

AN EXPOSITION, WITH PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS, OF

THE FIRST GENERAL EPISTLE OF

JOHN

This epistle is a discourse upon the principles of Christianity, in doctrine and practice. The design appears to be, to refute and guard against erroneous and unholy tenets, principles, and practices, especially such as would lower the Godhead of Christ, and the reality and power of his sufferings and death, as an atoning sacrifice; and against the assertion that believers being saved by grace, are not required to obey the commandments. This epistle also stirs up all who profess to know God, to have communion with him, and to believe in him, and that they walk in holiness, not in sin, showing that a mere outward profession is nothing, without the evidence of a holy life and conduct. It also helps forward and excites real Christians to communion with God and the Lord Jesus Christ, to constancy in the true faith, and to purity of life.

CHAPTER 1

*The apostle prefaces his epistle to believers in general, with evident testimonies to Christ, for promoting their happiness and joy. (1-4)
The necessity of a life of holiness, in order to communion with God, is shown. (5-10)*

 **1 John 1:1**

Vs. 1-4: That essential Good, that uncreated Excellence, which had been from the beginning, from eternity, as equal with the Father, and which at length appeared in human nature for the salvation of sinners, was the great subject concerning which the apostle wrote to his brethren. The apostles had seen Him while they witnessed his wisdom and holiness, his miracles, and love and mercy, during some years, till they saw him crucified for

sinner, and afterwards risen from the dead. They touched him, so as to have full proof of his resurrection. This Divine Person, the Word of life, the Word of God, appeared in human nature, that he might be the Author and Giver of eternal life to mankind, through the redemption of his blood, and the influence of his new-creating Spirit. The apostles declared what they had seen and heard, that believers might share their comforts and everlasting advantages. They had free access to God the Father. They had a happy experience of the truth in their souls, and showed its excellence in their lives. This communion of believers with the Father and the Son, is begun and kept up by the influences of the Holy Spirit. The benefits Christ bestows, are not like the scanty possessions of the world, causing jealousies in others; but the joy and happiness of communion with God is all-sufficient, so that any number may partake of it; and all who are warranted to say, that truly their fellowship is with the Father, will desire to lead others to partake of the same blessedness.

1 John 1:5

Vs. 5-10: A message from the Lord Jesus, the Word of life, the eternal Word, we should all gladly receive. The great God should be represented to this dark world, as pure and perfect light. As this is the nature of God, his doctrines and precepts must be such. And as his perfect happiness cannot be separated from his perfect holiness, so our happiness will be in proportion to our being made holy. To walk in darkness, is to live and act against religion. God holds no heavenly fellowship or intercourse with unholy souls. There is no truth in their profession; their practice shows its folly and falsehood. The eternal Life, the eternal Son, put on flesh and blood, and died to wash us from our sins in his own blood, and procures for us the sacred influences by which sin is to be subdued more and more, till it is quite done away. While the necessity of a holy walk is insisted upon, as the effect and evidence of the knowledge of God in Christ Jesus, the opposite error of self-righteous pride is guarded against with equal care. All who walk near to God, in holiness and righteousness, are sensible that their best days and duties are mixed with sin. God has given testimony to the sinfulness of the world, by providing a sufficient, effectual Sacrifice for sin, needed in all ages; and the sinfulness of believers themselves is shown, by requiring them continually to confess their sins, and to apply by faith to the blood of that Sacrifice. Let us plead guilty

before God, be humble, and willing to know the worst of our case. Let us honestly confess all our sins in their full extent, relying wholly on his mercy and truth through the righteousness of Christ, for a free and full forgiveness, and our deliverance from the power and practice of sin.

CHAPTER 2

The apostle directs to the atonement of Christ for help against sinful infirmities. (1, 2) The effects of saving knowledge in producing obedience, and love to the brethren. (3-11) Christians addressed as little children, young men, and fathers. (12-14) All are cautioned against the love of this world, and against errors. (15-23) They are encouraged to stand fast in faith and holiness. (24-29)

1 John 2:1

Vs. 1, 2: We have an Advocate with the Father; one who has undertaken, and is fully able, to plead in behalf of every one who applies for pardon and salvation in his name, depending on his pleading for them. He is “Jesus,” the Savior, and “Christ,” the Messiah, the Anointed. He alone is “the Righteous One,” who received his nature pure from sin, and as our Surety perfectly obeyed the law of God, and so fulfilled all righteousness. All men, in every land, and through successive generations, are invited to come to God through this all-sufficient atonement, and by this new and living way. The gospel, when rightly understood and received, sets the heart against all sin, and stops the allowed practice of it; at the same time it gives blessed relief to the wounded consciences of those who have sinned.

