

*"ARE YOU AN
AUTHENTIC PERSON?"*



*"Examining the Tests of
Real Christianity!"*

BY

RON G. CHRISTIAN

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"PROCLAMATION OF THE GOSPEL!"
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PART 1
"MESSAGES ON THE BOOK OF
1 JOHN!"

CHAPTER 1
"PROCLAMATION OF THE GOSPEL!"
1 John 1:1-4

SCRIPTURE: "That which was from the beginning, that which we have heard, that which we have seen with our eyes, that which we beheld, and our hands handled, concerning the Word of life (and the life was manifested, and we have seen, and bear witness, and declare unto you the life, the eternal life, which was with the Father, and was manifested unto us); that which we have seen and heard declare we unto you also, that ye also may have fellowship with us: yea, and our fellowship is with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ: and these things we write, that our joy may be made full." 1 John 1:1-4

Text: "That which we have seen and heard declare we unto you." 1 John 1:3

INTRODUCTION: "WHO IS JESUS CHRIST?"

"Did Jesus live before He was born in Bethlehem?" "Was Jesus really a human being, or did He just appear human?" "What was the purpose for Jesus' life?" "How is Christianity different from any other religion of the world?" "What is the responsibility of a person who follows the ways of Jesus?" "What happens if a person really accepts the way and teaching of Jesus?"

These are the questions that many people are asking. The New Testament gives the answers to these questions. The New Testament is the record of God's Word and message. God's message is a true message. Titus 1:2 says, "God cannot lie." II Timothy 3:16 says, "All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness."

PROPOSITION: What is the "unchanged, original content of the Gospel over against novel forms of doctrine?" (The Epistles of John, Stott; pg.

58) *The Gospel is good news – good news about Jesus Christ, and man's reconciliation to God through Jesus Christ. Because the Gospel is Good News, the Gospel must be proclaimed!*

I. *CONTENT OF THE PROCLAMATION - What is the basic content of the Gospel of Christ?*

A. *PRE-EXISTENCE OF JESUS*

John writes in his letters, "That which was from the beginning." (vs. 1) Basic to the proclamation of the message about Jesus, is recognition of the pre-existence of Jesus. Jesus existed before the beginning of all material things. Jesus existed consciously, personally, continuously, and intimately in communion with the Father before all time. Jesus, then, is eternal. His birth in the Bethlehem stable was merely His beginning in the dimensions of earth's time.

The real humanity of Jesus is basic to the proclamation of the message of Jesus. It is a fundamental necessity that there is an understanding of Jesus' relationship to humanity and to deity. Was Jesus really a human being or did he just seem human?

B. *REAL HUMANITY OF JESUS*

(1) *Basic to the proclamation of the message of Jesus is an understanding of Jesus' relationship to humanity and to deity. Was Jesus really a human being or did He just seem human?*

John would leave us in no doubt as to Jesus' humanity. Wrote John concerning Jesus, "That...which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon, and our hands have handled." 1 John 1:1.

John says that Jesus' humanity is made certain by four facts: The disciples of Jesus have heard Jesus' voice, they have seen Him with their own eyes, they have carefully observed Jesus, and they have actually handled Jesus to make certain that He is really flesh and bones. Why did John think it was so important to establish the fact of Jesus' humanity? It was very important for John to declare Jesus' humanity for there were many false teachers and prophets (many even in the Christian church) who taught very strange ideas about Jesus.

"All throughout the Greek world there was an ever-developing tendency of thought to which the general name of Gnosticism is given. The basic belief of all Gnostic thought is that only spirit is good, and that matter is essentially evil. If this is so, the Gnostic inevitably despises the world, for the world is matter, and all things created out of matter are essentially evil. In particular, the Gnostic despises the body. The body is matter, and therefore the body is evil...Given that point of view, it is impossible that God should over take human flesh upon Himself...In the early church this refusal to admit the reality of the incarnation took, broadly speaking, two forms.

- (2) *In its most radical and wholesale form it is called Docetism, which Goodspeed suggests might be translated Seemism. The Greek verb dokein means to seem; and the Defeatists taught that Jesus only seemed to have a body. They declared that His body was an unsubstantial*

phantasm. They insisted that He never had a flesh and blood, physical, human body, but that He was a purely spiritual being, who had nothing but the appearance of having a body.

- (3) *There was a more subtle, and perhaps even more dangerous, variant of this theory connected with the name of Cerinthus. Cerinthus drew a definite distinction between the human Jesus and the divine Christ. He said that Jesus was a man, born in a perfectly natural way. He lived in special obedience to God, and after His baptism, the Christ in the shape of a dove descended upon Him from that power which is above all powers, and then Jesus brought to men news of the Father who had been as yet unknown. Nor did Cerinthus stop there. He said that at the end of Jesus' life, the Christ again withdrew from Him, and that the Christ never suffered at all, but that it was the human Jesus who suffered, died, and rose again, while the divine Christ remained absolutely incapable of suffering, and in purely spiritual existence." (Barclay's 1 John; pgs. 7-9)*

John made it very clear that Jesus was truly human and that Jesus was one and the same as Christ, existing with God eternally. Jesus then is perfectly human and perfectly divine.

- C. *The four verbs that John uses to establish the fact of Jesus' humanity are interesting:*

- (1) HEARD – *This word is a verb in the perfect tense and can be translated, 'We are in a condition resulting from having heard'. That is, "What we*

heard from the lips of Jesus in the past is still having a profound effect on us." However, "to have heard was not enough; men 'heard' God's voice in the Old Testament. To have seen was more compelling." (Stott; 59)

- (2) SEEN - with our eyes (perfect tense). This phrase can be translated: 'That which we are in a condition resulting from having seen with our own eyes,' or "That which we have seen as we looked at Jesus has never been forgotten, but still abides in our memory." What one sees can never be unseen.
- (3) BEHELD AND GAZED AT - The Greek word here does not mean merely look at Jesus, but rather gaze at Jesus. The idea behind the word "is not that of a passing glance, and a quick look, but of a steadfast searching gaze, which seeks to discover something of the meaning of the mystery of Christ...It means to gaze at someone, or at something, until a long look has grasped something of the meaning and the significance of that person or thing." (Barclay; pg. 27)
- (4) HANDLED - To make no mistake that Jesus was human, the disciples actually felt, touched, and handled Jesus. This was the conclusive proof of material reality; Jesus was truly human - with human flesh and bones.

The last two verbs are in the aorist (or past) tense, and therefore the words refer to a particular past time, perhaps after the Resurrection when the disciple had opportunity both to gaze

at and handle the Lord Jesus. These two verbs (Gaze and handle) express a definite and careful investigation by the observer.

It is interesting that the word 'manifested' appears twice in the second verse - "was manifested...was manifested unto us." The verse begins and ends with the idea of God's manifestation to man. "First it occurs absolutely; and then 'unto us' is added. We could not have seen the One Himself. Men can apprehend only what God is pleased to make known." (Stott; pg. 61)

Thus, we see that the proclamation of the historical Incarnation is basic to the Gospel Message. Any so-called 'Gospel' today that denies the incarnation is not the New Testament message. There are still those today who do not believe that Jesus was really a man, with human needs, human feelings, human sorrow, human desires, human sorrow, human desires, and human temptations.

On the other hand, there are other people who say that Jesus really was not God but only influenced and empowered by God to do good works and mighty acts. Such people do not believe that when Jesus died that actually God died. They rob Jesus of His inherent deity, they rob Him of His pre-existence with God the Father, and they rob Him of His redemptive death as the true God

The proclamation of the Gospel is the proclamation that Jesus was the pre-existent, divine Son

of God who came to earth to become a true man and who lived and died as true God. In other words, Jesus is the perfect God-Man. He is true and perfect humanity and also true deity. The historical and the eternal are one.

D. WORD OF LIFE

Basic to the proclamation of the message of Jesus is the message or word of life. The pre-existent, incarnate Jesus is the word of life. Jesus brings new life and can change mere existence into real life. Jesus' message is not merely a message of morals, philosophy, or ethics, but Jesus' message is a message of life. Jesus is the message and to take Jesus is to take life - a new quality of life, which is the life of God Himself.

Other religions teach the word become word - moralism, philosophy, ethics - but Christianity points to a God who actually identified Himself with humanity. God became a man! Perfect identification with humanity! "Christianity has its doctrines but it is not a doctrine; has its creeds but it is not a creed; has its rites and ceremonies but it is not a rite or ceremony; has its institutions but it is not an institution. Christianity is Christ...The words of William Temple, Archbishop of Canterbury, sum up the Christian position; 'the supreme revolution is given in the life and person of Jesus. The revelation is not His teaching or His acts but Himself. ...Christianity is not a dedication to a system of rules or of thought, but a dedication to a Person. This is unique among the religions of the world.'" (Word Became Flesh; E.S. Jones; pg. 30)

II. COMPULSION OF THE PROCLAMATION

This Gospel message (of God becoming a man to give a new quality of life to humanity) is to be shared with others. The manifestation "unto us" (vs. 2) becomes a proclamation "to you" "John desires his readers to enjoy 'the same advantageous position which he himself and his fellow-apostles enjoyed as regards the knowledge of God in Christ'." (Stott)

Have you been given special privileges? Then you have special responsibility! The Gospel of God becoming a man to redeem humanity is not to be hid under a bushel; rather the light of this Gospel is meant to shine unto all men. It is manifested unto you in order to proclaim it unto someone else. That which is given to us by God (special privileges or special revelation) is meant to be passed on to someone else. Nothing remains my own unless I pass it on to someone less privileged.

III. AUTHORITY BEHIND THE PROCLAMATION

What is the motivation and authority for proclaiming the message of the Gospel?

A. "WE BEAR WITNESS" (vs.2) - Authority of Experience.

The apostles could not proclaim something that they had not experienced personally. "The true witness speaks not of what he has gathered second-hand from others, but of what he has himself personally seen and heard." (Stott)

Application: One cannot properly proclaim the Gospel of Christ (His redemptive death in the flesh) without a personal saving experience of Christ. "It is told of Alexander Whyte, the great preacher that, after a great sermon, someone once said to him, 'You preached today as if you had come straight from the presence.' And Whyte answered, 'Perhaps I did'. It is quite true that we cannot see

Christ in the flesh as John saw Him; but we can still see Him with the eye of faith." (Barclay's 1 John; pg. 27)

B. *"WE DECLARE" (vs. 2) – Authority of Commission.*

This commission comes from Jesus Christ, therefore, John the writer, is doubly bold and can speak pointedly, authoritatively and even dogmatically concerning the message of The Gospel. These two verbs establish John's authority to speak and to write concerning the Gospel message and to condemn the heretics within the Church whose message was false.

IV. *PURPOSE OF THE PROCLAMATION*

A. *FELLOWSHIP WITH CHRISTIANS*

The purpose of our proclamation is in order that there may be more Christians who fellowship one with another. The church, properly understood, is a fellowship of believers. The proclamation of the Gospel is to result in an increase of fellowshiping Christians. This forever rules out the exclusive, ingrown, cliquish spirit that sometimes exists among Christians within the church. Christians who are living according to the true spirit of the Gospel are believers who have an open heart and out-stretched arms, and who experience great joy in finding new and expanding relationships with new Christians.

Fellowship one with another comes because of a mutual sharing and "common anticipation in the grace of God, the salvation of Christ and the indwelling Spirit which is the spiritual birthright of all Christian believers." (Stott) Thus, the power to experience fellowship one with another comes

from "fellowship with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ."

This fellowship is equally real with the Son and with the Father (vs. 3), "The phrase marks emphatically the distinction and equality between the Son and the Father". (Stott) John said this to assert Jesus' deity and equality with God.

Acceptance of the message of Jesus Christ always creates true fellowship and oneness of spirit in the church. All other attempts at creating fellowship in the church, other than common participation in the fellowship of Christ, are futile. Mutual love for Christ coats a deep unity amidst the diversity of people, the diversity of ideas, and diversity of programs.

B. FULLNESS OF JOY

Fullness of joy is a result of fellowship with God and others. It is the ultimate, or at least a longer-range, result of the message or proclamation of the Gospel.

Fellowship develops when the proclamation of the Gospel is accepted, and this fellowship (mutual sharing and mutual participation in the life and fellowship of Christ) issues in fullness of joy. It is in aiding joy, and a full joy, but this joy is an increasing joy - a joy that increases as the fellowship deepens, and a joy that shall be consummated beyond this life in the life of heaven. The fullness of joy is possible on this earth, (fullness of one's capacity based on deepening fellowship with God and one's fellow Christians), but complete and perfect joy is a quality of heaven alone. Therefore, the joy that is a product of Christian fellowship is a progressive joy. Fellowship that issues forth in joy is the purpose of the proclamation of the Gospel.

*Thus, "the ultimate note of the Christian message is joy."
(Barclay; pg. 26)*

CONCLUSION:

What is the "unchanged, original content of the Gospel over against novel forms of doctrine?" Jesus is the divine, pre-existent Son of God who lived on earth as a true perfect man and as the perfect and focused God in human flesh. Jesus, the divine Son, died and, therefore, God died. God's death results in the impartation of a new quality of life. This is the content of the proclamation. God's Good News is to be shared with all mankind, for Christ died for all mankind. There are no favorites, and none is to be excluded from knowing about the Good News. The purposes of the proclamation of the message, is to bring reconciliation between God and man, and consequent fellowship and joy to all men. The Christian message is a message of joy.

CHAPTER 1 - DISCUSSION
PROCLAMATION OF THE GOSPEL
(1 John 1:1-4)

1. *Cite scriptural support to document the truth of the following statement: "Jesus existed consciously and intimately in communion with the Father before all time." Note John 1:1, 2; Colossians 1:17; Hebrews 1:3-12)*
2. *What four facts does John note as evidence of Jesus' true humanity in 1 John 1:17?*
3. *Discuss some of the main doctrinal tenets which the heretic teachers called the "Gnostics" taught in the early days of the Christian church.*
4. *Comment on the significance of the four verbs - "Heard", "Seen", "beheld", "handled" - which John uses to establish the fact of Jesus humanity.*
5. *Do you believe the following statement accurately reflects the truth regarding the proper identity of Jesus' personhood, as it relates to the Gospel Proclamation? "The proclamation of the Gospel is the proclamation that Jesus was the pre-existent, divine Son of God who came to Earth to become a true man and who lived and died as true God."*
6. *What is the difference between "the word became word" and "the word became flesh"? Why can it be said, "Christianity is Christ"?*
7. *According to 1 John 1:2, what responsibility does a Christian have to a non-Christian?*
8. *What twofold authority do believers have for proclaiming the message of the Gospel?*

9. *Why is there no justification for professing believers to engage in an exclusive, ingrown, cliquish spirit within the church?*
10. *Tell what the following statement means: "The joy that is a product of Christian fellowship is a progressive joy."*
11. *What is the unchanged, original content of the Gospel over against novel forms of doctrine?*

CHAPTER 2
"THE CHRISTIAN VIEW OF SIN!"
1 John 1:5-2:2

Scripture: "And this is the message which we have heard from him and announce unto you, that God is light, and in him is no darkness at all. If we say that we have fellowship with him and walk in the darkness, we lie, and do not the truth: but if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another and the blood of Jesus his Son cleanseth us from all sin. If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, he is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. If we say that we have not sinned, we make him a liar, and his word is not in us. My little children, these things write I unto you that ye may not sin. And if any man sin, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous: and he is the propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only, but also for the whole world. 1 John 1:5-2:2

Text: "My little children, I write unto you that ye sin not." (1 John 2:1a)

INTRODUCTION:

How can a person come into a meaningful relationship with God? It is a fact that sin is a barrier to such fellowship. What is sin and how can man get rid of it? Is sin compatible with fellowship? What is the method whereby God's wrath is appeased toward the sinner? How can a believer maintain a meaningful and cleansed relationship with God? What happens if a Christian commits an act of sin? What should be the attitude of a Christian toward sin?

PROPOSITION: John answers these questions in our Scripture lesson for today. One's attitude and understanding of sin largely determines

the quality of one's life. Let us then seek to understand the Christian attitude toward sin.

There Is No Sin or Darkness In God But Only Light (vs. 5). There is no sin in God's character or nature. Therefore, those who are the worshippers of God must reflect the same type of nature as the nature of God - sinless.

When the Scripture states that God is light, several ideas emerge concerning God (as pointed out well by Barclay): (1) Light speaks of God's splendor and glory; (2) Light is self-revealing, showing that there is nothing secretive or concealed about God; (3) Radiant purity is symbolized by light; thus, light speaks of God's holiness and purity; (4) Light guides one on a pathway; thus, God guides the footsteps of man; (5) Light reveals soiling's, stains, and imperfections, so God, as the Light, reveals the true character of things.

Living In Sin Destroys All Fellowship With God (vs. 6). Phillips translates verse 6 this way: "If we were to say that we enjoyed fellowship with him and still went on living in darkness, we should be both telling and living a lie." The fuller translation would be like this: "If we say that things in common we are having with Him, and thus fellowship, and in the sphere of the aforementioned darkness are habitually ordering our behavior, we are lying, and we are not doing the truth." (vs. 6 by Wuest)

"The Gnostic is the wise man, the man who has gnosis, knowledge, and the man who knows. Now certain Gnostics held that the real Gnostic must, therefore, know the best as well as the worst; he must know the depths as well as the heights; he must enter into every experience of life at its highest or at its deepest level, as the case may be. It might almost be said that such men held that it was an obligation to sin. The idea is something like the idea that it is good for a young man 'to sow his wild oats.' Only the Gnostics, who held this view, went further, and looked on sin as a kind of religious duty." (Barclay; pg. 12)

"John made it very clear that he who sins is going against the nature of God and cannot claim to be God's child. Darkness is opposed to light; sin is opposed to righteousness. Therefore, he who claims to be God's child must live like God - must live a life of righteousness. Here John is laying down the blunt truth that the man whose practice does not fit his profession is in fact a liar. The man who says one thing with his lips and entirely another thing with his life is a liar. The man who contradicts his claims by his living is a liar." (Barclay's 1 John 37)

If One Walks In The Light As God Is In The Light, Then The Blood Of Jesus Cleanses From All Sin. (7)

Note carefully the verb tenses in a more expanded translation of this verse: "But if within the sphere of the light we are habitually ordering our behavior as He himself is in the light, things in common and thus fellowship we (the believer and God) are having with one another, and the blood of Jesus His Son keeps continually cleansing us from every sin." (vs. 7 by Wuest)

If the Christian continually walks with God (in other words, habitually patterns his behavior after the behavior of God), then God will continually cleanse from all sin. As long as man continues, God will continue to do His work.

There is need in the Christian for constant cleaning. A past cleansing is not sufficient. There is need in a Christian for constant shaping of his behavior, patterned after the behavior of Christ. A past religious experience is not sufficient for the present. There must be a constant shaping and molding of one's life, for a Christian is only "a Christian in the making."

The blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin. The verb suggests that God does more than forgive; He erases the stain of sin. Moreover, the present tense shows that it is a continuous process. But what sin needs to be cleansed if we walk in the light?...If 'light'

signifies holiness as well as revelation, to walk in it is to live not only in honesty, but, at least to some degree, in purity also. So the reference here must be to cleansing not from deliberate sins but either from 'every sin' (NEB), even those committed unconsciously, or, as may be suggested by the use of the singular sin, from the defilement of our fallen nature. "What is clear is that if we walk in the light, God has made provision to cleanse us from whatever sin would otherwise mar our fellowship with Him or each other." (Stott)

Denial Of The Existence Of Sin Is Evidence of Self-deception and Avoidance Of The Truth, And Results In Calling God A Liar. (vss. 8, 10)

"If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us...If we say we have not sinned, we make him a liar, and his word is not in us." (vss. 8, 10)

"Clearly the true Gnostic would regard himself as an altogether spiritual man; he would regard himself as having shed all the material things of life, and as having released his spirit from the bondage of matter. Such Gnostics held that they were completely above sin; that sin for them had ceased to exist; that they were so spiritual that they were above and beyond sin, and that they had reached spiritual perfection. It is to them that John refers when he speaks of those who deceive themselves by saying that they have no sin." (1 John 1:8-20) (Barclay 12)

There are those who do not want to take any responsibility for sin. Such people blame their behavior on their environment, or heredity, or friends, or family, or circumstance, instead of taking personal responsibility for their own behavior.

Man tends to minimize sin, and explain it away. Paul Rees states, "Someone ought to set up a 'Bureau of Missing Words'. If we had such an institution, somewhere on the dust-laden shelves would be found the word 'sin'. It is the forgotten word of proud twentieth-century man.

We are so sure we have outgrown it that we would rather go to hell than to admit we are plagued with it. There is simply no end to the lengths we will go in building a silky vocabulary that leaves out the serpent-hissing word – sin. The quack religionists are ready to lend a hand: they smilingly remind us that sin is merely a ‘delusion of mortal mind’. The high-browed sociologists offer their assistance: they would sum up all that ails under the innocent-sounding phrase ‘the cultural lag’. The super-patriots have a neat little suggestion too: they rise up self-righteously to declare that one or two madmen, like Hitler or Mussolini or Khrushchev are to blame for all this devilishness that has loosed itself upon the world. The one thing that most of us are stubbornly unwilling to do is to locate the troubles of human society where they really are – inside our own prideful, peevish, perverse hearts, with their subtly persistent unbelief that turns away from God’s Christ and serves other gods instead.” (Stand Up In Praise to God; pgs. 70, 71)

He who denies the reality of sin is only deceiving himself and is void of the truth. God says that all have sinned and come short of the glory of God. To deny God’s estimate of man is to call God a liar.

If Man Confesses His Sins, God Will Forgive And Cleanse From All Sin. (vs. 9) The translation could properly be as follows: “If we continue to confess our sins (continue to agree with God regarding God’s estimate of our sinful nature and practices), then God is faithful and just too completely forgive our sins and to thoroughly cleanse from all unrighteousness.” As Stott says, “If we confess our sins, acknowledging before God that we are sinners not only by nature (sin) but by practice also (our sins), God will both forgive us our sins and...cleanse us from all unrighteousness. In the first phrase sin is a debt which he remits and in the second a stain which He removes.” (pg. 77)

A man needs not only forgiveness for what he has done, but also deliverance from what he is. Man is not a sinner because he sins; rather,

man sins because he is a sinner. The remedy for sin, as provided by Christ, goes beyond the realm of inner cleansing from the stain of sin.

Jesus is faithful to forgive, that is, Jesus is faithful to His promise and covenant (Jeremiah 31:34). Jesus is just to forgive sins, and that justice is based on Christ's death on the Cross for our sins. If Jesus is just, he must forgive, because of what He has done on the cross for man's sins.

The Christian Norm Is to Live without Willful Sin (2:1). One of the main purposes for writing the letter is to prevent Christians from sinning: "My little children, I am writing this to you so that you may not sin." (2:1a) John has already made it clear (1:7) that the Christian is one who is habitually shaping his life after the pattern of Christ (walking in the light as God is in the light). Therefore, living a life patterned after darkness and willful sin is completely out of the question, for the genuine Christian. John makes it clear later in the letter that he who practices sin as a way of life is of the devil (1 John 3:3-9). What John is saying in this verse is this: "My little children (born ones), these things I am writing to you in order that you may not commit an act of sin." (Wuest) It is John's firm belief that the blood of Jesus is powerful enough to keep one from even committing an occasional act of sin. It is possible - indeed it is expected of the Christian - to live a life of constant, consistent, and uninterrupted righteousness. There need be no break in a Christian's relationship with God. A Christian can live an absolutely pure life. All men 'miss the mark' of God's absolute and perfect law, and thus all men are in need of God's daily forgiveness and constant cleansing. (1 John 1:7, 9) The norm of the Christian life is to live without committing sin. (Sin, by definition, is breaking God's law, and this implies a willful breaking of God's law - 1 John 3:4)

"John lays down his two great ethical principles; knowledge involves obedience, and union involves imitation; and, therefore, in the Chris-

tian life there can never be any inducement to think lightly of sin."
(Barclay; pg. 42)

It Is Possible for A Christian to Sin, But If a Christian Falls into an Act of Sin, God, Because Of Christ's Atonement, Will Forgive and Restore to Fellowship. (2:1, 2)

If a Christian should find himself with guilt because of an act of sin, "we (Christians) have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous: and he is the propitiation for our sins: and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world."

Jesus Is Advocate. Jesus pleads our case before God the Father. "An advocate is a helper, a supporter of someone's cause, an advocate in someone's defense." (Barclay) Jesus is the one who intercedes on man's behalf before God the Father. Jesus alone is worthy to be an advocate before the Father, because Jesus alone is absolutely righteous.

Jesus Christ the Propitiation. To show the relationship between Advocate and Propitiation, Stott quotes Smith as saying, "Our Advocate does not plead that we are innocent, or adduce extenuating circumstances. He acknowledges our guilt and presents His vicarious work as the ground of our acquittal." (Barclay)

"The great basic truth behind this word is that it is through Jesus Christ that man's fellowship with God is first restored, and then maintained." (Barclay: 47)

To put it more clearly, the idea behind the word is this: God is wrathful toward man's sin and God's wrath toward the sinner must be averted or appeased if man is to be forgiven. God's judgment does rest upon man, but God's wrath is appeased since God has allowed the penalty for sin (which man deserved to receive) to be inflicted upon Himself.

