

Notes

on

First John

Windell Gann

Notes from e-Sword Bible Program

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Introduction

1ST JOHN

Introduction

Author: One of the unique features of the first epistle is that it does not name either the author or the recipients. The Epistle to the Hebrews is the only other book similar in this respect.

From the beginning it has been recognized as a letter from the Apostle John circulated to the churches around Ephesus (Asia Minor).

The Apostle John worked with the church in Jerusalem until about A.D. 70. After the destruction of Jerusalem he made his residence at Ephesus. He lived to a great age and here wrote the fourth Gospel, his three epistles and the Book of Revelation.

Much information about John and testimony to his work and authorship has come down to us through three of his pupils, Polycarp, Papias, and Ignatius, who became leaders in the churches at Smyrna, Hierapolis, and Antioch.

External Evidence: The external evidence for the Apostle John's authorship is very great. Only much later did someone try to suggest that the "elder John" was a John different from the Apostle. The term "elder" however was used by 2nd and 3rd generation Christians to refer to their predecessors, "the men of early days". It was natural then for John, the last of the apostles, to refer to himself as one of "the elder men" (Cf. EGT, V, p.160).

Internal Evidence: The similarity of the 4th Gospel and these three epistles is overwhelming. Identical authorship is obvious from contents, attitude, vocabulary, identical expression style.

Date and Place of Writing: As Ephesus was the Apostle's chief abode during the later years of his life, we may assume that they were written from there. Certainly they were written late in John's life. The tone of them is that of an old man writing to a younger generation. The internal relation of the three epistles strongly favor their time-order as we have them, 1st, 2nd, and 3rd. We may date them about A.D. 80-95.

Recipients: The first epistle might rightly be called a "general" or "catholic" epistle. It is not addressed to any specific church but it appears messengers took duplicate copies to area churches (See 2 John and 3 John).

Content: Each of John's epistles have introductory material and a conclusion, but apart from that it is difficult to make a satisfactory analyzed outline.

Purpose: John says he writes that the joy of his people be full (1:4) and that they may not sin.

Problem: Some false teachers were attempting to lead some away from the truth. John in a polite way does not name them but he leaves no doubt about whom he is speaking. His language and arguments are directed to refute their heresy.

One term used to describe this radical philosophy was Docetism. It is from the Greek word that means to seem, and the Docetists taught that Jesus only "seemed" to have a body. They insisted that he was only a phantom and never had flesh and blood, physical, human body; that he was a purely spiritual being who only appeared to have a body.

Another term used to describe a philosophy adopted and adapted by some false-Christian teachers was Gnosticism. This Gnosticism led to about three different attitudes:

1. Since it regarded the body as evil, it sometimes took the form of asceticism with fasting, celibacy, rigid control and even deliberate ill treatment of the body.
2. Or--it might take the form that the body did not matter, therefore its appetites and lusts might be gratified without control and without limit.
3. The Gnostic regarded himself as an altogether spiritual man; he was above all the material things of life, so completely did they consider themselves above sins that sin, for them, had ceased to exist. To them John speaks of deceiving themselves, [1 John 1:8-10](#).

A personal enemy of John at Ephesus was a man named Cerinthus. It might help us by seeing by Irenaeus says of him.

"Cerinthus, again, a man who was educated in the wisdom of the Egyptians,...represented Jesus as having not been born of a virgin, but as being the son of Joseph and Mary according to the ordinary course of human generation, while he nevertheless was more righteous, prudent, and wise than other men. Moreover, after his baptism, Christ descended upon him in the form of a dove from the Supreme Ruler, and that then he proclaimed the unknown Father, and performed miracles. But at last Christ departed from Jesus, and that then Jesus suffered and rose again, while Christ remained impassible / unsuffering / inasmuch as he was a spiritual being."

Against Heresies, I, 26:1-2.

Style: An understanding of something of the style of John will give greater appreciation to this epistle.

Parallelism

John writes in the Hebraic style of balancing two lines. The second line is usually in opposition or contrast to the first. (Cf. [1 John 1:5](#), [1 John 2:4](#), [1 John 2:27](#)). Also in antithesis-- [1 John 3:7-10](#), [1 John 4:4-6](#), [1 John 5:18-19](#).

Recapitulation

Sometimes one word will be introduced in a closing sentence of a paragraph only to be taken up and given fuller treatment in the next paragraph.

Word Parenthesis

(Cf. "manifested" [1 John 1:2](#); "last hour" [1 John 2:18](#); "out of you" [1 John 2:19](#); "abide" [1 John 2:27](#); "love" [1 John 4:7](#); "Son" [1 John 5:10](#); "death"; [1 John 5:16](#)).

John's style sometimes makes him seem repetitious if not understood.

SERMON OUTLINE See Ch. 1 "Why These Things Are Written"

Ch. 2 "Why Brethren Go Out From Us"

 1Jn 1

WHY THESE THINGS ARE WRITTEN

Introduction:

1. John sets forth his purpose in writing First John, and deepens our faith in God's Word.
2. The idea "I write" or "I have written" appears 9 times.

I. John Wrote To Give God's Saints A Basis for Joy - 1 John 1:4

- A. Men desire happiness. [1 Peter 3:10](#).
- B. Greatest happiness comes from obedience to God's Word.
- C. We can rejoice in forgiveness of sins.