1 John 2:3

Vs. 3-11: What knowledge of Christ can that be, which sees not that he is most worthy of our entire obedience? And a disobedient life shows there is neither religion nor honesty in the professor. The love of God is perfected in him that keeps his commandments. God’s grace in him attains its true mark, and produces its sovereign effect as far as may be in this world, and this is man’s regeneration; though never absolutely perfect here. Yet this observing Christ’s commands, has holiness and excellency which, if universal, would make the earth resemble heaven itself. The command to love one another had been in force from the beginning of the world; but it might be called a new command as given to Christians. It was new in them, as their situation was new in respect of its motives, rules, and obligations. And those who walk in hatred and enmity to believers,

remain in a dark state. Christian love teaches us to value our brother's soul, and to dread every thing hurtful to his purity and peace. Where spiritual darkness dwells, in mind, the judgment, and the conscience will be darkened, and will mistake the way to heavenly life. These things demand serious self-examination; and earnest prayer, that God would show us what we are, and whither we are going.

1 John 2:12

Vs. 12-14: As Christians have their peculiar states, so they have peculiar duties; but there are precepts and obedience common to all, particularly mutual love, and contempt of the world. The youngest sincere disciple is pardoned: the communion of saints is attended with the forgiveness of sins. Those of the longest standing in Christ's school need further advice and instruction. Even fathers must be written unto, and preached unto; none are too old to learn. But especially young men in Christ Jesus, though they are arrived at strength of spirit and sound sense, and have successfully resisted first trials and temptations, breaking off bad habits and connections, and entered in at the strait gate of true conversion. The different descriptions of Christians are again addressed. Children in Christ know that God is their Father; it is wisdom. Those advanced believers, who know Him that was from the beginning, before this world was made, may well be led thereby to give up this world. It will be the glory of young persons to be strong in Christ, and his grace. By the word of God they overcome the wicked one.

1 John 2:15

Vs. 15-17: The things of the world may be desired and possessed for the uses and purposes which God intended, and they are to be used by his grace, and to his glory; but believers must not seek or value them for those purposes to which sin abuses them. The world draws the heart from God; and the more the love of the world prevails, the more the love of God decays. The things of the world are classed according to the three ruling inclinations of depraved nature.

1. The lust of the flesh, of the body: wrong desires of the heart, the appetite of indulging all things that excite and inflame sensual pleasures.

2. The lust of the eyes: the eyes are delighted with riches and rich possessions; this is the lust of covetousness.

3. The pride of life: a vain man craves the grandeur and pomp of a vain-glorious life; this includes thirst after honor and applause.

The things of the world quickly fade and die away; desire itself will ere long fail and cease, but holy affection is not like the lust that passes away. The love of God shall never fail. Many vain efforts have been made to evade the force of this passage by limitations, distinctions, or exceptions. Many have tried to show how far we may be carnally-minded, and love the world; but the plain meaning of these verses cannot easily be mistaken. Unless this victory over the world is begun in the heart, a man has no root in himself, but will fall away, or at most remain an unfruitful professor. Yet these vanities are so alluring to the corruption in our hearts, that without constant watching and prayer, we cannot escape the world, or obtain victory over the God and prince of it.

1 John 2:18

Vs. 18-23: Every man is an antichrist, who denies the Person, or any of the offices of Christ; and in denying the Son, he denies the Father also, and has no part in his favor while he rejects his great salvation. Let this prophecy that seducers would rise in the Christian world, keep us from being seduced. The church knows not well who are its true members, and who are not, but thus true Christians were proved, and rendered more watchful and humble. True Christians are anointed ones; their names expresses this: they are anointed with grace, with gifts and spiritual privileges, by the Holy Spirit of grace. The great and most hurtful lies that the father of lies spreads in the world, usually are falsehoods and errors relating to the person of Christ. The unction from the Holy One, alone can keep us from delusions. While we judge favorably of all who trust in Christ as the Divine Savior, and obey his word, and seek to live in union with them, let us pity and pray for those who deny the Godhead of Christ, or his atonement, and the new-creating work of the Holy Ghost. Let us protest against such antichristian doctrine, and keep from them as much as we may.