A simple human analogy would be that of a parent who is wrathful because of his child's disobedience. The child deserves punishment, but the parent takes the punishment for the child and thus releases the child from the punishment and at the same time appeases the wrath of himself - the parent.

As Stott so clearly states, "It is an appeasement of the wrath of God by the love of God through the gift of God. The initiative is not taken by man, nor even by Christ, but by God Himself in sheer unmerited love. His wrath is not averted by any external gift, but by His own self-giving to die the death of sinners. This is the means He has Himself contrived by which to turn His own wrath away."

Jesus' propitiation (or Jesus' death on the cross for man's sins, which has become the means of appeasing God's wrath against the sinner) is for the whole world. The offer of salvation is universal (John 3:16; John 12:32; 1 Timothy 2:4).

Advocacy is only for believers - that is, for those who have accepted the objective work of Jesus' propitiation.

CONCLUSION:

The important question that must be pondered by all is this: 'Have you personally accepted the work of Christ's sacrifice on the Cross, as a personal atonement for your own sins?' If you have not accepted Jesus as your personal Savior, then the 'wrath of God abides on you'. (John 3:36) However, if you confess your sins (that, is, agree with God's assessment of your sinful nature and practices), and continue to confess, then God is faithful and just too completely forgive your sins and to thoroughly cleanse you from your sin nature. Christ's atonement is sufficient for both your sin (Nature) and you sins (Practices). (1:9) As long as you habitually pattern your life after the life of God (walk in the light), you may be assured that God will continually cleanse you from all unrighteousness and keep you in close fellowship

with Christ. (1:7) The Christian life is the life that is lived in the Light - the very Light of God. (1:5)

CHAPTER 2 – DISCUSSION
THE CHRISTIAN VIEW OF SIN

1 JOHN 1:5-2:2

1. *Do you agree or disagree with the following statement: "One's attitude and one's understanding of sin largely determines the quality of one's life"?*
2. *When God is called "Light" (1 John 1:5) what ideas regarding the person and the work of God come to your mind?*
3. *According to 1 John 1:6, how would you refute the argument of a person who claims that personal and experiential knowledge of sin is helpful or even virtuous? Is it possible to enjoy following with God and at the same time, be involved in a lifestyle of sinning?*
4. *Do you have a right, as a conscientious believer, to call a man a "liar" if his righteous profession is not supported by a righteous lifestyle? Is there a difference between being a "fruit inspector" (Matthew 7:15-20) and a "judge". (Matthew 7:12; 1 John 4:1-3)?*
5. *Is there evidence, from a careful study of 1 John 1:7, that God is able and willing not only to forgive deliberate sins, but also to cleanse one from the moral defilement in his fallen nature?*
6. *According to 1 John 1:8-10, how would you refute the argument of the one who denies the existence of sin or who rationalizes away his sinful behavior and attitudes.*
7. *Give your comments on the following statements: "Real guilt comes, not from acts which the individual would commit but dares not because of social restraints (Freudian psychology), but from acts which he has committed but wishes that he had not committed (Christian view). Therefore, confession of sin to God is the only way to find deliverance from real guilt!"*

8. *Tell how 1 John 1:9 teaches the twofold nature of sin, and God's twofold provision for the problem of sin. What is the difference between "sins" as moral transgressions, and "sin" as moral pollution? Do you agree with the following statement: "Man is not a sinner because he sins; rather, man sins because he is a sinner?"*

9. *According to 1 John 2:1 and 3:3-9, is it possible for a true Christian to think lightly of sin? Why or why not? According to 1 John 3:4, would you agree that the following definition of "sin" is an accurate definition: "Sin is a willful transgression against a known law of God"? (Note: John's definition of "sin" refers to "sins of commission." James' definition of sin - James 4:17 - probably refers to "sins of omission".) How would you define "sins of omission"? Do all believers sin every day "in word, or in thought, or in deed", failing to do all the good they ought to do each day? When John wrote (1 John 2:1) that Christians are not to sin at all, was he thinking of "sins of commission" or of "sins of omission"?*

10. *What provision has God provided for a believer who sins by breaking God's known laws, thus incurring guilt and/or condemnation? (Note 1 John 2:1, 2) In what way is Jesus God's answer to appeasing God's wrath against sin? What has Jesus done to make it possible for God's love to be demonstrated for the sinner and, at the same time, to make it possible for God's justice to be satisfied against sin?*

CHAPTER 3

"DOES YOUR PROFESSION AGREE WITH YOUR POSSESSION?"

1 John 2: 3-11.

Scripture: "And hereby we know that we know him, if we keep his commandments. He that saith, I know him, and keepeth not his commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him, but whoso keepeth his word, in him verily hath the love of God been perfected. Hereby we know that we are in him: He that saith he abideth in him ought himself also to walk even as he walked. Beloved, no new commandment write I unto you, but an old commandment which ye had from the beginning: the old commandment is the word which ye heard from the beginning. Again, a new commandment write I unto you, which thing is true in him and in you, because the darkness is passing away, and the true light already shineth. He that saith he is in the light and hateth his brother is in the darkness even until now. He that loveth his brother abideth in the light, and there is no occasion of stumbling in him. But he that hateth his brother is in the darkness, and walketh in the darkness, and knoweth not whither he goeth, because the darkness hath blinded his eyes." 1 John 2: 3-11.

TEXT: "He that sayeth he abideth in him ought himself also so to walk, even as he walked." (1 John 2:6)

INTRODUCTION:

What are the criteria to determine whether a person is really a Christian? Is a person's profession of Christianity judged on the basis of belief or on the basis of behavior, or on the basis of both belief and behavior? Is there some standard that I can use to evaluate a person's claims, without standing in God's place of ultimate judgment?

PROPOSITION:

Who is a Christian and who is not a Christian? That question is clearly answered in our Scripture lesson today. John gives several tests to determine whether a person is really a Christian or not. Two of those tests are (1) The Moral Test, and (2) The Social Test.

I. THE MORAL TEST (OBEDIENCE AND IMITATION)

One very important test of whether a person is genuinely a Christian or not, is found in obedience or lack of obedience to God's commandments. There were those in the ancient world and there are still those in the modern world who claim that knowledge of God is attained merely through an intellectual process. However, accumulating information and facts about God does not necessarily have any ethical impact. Many of the greatest of Greek minds in the ancient world who developed a philosophy about God, were not especially good men. It was John's firm conviction that anyone who claimed to know God must obey God's commandment. "He who keeps on saying, I have come to know Him experientially and as a present result am in that state, and His precepts is not habitually safeguarding with solicitous care, is a liar, and in this one the truth does not exist." (Wuest) "To know God is to experience His love in Christ, and to return that love in obedience." (C. H. Dodd, quoted by Barclay; 50)

There are those who claim to have fellowship and union with God, but whose lives have no resemblance to the character of God. The true test of fellowship and union with God is imitation of God's Character. One's claim of having fellowship and union with God must be backed with a life that imitates the life of God. Just as knowledge of God involves obedience, so union with God involves imitation.

If one's character and behavior is unlike the character and behavior of Christ, then, regardless of one's profession and claim, such a person is

a liar and the truth of God does not exist in him. One's high profession must be matched with a genuine possession.

To apply the moral test to one's profession of Christianity, involves asking these questions: (1) Am I carefully obeying God's commandments? (2) Am I truly Christlike in behavior, conducting myself after the pattern of Christ?

There are a number of people who say in essence that one's behavior is really not a gauge to determine if one is a Christian or not. Such individuals argue that what is important is not man's righteousness, but Christ's righteousness, which is imputed or attributed to man. Belief in Christ becomes the sole standard for judging if one is a Christian or not. John would agree that faith in Christ is the sole means whereby one can come to truly and experientially know God, but John makes it very clear that such belief (1 John 3:23) always results in Christlikeness in behavior (1 John 2:6). So the ultimate test is not merely belief, but behavior. John "insists that no religious experience is valid if it does not have moral consequences...Only if we obey Him can we claim to know Him, not to have accurate information about Him merely, but to have become personally acquainted with him...a man's words must be tested by his works." (Stott)

II. THE SOCIAL TEST (LOVE)

In 1 John 2:3-6, the commandment is love, and the imitation is also love. In John 13:34 Jesus says, "A new commandment I give unto you, that ye love one another; as I have loved you, that ye also love one another."

Note verse 7. Love was as old as the Old Testament itself. Leviticus 19:18 says, "Thou shalt not avenge, nor bear any grudge against the children of thy people, but thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself: I am the Lord." In Deuteronomy 6:5 it says, "And thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy

might." The message of love was no innovation such as heretics taught. It was the message that they had heard from the beginning.

Note verse 8. As Stott so ably clarifies, the commandment of love is new because it is the all-encompassing commandment of the age of grace or the age of light, which Jesus inaugurated by His coming to the world. Jesus has ushered in the real as opposed to the unreal. With Christ's coming has come the dawning of reality; and living according to reality is living the life of divine love.

This love is new in at least three ways. (1) New in Quality - The love which Jesus taught and exemplified is a selfless, self-sacrificing love - a love that lays down its life for another. That kind of love goes beyond the conception of the Old Testament (Deuteronomy 6:5 and Leviticus 19:18). (2) New in Extent - This divine love is not exclusive (for only Jews or for only the moral), but this love is all-inclusive (irrespective of race and rank and moral fitness). (3) New in Fresh Apprehension - Love as a doctrine or a principle is as old as the Old Testament, but love as a personal experience is constantly new.

The light is identified with God and God is love, so evidence that one abides in the light is the practice of love in one's life. In such a person there is no stumbling block. That is, "...it is love which sees straight, thinks clearly and makes us balanced in our outlook, judgments, and conduct." (Stott; 95) He who habitually loves his brother Christian does not produce a contradiction between his profession and his possession. He is a whole person - one in motive and one in behavior. His motive is love and his behavior is love, and the capacity for his love is progressively growing.

In the man who loves there is nothing that causes himself to stumble. "That is to say, love is the one thing which enables us to make progress in the spiritual life, and hatred is the one thing which makes progress impossible...If God is love, and if the new commandment of Christ is love, then love is the one thing which brings us nearer to men

and nearer to God, and hatred is the one thing which separates us from men and separates us from God." (Barkley pg. 57) Hatred has the terrible effect of not only stunting or destroying growth, but hatred also blinds a man. "He who hates his brother is in the darkness, and he is walking in darkness, and he does not know where he is going, because the darkness has blinded his eyes." (1 John 2:11) Hate blinds one to true progress and paralyzes all wise judgment-making.

"Love enables a man to walk in the light; hatred leaves him in the dark - even if he does not realize that it is so." (Barkley pg. 58)

The love that John speaks of is the highest quality of love - the divine love that is bestowed by God as a gift. This type of love is humanly unattainable, which is to say that living a true Christian life (which is the life of love) is a supernatural, God-empowered life.

1 John 2:9-11 makes it very clear that there is no neutrality in personal relationships. "A man is either walking in the light of love or in the darkness of hatred." (Barclay; pg. 55)

CONCLUSION:

John lays down some accurate criteria to judge whether or not a person is a genuine Christian. He who experientially knows God is the one who carefully observes and obeys God's commandments. (2:3-5) One's claim of having fellowship and union with God must be backed with a life that imitates the life of God (2:6). The test of the genuineness of Christian profession is the evidence of the possession of love in one's life. He who practices love in his relationships of life is like God and, being like God, walks in God's light. A love-centered person is free from stumbling and makes rapid spiritual progress. "It is love which sees straight, thinks clearly, and makes us balanced in our outlook, judgments, and conduct." (Stott)

CHAPTER 3. DISCUSSION

*"DOES YOUR PROFESSION AGREE WITH
YOUR POSSESSION?"*

1 JOHN 2:3-11

1. *According to 1 John 2:4, is it possible to know God without obedience to God's commandments? What is the difference between "knowing God" and "knowing about God"? Tell why you agree or disagree with the following statement: "To know God is to experience His love in Christ, and to return that love in obedience." (C.H. Dodd) At what point does disobedience against God's moral laws and holy commandments, forfeit one's relationship with God? Does God "drop one like a hot coal" the moment that he (professing believer) disobeys one of God's commandments? (Note 1 John 2:1-2; 3:6; James 5:16)*
2. *In light of the fact of human imperfection and the universality of sin in human beings (Romans 3:10), tell why you agree or disagree with the following statements: "One's claim of loving fellowship and union with God must be backed with a life which imitates the life of God. If one's character and behavior is unlike the character and behavior of Christ, then, regardless of one's profession and claim, such a person is a liar and the truth of God does not exist in him."*
3. *Give your interpretation of the following statement "A man's words must be tested by his works." (Stott) Is it possible for one intellectually to affirm orthodox beliefs and yet fail experientially to know God? (Note John 2:4, James 2:19)*
4. *In light of the fact that the Old Testament teaches the importance and the necessity of one loving his neighbor as himself, why was John justified in calling this commandment to love a "New" commandment? (1 John 2:8) In what three ways can this commandment to love be considered "New"?*

5. *In what ways can it be said that one is living "in the light" when he is proclaiming God-like love in his relationships with his fellow men? Give your comments and interpretation of the following statement by John Stott: "It is love which sees straight, thinks clearly and makes us balanced in outlook, judgments, and conduct."*

6. *In what ways does hatred blind a person to moral and social reality in the world of human relationships? (1 John 2:11) In what ways does love enable one to make progress in his spiritual life? In an age that tends to make moral neutrality and tolerance a virtue, how do you react to the following statement: "A man is either walking in the light of love or in the darkness of hatred."? (Barclay)*

CHAPTER 4
"THE DEVELOPING CHRISTIAN LIFE!"
1 John 2:-13-14

Scripture: I write unto you, fathers, because ye know him who is from the beginning. I write unto you, young men, because ye have overcome the evil one. I have written unto you, little children, because ye know the Father. I have written unto you, fathers, because ye know him who 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 evil one! 1 John 2:13-14

INTRODUCTION:

1. Note the meaning of 'children', 'young men', and 'fathers'.
"The little children are those newborn in Christ. The young men are more developed Christians, strong and victorious in spiritual warfare; while the fathers possess the depth and stability of ripe Christian experience." (Stott)
2. Repeated for Emphasis.

PROPOSITION:

The Christian life is a developing life – a life characterized by a sense of forgiveness, a victory over satanic opposition, and an intimate knowledge of God's unchanging love.

- I. Children Experience Forgiveness through Name of Jesus
 1. Man's need for forgiveness:
 - a. Born In Sin;
 - b. All Sinners (Romans 3:23);
 - c. Wrath of God rests upon Man (John 3:36);

- d. *Penalty of sin is death (Romans 6:23;*
- e. *Man cannot save himself (Isaiah 64:6).*
2. *God's provision for forgiveness through Name (Nature and Work) of Christ. "Those who know God's nature, God's character, what God is, in so far as it has been revealed to men, will be ready and eager to put their trust in Him, because they know what He is like." (Barkley 1 John, pg. 63) (Jesus is the only name the Father recognizes as the ground for forgiveness).*
 3. *God's judgment already passed on your sin. The Good News is forgiveness of sins (Luke 24:47). Jesus took the penalty of man's sins upon Himself, through His redemptive death!*
 4. *Forgiveness is the greatest of all blessings from God (Greatest word in English Language).*
 5. *Forgiveness is perfectly purchased for all men, and those who ask for forgiveness are forgiven. Forgiveness is a costly blessing. "It seems most difficult for the mind to grasp the fact that, as revealed in God's Word, God does not deal with any sin in mercy or leniency. The sinner is never forgiven because God is bighearted. Any presentation of divine forgiveness that represents God as directly exercising clemency toward a sinner, is a fatal detraction from the meaning of the cross of Christ, and a disastrous misrepresentation of the truth contained in the gospel. The forgiveness of God toward sinners, therefore, is a judicial pardon of a debtor in view of the fact that his debt has been fully paid by another, the Person of His Son, the Lord Jesus Christ." (Strauss) "Forasmuch as ye know that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold, from your vain conversation received by tradition from your fa-*

thers; But with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot" (I Peter 1:18-19). Note: It is not through wealth, or works, or weeping.

*"Could my tears forever flow,
Could my zeal no languor know,
These for sin could not atone,
Thou must save and thou alone,
In my hand no price I bring;
Simply to the cross I cling."
(Rock of Ages; 2 33)*

6. *Forgiveness produces great happiness - (Sense of relief which comes when one knows his sins are forgiven).*

II. YOUNG MEN OVERCOME EVIL ONE

1. Satan -

- a. *Created Being - "The Anointed Cherub that Covereth." ("Fullness of wisdom" and "perfection of beauty".)*

- b. *Charge of Earth after original creation - (When Satan said in his heart - "I will ascend into Heaven, I will exalt my throne above the 'Stars of God' (other ruling powers); I will ascend above the clouds; I will be like the Most High." Perhaps it was for this presumptuous act that the 'Pre-Admit World' became a chaos, and without 'form and void', as described in Genesis 1:2). (Pg. 12 Larkin; The Spirit World)*

2. *Origin of Evil - The angels, as free moral agents, had the power of choice, not between 'Good' and 'Evil', but between following the 'Will of God', or their 'own will'. As long as Sa-*

tan chose the 'will of God' there was no 'Evil' in the Universe, but the moment he chose to follow his own will, then he fell, and by persuading others to follow him he introduced 'Evil' into the Universe. (Israel 14:12-14)

3. *Present Location - At liberty in the heavenlies - (Job 1:7; 2:2)*

4. *Satan's Kingdom - Ephesians 6:12*

5. *Methods -*

a. *Deceiver of the World - 1 John 5:19*

*Blinds the eyes of the world - 2nd Corinthians 4:3,
4*

Instigator of Great Apostasy - 2nd Peter 2:1-2

b. *Adversary of God's People - Throughout all Scripture, there is a record of the conflict of God's people with Satan, and throughout the Church age, it has been the same.*

6. *Doom - at the close of the Tribulation period, an angel from heaven will seize Satan and bind him with a great chain, already forged, and cast him into the Bottomless Pit, where he shall remain for 1000 years. (Revelations 20:1-3). At the end of which time he shall be loosed for a season, and then with his angels he shall be cast into the 'Lake of Fire' prepared for him in the long ago to spend the Ages of the Ages.*

7. *Method of Overcoming*

---By resisting the devil and submitting to God

(I Peter 5:8, 9; James 4:7).

---By quoting the Word of God. Jesus did this in His temptation - 'It is written') David said, "Thy word have

*I hid in my heart that I might not sin against thee."
"Ye are strong because word abides in you." 1
John2:14b.*

--By involvement in God's work. A modern proverb says, "An idle mind is the devil's workshop". Jesus said, "I must be about my Father's business.")

--By walking close to Jesus, obeying His commandments, and trusting Him for a way out. (1 Corinthians 10:13; Hebrews 4:14, 15)

III. FATHER HAS KNOWN HIM THAT IS FROM THE BEGINNING

"Sweeter as years go by' - finding He is sufficient for every need. Not merely to know about His love, but to know His love by experience. It is one thing to read about love abstractly and note the traits etc.; it is quite another thing to know the love of a person by experience. "All Christians, mature and immature, have come to know God. But their knowledge of Him ripens with the years. The little children know Him as the Father; the fathers have come to know Him as him that is from the beginning, which is probably a reference, not to the Logos, but to the immutable eternal God who does not change, as men change, with advancing years, but who is forever the same. Time hurries on, but in all generations they find a refuge in Him who from everlasting to everlasting is God. They are already consciously living in eternity." (Stott)

CONCLUSION:

The emphasis of these three categories of persons (children, young people, and mature adults) is repeated. Therefore in reality, there are 'six messages'.

"It is significant that in each of these six messages the verb is in the perfect tense, which indicates the present consequence of a past event. John is laying emphasis on the assured standing into which

every Christian has come, whatever his stage of spiritual development." (Stott)

CHAPTER 4 - DISCUSSION

"THE DEVELOPING CHRISTIAN LIFE!"

1 John 2:-13-14

1. *How would you define 'children', 'young men', and 'fathers', as these terms relate to spiritual development in 1 John 2:12-14)?*
2. *What else would you add to the following definition of "the Christian life": "The Christian life is a developing life - a life that is characterized by a sense of forgiveness, a victory over satanic opposition and an intimate knowledge of God's unchanging love."?*
3. *What scriptural support can you cite that mankind universally is in need of forgiveness? (1 John 2:12) Even though God wishes to forgive all persons, can a sinner experience God's forgiveness without asking for God's forgiveness? Why or why not? If Jesus died for all persons, and if God is not willing that any should perish (II Peter 3:9), then why will not all persons automatically be saved? (Romans 10:9)*
4. *On what basis does God forgive sinners? What is the only "Name" the Father recognizes as the "Ground for forgiveness"? Why is man's wealth, works, or weeping not sufficient to attain God's forgiveness of sin and to merit God's eternal salvation?*
5. *What is the origin of good? Is "evil" an eternal reality, alongside "good", or is "evil" a perversion of "good" - i.e., moral rebellion? (Note Isaiah 14:12-14)*
6. *How much "liberty" does Satan have at the present time? (Note Job 1:7, 2:2) How is Satan's kingdom described in Ephesians 6:12? What are some of the methods Satan uses in his attempts to destroy mankind? (Note II Corinthians 11:14; II Corinthians 4:3-*

4; II Peter 2:1, 2; Revelation 12:9-10) What is the final destiny of Satan (Revelation 20:1-3, 7-10)?

7. Name four specific methods that the sincere believer can use to overcome temptation and the Evil One.
8. What are the characteristics of the deep, intimate knowledge of God that the spiritually mature enjoy?
9. What is the significance of John's use of the "Greek perfect tense" six different times in 1 John 2:12-14.

CHAPTER 5
"BE CAREFUL WHAT YOU LOVE!"
1 John 2:15-17

SCRIPTURE: 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. For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh and the lust of the eyes and the vain glory of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world. And the world passeth away, and the lust thereof: but he that doeth the will of God abideth forever. 1 John 2:15-17.

TEXT: "He that doeth the will of God abideth forever." 1 John 2:17

INTRODUCTION:

In the Scripture lesson for today, the writer, (John draws a sharp contrast between the man of the world and the man of faith. The man of the world may be termed a secularist. W. Curry Mavis clearly defines secularism. "Secularism means, most simply, a regard for the interests and affairs of the life to the neglect of matters pertaining to the future life. It represents the enthronement of personal interests and human sufficiency at the very center of life. Man takes a priority over God in the practical matter of life, and he maintains a nonchalant attitude toward Him...In secularism, 'temporal values are seen as ends in themselves', and men devote their lives to them." (The Psychology of Christian Experience; pp. 107, 8)

Secularism is preoccupation with this world with oftentimes a denial that there is an afterlife. Secularism results when one is swept into the whirlpool of materialism. A secularist believes that life consists in the abundance of things that a man possesses. Such a person is living for time only and has either disregarded or denied that there is an eternal existence. A secularist is one who adopts the attitude of 'let us eat, drink and be merry, for tomorrow we die.'

Although a secularist may not explicitly deny the existence of God or manifest outward hostility to the Church, a secularist shows by his materialistic values and his indifferent attitudes that he is at heart a practical atheist. For him, physical reality is all that can be known, and for him the gateway to all knowledge is his five senses. The secularist feels that he is self-sufficient to cope with life and that his own wisdom is the standard for all decisions. To depend on God is naïve and shows weakness in character.

The man of faith does not pattern his behavior after the style of this present world, but rather patterns his behavior after the will of God. He loves God's laws and on His laws he meditates day and night. The secularist loves the things of this world. In this Scripture, John is saying "Be careful what you love!"

PROPOSITION:

What you love determines the quality of your present life and the destiny of your future life! It is the wise man who loses the thing that is permanent and eternal, rather than the thing that is transitory and decaying.

I. LOVE OF THE WORLD

A. DEFINITION OF 'WORLD'

John wrote, "Do not love the world or the things in the world." (1 John 2:15) What does John mean when he uses the word 'world' in this passage? Certainly, John does not mean the world of God's creation, for the beauty of physical reality is to be enjoyed, and God is to be praised for it.

To understand John's definition of 'world', look at other passages in 1 John where 'world' is referred to: 1 John 3:1b: "The reason why the world does not know us in that it did not know him." 1 John 3:13: "Do not wonder, brethren, that the world hates you."

"We know that we are of God, and the whole world is in the power of the evil one." 1 John 5:19. When John uses 'world' in the passage that we are considering today, he "means human society in so far as it is organized on wrong principles, and characterized by base desires, false values, and egoism". (C.H. Dodd, quoted by Barclay, pg. 66) Westcott says that 'world' is "the order of finite being regarded as apart from God." "The world', therefore, is an inclusive term for all those who are in the kingdom of darkness and have not been born of God." (Stott) The NEB translates, "Do not set your hearts on the godless world or anything in it." (1 John 2:15)

Jesus made it very clear that "there is no neutrality; a man either loves the world, or he loves God." (Barclay). Said Jesus; "No one can be loyal to two masters. He is bound to hate one and love the other, or support one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and the power of money at the same time." (Matthew 6:24)

A true Christian is one who separates himself from the world's practices and standards. "Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you, and will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty." (II Corinthians 5:17, 18)

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE WORLD

John says that the way of the world is the way of paganism. Three essential traits of the pagan way of life are: (1) Lusts of the Flesh, (2) Lusts of the eyes, (3) Pride of Life.

