

Spirit and Truth, The Presence of the Real God. God is Missing in Christianity Today.

By Rick Friedrich

But the hour comes, and now is, when the true worshipers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth. For truly the Father requires such to worship him. God is a Spirit, and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and truth. (John 4:23-24)

*And this is the message which we have heard of Him, and declare unto you, that **God is light, and in him is no darkness at all**, if we say that we have fellowship with him, and yet walk in darkness, we lie and do not the truth: but if we walk in light even as He is in light, then we have fellowship with Him, and the blood of Jesus Christ His son cleanses us from all sin.*

(1 John 1:5-7)

Are we Worshipers in Spirit and in Truth?

Spirit and truth are both the *essence* of Christian faith and what is *missing* from people calling themselves Christians today. It is trendy for many Christians in worship service today to repeatedly invite God into their midst, and use very spiritual language to express their fond affection for Him to so bless them. *But why does He not come?* What is missing or rather what is filling people that God cannot fill them according to their chanting and singing? No doubt people know they are filled, but *what* are they already filled with?

This people draweth nigh unto me with their mouth, and honoureth me with their lips; but their heart is far from me. But in vain they do worship me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men. (Matt. 15:8-9)

Whatever other errors exist among professing Christians do not really matter when the fundamental elements of true religion are *not experienced* or *expected*. The Lord says our worship is *vain* if our heart is far from Him. Why is it that true believers have such a hard time finding fellowship, because professing Christians today *add to* or *subtract* from real Christian fellowship. Christians divide over many important and unimportant beliefs and practices. Have you ever wondered what the heart of the problem is and why there are so many factions and so much disunity? Is it not true that everyone who names the name of Jesus should be able to walk together with Him in light? Could it be that all that are “the true worshipers” actually *do* “have fellowship with Him” together because what is implied in worshipping “in spirit and in truth” unites them in the deepest bond that far surpasses all differences they may have? Division is as natural as the question, “Can two walk together unless they be agreed?” But *what* are we to be agreed upon? Usually when Christian's divide, and cannot fellowship together, each party believes the other is departing from essential truth contrary to their faithfulness to the truth. The question for everyone is whether they are dividing over such matters while really walking with God in light and really are a true worshiper of the Father in spirit and in truth. Jesus said this is what the Father requires, that they “must worship him in spirit and truth” and John tells us that “this is the message which we have heard of Him, and declare unto you, that God is light, and in him is no darkness at all, if we say that we have fellowship with him, and yet walk in darkness, we lie and do not the truth”. Yet *these ideas are foreign to Christian theology and practice today*. No rather, they are not unfamiliar but actually *argued against* and flatly *denied*. Lawlessness is popular theology today. It is being outwardly confident and

settled in a life of walking in darkness and sin (mixed with some good works) as the normal Christian experience while occasionally offering up lips to say and sing words actually *contrary to heart and life experience*. It is a mere fantasy where the worshiper projects themselves into a trance and delusion where they satisfy themselves that because they go through a *form* of religion, agree with *some truths*, feel some emotion about all this, and have some desires to give themselves more to God that they think they are following, that they are accepted in that state. And this delusion is made so much stronger by the fact that they see many others around them testifying to the same things in the same movie. It is like them being into a movie where they get carried away and almost become, for a moment, the character they are watching, and fall into sympathy with the character's predicaments and pursuits, and get themselves worked up and moved along so much that this absorbing fantasy takes a few hours to wear off after the worship service, I mean movie, is over. Anyone who clearly puts their finger on the heart of the matter and points these things out today in any way is treated as a heretic and sent to the stake to be burned. And yet popular Christianity today also exalts the *heroes* of the faith who actually experienced real faith and walked in the light contrary to this *dead faith* today. At the end of this article is a sample collection of such heroes of the faith and some of their quotes of how they lived as true worshipers in spirit and in truth. Their lives are held up as a super-standard that we should all strive towards but may not be able to reach instead of looking at their faith as the normal Christian experience. Their words are lightly passed over to merely be inspired by for morning devotions or polished sermons rather than to question people's shallow experience. And if someone were to quote the actual words of these heroes

today, as if it appeared to be coming from another person and not them, they would greatly object to the words said because they contradict popular theology and experience. The same is true when the truths of the bible are in the same way presented. Where do you fancy yourself reader? Are you conscious of abiding in Christ moment by moment, being moved by His deep love and lifting you above the world—*has the Lord filled His temple?*—or are you filled with something else and merely trying to do things to make you more obedient, more committed, more prayerful, apart from the leading of the Spirit and a full repentance and faith? You know the truth deep down.

What is this Different Life?

What is the meaning of walking or worshiping "in spirit and in truth"? Without attempting to be exhaustive, or limiting this reality to mere words, it could be said that: this is an ever-present state of being where *spirit* is absolute sincerity, truly spiritual, heavenly inspired, pure as God is pure (1 John 3:3), all absorbing heart conformity to Him and His truth in and under heaven. *Truth* is being absolutely unprejudiced, an honest pursuit of methods, means and facts in life, a pure correspondence to facts within our reach and careful and thorough research and weighing of evidence that leads to embracing in mind and heart and living in body the right conclusions. *It is an actually holy temple of God and a manifestation of the presence of God in believers*. These ideas overlap each other and are implied and developed throughout the Bible when *God only accepts total consecration, full obedience, perfect self-denial, carrying the cross, acceptable sacrifice, being hot and not cold, being holy or virtuous rather than carnal or sinful, etc.*, or as also shown in the following examples:

“And the Lord thy God will circumcise thine heart, and the heart of thy seed, to love the Lord thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, that thou may live.” (Deut. 30:6)

Even in the law the Lord gave us this perfect promise (impossible by today's theology) that we could be all that He wanted us to be and gave it also as a condition “that thou may live.”

And what is the New Covenant about?

Behold, the days come, saith the LORD, that I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel, and with the house of Judah: Not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers in the day that I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt; which my covenant they brake, although I was an husband unto them, saith the LORD: But this shall be the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel; After those days, saith the LORD, I will put my law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts; and will be their God, and they shall be my people. And they shall teach no more every man his neighbour, and every man his brother, saying, Know the LORD: for they shall all know me, from the least of them unto the greatest of them, saith the LORD: for I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more. (Jer 31:31-34)

He put His law inside of His people and truly is their God, not in idea or word or fancy, but living and abiding there. More specifically, and for the purposes of, and resulting in:

And when they entered unto the heathen, whither they went, they profaned my holy name, when they said to them, These are the people of the LORD, and are gone forth out of his land. But I had pity for mine holy name, which the house of Israel had profaned among the heathen, whither they went. Therefore say unto the house of Israel, Thus saith the Lord

GOD; I do not this for your sakes, O house of Israel, but for mine holy name's sake, which ye have profaned among the heathen, whither ye went. And I will sanctify my great name, which was profaned among the heathen, which ye have profaned in the midst of them; and the heathen shall know that I am the LORD, saith the Lord GOD, when I shall be sanctified in you before their eyes. For I will take you from among the heathen, and gather you out of all countries, and will bring you into your own land. Then will I sprinkle clean water upon you, and ye shall be clean: from all your filthiness, and from all your idols, will I cleanse you. A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you: and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you an heart of flesh. And I will put my spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes, and ye shall keep my judgments, and do them. And ye shall dwell in the land that I gave to your fathers; and ye shall be my people, and I will be your God. I will also save you from all your uncleannesses: and I will call for the corn, and will increase it, and lay no famine upon you. And I will multiply the fruit of the tree, and the increase of the field, that ye shall receive no more reproach of famine among the heathen. Then shall ye remember your own evil ways, and your doings that were not good, and shall lothe yourselves in your own sight for your iniquities and for your abominations. Not for your sakes do I this, saith the Lord GOD, be it known unto you: be ashamed and confounded for your own ways, O house of Israel. (Ezk 36:20-32)

People, just like today, had misrepresented God to the world by being a sinful people which did not personally reveal the love and holiness of God they claimed to belong to. God had regard to His name and reputation and condemned them for this. *And for His name sake He made an actually holy people,* “when I

shall be sanctified in you before their eyes." He sprinkles clean water upon them so they are clean, He takes away the stony heart and gives us an heart of flesh. He puts His Spirit in us and causes us to walk in His ways and keep His judgments and do them. He saves us from all our uncleannesses, etc. And notice the repeating context again in verse 36: *"Then the heathen that are left round about you shall know that I the LORD build the ruined places, and plant that that was desolate: I the LORD have spoken it, and I will do it."*

Does the Lord really Fill His Temple with His Glory?

And it came to pass, when the priests were come out of the holy place: (for all the priests that were present were sanctified, and did not then wait by course: Also the Levites which were the singers, all of them of Asaph, of Heman, of Jeduthun, with their sons and their brethren, being arrayed in white linen, having cymbals and psalteries and harps, stood at the east end of the altar, and with them an hundred and twenty priests sounding with trumpets:) It came even to pass, as the trumpeters and singers were as one, to make one sound to be heard in praising and thanking the LORD; and when they lifted up their voice with the trumpets and cymbals and instruments of music, and praised the LORD, saying, For he is good; for his mercy endureth for ever: that then the house was filled with a cloud, even the house of the LORD; So that the priests could not stand to minister by reason of the cloud: for the glory of the LORD had filled the house of God. (2 Chron. 5:11-14)

Afterward he brought me to the gate, even the gate that looketh toward the east: And, behold, the glory of the God of Israel came from the way of the east: and his voice was like a noise of many waters: and the earth shined with his glory. And it was according to the appearance of the vision which I saw, even according to the

vision that I saw when I came to destroy the city: and the visions were like the vision that I saw by the river Chebar; and I fell upon my face. And the glory of the LORD came into the house by the way of the gate whose prospect is toward the east. So the spirit took me up, and brought me into the inner court; and, behold, the glory of the LORD filled the house.

