

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.

Without confession of sin and willingness to depart from it, all hope of receiving for-

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 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; 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;)*

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

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.*

giveness 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.ⁱ

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;⁵ (2) He promises complete cleansing and thorough removal of sin.⁶ 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* (I 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 blessings and His judgments. 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 faithfulness demands judgment for unconfessed sin as well. God's faithfulness to His people is seen throughout Scripture: He will not let them be tempted above that which they are able,⁷ and He will likewise protect from evil those He has called to Himself.⁸ 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.⁹ 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 they heed His commandments and seek to do His will. *Thy faithfulness is unto all generations: thou hast established the earth, and it abideth* (Ps. 119:90).

⁵ Rom. 11:27 *For this is my covenant unto them, when I shall take away their sins.*

⁶ Heb. 8:12 *For I will be merciful to their unrighteousness, and their sins and their 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.*

⁸ 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.*

⁹ 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.*

¹⁰ II Thess. 3:3 *But the Lord is faithful, who shall stablish you, and keep you from evil.*

¹¹ Ps. 121:7 *The LORD shall preserve thee from all evil: he shall preserve thy soul.*

¹² 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.*

(*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 *aphiēmi*. Its definition from *Strong's Concordance* is “to send away, leave alone, permit.” *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.¹⁰ 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.¹¹ It is the character and nature of a holy God to forgive¹² and provide mercy for those bound by an unholy nature contrary to divine holiness.¹³

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, and because of God's pity, He gives mercy for sin.¹⁴

(*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

10 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. 9 And Aaron shall bring the goat upon which the LORD's lot fell, and offer him for a sin offering. 10 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: 22 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.*

11 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.*

12 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. 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 blotteth out thy transgressions for mine own sake, and will not remember thy sins.*

13 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.*

14 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.*

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.*

Born of God

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 pitied 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 3:19.¹⁵ 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 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.¹⁶ 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.¹⁷ 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 5:15.¹⁸

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 nowhere else in the New Testament, except in 2 Corinthians 7:4.¹⁹ 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

¹⁵ 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.*

¹⁶ 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:*

¹⁷ 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;*

¹⁸ 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.*

¹⁹ 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.*

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 3:21.²⁰

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 *paraklētōs*. *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 / *paraklētōs* (‘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

²⁰ *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.

death for sin²¹ is sufficient to appease divine judgment for it. He who sins, God's Word states, must die.²² 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.

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,²³ righteousness,²⁴ and obedience²⁵ of Jesus Christ.

21 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.*

I 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;*

22 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.*

23 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;*

24 Rom. 5:18 *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.*

25 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.*

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;*

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.*

Jesus Christ was in all respects holy and without sin. *Who did no sin, neither was guile found in his mouth* (I 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)²⁶—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.²⁷ *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,²⁸ then men would forever remain estranged from Him. The 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.²⁹

It is both right and righteous that God is greatly displeased with sinners,³⁰ and men should not try to diminish the truth that

²⁶ 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.*

²⁷ 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.*

²⁸ Luke 19:10 *For the Son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost.*

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.*

²⁹ 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:*

³⁰ 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;*

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; 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.*

His anger exists toward all who transgress His laws.³¹ 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.³² 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.³³

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.³⁴ For the truly 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.³⁵ 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.³⁶ Ultimately, it is by the possession of divine love that men can accurately gauge if they are true disciples of Jesus Christ or not,³⁷ since he who does not love neither knows God³⁸ 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.

31 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;*

32 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.*

33 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.* 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.*

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.*

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

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

36 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.*

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

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

For the second time, the apostle reveals whom God considers liars: (1) those who refuse to confess themselves as sinners,³⁹ and (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 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.

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 produces 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,⁴⁰ and all who are truly led by this Spirit⁴¹ 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 Chris-

³⁹ I John 1:10 *If we say that we have not sinned, we make him a liar, and his word is not in us.*

⁴⁰ 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.*

⁴¹ Rom. 8:14 *For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God.*

tian's behavior is modeled in their Savior. Through Christ the believer has been born again,⁴² given a new spiritual heart,⁴³ and become a completely new creature.⁴⁴ 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.⁴⁵

(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 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 3:16.⁴⁶ 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 13:34,⁴⁷) 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."

42 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.*

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.*

43 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.*

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.*

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:*

44 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.*

Gal. 6:15 *For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision availeth any thing, nor uncircumcision, but a new creature.*
45 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?*

46 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.*

47 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

i Ps. 51 *Have mercy upon me, O God, according to thy lovingkindness: according unto the multitude of thy tender mercies blot out my transgressions.* ²*Wash me thoroughly from mine iniquity, and cleanse me from my sin.* ³*For I acknowledge my transgressions: and my sin is ever before me.* ⁴*Against 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.* ⁵*Behold, I was shapen in iniquity; and in sin did my mother conceive me.* ⁶*Behold, thou desirest truth in the inward parts: and in the hidden part thou shalt make me to know wisdom.* ⁷*Purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean: wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow.* ⁸*Make me to hear joy and gladness; that the bones which thou hast broken may rejoice.* ⁹*Hide thy face from my sins, and blot out all mine iniquities.* ¹⁰*Create in me a clean heart, O God; and renew a right spirit within me.* ¹¹*Cast me not away from thy presence; and take not thy holy spirit from me.* ¹²*Restore unto me the joy of thy salvation; and uphold me with thy free spirit.* ¹³*Then will I teach transgressors thy ways; and sinners shall be converted unto thee.* ¹⁴*Deliver me from bloodguiltiness, O God, thou God of my salvation: and my tongue shall sing aloud of thy righteousness.* ¹⁵*O LORD, open thou my lips; and my mouth shall shew forth thy praise.* ¹⁶*For thou desirest not sacrifice; else would I give it: thou delightest not in burnt offering.* ¹⁷*The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit: a broken and a contrite heart, O God, thou wilt not despise.* ¹⁸*Do good in thy good pleasure unto Zion: build thou the walls of Jerusalem.* ¹⁹*Then 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.* ²*Blessed is the man unto whom the LORD imputeth not iniquity, and in whose spirit there is no guile.* ³*When I kept silence, my bones waxed old through my roaring all the day long.* ⁴*For day and night thy hand was heavy upon me: my moisture is turned into the drought of summer.* *Selah.* 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.* ⁶*For 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.* ⁷*Thou art my hiding place; thou shalt preserve me from trouble; thou shalt*

compass me about with songs of deliverance. *Selah.* ⁸*I will instruct thee and teach thee in the way which thou shalt go: I will guide thee with mine eye.* ⁹*Be 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.* ¹⁰*Many sorrows shall be to the wicked: but he that trusteth in the LORD, mercy shall compass him about.* ¹¹*Be 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,* 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: ²³And 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.*

Luke 7:41–48 *There was a certain creditor which had two debtors: the one owed five hundred pence, and the other fifty.* ⁴²*And when they had nothing to pay, he frankly forgave them both. Tell me therefore, which of them will love him most?* ⁴³*Simon answered and said, I suppose that he, to whom he forgave most. And he said unto him, Thou hast rightly judged.* ⁴⁴*And 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.* ⁴⁵*Thou gavest me no kiss: but this woman since the time I came in hath not ceased to kiss my feet.* ⁴⁶*My head with oil thou didst not anoint: but this woman hath anointed my feet with ointment.* ⁴⁷*Wherefore 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.* ⁴⁸*And 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.*

