

**“As he is, so are we in this world.”**

1 John 4:17

*“As he is so are we in this world.”*— What an astounding statement! We are told in Romans 8:29 that the object of God in predestination and in providence is that all his elect *“be conformed to the image of his Son.”* Here John declares that God’s great purpose is accomplished, at least in measure, *“because as he is so are we in this world.”* Our hearts’ great desire, our souls’ great ambition is that we be conformable to our blessed Savior in his death. Is it not? Here the Holy Spirit assures us that our hearts’ desire is, in great measure satisfied, *“because as he is so are we in this world.”*

### **Love Revealed**

John has been telling us about God’s marvelous, infinite, eternal love for us in Christ. God’s love for us is revealed adopting us as his children in eternal election, in making us his children in the experience of grace in the new birth, and in the sin-atonement sacrifice of his dear Son for us as our Substitute (1 John 3:1-3; 3:16; 4:9-10).

The apostle tells us that if we are born of God we love one another (vv. 7-16). That is an indisputable fact, plainly revealed throughout the Scriptures. God’s saints truly love one another. — *“He that loveth not, knoweth not God: for God is love.”* — *“If we love one another God dwelleth in us, and his love is perfected in us.”* That is to say, our love to one another is the reflection and fruit of God’s love to us; and our love to one another demonstrates the truthfulness of our professed love for God.

In other words, John is declaring that, if I do not love my brothers and sisters in Christ with the kind of love that is revealed in Christ and set forth in the Scriptures, then I do not know God, I am not born of God, and my profession of faith in Christ and my professed love for God is nothing but a vain show. However, if my love for God’s elect is sincere and genuine, then my professed faith in Christ and my professed love for God is also sincere and genuine. That is John’s doctrine in verses 7-16.

When the love of God is known and experienced in the heart, love flows from the heart. But then, in verse 17, the Apostle shifts gears.

### **Love Made Perfect**

*“Herein is our love made perfect.”* – If you have a marginal reference in your Bible, you will notice an alternative translation. The text might be better translated, *“Herein is love with us made perfect,”* or *“Herein is his*

**“AS HE IS SO ARE WE IN THIS WORLD”**

love with us made perfect,” or “Herein is God’s love with us made perfect.” Look at Romans 5:1-5.

“Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ: By whom also we have access by faith into this grace wherein we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God. And not only *so*, but we glory in tribulations also: knowing that tribulation worketh patience; And patience, experience; and experience, hope: And hope maketh not ashamed; because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us.”

God’s love toward us, which is shed abroad in our hearts by the knowledge of Christ, is made perfect in us when we are made to see the fullness, completion, and perfection of our salvation in Christ.

*“Herein is God’s love made perfect in us, that we may have boldness in the day of judgment.”* — There is a day appointed when God shall judge the world in righteousness and strict justice. In that day, though the wicked and unbelieving tremble and fear, the saints of God will have confidence, joy, and boldness.

“Bold shall I stand in that great day,  
For who ought to my charge shall lay,  
While through Christ’s blood absolved I am  
From sin’s tremendous guilt and blame?”

The wicked and unbelieving fear the day of judgment. Many people have nightmares about it. But God’s saints love it, long for it, and anxiously await it, at least we ought to. In that great day, we shall stand fearless, without the least dread, while the rest of the world cries for the mountains to fall upon them and hide them from the wrath of God and the Lamb. In that great day, when God shall judge the world in righteousness, God’s elect will have boldness. In that day we will speak to him who sits upon the throne freely and without fear, Ascribing all praise, honor, and glory to Christ alone as our Savior, and express our love and adoration to our God forever.

Would you have this boldness in the day of judgment? What is the basis of it? Where can it be found? Read the next line. *“Herein is God’s love with us made perfect, that we may have boldness in the day of*

**“AS HE IS SO ARE WE IN THIS WORLD”**

*judgment: because* (Here is the cause of that boldness.) *as he is so are we in this world.*” I repeat, what an astounding statement! — “*As he is so are we in this world.*”

Are you a believer? Are you a child of God? Are you redeemed by the precious blood of Christ? If so, this text applies to you. If at this very moment you trust Christ, if you have just this moment been born of God, this text is talking about you. As Christ is so are you in this world! It is our union and identification with Christ that will give us boldness in the Day of Judgment.