1 John 2:24

Vs. 24-29: The truth of Christ, abiding in us, is a means to sever from sin, and unites us to the Son of God, ^{<BIB>}John 15:3, 4. What value should we put upon gospel truth! Thereby the promise of eternal life is made sure. The promise God makes, is suitable to his own greatness, power, and goodness; it is eternal life. The Spirit of truth will not lie; and he teaches all things in the present dispensation, all things necessary to our knowledge of God in Christ, and their glory in the gospel. The apostle repeats the kind words, "little children;" which denotes his affection. He would persuade by love. Gospel privileges oblige to gospel duties; and those anointed by the Lord Jesus abide with him. The new spiritual nature is from the Lord Christ. He that is constant to the practice of religion in trying times, shows that he is born from above, from the Lord Christ. Then, let us beware of holding the truth in unrighteousness, remembering that those only are born of God, who bear his holy image, and walk in his most righteous ways.

CHAPTER 3

The apostle admires the love of God in making believers his children. (1, 2) The purifying influence of the hope of seeing Christ, and the danger of pretending to this, and living in sin. (3-10) Love to the brethren is the character of real Christians. (11-15) That love described by its actings. (16-21) The advantage of faith, love, and obedience. (22-24)

1 John 3:1

Vs. 1, 2: Little does the world know of the happiness of the real followers of Christ. Little does the world think that these poor, humble, despised ones, are favorites of God, and will dwell in heaven. Let the followers of Christ be content with hard fare here, since they are in a land of strangers, where their Lord was so badly treated before them. The sons of God must walk by faith, and live by hope. They may well wait in faith, hope, and earnest desire, for the revelation of the Lord Jesus. The sons of God will be known, and be made manifest by likeness to their Head. They shall be transformed into the same image, by their view of him.

1 John 3:3

Vs. 3-10: The sons of God know that their Lord is of purer eyes than to allow any thing unholy and impure to dwell with him. It is the hope of hypocrites, not of the sons of God, that makes allowance for gratifying impure desires and lusts. May we be followers of him as his dear children, thus show our sense of his unspeakable mercy, and express that obedient, grateful, humble mind which becomes us. Sin is the rejecting the Divine law. In him, that is, in Christ, was no sin. All the sinless weaknesses that were consequences of the fall, he took; that is, all those infirmities of mind or body which subject man to suffering, and expose him to temptation. But our moral infirmities, our proneness to sin, he had not. He that abides in Christ, continues not in the practice of sin. Renouncing sin is the great proof of spiritual union with, continuance in, and saving knowledge of the Lord Christ. Beware of self-deceit. He that doeth righteousness is righteous, and to be a follower of Christ, shows an interest by faith in his obedience and sufferings. But a man cannot act like the devil, and at the

same time be a disciple of Christ Jesus. Let us not serve or indulge what the Son of God came to destroy. To be born of God is to be inwardly renewed by the power of the Spirit of God. Renewing grace is an abiding principle. Religion is not an art, a matter of dexterity and skill, but a new nature. And the regenerate person cannot sin as he did before he was born of God, and as others do who are not born again. There is that light in his mind, which shows him the evil and malignity of sin. There is that bias upon his heart, which disposes him to loathe and hate sin. There is the spiritual principle that opposes sinful acts. And there is repentance for sin, if committed. It goes against him to sin with forethought. The children of God and the children of the devil have their distinct characters. The seed of the serpent are known by neglect of religion, and by their hating real Christians. He only is righteous before God, as a justified believer, who is taught and disposed to righteousness by the Holy Spirit. In this the children of God are manifest, and the children of the devil. May all professors of the gospel lay these truths to heart, and try themselves by them.

1 John 3:11

Vs. 11-15: We should love the Lord Jesus, value his love, and therefore love all our brethren in Christ. This love is the special fruit of our faith, and a certain sign of our being born again. But none who rightly know the heart of man, can wonder at the contempt and enmity of ungodly people against the children of God. We know that we are passed from death to life: we may know it by the evidences of our faith in Christ, of which love to our brethren is one. It is not zeal for a party in the common religion, or affection for those who are of the same name and sentiments with ourselves. The life of grace in the heart of a regenerate person, is the beginning and first principle of a life of glory, whereof they must be destitute who hate their brother in their hearts.