And I heard him speaking unto me out of the house; and the man stood by me. And he said unto me, Son of man, the place of my throne, and the place of the soles of my feet, where I will dwell in the midst of the children of Israel for ever, and my holy name, shall the house of Israel no more defile, neither they, nor their kings, by their whoredom, nor by the carcasses of their kings in their high places. In their setting of their threshold by my thresholds, and their post by my posts, and the wall between me and them, they have even defiled my holy name by their abominations that they have committed: wherefore I have consumed them in mine anger. Now let them put away their whoredom, and the carcasses of their kings, far from me, and I will dwell in the midst of them for ever. (Ezk. 43:1-12)

There are many passages that show the physical presence and reveal the glory of the Lord in His holy temple. Jesus later said that the day had come when the true worshipers had arrived to be what the father required and according to these promises there would no longer need to be a temple building in Jerusalem where people could sense the presence of the Lord, but that each believer would be that same temple which the Holy Spirit would cleanse, fill and show the character of God to the world.

Real Christians are that Holy Temple Now.

What? know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own? For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's.

(1 Cor 6:19-20)

If we are really God's people then we are His temple and God is really in us. We therefore can really glorify Him in our bodies and spirit just as He expects. This is no small reality to pass over reader. Consider what that really means by studying out the temple in the Old Covenant. Ask yourself if people around you really see you as the temple of God. Are you filled with God or something else? Do you fellowship in or with darkness? Have you cleansed yourself from all filthiness of the flesh and allowed the Spirit to so fill you with Himself that you display His righteousness? Are you a light?

Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers: for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? and what communion hath light with darkness? And what concord hath Christ with Belial? or what part hath he that believeth with an infidel? And what agreement hath the temple of God with idols? for ye are the temple of the living God; as God hath said, I will dwell in them, and walk in them; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people. 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. Having therefore these promises, dearly beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God. (2 Cor. 6:14-7:1)

Here are a lot of very important things stated, implied, promised, and commanded. Believers are considered actually righteous and unbelievers unrighteous. This is the first statement and theme of these verses. It is also a command. Believers are next called light and unbelievers darkness. Next what can Christ have *agreement* with the devil? Or what can a believer with an unbeliever? They have *no heart sympathy* and are *opposite* in character. Again, we are God's temple *or* we are unbelievers and have *not yet* experienced his grace. God indeed can dwell and walk in us, but not unless we come out from among them and be separate and touch not the unclean thing, *then* He will receive us. We cannot therefore mix fellowship with light and darkness, the righteous with the unrighteous. People today believe all people are unrighteous in heart and life so there is not even a distinction between believers and unbelievers, because most people don't even believe we can be light, filled with God, or be His temple displaying his glory and love and all His holy character. Naturally the last verse is viciously rejected as heresy when Paul quotes these holiness promises and realities as *for us now*. Reader, if so, why are you opposed to God making you His holy temple and cleansing you from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God? *What are you filled with to prevent this manifestation to everyone around you?*

Do you have this Living Water Inside of you?

Many have so much filling of themselves and their good works and forms of worship and service and man-made religion that it is difficult for them to consider if they are deceived in their religion. It is very hard for the self-righteous and false worshiper to see that his religion is merely emotionally based and void of real life from heaven. They can only see this if they become *totally honest with*

themselves and look at the deepest motivations of their hearts as we discuss later. Now we will look at the larger context of the true worshiper in spirit and truth verses. The woman at the well met with Jesus and admitted that she *lacked* and *wanted* this living water Jesus offered her. She *knew* that she did not have it yet, and the real question is are you are willing to be completely honest with yourself and come to Jesus truly *empty* and *thirsty* for this living water. This is not more of the same, adding to self-righteous dead works but complete repentance and death to self so that the Spirit can fill you with Himself.

Jesus answered and said unto her, If thou knewest the gift of God, and who it is that saith to thee, Give me to drink; thou wouldest have asked of him, and he would have given thee living water. The woman saith unto him, Sir, thou hast nothing to draw with, and the well is deep: from whence then hast thou that living water? Art thou greater than our father Jacob, which gave us the well, and drank thereof himself, and his children, and his cattle? Jesus answered and said unto her, Whosoever drinketh of this water shall thirst again: But whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst; but the water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life. (John 4:10-14)

In the last day, that great day of the feast, Jesus stood and cried, saying, If any man thirst, let him come unto me, and drink. He that believeth on me, as the scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water. (But this spake he of the Spirit, which they that believe on him should receive: for the Holy Ghost was not yet given; because that Jesus was not yet glorified.) (John 7:37-39)

This is not emotion one can have of being forgiven, or arising out a hope of heaven, or even some warm feelings arising out of assuming a new child relationship with a divine father. It is not the result of doing good works, or conforming to the Gospel or law of God. It does not consist in even warm feelings about the fact that Christ has died for us. All these are different things and not this living water. *This living water is actually the presence of God* that floods the soul like never before. The love of God is shed abroad in the heart and deep down to the center of man, like in your belly. The love of God is abundantly in you, around you, beneath you, below you, etc., as the song puts it. *This illuminates the soul, gives completely new life, and kills worldly temptations and even appetites.* It does not remove temptations, nor is it an emotional experience even though emotions continually result. It animates one's life to be fully devoted to constantly seek the glory of God and to know the best means to do His will in all things. *This living water meets the fundamental wants and desires of the believer, and all the vain things that charmed them most lose their power and attention over this pearl of great price.* No longer will they desire the worldly pastimes and seeking of mere pleasure to satisfy cravings. God Himself breaths new life and makes a new creation of them, not as some kind of chip that He programs, but He actually sets up residence as the Captain of their soul. *His very sentiments become theirs* as they walk and live their lives. He works through them for His good pleasure. They become *ambassadors* of His truth and love in this selfish and shallow world. They *feel His feelings* as they *share His character* and *experience similar reactions* while they walk in the truth and live a life of godliness and self-denial. It seems impossible for those who do not have this living water to ever see themselves as really doing the will of God at *all times*. They are conscious

of many neglects and bad attitudes that they do not believe they can control. They attempt to put them in check with various self-help efforts, or increasing devotional exercises, or improving upon the means of grace, but they cannot expect to ever be able to continually walk in the will of God 'all the day long' even though they may sing the songs of those who did. The relationship with God is distant, as one that *tries to conform to His will in externals* (even as the Roman 7 legal experience). God is prayed to as if far away and through some telegraph. Such people would not understand why it would be "better" that Christ went away to send the Holy Comforter as He said, as *they would prefer the physical Christ to ask occasional questions to rather than being filled with Him always* in the deepest parts of their heart. He is not close to them, and filling them with his presence. When He does so fill then all things become possible for those who believe. This living water, that we partake in and is the same as *eating His flesh and drinking His blood*, then becomes a totally different life. All former life is seen as dead works, ineffectual and unacceptable. *There is no way to have this living water and become a true worshiper in spirit and truth until we let go of all control, completely repent of all of our sins, acknowledge all our works as self-righteous or not acceptable or able to earn our pardon or ensure His abiding visitation or rather dwelling in us and making us His temple or holy sanctuary.* We must truly be thirsty, *wanting nothing else*, claiming nothing for or about ourselves; and letting go of all things *as if we expect to die the next day.* We must let go of our assumptions *against this*, and let go of trying to *control* what comes or may happen. One cannot even take the first step to be healed from sickness if one does not really believe they are sick and dying. One cannot repent unless they are *earnest and thorough.* But people are committed to their

churches, their families, their doctrines, their pleasures, their very lives, and it is very hard for them to let all these go for the glory of God, His cause and kingdom. Their doctrine is *gradualism*, just as if it was the same in naturalistic evolutionary belief. The Christian is to make *gradual improvements* upon an *unregenerate foundation* of selfish works in the hope that they somehow become *less selfish over time.* On the contrary, *we are to believe God's word and completely comply with His commands, promises, and walk in and experience this Living Water.* This is not building upon a self-righteous foundation of dead works (Heb 9:14) but we can be confident that He will give us in truth all that we really need:

And this is the confidence that we have in him, that, if we ask any thing according to his will, he heareth us: And if we know that he hear us, whatsoever we ask, we know that we have the petitions that we desired of him.

(1 John 5:14-15) Do you see any limits here? Only if you have no faith. And if you are unholy John says you can have no confidence. So will you believe Paul?

What shall we then say to these things? If God be for us, who can be against us? He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things? (Romans 8:31-32)

These promises you can disbelieve along with the world and the worldly church, or you can let go of the same and experience the fullness of the living water. However, Jesus did condition this faith and experience:

Whosoever he be of you that forsaketh not all that he hath, he cannot be my disciple.

(Luke 14:33)

I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service. (Romans 12:1-2)

This is not some unattainable ideal but the *normal life* of a *real* believer. Our every moment is to be a living, not dead, a sacrifice, and an *actually holy* character which is actually acceptable to God, not some blindfold concept where He sees you as holy when you are not in truth.

For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's. (1 Cor. 6:20)

Do you own your body, your time, your mind, your spirit, your possessions, your reputation, your influence? If you act like you do then you are not God's and do not glorify Him. How can we not give Him everything? And all these are to glorify Him at all times. Is this "your reasonable service" or is it unreasonable or impossible?

Neither yield ye your members as instruments of unrighteousness unto sin: but yield yourselves unto God, as those that are alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness unto God. (Rom 6:13) Are you alive or still dead?

Know ye not, that to whom ye yield yourselves servants to obey, his servants ye are to whom ye obey; whether of sin unto death, or of obedience unto righteousness? (Romans 6:16) Will you live or serve sin?

