in our members to bring forth fruit unto death.*

Jas. 1:15 *Then when lust hath conceived, it bringeth forth sin: and sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death.*

14 Heb. 9:26 *For then must he often have suffered since the foundation of the world: but now once in the end of the world hath he appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself.*

15 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.*

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

forgiveness and spiritual cleansing. And though it is possible to remain in religion and continue in sin, it is impossible to truly abide in Christ, and not despise sin wherever it exists, either in ourselves or the world around us.

I John 3:6 Whosoever abideth in him sinneth not: whosoever sinneth hath not seen him, neither known him.

The language of the apostle's argument could not be any clearer: *Whosoever abideth in him [Jesus Christ] sinneth not: whosoever sinneth hath not seen him.* One cannot infer from this that true Christians never sin; they do, and they must continually and humbly seek forgiveness for doing so.¹⁶ But although Christians may, and will, stumble and not consistently obey God's will in their lives, as they spiritually mature, an increased walk in holiness will occur. *No one who lives in him keeps on sinning. No one who continues to sin has either seen him or known him* (I John 3:6 NIV). It is impossible to truly abide in the Son of God yet continue to sin, impossible to have seen Christ or known Him, if sin remains in control of one's life. Mere professors of Christ, yes; true believers of Christ, never. Whenever men habitually sin while claiming relationship with the Son, they prove themselves false professors of the faith. He who believes he has the right to sin while practicing his religion, undoubtedly proves the falseness of it. Those who truly abide in the Savior will depart from a life of sin, where those who merely profess His name will not. Ultimately, any who practice sin cannot be true believers of the Son of God, though they will often claim they are.¹⁷

Jesus said He would send the Comforter, the Holy Spirit, and He would reprove and convict the world of sin. Hence, none can truly possess God's divine nature, while still making allowances, giving excuses, and providing shallow reasons for continuing in sin. The Spirit of God, Whom the Son of God imparts to true believers, the Holy Spirit, will not allow it. *And when he is come, he will reprove the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment* (John 16:8).

(Barnes' Notes on the Bible, John 16:8) He will reprove—The word translated "reprove" means commonly to demonstrate by argument, to prove, to persuade anyone to do a thing by presenting reasons. It hence means also to convince of anything, and particularly to convince of crime. This is its meaning here. He will convince or convict the world of sin. That is, he will so apply the truths of God to men's own minds as to convince them by fair and sufficient arguments that they are sinners, and cause them to feel this. This is the nature of conviction always.

I John 3:7 Little children, let no man deceive you: he that doeth righteousness is righteous, even as he is righteous.

It is a falsity and a lie that a man can remain in sin and still be a true son of God. The apostle therefore warns his readers not to be deceived by such a perversion of the truth.

(Barnes' Notes on the Bible, I John 3:7) Let no man deceive you—That is, in the matter under consideration; to wit, by persuading you that a man may live in sinful practices, and yet be a true child of God. From this it is clear that the apostle supposed there were some who would attempt to do this, and it

¹⁶ *I John 1:9 If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.*

¹⁷ *John 8:39–42 They answered and said unto him, Abraham is our father. Jesus saith unto them, If ye were Abraham's children, ye would do the works of Abraham. ⁴⁰But now ye seek to kill me, a man that hath told you the truth, which I have heard of God: this did not Abraham. ⁴¹Ye do the deeds of your father. Then said they to him, We be not born of fornication; we have one Father, even God. ⁴²Jesus said unto them, If God were your Father, ye would love me: for I proceeded forth and came from God; neither came I of myself, but he sent me.*

was to counteract their arts that he made these positive statements in regard to the nature of true religion.

Whenever men sin and do not think it is abhorrent to God, sin has deceived them.¹⁸ Moreover, willful sinners, after they have rejected Christ's doctrine, will look for corrupt teachers who will allow them to continue living in error.¹⁹ A false teacher or false prophet is one who has taken on the title of speaking for the Son of God, yet in truth has no real relationship with Him, or His divine ministry to save men. *For 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 (Jude 1:4).*

(Barnes' Notes on the Bible, Jude 1:4) *For there are certain men crept in unawares*—The apostle now gives “reason” for thus defending the truth, to wit, that there were artful and wicked men who had crept into the church, pretending to be religious teachers, but whose doctrines tended to sap the very foundations of truth. The apostle Peter, describing these same persons, says, “who privily shall bring in damnable heresies.” See the notes, 2 Peter 2:1.²⁰ Substantially the same idea is expressed here by saying that they “had crept in unawares;” that is, they had come in “by stealth;” they had not come by a bold and open avowal of their real sentiments. They professed to teach the Christian religion, when in fact they denied some of

its fundamental doctrines; they professed to be holy, when in fact they were living most scandalous lives. In all ages there have been men who were willing to do this for base purposes.

The devil is not above wrongly dividing the truth and seeking to pervert it in an attempt to lead people toward spiritual rebellion.²¹ He attempted this with the Savior, and he will attempt to do the same with any seeking to do God's will in his life today.²²

I John 3:8 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.

He that committeth sin is of the devil; for the devil sinneth from the beginning. How a man walks, not what he says, reveals whom he is of. By continuing in sin, sinners prove themselves to have aligned themselves with the very one who has sinned since the very beginning. The language used is strong, because the truth is certain: *he that committeth sin is of the devil.*

(Jamieson-Fausset-Brown Bible Commentary, I John 3:8) *He that committeth sin is of the devil*—in contrast to “He that doeth righteousness,” 1Jo 3:7. He is a son of the devil (1Jo 3:10; Joh 8:44).²³ John does not, however,

18 Rom. 7:11 *For sin, taking occasion by the commandment, deceived me, and by it slew me.*

19 II Tim. 4:3 *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;*

20 II Pet. 2:1 *But there were false prophets also among the people, even as there shall be false teachers among you, who privily shall bring in damnable heresies, even denying the Lord that bought them, and bring upon themselves swift destruction.*

21 II Tim. 2:15 *Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.*

22 Matt. 4:6–7 *And saith unto him, If thou be the Son of God, cast thyself down: for it is written, He shall give his angels charge concerning thee: and in their hands they shall bear thee up, lest at any time thou dash thy foot against a stone.* Jesus said unto him, *It is written again, Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God.*

23 I John 3:10 *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.*

John 8:44 *Ye are of your father the devil, and the lusts of your father ye will do. He was a murderer from the beginning, and abode not in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaketh a lie, he speaketh of his own: for he is a liar, and the father of it.*

say, “born of the devil,” as he does “born of God,” for “the devil begets none, nor does he create any; but whoever imitates the devil becomes a child of the devil by imitating him, not by proper birth” [Augustine, Ten Homilies on the First Epistle of John, Homily 4.10]. From the devil there is not generation, but corruption [Bengel].

Men who walk in sin may not be directly born of the devil in the way God’s children are born of God, but they are still of his company and move and operate no differently than him. Indeed, imposters of the faith have as much of a relationship with sin, and the devil, as true believers of Jesus Christ have with the Holy Spirit and their Father.

(Barnes’ *Notes on the Bible*, I John 3:8) (1) That all who commit sin, even true believers, so far as they are imperfect, in this respect resemble Satan, and are under his influence, since sin, just so far as it exists at all, makes us resemble him.

(2) all who habitually and characteristically sin are of the devil. This latter was evidently the principal idea in the mind of the apostle. His object here is to show that those who sinned, in the sense in which it would seem some maintained that the children of God might sin, could have no real evidence of piety, but really belonged to Satan.

For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that he might destroy the works of the devil. The devil seeks to influence people through subtle spiritual deception to sin against God. This is made visible in Genesis 3:1, where the scripture reveals that *the serpent was more subtil than any beast of the field.*²⁴

24 Gen. 3:1 Now the serpent was more subtil than any beast of the field which the LORD God had made. And he said unto the woman, Yea, hath God said, Ye shall not eat of every tree of the garden?

25 Gen. 3:15 And I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel.

26 Rev. 20:10 And the devil that deceived them was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone, where the beast and the false prophet are, and shall be tormented day and night for ever and ever.

27 Exod. 8:1 And the LORD spake unto Moses, Go unto Pharaoh, and say unto him, Thus saith the LORD, Let my people go, that they may serve me.

(*Jamieson-Fausset-Brown Bible Commentary*, Gen. 3:1) The woman knew that there were spirits, and did freely and frequently converse with spirits or angels, who also did appear in some visible shape to her, which seems very credible; because in the following ages not only the angels, but even the blessed God himself, did in that manner converse with men. And as they afterwards used to appear in the shape of men, why might not one of them now appear to her, and converse with her, in the shape of a beautiful serpent? And why might she not freely and securely discourse with this which she thought to be one of those good angels, to whose care and tuition both she and her husband were committed? For I suppose the fall of the angels was yet unknown to her; and she thought this to be a good spirit, otherwise she would have declined all conversation with an apostate spirit.

The overall theme of the Bible, beginning in Genesis²⁵ and culminating in the book of Revelation,²⁶ is that God’s true Christ, the promised seed of the woman, will crush Satan’s head. To do so, Christ shall destroy every plan, scheme, and malicious intention emanating from, and worked by the devil.

He who is bound by sin cannot serve God. Thus, to truly serve the Lord, the power of sin must be broken by a greater power than it. Moses’ act of delivering Israel from Egypt’s Pharaoh foreshadowed Christ freeing men from sin. Just as Moses emancipated and liberated the Israelites from Pharaoh’s power, so they could serve the Lord,²⁷ Jesus frees His people from sin’s power, enabling them the spiritual freedom to both worship and serve their heavenly Father. *And having spoiled principalities and powers, he made*

a shew of them openly, triumphing over them in it (Col. 2:15).

(Barnes' Notes on the Bible, Col. 2:15) The Christian is a freeman. His great Captain has subdued all his enemies, and we should not allow them again to set up their dark empire over our souls.

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.

No one, not one man, woman, or child, can continue practicing and living in sin, if they are truly born of God.²⁸ This is a practical impossibility and the apostle seeks to make this very important revelation abundantly clear. Once someone is born again,²⁹ has been filled with God's Holy Spirit, and has made Jesus Christ their Lord, then he cannot, and will not, continue in sin. This is because God's spiritual seed has regenerated and transformed the heart, and now righteousness is more preferred to be walked in, than either sin or unrighteousness. *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 (John 14:17).* This seed of God, the Holy Spirit, is the very nature of God.³⁰ Because God

is eternal, the Spirit He imparts to those who believe upon Him is eternal. *For you have been born again, but not to a life that will quickly end. Your new life will last forever because it comes from the eternal, living word of God (1 Pet. 1:23 NLV).* Ultimately men receive regeneration and the new birth through faith in the living³¹ and written Word of God.³² Through God's Holy Word and through His resurrected Son, the Lord gives to men His own divine and eternal spiritual nature. Thus, saints and sinners are easily distinguishable by whether sin still retains power over their lives, or the Holy Spirit leads them to fulfill God's will for their lives. *For to be carnally minded is death; but to be spiritually minded is life and peace (Rom. 8:6).* For true Christians, continuing in sin is infeasible, undesirable, and loathsome. They cannot continue to sin once God and Christ have come and made their abode in the heart. Once regeneration occurs, sin's power is broken, and a new holy energy is imparted to the Christian, enabling a successful pursuit of first gaining and then maintaining personal communion and fellowship with the Lord.

I John 3:10 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.

²⁸ I John 5:18 *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.*

²⁹ John 3:3–8 *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. ⁴Nicodemus 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? ⁵Jesus 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. ⁶That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit. ⁷Marvel not that I said unto thee, Ye must be born again. ⁸The 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.*

³⁰ John 4:24 *God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth.*

³¹ John 1:1–5 *In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. ²The same was in the beginning with God. ³All things were made by him; and without him was not any thing made that was made. ⁴In him was life; and the life was the light of men. ⁵And the light shineth in darkness; and the darkness comprehended it not.*

John 1:14 And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth.

³² Jas. 1:21 *Wherefore lay apart all filthiness and superfluity of naughtiness, and receive with meekness the engrafted word, which is able to save your souls.*

Born of God

There are but two camps of people: those born of God, and those still the property of the god of this world.³³ To distinguish who is who, we need only observe if men pursue God's righteousness, or remain content to live a life governed by fleshly lusts.³⁴ He who pursues not righteousness is not of God; neither is he who continues in sin. Every tree is known by its fruit,³⁵ therefore, how a man lives, and what he pursues, reveal who he truly is.

(Jamieson-Fausset-Brown Bible Commentary, I John 3:9) To be begotten of God and to sin, are states mutually excluding one another. In so far as one sins, he makes it doubtful whether he be born of God.

(Barnes' Notes on the Bible, I John 3:10) In this the children of God are manifest ...—That is, this furnishes a test of their true character. The test is found in doing righteousness, and in the love of the brethren. The former he had illustrated; the latter he now proceeds to illustrate. The general idea is, that if a person is not truly a righteous person, and does not love the brethren, he cannot be a child of God.

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? (I John 4:20). It is impossible for men to claim that they love God, Whom they cannot see, if they do not love those born of God, whom they can see.

33 II Cor. 4:4 In whom the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them.

34 II Pet. 2:10 But chiefly them that walk after the flesh in the lust of uncleanness, and despise government. Presumptuous are they, selfwilled, they are not afraid to speak evil of dignities.

Jude 1:16 These are murmurers, complainers, walking after their own lusts; and their mouth speaketh great swelling words, having men's persons in admiration because of advantage.

Jude 1:18 How that they told you there should be mockers in the last time, who should walk after their own ungodly lusts.

35 Matt. 7:20 Wherefore by their fruits ye shall know them.

36 Mark 12:30 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.

37 Mark 12:31 And the second is like, namely this, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. There is none other commandment greater than these.

(Barnes' Notes on the Bible, I John 3:10) The general sense is, that brotherly love is essential to the Christian character, and that he who does not possess it cannot be a Christian.

Love, specifically love for the brethren, reveals if a man has been truly saved by the Son of God, or if he merely walks in the company of those who are.

I John 3:11 For this is the message that ye heard from the beginning, that we should love one another.

From the very first moment John was exposed to the ministry of God's Son, Jesus taught him to love. Jesus condensed the entire law of God into two great commandments: love God with all your heart, soul, mind, and strength,³⁶ and love your neighbor as yourself.³⁷ On these two commandments, the Lord states, hang the entirety of God's will for man. It was also this message—that followers of Jesus should love one another—that John heard Him speak from the beginning. It was Jesus Who taught John to love, and Jesus Who spoke this divine message from the beginning. *On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets* (Matt. 22:40).

(Barnes' Notes on the Bible, Matt. 22:40) Love to God and man comprehends the whole of religion, and to produce this has been the design of Moses, the prophets, the Saviour, and the apostles.

I John 3:12 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 brother's righteous.

The opposites of love are envy and hate, the very same devilish qualities that led Cain to murder and slay his natural-born brother, Abel. The evil spiritual influence that led Cain to envy Abel, and then murder him, originated in the devil.³⁸ *And Cain talked with Abel his brother: and it came to pass, when they were in the field, that Cain rose up against Abel his brother, and slew him* (Gen. 4:8).

*(Jamieson-Fausset-Brown Bible Commentary, Gen. 4:8) And Cain talked with Abel his brother—Under the guise of brotherly familiarity, he concealed his premeditated purpose till a convenient time and place occurred for the murder (1Jo 3:12; Jude 11).*³⁹

When men have no love for God and their fellow man, they will often resort to deceptive words to conceal their true inward condition. After Cain led his unsuspecting brother into a field, far away from where anyone could see his intentions, he then rose up and attacked him. Like Satan, Cain was subtle, appearing innocent and unthreatening, until he arose with vengeance to murder one better than himself. The Hebrew word for *slew* is #2026 *herag*, defined as “kill, slay, implying ruthless violence, especially private violence.”⁴⁰ No doubt the crime scene, which screamed of Abel’s blood being shed,⁴¹ revealed the true

character of his murderer. There existed no divine love in Cain, and this left the door wide open for envy and hate to fill his soul. Love will ultimately prevent sin,⁴² but in its absence, sin will often continue to grow until violence is the end result. When men do not obey Christ’s command to love,⁴³ there is no other path for them to follow, than that which is harmful not only to themselves, but, sadly, eventually to others as well.

Who was of that wicked one. There was no neutrality in Cain’s heart, no mere indifference to either good or evil. Instead, he fully and willingly consented to be led by his hate and to carry out the ultimate purpose of the wicked one.

(Barnes’ Notes on the Bible, I John 3:12) Who was of that wicked one—Of the devil; that is, he was under his influence, and acted from his instigation.