1 John 3:16

Vs. 16-21: Here is the condescension, the miracle, the mystery of Divine love, that God would redeem the church with his own blood. Surely we should love those whom God has loved, and so loved. The Holy Spirit, grieved at selfishness, will leave the selfish heart without comfort, and full of darkness and terror. By what can it be known that a man has a true

sense of the love of Christ for perishing sinners, or that the love of God has been planted in his heart by the Holy Spirit, if the love of the world and its good overcomes the feelings of compassion to a perishing brother? Every instance of this selfishness must weaken the evidences of a man's conversion; when habitual and allowed, it must decide against him. If conscience condemn us in known sin, or the neglect of known duty, God does so too. Let conscience therefore be well-informed, be heard, and diligently attended to.

 **1 John 3:22**

Vs. 22-24: When believers had confidence towards God, through the Spirit of adoption, and by faith in the great High Priest, they might ask what they would of their reconciled Father. They would receive it, if good for them. And as goodwill to men was proclaimed from heaven, so goodwill to men, particularly to the brethren, must be in the hearts of those who go to God and heaven. He who thus follows Christ, dwells in Him as his ark, refuge, and rest, and in the Father through him. This union between Christ and the souls of believers, is by the Spirit he has given them. A man may believe that God is gracious before he knows it; yet when faith has laid hold on the promises, it sets reason to work. This Spirit of God works a change; in all true Christians it changes from the power of Satan to the power of God. Consider, believer, how it changes thy heart. Dost not thou long for peace with God? Wouldst thou not forego all the world for it? No profit, pleasure, or preferment shall hinder thee from following Christ. This salvation is built upon Divine testimony, even the Spirit of God.

CHAPTER 4

Believers cautioned against giving heed to every one that pretends to the Spirit. (1-6) Brotherly love enforced. (7-21)

1 John 4:1


Vs. 1-6: Christians who are well acquainted with the Scriptures, may, in humble dependence on Divine teaching, discern those who set forth doctrines according to the apostles, and those who contradict them. The sum of revealed religion is in the doctrine concerning Christ, his person and office. The false teachers spake of the world according to its maxims and tastes, so as not to offend carnal men. The world approved them, they made rapid progress, and had many followers such as themselves; the world will love its own, and its own will love it. The true doctrine as to the Savior's person, as leading men from the world to God, is a mark of the spirit of truth in opposition to the spirit of error. The more pure and holy any doctrine is, the more likely to be of God; nor can we by any other rules try the spirits whether they are of God or not. And what wonder is it, that people of a worldly spirit should cleave to those who are like themselves, and suit their schemes and discourses to their corrupt taste?

1 John 4:7

Vs. 7-13: The Spirit of God is the Spirit of love. He that does not love the image of God in his people, has no saving knowledge of God. For it is God's nature to be kind, and to give happiness. The law of God is love; and all would have been perfectly happy, had all obeyed it. The provision of the gospel, for the forgiveness of sin, and the salvation of sinners, consistently with God's glory and justice, shows that God is love. Mystery and darkness rest upon many things yet. God has so shown himself to be love, that we cannot come short of eternal happiness, unless through unbelief and impenitence, although strict justice would condemn us to hopeless misery, because we break our Creator's laws. None of our words or thoughts can do justice to the free, astonishing love of a holy God towards sinners, who could not profit or harm him, whom he might justly crush in a moment, and whose deserving of his vengeance was

shown in the method by which they were saved, though he could by his almighty Word have created other worlds, with more perfect beings, if he had seen fit. Search we the whole universe for love in its most glorious displays? It is to be found in the person and the cross of Christ. Does love exist between God and sinners? Here was the origin, not that we loved God, but that he freely loved us. His love could not be designed to be fruitless upon us, and when its proper end and issue are gained and produced, it may be said to be perfected. So faith is perfected by its works. Thus it will appear that God dwells in us by his new-creating Spirit. A loving Christian is a perfect Christian; set him to any good duty, and he is perfect to it, he is expert at it. Love oils the wheels of his affections, and sets him on that which is helpful to his brethren. A man that goes about a business with ill will, always does it badly. That God dwells in us and we in him, were words too high for mortals to use, had not God put them before us. But how may it be known whether the testimony to this does proceed from the Holy Ghost? Those who are truly persuaded that they are the sons of God, cannot but call him Abba, Father. From love to him, they hate sin, and whatever disagrees with his will, and they have a sound and hearty desire to do his will. Such testimony is the testimony of the Holy Ghost.

