

"AS HE..."

The 1st Epistle of John

Thoughts come from a wide variety of sources. Some from messages I have heard from individuals, some from assemblies Bible studies, some from home life and some from books I have read. The Holy Spirit is the Teacher who makes them real to me.

- "What the Bible Teaches, 1st John, A.M.S. Gooding. John Ritchie Ltd.
- "The Life Application Bible." Tyndale House and Zondervan

Life lived in fellowship with God is "life indeed." That gives meaning and direction so that our few years here have an eternal purpose, not just secular success. As people get older in years it is a good thing to pass on to those who are younger, some of the wisdom they have learned both by the "hits and misses" they have experienced. Things to avoid are important to be identified as well as those things that are right. A reliable model for living life as God intended is important for us to have. John the apostle knew this kind of life was important for the furtherance of the kingdom of God as well as for the benefit and practical outworking of faith in the lives of believers.

To be in fellowship with God and His people we need to "Walk in the light, AS HE is in the light [1:7]." To abide in Christ, we must "Walk even AS HE walked [2:6]" when He was here among people like us. To be in the likeness of Christ, when we see Him, we will be "AS HE is [3:2]." The motivation to purity of life now is to be pure "Even AS HE is pure [3:3]." When righteousness happens in our daily lives, our likeness for this is "Even AS HE is righteous [3:7]." Our righteousness in life makes love a reality when we "Love one another, AS HE gave us commandment [3:23]." That love is our greatest representation of Him as we live in this world and mature, "Because AS HE is, so are we in this world [4:17]."

The variety of "sevens" in 1st John is not without reason. God intends us to be full and complete in our life and testimony in this world. There are seven "Things of God" given in this letter. There is "The Word of God," which is the basis of all authority that we might "know," "be enlightened," and be "equipped" for everything that is ahead of us. "The Love of God" is the secret of all godliness that we might mature consistently, serve effectively and walk obediently to Him with gladness of heart. "The Will of God" for us is that we be able to fulfill our Lord's plans for us and abide eternally in Him. "The Son of God" is the center of all divine revelation. He was revealed openly when He was here. He is to be confessed openly by us and lived out openly in our daily life and conduct. He is revealed to us inwardly and is personal to us inwardly as well as being known by us personally. Being "Born of God" is the source of this life to us that we might live sinless, lovingly and victoriously. The "Spirit of God" is the power of all ability so that we might serve God watchfully and effectively.

The Gospel of John was written to give evidence of the deity of Christ and to illustrate that truth by the seven miracles recorded and the seven personal events in which He was revealed as the Messiah. The seven "I Ams" of His deity and the seven ways the Son is declared to be equal with the Father are some of the ways John testified to the deity of Christ in the Gospel of John. The first epistle of John declares the sinless humanity of Christ as an example to us as to how our lives and attitudes reflect on His Person. When we apply what we learn here, we understand this letter is for our learning so our "Joy might be full [1:4];" that "We sin not [2:1];" can "Know our sins are forgiven [2:12];" and know that we "Have eternal life [5:13]."

Key words like "fellowship," "know," "love," and "life" show us the need of being assured of the reality of God's interest in our life of faith. Sometimes believers need to be reassured of our faith in order to counter the false teaching that attacks the fundamental Christian doctrines we know from the word of God. There are some believers who need to be assured that they have eternal life because doubts come when they are challenged by articulate false teachers or failures in their lives. We all need to be encouraged to maintain fellowship with our God whose very existence is sometimes questioned by those who think they know what God should be like if He is real, how He should act and what He should do for them. If it is not according to their opinion, then He does not even exist as far as they are concerned.

The contrast of light and darkness is addressed in 1st John as well as the contrast between the old commandment and the new commandment. Loving the Father and loving the world; Christ and antichrist; truth and lies are contrasted. The children of God and the children of the devil are shown in contrast. Eternal life and eternal death; love and hatred; love and fear; having life and not having life; true teaching and false teaching --- these are all spoken of in 1st John by means of contrast.

The lives of God's children are effective to others and meaningful to us when we live in fellowship with God. To be AS HE is and experience fellowship with divine Persons means we will appreciate the fact that God is Light, God is Love and God is Life.

1st John 1:1-2

TRUTH ABOUT THE SAVIOR

There is a "social Christianity" that many people in the world claim as their religion in contrast to other world religions. True Christian faith that is experienced by a person who has been delivered from a life of sinful pleasures and ambitions often is remarkably life-changing. A case in point is the apostle Paul, who though a religious man full of zeal, when God stopped him his first words of repentance were, "Who art Thou, Lord?" The second question he had was one of true faith, "Lord, what wilt Thou have me to do?" All believers rejoice in a special way when this happens, and we consider that person "a trophy of grace." The Gospel truly is the "dynamite" of God. Second and third generations of believers often come quietly into the kingdom of God because they have been privileged to be raised by those who teach them the way of salvation from their infancy. For the most part they live and talk like Christians, and do "Christian" things. Their step of personal faith in Christ may come when they simply understand for themselves the true meaning of a verse of scripture which they memorized when they were young.

It is to this second and third generation of believers John seems to be addressing this letter. The early believers had faced, and some had survived, serious persecution. People around them were becoming used to Christianity and the different lifestyle of Christians. The commitment of first-generation believers was not seen in the next, and there was a tendency to conform to the world and its ways. Some were compromising their faith and were not taking a stand for the Lord. False teachers were getting a hearing from those who had learned the truth of God second-hand from their parents or others who were saved before them. The philosophy of the Gnostics for some reason seemed to appeal to some of them. They taught that scripture can only be understood by a few learned people. As far as they were concerned scripture has to be taken in a non-literal way to get its true meaning, and knowledge is more important than virtue.

Not only was this false teaching directed at the word of God, but at the Person of God. They taught that because there is evil in the world, God could not have created it. Also, they said that Christ could not be God because deity is a Spirit and cannot be found in anything material. Further, because the flesh is material, there cannot be a resurrection of the flesh. Some practiced the rejection of most food and comforts because all matter, according to their teaching, is evil. This letter from John was written to assure believers in Christ that what they had been taught was right. God is real. Faith in Christ is right. When we believe on Him, we have eternal life. We can have fellowship now with God and keep that fellowship with Him who is Light and Love and Life.

"That which was from the beginning," always was, even before the beginning as the Gospel of John says in the opening verses. In the epistle of 1st John, he refers to our Lord Jesus Christ proceeding forward from the beginning of time to His incarnation and revelation as the "Word of life." John is not only giving his personal testimony as to who the Lord is, but includes all the apostles by using the word "we."

The very first words of this letter, are a plain declaration that the Person he is writing about is the Lord God. He "was" always from the beginning, was testified to by John and all the apostles, was heard as to His speaking, seen literally, "looked upon" physically, and actually touched with their own hands. The challenge to the false teaching of the Gnostics as to the Person of Christ is clear. The "Person" John was writing about is eternal in His being. he was here on earth so that people could hear Him speak, see what He did and tell others about Him. The "Proofs" John was writing about were that he saw our Lord himself, heard Him, saw Him, looked closely at Him, touched Him and was told by Him to tell others about Him [1-2]. The "Purpose" John was writing for was so we can share our lives with other believers in our Lord Jesus Christ, share our lives with God and our Lord, and find our joy in fellowship with them [3-4].

To actually hear someone speak, particularly many times over a period of years, takes what has been said beyond the sound of one's voice, to where they understand the meaning of the words in the context in which they have been given. It is the permanent result of a past action. To see a person literally and visibly is a testimony of reality in itself. To see a person figuratively is to grasp the nuances of their personality and examine that person over a period of time. The remarkable and wonderful truth of God being "manifest in the flesh" was never lost to John. When the Lord was "looked upon," John viewed our Lord with careful, penetrating interest. He had "looked upon Jesus as He walked [Jn.1:36]," and never lost the wonder of that first sight of Him, nor the sight of Jesus walking on the water, or Jesus transfigured before his eyes on the mountain.

John succeeds in the very first sentence of the epistle of attracting the readers to the "Word of Life." By the use of words, we communicate thoughts, ideas, truth and experiences to others. Symbols and pictures are usually open to interpretation of some kind. Words taken in context are the precise ways to convey to others what I want them to know. God has conveyed His wisdom, His power, His authority, His love, His mercy, His grace and all of His attributes to us through His Son who is the Word of Life. He was here in the flesh as a man, and yet was God in every way. His glory was veiled so human beings wouldn't die when they looked at Him. He still "upheld all things by the word of His power" when He was visibly here as a man among men. None of His divine characteristics were lost when He took upon Himself human flesh and "was made in the likeness of men."

Eternal life was actually seen also when Christ was here. Ageless life is something people have always wanted but was lost to humanity by the invasion of sin into the world, "and death by sin." God's life, and life in God was conveyed to us by our Lord Jesus Christ when He was here and could be visibly seen. His kind of life was "manifested." It was seen by the apostles in human form and testified to by those same people. Eternal life is real life. It is an endless and meaningful existence, and has characteristics that divine Persons all have. It does not only relate to endless existence but is a living, acting connection to the Father and a relationship that is shared by all who have that eternal life. That life is more than existence but involves the quality and meaning that is shared in fellowship by all who have it. This is what those who believe in Jesus have as a gift from God. "Eternal life, through Jesus Christ our Lord."

There was never anything to break that flawless fellowship between the Father, Son and Holy Spirit. God is the Source of eternal life and it is His to give to whoever He will. Eternal life is a sovereign gift of God. How overwhelming it is to experience this life in His Son who is from "everlasting to everlasting," and is the 'First and the Last.' Our fellowship is with the Person of Christ. He is the Person of John's apostolic declaration [v.1]. The Proofs of that declaration is in verse 2 and the Purposes of it are in verses 3 and 4. May we never lose the wonder of who our Lord is. That is our safeguard against the false teaching that abounds in our day the same as in the day John wrote this epistle. This truth is the basis of a Joyful life which is a theme of 1st John chapter 1.

1st 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."*

WAS FROM THE BEGINNING

*That which was, not which came to be,
Was not an idea or vague-kind of sensitivity;
But was really a Person existing from all eternity –
Who came in a fleshly body and was of "mankind" like me –
Except He is and was sinless with no spot in Him –
Unusual because at the same time He was God and man –
Walking in light, because from Him light came
He was the God- Man, He was one and the same.*

*Wonder of wonders He came to walk with us –
Making it possible for Father and Son to bring us thus
Into light and life, not on a whim or a "just because,"
But His eternal life given me is the result of a just cause.
John knew it was the real and lasting life, now so do I –
It is true He was here and for my sins did die –
So now each day that passes and also in the bye and bye
I can have fellowship with Him, who by His grace brought me nigh.*

"Father in heaven, to experience walking in the light with my brethren is certainly a great joy. To be able to walk with Thee and enjoy the divine life I have through the divine nature Thou hast given, goes way beyond the word "joy." It is a blessed fearfulness to have the kind of joy that comes from the light of God, the relief after confession of sin and the fellowship of God. I worship in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, Amen."

1st 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)"*

DISPLAYED LIGHT

*I saw light first as a glimmer as truth began to dawn –
And as the Word of God unfolded the unknown soon was known.
The One who was obscured from my mind by blatant unbelief
Now was revealed by the truth standing out in bold relief.*

*I learned what was meant by "His blood shed on the tree,"
And understood finally that His death there was for me.
Then for the first time I could as a witness testify –
Making know to others the reason Christ had to die.*

*Now to show to others the true meaning of God's grace,
Means I have a message as I go from place to place.
Eternal life is real and I have now and forever –
The bond formed by faith in Him, nothing at all can sever.*

"It may only be a parenthesis Father, but the truth and teaching are real to me today. I am not called to be here for no reason. What I have I can tell and show to others. I thank Thee for the opportunity to bring some of the truth of this life to the man I was talking to at noon today. Help him to grasp the value of eternal life and lay hold on it. In the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, Amen."

1st John 1:3-4

THE JOY OF FELLOWSHIP

The reality of Christ in one's life changes what could be mundane and drudgery into something that is exciting and meaningful. If life is so full of obligations and pressures that we find ourselves frustrated and stressed by the expectation others have of us or that we have of ourselves, then we will not be very happy people. Joy in our lives is mostly dependent on the choices we make rather than a result of the circumstances that come upon us. In reality, the quality of life of a believer depends on the consciousness we have of living in fellowship with our Lord.

He is revealed to us in the wonders of His personhood as the "Word of life" in the first two verses of this letter. Then He was experienced by John who later writes "that life is in His Son." Now that life is shared with us. Eternal life is a real quality of life that continues forever. It begins in us when we turned in repentance from sin and in faith to Christ. We put our trust in Him and we were freely given eternal life in our Lord Jesus Christ. He is not some ethereal figure who exists only in our minds. He is eternal in His being. He was here on earth in flesh as the expression, "the Word" of life, and now we are brought into the light of life. It is through Christ we are cleansed and made acceptable to God. We as believers are "accepted in the Beloved."

Those who are "children of God by faith in Jesus Christ," have fellowship with each other in that a new relationship has been formed with the Father and His Son, Jesus Christ. The fellowship the Father and Son always had, has been opened to us. This is not like a social connection or the camaraderie of those who like each other and hang out together. This is not a fellowship based on origins but is a relationship in which those involved share in common their lives. It is communion - a union of persons who participated in, and enjoy the same things. It is a life experienced by those who have things in common.

Peter and the early apostles experienced life with Christ in their daily walk with Him. By sharing in common with new believers what they had experienced in their lives with the Lord, new believers ("whom having not seen ye love") could benefit by hearing from them truths about our Lord. We too have fellowship with our Lord like the Vine and the branches, or the Head and the body. Our fellowship with God is a fellowship of light, love and life.

The fellowship we have with other believers is based on the fellowship we have with the Father and the Son. Christian fellowship is based on God's word. This is not a religious affiliation but rather a conviction that the Bible is God's word, and the scriptures are not open to private interpretation. The fellowship of believers is grounded on what God's word says. That gives strength to the fellowship without which real communion is impossible. Fellowship of believers is also dependent on their mutual commitment to unity. Opinionated believers may be true in their lives as far as faith in Christ is concerned, but if they want everyone to submit to their opinion about a thing, true fellowship is not possible. Fellowship can only be maintained by daily yielding to the Holy Spirit in the conduct of our lives. If we do not agree on the right or wrong of a matter, or even how to accomplish a task, fellowship is not really there.

Fellowship with God's people involves both social and spiritual interaction. Both of these depend on the relationship we have with our Lord Jesus Christ. Some may look at the events of life in a way that blends well with the world around. That would limit the extent of fellowship they would have with those who believe we "should" come out from among them and be separate. Some claim that means all believers should dress uniformly. Others believe the principle of modesty directs how we clothe ourselves. When these opinions differ, we must turn to the scriptures for our counsel and the consequent results.

John and those he represented found their joy in the fellowship of believers who were committed to this knowledge of Christ. That knowledge inspired in them the joy that come from practicing what they believed. That same joy can be ours. That full joy was not only for the apostles, but is also the reason for our joy. Our Lord Jesus Christ is the eternal God. He was here on earth in the flesh. He was seen, heard and testified of by those in the past, so now when we believe on Him, we are given this life - eternal life. Eternal life makes possible our fellowship with other believers as well as divine Persons. That fellowship makes our lives to be what God intends and so our joy is full. "What a fellowship, what a joy divine...!"

1st 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."*

OUR FELLOWSHIP.

*The Person John knew was God in human flesh.
He came here to earth to redeem us and to bless
All who saw Him and knew God was here among us men –
Making it possible that through Him we might go to heaven.
So, the basis of our fellowship is knowing who He is
And the common ground we have is redemption by His grace.*

*Some have seen and heard Him in a physical way it's true –
But those of us who believe by faith have fellowship with Him too.
That fellowship is unique because Christ is both human and divine.
By an act of God's great grace, that nature He gave is mine.
Not that I am nor is it ever possible to become deity –
But He who was both God and man gave this new nature unto me.*

*Now I can enjoy fellowship with the Father and the Son –
And other believers too enjoy the common ground we're on.
Jesus Christ was very man so He knows what we all need –
And because He is God, He answers prayer when for His help we plead.
Such a fellowship cannot be known by those without new life.
It is based on God's salvation and on walking in the light.*

*The faith that opened my inner eyes to the truth of God's salvation –
Is the same faith that works and brings joy to daily occupation.
The common bond of sharing divine life that is eternal,
Links me with other saints who have found such life supernal.
As we move through each event of daily work and living,
The fellowship God initiated gives and keeps on giving.*

"O God, the joy of sharing life with Thee and the believers of many different places we have been lately, rises far above the trivial joys of earthly success. Is there a way that I can transmit that joy to other members of my family that I may have overlooked? If there is, I would like to know it and pass this joy on before they get too bogged down on finding temporary happiness as a poor substitute. In the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, Amen."

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

YOUR JOY.

*He picked up his pen to write – words divinely inspired
So much said in so few words – lifting my mind and heart higher
Not a cluster of random phrases – specific ones for present needs*

The purpose is to bring joy – this message I must heed.

*Fellowship defined is plain – sharing common interests
Fellowship experienced – walking in light the whole distance
Fellowship in action – two or more communing walking side by side
Fellowship enjoyed – having honest hearts able in each to confide.*

*The words don't change – the Lord is the same, the Source of Christian joy
The words make plain – don't be misled by some enticing ploy
The words are words from God – let no one this assurance take
The words are life indeed – they give joy, make no mistake!*

"I wonder, Father, if some of those who seemed so relieved and joyful have been led astray by some one or more who are looking for a place of authority over them. The words of truth from the scriptures seemed so precious to them one time but there is a sort of bitterness that has come. If there is some area of work or faith that I should try and fill and am able to do some good in it, make me ready to respond to the guidance of the Holy Spirit to try and restore that joy. In the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, Amen."

1st John 1:5-7

WE HAVE HEARD

Sometimes when we hear information passed on to us from teachers, friends or family members regarding things that have happened or been said, it is different from the actual facts. It is not that they have been deliberately trying to deceive us, but people filter things through their own perspective. John takes care to be specific when he states that what he is telling the readers, he and the other apostles heard it from the Lord Jesus Christ Himself. This was not second-hand information, nor was there any personal additions to the facts. "God is Light, and in Him is no darkness at all."

God did not create light because He is Light. There are no shadows around God. When His glory was in the Holiest of all in the tabernacle, there were no shadows cast by the wings of the cherubim. He is omnipresent so where He dwells in light darkness cannot exist. He would have created darkness as the condition of earth before the days of creation. The sin of Lucifer, angels and men has made the creation of darkness necessary in order for those who sin to survive even for a moment. In darkness evil and good look alike. Darkness cannot exist in light because light exposes what ever has been hidden. Sin is exposed by the light of truth and righteousness. Sinful men "love darkness rather than light, because their deeds are evil."

God is Light physically because He is the Source of the shining glory of energy unleashed. God is Light morally because He is holy. His charge to His children is to "Be ye holy, for I am holy." God is Light intellectually because He is "The Truth." That Truth gives guidance and understanding to us from "The Life." When Light and Truth are surrounding us, "The Way" makes sure the walk of fellowship with God and His people is experienced.

Believers are in light because we are "children of the day." That is our position. Our standing in Christ has placed us in the light. Every person who has been born into the family of God by the Holy Spirit is in this fellowship of light. Even though we have been saved by His grace and justified freely, we still have the fact of indwelling sin that makes sinning a matter to be faced and dealt with in our lives. Those who are in the light can stumble, and even fall if we get distracted or look backward. Sin does not have dominion over us, but still can influence us to do what is wrong, even when we know it is wrong.

To enjoy the fellowship of walking in the light and experiencing the value of our relationship with God, sin must be faced and rejected. Truth is what we believe and also what we should practice. A vital, living union with God is where a Christian's joy becomes real. Holiness and truth go together well. The false teachers who were promoting Gnosticism (similar to secular humanism in many ways) thought the human body was evil and of little value. They gave two options: live life in rigid inflexible discipline that rejects anything that gives comfort, or go ahead and satisfy yourself by doing whatever you want. People say things like that today. "After all, when you're dead, you're dead, so go ahead and do what you want."

Christians do not love sin and God at the same time. To claim to be a child of God and live a sinful lifestyle and yield to the lusts of the flesh and live immorally, is a false assumption. Habitual walking in darkness is proof of a person being a false professor - a false Christian. When one is born again, they have a new nature. One can stumble, be careless and sin, but that is not the bent of their life. That is not what they want.

If a person loves the world, the love of the Father is not in them. A Christian will confess and forsake sin, and then rise up to "walk in newness of life."

When a person is in fellowship with God, they will walk in the light with the characteristics of divine life being evident. Habitual sin without a commitment to repent of it and refusal to go that way any further, is clear evidence that one is walking in darkness and is a child of the night. They have never been born again of the Spirit. Light and darkness have no fellowship - no communion.

Because a person is walking in the light, we do have real fellowship with our Lord and His people. This is normal Christian living. Our connection with other believers is based on our link of life with God, and also on our commitment to holiness of life. Light does not want to be involved with darkness. The attitude of those who love the Lord is that we want to bring pleasure, honor and glory to Him - not to ourselves. God Himself is Light; Christ is our Light and those who are walking in the Light are in turn, a light to the world around. The walk of a believer relates to where we walk, "in the light," rather than the way we walk.

There is no question as to the cleansing by the blood of Jesus Christ. There is no other way for cleansing of sin to be accomplished. Death for sin is the only way of redemption, and "Christ died for our sins, according to the scripture." His blood has done its cleansing work. We do not need another application of the blood of Christ when we sin. The degree to which I walk in the light is not what determines whether I am cleansed. That is a fact that has been accomplished by the death of Christ for sin. Whether I need cleansing or not is not up to me. That has already been done for me when the Lord Jesus paid in full the penalty for sin upon the cross. He was identified by John the Baptist as "the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world." We have identified ourselves with Him when we believe on Him, put our full faith in Him alone for our salvation and trust His death as sufficient to meet the claims of God against our sin. Now we live a new life of fellowship with God by walking in the light publicly as one who has been permanently cleansed from sin by His precious blood.

1st John 1:5. *"This then is the message we have heard of Him, and declare unto you, that God is light, and in Him is no darkness at all."*

GOD IS LIGHT.

*Darkness was surrounding all that was made
Until "The Voice" spoke, "Let there be light!"
The light Source, the eternal Energy, the Power –
Released from the infinite storehouse of His Person –
All that was needed to light the trillions of stars
Light before the sun even shone, the brilliant orb of the sun,
Light generated – light reflected – physical light – moral light,
All came from Him who is light in His being –
He is God: for "God is Light!"*

*The light of deity casts no shadows – leaves no dark spots.
The light that shone over the dark earth was His light.
The light that shone in Goshen when all the rest of Egypt was dark –
The light from the pillar of fire that followed Israel lighting up the night –
The Shekinah light behind the curtain of separation in the tabernacle
The light of "His Star" over "The Child" after 400 years of spiritual darkness –
The light that was seen when the blind saw for the first time
The Light of the world – "Jesus" – He is God: for "God is Light!"*

*The light dawning from the striving of the Holy Spirit –
The light from the real conviction of sin revealing its awfulness
The light from the pages of the Bible that bring understanding –
The light of life that starts a new walk with God –
The light of the Word as a lamp to my feet and a light to my path –
The light of morality that sends denizens of darkness running to hide
The light in the faces of those who love the name and Person of Jesus –
He is the True Light "that lighteth every man that cometh into the world" –
He is God: for "God is Light!"*

"Father of lights, there is light here in this place though there is a lot of darkness around. There are those whose life is like a candle, easily seen though small compared to the huge amount of darkness. May I be able to stir the flame of these candles to unite and give the light of a "city set on a hill." In the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, Amen.

1st John 1:6. *"If we say we have fellowship with Him, and walk in darkness, we lie, and do not the truth."*

FALSE FELLOWSHIP: A LIE.

*A lie is spoken when one deliberately speaks an unsubstantiated word.
Hopefully it wouldn't be from a believer – one with a testimony to tell,
Because it doesn't take long when we have a conversation about God,
To know whether a person is really going to heaven or hell.*

*Many use words to describe their fellowship, it sounds real when we hear it at first,
They say they are fine; they know they're okay and have fellowship with Him;
But walking in darkness is a way we know that reveals what he seeks to insist
Is not really true; either he's lost or a believer who is tolerating sin.*

*Truth is like a light shining in the dark, the source may be hidden, but light is easily seen.
That light reveals the path on which our feet walk, it is given to illuminate our way.
The true believer may fail or stumble for not one of us is a perfect man,
But He turns to the light of truth in His hand, and then ahead, sees the light of new day.*

"It is hard sometimes, Father God, to determine whether a person is saved and away from God, or is lost and trying to earn favor with God. But the walk reveals which it is. The true believer is looking for the Sun of Righteousness to arise with healing in His wings. May His coming be near! Even so come Lord Jesus! Amen."

1st 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."*

"AS HE IS..."

*It's there again, again repeated, because His walk great interest thus inspired;
They looked upon Him as He walked, His purpose firm, the path impossible on waters deep;
His walk full set to absolute submission to the Father's will, led Him to Gethsemane – dark;
And then one brilliant resurrection day, toward even, He walked with two till they retired,
And so to me says truth so clear, so strong, so challenging that to the words responds my heart:
"Walk in the light, as He is in the light."*

*So righteousness within, makes light, to life an absolute essential here for me;
And righteousness without makes the walk of service all for God, true evidence
Of a walk similar to His, when in love and honesty all could see divine providence,
Had visited human-kind in veiled flesh to walk in love that all could see that we,
Frail, mortal men who, living here on earth, could truly, even as He, walk in grace;
"Walk, even as He walked."*

*In fellowship, in faith abiding and then in likeness to His own blessed Person,
I am in full assurance told, that I am called, O grace beyond compare, a son of God;
Not unique in the same way as He who full of grace and truth came here on earth and trod
A path uncheered by earthly smile, but as a son, a child on whom He set His love on;
I lift my eyes to the bright day above when He shall come to clouds above, the Mighty Son of God:
"We shall see Him as He is."*

*And as I think along this line of truth, the coming day; the saints' glad hope:
It makes my view of things both seen and not, far clearer than before;
For this day comes like thief in darkest night or bright like light upon the shore
Of waters pure and clean; the way He full intends my life to be, and farther up
Each passing day I climb; more like Him as that day draws so near, more pure;
"Even as He is pure."*

*But until then, my walk is here on earth, the place, the planet on which He stood;
And here, with men around dark lies to tell about His past, their purpose to deceive,
The hearts of those who longed His promises and words so rare to claim and to receive;
I live here too, and just the same as then 'tis now, their plan to trip this child of God,
Lest righteousness that He imparts, and righteous lives lead others to believe:
"Even as He is righteous."*

*It's His desire, for this He came, for this He lived and died upon the cross;
That here and now and through the days, that leads to final home in heaven above;
There will be those whose lives, and walk, and words, and deeds of gracious love;
Will here proclaim to generations now, and then in future ages the greatness of the cost;
The cost of grace that redemption did provide, and the commands our lives do prove;
"Love one another, as He gave us commandment."*

*And so it is, with love made perfect, bold and clear in future day of judgment;
There comes that time when no more fear of failure, loss or dark defeat;
We stand before the "Bema", there before the Lord in garments, clean and white;
The hosts of heaven all witnesses to see and hear, forever praise the pronouncement;
That while on earth, His own, by grace made His, they along with us repeat;
"As He is, so are we..."*

"I am humbled to think, Father, that such a great privilege could be mine to be identified so closely as to say, "As He is" so am I. To this I can't attain, but I am so grateful for what Thy grace has given to me in Christ. I thank Thee with all my heart; in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, Amen."

1st John 1:8-10

CONFESSION

There are two conditions that are important to maintaining fellowship with God and those who walk in the light. One is there is a standard of life and conduct to which we must conform. We must "walk in the light as He is in the light." The second is when we sin confession of sin must be real, sincere and specific. There is a false fellowship that is evident when one walks in darkness. We can say what we want, but the reality is seen when we do not live in the light of the truth. There is also a false holiness that people claim to have when they say they do not have a sinful nature. And there is also a false righteousness that denies their conduct has any sin in it at all.

The principle of sin still remains with us. "Sinless perfection" is actually self-deception when it is claimed by mortal men. The Gnostics claimed the soul is freed from sinful flesh. To say that anyone has no natural tendency toward sin and so we are incapable of sinning is a lie. Many people refuse to take sin seriously, so they deny that the standards of divine righteousness as taught by the law of God even applies to them. "If everyone does it, it's got to be okay." Both the root of sin (the sin principle) and the practice of particular sins (the fruit) break fellowship with God when we deny their existence or try to hide or ignore it as inconsequential. False fellowship [v.6], false holiness [v.8], and false righteousness [v.10] are countered by facing the principle of sin [v.8], the particular sins we commit [v.10], and the personal sins [v.10] that we may think are hidden.

To deal with this sin problem we face daily, we need to understand what confession of sin really means. This is not some formula designed by a church in which a person makes confession to another person and is declared by that person to be forgiven. Confession of sin takes us to the only Person who can forgive sins and provide the needed cleansing. To rationalize the sin problem by saying, "I have sinned," is not confession of sin. That is simply stating a fact. True confession means I recognize the sin problem for what it is, and agree with God as to the sinfulness of sin. I will repent of that sin in a specific way and in specific words - and forsake it. It is impossible for us to realize how serious sin is because we cannot see it through God's eyes. However, our new nature will convict us and move us to act in order to regain the joy of true fellowship with God.

Justice has been served when it provided our acceptance by God. Joy and fellowship are another matter. The barrier between our Father and His child is real until we allow God to act as a father toward us. He does not grudgingly grant forgiveness when sin is confessed, but delights to forgive so that unhindered fellowship can be restored. Not only does He forgive us in a faithful and just way, but "cleanses." purifies and

purges from all unrighteousness. The cause of hindered fellowship because of sinful actions must be removed and no longer allowed. When we recognize our weakness, our faults and our shortcomings, our Father draws us to Himself. He knows who we are and what we are. After all, He is our Father. Our biggest need is to face what we are and admit our need of Him and His strength to overcome sin.

When we lie to others [v.6] we fail the test of fellowship. When we lie to ourselves [v.8] we fail the test of nature. When we lie to God [v.10] we fail the test of actions. We lose the blessing of the word of God when we stop doing the truth. When truth is not in us and truth is turned into lies, we lose fellowship with God's people and God Himself. Prayer becomes empty, worship is dull and one becomes critical in spirit. When sin is not confessed, we will actually lose a certain part of our character and reputation.

The light of God and His word exposes sin. The indwelling Spirit of God awakens the conscience when we face sin and ourselves honestly. If we think we fool others by saying we have not sinned, that makes us appear more foolish ourselves. People who know us can see for themselves what we are like. Our fellowship and joy in the Lord can be real when we nurture our relationship with God by honest confession and forsaking of sin. By agreeing with God as to what sin is and what we have done, and being open about it, we will recognize our tendency to sin and need of God to keep us from sin. How thankful we are for His gracious forgiveness.

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

FALSE HOLINESS: DECEPTION.