II. John Wrote To Urge People To Live Pure Lives - 1 John 2:1-2

- A. Jesus died for our sins. 1 John 1:2
- B. Jesus' blood keeps on cleansing saints from sins - [1 John 1:7](#)
- C. John would motivate people to live pure lives.

III. John Wrote So Men Might Have the Right Relationships -

[1 John 2:13-14](#)

- A. Men need to know the Lord.
- B. Men need to have right relationship with the devil.
- C. Men need the proper relation to God's Word.
- D. Brethren need to have the right relationship with each other -
[1 John 2:8-11](#), [1 John 3:11](#)

IV. John Wrote That God's People Might Have Access to the Truth- [1 John 2:21](#)

- A. The Truth shall make you free - [John 8:32](#); [1 Timothy 2:4](#)
- B. False teachers trying to seduce God's people - [1 John 2:26](#)

V. John Wrote That God's Children Might Know That They Have Eternal Life -

[1 John 5:13](#)

- A. Men need this kind of assurance. "Blessed Assurance" #477.
- B. This assurance must be built upon God's revealed and written word. [1 John 5:13](#).

CONCLUSION

 1Jn 2

SECOND SERMON OUTLINE

WHY BRETHREN “GO OUT” FROM US1 John 2:19

Introduction

1. It is possible for some to “go out” from us. 1 John 2:19
2. This danger is seen in the lives of Hymenaeus and Alexander (1 Timothy 1:19-20) and Demas (2 Timothy 4:10).

I. Some “Go Out” Because of Temptation -- Luke 8:13

- A. Temptation means generally, a testing or trial, but it also means “solicitation to sin.” James 1:12-16.
- B. “Testing” may come from “friends” (1 Peter 4:3) or lusts of the flesh, eyes, or pride of life. 1 John 2:15.

II. Some “Go Out” Because Of:

- A. “Cares of this life” -- Luke 8:14
- B. Not “seeking the Kingdom first” -- Matthew 6:33
- C. “Pleasures of this life” -- Luke 8:14 b

III. Some “Go Out” Because of False Doctrine

- A. John warned the brethren - 1 John 4:1; 1 John 2:26
- B. Jesus warned His disciples of false teachers - Matthew 7:15
- C. Paul described people “tossed to and fro by every wind of doctrine” -- Ephesians 4:14
- D. The Galatian Christians had been deceived by a “perverted gospel” -- Galatians 1:6-9.
- E. Today brethren are led astray by the false doctrines that:
 1. “The Church of Christ is just a denomination among denominations.” -- Ephesians 4:4.
 2. “Morals are relative and ultimately determined by the situation.” -- Galatians 5:19-21.

3. “Truth is subjective, and is obtained through dialogue, and through the direct operation of the Holy Spirit.” -- [John 8:32](#); [Jude 1:3](#)

Conclusion:

1. These are some reasons brethren become unfaithful.
2. Those who “go out” are in the grips of spiritual death -- [1 John 5:16](#)
 - a. A sin unto death is any sin a brother will not confess and repent -- [1 John 5:16](#); 1 John 1:6-9.
 - b. Those who “go out” can return -- [James 5:19-20](#).
3. One thing more tragic than “going out” from the Lord is dying in that condition.
4. And it is just as tragic to never come “into” the Lord in the first place -- [Galatians 3:27](#); [Romans 6:3-5](#).

1Jn 1:1

1Jn 1:1 What was from the beginning, what we have heard, what we have seen with our eyes, what we have looked at and touched with our hands, concerning the Word of Life--

was -- Not "came into existence" but was already in existence.

The difference between 'to be' ([1 John 1:2](#)) and 'to come to be' or 'become' ([1 John 2:18](#)) must be carefully noted. Christ *was* from all eternity; antichrists *have arisen*, have come into existence in time.

the beginning -- The meaning of 'beginning' must always depend upon the context

Here, he explains that the Lord existed before he was manifested to men. Similar opening to the [Genesis 1:1](#) and [John 1:1](#).

There the point is that the Word existed before the Creation; here that the Word existed before the Incarnation. With the neuter "that which" comp. [John 4:22](#); [John 6:37](#); [John 17:2](#); [Acts 17:23](#)

we -- This is true of all the Apostles and all the eyewitnesses, but John means particularly himself.

heard -- With this clause we pass from eternity into time. He is perhaps referring to the teaching of all the Prophets and Christ, but certainly a reference to hearing the gospel directly taught by Him.

looked upon -- This implies steady contemplation.

"Beheld" implies deliberate and perhaps pleasurable sight ([John 1:14](#); [John 1:34](#); [Acts 1:11](#)). - CBSC

John was one of the few disciples who stayed with Jesus at His crucifixion. In addition, he was the one the Lord ask to care for His mother, Mary ([John 19:25-27](#)).

seen, heard, felt -- The aorists probably refer to definite occasions on which the beholding and handling took place. This would contradict Gnosticism. John may be referring to fact he had leaned on His breast at meal, etc. (PP)

hands handled -- This seems to a direct reference to the test demanded by Thomas, [John 20:27](#). [Luke 24:39-40](#). John refutes Gnosticism in the strongest language. He maintains that Jesus was real flesh.

word of life -- This is not the single genitive, but the genitive with a preposition. This favors the "Word" as being the personal Logos, rather than "word" meaning teaching or doctrine. The "Word" Who is the Life. cf. [John 1:1](#), [John 1:14](#).

Verse 1 Jesus was a man, but verse 2 He was more than a man.