I speak after the manner of men because of the infirmity of your flesh: for as ye have yielded your members servants to uncleanness and to iniquity unto iniquity; even so now yield your members servants to righteousness unto holiness. (Romans 6:19)

We have seen here a small but clear sample of what the new Covenant believer experiences as the promise and reality of God in the promise of the Spirit. These are looking at some aspects of the true worshiper that God accepts or requires. They show a fundamental difference

in character between them and those who are not true worshipers. These characteristics are so incredible and contrary to the world's experience that people cannot see *how* it is possible. How can we become the temple of God and He dwell in us? He cannot, while we are not totally empty of ourselves and selfishness and uncleanness and darkness and compromises, etc., and we will see next, our lies and prejudice. The point of this first part is to show the vast difference in action and character between before and after the filling of God's temple. But consider that God's very presence is filling the real believer. This is no small thing. We are not talking about the spirit of Santa Clause where our fantasy of a divine figure gives us what we want and we can have the best of both worlds while we may get a few less gifts if we are naughty. We are talking about the living God here. And *Spirit and Truth is the glory of the Lord filling and moving His holy believers*. This is what the grace of God brings to us and the world sees:

For the grace of God that brings salvation has appeared to all men, Teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live sensibly, righteously, and godly, in this present world; Looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Savior Jesus Christ; Who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a people for his own, zealous of good works. (Titus 2:11-14)

How people can read past all these verses again and again, and sing so many hymns and songs of the same tune without ever paying attention to the clear meaning is really incredible. The problem is no matter what is said in these matters people have so hardened themselves against the truth that they are dull in their comprehension of God's glory and holiness and

truth:

"In whom the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them." (2 Cor 4:4) Will you let God's light so shine upon your soul dear reader. If not, then know now the cause of this heardness and just how you have turned away from the truth one split second after another. Just how do people become hard-hearted and prejudiced and get worse and worse over time? We have seen a small bit of the teaching of the New Covenant and how real believers are said to be God's temple and how He is said to actually make them holy as contrasted with those who misrepresented him by not actually being holy. Now we look to some finer point details from the Word on *how* people reject the light and the real nature of virtue and vice that few are prepared to consider. People judge by the outward actions but most fail to look at the heart of the matter and see the very seed of sin and disbelief as well as the real guilt of the sins of ignorance and prejudice. Yet at the heart of every sin is a choice, no matter how fast it is made, to blind oneself from the truth and *select* for themselves their own reality to satisfy their own desires. This is almost never spoken of and as a result people generally are greatly mistaken about their own character. Every moment of every day we live for one reason or another, only two possible reasons exist, and only light or darkness is possible. Only two possible *intentions* exist. All actions are judged by God from these *ultimate motives of the heart*. So that:

The light of the body is the eye: if therefore thine eye be single, thy whole body shall be full of light. But if thine eye be evil, thy whole body shall be full of darkness. If therefore the light that is in thee be darkness, how great is that darkness! No man can serve two masters: for

either he will hate the one, and love the other; or else he will hold to the one, and despise the other. Ye cannot serve God and mammon. (Matt 6:22-24, Luke 11:33-36)

There is no halfway Christian, partialness of intention or service. You either serve one or the other, have a single eye or evil eye. The intentions can only be fully God's or fully yours. Fully loving or selfish. The heart is simple, either true or false, selfish or holy. When your heart is selfish your eye will be darkness. You will interpret things in unbelief, you will doubt God's promises for you, you will make dark His Word and it will have no saving affect upon you. You will *twist the truth by selecting your own facts to suit your desires*. The whole body will be darkness no matter what you convince yourself of the contrary. These seem like extreme words but when you read this whole testimony of the Lord and His Apostles you will understand why He makes such strong contrasts that people today call extreme:

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

Do not satisfy yourself that you are somewhere in between these two contrasts because you do not see yourself as loving darkness. The loving of darkness is not wishing to be evil or saying you love darkness, but rather *a choice to reject truth here and there and everywhere*, which is actually a love of being in the darkness, that is, in reference to the light. When you select only the light that you desire and not all light, then you love darkness for you love not all light.

There is really no in-between here. You are either a lover of the truth, and shun no truth, and embrace all truth, or you select just what facts suit your desires. And when you thoroughly embrace all light, you experience the grace of God and give glory to God for the works He has wrought or done in you. Our deeds are either done by ourselves in self-righteousness, which are not acceptable, or done in Him, through His power, by His Spirit, by a living faith, etc. Our walk is either in the light, embracing whatever fact comes our way, or it is in the dark where we ignore the facts of life and make selective impartial research. It is only one way or another. Do not satisfy yourself that we can be somewhere in-between these extremes. Allow yourself to *hear* the Lord impartially:

Jesus said unto them, If God were your Father, ye would love me: for I proceeded forth and came from God; neither came I of myself, but he sent me. Why do ye not understand my speech? even because ye cannot hear my word. Ye are of your father the devil, and the lusts of your father ye will do. He was a murderer from the beginning, and abode not in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaketh a lie, he speaketh of his own: for he is a liar, and the father of it. And because I tell you the truth, ye believe me not. Which of you convinceth me of sin? And if I say the truth, why do ye not believe me? He that is of God heareth God's words: ye therefore hear them not, because ye are not of God. (John 8:42-47)

We can read the Word of God all day, year, and life long and still never hear it or receive it into our hearts in true faith. Many have faith to believe what they want and create a Santa Clause god to excuse their dead faith that they admit to be contemptible. Here the Lord shows us that people *cannot* hear the truth of these

teachings of the Lord *because they will not let go* of their father the devil. They have a life of service to him by being a liar in their faith and actions and selections of truths that support their desires and not being fundamentally honest. We will see these ideas develop in His Word throughout John and the rest of the Word.

Prejudice is the Will controlling the Judgment
Well spoke the Holy Spirit through Isaiah the prophet unto our fathers, saying, Go unto this people and say, Hearing, ye shall hear and shall not understand; and seeing, ye shall see and not perceive. For the heart of this people has waxed gross, and their ears are dull of hearing, and their eyes have they closed; lest they should see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and understand with their heart, and should be converted, and I should heal them. Be it known therefore unto you that the salvation of God is sent unto the Gentiles, and that they will hear it. (Acts 28:25-28)

Have you ever wondered the exact reason why people deceive themselves, what is at the heart of a lie, and what is involved in every sin ever committed? It is actually *an action of the heart*, however briefly engaged, directly opposite to that required by the Father in worshiping in spirit and in truth. It is a choice of the heart where inwardly a person is *in a state where they are selecting from facts within their reach just what will suit their ends among other facts that may contradict their ends or pursuits or desires*. This is the Will directing the person's *research* and allowing the Judgment to conclude from these *limited chosen* facts, what will necessarily result, or what action should thus be taken. "Ignorance is bliss" is the admission of this practice by the masses. In other words, if I do not direct my research in this or that direction I will not be accountable for other facts that may

contradict my responsibilities and burden me more. I limit the extent of my investigation in any matter to agree with what I want the outcome to be. I don't dare look in such and such direction as it may contradict me. Oh, can't look there! Or, what I don't see I don't care about (and this excuses me). Again, it is the heart or Will making a very fast choice as to where to direct the attention and body, etc., to withhold or pursue research pertaining to duty and light. And people are so blind that they boast in this as if it was some virtue. They laugh at neglecting thorough research, especially in smaller matters. And then say "*I know I really shouldn't...*" Now this is an abiding state of heart where people walk in darkness because they continually close their eyes to serious and less serious facts of life and select the reality they want to have over what really is manifest to them. While it is given to them, they do not *let* themselves look at it and they actually *close the eyes of their hearts* to it because they do not *want* it to be true. *They choose to make their end in heart and life a good to self over good to others equally and good to God supremely.* However it is not so obvious to them when one is in the habit of doing this so fast, I'm talking microseconds here, and when people are so self-deceived in their prejudices that they think they are actually sincere, honest, and religious because of various actions they do, associations they are part of, or beliefs they hold to (Prejudice is prejudgment. It is a judgment made before it ought to be made. It is all this above.). It is nevertheless a matter of fact that people who consider themselves fundamentalists, orthodox, conservative, real believers, Bible believing Christians, etc., can be as prejudiced as any other person on earth. *WHAT* you believe does not imply *HOW* you believe, how you got there, and *WHY* you believe. And these are essential to God even if man cannot always know the heart of others or

ourselves when so blinded. What you believe can be merely because you want to be part of a party that is in the camp you believe is going to heaven. Holding to truth conclusions does not mean your heart and life corresponds to that truth, nor does it mean you got there honestly. God does not care so much about *what* you believe but about your *method of investigation* and the *spirit* in which you believe it. For if you are dishonest and selective at heart why should He care if you affirm to some *fundamental* truth? We saw above how Israel profaned God's holy name by affirming His Word while living in sin contrary to Him. Love is much deeper than obeying or verbalizing the letter of the law and the dogmas we hold to. A law abiding scripturally faithful minister of a church could be just as prejudiced and therefore sinful as a common criminal. For both may equally make selective choices to gratify the selfish desires of their hearts. And in fact the religious man ought to know better than that. We see this brought out in John's Gospel where John develops this teaching about prejudice in the dialogues between the Lord and the religious leaders of His day. John chapter 9 gives us the visual demonstration of prejudice in showing how God makes a man born blind see, and those who are supposed to see God's word, close their eyes to the miracle because they *cannot accept* a fact that contradicts their goals, purposes, desires, and prejudices. Here even the disciples make an assumption in their questioning whether the man or his parents were sinful that he was born blind.

And his disciples asked him, saying, Teacher, who did sin, this man, or his parents, that he was born blind? Jesus answered, Neither has this man sinned, nor his parents: but that the works of God should be made manifest in him. (John 9:2-3)

This would be a good time for Jesus to affirm the idea that blindness resulted from personal sin, whether individually or in Adam, but He says no such thing and goes on to expose prejudices in theology and life. He says: *"I am the Light of the world,"* and after exposing the prejudice of the Pharisees, *"For judgment I am come into this world, that they who see not might see; and that they who see might be made blind."* In other words, for those do not have the access to see and who are really willing to embrace all truth, I have come to be the light of the world to, and those who have all the truth already but do not embrace it in heart I blind them in their prejudices and leave them to believe *what they want to*. He continues with these later type: *"If you were blind, you should have no sin: but now you say, We see; therefore your sin remains."* They have looked and turned away from the light of God and refused it. If they had not seen, or had no access to this light, they would not have sinned by not embracing what they did not have access to, but they even admit to seeing the light and thus their sin is real.