Lusts of the Flesh (Base Desires; C.H. Dodd)

What is the 'lust of the flesh'? It is "the desire of which the flesh is the seat." (Westcott) To live according to the lusts of the flesh is "to judge everything in the world by purely material standards" (Barclay).

It is life that is dominated by the senses. Man has a mad craze to get more things to gratify the ears, to gratify the taste, to gratify the smell, to gratify the eyes, to gratify the touch.

"The activities of the lower nature are obvious. Here is a list: sexual immorality, impurity of mind, sensuality, worships of false gods, witchcraft, hatred, quarreling, jealousy, bad temper, rivalry, factions, party spirit, envy, drunkenness, orgies, and things like that. I solemnly assure you, as I did before that those who indulge in such things will never inherit God's kingdom." (Galatians 5:19-21)

Note the passage of Scripture in Deuteronomy 6:10-12. "And it shall be, when the Lord thy God shall have brought thee into the land which he swore unto thy fathers, to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob, to give thee great and goodly cities, which thou buildedst not, and houses full of all good things, which thou filledst not, and wells digged, which thou diggedst not, vineyards and olive trees, which thou plantedst not; when thou shalt have eaten and be full; then beware lest thou forget the Lord, which brought thee forth out of the land of Egypt, from the house of bondage."

There is no inherent sin in desiring the things that are listed in this passage. In fact, these things are God-given gifts. However, the temptation is to forget the source of these blessings and to take credit for them, and to become self-indulgent. These things must not become the end for which a man is living.

Man desires "great and goodly cities" (a wonderful place to live and pleasing atmosphere)

Man desires "houses full of all good things" like comfortable living and household conveniences.

Man desires "good and full wells" that is, an abundance of natural resources to satisfy our 1001 desires and America is most blessed in this way.

Man desires "vineyards and olive trees" that is, plenty of a large variety of foods, and all he wants to eat and more.

Any of these desires can become an end within themselves, and then they become 'lusts of the flesh' - and thus sinful.

1. *Lusts of the Eyes (False Values - C.H. Dodd)*

What is the 'lusts of the eyes'? "The tendency to be captivated by the outward show of things, without enquiring into their real values." (Dodd) "It is the spirit which can see nothing without wishing to acquire it, and which, having acquired it, flaunts it in the face of men. It is the spirit which believes that happiness is to be found in the things which money can buy and which the eye can see." (Barclay, pg. 68)

Says Lehman Strauss; "This is the desire for indulgence which is prompted by seeing. It could be the lust for fine clothes, a new automobile, a modern house, power, or the lust to satisfy the sensual appetite for some base and immoral indulgences. It is prompted by the sense of sight and it grows in the imagination of the mind."

"The essence of the worldly man is, as someone has said, that 'he knows the price of everything and the value of nothing.' The world's motive is the profit motives; the Christian's dynamic is the desire to serve." (Barclay's Ephe-sians pg. 115)

"Secularism has a strong appeal to practical minded people, such as Americans, because secular values are utilitarian. We have been conditioned to appreciate gadgets more than ideas." (The Psychology of Christian Experience; pg. 112)

What do your eyes behold? What type of entertainment do you enjoy? What goes through your eye gate? Do you view sensual pictures? Do you watch T.V. programs that create an evil imagination? Do you shun all pornographic literature and base pictures? Remember, the eyes are the shutters to snap pictures, which become indelibly imprinted upon the film of your mind. Let your prayer be the prayer of the Psalmist, "Turn away mine eyes for beholding vanity; and quicken thou me in the Psalmist, "Turn away mine eyes from beholding vanity; and quicken thou me in thy way." (Psalms 119:37) The Christian must guard his actions, and also guard the objects of his gaze and contemplation. Wrote Isaiah, "He that walketh righteously, and speaketh uprightly; he that despiseth the gain of oppressions, that shaketh his hands from holding of bribes, that stoppeth his ears from hearing of blood, and shutteth his eyes for seeing evil; He shall dwell on high." (Isaiah 33:15, 16a)

2. *Pride of Life (Egoism – C.H. Dodd)*

A person who is possessed with the 'pride of life' is a person who "continually boasts about things which he does not possess, and all his life is spent in an attempt to impress everyone he meets with his own non-existent importance.," (Barclay pg. 69)

"The pride of life is, therefore, an arrogance or vainglory relating to one's external circumstances, whether wealth or rank or dress, 'pretentious ostentation' (Plummer), 'the desire to shine or outshine others' in luxurious living (Eberhard)." (Quoted by Stott; pg. 100)

The 'pride of lie' is essentially a self-sufficient attitude – a braggart. Such a self-centered self-preoccupied person is described in Ezekiel 16:49: "Behold, this was the iniquity of

thy sister Sodom, pride, fullness of bread, and abundance of idleness was in her and in her daughters, neither did she strengthen the hand of the poor and needy."

Woe to such a person who feels no need of God, but who depends upon his own human resources alone. Said Jesus, "Woe to (alas for) you who are full now - completely filled, luxuriously gorged and satiated; for you shall hunger and suffer want! Woe to (alas for) you that laugh now, for you shall mourn and weep and wail!" (Luke 6:25)

To the Laodicean Church (in Book of Revelation), God said, "For you say, I am rich, I have prospered, and I need nothing; not knowing that you are wretched, pitiable, poor, blind, and naked." (Revelations 3:17)

John's words could be translated to mean, "For all that is in the world, base desires, false values, and egoism, is not of the Father but is of the world."

II. LOVE OF GOD'S WILL

"And the world passes away, and the lust of it; but he who does the will of God abides forever." (1 John 2:17) It is the fool who builds his life upon the sands of time rather than the rock of eternity. The sands of time will wash away. The present life and world is passing away. To build life upon these things of the world is to build life upon something that literally has no future. "But the day of the Lord will come like a thief, and then the heavens will pass away with a loud noise, and the elements will be dissolved with fire, and the earth and the works that are upon it will be burned up. Since all these things are thus to be dissolved, what sort of persons ought you to be in lives of holiness and godliness, waiting for and hastening the coming of the day of God, because of which the heavens will be kindled and dissolved, and the elements will melt with ire!" (II Peter 3:10-12)

Man's earthly existence is very transitory: "As for man, his days are like grass; he flourishes like a flower of the field; for the wind passes over it, and it is gone, and its place knows it no more." (Psalms 103:14-16)

Therefore, "Set your minds on things that are above, not on things that are on earth." (Colossians 3:2)

It is the wise man who loves the thing that is permanent and eternal, rather than the thing that is transitory and decaying. A well-known atheist in France confessed his most deep-seated urge: "I have in myself great need of permanence...I mean a need of believing that there are products not subject to decay and degradation, works on which temporal changes have no influence." However, only "he who doeth the will of God abideth forever."

A. *Meaning of God's Will*

1. *Content of Performance*

Obedience to God's commandments is the essence of performing God's will. "And by this we may be sure that we know him, if we keep his commandments. He who says, 'I know him' but disobeys his commandments is a liar, and the truth is not in him; but whoever keeps his word, in him truly love for God is perfected." (1 John 2:3-5a) Love for God and one's fellowman is the essence of God's will.

2. *Constancy of Performance*

The proper translation of 1 John 2:17 is, "But the one who keeps on habitually doing the will of God abides forever." (Wuest) It is not past performance but continual, up-to-date performances

of God's will which is the condition for claiming God's promise of 'abiding forever'. That is to say, we are constantly to exercise love, we are to maintain a daily close walk with Christ, in order that we may be guaranteed of eternal life. There is eternal life, but it is conditioned upon daily obedience to God's will.

B. Reward For Obedience to God's Will

Eternal life is the reward for the man who builds his life upon the will of God. God shall not forget him at the moment of death. Rather God shall say to him, "Well done, thou good and faithful servant. Enter thou into the joy of thy Lord." To enjoy eternal life is to enjoy the very life of God Himself.

CONCLUSION:

*"Swift to its close ebbs out life's little day;
Earth's joys grow dim; its glories pass away;
Change and decay in all around I see;
O thou, who changest not abide with me!"*

To love the evil world system, is to perish with that system. To love the will of God is to enjoy the eternal life and love of God Himself. Don't be a fool. Be wise!

Be Careful What You Love!

CHAPTER 5 - DISCUSSION

"BE CAREFUL WHAT YOU LOVE"!

1 John 2:15-17

- 1. Define and describe the characteristics of a "secularist".*
- 2. When John exhorts us to "love not the world or the things in the world", how would he define the word "world"?*
- 3. What specifically are some of the world's practices and standards from which a true Christian must separate himself? (II Corinthians 5:17, 18) (Read 1 John 2:15-17 in as many different translations as you can find). How would you describe a worldly-minded Christian? (Note I Corinthians 3:1-3; Ephesians 4:20-32; Romans 12:1-2)*
- 4. Give your interpretation of the following statement by John Scott: "He (the genuine Christian) is to be 'unworldly' without coming 'otherworldly', living 'in' it without being 'of' it." (Note John 17:15)*
- 5. What is meant by this phrase "lusts of the flesh"? According to Galatians 5:19-21, what are some of the activities of the "lower nature"?*
- 6. Is it possible to enjoy the "good things of life" (nice houses, enjoyable scenery, fun vacations, natural resources, material possessions, delicious food, quality clothing, material wealth) and yet make God, rather than things, the object of one's worship and affection? What is a "simple life-style", Biblically defined, and how can a sincere believer avoid self-indulgence in his daily life-style and yet, at the same time, learn to enjoy the "good things in life" which God has given?*

7. *How would you describe and define the "lusts of the eyes", and why do Americans seem especially to be vulnerable to this kind of sin? Do you agree that most Americans "have been conditioned to appreciate gadgets more than ideas"? What are some of the elements or characteristics in a distinctively "Christian value system"?*
8. *How would you describe and define "the pride of life"? What is the difference, in terms of attitudes and manifestations, between wholesome self-esteem and unwholesome self-sufficiency? (Note John 9:39-41; II Corinthians 3:1-6; Revelations 3:17)*
9. *What does common sense and clear Biblical revelation teach us regarding the futility of building our hopes and placing our faith in the treasures of the present world? (Note 1 John 2:17; 2 Peter 3:10-12; Psalms 103:14-16; Colossians 3:2).*
10. *What is God's will, generally speaking, for every person, according to the Bible? (Note 1 John 2:3-5)*
11. *Tell why you agree or disagree with the following statement: "It is God's desire that every person should enjoy eternal life in heaven, but the actual attainment of eternal life in heaven is conditioned upon a life of continual and significance obedience to God's revealed will." What significance is there in the use of the 'present tense' in 1 John 2:17 regarding the doing of the will of God?*
12. *What promise is granted to the person who persists in doing the will of God throughout his lifetime? (1 John 2:17)*

CHAPTER 6.

"HOW TO IDENTIFY A TRUE CHRISTIAN!"

1 John 2:-28-3:10

SCRIPTURE: And now, little children, abide in him, so that when he is revealed we may have confidence and not be put to shame before him at his coming. If you know that he is righteous, you may be sure that everyone who does right has been born of him. See what love the Father has given us, that we should be called children of God; and that is what we are. The reason the world does not know us is that it did not know him. Beloved, we are God's children now; what we will be has not yet been revealed. What we do know is this: when he is revealed, we will be like him, for we will see him as he is. And all who have this hope in him purify themselves, just as he is pure. Everyone who commits sin is guilty of lawlessness; sin is lawlessness. You know that he was revealed to take away sins, and in him there is no sin. No one who abides in him sins; no one who sins has either seen him or known him. Little children, let no one deceive you. Everyone who does what is right is righteous, just as he is righteous. Everyone who commits sin is a child of the devil; for the devil has been sinning from the beginning. The Son of God was revealed for this purpose, to destroy the works of the devil. Those who have been born of God do not sin, because God's seed abides in them; they cannot sin, because they have been born of God. The children of God and the children of the devil are revealed in this way: all who do not do what is right are not from God, nor are those who do not love their brothers and sisters. 1 John 2:-28-3:10

INTRODUCTION:

One was asked, "Are you a Christian?" Replied the man, "Of course I am a Christian, I am not a heathen!" This man identified being an American with being a Christian. To live as a decent citizen, earning an honest living, performing a few good deeds, and giving nominal ad-

herence to a few religious creeds, is, in many people's minds, the essence of Christianity.

However, as Sangster points out, "The heart of religion is not an opinion about God, but a personal relationship with him." (*Can I Know God?* pg. 16)

The Bible often speaks about the possibility of 'knowing' God. When the word 'know' is used in the Bible with reference to man's relationship with God, this knowledge is not some type of abstract knowledge but rather a personal experiential knowledge of God.

PROPOSITION:

The true Christian is one who knows God in a personal way. John tells how one can identify a true Christian. There are three tests which can be applied to determine if one is a true Christian or not. One need not be in question whether or not he is a true Christian.

1. **OBEDIENCE, OR THE MORAL TEST:** "And hereby we know that we know him, if we keep his commandments. He that saith, I know him, and keepeth not his commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him; but whoso keepeth his word, in him verily hath the love of God been perfected. Hereby we know that we are in him: he that saith he abideth in him ought himself also to walk even as he walked.
2. **LOVE, OR THE SOCIAL TEST:** "Beloved, no new commandment write I unto you, but an old commandment which ye had from the beginning: the old commandment is the word which ye heard. Again, a new commandment write I unto you, which thing is true in him and in you; because the darkness is passing away, and the true light already shineth. He that saith he is in the light and hateth his brother is in the darkness even until now. He that loveth his brother abideth in the light, and there is no occasion of stumbling in

him. But he that hateth his brother is in the darkness, and walketh in the darkness, and knoweth not whither he goeth, because the darkness hath blinded his eyes.

3. BELIEF, OR THE DOCTRINAL TEST: *"I write unto you, my little children, because your sins are forgiven you for his name's sake. I write unto you, fathers, because ye know him who is from the beginning. I write unto you, young men, because ye have overcome the evil one. I have written unto you, little children, because ye know the Father. I have written unto you, fathers, because ye know him who 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 evil one. Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh and the lust of the eyes and the vainglory of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world. And the world passeth away, and the lust thereof: but he that doeth the will of God abideth forever. Little children, it is the last hour: and as ye heard that antichrist cometh, even now have their arisen many antichrists; whereby we know that it is the last hour. They went out from us, but they were not of us; for if they had been of us, they would have continued with us: but they went out, that they might be made manifest that they all are not of us. And ye have an anointing from the Holy One, and ye know all the things. I have not written unto you because ye know not the truth, but because ye know it, and because no lie is of the truth. Who is the liar but he that denieth that Jesus is the Christ? This is the antichrist, even he that denieth the Father and the Son. Whosoever denieth the Son, the same hath not the Father: he that confesseth the Son hath the Father also. As for you, let that abide in*

you which ye heard from the beginning. If that which ye heard from the beginning abide in you, ye also shall abide in the Son, and in the Father. And this is the promise which he promised us, even the life eternal. These things have I written unto you concerning them that would lead you astray. And as for you, the anointing which ye received of him abideth in you, and ye need not that anyone teach you; but as his anointing teacheth you; concerning all things, and is true, and is no lie, and even as it taught you, ye abide in him."

"As a man thinks, so is he." One test to apply to a person who professes to be a Christian is the doctrinal test. "What does he believe?"

"Everyone talkin' about heaven ain't goin' there." John knew when he wrote his letter, that there were many who claimed to know God, but their claim was invalidated because of the doctrines they taught and practiced. Those who taught such false teachings were called antichrist, for their teachings were in opposition to the teaching of Christ.

Note 1 John 2:18, 19 for a description of the antichrists. These antichrists were forerunners of the final anti-Christ (in the book of Revelation), who is to come.

The antichrists left the church because they could not win leaders over to their viewpoint. By leaving the Church they became manifest for what they were - 'against Christ', and thus the church was cleansed.

Leaving the fellowship of the Church, says John, is proof that such are not of God. Either they had backslidden from the Lord (turned against Christ and became antichrist) or

they had always been against Christ and their revealed deception caused them to leave the Church.

What are the beliefs or doctrines that true Christians believe in?

A. *A TRUE CHRISTIAN BELIEVES IN AND EXPERIENCES THE HOLY SPIRIT'S ANOINTING.*

The 'Christ' people know God, because of the Holy Spirit's anointing or indwelling. "And ye have an anointing from the Holy One, and ye know all the things. I have not written unto you because ye know not the truth, but because ye know it, and because no lie is of the truth." 1 John 2:20, 21.

The Holy Spirit is the Enlightener and the Teacher. He is the Spirit of Truth. (2:26, 27) In a world of falsehood and deception, the Christian needs a Guide to keep him in the Pathway of truth. The indwelling Holy Spirit is the subjective safeguard against falsehood.

B. *A TRUE CHRISTIAN BELIEVES IN THE INCARNATION.*

"The antichrists made Jesus a mere man invested for a brief period with divine powers or even adopted into the Godhead, but they denied that the man Jesus and the Eternal Son were and are the same Person, possessing two perfect natures, human and divine." (Stott)

The true Christian believes that Jesus is and was the unique Son of God and that Jesus is and was the Christ (God) come in the flesh. One who denies that Jesus is the Son of God and the Christ come in the flesh is the liar par excellence. (vs. 22, 23) To depart from the doctrine of the Incarnation is to depart from Christianity itself. To deny the Incarnation is to be diabolical (antichrist). He who denies

the incarnation denies "the Father and the Son." Any group, which denies that "Jesus is God come in the flesh", is not a Christian group.

- C. *A TRUE CHRISTIAN IS ONE WHO BELIEVES AND KNOWS BY EXPERIENCE THAT THERE IS NO WAY TO TRULY KNOW GOD EXCEPT THROUGH THE SON.*

He who has the Son has the Father also. He who does not have the Son does not have the Father. "And Jesus cried out and said, 'He who believes in me, believes not in me but in him who sent me. And he who sees me sees him who sent me.'" (John 12:44, 45) Jesus said, "I am the way, and the truth, and the life; no one comes to the Father, but by me." (John 14:6) "For there is one God, and there is one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus." (1 Timothy 2:5)

- D. *A TRUE CHRISTIAN IS ONE WHO DOES NOT ACCEPT NEW DOCTRINES, IDEAS, AND TRADITIONS OF MEN, BUT RATHER HE ADHERES TO AND PRACTICES THE AUTHORITATIVE MESSAGE OF THE EARLY CHURCH, AS RECORDED IN SCRIPTURE.*

One characteristic of the Last Days is the presence of many "who will listen to anybody and can never arrive at knowledge of the truth." (2 Timothy 3:1) "For the time is coming when people will not endure sound teaching, but having itching ears they will accumulate for themselves teachers to suit their own likings, and will turn away from listening to the truth and wander into myths." (2 Timothy 4:3, 4)

The true Christian does not react against changing methods, for changing times demand changing methods. However, the Christian opposes a liberalization or modification of the cen-

tral Biblical message. The true Christian is Bible-centered in his teaching. The central message of Christianity is Jesus Christ as Savior of mankind. To deny this message is to forfeit eternal life. (2:24, 25)

The Word of Jesus, which is the Word of truth, is the objective safeguard against falsehood. The subjective safeguard against falsehood is the indwelling Holy Spirit, as already noted (2:20). "Both the apostolic teaching and the Heavenly Teacher are necessary for continuance in the truth. And both are to be personally and inwardly grasped. This is the biblical balance too seldom preserved by men. Some honor the Word and neglect the Spirit who alone can interpret it; others honor the Spirit but neglect the Word out of which He teaches." (Stott)

CONCLUSION:

How can a true Christian be identified? By applying three tests: (1) the moral test - Obedience. Jesus made it clear that if one is a true follower of God, then that person will keep God's commandments; (2) the social test - Love. The man who experiences bitterness or resentment has forfeited his claim to be genuinely Christian. "Love has good manners and does not pursue selfish advantage. It is not touchy. It does not keep account of evil or gloat over the wickedness of other people. On the contrary, it is glad with all good men when truth prevails." (I Corinthians 13); 3. The belief test - Doctrine. A true Christian believes that Jesus is the unique Son of God, and the bodily manifestation of God. A true Christian experiences the indwelling Holy Spirit and is guided into all truth as the Holy Spirit applies the teachings of the Word to his life. The true Christian is one who has come to know God personally and experientially, through Christ.

CHAPTER 7

"CHARACTER OF A CHRISTIAN – BORN OF GOD!"

1 John 2:28-3:10

SCRIPTURE: And now, my little children abide in him; that, if he shall be manifested, we may have boldness, and not be ashamed before him at his coming. If ye know that he is righteous, ye know that everyone also that doeth righteousness is begotten of him. Behold what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called children of God; and such we are. For this cause the world knoweth us not, because it knew him not. Beloved, now are we children of God, and it is not yet made manifest what we shall be. We know that, if he shall be manifested, we shall be like him; for we shall see him even as he is. And every one that hath this hope set on him purifieth himself, even as he is pure. Every one that doeth sin doeth also lawlessness; and sin is lawlessness. And ye know that he was manifested to take away sins; and in him is no sin. Whosoever abideth in him sinneth not: whosoever sinneth hath not seen him, neither knoweth him. My little children, let no man lead you astray: he that doeth righteousness is righteous, even as he is righteous: he that doeth sin is of the devil; for the devil sinneth from the beginning. To this end was the Son of God manifested, that he might destroy the works of the devil. Whosoever is begotten of John doeth no sin, because his seed abideth in him: and he cannot sin, because he is begotten of God. 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. 1 John 2:28-3:10.

*TEXT: "Since we know that God is always good and does only right, we may rightly assume that all those who do right are His children."
(1 John 2:29)*

INTRODUCTION:

What is the character of a true Christian? A good description of a Christian is 'one who is Christlike'. Often people are heard to say,

"That young boy looks just like his father!" Indeed so, for that child is begotten of the father.

A Christian is one who is born of God. Therefore, a Christian should be like God in many ways - pure, righteous, faithful, and holy. God's command is, "Be ye holy for I the Lord thy God am holy." Holiness in the Christian is not an inherent quality, but a derived quality. Through spiritual birth, God imparts His very nature - the nature of righteousness - to the Christian. In fact, it is the impartation of this righteousness that makes a person a Christian.

PROPOSITION:

In terms of 'Being' and 'Doing' how can the begotten one be described? That is the question that we wish to answer from the Scriptures.

I. THE BEGOTTEN ONE PRACTICES RIGHTEOUSNESS (2:28, 29)

"And now, my little children, stay in happy fellowship with the Lord so that when He comes you will be sure that all is well, and will not have to be ashamed and shrink back from meeting Him. Since we know that God is always good and does only right, we may rightly assume that all those who do right are His children." (1 John 2:28, 29; Living Bible)

The person who is born of God is the person who practices righteousness. The secret to living a consistently righteous life is found - not in human strength - but in the power received by constantly abiding in Christ. The branch has no life apart from the vine, so a Christian has no life of righteousness apart from abiding in Christ.

John says that a spur to righteous living and faithful service is the knowledge that Christ is coming to earth again. (vs. 28) Living righteously will give confidence when Jesus returns.

Note the affect that belief in the second coming of Christ had upon the lives and ministries of some of the greatest Christians in modern

times. "D.L. Moody was asked the secret of his power and intensity. He said, 'I preached for years with the thought that before every sermon was finished the Lord Might Come.' J. Wilbur Chapman said, 'I preach the Lord's return because the thought of His second coming has changed my whole ministry. I have not the slightest doubt but that we are approaching the last days,' G. Campbell Morgan said, speaking in those dark terrible days of the bombing of England, 'To me the second coming is the perpetual light of my pathway, making the present bearable, I never lay my head on my pillow without thinking that before morning breaks the final morning may have dawned.' Hudson Taylor, that great pioneer for God who tackled the seemingly impossible in China and wrought such mighty things for Christ, said, 'This truth of the Lord's return has been the greatest spur to me in missionary service.' Dr. R.A. Torrey, peerless preacher of yesterday, said, 'The truth of our Lord's return is the most precious truth the Bible contains. It fills the heart of a believer with joy. It girds him with strength for the battle. It lifts him above the sorrows and the fears and necessities and trials and ambitions and greed of this world, and makes him in all things more than a conqueror.'" (Rosell)

The source of righteousness is Christ. A Christian is one who is Christ-like in nature. "The child exhibits the parent's character because he shares the parent's nature." (Stott) The incentive to holy, righteous living is found in comprehending the hope of Christ's second coming to earth.

II. THE BEGOTTEN ONE IS A CHILD OF GOD (1 John 3:1-3)

"See how very much our Father loves us, for he calls us his children, and that is what we are! But the people who belong to this world do not recognize that we are God's children because they do not know him. Dear friends, we are already God's children, but he has not yet shown us what we will be like when Christ appears. But we do know that we will be like him, for we will see him as he really is. And all who

have this eager expectation will keep themselves pure, just as he is pure."

A. CAUSE FOR WONDERMENT AND AMAZEMENT (vs. 1)

The amazement of Christians is that they are not only called – but actually become – children of God through the second birth. The love of God, which makes this possible, is a love beyond human comprehension or human categories. It is a love that is foreign to the human heart, a love that issues from the great heart of God Himself. This sonship is real – not just a title. This sonship is a product of grace – man does not deserve it and cannot earn it, but only receives it with gratitude.