1 John 1:2

1 John 1:2 and the life was manifested, and we have seen and testify and proclaim to you the eternal life, which was with the Father and was manifested to us--

manifested [revealed] -- ἐφάνερθαι, G5319; To make visible, make known, to be plainly recognized. The Lord's identity was made known to his apostles. Our Lord existed before He was manifested to men.

"Manifest" is one of John's characteristic words, in the Gospel, his epistles, and twice in Revelation.

and we -- This implies the collective yet personal witness of the Apostles.

have seen -- They perceived and understood the truth that his miracles made manifest.

and testify [bear witness] -- "Bear witness" ([μαρτυρε v](#)) is another of his favorite words, occurring frequently in Gospel, Epistle, and Apocalypse. John here refers to his own experience.

The apostles and eye-witnesses gave their witness to what they had seen and heard.

proclaim -- The apostles, N.T. prophets, and other evangelists shared the truth they had witnessed. John and other inspired men shared their message in their writings.

bear witness -- The apostles preached what they saw.

eternal life -- qualitative, not quantitative. Here the "Eternal Life" is another reference or title for the Christ. John accentuates the externality of Christ in his pre-incarnate glory (cf. [1 John 5:12](#); [John 1:4](#); [John 5:26](#), [John 5:40](#); [John 11:25](#); [John 14:6](#)).

"Eternal life" is another of John's characteristic phrases, often being rendered "everlasting life" or "life everlasting" by various translations.

with the Father -- "With the Father" is exactly parallel to "with God" in [John 1:1](#). Christ was "with the Father" before the incarnation, or before he "was made flesh" [John 1:14](#).

made manifest to us -- Repeated from the beginning of the verse. In both cases we have a change from the imperfect tense (of the continuous preexistence of Christ) to the aorist (of the comparatively momentary manifestation).

That Being [the Life, the Word] who was from all eternity with the Father, has been made known, and made known *to us*.

1 John 1:3

1 John 1:3 what we have seen and heard we proclaim to you also, so that you too may have fellowship with us; and indeed our fellowship is with the Father, and with His Son Jesus Christ.

we -- John, (editorial "we") along with the rest of the apostles.

seen and heard -- John and the apostles were witnesses, of Jesus' works and teaching. ([Acts 1:22](#))

declare -- The main verb. This speaks of their commission to preach the gospel. ([Mark 16:15](#))

fellowship -- A corcial and proper relationship with the Father is the presupposition of fellowship with each other.

Or, *communion*; almost always used of fellowship with *persons* ([1 Corinthians 1:9](#)) or with things personified ([2 Corinthians 6:14](#)). The word is rare in N. T. outside Paul's writings.

It "generally denotes the fellowship of persons with persons in one and the same object, always common to all and sometimes whole to each" (Canon Evans on [1 Corinthians 10:16](#)).

This is John's conception of the Church: each member of it possesses the Son, and through Him the Father; and this common possession gives communion with all other members as well as with the Godhead.

fellowship with us -- Fellowship does not mean social relations, but that his readers were to be partakers (or, partners) with John in possessing eternal life (cf. [Philippians 1:5](#); [1 Peter 5:1](#); [2 Peter 1:4](#)).

John is writing to address a division in the community of believers. This community might have been located in Ephesus, where the Apostle John resided near the end of his life. - FSB

the Father and his Son Jesus Christ -- The fulness of the expression (cf. [1 John 3:23](#)) is not so apparent in the English as in the Greek, which literally rendered runs thus; *is with the Father and with the Son of Him, Jesus Christ*. Both the preposition and the definite article are repeated, marking emphatically the distinction and equality between the Son and the Father.

■ 1 John 1:4

1 John 1:4 These things we write, so that our joy may be made complete.

we are writing -- The editorial "we" seem to reference this letter which John is now writing.

these things -- This entire epistle. Especially the matter of Christ being manifested in the flesh.

our [your] joy -- Some MSS have "our" joy. Your joy as well as ours. This would be consistent with [2 John 1:4](#), and [3 John 1:4](#). (cf. [Philippians 2:2](#))

joy -- Joy in having fellowship with the Father. cf. [John 17:3](#). A joy that was threatened by the disturbance of false teachers.

joy ... complete [full] -- It seems certain that John remember the Lord's declaration of [John 15:11](#).

Only real joy and satisfaction is to be found in one's proper relationship to Christ and in obedience to his teaching.

■ 1 John 1:5

1 John 1:5 This is the message we have heard from Him and announce to you, that God is Light, and in Him there is no darkness at all.

the message -- Better, "**And the message which we have h'heard from Him is this.**"

"This" is the predicate, as so often in John's writing: "But the judgment is this" ([John 3:19](#)); "The commandment is this" ([John 15:12](#)); "The eternal life is this" ([John 17:3](#)); compare [1 John 3:11](#); [1 John 3:23](#); [1 John 5:3](#); [1 John 5:11](#); [1 John 5:14](#); [2 John 1:6](#). In all these cases "is this" means "This is what it consists in; This is the sum and substance of it".

God is light -- On the intellectual side, God is "*light*," on the moral side God is "*love*." [1 John 4:8](#); On the metaphysical side God is spirit, [John 4:24](#).

light -- This indicates God's purity, sinlessness, holiness, and everything good and right. cf. [James 1:17](#).

darkness -- Darkness sums up the elements of evil. This is excluded from the nature of God.