The cause of Cain’s hate lay in the fruitlessness and shallowness of his own corrupt and defective character. Such deficits of character often foster envy and hate towards the righteous, when men sense the absence of true goodness and virtue within themselves. Therefore, he who is unrighteous will often despise and hate those who are. In truth, when an evil man compares himself to a good man, it is difficult for him not to see his own lack of spiritual integrity. We observe this in

³⁸ John 8:44 *Ye are of your father the devil, and the lusts of your father ye will do. He was a murderer from the beginning, and abode not in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaketh a lie, he speaketh of his own: for he is a liar, and the father of it.*

John 10:10a *The thief cometh not, but for to steal, and to kill, and to destroy ...*

³⁹ I John 3:12 *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 brother's righteous.*

Jude 11 *Woe unto them! for they have gone in the way of Cain, and ran greedily after the error of Balaam for reward, and perished in the gainsaying of Core.*

⁴⁰ Brown-Driver-Briggs Hebrew and English Lexicon

⁴¹ Gen. 4:10 *And he said, What hast thou done? the voice of thy brother's blood crieth unto me from the ground.*

⁴² Rom. 13:10 *Love worketh no ill to his neighbour: therefore love is the fulfilling of the law.*

⁴³ Matt. 22:36–39 *Master, which is the great commandment in the law? ³⁷Jesus said unto him, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. ³⁸This is the first and great commandment. ³⁹And the second is like unto it, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself.*

Luke 10:27 *And he answering said, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy strength, and with all thy mind; and thy neighbour as thyself.*

the story of Saul, who envied David and sought to take his life.⁴⁴ In Abel, Cain's lack of genuine spirituality, love, and respect for God was exposed. Consequently, Cain hated Abel, and the fact that Abel's offering was accepted by the Lord, while his own was not. *And Abel, he also brought of the firstlings of his flock and of the fat thereof. And the LORD had respect unto Abel and to his offering: But unto Cain and to his offering he had not respect. And Cain was very wroth, and his countenance fell* (Gen. 4:4–5).

I John 3:13 Marvel not, my brethren, if the world hate you.

It should not be surprising that the world hates those called to Christ, since it also hated Christ before them.⁴⁵ Christians therefore should never think it an unnatural thing that an evil world that has rejected both the Father and the Son will not also despise those now born of them. *To the one we are the savour of death unto death; and to the other the savour of life unto life. And who is sufficient for these things?* (II Cor. 2:16).

(Barnes' Notes on the Bible, II Cor. 2:16) *We are the savour of death unto death*—We are the occasion of deepening their condemnation, and of sinking them lower into ruin. The expression used here means literally, "to the one class we bear a death-conveying odor leading to their death"—a savor, a smell which, under the circumstances, is destructive to life, and which leads to death. Mr. Locke renders this: "To the one my preaching is of ill savor, unacceptable and offensive, by their rejecting whereof they draw death on themselves." Grateful as their labors were to God, and acceptable as would be their efforts,

whatever might be the results, yet Paul could not be ignorant that the gospel would in fact be the means of greater condemnation to many; see the notes on 2 Corinthians 2:15.⁴⁶ It was indeed by their own fault; yet wherever the gospel was preached, it would to many have this result.

I John 3:14 We know that we have passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren. He that loveth not his brother abideth in death.

Divine love appearing in the Christian's heart is proof that he has passed from death unto life. However, where divine love does not reside, neither does God's salvation. It is also worthy of note that love for the brethren confirms that a man has been declared righteous before God. Ultimately, no one can enter heaven, or be given eternal life, without first being made righteous.⁴⁷ The presence of divine love in the Christian, which is the work of the Holy Spirit, proves that righteousness has been imparted, and God's eternal life is now possessed.

(Jamieson-Fausset-Brown Bible Commentary, I John 3:14) *because we love the brethren*—the ground, not of our passing over out of death into life, but of our knowing that we have so. Love, on our part, is the evidence of our justification and regeneration, not the cause of them. Let each go to his own heart; if he find there love to the brethren, let him feel assured that he has passed from death unto life.

The divine qualities of love, joy, and peace, as well as the other fruits of the Spirit,⁴⁸ cannot exist in an unsaved man. These fruits of the Spirit, thus cannot either be

⁴⁴ I Sam. 18:6–16

⁴⁵ John 15:18 *If the world hate you, ye know that it hated me before it hated you.*

⁴⁶ II Cor. 2:15 *For we are unto God a sweet savour of Christ, in them that are saved, and in them that perish:*

⁴⁷ I Cor. 6:9–10 *Know ye not that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God? Be not deceived: neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor abusers of themselves with mankind,*

¹⁰ *Nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners, shall inherit the kingdom of God.*

⁴⁸ Gal. 5:22–23 *But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith,*

²³ *Meekness, temperance: against such there is no law.*

experienced, or enjoyed by those who have not the Spirit.

I John 3:15 Whosoever hateth his brother is a murderer: and ye know that no murderer hath eternal life abiding in him.

Though hate may not initially manifest itself on the outside, it is always seen by God on the inside.

(*Benson Commentary*, I John 3:15) Every degree of hatred being a degree of the same temper which moved Cain to murder his brother.

(*Barnes' Notes on the Bible*, I John 3:15) *Whosoever hateth his brother is a murderer ...* The private malice, the secret grudge, the envy which is cherished in the heart, is murderous in its tendency, and were it not for the outward restraints of human laws, and the dread of punishment, it would often lead to the act of murder. The apostle does not say that he who hates his brother, though he does not in fact commit murder, is guilty to the same degree as if he had actually done it; but he evidently means to say that the spirit which would lead to murder is there, and that God will hold him responsible for it.

The ministry of the Son of God is proposed to reveal the secret things in men's hearts, and ultimately, to judge them whether they be found good or evil. *In the day when God shall judge the secrets of men by Jesus Christ according to my gospel* (Rom. 2:16).

(*Benson Commentary*, Rom. 2:16) *when God shall judge the secrets of men*—Not only their outward actions, good and evil, which are manifest to all men, but their most secret and

hidden ones, with their internal desires and designs, their intentions, purposes, schemes, contrivances, with the various workings of their passions, imaginations, and thoughts; for he will bring every work into judgment, with every secret thing, whether it be good, or whether it be evil, Ecclesiastes 12:14;⁴⁹ will bring to light the hidden things of darkness, and will make manifest the counsels of the heart, 1 Corinthians 4:5.⁵⁰

Jesus considers hating one's brother the same as murder. Just as eternal life does not abide in any murderer, so it cannot abide in anyone who hates the brethren. While love proves the presence of eternal life, hate establishes its absence. Practically, there are but two base emotions at the core of what men think of the brethren: love or hate. No murderer has eternal life, and those who hate are considered by the Lord to be completely estranged from Him.

I John 3:16 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.

The love found in Jesus Christ stands in direct contrast to a hate-filled world. Cain's hate prompted him to take the life of his brother, while Christ's love motivated Him to sacrifice His own life for others. Cain and Jesus Christ are therefore contrasting examples of what hate will result in, and what true love will ultimately produce. Through Christ laying down His life for the brethren, divine love became visible. In Jesus Christ we have the very essence of God's love. This is why a man manifests Jesus' love, when he is willing to give his life to God, as Je-

⁴⁹ Eccl. 12:14 *For God shall bring every work into judgment, with every secret thing, whether it be good, or whether it be evil.*

⁵⁰ I Cor. 4:5 *Therefore judge nothing before the time, until the Lord come, who both will bring to light the hidden things of darkness, and will make manifest the counsels of the hearts: and then shall every man have praise of God.*

sus first did,⁵¹ for the benefit of others.⁵² This is the standard of true discipleship, to both love, and lay down our lives for the brethren, even as our Savior has done for us. By laying down our lives in service to God and for those also born of Him, believers manifest the love of Christ, and Christ's own sacrifice is revealed in them.

I John 3:17 But whoso hath this world's good, and seeth his brother have need, and shutteth up his bowels of compassion from him, how dwelleth the love of God in him?

One of the chief signs that men love is their willingness to give up their earthly possessions when a brother is in need. All love gives—and no true love can ignore those in need. If our hearts remain closed to the lack of those around us, especially the brethren, it is certain that God's love has no real place in us. Where true need is, love responds,⁵³ especially when those in need, are born of God.

I John 3:18 My little children, let us not love in word, neither in tongue; but in deed and in truth.

(Geneva Study Bible, I John 3:18) Christian charity stands not in word but in deed, and proceeds from a sincere affection.

If a man says he loves, it means little to nothing if he is unwilling to sacrifice for that love. True love therefore will be evidenced by deed. And it is this form of divine love that reveals if the love professed is genuine and true—simply because if there are no good deeds, then it is certain that there is no true love held.

(Matthew Poole's Commentary, I John 3:18)

It is a vain thing to make verbal pretences of love, without any real proof of it.

I John 3:19 And hereby we know that we are of the truth, and shall assure our hearts before him.

Only by sincerely walking in love can the believer prove to himself and others that he abides in the truth. Whereas a hypocrite has no assurance that he is of God and has been saved by Him, the man who genuinely loves does. It is also only by doing the Word, not merely hearing it,⁵⁴ that the internal conscience is quieted and the assurance that we are God's children is confirmed. By walking in divine love our own hearts are assured that we have become the true children of God. By Christ's love being manifest in us, the world will come to know that we are genuinely true followers of the Son of God.⁵⁵ It is love that characterized His earthly walk and will be manifested in those truly saved by Him.

51 Rom. 5:7–8 For scarcely for a righteous man will one die: yet peradventure for a good man some would even dare to die. ⁸But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us. I Pet. 2:21 For even hereunto were ye called: because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that ye should follow his steps:

52 John 10:11 I am the good shepherd: the good shepherd giveth his life for the sheep.

John 15:13 Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends.

I John 3:16 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.

53 Matt. 14:14 And Jesus went forth, and saw a great multitude, and was moved with compassion toward them, and he healed their sick.

Matt. 15:32, 36–37 Then Jesus called his disciples unto him, and said, I have compassion on the multitude, because they continue with me now three days, and have nothing to eat: and I will not send them away fasting, lest they faint in the way. ... And he took the seven loaves and the fishes, and gave thanks, and brake them, and gave to his disciples, and the disciples to the multitude. ³⁷And they did all eat, and were filled: and they took up of the broken meat that was left seven baskets full.

Mark 6:34 And Jesus, when he came out, saw much people, and was moved with compassion toward them, because they were as sheep not having a shepherd: and he began to teach them many things.

54 Jas. 1:22 But be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving your own selves.

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

To love as Christ loved, brings assurance to the heart, and confidence that we are born of Him.

(Matthew Poole's Commentary, I John 3:19)
And shall assure our hearts before him; so shall our hearts be quieted, and well satisfied concerning our states God-ward.

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.

Men cannot hide or indulge in sin, especially in the heart, and maintain peace and fellowship with God. A condemning heart also does nothing to inspire greater confidence in the Lord; in fact, it does quite the opposite.¹

(Barnes' Notes on the Bible, 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 3:9,² 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.

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

To properly walk with God, our love must be pure, our faith unfeigned, and our conscience free of convicting and condemning sin. The condition of the heart greatly affects men's faith and trust in God. To

properly grow and develop in the Christian faith, we must so live that our heart does not accuse us or condemn of sin, but rather commends us for living rightly before the Lord.³ Though most do not know it, a good conscience is as critical to true piety as love and faith. Possessing these three godly characteristics is the ultimate end of God's will for the Christian. *Now the end of the commandment is charity out of a pure heart, and of a good conscience, and of faith unfeigned* (1 Tim. 1:5). If our faith and love are insincere and have no real depth, our conscience will inform us. Hence, the conscience plays a very significant and key role in leading men's souls toward God's salvation, by exposing potential spiritual insincerity or impurity where it exists.

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 result that the pursuit of righteousness, a good conscience, and inward purity will produce. It is that God will answer all prayers that align themselves with His will, teaching us that how a man lives directly affects whether or not God hears and answers his prayers. Therefore, if men choose not to keep God's commandments, then they should not be so presumptuous to believe that God will hear their prayers.

(Barnes' Notes on the Bible, I John 3:22) We can have no hope that he will hear us unless we do so live as to please him.

1 II Cor. 7:10 *For godly sorrow worketh repentance to salvation not to be repented of: but the sorrow of the world worketh death.*

2 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.*

3 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;)*

How foolish are men to falsely believe that they can live as they will, and sin as they desire, and that God will still hear them in their time of need! The truth is that God will not hear or come to the aid of anyone who cherishes iniquity in the heart.⁴ *If I regard iniquity in my heart, the LORD will not hear me* (Ps. 66:18). As long as sinners embrace sin, the Lord will not hear them. One of the fatal consequences of choosing to live a life of sin is that God refuses to hear any who do so.⁵ Sinners, therefore, should never be so naive to believe that God will still hear them in their time of need, if they have continued to resist divine will. Scripture repeatedly confirms that a sinner's plea will not be heard without repentant prayer and acknowledgment of sin, with also no attempt to defend it or hide it from God.⁶ Thus for God to hear men's petitions, they must keep His commandments and do those things that are pleasing in His sight. Only by living this way can they be assured that

what is asked of God will be both heard and answered.

God hears and has promised to come to the aid of the righteous,⁷ but not to any who harbor sin in their hearts. The Lord's ears are open to the righteous, but His face is divinely set against any who engage in evil. *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* (I Pet. 3:12).

A truly righteous man should never fear that God will not hear his prayers or come to his aid in time of need.⁸ What God has declared will be done for the righteous, you can be certain it will be done.

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.

4 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.*

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

6 II Chrn. 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.*

Jnh. 3:6-9 *For word came unto the king of Nineveh, and he arose from his throne, and he laid his robe from him, and covered him with sackcloth, and sat in ashes. 7 And he caused it to be proclaimed and published through Nineveh by the decree of the king and his nobles, saying, Let neither man nor beast, herd nor flock, taste any thing: let them not feed, nor drink water: 8 But let man and beast be covered with sackcloth, and cry mightily unto God: yea, let them turn every one from his evil way, and from the violence that is in their hands. 9 Who can tell if God will turn and repent, and turn away from his fierce anger, that we perish not? I Sam. 12:13 Now therefore behold the king whom ye have chosen, and whom ye have desired! and, behold, the Lord hath set a king over you.*

Luke 15:17-24 *And when he came to himself, he said, How many hired servants of my father's have bread enough and to spare, and I perish with hunger! 18 I will arise and go to my father, and will say unto him, Father, I have sinned against heaven, and before thee, 19 And am no more worthy to be called thy son: make me as one of thy hired servants. 20 And he arose, and came to his father. But when he was yet a great way off, his father saw him, and had compassion, and ran, and fell on his neck, and kissed him. 21 And the son said unto him, Father, I have sinned against heaven, and in thy sight, and am no more worthy to be called thy son. 22 But the father said to his servants, Bring forth the best robe, and put it on him; and put a ring on his hand, and shoes on his feet: 23 And bring hither the fatted calf, and kill it; and let us eat, and be merry: 24 For this my son was dead, and is alive again; he was lost, and is found. And they began to be merry.*

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

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

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.*

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.⁹ Though two things are mentioned, *that we should believe on the name of his Son Jesus Christ and love one another, as he gave us commandment*, the apostle reveals that God has combined both into one commandment. Therefore, believing in the Son of God and love for the brethren are eternally bound.¹⁰ Obeying one leads 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 also be genuine and sincere love for those born of Him.¹¹ Hence, whenever there is faith in the Savior, there will be a corresponding love for the saved.¹² This is undoubtably true regarding those created in Christ's image, who have been made to share in the same Spirit of God.¹³

(Jamieson-Fausset-Brown Bible Commentary, 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.

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. Those who keep Christ's commandments dwell in Christ, and He in them. Jesus promised His followers that if He was loved and His words were kept, then He and the Father would come and live within their hearts. By the presence of the Holy Spirit in the heart, the saved are assured and comforted that God in Christ lives within them.¹⁴ *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* (John 14:23). In the Old Testament, God dwelt among His people.¹⁵ Now Jesus promis-

9 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: ³⁰And 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. ³¹And the second is like, namely this, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. There is none other commandment greater than these.*

10 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,*

11 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.

12 I John 2:9–10 *He that saith he is in the light, and hateth his brother, is in darkness even until now. ¹⁰He that loveth his brother abideth in the light, and there is none occasion of stumbling in him.*

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.*

13 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:*

14 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:*

15 Exod. 29:45–46 *And I will dwell among the children of Israel, and will be their God. ⁴⁶And 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.*

es that both the Father and the Son will come and make their abode within them.

