

1 John 2:1

by John Gill

John writes to comfort the saints under a sense of sin and to urge them to persevere in the faith, emphasizing the importance of brotherly love and the promise of eternal life.

Scripture: 1 John 2:1

Topics: "Assurance of Salvation", "Advocacy of Christ"

Description

John Gill emphasizes the apostle John's message in 1 John 2:1, which serves to comfort believers in their struggles with sin while urging them to adhere to God's commandments, particularly the commandment of brotherly love. He reassures the faithful that, despite their imperfections, they have an advocate in Jesus Christ, who intercedes for them before the Father. Gill warns against the dangers of worldly love and false teachings, encouraging believers to remain steadfast in their faith and to walk in the light of Christ. The sermon highlights the importance of true knowledge of God, evidenced by obedience to His commands, and the assurance of eternal life for those who abide in Christ. Ultimately, Gill calls for perseverance in the faith, reminding believers of the righteousness of Christ and the comfort found in His advocacy.

Transcript

INTRODUCTION TO 1 JOHN 2

In this chapter the apostle comforts the saints under a sense of sin; urges them to an observance of the commandments of God, in imitation of Christ, particularly to the new commandment of brotherly love, and gives his reasons for it; dehorts them from the love of the world, and the things of it; cautions them against false teachers and antichrists, and exhorts them to abide in Christ, and persevere in the faith of him.

He first declares that the end of his writing was to prevent their sinning; but supposing any should fall into sin through infirmity, he comforts them with the consideration of the advocacy of Christ, and of his being the propitiation for the sins both of Jews and Gentiles, 1Jo 2:1, and whereas some persons might boast of their knowledge of Christ, and neglect his commands, he observes, that the keeping of them is the best evidence of true knowledge, and of the sincerity of their love to God, and of their being in Christ; and that such who show no regard to them are liars, and the truth is not in them; and such that profess to be in Christ and abide in him, ought to walk as they have him for an example, 1Jo 2:3, and instances in a particular commandment, to love one another, which on

different accounts is called an old and a new commandment, and which has been verified both in Christ and his people; for which a reason is given in the latter, the darkness being past, and the true light shining, 1Jo 2:7, upon which some propositions are founded, as that he that professes to be in the light, and hates his brother, is in darkness to this very moment; and that he that loves his brother is evidently in the light, nor will he easily give or take offence; and that he that hates his brother is not only in darkness, but walks in it, being blinded by it, and so knows not whither he is going, 1Jo 2:9, and this commandment of love the apostle writes to the saints, as distinguished into the several classes of fathers, young men, and children; and urges it on them from the

consideration of the blessings of grace peculiar to them; as ancient knowledge to fathers, strength and victory to young men, knowledge of the Father, and remission of sins, to children, 1Jo 2:12, and then he dissuades from the love of worldly things, seeing the love of them is not consistent with the love of God; and seeing the things that are in it are vain and sinful, and are not of God, but of the world; and since the world and its lust pass away, when he that does the will of God abides for ever, 1Jo 2:15, he next observes unto them, that there were many antichrists in the world; which was an evidence of its being the last time; and these he describes as schismatics and apostates from the Christian churches, 1Jo 2:18, but as for the saints he writes to, they were of another

character, they were truly Christians, having an anointing from the Holy One, by which they knew all things; nor did the apostle write to them as ignorant, but as knowing persons, and able to distinguish between truth and error, 1Jo 2:20, and then he goes on with his description of antichristian liars, showing that they were such who denied Jesus to be the Messiah, and the relation that is between the Father and the Son, 1Jo 2:22, and closes the chapter with an exhortation to perseverance in the doctrine of Christ; since it was what they had heard from the beginning, and since by so doing they would continue in the Father and in the Son, and besides had the promise of eternal life, 1Jo 2:24, and indeed this was the main thing in view in writing to them concerning seducers, to preserve

them from them, though indeed this was in a great measure needless, since the anointing they had received abode in them; and taught them all things, and according as they regarded its teaching they would abide in Christ, 1Jo 2:26, to which he exhorts them from the consideration of that boldness and confidence it would give them at his appearance, who they must know is righteous, and so that everyone that doth righteousness is born of him, 1Jo 2:28.

Ver. 1. My little children,.... The apostle may address the saints under this character, on account of their regeneration by the Spirit and grace of God, in which they were as newborn babes; and on account of his being the instrument of their conversion, and so was their spiritual father, and therefore calls them his own children; and he might the rather use such a way of speaking, because of his advanced age, being now in his old age, and John the elder in age as well as in office; as well as to show his paternal affection for them, and care of them, and that what he had wrote, or should write, was not from any disrespect, but from pure love to them; and it might serve to put them in mind of their weakness in faith, in knowledge, and spiritual strength, that they might not entertain high notions of themselves, as if they were perfect and without infirmities; and it is easy to observe, that this is one of Christ's expressions, Joh 13:33, from whose lips the apostle took it, whose words and phrases he greatly delighted in, as he seems to do in this, by his frequent use of it; see 1Jo 2:18.