B. CAUSE FOR ALIENATION FROM THE WORLD (v. 1)

Spiritual sonship is so different from the world, that the world does not know the Christian. "On this account the world does not have an experiential knowledge of Him." (Wuest)

C. THE ULTIMATE REWARD FOR SONSHIP IS NOT YET REVEALED, BUT WILL BE REVEALED WHEN CHRIST COMES AGAIN. (v. 2)

"Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him." (I Corinthians 2:9).

We will be with Christ and like Christ, but for the details of what this will mean, we must be content to wait.

*Jesus, these eyes have never seen
That radiant form of Thine;
The veil of sense hangs dark between
Thy blessed face and mine.
I see Thee not, I hear Thee not,
Yet art Thou oft with me;*

*And earth hath ne'er so dear a spot
As where I meet with Thee.
Yet though I have not seen, and still
Must rest in faith alone,
I love Thee, dearest Lord, and will,
Unseen but not unknown.
When death these mortal eyes shall seal,
And still this throbbing heart,
The rending veil shall Thee reveal
All glorious as Thou Art.*

*III. THE BEGOTTEN ONE CONTINUALLY SETS HIS HOPE ON CHRIST,
AND THUS CONSTANTLY KEEPS HIMSELF PURE. (v. 3)*

Everyone who has the hope of someday seeing and being like Christ, "...will try to stay pure because Christ is pure." It is God's part to cleanse the human heart, but it is man's part to maintain faith and hope in Christ. Maintenance of faith in Christ keeps hope burning alive and results in constant inner cleansing. "And everyone who has this hope continually set on Him is constantly purifying himself just as that One is pure." (3:3)

As one said, "Life with Christ is an endless hope; without Him a hopeless end." "A young Christian at the deathbed of an aged saint, said to him, 'Shall I read to you the sweetest verse in the Bible?' 'Yes'. The young man read the verse of John 14:2. 'In My Father's house are many mansions; if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you.' 'No', said the dying man, 'that is not the sweetest verse. Read on. The young man read on: 'and If I go to prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also.' 'That is the sweetest', said the dying man: 'It is not the mansion, it is He, Himself, I want.'" (Rosell) The hope of seeing Christ face to face someday is a great incentive for keeping ourselves pure and holy, as Christ is pure and holy.

IV. *THE BEGOTTEN ONE DOES NOT HABITUALLY SIN (3:4-10)*

A. *SIN IS LAWLESSNESS*

1 John 3:4 says, "Whosoever committeth sin transgresseth also the law: for sin is the transgression of the law." Sin is "an active rebellion against God's will and a violation of His holy law." (Stott) There are other definitions of sin in the Scriptures ("Whatsoever is not of faith is sin" - Romans 14:23b and "Therefore to him that knoweth to do good, and doeth it not, to him it is sin." (James 4:17). But this definition of sin in John ("sin is lawlessness") "...is the clearest and most revealing". (Stott; pg. 122) "The statement 'sin is lawlessness' so identifies the two as to render them interchangeable terms. Wherever one of them is read, it is possible to substitute the other." (Stott; 122) This verse says, "Everyone who habitually sins, also habitually commits lawlessness; and sin is lawlessness." (v. 4)

B. *THE PURPOSE FOR CHRIST'S FIRST COMING WAS TO TAKE AWAY OUR SINS. (3:5)*

"And you know that He (emphatic with special emphasis) became a man so that He could take away our sins, and that there is no sin in Him, no missing of God's will at any time in anyway." (v. 5)

"Lady Huntington was trying to lead a man to Christ. To her urgent entreaties he answered: 'Oh! It is of no use! I am lost! I am lost!' 'Thank God for that!' said she. 'Why?' exclaimed the man in astonishment. 'Because', said Lady Huntington, 'Christ came to save the lost. He is just the one who can save you.'" (Rosell)

"Some years ago in the typically explosive style of modern youth, a young man left his home. Father and mother wept,

but he laughed their pleas aside and strode off to have his own way. His way led him to sin and each year found him increasingly broken and despondent until he was ashamed to write a letter to his loved ones. A score of years later he climbed out of a boxcar one morning to find himself in the village where he had been reared. His heart quickened to think that he was near his farm home but he suddenly saddened at the thought that surely his parents would not allow him to return broken and sinful to their door. Unable to leave the village without at least making an effort to see his mother, he scribbled a card in the familiar little post office and sent it R.F.D., to the farm a few miles out of town. It read, 'Dear Mom, I wouldn't blame you if you would not forgive me, but if you still love me and can forgive me hang a sheet on the clothes line and I'll be passing by in the next few days, if you and Dad can't forgive me, never mind. I will not bother you again.' The next day he jumped aboard the slow train that made its way through the hills crossing the corner of his father's farm. Rounding the last hill he recognized the familiar cottage, and saw - not one sheet but EVERY CLOTHES LINE COVERED WITH SHEETS and pillow cases! Like a schoolboy he ran across the fields to the arms of a mother who would ALWAYS forgive. God is like that!" (Rosell)

As someone said, "When God pardons, He consigns the offense to everlasting forgetfulness."

C. THE WAY TO KEEP FROM HABITUALLY SINNING IS TO CONSTANTLY ABIDE IN CHRIST. (3:6, 7)

Everyone who is constantly abiding in Christ is not habitually sinning. These who are habitually sinning do not have a present, up-to-date, and victorious relationship with

Christ. They do not have a present, acceptable standing before God. It could be that such individuals have never experientially known Christ, or it could be that the hearts of such people have become hardened through the deceitfulness of sin, after once knowing Christ. The point is this: Those who are presently practicing sin do not presently know God. Such individuals are not abiding in Christ. Failure to abide in Christ is the cause of habitual sinning.

A Christian is one who is like Christ. The character of Christ's life was sinless. The pattern of the Christian's life too will be sinless. I emphasize the word 'pattern'. The Christian norm is never to sin, and by John's definition of sin we mean 'going against God's holy law'. John wrote earlier in his letter: 1 John 2:1: "My little children, these things I am writing to you in order that you may not commit an act of sin." Habitual sinning is out of the question for a Christian. And John makes it clear that a Christian need never to commit even a single act of willful transgression against a known law of God. However, John makes it clear that it is possible to be a Christian and still commit isolated acts of sin. 1 John 2:2 says, "And if anyone commits an act of sin, One who pleads our cause we constantly have facing the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous One." (Wuest) So a Christian is one who does not habitually sin (that is, practice sin); however, a Christian may and sometimes does commit an isolated act of sin. Those isolated sins of course must be immediately confessed to God. A Christian is one, then, whose 'pattern' of life is sinless, but whose every detailed action may not be sinless.

The Christian who constantly abides in Christ will be delivered from a life of habitual sinning. "Sin and Christ are irreconcilably at enmity with each other. Christ in His sin-

less Person and saving work is fundamentally opposed to it." (Stott)

- D. *Wrote John, "But if you keep on sinning, it shows that you belong to Satan, who since he first began to sin has kept steadily at it. But the Son of God came to destroy these works of the devil. The person who has been born into God's family does not make a practice of sinning, because now God's life is in him; so he can't keep on sinning, for this new life has been born into him and controls him - he has been born again. So now we can tell who is a child of God and who belongs to Satan. Whoever is living a life of sin and doesn't love his brother shows that he is not in God's family". (1 John 3:8-10)*

The one who habitually practices righteousness is of God; the one who habitually sins is of the Devil. Jesus said, "By their fruits ye shall know them." (Matthew 7:20) "Our parentage is either divine or diabolical...In the intimate, spiritual sense, God is not the Father of all men, and all men are not His children." (Stott)

As long as one appropriates the Nature of Christ, it is impossible to practice sin. (vs. 9)

It is the practice of righteousness that best identifies a person as being born of God. "The heretics appear to have indulged in the subtly perverse reasoning that somehow you could 'be' righteous without necessarily bothering to 'practice' righteousness. John roundly denies the possibility. 'Doing is the test of 'being' (Law)." (Stott)

Concretely defined, the righteousness which the Christian is to 'practice' is the righteousness of love. "Love is righteous-

ness in relationship up to others." (Plummer) In the next paragraph of his letter, John describes this love.

Note verse 8. The characteristic work of the devil is to sin (continuous present tense), but the work of the Son of God is to save.

Christ came decisively, completely, and once-and-for-all to destroy (aorist) the works of the devil. Those works include: (1) morally - enticement to sin; (2) physically - infliction of disease, (3) intellectually - seduction into error. (The word 'destroy' can be translated 'loose' - loose the diabolical chains that bound us.)

Because the devil is still doing his destruction in lives, the word 'destroy' must be taken not to mean 'liquidate' or 'annihilate', but rather 'to negate, to deprive of force, to render inoperative, to conquer and to overthrow'. (Stott) The devil is still busy doing his wicked works, but he has been defeated and in Christ we can escape from his tyranny." (Stott)

Through Christ's death the power of God is made available to break the chains of sin in your life; have you availed yourself of that power? Do you have chains of sin or chains of bad habits, which are enslaving you? If so, Christ has the power to loose you from those chains! You do not have the power to deliver yourself, but Christ does have the power! However, you must let Christ release His power in your life. That chain may be a moral chain, or a physical chain, or an intellectual chain. The whole purpose for Christ's coming was to release you from your bondage - to destroy the works of Satan and to break the chains that bind you!

In this entire section (3:4-10) "John is arguing rather the incongruity than the impossibility of sin in the Christian" (as

shown by the continuous tenses - signifying habitual practice of sin). (Stott, 126, 127) "If even isolated sins are so incongruous, what is utterly impossible is persistence in sin, 'a character, a prevailing habit, and not primarily an act.' (Westcott)." (Stott).

CONCLUSION:

If Christ appeared first both 'to take away our sins' and to 'destroy the works of the devil', and if, when He appears a second time, 'we shall see him' and, in consequence, 'we shall be like him', how can we go on living in sin? To do so is to deny the purpose of His two appearing. If we would be loyal to His first coming and ready for His second, we must purify ourselves, as He is pure. By so doing we shall give evidence of our birth of God." (Stott)

CHAPTER 7 - DISCUSSION

"CHARACTER OF A CHRISTIAN - BORN OF GOD!"

1 John 2:28-3:10

- 1. Give your explanation of the following statement: "Holiness in the Christian is not an inherent quality, but a derived quality."*
- 2. Who is the source, and what is the strong motivation for righteous living, according to 1 John 2:28?*
- 3. What is one of the strongest evidences that one has been truly "born again", according to 1 John 2:29? Give some thought to the following statement by John Stott: "The child exhibits the parent's character because he shares the parent's nature."*
- 4. What difference should a strong belief in the immanent second coming of Jesus make in the way one lives his life and in the way in which one declares God's truth to others?*
- 5. Why should the fact that Christians are called "children of God" cause such wonderment and amazement? (1 John 3:1) According to 1 John 3:1, should a "born again" person be surprised if he finds that some of his friends alienate him?*
- 6. What future destiny can true believers anticipate when Christ appears the second time, according to 1 John 3:27? (Note 1 John 3:3)*
- 7. Give your interpretation of the following statement: "maintenance of faith in Christ keeps hope burning alive and results in constant inner cleansing." (Note 1 John 3:3)*
- 8. What is John's definition of sin, and how does John's definition differ from Paul's and James' definition of sin? (Note 1 John 3:4; Romans 14:23; James 4:17). Do you believe that John's definition of sin is the clearest and the most concise definition of sin that can be found in the New Testament? According to 1 John 3:4, is it*

the occasional sin or the habitual practice of sin that indicates one is "lawless"?

9. *What was the main purpose for which Christ came to Earth to become a man, according to 1 John 3:5? (Note Romans 5:6; I Timothy 1:15; Mark 2:17). Give your comments on the following statement:*

*"There is no sin stain so deep,
But what Jesus' blood goes deeper yet!"
"Come, and He will give you rest;
Trust Him for His word is plain;
He will take the sinfulest,
Christ receiveth sinful men."
"Christ receiveth sinful men,
Even me with all my sin,
Purged from every spot and stain,
Heaven with Him I enter in."
"Sing it o'er and o'er again,
Christ receiveth sinful men;
Make the message clear and plain'
Christ receiveth sinful men."*

10. *According to 1 John 3:6, 7, what would you conclude about a person who claims to know God, in spite of the fact that he is presently practicing sin? From personal observation and from a careful study of scripture, can you conclude that it is possible for a backsliding believer eventually to lose, not only his personal fellowship with God, but also his very salvation from God? Is it reasonable and Biblical to conclude that no one who is presently practicing sin ever knew God (in a saving relationship) in the past? Is not the possibility of apostasy taught in the scriptures? (Note Hebrews 3:12; 10:35-39; II Peter 2:20; 3:17; I Timothy 1:19; 4:1).*

11. *How do you reconcile the teaching of 1 John 1:7-2:2 and 1 John 3:4-8? (Be sure to read these verses in modern translations, which make distinction between the Greek Tenses).*
12. *Is it an act of judging, on your part, if you declare to a professing Christian who is at the same time living a life of sin, that he is not a Christian and that he has no right to profess to being a Christian? (Note 1 John 3:8-10; Matthew 7:1, 15:20)*
13. *Tell why you agree or disagree with the following statements: "Our parentage is either divine or diabolical. In the intimate, spiritual sense, God is not the Father of all men, and all men are not His children." (Note John 8: 39-58, especially John 8:44)*
14. *According to 1 John 3:9, is it possible for a person to appropriate the nature of Christ and at the same time make a practice of sinning?*
15. *Is it possible to "be" righteous without bothering to "practice" righteousness? Is it possible to be "justified" without being "re-generated"? Can there be "positional" righteousness without "actual" righteousness evident in the life of a person who professes to be a Christian?*
16. *Concretely defined, what is the righteousness that the Christian is to "practice"? Give your comments on the following statement: "Love is righteousness in relationship to others."*
17. *What are some of the "works of the devil" (1 John 3:8) that the Son of God came to destroy? Because it is evident that the devil is continuing to do his diabolical and destructive work in the lives of human beings, how can it be said that Jesus came to earth decisively and once-and-for-all "to destroy the devil's work" (1 John 3:8)?*
18. *Tell why you agree or disagree with the following statement: "If we would be loyal to His first coming and ready for His second, we must purify ourselves, as He is pure. By so doing we shall give evidence of our birth of God." In what areas of your life do you need*

*to purify yourself, in order for you better to be prepared for
Christ's second coming?*

CHAPTER 8

"CHARACTER OF A CHRISTIAN - SELF-GIVING LOVE!"

1 John 3: 11-24

SCRIPTURE: This is the message you have heard from the beginning: We should love one another. We must not be like Cain, who belonged to the evil one and killed his brother. And why did he kill him? Because Cain had been doing what was evil, and his brother had been doing what was righteous. So don't be surprised, dear brothers and sisters, if the world hates you. If we love our brothers and sisters who are believers, it proves that we have passed from death to life. But a person who has no love is still dead. Anyone who hates another brother or sister is really a murderer at heart. And you know that murderers don't have eternal life within them. We know what real love is because Jesus gave up his life for us. So we also ought to give up our lives for our brothers and sisters. If someone has enough money to live well and sees a brother or sister in need but shows no compassion—how can God's love be in that person? Dear children, let's not merely say that we love each other; let us show the truth by our actions. Our actions will show that we belong to the truth, so we will be confident when we stand before God. Even if we feel guilty, God is greater than our feelings, and he knows everything. Dear friends, if we don't feel guilty, we can come to God with bold confidence. And we will receive from him whatever we ask because we obey him and do the things that please him. And this is his commandment: We must believe in the name of his Son, Jesus Christ, and love one another, just as he commanded us. Those who obey God's commandments remain in fellowship with him, and he with them. And we know he lives in us because the Spirit he gave us lives in us. 1 John 3:11-24

INTRODUCTION:

HOW CAN A TRUE CHRISTIAN BE IDENTIFIED?

The Bible offers definite tests to determine whether or not a person is a true Christian. The first test is the moral test – the test of obedience to God's commandments issuing forth in righteous living. At least two

times in the Book of 1 John 2:3-6 and 2:28-3:10, this test is emphasized. The righteousness that characterizes a Christian is a Christ-like righteousness, a righteousness that is supernatural and divinely imparted. A genuine Christian is one who practices righteousness. 1 John 3:6 says in Greek: "Everyone continually remaining in Him does not practice sin. Everyone practicing sin does not presently see and know Him."

The second test is the social test, or the test of love, as described in 1 John 2:7-11 and in 1 John 3:11-24, which is our Scripture reading for today.

The third test is the doctrinal test, or the test of belief. Those who deny the incarnation – that is, God come in the flesh – are not of God.

PROPOSITION:

One of the greatest character traits of a Christian is self-giving love. "Love is righteousness in relationships." Righteousness is concretely defined in terms of love. Just as righteousness is a divinely-imparted gift, so love is divinely-imparted gift. This love can be described in four ways: (1) Personal love, (2) Perfect love, (3) Practical love, and (4) Productive Love.

I. **PERSONAL LOVE (3:11-15)**

This love is not abstract, general love for the entire world, but personal, individual love for specific persons. "It is easier to be enthusiastic about Humanity with a capital "H" than it is to love individual men and women, especially those who are uninteresting, exasperating, depraved, or otherwise unattractive. Loving everybody in general may be an excuse for loving nobody in particular". (Lewis) (Stott).

Some want to do great things for mission fields around the world, and we should, but they are not on speaking terms with some Christian

brother who lives next door to them. Christians may not agree with every viewpoint of fellow Christian brothers (Paul and Barnabus did not and even went their separate ways to work for the Lord), but we must love each brother (Paul and Barnabas continued to love each other). Christian brothers of varying temperaments and interests can still love each other dearly, because of the great mutual interest and permission that both have in Christ and His unifying love.

This personal love will produce righteous works, which will be a silent rebuke to the ungodly (1 John 12-15). Therefore, the ungodly man who is rebuked by such righteousness and love will hate the loving Christian. "The life of a good man always passes a sight judgment on the life of an evil man. That was the attitude of the wild and loose-living and reckless Alcibiades to Socrates. Socrates was the good man par excellence; Alcibiades was brilliant but erratic and often debauched. He used to say to Socrates, 'Socrates, I hate you, because every time I meet you, you show me what I am. (Barclay's 1 John pg. 101) Hate is the mother of murder. It is the hand that moves the knife to the throat (like Cain did to Abel). "In equating the hater with the murderer, John is not exaggerating, 'for we wish him to perish when we hate'. (Calvin) So hatred is murder, and it is true to say that whosoever hateth his brother is a murderer." (Stott)

We should not marvel (3:13) if the world hates us for what seems to be no apparent reason. The world, like Cain, feels the condemnation of God, and wants to destroy anything that represents God or reminds of God's righteousness. Certainly a Christian's divinely-imparted righteousness reminds one of God. "The hatred for the world for the Christian is still an ever-present phenomenon and it is due to the fact that the worldly man sees in the Christian the condemnation of himself; he sees in the Christian that which he is not, and that which in his heart of hearts he knows he ought to be; and, because he will not change,

he seeks to eliminate the man who reminds him of the lost goodness." (Barclay's 1 John; pg. 101)

Possession of such personal, perpetual love is the evidence that one has passed from death to life (3:14). The person who continually loves (present tense) has a personal up-to-date relationship with God (is in a condition resulting from having passed out of death into life – perfect tense). "The fact that we are conscious of a love for Christians as Christians is a proof to us that we have entered upon a new life: that we now first truly live. The passage has been made: the new sphere of being has been gained. Life is not future but present." (Westcott)

PERFECT LOVE (1 John 3:16a)

This love is perfect for several reasons.

PERFECT because this love is the divine love of God (Agape). It is the highest type of love. It is not a human love, but a divine, self-sacrificing love.

PERFECT because it cannot be purchased, or achieved based on human effort. Romans 5:5 says, "The love of God has been poured out in our hearts and still floods them through the agency of the Holy Spirit who has given to us." (Wuest) For God to make this gift of love available for man, it took the costly sacrifice of Jesus on the cross. "We have come to know by experience the afore-mentioned love, because that One on behalf of us laid down His soul." (v. 16, Wuest)

"It seems to imply not so much the laying down as the laying aside of something like clothes, the 'divesting oneself of a thing' (Westcott). It is used, in fact, in John 13:4 of Christ laying aside His garments. As Cain has been given as the supreme example of hate, Christ is presented as the "Supreme Example of Love". A person's life is his most precious possession. To rob him of it is consequently the greatest sin we can do against him, which is presumably why the prohibition of

murder is the first commandment of the second table of the law. For the same reason, to give one's own life on another's behalf is the greatest possible expression of love for him. This then is the ultimate contrast: Cain's hatred issued in murder, Christ's love in self-sacrifice." (Stott)

Although this love is perfect in Source and quality, it is not perfect in expression, for this love is contained in and expressed through 'an earthen vessel' - cracked and subject to human frailties (weaknesses, mistakes, limitations in body, mistakes in judgment, imperfect actions). (Illustration: A little boy may want only to please his father, but he may make many mistakes in trying to carry out his father's desires.)

PERFECT in quality, because its source is from God, but man has need for an unlimited expansion and growth in his capacity for more love.

PRACTICAL LOVE (3:16b-18)

The chief example and motivation of love is Jesus Christ, who laid down his life for others. Christians too must be willing to lay down their lives for their brethren if necessary. But more often this divine love means, "communicating to another the outward means of living." The Christian who meets the two following qualifications is put in a position of inescapable responsibility. "First, he must see a brother's need, 'not merely cast a passing glance, but see, long enough to appreciate and understand the circumstances of the case' (Brooke). Secondly, he must himself be better off. If he sees his brother's necessity and has the wherewithal to supply it, he cannot stand idly by." (Stott)

A Christian must possess self-sacrificing love, patterned after Christ's self-giving love. "A missionary who gave up money he had saved to buy washing machine to provide money for literature distribution to

pagans, stated that he had for years used rocks for a wash board and that he could continue to do so"

What does the phrase 'the goods of the world' mean? "The phrase includes all the endowments which make up our earthly riches, wealth, station, intellect." (Westcott) Whatever you have that can aid your brother in poverty, you must give. This is the motivation for mission giving! Your brother can be in all kinds of poverty - physical, mental, spiritual poverty. "It has been finely said of a great teacher that 'He was tender to dullness as to all forms of poverty'." (Westcott) What does your brother need that you can supply? Intellectual enhancement; Understanding; Companionship in time of sorrow; Food and clothing to supply his physical needs.

"A rich business man and a prominent attorney were travelling around the world. They saw many impressive sights, but agreed that something they saw in Korea was most impressive of all. One morning as they walked along a country road in Korea, they saw a boy pulling a plow which was steered by an old man. It amused the attorney so much that he insisted on taking a picture of the scene with his little pocket camera. Later he showed the picture to a missionary in the next village remarking about the peculiar spectacle. 'Yes', said the missionary, 'it seems a very strange way to plow a field, but I happen to know the boy and old man well. They are very poor. However, when the little church was built here in the village they wanted to contribute something. They had no money. They had no grain to spare and winter was coming on, so they sold their ox and gave the money to the church building fund, and now, minus the valuable animal they have to pull the plow themselves.' The men looked at each other for a moment, and then the attorney said, 'But what a stupendous sacrifice! Why did you allow it?' 'They did not feel that way about it. They regarded it as a great joy that they had an ox to give to the Lord's work.'" (Rosell)

The love that God gives is the love that Jesus practiced. It is self-giving. "Love is 'the willingness to surrender that which has value for our own life, to enrich the life of another'". (Rosell)

The love that God gives is the love that Jesus practiced. It is self-giving. "Love is 'the willingness to surrender that which has value for our own life, to enrich the life of another' (Dodd)". (Stott)

Wrote James, "What doth it profit, my brethren, though a man say he hath faith, and have not works? Can faith save him? If a brother or sister be naked, and destitute of daily food, and one of you say unto them, 'Depart in peace, be ye warmed and filled; notwithstanding ye give them not those things which are needed to the body; what doth it profit? Even so faith, if it hath not works, is dead, being alone." (James 2:14-17) Love is not in word or tongue only but in deed and truth, not in theory but in action, not with mere outward expression but with genuine movement of our whole being.

PRODUCTIVE LOVE (3:19-24)

"If the RSV is correct in translating the first phrase of verse 20 '...whenever our hearts condemn us', the suggestion seems to be that it may not be either an unusual or an infrequent experience for the Christian's serene assurance to be disturbed. Sometimes the accusations of our 'conscience' will be true accusations, and sometimes they will be false, inspired by 'the accuser of the brethren'. (Revelations 12:10) In either case, the inner voice is not to overcome us." (Stott) Satan is the accuser of the brethren who appears as an angel of light - seeking to produce a condemning conscience in the Christian. Against this darkening, confusing, subtle force stands the powerful and merciful Spirit of God who comforts and stills the accusing voice of Satan.

There is the condemnatory voice of an over-sensitive conscience seeking to accuse, when there is no Biblical or objective basis for condem-

nation. Sometimes this over-sensitive conscience is developed in one's childhood. Children can develop notions and impressions that some things are wrong when those things that produce guilt feelings are not wrong at all. Such false guilts need to be thrown aside and a new confidence with God and man regained. God is greater than human ideas and notions, and in God's sovereign love and mercy, He will calm human doubts and deliver from false guilts.

When the body and mind are physically weary, doubt can easily creep upon one.