Once the Holy Spirit enters a believer's heart, a spiritual oneness is created between the believer, the Father, and the Son. It is this oneness that Jesus possessed with God, that He prayed could also be shared with those who believed upon His name. *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* (John 17:20–21). For the true Christian, God is much more than simply around him; He is in all respects living within him.¹⁶ Consequently, sinners are saved not when they enter churches, but only when the Father and Son, in the presence of the Holy Spirit, come to live, abide, and dwell within them.

(Ellicott's Commentary for English Readers, 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 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.

And hereby we know that he abideth in us, by the Spirit which he hath given us. The Christian knows that God dwells in him through the Spirit of God living within. Because of the Spirit's inward presence and influence, those saved are brought to know that they are of God, and that God dwells in them. This is directly due to

the Holy Spirit's presence in their hearts, which internally testifies to possessing true relationship with God. The Holy Spirit also allows believers to cry, *Abba, Father*, something slaves, and those still in bondage, were never allowed to do. *And because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father* (Gal. 4:6).

(Barnes' Notes on the Bible, Gal. 4:6) Abba, Father—See the note at Romans 8:15.¹⁷ 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.

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 professes to come in God's name. All spirits, and all who present themselves as being sent by God, should be tried, simply because a vast number of *false prophets are gone out* and operate in the world. Not all spirits are holy. Neither are all men who profess to speak by the Spirit of God actually of Him. The apostle seeks to make this essential truth abundantly clear, simply because false ministries in the Christian faith have abounded throughout its inception, and many have been deceived by those who, though they claimed relationship with God, actually had none. Hence, if

¹⁶ Rom. 8:10 *And if Christ be in you, the body is dead because of sin; but the Spirit is life because of righteousness.*

¹⁷ 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. 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:*

¹⁷ 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.*

absent the Spirit of Christ¹⁸ and the ability to discern the true nature of both good and evil spirits,¹⁹ those searching for God can easily confuse that which has not been genuinely sent by God, as having come from Him. Sadly, if men listen to and trust these counterfeit spirits, who falsely claim they are of the Lord, even the elect can be deceived. *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* (II Cor. 11:3). The primary purpose of all spiritual deception in the church, brought by false ministries into her, is separating the believer from the simplicity of Jesus Christ and His gospel.

(Barnes' *Notes on the Bible*, 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 be employed to seduce them from simple attachment to Christ.

The Christian doctrine, which leads to the new birth²⁰ and eternal life,²¹ is a very simple one. It is a call to repent for sin,²² believe in the Son of God,²³ and be baptized by Him with the Holy Spirit. *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 2:38). In contrast to this, false prophets and false teachers often stress what God will do for men, while at the same time completely ignoring what men need to do to be saved by God. In all false religion it is easily observed that man is the real center of it. And this will be seen by men being lovers of self more than lovers of

18 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.*

19 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; to another faith by the same Spirit; to another the gifts of healing by the same Spirit; 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: ¹¹But all these worketh that one and the selfsame Spirit, dividing to every man severally as he will.*

20 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: ¹³Which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.*

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

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

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.*

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

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

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

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.*

23 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.*

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.*

God.²⁴ Because also many mere professing believers are ruled by lust, they will seek out false teachers who will allow them to remain in it.²⁵

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: ³And 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.

A great debate arose among the Jews and early Christians as to the true nature of Jesus Christ: was Jesus actually born of God, and was He, God's promised Messiah? The actual debate centered around not mere doctrines of faith but the genuineness of the gospel's Author.²⁶ To be *antichrist* is to be against God's true Christ. Thus, he who rejects the Son rejects not only the Savior of this world but also the Ruler of the next.²⁷ *No man hath seen God at any time, the only begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared him* (John 1:18). Because Jesus, God's only begotten Son, revealed God to the world, it is impossible to reject Him and not also reject the Father, Who sent Him. Hence, to reject Christ's rule²⁸ and the power God has given His Son is

to reject the divine rule and authority of God Himself.²⁹

(*Benson Commentary*, 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.

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 ones who have been *overcome* are those listed as of *antichrist* in the previous verse. It is tempting to believe that because of the vast number of sinners who

24 II Tim. 3:2 *For men shall be lovers of their own selves, covetous, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy,*

25 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; ⁴And they shall turn away their ears from the truth, and shall be turned unto fables.*

26 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.*

27 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:*

28 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.*

Jude 1:4 *For 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.*

29 Matt. 28:18 *And Jesus came and spake unto them, saying, All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth. Matt. 11:27 All things are delivered unto me of my Father: and no man knoweth the Son, but the Father; neither knoweth any man the Father, save the Son, and he to whomsoever the Son will reveal him.*

John 3:31 *He that cometh from above is above all: he that is of the earth is earthly, and speaketh of the earth: he that cometh from heaven is above all.*

reject God, and the positions of power in the world they hold, that true saints are inferior to the evil forces around them. This is not true, simply because the Son of God lives within His people, and through Him they have been made more than conquerors.³⁰ Greater is Christ in the true believer, than the hosts of antichrists in the world. So powerful is the Spirit of God's Son, imparted to the saved, that by this Spirit they have been made greater³¹ than even him who presently rules this world.³²

(*Benson Commentary*, 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 apostasy, 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.

(*Barnes' Notes on the Bible*, 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.

The Christian is not made victorious by his own power. This could never be the case, since this would only lead to greater trust and confidence in self.³³ Rather, that which causes God's new sons to overcome the world lies in the strength of their Savior. This is a reality that every true Christian can attest to through personal experience, that because of God's presence in their lives, things that should have overcome and defeated them, in the end, neither did nor could.

A treasure, a very precious treasure, lives in the people of God. This treasure is the Holy Spirit, Who enables God to unleash His power in and for the Christian. *But we have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the excellency of the power may be of God, and not of us* (I Cor. 4:7). The excellency of the power manifested in the saint of God is vastly superior to any opposing evil power assembled against him. Victory is the Lord's, and due to God's own spiritual power, His people are themselves made to become victorious.³⁴ The believer's strength lies not in himself, but in the Lord. And though God's hands which deliver His people remain invisible, His power to deliver cannot be denied. The Lord is indeed the strength of His people. For this reason they need not to rely on their own strength and ability, but rather on He, Who is so much stronger than them. *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* (Ps. 28:8–9).

(*Benson Commentary*, Ps. 28:8) *The Lord is their strength*—That is, the strength of his people, mentioned in the next verse. *He is*

30 Rom. 8:37 *Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him that loved us.*

31 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.*

32 II Cor. 4:4 *In whom the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them.*

33 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!*

34 Rom. 8:37 *Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him that loved us.*

the saving strength—Hebrews *ישועות מעון*, *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.

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

One of the distinguishing marks of antichrists is that this world is their true home. It is the world that they are most comfortable in, and they inwardly seek nothing beyond it. Just as Christ's people hear His voice,³⁵ so do those of the world hear all the various voices of antichrists. And like with Israel of old,³⁶ sinners will often look for weak and compromising leaders, who will allow them to do as they will.

(*Barnes' Notes on the Bible*, 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.

Whomever a man listens to or enjoys the company of reveals who he really is. If it is the world, then he is of it; if it is God,

then he is of Him. By this simple criterion the children of God and the children of the devil are manifest. Observe also that if any have made themselves friends with this world, they have by choice become God's enemy. *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* (Jas. 4:4). When a man is a friend of anything, especially that which is evil and rebellious toward the Lord, he reveals kinship with it. This devilish friendship provides evidence that all antichrists are worthy of divine judgment. Because of their choosing and loving a sinful and evil world more than their Creator, they are promised to suffer the same dreadful fate as it.

(*Ellicott's Commentary for English Readers*, 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.

³⁵ John 10:27 *My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me:*

³⁶ Exod. 32:1–9 *And when the people saw that Moses delayed to come down out of the mount, the people gathered themselves together unto Aaron, and said unto him, Up, make us gods, which shall go before us; for as for this Moses, the man that brought us up out of the land of Egypt, we wot not what is become of him.*

² *And Aaron said unto them, Break off the golden earrings, which are in the ears of your wives, of your sons, and of your daughters, and bring them unto me. ³And all the people brake off the golden earrings which were in their ears, and brought them unto Aaron. ⁴And he received them at their hand, and fashioned it with a graving tool, after he had made it a molten calf: and they said, These be thy gods, O Israel, which brought thee up out of the land of Egypt. ⁵And when Aaron saw it, he built an altar before it; and Aaron made proclamation, and said, To morrow is a feast to the LORD. ⁶And they rose up early on the morrow, and offered burnt offerings, and brought peace offerings; and the people sat down to eat and to drink, and rose up to play. ⁷And the LORD said unto Moses, Go, get thee down; for thy people, which thou broughtest out of the land of Egypt, have corrupted themselves: ⁸They have turned aside quickly out of the way which I commanded them: they have made them a molten calf, and have worshipped it, and have sacrificed thereunto, and said, These be thy gods, O Israel, which have brought thee up out of the land of Egypt. ⁹And the LORD said unto Moses, I have seen this people, and, behold, it is a stiffnecked people:*

The Christian's call, given by God through Jesus Christ, is a call to separate himself from all things worldly.³⁷ *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* (I John 2:15). No man can serve two masters,³⁸ just as no man can love an evil and sinful world that rejects divine rule, and at the very same time hold any true affection for a divine Being Who demands it.

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 observing who hears the gospel of Jesus Christ, the Spirit of truth and the spirit of error are made visible. No man can turn a deaf ear to the truth, and still be of God, which means that those who are truly of the Lord will readily, and with great joy, hear the gospel of Christ once it is presented to them. The primary means by which this gospel is spread and proclaimed to the world is through the gift ministries that the Son of God has both given to and placed in the church. *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 (Eph. 4:11–13).

(*Ellicott's Commentary for English Readers*, Eph. 4:11) *He gave*.—In the original “He” is emphatic—He and He alone, as the ascended Head of humanity. The word “gave,” instead of the more obvious word *set*, or *appointed* (used in 1 Corinthians 12:28),³⁹ is, of course, suggested by Ephesians 4:8.⁴⁰ They who are ministers of His gifts are themselves gifts from Him to the Church.

It is Christ's will that He be made more fully known to the church. In the form of apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors, and teachers, this knowledge of Christ is spread to those called to heaven through Christ.

(*Barnes' Notes on the Bible*, 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 1:19–21.⁴¹

37 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.*

38 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.*

39 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.*

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

41 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.*

Born of God

Whether a man will hear the true gospel of Jesus Christ or not reveals what spirit or spirits are influencing him.

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.

The apostle places great importance on love because of its direct relationship to God. *Love is of God* reveals that all love has its source in Him. From the Father flows all the love experienced and present in creation. Divine love, therefore, is the primary test to determine whom God has saved and made His true sons, and those He has not. There is no such thing as a true Christian who lacks divine love, simply because once born of God, believers are taught by Him to love. *But as touching brotherly love ye need not that I write unto you: for ye yourselves are taught of God to love one another* (I Thess. 4:9). So natural will love be in the true Christian's heart, that there will be found no great need to teach him to love. Because God is love,⁴² He births spiritual children, in His own image, whose main desire is to love. Nothing also gives a man more confidence that he is of the truth, than when God's love abounds in his heart. By this he is assured that he is born of God and has accurately come to know Him.

*(Barnes' Notes on the Bible, 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 children that therefore he loves God, or is born again.

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

*(Jamieson-Fausset-Brown Bible Commentary, I John 4:8) knoweth not—*Greek aorist: not only knoweth not now, but never knew, has not once for all known God.

Love is that standard that reveals who in this world actually knows the Lord and who does not—who is born again, and has been regenerated by the Christ Spirit, and who has not. Thus, neither religious attendance nor biblical study provides insight as to who possesses a true knowledge of the Lord; only His own divine love can prove this.

A man could live his entire life, give to the poor every possession he possessed, manifest the gift of prophecy, and even perform miracles and wonders in Christ's name—yet without love he will be both judged and accounted by God as nothing. *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* (I Cor. 13:2). It is love that determines a man's true worth, and if a man does not have this divine fruit both in his heart, and in his life, he is by all heavenly standards viewed and accounted by God as nothing.

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: ²⁰For the wrath of man worketh not the righteousness of God. ²¹Wherefore lay apart all filthiness and superfluity of naughtiness, and receive with meekness the engrafted word, which is able to save your souls.

⁴² *I John 4:8 He that loveth not knoweth not God; for God is love.*

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.

There is not anything more precious than life, and nothing reveals divine generosity and goodness more, than when eternal life is imparted to the sinner. By this act of compassion and mercy, the true benevolent nature of God is made known to the world. Thus, whenever repentant sinners are forgiven and spiritual regeneration occurs,⁴³ divine love is both seen and 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 possess love for those who love us, or have done something to merit good being done for them. It is quite another thing when God's love and the gift of salvation⁴⁴ are given to sinners unworthy of love. *But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us* (Rom. 5:8).

Long before men loved God, He loved them. Many also have wondered why God would absolve men of sin. The answer lies in the divine goodness and spiritual generosity of a loving God. Thus, transgressors are forgiven of sin,⁴⁵ saved, and made righteous before God,⁴⁶ simply because God is love. There is no other reason for these acts of grace beyond the reality that it is because of divine love that sinners are cleansed from their sin, and given a new heavenly standing before God.

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

Once we have been made partakers of divine love, and God's love has been shown to us, then it should be very easy to share this love with others. Freely we have received, and just as freely we should give.⁴⁷ Because God's love was freely given to us, we should likewise freely love, as He has loved us.

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.

43 Tit. 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; Ezek. 36:26–27 A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you: and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you an heart of flesh. ⁴⁵And I will put my spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes, and ye shall keep my judgments, and do them.

II Cor. 5:17 Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new.

44 II Cor. 9:15 Thanks be unto God for his unspeakable gift.

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

John 4:10 Jesus answered and said unto her, If thou knewest the gift of God, and who it is that saith to thee, Give me to drink; thou wouldest have asked of him, and he would have given thee living water.

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.

45 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;

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;

46 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.

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.

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

Born of God

(Barnes' Notes on the Bible, 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.

No man is more assured that God truly dwells within him, than he who has inward spiritual proof that God's love is being perfected in him. It is thus by loving one another that God's love is perfected in Christians, and they are made to know that God actually dwells in them.

(Matthew Poole's Commentary, 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.

Love is meant to increase in the believer,⁴⁸ and as it does, faith in God's existence will likewise increase. By manifesting divine love to the world, it is proven that God's holy presence remains in it.

⁴⁸ *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:*

I John 4:13–5:12

I John 4:13 Hereby know we that we dwell in him, and he in us, because he hath given us of his Spirit.

THE greatest proof of God's existence in the human heart is the presence of the Holy Spirit within it. The presence of the Lord's Spirit in a believer proves not only that he dwells in God but also that God dwells in him.¹ *And because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father* (Gal. 4:6). The greatest gift that God gives is the Holy Spirit, Whose source is God Himself and is a portion of His own holy nature. The spiritual authentication therefore that every Christian possesses, that proves he has true relationship with Christ, is that the Spirit of God lives within him. But if any have not been given the Holy Spirit through Christ, then it is certain that they are not of God, and God does not consider them as His own. *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* (Rom. 8:9).

(Benson Commentary, Rom. 8:9) *Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ*—Thus residing in him, and governing him, whatever he may pretend; *he is none of his*—Not a disciple or member of Christ; not a Christian; not in a state of salvation.

The evidence that a man dwells in God (or does not) and is also God's child (or is not) is his having been given the Spirit of God. By this we can see that it is the Spirit's presence in a man, or lack of, that reveals his true standing and relationship with God. Where the Holy Spirit has been given through belief in the Son of God, God dwells; where the Holy Spirit has not, He does not.

(Barnes' Notes on the Bible, I John 4:13) *Hereby know we that we dwell in him*—Here is another, or an additional evidence of it.

Because he hath given us of his Spirit—He has imparted the influences of that Spirit to our souls, producing "love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith," etc., Galatians 5:22–23. It was one of the promises which the Lord Jesus made to his disciples that he would send the Holy Spirit to be with them after he should be withdrawn from them, John 14:16–17, John 14:26; John 15:26; John 16:7,² and one of the clearest evidences which we can have that we are the children of God, is derived from the influences of that Spirit on our hearts.

The Holy Spirit given through belief in Jesus Christ is the great Witness that a man has been saved by God, without which no man should either assume or claim he has any true relationship with God.

¹ John 6:56 *He that eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, dwelleth in me, and I in him.*

John 14:17 *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.*

² John 14:16–17 *And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you for ever; ¹⁷Even 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.*

John 14:26 *But the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you.*

John 15:26 *But when the Comforter is come, whom I will send unto you from the Father, even the Spirit of truth, which proceedeth from the Father, he shall testify of me:*

John 16:7 *Nevertheless I tell you the truth; It is expedient for you that I go away: for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you; but if I depart, I will send him unto you.*

I John 4:14 And we have seen and do testify that the Father sent the Son to be the Saviour of the world.

