

The Confidence, Hope, and Purity of God's Children – *1 John 2:28 – 3:3*

Introduction – There is an old saying that someone can be so heavenly-minded that he is no earthly-good. There is, however, a correct and biblical heavenly-mindedness that is exactly what makes us good on and for the earth. John is writing to instill confidence in Christians that God is for them now and will be for them forever. What we learn is that as we abide in Him (and all that it means to abide in Him, His Word, and His Spirit), God uses this as a means for confidence, hope, and purity for God's children.

Confidence at His Appearing (vv28-29) – Jesus warned that false prophets would come (as John has dealt with) leading people away from the true gospel of Christ (Matt 7:15-23), and it is true that some who are in the church will be ashamed at the coming of Christ. Their hypocrisy will be revealed (note the similarity between v29 and Matt 7:23). But again, John is primarily interested in assuring God's "little children" that as they "abide in Him" they will have confidence at His coming and not be ashamed – they need not listen to the false prophets who teach they need something else. That confidence in His appearing includes His vindication of all that has occurred against His name and towards His disciples. In His judgment, we will have nothing to be ashamed of and nothing that will not have been made right.

Born of Him (v29) – Some commentators wonder if the false teachers called their initiation into their extra-knowledge a 'regeneration.' Regardless, John is making clear that we must be "born of Him" (hearkening back to Jesus' words to be "born again"). This regeneration and abiding in God brings forth a natural imitation as a son to his father. A person's righteous practices are thus the evidence and assurance of his new birth, not the cause of it. The way we live (the fruit we bear) is a primary evidence of our regenerate state. (And a reminder: part of walking in the light is confessing sin; part of walking in the darkness is lying to yourself about perfectionism).

Foreign Love (3:1-3) – This leads John to an outburst of wonder at God's love. The Greek word *potapen* originally meant, "of what country" and always implies astonishment. God's love is exotic and other-worldly – that He would call us His children when we were His enemies and all at the cost of His own Son. Because of this and because we abide in Him, the world doesn't get us – we are foreign to them at the very level of our nature, our new nature in Christ.

We Also Do Not Know (v2) – John, the apostle and dear friend of the Lord Jesus, frankly admits that he does not know the precise character of our final inheritance when Jesus does return. Resurrection, glorification, full and complete union with God the Father in Jesus by the Holy Spirit – what do these precisely mean for us (notice his earlier statement that the anointing teaches us about all things, 2:27, is not to be pressed literally). What we have now is only a glimpse, a taste, of the overwhelming experiences for us in the resurrection (1 Cor 2:9). We know that we will share in the glory of Christ (Rom 8:17-19, Phil 3:21, Col 3:4). What we know is that our journey towards Christ-likeness will have been achieved, for "*we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is.*"

Hope and Purity (v3) – This has not simply been a theological rabbit-trail for John. His point is ethical. To be heavenly-minded in this way purifies us. But our hope must not be without an object; it must be a hope "in Him" and all that John and the apostles have revealed about Him. It is wicked to instill hope in anyone other than in a hope that is "in Him." Christian hope has an object and foundation: the return of Christ and the everlasting glory which follows. And so, as the passage began, "little children, abide in Him." This is where we will find confidence, hope, and purity.