*Sometimes we say what we don't really mean.
Not deceiving deliberately but we haven't really seen
What we are like inside, until from God's holy view,
Our treacherous heart is exposed for what we never knew.*

*Then truth in all its light and holiness imparted,
Brings us to know we are responsible now for what God started
When He saved us and cleansed us by the shedding of Christ's blood
And brought out the potential within us to become what we really should.*

*To say I have no sin, deceives no one else but me,
For my life is lived out in the open for everyone to see.
The truth I truly cherish and by God's help I now commit
Myself to being honest, and when sin comes, to confess it.*

"It is a fact Father, that there are times I forget to be honest the confession of sin. May I again seek help from the holy Spirit to keep all daily accounts settled and leave nothing undone that should be at the end of each day. In the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, Amen."

1st 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."*

CONFESSION.

*Not just acknowledgement – far more is confession in deed-
Repentance – the awareness that God is involved
Forsaking – reminds me to truth I must take heed.
Confession – words expressed that guilt may be absolved
Humility – arrogance and self-justification gone
Sorrow – sin is not just a light-hearted laugh
Contrition – a sense there is an effect to what I've said or done
Righteousness – a return to God's brightly lighted path.*

*Faithful – God has never said what He doesn't really mean
Just – His unfailing righteousness never sin o'er looks
Forgives – He paid the price that needed to cleanse every sin
That forgiveness is based on the judgment Christ once took,
Cleansing – this is a wonder that sin is not just swept aside*

*Forgiven sin removed, as far as the east is from the west
This could only be, because the sinless Savior died
Accepted, forgiven, cleansed – in Christ I'm truly blest.*

"I rejoice daily heavenly Father, in the acceptance I have in Christ. The problem of sin in my life brings the dark cloud of guilt over my soul, but the blessing of forgiveness brings the light back as the relief of confession takes place and forgiveness is assured. I am so grateful and thankful for this act of such grace. In the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, Amen."

1st John 1:10. "If we say we have not sinned, we make Him a liar and His word is not in us."

FALSE RIGHTEOUSNESS: NOT SINNED.

*What a fearful thing it would be
To say I have not sinned.
It is bad enough to say those words
Knowing what I'm like within.
But to say such a thing, here it says,
I will make of Him out a liar –
Whoever says such a terrible thing
Is in danger of hell-fire.*

*No, I have sinned, and alas, still do,
Though it grieves me to the core,
Because I know it reflects on Him
Who on the cross my judgment bore.
I rest, not carelessly, but sure
On the assurance I've an Advocate –
And I never want to dishonor Him
Who died for sin in my place.*

"God, forbid that I should ever give the impression I think I am perfect. My only hope is in Christ alone. May it never be implied when I speak or in any other form of communication I might use, that I claim righteousness on my own. I do praise Thee for the righteousness of Christ that makes me accepted by Thee. In the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, Amen."

1st John 2:1-2

AFFECTION EXPRESSED

How does a father get important things across to adult children without seeming to talk down to them nor demean them in any way? The compassion of one's heart is heard by the tone of voice, facial expressions, and the focus of the eyes. To get this across in written words limits us to the proper position of words in a sentence and the way they are used. John did not use the word "we" in verse one of this chapter as he did in the first chapter as an apostle. Rather he established his personal connection with them by using the word "my" and the words "little children," as a father would speak to those born into his family. To express one's self as a caring, older father who has the welfare of his children in his heart, makes what he says of special impact. This distinguishes the words, "little children," as one would speak to adults without a condescending manner.

Probably many who would read this epistle when it was first written would have been his own spiritual children. They would understand his words to be those of an affectionate older believer who wants the best for them so they could live victorious lives. Expressions of endearment are never out of place when it comes to giving instruction and correction. These "children" had heard from Gnostics that sin wasn't all that serious. So he wrote in the previous verses [1:5-10] the way believers are to deal with sin. Lest they take sin lightly he states. "That ye sin not." A true child of God does not want to sin, nor should he regard the promise of forgiveness as a license to sin. Actually, that promise should motivate us to keep from sinning so the name of our Lord and our Father should not be demeaned by our lifestyle of sin.

The sacrificial love of our Savior to provide forgiveness and salvation both full and free, constrains us to live holy, righteous and godly out of gratitude and appreciation for Him. But sadly, we do sin, so the words, "If

any man sin," is a reference to some specific sin that has been committed. When we are guilty of sin and are feeling condemned, we are assured that the cross-work of Christ is sufficient to deal with all of our sin - past, present and future. Sinning for a believer should be the exception, not the constant in life. Our new nature warns us as the Holy Spirit moves our conscience to reject sin in spite of its appeal. But we do fail. We are not sinlessly perfect. The accuser will seek to make one think they have "lost their salvation" or never were saved at all.

John writes to assure them of our Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous. He is the One who suffered, "The just for the unjust to bring us to God." He has satisfied the requirements needed to turn away the wrath of divine righteousness. On the basis of the perfection of Christ's sacrifice, the atonement for our sin has been made once and for all. Habitual sin is not the practice of a child of God. We love our Father too much to want to dishonor Him in any way. We love our Lord Jesus too much to want anything or anybody to disregard the supreme sacrifice He made for us on the cross. We want Him to be honored, trusted and accepted by everyone. We who have believed in Him, have been forgiven and cleansed, know what a blessing it will be to others who receive Him.

"Jesus Christ the righteous," makes our acceptance permanent. He does not excuse sin, justify it in any way nor claim our sin is not serious. He took our case personally and in a righteous way, dealt with the whole matter before the Father as the One who is the propitiation. This is not a reference to the cross-work He accomplished, but it is the Advocate Himself who is the propitiation for our sins. He is continually in the presence of divine justice as the One and only One who has removed the barrier of sin by the punishment He endured in our place. We are accepted on the basis of that sacrifice, and the value of the living Savior who has "made us accepted in the Beloved."

Propitiation is also a fact that the gift of God has been given to us because the love of God has provided what we need. Actually, propitiation is an act of love on God's part toward us. Propitiation is available for everyone to have, but that does not mean that all men's sins are forgiven because Christ died for our sins. God wants "all men to be saved" and has supplied sufficient payment to save all men. We can say the message of salvation goes out to all. "It is unto all, and upon all them that believe." God wants "all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth." The sacrifice Christ made was infinite, it was of infinite value, and provided by an Infinite Person, of infinite power, authority and worth. No matter how many other persons have existed, His infinite Being goes beyond anything finite. It is on the basis of this that our fellowship with God leads us to live in conscious victory. There is no reason or need for sinning. Our fellowship is maintained constantly by our Advocate, and we are motivated to please Him.

1st 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:"*

AN ADVOCATE.

We need an Advocate – we are still in a body of flesh

We need an Advocate – One we can completely trust

We need an Advocate – the world-pressures are not decreasing

We need an Advocate – One who's pleading for us continues unceasing.

We have an Advocate – not just one trained in the schools of men

We have an Advocate – always pleading for us, not just now and then

We have an Advocate – one who is without sin of his own

We have an Advocate – He has constant access to God's throne

This Advocate is Jesus Christ the Righteous

This Advocate never ignores or despises us

This Advocate is the Father's Beloved Son

This Advocate has every single case won

His advocacy in no way excuses sin

His advocacy isn't just that each case He may win

His advocacy is there for me when I do fail

His advocacy is that I over sin will prevail.

"It seems like it is so often Father, that the sin of omission happens and I don't realize my failure until after the event. I am thankful for an Advocate who is all-knowing and is never late in any thing. When the action I have taken in haste is wrong, gratefully I remember the Advocate who has already acted on my behalf. I confess the sin and thank Thee for fellowship with Thee and the Son. In the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, Amen."

1st John 2:1. "My little children, 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:"

WE HAVE AN ADVOCATE.

Christ's interest in us:

- Jn.15:16. He has chosen us – therefore His reputation is involved.
- Rev.1:5. He has loved us and washed us – therefore His crucifixion is involved.
- Col.1:27. He is in (among) us – therefore his life is involved.
- 2Cor.5:21. He has imputed His righteousness to us – therefore His future is involved.

Christ's defense of us:

- Lu.22:31-34. He prays for us – so He represents us to the Father.
- Heb.13:6. He protects us – so He defends us to men.
- Ps.23:1. He provides for us – so He assures us to ourselves.
- 2Tim.4:18. He preserves us – so He keeps us from every evil work arrayed against us.

Christ's blessings to us:

- Jn.14:16. Another Comforter – a new Person in us.
- Jn.13:34-35. A new commandment – a new Authority for us.
- 2Cor.5:17. A new creation – a new nature from us.

Christ's commission to us:

- Mat.28:16-20. Our mission – evangelize, because He has sent us.
- Acts 1:8. Our means – the Holy Spirit, because He is in us.
- Rom.1:16. Our might – the Gospel, because it empowers us.
- 2Cor.5:14-15. Our motivation – love, because the love of Christ constrains us.

"At this throne of grace, I come with all confidence, Father God, in spite of failures. I am thankful that the scriptures give assurance of One who is continually before Thy holy throne bearing my name upon Himself and making my cause, His. By virtue of His advocacy, I again make an appeal for the lost of this place; that by Thy power and the working of the Spirit of God in all of us the Lord's people, please save precious souls in this place. In the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, Amen."

1st John 2:2. "And He is the propitiation for our sins: and not for ours only, but for the sins of the whole world."

THE PROPITIATION.

*Lest I for some unknown reason, think that sin is not so bad –
It is well that week by week I am committed to go
To the "place of remembrance" where with thoughts both glad and sad –
I am brought to consider again that He who every sin did know
Without hesitation gave for us, everything that He had –
And in the way He chose, we can His propitiation show.*

*The demands of justice that claim the soul of every sinful man –
Have been met by the only One who could those demands meet.
Jesus Christ the Son of God, could turn aside that just wrath –
And did, when on the cross nailed there by His hands and feet
He gave His life as the propitiation meeting every demand –
So every one can be accepted who "find" when with the heart they seek.*

*Punishment for sin has been removed in a just and righteous way.
The sacrifice of Christ has met all of God's righteous claims.
No other person or way could the price of sin fully pay –
All power and authority in heaven and earth is in Jesus' name,*

*And through His propitiation, He God's righteous wrath did allay –
For us the propitiation is accepted when He for us mercy attained.*

"I rest in my Lord Jesus Christ, Father, knowing that He has accomplished on my behalf what would never have been possible in any other way. I thank Thee for the justice and full accomplishment that His sacrifice has made. In the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, Amen."

1st John 2:3-6

WE KNOW HIM

Around forty times in the epistle of 1st John the word "know" occurs in its Greek form helping to define what it means to be a Christian. Many equate being a Christian as one being born in a Christian country, in a Christian family, who attends a Christian church and lives a Christian lifestyle. "Know" in verse 3 is relating to the first of several tests of salvation in this letter. This refers to the practical experience of believers who keep the commands of God out of a genuine desire to please Him. Obeying God's word, walking in holiness of life and doing what we know God wants, are all evidence that we truly know Him in a personal way.

Knowing what the Bible teaches is not necessarily evidence of divine life in a person. Wanting to obey our Lord from the heart and serving Him with a gracious and humble spirit gives us personal assurance of the fact we are children of God. We know personally when we do something because we sincerely want to, not because we have to. Appreciation, gratitude and thankfulness have a way of demonstrating reality that is not seen by responding to truth simply by one's intellect. This does not mean we never disobey, but the lives of those who are God's children are generally characterized by wanting to show our love for Him by pleasing Him.

Two tests of genuine faith in Christ is that we do what He says because He is our Lord and conduct our lives as our Lord wants. It is made plain a little later in the epistle that these two things are that we "believe on His name, and love one another." Neither of these has to do with what I say about myself or the impression I try to make on other people. The negative side of this teaching regarding knowing that we are saved, is that if I do not "keep His commandments," no matter what I might say or think - I am not a child of God. That is very clear. When the truth is in us, we do keep His commands. That is not only a desire but a fact. To keep every condition and demand perfectly of the ten commandments is not what is being said here. "By the law is the knowledge of sin." No one but our Lord Jesus Christ has ever done that. But it is expected of one who has the divine nature given when we were born again, and has the Holy Spirit of God within, to conduct their life in obedience to God. The frailty of our human nature limits us, and on occasion trips us up. His commandments are consistent with the life and teaching our Lord when He was here. "He left us an example that we should follow in His steps."

To keep on obeying the word of God consistently is a demonstration of the love of God in a believer. The revelation of God's will is in all the scriptures; not just a verse that fits our opinion as to how to deal with a situation at the moment. This is more than one's personality having a bent toward God and religion. This is the result of God's love being in us and shown to others through us. Love is in God because God is love. He is the source of love in us, and the evidence of that love is that we are in Christ. It is God's intention that our lives should be conducted as the Lord lived His life when He was here on earth in the flesh.

This does not mean that we need disciples following us and we must do miracles as a test of our salvation by grace. Copying the life of Christ is simply seeking to do what He said, "I do always those things that please the Father." Faith, obedience and service to others was what people saw in our Lord when He was here. What I think, what I do, how I love others and live life should testify in some way that I am a true child of God. This is evidence of one who is "abiding in Christ."

I have a moral responsibility as a child of God to conduct all I do in a way that is consistent with the mind of God. My mind must be like His, so I am to "bring every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ." Whatever I do in word or deed should be done "in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ." People should be able to know I am a disciple of Christ because "by this shall all men know ye are My disciples if (since) ye love one another," and that kind of life is seen to be real.

Our Lord Jesus Christ brought delight to God by who He is and what He did while walking as a man among people like us. His walk, His ways, His words, His character were all perfect as a man. It is this that give us the template of the holy walk God desires of all His children. Our humanity is certainly not perfect, but this we "ought" to do. Walk as children of light who know our Lord and do what He says. When we do that, the love of God will not be some light-hearted comment that is so common today - "Love you !!!" - and then is

forgotten. That maturing process will be evident as God's love is seen through us and Christ-likeness is seen in our frail humanity.

1st John 2:3. *“And hereby we do know that we know Him, if we keep His commandments.”*

KEEP HIS COMMANDMENTS.

*They are there that all may read, and act, and know –
God has a standard, a plan for living, a way to show
I am not free to live without restraint – selfish or immorally –
And blissfully sinning, go on through life into a lost eternity
Without some mechanism in place that is true for all –
This is already in place – simple, easily understood when read – there is a law
Written, not only on pages to be read, but also written indelibly on my heart –
His commandments are to govern; to be a teacher to me – it's been there from the start.*

*Listening to the Gospel message, a command is there that I must face –
Repentance toward God is not an option, nor is it limited to a person or a place
Sin cannot be ignored as if it were not serious nor didn't matter
Genuine repentance takes place, turning from sin to God – and faith comes after.
Believing on Christ is not some light thing we assent to without consideration –
Repentance is followed by faith in Christ alone – then God gives His free salvation.
The command to show the reality of faith in Christ is believer's baptism –
Testifying that in Christ I died and was buried – now with new life in Him I am risen.*

*“This do,” is not some trivial matter, nor from the Master a casual suggestion –
These are words of a command that Christ gave so He is the center of our occupation.
A weekly practice to be carried out by disciples who have committed to following Him,
Is the “Lord's Supper,” a time and place of remembrance, not for forgiveness of sin.
To think this command is lesser than the rest, is a wrong attitude indeed –
His intention is: I hear and act on His command and to His holy Word pay heed.
The Savior lives forever, a Victor over sin, death and hell – this I know is true –
Making such a command to remember Him most serious – so this I do.*

“May I never, O God my Father, ever think anything that is told me by Thee is less than important. Keep me from ever speaking in a way that would make people think they can trifle with God and the commands given to us. I pray in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, Amen.”

1st John 2:4. *“He that saith, I know him, and keepeth not his commandments is a liar, and the truth is not in him.”*

NOT IN HIM.

*There will be evidence of truth received by any man from God.
To say a thing and not really live it out is not just odd –
But is a form of sacrilege, bringing God to be no more than an idea
Or an influence to keep us orderly, or perhaps – if enslaved – to free us.*

*Truth cannot be just words that have no basis in fact.
To keep commands God gave, insists that on that command, I act –
Responding with alacrity to what I know is His sovereign will –
I dare not hesitate or procrastinate to quickly that command fulfill.*

*A liar says one thing and means another, speaking without fear
Of retribution or results that pay-day for sin is drawing near.
He merrily deceives himself and thinks he is deceiving others –
Not realizing the path of deception leads ultimately to light – without a cover.*

*A reputation of saying words carelessly without a serious thought,
Will lead that person to a time and place where he will be caught
In the web of his own weaving: the trap of his own undertaking*

Will snare him, caught with no excuse, no way of possibly escaping.

*Truth in a person is like a light shining in places that are dark –
Revealing to those who know and trust you – the inner recesses of the heart.
It is God-like, for God Himself and His infallible and holy Word,
Are in the man and woman of truth – they the value of truth have owned.*

“Knowing Thee, O God, is no small matter. Thou, the God of Truth and Holiness, can see beyond the casual words spoken by men and women to the real meaning of the words in the heart. Even if spoken carelessly, there are fatal consequences that should never be ignored. I never want to lie and think I can get away with it. In the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, Amen.”

1st John 2:5. *“But whoso keepeth his word, in him is the love of God perfected: and hereby know we that we are in him.”*

KEEP HIS WORD.

*There really is no reason to not obey the Lord –
His word is always truth – there is no doubt.
The problem arises when lesser interests raise their heads –
Promising some great benefit, we don't know about.*

*Love for God is the secret of a life of consistency –
That develops as in Christ we do mature.
When the love of God is within, we live life abundantly –
And our confidence in God becomes more sure.*

*Love is a motivation to serve God effectively –
We don't want to waste ourselves on what doesn't count.
Serving God helps our development into maturity –
When in His strength we learn what life's about.*

*The secret of all godliness is based on obeying God's own Word
The walk of faith leads me to live obediently.
By His grace and power together, I can accomplish what I should –
And the love of God is “perfected” in me assuredly.*

“Father, may I never overlook or cease to apply myself to obey Thee and serve Thee with truth. May the love of God be maturing me to be Christ-like and my actions be with confidence and real faith. In the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, Amen.”

1st John 2:6. *“He that saith he abideth in him, ought himself to walk, even as he walked.”*

CONDUCT.

*To walk as Christ did seems so high that I could never reach.
The manner of conduct that so greatly His own Father pleased –
By abiding in Christ so that in all aspects I learn what he does teach
Then I can apply myself to walk in love that others Christ will see.*

*His walk on earth created interest as each day He met folks needs.
His walk affected how people thought when to His words paid heed.
His walk took Him to an open place where the hungry He did feed.
His walk led Him to heal and bless those who for His help did plead.*

*I may not always know the results of walking with the Lord.
The conduct expected in my life motivates me to be all I should.
I know the course of life must be always governed by the Word
When I say I abide in Christ, I will walk as I knew He would.*

“The standard is high Father God, because I am told to walk before Thee even as He walked before Thee. This seems so far

above my ability that I must come to Thee in prayer and ask for strength, grace and power to do what I cannot do in myself. I ask this in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, Amen."

1st John 2:7-11

A NEW COMMANDMENT

A characteristic of one who is walking in the light is the desire for, and practice of, fellowship. This fellowship with divine Persons and the people of God is one that is both outwardly seen and inwardly cherished. John began the epistle with truth concerning our fellowship with the person of Christ [1:1-4]. Then he showed how the character of God in His message of the Gospel to us creates fellowship with Him [1:5-7]. Thirdly, confession of sin is essential to maintain spiritual fellowship [1:8-10]. The advocacy of Christ on our behalf keeps our fellowship a reality [2:1-2]. The obedience of believers to the word of God and its precepts, and the pattern of life that accompanies that obedience keeps that fellowship as a vital characteristic of our Christian life and walk [2:3-6].

There is another fundamental characteristic of fellowship that is proof of life, and that is not following the ways of the world nor loving the world [2:7-10]. The conduct of fellowship involves the principle of obedience to God [2:1-2], the practice of love of the brethren [2:3-6], and the proof seen in separation from the world's system of living for self-interest. The love of the Father and the Son is the principle by which fellowship of believers can be a constant reality. John introduced the subject in verse 7 by using the word "brethren" in the sense of those who are "beloved" or "dear friends," as a way to go beyond a generic family term to the opening of one's heart to another.

To love one another was not a new or radical teaching. That goes back to the beginning of mankind and was commanded by the law as in Leviticus 19:18. The new commandment contained some startling new concepts that were taught by our Lord Jesus when He was here. What He taught, He practiced and it is His intention that we too practice what He taught. It was a totally new command to go beyond having respect for others to self-sacrifice on our part for the benefit of others and expect nothing in return. The spirit of the new commandment goes beyond the letter of the law to a daily love toward others that grows. Our Lord demonstrated this by touching a leper, eating with publicans and sinners, going to a feast put on by a hypocritical Pharisee who wanted to trap Him in some way. The children and the outcasts were as important to Him as anyone else.

This kind of love that the new commandment teaches goes even beyond self-sacrifice to deliberately serving others. This kind of selfless giving extends to loving our enemies and those who persecute us. This loving is a unifying principle among believers that should mark us as those who belong to our Lord Jesus Christ. This new command is the key to walking in the light and maintaining an effective relationship with God and a growing relationship with His people.

Our attitude is associated with the new commandment when we make the deliberate choice to want and work for the well-being of others. In that way we will be respectful of, and willing to serve others, for whom we may not feel affection. We like some people better than others, but we do not ignore or despise those who we may not like, nor should we treat them as if we are in competition with them like enemies. This love is a choice more than emotional feelings. We choose to love them and God gives us the ability to express that in ways that are appropriate.

To say I am a believer who is walking in the light without evidence of love is a contradiction. Hatred is a characteristic of those who are in darkness, not of a child of God. A Christian walking in the light obeys God and loves God's people because they are our brothers and sisters. The person whose pattern of life and habits are contrary to the characteristics of love, is walking in darkness. The One who is the Light captures the heart with its affections and choices and influence them to walk in the light themselves. The actually are identified by our Lord as "ye are the light of the world." We reflect divine light when we are walking in fellowship with our Lord and Savior.

By contrast to those in darkness are those whose love is evident toward others who are in the light. They abide in the light. There is no twilight zone for those who abide in the light. They are kept from stumbling because they are conscious of being in the light as well as walking in the light. That light is the truth of God and the Person who is both the Light and the Truth. The truth of the Gospel of Jesus Christ and the Person of Christ are inseparable. The condition in which we are found determines the conduct of our life.

The one who hates his brother is in darkness and does "darkness" because he walks in darkness. Character and conduct are tightly bound together. The darkness of character reveals the darkness of conduct and vice-versa. One who deliberately blinds his mind and the eyes of understanding to the truth of God, has no

evidence of divine life in him. Children of light on the other hand, follow our Lord and do not walk in darkness, "but have the light of life." They are associated with those whose inheritance is in light. They dwell in the light. They love the light and love being in the light. The love in the believer gives clear insight into that which is light and they choose to demonstrate that love and light in a balanced way of living that affects not only us, but those who watch our choices and conduct.

1st 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."

OLD COMMANDMENT.

*Right from God many generations ago the old command was plainly stated –
Not a negative approach to what God desired.*

*But others and their blessing were where God in love concentrated –
That same commandment is the one I am by God's love inspired.*

*All the heart doesn't leave much doubt that emotion plays a part
In keeping the old commandment, He wants for me to keep.
Loving God with all the soul is genuine right from the start –
The soul is where such love is found – that old command we seek.*

*The mind and soul are much alike – love is a natural reaction.
When what I think and do begins right in the heart.
The old commandment obeyed brings to God a great deal of satisfaction –
Loving the Lord involves all of me, not just a little part.*

*The old commandment also includes loving my neighbor as myself
When he has needs that I know I can meet.
It is important that I do what I can to give to him some help –
The old commandment is not just words but loving with my feet.*

"Some things never change, O God, and I know, forever O Lord, they are still in place. May I never overlook the old commandment by the help of God. I ask in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, Amen."

1st 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.

*It shows itself in various ways,
The command to love, I mean –
Not just respect for what God says,
But the new command is what is seen.*

*Self-sacrifice is evidence
Of learning what Christ taught –
Giving in love is consistent,
With walking the way He walked.*

*Feeding the hungry, clothing the poor,
Is evidence of the new command.
Meeting needs as the Lord did here –
Indicates the new commandment I understand.*

*The new commandment goes beyond
How I think or what I say.
It defines the value of every one –
And how I live each day.*

*Since I have experienced the love of God,
Darkness is a thing of the past.*

*True light shines out from the living Word –
It's now my turn to make that love last.*

*Some folks might not listen to a preacher –
They won't come to hear the Gospel sound.
But love is a most effective teacher –
They listen to love when it comes around.*

*May I never forget the new commandment –
There is much that is really at stake.
The banner of love is the standard –
May love direct every step that I make.*

"Father in heaven, please impress the new commandment on my heart. I need to be able to see people around me as those that are in need of the love of God. May I live out the effects of the love of God to me so that others will see what it means to be in God's family. In the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, Amen."

1st John 2:9. *He that saith he is in the light, and hateth his brother, is in darkness even until now."*

LIGHT OR DARK.

*In the light there will be love
In the dark there will be hate
In the light there is compassion
In the dark there is bitterness
In the light there is learning
In the dark there is arrogance
In the light there is understanding
In the dark there is ignorance
In the light there is joy
In the dark there is sadness
In the light there is a song
In the dark there is surliness
In the light there is hope
In the dark there is hopelessness
In the light there is meaningful prayer
In the dark there is silence before God
In the light the Word of God of God comes alive to us
In the dark the Word of God is not truly read
In the light there will be no shame at His Coming
In the dark there will be shame when Jesus comes
In the light there will be great joy seeing Jesus
In the dark the eyes will drop at seeing Him
Always say what is true –
Always be what you really are.*

"Holy God, Thou doest know what a person says and what a person really means. May I always say what is true and commit myself to be in the light. I seriously want to avoid the darkness and the sadness that is associated with being in the dark. I pray this in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, Amen."

1st John 2:10. *"He that loveth his brother abideth in the light, and there is none occasion of stumbling in him."*

NO STUMBLING.

*A person is often stumbled by inconsistency seen in another
Stumbling another happens when walking the wrong path farther
A word spoken out of context can be a rock in the path
To desire the worst for a person can cause a stumble that will last.*

*Some believers are strong and other believers quite weak
To act in love to each other will bring the results both seek*

*You may have imposed on yourself some self-appointed restrictions
It will cause another to stumble if you insist on your stipulations.*

*God's Word alone tells us what's right or wrong in His eyes
The Lord's people can have different opinions and still be unified
Potential stumbling problems can very quickly get out of hand
Stay walking in light with the Lord and you won't stumble another man.*

"Gracious Father in heaven, I ask here this morning that if there is something going on in my life that would stumble another, please make me aware of it so I can change whatever stumbling. Thy people are that important to me that I will not address them until I know they will not be stumbled. In the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, Amen."

1st 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."

CHOOSING BLINDNESS.

*Why would one choose to be blind;
When all around there is so much to see?
Can the pressure to conform be so strong –
Deliberate blindness they willingly allow to be?
What has gone wrong when the wrong is done –
Just to please all those gathered 'round me?
Can that deepening darkness in the soul –
Bind its dark cords around a soul once free?*

*Has self-centeredness such a hold on a person –
That he is blind to the value of right?
Can the arrogance that despises another –
Blind my eyes to the truth and the light?
Will the dark that begins in the eyes –
Soon spread deep into a deceitful soul?
Will one who has been blessed with a life –
Spurn it on some "life-taking" sinister goal?*

*Can it be possible that one God has blessed –
Walks away from those blessings so dear?
Can one really and deeply ignore –
The truth of the Written Page?
Can one who believes with unshakable faith –
Ignore as nothing the value of grace?
Can one for a lifetime of experiences –
Ever conceive of not seeing God's face?*

"There are those Father: I know who turn deliberately from the ways of Thy will. It seems they do not understand the consequences of darkness and hatred. As I move among those who do not know Thee, may I be able to show them a far better way – the way of eternal life – the Lord Jesus Christ Himself, Amen."

1st John 2:12-14

SEPARATION - The Commandment of conduct

To live a victorious life in Christ, fellowship is a fundamental part of the cause of living above the world and the things of the world. Fellowship with God is of primary importance and associated with that fellowship is fellowship with His people. There is a certain pattern of conduct necessary in order for that fellowship to be maintained. The character of Christian conduct is addressed in the first eleven verses where the principle for conduct is the imitation of Christ.

The commandment for our conduct is taught in verses twelve through seventeen. In reading this passage of scripture, it is obvious the principle involved is separation from the world system. Those being addressed cover all the ages of Christian experience. Like a kindly benevolent father, John introduces the subject of the commandment for conduct by calling those who read his letter "little children," or "dear children." That is how

he looked upon them all from his years of experience walking in the light with his Lord. They are all dear children to him regardless of their maturity. He introduces his commands by first addressing each stage of development.

Forgiveness of sin in the life of a believer was explained in chapter one, so from that point on he was going to teach the value of appropriate conduct in daily life. Our forgiveness has been granted because of the sacrifice of Christ on the cross. Our enjoyment of our new life in Christ depends on our willingness to face, confess and forsake specific sins as they cast their dark shadows over our joy of fellowship with our Lord.

To "know Him" does not mean that younger believers do not know Him by faith in Him. This has to do with the experiences of life that have increased one's knowledge of our Lord beyond that of acquaintanceship to sharing the burdens of life with Another who has borne the same things. Maturity in life and conduct comes as one walks with the Lord in the light of His word, and then has gone farther in spiritual growth. The young men (people) have experienced spiritual victories and need to continue to keep alert in view of the fact the enemy is always seeking ways to bring them down.

In the second exhortation in writing to these children of God, the word "children" is used in the sense or arranging in rank and experience rather than relationship. Through the new birth they know God as Father and they belong to Him. The fathers are addressed with the same words the second time because their spiritual maturity is obvious. They know Him, continue to learn from Him, meditate on the One who is "from the beginning" and seek to emulate His walk. Divine attributes like grace, mercy, longsuffering and gentle acceptance of others for who they are and where they are in their spiritual life are demonstrated by those with father-like care. There is really nothing new to say to them but to keep on keeping on. He goes further in pointing out to the young men (people) that they are strong, the word of God is real to them and they are being victorious over the wicked one.

Young men who are walking in the light are growing strong in faith because the word of God is abiding in them, guiding and controlling them so they conduct their lives under divine authority. In that way they can deal with the battles the devil wages against them as they "bear the yoke" in their youth. The enemy attacks outwardly, but if that scheme fails, he deceives, discourages and seeks to defeat them by guile.

Each stage in the development of our Christian life builds upon the one before it. The more we learn about our Lord Jesus Christ when we are young, the more able we are capable of handling temptations when they come. As we grow in the Lord and experience God at work in us, we gain victories that strengthen our faith and testimony. Then as we move forward in confidence, and trust the Lord even when we don't know what is coming next, wisdom is developed. That wisdom enables us to teach those who are new in Christ, and those who have been coming behind us. Older and younger believers in fellowship together, make a public testimony significant to those who come among us. It is a good thing for all of us to evaluate our spiritual maturity as believers and in faith move forward in our walk with the Lord. The older believers need to ask themselves if they are actually passing on our faith to those who are younger in a way they can understand. The younger need to ask themselves if they are willing to be taught by those who have walked with the Lord, or are they conducting their lives in a self-centered way.