Because the apostle John personally observed Jesus Christ in both His earthly and resurrected forms, and was given the Holy Spirit through Christ,³ he could openly testify to the truth that Jesus is the Savior of the world. The power of the Lord's ministry in John's own life confirmed Christ's true identity.⁴ Yet it was not simply the apostle John who was an eyewitness of Jesus' deity but also all Jesus' other disciples. Hence, John states, *we have seen and do testify that the Father sent the Son to be the Saviour of the world.*

(Jamieson-Fausset-Brown Bible Commentary, I John 4:14) The internal evidence of the indwelling Spirit (1Jo 4:13) is corroborated by the external evidence of the eye-witnesses to the fact of the Father having "sent His Son to be the Savior of the world."

I John 4:15 Whosoever shall confess that Jesus is the Son of God, God dwelleth in him, and he in God.

The Greek word for *confess* is #3670 *homologeó*. It is defined by *Strong's Concordance* as "to speak the same, to agree." *HELPS Word-studies* defines the word, "properly, to voice the same conclusion, i.e. agree ('confess'); to profess (confess) because in full agreement; to align with

(endorse)." The agreement that must take place that Jesus is the Son of God is with God and Whom He, God, has declared Jesus to be. That which undeniably confirmed that Jesus is the Son of God was His resurrection from the dead.⁵

Whosoever shall confess that Jesus is the Son of God. No greater promise could ever be made, nor any promised reward could ever be given, regarding what true faith in the Son of God will produce—the Lord Himself coming to abide where previously only sin and self did. He therefore who confesses Jesus as his Lord, just as God has declared Him to be, will have the Lord's own holy presence come and abide within him.⁶ Although death has power over all those only physically born, it did not over Jesus, Who shares the same holy nature and divine nature as God and Who is Himself a Holy Spirit. *And declared to be the Son of God with power, according to the spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead* (Rom. 1:4).

(Barnes' Notes on the Bible, Rom. 1:4) The act of raising him from the dead designated him, or constituted him the Son of God. It was such an act as in the circumstances of the case showed that he was the Son of God in regard to a nature which was not "according to the flesh."

Jesus' fleshly birth is what revealed Him as the "Son of man." Jesus' spiritual birth,⁷

3 John 20:19–22 Then the same day at evening, being the first day of the week, when the doors were shut where the disciples were assembled for fear of the Jews, came Jesus and stood in the midst, and saith unto them, Peace be unto you. 20 And when he had so said, he shewed unto them his hands and his side. Then were the disciples glad, when they saw the Lord. 21 Then said Jesus to them again, Peace be unto you: as my Father hath sent me, even so send I you. 22 And when he had said this, he breathed on them, and saith unto them, Receive ye the Holy Ghost:

4 Rom. 1:4 And declared to be the Son of God with power, according to the spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead:

5 Rom. 1:3–4 Concerning his Son Jesus Christ our Lord, which was made of the seed of David according to the flesh; 4 And declared to be the Son of God with power, according to the spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead:

6 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.

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.

7 Matt. 1:18–20 Now the birth of Jesus Christ was on this wise: When as his mother Mary was espoused to Joseph, before they came together, she was found with child of the Holy Ghost. 19 Then Joseph her husband,

coupled with His manifestations of divine power and His resurrection from the dead, confirmed Jesus as the Son of God. Once He was raised from the dead, all doubt that could have remained in those who were previously exposed to Jesus and might have remained curious of His spiritual ministry was removed by His resurrection from the dead.⁸ The gospel does not hide from this reality, nor does it shy away from the fact that if Christ is not risen, then every element of Christianity is undoubtedly vain. If Christ be not raised, then all belief in God is nothing more than human imagination and vain speculation.⁹ Simply put, if Christ is not risen, man has no hope of anything beyond this earthly existence and his very short time on the earth. But if Jesus has been—as God’s Word and the Holy Spirit attest Him to be—risen from the dead,¹⁰ then an indescribable heavenly reality and spiritual world awaits those who have believed on God’s Son. Where previously

there existed only darkness for all men, now *the true light now shineth*.¹¹

I John 4:16 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.

Here is the second truth that confirms if a man dwells in God and God dwells in him. The first was stated in the previous verse, in which confession of Christ produces the Lord coming into the heart. Now, along with confession of the Son of God as Lord of one’s life is the added revelation that those who *dwelleth in love* dwell in God and He in them.

And we have known and believed the love that God hath to us. It is one thing to hear of God’s love. It is quite another thing to be brought to know it. No man also will deeply love the Lord until he is exposed to the divine and spiritual love that God has for the sinner. Since it is love that

*being a just man, and not willing to make her a public example, was minded to put her away privily.*²⁰ *But while he thought on these things, behold, the angel of the Lord appeared unto him in a dream, saying, Joseph, thou son of David, fear not to take unto thee Mary thy wife: for that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Ghost.* 8 *Matt. 28:8–10 And they departed quickly from the sepulchre with fear and great joy; and did run to bring his disciples word.* ⁹ *And as they went to tell his disciples, behold, Jesus met them, saying, All hail. And they came and held him by the feet, and worshipped him.* ¹⁰ *Then said Jesus unto them, Be not afraid: go tell my brethren that they go into Galilee, and there shall they see me.*

John 20:19–20 Then the same day at evening, being the first day of the week, when the doors were shut where the disciples were assembled for fear of the Jews, came Jesus and stood in the midst, and saith unto them, Peace be unto you. ²⁰ *And when he had so said, he shewed unto them his hands and his side. Then were the disciples glad, when they saw the LORD.*

Acts 1:3 To whom also he shewed himself alive after his passion by many infallible proofs, being seen of them forty days, and speaking of the things pertaining to the kingdom of God:

9 I Cor. 15:14 And if Christ be not risen, then is our preaching vain, and your faith is also vain.

10 Matt. 28:5–6 And the angel answered and said unto the women, Fear not ye: for I know that ye seek Jesus, which was crucified. ⁶ *He is not here: for he is risen, as he said. Come, see the place where the Lord lay.* *Mark 16:6 And he saith unto them, Be not affrighted: Ye seek Jesus of Nazareth, which was crucified: he is risen; he is not here: behold the place where they laid him.*

Luke 24:6–7 He is not here, but is risen: remember how he spake unto you when he was yet in Galilee, ⁷ *Saying, The Son of man must be delivered into the hands of sinful men, and be crucified, and the third day rise again.*

I Cor. 15:3–4 For I delivered unto you first of all that which I also received, how that Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures; ⁴ *And that he was buried, and that he rose again the third day according to the scriptures:*

Phil. 3:10 That I may know him, and the power of his resurrection, and the fellowship of his sufferings, being made conformable unto his death;

I Pet. 1:3 Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which according to his abundant mercy hath begotten us again unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead,

11 I John 2:8 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.

covers a multitude of sins,¹² and love that alone can produce their removal, repentant sinners will be drawn to Him Who is Himself purely love. It is also the love of God that gives sinners hope of ultimately being forgiven by God.

I John 4:17 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.

If Christ's people pursue and walk in Christ's love,¹³ they can be assured that they will have nothing to fear in the day of His judgment. The Greek word for boldness is #3954 *parrésia*. HELPS Word-studies defines it as "properly, confidence (bold resolve), leaving a witness that something deserves to be remembered." Obeying Christ's command to love¹⁴ produces great confidence in the believer of being of His fold and escaping God's divine wrath¹⁵ at Christ's return in judgment. *Because he hath appointed a day, in the which he will judge the world in righteousness by that man whom he hath ordained; whereof he hath given assurance unto all men, in that he hath raised him from the dead* (Acts 17:31). Obeying Christ's commandments to love God and love his neighbor¹⁶ will allow the believer to approach the tribunal of the Son of God with the spiritual confidence that he has lived in obedience to Christ and His will for his life. Ultimately, it will be only those

who have genuinely pursued and walked in Christ's love who will remain confident and unafraid at His coming in judgment.

(Barnes' Notes on the Bible, I John 4:17) That we may have boldness in the day of judgment—... The idea is, that he who has true love to God will have nothing to fear in the day of judgment, and may even approach the awful tribunal where he is to receive the sentence which shall determine his everlasting destiny without alarm.

Because as he is, so are we in this world— That is, we have the same traits of character which the Saviour had, and, resembling him, we need not be alarmed at the prospect of meeting him.

I John 4:18 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.

There is no fear in love, since perfect love casts out all fear of God and any anxiety of being judged by Him. Yet if fear of divine judgment remains, this is strong evidence that love also remains an unfinished product in the Christian. Thus, only when love has fully grown and achieved its full purpose in the Christian will he suffer no more alarm or anxiety in having to face the Savior.

*(Barnes' Notes on the Bible, I John 4:18) But perfect love casteth out fear—*That is, love

12 I Pet. 4:8 *And above all things have fervent charity among yourselves: for charity shall cover the multitude of sins.*

13 I John 2:6 *He that saith he abideth in him ought himself also so to walk, even as he walked.*

I John 3:16 *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.*

14 Mark 12:29–30 *And Jesus answered him, The first of all the commandments is, Hear, O Israel; The Lord our God is one Lord. ³⁰And 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.*

Luke 10:26–27 *He said unto him, What is written in the law? how readest thou? ²⁷And he answering said, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy strength, and with all thy mind; and thy neighbour as thyself.*

15 Rom. 5:9 *Much more then, being now justified by his blood, we shall be saved from wrath through him.*

16 Matt. 22:36–40 *Master, which is the great commandment in the law? ³⁷Jesus said unto him, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. ³⁸This is the first and great commandment. ³⁹And the second is like unto it, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. ⁴⁰On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets.*

that is complete, or that is allowed to exert its proper influence on the soul. As far as it exists, its tendency is to deliver the mind from alarms. If it should exist in any soul in an absolutely perfect state, that soul would be entirely free from all dread in regard to the future. ...

He that feareth, is not made perfect in love—He about whose mind there lingers the apprehension of future wrath, shows that love in his soul has not accomplished its full work. Perhaps it never will on any soul until we reach the heavenly world, though there are many minds so full of love to God, as to be prevailingly delivered from fear.

I John 4:19 We love him, because he first loved us.

The source of all divine love is God.¹⁷ It is because God first loved man that men have come to love Him. Consequently, if any have deep fondness and love for the Father, they can rest assured that the reason for this spiritual affection is their first being loved by Him. And although not all men will respond to God's love by loving God back in return, those purposed to be saved through Christ will.

(Jamieson-Fausset-Brown Bible Commentary, I John 4:19) We love him, because he first loved us—This passage is susceptible of two explanations; either.

(1) that the fact that he first loved us is the “ground” or “reason” why we love him, or.

(2) that as a matter of fact we have been brought to love him in consequence of the love which he has manifested toward us, though the real ground of our love may be the excellency of his own character.

¹⁷ I John 4:8 *He that loveth not knoweth not God; for God is love.*

¹⁸ 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.*

John 6:46 *Not that any man hath seen the Father, save he which is of God, he hath seen the Father.*

Col. 1:15 *Who is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of every creature:*

(Matthew Poole's Commentary, I John 4:19) His is the fountain love, ours but the stream: his love the inducement, the pattern, and the effective cause of ours.

I John 4:20 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?

If a man professes love for God while hating those born of Him, he is unquestionably a liar and has borne false witness concerning his faith. Moreover, no one can love God, Who cannot be seen,¹⁸ if he does not love those born of Him, who can be seen. Ultimately, one who is truly born again and has become a true child of God cannot hate, simply because it is completely contrary to the divine and holy nature imparted to him. To hate any brother proves that there cannot be, nor ever has been, any sincere love for the Lord. He who hates knows not God, nor does God consider him as His own.

(Jamieson-Fausset-Brown Bible Commentary, I John 4:20) If we do not love the brethren, the visible representatives of God, how can we love God, the invisible One, whose children they are?

I John 4:21 And this commandment have we from him, That he who loveth God love his brother also.

This expressed commandment that he who loves God will love his brother has its source in the Son of God. John heard this truth from the Savior, and therefore he boldly asserts this very important revelation as having come from Jesus Christ. It was Christ Who taught John to love, and it was Christ Who revealed that those

who genuinely love God will love their brothers also.

(Barnes' Notes on the Bible, I John 4:21) And this commandment have we from him—That is, the command to love a brother is as obligatory as that to love God. If one is obeyed, the other ought to be also; if a man feels that one is binding on him, he should feel that the other is also; and he can never have evidence that he is a true Christian, unless he manifests love to his brethren as well as love to God.

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.

Whosoever believeth that Jesus is the Christ is born of God. To be begotten of God requires sincere faith that Jesus is the Christ. Through faith in the Son of God are men begotten of God. This is why not until there is true belief that Jesus is God's Son and Jesus is made Lord of one's life will being born again become available and spiritual regeneration be given.

And every one that loveth him that begat loveth him also that is begotten of him. John's previous argument was that if men love God, they will love their brothers; now he adds that if a man truly loves God, he will love all those begotten of Him. This undoubtedly includes loving Jesus Christ, the only begotten Son of God. Thus, if a man genuinely adores, cherishes, and embraces the Father, he will possess the same love and affection for the Son. There is ultimately no separation between true love for God and all those born of Him.

For he who truly loves God will, with all spiritual certainty, love all those begotten of Him.

I John 5:2 By this we know that we love the children of God, when we love God, and keep his commandments.

(Jamieson-Fausset-Brown Bible Commentary, I John 5:2) As our love to the brethren is the sign and test of our love to God, so (John here says) our love to God (tested by our "keeping his commandments") is, conversely, the ground and only true basis of love to our brother.

First, as the apostle stated, those who possess the Spirit of God dwell in God and He in them.¹⁹ Second, it has been revealed that those who dwell in love dwell in God, and God in them.²⁰ And now third, you can be assured that those who truly love God will keep His commandments. By these three spiritual realities—(1) possessing the Spirit of God, (2) dwelling in God's love (3) by keeping God's commandments—it is confirmed who has genuine relationship with the heavenly Father and who does not. Scripture also makes it abundantly clear that a mere profession of relationship with Christ is not enough²¹ if one lacks the Holy Spirit, lacks love for the brethren, or fails to keep Christ's commandments. Practically, there is no such thing as a disobedient Christian, a Christian who lacks divine love in his life, or a Christian who has not been regenerated through the power of the Holy Spirit.²² What is also equally true is that if a man lacks even one of these spiritual qualities, he will not see the presence of the other two.