1 John 1:6

1 John 1:6

If we say that we have fellowship with Him and *yet* walk in the darkness, we lie and do not practice the truth;

If we -- This "if we" continues in almost every verse until [1 John 2:3](#), after which it is changed into the equivalent "he that," which continues down to [1 John 2:11](#).

They refer to the claims of false teachers who appear to be early gnostics.

fellowship with him -- Someone truly in relationship with Jesus will live by the principles He proclaimed.

The heretics claimed that fellowship was based on knowledge only. John asserts that Christians must live Christ-like lives to be fellowship with God.

we walk in darkness -- John is concerned with "right" living and "wrong" living and fellowship with God.

walk -- This 'walk' ([περιπατε](#) v) signifies the ordinary course of life. The word in this sense frequently by both Paul and John. (Cf. Paul in [Ephesians 4:1](#), [Ephesians 4:17](#); [Ephesians 5:2](#); [Ephesians 5:15](#); and John in [1 John 2:6](#); [1 John 2:11](#); [2 John 1:4](#); [2 John 1:6](#); [3 John 1:3-4](#); [Revelation 21:24](#); [John 8:12](#).)

"**Walk**" expresses not merely action, but habitual action. A life in moral darkness can no more have communion with God, than a life in a coal-pit can have communion with the sun.

in darkness -- "In darkness" should probably be *in the darkness*: as in [1 John 2:8-9](#); [1 John 2:11](#), both light and darkness have the article in the Greek, which makes it emphatic ;God is light with no darkness. His children should be like Him (cf. [Matthew 5:48](#)).

walk in the darkness. Denotes a life characterized by wickedness and ignorance and an unwillingness to be open toward God and his revelation in Christ lest one's sinful behavior be exposed (cf. [John 3:19-21](#)). - NIVBSB

we lie and do not [practice] the truth -- Antithetic parallelism, as in [1 John 1:5](#). The negative statement here carries us further than the positive one: it includes conduct as well as speech. See on [John 3:21](#), where "doing the truth" is opposed to "practicing evil."

Throughout the letter, John contrasts telling lies with telling the truth. He declares that God is true, while those he calls "antichrists" are false.

1 John 1:7

1 John 1:7 but if we walk in the Light as He Himself is in the Light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus His Son cleanses us from all sin.

walk in the light -- A Christian does not walk in the darkness of falsehood and sin.

Walking in the light involves: 1) consciousness of one's own sin; 2) repentance from a sinful way of life; 3) confessing our sins; 4) being obedience to the teaching of Christ ([Matthew 28:19-20](#); [1 John 2:3-6](#));

as he is in the light -- We need to walk "in the light" where "God is." God IS light, so He is ever in the light, (cf. [1 Timothy 6:16](#)).

fellowship -- This fellowship is with God and with others walking in the light. If we have fellowship with God, we also have a fellowship with others who are in fellowship with God.

the blood of Jesus Christ -- The term "*blood*" stands for the whole process of a sacrificial death. This implies the reality of: 1) the human body of Jesus; 2) His suffering; 3) His sacrifice.

his Son -- This explains how the sacrifice of Jesus Christ can have such virtue; it is the blood of One who is the Son of God. His perfect, moral, sinless life could be the sacrifice for all sin!

cleanses us from all sin - Jesus' sacrificial death and clears away the sin of those who follow Him, which makes a relationship with God possible. The concept of atonement, which is derived from the O.T. (see [Leviticus 16:30](#)), is a common theme throughout the letter (see [1 John 2:2](#); [1 John 4:10](#))

cleanses [cleanseth] -- This is in the present tense and shows the "cleansing" goes on continually. This is what makes possible for a Christians who sins to find forgiveness upon repentance without the need of another sacrifice.

Note: The "...eth" ending of a word in the KJV indicates the word to be present tense. It was a scholarship feature of the King James Version to show the present tense of continuous action.

■ 1 John 1:8

1 John 1:8 If we say that we have no sin, we are deceiving ourselves and the truth is not in us.

If we -- See note on [1 John 1:6](#).

say -- "Say" needs not more than "say in our hearts"

John may be alluding to some error which was then being taught in the church. Some who claimed that they did not sin and therefore did not need to be cleansed.

we have no sin -- [Romans 3:23](#); To "have sin" means to be guilty of sinful acts (cf. [John 9:41](#); [John 15:22](#), [John 15:24](#); [John 19:11](#)). - NIVBTSB

It is almost daily that one falls into some sin. (-PC)

we deceive ourselves -- Only One human being has been able to say 'The things pleasing to God I always do'; 'Which of you convicteth Me of sin?'; 'The ruler of the world hath nothing in Me' ([John 8:29](#); [John 8:46](#); [John 14:30](#)). - CBSC

Not only did the false teachers make false claims to fellowship and disregard sin ([1 John 1:6](#)), they are also characterized by deceit regarding sinlessness ([Ecclesiastes 7:20](#); [Romans 3:23](#)). - MSB

Not merely are we mistaken, or misled, but *we* lead ourselves astray. (CBSC)

the truth is not in us -- One is false to make such a statement. The "truth" of the gospel is not in such a teaching as claimed by these false teachers.

See [James 5:19](#) note on APOSTASY

1 John 1:9

1 John 1:9 If we confess our sins, He is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

If we -- See note on [1 John 1:6](#).

confess our sins -- The term “confess” means to say the same thing about sin as God does; to acknowledge His perspective about sin. cf. The people coming to John the Baptist, [Matthew 3:6](#). Cf. [Acts 19:18](#); [James 5:16](#).