The one who experiences the divinely imparted love is assured that he is of the Truth, and therefore he can have a tranquil heart. "It is the mind's knowledge by which the heart's doubts may be silenced...Love is the final objective test of our Christian profession, for true love, in the sense of self-sacrifice, is not natural to man in his fallen state. Its existence in any man is evidence of new birth and of the indwelling Spirit, and it shows itself 'in deed'. 'There are actual things we can point to - not things we have professed or felt or imagined or intended, but things that we have done'. (Law) If we thus love 'in truth', we may indeed, have full assurance in our hearts. 'The fruit of love is confidence' (Westcott)" (Stott)

Are you beset by nagging doubts and feelings of condemnation and guilt? If so, first make sure of the source of your feelings. It could be that Satan is accusing you of things that you are not guilty of all. The source of your condemnation could be a conscience that has been trained to be over-sensitive concerning some issues. The conscience will tell you what it is trained to tell you. If, for instance, the conscience has been trained hard and long to believe that it is wrong to eat certain kinds of food, then every time you eat those foods you will feel condemned. However, God makes it clear in His Word that all foods are proper to eat and that there is no sin connected with them. (Colossians 2:20-23)

"Our conscience is by no means infallible; its condemnation may often be unjust. We can, therefore, appeal from our conscience to God who is greater and more knowledgeable. Indeed, He knows all things, including our secret motives and deepest resolves, and it is implied, will be more merciful towards us than our own heart. His omniscience should relieve, not terrify, us. So it is knowledge which alone can quieten the condemning heart, our own knowledge of our sincere love for others and supremely God's knowledge of our thoughts and motives. Stronger than any chemical tranquillizer is trust in our all-knowing God." (Stott)

However, if the condemnation which you feel is because of real sin in your life, the Sovereign mercy and love of God is still 'greater than your heart'. God knows your heart and can judge rightly. He is able and ready to forgive and to restore you to warm fellowship with Him if you confess and forsake your sins. So, whatever the source of condemnation - be it false or true - God is greater than the condemnation and can restore the believer to true confidence.

He who experiences God's divinely-imparted love, which frees the heart from condemnation, has a fearless confidence in the face of God the father.

Thus the meaning of the whole passage will be: The sense within us of a sincere love of the brethren, which is the sign of God's presence with us, will enable us to stay the accusations of our conscience, whatever they may be, because God, who gives us the love, and so blesses us with His fellowship, is greater than our heart; and He, having perfect knowledge, forgives all on which the heart sadly dwells." (Westcott)

The love-baptized, confident Christian constantly and habitually keeps God's commandments. (3:22-24) No-one may dare to claim that he abides in Christ and Christ in him unless he is obedient to the three

fundamental commandments which John has been expounding, which are belief in Christ, love for the brethren and moral righteousness." (Stott)

Such a Christian who possesses obedient love for God can expect to keep on receiving from God as He keeps on habitually asking God.

The product of love then is confidence – confidence in fearlessly facing God the Father, and confidence in expecting and receiving answers to prayer.

CONCLUSION:

"It may be helpful to summarize the teaching in this passage about hatred and love. Hatred characterizes the world, whose prototype is Cain. It originates in the devil, issues in murder and is evidence of spiritual death. Love characterizes the church, whose prototype is Christ. It originates in God, issues in self-sacrifice, and is evidence of eternal life." (Stott)

CHAPTER 8 - DISCUSSION
CHARACTER OF A CHRISTIAN - SELF-GIVING LOVE!
1 John 3: 11-24

1. *Tell why you agree or disagree with the following statement: "It is easier to be enthusiastic about Humanity with a capital "H" than it is to love individual men and women, especially those who are uninteresting, exasperating, depraved, or otherwise unattractive. Loving everybody in general may be an excuse for loving nobody in particular".*
2. *Is it possible for fellow Christians to love one another even when they disagree in their viewpoints and when they vary greatly in their temperaments and personalities? Is it proper to say that "love is a decision of the will", with or without accompanying emotions of the heart? Is it possible for one to love a person even though he does not like that person? Why or why not?*
3. *What explanation can be offered for the fact that sometimes the godless person hates the godly person, even though the latter seeks only to express genuine care and compassion for the former?*
4. *Is it an exaggeration to equate the hater with the murderer? (1 John 3:15) Why or why not?*
5. *According to 1 John 3:24, what is one of the strongest proofs that a person has truly become a Christian, and has truly entered upon a new life?*
6. *In what ways can a Christian's love be considered "perfect"?*
7. *What contrast is drawn between Cain and Christ, in terms of these two persons' attitudes and actions towards others? (Note 1 John 3:11-16)*
8. *Cite evidence from your personal experiences and observations and from the Holy Scriptures to document the truth of the following statement: "Although this love is perfect in source and in quality, it is not perfect in expression, for this love is contained*

in and expressed through 'an earthly vessel' - 'cracked' and subject to human frailties." (Note II Corinthians 4:7). Throughout one's entire life, will there continue to be a need for greater development in one's capacity to love? (Note the difference between "purity" and "maturity" and between "quality" and "quantity" as these terms relate to one's initial Christian experiences and to one's continuing spiritual developments).

9. *According to 1 John 3:16, what, practically, does Christian love mean?*
10. *In terms of a Christian's social relationships, what two qualifications must exist to put a believer in a position of inescapable responsibility to his fellow human being? (Note 1 John 3:17)*
11. *Tell why you agree or disagree with the following statement: "A Christian must possess self-sacrificing love, patterned after Christ's self-giving love." In light of the physical and spiritual needs of the world's poor people, is it morally right for a Christian to live luxuriously? What biblical evidence can you cite to support the following statement: "Christians are to live like the King, not like a king." (Note Isaiah 58:7; Luke 12:33; Matthew 8:20; Acts 10:36-38; Hebrews 13:16; 1 John 3:17, 18; James 2:14-17; Ephesians 4:28) Is a distinctively "Christian life-style" always "a simple life-style"? What does it mean to you to live "a simple life-style"?*
12. *What "needs" does your "brother" have, of which you are aware and which you have the ability to help meet? (1 John 3:17) What benefit, according to 1 John 3:18-20, does the knowledge that one has practiced compassionate actions in his life; bring to him during times when his conscience sends strange messages of condemnation to his heart? What is meant by the statement: "The fruit of love is confidence"?*
13. *How do you respond or react to the following definition of "love"? - "Love is the willingness to surrender that which has value for our own life, to enrich the life of another."*

14. *How do you distinguish between "real guilt" and "false guilt", "legitimate" feelings and "illegitimate feelings" of condemnation? What are some of the possible sources of "false guilt" and illegitimate feelings of condemnation? What is the scriptural answer for dealing with the accusations of one's conscience? (1 John 3:19-20)*
15. *To what extent is one's conscience a "reliable guide" in determining the "rightness" or the "wrongness" of one's actions and attitudes? Who is greater than one's conscience? Why should God's omniscience relieve, rather than terrify, a believer - even during times when a believer has incurred feelings of guilt and condemnation because of violations of God's known laws or because of neglect in moral duty?*
16. *Tell why you agree or disagree with the following statement: "No one may dare to claim that he abides in Christ and Christ in him unless he is obedient to the three fundamental commandments which John has been expounding, which are belief in Christ, love for the brethren and moral righteousness."*

CHAPTER 9
"TESTING SPIRITS!"
1 John 4:1-6

SCRIPTURE: Beloved, believe not every spirit, but prove the spirits, whether they are of God; because many false prophets are gone out into the world. Hereby know ye the Spirit of God: every spirit that confesseth that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is of God: and every spirit that confesseth not Jesus is not of God: and this is the spirit of the antichrist, whereof ye have heard that it cometh; and now it is in the world already. Ye are of God, my little children, and have overcome them: because greater is he that is in you than he that is in the world. They are of the world: therefore speak they as of the world, and the world heareth them. We are of God: he that knoweth God heareth us; he who is not of God heareth us not. By this we know the spirit of truth, and the spirit of error. 1 John 4:1-6

INTRODUCTION:

What are the objective tests to determine whether or not a person is really a Christian? John states three main tests to apply: (1) Moral Test - Obedience, (2) Social Test - Love, (3) Doctrinal Test - Belief. These tests recur at least three times throughout the book of 1 John. Like a revolving staircase, these tests are applied on a different level.

PROPOSITION:

Today let us again look at the doctrinal test - the test of belief. The doctrinal test to apply to all who teach is the test of the Incarnation. John points out (1) The Need for Testing spirits, (2) The Method for Testing Spirits, (3) The Results of Testing Spirits.

- I. **NEED FOR TESTING SPIRITS:** "Beloved, believe not every spirit, but prove the spirits, whether they are of God; because many false prophets are gone out into the world."

Why is there a need for testing spirits? Simply, because many false prophets are gone out into the world. The scene of their false teaching and deception is the world of men. There is a battleground be-

tween good and evil, and man's mind and heart is the scene of that battle. The activity of Satan is continual (as shown by the perfect tense."

The Christian faith is not an indiscriminate faith. Rather, "...true faith examines its object before reposing confidence in it." (Stott)

Satan can perform miracles as well as God. Satan counterfeits the work of God. The magicians in Egypt could perform some of the plagues, but were unable to perform all. "Pharaoh in turn called in sages and magicians and they, the scribes of Egypt, did the same by their secret formulas." Exodus 7:11. They mimicked the work of God.

Revelations 13:12-15 shows that the 'False Prophet' who will serve the Antichrist during the Tribulation is given power by Satan to perform great miracles. "And he exerciseth all the authority of the first beast in his sight. And he maketh the earth and them dwell therein to worship the first beast, whose death-stroke was healed. And he doeth great signs that he should even make fire to come down out of heaven upon the earth in the sight of men. And he deceiveth them that dwell on the earth by reason of the signs which it was given him to do in the sight of the beast; saying to them that dwell on the earth, that they should make an image to the beast who hath the stroke of the sword and lived. And it was given unto him to give breath to it, even to the image to the beast, that the image of the beast should both speak, and cause that as many as should not worship the image of the beast should be killed." Revelations 13:12-15.

Satan appears as "an angel of light", posing as a worker of good. Satan can perform what appear to be deeds of great goodness. Satan uses many religions for his own purposes. Modernism, in many churches today, is simply a system of good works of charity, but works that are done from a motive of human pride rather than from the motive of humility and honor to Christ. Modernism denies the true lord-

ship and deity of Jesus Christ; thus, however good its works appear to be, modernism is an instrument of Satan.

Human teachers and religious teachings must be carefully examined, for Satan works through religion and impersonates himself in so-called beneficial systems. "Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God; because many false prophets are gone out into the world." (1 John 4:1)

II. METHOD FOR TESTING SPIRITS (vs. 2, 3, 5, 6).

A. If a Teaching or a Teacher confesses and adheres to the Incarnation, the teaching and teacher are of God. (vss. 2, 3)

"Confesseth - openly and boldly acknowledges the Person of the Incarnate Savior and not only the fact of the Incarnation." (Westcott) "The confession is that the man Jesus of Nazareth is Himself none other than the incarnate Christ or Son...The perfect tense, come (eleluthota) compared with the present tense in 2 John 7 (erchomenon), seems to emphasize that the flesh assumed by the Son of God in the incarnation has become His permanent possession. Far from coming upon Jesus at the baptism and leaving Him before the cross, the Christ actually came in one flesh and has never laid it aside...The fundamental Christian doctrine which can never be compromised is the eternal divine-human Person of Jesus Christ, the Son of God." (Stott) "No system can be tolerated, however loud its claims or learned its adherents, if it denies that Jesus is the Christ come in the flesh." (Scott)

There are several modern-day Churches that deny the Divine-Human Person of Jesus Christ.

1. *UNITARIANISM* - "They think of Jesus as merely a man, an exceptional man like Moses and Buddha, but no more than a man. In their view, Jesus' main contribution was as a teacher.
2. *JEHOVAH'S WITNESSES* - The Witnesses teach that Christ is not equal to God, but that He was created by God. For them, Jehovah is the only Savior. When Christ lived in heaven, they say, He was known as the angel Michael. When Christ came to earth, He was stripped of his angelic nature and became only a man. Therefore, it is only as a man that Jesus died on the cross and a man's death is not enough to atone for the sins of the world. The Witnesses also teach that Jesus was not bodily resurrected, but only as a spirit. However, like others who have said this, the Witnesses cannot explain what happened to Christ's body." (Ridenour, *So What's The Difference*, pg. 139)
3. *CHRISTIAN SCIENCE* - Mrs. Eddy's "problem was to prove that Jesus was not a real man, but only a spirit. To do this, she drew an artificial distinction between the two parts of His name, Jesus (His personal name) and Christ (His official name). She writes, "The spiritual Christ was infallible. Jesus, as material manhood, was not Christ. As a drop of water is one with the ocean, a ray of light one with the sun, even so God and man, Father and son, are one in being." In other words, Jesus is no different from other men because they are all part of God. This, of course, denies the deity of Christ...Mrs. Eddy tried to solve the problem of the empty tomb like the

Gnostics, who taught that Jesus was only a spirit, never a man, so he didn't really die nor rise from the dead. The apostle John wrote his gospel to refute the Gnostics and it is also an effective answer for Christian Science. (Ibid; 148-149)

4. *MORMONISM - "Mormons have an unbiblical view of the doctrine of God. They claim that God is not a spirit, but is of material substance. They also say that there are many gods (polytheism) and that men are gods. In his Journal of Discourses, Joseph Smith wrote, 'God himself was once as we are now and is an exalted man...' Smith also wrote in Doctrine and Covenants, 'The father had a body of flesh and bone as tangible as man's...' Mormons say that our Savior was produced, not by a direct act of the Holy Spirit, but by actual sexual relations between a resurrected Adam-God and Mary. They further assert that the wedding Jesus attended in Cana where He turned water into wine was His own. Brigham Young wrote that Jesus married Lazarus' sisters, Mary and Martha, that day - and that He also married Mary Magdalene." (Ibid; 161, 164)*

B. Another test to determine whether a message is from God "is whether it is accepted by Christians and rejected by non-Christians." (Stott) "They are of the world: therefore speak they as of the world, and the world heareth them. We are of God: he that knoweth God heareth us; he who is not of God heareth us not. By this we know the spirit of truth, and the spirit of error. (Ibid; 151-164)

"There is a certain affinity between God's Word and God's people. Jesus had taught that His sheep hear His voice (John 10: 4, 5, 8, 16, 26, 27), that everyone who is of the truth listens to His witness to the truth (John 18:37), and that 'he who is of God hears the words of God'. (John 8:47) in the same way John asserts that since we are of God (6) and ye are of God (4), you listen to us. There is a correspondence between message and hearers. The Spirit who is in you (4) enables you to discern His own voice speaking through us (2). So you can recognize God's Word because God's people listen to it, just as you can recognize God's people because they listen to God's Word."

"The man whose source and origin is God will welcome the truth; the man whose source and origin is the world will reject the truth. When we come to think of it, that is an obvious truth. How can a man whose watchword is competition even begin to understand an ethic whose keynote is service? How can a man whose aim is the exaltation of the self, who believes in the survival of the fittest, and who holds that the weakest must go to the wall, even begin to understand a teaching whose principle for living is love? How can a man who believes that this is the only world, and that, therefore, material things are the only things which matter, even begin to understand a life which is lived in the light of eternity, and where it is the unseen things which are the greatest values in life?" (Barkley's 1 John, pg. 113)

III. RESULT OF TESTING SPIRITS (vs. 4)

"You have your source and origin in God, dear children, and you have won the victory over them, because that power which is in you is greater than the power which is in the world." (1 John 4:4; Barclay)

"You have not succumbed to their blandishments or believed their lies." (Stott)

"Have overcome" - stand presently victorious (perfect tense) because of the exceeding power of Christ which works within.

Satan is strong but the Holy Spirit in the believer is much stronger. Through the Holy Spirit's illumination, the believer is enabled to detect falsehood and to overcome error.

"In this conflict the virtue of their Master's Victory (John 16:33) is granted to them. They have to claim the fruits of a triumph which has been already gained." (Westcott)

"He that is in you" - The Church appears to be set over against the world; so that here the thought is of the body, and not of the individual." (Westcott)

The 'world' is simply "the moral characteristics of the order, as separated from God." (Westcott)

CONCLUSION:

Don't believe everything you see or hear, regardless of how religious or spectacular, or miraculous it may be or claim to be. There are many false prophets who are actively and continuously working within the sphere of society and in the hearts and minds of many people.

First does the professed religious teacher believe in the divine-human Christ (Incarnation); and second is the proposed message from God accepted by the company of true Christians and rejected by non-Christians?

The result of carefully and prayerfully relying on the Holy Spirit, is total victory - overcoming the false prophets.

Do not accept teaching and preaching gullibly, regardless of how persuasive and miraculous the leader claims to be. Test the spirits, and

as you do, the Holy Spirit will enable you to detect false prophets and false prophecy. The warning against the false prophet in the Old Testament days was very serious. (Deuteronomy 13: 1-5) God help us to watch and pray.

CHAPTER 9 – DISCUSSION
"TESTING SPIRITS"

1 John 4:1-5

1. According to 1 John 4:1, why is there a need for "testing spirits"?
2. Cite scriptural evidence to prove the claim that Satan and Satan's servants are able to perform miracles as well as God, in the attempts to counterfeit God's works and in the attempt to deceive human beings. (Note Exodus 7:11; Matthew 7: 21-23; 24: 23-26; Mark 13: 21-23; I Timothy 4: 1-2; II Timothy 3: 12-13; 1 John 2: 126; II Corinthians 11: 13-15)
3. What does it mean to acknowledge that "Jesus Christ has come in the flesh"? (1 John 4: 2)
4. What evidence is there, from a careful study of scripture, to say that Jesus Christ "actually came in one flesh and has never laid it aside"? (Stott) If this statement is true, does this mean that Jesus forever bears the marks (wounds) of His sacrificial death on His resurrected body in Heaven, demonstrating His continuing and eternal identification with humanity?
5. Is the doctrine of the incarnation a "fundamental doctrine" that one must believe if he is to be a Christian, or is it a "secondary doctrine" which is debatable among sincere Christians? Do you agree with the following statement: "The fundamental Christian doctrine which can never be compromised is the eternal divine-human Person of Jesus Christ, the Son of God." (Stott)?
6. Tell how you react to the following statement: "No system can be tolerated, however loud its claims or learned its adherents, if it denies that Jesus is the Christ come in the flesh." (Stott)
7. What is meant by the phrase: "There's a certain affinity between God's word and God's people"? Note 1 John 4: 5, 6) What can be said about a person who resists the teaching of those who declare that Jesus is the co-eternal, co-equal Son of God who became a man and who, as the sinless divine-human Person, died

on a cross and bodily arose again from the dead? According to 1 John 4:3, is it judgementalism to call a person an "antichrist" if he denies the doctrine of the incarnation?

8. *Whose presence is in the mind and heart of the believer to enable the believer to discern falsehood and to overcome the power and the deception of Satan? (Note 1 John 4:4) Do Christians work for a victory or from a victory? With whose "victory" can Christians identify, and from whose may they enjoy benefits? (Note John 16:33)*
9. *What, according to the scriptures, were some of the characteristics of a false prophet, and how was a false prophet to be punished? (Note Deuteronomy 13:1-5)*
10. *Do you agree with the following statement? "Don't believe everything you see or hear, regardless of how religious, or spectacular, or miraculous it may be or claim to be." What is the difference between being "gullible" and "teachable", between being "judgmental" and "discerning"?*

CHAPTER 10

"LET BROTHERLY LOVE PREVAIL!"

1 John 4:7-21

SCRIPTURE: Dear friends, let us continue to love one another, for love comes from God. Anyone who loves is a child of God and knows God. But anyone who does not love does not know God, for God is love. God showed how much he loved us by sending his one and only Son into the world so that we might have eternal life through him. This is real love—not that we loved God, but that he loved us and sent his Son as a sacrifice to take away our sins. Dear friends, since God loved us that much, we surely ought to love each other. No one has ever seen God. But if we love each other, God lives in us, and his love is brought to full expression in us. And God has given us his Spirit as proof that we live in him and he in us. Furthermore, we have seen with our own eyes and now testify that the Father sent his Son to be the Savior of the world. All who declare that Jesus is the Son of God have God living in them, and they live in God. We know how much God loves us, and we have put our trust in his love. God is love, and all who live in love live in God, and God lives in them. And as we live in God, our love grows more perfect. So we will not be afraid on the Day of Judgment, but we can face him with confidence because we live like Jesus here in this world. Such love has no fear, because perfect love expels all fear. If we are afraid, it is for fear of punishment, and this shows that we have not fully experienced his perfect love. We love each other because he loved us first. If someone says, "I love God," but hates a fellow believer, that person is a liar; for if we don't love people we can see how can we love God, whom we cannot see? And he has given us this command: Those who love God must also love their fellow believers. 1 John 4: 7-21.

INTRODUCTION:

The pagans, during the early days of Christianity, were convinced of the reality of Christianity, because of the love that Christians had for one another. Declared the pagans concerning the Christians, "Behold how they love one another!" Jesus said, "By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples if ye love another."

PROPOSITION:

Love is the authenticating proof that Christianity is real. The Bible says, "If I have the gift of foretelling the future and hold in my mind not only all human knowledge but the very secrets of God, and if I also have that absolute faith which can move mountains, but have no love, I amount to nothing at all." (1 Corinthians 13:2) If love is so important, and is an absolute necessity in my life, then I must seek to find and to practice this love.

I. MOTIVATION FOR BROTHERLY LOVE (Why Love)

A. God's Very Nature Is Love and the Origin of All True Love Is God.

Wrote John, "Beloved, let us love one another: For love is of God; and every one that knoweth is born of God, and knoweth God." (1 John 4:7) "Others had said, 'God loves', but no one had ever said: 'God Is Love' in His essential nature and cannot do an un-loving thing without violating His own nature." (Jones, Word Became Flesh; pg. 91)

The Nature of Reality is love, and, therefore to go against love is to go against reality. If the very Nature of the Creator is love, then it stands to reason that the nature of the creature ought to be love.

"Dr. Carl Menninger, head of perhaps the outstanding psychiatric center of American, in Topeka, Kansas, wrote a book on 'Love

Against Hate'. He took the position that love is the constructive element - love builds up and hate tears down. When he came to the conclusion that people are in his institution because they had not loved or been loved, it was an epoch in his thinking. For psychiatry had been founded on the idea that insight is the cure-all for human personality problems. Give the patient insight as to his troubles, and he is automatically cured. But mental institutions are filled with people who have insight as to what is the matter with them, but they are still there. When Dr. Menninger gained this new insight, he called his staff together and said in essence: These people are here because they haven't loved or been loved. That is their disease. All else is symptom. So we will have to love them into loving, will have to make all our contacts with the patients love contacts, from the top psychiatrist to the caretaker. If you go into change an electric light bulb in a patient's room, you must make your contacts love contacts. They tried it for six months, and found at the end of that time, that the period of hospitalization had been cut in half. The patients were getting well in half the time it took under the old insight technique. Love was the key." (Jones, Word Became Flesh; pgs. 92, 93) Dr. Smiley Blanton, another psychiatrist, says that "after sitting for forty years in my office and dealing with disrupted people I've come to the conclusion that they are disrupted because they haven't loved or been loved." (Ibid; 94)

"In the Bellevue Hospital in New York they found that babies, though given scientific care and feeding, died to the tune of 32 per cent the first year of a minor ailment. They decided that the babies were getting everything except love. So they sent out a call for 'Love Volunteers' - women who would come in and love babies so many hours a day. Hundreds of women volunteered. The superintendent reporting on results said, 'We could no more do without these 'love volunteers' than we could do without pen-

icillin. Here is a vitamin, love, without which babies die to the tune of 32 per cent the first year of a minor ailment and 22 per cent are so damaged that they must be classed as idiots." (Ibid; 94)

Man is made in the image of God, and if "God is love" then man is made to love and to be loved. "As it has been said, 'A saint is a man in whom Christ lives again', and the best demonstration of God comes not from argument, but from a life of love. In such a life God is seen as He is seen nowhere else." (Barclay 1 John, pg. 115)

B. God Manifested His Love Perfectly By Sending His Son To Die For Mankind.

By Christ's coming God accomplished two things: (1) Made possible the gift of love to man. "God showed how much he loved us by sending his one and only Son into the world so that we might have eternal life through him." God showed how much he loved us by sending his one and only Son into the world so that we might have eternal life through him. 1 John 4: 9: (2) This is real love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us and sent his Son as a sacrifice to take away our sins. 1 John 4: 10. (3) Furthermore, we have seen with our own eyes and now testify that the Father sent his Son to be the Savior of the world. I John 4:14.