19 I John 4:13 *Hereby know we that we dwell in him, and he in us, because he hath given us of his Spirit.*

20 I John 4:16 *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.*

21 Matt. 7:22–23 *Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name have cast out devils? and in thy name done many wonderful works? ²³And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity.*

22 Tit. 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;*

I John 5:3 *For this is the love of God, that we keep his commandments: and his commandments are not grievous.*

All those who truly love God will keep His commandments—to this revelation the apostle adds that God’s commandments are neither difficult nor grievous to be borne. The Greek word for *grievous* is #926, *barus*. *Strong’s Concordance* defines the word as “heavy, weighty, burdensome, lit. and met; violent, oppressive.” *HELPS Word-studies* defines the word as “properly, heavy (weighty); (figuratively) what is grievous (burdensome), pressing down on a person with oppressive force. Such a grievous burden makes a person unable to function (enjoy free movement).” Sin weighs men down; obedience to divine law does not. The Lord puts nothing on a man that is not profitable for his life and good for his soul.²³ Thus, subjection to God’s will is always good for men and cannot be considered either burdensome or grievous in any manner.²⁴ Keeping God’s commandments also brings joy to the soul,²⁵ health to the body,²⁶ and prosperity to the life.²⁷ It is always good for believers

to keep God’s Word,²⁸ and doing so will lead them to possess the spiritually abundant life promised by Christ.²⁹

(*Barnes’ Notes on the Bible*, I John 5:3) *And his commandments are not grievous*—Greek, “heavy”—*βαρεῖαι bareiai*; that is, difficult to be borne as a burden. See Matthew 11:30.³⁰ The meaning is, that his laws are not unreasonable; the duties which he requires are not beyond our ability; his government is not oppressive. It is easy to obey God when the heart is right; and those who endeavor in sincerity to keep his commandments do not complain that they are hard. All complaints of this kind come from those who are not disposed to keep his commandments. Indeed, they object that his laws are unreasonable; that they impose improper restraints; that they are not easily complied with; and that the divine government is one of severity and injustice. But no such complaints come from true Christians. They find his service easier than the service of sin, and the laws of God more mild and easy to be complied with than were those of fashion and honor, which they once endeavored to obey. The service of God is freedom; the service of the world is bondage. No man ever yet heard a true Christian say that the laws of God,

23 Deut. 5:33 *Ye shall walk in all the ways which the LORD your God hath commanded you, that ye may live, and that it may be well with you, and that ye may prolong your days in the land which ye shall possess.* Deut. 29:9 *Keep therefore the words of this covenant, and do them, that ye may prosper in all that ye do.* Ps. 19:7 *The law of the LORD is perfect, converting the soul: the testimony of the LORD is sure, making wise the simple.*

Ps. 128:1 *Blessed is every one that feareth the LORD; that walketh in his ways.*

24 I John 5:3 *For this is the love of God, that we keep his commandments: and his commandments are not grievous.*

25 John 15:10–11 *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.* ¹¹*These things have I spoken unto you, that my joy might remain in you, and that your joy might be full.*

26 Prov. 4:20–22 *My son, attend to my words; incline thine ear unto my sayings.* ²¹*Let them not depart from thine eyes; keep them in the midst of thine heart.* ²²*For they are life unto those that find them, and health to all their flesh.*

27 Job 36:11 *If they obey and serve him, they shall spend their days in prosperity, and their years in pleasures.*

28 Ps. 112:1 *Praise ye the LORD. Blessed is the man that feareth the LORD, that delighteth greatly in his commandments.*

Luke 11:28 *But he said, Yea rather, blessed are they that hear the word of God, and keep it.*

I Kgs. 2:3 *And keep the charge of the LORD thy God, to walk in his ways, to keep his statutes, and his commandments, and his judgments, and his testimonies, as it is written in the law of Moses, that thou mayest prosper in all that thou doest, and whithersoever thou turnest thyself:*

Josh. 1:8 *This book of the law shall not depart out of thy mouth; but thou shalt meditate therein day and night, that thou mayest observe to do according to all that is written therein: for then thou shalt make thy way prosperous, and then thou shalt have good success.*

29 John 10:10b ... *I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly.*

30 Matt. 11:30 *For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light.*

requiring him to lead a holy life, were stern and “grievous.” But who has not felt this in regard to the inexorable laws of sin?

I John 5:4 For whatsoever is born of God overcometh the world: and this is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith.

(Barnes’ *Notes on the Bible*, I John 5:4) John makes this affirmation of all who are born of God. “Whatsoever,” or, as the Greek is, “Everything which is begotten of God,” (πᾶν τὸ γεγενημένον *pan to gegēnēmenon*;) meaning to affirm, undoubtedly, that “in every instance” where one is truly regenerated, there is this victory over the world.

This scripture makes two very important points: first, that *whosoever is born of God overcometh the world*, and second, that this victory is accomplished through *faith*. What this teaches us is that the world cannot overcome a true child of God, as it does to so many who have never been born of Him. True Christians, therefore, regardless of their state in the world, cannot be, nor ever should be, considered as victims of it. This is simply because those saved by Christ have, through their faith in Him, overcome the world. The Greek word for *overcome* is #3529 *niké*. *Strong’s Concordance* defines it as “victory.” HELPS Word-Studies defines the word as “conquest; a particular expression of victory, resulting from receiving (obeying) the faith Christ imparts (i.e. His inworked persuasion).” It is because of faith in the Son of God that a man is both born of God and overcomes the world, that is, made victorious over all its temptations, sin, and evil spiritual influences. Because of being born of God, the power the world once held over the sinner is broken, and a new power is imparted to him. By also being born of God,

Christians have overcome *the god of this world*,³¹ who has blinded so many to the light of the gospel and its ability to save. Ultimately, through faith in the Son of God, Christians will be made to reign over everything that once ruled them, even Satan himself.

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

This world has beaten down many a sinner, drained him of all strength, discouraged his soul, and ruined his life. It has not and cannot do the same thing to those who have believed upon God’s Son. By possessing faith in Jesus as the Christ, Christians are made to share in the same victory over the world as Christ.

(*Jamieson-Fausset-Brown Bible Commentary*, I John 5:5) For it is by believing: that we are made one with Jesus the Son of God, so that we partake of His victory over the world, and have dwelling in us One greater than he who is in the world (1 Jo 4:4).³² “Survey the whole world, and show me even one of whom it can be affirmed with truth that he overcomes the world, who is not a Christian, and endowed with this faith” [Episcopus in Alford].

I John 5:6 This is he that came by water and blood, even Jesus Christ; not by water only, but by water and blood. And it is the Spirit that beareth witness, because the Spirit is truth.

Many scholars have speculated regarding the true meaning of this verse, but as with most things, the simplest explanation is often the most satisfactory. Scripture states here that Jesus *came by water and blood*. Jesus’ earthly ministry began when John the Baptist baptized Him with wa-

31 *II Cor. 4:4 In whom the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them.*

32 *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.*

ter.³³ As for Christ coming to His people with *blood*, it should be remembered that just as His earthly ministry began with water, Jesus' true heavenly ministry, which saves men, began with His death and the shedding of His blood.³⁴ In both instances, at the beginning of Christ's earthly ministry (which began with water) and the commencement of His heavenly ministry (which began with blood), the Spirit of God gave supernatural testimony that Jesus is the Son of God. These two spiritual events—the heavenly baptism of Christ, when the Spirit descended upon Him in the form of a dove and a voice from heaven declared, *This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased*,³⁵ and Christ's resurrection from the dead,³⁶ testified to by the Spirit of holiness,³⁷ and through which He became a life-giving Spirit³⁸—proved that Jesus was all, and everything He ever claimed to be.³⁹

I John 5:7 For there are three that bear record in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost: and these three are one.

33 Matt. 3:13–17 *Then cometh Jesus from Galilee to Jordan unto John, to be baptized of him. ¹⁴But John forbad him, saying, I have need to be baptized of thee, and comest thou to me? ¹⁵And Jesus answering said unto him, Suffer it to be so now: for thus it becometh us to fulfil all righteousness. Then he suffered him. ¹⁶And Jesus, when he was baptized, went up straightway out of the water: and, lo, the heavens were opened unto him, and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove, and lighting upon him: ¹⁷And lo a voice from heaven, saying, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.*

34 Matt. 26:28 *For this is my blood of the new testament, which is shed for many for the remission of sins. Mark 14:24 And he said unto them, This is my blood of the new testament, which is shed for many.*

Luke 22:20 *Likewise also the cup after supper, saying, This cup is the new testament in my blood, which is shed for you.*

35 Matt. 3:16–17 *And Jesus, when he was baptized, went up straightway out of the water: and, lo, the heavens were opened unto him, and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove, and lighting upon him: ¹⁷and lo a voice from heaven, saying, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.*

36 Acts 2:24 *Whom God hath raised up, having loosed the pains of death: because it was not possible that he should be holden of it.*

Acts 5:30 *The God of our fathers raised up Jesus, whom ye slew and hanged on a tree.*

I Cor. 15:4 *And that he was buried, and that he rose again the third day according to the scriptures:*

37 Rom. 1:4 *And declared to be the Son of God with power, according to the spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead:*

38 I Cor. 15:45 *And so it is written, The first man Adam was made a living soul; the last Adam was made a quickening spirit.*

39 Mark 14:61–62 *But he held his peace, and answered nothing. Again the high priest asked him, and said unto him, Art thou the Christ, the Son of the Blessed? ⁶²And Jesus said, I am: and ye shall see the Son of man sitting on the right hand of power, and coming in the clouds of heaven.*

John 6:35 *And Jesus said unto them, I am the bread of life: he that cometh to me shall never hunger; and he that believeth on me shall never thirst.*

John 8:12 *Then spake Jesus again unto them, saying, I am the light of the world: he that followeth me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life.*

John 14:6 *Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me.*

For a more thorough examination of this verse, the Jamieson-Fausset-Brown notes provide enlightening insight on this important topic.

(Jamieson-Fausset-Brown Bible Commentary) three—Two or three witnesses were required by law to constitute adequate testimony. ... That THE Trinity was the truth meant is a natural inference: the triad specified pointing to a still Higher Trinity; as is plain also from 1 Jo 5:9, “the witness of God,” referring to the Trinity alluded to in the Spirit, water, and blood. It was therefore first written as a marginal comment to complete the sense of the text, and then, as early at least as the eighth century, was introduced into the text of the Latin Vulgate. The testimony, however, could only be borne on earth to men, not in heaven. The marginal comment, therefore, that inserted “in heaven,” was inappropriate. It is on earth that the context evidently requires the witness of the three, the Spirit, the water, and the blood, to be borne: mystically setting forth the divine triune witnesses, the Father, the Spirit, and the Son.

I John 5:8 And there are three that bear witness in earth, the Spirit, and the water, and the blood: and these three agree in one.

The Spirit, the water, and the blood all bear one great witness of Jesus' true identity as being God's Son. *The water.* At Jesus' baptism the heavens were opened and the Spirit of God descended and lighted upon Him. *And Jesus, when he was baptized, went up straightway out of the water: and, lo, the heavens were opened unto him, and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove, and lighting upon him* (Matt. 3:16). As with Stephen when the heavens were opened and he observed the Son of Man standing on the right hand of God,⁴⁰ so were the heavens opened at Christ's baptism so that men could observe the Holy Spirit descending upon Him. With Stephen the heavens were opened, allowing him to observe Jesus at the right hand of God. Now the heavens themselves have been opened, testifying to Christ's being the world's Savior.

The Spirit. Jesus' earthly ministry bore witness of His being God's Son, as through it the Holy Spirit was vividly revealed both in Christ's deep spiritual wisdom⁴¹ and in His supernatural spiritual power.⁴² Jesus also is seen to have returned from His temptation in the wilderness full of the Holy Spirit,⁴³ and likewise He returned in

the power of the Spirit to Galilee.⁴⁴ Biblical prophecy had revealed that the Spirit of God would come upon the Messiah,⁴⁵ and it was this spiritual anointing that proved Jesus as being the Messiah. It was also through the power of the Holy Spirit that Jesus cast out demons,⁴⁶ which ultimately revealed His spiritual power over all that oppressed man.

Blood. The blood and Jesus' sacrifice for sin confirmed Him to be the Son of God, since after His death God raised Him from the dead. In contrast to those merely born of the flesh, the Spirit of holiness, which Christ possessed, proved His heavenly deity.⁴⁷ Hence, from Christ's birth to Christ's resurrection, God testified to Jesus being His only begotten Son.

(Jamieson-Fausset-Brown Bible Commentary, I John 5:8) agree in one—"tend unto one result"; their agreeing testimony to Jesus' Sonship and Messiahship they give by the sacramental grace in the water of baptism, received by the penitent believer, by the atoning efficacy of His blood, and by the internal witness of His Spirit (1Jo 5:10):⁴⁸ answering to the testimony given to Jesus' Sonship and Messiahship by His baptism, His crucifixion, and the Spirit's manifestations in Him (see on [2651]1Jo 5:6). ... By the baptism then received by Christ, and by His redeeming blood-shedding, and by that which the Spirit of God, whose witness is infallible, has effected, and still effects, by Him, the Spirit, the

40 Acts 7:55 *But he, being full of the Holy Ghost, looked up stedfastly into heaven, and saw the glory of God, and Jesus standing on the right hand of God,*

41 Acts 6:10 *And they were not able to resist the wisdom and the spirit by which he spake.*

42 Acts 10:38 *How God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Ghost and with power: who went about doing good, and healing all that were oppressed of the devil; for God was with him.*

43 Luke 4:1 *And Jesus being full of the Holy Ghost returned from Jordan, and was led by the Spirit into the wilderness,*

44 Luke 4:14a *And Jesus returned in the power of the Spirit into Galilee...*

45 Isa. 11:2 *And the spirit of the LORD shall rest upon him, the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and might, the spirit of knowledge and of the fear of the LORD;*

Isa. 42:1 *Behold my servant, whom I uphold; mine elect, in whom my soul delighteth; I have put my spirit upon him: he shall bring forth judgment to the Gentiles.*

46 Matt. 12:28 *But if I cast out devils by the Spirit of God, then the kingdom of God is come unto you.*

47 Rom. 1:4 *And declared to be the Son of God with power, according to the spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead:*

48 I John 5:10 *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.*

water, and the blood, unite, as the threefold witness, to verify His divine Messiahship [Neander].

I John 5:9 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.

It is one thing for men to testify that Jesus is the Son of God; it is quite another when God Himself testifies to this truth. God's witness is significantly greater and more worthy to be trusted than any earthly witness, even that of the apostles: *if we receive the witness of men, the witness of God is greater.* Regarding the origination of the Word of God⁴⁹ and the true identity of Jesus Christ, critics have argued for millenniums that Christianity was founded by men—that the Word of God came from men, and that the Son of God was nothing more than a man.⁵⁰ Left out in this weak and deceptive assertion is the fact that God Himself has borne witness—and continues to bear witness—that Jesus Christ is His Son. Therefore, it is not merely the apostles who have borne testimony that Jesus is the Son of God, who even themselves were personal eyewitnesses of His glory and majesty,⁵¹ but more importantly

God, Who has openly witnessed to and confirmed the great spiritual reality that Jesus Christ both was and is His only begotten Son.

Barnes' Notes on the Bible, I John 5:9) For this is the witness of God ...—The testimony above referred to—that borne by the Spirit, and the water, and the blood. Who that saw his baptism, and heard the voice from heaven, Matthew 3:16–17,⁵² could doubt that he was the Son of God? Who that saw his death on the cross, and that witnessed the amazing scenes which occurred there, could fail to join with the Roman centurion in saying that this was the Son of God? Who that has felt the influences of the Eternal Spirit on his heart, ever doubted that Jesus was the Son of God? ... Any one of these is sufficient to convince the soul of this; all combined bear on the same point, and confirm it from age to age.

I John 5:10 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.

He that believeth on the Son of God hath the witness in himself. All true Christians possess a spiritual witness in their hearts of Christ's true identity. This witness is

⁴⁹ Gal. 1:11–12 *But I certify you, brethren, that the gospel which was preached of me is not after man.* ¹²For I neither received it of man, neither was I taught it, but by the revelation of Jesus Christ.

^{II Tim. 3:16} *All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness:*

^{II Pet. 1:21} *For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man: but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost.*

⁵⁰ Matt. 13:54–57 *And when he was come into his own country, he taught them in their synagogue, inasmuch that they were astonished, and said, Whence hath this man this wisdom, and these mighty works?*

⁵⁵ *Is not this the carpenter's son? is not his mother called Mary? and his brethren, James, and Joses, and Simon, and Judas?* ⁵⁶ *And his sisters, are they not all with us? Whence then hath this man all these things?*

⁵⁷ *And they were offended in him. But Jesus said unto them, A prophet is not without honour, save in his own country, and in his own house.*

^{John 10:33} *The Jews answered him, saying, For a good work we stone thee not; but for blasphemy; and because that thou, being a man, makest thyself God.*

^{John 19:7} *The Jews answered him, We have a law, and by our law he ought to die, because he made himself the Son of God.*

⁵¹ ^{II Pet. 1:16} *For we have not followed cunningly devised fables, when we made known unto you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but were eyewitnesses of his majesty.*

⁵² ^{Matt. 3:16–17} *And Jesus, when he was baptized, went up straightway out of the water: and, lo, the heavens were opened unto him, and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove, and lighting upon him: ¹⁷And lo a voice from heaven, saying, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.*

the Spirit of God. This spiritual witness is given to them by God through Christ.⁵³ For the true Christian there is no such thing as blind faith, simply because everyone saved by Christ has a personal and continuing spiritual witness within himself.

He that believeth not God hath made him a liar; because he believeth not the record that God gave of his Son. He who refuses to believe the testimony of God presented at Jesus' baptism,⁵⁴ His resurrection from the dead,⁵⁵ and Jesus sending forth the Holy Spirit⁵⁶ has no other option than to assert that God has lied about Jesus being His only begotten Son. Hence he who does not believe in the evidence given by God of Jesus' true identity ultimately declares God to be a liar.

(Barnes' Notes on the Bible, I John 5:10) *He that believeth not God hath made him a liar ...*

Because he believeth not the record ...—The idea is, that in various ways—at his baptism, at his death, by the influences of the Holy Spirit, by the miracles of Jesus, etc.—God had become a “witness” that the Lord Jesus was sent by him as a Saviour, and that to doubt or deny this partook of the same character as doubting or denying any other testimony; that is, it was practically charging him who bore the testimony with falsehood.

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

In His Son, God has provided divine evidence that He has given men life and that this life is eternal.