This is the opposite of "saying we have no sin" (v. 8).

our sins -- Notice the plural. This refers to acts of sin we have committed.

Converts coming to receive baptism, come in repentance, confessing they are sinners needing a Savior, and confessing their faith that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God ([Romans 10:9-10](#)) and upon baptism God translates them from the kingdom of darkness to the kingdom of light ([Colossians 1:13](#); [Acts 2:47](#); [Romans 6:3-6](#)).

he is faithful and just -- "God is faithful (to His promises to us) *and yet* righteous (in hating and punishing sin)". He keeps His promise of mercy to the penitent without losing His character for righteousness and justice.

Meaning that God is "*faithful*" to the agreement He made with His people, which established the true cost of sin ([Deuteronomy 7:9](#); [Jeremiah 31:31-34](#)).

The word "*just*" is often used in the sense, of denoting upright, equitable, acting properly in the circumstances of the case. In this case, proper payment for sin has been made in the sacrifice of the perfect sin-offering, Jesus Christ.

just to forgive -- Forgiveness, says John, open the way to fellowship with God. The two terms "forgive" and "cleanse" are synonymous in this context.

and to cleanse us -- By forgiving all that is past, treating us as if we were righteous, and ultimately by removing all the stains of guilt from the soul. - BN

from all unrighteousness -- The word "unrighteousness" contrasts with "Jesus Christ the righteous" [1 John 2:1](#).

1 John 1:10

1 John 1:10 If we say that we have not sinned, we make Him a liar and His word is not in us.

If we -- See note on [1 John 1:6](#).

If we say -- The Gnostics divorced sin from the reality of the body.

we have not sinned -- We are contradicting his Word which says we are sinners, [Romans 3:23](#); See note on [1 John 1:8](#).

"Have no sin" refers to a sinful state; "have not sinned" refers to the actual commission of particular acts of sin: the one is the inward principle, the other is its result. - CBSC

make him a liar -- This is worse than "we lie" ([1 John 1:6](#)). We make God a liar who has promised to forgive our sins through Christ.

We remember Paul said "Let God be found true, but every man a liar" ([Romans 3:3](#)).

his word is not in us -- God's revelation of Himself has no home in our hearts: it remains outside us, as the light remains outside of darkness.

Compare, "His word is not in us" ([1 John 2:14](#)), or "If ye abide in My word" ([John 8:31](#)): and "The truth is not in us" ([1 John 1:8](#)),

word -- This may refer to the dual aspect of the term "*logos*" both as a message and a person (cf. [John 1:1](#), 1 John 1:8; [John 14:6](#)). John often refers to this as "truth."

1 John 2:1

1 John 2:1 My little children, I am writing these things to you so that you may not sin. And if anyone sins, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous;

My little children -- Tells us something of the relationship of the recipients to the writer. cf. [John 13:33](#), used by Jesus.

There are two Greek words translated by the phrase "little children" in the Epistle. The first of these, *teknia*, [G5040] plural diminutive of *teknon*, occurs here [1 John 2:1](#), and at [1 John 2:12](#); [1 John 2:28](#); [1 John 3:18](#); [1 John 4:4](#); [1 John 5:21](#), and only elsewhere, in the New Testament, in [John 13:33](#), where the Lord used it, and which use likely occasioned John's adoption of it here. It is a word which, when figuratively used, designates the spiritual relation of children to a father in the faith. (See [1 Corinthians 4:15](#), where the idea, but not the word, occurs.)

The second word translated by the phrase "little children" is *paidia*, [G3813] occurring in [1 John 2:13](#); [1 John 2:18](#). This word denotes the age and characteristics of childhood, and, as here used, conveys the kind and tender address of age to youth, of authority to subordinates, of wisdom to ignorance.

That ye may not sin -- Because sin breaks fellowship with the Father. 1) To have fellowship with God is to walk in the light; 2) To know God is to keep His commandments.

The negative side of these two points and positive assertion of the blessing [1 John 1:7](#), [1 John 2:5](#).

Advocate -- Literally "one called along side." Counselor, "One who pleads another's cause with one, an intercessor." BDAG says the Greek word [παράκλητος](#) (G3875) means, "one who is called to one's aid, one who appears in another's behalf."

Advocate -- Note the inconsistency of translating this Greek word. Both Christ and the Holy Spirit are referred to by this term. 1) Christ is our "paraclete" or "advocate" with the Father, and 2) the Holy Spirit is the Fathers "paraclete" or "advocate" to us.

Christ arose and ascended back to the Father to be our "advocate" and plead our case with God. What does our Advocate plead? That we are sinless? No. But that He is the "answer" or "satisfaction" for sin, and that His work is the grounds for our acquittal.

The Holy Spirit is God's advocate with men, who pleads God's case to us through the inspired apostles and prophets and to us today through the inspired written Word of God.