1 John 4:14

Vs. 14-21: The Father sent the Son, he willed his coming into this world. The apostle attests this. And whosoever shall confess that Jesus is the Son of God, God dwelleth in him, and he in God. This confession includes faith in the heart as the foundation; makes acknowledgment with the mouth to the glory of God and Christ, and profession in the life and conduct, against the flatteries and frowns of the world. There must be a day of universal judgment. Happy those who shall have holy boldness before the Judge at that day; knowing he is their Friend and Advocate! Happy those who have holy boldness in the prospect of that day, who look and wait for it, and for the Judge's appearance! True love to God assures believers of God's love to them. Love teaches us to suffer for him and with him; therefore we may trust that we shall also be glorified with him,  2 Timothy 2:12. We must distinguish between the fear of God and being afraid of him; the fear of God imports high regard and veneration for God. Obedience and good works, done from the principle of love, are not

like the servile toil of one who unwillingly labors from dread of a master's anger. They are like that of a dutiful child, who does services to a beloved father, which benefit his brethren, and are done willingly. It is a sign that our love is far from perfect, when our doubts, fears, and apprehensions of God, are many. Let heaven and earth stand amazed at his love. He sent his word to invite sinners to partake of this great salvation. Let them take the comfort of the happy change wrought in them, while they give him the glory. The love of God in Christ, in the hearts of Christians from the Spirit of adoption, is the great proof of conversion. This must be tried by its effects on their temper, and their conduct to their brethren. If a man professes to love God, and yet indulges anger or revenge, or shows a selfish disposition, he gives his profession the lie. But if it is plain that our natural enmity is changed into affection and gratitude, let us bless the name of our God for this seal and earnest of eternal happiness. Then we differ from the false professors, who pretend to love God, whom they have not seen, yet hate their brethren, whom they have seen.

CHAPTER 5

Brotherly love is the effect of the new birth, which makes obedience to all God's commandments pleasant. (1-5) Reference to witnesses agreeing to prove that Jesus, the Son of God, is the true Messiah. (6-8) The satisfaction the believer has about Christ, and eternal life through him. (9-12) The assurance of God's hearing and answering prayer. (13-17) The happy condition of true believers, and a charge to renounce all idolatry. (18-21)

1 John 5:1

Vs. 1-5: True love for the people of God, may be distinguished from natural kindness or party attachments, by its being united with the love of God, and obedience to his commands. The same Holy Spirit that taught the love, will have taught obedience also; and that man cannot truly love the children of God, who, by habit, commits sin or neglects known duty. As God's commands are holy, just, and good rules of liberty and happiness, so those who are born of God and love him, do not count them grievous, but lament that they cannot serve him more perfectly. Self-denial is required, but true Christians have a principle which carries them above all hindrances. Though the conflict often is sharp, and the regenerate may be cast down, yet he will rise up and renew his combat with resolution. But all, except believers in Christ, are enslaved in some respect or other, to the customs, opinions, or interests of the world. Faith is the cause of victory, the means, the instrument, the spiritual armour by which we overcome. In and by faith we cleave to Christ, in contempt of, and in opposition to the world. Faith sanctifies the heart, and purifies it from those sensual lusts by which the world obtains sway and dominion over souls. It has the indwelling Spirit of grace, which is greater than he who dwells in the world. The real Christian overcomes the world by faith; he sees, in and by the life and conduct of the Lord Jesus on earth, that this world is to be renounced and overcome. He cannot be satisfied with this world, but looks beyond it, and is still tending, striving, and pressing toward heaven. We must all, after Christ's example, overcome the world, or it will overcome us to our ruin.

1 John 5:6

Vs. 6-8: We are inwardly and outwardly defiled; inwardly, by the power and pollution of sin in our nature. For our cleansing there is in and by Christ Jesus, the washing of regeneration and the renewing of the Holy Ghost. Some think that the two sacraments are here meant: baptism with water, as the outward sign of regeneration, and purifying from the pollution of sin by the Holy Spirit; and the Lord's supper, as the outward sign of the shedding Christ's blood, and the receiving him by faith for pardon and justification. Both these ways of cleansing were represented in the old ceremonial sacrifices and cleansings. This water and blood include all that is necessary to our salvation. By the water, our souls are washed and purified for heaven and the habitation of saints in light. By the blood, we are justified, reconciled, and presented righteous to God. By the blood, the curse of the law being satisfied, the purifying Spirit is obtained for the internal cleansing of our natures. The water, as well as the blood, came out of the side of the sacrificed Redeemer. He loved the church, and gave himself for it, that he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word; that he might present it to himself a glorious church, **Ephesians 5:25-27.** This was done in and by the Spirit of God, according to the Savior's declaration. He is the Spirit of God, and cannot lie. Three had born witness to these doctrines concerning the person and the salvation of Christ. The Father, repeatedly, by a voice from heaven declared that Jesus was his beloved Son. The Word declared that He and the Father were One, and that whoever had seen him had seen the Father. And the Holy Ghost, who descended from heaven and rested on Christ at his baptism; who had born witness to Him by all the prophets; and gave testimony to his resurrection and mediatorial office, by the gift of miraculous powers to the apostles. But whether this passage be cited or not, the doctrine of the Trinity in Unity stands equally firm and certain. To the doctrine taught by the apostles, respecting the person and salvation of Christ, there were three testimonies.