(Barnes' Notes on the Bible, I John 5:11) *And this life is in his Son*—Is treasured up in him, or is to be obtained through him. See the John 1:4; John 11:25; John 14:6 notes; Colossians 3:3 note.⁵⁷

53 Luke 11:13 *If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children: how much more shall your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask him?*

Acts 5:32 *And we are his witnesses of these things; and so is also the Holy Ghost, whom God hath given to them that obey him.*

Acts 15:8 *And God, which knoweth the hearts, bare them witness, giving them the Holy Ghost, even as he did unto us;*

Rom. 5:5 *And hope maketh not ashamed; because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us.*

I Cor. 2:12 *Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the spirit which is of God; that we might know the things that are freely given to us of God.*

II Cor. 1:22 *Who hath also sealed us, and given the earnest of the Spirit in our hearts.*

I Thess. 4:8 *He therefore that despiseth, despiseth not man, but God, who hath also given unto us his holy Spirit.*

54 Mark 1:9–11 *And it came to pass in those days, that Jesus came from Nazareth of Galilee, and was baptized of John in Jordan. ¹⁰And straightway coming up out of the water, he saw the heavens opened, and the Spirit like a dove descending upon him: ¹¹And there came a voice from heaven, saying, Thou art my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.*

55 John 20:11–18 *But Mary stood without at the sepulchre weeping; and as she wept, she stooped down, and looked into the sepulchre, ¹²And seeth two angels in white sitting, the one at the head, and the other at the feet, where the body of Jesus had lain. ¹³And they say unto her, Woman, why weepest thou? She saith unto them, Because they have taken away my Lord, and I know not where they have laid him. ¹⁴And when she had thus said, she turned herself back, and saw Jesus standing, and knew not that it was Jesus. ¹⁵Jesus saith unto her, Woman, why weepest thou? whom seekest thou? She, supposing him to be the gardener, saith unto him, Sir, if thou have borne him hence, tell me where thou hast laid him, and I will take him away. ¹⁶Jesus saith unto her, Mary. She turned herself, and saith unto him, Rabboni; which is to say, Master. ¹⁷Jesus saith unto her, Touch me not; for I am not yet ascended to my Father: but go to my brethren, and say unto them, I ascend unto my Father, and your Father; and to my God, and your God. ¹⁸Mary Magdalene came and told the disciples that she had seen the Lord, and that he had spoken these things unto her.*

56 John 20:21–22 *Then said Jesus to them again, Peace be unto you: as my Father hath sent me, even so send I you. ²²And when he had said this, he breathed on them, and saith unto them, Receive ye the Holy Ghost:*

57 John 1:4 *In him was life; and the life was the light of men.*

John 11:25 *Jesus said unto her, I am the resurrection, and the life: he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live:*

I John 5:12 He that hath the Son hath life; and he that hath not the Son of God hath not life.

If a man has the Son, he has the life of God, but if he has not the Son, then neither does he possess the spiritual life that is given only through Him. The entirety of God's eternal life abides in His Son, and there is no means of gaining this spiritual and eternal life apart from Him.⁵⁸ Ultimately it is a man's faith in,⁵⁹ obedi-

ence to,⁶⁰ and relationship with⁶¹ the Son of God that allows him to receive God's gift of eternal life.⁶² It is God's will that all men might be saved,⁶³ and he who believes on and trusts in the message of God's Son will be.

(Pulpit Commentary, I John 5:12) Eternal life is not granted to the whole world, or even to all Christians en masse; it is given to individuals, soul by soul, according as each does or does not accept the Son of God.

John 14:6 Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me. Col. 3:3 For ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God.

58 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 6:47 Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that believeth on me hath everlasting life.

John 6:51 I am the living bread which came down from heaven: if any man eat of this bread, he shall live for ever: and the bread that I will give is my flesh, which I will give for the life of the world.

59 John 6:29 Jesus answered and said unto them, This is the work of God, that ye believe on him whom he hath sent.

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.

Gal. 3:26 For ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus.

60 Heb. 5:9 And being made perfect, he became the author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey him; I John 2:3—And hereby we do know that we know him, if we keep his commandments.

61 John 15:4–5 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. ⁵I am the vine, ye are the branches: He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit: for without me ye can do nothing.

Rom. 7:4 Wherefore, my brethren, ye also are become dead to the law by the body of Christ; that ye should be married to another, even to him who is raised from the dead, that we should bring forth fruit unto God.

62 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.

Tit. 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.

63 I Tim. 2:4 Who will have all men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth.

I John 5:13–21

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.

To preach Christ and make Him known is to preach the precious gift of spiritual regeneration. It is to reveal that

God's eternal life can be found in the One sent to declare Him to the world.¹ There is but one entrance into heaven, and it is through the Son of God,² Who now sits in heaven.³ There should be no guesswork in determining one's salvation, as God's Word and God's Spirit will confirm its possession. Sincerely believing in Jesus Christ,⁴ obeying His words,⁵ and loving

1 *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.

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

2 *John 8:24 I said therefore unto you, that ye shall die in your sins: for if ye believe not that I am he, ye shall die in your sins.*

John 14:6 Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me.

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.

I Tim. 2:5 For there is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus;

3 *Mark 16:19 So then after the Lord had spoken unto them, he was received up into heaven, and sat on the right hand of God.*

Eph. 1:20 Which he wrought in Christ, when he raised him from the dead, and set him at his own right hand in the heavenly places,

Heb. 1:3 Who being the brightness of his glory, and the express image of his person, and upholding all things by the word of his power, when he had by himself purged our sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high:

Heb. 8:1 Now of the things which we have spoken this is the sum: We have such an high priest, who is set on the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in the heavens;

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.

4 *John 3:16 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 3:18a He that believeth on him is not condemned:

John 3:36a He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life:

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 11:25 Jesus said unto her, I am the resurrection, and the life: he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live:

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.

5 *John 8:31 Then said Jesus to those Jews which believed on him, If ye continue in my word, then are ye my disciples indeed;*

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

John 14:21 He that hath my commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me: and he that loveth me shall be loved of my Father, and I will love him, and will manifest myself to him.

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.

the brethren produces confidence that one is born of God and shares spiritual relationship with Him.⁶ While religion provides no real certainty of these truths, genuine belief in the Savior does.

And that ye may believe on the name of the Son of God. The second part of this verse, which appears at first as a duplication of thought, is actually just an exhortation to continue in the faith. It is not enough to merely believe upon Jesus Christ for a brief period of time, which offers no sure hope of gaining the life offered through Him. True faith is enduring; it is not short-term, for a time, or temporary. This mere profession of piety will save no one.⁷ Continued belief in the Son of God and subjection to His lordship are necessary and must extend until this earthly life is over or we are received into heaven by Him.⁸ Practically, faith produces faithfulness,⁹ which is essential to receiving from God all that He has promised. *That ye be not slothful, but followers of them who through faith and patience inherit the promises* (Heb. 6:12). When men reveal themselves as unfaithful in following God's will for their lives, they demonstrate their lack

of true spiritual regeneration. *From that time many of his disciples went back, and walked no more with him* (John 6:66).

*(Barnes' Notes on the Bible, John 6:66) Many of his disciples—*Many who had followed him professedly as his disciples and as desirous of learning of him. See the notes at John 6:60.¹⁰

*Went back—*Turned away from him and left him. From this we may learn,

1. Not to wonder at the apostasy of many who profess to be followers of Christ. Many are induced to become his professed followers by the prospect of some temporal benefit, or under some public excitement, as these were; and when that temporal benefit is not obtained, or that excitement is over, they fall away.

2. Many may be expected to be offended by the doctrines of the gospel. Having no spirituality of mind, and really understanding nothing of the gospel, they may be expected to take offence and turn back.

To truly believe in the Son of God, faithfulness to Him must continue until being received by Him into heaven. Departure

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.

I John 2:3 And hereby we do know that we know him, if we keep his commandments.

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.

I John 5:2 By this we know that we love the children of God, when we love God, and keep his commandments.

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

I John 2:10 He that loveth his brother abideth in the light, and there is none occasion of stumbling in him.

I John 3:14 We know that we have passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren. He that loveth not his brother abideth in death.

7 Prov. 20:6 Most men will proclaim every one his own goodness: but a faithful man who can find?

8 II Tim. 4:18 And the Lord shall deliver me from every evil work, and will preserve me unto his heavenly kingdom: to whom be glory for ever and ever. Amen.

II Pet. 1:11 For so an entrance shall be ministered unto you abundantly into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.

9 Num. 12:7 My servant Moses is not so, who is faithful in all mine house.

Neh. 7:2 That I gave my brother Hanani, and Hananiah the ruler of the palace, charge over Jerusalem: for he was a faithful man, and feared God above many.

Neh. 9:8 And founded his heart faithful before thee, and madest a covenant with him to give the land of the Canaanites, the Hittites, the Amorites, and the Perizzites, and the Jebusites, and the Girgashites, to give it, I say, to his seed, and hast performed thy words; for thou art righteous:

I Tim. 1:12 And I thank Christ Jesus our Lord, who hath enabled me, for that he counted me faithful, putting me into the ministry;

10 John 6:60 Many therefore of his disciples, when they had heard this, said, This is an hard saying; who can hear it?

and falling away from the Savior prior to this have eternal and perilous consequences. *For it is impossible for those who were once enlightened, and have tasted of the heavenly gift, and were made partakers of the Holy Ghost, and have tasted the good word of God, and the powers of the world to come, if they shall fall away, to renew them again unto repentance; seeing they crucify to themselves the Son of God afresh, and put him to an open shame* (Heb. 6:4–6).

(Barnes' Notes on the Bible, Heb. 6:6) Such a statement might be one of the most effectual means of preserving from apostasy. To state that a fall from a precipice would cause certain death, would be one of the most certain means of preserving one from falling; to affirm that arsenic would be certainly fatal, is one of the most effectual means of preventing its being taken; to know that fire certainly destroys, is one of the most sure checks from the danger. Thousands have been preserved from going over the Falls of Niagara by knowing that there would be no possibility of escape; and so effectual has been this knowledge that it has preserved all from such a catastrophe, except the very few who have gone over by accident. So in religion. The knowledge that apostasy would be fatal, and there could be no hope of being of the danger than all the other means that could be used. If a man believed that it would be an easy matter to be restored again should he apostatize, he would feel little solicitude in regard to it; and it has occurred in fact, that they who suppose that this may occur, have manifested little of the care to walk in the paths of strict religion, which should have been evinced.

The Christian's call requires faithfulness until the end. *But he that shall endure unto the end, the same shall be saved* (Matt. 24:13). Once the Christian journey begins, it cannot be departed from. To do so endangers the promise of eternal life itself. To even begin looking back is dangerous; turning back is spiritually fatal.¹¹ *And Jesus said unto him, No man, having put his hand to the plough, and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God* (Luke 9:62).

(Jamieson-Fausset-Brown Bible Commentary, Luke 9:62) *No man, &c.*—As ploughing requires an eye intent on the furrow to be made, and is marred the instant one turns about, so will they come short of salvation who prosecute the work of God with a distracted attention, a divided heart. Though the reference seems chiefly to ministers, the application is general. The expression “looking back” has a manifest reference to “Lot's wife” (Ge 19:26; ¹² and see on [1621] Lu 17:32¹³). It is not actual return to the world, but a reluctance to break with it. (Also see on [1622] Mt 8:21.¹⁴)

I John 5:14 And this is the confidence that we have in him, that, if we ask any thing according to his will, he heareth us:

One way to encourage faith in God is to focus not on the petition but on the Lord Who has the power to grant it. Understandably, no faith can really be developed by looking at the obstacle, and not God's ability to help us to overcome it. This was the spies' sin, when they returned and gave an evil report of what they had seen.¹⁵ Hence when praying for deliverance, we

11 II Tim. 4:10 *For Demas hath forsaken me, having loved this present world, and is departed unto Thessalonica; Crescens to Galatia, Titus unto Dalmatia.*

12 Gen. 19:26 *But his wife looked back from behind him, and she became a pillar of salt.*

13 Luke 17:32 *Remember Lot's wife.*

14 Matt. 8:21 *And another of his disciples said unto him, Lord, suffer me first to go and bury my father.*

15 Num. 13:25–29 *And they returned from searching of the land after forty days. ²⁶And they went and came to Moses, and to Aaron, and to all the congregation of the children of Israel, unto the wilderness of Paran, to Kadesh; and brought back word unto them, and unto all the congregation, and shewed them the fruit of the land. ²⁷And they told him, and said, We came unto the land whither thou sentest us, and surely it floweth with milk and honey; and this is the fruit of it. ²⁸Nevertheless the people be strong that dwell in the land, and the cities are walled, and very great: and moreover we saw the children of Anak there. ²⁹The Amalekites dwell in the land of the south: and the Hittites, and the Jebusites, and the Amorites, dwell in the mountains: and the Canaanites dwell by the sea, and by the coast of Jordan.*

should trust in God's ability to deliver and not be consumed with our own inabilities. This confidence is what characterized Abraham's faith, and it should characterize ours as well.¹⁶ *And being not weak in faith, he considered not his own body now dead, when he was about an hundred years old, neither yet the deadness of Sarah's womb* (Rom. 4:19).

(Barnes' Notes on the Bible, Rom. 4:19) *He considered not*—He did not regard the fact that his body was now dead, as any obstacle to the fulfillment of the promise. He did not suffer that fact to influence him, or to produce any doubt about the fulfillment. Faith looks to the strength of God, not to second causes, or to difficulties that may appear formidable to man.

It is not confidence in self that gives hope of answered prayer,¹⁷ but trust and confidence in the One we are praying to.¹⁸ For this reason men should not look on their

own fleshly inadequacies, shortcomings, and inabilities, but rather exercise faith in a spiritual Creator, Who has none. *Behold, I am the LORD, the God of all flesh: is there any thing too hard for me?* (Jer. 32:27).

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.

Expectant prayer is the most effective prayer. This is observed in the lame man at the gate Beautiful;¹⁹ the woman who came to touch the hem of Jesus' garment expecting healing;²⁰ and the centurion who sought for Jesus to speak only a word in order that his servant might be healed.²¹ This is again why men's eyes should be solely on the Lord, similar to when Peter's eyes were focused on Jesus when he walked on the water,²² lest their attention become distracted, and like Peter, lose

16 Rom. 4:19–22 *And being not weak in faith, he considered not his own body now dead, when he was about an hundred years old, neither yet the deadness of Sarah's womb:* ²⁰*He staggered not at the promise of God through unbelief; but was strong in faith, giving glory to God;* ²¹*And being fully persuaded that, what he had promised, he was able also to perform.* ²²*And therefore it was imputed to him for righteousness.*

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

18 Prov. 3:5 *Trust in the LORD with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding.*

19 Acts 3:2–8 *And a certain man lame from his mother's womb was carried, whom they laid daily at the gate of the temple which is called Beautiful, to ask alms of them that entered into the temple;* ³*Who seeing Peter and John about to go into the temple asked an alms.* ⁴*And Peter, fastening his eyes upon him with John, said, Look on us.* ⁵*And he gave heed unto them, expecting to receive something of them.* ⁶*Then Peter said, Silver and gold have I none; but such as I have give I thee: In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth rise up and walk.* ⁷*And he took him by the right hand, and lifted him up: and immediately his feet and ankle bones received strength.* ⁸*And he leaping up stood, and walked, and entered with them into the temple, walking, and leaping, and praising God.*

20 Matt. 9:20–22 *And, behold, a woman, which was diseased with an issue of blood twelve years, came behind him, and touched the hem of his garment:* ²¹*For she said within herself, If I may but touch his garment, I shall be whole.* ²²*But Jesus turned him about, and when he saw her, he said, Daughter, be of good comfort; thy faith hath made thee whole. And the woman was made whole from that hour.*

21 Matt. 8:5–13 *And when Jesus was entered into Capernaum, there came unto him a centurion, beseeching him,* ⁶*And saying, Lord, my servant lieth at home sick of the palsy, grievously tormented.* ⁷*And Jesus saith unto him, I will come and heal him.* ⁸*The centurion answered and said, Lord, I am not worthy that thou shouldst come under my roof: but speak the word only, and my servant shall be healed.* ⁹*For I am a man under authority, having soldiers under me: and I say to this man, Go, and he goeth; and to another, Come, and he cometh; and to my servant, Do this, and he doeth it.* ¹⁰*When Jesus heard it, he marvelled, and said to them that followed, Verily I say unto you, I have not found so great faith, no, not in Israel.* ¹¹*And I say unto you, That many shall come from the east and west, and shall sit down with Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, in the kingdom of heaven.* ¹²*But the children of the kingdom shall be cast out into outer darkness: there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth.* ¹³*And Jesus said unto the centurion, Go thy way; and as thou hast believed, so be it done unto thee. And his servant was healed in the selfsame hour.*

22 Luke 8:22–32 *Now it came to pass on a certain day, that he went into a ship with his disciples: and he said unto them, Let us go over unto the other side of the lake. And they launched forth.* ²³*But as they sailed he fell asleep: and there came down a storm of wind on the lake; and they were filled with water, and were*

sight of Christ, by observing the storm and then sink in areas where continued faith in God, could have kept them afloat.