ESV *Helper*; NIV *Counselor*,

[John 14:26](#); [John 15:26](#); [John 16:7](#); [1 John 2:1](#)

An advocate (*parakle ton*). See note on [John 14:16](#), and [John 14:26](#); and note on [John 15:26](#); and [John 16:7](#) for this word, nowhere else in the N.T. The Holy Spirit is God's Advocate on earth with men, while Christ is man's Advocate with the Father (the idea, but not the word, in [Romans 8:31-39](#); [Hebrews 7:25](#)). As *dikaios* (righteous) Jesus is qualified to plead our case and to enter the Father's presence ([Hebrews 2:18](#)). [1 John 2:1](#);

Robertson's Word Pictures

Joh Another Comforter (*allon parakle ton*). Another of like kind (*allon*, not *heteron*), besides Jesus who becomes our Paraclete, Helper, Advocate, with the Father ([1 John 2:1](#), Cf. [Romans 8:26](#)). This old word (Demosthenes), from *parakaleo*, was used for legal assistant, pleader, advocate, one who pleads another's cause (Josephus, Philo, in illiterate papyrus), in N.T. only in John's writings, though the idea of it is in [Romans 8:26-34](#). Cf. Deissmann, *Light*, etc., p. 336. So the Christian has Christ as his Paraclete with the Father, the Holy Spirit as the Father's Paraclete with us ([John 14:16](#), [John 14:26](#); [John 15:26](#); [John 16:7](#); [1 John 2:1](#)).

G3875 ἀράκλητος *parakle tos*

Thayer Definition:

- 1) summoned, called to one's side, especially called to one's aid
 - 1a) one who pleads another's cause before a judge, a pleader, counsel for defense, legal assistant, an advocate
 - 1b) one who pleads another's cause with one, an intercessor
 - 1b1) of Christ in his exaltation at God's right hand, pleading with God the Father for the pardon of our sins
 - 1c) in the widest sense, a helper, succorer, aider, assistant
 - 1c1) of the Holy Spirit destined to take the place of Christ with the apostles (after his ascension to the Father), to lead them to a deeper knowledge of the gospel truth, and give them divine strength needed to enable them to undergo trials and persecutions on behalf of the divine kingdom

Part of Speech: noun masculine

A Related Word by Thayer's/Strong's Number: a root word

Citing in TDNT: 5:800, 782

WordStudy

G3875 *παράκλητος* *parákletos*; gen. *parakle tōu*, masc. noun from *parakaleō* (G3870), to comfort, encourage or exhort. It is properly a verbal adj. referring to an aid of any kind. In the Greek writers, used of a legal advisor, pleader, proxy, or advocate, one who comes forward in behalf of and as the representative of another. Thus, in [1 John 2:1](#), Christ is termed our substitutionary, intercessory advocate. Christ designates the Holy Spirit as Paraclete ([John 14:16](#)), and calls Him *állos* (G243), another, which means another of equal quality and not *héteros* (G2087), another of a different quality. Therefore, the Holy Spirit is designated by Jesus Christ as equal with Himself, i.e., God ([1 John 2:1](#)). This new Paraclete, the Holy Spirit, was to witness concerning Jesus Christ ([John 14:26](#); [John 16:7](#), [John 16:14](#)) and to glorify Him. The Holy Spirit is called a Paraclete because He undertakes Christ's office in the world while Christ is not in the world as the God-Man in bodily form. In addition, the Holy Spirit is also called the Paraclete because He acts as Christ's substitute on earth. When Christ in [John 14:16](#) designates Himself as a Paraclete, the same as the Holy Spirit, the word must not be understood as applying to Christ in the same sense as in [1 John 2:1](#) where it refers to our substitutionary Advocate who pleads our cause with the Father. It should rather be taken as He who pleads God's cause with us (see [John 14:7-9](#)). The words *parakaleō* (G3870) and *parákletos* (G3874), the act or process of comforting or advocating, do not occur at all in the writings of John.

[1 John 2:1](#) "Advocate" [John 14:16](#); [John 14:26](#); [John 15:26](#); [John 16:7](#); [1 John 2:1](#);

We have an advocate. Who pleads with the Father not to withdraw his love because we may have been betrayed into sin. - PNT

See [1 John 2:1](#) for wordstudy on **Advocate, Comforter, Paraclete**

1 John 2:2

1 John 2:2 and He Himself is the propitiation for our sins; and not for ours only, but also for *those of the whole world*.

Propitiation -- [Romans 3:24](#) ESV; [Revelation 1:5](#); appeasement, satisfaction. A suitable English translation for this word (*ἱλασμός*, *hilasmos*) is a difficult and even controversial problem.

"Expiation," "propitiation," and "atonement"

The idea of *turning away the divine wrath*, suggesting that "propitiation" is the closest English equivalent.

Nevertheless, the English word "propitiation" is too technical to communicate to many modern readers, and a term like "atoning sacrifice" (given by Webster's *New International Dictionary* as a definition of "propitiation") is more appropriate here.

The Greek word (*ἱλασμός*, *hilasmos*) behind the phrase *atoning sacrifice* conveys both the idea of "turning aside divine wrath" and the idea of "cleansing from sin."

not ours only -- Not for Jews only, but also for Gentiles. His "propitiation" is not limited to a small group, but is available for the whole world who will believe (trust) and obey. cf. [Titus 2:11](#), [Revelation 22:17](#), [Matthew 28:19](#); [Mark 16:15](#).

■ 1 John 2:3

1 John 2:3 By this we know that we have come to know Him, if we keep His commandments.

Hereby -- (*en toutoi*), Literally, "in this," or "by this" a phrase often used by the apostle, and occurring at [1 John 2:5](#); [1 John 3:16](#), [1 John 3:19](#); [1 John 4:2](#), [1 John 4:13](#); [1 John 5:2](#). It refers to the clause, "If we keep his commandments."

know -- We get to know Christ by practicing His precepts. "Keep," here, is present subjunctive, thus, "If we keep on keeping his commandments."

know -- We get to know Christ by practicing His precepts. It is possible to claim a knowledge of God and of Christ and to be deceived. Paul writes of those who "profess that they know God; but by their works they deny him, being abominable, and disobedient, and unto every good work reprobate." ([Titus 1:16](#).) One does not know God who does not conform to his will.