1st John 2:12. *"I write unto you, little children, because your sins are forgiven you for his name's sake."*

FORGIVEN.

*Some words do not need a lot of explanation –
The word itself is its own joyous proclamation –
It extends itself beyond even the word salvation –
Because of it I can see face of God!*

*I needed forgiveness for what I inherently am –
By nature, I am a sinner – a sin-cursed man.
When I trusted Christ as Savior, then I became –
A forgiven person, cleansed by Jesus' blood!*

*What I have done wrong from day one till now
Even though I'm cleansed – that doesn't change sin somehow –
When I in repentance and confession before God, do bow –
I rest as a forgiven person before my Lord!*

*When I see Jesus in His holiness and the effects of His grace –
When I understand I couldn't survive the brightness of His face
Yet I am welcomed as a worshipper into His Holy Place –
I know I am given a new life by the Holy God!*

*Words of the Gospel are given and the Savior received –
Words of assurance are given and these words believed –
Words of welcome when seeing the Lord, I bow my knees –
Forgiven and accepted in the presence of the Lord!*

"Forgiven by Thee, Heavenly Father, is the only claim I have to be accepted by Thee. How great and holy art Thou and I am able to be called a child of God because of Thy grace alone. I praise Thee in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, Amen."

1st John 2:13. "I write unto you, fathers, because ye have known him that is from the beginning. I write unto you, young men, because ye have overcome the wicked one. I write unto you, little children, because ye have known the Father."

KNOWN HIM.

*In some ways it seems like a long, long time –
In other ways only recent,
Since I first met Thee when this humbled heart of mine –
Was made by the Spirit truly repentant.
Nearly sixty years have come and long since passed –
When I first called Thee, my heavenly Father.
Now I am called a father because at long last –
I have come to know Thee better than any other.*

*I know Thee to be true in every life situation –
Thou hast never forsaken me – never failed.
Right from the beginning – the day of my salvation,
I knew there was a way for me to take.
By Thy grace and help these experiences of life been given,
Each an act of God whether small or great –
I know my Lord, that from here right into heaven –
Each experience has helped my character to make.*

*Lord, I hope it doesn't seem that I'm being too familiar –
Everything I am and hope – I owe to You.
From physical needs that arise and to everyone is similar,
To the private spiritual acts that have now come due –
Its just I know Thee well enough that I have naught to hide,
Every thought and word is exposed for what it is.
My joy and comfort in life, is to in Thyself abide –
I have learned that it is here I am truly blessed.*

"I am so thankful Father this eternal life I enjoy every day is a result of knowing Thee. It is delightful to experience God in the large and small things of every day. What a joy to see Thee respond to my faith when I place a seed in the ground, or when I am able to plant a seed of the Gospel in some good ground hearer. Life is so right when I can see evidence of it in every place. It even makes my knees weak to think of such power and glory at my disposal. I worship in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, Amen."

1st John 2:14. "I have written unto you, fathers, because ye have known him that is from the beginning. I have written unto you, young men, because ye are strong, and the word of God abideth in you, and ye have overcome the wicked one."

YE ARE STRONG.

*It is warfare – the lines are drawn –
There is no way to avoid the confrontation.
The enemy is strong – implacable, without feeling –
His sole objective is to bring about destruction.
There are no areas to go where the battle does not rage –*

*There is no specific line of demarcation.
Opposition arises day or night – open or subtly –
The wicked one relentlessly tracks those who preach salvation.*

*But you are strong, the Spirit of God has come –
He indwells empowering you with faith – strength far beyond satanic opposition.
The Father and Son have committed to being with you –
You who keep His commands and experience practical sanctification –
You overcome by power far beyond human capacity –
Because the experience of God working in you brings the realization
You are not alone, undone, underpowered by the flesh –
But strengthened and overcoming obstacles by divine operation.*

*And so, it comes to hand; the divine Word to you –
Thus, to read and make your own, by personal meditation.
Stepping out on truths now known and claimed by action –
The overcomer rises higher than before in faith now proven.
The Father blesses that young man who knows God's strength –
And rests assured on the basis of God's complete justification.
From faith's first day of introduction and knowing –
Through years of living by faith we are blessed by personal acceptance.*

"I thank Thee, O God, for the strength given to those who have experienced Thy grace. It is surely necessary for those who bear the yoke to know Thy power in the fight against the evil of satanic opposition. I praise Thee for victory in Christ. Amen."

1st John 2:15-17

THE APPEAL OF THE COMMAND

To understand the world system (the cosmos) and why it is so dangerous to the life, testimony, conduct and joy of a believer means we have to recognize it for what it is. The "world" written of here is not the created earth or the people who live on earth. Rather it is a system of living that is organized, ordered and controlled by Satan. He is the god of this world and opposes all that is of God and His kingdom. Righteousness of life, and life lived by divine standards are undermined or attacked until what even Christians should know is wrong, is accepted as normal practice. Those who live godly lives for God's glory will be shunned, ignored, maligned and mocked because they live contrary to that which brings pleasure to the majority of society.

Worldliness begins in the heart as an attraction to the "pleasures of sin for a season." This usually followed by a gradual compromise of that which was taught from the scriptures. Attempts are made to try to justify doing what once they avoided. There is a certain embarrassment initially when they start doing things that are of the world, especially if they are among those Christians who have committed themselves to following the word of God. After that initial sense of guilt is overcome and their conscience is not paid any attention, before long there is "love" for the world and the things that are "in the world." The attractions of the world system take over the mind and then the direction of one's life. Separation is not evident and the child of God blends in with the people who live by the world's system.

Our thoughts have great power over our lives. To bring into captivity every thought "to the obedience of Christ" is so very important it is impossible to over-emphasize the necessity of this. Worldliness begins internally in our thoughts. Then our attitude toward right and wrong, sinfulness and holiness change us. Soon it becomes external behavior that is inconsistent with the love of the Father that was once evident. This appeal to separation from the world is made so that the "dear children," "young men" and "fathers" will know who and what are against a child of God who loves the Lord and wants to please Him.

Love of the Father includes all the Father values in His children. In contrast with the "lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes and the pride of life," are self-control, generosity and humble service for the Lord and others. The cravings of men can and should be controlled by one who loves the Lord, and not by the world. The uncontrolled lifestyle of those who submit to the cravings of the flesh and eyes, has led to all sorts of evil committed by man against men and against that which is righteous and true.

From within comes the lust of the flesh that appeals to the physical senses of the body. Eve saw forbidden fruit as something good to eat. "That which is of the earth is earthy." When we "love not" nor yield to the lust of the flesh we gain victory over the appetites that can consume our minds, fill our thoughts and ultimately ruin our reputation and testimony for God. The "lust of the eyes" is directed outwardly toward those things we can see. There is a covetous craving for those things we want to claim for ourselves. Eve saw the fruit was good to see, to look at, and her sensual desire for that which was forbidden, controlled her action. Victory over covetousness is possible when we "love not the things that are in the world."

Lucifer wanted to make himself like God, and his pride brought him down to be lost forever. The lust of the flesh refers to the cravings of the body. The lust of the eyes to the cravings of the soul. "The pride of life" is the cravings of the spirit for that which is devilish. James wrote that the wisdom of this world is "earthly, sensual and devilish." The pride of life is truly devilish. Boasting of one's accomplishments, status and importance comes from below from the power of the god of this world and darkness. To deliberately reject the world and not love the things in it, gives us victory over pride.

If we take time to consider what I really value, it will soon be clear to me that I cannot live in a vacuum. Any desire for the world and the things in it must be replaced with that which we know pleases God because those things are right. The support we need to overcome temptation and fill life with that which is right will happen when we choose to "do the will of God from the heart." The world is deteriorating physically and morally. It will not last. The "will of God abideth forever." The curse of God is on creation and the system of the world, and brings to perdition those who follow that system. The law of entropy is still at work.

For some people it is hard to believe that those who believe on the Lord Jesus Christ will abide with Him forever and have a meaningful life forever. But this is true. As we read through God's word our faith is confirmed and we realize the world and the things in it are only temporary. When our convictions are based on our Lord's life, teaching, practice, death, resurrection and the promises He gave, then we have the power to reject the evil lusts.

God gives the courage to live holy, productive lives with a view of eternity before us when we recognize the exceptionalism of those who belong to our Lord. It is all because of His work and worth that we can rise above those things of the world to "seek those things which are above," and "set our affection" on them. Right now, in our lives we can live "kingdom lives" in a way that is consistent with God's word and will. The things of God do not change even though the things of the world are in the process of passing away. Because God is holy, everything about Him and all He does, including His word, will not change. Sin has no effect on the things of God nor the plans of God. He will change our vile bodies to be like the body of our Lord. "When we see Him, we shall be like Him for we shall see Him as He is."

1st 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."*

LOVE VS love.

*Love of the world is noisy and brash –
That love flows for a moment but soon it is past.
The things of the world you love are soon gone –
They promised a lot but never belonged
To one who in God's family has a prominent place,
Never can find satisfaction apart from God's grace.
Love of the world involves following earth's god –
There is no place of connection between cosmos and the Lord.*

*Love of the Father is honorable and deep –
It is our highest joy His will to do and keep.
Love of the Father is love right from the heart –
It came to full life right from the start.
And as years pass by, I find that love still growing,
The love of the Father far surpasses my knowing
All that it means, but I daily experience –
The fact of Father's love in divine providence.*

*Love of the world and love of the Father,
Are totally incompatible each with each other.*

One finds no common ground if they love the world –
Because the world hated and crucified my Lord.
Love of the Father is not a big show –
It is in the heart and life where His love we know.
May the world and its love never attract my attention –
The love of the Father is proof of my salvation.

“Father in heaven, I am in this world but I do not love it. As each day passes, I find myself more estranged from all that people seem to think is so important. I do worry somewhat about my family lest they think there can be some satisfaction in the world that will give them what they think they are missing. Preserve them, O God. I pray in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, Amen.”

1st 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.”

IN THE WORLD.

The flesh is deceitful – never satisfied
The smell attracting my attention – before seeing
The sounds are strange – at first resistant
Soon the attack on my ears has faded – I am responsive
The feel of the world is like velvet – smooth and subtle
No honest calluses – just blisters on dancing feet
The lust of the flesh forges ahead without restraint
The world appeals, attracts – and awaits.

On every side the appeal is there – easily seen
Signs, books, visuals are everywhere – terrible in attraction
All that is around is designed to create – dissatisfaction
Nothing is able to fulfill the lust – false perception
The eyes take in so much that attracts – claiming attention
Much that is seen is so right if focused – direct occupation
The eyes that lust for all that they see – serious distraction
The world claims as much as possible for the eyes – all deception.

Self-centeredness is a problem to all – selfishness
Pride of face has claimed many lives – senselessness
Pride of race has stumbled many – hopelessness
Pride of accomplishments without humility – foolishness
Pride of heritage over which we have no control – perverseness
Pride of nationality is also of the world – carefulness
Put all of these together – some of these may be good and others bad
The lust of the flesh and of the eyes, and pride of life is of the world.

“Holy God, my Father: more and more I can see the attraction the world has on the young, even in my family. Please give me the grace and strength to be consistent in actions and words so they can see I am not compromising what I believe is Thy will for us all – not just for me. In the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, Amen.”

1st John 2:17. “And the world passeth away, and the lust thereof: but he that doeth the will of God abideth for ever.”

THE WILL OF GOD.

Is it so complicated to want what God wants?
Is it so difficult I do not attempt to do what He asks?
Is it so far removed from my reality that my will I flaunt?
Is it possible I have ignored God's will in the past?

Today is a new day, and I look at the way ahead –
I am reminded this life I live is not mine alone –
For now, in Christ I live, because in Christ I was dead –

Doing the will of God is the desire of one for whose sin He atoned.

*Everything else is temporary, only the unseen things are forever
The world with all its history will never ever last –
The link that joins me to God's will is a tie that cannot sever –
The life I live is in the present, the old life now is passed.*

*The will of God is always right, of that there is no question –
His will and way are perfect, He has plans to be fulfilled.
As I reflect on God's will in the past, I am drawn to serious reflection –
May my commitment to God's will in me be well instilled.*

"I pray daily Father, that I will be sensitive to and aware of Thy will in each activity I am involved in. There are outside pressures but as I am getting older, I sense I have a greater desire to know and obey Thy will as it is revealed to me. May it always be like this. I pray in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, Amen."

1st John 2:18-27

A SENSE OF URGENCY

Fellowship is essential between each of us and our God as well as fellowship with the people of God. Not everyone who takes the place of being a Christian is one in the scriptural sense. True fellowship relies on the advocacy of Christ and the obedience of each believer. When these are understood, there is love for the brethren that involves the privilege of fellowship with believers of all ages. Love for the world on the part of any of God's children limits or brings to an end that fellowship that was once enjoyed. There is another necessity for fellowship to be maintained, and that is a commitment to the doctrine of Christ.

The fact that John addresses this matter of false teachers pretending to be Christians in order to get a following for themselves, and tells them this is the "last hour," makes this an urgent matter. When the word "last" is used as in "last times," "last days" and "last hour," the point is made that something is imminent. In this case it is the Lord's coming. "The last days" ("last hour") refers to a limited time, a comparatively brief time to do what needs to be done between the first and second coming of Christ. In the final exhortation in this passage to the "dear children," "fathers" and "young men," a sense of urgency is given. He affirms the fact of the time in which they were living, and believers are earnestly looking for the Lord to come. They had heard from the apostles that antichrist would come, and so substantiates that by exposing those who were false among them.

1st John 2:18. *"Little children, it is the last time(hour): and as ye have heard that antichrist shall come, even now are there many antichrists; whereby we know that it is the last time."*

THE LAST TIME.

*They are coming out in their true colors – in opposition
It started when He was born – from the highest human station
Not satisfied with subtle deceitful lies – antichrist raises his head
So dark in soul and hatred, at the beginning of the "last hour" – hundreds dead.*

*Through the years and generations – long past Christ's crucifixion
Antichrists arise in bitterness against the saints – awaiting annihilation
Coming from political sources – fear that the real King will reign
Coming from the antichrist religious groups – they wouldn't honor*

*Even now as the last hour runs its course – so much indifference
Antichrists arise to turn aside the honest – forceful interference
Those who teach the young change standards – using sarcasm
Promoting antichrists agenda – supporting dark atheism.*

*Even the music that should honor God – respectful dignity in worship
Has fallen under antichrists influence – exchanging sanctity for hip
God is used as a subtle prop for latent existentialism
Antichrist attitude ignores the Word of truth and brings division.*

The "last time" is here and now – it is well the "little children" are aware
Of the pressures that will come upon them imposing serious burdens to bear
In view of this last hour in which we are called upon to live –
We look around at the "antichrist movement" – and praise God, Jesus saves!

"If all I knew Father God, was what I see around me, I would be so disillusioned that I wouldn't even want to keep on living. But I am grateful that Thou hast made it real to me that this is only a temporary time. Living in the last of the last times opens my eyes to what is real in Thy eyes. I am content that whatever comes is allowed and appointed by Thee. In the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, Amen."

1st 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 manifest that they were not of us."

NOT OF US.

They were here once but now are gone –
What brought them to this place?
Was there something in the past they liked –
Or something they could not face?
For some people tradition has a hold –
Passed on from father and mother.
They are not of the truth or of the church –
Their interests were based on another.

The social life seemed to be what they wanted –
Friendships were on their minds.
The worship and teaching weren't important to them –
It was significant social life they wanted to find.
So, they didn't stay because friends come and go –
Truth and scriptural practice are to them unimportant.
There was another reason and agenda they seemed to have –
To God and the assembly there was no real commitment.

Others sometimes come to gather with us –
Their basic reason is for business to interface.
The purpose of a church or even to bring God glory –
Is less important to them than the God of all grace.
They are not of us; they live for self –
For some reason they have no real shame –
Even though they attended for quite some time –
They never really had gathered to His name.

Habit too claims some folks attendance –
They gathered with us because it is expected.
They came for awhile and now are gone –
The truth of God they were not interested in defending –
But I want to commit myself once again –
To gathering to my Savior and Lord –
By God's grace I will stay and do what I can
To promote and defend the truth of God's Word.

"Father God, there are those that seem to be a part of us as an assembly but they never really show interest and seldom show their faces. If there is some area of need they have; help us to help them. If it is indifference or no desire to be a part of the assembly, may they find it in their hearts to move on before they disrupt or divide the Lord's dear people. In the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, Amen."

These antichrists are not people to be feared because the Holy Spirit in true believers exposes their false teaching as we read the scriptures. By reading the word of God carefully and clearly, we will not be deceived by those who are counterfeit Christians. There are those who oppose the infallibility of the scriptures and the Person and work of our Lord Jesus Christ as the eternal Son of God. Their refusal to accept our Lord Jesus

as the only Savior of sinners, and the fact He is both God and man, is rejection of a fundamental doctrine of Christianity. Even God Himself is demeaned by false teachers into being to them no more than a force or idea men have contrived to maintain a certain pressure on people for good conduct.

Every Gnostic in John's day was essentially an antichrist, in the same way as New Age adherents, atheists and proponents of a "Jesus, plus self-efforts" faith are in our day. Even though we may find some of these people among us for awhile, they will leave before too long if new believers won't follow their line of teaching. Even though they may be found among God's people, they are not one of them. It is not always clear why they came in the first place nor why they leave. We know, when it happens, they were never among us for the right reasons. Some are in an assembly because their family is there. Some come to interface with people for business and social reasons.

Those who find themselves gathered with the Lord's people to His name alone need to commit themselves to be loyal to our Lord, His word, His house and His people. When people come among us to be "comfortable" they will leave when they are uncomfortable. When the word of God is clearly taught, there will be times when we all will be uncomfortable as truth that is "sharper than a two-edged sword" is applied to our conscience.

1st John 2:20. *"But ye have an unction from the Holy One, and ye know all things."*

ANOINTING.

*It is not a mistake; all the Godhead agrees –
The Holy Spirit who gives life has identified me
By anointing me Himself – sealing and indwelling within –
And there is no need of the oil-symbol; I've been anointed by Him.*

*The Father and the Son both had a part in this act.
The Father planned salvation – the Son made it a fact –
When by fulfilling all righteousness by His sacrificial death –
Salvation is given by God when we know and obey the truth.*

*The anointing by God sets each believer from the world apart.
We have responded to God's Gospel and believed it from the heart.
The subtlety from the world where so many lies all abound –
Is rejected by the child of God in whom God's grace is found.*

*There isn't some ceremony planned like anointing by mere men
This act is by God only, from the beginning to the end.
In grace He revealed Himself – and by faith I believed –
When that actually happened, divine anointing I received.*

*I know it has happened by the differences I can see
Between the things I joy and rejoice in and the world around me.
Others run here and there seeming to look for new ways to sin.
The antichrist system claims so much and yet to men gives so little.
I have found God's promises He fulfills, including each jot and tittle.
The result of His anointing is great peace and a contented mind.
I have been blessed for years with what most in the world will never find.*

"There is great peace Father, in knowing that the Holy Spirit has done His separating work and has sealed me. It certainly is real to me when I see how dissatisfied so many people are with their lives and the hopelessness they live under. I praise Thee for the unity of the Godhead in the anointing I have received. In the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, Amen."

1st 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."*

YOU KNOW

*At the beginning when at the first I was saved
Like those in the old times I knew I truly did have
Eternal life and not a whole lot more – until
The words of the Bible gave me much more – and still*

*Such teaching I received gave real assurance and confidence
So I could rest on God's written word, and I have ever since.*

*But there are others who came along and say they too
Have a revelation from God that is more recent – it's new
And makes more plain they say, things we didn't learn –
From those ancient words of scripture they want me to turn
And follow what they say because it is more up to date –
And the reading is easier – but that I won't take.*

*I know that Christ Jesus has come in the flesh
I know I must have His imputed righteousness
I know there are antichrists who now God's grace spurn
I know they are false and it's a false doctrine they learn.
I know I have the Spirit, the Father and the Son –
I know those who deny Him have never been reborn.*

"There is a lot of truth, heavenly Father, that is being denied right around me and it seems to be getting more popular to ignore the scriptures and make mans' ideas acceptable. I see evidence of antichrist attitudes near at hand and wonder if there is some way that I can reinforce Thy truth in a way I may have overlooked. If there is such, please make me aware of it and show me how I can again be effective in teaching Thy word. In the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, Amen."

The Holy Spirit who indwells every believer from the moment of their new birth has "anointed" each one with spiritual understanding to discern that which is taught as to whether it is right or wrong. He communicates truth to us and guides us to come to know our Lord Jesus Christ. He reveals Christ to us as a real Person in our lives with whom we live and walk. Those who do not have the Spirit within are not hesitant to lie and deceive. Believers know the truth and we are led by the Spirit to oppose and reject the spirit of antichrist that is in false teachers. Those who oppose Christ while claiming to be children of God, are liars. These are strong words of urgency spoken against those who undermine divine truth.

Those who know the Father and the Son, know that it is Jesus alone who was sent by the Father to be the Savior of the world. They know and believe with all their hearts that Christ died for our sins, was buried and rose again for our justification. It is incumbent on us to faithfully hold on to our faith and teach its fundamentals to others. That is the means whereby we can successfully oppose the false teaching that is pressed upon those who may be young in the faith and have little understanding of Christ's doctrine as yet. Those things that have been taught us by faithful men and that stands the tests of scripture, needs to be held.

1st John 2:22. "He is antichrist, that denieth the Father and the Son." "Who is a liar but he that denieth that Jesus is the Christ?"

A LIAR.

*To deny what is truth having been proved beyond doubt,
Is an affront to the One who is the Truth.
The proofs were in place then, and even now I can't count
All the evidences and how much they are worth.
When one denies Christ is the unique Son of God,
He sets himself up on a pedestal so high –
That when he speaks, I cannot believe his words
Knowing that it is in his nature to lie.*

*The Father bore witness that the Lord Jesus is God,
And so did His fore-runner John.
A lasting and reliable witness is God's written Word,
And by His works, is Christ's deity shown.
The fulfillment of the scriptures during His life and His death,
Give plain evidence that Jesus is the Christ.
To read the Word paying attention to what it really has said,
Of the many assurances is the best.*

*A lie is an abomination so a liar is in danger
Of losing His eternal soul.
A liar is not hated but to God's grace is a stranger –
And to heaven through Christ cannot go.
It is a sad commentary when one is willing to deny,
What God and His Word say is true.
Anyone who refuses to on Christ alone rely,
The gift of eternal life forever they will lose.*

"With so many proofs in place Father God, I find it a hard thing to find ways to convince those who deny Christ of the truth of salvation. Some seem to think it is not important to consider His deity and Messiah-ship. Others put their own opinions ahead of the truth of Thy Word. Have mercy on them Father, and if there will be with Thy Gospel. In the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, Amen."

1st John 2:23. "Whosoever denieth the Son, the same hath not the Father: but he that acknowledgeth the Son hath the Father also."

THE SON AND THE FATHER.

*One and the same yet each One uniquely different –
How can such a thing be?
To deny the Son is truly God incarnate –
Is to deny the Holy Trinity.*

*But the Father sent the Son found in fashion as a man –
Into this world that was wholly lost in sin.
It is written in the scriptures this was part of the divine plan
That to lost sinners eternal life could be given.*

*In total agreement, each One in harmony with the other –
The plan of salvation through the Son was revealed.
The Son as a man in every way pleased the Father –
And His life brought to light what was concealed.*

*To see the Father, we have to look upon the Son –
He is the embodiment of deity in the flesh.
The Three Persons of the Godhead are seen in only One –
Yet through the work of each One we are blest.*

*The Son delighted the Father in everything He did –
And the Father's will, was the Son's pure delight.
The fulfilling of righteous requirements the Son fully paid –
The Father then counts us cleansed in His sight.*

*I cannot comprehend all the benefits received
By the Father and the Son in holy union;
Giving life to all those who on God truly believe –
But I rejoice in this acceptance and sweet communion.*

"I appreciate greatly, heavenly Father, the fellowship of the Father and Son and Holy Spirit. To live in this world knowing Thou art near and involved in every situation in my life gives great contentment and joy in my soul. In the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, Amen."

We must never abandon the basic truths of the word of God, no matter what human reasoning is aligned against them. That which we know to be truth from the beginning of our walk in the light with the Lord, we must never ignore or consider letting go. Other deeper and more intellectual truths may be learned, but fundamental truth must be maintained and defended. The Holy Spirit is always with us to "guide us into all truth." He will keep us from wandering when we trust Him to guide us and strengthen us in our faith. He makes it possible for us to discern truth in our minds and live it out openly.

Each believer has a personal responsibility to read the word of God and act upon it in a spiritual and practical way. I cannot blame someone else for carrying out that for which I am responsible. I am to "rightly divide the word of truth." I am to be a "workman" with that commitment to guide me. Truth is already in a believer and will remain there. The vital communion a believer has with Christ will remain there. These truths abide in us as part of the possession of the eternal life we have been given. Where there is no life in Christ, there is no Christ in a person.

We need teachers who teach the word in ways we can understand and apply in practical day to day living. We need them to teach what is right and expose and avoid errors. We need the general teaching that equips us to live holy, righteous and godly lives. We need the teaching that builds up our faith and edifies, exhorts and comforts us. We need those who teach the truth about the true God, the Lord Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit. The urgency associated with this teaching will help expose the comfortable, deceptive and false teaching around us today.

1st 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."*

FROM THE BEGINNING.

*From the earliest days of my recollection
Certain things I learned and I have absolutely no question
That the God of eternity spoke things into being at the time of creation
And maintains all things in order by divine organization.*

*Planned even before earth, was the way of redemption
There was a purpose behind every act of needed substitution
As animals were slain to keep sinners from holy retribution
Until the Lamb God provided brought to us eternal salvation.*

*In grace God arranged Christ's coming with careful preparation,
The Romans had conquered, and planned a taxation,
And into this world at the right time and location
The Savior came bringing light to every nation.*

*His coming was not an act of divine desperation
But was designed and carried out to bring reconciliation
With grace and holy dignity, Jesus brought to every situation
A result that honored God and gave the needy the right solution.*

*God was in Christ through He endured great humiliation
On every hand while He was here there was strong opposition
With gracious words and holy boldness, He went to the destination
Of the redemptive work when He died the death of crucifixion.*

*The blessings from the beginning come right to my generation
Redeemed by His blood, saved from sin and given practical sanctification
Risen in Him now, and awaiting the glorious resurrection –
And privileged along with others to be His earthly representation.*

"Father in heaven, I learned from those who taught me the truth of God. Since then I have experienced personally the things I was taught from others. Now those early teachings are my own in a practical way. I am convicted and convinced of those things I learned from the beginning. I fear I haven't been able to pass on to my family those same things. So, I pray they will learn for themselves that Thou art unchanging, reliable in every situation and anxious to have them live and learn from Thyself. I pray in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, Amen."

1st John 2:25. *"And this is the promise that he hath promised us, even eternal life."*

THE PROMISE.

*Are you sure? Can there be no mistake?
What He has given, absolutely no one can take*

*Away what has been provided and paid for in blood?
Eternal life is new life – God's promise is good.*

*The terms are made plain in the scriptures of truth.
The promise God gave is based on One of highest worth.
When God says a thing, it will surely come to pass –
His Word is unchangeable from the first to the last.*

*What promise could be given better than eternal life.
It has been made by One who is unable to lie.
The life God has Himself, He gives to us as a gift –
What blessing could ever be comparable with this.*

*Such a promise gives meaning to every part of living.
It gives a perspective and purpose to my reason for being –
The life that is eternal is lived even here and now –
By the events of each day I can mature and grow.*

*This promise is from God and can in no way be trivial.
To doubt such a promise indicates lack of life eternal.
To not believe God is to make Him out to be a liar –
Which will leave such a person in danger of eternal fire.*

*Eternal life is more than living a long, long time.
It involves sharing with God a nature divine –
So that I can enjoy and appreciate the things He does –
And now I am able to love all the things that He loves.*

"Father God, I am so thankful for the gift of eternal life through the Lord Jesus Christ. To experience life like this is a great joy in all aspects of daily living. To wake with thoughts of Thee and then to enjoy the scriptures give me a good start to a day. Physical activity as well as thinking, reading and writing all bring a sense of meaning to each action. Perhaps above all this is the assurance that the Lord is coming and perhaps this will be the day He calls us to Himself. I wait – and rejoice in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, Amen."

1st John 2:26. "These things have I written unto you concerning them that seduce you."

I HAVE WRITTEN.

*About the beginning – the Word, the Light, the Life
He wrote and it was clear to all who read
The Eternal God was here in the flesh – a Man among men
Here to give the Spirit-born new life to mortal men.*

*Again, and again he wrote defining, clarifying
Repeating in illustration after illustration a unique truth –
This fellowship, this new life, this new nature given freely
To all those who believe and receive – the Son of God.*

*Warnings were given – written by one who knows
Who heard from the Master Himself - warnings about coming deception;
Evil men with personal agendas are working to stop grace
And they will come subtly to turn aside the saints.*

*He wrote to warn of those who denied true incarnation
Deception – Jesus was not real only a spirit-visible
To deny Him – in flesh, real and full of grace – is antichrist
And the warnings need paying attention to – by all.*

Written again in final words – the future unfolds

*In fearful and terrible clarity of judgment
Yet to come on all who seduce God's people
And final offers of repentance and salvation.*

*Written for our learning – Jesus Christ is God
Written for our faith – he that believeth has everlasting life
Written for our edification – if we sin, we have an Advocate
Written for our fellowship – with the Father, Son, Holy Spirit – and each other.*

“Men like John who wrote for Thee, Father, have given us so much assurance from Thy word that it removes all doubt of the present blessings of eternal life now and in the future. I read often those things the Spirit of God gave him to write and it blesses me even as I read it to others. Thanks so very much for doing this, in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, Amen.”

1st 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.”*

THE ANOINTING.

*The Holy Spirit has worked through men to declare God's holy will.
We have been given spiritual light when our minds we choose to fill.
With truth revealed by God the Spirit – we have been anointed –
And follow the truth we responded to when first we were appointed.*

*Those who claim a “higher knowledge” than what we first received
Not only try to turn us aside, but they have themselves deceived.
To say the Word of God is lacking and they have some new truth –
Is not to be considered and is only useless words.*

*Reality follows the line of teaching contained in God's own Word.
The Holy Spirit convicts of sin, righteousness, judgment and teaches Christ is Lord.
The anointing work of the Spirit has the power to regenerate –
Repentance of sin to God leads to Christ in whom we put our faith.*

*The anointing we receive includes sealing by the Spirit.
Now the Spirit Himself dwells continually within us.
We are taught by the Holy Spirit when decisions we have to make –
The anointing of the Holy Spirit leads us when guidance we will seek.*

*The capacity we've been given to appreciate all the Spirit has revealed –
Lets us appropriate all God provides that previously was concealed.
All through life's many changes the Spirit leads and guides –
We experience all this means when we in Christ abide.*

I thank Thee, O God, for the work of the Holy Spirit from the time of first conviction to the guidance He is giving us today. How gracious He is to be with me in every detail of life. From time to time Linda and I go over the leading of the Spirit in so many ways in our life and we are so grateful for the daily work of God on our behalf. In the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, Amen.”