(Jamieson-Fausset-Brown Bible Commentary, I John 5:15) Not one of our past prayers offered in faith, according to His will, is lost. Like Hannah,²³ we can rejoice over them as

granted even before the event; and can recognize the event when it comes to pass, as not from chance, but obtained by our past prayers. Compare also Jehoshaphat's believing confidence in the issue of his prayers, so much so that he appointed singers to praise the Lord beforehand.²⁴

in jeopardy.²⁴ And they came to him, and awoke him, saying, Master, master, we perish. Then he arose, and rebuked the wind and the raging of the water: and they ceased, and there was a calm.²⁵ And he said unto them, Where is your faith? And they being afraid wondered, saying one to another, What manner of man is this! for he commandeth even the winds and water, and they obey him.²⁶ And they arrived at the country of the Gadarenes, which is over against Galilee.²⁷ And when he went forth to land, there met him out of the city a certain man, which had devils long time, and ware no clothes, neither abode in any house, but in the tombs.²⁸ When he saw Jesus, he cried out, and fell down before him, and with a loud voice said, What have I to do with thee, Jesus, thou Son of God most high? I beseech thee, torment me not.²⁹ (For he had commanded the unclean spirit to come out of the man. For oftentimes it had caught him: and he was kept bound with chains and in fetters; and he brake the bands, and was driven of the devil into the wilderness.)³⁰ And Jesus asked him, saying, What is thy name? And he said, Legion: because many devils were entered into him.³¹ And they besought him that he would not command them to go out into the deep.³² And there was there an herd of many swine feeding on the mountain: and they besought him that he would suffer them to enter into them. And he suffered them.

23 I Sam. 1:9–17 So Hannah rose up after they had eaten in Shiloh, and after they had drunk. Now Eli the priest sat upon a seat by a post of the temple of the LORD.¹⁰ And she was in bitterness of soul, and prayed unto the LORD, and wept sore.¹¹ And she vowed a vow, and said, O LORD of hosts, if thou wilt indeed look on the affliction of thine handmaid, and remember me, and not forget thine handmaid, but wilt give unto thine handmaid a man child, then I will give him unto the LORD all the days of his life, and there shall no razor come upon his head.¹² And it came to pass, as she continued praying before the LORD, that Eli marked her mouth.¹³ Now Hannah, she spake in her heart; only her lips moved, but her voice was not heard: therefore Eli thought she had been drunken.¹⁴ And Eli said unto her, How long wilt thou be drunken? put away thy wine from thee.¹⁵ And Hannah answered and said, No, my lord, I am a woman of a sorrowful spirit: I have drunk neither wine nor strong drink, but have poured out my soul before the LORD.¹⁶ Count not thine handmaid for a daughter of Belial: for out of the abundance of my complaint and grief have I spoken hitherto.¹⁷ Then Eli answered and said, Go in peace: and the God of Israel grant thee thy petition that thou hast asked of him.

24 II Chrn. 20:5–22 And Jehoshaphat stood in the congregation of Judah and Jerusalem, in the house of the LORD, before the new court,⁶ And said, O LORD God of our fathers, art not thou God in heaven? and rulerest not thou over all the kingdoms of the heathen? and in thine hand is there not power and might, so that none is able to withstand thee? Art not thou our God, who didst drive out the inhabitants of this land before thy people Israel, and gavest it to the seed of Abraham thy friend for ever?⁸ And they dwelt therein, and have built thee a sanctuary therein for thy name, saying,⁹ If, when evil cometh upon us, as the sword, judgment, or pestilence, or famine, we stand before this house, and in thy presence, (for thy name is in this house,) and cry unto thee in our affliction, then thou wilt hear and help.¹⁰ And now, behold, the children of Ammon and Moab and mount Seir, whom thou wouldest not let Israel invade, when they came out of the land of Egypt, but they turned from them, and destroyed them not;¹¹ Behold, I say, how they reward us, to come to cast us out of thy possession, which thou hast given us to inherit.¹² O our God, wilt thou not judge them? for we have no might against this great company that cometh against us; neither know we what to do: but our eyes are upon thee.¹³ And all Judah stood before the LORD, with their little ones, their wives, and their children.¹⁴ Then upon Jahaziel the son of Zechariah, the son of Benaiah, the son of Jeiel, the son of Mattaniah, a Levite of the sons of Asaph, came the Spirit of the LORD in the midst of the congregation;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.¹⁶ To morrow go ye down against them: behold, they come up by the cliff of Ziz; and ye shall find them at the end of the brook, before the wilderness of Jeruel.¹⁷ Ye shall not need to fight in this battle: set yourselves, stand ye still, and see the salvation of the LORD with you, O Judah and Jerusalem: fear not, nor be dismayed; to morrow go out against them: for the LORD will be with you.¹⁸ And Jehoshaphat bowed his head with his face to the ground: and all Judah and the inhabitants of Jerusalem fell before the LORD, worshipping the LORD.¹⁹ And the Levites, of the children of the Kohathites, and of the children of the Korhites, stood up to praise the LORD God of Israel with a loud voice on high.²⁰ And they rose early in the morning, and went forth into the wilderness of Tekoa: and as they went forth, Jehoshaphat stood and said, Hear me, O Judah, and ye inhabitants of Jerusalem; Believe in the LORD your God, so shall ye be established; believe his prophets, so shall ye prosper.

Born of God

When a man spiritually perceives that God has heard him,²⁵ he should expect, when his request is according to divine

will, to receive what has been asked.²⁶ The only way also that believers may experience the powerful effects and wonderful

²¹And when he had consulted with the people, he appointed singers unto the LORD, and that should praise the beauty of holiness, as they went out before the army, and to say, Praise the LORD; for his mercy endureth for ever. ²²And when they began to sing and to praise, the LORD set ambushments against the children of Ammon, Moab, and mount Seir, which were come against Judah; and they were smitten.

25 Ps. 102:16–17 When the LORD shall build up Zion, he shall appear in his glory. ¹⁷He will regard the prayer of the destitute, and not despise their prayer.

Jnh. 2:7 When my soul fainted within me I remembered the LORD: and my prayer came in unto thee, into thine holy temple.

26 Abraham and Sarah—Gen. 15:2–3 And Abram said, LORD God, what wilt thou give me, seeing I go childless, and the steward of my house is this Eliezer of Damascus? ³And Abram said, Behold, to me thou hast given no seed: and, lo, one born in my house is mine heir. Gen. 17:15–16 And God said unto Abraham, As for Sarai thy wife, thou shalt not call her name Sarai, but Sarah shall her name be. ¹⁶And I will bless her, and give thee a son also of her: yea, I will bless her, and she shall be a mother of nations; kings of people shall be of her. Gen. 21:1–2 And the LORD visited Sarah as he had said, and the LORD did unto Sarah as he had spoken. ²For Sarah conceived, and bare Abraham a son in his old age, at the set time of which God had spoken to him.

Joshua—Josh. 10:11–14 And it came to pass, as they fled from before Israel, and were in the going down to Bethhoron, that the LORD cast down great stones from heaven upon them unto Azekah, and they died: they were more which died with hailstones than they whom the children of Israel slew with the sword. ¹²Then spake Joshua to the LORD in the day when the LORD delivered up the Amorites before the children of Israel, and he said in the sight of Israel, Sun, stand thou still upon Gibeon; and thou, Moon, in the valley of Ajalon.

¹³And the sun stood still, and the moon stayed, until the people had avenged themselves upon their enemies. Is not this written in the book of Jasher? So the sun stood still in the midst of heaven, and hasted not to go down about a whole day. ¹⁴And there was no day like that before it or after it, that the LORD hearkened unto the voice of a man: for the LORD fought for Israel.

Hannah—I Sam. 1:1–2, 6, 10–11, 19–20 Now there was a certain man of Ramathaimzophim, of mount Ephraim, and his name was Elkanah, the son of Jeroham, the son of Elihu, the son of Tohu, the son of Zuph, an Ephrathite: ²And he had two wives; the name of the one was Hannah, and the name of the other Peninnah: and Peninnah had children, but Hannah had no children. ⁶And her adversary also provoked her sore, for to make her fret, because the LORD had shut up her womb. ¹⁰And she was in bitterness of soul, and prayed unto the LORD, and wept sore. ¹¹And she vowed a vow, and said, O LORD of hosts, if thou wilt indeed look on the affliction of thine handmaid, and remember me, and not forget thine handmaid, but wilt give unto thine handmaid a man child, then I will give him unto the LORD all the days of his life, and there shall no razor come upon his head. ¹⁹And they rose up in the morning early, and worshipped before the LORD, and returned, and came to their house to Ramah: and Elkanah knew Hannah his wife; and the LORD remembered her. ²⁰Wherefore it came to pass, when the time was come about after Hannah had conceived, that she bare a son, and called his name Samuel, saying, Because I have asked him of the LORD.

Elijah—I Kgs. 17:21–22 And he stretched himself upon the child three times, and cried unto the LORD, and said, O LORD my God, I pray thee, let this child's soul come into him again. ²²And the LORD heard the voice of Elijah; and the soul of the child came into him again, and he revived.

Hezekiah—II Kgs. 20:1–6 In those days was Hezekiah sick unto death. And the prophet Isaiah the son of Amoz came to him, and said unto him, Thus saith the LORD, Set thine house in order; for thou shalt die, and not live. ²Then he turned his face to the wall, and prayed unto the LORD, saying, ³I beseech thee, O LORD, remember now how I have walked before thee in truth and with a perfect heart, and have done that which is good in thy sight. And Hezekiah wept sore. ⁴And it came to pass, afore Isaiah was gone out into the middle court, that the word of the LORD came to him, saying, ⁵Turn again, and tell Hezekiah the captain of my people, Thus saith the LORD, the God of David thy father, I have heard thy prayer, I have seen thy tears: behold, I will heal thee: on the third day thou shalt go up unto the house of the LORD. ⁶And I will add unto thy days fifteen years; and I will deliver thee and this city out of the hand of the king of Assyria; and I will defend this city for mine own sake, and for my servant David's sake.

Jabez—I Chrn. 4:9–10 And Jabez was more honourable than his brethren: and his mother called his name Jabez, saying, Because I bare him with sorrow. ¹⁰And Jabez called on the God of Israel, saying, Oh that thou wouldest bless me indeed, and enlarge my coast, and that thine hand might be with me, and that thou wouldest keep me from evil, that it may not grieve me! And God granted him that which he requested.

Jonah—Jnh. 2:1–2, 10 Then Jonah prayed unto the LORD his God out of the fish's belly, ²And said, I cried by reason of mine affliction unto the LORD, and he heard me; out of the belly of hell cried I, and thou heardest my voice. ¹⁰And the LORD spake unto the fish, and it vomited out Jonah upon the dry land.

results of prayer is by praying.²⁷ For God cannot prove Himself until men believe that God is and will justly reward those who diligently seek Him.²⁸ When prayer is offered with expectant faith, God can reveal His supernatural spiritual ability to do exceedingly above all that men ask or think.²⁹ Understandably, it is not God's power that falls short in times of need, but His people's faith, which cannot perceive that what is impossible with man is entirely and absolutely possible with God.³⁰ Ultimately, whatever man can perceive, God is able to do exceedingly and abundantly more than this. *Now unto him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us* (Eph. 3:20).

(Barnes' Notes on the Bible, Eph. 3:20) *That is able to do*—see the notes, Romans 16:25.³¹

Exceeding abundantly—The compound word used here occurs only in this place, and in 1 Thessalonians 3:10; 1 Thessalonians 5:13.³² It means, to an extent which we cannot express.

Above all that we ask or think—More than all that we can desire in our prayers; more than all that we can conceive; see the notes on 1 Corinthians 2:9.³³

According to the power that worketh in us—The exertion of that same power can accomplish for us more than we can now conceive.

I John 5:16 *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.*

Intercessory prayer should be an important aspect in believers' lives.³⁴ Just as in-

²⁷ Jer. 29:12 *Then shall ye call upon me, and ye shall go and pray unto me, and I will hearken unto you.*
Phil. 4:6 *Be careful for nothing; but in every thing by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God.*

²⁸ Heb. 11:6 *But without faith it is impossible to please him: for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him.*

²⁹ II Chrn. 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.*

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

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.*

Ps. 145:18 *The LORD is nigh unto all them that call upon him, to all that call upon him in truth.*

John 15:16 *Ye have not chosen me, but I have chosen you, and ordained you, that ye should go and bring forth fruit, and that your fruit should remain: that whatsoever ye shall ask of the Father in my name, he may give it you.*

I Thess. 5:16–18 *Rejoice evermore. ¹⁷Pray without ceasing. ¹⁸In every thing give thanks: for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you.*

Heb. 4:16 *Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need.*

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.*

³⁰ Luke 18:27 *And he said, The things which are impossible with men are possible with God.*

³¹ Rom. 16:25 *Now to him that is of power to stablish you according to my gospel, and the preaching of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery, which was kept secret since the world began,*

³² I Thess. 3:10 *Night and day praying exceedingly that we might see your face, and might perfect that which is lacking in your faith?*

I Thess. 5:13 *And to esteem them very highly in love for their work's sake. And be at peace among yourselves.*

³³ I Cor. 2:9 *But as it is written, Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him.*

³⁴ Matt. 5:44 *But I say unto you, Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you;*

tercessory prayer can save the sick,³⁵ it can also help those who have sinned against God. Praying for other Christians in need in the body of Christ is as essential as praying for our own needs.³⁶ If we love our brothers as ourselves, we will seek God's help for them.

Though there is a *sin which is not unto death*, there is undoubtedly one that is. *There is a sin unto death: I do not say that he shall pray for it.* In all of life there are natural laws that govern points of no return. The same is true concerning spiritual laws, when men progress further in sin than where God's forgiveness lies. An example of this can be observed in the physical realm, such as if a man jumped off an exceedingly high and lofty cliff, but then, in the middle of the fall, changed his mind, nothing could alter the fatal result. Thus, in some things, and especially so with sin, there exists an event horizon.³⁷ Once this has been passed, there is no chance of reversing the choice that has been made nor to avoid the inevitable repercussions that must come because of it. Sin against the Holy Spirit is such

a sin as this: a sin for which neither repentance nor prayer can change God's judgment. *Wherefore I say unto you, All manner of sin and blasphemy shall be forgiven unto men: but the blasphemy against the Holy Ghost shall not be forgiven unto men* (Matt. 12:31). If any passage of Scripture should alarm men to the danger of aligning themselves with the devil and carrying his words of blasphemy against the work of the Holy Spirit, it is this one. If this sin is committed, no room for forgiveness remains, and not even prayers of faith can alter God's sentence. No sin is so great as proclaiming evil the work of God. To proceed this far in sin goes beyond even the manifold grace of God. To align oneself with the devil is to carry out his malicious and treacherous aims and speak evil of the Lord's work. The consequence of this devilish act is none other than eternal damnation,³⁸ as this sin will not be forgiven, and not even prayers of faith can reverse God's promised judgment for it.

(*Ellicott's Commentary for English Readers*, Matt. 12:31) *The blasphemy against the*

Eph. 6:18 Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, and watching thereunto with all perseverance and supplication for all saints;

I Tim. 2:1-2 I exhort therefore, that, first of all, supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks, be made for all men; ²For kings, and for all that are in authority; that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and honesty.

Jas. 5:16 Confess your faults one to another, and pray one for another, that ye may be healed. The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much.

35 Jas. 5:15 And the prayer of faith shall save the sick, and the Lord shall raise him up; and if he have committed sins, they shall be forgiven him.

36 I Sam. 7:5 And Samuel said, Gather all Israel to Mizpeh, and I will pray for you unto the LORD.

Acts 8:15 Who, when they were come down, prayed for them, that they might receive the Holy Ghost:

Acts 12:5 Peter therefore was kept in prison: but prayer was made without ceasing of the church unto God for him.

Rom. 15:30 Now I beseech you, brethren, for the Lord Jesus Christ's sake, and for the love of the Spirit, that ye strive together with me in your prayers to God for me;

II Cor. 1:11 Ye also helping together by prayer for us, that for the gift bestowed upon us by the means of many persons thanks may be given by many on our behalf.