1. *Showed to man concretely the meaning of love in terms of active self-giving.*

"If God loved us so much, we ought to love one another." (vs. 11). "He loved us and sent His Son to rescue us, not because we are in any sense lovable, but because He is love. So the great-

ness of His love is seen in the costliness of His self-sacrifice for the wholly undeserving (Romans 5: 7, 8). A clearer manifestation of God's love could not be imagined." "No-one who has been to the cross and seen God's immeasurable and unmerited love displayed there can go back to a life of selfishness." (Stott)

The love that is described here is 'agape' love, which is divine love. Our love has a supernatural source. "Agape is self-sacrifice, the seeking of another's positive good at one's own cost, and a greater self-giving than God's gift of His Son there has never been, nor could be." (Stott) Greatest possible love - the fact of the Incarnation itself is most amazing (God become a man), but the greater manifestation of love than even that is seen in Christ's death (Atonement) whereby He becomes our Savior. Because He is our Savior, it shows that we are sinners. "Men need to be saved from themselves; they need to be saved from the habits which have become their fetters; they need to be saved from their temptations; they need to be saved from their fears and their anxieties; they need to be saved from their own follies and their own mistakes. In every case Jesus brings men salvation. (Barclays Acts; pg. 193)

"There was famous evangelist and preacher called Brownlow North. He too was a changed man and in his early days, he had lived a life that was anything but Christian. Once, just before he

was to enter the pulpit to preach in a church in Aberdeen, he received a letter. This letter informed him that its writer had evidence of some disgraceful thing which Brownlow North had done before he became a Christian; and it went on to say that the writer proposed to interrupt the service and to tell the whole congregation of that sin if Brownlow North preached. Brownlow North took the letter into the pulpit; he read it to the congregation; he told of the things that once he had done; and then he told them that the charge was absolutely true but that Christ had changed him and that Christ could do the same for them." (Barclay Acts; pg. 193)

II. MEANING OF BROTHERLY LOVE (What Is Love?)

- A. *The practice of love is evidence that one has been born of God and knows God. The opposite is also true. "Everyone that loveth is born of God, and knoweth God. He that loveth not knoweth not God; for God is love." (1 John 4: 7b, 8)*
- B. *"Our love for one another is evidence of God's indwelling, and wonderful presence." "If we love one another, God dwelleth in us, and his love is perfected in us." (1 John 4:12)*
- C. *God's love in us is brought to completion. "God's love for us is perfected only when it is reproduced in us." (Stott) Just as a size 7 glove is made for a size 7 hand, so God's love is perfectly made for man. "If we habitually are loving one another, God in us is abiding, and His love has been brought to its fullness in us and exists in that state of fullness." (vs. 12; Wuest)*

III. METHOD OF BROTHERLY LOVE (How to Realize Love?)

- A. *Conversion to Christ and abiding in Christ is made possible through God's gift of the Holy Spirit. "Hereby know we that we dwell in him, and he in us, because he hath given us of his Spirit." (4:13) The historic (Christ's purchased gift through death on the cross) must become the experiential (through ministry of the Holy Spirit). "The love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us." (Romans 5:5)*
- B. *"The only way to love (vs. 16), as the only way to believe (vs. 15), is by dwelling in God and God in us." (Stott) "It is the divine indwelling which alone makes possible both belief and love." Believing (vs. 15) and loving (vs. 16) are only made possible because of the mission of the Son (vs. 14) and because of the witness of the Spirit (vs. 13). "Here is objective historical evidence in the sending of the Son both of His deity (which we have seen, 14) and of the Father's love (which we have known and believed, 16). But even this is insufficient. Without the Holy Spirit our minds are dark and our hearts cold. Only the Holy Spirit can enlighten our minds to believe in Jesus and warm our hearts to love God and each other. So believing and loving are evidence that His Spirit is at work within us." (Stott)*

IV. MEASURE OF BROTHERLY LOVE (How Much Love?)

- A. *Love Must Be Perfected. Phillips translates 1 John 4:17-19 this way: "So our love for him grows more and more, filling us with complete confidence for the day when he shall judge all men - for we realize that our life in this world is actually his life lived in us. Love contains no fear - indeed fully developed love expels every particle of fear, for fear always contains some of the torture of feeling guilty. This*

means that the man who lives in fear has not yet had his love perfected." (vs. 17-19)

"John is not suggesting that any Christian's love could in this life be flawlessly perfect, but rather developed and mature, set fixedly upon God." (Stott) What are the signs of perfect love?

- 1. Presence of Confidence - "It is grounded upon the fact that as he is (i.e., Christ) so are we in this world. Jesus is God's beloved Son, in whom He is well pleased; we too are God's children and the objects of His favour. If He called and calls God 'Father', so may we. We are 'accepted in the beloved' (Ephesians 1:6); we can share His confidence towards God." (Stott)*
- 2. Absence of Fear. "The love that spells confidence banishes fear. Fear introduces the category of punishment, which is quite alien to God's forgiven children who love Him...to God's beloved children; we cease to be afraid of Him. It is evident, therefore that he that feareth is not made perfect in love." (Stott; 169, 170)*

"Egerton Young was the first missionary to the Red Indians. In Saskatchewan he went out to find them and he told them of the love of God, the Father. To the Indians it was like a new revelation. When the missionary had told his message, an old chief said, "When you spoke of the Great Spirit just now, did I hear you say, "Our Father"?' 'Yes", said Egerton Young. 'That is very new and sweet to me', said the chief. 'We never

thought of the great Spirit as Father. We heard Him in the thunder; we saw Him in the lightning, the tempest and the blizzard, and we were afraid. So when you tell us that the Great Spirit is our Father, that is very beautiful to us.' The old man paused, and then he went on, as a glimpse of glory suddenly shone on him. 'Missionary, did you say that the Great Spirit is your Father?' 'Yes', said the missionary. "And", said the old chief, like a man on whom a dawn of joy had burst, 'you and I are brothers!' The only possible unity for men is in their common sonship with God." (Barclay, John vs. 2, pgs. 74, 75) The only possible source of the confidence which banishes fear is in the fact that God is truly a loving Father, and that as Jesus is an object of God's special love, so we too are objects of God's love.

B. Love Must Be Proved. Our fathers worshipped in this mountain; and ye say, that in Jerusalem is the place where men ought to worship. Jesus saith unto her, Woman, believe me, the hour cometh, when neither in this mountain, nor in Jerusalem, shall ye worship the Father. (1 John 4 (20-21))

*"A bell is not a bell til you ring it,
A song is not a song til you sing it.
Love in your heart is not put there to stay
'Love is not love til you give it away."*

(Ser. Builder; Dec. 1971; pg. 14)

CONCLUSION:

Jesus came to be our Savior. Is He our personal Savior? If not, why not give your heart to him just now. "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and you will be saved."

Jesus came to perfect our love, through His perfect sacrifice., this love we cannot earn, achieve humanly with our own resources, for this love is divine in origin and is a gift to be given to receptive hearers. If you have a terrifying fear of God, come to Him for His gift of love.

Why should I love? (1) Because God's nature is love. (2) Because not to love is to go against reality. (3) Because I am made to function in love. When I do not love, I am going against my own physical, psychological, social, and spiritual constitution. (4) Because God so loved that He sent His Son to die for my sins, thus making it possible for me to experience divine love. Through his death I am provided an example that the way of self-sacrifice is the way to live. (5) Because the Holy Spirit is given to enable me to love, if I accept His empowering ministry, (6) Because when I love, I am closest to God and I best express the nature and character of God within the sphere of time.

CHAPTER 10 - DISCUSSION
"LET BROTHERLY LOVE PREVAIL!"
1 John 4:7-21

1. *According to I Corinthians 13, what are some of the distinguishing marks of Christian love? Tell why you agree or disagree with the following statement: "Love is the authenticating proof that Christianity is real."*
2. *Do you agree with E. Stanley Jones that God in His essential nature is love and that God cannot do an unloving thing without violating His own nature? How do you reconcile God's love with God's wrath? Is God's wrath and judgment simply one manifestation of God's holy love?*
3. *What evidence can you cite from personal experience, scientific studies, or scriptural revelation to document the following statement: "Man is made to love and to be loved? Only when man is giving and receiving love is man truly healthy - physically, mentally, emotionally and spiritually."*
4. *How was God's love most perfectly manifested and revealed to mankind, according to 1 John 4:9? (Note Romans 5: 7, 8)*
5. *Because Jesus' relationship to mankind is that of Savior to sinner, from what specifically does Jesus save man?*
6. *What does the practice of love in the life of a person prove to one's self, to God, and to others? (Note 1 John 4: 7,8,12)*
7. *How is a person enabled to experience God's love, according to 1 John 4:13? (Note Romans 5:5) What is the relationship between the Son and the Holy Spirit as these two persons of the Godhead work together to enable man to believe correctly and to love deeply? (1 John 4:13-16)*
8. *According to 1 John 4: 17-19, what does the presence of fear in a believer's life evidence?*

9. *Is it too bold an assertion to say that each of us – as a believer – is the object of God's special favor, and that therefore we can share Jesus' confidence towards God? (Note Ephesians 1: 6)*
10. *Do you agree with the following statement? "The only possible source of confidence which banishes fear is in the fact that God is truly a loving Father, and that as Jesus is an object of God's special love, so we too are objects of God's love."*
11. *According to 1 John 4:20-21, why is it illogical and contradictory for one to claim to love God while he, at the same time, is entertaining feelings of bitterness towards a fellow human being?*
12. *Is love a "feeling" or is love an "action"? What is your response to the following poem?*

*"A bell is not a bell till you ring it,
A song is not a song till you sing it.
Love in your heart is not put there to stay
Love is not love till you give it away."*

From a study of 1 John 4:7-21, give at least six reasons why a person should practice love.

CHAPTER 11
"THE VICTORIOUS LIFE!"
1 John 5:1-12

SCRIPTURE: "Whosoever believeth that Jesus is the Christ is born of God: and every one that loveth him that begat loveth him also that is begotten of him. 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. Who is he that overcometh the world, but he that believeth that Jesus is the Son of God? This is he that came by water and blood, even Jesus Christ; not by water only, but by water and blood. And it is the Spirit that beareth witness, because the Spirit is truth. 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. 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. 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. And this is the record, that God hath given to us eternal life, and this life is in his Son. He that hath the Son hath life; and he that hath not the Son of God hath not life." 1 John 5:1-12)

INTRODUCTION:

Plagued with inner guilt, fears, frustrations, loneliness, and defeat, modern-day man is asking if there is such a thing as a meaningful and peaceful way of life. This age could well be called the age of despair. Many noted philosophers are declaring that there is no way out - that there is 'No Exit' from the modern-day dilemma. One such philosopher conceived the modern predicament of man as a man who is on the surface of ice on a small lake. Surrounding the lake are vertical cliffs, al-

lowing no way for man to escape from the lake. The man on the surface of the ice is in frenzy and deeply worried, for he knows that the ice will melt soon and he will break through the ice and perish. Knowing that there is no way to escape his ultimate fate, he is 'eating, drinking, and attempting to be merry' - indulging his flesh in every conceivable lust, and living carelessly, aimlessly, and seeking to forget about his ultimate fate.

Man is hopelessly seeking to find meaning in the transitory toys and joys of sensuality, and materialism, but underneath the surface, there is a deep restlessness, and futility. Said Philosopher Bertrand Russell, "Brief and powerless is man's life. On him and all his race the slow, sure doom falls pitiless and dark. Blind to good and evil, reckless of destruction, omnipotent matter rolls on its relentless way." Well known is Mencken's impious creed: "The universe, gigantic wheel in rapid revolution; man, a sick fly taking a dizzy ride on the rim thereof; religion, the fly's delusion that the wheel was constructed to give him the ride." (The Word of the Lord Came Unto Me Also; edited by Joseph Black; sermon by Marston; pg. 128)

Man seems to be doomed to a terrible fate. Man finds it natural to do evil and hard to do good. Man is plagued with selfishness. Gladstone said, "Selfishness is the greatest curse of the human race."

Man practices a 'dog-eat-dog' ethics, and uses his fellow man to climb to the 'top of the heap'. Man - even the so-called good man - is subject to temptation. Evil within (human nature) - and evil without - (the Devil - plague every man making any kind of meaningful and victorious life seemingly impossible. Is there any answer to man's dilemma? Is there a supernatural power that man can tap which will give him strength to overcome the downward gravitational pull of sin, temptation, selfishness, greed, and pride?

PROPOSITION:

The Bible contains the secret to finding a victorious, strong life. John, in his Epistle, describes the life of victory and the way to find that victory. Victory over supernatural forces of evil requires a supernatural power. There is a supernatural power available and that power is released into the world through a unique Person. This world of ours is a visited planet, and its very Creator has visited it. Think of it! God stopped down on this minute planet - Earth - lived a sinless life, died a sacrificial death, demonstrated ultimate power through His Resurrection, and offers a supernatural power to enable man to live a victorious life. This power enables man to conquer the enemies within - sinful lusts - and to conquer the enemies without - temptation and satanic power.

EVIDENCE OF VICTORY - "Whosoever believeth that Jesus is the Christ is born of God: and every one that loveth him that begat loveth him also that is begotten of him. 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." 1 John 5:1-3

1. *What are the evidences, or the marks in a person's life, that indicate that he is truly a victorious person - victorious over inner evil forces and outer evil forces?*

A. *THE NEW BIRTH*

The New Birth is the evidence of supernatural power in a man's life, resulting in victorious living. "Everyone who believes that Jesus is the Christ is a child of God." (5:1a) "Our present, continuing activity of believing (in the eternal Son) is the result, and therefore the evidence of our past experience of new birth by which we became and remain God's children." (Stott) Have you been born again? Being born again means living a new life, with new desires, and new attitudes. "Wherefore if any man is in Christ, he is a new creature: the old things are passed away; behold, they are become new". II Corinthians 5: 17. The New Birth results in a life of continuous belief - belief in Jesus as the

unique and Divine Son of God through whom a person is given supernatural power to live a supernatural life. What is the main characteristic of the supernatural life, which belief in Christ makes possible? It is the life of love.

B. LOVE FOR GOD AND LOVE FOR OTHER CHRISTIANS

Who is the victorious person who has victory over sin and who is conquering the inner and outer enemies of life? The person who practices love for God and love for other Christians. This is a supernatural love and is given as a gift to a person who believes in and who commits himself to Jesus Christ.

The victorious person is the one who loves God's children. This is very logical, for "everyone who loves the parent (God) loves the child and (other Christians)."

What is the proof that a person really loves his fellow Christians? "By this we know that we love the children of God, when we love God and obey his commandments." (5:2) If you are conscientiously obeying God's commandments and if you have a supreme preference for God in all you do, then you can be assured that you truly love your fellow Christians. Love for fellow Christians is one of the evidences or marks of a victorious person.

Love for God is also a mark of a victorious person. Proof that you love God is found in the fact that you are habitually observing God's commandments. "Love for God is not an emotional experience, so much as moral obedience." (Stott)

Thus, obedience to God's commandments is both evidence that one loves God and that one loves his fellow Christians. Thus all three tests (doctrinal, social, moral) are combined to show that belief in the son, love of God and man, obedience to God's commandments are the evidences of a truly victorious life. "The real link between the three tests is seen to be the new birth. Faith, love, and obedience are the natural growth which follows a birth from above." (Stott)

II PATHWAY TO VICTORY. "For whatsoever is born of God overcometh the world: and this is the victory that overcometh the

world, even our faith. Who is he that overcometh the world, but he that believeth that Jesus is the Son of God? This is he that came by water and blood, even Jesus Christ; not by water only, but by water and blood. And it is the Spirit that beareth witness, because the Spirit is truth. 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. 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. 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. And this is the record, that God hath given to us eternal life, and this life is in his Son. He that hath the Son hath life; and he that hath not the Son of God hath not life.” (5:4-12)

In the first section, the way to find victory was shown to be the New Birth, which manifests itself by faith in Christ, love of God and man, and obedience to God's commandments. Let us now explore the actual pathway to victory in more details.

The victory that overcomes the world is faith (vs. 4) or, to put it more concretely, 'belief that Jesus is the Son of God' (vs. 5). When John uses the term 'world' he "gathers up to the sum of all the limited, transitory powers opposed to God which make obedience difficult". (Westcott) "Sometimes these are moral pressures – the outlook, standards and preoccupations of a godless, secular society, 'the lust of the flesh and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life' – Sometimes they are intellectual (heresy) and sometimes physical (persecution). But, whatever form the world's assault upon the Church may take, the victory is ours." (Stott)

Thus, to overcome all the inner and outer powers that are opposed to God, one must believe that Jesus is the Son of God. "To believe in Jesus Christ is not simply to accept what He says as true; it is to commit all life into His hands and into His direction; it is to place ourselves in His hands in time and in eternity." (Barclay's 1 John; pg. 133) Faith or

belief (commitment) to Jesus Christ results in being born of God. "For whatever is born of God overcomes the world; and this is the victory that overcomes the world, our faith." 'Faith' (vs. 4) and belief 'that Jesus is the Son of God' are synonymous and results in being born of God. Moreover, the One who is born of God overcomes the world.

Also, the one who is born of God finds that God's commandments are not burdensome. Why is this? (1) Because his new birth gives him a new nature. The laws of God are written no longer on tablets of stone, but on the tablet of his heart. "For the covenant I will make with the house of Israel after those days, says the Lord, is this: I will set my laws in their understanding and write them on their hearts; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people." (Hebrews 8: 10) God's commandments are not burdensome because fulfilling God's commandments is simply fulfilling the basic desires of my changed nature. (2) God's commandments are not burdensome because the Christian realizes that God's will is perfect – perfect in that it is beneficial to man and glorifying to Christ. God's will is the will of an all-wise; all-loving Father who seeks our highest welfare. So, when we obey, we are not only helping God, but we are helping ourselves. (Illustration: suppose you are very ill and the doctor commands you to take a certain medicine to get well. Would his commandment be burdensome to you? No, indeed! You would delight in obeying his command, for obedience would lead to healing)." God's Commandments Are Not Burdensome, For Obedience To Them Gives You Healing and Keeps You Healthy.

Thus, to summarize so far, faith (belief that Jesus is the Christ which means commitment to Him), produces the New Birth. The New Birth results in: (1) Overcoming the world (those transitory powers opposed to God), (2) Loving God and one's fellow Christians, and (3) Delighting in God's commandments (God's commandments not being burdensome because of a change in nature (Hebrews 8:10), and because of realizing that God's will is good, acceptable, perfect, and beneficial to man.)

But the question may arise, 'What is the objective basis for believing in Jesus?' John says there are three witnesses that bear witness to Jesus as a reliable object for one's faith. "There are three witnesses, the

Spirit, the water, and the blood; and these three agree." (1 John 5:8) It seems clear from this passage (5:6-8) that the Holy Spirit is the main witness to the Divine-Human person of Jesus. "And the Spirit is the witness, because the Spirit is the truth". (vs. 7)

It is said of this Person (Jesus) that he is the one "who came by water and blood, Jesus Christ, not with the water only but with the water and the blood." (vs. 6) To what does 'water' and 'blood' refer? Behind this letter of 1 John there lies the heresy of Gnosticism, which believed that spirit was absolutely good, and matter was absolutely evil. A branch of Gnosticism (as taught by Corinthus) "taught that at the baptism, from that power which is above all things, the divine Christ descended and came into the man Jesus in the form of a dove; Jesus allied as it were with the Christ who had descended upon Him, brought to men the message of the God who had hitherto been unknown, and lived in perfect virtue; then at the end the Christ departed from the man Jesus and returned to glory, and that it was the only the man Jesus who was crucified on Calvary and who was afterwards resurrected. We might put it more simply by saying that Cerinthus taught that Jesus became divine at the baptism, and that divinity left Him before the Cross, and that He died simply a man." (Barclay 1 John; pg. 128)

"This is no trivial error. It undermines the foundations of the Christian faith and robs us of the salvation of Christ. If the Son of God did not take Himself our nature in His birth and our sins in His death, He cannot reconcile us to God. So John emphasizes not just that He came, but especially that He came by water and blood." (Stott; 179)

This passage (5:6-8) appears to mean that the Spirit witnesses to the Divine-Human personhood of Jesus, that is, that Jesus was divine not only between His Baptism and Crucifixion, but that He was divine before and during His Baptism (water) and during and after His Crucifixion, but that He was divine before and during His Baptism (water) and during and after His Crucifixion (blood). A total incarnation is vital to a total redemption.

Added to the three-fold witness of the Spirit, water, and blood to the Divine-Human Person of Jesus is the witness of God Himself, which also witnesses to the Divine-Human Person of Jesus. "If we receive the

testimony of men, the testimony of God is greater; for this is the testimony of God that He has borne witness to His Son." (vs. 9)

"The perfect tense (vs. 9) indicates the abiding validity (in itself and though the Spirit) of God's historical witness to Christ. It is God who bore witness to His Son in history, in the water and the blood, and it is God who bears witness to Him today through His spirit in our hearts." (Stott)

"If we receive the witness of men" (vs. 9) refers to the Old Testament times (Deuteronomy 19:15), therefore, a three-fold divine witness ought to be much more quickly accepted to establish a spiritual fact.

"To 'receive the witness...of God' (vs. 9) and to 'believe on the Son of God' (10) are virtually synonymous expressions." (Stott)

What is the result when one denies God's witness to the Divine-Human Person of Jesus? (1) "He, who does not believe God, has made him a liar, because he has not believed in the testimony that God has borne to his Son" (vs. 10); (2) "He who has not the Son has not life." (vs. 12b) There is no true life without Christ - only mere existence. The one without Christ is "dead in trespasses and in sin." But those who have Christ have life - "abundant life".

What is the result when one accepts God's witness to the Divine-Human Person of Jesus? (1) "He who believes in the Son of God has the testimony in himself." (vs. 10a) "That is (the believer) is given a yet deeper assurance by the inward witness of the Spirit that he was right to trust in Christ, a striking example of the spiritual principle that 'to everyone who has will more be given'." (Stott) (2) "And this is the testimony that God gave us eternal life, and this life is in his Son. He who has the Son has life." (vs. 11-12a)

"Three important truths are taught in these verses about eternal life. First, it is not a prize which we have earned, but an undeserved gift. Secondly, it is found in Christ, so that, in order to give us life, God both gave and gives us His Son. Thirdly, this gift of life in Christ is a present possession. True, it is further described as 'eternal', 'avionics', which means literally 'belonging to the age', i.e., the age to come. But since the age to come has broken into this present age, the life of the

age to come, namely 'eternal life, can be received and enjoyed here and now.' (Stott)

CONCLUSION:

Are you experiencing this eternal life of God? In other words, have you been born again? Said Jesus, "Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born anew, he cannot see the Kingdom of God." (John 3:3)

Faith or belief in Jesus, which means commitment to Jesus for time and eternity, produces the New Birth. This New Birth results in overcoming the world and in a new nature that delights in keeping God's commandments, and in loving God and fellow Christians.

"But how can we come to faith in the divine-human Person of Jesus? John's answer here, as in the Gospel, is that faith depends on testimony, and that the reasonableness of believing in Jesus is grounded upon the validity of the testimony which is borne to Him." (Stott) That testimony to Jesus is found in the threefold witness of the Spirit, water (Baptism) of Jesus, and blood (Death) of Jesus, all of which agree in testimony and all of which are backed by the testimony of God Himself to the Divine-Human Person of Jesus. To believe in the Testimony of Jesus results in having the added inner witness of the Spirit, affirming the rightfulness of a person's belief in Jesus, and results in having eternal life. To deny the witness of God is to make God a liar, and is to forfeit any possibility of having eternal life.

Do you want eternal life (a new quality of abundant life for time and eternity)? Then simply believe God's witness to His Son and commit your life to Jesus Christ for time and for eternity.

Do It NOW! 'Now is the day of Salvation!' "Now is the Acceptable time!

CHAPTER 11- DISCUSSION
"THE VICTORIOUS LIFE!"
1 John 5:1-12

1. *What evidence can you cite to demonstrate the fact that man is in desperate need of moral deliverance from his self-centered bond-ages? Is there any hope for humankind, which seems to be filled with despair and intent on self-destruction? Is there supernatural power that man can tap which will give him strength to overcome the downward gravitational pull of sin, temptation, selfishness, greed, and pride?*
2. *What is the result of the New-Birth in a person's life, in terms of belief, and how does this belief enable one to live a supernatural life? (Note 1 John 5:10)*
3. *Morally, socially, and doctrinally, (according to 1 John 5: 1-3) what are the three marks or evidences of a truly victorious person?*
4. *Tell why you agree or disagree with the following statement: "Love for God is not an emotional experience, so much as moral obedience." (1 John 5:3)*
5. *What is the meaning of "world" as John uses the term in 1 John 5:4, and what are some of the forms of assaults which the "world" launches against the Christian?*
6. *If belief in Jesus as the Son of God is the essence of true faith, tell concretely what belief in Jesus really means. (Note 1 John 5: 4, 5)*
7. *Why does the person who is born of God find that God's commandments are NOT burdensome? (Note 1 John 5:3; Hebrews 8:10)*
8. *Do you agree with the following statement: "What God commands, man's nature demands. So, when man obeys God's commandments, he is not only glorifying God but he is also helping himself."?*
9. *List some of the basic and wonderful results of the New Birth.*

10. *According to 1 John 5: 6-8, what are the three witnesses that bear testimony to Jesus as a reliable object for one's faith?*
11. *What does "water" and "blood" refer to in 1 John 5: 6? Explain what is meant by the following phrase: "A total incarnation is vital to a total redemption".*
12. *In addition to the witness of the "spirit", the "water", and the "blood", who else bears an ongoing and contemporary witness to the Divine Human Person of Jesus? (Note 1 John 5:9)*
13. *Why did John consider a threefold witness important to establish the truthful nature of a claim, especially the claim of the Human Divine Personhood of Jesus? (Note Deuteronomy 19:15)*
14. *What are the results when one denies God's witness to the Divine Human Person of Jesus? (1 John 5: 10, 12)*
15. *What are the results when one accepts God's witness to the Divine Human Person of Jesus? (1 John 5: 10-12)*
16. *Name three important truths that are taught in 1 John 5: 11-12, regarding "eternal life".*

CHAPTER 12
"THE CHRISTIAN'S ASSURANCE!"
1 John 5: 9-21

SCRIPTURE: Since we believe human testimony, surely we can believe the greater testimony that comes from God. And God has testified about his Son. All who believe in the Son of God know in their hearts that this testimony is true. Those who don't believe this are actually calling God a liar because they don't believe what God has testified about his Son. And this is what God has testified: He has given us eternal life, and this life is in his Son. Whoever has the Son has life; whoever does not have God's Son does not have life. I have written this to you who believe in the name of the Son of God; so that you may know you have eternal life. And we are confident that he hears us whenever we ask for anything that pleases him. And since we know he hears us when we make our requests, we also know that he will give us what we ask for. If you see a fellow believer sinning in a way that does not lead to death, you should pray, and God will give that person life. But there is a sin that leads to death, and I am not saying you should pray for those who commit it. All wicked actions are sin, but not every sin leads to death. We know that God's children do not make a practice of sinning, for God's Son holds them securely, and the evil one cannot touch them. We know that we are children of God and that the world around us is under the control of the evil one. And we know that the Son of God has come, and he has given us understanding so that we can know the true God. And now we live in fellowship with the true God because we live in fellowship with his Son, Jesus Christ. He is the only true God, and he is eternal life. Dear children, keep away from anything that might take God's place in your hearts. 1 John 5: 9-21

INTRODUCTION:

Man's basic need is for assurance and security. Man is plagued with fears and is searching for peace and confidence to face the future.