1st John 2:28-29

NOT ASHAMED

Children of God have a new nature given to them by the Holy Spirit when we personally accept the Lord Jesus Christ as our Savior. We believe that our Lord Jesus is the Son of God who came to earth found in fashion as a man, sent by the Father, to save us from our sins. We believe He died on the cross for our sins and rose again. We believe He has ascended into heaven and is coming again to receive us unto Himself. This relationship has been established by the anointing of the Holy Spirit [v.20], and we adhere to its claims on us [v.24-25]. There is a permanent union with divine Persons that affects life now and forever because it is eternal life. This union was originated by our Father in heaven because we have been born of Him.

The visible proof of a person being a real Christian, not one in name only, is the behavior they exhibit. A righteous life is evidence of the new nature received when one is born again. There are many people who live a good respectable life but have never put their faith in our Lord Jesus Christ. Other people claim to be Christians but there is little evidence of that in their lives. The one does good works but does not have faith. The other claims faith but no good works are evident. A child of God by virtue of the new birth and new nature has both faith and good works. Good works do not produce salvation but testify to salvation in a child of God.

There are seven references to the new birth in first John. The subject of the new birth is introduced in the Gospel of John, and Peter wrote that one who is born again is born of "incorruptible seed that liveth and abideth forever" [1Pe.1:23]. The doctrine of the new birth is explained in the epistle of first John. The first mention of the new birth is in verse 29, pointing to the actual *practice* of the new birth that affects our *conduct* as children of God. The characteristics of God should be seen in His children. In view of His coming for us at the rapture of the church, we should be motivated to holy living so we will not be ashamed when we see Him. The judgment seat of Christ will follow that where we will "receive the things done in the body --- good or bad." So we will not be ashamed and speechless before our Lord when our lives are reviewed, we should guide our daily conduct now in a way that pleases Him.

The *principle* of the new birth that relates to our *character* [1Jn.3:9], teaches us that this new life came from God. It is His seed in us that gave us eternal life. This does not come from self-effort or from any other person declaring it to be so on their authority. The principle of life comes from God alone. All life has its source in Him. He has given us eternal life by virtue of that which Jesus Christ our Lord has accomplished for us. The Father and the Spirit are the Persons involved in giving us this life. We do not read of being born of Christ. The Holy Spirit was involved in Him being "found in fashion as a man" and He is the same Spirit that is involved in us being born of "incorruptible seed."

The *power* of the new birth is evident in the *concern* of a child of God [1Jn.4:7]. Love for others is a natural result of spiritual regeneration. "God is love." That is one description of who He is. That love should be evident in His children. Other people are important to a child of God. Actually, their well-being should be more important than our own so that they too can come to faith in Christ. Divine love that is "shed abroad in our hearts" is characterized by what can be done for the benefit of others. The love of God sent His "only begotten Son" into this world that we might live through Him. Others need our love shown toward them that they also might live for Him.

The *proof* of the new birth is the *confidence* we have in the word of God [1Jn.5:1]. This statement of fact is not an emotional proof but a biblical truth that needs no qualifications to be understood. We are not just assenting to something written down, but accept this stated fact as a guarantee from God. The word "if," is not a question or a doubt, but a principle of divine life. "Since" is a word that better says this to be true because our Father has given life to us and this life is in His Son. "He that hath the Son, hath life." When we see Him we want to be free from any ties to this world system that would be inconsistent with the life we have been given.

Fellowship with those who deny basic doctrines of the scriptures and the fundamentals of the faith, would embarrass us if we were linked with them when He comes. Some in John's day were in danger of yielding to the false teaching they listened to in the same way as some believers today pay attention to false arguments that are raised. We must commit ourselves to hold true to that which we received and learned at the beginning of our walk in the light with the Father and the Son. There will be growth in discernment and a willingness to maintain the truth of God when we follow the word of God and the Spirit of God which brought life to us at the beginning.

By walking with the Lord and not grieving or quenching the Holy Spirit, we will find the strength and guidance we need to live as our Lord intends. Not only will we be kept from that which is wrong, but we will be enabled and empowered to do that which is right. Our relationship with our Lord is based on the life we have received from Him. It is personal and real. It remains in us even when we step out of the path of His leading which we should follow. That is what makes us ashamed. By whole-heartedly trusting Him and yielding to His revealed will, we can live daily with confidence and joy. The proof of the new birth and the new nature we have been given, is a vital faith in Him and produces conduct that represents Him well.

1st 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."*

NOT BE ASHAMED.

In the early morning when waking thoughts arouse the sleepy mind

"The Lord is Coming!"
In spite of early actions planned by the urgency of the moment change I find –
"The Lord is Coming!"
So, in the minutes of my early prayer,
Or in the reading of the scriptures it is there
Affecting all I plan to do right here –
"The Lord is Coming!"

To those I meet throughout the day there is this challenge to all action –
"The Lord is Coming!"
This keeps me from the danger of trying to find from earth my satisfaction –
"The Lord is Coming!"
The tasks that take the effort of my body,
And keeps the tasks done from being shoddy,
Changing the mundane to something holy –
"The Lord is Coming!"

When evening comes and daily activities are past –
"The Lord is Coming!"
The trivial seems like nothing compared to things that last –
"The Lord is Coming!"
The sum of things done are now a recollection,
They are not worth much serious contemplation,
For daily I await the promised transformation,
"The Lord is Coming!"

In view of that soon event may I never be ashamed –
"The Lord is Coming!"
The promises come from the highest name ere named –
"The Lord is Coming!"
The words I speak today – may they be truth,
The acts of daily living – may they be of worth,
The inward will of mine – may it be of faith –
"The Lord is Coming!"

"Father, the Lord Jesus Himself said the time of His coming is in Thy plans. I know it is kept unknown so we wouldn't quit everything we are called to do. No doubt we would get a bit panicky if we knew it would be at 3:20 this afternoon. Still, I do recognize the importance of the need of knowing it could happen at any time. And the purifying effect is really there in each activity. In Thy gracious strength keep me for being ashamed before Him at His coming. In the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, Amen."

1st John 2:29. "If ye know that he is righteous, ye now that every one that doeth righteousness is born of him."

YE KNOW #2.

*I know that He who made all things by the word of His power is Almighty God.
I know the same One who maintains all things can change it all with one word.
I know the power that in such a mighty creative work He did accomplish,
Can in those redeemed by grace alone, around the world by them be published,
If the righteousness imparted by Him be seen in them to be what's real –
It will to the testimony of His saving power set an assuring seal.*

*I know that He who saved me keeps me through all the changing scenes of life.
I know He who lived here in the flesh gave plain warning there would be strife.
I know the Spirit who dwells within gives grace and all the needed strength,
To deal with any unforeseen temptations and besetting sins at length,
Bringing ultimately a righteous benefit that will to me be purifying,
And keep me from embarrassing myself or the Lord denying.*

*I know the attitudes of men and nations – even believers is changing.
I know the things they accept as normal will never to me be satisfying.
I know the Father, Son and Holy Spirit all in plan and purpose are united,
And I have found through many years of fellowship, I am delighted
With knowing I am born again – a work of God alone, not of any man;
Nearly sixty years of increasing joy in following the path God alone did plan.*

*I know that He who saved me by His grace, intends to keep me to the end.
I know the truth of God well taught, will not need my feeble attempts to make it stand.
I know the charge to defend the faith, teach sound doctrine and the Gospel preach,
Is not a work beyond my scope, nor should I ever by slothfulness, myself impeach;
So, I call upon my soul and spirit in this noisy place, to be quiet here today,
And contemplate before anything unknown arises, what I will do and say.*

“O Righteous God, there is in me so little that is of value, and yet I am anxious to do and be righteous in every way. I think I am ready to learn – yes, I am ready: please teach me Thy righteousness experimentally. In the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, Amen.”

1st John 3:1-3

PURITY

The life of a believer as God intends, and has made provision for, is a joyful life [1Jn.1]. Joy and victory depend on our fellowship with God and the children of God. The conditions of fellowship and the conduct of fellowship were addressed by the apostle in the first chapters. Now he identifies the characteristics of fellowship. These characteristics are in contrast to the false teachers who depart from the faith, deny the faith and seek to deceive the faithful. Our defense against them is addressed in chapter 3. Our motivation to maintain this life of victory challenges us to purity in view of the prospect ahead when our Lord comes [v.1-3]. Righteousness of life demonstrated is evidence of our position as children of God [v.4-10]. Love is evidence of reality as those who are children of God. Answers to prayers made with confidence in God and obedience to God, gives us assurance that our fellowship with the Father is intact.

One who is truly born again has a nature implanted that does not lose the wonder of being loved by God. In an exclamatory phrase, the apostle writes words of worship and praise as he passes on to others the thoughts of his own heart. How great and real is the "manner of love the Father has bestowed upon us!" It defies description because it is so far beyond human experience. The Father who loves the Son supremely, has bestowed that love on us as His children. This "manner of love" is unique in its origin because He is a perfect Father. He has freely bestowed this on us, not because we deserve it but because of who He is. It has been bestowed on us by His choice and we have been made recipients of an infinite love that has made us "sons of God."

Angels and then Adam were called "sons of God." Now we are called sons of God because we have been "created in Christ Jesus" and so are new creatures in Him. Those who are born of God "do not commit sin" [3:9]; "love one another" [4:7]; "believe that Jesus is the Christ" [5:1]; "overcome the world" [5:4] and "keep ourselves" [5:18]. We are children of now by birth, not only by adoption. We are children of God now, not in the distant future. We are children of God in whom the features of our Father are to be seen. When people saw our Lord Jesus when He was here, they saw the Father, even though they did not recognize that fact. The features of the Father are those things that reveal His character such as purity of character, holiness in life, love that is demonstrated in many ways, and righteousness that puts all of these characteristics on display. The world will not recognize this in the children of God because it did not recognize that in the Lord Jesus Christ when He was here.

Even though we are flesh and blood, and are unrecognized by the world as children of God, it is a fact. Our Lord was not recognized but was laughed at and mocked when He said He was the Son of God. How much more will we who still have sin in us and at times commit sins be laughed at and mocked. Many will think it the heights of arrogance that we tell them we are saved from the consequences of our sin, have been given eternal life and will not perish - and are now "sons of God." We should not marvel at this rejection because the world didn't know the perfect Son of God when He was here.

The day is coming when our Lord comes, that we will be changed. "Our vile bodies" will be made like His body of glory. We have been predestined to be like God's Son. There will be a moral change when we are no more able or even want to sin. The limits of our humanness will be transfigured into the image of God's

dear Son. Our bodies will put off corruption and put on immortality. When all things are made new [Rev.21:5], it may be that those who died in infancy will be mature, and those who died in old age or weakness will be made strong and robust. "When we see Him, we shall be like Him..." We will be reflections of God then in a way similar to what we should be now. At the present time we can grow to resemble our Lord by "being righteous as He is righteous" [2:29]; by being pure "as He is pure" [3:3]; and by rejecting sin when it raises its ugly head in view of the time we shall be like Him [3:5].

He is righteous and we have been declared righteous before God because of the righteousness of Christ imputed to us. What joy when our standing and state are the same before God. His purity when He was here was such that He was "holy, harmless, undefiled and separate from sinners." Now we have to admit that in our flesh we fail because we are earth-bound. The process of becoming like Christ will not be complete until we see Him. But knowing our ultimate destiny is to be with Him, should purify us now and challenge us to be morally clean from the corruption of sin. The promise of His coming is to us a positive hope that excites us rather than frightens us. It is a "blessed hope [Ti.2:13]; a "joyful hope" [1Thes.2:19]; a "lively hope" [1Pe.1:3]; a "hope of glory" [Col.1:27] and a hope that is an "anchor of the soul both sure and steadfast" [Heb.6:19]. Because it also is a purifying hope [v.3] we are challenged to abide in Him now so our hearts are set on Him who we may see at any moment of the Father's choosing.

Obedying the truth has a purifying effect on us [1Pe.1:22]. Drawing near to God deliberately with clean hands and a pure heart, also purifies us [Ja.4:8]. Deliberately avoiding any sin or people who would turn us aside from our walk with God by faith, keeps us pure [1Tim.5:22].

The manner of the Father's love stirs us to live in purity in view of the Lord's appearing. The matter of the world's knowledge and lack of understanding of who God is and what Christ has done, moves us to purity in contrast to the ways of the world. The meaning of the Son's appearance moves us to sanctification now in view of glorification in the future.

1st 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."

MANNER OF LOVE.

*They don't know me, how strange, even though I lived here for a lifetime.
I might have wondered one time; how could such a thing ever be.
But really, it should not make me wonder, it is a natural response
To a love that is so unnatural – it stands by man unknown,
That "manner of love" means death for life –
And I by God Himself am born.*

*The world doesn't know me, because there has been and still is – a difference.
Never has it entered the heart of natural man the value of redeeming grace.
It is impossible for me to find my joy in places where my Lord is not,
If He would not to such a thing be able to add His blessing,
So more, should I refrain when His name confessing,
And by God Himself be loved.*

*A funny thing sometimes happens when I, for some reason, pass by.
Conversations sputter and slowly die until they cease in silence;
An uncomfortable silence that causes them to look around –
Or leave with sentences unsaid they had hoped to share,
But "that manner of love" has such a power –
God Himself bestowed the love.*

*The world doesn't know real Christians who stand out like a bird alone.
They want the flock to be alike and travel the same direction.
But like a "speckled bird" among a flight of black,
The committed Christian shows what others lack,
Because of the "manner of love," we trust.
God Himself, in love, will see us home.*

"I thank Thee, O Father, for the uniqueness of Thy love that makes so evident to the world around me; I am loved in a special manner. Whether Thy love is shown in correction, rebuke or recovery, I know it is unusual to most people. They want love to be sticky and sentimental making everyone feel good but never having a lasting effect. There are those here who are uncomfortable around the reading and speaking from the Bible and/or prayers that are specific rather than general. I pray to be kept from the world "knowing me," in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, Amen."

1st John 3:2. "... but we know that, when He shall appear, we shall be like Him; for we shall see Him as He is."

THIS HOPE.

The persons are aware – we know: there is no question; He has promised; His word is true.

The Person is alive – He: our Savior, our Lord, our coming king.

The prospect is real – He shall appear: no imaginary vision; no magical slight of hand; no figment of imagination.

The plan is in place – we shall be like Him: the change is real; the likeness is evident; the reality is without question.

The program is arranged – we shall see Him: it is the first look that counts; it is the linkage that makes it happen; it is a likeness that is obvious; it is a longing that is fulfilled.

How precious is this hope, it is a positive assurance;

How personal is this hope, it is in me;

How purifying is this hope, it is about me.

How powerful is this hope, it means I'll be like Him.

"O Father, I know the day is coming and look forward to it. But thanks for not making the time known to me because I would probably be scared, or intimidated, or irresponsible; thinking only of that and not of what Thou hast placed in my hands now. I would like to be in the right place, at the right time, doing the right thing when He comes. Thanks for keeping me on my toes. In the name of the Coming Lord, Amen."

1st 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."

AS HE IS #2.

To be a child of God is not some trivial thing.

By God's Spirit I was convicted and by the Spirit born again.

Now it is only right that God expects of me, a son –

To reflect the character of God, and appreciate what He has done.

But this is only the beginning of a divine working in me –

When He appears and I see Him, I shall be like Him in purity.

The sins and transgressions that hinder, by Him have been taken away,

And evidence of this should be noticed in all I do and say.

The Son of God was here to defeat and destroy the devil –

As one born of God, I too, am aware of the consequences of evil.

A child of God wants to please the One who adopted him,

And in righteousness now I live; grieved whenever I sin.

By God's help I will always remember, I am His bought with a price.

The life of righteousness is important, this is evidence of new life.

Love for God and others is the characteristic most desired –

And Christian who love one another, make our God by others admired.

"I desire Christ-likeness, Father God. I want to be like my Lord now but so often I hardly know much difference in me than those that do not know Thee. I need Thy power and grace to let love for Thee and others be seen in my face – and I need this to be seen in the actions and bent of my life. I pray for this in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, Amen."

1st John 3:3. "And every man that hath this hope in him purifieth himself, even as he is pure."

AS HE IS PURE.

He stands alone among all men and all created beings,

For He alone is pure in His inherent nature.

Impossible it is to sin or have unholy feelings,

For in divine Persons, sinlessness is a key feature.

*From eternity far back beyond our imagination,
The character of God always was, was never formed.
His personality, when first expressed in His creation,
Was such that everything He did, He said was good.*

*Then He chose to reveal Himself to man in His perfection,
But man, in failure closed that door by sin.
So then in various nations and many generations,
God spoke in types and shadows – then Christ came.*

*A birth unique was His, a human, yet from sin apart,
His sinless humanity became obvious for all to see.
His life was spotless, blameless was He right from the start
Of a ministry that proved Jesus Christ was truly deity.*

*Standing alone before the crowd of sinful men, a judge
Said what all knew to be true but could not face.
“No fault,” “A just man” four times over he said,
Before condemning Him to death at Calvary’s place.*

*All of this together impresses its self upon my mind.
The hope of His appearing and glory challenges me,
To purity of life in view of His coming – will He find
Me committed to being what He wants me to be.*

*The challenge of purity is often hard to keep,
Because temptation lurks around each corner in my life.
By the grace God gives I will trust and seek –
To yield not to anything that will not reflect God’s light.*

“O gracious God and heavenly Father, I have been thinking of the life and work of Thy Son and the way His purity was displayed. How far He is beyond my reach, and yet there is the fact that the more inwardly and outwardly. In the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, Amen.”

1st John 3:4-10

WHOSE CHILD?

There are a number of ways in which we can identify the family of an individual as to who are their parents. Physical characteristics, the tone of voice, body language, their interests and their approach to life all display the nature a person has received by virtue of their birth. John returns to the theme of the new birth and the new nature after having addressed the conduct of children of God. One obvious evidence of sonship is righteousness. God's children are members of His family [1Jn.3:1; Ep.3:15]. Collectively God's family is called "the people of God" [1Pe.2:9-10]. As those who have been born into His family, the people of God are citizens of heaven who are living here on earth [Phil.3:20] and are meant to function together with the same interests even though we do not all live in one place [1Co.12:127].

Wherever God people are found on earth there are similar characteristics. Unity in a local church should be a visible manifestation [1Co.1:10] of life in God's family and division should not be a normal feature. It does happen, but most often because there are those who are not children of God who come among His people claiming to be family members. Not all children in a family are alike. Diversity [Ep.4:7] is a positive feature in a family. Each contributes a personal strength and giftedness to the benefit of all family members. That interdependence [Ep.4:11-12] is a positive characteristic in which all are able to function together because each of us needs the others. As the people of God, we worship as a kingdom of priests [1Pe.2:4-5], not as clergy and laity. Each person either silently or audibly expresses their adoration of our Lord to the blessing of the whole. That affectionate relationship [Ep.5:23-27] is demonstrated in the same way as any family relationship.

1st John 3:4. *“Whosoever committeth sin transgresseth also the law: for sin is the transgression of the law.”*

TRANSGRESSION.

*There are standards God made that are not going to change.
His laws come from His character impervious to sin.
Such laws as He has given have always a benefit made –
Transgression of those laws is a danger to men.*

*Sometimes a person may not know really clear,
Whether a thing is really right or how seriously wrong –
But linked with the written law that all might fear –
Is the law in the heart that is there all along.*

*To transgress means to go beyond what I know is right;
Or transgressions may take me to some erroneous path.
Transgressions may be sins, instead of songs in the night;
Transgressions not forgiven will bring down God’s wrath.*

*There really is no excuse a person can make,
For the law is quite plain as to what God expects.
To transgress is a very dangerous road to take –
Christ’s blood alone lets God, our transgressions forget.*

*“How far we have gone, O God, from the demands of Thy righteous laws, but how grateful I am for Him who was
“wounded for our transgression.” I give praise and thanks to the Lord Jesus Christ, Amen.”*

Family members by virtue of the divine nature that has been imparted to us are consecrated to walking in the light [1Jn.1:7] with our Lord, and are purified to holy living [1Jn.3:3]. As such there will be a devotedness to family interests [1Jn.3:16], love for family members [1Jn.4:11] and separation from the world to the interests of the family of God now, that will be evident for all to see in the day of judgment [4:17].

Even though we are members of God's family, as children we do commit sin. When Christ died for our sins on the cross, He took them away and we are accepted by our holy God because of the righteousness of our substitute. But the root of sin itself still remains as long as we are bound in our present bodies of sin. There is a difference between committing a sin, and practicing sin. Sin and the Christian life are not compatible because sin is lawlessness, not in the sense of breaking the law of Moses, but in contrast to righteousness. The practice of lawlessness in general is evidence there is no divine life in one who continues in it. One who is of the "wicked one" practices lawlessness. They say, "Sin is what you think it is or what you make of it." Many things that were in the recent past lawless, have become law under the pressure of lawless people to change laws that have been in place for thousands of years. Even governments submit to the will of the people and the general idea of lawlessness being determined by that which is expedient. Righteousness is doing that which is the will of God. Those who practice righteousness, even though they fail on occasion, are born of God.

1st John 3:5. *“And ye know that was manifested to take away our sins: and in him is no sin.”*

HE WAS MANIFESTED.

*He was here – manifested in the flesh, a babe lying in a manger;
Proclaimed to those waiting for His coming, by angels –
Heaven knew, creation knew – His star guiding the strangers
To the place where God lay waiting to bless the “waiters.”*

*He was here – manifested to the wise as He listened – and answered;
Increasing in favor with God and man while in Nazareth.
They saw Him first in public when to Jordan He traveled –
It was there God spoke aloud and He was manifested.*

*At Nazareth and Cana; Capernaum and Bethsaida,
His person and power were to the nation made known.*

*Throughout the whole land was manifested the Savior,
Forgiving sins and healing diseases – proving deity had come.*

*Of all the revelations manifesting God unto men,
The cross-death stands out as a declaration of grace.
The only Sinless One when His life there was given,
Manifested His perfection while taking our place.*

*No sin was ere found in Him, neither in nature nor life;
His holiness was visible and made manifest to men.
From the depths of His mercy to grace's highest height,
The evidence is there to see – in Him is no sin.*

“Father God, I am finding the blessing of being associated with the Lord Jesus to be a greater delight as the days quickly pass. I am praying that I will never in any way bring disgrace upon His name, His person or His work, In the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, Amen.”

"Our sins" are what our Lord Jesus Christ bore in His own body on the tree. John the Baptist declared in the hearing of John and others, "Behold the Lamb of God which taketh away the sin of the world." By virtue of the accomplishment of the sacrifice of Christ on the cross, there will come a time when all sin will be removed from the world. In grace God is waiting for those still in their sins to come to Him in faith for forgiveness of their sins. The forgiven sinner does not continue doing that which is in opposition to God. No claim of a person to be a child of God, makes one who continues in sin a Christian. That claim means nothing. The proof of reality is in the living, not in the words that are spoken. To say, "I am saved," does not make one saved.

The Lord came to take away our sins and could do that because in Him is no sin, He did not sin, He knew no sin and He was separate from sinners. He always pleased the Father. That is the desire of any child of God. We want to please our Father, and even though we fail on occasion, that is the "mistake," not the "normal" practice of a believer in Christ. Gratitude, appreciation and love for God are characteristics of divine life in those who profess to be born again. Those who are born again avoid sin because it condemns them and they lose their joy. If there is no condemnation when one sins but rather an attempt to justify the action, that person is not saved. He or she is not a child of God but a child of the devil.

1st John 3:6. *“Whosoever abideth in him sinneth not: whosoever sinneth hath not seen him, neither known him.”*

SINNETH NOT.

*Impossible! Such can not be that one born with a sinful nature does not sin?!
So what is the answer to such a definite statement – what does it really mean?
Abiding in Christ is the reason that is given for one with this lofty definition;
The Spirit is speaking of us through God's eyes; He has placed us in this position.*

*Grace goes much farther than salvation from sin – it is part of our daily living;
For a new creature in Christ who has the new nature, pleasing God is part of his being.
Such a one does not want to live separate from God, for Jesus is truly his Lord,
And “abiding in Him” is what a believer wants; our standing is right where He stood.*

*He is the Redeemer and on redemption ground, He has provided for all that we need,
He stood in the midst of those who in faith had to His provision paid heed.
I also have experienced salvation and know the greatest place for me to abide,
Is where He is doing what He did in the past – keeping those who trust close to His side.*

*It seems so out of place to ignore His grace and want to abide someplace else,
When the place where He wants me and where I want to abide
Is “in Him” like those disciples of old who came to where He did dwell –
Abiding there, where there's nothing to fear assures me that all is well.*

“To not sin is a seemingly impossible thing, Father, yet the statement in this verse seems so specific. I am taking for myself

from this text, O God, the "abiding" part. That is where I am; I can comprehend. Even at this moment I sense the privilege of abiding in Him is a real thing. I praise Thee in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, Amen."

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

AS HE IS RIGHTEOUS.

*In the very nature of the Lord Jesus Christ – He is righteous.
In every act He did both as God and man – was a righteous act.
In every word He spoke whether to God or man – was a righteous word.
In every association He had with persons – it was a righteous relationship.*

*Meeting the needs of others was one thing He did I can do.
Comforting the sorrowing was one thing He did I can do.
Interceding for the wellbeing and needs of others is one thing He did I can do.
Doing the will of God from the heart is one thing He did I can do.*

*Being silent when accusers have a lot to say, is one thing He did I can do.
Speaking words that are instructive is one thing He did I can do.
Making the Word of God more understandable is one thing He did I can do.
Singing with my brothers while knowing difficulties are ahead, is one thing He did I can do.*

*Blessing while being cursed, is one thing He did I can do.
Forgiving others who sinned against Him is one thing He did I can do.
Keeping close fellowship with His Father is one thing He did I can do.
Living in the light of the eternal future is one thing He did I can do.*

"O God and Father in heaven, please help me to be Christ-like in the acts of my life. I want to do righteous things as well as being a privileged person to have been imparted the righteousness of Christ. May I always be committed to the Lord and the righteousness that reveals Him to the world. In the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, Amen."

When righteousness has been imputed to us, righteousness is practiced. The righteousness of Christ has been imputed to us by virtue of the new nature. The seed of the new nature is in a true Christian and remains there. These words are directed toward those who sin and try to justify it. To claim the sacrifice of Christ was for our forgiveness and yet we can still go on sinning and have the "rubber stamp" of God's forgiveness, is not what is taught here nor is it true. The "little (dear) children" were being led astray and were in danger of not presenting the Gospel to others correctly. An "easy believeism" has made inroads into "Christian preaching" that is deceiving many into thinking they are saved when they are not.

The devil chose to sin when his heart was lifted up in pride and he has been sinning ever since. Those who sin and seek to justify it, discount it or not consider it sin, are children of the devil. They are doing the same thing he did. The seed of divine life is in a child of God and that will convict us, condemn us and lead us to confess and forsake that sin - and not return to it again. To avoid the problem before it happens, we must yield to the Holy Spirit in us who forbids it and our conscience will bear witness to His prompting. We need to deliberately avoid situations where we know sin is practiced and keep as far away as possible from any temptation. Keeping close to other Christians whose influence, moral and spiritual pressure will help us, enables us to overcome habits and practices that lead to sin in the first place.

A person who has been born again with the seed of divine life within, will not habitually sin. Children of the devil will habitually sin and seek to excuse it. Children of God will not. A person who does not do what is right or love God's people is not in God's family. There is no question about it. There is no grey area in this matter. One who is a child of light and who "is light" does not walk in darkness but has the "light of life."

1st 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."

THIS PURPOSE.

*It started way back, the rebellion that is – he wanted the throne of God.
In some act of subtlety, he got a host to join who all with him did fall.
As a result of that choice, all earth has been affected by the lies he always tells.
To listen to him and believe his lies will surely lead a person to hell.*

*For thousands of years he has been actively involved in opposing all that is right.
Deception has worked effectively so many won't believe by faith, only sight.
He even tried to get the Lord Jesus to give him the place of supremacy.
The Lord was manifested in flesh and in each replied to the challenges scripturally.*

*The enemy's hold on people back then was broken whenever Jesus spoke
Deliverance to the bound and healing to the sick and the devil's bondage broke.
He tried to destroy the One who gives life, right from His birth to His death;
But until God had planned, not a thing could he do to anyone to whom God gives breath.*

*But more than seeing the Lord when here; was the manifestation of His saving grace;
The defeat of the foe took place on the cross where there He took the sinners place.
The pure and the just One died in the stead of the unjust; as the substitute He died for me.
The bonds of sin and the devil were broken; and the captives were able to be free.*

*No longer does the devil have power and dominion over those he once claimed as his.
The Son of God was manifest in the flesh that all might be saved by His grace;
By power divine the enemy is defeated but he still attacks those who are off guard;
An armor is provided by Him who had this purpose, so we can stand strong in the Lord.*

"O Lord God of Hosts, the enemy has often tried to thwart the work we do, but I thank Thee for divine power given to resist the devil – and for the promise that he will flee from me. By Thy divine wisdom, make me to be aware when an attack of the devil comes – either subtly or overtly, so I can vigorously resist him. I pray this in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, Amen."

1st 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."

HIS SEED.

*There is life in that seed – every impulse from God, that makes something innate spring forth and grow.
When it first sprang to life by the power of God, there was a life change that I could personally know.
As time passed along, life that came from the seed, began to break the shell and evidence did show,
There was something new there in me that was never there before, and that started over 60 years ago.*

*Time passes by and much in life changes from the place where lives, to his work,
However, the seed that was in when the sower spread it around, still reproduces and remains like it was at the start.
The Life-Source is the same and still does maintain the characteristics God wanted to see.
So if sin does break out, it can be stopped when my mouth makes a true confession of that which came to be.*

*How wonderful God's grace I've known in each place He has moved me to carry out my calling.
The seed of life He gave when my soul He did save, is still in me and keeps me from falling.
The seed planted by God does not spoil as time passes, it remains living, and vital and real.
One born of God knows sinning is not a habit, that person confesses and forsakes sin, not conceals.*

"The reality of the new birth, Father God, is what enables me to not make sin the on-going practice of my life. May I always be willing to quickly respond to the power and influence of the Holy Spirit to keep me from sinning. In the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, Amen."

1st 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."

CHILDREN OF GOD ARE MANIFEST.

*Facial features may be quite similar but the evidence of new life is more than looks.
The way God does things and the power He gives is often shown in righteous works.
Above and beyond all the temporal things is what has come down to us from above –
The children of God are made manifest by divinely imparted love.*

*You may see them walking slowly along helping the very young or old.
They may be far away in some foreign land and yet they can feel at home.*

*There are things they do that are peculiar and you may wonder at the cost –
The reason they sacrifice and give is because they care for the lost.*

*They might seem to some old fashioned by the modesty of their style.
Or if you had a special need, I'm sure they will go the extra mile.
When they go out into the public, the crowd often gives a sideways glance,
When doing what they know is God's will, they are not willing to take a chance.*

*The children of God are manifest in the homeland or in far-off nations,
Because they have a concern for those who do not have God's salvation.
The evidence that they are a part of, God's spiritual family –
Is not that they all wear the same clothes, but commit to live righteously*

"Holy Father, I have seen on many occasions evidence of a child of God by watching their ways and works. Bless Thy children, Father, and help all of us to live righteously and to Thy glory. In the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, Amen."