If they were a true worshiper of the Father in spirit and in truth, such as the Father requires, they would have embraced Jesus the Light and Life of God. But notice that they could not hear Him as there was no place for truth in their hearts. No place for that *kind* of truth. Everyone believes truth more or less, but *the sinner is selective in researching truth* and will not hear that which contradicts his selfish desires or that which he *wishes to control*. Notice that Jesus has not come on his own but was sent. Even the Light to us has not come to control facts, truth, and His mission, but is sent of the Father. All believers must likewise *humbly be lead* by the Truth in the same way and receive it meekly and gladly as from heaven and not trample the truth no matter how small, and not ignore facts that may lead

to contradictions *we may not like to consider*. The path of the righteous is both narrow and lonely because honest research and embracing all truth is not the practice of the world who *manipulate facts at a heart level*. Look at a few more verses on selecting what you want to look at to create a necessarily selfish reality:

Having the understanding darkened, being alienated from the life of God through the ignorance that is in them, because of the blindness of their heart: (Eph 4:18) Notice that this darkness, alienation, and ignorance is do to the action of the heart—a willful selecting blindness.

The simple believeth every word: but the prudent man looketh well to his going. (Proverbs 14:15) This yesman creates his own reality, whatever is told him, instead of testing all things, and being honest about testimony.

They hated me without a cause. (John 15:25) The most vivid example of prejudice ever. The Light from heaven came down and they rejected Him utterly!

But ye denied the Holy One and the Just, and desired a murderer to be granted unto you; (Acts 3:14) Selected what they desired for their own purposes.

And he that doubteth is damned if he eat, because he eateth not of faith: for whatsoever is not of faith is sin.

(Romans 14:23)

Therefore to him that knoweth to do good, and doeth it not, to him it is sin. (James 4:17)

These are going against the light, not living according to known truth, not letting yourself embrace the light in your heart and faith and lives. It is walking in darkness and a rejection of truth as really given by the hand of God. Do you care that it is sin? Does sin matter? What does Paul mean with the word "damned"? Can we not please God while doing things we doubt?

But without faith it is impossible to please him: for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him. (Hebrews 11:6)

Just how do people first turn away from God, and wherein is the guilt of their sin? Never fool yourself into twisting the epistle of Roman in later chapters without first reading the first two that clearly develop this:

For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who hold the truth in unrighteousness; Because that which may be known of God is manifest in them; for God hath showed it unto them. For the invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal power and Godhead; so that they are without excuse:

Clearly revealed truth inwardly and externally, which is suppressed and rejected and for that reason alone results in the wrath of God against them. Furthermore,

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

They were not born this way but became this way. They knew God, and did not wish to glorify Him as such and selected their own reality which is letting their minds become vain and diverting of truth. This is how the heart is darkened.

Professing themselves to be wise, they became fools, And changed the glory of the uncorruptible God into an image made like to corruptible man... Who changed the truth of God into a lie...

Wise people honestly research and judge accurately and fools revel in fallacy. These change the facts and make their own conclusions. As I wrote, they create their own god after their own corrupt nature to justify

their own selective research. They embrace not all truth but only those truths that support their life lie: the lie that we can select what truth we choose to look at and believe and excuse ourselves from all other truths and resulting conclusions.

And even as they did not like to retain God in their knowledge, God gave them over to a reprobate mind, to do those things which are not convenient...

They select what truths they look at, and retain not and ignore the other truths that matter. AND IT IS BECAUSE OF THIS THAT GOD GIVES THEM OVER TO WHAT THEY WANT TO BELIEVE AND DO. They are not already given over to be reprobates, they become reprobate in mind after blinding themselves first. The Pharisee who looked down at the Gentiles as thus reprobate were also in the same position before God as having blinded their own hearts by selecting what truths they believed and embraced:

Who knowing the judgment of God, that they which commit such things are worthy of death, not only do the same, but have pleasure in them that do them... But after thy hardness and impenitent heart treasurest up unto thyself wrath against the day of wrath and revelation of the righteous judgment of God; Who will render to every man according to his deeds...

(Romans 1-2)

Remember, it is not the *amount* or *kind* of sin but rather the rejection of truth that the wrath of God is against. The outward manifestations of this are different from one person to another. Paul shows that both the heathen (chapter 1) and the strict religious person (chapter 2) were both equally condemned for creating their own god and selecting their own reality to live by.

Notice also that people are either of God or the devil. They are either of the truth or liars. It is *hard* for people to accept this, but the fact is

that all people not born of God do continually lie every moment of every day (you cannot read 1 John any other way). How can this be? How can they be of their father the devil? It is because of this very thing. They *continually* give themselves over to a willful sorting of facts to suit their selfish desires. This kind of desire is forbidden as it selects facts seemingly good to self but not to others or God above all. It is to be fundamentally unjust. To close one's eyes to the fact that a man has been made to see (as in John 9) is obvious prejudice to us 2000 years later, but it is the *same* prejudice to close one's eyes to the clear teaching of scripture about these very things. It is similar as to close one's eyes as a government official who is supposed to do the proper research on the health risks of water in Flint Michigan and instead just hopes all is good with getting water from the river, and guesses that it is fine (when in fact it has caused a huge problem).

Each moment in life presents continuous opportunities to choose one way or another at the heart level. People wonder how they fall into this and that sin without tracing back the root of their sin in the primary choices they make walking into temptation or not walking in the Spirit or abiding in Christ. The religion is a matter of self-righteous works, hype, resolution to work themselves up into duty rather than completely repenting, dying to selfishness, and letting God change their hearts to be soft and of the spirit of heaven. There are no tears for the Lord in such a person because it is all hardness and prejudice and resisting of the Spirit. It is not the outward sin that is the matter but the heart that firsts selects what facts it will look at and then what kind of action it forces the Judgment to decide to conclude on. This is the life of the sinner from one moment to another and it is as repeated and automatic as their heartbeat. They are aware of it at times but have been so accustomed to this

selective research and self-delusion that in some sense they actually think they are serving God or are a good person because outwardly they do good things and people assume they are good more or less. They compare themselves to others and think they are fine. *But they cannot help but to be dissatisfied in life deep down because they cannot be truly happy until they are fully and truly holy and walking with God in light.* So at times they actually see their own prejudice as they get caught in their lies and get contradicted in their beliefs and *see their own selective reasoning.* Reader, you know what I mean here. Man tries to block out that revelation to self with counter testimony, activities, good works, or even drugs to silence the conviction of the Holy Spirit and Conscience. If you have never thoroughly dealt with your prejudice or this selecting of facts then you are still in your sins. You know when you have really repented *when you have fundamentally changed at this foundational level* and gone from this darkness into light which is as far as the East is from the West. You would be aware of the complete difference in your life at this level and not merely some outward actions changing as so many suppose wrongly is regeneration. *It is a new heart that no longer selects the facts for themselves unrighteously, or unsoundly, or unreasonably, but meekly and humbly embraces all truth and does not seek to control others or manipulate evidence or divide over unimportant things.* What kind of selection it now makes is in regards to beyond self in: *What is the need of the hour? What can best serve my Lord and His cause? How may I do the most good?* And if I cannot do *thorough* research on any particular matter, I must then *qualify my research as incomplete* and thus *inconclusive* or merely make *probable* estimations and always *humbly* represent myself in all things. Not so the sinner. They are bound to be *committed to their*

opinions or shallowly researched beliefs, stubborn, or only seemingly fair-minded in some things, or else totally unsure of anything. There is fundamental resistance here and there if you push the right buttons and walk with them a little. No patience, grace, or honesty when you get down to important matters. All is rotten at the heart, and the selection process will draw out the enmity they have for God towards you if you are the messenger of His particular law you are revealing. I have seen the seemingly meekest of men, one missionary man in particular with a smile on his face always, display the most ugly hatred and prejudice when his son began to question the family religion and begin to experience walking in the love and truth of God. This man beat his son and took away his Bibles, and several times felt the need to confess his hatred towards another (not that he stopped hating them but was under some bondage to tell them about it). It is not the outward that God is interested in but the heart. You can look at the outward and know that something is foul and rotten, and you can see a man who loves the Lord by looking at the outward, otherwise we would not be told that we could. But we must be careful to properly judge what is sin at the fundamental level and not judge people merely by their stated creed or doctrine or outward works. For as Paul says, nothing is unclean in itself, it is only the purpose or intention that determines the character of a person. One man may do an action that is sin to him and for another it may not be. One man even may believe something, and it is sin for him to believe it, because he arrived at it by so dishonestly selecting his facts to leave no other choice for his judgment to conclude on. Another man may sincerely be mistaken in his research and not have selected such facts as the other and may have come to the same conclusion because he was tricked or mistaken

about some facts. It is therefore not about the conclusions we come to all the time that determine our honesty or standing with God. It is rather about *how* we decide at the heart or Will that matters. This is what God judges. No doubt many outward actions always imply a bad heart (at least with a sane person). But many things do not so reveal. The revealing outward facts pertain to this heart problem so that if we see lack of patience, meekness, self-control, gentleness, love, or any other spiritual fruit then we can be sure as the Bible is true that the fountain from which it springs is polluted. This is not to say that we cannot be mistaken about someone like Christ cleansing the temple and wondering what to make of such actions. Good people can be mistaken in their actions, just as sinners can be thought of as virtuous. And a good man can still fall from this true worship state of heart at any time and wither. But the man of God *walks* with God and not with the world. Blessed is the man of Psalm 1 or the one who all can say that they walked with God. Even as Tyndale was locked up in a tower for a year and a half before he was martyred was considered a Christian man if ever the Jailer knew one. Even so ever real Christian is indeed a lamp in a dark world of worldly souls, who offers his life for those around them, while people love them and hate them for such service. Even those who hate them know deep down that their frequent tears demonstrate the deep love of God that these can never really experience.