One of man's basic fears is fear of the future. This fear can be destroyed through the grace and power of God. God has come to give peace and confidence and enable man to face the future with absolute trust and confidence.

ASSURANCE OF ETERNAL LIFE (1 John 5: 13)

'Know' - present tense - Not gradual growth in assurance, but a possession here and now of a present certainty of the life they have received in Christ. The whole purpose of the epistle is to assure the believers (whom the heretics had tried to make doubt) that they have eternal life.

'Have' - present tense - Right now have eternal life - not future possession after death but present reality.

'Eternal Life' - 'the life of God' for God alone inherently possesses and inhabits eternity. "What we are promised is that here and now there can be given to us a share in the very life of God." (Barclay)

"In God there is peace, and therefore, eternal life means serenity. It means a life liberated from the fears that haunt the human situation. In God there is power, and, therefore, eternal life means the defeat of frustration. It means a life filled with the power which is the power of God, and which is, therefore, a life victorious over circumstance. In God there is holiness, and, therefore, eternal life means the defeat of sin. It means a life clad with the purity which is the purity of God, and armed with a defense against the soiling infections of the world. In God there is love, and, therefore, eternal life means the end of bitterness and hatred. It means a life which has the love of God in its heart and the undefeatable love of man in all its feelings and in all its action. In God there is life, and, therefore eternal life means the defeat of death. It means a life which is indestructible, because it has in it the indestructible life of God Himself." (Barclay's 1 John 134, 135)

Condition for Maintaining Present Assurance of Eternal Life. - 'To the ones believing' - a continual commitment to Jesus Christ - to his name - (Character and person are worthy of trust and commitment).

ASSURANCE OF ANSWERED PRAYER

Gift - Confidence

Because the Christian has eternal life within, this fact gives him boldness and confidence toward God. The Christian may come boldly before the throne of God to make his needs and wishes known to God. The Christian has confidence in facing Christ's future Second Coming and the future Judgment Day, but the Christian also has confidence in approaching God daily in prayer. The Christian knows that God will not intimidate him or make him feel cheap. The Christian knows that God is concerned in the smallest detail of his life. To the Christian, God is a loving Father.

"There is an old Roman story which tells how a Roman Emperor was enjoying a triumph. He had the privilege, which Rome gave to her great victors, of marching his troops through the streets of Rome with all his captured trophies and his prisoners in his train. So the Emperor was on the march with his troops. The streets were lined with cheering people. The tall legionaries lined the street edges to keep the people in their places. At one point on the triumphal route there was a little platform where the Empress and her family were sitting to watch the Emperor go by in all the pride of his triumph. On the platform with his mother there was the Emperor's youngest son, a little boy., as the Emperor came near the little boy jumped off the platform, burrowed through the crowd, tried to dodge between the legs of a legionary, and to run out on the road to meet his father's chariot. The legionary stooped down and stopped him. He swung him up in his arms: 'You can't run out to his chariot.' And the little lad laughed down. 'He may be your Emperor,' he said, 'but he's my father.' That is exactly the way in which the Christian feels towards God. The might, and the majesty, and the power are the might and the majesty, and the power of one whom Jesus Christ taught us to call Our Father." (Matthew 202)

"God is always listening. He is more ready to hear than we are to pray. God is always waiting. We never need to force our way into the presence of God, or to compel God to pay attention to us. He is waiting for us to come. To use a very human analogy. We know how we have often waited for the knock of the postman, or the ring of the telephone bell, to bring us a message from someone whom we love. In all rever-

ence we can say that God is like that with us." (Barclay's 1 John; pg. 136)

Condition - Keep on Asking According To God's Will

The Christian's requests of course must accord with God's will. "Prayer is not a convenient device for imposing our will upon God, or bending his will to ours, but the prescribed way of subordinating our will to His...Every true prayer is a variation on the theme 'Thy will be done'. Our Master taught us to say this in the pattern prayer He gave us, and added the supreme example of it in Gethsemane." (Stott; pgs. 18, 186)

"Here, indeed, is something on which to ponder. We are so apt to think that prayer is asking God for what we want, whereas true prayer is asking God for what He wants. We are so apt to think of prayer as talking to God - as indeed it is - whereas it is even more listening to God." (Barclay's pg. 137)

The Christian must keep on asking (Present). The Christian, through the very process of importunate, persistent praying is growing spiritually.

"Prayer is as simple as asking; it is also work. It is the quick breathing of a petition one time; another it is accompanied with heavy sighs and tears. It is, in point of fact, a paradox. And to view exclusively one side of the paradox (or coin) is to miss the other side of prayer., to ask and go on your way in faith is quite all right in some circumstances; in others it takes prolonged labor until one has 'prayed through'."

Present Fulfillment

When the Christian meets God's condition of asking according to God's will, God immediately grants the petition. The phrase 'we do know (present) that he hears us' and the phrase 'we do know (present) that we have the petitions that we desired of him' are identical in meaning. As soon as the Christian meets God's condition in praying, the petitions are immediately granted. 'Our petitions are granted at once: the results of the granting are perceived in the future' (Plummer). (Stott, 186) (Like Inheritance - granted in moment of time (In writing); fulfilled and visibly realized in the future.

REGULATION IN PRAYER

Illustration of Prayer (vss. 14, 15)

These verses show that we must be vitally concerned in our fellow-men.

*He stood at the crossroads all alone,
With the sunrise in his face;
He had no fear for the path unknown,
He was set for a manly race.
But the road stretched east, and the road stretched west;
There was no one to tell him which way was the best;
So my chum turned wrong and went down, down, down,
Till he lost the race and the victor's crown,
And fell at last in an ugly snare,
Because no one stood at the crossroads there.
Another chum on another day,
At the selfsame crossroads stood;
He paused a moment to choose the way
That would lead to the greater good.
And the road stretched east, and the road stretched west;
But I was there to show him the best;
So my chum turned right and went on and on,
Till he won the race and the victor's crown;
He came at last to the mansions fair,
Because I stood at the crossroads there.
Since then I have raised daily prayer,
That I be kept faithfully standing there,
To warn the runners as they come,
And save my own or another's chum.
- Author Unknown*

The true Christian is filled with compassion for his fellow Christians within the Christian congregation. If anyone sees his brother sinning

he should have compassion upon him and earnestly pray to God and ask God to draw him back with the chords of love. It is possible and indeed many times happens that a Christian brother "...is swept away by a passion or a desire, which at the moment is too strong for him." Such a man "hates his own sin; in the moment of temptation he falls to sin, but afterwards he hates his sin, and he hates himself." (Barclay; pg.142)

The true Christian does not kick a person when he is down, but rather tenderly and lovingly lifts up the brother who has fallen. The Bible says, "So let the man who feels sure of his standing today be careful that he does not fall tomorrow." (I Corinthians 10:12)

A. Limitation of Prayer (vss. 16-17)

"Not every sinner can be given life in answer to prayer however." (Stott, pg. 187)

Listen to Phillips translation, which clarifies this passage: "If any of you should see his brother committing a sin (I don't mean deliberately turning his back on God and embracing evil), he should pray to God for him and secure fresh life for the sinner. It is possible to commit sin that is a deliberate embracing of evil and that leads to spiritual death - that is not the sort of sin I have in mind when I recommend prayer for the sinner. Every failure to obey God's laws is sin, of course, but there is sin that does not preclude repentance and forgiveness." (1 John 5: 16, 17)

What kind of sinner cannot be given life in answer to prayer? It is the sinner who deliberately embraces sin, who delights in sin as a way of life, who so hardens his heart against God that repentance never enters his mind. Without repentance, there is no forgiveness, and without forgiveness there is no eternal life. Therefore, not even prayer can change the man who is determined not to repent, and the ultimate end

of such a man is spiritual death. John "does not advise prayer, for he clearly doubts its efficacy in this case." (Stott; pg. 187)

What is the "sin unto death"? It appears to be blasphemy against the Holy Spirit. "This sin, committed by the Pharisees, was a deliberate, open-eyed rejection of known truth. They ascribed the mighty works of Jesus, evidently done 'by the Spirit of God' (Matthew 12:28), to the agency of Beelzebub. Such sin, Jesus said, would never be forgiven either in this age or in the age to come. He who commits it 'is guilty of an eternal sin'. (Mark 3:29; Matthew 12: 22-32)." (Stott; pg. 188)

"If (man) allows himself again and again to flirt with temptation, and again and again to fall to temptation, on each occasion the sin becomes easier; and, if he escapes, as he thinks, the consequences, on each occasion the self-disgust and the remorse and the regret become less and less; until in the end he can reach a state when he can sin without a tremor, and can congratulate himself on being able to get what he wants and to escape the consequences. It is precisely that which "the sin which is leading to death" is. So long as a man in his heart of hearts hates sin and hates himself for sinning, so long as he knows that he is sinning, he is never beyond repentance, and, therefore, never beyond forgiveness; but once a man begins to revel in sin, and to make sin the deliberate policy of his life, and loses all sense of the terror and the awfulness of sin and also the feeling of self-disgust, he is on the way to death, for he is on the way to a state where the idea of repentance will not, and cannot, enter his head. The sin unto death is the state of the man who has listened to sin so often, and refused to listen to God so often, that he has come to a state when he loves his sin, and when he regards sin as the most profitable thing in the world." (Barclay's 1 John; pg. 143)

CONCLUSION:

The Epistle of 1 John was written to assure believers of their eternal life. Also assurance is given to the believer that God is waiting lovingly and expectantly for the believer to come to Him to ask for good things. All requests must be made earnestly, persistently, and in accord with God's will. Such petitions are immediately granted, although many times the result of the granting are perceived in the future.

John assures the Christian that if a brother Christian sins that the faithful Christian should pray for the restoration of the fallen one.

John believes it is no use, however, to pray for the man who has so advanced in sin that his heart is hardened against God and he calls darkness light and attributes that work of the Holy Spirit to Satan. Such sin leads to eternal punishment in the Lake of Fire (Second Death).

Assurance is the message that John most wants to convey. John wants his readers to guard against sinning and live a regenerated life. Such a person is protected against Satan (vs. 18), as contrasted to the world which is in the grasp of the Evil One (vs. 19). The Son of God has come to give us understanding of God and eternal life. He who accepts the Son is living according to truth and reality, and keeps himself from the false idols of the world (vss. 20-21). Such a person is truly alive!

CHAPTER 12 – DISCUSSION
"THE CHRISTIAN'S ASSURANCE!"

1 John 5: 9-21

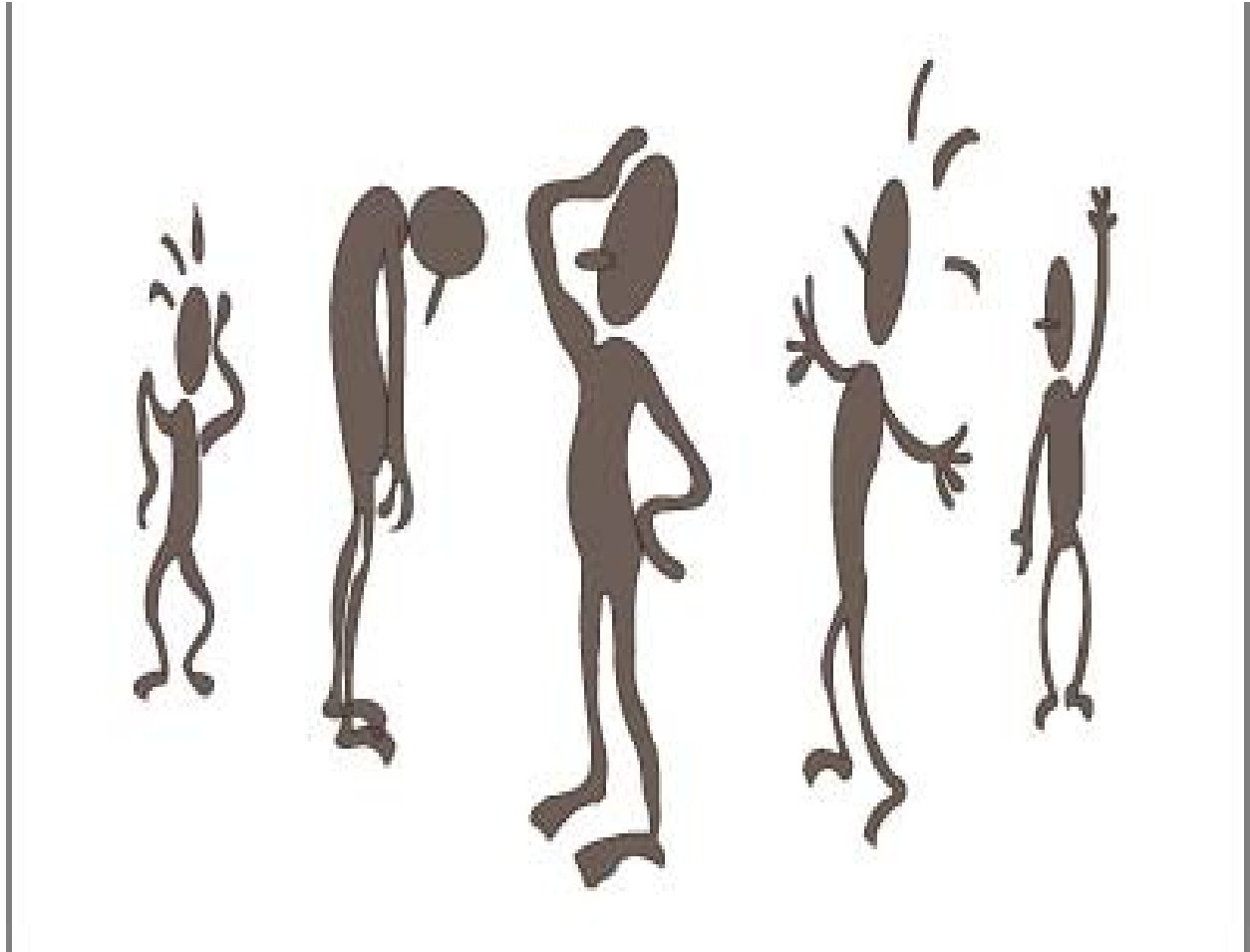
1. *According to 1 John 5:13, is it presumptuous for one who believes in Jesus to claim assurance of eternal life? Is "eternal life" a present reality for the person of faith, or is "eternal life" only a future anticipation?*
2. *If it is possible for a believer, here and now, to enjoy eternal life (i.e., to share in the very life of God), then what does "eternal life" concretely mean to a believer as he lives his life here on Earth?*
3. *If "belief" in Jesus is the condition for maintaining a sense of personal assurance of eternal life (1 John 5:14), what does it mean "to believe" in Jesus? Is "belief" a momentary and once-and-for-all experience, or is "belief" an on-going, continuous attitude of commitment to Jesus? Does one who abandons personal commitment to Jesus (i.e., one who no longer believes in Jesus) have any basis for claiming present assurance of eternal life? According to 1 John 5:13 (and other related scriptures), does the bible teach a "conditional" security or an "unconditional" security regarding salvation? Is it not true that "eternal life" can be forfeited in the life of a one-time believer who falls away from God and who resumes a lifestyle characterized by habitually sinning?*
4. *Because God is a loving Father, what are the children of God assured of, regarding prayer? (1 John 5:14)*
5. *What condition must a believer meet if he expects God to answer his prayers? (1 John 5: 14)*

6. *Tell why you agree or disagree with the following statements: "Prayer is not a convenient device for imposing our will upon God, or bending His will to ours, but the prescribed way of subordinating our will to His. Every true prayer is a variation on the theme 'Thy will be done'. Our master taught us to say this in the pattern prayer He gave us, and added the supreme example of it in Gethsemane." (Stott) (Matthew 6: 9-13; 26: 39; Psalms 40: 8; 143: 10) If prayer is God's prescribed way of subordinating our will to His will, then is it not presumptuous (if not blasphemous) to use prayer as a way of "dictating" our wishes to God? Is it not possible to use prayer as a means of advancing selfish goals, concealed behind the notions of "claiming God's promises"? Is it not important, when praying, first to submit one's will to God before one "claims God's promises"? (Is not the "name it - claim it" method of praying questionable, if not explicitly "un-Bibical"?)*
7. *Is prayer mostly asking God for what we want, or is true prayer mostly asking God for what He wants? Is prayer mostly talking to God or is prayer listening to God?*
8. *In what ways is prayer a "paradox"?*
9. *Tell why you agree or disagree with the following statement: "As soon as the Christian meets God's condition in praying, the petitions are immediately granted." Do you agree with the following statement by Plummer? "Our petitions are granted at once: the results of the granting are perceived in the future."*
10. *What, practically, does it mean for a Christian to be his "brother's keeper"? (Note 1 John 5: 16; James 5: 16, 19, 20; Galatians 6: 1; I Corinthians 10: 12)*
11. *What is your interpretation of 1 John 5:16, 17? Is the "sin unto death" the kind of sin that Jesus spoke of when He talked about*

sinning against the Holy Spirit? Is it possible for one who presently is born again to commit sin that is a deliberate embracing of evil that leads to spiritual death? (Note James 5: 19-20; Hebrews 6: 4-8; 10: 38-39; Matthew 12: 22-32; Mark 3: 29)

12. *Give your comments on the following quotation from William Barclay: "The sin unto death is the state of the man who has listened to sin so often, that he has come to a state where he loves his sin, and where he regards sin as the most profitable thing in the world."*

13. *What are some of the "idols" from which the sincere believer must keep himself, as he seeks to live for God? (Note 1 John 3: 21)*



PART II

"REFLECTIVE OVERVIEW OF THE BOOK OF 1st JOHN!"

REFLECTIVE OVERVIEW
OF THE BOOK OF 1ST JOHN!

The Book of 1 John is a Book of contrasts. Contrasting words or concepts appear throughout the entire book (light and darkness, love and hate, truth and falsehood, life and death, sin and righteousness, Spirit of God and Spirit of anti-Christ, love of the world and love of God, etc.).

The basis and source of fellowship is described in interrelating the three main strands of arguments in various ways. Three main tests for authentic Christian experience are applied and interrelated: (1) The Doctrinal Test (Propositional belief in the Incarnation of Jesus), (2) The Moral Test (Ethical practice in terms of obedience to God's commands) and (3) The Social Test (Relational life in terms of genuine love of the brethren). Like a rope with three strands, these three tests to determine Christian authenticity are carefully and uniquely interwoven. Nearly all, if not all, paragraphs (or divisions) in the Book can be related to one or more of these tests, i.e., the doctrinal test, the social test, or the moral test.

One might look at the Book of 1 John as a 'circling ascending staircase' with the three tests forming the cyclic motion, and the study of these three tests in various interrelated ways as the 'progressive ascension' in the total arguments of the Book.

1 John 1:1-4: DOCTRINAL FOUNDATION FOR FELLOWSHIP

Doctrinal Test: Propositional truth regarding the true person of Jesus.

Who is Jesus Christ? Did Jesus live before He was born in Bethlehem? Was Jesus really a human being, or did He just appear to be human? Probably against the background of the subtle Gnostic heresy, John immediately finds it necessary to establish the true person and the

true nature of Jesus, both as to His pre-existence and as to His true humanity.

Basic to all true fellowship with the Father is acceptance of Jesus as the true God-Man whom Jesus claimed Himself to be. All claims to fellowship with the Father, apart from experiential knowledge of the Son, are invalid and fallacious.

"That which was from the beginning" (reminiscent of John 1:1) speaks of Jesus' pre-existence, and thus speaks to his deity. Jesus existed consciously, personally, continuously, and intimately in communion with the Father before all time. Jesus, then, is eternal.

The basis and source of fellowship is an acceptance of Jesus' deity (the Gnostics entertained a mystical view of Jesus, which in some ways accepted his deity, but they, nevertheless, denied his true humanity). Because of the Gnostic heresy, John must take great pains to establish the true humanity of Jesus, using a series of four verbs - Heard, Seen, Beheld, and Handled.

John asserts that the basis of fellowship with the Father and the subsequent joy is acceptance of the Incarnation. Human flesh (considered evil by the Gnostics) is what Jesus took upon himself when He became a man. Jesus did not merely 'Seem' to be human (as some Gnostics declared), but He was fully human. Jesus was not a purely spiritual being, but He had a flesh and blood body, a real physical human body. Jesus - the pre-existent eternal one - became a human, and, while remaining a true human throughout his entire earthly existence, He died as a true human. John makes it very clear that Jesus was truly human, and that Jesus was one and the same as Christ, existing with God eternally.

John's use of the four verbs (Heard, Seen, Beheld, and Handled) shows a progression in thought in demonstrating the concreteness of Jesus'

humanity (the acceptance of which proves the Incarnation and provides the basis for true fellowship with the Father).

The four verbs that John uses to establish the fact of Jesus' humanity are interesting:

Heard - (perfect tense). I would translate the phrase as follows: "What we heard from the very human lips of Jesus in the past is continuing to have a profound effect on us."

Seen - (perfect tense). Hearing is good, but seeing is better. I would translate this phrase as, "That which we have seen as we looked at Jesus has never been forgotten but it stills abides in our memory, for what one sees can never be unseen".

Beheld - (aorist tense). (This Greek word does not mean merely to look at Jesus, but rather to gaze at Jesus.) Gazing and closely observing Jesus made the disciples even more certain that Jesus was truly human.

Handled - (aorist tense). To make no mistake that Jesus was human, the disciples actually felt, touched, and handled Jesus. This was conclusive proof of material reality. Jesus was truly human, with human flesh and blood.

The last two verbs are in the aorist tense, and therefore the words refer to a particular past time. Perhaps after the Resurrection when the disciples had opportunity both to gaze at and to handle the Lord Jesus. These two verbs (behold and handle) express a definite and careful investigation by the observer.

1 John 1:5 - 2:2. ETHICAL PURITY IS A BASIS FOR TRUE FELLOWSHIP (Moral, Ethical, Test).

Not only is doctrinal soundness, regarding the person of Jesus, a foundation for fellowship, but ethical purity regarding one's attitude toward and experience of sin is a foundation for fellowship with the Father.

John moves from the doctrinal (propositional), argument to the ethical (personal and behavioral) argument. Not only must one think right doctrinally regarding the person of Jesus, but one must live right ethically regarding one's behavior.

Those living in sin destroy all fellowship with God (1:6) because they are walking in ethical darkness. John is bold enough to call the false teachers liars. Because the Gnostics believed that they could indulge the flesh, without morally polluting the spirit, their daily walk was characterized by gross sinning. Because they were habitually ordering their behavior in a life of unrighteousness, their claim to intimate fellowship and special knowledge of the Father was totally invalidated. He who claims to have fellowship with the Father must live like the Father!

There is no sin or darkness (ethically speaking) in God, but only Light. (1:5) There is no sin in God's character or nature. Therefore, those who claim to have fellowship with God (as the Gnostic heretics were claiming to have) must reflect the same type of behavior as God reflects, namely, holy, righteous, and pure behavior.

John notes the physical shed blood of Jesus (1:7), a reference to Jesus' genuine humanity. Another way of refuting the dangerous Gnostic heresy, which stated that all physical matter including a physical body, was inherently evil. The blood of Jesus is the basis for atonement of sin and forms the basis for fellowship with the Father! Not only does God forgive sins, but also He erases the very stains of sin - a thorough description of the ethical effects of the atoning work of Christ. Far from practicing sin (as the Gnostics were doing), Jesus' blood not only pardons from sin but also cleanses from the pollution of sin!

