

"VISIBLE SAINTS"**Introduction**

1. This is the "Inner Sanctuary"
2. Here is a foretaste of heaven
3. Also – the best way to advance Christ's gospel

1. CHRIST WOULD HAVE HIS PEOPLE TO BE KNOWN

- 1) There are "Secret Societies": examples.
- 2) Christ's religion is not one of them:
 - (i) it is a thing to be preached openly
 - (ii) Christ's claim for openness:
 - (iii) Faith to be confessed openly:
- 3) The nature of Christianity is to be visible:
 - (i) "Let your light so shine..."
 - (ii) "Epistles of Christ..."
 - (iii) "Light under a bushel"
DOCTRINE: True grace cannot be concealed
 Two "Shorter Catechism" men.
ILLUSTRATION: We are not to be "secret" disciples'.

2. THE SUREST EVIDENCE OF GRACE IS BROTHERLY LOVE

- 1) There are right/wrong ways of professing Christ:
 - (i) what are not sufficient: cross, garb, outward...
 - ILLUSTRATION**: the Pharisees
 - (ii) knowledge, learning, scholarship...
 - (iii) observance of festivals, holy days...
 - (iv) but fanaticism can do all this
- 2) The ultimate test is love to the brethren:
 - (i) not just of our own group / church...
 - (ii) but all who love Christ sincerely: "salute every saint..."

- 3) Brotherly love works like this:
 - (i) We respect them as Christ's dear people
 - (ii) we are "fellow-heirs"
 - (iii) to spend eternity together
 - (iv) the kindness done to them is done to Him
 - (v) members of the same body

ILLUSTRATION: "I have no need of you"

APPLICATION: We need to remind ourselves of this

3. WE ARE TO SEEK TO GROW IN THIS GRACE OF LOVE

- 1) Brotherly love is a growing grace, as all other graces – we are to improve.
OBSERVE: Some things in our life are perfect at once – some are imperfect (Explain).
- 2) Brotherly love grows best when believers most value it + cultivate it:
 - (i) love is the highest grace: 1 Cor. 13
 - (ii) Christ calls it a "new commandment"
- 3) Reasons why brotherly love is important:
 - (i) Even the unbeliever recognises it
ILLUSTRATION: the woman with drunk husband
 - (ii) Satan cannot counterfeit it
 - (iii) Only the Holy Spirit can inspire it
DOCTRINE: Love is the ultimate test

CONCLUSION

1. Be quick to forgive injuries.
2. Neither gossip nor listen to gossip.
3. Treat God's people as you would treat Christ: Matt. 25

PSALM**122: 1 – 9****146: 1 – 7****133: 1 – 3**