1st John 3:11-18

LOVE ON DISPLAY

Righteousness of life is an obvious testimony to the reality of a Christian's faith. Conduct is one thing in our lives that is on display every day, all day. A little bit of sinning can quickly negate the impact of all we might do that is right. Right living puts out in the open the actions of our lives that positively affects others. It doesn't really show the motivation behind the action. Love does.

Christian love puts the attitude of Christian faith and living right out where the true motivation behind the actions and words can be seen. Love is seen in the expressions of the face and hands. It is seen without respect of persons, in the genuine care for the well-being of others at the personal cost of the giver and is demonstrated openly and obviously. Right from the beginning of human history, love for God and love for others was the commandment built into those in fellowship with God who directed the interactions of their lives.

Characteristics of God are light and love. They were manifested when the human race began as He walked and talked with Adam and Eve. Each evening He would meet with them, that is before they sinned for the first time by acting on the subtle deceptive words of the devil. Then divine, holy light exposed their sin and they were shut out from the presence of God even though they were still loved by Him. Fundamentals of the Gospel message include both love and light. "For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son..." is how He demonstrated His love to us in spite of our sin. "...that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish but have everlasting life" is how His light is demonstrated to us. On the legal basis of death for sin, God in love provided for us that which we could never have by our own efforts. John had heard that message from the Lord Jesus Christ. That love was made evident and unique when He came was through His teaching as new dimensions were clarified. It isn't only that we are to love God and our neighbors, but we are to love our enemies and those who persecute us. That love is seen when we do good to those who do bad to us. We are to bless those who curse us. That kind of love is shed abroad in the hearts of His children.

1st John 3:11. *"For this is the message that ye heard from the beginning, that we should love one another."*

LOVE ONE ANOTHER.

*Facial expressions: the widening of the eyes,
lifting at the corners of the mouth,
the rising higher of the head,
the movements forward of the head,
extra intake of breath,
moistening at the edges of the eyes,
the total focus towards the oncoming person –
Love for one another is expressed in the face.*

*Body expressions: the hands open towards the other person,
arms are raised in greeting; the feet move towards the on-
coming person to shorten the time of meeting, the whole pace is
quickened as the ones appreciated and loved come closer –
Love for one another is expressed in the body.*

*Vocal expressions: quiet tones are forgotten even when others
are around, names are exchanged – not just for introduction but
in appreciation, the loud voices of love are lowered as one draws very close –
Love for one another is expressed in the voice.*

*From the beginning the Father loved the Son.
What they began they concluded as one.
What was there before creation then came under the sun
Love for one another was at the beginning.*

*At the beginning of the incarnation there were loving tones of Mary's voice,
There were those who loved him dearly as a result of their personal choice.
It is really hard to tell which of His own loved Him most –
Love for one another was at the beginning.*

*When at the beginning I was saved by God's grace,
I loved Him who on the cross willingly took my place,
I anticipated then and do now seeing His face –
Love for Christ was at the beginning.*

*When from time to time I meet a new believer,
There is a linkage that affects our behavior,
Because we share love for the same Savior –
Love for the Lord is at the beginning.*

*Many of God's people I have known for years,
We have shared in life many joys and fears,
All of us together will rejoice when He appears –
Love is greater than at the beginning.*

"Gracious Father, I thank Thee and praise Thee for Thy love which has been placed in my heart. I can honestly say to Thee, Father, I love Thee and I love the Lord's people. May it always be so and may I never let anything come into my life that will diminish that love in any way. In the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, Amen."

The illustration of Cain and Abel is used to emphasize the difference between one who is morally righteous and brings to God that which He wanted as a sacrifice, and one who is arrogant and proud and has no love for God. Cain was like his father the devil. His hatred toward his brother was the result of the evil nature in him that led him to offer God that which pleased him rather than God. Because God accepted Abel's sacrifice and not his, the way it was, and because God gave him the opportunity to do that which was right and he refused, his evil nature burst forth in jealous anger and murder. The moral uprightness of Abel exposed the self-centeredness of Cain. Resentment by those who do wrong against those who are morally upright is still in evidence today in people who live immorally. The wicked are still hostile against the righteous.

That brought about John's words of encouragement in the next verses. There will be continual antagonism against moral light by those living in immoral darkness. This is to be expected so do not be too concerned when it happens nor expect anything different. "What fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? And what communion hath light with darkness? And what concord hath Christ with Belial? Or what part hath he that believeth with and infidel? And what agreement hath the temple of God with idols?" This opposition is against "my brethren" - the brotherhood of believers, and should not be taken only as a personal attack.

1st 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."*

EVIL WORKS.

*Whatever happened, you had the same parents?
Was it your personality that made you not listen?
Was it responsibilities you didn't want to bear?
What was it made you respond to the wicked one's hissing?*

*Why didn't you choose to bring to God what He wanted?
When Abel brought what was right why wouldn't you change?*

*Did you not understand by killing Abel you would forever be haunted?
Why did you refuse the offer of the lamb that there you could take?*

*You were angry and bitter you must have known that was evil?
Couldn't you remember that a sinless victim must die?
What was it possessed you to pay heed to the devil?
Did he come to you like a friend and tell you a big lie?*

*When you killed Abel, didn't you know the difference between hate and love?
After you did the deed didn't your conscience seriously convict?
What crossed through your mind when you first shed Abel's blood?
The evil works you did, you poor man, forever marks you an apostate!*

"Holy God, the warnings in the Bible of apostasy and its consequences, challenge me to be faithful in warning the lost. I wonder if I have ever spoken to one who is an apostate. I can certainly see evidence of the rising spirit of apostasy all around. Help me to be a faithful witness and one who is willing to warn, and keep on warning, the unsaved to repent and turn to Christ. I pray in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, Amen."

1st John 3:13. "Marvel not, my brethren, if the world hate you."

MARVEL NOT.

*It is unusual is it not that in this world Christians don't fit.
Fundamental to this fact is the devil is the god of it.
The hatred that is evident is no real surprise,
Because we go up when others go down.
By the grace of God and power of the Spirit,
We will continue to go opposite.*

*Antagonism was obvious when the Lord Jesus came to earth.
Herod himself tried to take His life right at His birth.
In His own town and among His own kin,
There was resentment and opposition to Him,
That followed the Lord for over 30 years,
And ceased only when enemies witnessed His death.*

*It is not unexpected when people around try to avoid the brethren.
To follow the Lord as a disciple should is an embarrassment to men.
The light of the godly shows up all the darkness,
It reveals whether they belong to God or the devil,
And righteousness and unrighteousness both will clash,
Because one group is hell-bound and the other going to heaven.*

*One thing about hatred that helps the brethren live right,
We stand out like a lighthouse at night.
There is no point pretending we belong to the world,
We talk differently, and in all ways we just don't fit.
So, I'll just I won't get upset or for any reason fret,
It is normal for the world doesn't want the things I like.*

"It happens quite a few times Father, when I am with those who are not believers, they find it embarrassing to be in my presence. I know I dress differently, talk about different things, and even act differently. I am content knowing that this is the way it is supposed to be. I do have one concern though – there are those in our family who profess to be children of God, who see me just like the world's people do. I pray Father, that they will open their eyes to Thy truth, and turn from worldliness to the life of faith once again. I ask this in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, Amen."

Malicious hatred is to be expected from those who are of the devil. Love is expected as proof of divine life in the children of God. A Christian has "passed from death unto life." This is a fact. When we acted in faith on the word of God and were given eternal life, that new birth has with it, undeniable proof of reality. There is

love for our brothers and sisters in Christ. That love goes along with the new life and new nature. This comes from God; it is not something we have to conjure up. We are in a new family, under new ownership, under new leadership in a new kingdom. The features of God will be seen in His children. If that is not true, that person is not a child of God.

Love for God's people is a proof of life. Christianity is an action from the heart, not just a code of beliefs we follow. Outward actions that follow Christian principles are not proof of divine life. To only comply with what is expected of Christians is not love. Real love goes beyond "feeling the love," to actions taken that involve self-sacrifice. To give that costs us something with no thought of getting anything back, is a demonstration of this love. This is what John heard the Lord Jesus teach and what both the Lord and His disciples practiced. This goes way beyond sentimental emotions to meeting the needs of others around us.

1st John 3:14. *"We know we have passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren. He that loveth not his brother abideth in death."*

WE LOVE.

*I know it when I see them – my heart is warmed at the sight.
They turn to look and greet me – the bands we share immediate resonate.
The voices of the brethren are like music – I long to hear them speak,
The pressure of their hands is welcomed – it means all is well*

*Even when I can't see them – the words they write are precious.
Sometimes I can hear their voices – and I smile as I hear them through the air.
News comes from far away – and I picture them in my mind.
I visualize their faces, families and work – and I pray.*

*The dark world around may hate us – but the love of the brethren gives joy.
We have left the atmosphere of the dying – love of the brethren gives evidence of life.
The unhappiness around depresses – love of the brethren gives spring to my step.
The questioning of the obvious makes uncertainty – love of the brethren reassures.*

*Within me is a proof, of the which I cannot deny.
Love for the brethren is there which money cannot buy.
There is evidence in my soul constantly maintained –
Love for the brethren is there; by the Spirit it is sustained.*

*From the beginning of my new life, love for the brethren was there.
Now many years have passed and it is a greater love we share.
I really wonder sometimes why it doesn't fade away –
But I think it the work of God that family-love every day.*

"They really are dear to my heart Father God: these children of Thine have so much that is special about them. It takes time to analyze why this love is so sustainable and I haven't got it all figured out yet – but this I do know, I love them because they love Thee – and so do I. Amen."

How do we lay down our lives for others with the same concern our Lord had when He "laid down His life for us?" His example was more than doing some great deed like He did when He gave His life for us on the cross. The "world's goods" are those things we have access to in order to live and maintain life itself. We have these to give, and keep on giving over a period of time to provide for the needs of other people. This is not a superficial, casual or a spur of the moment action. Rather it is taking another person's problem and making it our own until the difficulty has passed. The sharing of goods, the meeting of emotional needs, the caring for those who hurt, the fact of going deeper than a "How are you?" greeting, are all involved in the "love of God" in us working out what it truly is. Love is not a covetous miserly person. Love is not one who is angry with his brother and has murder in his heart. "Bowels of compassion" need to be unlocked and used for love to be demonstrated.

The true love of God is not something we talk about or just sing about. This kind of love is lived out in actions of benevolence and kindness. It will show itself to many in general and to fellow believers in specific ways. It acts deliberately, compassionately and appropriately for the benefit of others.

1st John 3:15. *“Whosoever hateth his brother is a murderer: and ye know that no murderer hath eternal life abiding in him.”*

MAN-MURDERER.

*It started with the devil; he was a murderer from the beginning.
He wasn't actually stained with blood, but deceived Eve into sinning.
Adam made his choice and because of the devil, both did die.
He did his murder by proxy, and his payday comes bye and bye.*

*Cain did not have life eternal, and he made a fatal decision.
He rejected God offer of grace and for murder was never forgiven.
His anger against God was such he from the Lord turned away,
His murderous heart is a witness, to those who from God will stray.*

*Hatred of a brother is murder, the Lord Jesus clearly taught us that.
Though you might never shed a person's blood, murder is in the heart.
The malice and evil that attends hatred before a murder is done,
Is the same to God as if you had already killed someone.*

*A man-murderer is morally the same as one who hates his brother.
To awaken man's conscience to God, Jesus said one is the same as the other.
Anyone who continues like this and whose heart is black as the night,
Certainly, does not possess the blessings of eternal life.*

“Holy God, be merciful to those who have borne such hatred and by the light of the Gospel, bring them to repentance of this awful sin and to faith in the One who died for their sin. In the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, Amen.”

1st 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.”*

OUR LIFE.

What really is my life? Is it the ability of my body parts to all function properly and in harmony so this 220-pound carcass can freely move about? Or is my life a style of moving through the course of a day; the interacting of myself with Linda, our family, the Lord's people – or even everyone in the sphere of my daily activities? Is it the way I do things in this setting?

I know eternal life is the life of God, graciously imparted to me, an undeserving sinner. But because of God's sovereign interest and divine love, He has given to me His kind of life – really, His life; and to do that He laid His life down. Did He do that at the cross only, or was there more to the fact that He laid down His life for us? Did He not lay down the style of life He had in the glories of the eternal past? Yes, He set that aside deliberately; He had that and laid it down. Did He not lay down the close family life He had as a growing child in the home of Mary and Joseph? Did He not have to lay down His family life? Yes, He had to walk away from the obscurity and, in a sense, security of coming home each night from work into the warmth of a loving home. Did He not have to lay down His life as a carpenter with all the satisfaction of a job that allows one to create and then the joy of a job well done? Yes. He had to lay that down and then pick up the reproaches of men that came on Him because of us. The laying down of glory, family, occupation and ultimately – physical life was deliberately laid down for the welfare and benefit of us. And because of that willingness to give Himself – not just of Himself, we have the abundant blessing of a new life that's hid with Christ in God.

But now, the fellowship we have with the Father and Son comes only when we follow that same pathway of light. The brethren need me. They need my life. They need all the glories that might be mine. The glories of strength. Family life, important as it is, cannot be the all-encompassing objective of my life. I must lay down the time I would like to spend with my wife and children, because the need is greater in the family of the saints. I do not have to kill, forsake or ignore and abandon family life – I have to lay it down.

The satisfaction that comes from a creative occupation is very great – at least for many people. The closing of a deal; the conclusion of a successful operation; the finishing of a project; all means of proving our worth. These have to be laid down for my brethren. The physical aspect of life being laid down, brings a conclusion to everything. The on-going offering of myself as an offering to God for my brethren, continues as a drink offering poured out. The Lord who laid down His life for us, had power to take it again. He didn't take it again with a selfish, grasping hand, but with all the blessings and glories linked with the result of laying it down in

the first place, comes increased glories and blessings as He takes it again. The same is true of us – as we lay down our lives for the brethren, we find that we have more after than we ever had before.

“O Father God: He who was the God-Man of the “open hand” and laid it all down for me, is the supreme example of giving. I know Jim Elliott said it well, and I can’t improve on his statement. But somehow, I need to lay down what I can keep, even if I can only keep it for awhile, that my brethren might be benefited. I think the only way I can do that is if Thou wilt keep me from a tight hand, by letting me have some insight into the needs of others. If this is the way it can best be done, please give me this special kind of eyesight. In the name of the Lord Jesus Christ.”

1st 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?”

HIS BROTHER HAVE NEED.

*There is more to love than fickle emotions that rise and fall like the wind.
Even if one lays down his life for another, or out of his abundance does send
To meet the needs of a brother that arise because he’s been repeatedly asked,
Is far different from love that “sees,” and love that arises to the task,*

*When I have enough of this “world’s goods” and I am able to live quite well,
It is time to consider, not just give a casual glance, my brother has a need he can’t fill.
He may not be my friend or some special person, but the need is there just the same.
It is important that I look and then show some love, doing it in Jesus’ name.*

*All that I have has come from God, it is not mine to hoard and just keep,
Worldly goods have been given me for living and also to meet other’s needs.
Love exhibits itself in many ways, one of which is to help a person in want.
The Lord made it plain if I have some to give, it would be wrong to say I can’t.*

*Sometimes to live is harder than to die, for living involves more than me.
I am part of a large family, I can’t feed all of humanity, but I can help those I see.
The love of God has been shed in the hearts of His own, it is natural for them to care;
To use my “world’s goods” is part of what it means, to help him, his burden to bear.*

“Father, I know the burdens of the saints are sometimes never expressed and can only been known by my looking. Give me an eye to see where the needs around me are and to wisely respond to real needs, not just to the complainers. Let me see through Thy eyes what is really needed. In the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, Amen.”

1st John 3:18. “My little children, let us not love in word, neither in tongue; but in deed and in truth.”

IN WORD... IN TONGUE... IN DEED... IN TRUTH.

*A word is an expression of which my mind is thinking,
When spoken it is not coming back,
I may think it is true, but if part of truth it is evading,
That word really is a lie, not a fact.*

*With my tongue I express thoughts to others in audible terms,
With suggestive tones either loud or soft.
The tongue can deceive others or even me when it sounds so warm,
Yet never produce any love.*

*Deeds done in the name of the Lord must be real,
His honor and love are at stake.
When they’re accomplished the recipient will feel,
The love of God in you is not fake.*

*Truth when expressed in the love of the Lord,
Doesn’t need an interpreter.
It states clearly the facts right from God’s Word,
The foundation of truth is sure.*

“I guess by now Father, I have established my reputation as to whether I can be trusted not. I pray that there are deeds and truth that will honor Thee and make the name and Person of the Lord Jesus Christ to be glorified. If there are areas in my life to be changed or my words and tongue need to be dealt with, I would like Thee to make it known to me quickly lest I disgrace the name of the Lord and the work I do. In the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, Amen.”

1st John 3:19-24

IF OUR HEART CONDEMN US

Characteristics of those who are children of God walking in the light in fellowship with God and His people, are that they are committed to righteousness of life. They love others as a normal evidence of being indwelt by the Spirit of God, and thirdly they walk in truth. Loving others in truth, and righteousness are evidence of the new nature God has given us. The child of God who is sensitive to the truth of God may wonder if they are really in Christ because we so often fail. We miss opportunities to let our "light so shine before men," and sometimes we even do that which we know is wrong, or avoid doing what we know is right.

When that happens, our consciences bother us and we feel a sense of guilt to the extent we wonder if we have deceived ourselves into thinking we have been born of God. John addresses this matter of experimental evidence of walking in the truth of God. Emotions do have an effect on some people more than others so that they do not "feel" like they are doing what is right. They do not "feel the joy" of being a child of God. They "feel guilty" because they have not done enough or been openly committed enough to the Lord. Peter "wept bitterly" when he faced his failure of denying the Lord. He met the Lord personally after that and still had to face the fact of failure again.

1st John 3:19. *"And hereby we know that we are of the truth, and shall assure our hearts before him."*

ASSURE OUR HEARTS.

*There is something about showing love to others in any way we can,
That benefits us more than them – it shows me what I really am.
The natural bent of life is usually to have others show their love to me,
And I put them to the test in some way to observe them critically.
The assurance to my heart doesn't come from others but from what I am able to show.
When God's love is real to me, well then, that love is what I know.*

*I know the Lord held nothing of Himself back, He truly gave His all.
I know when I give from the heart and when I respond to the Spirit's call.
I know the example the Lord Jesus gave when He laid down His life for us.
I know I should lay down my life for the brethren so God can truly bless.
I know when I fail to fulfill the privilege of giving what I have for God,
I lose out on the joy of the Lord and haven't really obeyed God's Word.*

*When I am willing to do what God wants, then assurance comes to my heart.
It is like that when some need comes to my attention and I'm able to do my part.
Assurance is more than knowing a thing is right because it's common to man.
It involves the self-sacrificing pattern of living that is part of God's overall plan.
If I have expressed love to my brother by responding to meet his need,
It gives me so much more assurance of life than if I am filled with greed.*

*Evidence I am of the truth, comes when opportunities make me aware
Of the fact that others are important to God and He calls me to help them there.
Those times convince me more than ever, that I am a child of God –
I am persuaded that He is able to make that effort result in some other person's good.
My heart is assured before Him so when I bow down to pray –
Showing God's grace to others through me is better than what I might say.*

"I thank Thee, O Father, for the assurance in my heart that a work of grace has been done. I know I fail often to meet the needs of others the way I should. I am afraid my most serious problem is to hold back for fear I might offend or be intrusive into a person's life when they don't want me to be there. I pray for a more sensitive understanding of how to meet the needs others have in an appropriate way. In the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, Amen."

1st John 3:20. *"For if our heart condemn us, God is greater than our heart, and knoweth all things."*

GOD IS GREATER.

*Conscience spoke to heart one day
Saying, "Why didn't you say what you were supposed to say?
How can you leave unsaid such truth;*

*That you know is of inestimable worth?
You failed again, how many times is that?
You should've had all that message down pat."*

*Then eye spoke to heart with accusing tones,
"Why didn't you read that material at home?
You knew when you left you wouldn't have much time
To make any changes so that God's truth would shine
From the pages of scripture that people need –
In that time of study, you should've paid heed."*

*Hand and arm spoke to heart with tones accusatory,
"You directed us to do things that were unnecessary,
And what should have been done with muscle and strength
Has been left undone, and now you are starting to shrink –
To be only a part of the man you could have been –
Don't you know omission can be sin?"*

*But then from the Spirit of God comes the word,
"Pay attention to the things you have heard."
When our heart condemns us and we feel such guilt,
Remember God's promises are in truth that is felt
When I apply to myself words that I heard from the start –
"If our heart condemn us; God is greater than our heart."*

"I praise Thee here this morning Father God, for such greatness that knows me better than I know myself. I have failed and do fail. My heart sometimes challenges me just like the Bible says but I thank Thee for the blessed words of this verse, in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, Amen."

What can we do when our heart condemns us? How can we face and deal with consciousness of failure? Instead of looking within ourselves and seeking assurance from our actions, we must look to God's word and to God Himself to get the answers to these questions. The very fact of a conscience that convicts us is evidence of the Holy Spirit being in us and producing these thoughts of concern when there is failure of some kind. To ignore the accusations of our consciences or to seek to rationalize what we have done, is not right. Instead when "our heart condemns us," we need to set our heart on God. We are children of God if we love the brethren. Love for the Lord is real, not merely affected. He knows our hearts and He knows all about us. His knowledge of us is far greater than our knowledge of ourselves.

Whatever it is that condemns us is known by God. When we move by faith in a conscious way into His presence with honesty, respect and an awareness that He knows the truth because He is truth, then we can calm down and find a quietness in our spirits because we know He knows. He is greater than our hearts. He knows the reason for us "feeling condemned." Our lack of love or our lack of sacrifice when we could have done more, is known by Him. He knows the degree of our affection and the cause of our anxiety. He knows the circumstances of life in which we are found. He knows each incident that has brought this sense of guilt upon us. He knows how we failed and why we failed. His word of assurance is directed toward us so that we do not need to remain in the fearful condition of uncertainty.

1st John 3:21. *"Beloved, if our heart condemn us not, then have we confidence toward God."*

CONFIDENCE.

*As a term of endearment when not prefaced by "self,"
The basis of confidence is when there is nothing to condemn.
Quietness of soul is like something personal that's felt,
Confidence in God is more than superficial knowledge of Him.*

*When everything is right it is like being face to face
With God in the sense of boldness when we come to Him in faith.
The conscience is at peace and at the throne of grace –
We know we are loved and enjoy God's perfect peace.*

*This is not like the boldness of arrogance before a judge,
But the kind of bold acceptance of a child with his father.
The knowledge that God knows me, eliminates the edge,
That makes one move with trepidation in fear of what will happen.*

*This confidence is based on love and a conscience that is clear truth.
We do not avoid connecting with a father we hold dear -
And likewise, God our Father assures us by what He saith.
Whenever and from wherever we call, He is always near.*

*"My quietness here Father, is because I have this assurance I am in the right place at the right time, doing the right thing.
Whatever comes next in the days ahead I trust I am ready for and that I will recognize Thy leading and guidance in every
way. I pray in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, Amen."*

1st 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."*

KEEP AND DO.

*Do not hesitate – it is alright to ask
We are not intruders in the place we call "home"
His smile is there when the clouds are lifted off the soul
He hears – He really does, and answers in peace*

*It is a habit; true believers have in common
Commandments – not just to be memorized and quoted
But lived – kept, perhaps in a general way at times – we do have the whole Book,
Also more carefully keep those things written that apply – specifically*

*He knows – what we see and do gratefully and in a graceful way
We are walking in His sight – how can He not know every act
More – why would we not want to be close to Him we love –
Keep in touch with Him and bring pleasure to Him*

*We are not in the dark blindly grasping for straws or shadows
His Word is revealed by the Spirit – surely, we want to obey
We have received from Him – therefore be thankful
His commandments are not grievous – therefore obey them*

*"How blessed are we to be Thy children, Father God, and to be able to ask of Thee our petitions in the name of the Lord
Jesus Christ, Amen."*

True, we have been commanded to love. The contrasts of love and the absence of love are easily discerned. It is as pronounced as the contrast between God and the devil. Children of God love, children of the devil hate. The conduct of love was demonstrated by the love of Christ and is demonstrated in the love of God's children for each other. The confidence of love is that we are assured by the fact of it in us, even by our failure and guilt. The importance of love is that God is love and He knows our hearts because He knows everything.

After looking at ourselves and our lives through God's eyes and having been assured by Him that He knows our hearts, accepts our confession, forgives completely and restores us fully, then we have confidence. Self-condemnation has no reason to continue because any barrier has been removed, and we are able to be face to face with our God. There are no clouds to hide His face from us. We can enjoy fellowship with Him and have boldness in the sense of reverential respect to speak to Him. Contact with God is real and relevant, and we are able to approach Him as His children, not as our Judge.

1st 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."*

AS HE GAVE US COMMANDMENT.

*It is really not complicated, this commandment of God –
He would not have given it if He didn't expect us to obey.
This commandment sums up all the teaching of the Lord –
We are to believe on Him and love one another He did say.*

*I cannot believe on Him, without loving Him and others –
I cannot love others without believing it's plain to see.
In the family of God believers are sisters and brothers –
By God's grace and through faith all are related to me.*

*True faith is expressed in my conduct and practice –
It would be inconsistent to say and not do what He says.
Believing the name implies I will do no action
That will dishonor His offices nor bring shame on His name.*

*Right doctrine will always lead to right behavior in life –
The name of His Son Jesus Christ is enough incentive to please.
The command He gave to love others does away with strife –
And the command to believe means I will do what He says.*

"Heavenly Father, it appears to me that the attitude of faith and love in Thy people here on earth, would well represent what Thy intentions are for the future too. When all the saints of God are together, we will respond "as He gave us commandment." By Thy grace help me to do this now so others can see Christ in the life of Thy family. In the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, Amen."

When fellowship is assured, then in confidence we have boldness to "make our requests known unto God." The prayers we make and the answers He gives are in "full assurance of faith." When our lives and labors are in fellowship with the Father and the Son, He answers in the way that is most suitable to His will. As we commit ourselves to His truth, and habitually doing those things that honor Him, we "ask" and "receive" from Him that which we ask. Abiding in Christ involves close fellowship, walking in the light with Him, obeying what is taught by the Spirit in the scriptures and living in confident assurance with Him. He is our Father and we are His children who He blesses.

His name identifies who He is and what His character is. It represents Him so when we believe in His name, we believe all for which His name stands. He is God - His deity, and He is man - His humanity. He is the one and only Savior who was sent by the Father. He is the One appointed to be the universal Judge. He is the King, the Lord and the Prince of Peace. He is the Lover of our souls and His command for us to love one another is not a mere suggestion. It is a command to obey, not to be questioned or ignored. Actually, for those who believe in His name, love for others is a characteristic that does not have to be forced. When we live like Christ intends in fellowship with Him, we will "love one another with a pure heart fervently."

The relationship with Christ displays itself in our belief in Him, our love for His people and our commitment to live a holy righteous life. "He abides in us." The Holy Spirit is in us, given to us when we believed on the Lord Jesus Christ, and He has sealed us as those who belong to our Lord. Even though we may fail at times, we have been redeemed and purchased by His blood. The presence of the Holy Spirit in us is both spiritual and practical. Spiritually He empowers us as and guides us in the way of truth. Practically, His presence affects our conduct of life in a way that makes it evident that we are children of God. Our confidence is based on the actions and will of divine Persons working in and through us, even though there may be times when our hearts condemn us.

1st 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."*

HE ABIDETH IN US.

*It happened quickly although I did not know,
New life was given and a new nature too.
Instead of living life in a vain empty show,
Another came to live in me I never knew.*

He made personal things different so uncharacteristic

*That I found what I hadn't liked, now those I love.
The things I had loved now seemed foolish and simplistic –
And my love for the Savior I now wanted to prove.*

*An intimate union was formed when He came to abide in me;
I didn't understand what Spirit-sealing meant at that time.
It was a natural reaction that from my heart I wanted to please;
The One who died for me, my allegiance had claimed.*

*There was that specific time when I knew new life I had,
The Spirit who convicted and saved me now abides within.
Sealed by the Spirit I have been given peace that gladdens –
And the assurance of His presence gives power over sin.*

"Holy God, for the Holy Spirit within who guides, teaches, corrects and leads me, I give Thee thanks. For the consciousness of His abiding presence, I give Thee thanks. For the awareness of dangers and false people who claim to be Christians, I give Thee thanks. I am so thankful for His abiding presence. In the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, Amen."

1st John 4:1-6

TEST THE TEACHING

Compassionate concern for the spiritual health and safety of the young in Christ and those who are letting their "light so shine before men," marks those believers who have experienced God with them in their lives. They know that opposition will come from many sources. Outward persecution is hard to bear, but at least we can see where it is coming from and avoid it or stand against it. Eloquent speakers who have "studied the Bible" and who are known as "Christian scholars" attract people to their "new revelations" or their "deeper knowledge" of the Bible. At the time of John's writing the teaching of Plato, Cerinthius and others was popular in the world of religion and learning. It was to those who were being influenced by the teaching of those people that John was addressing his warning to "try the spirits."

Most of those who were alive when our Lord Jesus Christ was here on earth, and had heard and seen His ministry, had died by the time John wrote this epistle. Second and third generation believers seem to have more doubts about what they have been taught because they have been used to biblical teaching all their lives. Those things first understood by those who came from moral darkness as well as spiritual darkness, brought the "light of life" into the darkness of their lives. They had lived in, and loved sin. The new birth and new nature changed them and their lives completely. Those who have been raised as Christians, and have lived under the influence of those who are "the light of the world," only realize their sinfulness and sinful nature when they are conscious of the holiness of God. When they compare themselves with those who have never heard or understood the Gospel, they seem like they are already children of God. They look like Christians, act like Christians, do Christian things and attend Christian churches - but have never been born again by the Spirit and word of God.

1st 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 SPIRITS.

*It seems believable and it is so easy –
No pressure, no pain, no personal changes and no cost.
What could be better – to be holy and rich at the same time!
To be a disciple and never ever have any physical problems –
To live in an ungodly world and not be persecuted for being righteous –
To be a follower of Christ and at the same time friend of everyone –
Surely that seems like it would make the Gospel acceptable to all –
Then all would be saved and happy and rich and – but that doesn't sound right.*

*"Marvel not if the world hates you; it hated Me before it hated you."
"Blessed are they which are persecuted for righteousness' sake."
"Blessed are ye when... revile you... persecute you... say all manner of evil against you."
"Pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you."
"Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth."
"Where your treasure is, there will your heart be also."*

"Ye cannot serve God and mammon."

This sounds right because it comes from the lips of the Lord – test the teachings.

It is almost too wonderful to be true –

You never have to be sick, or hungry, or alone.

Pray in faith and you will overcome the demon of whatever sickness you have –

Believe, have faith, if you can move mountains you can remove all difficulties –

Your problem is yourself – you don't claim what is yours –

You are healed because Christ died so you would never be sick –

It is up to you what happens to you – take hold of what is yours –

No Christian should ever be sick – but that doesn't sound right.

"Lord, behold, he whom thou lovest is sick."

"If thou wouldst believe, thou should see the glory of God."