1. The Holy Spirit. We come into the world with a corrupt, carnal disposition, which is enmity to God. This being done away by the regeneration and new-creating of souls by the Holy Spirit, is a testimony to the Savior.

2. The water: this sets forth the Savior's purity and purifying power. The actual and active purity and holiness of his disciples are represented by baptism.
3. The blood which he shed: and this was our ransom, this testifies for Jesus Christ; it sealed up and finished the sacrifices of the Old Testament.

The benefits procured by his blood, prove that he is the Savior of the world. No wonder if he that rejects this evidence is judged a blasphemer of the Spirit of God. These three witnesses are for one and the same purpose; they agree in one and the same thing.

1 John 5:9

Vs. 9-12: Nothing can be more absurd than the conduct of those who doubt as to the truth of Christianity, while in the common affairs of life they do not hesitate to proceed on human testimony, and would deem any one out of his senses who declined to do so. The real Christian has seen his guilt and misery, and his need of such a Savior. He has seen the suitability of such a Savior to all his spiritual wants and circumstances. He has found and felt the power of the word and doctrine of Christ, humbling, healing, quickening, and comforting his soul. He has a new disposition, and new delights, and is not the man that he formerly was. Yet he finds still a conflict with himself, with sin, with the flesh, the world, and wicked powers. But he finds such strength from faith in Christ, that he can overcome the world, and travel on towards a better. Such assurance has the gospel believer: he has a witness in himself, which puts the matter out of doubt with him, except in hours of darkness or conflict; but he cannot be argued out of his belief in the leading truths of the gospel. Here is what makes the unbeliever's sin so awful; the sin of unbelief. He gives God the lie; because he believes not the record that God gave of his Son. It is in vain for a man to plead that he believes the testimony of God in other things, while he rejects it in this. He that refuses to trust and honor Christ as the Son of God, who disdains to submit to his teaching as Prophet, to rely on his atonement and intercession as High Priest, or to obey him as King, is dead in sin, under condemnation; nor will any outward morality, learning, forms, notions, or confidences avail him.

 **1 John 5:13**

Vs. 13-17: Upon all this evidence, it is but right that we believe on the name of the Son of God. Believers have eternal life in the covenant of the gospel. Then let us thankfully receive the record of Scripture. Always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that our labor is not in vain in the Lord. The Lord Christ invites us to come to him in all circumstances, with our supplications and requests, notwithstanding the sin that besets us. Our prayers must always be offered in submission to the will of God. In some things they are speedily answered; in others they are granted in the best manner, though not as requested. We ought to pray for others, as well as for ourselves. There are sins that war against spiritual life in the soul, and the life above. We cannot pray that the sins of the impenitent and unbelieving should, while they are such, be forgiven them; or that mercy, which supposes the forgiveness of sins, should be granted to them, while they willfully continue such. But we may pray for their repentance, for their being enriched with faith in Christ, and thereupon for all other saving mercies. We should pray for others, as well as for ourselves, beseeching the Lord to pardon and recover the fallen, as well as to relieve the tempted and afflicted. And let us be truly thankful that no sin, of which any one truly repents, is unto death.

 **1 John 5:18**

Vs. 18-21: All mankind are divided into two parties or dominions; that which belongs to God, and that which belongs to the wicked one. True believers belong to God: they are of God, and from him, and to him, and for him; while the rest, by far the greater number, are in the power of the wicked one; they do his works, and support his cause. This general declaration includes all unbelievers, whatever their profession, station, or situation, or by whatever name they may be called. The Son leads believers to the Father, and they are in the love and favor of both; in union with both, by the indwelling and working of the Holy Spirit. Happy are those to whom it is given to know that the Son of God is come, and to have a heart to trust in and rely on him that is true! May this be our privilege; we shall thus be kept from all idols and false doctrines, and from the idolatrous love of worldly objects, and be kept by the power of God,

through faith, unto eternal salvation. To this living and true God, be glory and dominion for ever and ever. Amen.