These things write I unto you; concerning the purity and holiness of God, who is light itself; concerning fellowship with him, which no one that lives in sin can have; concerning pardon and cleansing from sin by

the blood of Christ, and concerning sin being in them, and they not without it. The Ethiopic version reads, "we write", as in 1Jo 1:4;

that ye sin not; not that he thought they could be entirely without it, either without the being of it, or the commission of it, in thought, word, or deed, for this would be to suppose that which is contrary to his own words, in 1Jo 1:8; but he suggests that the end of his writing on these subjects was, that they might not live in sin, and indulge themselves in a vicious course of living, give up themselves to it, and walk in it, and work it with all greediness: and nothing could be more suitably adapted to such an end than the consideration of the holiness of God, who calls by his grace; and of the necessity of light and grace and holiness in men to communion with him; and of the pardoning grace of God and cleansing blood of Christ, which, when savingly applied, sets men against sin, and makes them zealous of good works; and of the indwelling of sin in the saints, which puts them upon their guard against it:

and if any man sin; as every man does, even everyone that is in the light, and walks in it, and has fellowship with God; everyone that believes in Christ, and is justified through his righteousness, and pardoned by his blood; everyone of the little children; for the apostle is not speaking of mankind in general who sin, for Christ is not an advocate for all that sin, but of these in particular; hence the Arabic version renders it, "if any of you sin"; and this, with the following, he says not to encourage in sin, but to comfort under a sense of it:

we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous; Christ is an advocate, not for just or righteous persons, for as he came not to call these to repentance, nor to die for them, so such have no need of an advocate, nor is he one for them; but as he came to call sinners, and to save them, and died for them, the just for the unjust, so he is an advocate, and makes intercession for transgressors; and not for all men, though they have all sinned; not for the world, or those so called in distinction from the persons given him by his Father, for these he prays not; but for all the elect, and whatsoever charges are brought against them he answers to them, and for them; and for all that believe in him, be they weak or strong, even for the apostles as well as others; for they were

not without sin, were men of like passions as others, and carried about with them a body of sin, and had their daily infirmities, and so needed an advocate as others; and hence John says, "we have an advocate", &c. but then Christ is not an advocate for sin, though for sinners; he does not vindicate the commission of sin, or plead for the performance of it; he is no patron of iniquity; nor does he deny that his clients have sinned, or affirm that their actions are not sins; he allows in court all their sins, with all their aggravated circumstances; nor does he go about to excuse or extenuate them; but he is an advocate for the non-imputation of them, and for the application of pardon to them: he pleads in their favour, that these sins have been laid upon him, and he has bore them; that

his blood has been shed for the remission of them, and that he has made full satisfaction for them; and therefore in justice they ought not to be laid to their charge; but that the forgiveness of them should be applied unto them, for the relief and comfort of their burdened and distressed consciences: and for this he is an advocate for his poor sinning people "with the Father"; who being the first Person, and the Son the advocate, and the Spirit sustaining a like character, is only mentioned; and he being God against whom sin is committed, and to whom the satisfaction is made; and the rather, as he is the Father of Christ, and of those for whom he is an advocate; seeing it may be concluded that his pleadings will be with success, since he is not only related to him, and has an interest in

him himself, but the persons also, whose patron he is, are related to him, and have a share in his paternal affection and care: moreover, this phrase, as it expresses the distinct personality of Christ from the Father, so his being with him in heaven at his right hand, and nearness to him; where he discharges this office of his, partly by appearing in person for his people in the presence of God; and partly by carrying in and presenting their confessions of sin, and their prayers for the fresh discoveries and applications of pardoning grace, which he offers up to his Father with the sweet incense of his mediation; and chiefly by pleading the virtue of his blood, righteousness, and sacrifice, which are carried within the vail, and are always in sight, and call aloud for peace and pardon;

as also by answering and removing the charges and accusations of the court adversary, the accuser of the brethren, the devil; as well as by the declarations of his will, demanding in point of justice, in consideration of his sufferings and death, that such and such blessings be bestowed upon his people, as pardon, righteousness, grace, and supplies of grace, and at last glory; and by applying these benefits to their souls as a "comforter", which the word here used also signifies, and is so rendered, Joh 14:16; and by the Arabic version here.

Now the saints have but one advocate, and that is enough for them; the apostle does not say we have advocates, but "an advocate"; not angels, nor saints departed, but Jesus Christ only, who is the one Mediator between God and man, 1Ti 2:5: and he is a continual one, he ever lives to make intercession; his blood is always speaking, and he always pleading; and therefore it is said "we have", not we have had, or we shall have an advocate and he is a prevalent one, he is always heard, he thoroughly pleads the cause he undertakes, and ever carries it; which is owing to the dignity of his person, his interest with his Father, and the virtue and value of his sacrifice: and he every way fit for such a work, for he is "righteous"; not only in his natures, both divine and human, but in his office, as Mediator, which he faithfully and righteously performs; he is a very proper person to plead for guilty persons, which he could not do if he himself was guilty; but he is so holy and righteous that nothing can be objected to him by God; and it need not be doubted by men that he will act the faithful part to them, and righteously serve them and their cause; and it is moreover his righteousness which he has wrought out, and is imputed to them, that carries the cause for them; and therefore this character of Christ fitly added, as is also the following.

The Jews {i} have adopted the word in the text into their language, but have applied it to a different purpose, to alms deeds, repentance, and good works. Much more agreeably Philo the Jew {k} speaks of the son of perfect virtue, paraklhtw, "as an advocate" for the forgiveness of sins, and for a supply of everlasting good things.

{i} Pirke Abot, c. 4. sect. 11. T. Bab. Sabbat, fol. 32. 1. T. Bab. Bava Bathra, fol. 10. 1. {k} De Vita Mosis, l. iii. p. 673.

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