"Lest I should be exalted... there was given to me a throne in the flesh."

"My grace is sufficient for thee: for my strength is made perfect in weakness."

"Gladly therefore will I... glory in my infirmities... power of Christ may rest upon me."

"Is any sick among you? Let him call for the elders... pray over him... anoint him..."

"Confess your faults one to another, and pray for another that ye may be healed."

That sounds right because it comes from the Word of God – test the teachings.

"O God, may I never take anything for granted when people say that it is true without the standard of scripture. Give me the wisdom to try the teachings that I hear according to the Word of God. I know the Spirit of God also bears witness as to what is true when He bears witness with my spirit. In the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, Amen."

1st John 4:2. *"Hereby know ye the Spirit of God: every spirit that confesseth that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is of God."*

HOW YOU KNOW.

Evidence is soon there when the conversation begins –

Not just the words but the subject produces a knowing –

Such cannot be known without out the experience of faith;

Personal and real, activated by the Spirit of God without prompting.

A sensible awareness of divine things becomes obvious –

And there is the warmth of love as the name of the Lord Jesus is spoken.

Experience and observation both directed by the unseen Spirit –

And there is agreement with His divine revelation in the scriptures.

Mention the name and Person of the Lord Jesus and listen – listen well,

Any lack of agreement with the inspired scriptures, and you know –

Know whether that person is activated by the Spirit or dead to God –

The confession of faith and the person that faith is placed in, tells the truth.

Jesus Christ, eternal in His person; without beginning of days or end of life –

The verbal expression of God; the Word that was in the beginning – ageless.

He took on true manhood Himself – sent of the Father – willing to come –

Not just a Christ that came upon a mortal man born in sin and set apart.

No, He who was The Father of Eternity, became true humanity –

He took upon Himself true manhood permanently – now He is The God-man.

In the flesh, of that there is no question, "God was manifest in the flesh."

See Him in His incarnation: angels, shepherds, wise men; waiting believers –

All testify, along with the fulfilled scriptures: Jesus Christ is come in the flesh.

See Him in His manifestation: miracles, teaching, sinless life, gracious words –

See Him in His work of redemption: sinless, yet bearing sin; forgiving –

The confession of faith in Christ alone: His Person, His work, tells the truth.

"O Father, who sent the Son to be the Savior of the world: my confession is to Thee again today – I know and testify that Jesus Christ, the God-man has come and has justified us before Thee by know Him, love Him and am daily waiting for His return. In the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, Amen."

It is to those the charge to "try the spirits," or "test the teachings" is so important. The teaching of Plato was that the spirit is that which is important. His teaching was also that the body is a prison from which we want to escape. Cerinthus taught that Jesus was a pious man upon whom Christ came when He was baptized. Another teaching was that Jesus was only a spirit who seemed like He had a body but never cast a shadow, or left footprints because He was God but not man. Still another teaching was that all physical matter is evil and only spiritual things are good. So only those who studied spiritual things and were intellectually capable of understanding spiritual things could enlighten others as to the benefits of religious thought. They did not understand, nor believe in hypostatic union. All of these schools of thought are still around today in one form or another. The fact that Jesus is both God and man is not understood, therefore not accepted as true. Many today believe Jesus was only a good man, with good morals, who gave good teaching. That He is the God/man is either not understood, or denied, or rejected.

Whenever we hear a person speak as one who speaks for God, we must be sure he speaks correctly of our Lord Jesus Christ. One wrote:

"What think ye of Christ is the test
To try both the state and the scheme.
You cannot be right in the rest,
Until you think rightly of Him."

Elders and shepherds in assemblies of God's people must know what a teacher, an evangelist or any other Christian who speaks on behalf others, truly believes about Christ before they can address the people of a congregation. A guarded platform is an important way to preserve God's people from error. Each individual believer needs to test the teaching of any person they listen to on the radio, internet or television. Before you pay attention to what they say, be sure you know what they believe about our Lord Jesus Christ. Jesus lived as a man among people, but He never ceased to be God in any way. His glory was veiled so people wouldn't die in His presence because of His holiness, but His personhood never changed.

There are false prophets, false apostles and false teachers today the same as there was in John's day. There are more now than then, and many are worse in morals and their rejection of truth. The Spirit of God in a true believer will make plain what is true or false. It is up to us to yield to the Spirit and not grieve the Spirit who "guides [us] into all truth." Some teachers deny the virgin birth of Christ, His atoning death that is sufficient to meet the need of all mankind without any additions, and His physical resurrection from among the dead. The eternal Sonship of Christ, the Supreme authority and power of Christ, the soon-coming of Christ and the sinless perfection of Christ are denied by many religionists. Some say that Jesus could have sinned because He was a man, but chose not to sin. That teaching would put our salvation in jeopardy for ever. He is "the same yesterday, today and forever," so if He could have sinned in the past, He could sin in the future. If that was so, He had a sin-nature, and we who are "accepted in the Beloved" would be rejected.

1st 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 is should come; and even now is it in the world."*

SPIRIT OF ANTICHRIST.

*It is not new these days, it started long ago,
A deliberate attempt was made so people would not know
The necessity of Jesus Christ being human from His birth,
And that He came to bring salvation here to earth.*

*The facts are clear to those who read and believe the Bible true;
Others seem to think their ideas right and bring up something new.
Evidence is in, with witnesses to say; Jesus Christ is God,
And those who believe Him truly, are those who call Him Lord.*

*But counterfeits have been springing up since back in Bible times,
They have made far-out explanations that come from mixed up minds.
Some will say it's all a hoax, Jesus Christ never existed;
Others say He was just another prophet and list Him with the mystics.*

*Still others say He was just a man but He had some real good teachings,
And still more try to say He was a prophet committed to His preaching.
Denying Jesus Christ is God is like saying there is no sun above,
Because the clouds obscure its rays so sunlight we do not have.*

*There is a lot of spit and dust the devil throws in people's eyes,
As he goes about deceiving folks and telling them his lies.
The spirit of antichrist comes right from the pit of hell,
And it rampages through the world trying to get Christians not to tell
Of the grace of God that came down to earth in the Person of His Son,
Whose willingness to become a man-made redemption to be won
By the cross-death Jesus died when He suffered in our place,
So, we who were enemies of God would through Jesus see His face.*

*The antichrist spirit that is roaming through earth and finding many hearers,
Has made the false stand out from the true who are now visible witness bearers.
There is no doubt there has been on earth down through the past generations,
The spirit of antichrist is all over the world and it is affecting many nations.*

*It is not possible that we can stop that evil spirit from reproducing,
But as Bible-believing Christians we can influence others by them loving.
The spirit of antichrist is hard, there is no joy, no enduring satisfaction;
We are able to proclaim what's true and tell of life that's everlasting.*

"Father God, in this city where the Gospel was once a mighty power and lives were changed when people repented and believed on the Lord Jesus Christ, things have changed. Money, pleasure, ambition and a host of other distractions have allowed the spirit of antichrist to affect people. The morals are changed, the beliefs are changed, the integrity has changed and it seems like people are getting farther and farther away from any place of hope. I did read about Gideon today and his time seemed like this time. If it is possible to go in the might of the Lord and reach people for Thy kingdom, gives us courage and power to do it. In the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, Amen."

1st 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."

OVERCOME THEM.

*There is strength when they come to promote what they think –
Many will be attracted to what is wrong.
Their strength lies in the fair speeches and good words they speak –
And the ability they have to sound strong.*

*But He that is greater is in all the children born of God –
He is stronger far than he that leads them.
The Spirit of God is limitless giving power through the Word –
The power He has is not rooted down in sin.*

*The inward guidance of the Spirit, leads us into truth –
He dwells in us and keeps us away from error.
The Spirit of Truth in our hearts enables us to overcome the false –
Divine intuition is what God implanted there.*

*The Spirit of God who moved upon the face of the waters at the first –
Is the same Person who lives within this temple.
The Spirit's power and authority has not diminished in the least
The defense against the enemy we face is more than ample.*

*I may not understand at times the reality of overcoming strength
God has given and is available to all who on it lay hold.
But I am well assured from the spiritual consciousness God gives –
I will not yield to those false teachers who often seem so bold.*

"O Gracious God, thanks so much for giving us the indwelling Holy Spirit. The divine intuition and guidance that He gives is a wonderful safeguard to us who live in this body of sinful flesh. By Thy grace, keep me from giving an ear to those who have tried, and still do try to lead people astray but their false teaching. In the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, Amen."

"The spirit of antichrist" that is already in the world, is the antichristian attitude and activity that is going on now even though the Antichrist is not yet revealed. He is coming and that "mystery of iniquity" will be openly seen when "the man of sin" is revealed. However, even though there is evil rampant around us in the world, and the wickedness of man is getting worse, this should not cause us to doubt or fear what is going to happen to us. The word "them" refers to those who are false. The word "you" refers to the believers who were reading the words of 1st John. The word "we" is a reference to the apostles and those trusted teachers of the word of God.

Unbelievers who are in the world, and of the world will listen to false teachers. They listen because those who teach and give the secular worldview do not believe on the Lord Jesus Christ. The Christian worldview is much different. We are not overwhelmed nor should we be frightened by what is happening around us, because the Holy Spirit is in us. It is true that the powers of darkness and evil are stronger than we are in ourselves, but God is stronger than any and all evil. "Greater is He that is in you than he that is in the world." God's Spirit and God's word is in God's people and we are "more than conquerors through Him who loved us."

A discerning life is important for fellowship with God and His people to be maintained. Fellowship's cautions are concerning the lying spirits (teaching) of false prophets who do not confess that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh. They are of the world, speak of the world, the world hears them and they will not listen to what spiritual believers say and teach. Christians who faithfully teach the word of God will not be listened to by those who do not want their lives exposed or their sin denounced. They do not want to conduct their lives as followers of Christ. They do not want to change their behavior to be consistent with the teaching of the word of God. Therefore, we must test the teaching we hear, reject that which is false and practice that which is true.

1st John 4:5. *"They are of the world: therefore speak they of the world, and the world heareth them."*

OF THE WORLD.

*"Of the world" begins with and follows an evil source.
Its god promotes and continues, a dark and downward course.
Its objective in the end is to defeat all that is of God,
And turn aside righteousness using every method and falsehood.*

*It has a form of government that spreads out through all the land.
Evil men and seducers abound on every hand,
Guided by false spirits that turn millions from God's way
So that the majority that are living are under this world's sway.*

*Pleasure stands high as one of the objectives of the world's agenda –
To keep mankind from serious thinking or anything that offends them.
Vicarious living through hero-worship leads down an unknown path
That ultimately leaves the lost soul empty and ends with them under God's wrath.*

*Business has a solid claim on those with a lot of ambition.
The world lies before them beckoning to a higher situation.
Even though the profit margins seem to be getting greater –
There comes a time when business ends – for some its sooner than later.*

*Fame entices the ones who have a desire to be seen by men.
The attraction of being known as a skillful negotiator never leaveth them.
The higher in the public eye they climb, the better they like it –
Until the time comes when they lose and end in despair's dark pit.*

*No matter what the world offers people, it cannot bring one satisfaction.
The more absorbed in worldly activity, the greater the false attraction.
When one is "of the world" there is no escaping its chains –*

Peace and joy are missing from everything done in the devil's name.

"I look around Father God, and see so much activity and so few results that bring people what they really want. Please help us who are Christians to let our light so shine in this dark world, that people will want the light we have for themselves. I pray in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, Amen."

1st 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."*

HEREBY KNOW.

*Close your eyes before you eat and give to God your thanks,
See how many people nod and smile, and how many think "fanatics."
Take the time to read some scripture before you start your day,
Watch to see if others do or if they casually go away.*

*Sing a verse of a hymn quietly, just loud enough to hear the tune,
Those who recognize it will often come and say to you,
"I remember that song back in Sunday School,
Where I learned Bible stories and also the Golden Rule."*

*Their interest is perked up and they want to stop and talk,
Because sometimes people find it hard to really walk the walk,
They know what is true and have received the Holy Spirit of Truth,
But they have found it hard to live without the help of others' strength.*

*Grace has been experienced by every true born child –
But often when they're left alone, they get a little wild,
And need the voice of a believer to give them help to stand –
It is a privilege of all of us to giving them a helping hand.*

*There is something unexplainable that links Christians to each other.
There is an unseen intuition that tells me he is my brother.
The Spirit of truth is a living Person that is alive in me,
And gives the connection that's needed when a child of God I see.*

*The faith of some is stronger than that of other folks,
But where faith is, that generates an awareness of the truth.
One not born of God can't tell the difference between truth and error,
Those who are born of God have the same Spirit that they share.*

"It is not always that I can tell Father God, those that are genuine believers, but usually there is that unexplained evidence that comes out in the tone of voice or the way people react when the name of the Lord Jesus Christ is mentioned. Love for Christ cannot really be hidden. Some way it will show itself. I thank Thee and praise Thee that I know Him. In the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, Amen."

1st John 4:7-12

REAL LOVE

To many people and perhaps most people, love is a feeling - an emotion that is a response to people or things. Even a cat or dog can make people feel good and they often say they love their pet. An obedient child is easier to express love to than a disobedient child. However, because they are a child, parents love them because they give a particular sense of significance. However, love in reality is an action and a choice that work together for the benefit of another. It begins in us by virtue of our new nature. That new nature imparted by God in a child of God, cannot help but choose to act for the blessing of others. That is evidence of the Spirit of truth within, in contrast to the spirit of error. The Spirit of truth focuses our actions and choices on those things that are consistent with the word and will of God. The spirit of error (fraudulent) focuses its choices and actions on those things that please the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes and pride of life.

Thirty-two times in the verses from 4:7 through 5:3, the word "love" is mentioned. Forty-three times in the whole epistle this word is used in its various forms. It is important for us to understand that God is love, not

love is God. If the word "love" is used synonymous with "God," the effect is that all other attributes of God are either lesser or even denied. Some people believe that because God is love, He will overlook sin and take everyone to heaven just as they are. "After all, God is love," is used as an excuse for some to continue doing that which is wrong. True, God is love, but He is also holy, just, righteous, longsuffering, truth, merciful and all other attributes that are part of His infinite being and perfect character.

1st John 4:7. "Beloved, let us love one another: for love is of God; and everyone that loveth is born of God and knoweth God."

BORN OF GOD.

*There is no doubt, it's an accomplished fact,
Not of me or men, but a gracious act
Of God Himself. He's the One who moved
Toward darkened, dead ones deep in sin and showed
The life-giving truth to me that I might live.
And by His Holy Spirit, power came to me to give
Life: unable to gain or earn or make to be.
Life came from God the Source through Word to me;
And I am born of God.*

*Born: not because of works or prayers or water.
Born: not because some other man or others said I ought to.
But by an act of God in sovereign electing grace,
By the Gospel news and convicting Word, made me to trace
The Person and work of Christ from eternity to the cross.
Where in my lost, condemned, undone condition, with works but dross;
The light dawned bright in this my longing searching soul.
And mercy shown by blood that flowed from Him, made me whole.
And I am born of God.*

*And now with life divine and nature given from God to make me new;
I rise from death to life, and sounds and signs of life I show.
Because from deep within the Life-Source to this heart of mine;
Has come a nature-new, the seed of God implanted, pure, divine.
The life of God cannot be hidden, Evidence is there to see.
God has convicted, worked, empowered and a work began in me.
And interests changed; ambitions, hopes, dreams and passions too.
My "dead-life" now is gone and real life from God; life anew.
And I am born of God.*

*My brothers, sisters, saints, believers – even those in sin;
I not can't help but loving; because from deep within
There is begotten a love that is real, that burns so bright;
That I truly know it's not from me, but Him whose light
Shone in my darkness and now with love divine imparted;
It goes unsaid, that God Himself in grace and love has started
To work His love to others, out through me. It's not of men;
But God who now indwells – the power that comes from deep within,
Because I am born of God.*

*Love shows itself – through vessels clay or gold;
That God has worked His work unique, begun in days of old.
And now that longed for, sought for, greatest missing need,
Is now supplied. God's love made manifest is seen
In lives, and words, and deeds in men and women –peculiar,
Because it is different from those around. It's life unusual.
Unusual, because the one who loves no matter what or who
Deserves the love or not. They love with love they never knew.
Because they're born of God.*

So now through fleshy bodies, souls redeemed; lives made light through grace,
There is throughout the world so dark and lost, light-rays in every place.
Some brighter true, than others; yet in every case where love brought life;
There is from far and distant isles, cities, towns, countries torn with strife:
Evidence undeniable, proof seen; there can be no mistake.
God has worked and loved; and seed spread far and wide; and people take
The Word, the Water, the Spirit of Truth then quickly works;
And cold, dark, dust of sinful man; now lives – the pure seed takes.
And men are born of God.

“Heavenly Father: I am wondering why love seems so evasive. Maybe evasive is not the word, but many of us are afraid of making expressions of love a habit. I don't want to seem distant and hard to reach, especially to my family, but also to these people I work with. If there is any apparent barriers in me that makes me appear distant and foreboding to them, I really want to deal with that perception that the love of God can be truly evident. Then perhaps they will be able to see something of my Lord in me. Amen.”

1st John 4:8. “He that loveth not knoweth not God; for God is love.”

HABITUAL LOVE.

If love for God is not habitual it is not true love at all,
For God is love by His nature that He imparts to those He calls.
The source of life and love is God, and those are passed on to us.
Life eternal is the gift of God that we receive when Him we confess.
As time passes by, we know more about this new life we have received,
Understanding we are new creatures in Christ, when on Him we first believed.
Eternal life develops as life we experience, not more life but now we know more,
And are now able to experience life with God in ways we could not before.

Accompanying this eternal life is a love that is of God,
This comes as the new nature gives us the love of the Lord.
Without love there's no life because these two go together,
It is part of what our God and His family share with each other.
This love is not funny feelings that quickly come and go,
But it is a deep value placed on the One Christians know.
If that kind of love is missing that verdict is already in,
A person without the love that is of God remains still in his sins.

It is expressed in ways we know only ourselves,
Because it is often so personal there is no way to others tell.
It is also expressed publicly in love for God and His people,
Because those with the love of God know all of us are equal.
God is not respecter of persons and neither should we be,
We have a nature that loves His people in spite of what we see.
Grace, mercy and faith – along with this love in our hearts,
Is all of God's doing when He saved us at the start.

Now it becomes evident around the whole world,
Christians have a love from God that is genuine and real.
God is love, that affirmation is clearly sustained
When we who know the Lord the cross-work proclaim.
The voice of the Spirit of God is seen when Christians love
Is demonstrated by their walk, and they tell of what they have.
May it always be a testimony that men and women can see,
The love of God has been shed abroad and we share it abundantly.

"Father in heaven, I give thanks to Thee for the love that has been shown to me by Thee – and the love of the Son – and the love of the Spirit. I give thanks that that love is seen in believers all over the world and I have experienced it in many different ways and places. I praise Thee for dispensing such love, in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, Amen."

Our character traits are not all eliminated when God saves us by His grace, but "the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts," and so we love God and other people. God is the source of our love. He chose to love us and send His Son to be the sacrifice for our sin. The Lord Jesus Christ loved us and was willing to leave heaven to be that sacrifice. "The Son of God who loved me and gave Himself for me." That same love is confirmed in us when we look on others and make choices and take actions that blesses them. We do have love for lost souls around us because we see them as God sees them and there is a value in them that is plain to us that they do not see in themselves. There is also special, mutual love that God's children have for each other. We "love one another" because that kind of love is part of the nature God has given us. God is love Himself. Christ has loved us and "demonstrated that love toward us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us." Now we love Him and each other.

Real love in God's children is like God. He is holy and says to us, "Be ye holy for I am holy. Our Lord is light, and He said, "Ye are the light of the world." His righteousness is on display through us. He is just, so we are to be fair and just in our dealings with others. None of these characteristics of the divine nature cancels out, nor demeans in any way, the love of God that is shown to us through others, and to others through us. God's love was "manifested" toward us when His "only begotten Son" came to give us eternal life through Him. That love of His is now in us so that we can reflect it for the blessing of those with whom we come in contact.

1st 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?"*

GOD SENT.

*Sent – down through the ages, messages were sent to men
Sent – words of warning or encouragement were sent to them
Sent – to men in various and unusual ways
Sent – from God as He showed them His matchless grace*

*Sent – messengers chosen by God Himself
Sent – each one had something from God to tell
Sent – like Isaiah to speak words from God
Sent – like Daniel with warnings for the sinful world*

*Sent – His servants to bring to God what was owed
Sent – to the highways and byways to speak for the Lord
Sent – to bring the poor and needy from the paths of sin
Sent – to tell sinners of God's desire for them*

*Sent – angels came down God's bidding to do
Sent – to bring hope though the listeners were very few
Sent – to bring to men good tidings of great joy
Sent – to guide the searchers in the way they should go*

*Sent – finally to earth came the Messiah long promised
Sent – Emmanuel came to live here among us
Sent – His only uniquely begotten, His one and only Son
Sent – His Son that the redemptive work would be done*

*Sent – and now it's our turn to respond to God's call
Sent – to tell sinners that God loves them all
Sent – to make known this is the day of God's grace
Sent – to lead people to in Him place their faith*

*Sent – until the days of the harvest are finished
Sent – so God's power in us won't diminish
Sent – until this voice can't speak for God any more
Sent – until landed safe on the heavenly shore*

"O God, I thank Thee for sending Thy Son that I might live through Him. I thank Thee that He sent the Holy Spirit to live in me. I thank Thee for sending me into the harvest field to sow and reap. I thank Thee for giving me the privilege of serving Thee in divine things. In the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, Amen."

1st 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."

PROPITIATION.

*Look at this way the love of God to us is revealed –
Look at how a sinner's pardon can be sealed –
Look at what no longer by types is concealed –
God sent His Son to be our propitiation.*

*We had no love within and were God's enemies instead –
We had no claim on God for we were spiritually dead –
We had only condemnation and looked forward with dread –
But God sent His Son to be our propitiation.*

*The Lord Jesus came to earth God manifest in the flesh –
The Lord Jesus came full of grace and perfect righteousness –
The Lord Jesus came that sinners like me He could bless –
God sent His Son to make propitiation for me.*

*He in Himself assumed our legal obligations –
He in Himself took my guilt and condemnation –
He in Himself covered the guilt of my separation
From God who sent His Son to make propitiation for me.*

*By dying in my place, He took the punishment I deserved –
By dying in my place, He from hell me preserved –
By dying in my place as my sacrifice He served –
Me when God gave His Son as a propitiation for me.*

*It was love that led God to give such an unspeakable gift –
It was love that led Jesus to be willing Himself to give –
It was love that made it possible for me in Christ to live –
Because God sent His Son to make propitiation for me.*

*Now God is satisfied because His legal claims have been met –
Now Christ is satisfied for what from the travail of His soul He gets
Now I am satisfied for His propitiation has forever settled my debt –
God sent His Son as a propitiatory sacrifice for me.*

"Father God, I thank Thee for the sacrificial work of Christ on the cross that turned away the righteous wrath that was against me. I am free from the sins that bound me and separated me from Thee. I have been made a child of God by faith in Jesus Christ who dealt with that just and legal wrath my sins had caused. I thank Thee that I am accepted in Christ, in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, Amen."

His uncaused love met our need by His Son being the "propitiation" for our sins. His love provided payment for our sin in a just legal way that met every demand against us, and at the same time revealed the extent of His love. Love does not make God nor us, morally lax, but makes forgiveness possible. God created people and wants them to appreciate Him and enjoy spontaneous fellowship and love for Him. Those same characteristics of the divine nature, we share with other children of God in whom we see the features of God displayed.

How can we truly love someone we have never seen? Visible evidence is only just that. The inward person and nature are revealed in a variety of expressions. God revealed Himself as "The Word" that "was made flesh and dwelt among us." Expressions of the soul and spirit come to us usually by words. Those physical

external expressions can be changed very easily. True, we can lie with our words too, but words of love and grace have their own testimony by tone of voice, cadence and affect our visible outward expression. God expressed Himself to us through His Son, and the uniqueness of His life and words. "Never man spake like this Man." "We have never seen it on this wise before."

1st John 4:11. "Beloved, if God so loved us, we ought also to love one another."

WE OUGHT.

*Sometimes we avoid what we ought to do –
Some reasons are legitimate but often reasons are askew –
Because we would rather do something else than what is the true
Reasons we do not love one another.*

*If my brother is in some kind of trouble –
If he has chosen to live in his own little bubble –
If for some reason he doesn't want me to come on the double –
We still ought to love one another.*

*There are times when I might say, "He deserves what he got –
There were times when I could have helped him but rather chose not
There will be times in the future when I have to do what God says I ought –
And that is to love one another.*

*If I fail in this command, I might fail in some others –
If I don't act when I should, without having respect between brothers –
If for some reason I fail those in want, I know I have not obeyed my Father –
Who tells me to love one another.*

*To love one another is a debt I must pay –
To love one another means to love in a self-sacrificing way –
To love one another is one of the many ways I can publicly say
I am a Christian, and Christians love one another.*

"There have been many times Father, when I haven't shown the love for my brothers in Christ that you have a right to expect from me. I pray for an awakening in my heart that lets me think of ways I can show love for Thy people. Linda is really good at this. May I learn from her and Thee how to show that I am a disciple in deed. In the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, Amen."

When we love one another, God makes Himself known to others through us in a way similar to our Lord Jesus when He was here in the flesh. "Let this mind be in you, that was also in Christ Jesus." We are to be like Him in holiness [1Pe.1:15-16] which indicates a unique way of life that is lived in obedience to God. We are to be like Him in righteousness [1Jn.3:7] which means there are unique deeds done for the benefit of others. We are to be like Him in purity [1Jn.3:3] which is a unique conduct of life. We are to be like Him in love [Ep.5:1-2], walking in love which is a unique course in life. We are to be like Him in forgiveness [Col.3:13], indicating a unique attitude in life. We are to be like Him in compassion [Lu.6:16] in which we are to be merciful as our Father, which indicates a unique concern in life. We are to be like Him in endurance [Heb.12:2-4] as we "look unto Jesus" indicating a unique purpose in life. We are to be like Him in submission indicates a unique authority in life. We are to be like Him in humility and obedience [Phil.2:5-8] indicating a unique Lordship in our life. We are to be like Him in kindness [Lu.6:35], doing good for others which indicates unique action in life. We are to be like Him in our giving [2Co.8:1-9], and that generosity indicates a unique attitude toward money in our life.

The words of John do not tell us how many people we are to love, but how much we are to love those who are already in our lives in some way. It is not usually too difficult to show love to family members. We may be naturally shy and find it difficult to reach out to people, even when they are in the family of God. But soon we will find it possible to love others as the commandment of God tells us, because He gives us the desire and ability to do that within the confines of our personality.

Not every person finds it easy to talk, nor every extrovert loves people just because they find it easy to communicate and have a lot of friends. Love goes beyond words, to choices and actions that demonstrate

what it is to be a Christian to our neighbors, strangers and even enemies. It is God's love that is made complete in us, not our own natural love that is being perfected. God's features, attitudes and actions are what we are able to display to those with whom we come in contact.

1st 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."*

HOW CAN I SEE GOD?

How can I see God?

What evidence is there around me showing me God is real?

I open my eyes – my spiritual eyes – and see

There, in my brother and sister, is the extra mile walked

A coat comes off his or her back and is given to another –

That is how I see God!

How can I see God?

The Spirit within me responds to the words of scripture –

Christ was here – sent by the Father – He was here in the flesh –

I didn't literally see Him, but others did – many others,

And I trust their testimony – their words ring true – Jesus was here –

That is how I see God!

How can I see God?

Special people – they are a lot like Christ – I know them –

They are different – they are separate – they are a cut above

They love other people – they love God's Word – they love me

They are not afraid in the dark days – their fear is gone –

That is how I see God!

How can I see God?

In those who walk together in light and love –

In those who give of themselves and what they have –

In those who read the Bible and live by it –

In those old people, sick people, poor people who are not fearful

That is how I see God!

"For any insight given by the Spirit, Father: for any truth seen in others lived out that reveal Thyself to me; for any grace that shines from others to those in the darkness of this age and place – I give Thee thanks and glory, in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, Amen."

1st John 4:13-17

GOD IN OUR LIVES

One who is born of God believes in Him, obeys Him and loves Him. These same basics are in our Lord Jesus Christ. There are eight tests of salvation for us that begin with the word "hereby" in 1st John, that testify experimentally to the reality of our faith. The first test is that a child of God keeps His commandments [1Jn.2:3]. That simply means we do what He says - period. The second test is we guard His word [2:5]. To "keep" implies we guard it not as in a place of safe-keeping, but to live our lives as He intends is to live. Thirdly, we are to be living sacrifices for the sake of the people of God [3:16]. To lay down one's life for the sake of others is what our Lord did for us. To give ourselves to serve others without expecting anything back, is a characteristic of appreciation for what we have received from God.

To love in deed and truth [3:18-19] is the fourth test. Love as God expects from us is not something to talk about or write on a card that expresses some sentimental words. It will be easily seen when it is directed toward others in a personal way. The fifth test is the consciousness of the Holy Spirit of God within us [3:24]. The presence of the Holy Spirit in one's life is evident in practical expressions of Christian-conduct, not something mystical. Spiritual life directed by the Holy Spirit will move me to yield to His prompting and guiding, and avoiding everything that is not consistent with my profession of faith in Christ. Linked with the work of the Spirit is the sixth test of salvation which is, a believer in Christ testifies to the fact that our Lord Jesus Christ is the God/man. He is both God and man [4:2]. This truth is often challenged by those who look at our Lord Jesus Christ as only a good teacher of moral living, rather than the eternal Son of the eternal

God. The seventh test is that we are conscious of God hearing our prayers [4:6]. Our prayers are not always answered in ways we had anticipated, or perhaps had hoped. The answer of "No" is just as important as "Yes." It may be that an answer of "Wait awhile," is the best one we could ever get. The eighth test is the practical experience of the Holy Spirit working out God's will through us and by His power [4:13]. Love working out toward others is proof of the Holy Spirit in a child of God.

1st John 4:13. *"Hereby know we that we dwell in him, and he in us, because he has given us of his Spirit."*

WE DWELL IN HIM.

*We know by experience, evidence is really unmistakable,
Something of God has happened that can in no way be denied.
When I partook of Christ Himself and came to dwell in Him,
He sent the Holy Spirit – now He has come to dwell inside.
It became obvious to me as God's love to me was imparted,
I sensed a new life and new attitude towards the children of God.
From then on until now the gracious inward work He started,
Bears witness with my spirit that Jesus Christ is my Lord.*

*It was not because I asked or pleaded for something special,
This didn't happen gradually for God gives not the Spirit by measure
It was a work of God alone right from the beginning to the end.
There was no tantalizing withholding when the Holy Spirit was sent.
There were no limitations or any kind of emotional deception,
There is no striving on my part that more of the Spirit I can get,
When the Spirit of God is spoken of in scripture there isn't any mention
Of a gradual dispensation of power depending on my own personal bent.*

*The issue that is involved in this is how much does the Spirit have of me,
It is my responsibility to allow the Spirit freedom that I with Him be filled.
There are things that show this filling to be real that others too can see,
When this takes precedence in my life, it is to God's will my will I yield.
Melody in my heart and singing on my lips; thankfulness also is a real proof;
A submissive spirit and love that is true – these all show He in me dwells.
Love for the Father, love for the Son, love for the Spirit – love for others too,
All of these expressions of faith in Christ, are ways a testimony has to tell.*

"The indwelling Holy Spirit, O God, is a felt reality in my life. I praise Thee for making it possible that the new life can be lived out by a power that is super natural and much more evident than what I could ever produce with my feeble strength. Thanks so much. In the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, Amen."