“*As he is so are we in this world.*” — Everything that the Lord Jesus Christ is, in his office capacity as our Mediator, Representative and Substitute, before God we are in him. The Holy Spirit does not say, “As he was, so are we,” or “As he is, so we shall be.” The text reads, “*As he is, so are we in this world.*”

The whole purpose of God’s grace toward us is that we should be conformed to the image of his dear Son. To that end God the Father chose us in eternal election (Ephesians 1:3-4) and predestinated all things from eternity (Romans 8:29), God the Son redeemed us with his own precious blood (Ephesians 5:25-27) and God the Holy Spirit called us, gave us faith and preserves us in grace (Jude 24-25).

We know that God will accomplish his purpose, ultimately, in resurrection glory. But here the Apostle John tells us that God’s whole purpose concerning us is, at least in a sense, now accomplished in us and for us by virtue of our saving union with Christ. — “*Because as he is, so are we in this world!*” Right now, living in this world “*as he is, so are we.*” I cannot begin to expound the meaning of those words. But I hope, by the help of God the Holy Spirit, to convey the glorious message of them. If I can do that, I will have fulfilled the charge the Lord God has given me as his servant, saying, “*Comfort ye, comfort ye my people*”

**The Begotten Son**

As the Lord Jesus Christ, our Savior, is the begotten Son of God, so are we! Christ is the Son of God by nature, eternally begotten of the Father. In that sense, he is “*the only begotten Son*” of God. But we are the sons of God by adoption and grace. The man Christ Jesus, our Mediator, is the Firstborn among many brethren (Rom. 8:29). And we are his brethren, the sons of

**“AS HE IS SO ARE WE IN THIS WORLD”**

God. And he is not ashamed to call us his brethren, because we are truly the sons of God with him (Heb. 2:11). Christ our Mediator is God’s “Firstborn.” Yet, his church is called the church of the firstborn ones (Heb. 12:23), because we are one with him. Every heaven-born soul is given the portion of the firstborn (Deut. 21:17; Isaiah 40:1-2), “*because as he is so are we in this world.*”

God loved us as his sons (1 John 3:1). He chose us to be his sons in eternal election and adopted us (Eph. 1:5). And he gave us the nature of his Son in regeneration (2 Pet. 1:4). We were begotten of God in the new birth by the power and grace of his Spirit (Gal. 4:6; James 1:18; 1 Pet. 1:23; John 1:13). John Gill wrote, “This is a privilege that exceeds all others. It is better to be a son than a saint. Angels are saints, but not sons. They are servants. Adoption is something even more glorious than redemption, pardon, and justification. It is an act of great grace to redeem one from slavery, to pardon a criminal, or to justify the ungodly. But it is a far greater, higher, and more glorious act of grace to make the redeemed slave, the pardoned felon, or the justified sinner one’s own son.”

*“Beloved, now are we the sons of God!”* — That is an indescribably higher honor than to be the sons and daughters of the greatest man on earth. This is an honor that Adam did not enjoy in the garden, an honor greater than the angels in heaven can ever hope to attain. They are sons by creation. But we are the sons of God by adoption and grace. As Christ is the Son of God, so are we in this world!

**Loved of God**

As Christ is loved of God with an everlasting love, so are we! — *“Thou hast loved them as thou hast loved me...Thou lovedest me before the foundation of the world”* (John 17:23-24). Try to grasp the meaning of those words, which fell from the lips of the Lord Jesus Christ as he spoke to God the Father for us. As he is loved of God from eternity, with an immutable love of complacency and delight, because of his pledged obedience to God as our Surety (John 10:16-18), even so we are loved of God.

God loves us as he sees us in Christ. And the way God sees us is the way we really are! God loves us for Christ’s sake. And God loves us as he loves the Lord Jesus Christ, our God-man Mediator, to the same degree, for the same reason. He loves us eternally, perfectly, immutably, with a love

**“AS HE IS SO ARE WE IN THIS WORLD”**

that is altogether free, yet earned (earned by our Mediator). It is a love that is totally underserved, yet fully deserved by our Redeemer’s obedience unto death as our Substitute (John 10:16-18).

God loves us without beginning, without cause, without end, and without change! Child of God, here is sweet water drawn from the wells of salvation. You are loved of God, right now, just as God loves your Savior, *“because as he is so are we in this world.”*

**God’s Elect**

As the Lord Jesus Christ is elect, chosen of God and precious, so are we (1 Peter 2:6; Isaiah 42:1-4; 43:4). Christ was chosen of God to be our Surety. We were chosen to be his people. He was chosen to be our Savior. We were chosen to be saved. He was chosen to be our Redeemer. We were chosen to be redeemed. He was chosen to be the Head of all things. We were chosen to be his body. He was chosen to be the Foundation Stone. We were chosen to be the temple and building of God.