We can see what pride and stubbornness are. Some like to say that they just are naturally stubborn. But what is stubbornness? "Having or showing dogged determination not to change one's attitude or position on something, especially in spite of good arguments or reasons to do so."

First of all, this is not a good thing. It is not the same as being stable or cautious. It is the very

thing we are talking about, “dogged determination” “in spite of good reasons”. To call yourself or another stubborn is to say their selective selfish reasoning is their general character. This is the opposite of a Christian spirit that readily embraces truth. Pride is the same sort of thing in that the person cannot allow themselves to be considered wrong in one or any matter. It is right to them *because they believe it or have said it*. Right is what this person *makes* it. The older people get the more their character will manifest one way or the other. We see older people as the most stubborn, prideful, or mellow and soft because of this. Over time people care less and less about covering up their selfish heart. They are fixed and often feel that it is too late to change as they look back on all the people they would have to admit being wrong to. And people generally expect this from them and do not really fault them for it. It is considered unavoidable, natural, and not serious at all. This is because people are fundamentally wrong on how they estimate character and the guilt of sin. They look at the general outward works and beliefs of a man rather than whether they are a manifestation of the glory of God and a heavenly spirit. Perhaps they have never seen someone live, breath, and eat for the glory of God. So all they can do is judge by mere externals and look at man as an animal that can only seek his own way instinctively. Maybe he cannot help himself and is a victim of circumstances, temptation, or fate? Yet:

There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man: but God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it. (1 Cor 10:13)

When such passages are read people say, “I know, I know, I should do better...” Or they read

over them without any contemplation that *the preference of their heart deep down is to give into temptation* and there is really no known way to self-righteously overcome temptation. For the self-righteous *are selfish at heart* and reject the Lord as their first pursuit, and secondly *ignore or disbelieve* His promises that lift them out of temptation. While they may *somewhat grasp* God giving a way out of every temptation, nevertheless they have come to accept that *it is really not that important anyway, as others around them do not seem to be alarmed about it*.

“I suppose Paul was just being an alarmist in using language like making a way of escape. What's the big deal if we give into temptation, everybody's doing it! And sin actually makes you humble. We need sin so that grace may increase. If we were actually holy then we wouldn't need Jesus.”

This is Christian theology and reasoning today. I have heard it countless times. Yet Paul was not alarmist, neither was Jesus when He said it was better to chop off a body part that causes offense than to be thrown into the lake of fire.

And if thine eye offend thee, pluck it out: it is better for thee to enter into the kingdom of God with one eye, than having two eyes to be cast into hell fire: (Mk 9:47)

Jesus said also that the way to life is narrow and few will enter. We must not deceive ourselves by looking at others. Sin also does not humble but hardens the heart and grieves the Holy Spirit. Sin limits grace not increases it. Paul says against this damnable theology:

And not rather, (as we be slanderously reported, and as some affirm that we say,) Let us do evil, that good may come? whose damnation is just. (Romans 3:8)

What shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin, that grace may abound? God forbid. How shall we, that are dead to sin, live any longer therein? (Romans 6:1-2)

Now talk to self-righteous Christians of doing *everything* for the glory of God, from the littlest things to major things, and they will look at you puzzled and wonder how that is even possible. They cannot imagine having to evaluate everything in life as whether it would be done for God when so much is done for self.

“Wow, I mean we do our devotions daily, go to church on Sunday, and help out others where we can. I need some time for myself to unwind and indulge a little here and there. Let's not get extreme here people! Christianity is not about getting legalistic and making sure we do everything perfect. Come on! You can't tie your shoe for the glory of God can you?”

Yet Paul says, *“Whether therefore ye eat, or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God.”* (1 Cor 10:31) This seems impossible because the heart is given over to unrighteous judgments and people count themselves as their own property and control what they want in life. *Doing God's will is a task to be done, a chore to need motivation for, a resolution more often broken than followed.* It is a burden that requires break for self. Yet the Lord says otherwise:

For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light.
(Mt 11:30)

For this is the love of God, that we keep his commandments: and his commandments are not grievous. (1 John 5:3)

The problem is that we really have to die to live again. The Will has to die and the sinner must fully throw themselves upon the mercy of God. God's love will flow from heaven into their hearts, even as the Holy Spirit convicts the world of sin, if they will but stop ignoring it and

selecting the light that only suits their desires. This is a fundamental heart charge. Yes, everyone uses this language, and reads the Bible to know better. But who really believes and receives?? I am doing what I can to express in words a spiritual reality. If people will not bother to slow down for one minute and carefully consider these things and be honest for the first time in their lives, I expect that they will just continue on hardening their hearts as before.

Do you Abide in the True Vine?

So let us now go back to the Gospel of John: *I am the true vine, and my Father is the husbandman. Every branch in me that beareth not fruit he taketh away: and every branch that beareth fruit, he purgeth it, that it may bring forth more fruit. Now ye are clean through the word which I have spoken unto you. Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine; no more can ye, except ye abide in me. I am the vine, ye are the branches: He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit: for without me ye can do nothing. If a man abide not in me, he is cast forth as a branch, and is withered; and men gather them, and cast them into the fire, and they are burned. If ye abide in me, and my words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you. Herein is my Father glorified, that ye bear much fruit; so shall ye be my disciples. As the Father hath loved me, so have I loved you: continue ye in my love. If ye keep my commandments, ye shall abide in my love; even as I have kept my Father's commandments, and abide in his love. These things have I spoken unto you, that my joy might remain in you, and that your joy might be full.* (John 15:1-11)

Do these verses make any sense? Do people look at “without me you can do nothing” as in

without God the world would not turn? Or do they see *the life in Christ as moment by moment* as the songs we sing about? Is it merely an attempt to look to Him in times of trouble or once in a while, or is He really The True Vine in our lives of which we are only lost in our own sin for a moment away. Like a child on a windy roof holding the hand of a stable parent, if the child lets go he will fall down. Does Christ more than hold our hands? *Does He fill us with living water always?* Is the end of Romans 8 merely a fantasy or the real experience of Christians?

Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? As it is written, For thy sake we are killed all the day long; we are accounted as sheep for the slaughter. Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him that loved us. For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, Nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord. (Romans 8:35-39)

For this cause I bow my knees unto the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, Of whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named, That he would grant you, according to the riches of his glory, to be strengthened with might by his Spirit in the inner man; That Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith; that ye, being rooted and grounded in love, May be able to comprehend with all saints what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height; And to know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge, that ye might be filled with all the fulness of God. Now unto him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us, Unto him be glory in the church by Christ Jesus throughout all ages, world without end. Amen. (Ephesians 3:14-21)

Practical Atheism is Living like God is not Real

I do not make these things up, as I know in my own life where I have blocked out the light from heaven and have been aware of walking in darkness. I know how easy it is to get distracted by the things in this world and live just like everyone else. And I also know how it is to live in hypocrisy and deceive my own self into giving a partial obedience. Yet no one can continue long without periodic realizations that something is not fundamentally right. The truth catches up with people from time to time throughout their lives, even with the most reprobate. This is the source of so much frustration inside of man. Practical Atheism is living like God is not real and we are left to ourselves to make ends meet, or deal with our problems, or make ourselves better. Atheists, Agnostics, Secular humanists, and Deists (like Thomas Jefferson who cut out all the miracles in Bible and made his own) pride themselves that they have only themselves to thank for bettering themselves. But most Christians live no different and many are even less productive. Sure the Christian Atheist will offer a little prayer at meal-time, and do his devotions and say a few words to the unknown and unexperienced god. Yes they may do some church and sing some songs. But there is no life in it. At least not as much as they are into their idols. Listen to them throughout the day and you will see what excites them and what moves them. They are not living as if it is their last day on earth and ready to meet their maker. There is no heavenly mindset but the things of this earth are their focus. Heavenly things do not melt them and tears are far from a hard heart. Songs are song without feeling and words passed over without even realizing they are living totally opposite to them. Christian Atheism is placing Santa Clause in the sky and falling down and worshiping a deceptive mirror on one's ceiling as a god one has created to

allow them to have what they want in this world while making themselves feel comfortable about the future. This Christian Humanism is practically no different than Secular Humanism. Both are prideful of their own self-righteous works that have no experience abiding in Christ in truth. The Christian Atheist is the best excuse-maker. He can have all the reasons in the world for his sin. His creed is that he is almost proud to be a saved sinner but don't try and point out any particular sin because when it comes to accountability he is perfectly sinless and will never admit to or be willing to change anything. He knows he should pray more, but this is excused by his claim that everyone needs to pray more. Talk to him of spirit and truth worshipers and he will call that extremism or fanaticism. No, he knows that is not for him. He thinks he's seen those types before and want's nothing to do with it. Reactionary religion is a foundation for so many people's religion. They see some evil perversion of a good thing and then reject the truth with those misrepresenting it. People reject talk or the truths of the filling of the Holy Spirit because they want nothing to do with Charismatic self-delusions and false prophet claims of new revelation. So it is easy to reject a lot of Bible truth this way. So this man has got his simple religion all figured out it's not going to change one bit from here on. For it works for him and people generally treat him as moral and religious. Why bother to look further if you generally live a bit better than most godless people today? If no one reads the Bible much, surely those who at least do their devotions and believe the right things will do fine and hopefully make it. Such people cannot be bothered to honestly search matters out because at the heart they are actually selective and selfish. They have chosen a non-existent middle road between obvious godlessness and

total consecration to God. Virtue, with them, is the means between extremes. 'Do not be overly righteous or overly wicked, for why should you die before your time.' Salvation is passing on the curve with those around you. Conversion is merely being awakened to some spiritual realizations and not actually being transformed from complete darkness into light. It is in name only, with some good works here and there. But inside the soul struggles with doubts and deadness and is really unsatisfied. Therefore the man seeks different pursuits to pass the time and hype themselves up into spirituality. But dead works are dead, and do not bread anything but death to those around them. Spiritual death is for those who will not abide in Christ always. Counterfeit faith is shallow and is more or less practical Atheism. Or maybe practical Deism. Deism is the belief that God created the universe and let it run itself. So in the same way prayer doesn't really do anything for anyone but maybe make them think about things. God is not filling them because they are filled with other things. They are not His temple and they don't pretend to be. Their bodies are their own property and no one is going to change that. The presence of the Lord has long departed from this world as much as for the Deist. The world can only get worse because there really isn't anything we can do. Things are really fixed and we are on our own to improve only ourselves. Don't you dare talk about being holy because then we would not need Christ! We don't need to be like him because all we are is self-righteous anyway. This is really the faith of vast multitudes truly living in the most deceptive sin and hopeless, lifeless, Christless religion. Maybe such people have one act of faith where they were told they had a hope of heaven if only they believed certain things. Maybe they grew up in the same kind of religion and just grew into it. This is actually popular Christianity

today. Some are more active and missions oriented, while others are more into doctrine, and still others are into family. Yet this Christian Atheistic or Deistic theology and practice is everywhere.