"The Savior of the world" is a term only John uses in the scriptures. It is a clear testimony as to the person of John had opportunity to be with Him, see Him do the will of the Father - even share in His work when he was a young man. Now, maybe even over 50 years later, he is able to be emphatic as he states the Son of God is "the Savior of the world." This means He is the "only" Savior of the world, not one of many. There is no other Savior that the One the Father sent. It was to this fact, John who had "seen" the Lord, now again "testifies."

The apostles had seen, heard and examined the Lord Jesus for three years when they followed Him. No man has seen God in the fullness of His glory, but the Son of God when "He was found in fashion as a man," was able to be seen physically and His moral glory was always evident to those who were with Him. Our faith "comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God," that has passed these truths on to us. The effects of the Father sending the Son was evidence of God's interest in us. It was the Father who sent the Son. The Spirit brings us to recognize the Son for who He is. The Son is the Savior of the world, and the offer of salvation is world-wide.

1st John 4:14. *"And we have seen and do testify that the Father sent the Son to be the Savior of the world."*

WE HAVE SEEN...AND TESTIFY.

John:

*He saw the Lord at the beginning of His public ministry –
When at the baptism of the Lord all there could plainly see*

*A dove descending and lighting on Jesus but they really didn't know,
The Spirit of God was in that dove testifying to those here below
That God was here in the Person of Jesus, the long-awaited Messiah had come –
And the testimony was seen and now John knew this was the promised One.*

*John heard Him speak and learned that Christ was here fulfilling the Word.
He watched the things He did and knew Jesus was Christ the Lord.
He tasted the miracle food and drink, he watched Jesus raise the dead –
There was never a question in John's mind, Jesus was who Peter said –
"The Christ, the Son of the living God," and to that John could say, "Amen,"
For he was with the Lord from the first and was there watching Him ascend.*

Paul:

*Never did he think he would be one who would for Jesus testify.
But God knows all men and is able to do far beyond what we ask or think –
And He chose Paul to take the Gospel to Gentiles and for the Holy Spirit write.
We have thirteen letters of teaching from God written through His servant Paul –
Who testified of Christ the Savior and was the last person on earth who Jesus saw.*

Me:

*It is not that I have seen the Lord visibly, to that I could never attest
But when the eyes of faith are opened by God, something important takes place.
An understanding of things I long knew, changed things from obscure to right plain –
And the way I Christ saw was through the scriptures themselves, when I was born again.
I can truly say in words of testimony that the Savior of the world has come –
And the Father knew before He sent Him that among all them – I was one.*

*How I see now who Jesus is, and what He accomplished while on earth –
Is through the Bible as the Spirit reveals Christ, and all the evidences of truth.
To apply the things learned and live by the directions God has given
Is the way God intended it to be and makes life worth the living.
I have seen also, along with all believers who testify of their Savior –
Because the Father sent Him, all has been changed, not just outward behavior.*

"Father in heaven, I too testify that I have experienced the blessing of the Savior coming to die for me. May I always be available for the Holy Spirit to pass on through me the good news of the Gospel to others. In the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, Amen."

False prophets did not confess that Jesus is the Son of God. A confession of that truth is an act of decision, not a casual comment. When that confession is real and personal, that person has the Spirit of God within. "God dwelleth in us" [vs. 12] indicates the fact of the Spirit within. We have not only been sealed by the Spirit of God, but the love of the Spirit and the power of the Spirit is demonstrated in this new life in us. The proof of the Spirit and the power of the Spirit that of a Person who has been given and received by us, not just an influence. The characteristics of personhood are in Him and is visibly worked out through us. True, He does influence us and our actions when he uses our bodies to work out the will of God. We have not been given part of the Spirit because He is not given "by measure."

The evidence of the Spirit in us is when we are filled with the Spirit to accomplish His purposes. We do not need more of Him; He just needs all of us. Our responsibility is to not hold back or quench His work. Nor should we impetuously go ahead of His leading on our own, but "yield to the Spirit" and act under His control. These are things we "know and believe." Confidence and realizing the fact of a matter, are both parts of understanding a fact that has been stated. That understanding of spiritual truth when we receive it with conviction, leads us to understanding with confidence. We know something is truth when by faith and experience we prove it to be real in us. That is when the love of God is truly in us, not just for us.

1st John 4:15. "Whosoever shall confess that Jesus is the Son of God, God dwelleth in him, and he in God."

PUBLIC CONFESSION.

*I am not sure which public confession has had the greatest impact on others,
But I know the first one I made, had a great impact on me.
The day after I accepted Christ as my own Lord and Savior,*

*I had to publicly confess Christ before contemporary teens.
It certainly made me nervous, and made me have a serious doubt –
Was I really a child of God, or was there something missing?
What I understood of the blood of Christ shed – was it only a thought?
Was I really a true Christian or had I missed salvation's blessing?
I had no choice but to testify and they listened with differing faces;
Some had skeptical looks and just wanted to have some fun –
But others seemed to believe it was real and stood still in their places,
Waiting with a kind of respect until my testimony was done.
One followed me into the school and said he too wanted salvation –
And listened that night to the Gospel sitting beside me,
Responding to the message that is worthy of all acceptance,
He too the provision Christ made was able to personally see.*

*After all these years that have passed, I still want Christ to confess –
Knowing that what one has experienced for so long,
Does have a certain credibility when I stand to give a witness,
That can't be ignored and cannot be proven to be wrong.
Sometimes the opportunity is given to speak to a large company,
Who have gathered together to hear God's Word,
And at other times the group I speak to is only two or three,
Yet even if it's one, I am glad to tell of my Lord.
When a blessing like God's salvation has been experienced for years,
And many accompanying blessings have been tried and proven,
It seems only right if the time is appropriate to these others share,
All that God's grace means to me, and tell of eternal life given.
By the Holy Spirit's guidance and opportunities that evolves,
I hope to be able to speak of the Lord Jesus and tell
Of my salvation and life in Christ with all that new life involves
I testify that by grace alone I'm saved, and my Jesus does all things well.*

"O God, I am not able to express myself very well but I know what has happened to me and am thankful for a story of salvation to tell others. I think of those who were listening last night to the Gospel and I pray for their minds and hearts to be opened to the truth of salvation by grace through faith. I pray in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, Amen."

God's love has been demonstrated in its fullness among us now. This gives us assurance that when the great white throne judgment takes place, we who have passed from death unto life will not be there to be judged. God's perfect love is being perfected or being brought to maturity in us. We have confidence because we are already accepted by a holy God on the solid foundation of our position in Christ. Likeness to Christ is identifiable in at least seven ways. We have the same heavenly Father [1Jn.3:2]. We have the divine nature [2Pe.1:3-4]. We have been declared blameless in the sight of God [Rom.8:1; Isa.53:5]. As our Lord had a divinely appointed work to do in this world, so do we [Ron.12:1; Mat.28:19-20]. Both our Lord Jesus Christ and we His people are special objects of satanic attacks in this world [Mat.4:1; 1Pe.3:8]. As Christ has been raised from the dead by His glorious resurrection, so it will be with those of us who are in God's family and belong to Him [1Co.15:20-23]. Our inheritance and that of our Lord's is the same because we have been made "heirs of God and joint heirs" with Jesus [Rom.8:17; 1Jn.3:2].

The characteristics of those who have God in their lives are unmistakable. We have no reason to fear the future because "we have been saved from wrath through Him." The punishment for our sins has been taken by our Savior, and we look forward with confidence when the day of judgment comes. It will not affect us, and it will mean the final end of sin. Our personal relations with our Lord will be unhindered by our frail, failing human flesh, and we will "be like Him."

1st 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."*

KNOWN AND BELIEVED.

*I have known God's love in many ways –
By what He has done and what He says –
In the darkest nights or brightest days –*

He is faithful and I truly believe.

*Experiencing God's love is a real test –
Because I have to trust that He knows best –
When life seems harder on me than all the rest –
He has allowed it and I truly believe.*

*When I do what God says and act in faith –
When the events unfold with a bitter taste –
When all I have to hold is the promise of grace –
He is near and I truly believe.*

*When the events unfolding are full of wonder –
And the prayers are answered and He is honored –
And I stop to meditate, and on His blessing ponder –
He promised and I truly believe.*

*I have watched when the saints have come to death's door –
When they and I know we won't be together any more –
And for both of us attention is fixed on the heavenly shore –
He doesn't leave and I truly believe.*

*I have believed and experienced what God said is right –
When I act in faith life is lived in the light –
Knowing and believing make my spirit bright –
He never fails and I truly believe.*

"I thank Thee Father God, for the blessings of being able to experience Thy presence and live in Thy light. It makes everything associated with living so reasonable and right. I know personally and experimentally that "God is love," and I give thanks in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, Amen."

1st 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."

BOLDNESS.

*Boldness is not arrogance but is based on assurance,
What others have experienced gives us confidence.
So, we don't have to fear the darkness or the unknown –
The love that matured them has plainly shown
God can be trusted to meet needs in life now –
Surely, He will not abandon us when in His presence we bow.*

*The Lord Jesus lived here on earth long before me –
He knew what it was like when friends – even family
Didn't understand His work or His strong motivation
To do what was necessary to provide salvation
For those who didn't love God and seemingly didn't care
He came here to save people and their sin-burden bear.*

*The constraints of His love kept Him moving ahead
To the cross where for us in love, His blood was shed.
The love He personified was perfected in full
When holding nothing back He gave for us His all.
Now it is my turn to show God's love to others,
It matures through my actions to sisters and brothers.*

*The Lord was here and so He gives me the grace,
To show God's love to those who live in this place.*

*More than that, He provides all the needed strength
To ensure my commitments are done at length
In the name of the Lord and by the power of God –
So, in the day of judgment, "Well done" is full reward.*

"Father, keep me from being self-centered and at the same time bold in faith as I see opportunities to express the love of God to others. May I not overlook the value of the circumstances Thou hast brought me into. May I be faithful to Thee and others to show the care and kindness of God. I pray in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, Amen."

1st John 4:18-21

PERFECT LOVE

It is possible for even a Christian to live in fear. They fear the future as they look ahead to days before them and the unknown, stirs a sense of trepidation as they think of "all the bad things might happen." They fear the coming of the Lord because they might be doing something that would embarrass them when they see Jesus. Some fear the judgment seat of Christ because they don't know what might be revealed and how they would respond to the Savior when we "receive for the things done in the body, whether it be good or bad." Such fear can cripple is and plays on our emotions instead of moving us to a satisfying life of faith.

When such fears arise, we need to remember we have been loved by God with a perfect love. To focus our minds on His love for us, will motivate us to show His love through us to others. Consciousness of His love quiets our fear and gives us confidence in day to day life as well as looking into the future. "Our times are in Thy hands," is not just a quotation from Psalm 31. Fear keeps us from the joy of living and walking in the light with our Lord. 1st John chapter four reminds us of the importance of a "discerning" life. True sonship is put to the test by our attitude toward our Lord Jesus Christ. It is also tested by our love and our response to the exhortation to love. The demonstration of love testifies to the fact that we know God. The motivation of love is that others might be blessed. The function of love is that God works in us and through us so others can see what God is like by observing His people. The obligation of love is actually in its very nature. Love shows itself because that is what love is - a fact and an act.

1st 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."*

NO FEAR.

*Not with a brazen sense of arrogance.
Not with a boldness spawned in self,
Not even in the words of modern parlance,
Not because I'll never need some help.
But the fearlessness of holy love
Is based on something higher,
That defeats the torment in the soul
And fills it with a holy fire,
That originates with God
And then reaches down to me,
As the Holy Spirit and the Word
Kindle a flame that none can see.
But it is there and known by warmth
That emanates from deep within,
When the grace and life implanted
That delivered me from sin,
Takes root and produces evidence
That this love is not of man,
It's the life of God lived in human flesh
Not duplicated by trying as hard as I possibly can.
For this love is the way love should be,
It is perfect because it is God's nature:
Unchangeable, reliable, full and free
Not adding inches to outward stature,
But growing and maturing until it is seen,
And the love of God is spread till those*

*Who look on and can't see it know where it has been;
Marveling at evidence seen in each one God did choose.
Another wrote words long ago that this truth does well explore;
"My sins are gone, my fear is o'er,
I shun God's presence now no more" –
I too am now able without fear to live,
Though still this world's a fearful place.
Fear and torment are cast out by His love –
For love was given to me by God's redeeming grace.*

"For the peace and contentment, I enjoy Father God, and for the implanted provisions to do what would be impossible for me – love and care for others, I give Thee all the glory, praise and thanks, in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ."

Love is perfected in God's children because it comes from God. Love is not self-generated. The source of all human love is God. His love for us produces in us love for others, and through us to them, and through them to still others. Love continues in it multiplying principle. From God comes to us power, love and a sound mind [2Tim. 1:7] - not fear. The perfection of love as it relates to myself is that it produces boldness in view of the day of judgment. When a person denies God and rejects Christ because of their fear of man, they should have fear in view of the day of judgment.

"We love," simply because that is one of the many characteristics of the new nature we received when we were born again. If love is missing, divine life is missing. It is a plain fact that one who is born of God has love implanted into their nature along with all the other attributes that characterizes a child of God. To say, "I love God," and not treat those around me with love and compassion, or to neglect those things that demonstrate how we value other people, is a denial of our love for God. The principle of love is that God in us produces love that flows out from us. This is not an exhortation, but the statement of a fact. God expresses Himself to others in us when we are His children.

1st John 4:19. *"We love him, because he first loved us."*

HE FIRST.

*When long before the sky was blue
Or angels had a song –
Divine Persons did exist together,
The Eternal Three in One.
Not limited then or ever,
Their roles were well defined,
In purpose never One did sever
As eternity rolled into time.*

*Man became a spiritual being
By means of God's intent;
And God gave him special meaning,
With a body, a soul and a spirit.
So not just could tasks be complete,
Or things of beauty he could enjoy;
But with the spirit, he, God could meet
And personal holy love they could employ.*

*In the darkness of separation
By sin, love in man was lost.
And from that came condemnation,
Sin has such an awful cost.
But love in God has never faded,
His love for mankind remained.
When the Father sent the Lord Jesus,
Divine love was in the ultimate displayed.*

It was an act of love of the Father,

*To send us His Beloved Son,
It was an act of the love of the Savior,
To willingly die for everyone.
It was an act of the Holy Spirit,
Who in love drew me unto God.
It was an act of the love through the Bible
To bring light through His Holy Word.*

*He loved me first is unmistakably clear,
That love has been shown to me.
His love in bringing the Gospel here,
Was so blind sinners could really see
They have been loved first, Oh so supremely,
That there aren't words a tongue can tell.
But God's love is revealed so plainly,
That this sinner will never see hell.*

*A remarkable thing has happened;
I can now love Him in return.
And though my capacity is limited,
He will never my love for Him spurn.
He loved me first it is true,
And that love was never deserved –
My love is given Him to whom love is due
With sincere devotion – God help me Him to serve.*

"Father, I know my love is feeble, but I do love Thee. I do love the Lord Jesus for who He is and what He has done, and I love the awareness of the Holy Spirit within. I praise Thee in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, Amen."

On the other hand, the profession of love means nothing if the principle of love is not demonstrated. It is easy to say, "I love you," when it is no more than a greeting or the way a conversation is closed. If love doesn't cost anything, the profession doesn't mean anything. It is possible to attend assembly meetings because we profess to love God and His people. However, when they are right in front of us, and their needs are known to us, and we do nothing about them, we fail the test of love. Love for God is real when my love for fellow believers and/or family is real. We can actually see human beings with our eyes, so our love for them is evident when it is there. If that is not true, and love for others is absent, to say I love God who I cannot see is actually a lie.

The teaching of the word of God right from the beginning is that loving God and loving others goes together as characteristics of genuine faith. When we love God, we do what He says. When we love our neighbor, we want what is best for that person and will seek to make sure they get that at whatever cost is necessary to pay. The principle of love [v.19] goes beyond a mere profession of love [v.20], to proof of love [v.21]. "By this shall all men know ye are My disciples, if ye have love one to another" [Jn.13:35].

1st John 4:20. *"If a man say, I love God, whom he hath seen, how can he love God whom he hath not seen?"*

SEEN...NOT SEEN.

*He is there – every day he's there waiting and wondering –
"Does anyone care for me? Is this all life is supposed to be?"
And I am here – blessed with the Gospel – sitting and observing,
"Where should I go? What should I do? What does God want from me?"*

*And my brother waits and wonders – and no one ever comes.
Who will be the one to act and show him the love of God?
Why doesn't someone go – can't someone take that man home?
Where are all the brothers who attend so much to God's Word?*

*Then I pass by a mirror and see in that glass a face.
There is a person in there who could show love if he would.*

*That person rises and leaves his well-designed and comfortable place,
And goes out to find that lost brother in the way he always should.*

*He shows an interest and care responding to obvious need.
The one who was waiting in bitterness and darkness
To acts of kindness and love, now he begins to take heed.
And through love that is genuine, God reveals His grace.*

*Finally, it dawns on me that loving the brother, and God is the same.
Though I've never seen God I truly love Him –
For personal praise and the results of love I can't claim,
But now love for God is no longer so dim.*

*I serve God when I am serving my brother,
And my love for God is seen in the same way.
Whether it is the brother I know or some other,
Love for God is seen by what I do and say.*

"I know, O God that often I have overlooked those that seem to be bypassed by others and I am prone to do the same. I think of that woman standing by the wall alone, and she seemed so glad that I stopped and shook her hand. I am ashamed I didn't stop and hold a meaningful conversation. Forgive me I pray, in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, Amen."

1st John 4:21. *"And this commandment have we from him, that he who loveth God love his brother also."*

THIS COMMANDMENT.

*Here at the end of this chapter
Are words that sum it all up.
Love is not a whole lot of chatter,
It involves loving all others from a full cup.
It is in no way superficial,
Not just some words to make it seem right.
It involves a life sacrificial,
And be willing to bring joy to one's night.*

*Not casual, light-weighted or a nod
Is the love God commands me to show.
The source of this love isn't men, but God,
That evidence will be easy to know.
A load that is heavy will be lifted;
A song long hidden will be sung,
New opportunities will unfold to the gifted;
The road once traveled now not so long.*

*The one who was alone will have friends;
The one who wept – their tears will be dried.
The one who is hurting has those who attend,
Those abandoned know now others have cried.
The one who needed grace now has found it;
The one who needed light now lives in the day.
The one who needed an ear has found one willing to sit,
The one with problems met someone willing to pray.*

*None of this is just a suggestion,
It is plainly a command to obey.
Loving my brother is a personal obligation,
I must hasten to do this today.
May I never consider this an option,*

*To take or to leave on a whim.
Loving my brother demands I take action,
To God, loving my brother's the same as loving Him.*

"I've been quite awhile in this chapter Father, and it has spoken very loudly to me. There are changes in me that must happen. I must be more outgoing. I must take more initiative in demonstrating the love of God to my brothers. I am praying for help to respond to his great commandment. In the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, Amen."

1st John 5:1-11

A CONFIDENT LIFE

The epistle of John begins with chapter one pointing the way for a believer to have a joyful life. Then in chapters two and three we are taught how to apply God's truth to our lives in order to live a victorious life. In chapter four instruction is given as to what is true or false so we can have a discerning life. The fifth chapter goes from the beginning of our life in Christ and teaches us how we can have a confident life.

Our faith in Christ is proved by the conduct we exhibit. A child of God truly believes that Jesus is the Christ, and love for Christians testifies to that fact. One who believes in our Lord Jesus Christ keeps God's word and does overcome the world. The first five verses of this chapter give this teaching. Faith in Christ is also proved by the credentials we exhibit [vs.6-12]. The evidence of that and the effect of these are unmistakable. Further evidence as to our fellowship with God and the genuineness of our faith, is that we have confidence in prayer and confidence ("we know") in knowledge and understanding [vs.13-21].

1st John 5:1. *"Whosoever believeth that Jesus is the Christ is born of God: and everyone that loveth him that begat loveth him also that is begotten of him."*

BORN OF GOD.

*Like the dawn of day
Everything is new.
Though the objects are the same,
There is a different view.
As my eyes register the changes,
It is very hard to explain –
How everything can be different,
Yet still remain the same.*

*Then I consider it is not them but me;
The objects are still the same.
Changes within me affect what I perceive,
I'm new-born in Jesus' name.
I look with a clear view now,
Seeing things as God intended.
Heavenly eye-salve has been applied,
And spirit, soul and body now are blended*

*My hearing is different too,
There are not distracting noises.
What used to be just sounds,
Now I hear lessons that God teaches.
Even words seem much different,
What was confusion now makes sense.
I have been new-born of God,
Now seeing and hearing have been changed.*

*Born of God affects my body,
Things once done are left alone.
Born of God affects my soul,
As new life and attitudes are shown.
Born of God affects my spirit,
What once was dead now is alive.*

*Really, all about me is different,
For the Spirit dwells inside.*

"This morning Father, as I looked and listened to the sounds sights of this early morning; I am impressed with how this must look to Thee who made it and saw, "It is good." I have been to by Thee through the seeing of my eyes and the hearing of my ears, and I am called to worship and praise Thee, in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, Amen."

1st John 5:2-4. "By this we know that we love the children of God, when we love God and keep His commandments. For this is the love of God, that we keep His commandments: and His commandments are not grievous. For whatsoever is born of God overcometh the world: and this is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith."

BORN OF GOD – CHILDREN OF GOD – LOVE OF GOD.

*It is fact, not some strange unworldly fantasy
When God gives new birth, it is a spiritual reality.
From spiritual death the Holy Spirit awakens the soul,
And imparts divine life and by His word we will know
We are children of God not aliens, those who have no place
In the divine inheritance; part of the blessings of grace –
Imparted in children is the character of our Father –
And one of those characteristics is children of God love one another.*

*Love is not just emotions that have some unusual or passing feel
It is emotional its true – but far more, it is a value that is real.
Love that is from God is not based on a person's own felt worth
God looks on an eternal soul and values them more than the earth.
The witness of God is established as Christ is revealed to us.
He has given His written word, and that word reveals to us thus
God is in Christ testified by the Spirit and through scriptures of truth –
We whom God has loved are children of God by new birth.*

"I thank Thee, O God for these divine actions that have been directed towards we Thy children. We are not aliens, or strangers, but children new born and loved. This holy position is true, and yet I seem to grasp only a little of all it means. In all of the transcendent glory of Thy person and work, I have been made an inheritor. I thank Thee from my heart, in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, Amen."

We start our life with God right where we are. We do not have to, nor can we, go back and start over hoping to have a clean slate to start with. Life on the natural plane is incomplete and disappointing. Life on the natural plane is sinful. When we are born again by the Spirit of God, our new nature makes life possible to be changed. It is important for believers in Christ to step right out into the Christian life will full confidence in God. For some this may be a more dramatic change in lifestyle than others, but the inward change brought about by the new birth has a number of ways that it is seen. By the power of God, we have been given all we need to live effectively where we are and at this time in history.

There is an obvious reason for believers in Christ to love other believers. All believers "that Jesus Christ is the Christ, is born of God." Believing doesn't make us born again. Believing is the continuing proof of being "born of water and of the Spirit." The word of God and the Spirit of God brought regeneration that has changed us into those who love God, and who love and accept God's people. Love to God and a desire to obey Him are seen outwardly by brotherly love in those who have a common relationship with our heavenly Father. All true believers are children of God and all who believe in our Lord Jesus Christ are brothers and sisters. Love for God's children is evidence of genuine faith in Christ. Our love for God is evident when we keep His commandments.

Everyone in the body of Christ has been born of God and that was seen by moral obedience to the commands of God, not just excited emotional outbursts. The new life of a believer originates with being "born again," and conflict is to be expected with the world system. By the power of the Spirit of God, believers "overcome the world," by our faith in Him being real. The first act of faith moves us to "overcome the world," and the continual day by day living by faith is such that overcoming the world is a continuous life of victory. That faith in Christ brought us into God's family, and faith in Him keeps us consistent in living to please our heavenly Father.

1st John 5:4. *“For whatsoever is born of God overcometh the world: and this is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith.”*

OVERCOME.

*What is it that gives this power, from whence does this strength come?
Is it mind over matter, or comes it from source unknown?
No, there is no mysterious magic, nor is there some self-strength shown;
The new strength from God within us, comes from the soul reborn.*

*The world has its strength in numbers, or in forces by man to unleash.
Its power is forceful to conquer, or dominate all as it pleases.
It cannot do else but demand, all under it to acquiesce.
Victory there is still hollow; it's true, but it is not by true faith.*

*For those with new life from God given, and indwelt by the Spirit divine.
Comes victory known up in heaven, and the newness from God now is mine.
The forces around so attractive, and the temptations that once seemed to shine;
Are under the power of another, and life thus empowered does win.*

*It doesn't mean I'm not attracted, to those things which others enjoy.
But it does mean I'm not distracted, by worldly attractions – they're toys.
And the things which mean most are unseen, because, by faith they
And the reason for now overcoming, is God's quiet is greater than noise.*

*The noise of the world does not charm me; it once did but now comes to me;
The blessed sound of many hearts singing, and faces with joy I can see.
There's pain, and yet there is vict'ry; there's sorrow and yet there is peace.
There's all the earth – problems around me, and yet there is true victory.*

*That victory comes not with wishing, but with faith without question in Him.
The Lord Jesus Christ is now always with me, and the Holy Spirit lives now within.
And the power for sin overcoming, and the world with challenge and sin;
Can not now defeat nor control, for overcoming with victory, we win.*

“Father, often I thank Thee for the new birth that has brought life to me. But perhaps I have not expressed as often as I should, my appreciation for the results of that new birth. I thank Thee for new life; for a new nature; for a new direction in life. I thank Thee for new ambitions and new hopes. I thank Thee for the power of the new birth seen in faith that overcomes the world. That Object supreme of faith is my Savior and my Lord. All the world forces put together cannot begin to bring down Him who has all power in heaven and in earth. And to think that power to overcome is mine brings me to pause and worship Him. Amen.”

1st John 5:5. *“Who is he that overcometh the world, but He that believeth that Jesus is the Son of God.”*

WHO IS HE?

*He looks like he is normal, not from some other place.
There's not a lot of difference except when you see his face.
He seems to be quite peaceful, and is not staring off in space.
He's had his share of problems too that lines will often trace.
He's an overcomer.*

*He hears the things others hear but doesn't use their words.
The things he likes to listen to say a lot about him and the Lord.
While others tell their jokes and such, he turns away not toward
Them for he looks beyond to a time when faith has its reward
For the overcomer.*

*Many are not satisfied as they rush to here and yon,
Trying to make some kind of profit before the chance is gone.*

*But he doesn't rush about afraid, he quietly goes home
To his wife and heritage, the Lord gave him; he's satisfied with them
He's an overcomer.*

*The things he turns his mind to are things that are eternal.
His real concern is for those who're lost, hastening to hell's inferno.
To leave them without warning would to him be really criminal,
So, in the ways he can, he asks the Lord to help him to be faithful –
Because he's an overcomer.*

*The world to him has lost its claim and also its fatal attraction.
Yet while he's in the world, he does not avoid meaningful interaction
With those around because he knows they are without real satisfaction,
Like he has found in Christ alone upon receiving God's salvation –
And chose to be an overcomer.*

*He believes that Jesus truly is the eternal Son of God,
And he wants others to know that they too should make Him Lord.
He knows the Lord is coming and tries to influence them through God's Word,
Praying and speaking also to them about the Son of God –
He is an overcomer.*

"I have to admit to Thee Father God, that I am not as outgoing as I should be. But there is no question that Jesus is the Son of God and I believe that with all my heart. I would like to help others to understand and believe this truth too. I pray for help and guidance to do this. In the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, Amen."

Obedying God and living for Him was never promised to be an easy thing. Godly living and persecution go together. Serving Christ from the heart will involve hard work and personal discipline which true believers are glad to accept. When we love our Father, we want to be actively involved in the furtherance of His kingdom and His interests. There will be burdens to bear if we love our fellow believers. By faith we trust in the One who tells us to "cast our burdens upon Him, and He will sustain us."

Those who lived in John's day had a form of teaching to contend with that taught Jesus became the Messiah at His baptism when the Spirit of God descended like a dove and sat upon Him. Their teaching was that the Spirit of God, "Messiahship," left Him before His death on the cross. That teaching in various forms, is still around when people are taught to "do the best you can," or "prepare for the worst, hope for the best, and take what comes." The teaching of baptism is that death, burial and resurrection takes place so that new life is imparted. The "water" and "blood" in relation to our Lord Jesus has to do with introducing His public ministry in figure, and concluding His public ministry in fact. Both the water and blood testify of His death for our sins. The Holy Spirit continues to confirm that witness to us today. Our Lord Jesus Christ is truly the Christ of God - the anointed and promised One.

There is on-going testimony that is perfect agreement as to the Person of Christ and the efficacy of His work. The Holy Spirit revealed the Person of Christ at His baptism and still takes the teaching of Christ and "shows it to you." The One who was identified through the water of His baptism was also identified through "the blood of His cross." The false teaching of those three are united into one testimony of truth.

1st John 5:6. *"This is he that came by and blood. And it is the Spirit that beareth witness, because the Spirit is truth."*

WATER AND BLOOD.

*He stepped out into public – everyone could see
He was unique, there was no one else who could be
The Christ – But He who always was the Son of God became
Incarnate and was found in fashion as a man just the same.
The beginning of His ministry by His baptism in water –
The same water He made by the word of His power.
By the authority of His Person, He separated it from all other
Created material, that life might spring forth when rejoined –
That fundamental life-force that God alone has – came forth,
Not now as a creatorial act but with a purpose more lofty –*

*As the Holy Three in One united to give a life of greater worth –
A life to freely give to those who seek – a life to them more costly.*

*“In Him was life” and now to men He came to show
He was eternal, life eternal was His alone, but now to share
With others that unique gift He gives, that we and He might know
Such fellowship and walking in the light His moral image we can bear.
But blood too was in that fateful cup He took, when stepping out
Before the witnesses He walked a journey of life with such perfection,
There was put on display as the Lamb observed until with angry shout
United in evil intent and darkness of their heart – they demanded condemnation.
Not satisfied – even then the thirst was only satisfied with blood His blood,
Though innocent, identified Him as the only One who could for sin atone.
The price, the wages, the bitterness, the gall He did assume – none other could,
As from water at the first and then to blood, He alone a mighty victory won.*

“Father, I thank Thee for the public evidence all could see that the Lord Jesus was truly the Christ. From the beginning to the end of His life, the Spirit bore His witness to the truth of who the Lord Jesus was. I give Thee thanks in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, Amen.”

1st John 5:7-8. *“For there are three that bear record in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost: and these three are one. And there are three that bear witness in earth, the Spirit, and the water, and the blood: and these three agree in one.”*

THREE THAT TESTIFY.