Greek "know him." (1) Many take the third person pronoun [αὐτον](#) (*auton*) to refer to Jesus Christ, since the pronoun [αὐτός](#) (*autos*) at the beginning of [1 John 2:2](#) clearly refers to him. But (2) others think it is more likely that God is the referent here suggesting that the author is now returning to the discussion of God who is light, a theme introduced in [1 John 1:5](#).- NET

keep -- "Keep," here, is present subjunctive, thus, "If we keep on keeping his commandments." We are informed here that it is possible for us to "know that we know him." How, or in what way? *If we keep his commandments!*

■ 1 John 2:4

1 John 2:4 The one who says, "I have come to know Him," and does not keep His commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him;

[1 John 2:4](#) "His Commandment" = "His Word" in [1 John 2:5](#).
[1 John 2:3](#) To "know Him" = "the love for God" in [1 John 2:5](#).

cf. Vs. 5 Keeping His Word = Loving God = Abiding in Him

come to know him -- *Greek "know him."* See the note on the phrase "*know God*" in [1 John 2:3](#) for explanation.

he is a liar -- The words "He is a liar" are more emphatic than "we lie," of [1 John 1:6](#), and "we deceive ourselves," of [1 John 1:8](#). His status is not simply that of one who is guilty of a single falsehood, or one who is innocently deceived; his acts of falsehood have become embedded in his character and he is, essentially, *a liar*.

and the truth is not in him; -- A conclusion drawn from the foregoing premises, and a further affirmation of the truth above expressed.

The verbs in the Greek text are in the present tense. He who keeps on saying, "I know him", and yet keeps not on keeping his commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him.

1 John 2:5

1 John 2:5 but whoever keeps His word, in him the love of God has truly been perfected. By this we know that we are in Him:

whoever keeps his word -- This verse is synonymous with "keeping his commandments" of verse 4. Here, as in **1 John 1:7**; **1 John 1:9**, the opposite of that immediately preceding is stated, and the thought advanced one step further. The "love of God" here contemplated is not God's love for us, but our love for God.

in him -- ἐν τῷ τῷ *in this one*. The middle-eastern mind of speaking of a quality or attributed being in a person.

in him this love of [for] God --

truly the love of God -- An accomplished fact, a relation of love has been established.

love of God -- 1) God's love for us, OR 2) our love for God? What did Jesus Himself say? [John 14:21](#), [John 14:23](#); Our love **for** God is evident when we keep his Word.

"love of God" NKJV 12 verses, 12 matches = [Luke 11:42](#); [John 5:42](#); [Romans 5:5](#); [Romans 8:39](#); [2 Corinthians 13:14](#); [2 Thessalonians 3:5](#); [Titus 3:4](#); [1 John 2:5](#); [1 John 3:17](#); [1 John 4:9](#); [1 John 5:3](#); [Jude 1:21](#);

"love of God" **ESV** 9 verses 9 matches = [Luke 11:42](#); [John 5:42](#); [Romans 8:39](#); [2 Corinthians 13:13](#); [2 Thessalonians 3:5](#); [1 John 2:5](#); [1 John 4:9](#); [1 John 5:3](#); [Jude 1:21](#);

"love of God" **NIV** 6 verses, 6 matches, = [Luke 11:42](#); [John 5:42](#); [Romans 8:39](#); [2 Corinthians 13:14](#); [Titus 3:4](#); [1 John 3:17](#);

"love of God" **NASB** 11 verses, 11 matches = [Luke 11:42](#); [John 5:42](#); [Romans 5:5](#); [Romans 8:39](#); [2 Corinthians 13:14](#); [2 Thessalonians 3:5](#); [1 John 2:5](#); [1 John 3:17](#); [1 John 4:9](#); [1 John 5:3](#); [Jude 1:21](#);

[Common to all: **1)** [Luke 11:42](#); **1)** [John 5:42](#); **2)** [Romans 8:39](#); **2)** [2 Corinthians 13:14](#); **1)** [1 John 3:17](#); ‘

1) Love for God; **2)** God's love for me (us)

ἡ ἀγ πη το θεο = (6 nominative s.) [Romans 5:5](#); [2 Corinthians 13:13](#); [1 John 2:5](#); [1 John 3:17](#); [1 John 4:9](#); [1 John 5:3](#)

την ἀγ πην το θεο = (3 accusative s.) [Luke 11:42](#); [John 5:42](#); [2 Thessalonians 3:5](#)

τς ἀγ πης το θεο = (1 genitive s.f.) [Romans 8:39](#);

ἐν ἀγ πη θεο = (1 dative s.) [Jude 1:21](#)

G26 (love) G2316 (God) {in the same verse} = 32 verses (74 matches) = (G-NT-TR (Steph)+) [Luke 11:42](#); [John 5:42](#); [Romans 5:5](#); [Romans 5:8](#); [Romans 8:39](#); [Romans 15:30](#); [2 Corinthians 13:11](#); [2 Corinthians 13:14](#); [Ephesians 2:4](#); [Ephesians 3:19](#); [Ephesians 5:2](#);