A Perfect Example of Godless Christianity Today

We need to look more carefully into the nature of these various deceptions so that the reader will not pass over these words and miss the purpose of this paper by merely mentally agreeing with the form of the words and fail to enter into the spirit of true worship continually. But first we will consider an example of the church today. When I first started writing this paper I received an invitation card in the mail from a local church. The advertisement is a perfect representation of Christianity today. On the front side are the Words covering about half the page that say BELONG, and the full wording is "A place to BELONG Believers Christian Church". The background image has six white people sitting around a table with each one holding a cup of coffee. This is not an invitation for Christians but to anyone. It is a place for the world to feel comfortable and mingle with others of like mind. On the other side the add continues with large print at the top: FINDYOUR PLACE AT Believers Christian Church. Then it adds: "Believers Christian Church isn't a place just for the prim and proper. In fact, if you visit, you might be surprised to find a whole community of people that remind you of yourself. We're not interested in "perfect," we only care about "real". Our church is a family, where every individual is valued, friendships are important and people are encouraged to use their unique talents to help others. Come be a part of a real community, and find your place to belong this weekend!" Then the bullet points are: "Contemporary Praise & Worship, Childcare & Children's Ministry, Gospel Centered & Grace

Filled Messages, Relevant Teaching For Victorious Living".

This is the perfect representation of the Evangelical church today in America. It is a place where anyone will be sure to fit it and be reminded of themselves because there is really no difference between these kinds of believers and the world. It is a place where messages of grace are distorted with compromise, self-righteousness "relevant" self-helps, and lawlessness. A place where "real" means unholy and is considered acceptable living. Where "real" is actually fake Christianity and contrary to commonsense realism and the life of the martyr's cross. It is a place where everything and everyone but the Holy Spirit of God is welcome to "use their talents to help others" perpetuate a humanistic gospel. It is a place where love can never be "perfect" nor are "believers" expected to really live just as Jesus is in this world:

Herein is our love made perfect, that we may have boldness in the day of judgment: because as he is, so are we in this world. (1 John 4:17)

There is a place to fit in, to use your talents, to find a family, where grace filled messages are taught with relevant teaching for victorious living, but you will never find such with this kind of people. For at the foundation is a false gospel that does not save anyone from their sins at all but merely deludes them to feel better about their lives and eternity. It is a false grace that brings no salvation and leaves in sin. This kind of place rather suppresses all the conviction of the Holy Spirit with unconverted fellowship, humanistic works and false teaching. This is the mixture of darkness and light and the lawless claim that all are welcome to worship God while in sin. Since believers remind the world of themselves they are actually worldly and not such as have eternal life. (See Jude)

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 pride 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 for ever. (1 John 2:15-17)

Find your place at Believers Christian Church no matter what your character or beliefs are because they love the world and are the world. But "if any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him."

While this may appear as a rather extreme example of a worldly church it really is essentially the common gospel today. It doesn't matter how orthodox we are in doctrine, how much we read and analyses the Bible, how polished and practical our sermons are, how many social programs we have and how many good works we may do, if we are not walking in light with God we are walking in darkness with the world. If a church is worldly in spirit and the people do not expect to abide in the true and holy Christ, they are fundamentally wrong and just as lost as these "believers."

Spirit and truth are the essence of worship and bases for fellowship in Jesus Christ; not a form of religion people make traditions of, that allow walking in prejudice and darkness (inward and outward).

The bottom line is that there is no faith without full repentance. There is no salvation without the resulting love of God. There is no regeneration or justification without being born anew and being a child of God having His character. There is no forgiveness while being unforgiving. Heaven is not the destination unless you presently have the spirit of heaven. There is no protestant purgatory to make you heavenly. He did not come to save you *in* your sins but *from* your sins:

And she shall bring forth a son, and you shall call his name Jesus: for he shall save his people from their sins. (Matt 1:21)

Total Consecration or Total Deception

The Lord calls for and only accepts total commitment and pure faith in Him. Intentions, fantasies, and formalism are mere delusions. You cannot *intend* to obey Him if you are not *presently* abiding in Him, because while you are not abiding you are opposing Him. A desire to obey, if it is not a present conformity, is not heart conformity and is merely *as* the sower of seed casting the truth of God *upon the path that is trampled upon or choked out by weeds*. Desire and intentions are the fantasies of the church today where people suppose they really want to serve the Lord but only need to make *gradual* changes in their lives and become more and more obedient. At the heart of this is the Eastern idea of making God a mixture of the ying and the yang, making him good and evil, light and darkness contrary to "The Message" the Apostles were given above. For when man supposes God accepts him and fellowships with him *in a state of walking in any darkness* he not only contradicts The clear Message here but also of the Word of God in general that separates the sheep from the goats, the righteous from the unrighteous, the saint from the sinner, the faithful from the unfaithful, those who abide in the vine from those who abide not and wither, the hot from the cold, etc. Popular theology today claims that God regenerates believers one way or another. But while these believe they are *perfectly justified*, they reject the idea that God can make them actually *sanctified* in Him and act like they believe that they are left to work out their own self-righteous sanctification or morality. Ask them, *is it God or you who sanctifies?* In essence people want the best of both words, the lifestyle of the world and the destiny of the

righteous. So instead of actually abiding in Christ and walking purely in light with Him they set up for themselves humanistic self-helps and motivational false prophets to tickle their ears with resolution religion and entertaining storytelling about the a mythical kingdom like the old Greek and Roman gods where they accepted a carnal and partial sacrifice from an unholy worshiper. These gods, like all the false religions of the world in all history, are conceived to be both good and evil. And in the same way this modern religion supposes a god in heaven winks at sin and believers can walk with him in partial or complete darkness and be left to make self-righteous improvements upon character without the possibility to abide entirely in Him and share His character.

I fear that people are so accustomed to passing over the Word of God without paying attention to the details so that these verses have fallen upon deaf ears. So it will help the reader to quote this same idea I have been endeavoring to elucidate from a different angle, from a source they may be willing to consider more than from me. The reader is probably not familiar with much if any of the history and writings of the first man that God used to bring us the English Bible from the original languages: William Tyndale. Tyndale lived at a pivotal time in Christian history and was used of God more than anyone else to influence the English language and the words we use in our Bibles. He was a bright light and one like John the Baptist, who prepared the way of the Lord for us. He gave his life to give the common man the Word of God and was put to the stake and martyred more or less for translating more accurately such words as congregation, love, elder, etc., against Catholic traditions and prejudices. Tyndale was a godly man and saw his generation as blindly enslaved by the religion of the day who twisted the Word of God to suit their beliefs and lifestyle in the

same way as is being done today. When you read his words at the introduction of the Bible see how much it applies to our day where I am attempting to bring out the same points. First I quote what John Foxe wrote of him in chapter 12 of Foxe's Acts and Monuments, or otherwise, book of Martyrs:

"As touching his translation of the New Testament, because his enemies did so much carp at it, pretending it to be full of heresies, he wrote to John Frith, as followeth, 'I call God to record against the day we shall appear before our Lord Jesus, that I never altered one syllable of God's Word against my conscience, nor would do this day, if all that is in earth, whether it be honor, pleasure, or riches, might be given me.'"

W. T. Unto the Reader

"Moreover, because the kingdom of heaven, which is the scripture and word of God, may be so locked up, that he which readeth or heareth it, cannot understand it: as Christ testifieth how that the scribes and Pharisees had so shut it up (Matt. 23) and had taken away the key of knowledge (Luke 11) that their Jews which thought themselves within, were yet so locked out, and are to this day that they can understand no sentence of the scripture unto their salvation, though they can rehearse the texts everywhere and dispute thereof as subtly as the popish doctors of dunces' dark learning, which with their sophistry, served us, as the Pharisees did the Jews. Therefore (that I might be found faithful to my father and Lord in distributing unto my brethren and fellows of one faith, their due and necessary food: so dressing it and seasoning it, that the weak stomachs may receive it also, and be the better for it) I thought it my duty (most dear reader) to warn thee before, and to shew thee the right way in, and to give thee the true key to open it withal, and to arm thee against false prophets

and malicious hypocrites, whose perpetual study is to leaven the scripture with glosses, and there to lock it up where it should save thy soul, and to make us shoot at a wrong mark, to put our trust in those things that profit their bellies only and slay our souls.