*The Three are One in purpose and in name –
Each One is different yet all are the same,
For there is only One God, yet just one in a body came –
In His life He did testify.*

*The Father was pleased with everything the Son had done.
At the beginning of His ministry, the Father identified His Son.
Through Jesus' life and right until victory over sin was won –
The Father-God did plainly testify.*

*To the desert the Spirit led Him that all of us would know
Jesus was the God-Man as all the evidence would show –
And the Holy Spirit then came to dwell in us here below –
The Holy Spirit still does testify.*

*The Holy Three-in-One, each One as one, really do agree –
From the beginning of Jesus' life until His death at Calvary,
That in heaven as on earth each gives testimony we can see –
The Godhead all does plainly testify.*

*Here on earth where I live there are three;
Each one of these also does fully agree
From His baptism to His death it is plain to see
The Spirit, water and blood do testify.*

*Jesus Christ in the flesh was always and forever God.
Not some strange enigma but truly flesh and blood,
With evidence to see, and by God's Holy Word –
These all do testify.*

*There is no need for any one to doubt.
All these witnesses do not have to shout –
And I also can tell others what I know about
His Person and work when I do testify.*

"Father, even though there are some texts that do not include all these words, the truth is the same – Jesus Christ is truly the Son of God. The witnesses are all agreed as to His Person and His work, I thank Thee for giving these plain truths in words in this Holy Book, In the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, Amen."

God spoke in testimony out loud at His baptism and His transfiguration. This declaration of God as well as the Spirit of God, the waters of baptism and the sacrificial blood of Christ all agree that God gives eternal life to those who believe on Jesus Christ, and this eternal life is in His Son. This eternal life God has given us in the past when we believed on the Son is our possession now and forever. Its origin is in the Son who has eternal life and imparts that to us as a personal permanent possession. We do not wait for eternal life because it became ours the moment we believed. We do not work for that which we already have. We do not need to worry about whether we have it or not, because God's word says He gives it to us Himself. His word is His guarantee of this fact.

It is not given to us because we deserve it for some reason or by some effort of our own. The gift of eternal life in Christ is ours because God gave His Son for us and He is alive and is "the Gift that keeps on giving." This present possession of life in Christ is not able to be rejected or cast away after it has been received. Its nature is the life of God Himself. His life is an infinite life. One who does not believe God, "has made Him a liar." There is no greater sin than calling the One who created us a liar. This is an infinite sin that demands infinite punishment. The infinite sacrifice of sin that Christ paid by His death, has provided infinite life for us on the basis of that sacrifice. That is why this is available only through Christ. It is available to all. God wants all to have it. But if you do not have it, you are responsible for that lack. "Ye will not come to Me, that ye might have life."

1st 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."*

THE WITNESS OF GOD.

Men can only see happenings with their eyes.

And in spite of himself, a man may lie.

When God gives witness there can be no question –

What He testifies to gives us each a lesson

That never should be overlooked by anyone –

The Man Christ Jesus is God's only unique Son.

He witnessed to His Person at Jesus' public baptism.

His voice was heard when He spoke from heaven.

He identified the Lord before all of the watchers,

As the well-beloved Son who pleased the heavenly Father.

It was God's intention that all men would believe

On the One who came from heaven lost souls to save.

God spoke again, witnessing high on a mountain –

Telling those who were there they should really listen

To the Lord who spoke and to all He said –

But much was forgotten till after He rose from the dead;

Then they truly understood the One they personally followed –

Was the Son of God as God Himself clearly testified.

God who sent the Son to earth to pay the cost

In order that all mankind would not forever be lost –

Identified the Son as the only One who could pay

The redemptive price so all believers can confidently say

"The Lord Jesus Christ came here to die for me" –

As God said Himself, He gives us life abundantly.

"I thank Thee, O God, for the plain and irrefutable testimony of the Lord Jesus Christ being the eternal Son of God. I would like to be able to witness to that fact in a way those I speak to would believe. This is only possible as the power of God to give life is experienced by those who hear the Gospel. I pray this will happen in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, Amen."

1st 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."

THE ULTIMATE INSULT.

*It is within, implanted by God,
The assurance that Jesus is God.
Not only the assurance; joy is there too,
Total confidence comes from His Word.
There is a witness inside, the Holy Spirit Himself,
Testifies to me; Jesus is Lord.
Without any doubt, I believe all about,
Him who is revealed by God's truth.*

*I dare not lie and say I don't know,
Because I do, of this I am sure.
I believe on the Son, He the unique One,
Is my Savior, this testimony is true.
The record is clear, He was really down here,
To save us, not to just give us a cure.
I know for a fact, He will be coming back,
The same One who my salvation procured.*

*Let my testimony stand, I am held in God's hand,
He promised to not let me go.
My trust in the Lord, is strengthened by His Word,
And this I most surely do know –
He, the Almighty One, is God's eternal Son,
And through children of faith He does show,
They're His from new birth, through life unto death,
Through faith and by grace they will grow.*

"How can people not believe Father, the evidence is everywhere and the Person has been testified to by millions. To not believe Thy Word is so insulting to Thee, that I wonder at Thy grace and longsuffering towards mankind. And then, I think of the years I knew about Thee and still ignored the Savior, and I am glad for Thy longsuffering. In the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, Amen."

1st John 5:11. "And this is the record, that God hath given us eternal life, and this life is in his Son."

THE LIFE.

*Not like any other – this life has no end
The Giver of life has a unique life of His own.
Origin-less, without a pedigree it stands apart
From all forms or latent seeds that need nurturing.
Unable to be transmitted except by its Possessor,
It awaits to be gifted; not commanded nor demanded.
It is a gift owned alone by Deity who is willing to give –
Not to doubters of truth, of grace or of God –
But faith, even the smallest amount placed in the right Person –
Is honored, it is accepted as sufficient, is the key –
As eyes of the heart are turned from self and man and earth –
To Him who knows the heart and looks upon it with omniscience –
Recognizing when He is recognized – and believed and received.
Then from the life that is His alone, He takes of Himself –
And gives that needed gift – not totally valued or understood yet –
To the one who has made the step of faith – faltering perhaps, but trusting
Him, and He knows, and loves and smiles upon those baby steps –
And willingly gives the gift of His life making the recipient – His child.*

"I believe Father God; I know I have eternal life from Thee. I am thankful and I praise Thee for such grace as to bestow this gift on this unworthy sinner. Thanks, from my heart, in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, Amen."

1st John 5:12. "He that hath the Son hath life; and he that hath not the Son of God, hath not life."

YES OR NO.

*No place or position near the half way mark,
No gray areas, only black or white.
It is impossible to be half in or half out,
It must be either wrong or right.*

*You can't be in heaven or hell both at once,
You will be in either one or the other.
You can't be a friend of the world and God,
A "worlding" is not a Christian brother.*

*If you have the Son then you have eternal life,
Of that fact there is absolutely no question.
You know you have the Son, when you know and love the Lord,
Through the Word and the Spirit, God gives salvation.*

*When there is no love for Christ – no evidence of grace –
No desire to learn the things of God;
Then that person has no life, there is no real fruit –
For eternal life is proven through the living Word.*

*There is no in between, half living and half dead –
Eternal life is vital and alive just like the Savior.
When God's life is deep inside, the Holy Spirit does abide,
And eternal life shows itself in my behavior.*

*God's joy and heavenly grace, find in me a lasting place,
And the things I want to do in life are for Him.
Since God gave me eternal life, earthly things have lost their taste,
The things that grieve me most are when I sin.*

"Gracious, eternal God, it is with a grateful heart I thank Thee for eternal life give to me as a gift from Thee. I praise Thee for granting such a gift to one who is so undeserving. In the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, Amen."

1st John 5:13-17

THAT YE MAY KNOW

Those who are mature in their faith and know the Lord in a special personal way by virtue of their experiences with God, have a real concern for their brothers and sisters in Christ. John is an example of this as he wrote to the people of God drawing from his life of service and testimony. He knew the value of joy in the Christian life even in trials [1:4]. The fact of sin in a believer has to be faced even though it is not the habitual practice of a child of God [2:1]. To know one is forgiven by God strengthens one who is young in Christ [2:12]. Maturity in the faith is a strong support by those who are older believers who recognize their responsibility for the younger believers [2:13]. Victorious living is a work of God in the lives of those out in public who represent the kingdom of God [2:13]. John states, "I write..." so that the Lord's people know his interest is real.

He continued to say, "I write," or "I have written" to establish the believers in their faith in Christ. To know God as "Father" in a personal way keeps a new believer from falling. To continue to be established in the faith and establish others is evidence of spiritual maturity in older believers. To practice the word of God by applying its truth to each aspect of life is strengthening to those laboring for the Lord [2:14]. To know the truth and be confident in it keeps the people of God from being attracted to false teaching [2:21]. To be able to discern that which is real from that which is counterfeit is essential to our testimony [2:26]. Confidence in the word of God alone as the way one can know whether they have eternal life, gives the best possible assurance [5:13]. It is to all these matters John says, "I have written" or "I write." A mature believer has the

spiritual well-being of the family of God on his heart and will seek to give strength and confidence to the saints.

1st 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.”*

MAY KNOW.

*The pages look like any other – words always look the same,
Until the mind with intelligence begins to think,
On things that unfold like flowers in the morning
Or a sun that rises spreading ever increasing light.
Dim light at first – than gradually revealing all that lies around
In brighter and brighter understanding to my heart.
The thoughts now run in paths being made more clear –
As the black words now revealed golden truths
That opens like great highways to flourishing fields
Full of life-sustaining bread to meet needs fundamental
To eternal life – that life enjoyed and lived on earth
That goes on and on through ages yet to come – eternal things.
I'm learning now as the increasing light of spiritual day
Reveals not only that which is fundamental, but precious fruits,
Once hidden in the shadows of protecting leaves of truth –
Now hangs before my eyes awaiting my eager hands of faith
To taste and see – that from the Vine come not only that
Which meets the needs most basic, but adds great flavor –
Of truths which now applied bring the smile of joy
Upon the face as things long hidden, now are claimed.
Not just claimed but experienced and soon become to me,
A personal reality – and things once just words in a book,
Now become a life shared with God – that fairly live and breathe
Their own aroma of divine intent for me – not only now –
But forever shared with God.*

“Some verses of scripture, Father, breathe out a very special aroma of truth that has a special hold on me. This is one that gives assurance of the written word as a guarantee of eternal life to those who believe on the Son. I rest and rejoice in these words, in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, Amen.”

Putting faith in "the name of the Son of God" comes when we have confidence in what is written in the word of God. The scripture is very plain - our certainty of eternal life is based on the promise of God, not on our hopes and feelings. A mental assent to what one has been taught is not what "believing on the Son" means. "He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life," is an unreserved trust in our Lord Jesus Christ alone as the One who takes away our sin. His sacrifice for our sins is the only way "the wages of sin" is dealt with. "Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures," is a fact, not a feeling.

Our assurance of having eternal life now and forever is based on the word of God. Sometimes God's people feel close to Him and have joy and assurance of their spiritual life. Other times they may feel far away because of failure or some besetting sin. We know we have eternal life when we believe God's truth about the matter. The false teachings of emotional excitement, professed miraculous events, seeing visions and other out of the ordinary things as proof of salvation are deceptive. They mislead many into thinking they are saved even though they do not know the Lord. They just know what "happened to them." "This is life eternal; that they might know Thee, the only True God, and Jesus Christ whom Thou hast sent."

1st John 5:14. *“And this is the confidence that we have in him, that, if we ask anything according to his will, he heareth us.”*

ACCORDING TO HIS WILL.

*Not self-centered, arrogant demands that focus on our wants,
But realizing who God is and trusting in His grace –
Makes prayer and exercise of heart, not just repeated chants –
Rather expressions of confidence in the Object of our faith.*

*There is no special formula that makes our prayer more real.
For God is always listening, He knows I'm just a man
Who often acts like a child who pours out some foolish spiel,
While my Father patiently waits me out; waiting to reveal His plan.*

*When I finally get past me, to where I'm willing for His will –
Then He is able to impress and guide me – I'm ready to attend
To things or issues, He already planned for when the Spirit still
Will show through scriptures that apply: and by giving peace within.*

*God has a perfect will that's good for me when I do hear
His will through divine impressions when I wait upon His voice.
The unmistakable will of God in His Word is often clear –
But sadly, there have been times when I've made my willful choice.*

*In confidence I bow to pray and lay things out to Him –
Knowing God's plans and purposes will lead me into rest.
The events between the start and finish – I'll understand them when
He wants – but for now I trust with confidence in Him who loves to bless.*

"I pray again, Father, I will not be independent nor think my will is right. By Thy grace, move my willfulness to the be subdued under Thy perfect will, in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, Amen."

1st John 5:15. *"And if we know that He hear us, whatsoever we ask, we know that we have the petitions that we desired if him."*

HE HEARS.

*The confused mumblings of first awaking thoughts – He hears.
When the eyes open and coherency forms first words – He hears.
The initial thoughts of this day being the "Coming Day" – He hears.
Even the child-like thanks for a night that was good – He hears.*

*Thanks for the beauty of a new day – the ability to see the light – He hears.
Prayers for understanding of His Word that He might clarify – He hears.
The spiritual light enters my mind putting trivial things to flight He hears
My spirit is lifted, my heart is warmed, and my soul is revived – He hears.*

*Food for sustenance is there before us, to Him I give my thanks He hears.
Asking for grace to live this day in fellowship with Him and others – He hears.
Listening to requests expressed from other lips my view expands – He hears.
Knowing it is good to experience other's prayers, I say, "Amen" to Father – He hears.*

*In the busy pursuit of life and work, short requests are made – He hears.
Decisions have to be made quickly and guidance is needed – He hears.
Unexpected events arise, obligations to be fulfilled and paid – he hears.
People who have souls are all around, I pray knowing it is not unheeded – He hears.*

*We gather with saints to sing, to worship, to learn and to pray – He ears.
The field is the world, nations of people and leaders and leaders of nations – He hears.
Some pray aloud, others in silence, we all know whatever we say – He hears.
From the first supplication to the final "Amen" of sincere adoration – He hears.*

*Knees are bent by the bedside, the day reviewed from last to first – He hears.
Confession of sins committed is over; some final words of intercession – He hears.
Grateful thoughts that are hard to express in words come without words – He hears.
Eyes close, a simple phrase, "Good night Father, thanks for salvation" – He hears.*

"Father God, thanks for listening to my prayers and answering as You know is best. The best desire I could ever have would be so much less than what Thou does give, that I am ashamed at my limitations. I trust Thee, Father without question. I pray Thou would make me spiritually sensible to Thy will. In the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, Amen."

The word of God gives assurance of our life in Christ, and so do answered prayers. Confidence in prayer is not a brash attitude, but rather a spiritual awareness of who God is and of who we are as His respectful children. We don't make demands of our Father but by fellowship with Him and listening to Him speak to us in His word, we speak to Him in prayer about He wants for us. His will is made known to us in both general and specific ways. When something is written that is specific, then our prayer is for the wisdom and will to carry out that activity. When we know His will in a general way, then we ask in faith that He will open the way unmistakably before us. We need His power to carry out that specific task by our prayers. "Supplications, prayers, intercession and giving of thanks," are all in this area of our fellowship with God as we communicate with Him. He gives answers. We can pray in confidence.

When we know a brother or sister in Christ is involved in a sinful practice, we must pray to God on behalf of that person with the confidence that God can do what needs to be done for that person. At the time of John's writing some of the Lord's people were listening to false teachers. The same thing is going on today. There were those who were engaged in worldly practices. The same thing is going on today. Idolatry was claiming the minds of those who put that which they could see ahead of spiritual things. The idolatry of materialism is going on today.

1st 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 or them that sin unto death. There is a sin unto death: I do not say he shall pray for it."*

INTERCESSION.

*A man and his wife seemed like they were really sincere.
Selling their land, bringing part of it where
The new church met with all things in common –
They thought no one knew they'd agreed to lie some.*

*Their bodies carried out and buried that day,
Reminds us God knows all we do and say.
I must pay attention to all that God saith –
Because it is true, there is a sin unto death.*

*They came carelessly the Lord Jesus to remember –
The holiness of the Lord's Supper they forgot to consider
In an unworthy manner they partook of the bread and wine –
Sickness and death came in a very short time.*

*There is a spiritual death that happens while alive.
The darkness in life comes from darkness inside.
Those who deny the Lord and have thrown off all restraints,
Have sinned unto death, though interceded for and prayed.*

*We must pray for the brothers and sisters each day,
Who don't seem to understand the wrong in living carelessly.
I can't judge their motives and why they do what they do –
But I can intercede for them that they'll turn unto truth.*

*I pray that they will see the error of their ways –
Praying that God will spare them till they do what He says.
Praying there won't be others turned away by their action –
I should never give up on sincere intercession.*

"Holy God, may those who are truly saved, never think they can sin and not have to accept the consequences. I don't want to ignore my responsibility to intercede for those who have not remembered who they are and why God saved them. In the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, Amen."

Believers do sin, but "not unto death." Apostates sin "unto death." We are not able to determine whether one is an apostate or not. We can discern the spirit of apostasy, and can see the practices of apostasy, but as to whether one has deliberately, willfully and practically been enlightened and tasted the word of God - and then rejected that, is beyond our knowledge. The true apostate has no root, no life, has never been born of God but pretend to - then by choice, they reject God's truth. We can still pray for such a person because we do not know their heart. God alone "looketh on the heart."

"All unrighteousness is sin" is a very precise definition. It leaves nothing to the imagination or speculation. Careless living is sin. Paying attention to false teaching is sin. Not doing what we should is sin. Going our own way is sin. Not believing on the Lord Jesus Christ is sin. Doubting God is sin. Sin "doth easily beset us" when we are not walking in the light. We do need to pray for our fellow believers that they may be preserved from sinning; when they sin, for their recovery; that they might remember who they are and to whom they belong. Serious sin leads to death. That is in God's hands. Our awareness of sin "not unto death" leads us to pray for their preservation personally, physically, morally and spiritually.

1st John 5:17. *"All unrighteousness is sin: and there is a sin not unto death."*

UNRIGHTEOUSNESS.

*Others are involved – one refused to work
They load they carry is large – one continues to shirk
The pressure to conform is applied to every one
Conforming to the world – he is like a chameleon.*

*It may not seem too bad – only a small part is really wrong
No consequences now although there'll be some later on
Most people will never know but what everything's okay –
Hopefully when it's found out, I'll be far away.*

*Some things are easily hidden from eyes that will not see
The thoughts that lead to actions lived out unrighteously
Starts with unrighteousness allowed to take control,
And ends with sin-stains unerasable on an unrighteous soul.*

*There is no good explanation for doing what I know is bad.
There is no joy in evil, only a heart that grows more sad.
There is no escaping the fact that all unrighteousness is sin,
This must be dealt with in temptation before the actions begin.*

*The blood of Christ still cleanses us but we have a choice to make.
Deliberately choosing unrighteousness affects the way I take.
The Spirit, water and blood – to me does still testify –
It is the actions of unrighteousness from which I still must fly.*

*Unrighteousness still is sin whether in thought or word or deed.
There is power to overcome when to the Spirit I give heed.
There are no good excuses for doing what I know is wrong –
When through spiritual powers within, instead of being weak, I am made strong.*

"I pray today, Father, that I will never excuse unrighteousness. Also, I pray that I will always be conscious of it, and be careful in confessing and forsaking sin. I ask this in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, Amen."

1st John 5:18-21

SAFE KEEPING

In contrast to the majority of people in the world who look ahead with uncertainty, the children of God exhibit confidence. Our confidence is because of the knowledge we have been given by God. "We know" is a major theme of the book of 1st John. "We know" who we are as the children of God and there is unmistakable evidence of this fact. The new birth has brought to us a spiritual understanding, a spiritual intuition that is experienced often as the Holy Spirit "bears witness with our spirit" that we are born of God. For Christians to love and appreciate God is as normal as breathing. Even though we have been "born of God and it is not

our practice to sin, we do sin. We do not continue in it, but we confess it to our Father, accept gratefully His forgiveness and forsake it. It does not have dominion over us.

Even more powerful than the greatest effort we can make to avoid and guard against the attacks of Satan, is "the only begotten Son" who keeps us safe and guards us from the attacks of "the evil one." Our fellowship with divine Persons protects us in ways that are far beyond our capability. We seek to have "the mind of Christ," but when "the peace of God, which passeth all understanding" [Phil.4:7] is a fact in our lives that "keeps (guards) our hearts and minds through Christ Jesus." Satan does not have the control over a believer in our Lord Jesus Christ.

1st John 5:18. *"And 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."*

KEEPETH HIMSELF.

*We are not under bondage by God's grace we are free.
One born of God can be all he should be.
Greater is the Spirit in us than he in the world –
We are kept safe by God though by many misunderstood.*

*People of the world over sin have no power.
Their slavery to sin claims every waking hour.
Those who are the Lord's by His grace live in freedom –
Not bound by sin's chains, loving the One who freed them.*

*Safe from sin's dominion there is no reason to fear
The One who gave new life always is very near.
When we came to Christ in faith a whole life we began –
There is no middle ground, we are held by God's hand.*

*Satan will attack it happens to saints often;
But when we resist him, there is power to conquer.
We are not under his power in any way at all –
Our God is there to keep us, He hears our earnest call.*

"I do not have the power in myself Father, to keep from all that is in the world, the flesh and the devil. I do thank Thee, the Spirit of God is able to supply the power that overcomes these enemies. In the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, Amen."

A child of God may commit acts of sin but does not habitually live in sin. The One who paid the price of our salvation by giving Himself on the cross as a ransom for us, has delivered us and continues to guard us who are the fruit of His sacrifice. Satan does attack believers from without, but he cannot "fasten himself" on us as he does on those who are under his control. Our Lord mentioned to the Father in His prayer in John 17 that those who the Father gave to the Son, keep His word. He also said He kept them. It is up to us to know what God says and do it. Our Lord guards us and keeps us safely from Satan's power and control.

We know that we are born of God and sin is not the controlling power in our lives. We also know we are children of God because it was God who brought this new life to us. We have been "born out of God." Our nature, our eternal life, has its source in God. We are in his family by virtue of what He has done, not anything we have done or might do. By contrast unbelievers are under the control of the god of this world. He pressures them to do the best they can to make themselves "acceptable."

1st John 5:19. *"And we know that we are of God, and the whole world lieth in wickedness."*

WE or THE WORLD.

*Children of God ----- are safe in God's family
Those of the world ---- under the control of the enemy
Children of God ----- have power within
Those of the world ---- powerless before sin
Children of God ----- rejoice in the Lord
Those of the world ---- have no where to turn
Children of God ----- love what God loves
Those of the world ---- this love never has*

*Children of God ----- appreciate grace
Those of the world ---- are stuck in this place
Children of God ----- find fellowship with saints
Those of the world ---- are full of complaints
Children of God ----- look beyond present troubles
Those of the world ---- just live in this bubble
Children of God ----- call God their Father
Those of the world ---- consider God just a bother
Children of God ----- know heaven is their home
Those of the world ---- will be left all alone
Children of God ----- are indwelt by God's Spirit
Those of the world ---- can only grin and bear it
Children of God ----- choose to live by faith
Those of the world ---- can live only by chance
Children of God ----- have a sure hope when they die
Those of the world ---- fear their last sigh
Children of God ----- will experience a bright future
Those of the world ---- the future couldn't be blacker*

"I thank Thee, O God, for being able to be in the family of God. The deliverance from the world is such a blessing I am not able to express myself sufficiently for Thy grace. I praise and thank Thee in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, Amen."

The world system is in the devil's dominion. Godlessness, mind control by the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes and the pride of life is the controlling force that keeps people helpless. In the domain of Satan, people have no choice but to submit to him. Most people are content to stay in that darkness so that their evil deeds are not exposed by the light of truth. The "god of this world has blinded the minds" of those who are in his power, and they easily, maybe even gladly, live passively under his diabolical control. There is no way to serve God and serve Satan at the same time. People yield their will to either one or the other. There is no middle ground. To adapt the Gospel message of salvation by grace through faith in Christ alone to suit the desires of the world, even the evangelical world, and still be consistent with the truth, is not possible.

Another positive "we know" statement confirms that our Lord Jesus Christ has come in the flesh. The incarnation of the Messiah is a fact. "God was in Christ," reconciling us to Him. "God was manifest in the flesh." "The eternal life which was with the Father has been manifest unto us." He has come "found in fashion as a man," and given us a personal knowledge of the truth. "An understanding of the truth as well as a personal knowledge of Him who is "The Truth." This has happened and has resulted in us being "in His Son, Jesus Christ."

1st John 5:20. *"And we know 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."*

AN UNDERSTANDING.

Between those who know each other, there comes an understanding that follows the period of getting acquainted. To meet a person, is to learn their name, and a number of things about them. We may learn where they are from, some family connections, occupational information the first time we meet. Then comes the developing of a relationship depending on the degree we know each other. Some things we learn indicate by body language, tone of voice or other visual and verbal way what is important to that person.

To gain "an understanding" of another person is dependent entirely on how much they are willing to trust me. It may depend on how trustworthy I have been toward them. The time comes when "an understanding" is in place between the two because of mutual trust, similar interest and an emotional connection that leads to the openness of love.

To think that the Son of God in all the supremacy of His person, the holiness that characterizes His personality, the loftiness of His many offices, the eternity of His Person, nature and character – and yet He has given us "an understanding", goes beyond all other relationships that I might have. He has initiated this understanding. He has given this understanding. His reason for doing so is that I might know Him. He is letting Himself be known by such a lowly, unworthy person as me.

Even beyond knowing Him comes another reason that goes even farther; that I might be placed in Him. He places us in the sphere of His influence and interests; in His very family of the redeemed as a child of God.

He gives me "an understanding" that I might be involved in the operations of His kingdom as a participant in the most meaningful work in the world. We have reached the point of "an understanding."

"It is true, isn't it, Father, that You know what I think as well as what I say? I really believe this. So if sometimes when I am lying in the dark on the bed in the morning or late at night, trying not to disturb Linda or any others for that matter, and I only say a word in my mind like, "Newfoundland," "Tri-cities," "the children," "Gander," or other words like that without a whole lot of words around it – you do know what I mean because we have "an understanding." Sometimes things go racing through my mind and I do believe You can accept them as an unexpressed prayer. I offer them a lot of times and find great comfort that this "understanding" comes from You. Thanks, in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, Amen."

We are in Him as members of His body, and are accepted by God in Him positionally, legally, and personally. This eternal life is in God, and eternal life is in God's children. The Gnostics of the past, the agnostics of the present and all unbelievers do not know "the true God" and do not have eternal life.

John, as an aging mature saint of God, has a genuine heart of compassion for the Lord's dear people. Again, he addresses them as "little children," or "dear children," who are very important to him. He began the epistle that they might know who Christ is, how they could have joy, and how they could have fellowship with God by walking in the light. Now he gives them the important obligation to "keep themselves from idols." We are responsible to guard ourselves against anything that would take the place of God in our lives.

Our Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God, keeps us so Satan will not capture us, but we have our own responsibility to avoid, reject and guard ourselves from anything in the world that would capture our minds. False teaching attacks the mind. We must keep ourselves from listening to it. Physical and mental images that take a hold on our minds have the ability to turn us aside from walking in the light. It is not so much idols formed by men's hands that attracts the minds in this part of the world, but the more insidious idols that cannot be seen or touched.

There are some forms of nature that people venerate such as "mother earth;" the sun, moon and stars; sun worshippers and those environmentalists often worship the creature and creation, not the Creator. Those who succumb to the strange teaching of evolution that defies reasonable and rational thinking, have made themselves the god they worship. They reject openly their responsibility to an all-powerful, all-knowing, all-present God who is the Supreme Authority. He made it. It is His no matter what evolutionists may say. He is the "True God."

Some forms of idolatry common to those who reject God are the idol of education. They think all answers to man's problems and the issues of life are in knowledge gained by education. They worship knowledge. Others worship materialism. Even though they have all they need and more than they can ever use, they keep wanting more. "Things and success" are their idol. Economic materialism is what they worship. Some people worship nature. Pantheism has a new name now, "New Age." Trees, animals, the environment itself and the world is their idol. Some call "the wide-open spaces" as their objects of worship.

John concludes the epistle with a clear presentation of our Lord Jesus Christ as he has throughout the whole letter. Our Lord is the central theme of Christian teaching, preaching and living. He came from heaven to earth, sent by the Father to be the Savior of the world. Through faith in Him we are given eternal life. Now we, the children of God, are given the strength by the Spirit of God to do the will of God from the heart.

There are some "Things of God" in 1st John that will help us remember who He is and live for Him, and who we are and what He has the right to expect of His children. The Word of God [2:14; 5:9] is the basis of all authority. This is the witness of God that we might "know" what He wants us to know; that we might be enlightened as to what is expected of God's children; and that we might be equipped to do it. The Love of God [2:5; 4:9; 5:3] is the secret of all godliness. The power of love is given that might mature consistently; live abundantly; serve effectively and walk obediently.

The Will of God [2:17] is the fulfillment of heaven's plans through people. His will is that we might abide in Him, now and eternally. The Children of God [3:1,2,10; 5:2] identifies the relationship of all privilege. This relationship is formed that we might be identified specifically; conduct ourselves righteously; serve others faithfully and live confidently.

The Son of God [3:8; 4:15; 5:5,10,12,13,20] is the center of all revelation. he was revealed openly; He is to be confessed by us openly; He is to be lived out openly; He is revealed to us inwardly; He is personal to us inwardly and He is known by us personally. Being Born of God [3:9; 5:1,4] is the source of all life. We have

been born of God that we might live sinlessly; live lovingly and live victoriously. The Spirit of God [4:2; 5:9], who is the witness of God is the power of all ability. By virtue of being born of the Spirit of God, we are able to serve God continually and watchfully.

1st John 5:21. *“Little children, keep yourselves from idols. Amen.”*

SUCCINCT SUMMATION.

*John began writing as a father whose children are dear.
He knew by experience many dangers were near.
The fact of opposition from within was also clear –
The little children were pressured to conform.*

*His warnings were timely as the Spirit guided his pen.
They were called to walk in the light as the Savior had done.
Joy would follow the children; they would have victory when –
God’s children would stay in fellowship with Him.*

*The world was there with many temptations to sin.
Christ was the Advocate giving acceptance to God through Him.
His letter gave guidance as he wrote unto them –
That antichrists would be sure to come.*

*The children were urged to love both in word and deed.
The love of God for them and God Himself met their need.
They would be Christ-like themselves when they gave heed –
As children who love God from the heart.*

*John wanted them to know false teachers would come –
Who would lead them away from the Father and Son,
To question God’s Word was the object of some –
Who never had love for the brothers.*

*The written words were unmistakable, eternal life was a gift.
Those who had believed on the Son were sure to live
Eternally, because God Himself is the One who gives –
The life He shares with His own.*

*Children, never let idols from truth turn aside
Any of you for whom the Savior has died.
It is your responsibility in Christ to abide –
That you all live for God – not idols.*

“I know it has taken me some time Father, to express myself to Thee in the words that have come to me as I read this book. Perhaps there are words here Thou art able to accept as worship and praise. I want to honor all the Divine Persons in this way that comes to me. Please accept the words and thoughts of my heart that I offer in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, Amen.”