I Tim. 2:1 I exhort therefore, that, first of all, supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks, be made for all men;

Phil. 1:19 For I know that this shall turn to my salvation through your prayer, and the supply of the Spirit of Jesus Christ,

37 "the surface of a black hole: the boundary of a black hole beyond which nothing can escape from within it" "Event horizon." *Merriam-Webster.com Dictionary*, Merriam-Webster, <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/event%20horizon>. Accessed 12 Apr. 2023.

38 Eph. 2:2 Wherein in time past ye walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience:

Holy Ghost. — ... The Pharisees were warned against a sin to which they were drawing perilously near. To condemn the Christ as a gluttonous man and a wine-bibber, as breaking the Sabbath, or blaspheming when He said, “Thy sins be forgiven thee,” was to speak a word against the Son of Man. These offences might be sins of ignorance, not implying more than narrowness and prejudice. But to see a man delivered from the power of Satan unto God, to watch the work of the Spirit of God, and then to ascribe that work to the power of evil, this was to be out of sympathy with goodness and mercy altogether. In such a character there was no opening for repentance, and therefore none for forgiveness. The capacity for goodness in any form was destroyed by this kind of antagonism. The human nature in that extremest debasement has identified itself with the devil nature, and must share its doom.

I John 5:17 All unrighteousness is sin: and there is a sin not unto death.

When men do not adhere to the commandments given by either God’s Word or God’s Spirit, it is sin; however, this does not imply that all sin is unpardonable and must end in death. God’s nature is to forgive, so that if a man repents of his sin, the Lord’s grace will prove itself greater

than his transgression.³⁹ Nowhere also is God’s love manifested more than when He forgives those who have broken His laws and transgressed His commandments. Ultimately, pity on the sinner is one of the greatest expressions of divine love that is extended toward sinful man. Vast amounts of sin have been forgiven through repentance⁴⁰ and the penalty for sin avoided⁴¹ because of divine love. Just as man’s fallen nature compels him to sin against God’s laws, God’s loving nature allows for forgiveness for this disobedience. The gospel of Christ is undoubtedly a gospel of divine grace and forgiveness where men, though unworthy of pardon, are still, because of heavenly mercy, continually granted it. *If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness* (I John 1:9).

I John 5:18 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.

The truth is non-debatable that any true Christian cannot remain living in sin, nor will he return back to it once born of

39 Ps. 103:2–3 *Bless the LORD, O my soul, and forget not all his benefits: ³Who forgiveth all thine iniquities; who healeth all thy diseases;*

Ps. 103:12 *As far as the east is from the west, so far hath he removed our transgressions from us.*

Isa. 43:25 *I, even I, am he that blotteth out thy transgressions for mine own sake, and will not remember thy sins. Mic. 7:19 He will turn again, he will have compassion upon us; he will subdue our iniquities; and thou wilt cast all their sins into the depths of the sea.*

Rom. 11:27 *For this is my covenant unto them, when I shall take away their sins.*

Heb. 8:12 *For I will be merciful to their unrighteousness, and their sins and their iniquities will I remember no more.*

Heb. 10:17 *And their sins and iniquities will I remember no more.*

I John 1:9 If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

40 *II Chrn. 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.*

Ps. 32:5 *I acknowledge 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.*

I John 1:9 If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

41 *Ezek. 18:20 The soul that sinneth, it shall die. The son shall not bear the iniquity of the father, neither shall the father bear the iniquity of the son: the righteousness of the righteous shall be upon him, and the wickedness of the wicked shall be upon him.*

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

God.⁴² God's very own nature imparted to him prohibits this.⁴³ Thus, if a man claims he can remain in sin and live as he always has and still be saved, then you can be sure he has never received true spiritual regeneration.⁴⁴ Hence, continuing in sin, or refusing to leave it, only proves that men have never been saved by Christ. It is the children of wrath,⁴⁵ and not the children of promise, who foolishly believe the holiness of heaven and the uncleanness of sin can be joined. Yet no man can truly enter heaven without being born of God,⁴⁶ and all those truly born of Him will depart from serving their previous master, sin.

(*Barnes' Notes on the Bible*, 1 John 5:18) *We know that whosoever is born of God sinneth not*—Is not habitually and characteristically a sinner; does not ultimately and finally sin and perish; cannot, therefore, commit the unpardonable sin. Though he may fall into sin, and grieve his brethren, yet we are never to cease to pray for a true Christian: we are never to feel that he has committed the sin which has never forgiveness, and that he has thrown himself beyond the reach of our prayers. This passage, in its connection, is a full proof that a true Christian "will" never commit the unpardonable sin, and, therefore, is a proof that he will never fall from grace. Compare the notes at Hebrews 6:4–8; Hebrews 10:26.⁴⁷ On the meaning of the assertion here made, that "whosoever is born of God sinneth not," see the notes at 1 John 3:6–9.⁴⁸

42 Gal. 4:6 *And because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father.*

43 1 John 2:29 *If ye know that he is righteous, ye know that every one that doeth righteousness is born of him.* 1 John 3:6 *Whosoever abideth in him sinneth not: whosoever sinneth hath not seen him, neither known him.* 1 John 3:9–10 *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.* 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.*

44 Ezek. 11:19 *And I will give them one heart, and I will put a new spirit within you; and I will take the stony heart out of their flesh, and will give them an heart of flesh:*

Ezek. 36:26–27 *A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you: and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you an heart of flesh.* ²⁷*And I will put my spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes, and ye shall keep my judgments, and do them.*

Ezek. 37:14 *And shall put my spirit in you, and ye shall live, and I shall place you in your own land: then shall ye know that I the LORD have spoken it, and performed it, saith the LORD.*

II Cor. 5:17 *Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new.*

Eph. 4:24 *And that ye put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness.*

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

Tit. 3:5–6 *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; ⁶Which he shed on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Saviour;*

45 Eph. 2:3 *Among whom also we all had our conversation in times past in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind; and were by nature the children of wrath, even as others.*

46 John 3:3 *Jesus answered and said unto him, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.*

John 3:7 *Marvel not that I said unto thee, Ye must be born again.*

47 Heb. 6:4–8 *For it is impossible for those who were once enlightened, and have tasted of the heavenly gift, and were made partakers of the Holy Ghost, ⁵And have tasted the good word of God, and the powers of the world to come, ⁶If they shall fall away, to renew them again unto repentance; seeing they crucify to themselves the Son of God afresh, and put him to an open shame. ⁷For the earth which drinketh in the rain that cometh oft upon it, and bringeth forth herbs meet for them by whom it is dressed, receiveth blessing from God: ⁸But that which beareth thorns and briers is rejected, and is nigh unto cursing; whose end is to be burned.*

Heb. 10:26 *For if we sin wilfully after that we have received the knowledge of the truth, there remaineth no more sacrifice for sins,*

48 1 John 3:6–9 *Whosoever abideth in him sinneth not: whosoever sinneth hath not seen him, neither known him. ⁷Little children, let no man deceive you: he that doeth righteousness is righteous, even as he is righteous. ⁸He 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. ⁹Whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin; for his seed remaineth in him: and he cannot sin, because he is born of God.*

But he that is begotten of God keepeth himself, and that wicked one toucheth him not. Adding to the wonderful truth that the new birth transforms the human heart is that God's only-begotten Son, Jesus Christ, preserves, protects, and keeps safe⁴⁹ those whom God has given Him⁵⁰ and made to become part of His celestial body.⁵¹

(*Ellicott's Commentary for English Readers*, I John 5:18) *But he that is begotten of God keepeth himself.*—Rather, he that is begotten of God keepeth him: that is, the Son of God preserves him. (Comp. John 6:39; John 10:28; John 17:12; John 17:15.)⁵²

It is Christ's blood that saves the Christian, and it is Christ's power that preserves and keeps unholy and deceptive spirits from exerting the needed spiritual influence to lure him back to a life of sin and death.

49 John 10:28–29 *And I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand.* ⁴⁹*My Father, which gave them me, is greater than all; and no man is able to pluck them out of my Father's hand.*

I Thess. 5:23–24 And the very God of peace sanctify you wholly; and I pray God your whole spirit and soul and body be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. ²⁴*Faithful is he that calleth you, who also will do it.*

II Thess. 3:3 But the Lord is faithful, who shall stablish you, and keep you from evil.

50 John 6:37 *All that the Father giveth me shall come to me; and him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out.* John 10:29 *My Father, which gave them me, is greater than all; and no man is able to pluck them out of my Father's 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.*

John 17:6 *I have manifested thy name unto the men which thou gavest me out of the world: thine they were, and thou gavest them me; and they have kept thy word.*

John 17:9 *I pray for them: I pray not for the world, but for them which thou hast given me; for they are thine.*

John 17:11 *And now I am no more in the world, but these are in the world, and I come to thee. Holy Father, keep through thine own name those whom thou hast given me, that they may be one, as we are.*

51 Rom. 12:5 *So we, being many, are one body in Christ, and every one members one of another.*

I Cor. 12:12–13 *For as the body is one, and hath many members, and all the members of that one body, being many, are one body: so also is Christ.* ¹³*For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body, whether we be Jews or Gentiles, whether we be bond or free; and have been all made to drink into one Spirit.*

I Cor. 12:27 *Now ye are the body of Christ, and members in particular.*

Eph. 5:30 *For we are members of his body, of his flesh, and of his bones.*

52 John 6:39 *And this is the Father's will which hath sent me, that of all which he hath given me I should lose nothing, but should raise it up again 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 17:12 *While I was with them in the world, I kept them in thy name: those that thou gavest me I have kept, and none of them is lost, but the son of perdition; that the scripture might be fulfilled.*

John 17:15 *I pray not that thou shouldest take them out of the world, but that thou shouldest keep them from the evil.*

53 II Chrn. 15:1–2 *And the Spirit of God came upon Azariah the son of Oded: ²And he went out to meet Asa, and said unto him, Hear ye me, Asa, and all Judah and Benjamin; The LORD is with you, while ye be with him; and if ye seek him, he will be found of you; but if ye forsake him, he will forsake you.*

(*Barnes' Notes on the Bible*, I John 5:18) *And that wicked one toucheth him not*—The great enemy of all good is repelled in his assaults, and he is kept from falling into his snares.

(*Jamieson-Fausset-Brown Bible Commentary*, I John 5:18) *that wicked one toucheth him not*—so as to hurt him. In so far as he realizes his regeneration-life, the prince of this world hath nothing in him to fasten his deadly temptations on, as in Christ's own case. His divine regeneration has severed once for all his connection with the prince of this world.

Where habitual sin is, God is not.⁵³ Where sin is preferred more than faith, the Holy

Spirit's presence is not.⁵⁴ This undoubtedly-ly includes a willful sinner's heart.⁵⁵

Every true believer in Jesus Christ has been made anew.⁵⁶ He has through the ministry of the Son of God been given a holy Spirit, which convicts him of sin,⁵⁷ and will not allow his heart to continue in it.⁵⁸ Where the Spirit of Christ truly is, the desire to continue in sin cannot exist. Hence he who is truly born of God *sinneth not*; he cannot, simply because Christ's new nature that has been imparted to him is far greater than the previously sinful nature received from Adam.⁵⁹ Ultimately the holy, spiritual

genetics of heaven are far greater than the sinful nature passed on from Adam.

Because of their relationship with the Son of God, those saved by Christ are made completely new creatures.⁶⁰ *Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new* (II Cor. 5:17). This spiritual transformation⁶¹ is similar to when God took from the Spirit upon Moses and gave it to the seventy elders of Israel.⁶² But now God has taken the Spirit of His Son and anointed those saved by

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.

Gal. 5:19–21 Now the works of the flesh are manifest, which are these; Adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness,²⁰ Idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, strife, seditions, heresies,²¹ Envyings, murders, drunkenness, revellings, and such like: of the which I tell you before, as I have also told you in time past, that they which do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God.

54 Deut. 31:17–18 Then my anger shall be kindled against them in that day, and I will forsake them, and I will hide my face from them, and they shall be devoured, and many evils and troubles shall befall them; so that they will say in that day, Are not these evils come upon us, because our God is not among us?¹⁸ And I will surely hide my face in that day for all the evils which they shall have wrought, in that they are turned unto other gods.

II Kgs. 17:18 Therefore the LORD was very angry with Israel, and removed them out of his sight: there was none left but the tribe of Judah only.

55 Gen. 6:5 And God saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually.

Rom. 1:21 Because that, when they knew God, they glorified him not as God, neither were thankful; but became vain in their imaginations, and their foolish heart was darkened.

Heb. 3:12 Take heed, brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief, in departing from the living God.

56 Rom. 6:4 Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life.

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

57 John 16:8 And when he is come, he will reprove the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment:

58 I John 3:6 Whosoever abideth in him sinneth not: whosoever sinneth hath not seen him, neither known him.

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.

59 Rom. 5:12 Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned:

60 Rom. 6:6 Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin.

61 John 3:3 Jesus answered and said unto him, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.

John 3:7 Marvel not that I said unto thee, Ye must be born again.

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.

62 Num. 11:25 And the LORD came down in a cloud, and spake unto him, and took of the spirit that was upon him, and gave it unto the seventy elders: and it came to pass, that, when the spirit rested upon them, they prophesied, and did not cease.

Christ so that they might share in the same spiritual nature⁶³ as the Savior.

I John 5:19–20 And we know that we are of God, and the whole world lieth in wickedness.

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.

These verses reveal the three spiritual realities that every child of God will be made to know through the revelation given to him by the Son of God:

1. That God is Jesus Christ's Father, and Jesus Christ is God's Son.
2. That the whole world *lieth in wickedness*.
3. That he who is saved is *in Him that is true*, even God's Son, Jesus Christ.

I John 5:21 Little children, keep yourselves from idols. Amen.

These last words of the apostle seem to be a digression, yet the danger of unintended idolatry remains even for those born of God. Idolatry can occur when personal

pursuits, worldly pleasures, carnal desires, and the cares of this world⁶⁴ wrongly assume the place in the believer's heart reserved solely for God and Christ. For this reason Christians should take great care and regularly inspect their own hearts to ensure that nothing assumes the rightful place reserved for the Lord.

(Barnes' Notes on the Bible, I John 5:21) (1) Those to whom he [the apostle] wrote were surrounded by idolaters, and there was danger that they might fall into the prevailing sin, or in some way so act as to be understood to lend their sanction to idolatry.

(2) in a world full of alluring objects, there was danger then, as there is at all times, that the affections should be fixed on other objects than the supreme God, and that what is due to him should be withheld.

There is no middle ground for true Christians to balance love for God and love for the world. To love what the flesh desires and not what the Holy Spirit wills only reveals the absence of true salvation. Consequently, if any desire to be saved, then sincere, deep, and genuine love for God must arise above every other carnal and worldly affection in the heart.⁶⁵ Idolatry is the foundation of all unrighteousness, and no man who lives in it will inherit

63 I John 2:20 *But ye have an unction from the Holy One, and ye know all things.*

I John 2:27 *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.*

64 Mark 4:18–20 *And these are they which are sown among thorns; such as hear the word, ¹⁹And the cares of this world, and the deceitfulness of riches, and the lusts of other things entering in, choke the word, and it becometh unfruitful. ²⁰And these are they which are sown on good ground; such as hear the word, and receive it, and bring forth fruit, some thirtyfold, some sixty, and some an hundred.*

65 Deut. 6:5 *And thou shalt love the LORD thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy might.*

Deut. 11:1 *Therefore thou shalt love the LORD thy God, and keep his charge, and his statutes, and his judgments, and his commandments, always.*

Ps. 31:23 *O love the LORD, all ye his saints: for the LORD preserveth the faithful, and plentifully rewardeth the proud doer.*

Matt. 27:37–38 *And set up over his head his accusation written, This Is Jesus The King Of The Jews. ³⁸Then were there two thieves crucified with him, one on the right hand, and another on the left.*

II Thess. 3:5 *And the Lord direct your hearts into the love of God, and into the patient waiting for Christ.*

Jude 21 *Keep yourselves in the love of God, looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life.*

the kingdom of God.⁶⁶ Many also have deceived themselves into both thinking and believing that they may continue in sin, pursue its carnal pleasures, and still enter heaven. This is not the truth of God's Word, nor what the apostle John personally heard and was taught by Jesus Christ. If any believe otherwise, they have

entered into conflict with the Lord Jesus Christ Himself. *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. If we say that we have fellowship with him, and walk in darkness, we lie, and do not the truth* (I John 1:5–6).

⁶⁶ *I Cor. 6:9–10 Know ye not that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God? Be not deceived: neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor abusers of themselves with mankind, nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners, shall inherit the kingdom of God.*