The right way, yea and the only way to understand scripture unto our salvation, is, that we earnestly and above all thing, search for the profession of our baptism or covenants made between God and us. As for an example: Christ saith (Matt. 5) Happy are the merciful, for they shall obtain mercy. Lo, here God hath made a covenant with us, to be merciful unto us, if we will be merciful one to another: so that the man which sheweth mercy unto his neighbour, may be bold to trust in God for mercy at all needs. And contrary-wise, judgement without mercy, shall be to him that sheweth not mercy (Jas. 2) So now, if he that showeth no mercy, trust in God for mercy, his faith is carnal and worldly, and but vain presumption. For God hath promised mercy only to the merciful. And therefore the merciless have no God's word that they shall have mercy: but contrary-wise, that they shall have judgement without mercy. And (Mat. 6) If ye shall forgive men their faults, your heavenly father shall forgive you: but and if ye shall not forgive men their faults, no more shall your father forgive you your faults. Here also by the virtue and strength of this covenant wherewith God of his mercy hath bound himself to us unworthy, may he that forgiveth his neighbour, be bold when he returneth and amendeth to believe and trust in God for remission of whatsoever he hath done amiss. And contrary-wise, he that will not forgive, cannot but despair of forgiveness in the end, and fear judgement without mercy.

The general covenant wherein all other are comprehended and included, is this. If we meek ourselves to God, to keep all his laws, after the example of Christ: then God hath bound

himself unto us to keep and make good all the mercies promised in Christ, throughout all the scripture.

All the whole law which was given to utter our corrupt nature, is comprehended in the ten commandments. And the ten commandments are comprehended in these two: love God and thy neightbour. And he that loveth his neightbour in God and Christ, fulfilleth these two, and consequently the ten, that is to weet, if we being loving, kind and merciful to them, because God hath created them unto his likeness, and Christ hath redeemed them and bought them with his blood, then may we be bold to trust in God through Christ and his deserving, for all mercy. For God hath promised and bound himself to us: to show us all mercy, and to be a father almighty to us, so that we shall not need to fear the power of all our adversaries.

Now if any many submitteth not himself to keep the commandment, do think that he hath any faith in God: the same man's faith is vain, worldly, damnable, devilish and plain presumption, as it is above said, and is no faith that can justify or be accepted before God. And that is it that James meaneth in his Epistle. For how can a man believe saith Paul, without a preacher (Rom. 10) Now read all the scripture and see where God sent any to preach mercy to any, save unto them only that repent and turn to God with all their hearts, to keep his commandments. Unto the disobedient that will not turn, is threatened wrath, vengeance and damnation, according to all the terrible curses and fearful examples of the Bible.

Faith now in God the father through our Lord Jesus Christ, according to the covenants and appointment made between God and us, is our salvation. Wherefore I have ever noted the covenants in the margins, and also the promises. Moreover where thou findest a promise and no covenant expressed therewith,

there must thou understand a covenant. For all the promises of the mercy and grace that Christ hath purchased for us, are made upon the condition that we keep the law. As for an example: when the scripture saith (Matt. 7) Ask and it shall be given you: seek and ye shall find: knock and it shall be opened unto you. It is to be understood, if that when thy neighbour asketh, seeketh or knocketh to thee, thou then shew him the same mercy which thou desirest of God, then hath God bound himself to help thee again, and else not.

Also ye see that two things are required to begin a Christian man. The first is a steadfast faith and trust in almighty God, to obtain all the mercy that he hath promised us, though the deserving and merits of Christ's blood only, without all respect to our own works. And the other is, that we forsake evil and turn to God, to keep his laws and to fight against ourselves and our corrupt nature perpetually, that we may do the will of God every day better and better.

This I said (most dear reader) to warn thee, lest though shouldest be deceived, and shouldest not only read the scriptures in vain and to no profit, but also unto thy greater damnation. For the nature of God's word is, that whosoever read it or hear it reasoned and disputed before him, it will begin immediately to make him every day better and better, till he be grown into a perfect man in the knowledge of Christ and love of the law of God: or else make him worse and worse, till he be hardened that he openly resist the spirit of God, and then blaspheme, after the example of Pharaoh, Coza, Abiram, Balaam, Judas, Simon Magmus and such other.

This to be even so, the words of Christ (John 3) do well confirm. This is condemnation saith he, the light is come into the world, but the men loved darkness more than light for their deeds were evil. Behold, when the light of God's word cometh to a man, whether he read it or hear it

preached and testified, and he yet have no love thereto, to fashion his life thereafter, but consenteth still unto his old deeds of ignorance: then beginneth his just damnation immediately, and he is henceforth without excuse: in that he refused mercy offered him. For God offereth him mercy upon the condition that he will mend his living: but he will not come under the covenant. And from that hour forward he waxeth worse and worse, God taking his spirit of mercy and grace from him for his unthankfulness' sake."

(William Tyndale's New Testament 1534 Pgs 3-5)

These words, and more of the same, were given to all the English speaking people with the first Bible. The reader would do well to carefully consider each point made and all the scriptures references even if they think they are walking in light presently. For our present day is just as dark as Europe in 1534 or in the middle East in 30AD. We have the same kinds of religious bodies twisting the Word of God and leaving the people in spiritual bondage rather than urging them truly and thoroughly to abide in Christ. We have the same kinds and forms of religion that deny the power of God, the same kinds of orthodoxy that demands conformity to creed but not life to the spirit of the law, the same kinds of prejudice that closes the eyes of their hearts to the simple presentation of the clear truths of God's Word in these matters, the same kinds of traditions and assumed dogma that sets aside the most basic truths of God's Word, and the same kind of zeal to promote a self-righteous belief system and social program. Tyndale was a very bright light that God used to open up the heavens to us. Please consider his words and life as you ought to consider these other martyrs and heroes of the faith that walked akin to those in chapter 11 of Hebrews. See that their lives were the norm and they were not to be canonized as "saints"

(literally holy ones) apart from all true believers in God.

How can every believer be a Tyndale martyr today? Not by joining a church but rather be a congregation of people of his spirit and zeal—individuals walking together in the light abiding in Christ in spirit and truth in a day that sets aside the Spirit or Truth in their lives and fellowship and settles for formalities, traditions, or is superstitious or reactionary. Tyndale gave us English the Word of God that opened our eyes to see everything God wanted us to know. Let us discover what God wants us to be today and in the same spirit lay down our lives for God's glory and kingdom. It is time for a new day of worshipers as Jesus described to leave the world's policy of sectarianism, selfishness, and sin and find our place in the light with God and as lights in a dark world. Let people promote this living and abiding faith and gospel, which reveals the deep love of God in our lives as we declare the truths of Jesus' life, death and resurrection—as real history and vitally relevant for everyone today.

In Tyndale's day the whole culture was steeped in Roman Catholic tradition and superstition. Tyndale was a bright light representing a piercing of the darkness which changed the world in so many ways. We live in perhaps just as dark and wicked world today which blinds its eyes to what it means to walk in spirit and truth. Let us therefore take up that martyred calling and do whatever God calls us to do to make every plow boy not only know the Word of God as Tyndale gave them, but to know by example those true worshipers who always worship God in spirit and truth! Shall not this goodness of God lead people to repentance (Romans 2) and sanctify God's holy name (Ezekiel 36)? Christians honor and hold high various people

who have so walked and believed, and have more or less promoted their beliefs or practices, but to a large extent missed what was at the heart of their faith. What did all these worthies have in common? What was their pure faith? Why did God use them? Why do we esteem them? They continually abide in Christ in spirit and truth and did not let anything get in the way of that, and avoided adding and subtracting to that. That was always the need of the hour, that was their story, that was their song... This is love for God and man. Follow not after these in form or opinion but in spirit and truth—let their example of abiding in Christ so move you likewise.

No doubt many churches say as much in creed (even though in most cases add to this) but what is the practice? Churches and anti-church people today nevertheless make their gatherings something more or less than this. People gather once or twice a week to hear a message, sing songs, or to learn more, or meet with others. That is all fine but do they really see the life of the true worshiper in spirit and truth? Are people admittedly walking in the light as Jesus walked? Have they confessed and forsaken their sins and found the cleansing of Christ? Or is church about something else than this abiding in Christ reality John fully develops? And what of the numerous anti-church groups and individuals? Are they merely reactionary and issues based? Not saying there are no true worshipers involved in churches or those who are anti-church. Issues, public and private preaching, ministries, doctrinal development, etc., are needful to focus on and engage in, but must always be subordinate to abiding in Christ where the deep love of Christ fills and motivates the purpose. This abiding is the focus always. Not wondering if we are, not getting into a form of that, but actually abiding in Christ, actually receiving of heaven the life of

Christ through the Spirit. Whatever issues we deal with we have this first and always as the foundation in all of our reasoning. "This is the message we have heard and declare to you..." No goal, ministry, purpose shall ever contradict this. "Keep yourself from idols." No theology, excuses, traditions, reactions against bad examples are to separate us from the love of God and purpose of the Son of God and Spirit of God coming into this world. You know whether this is true deep down in your heart, even if there is so much pride there preventing you from admitting it to others, and even if you try to divert your mind from focusing on it. Let go of the world and give your soul to God fully! Prepare yourself now to meet that true God that only fellowships with you in the light as He is in the light! Let this be your one breathing impulse for every grace-given moment you have left from and for Him. According to the meaning of the new covenant: To glorify His holy name in abiding in Him in spirit and truth and thus doing everything to bring others to the same experience. Let not your flesh, the world or the evil one prejudice you or divert you from this holy calling.

Let not my words in this be assumed to be contrary sound truth because opportunity is not possible in this short word to mention all associated and implied truths of the gospel and Christian doctrine. The purpose of this is to notice that which is lacking today at a fundamental level rather than give some comprehensive teaching on all truth. The deity of Christ and Holy Spirit, the atonement, and all essential truths are assumed here. My point is to look at the purpose of the letter of 1 John as one of the last books of the bible specially given to us and live accordingly. See there this specific and general teaching on how you should live in contrast to the way so many live today who are admittedly void of the Spirit and spiritually dead in sins, and prejudiced against

the leading of and conviction of the Spirit in their reasonings about personal prayer and ministry, practical doctrine and personal godliness, and how they ought to relate to all who do not adorn the doctrine of Christ in their lives and are thus worldly or of the world. We are either one or the other type of person. Remember the anointing you received in the Spirit, and teaches you to abide in Him and abide in His love. If this is not real to you then do not be distracted by anything else but to know the Lord in this way and so walk with Him in the light and then walk with others only there (psalms 1). This witness will abide in you and fill you with new love you have never known before. This is the message the apostles were given as outlined by Jesus at the well. The spirit and truth is embracing all truth one has practical access to, in your head as well as in your heart and life contrary to party politics, sectarianism, selfishness, and the opinions of man.

