

"Beloved let us love one another, *for love is of God, and every one that loveth is begotten of God*" (4:7). This is a good text mark; one that even the world can apply to us. "By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples if ye have love one for the other" (John 13:35). (3) The third mark is *faith in Jesus Christ*. The un-renewed heart is an evil heart of unbelief, and unless changed would never trust God; hence when a man finds that he can commit himself and all that concerns him to God in Christ, he may know that God has given him a new, a believing, trusting heart. "*Whosoever believeth that Jesus is the Christ is begotten of God.*" (5:1).

Now, my brother, you may say that you are trusting the Lord Jesus as your Saviour, that you love the society of God's people, and that you are honestly striving to keep God's law and that you delight in it: but you would scarce dare to say that you are born again. You need not say it, God says it for you. He says that any man that has these characteristics *is begotten of God*. Nay, more, you may have only an hour ago fled to Christ for refuge, you have cast yourself unreservedly on Him, believing that He forgives and receives you: but you are not yet in a position to speak of your obedience any more than to say that you are willing to do whatever he commands you; if that is true, then *God says* you are born of God. In so far, therefore, as you know that you believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, in so far as you know that you love the brethren, and in so far as you know that you delight in God's law after the inner man, so far you may have the assurance that you are a child of God, because God says you are. Now some are loyal to God, loving him, trusting him, and serving him; but they think it too much to claim that they have eternal life, and that they are children of God. So it is too much: we are not worthy of it: but God has given us life and a place in His family: and if He has done all this, shall we not give Him credit for what He has done, and own with meekness and fear, yet with confidence and joy that we are His children? You have prayed with the Psalmist, "Say thou to my soul, I am thy salvation:" and now when the Spirit of God says it to you through the word, acknowledge it. In love for your comfort and joy he speaks to you: hear Him and He will speak yet more and more distinctly till you can say assuredly that the Spirit beareth witness with your spirit that you are a child of God.

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