Apparently, the Gnostics were denying the existence of sin. Their attitude towards the human body (that it is inherently evil) resulted in them disregarding ethical commands. If the spirit is pure and the body

is evil, these same Gnostics concluded that the body's passions could be indulged (1 John 2:15-17 is an exposition of the passions of the 'flesh'), without affecting the purity of the spirit. Thus, if the body's actions (behavior) had no effect on the spirit's spiritual condition, the Gnostics could claim to have intimate fellowship with the Father - at the same time as their bodies were being indulged (from the Christian viewpoint) in all kinds of sin. If such (unrighteous) behavior was morally and ethically irrelevant, then practically-speaking, sin did not even exist for the Gnostics.

However, to refute the Gnostic heresy, John contends that ethical behavior is the evidence of spiritual fellowship with the Father. Therefore, the denial of the existence of sin is evidence of self-deception, and results in a person calling God a liar! (1:8,10)

Sin is a reality. Sin destroys one's fellowship with the Father. The atonement of Christ is the basis of establishing fellowship with the Father.

To practice sin is to lose all fellowship, and relationship, with the Father. To deny the existence of sin is to call God a liar, and is to deny the God-revealed Truth, and such denial of these eternal verities is to be self-deceived!

So, while sin is not to be practiced (as the Gnostics were doing even though they denied the existence of sin, 2:8. 10), the possibility of sinning is not to be denied by the true believer whose doctrine (1:1-4) is sound and whose ethical practice is basically righteous. (1:5-7)

What is the solution to the problem of sin in the life of a true believer? Confess your sins and God will forgive and cleanse from all sin. (1:9)

Recognizing that the Christian norm is to live without any willful sinning (2:1), the reality of the situation is that believers sometimes do sin. Aorist tense indicates occasional acts of sin instead of habitual sinning, 1 John 2:4-10. It is possible for a Christian to sin, but if a

Christian fails into an act of sin, God (because of Christ's atonement) will forgive and He will restore a believer to fellowship. Fellowship with the Father is the continuing theme, described in various ways, throughout the entire book of 1 John. This is possible because Jesus is both advocate and propitiation. (2:1, 2)

I JOHN 2:3-11 – TEST FOR AUTHENTIC FELLOWSHIP - THE MORAL TEST (2:3-6) AND THE SOCIAL TEST (2:7-11).

John's discussion of ethical behavior (regarding one's wrong attitude toward sin which issues forth in a practice of sinning 1:5-2:2), is now further discussed in terms of obedience to God's commandments. There is a steady progression of thought in John's arguments for authentic Christian experience. After discussing doctrinal soundness 1:1-4, he moves into a discussion of ethical practice 1:5-2:2, and defines the motivation for ethical practice in terms of the character of God and in terms of the commandments of God 2:3-6.

One's claim of having fellowship and union with God must be backed with a life that imitates the life of God (2:6). Just as knowledge of God involves obedience (the moral test), so union with God involves imitation.

Imitation of God's character means not only obedience to propositional truths, (doctrines), is best demonstrated by love in human relationships, 2:7-11. There is a progression from the doctrinal 1:1-4 to the moral and ethical 1:5-2:6, to the social and personal relationships. (2:7-11) Thinking right about Jesus leads one to act right regarding ethical obedience to God's commands, but the latter is concretely expressed in practical human relationships in terms of loving one's brother 2:10. One's claim of having fellowship and union with God must be backed with a life that imitates the life of God 2:6. The test of the genuineness of Christian profession is revealed (demonstrated) by the life of practical expressions of love.

I JOHN 2:12-17 PRACTICAL APPLICATION OF PREVIOUSLY STATED TRUTHS!

The next two paragraphs are practical applications of the three previously expounded tests for authentic Christian experience.

After discussing the doctrinal test 1:1-4, the moral ethical test 1:5-26, and the social personal test, 2:7-11, John affirms those in the Christian fellowship whose lives evidence that they pass all three tests.

Children experience forgiveness through the name of Jesus. This means that the reality of sin has not been denied (1:8-10). This means that the blood of Jesus has been applied in the personal atoning of sin. (1:7, 9; 2:1-2)

Young men have overcome the evil one. This means that the real presence of sin, the power of Satan, and the provision of Christ have all been acknowledged, all facts that the Gnostics denied.

Fathers have known him who is from the beginning. This knowledge is a true experiential knowledge (in contrast to the false claims of the Gnostics). The Father's knowledge of God has come because of accepting the person of Jesus (1: 1-4), because of experiencing the forgiveness and cleansing of Sin (1:5 - 2:2), and because of being in loving relationship with their fellowmen (2:7-11)

The practical application of the doctrinal, moral, and social tests to the family of believers, 2:12-14 is very positive and edifying. After John affirms the family of believers in this section and commends them for application of the tests in their lives, John moves into a section of warning, 2:15-17.

Probably the Gnostics (whose lives demonstrated unethical and disobedient behavior and whose evil influence was being felt in the Chris-

tian fellowship), were in mind when John wrote (2:15-17), a description of worldliness and its consequences.

The Gnostics were practicing worldliness, (lusts of flesh, lusts of eyes, pride of life – reminiscent of both the original fall and the threefold temptations of Jesus in Matthew 4). Because the Gnostics had denied sin, the result was a practice of gross sinning in their own daily lives. Even though they claimed to be in intimate fellowship with the Father, through their system of special revelation and knowledge, John declares that they are in reality far from God. To live a lifestyle of sinning, (the same subject that will be reiterated in the 'revolving staircase' of truth in 1 John 3:4-10), is to perish eternally. Only those who do the will of God, moral obedience, will abide forever, 2:17!

I JOHN 2:18-27 DOCTRINAL SOUNDNESS IS THE BASIS FOR TRUE FELLOWSHIP!

Those who claim, like the Gnostics, to have fellowship with the Father, to abide in God, and yet who deny the person of Jesus, (that He is the divine Christ), are called antichrists. As the letter moves from descriptions of the doctrinal, moral, and social tests, (1:1-2:11), to positive and negative applications of the tests (2:12-17), to refined expositions and emphasis of the tests, (2:18-5:21), an intensification in the argument for authentic Christian experience is felt.

John increasingly becomes bold and daring in the pictures he gives of the false professors (2:18-25) of truth, and of the true possessors of truth (3:1-3). In the former case, he boldly asserts that they are 'antichrists' (2:22). In the latter case, he dares to call them children of God (3:1) whose destiny is gloriously wonderful (3:2, 3)!

As the letter progresses, the description of both the true believer and the false professor becomes more intense and focused. In 1 John 2:18-27, by way of contrast, John identifies the true Christian. A true Christian believes in and experiences the Holy Spirit's anointing (2:20,

21). *A true Christian believes in the Incarnation. To deny the Incarnation is to be diabolical (antichrist). He who denies the Incarnation denies "the Father and the Son." (Again, the recurring theme of fellowship with the Father is stated). A true Christian is one who believes that there is no way to truly know God, except through the Son. A true Christian is one who does not accept new doctrines, ideas, and traditions of men, but rather he adheres to and practices the authoritative message of the early Church, as recorded in Scripture. The Word of Jesus, which is the Word of Truth, is the objective safeguard against falsehood. The subjective safeguard against falsehood is the indwelling Holy Spirit. (2:20)*

I JOHN 2:28-3:10 CHARACTER OF THE CHRISTIAN ETHICALLY DESCRIBED "POSITIVELY AND NEGATIVELY".

With a progressively greater intensity, John applies the tests for authentic Christian experience. He makes a strong application, both positively and negatively. First the ethical, moral test, and he then applies in detail, the social, love test. (3:11-24)

The application of the moral test, positively, is found in 2:28-3:3, and the application of the moral (ethical) test, negatively, is found in 3:4-10.

Note the positive application of the moral test. (2:28-3:3)

An added dimension to the moral test (not yet mentioned in the letter), as regards motivation for righteous living, is found in 2:28. John says that a spur to righteous living and faithful service is the knowledge that Christ is coming to earth again. (v. 28) Living righteously will give confidence when Jesus returns. Those whose lives are characterized by righteousness are called children of God, because the righteous ones reflect the character of the Righteous One, Jesus Christ.

The character of the Christian is ethically described, negatively, in 3:4-10. The begotten one (wonderfully described in 3:1-3) does not practice sinning. (3:4-10) John has already refuted the heretics who claimed to be beyond the possibility of sinning (1:8, 10). While they denied the existence of sin, they were in reality ordering their behavior in sinful ways. But true believers, while they never deny the reality of sin, doctrinally and ethically speaking, and while they must acknowledge the possibility (and probability) of actual cases of sinful acts in their lives (2:1-2), they (true believers) must, nevertheless, realize that a habitual lifestyle of sinning is totally incompatible and contradictory to authentic Christian experience. (3:4-10)

Sin is described as lawlessness (3:4), and the very purpose for Christ's first coming was to take away sins (3:5). The way to keep from habitually sinning is to abide constantly in Christ. (3:6, 7) The Gnostics claimed to abide in God (to have special 'inside' knowledge of God and intimate fellowship with God), but their evil moral behavior (practicing sin) was such that all their high claims must be repudiated on the basis of their low moral performance! In other words, a person is known by, and best described by, his character. The one who habitually practices righteousness (in spite of occasional sin, which is immediately atoned for because of the propitiatory work of Christ, 1 John 2:2) is of God; the one who habitually sins is of the Devil. As long as one appropriates the nature and the benefits of Christ, it is impossible to 'be' righteous (as the Gnostics claimed) without bothering to practice righteousness. (Note: There is a popular, perverted doctrine today that claims that one is saved 'in' his sins, not 'from' his sins, that he can be 'imputed' righteous without any evidence of actual change of behavior. This doctrine is an application of the Gnostic heresy that one can be considered righteous in God's sight apart from a habitual practice of righteous deeds.) The Bible teaches that justification - i.e., being reckoned righteous - is inseparably connected with regeneration - i.e., being made righteous through God's divine empowering. "If even

isolated sins are so incongruous, what is utterly impossible is persistence in sin, 'a character, a prevailing habit, and not primarily an act.'"
(Westcott)

I JOHN 3:11-24. CHARACTER OF THE CHRISTIAN RELATIONALLY DESCRIBED AS SELF-GIVING LOVE!"

1 John proceeds to describe in considerable detail the dynamics of love as the authenticating and climaxing test for true Christian profession. With increasing emphasis in the latter half of the letter, John dwells upon the greatest of the three main tests for authentic Christian experience. The refrain of Christian love is repeated in 4:7-21. So in two long passages, 3:11-24 and 4:7-21, John emphasizes the dynamics and the application of Christian love. The abstract and doctrinal test (belief in the Incarnation) becomes more concrete in the moral obedience to God's commands, and the concrete could not become more concrete than in that which John emphasizes at great lengths - the practical expressions of love in human relationships, (3:11-24), a love patterned after the very love of God Himself (4:7-21).

Between the two long passages on love is inserted a concise application of the moral test, as it is applied to testing the spirits in 1 John 4:1-6.

Self-giving love, the social test for authentic Christian experience, is described in the following ways in 3:11-24:

- (1) Personal Love (3:11-15): This love is not abstract, general love for the entire world, but it is personal, individual love for specific persons. This personal love will produce righteous works, (the social test and the moral test are interwoven here), which will be a silent rebuke to the ungodly, even incurring the murderous wrath of the ungodly (3:12-15)!*
- (2) Perfect Love (3:16a): This love is perfect for several reasons:*

- (a) *Perfect because this love is God's love, agape love.*
 - (b) *Perfect because this love cannot be purchased or achieved based on human effort.*
 - (c) *Perfect because growth in this love is without limitations, from God's perspective. (Note: although this love is perfect in source and quality, it is not perfect in expression, for this love is contained in and expressed through 'earthen vessels' - subject to 'human frailties').*
- (3) *Practical love (3:16b-18) - A Christian must possess self-sacrificing love, patterned after Christ's self-giving love.*
- (4) *Productive love (3:19-24) - The one who experiences the divinely-imparted love can be assured that he is of the Truth, and, therefore, he can have a tranquil heart. Whatever the source of condemnation - be it false or true - God is greater than the condemnation and God can restore the believer to true confidence.*

The love-filled, confident Christian constantly and habitually keeps God's commandments (3:22-24) - (this is another instance of John interweaving the social and the moral tests for authentic Christian experience).

The product of love is confidence - confidence in fearlessly facing God the Father, and confidence in expecting and receiving answers to prayer.

*I JOHN 4:1-6 APPLICATION OF THE MORAL TEST IN
'TESTING SPIRITS!'*

Before John continues with a further discussion of the social test (the dynamics of brotherly love, 1 John 4:7-21), John makes another cycle (in the 'circling, ascending staircase' of truth) as he inserts a concise description of the practical application of the doctrinal test. In the opening verses of the letter (1 John 1:1-4), John gave a concrete affirmation of Jesus' true humanity (which is the doctrinal foundation for fellowship with the Father). John has already shown that denial that Jesus is the Christ is evidence that one is an antichrist. John will later return to the doctrinal test when he declares that confession of Jesus' divine sonship is evidence of God's indwelling (4:14, 15), evidence of spiritual birth (5:1a), and the objective basis for belief (5:6-10). In this section, the need for testing the spirits is assumed (4:1) and then the method for testing (4:2, 3, 5, a 6).

The Christian faith is not an indiscriminate faith. "True faith examines its object before reposing confidence in it." (Stott) The value of one's faith is determined by the object of one's faith.

1 John 4:2, 3 notes that if a teaching or a teacher confesses and adheres to the Incarnation, the teaching and teacher is of God. 1 John 4:5, 6 describes another way the moral test can be applied in the 'testing of spirits'. Is the message accepted by Christians and rejected by non-Christians? Not only are the need for and the method for testing spirits described, but the wonderful results of successful application of the doctrinal test to heretics are described. "Little children, you are of God, and have overcome them; for he who is in you is greater than he who is in the world." (1 John 4:4)

"Have overcome" – i.e., stand presently victorious (perfect tense) because of the exceeding power of Christ that works within.

The doctrinal test has not only intellectual significance, but it has personal significance. The believer's personal, spiritual existence depends upon the successful application of the doctrinal test, in the face of fierce satanic opposition. The many antichrists in the world (2:18) are described (4:3) and defeated (4:4), because He (God), who makes His residence in the Body of the Church, is greater than the Evil One who expresses himself in the world (2:15-17) and through the activities of the many antichrists in the world (2:18).

I JOHN 4:7-21 THE OPERATION OF AGAPE LOVE!

After spending a short time on the Doctrinal test, John returns to his favorite theme – the expression of agape love as the greatest evidence that one has true fellowship with the Father.

- (1) Motivation for brotherly love (Why love?)*
 - (a) God's very nature is love and the origin of all true love is God.*
 - (b) God manifested His love perfectly by sending His Son to die for mankind. This portion of Scripture indicates that two great things were accomplished through Christ's coming to earth: The saving work of redemption was accomplished (vs. 9, 10, and 14) and an example of concrete loving in terms of active self-giving was given to man (v. 11).*
- (2) Meaning of brotherly love (What is love?) The meaning of love is seen in three statements:*

- (a) *The practice of love is evidence that one is born of God and knows God (4:7b, 8),*
 - (b) *Loving one another is evidence of God's indwelling and wonderful presence (4:12),*
 - (c) *God's love in us is brought to completion, or as Stott says, "God's love for us is perfected only when it is reproduced in us."*
- (3) *Method of brotherly love (How to realize love?)*
- (a) *Conversion to Christ and abiding in Christ is made possible through God's gift of the Holy Spirit. (4:13)*
 - (b) *"The only way to love (v. 16), as the only way to believe (v. 15), is by dwelling in God and God in us." (Stott)*
- (4) *Measure of brotherly love (How much love?)*

Love must be perfected. "John is not suggesting that any Christian's love could in this life be flawlessly perfect, but rather developed and mature, set fixedly upon God." (Stott)

1 JOHN 5:1-12 BASIS FOR THE VICTORIOUS LIFE!

John combines all three tests in his argument for authentic Christian experience in 1 John 5:1-2. Doctrinal test ("believeth that Jesus is the Christ"). Social test ("everyone that loveth him"). Moral test ("and keeps his commandments").

After expounding in detail the various tests, the Doctrinal, 1:1-4; 2:18-23; the Social 3:11-24; 4:7-21; the Moral, 1:5-2:2; 2:28 - 3:10, John combines the arguments in a concise statement (1 John 5:1-2). He says that love for God is evidenced by love of the brethren (v. 2). He says that belief that Jesus is the Christ is the basis for the new birth. (v. 1) He says that we may know that we love the brethren when we are keeping God's commandments. The latter is both interesting and significant. Ethical obedience to God's commandments is the source

of our confidence that we are indeed realizing agape love in our relationships with others. We may know that we possess love for others, whether or not we 'feel' love for others. Love is not a mere feeling; love is an ethical commitment to another. Ethical obedience to God's commands and relational commitment in love expressions are inseparably connected.

1 John 5:1-3 Outlines the Evidence of Spiritual Victory: (a) the new birth, (b) Love for God and (c) love for other Christians.

1 John 5:4-12 Outlines the Pathway to Victory. The victory that overcomes the world is faith (v. 4), or, to put it more concretely, 'belief that Jesus is the Son of God' (v. 5). That is, to overcome all the inner and outer powers that are opposed to God (the meaning of 'world'), one must believe that Jesus is the Son of God.

The one who is born of God finds that God's commandments are not burdensome. Why is this? Because his new birth gives him a new nature. The laws of God are written no longer on tablets of stone but on the tablet of his heart. (Hebrews 8:10)

Why should one commit his life to Jesus? What is the objective basis for believing in Jesus? While there are various interpretations given for 1 John 5:6-8, the latter passage appears to mean that the Spirit witnesses to the Divine-Human personhood of Jesus, that is, that Jesus was divine not only between His Baptism and Crucifixion, but that He was divine before and during His Baptism ("water") and during and after His Crucifixion ("blood"). These verses (vs. 6-8) contend that a total Incarnation is vital to a total redemption. A recurrence of the doctrinal test: a refutation of the Gnostic heresy, which taught that the Divine 'Christ' entered the earthly Jesus at the Baptism and left the earthly Jesus before his Crucifixion.

Added to the three-fold witness (Spirit, water, and blood) is the witness of God Himself who also witnesses to the Divine-Human person of Jesus. Added to the witness of the disciples to the Divine-Human person of Jesus in 1:1-4 are the three-fold witness in 5:8 and the witness of God Himself in 5:9. The witness of God to Jesus has abiding validity in the present and future (note the use of the Greek perfect tense).

What is the result when one denies God's witness to the Divine-Human person of Jesus? (1) "He who does not believe God has made him a liar, because he has not believed in the testimony that God has borne to His Son" (v. 12b).

What is the result when one accepts God's witness to the Divine - Human person of Jesus? (1) "He who believes in the Son of God has the testimony in himself." (v. 10a) "That is (the believer) is given a yet deeper assurance by the inward witness of the Spirit that he was right to trust in Christ." (Stott) (2) "And this is the testimony that God gave us eternal life, and this life is in his Son. He who has the Son has life." (vs. 11-12a)

I JOHN 5:9-21 THE CHRISTIAN'S ASSURANCE!

Perhaps the most appropriate way for John to climax his letter is with an affirmation of Christian assurance.

The Gnostic heretics prided themselves in claiming 'to know' God. John declares that personal, experiential knowledge is a reality, but he has taken pains to make clear - to enunciate - the conditions for such fellowship. After discussing (in a recurring, repetitious manner) the three main tests for authentic Christian experience, he wraps up his letter with words of certitude for those who have met the tests!

1 John 5:13 Speaks of Assurance of Eternal Life. 'Know' is in the present tense - i.e., a possession here and now of a present certainty of received life in Christ. 'Have' is in the present tense - i.e., eternal life is not only a future anticipation but also a present reality! 'Eternal life' is the 'life of God', for God alone inherently possesses and inhabits eternity! "What we are promised is that here and now there can be given to us a share in the very life of God" (Barclay).

The condition for maintaining present assurance of eternal life is described in the phrase 'to the ones believing' - i.e., to the ones who have a continuing commitment to Jesus Christ.

The subject of assurance is extended to that of answered prayer. Assurance is given to the seeking believer. God is waiting lovingly and expectantly for the believer to come to Him to ask for good things. All God-honoring requests must be made earnestly, persistently, and in

accord with God's will. Such God-honoring petitions are immediately granted, although many times the results of the granting are perceived in the future. (5: 14, 15)

After speaking of assurance of eternal life (v. 13), assurance of answered prayer (v. 14, 15), John turns to another illustration of assurance. John assures the Christian that if a brother if, brother Christian sins, the faithful Christian should pray for the restoration of the fallen one "and God will give him life for those whose sin is not mortal." (v. 16)

Assurance of God's fellowship is a key theme of John in his letter. John wants his readers to guard against sinning (1 John2:1-3, 6-10) and to live a regenerated life, looking forward to future glory (3:1-3). Such a person is protected against Satan (5:18), as contrasted to the world which is in the grasp of the Evil One (5:19). He who accepts the Son is living according to truth and reality, and he keeps himself from the false idols of the world (5:20-21). Such a person is truly alive!

CONTRASTS IN THE BOOK OF one JOHN.

Light - 1:5, 7; 2:8, 9, 10

Darkness - 1:5, 6; 2:8, 9, 11

Love - 2:5; 2: 9, 10; 3:14, 16, 17, 18; 4:7, 18

Hate - 2:9, 11; 3:14, 15; 4:7, 19

Truth - 1:8; 2:8; 2:20, 27; 3:19; 4:19

Falsehood (Liar) - 1:6, 8, 10; 2:4, 21; 2:22, 23, 27

Life - 1:2; 2:17; 2:25; 3:14

Death - 2:17; 3:14

Sin (Guilt) - 1:8; 2:1; 3:9, 12, 20; 2:12; 3:6, 8

Righteousness (Forgiveness, confidence) - 1:9; 2:2; 2:12; 3:6, 7, 12, 20, 21

Spirit of God - 4:2, 4, 6

Spirit of Ant-Christ - 4: 3, 4, 6

Love of World - 2:15, 16

Love of God - 2:15

Spiritual Group (God's children) - 2:19, 27; 3:10; 4:6; 5:10

Deceptive Group (Satan's children) - 2:19, 26; 3:10; 4:5, 6; 5:10

Courage - 2:28

Shame - 2:28

Work of Son 3:8

Work of Satan - 3:8

*EVIDENCES OF CONVERSION
(Book of Me John)*

- I. *Doctrinal Test - Belief in Incarnation and Uniqueness of Jesus (Intellectual approach - "Mind" - "Knowing")*
 1. *Experimental knowledge of Jesus = Evidence of Jesus' Deity (1:1-4)*
 2. *Denial that Jesus is Christ = Identification of antichrists (2:18; 4:1-6)*
 3. *Maintenance of "anointed" spiritual truth = Condition for spiritual abiding (2:24-27); Confidence for Christ's Coming (2:28)*
 4. *Confession of Jesus' Divine Sonship = Evidence of God's indwelling (4:14, 15)*
 - = *Evidence of Spiritual Birth (5:1a)*
 - = *Objective Basis for Belief (5:6-10)*

- II. *Social Test - Love of the Brethren (Emotional approach - "Emotions", "Feelings")*
 1. *Hatred of Brethren = Evidence of Spiritual darkness (2:9) and blindness (2:11)*
 2. *Love of Brethren*
 - = *Evidence of Spiritual abiding (2:10)*
 - = *Evidence of Love's perfection (4:12, 16)*
 - = *Evidence of Spiritual Birth (3:10b-15; 4:7-12; 5:1b)*
 3. *Perversion of Human Desires = Evidence of Worldliness (2:15, 17)*
 4. *Actions of Sacrificial Love = Evidence of Authentic Profession (3:16-18)*
 5. *Indwelling of Holy Spirit = Witness of Spiritual Sonship (4:13)*

6. *Perfection of Love*
 - = *Confidence for Christ's Coming (4:17)*
 - = *Casteth out fear (4:18)*
7. *Love for God = Evidenced by love for Brethren (4:19-21)*
 - = *Evidence for love of the Brethren (5:2)*
 - = *Evidenced by obedience to commandments (5:3)*

III. *MORAL TEST - OBEDIENCE TO COMMANDMENTS OF GOD (VOLITIONAL RESPONSE - "WILL", "DOING")*

1. *Walking in Light = Condition for Fellowship (1:5-7)*
2. *Confession of Sinful Actions = Condition for Forgiveness (1:8-10)*
3. *Appeal to Christ's Advocacy = Condition for Restoration (2:1-2)*
4. *Obedience to Commandments = Condition for Experimental Knowledge (2:3-4; 7-8; 3:24)*
 - = *Condition for Confidence (3:19-24)*
 - = *Condition for Answered Prayer (3:22)*
 - = *Evidence of Love for Brethren (5:2)*
5. *Imitation of Christ = Condition for Spiritual Abiding (2:6)*
6. *Personal Volitional Response to God = Condition for Vital Victorious Living (2:12-14; 3:1-3; 5:18-21)*
7. *"Doing" will of God = Evidence of Spiritual Birth (2:29)*
 - = *Condition for Eternal Abiding in God (2:17)*
8. *Habitual Practice of Sin = Evidence of Spiritual Death (3:4-10)*

9. *Overcome the World = Accomplished by Faith of Believer (5:4);*
 - = Accomplished by Belief in Jesus' Deity (5:5)*
10. *Ask in Faith = Leads to Confidence in God (5:14);*
 - = Prayer answer conditioned by God's will (5:15);*
 - = Results in restoring fallen brother (5:16, 17)*