Quotes of those considered Godly Heroes of the Faith

"To one who asked him the secret of his service he said: "There was a day when I died, *utterly died;*" and, as he spoke, he bent lower and lower until he almost touched the floor—"died to George Muller, his opinions, preferences, tastes and will—died to the world, its approval or censure—died to the approval or blame even of my brethren and friends—and since then I have studied only to show myself approved unto God." (George Muller of Bristol: His Life of Prayer and Faith page 367)

"*Our Hearts, His Dwelling Place* I firmly believe that the moment our hearts are emptied of selfishness and ambition and self-seeking and everything that is contrary to God's law, the Holy Spirit will come and fill every corner of our hearts; but if we are full of pride and conceit,

ambition and self-seeking, pleasure and the world, there is no room for the Spirit of God. I also believe that many a man is praying to God to fill him, when he is full already with something else. Before we pray that God would fill us, I believe we ought to pray that He would empty us. There must be an emptying before there can be a filling; and when the heart is turned upside down, and everything that is contrary to God is turned out, then the Spirit will come, just as He did in the tabernacle, and fill us with His glory. We read in 2 Chronicles 5:13-14" (D. L. Moody Secret Power chapt 4)

Blessed assurance, Jesus is mine;
Oh, what a foretaste of glory divine!
Heir of salvation, purchase of God,
Born of His Spirit, washed in His blood.

This is my story, this is my song,
Praising my Savior all the day long.
This is my story, this is my song,
Praising my Savior all the day long.

Perfect submission, perfect delight,
Visions of rapture now burst on my sight;
Angels descending, bring from above
Echoes of mercy, whispers of love.

Perfect submission, all is at rest,
I in my Savior am happy and blest;
Watching and waiting, looking above,
Filled with His goodness, lost in His love.
(Fanny J Crosby Blessed assurance 1873)

"And this point may be further illustrated and confirmed, if it be considered, that the holy scriptures abundantly place sincerity and soundness in religion, in making a full choice of God as our only Lord and portion, forsaking all for Him, and in a full determination of the will for God and Christ, on counting the cost; in our

hearts closing and complying with the religion of Jesus Christ, with all that belongs to it, embracing it with all its difficulties, as it were hating our dearest earthly enjoyments, and even our own lives, for Christ; giving up ourselves with all that we have, wholly and for ever unto Christ, without keeping back any thing or making any reserve. In one word, sincerity consists in the great duty of self-denial for Christ; or in denying, that is, as it were disowning and renouncing ourselves for Him, making ourselves nothing that He may be all. Mat. 5:29, 30: 'If thy right eye offend thee, pluck it out, and cast it from thee; for it is profitable for thee that one of thy members should perish, and not that thy whole body should be cast into hell. And if thy right hand offend thee, cut it off, and cast it from thee; for it is profitable for thee that one of thy members should perish, and not that thy whole body should be cast into hell.' Mat. 6:24: 'No man can serve two masters; for either he will hate the one, and love the other; or else he will hold to the one and despise the other. Ye cannot serve God and Mammon.' Mat. 10:37-39: 'He that loveth father or mother more than me, is not worthy of me; and he that loveth son or daughter more than me, is not worthy of me; and he that taketh not his cross and followeth after me, is not worthy of me. He that findeth his life shall lose it; and he that loseth his life for my sake, shall find it.' Mat. 13:44-46. Luke 14:16-20, 25-33, and 16:13. Rom. 6:3-8. Gal 2:20, and 6:14. Phil. 3:7-10. 1 John 2:15. Rev. 14:4. Gen. 12:1-4, with Heb. 11:8-10. Gen. 22:12, and Heb. 11:17, 24-27. Deut. 13:6, and 33:9. Now surely having a heart to forsake all for Christ, tends to actually forsaking all for Him, so far as there is occasion, and we have the trial. Having a heart to deny ourselves for Christ, tends to denying ourselves in deed, when Christ and self-interest stand in competition. A giving up of ourselves, with all

that we have, in our hearts, without making any reserve there, tends to our behaving ourselves universally as his, as subject to his will, and devoted to his ends. Our hearts entirely closing with the religion of Jesus, with all that belongs to it, and as attended with all its difficulties, upon a deliberate counting of the cost, tends to a universal closing with the same in act and deed, and actually going through all the difficulties we meet with in the way of religion, and so holding out with patience and perseverance." (President Jonathan Edwards *A Treatise Concerning Religious Affections* page 189)

II. If it be inquired, "What more than this is implied in the being altogether a Christian?" I answer,

(I.) 1. First. The love of God. For thus saith his word, "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and with all thy strength." Such a love is this, as engrosses the whole heart, as rakes up all the affections, as fills the entire capacity of the soul and employs the utmost extent of all its faculties. He that thus loves the Lord his God, his spirit continually "rejoiceth in God his Saviour." his delight is in the Lord, his Lord and his All, to whom "in everything he giveth thanks. All his desire is unto God, and to the remembrance of his name." His heart is ever crying out, "Whom have I in heaven but Thee? and there is none upon earth that I desire beside Thee." Indeed, what can he desire beside God? Not the world, or the things of the world: for he is "crucified to the world, and the world crucified to him." he is crucified to "the desire of the flesh, the desire of the eye, and the pride of life." Yea, he is dead to pride of every kind: for "love is not puffed up" but "he that dwelling in love, dwelleth in God, and God in him," is less than nothing in his own eyes.

(II.) 2. The Second thing implied in the being altogether a Christian is, the love of our neighbour. For thus said our Lord in the following words, "Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself" If any man ask, "Who is my neighbour?" we reply, Every man in the world; every child of his who is the Father of the spirits of all flesh. Nor may we in any wise except our enemies or the enemies of God and their own souls. But every Christian loveth these also as himself, yea, "as Christ loved us." he that would more fully understand what manner of love this is, may consider St. Paul's description of it. It is "long-suffering and kind." It "envieth not." It is not rash or hasty in judging. It "is not puffed up;" but maketh him that loves, the least, the servant of all. Love "doth not behave itself unseemly," but becometh "all things to all men." She "seeketh not her own;" but only the good of others, that they may be saved. "Love is not provoked." It casteth out wrath, which he who hath is wanting in love. "It thinketh no evil. It rejoiceth not in iniquity, but rejoiceth in the truth. It covereth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things."

(III.) 3. There is yet one thing more that may be separately considered, though it cannot actually be separate from the preceding, which is implied in the being altogether a Christian; and that is the ground of all, even faith. Very excellent things are spoken of this throughout the oracles of God. "Every one, saith the beloved disciple, "that believeth is born of God." "To as many as received him, gave he power to become the sons of God. even to them that believe on his name." And "this is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith." Yea, our Lord himself declares, "He that believeth in the Son hath everlasting life; and cometh not into condemnation, but is passed from death unto life."

4. But here let no man deceive his own soul. "It is diligently to be noted, the faith which bringeth not forth repentance, and love, and all good works, is not that right living faith, but a dead and devilish one. For, even the devils believe that Christ was born of a virgin: that he wrought all kinds of miracles, declaring himself very God: that, for our sakes, he suffered a most painful death, to redeem us from death everlasting; that he rose again the third day: that he ascended into heaven, and sitteth at the right hand of the Father and at the end of the world shall come again to judge both the quick and dead. These articles of our faith the devils believe, and so they believe all that is written in the Old and New Testament. And yet for all this faith, they be but devils. They remain still in their damnable estate lacking the very true Christian faith."

5. "The right and true Christian faith is "not only to believe that Holy Scripture and the Articles of our Faith are true, but also to have a sure trust and confidence to be saved from everlasting damnation by Christ. It is a sure trust and confidence which a man hath in God, that, by the merits of Christ, his sins are forgiven, and he reconciled to the favour of God; whereof doth follow a loving heart, to obey his commandments."

6. Now, whosoever has this faith, which "purifies the heart" (by the power of God, who dwelleth therein) from "pride, anger, desire, from all unrighteousness" from "all filthiness of flesh and spirit;" which fills it with love stronger than death, both to God and to all mankind; love that doeth the works of God, glorying to spend and to be spent for all men, and that endureth with joy, not only the reproach of Christ, the being mocked, despised, and hated of all men, but whatsoever the wisdom of God permits the malice of men or devils to inflict,

—whosoever has this faith thus working by love is not almost only, but altogether, a Christian."
(John Wesley *The Almost Christian*)

*Abide with me; fast falls the eventide;
The darkness deepens; Lord, with me abide;
When other helpers fail and comforts flee,
Help of the helpless, oh, abide with me.*

*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.*

*I need Thy presence every passing hour;
What but Thy grace can foil the tempter's pow'r?
Who, like Thyself, my guide and stay can be?
Through cloud and sunshine, Lord, abide with me.*

*I fear no foe, with Thee at hand to bless;
Ills have no weight, and tears no bitterness;
Where is death's sting? Where, grave, thy victory?
I triumph still, if Thou abide with me.*

*Hold Thou Thy cross before my closing eyes;
Shine through the gloom and point me to the skies;
Heav'n's morning breaks, and earth's vain shadows flee;
In life, in death, O Lord, abide with me.*

***Real Spirit and Truth Worshipers Reveal
The Presence of God in His Holy Temple
Living Water Vessels of His Love and Glory
Dying to all but the Heartbeat of Heaven***