“Christ be my first Elect he said,  
Then chose our souls in Christ our Head,  
Before He gave the mountains birth  
Or laid foundations for the earth.

Thus did eternal love begin  
To raise us up from death and sin;  
Our characters were then decreed,  
‘Blameless in love, a holy seed.’”

Predestinated to be sons,  
Born by degrees, but chose at once,  
A new, regenerated race  
To praise the glory of His grace!

With Christ our Lord we share a part  
In the affections of His heart;  
Nor shall our souls be thence removed  
Till God forgets His first Beloved!”

—Isaac Watts

**“AS HE IS SO ARE WE IN THIS WORLD”**

As The Lord Jesus Christ, our Substitute, is well pleasing to God, so are we in this world. When Peter, James, and John were in the mount of transfiguration with the Lord Jesus, Moses and Elijah appeared before them, talking with the Savior. Peter was so pleased that he wanted to build three tabernacles, one for Moses, one for Elijah, and one for Christ. He appeared to place the law of God and the prophets of God upon equal ground with the Son of God! But God stepped in and said – Never! *“This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased”* (Mat. 17:1-5).

God almighty is pleased with no one and nothing but his Son. After God spoke, *“when they had lifted up their eyes, they saw no man, save Jesus only.”* (Matt. 7:8). Blessed blindness is that blindness caused by SON burnt eyes. Blessed is that man who sees no man, save Jesus only, as the object of God’s pleasure. Blessed are those people who sit under a preacher who sees nothing, but Jesus only as the theme of Holy Scripture. Be sure you learn these two things from the mount of transfiguration...

1. God is pleased only with His Son. He is pleased with our Savior’s person, his obedience, his blood, and his intercession.
2. But, blessed be his name, God is pleased with us because we are in his Son, robed with his righteousness, and washed in his blood. — *“He hath made us accepted in the Beloved”* (Eph. 1:6). We are accepted in Christ, as one with Christ from eternity, accepted right now, accepted at all times, accepted immutability, accepted forever.

The more this theme is pursued through the Scriptures, the sweeter it gets. Because we are *“accepted in the Beloved,”* *“because as he is so are we in this world,”* the Lord God is well-pleased with what we offer him because we are one with his Son.

*“Ye also, as lively stones, are built up a spiritual house, an holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ”* (1 Peter 2:5).

Imagine that! As God is pleased with his Son, he is pleased with you and me, *“because as he is, so are we in this world.”* As God is pleased with and accepts the obedience of his Son, he is pleased with and accepts our feeble efforts at obedience. — *“Because as he is, so are we in this world!”* The God of Glory is pleased with our desire to please him, pleased with our

**“AS HE IS SO ARE WE IN THIS WORLD”**

efforts to please him, “*because as he is, so are we in this world,*” well-pleasing to God!

**Freed From Sin**

As the Lord Jesus Christ is justified from all sin, so are we.

“Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with *him*, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin. For he that is dead is freed from sin. Now if we be dead with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with him: Knowing that Christ being raised from the dead dieth no more; death hath no more dominion over him. For in that he died, he died unto sin once: but in that he liveth, he liveth unto God. Likewise reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord” (Romans 6:6-11).

McCheyne said, “When Christ was made to be sin for us and crucified as our sin-bearer, he was buried, and his body laid in the tomb for three days in an unjustified state. And on the third day, when he rose from the dead, *‘He was justified in the Spirit.’*”

“*He was manifested to take away our sins; and in him is no sin*” (1 John 3:5). Christ the Paschal Lamb was slain for our sins. Christ the Scapegoat carried our sins into the tomb. Christ the Fit Man returned from the grave without sin. And...

“With His spotless garments on  
I am as holy as God’s Son!”

Behold the risen Christ and understand that the law has no more dominion over him, and “*as he is so are we in this world*” (Rom. 7:4). Sin has no more dominion over him, and “*as he is so are we in this world*” (Rom. 6:18; 1 Pet. 4:1-2). Death has no more dominion over him, and “*as he is so are we in this world*” (1 Cor. 15:55-57; Heb. 2:15).

**A Stranger**

As the Son of God is a stranger to this world, so are we. — “*The world knoweth us not, because it knew him not*” (John 1:10-11; Isaiah 53:1-3).

## “AS HE IS SO ARE WE IN THIS WORLD”

And as long as we are in this world, if we follow him, we will be strangers to it (John 15:17-20; 16:1-3). *“Marvel not, my brethren, if the world hat you”* (1 John 3:13). The Lord Jesus places this badge of honor upon all his disciples, *“They are not of the world, even as I am not of the world”* (John 17:16). We are not of the world’s religion, the world’s philosophy, the world’s fashion, the world’s ambition, or the world’s mind (1 Cor. 2:14-16). *“We have the mind of Christ...because as he is so are we in this world.”*

### God’s Servant

As the Lord Jesus Christ is the Servant of God, so are we (Isaiah 42:1-4). The Son of God *“took on him the form of a servant and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross”* (Phil. 2:7-8). He *“came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many”* (Matt. 20:25-28). Paul called himself *“the servant (bondslave) of Jesus Christ.”* As Christ was the Servant of God, and as he is now even in heaven, the Servant of God, *“so are we in this world.”* If we are born of God, we are the servants of God. I was once asked, “What does it take for a person to be a Christian?” I replied, “Nothing from me, but all of me.” That is exactly what the Lord Jesus asserted in Luke 14:25-33.

“And there went great multitudes with him: and he turned, and said unto them, If any *man* come to me, and hate not his father, and mother, and wife, and children, and brethren, and sisters, yea, and his own life also, he cannot be my disciple. And whosoever doth not bear his cross, and come after me, cannot be my disciple. For which of you, intending to build a tower, sitteth not down first, and counteth the cost, whether he have *sufficient* to finish *it*? Lest haply, after he hath laid the foundation, and is not able to finish *it*, all that behold *it* begin to mock him, Saying, This man began to build, and was not able to finish. Or what king, going to make war against another king, sitteth not down first, and consulteth whether he be able with ten thousand to meet him that cometh against him with twenty thousand? Or else, while the other is yet a great way off, he sendeth an ambassage, and desireth conditions of peace. So likewise, whosoever he be of you that forsaketh not all that he hath, he cannot be my disciple.”

When Pete Rose was in his prime with the Cincinnati Reds, one of



**“AS HE IS SO ARE WE IN THIS WORLD”**

the sports announcers watching him said, “The man only knows one way to play this game — 100%!” That is the only way to serve God — 100%!

The Word of God tells us, by picture and by precept what a servant is. — A servant is one who, having counted the cost, willingly devotes himself to his Master for life (Ex. 21:1-6). The servant has only one object in life — The glory, honor, and will of his Master! He submits his life’s ambitions and blueprints to his Master, desiring not his will, but his Master’s will, desiring not his way, but his Master’s way. He says, “I love my Master, I will not go out free.” Are we the servants of God? Then whatsoever we do in word or in deed, let us do all for the glory of God. Let us resolve that no flesh glory in his presence. Let us say with Paul, “*God forbid that I should glory save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ.*”

If two angels were sent by God to the earth, one to rule a nation and the other to sweep the streets for the glory of God, they would not care which they did. I want to be that kind of servant to our Master. Don’t you? The servant of God has only one message to declare — His Master’s message, “*the doctrine of Christ*” (2 John 7-9). The servant of God calls nothing his own (Acts 4:32). “*So likewise, whosoever he be of you that forsaketh not all that he hath, he cannot be my disciple*” (Luke 14:3). The servant wants nothing, but to hear his Master say, “*Well done.*”

I once heard a story that illustrates what I want to convey. A preacher was seated beside another man on an airplane, and the man wanted to talk. He introduced himself to the preacher, and said, “I’m in business with my father.” The preacher thought for a minute, and said, “So am I.” The businessman said, “Our business is with jewels.” The preacher replied, “Ours, too.” Then the businessman said, “We only deal in the best of jewels.” The preacher smiled and answered, “Us too.” Then, the businessman said, “I’m on my way home now to meet my father.” The preacher was quiet for a minute. Then he said, “So am I.” The businessman, with a beaming smile, said, “I sure hope my father will be pleased with what I’ve done.” With that, the preacher wiped a tear from his eye, and said, “So do I.”

The servant wants nothing, but to hear his Master say, “*Well done.*” And, we shall have that, too. We shall soon stand before the bar of God and hear our blessed God and Savior say, “*Well done, thou good and faithful servant*” (Matt. 25:21), “*because as he is so are we in this world*” the servants of God.

**“AS HE IS SO ARE WE IN THIS WORLD”**

One more thing I must tell you. — As Christ is now, so shall we be in the world to come (John 17:5, 22; 1 John 3:1-2).

Amen.