Ephesians 6:23; Colossians 2:2; 1 Thessalonians 1:3; 2 Thessalonians 1:3; 2 Thessalonians 3:5; 1 Timothy 6:11; 2 Timothy 1:7; Hebrews 6:10; 1 John 2:5; 1 John 3:1; 1 John 3:17; 1 John 4:7; 1 John 4:8; 1 John 4:9; 1 John 4:10; 1 John 4:12; 1 John 4:16; 1 John 5:3; 2 John 1:3; 3 John 1:6; Jude 1:21;

is perfected -- "Perfected" is perfect passive indicative of *teleioo*, to stand complete. Thus, he who keeps the commandments of God matures his love, for this is the way in which love for God manifests itself, **1 John 5:3.**

By this we know -- *This is how.* "Obedience is how we can know we live in fellowship with God!"

we are in him -- ἐν αὐτῷ in him, person pronoun. The words "in him" indicate a relationship of the most intimate nature. The phrase is a summary of all the blessings available from God.

To know God we must keep his word; those who keep his word love him; but those who love him are in him. Fruit bearing produced as the result of love for God is evidence of our union with him. (**John 15:4-5.**)

1 John 2:6

1 John 2:6 the one who says he abides in Him ought himself to walk in the same manner as He walked.

whoever says he abides in him -- The one who represents himself as abiding in the Lord has the definite obligation to "walk even as he walked," i.e., in the light, in fellowship with God, in keeping his commandments. Only in this manner can one demonstrate the soundness of his claim.

ought -- "Ought," from *opheilo*, to be in debt, denotes the moral obligation here to exhibit the basis of one's claim or profession.

walk in the same way -- To walk as Christ walked is to follow him as the perfect model and guide that he is. Nothing less than this will meet the demands of the case. The *walk* of the Lord which we are to imitate is, obviously, to be found in the spiritual and moral activities of his life on earth.

There is no reference here to the miraculous powers which Jesus exhibited on earth. As Martin Luther fittingly remarks, it "is not Christ's walking on the sea that we are to imitate, but his ordinary walk." The verb "*walk*" is figuratively used to denote the daily manner of life which must characterize us as children of God.

Jesus used it in this sense (**John 8:12; John 12:35**), as did Paul (**Ephesians 2:10; Colossians 3:7; Romans 6:4**).

1 John 2:7

1 John 2:7 Beloved, I am not writing a new commandment to you, but an old commandment which you have had from the beginning; the old commandment is the word which you have heard.

Vs. 7-28 The Negative Side of what walking in the light excludes.

Beloved -- This form of address only occurs once in the first part of the Epistle ([1 John 2:7](#)), just where the subject of love appears for a few verses: it becomes the more common form of address ([1 John 3:2](#); [1 John 3:21](#), [1 John 4:1](#); [1 John 4:7](#); [1 John 4:11](#)) now that the main subject is love. Similarly, in [1 John 3:13](#), where brotherly love is the special subject, 'brethren' is the form of address.

no new -- "New" = "fresh", novel. The apostle had just commanded his readers to walk as Christ walked. ([1 John 2:6](#)) This walk was grounded in loving God. Hence, the commandment to love God was not a new one, i.e., a novel, unusual thing. These to whom John wrote had been aware of this obligation, and had in some measure followed it from the beginning of their Christian life.

had from the beginning -- From the beginning of their career as a Christian.

The old commandment is the word -- This commandment was the "word" which they had "heard." The "word" sums up the message they had received; "heard" indicates the manner of reception. They had "heard" it; it therefore came to them through preaching. They heard it, and it was at the beginning of their Christian experience .

■ 1 John 2:8

1 John 2:8 At the same time, it is a new commandment that I am writing to you, which is true in him and in you, because the darkness is passing away and the true light is already shining.

Again -- i.e. From another point of view. In another sense.

At the same time -- There is a "new commandment" that goes along with and coincides with the "old commandment."

a new commandment -- Love is "old" consider [1 John 3:1](#); [1 John 3:11-12](#). It was the Lord himself who designated the command to love one another as a *new* one: "A new commandment I give unto you, that ye love one another; even as I have loved you, that ye also love one another." ([John 13:34](#).)

The newness was not merely in the command to love; the law and the prophets required this. ([Deuteronomy 10:19](#); [Micah 6:8](#), etc.) It was the *measure* or *extent* of the love that made it new: "even as I have loved you." Never before the Christian age had such a love been required of man. It was henceforth to be a condition precedent to discipleship; indeed, the badge and token thereof: "A new commandment I give unto you, that ye love one another; even as I have loved you, that ye also love one another. *By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another.*" ([John 13:34-35](#).)

darkness is passing away -- The darkness of ignorance, superstition, bitterness, and hate was passing; the "true light," which radiated from the Lord, was shining, thus dispelling the gloom and darkness of unbelief.

The text does not affirm that the darkness had already passed. Then, as now, there was much error and deception in the world. But, as the truth is preached, the light is extended, and the darkness recedes as man came into the light. (**John 8:12**; cf. [1 John 4:10](#).)

true in him -- True love is revealed in Jesus Christ; We see fully what is meant by "brotherly love," [John 13:34-35](#).

the old command - to love God, and our neighbor.

the new command - to love one another to the extent of Christ's love for us.

Vs. 7 & 8. Is there one commandment which is both "new" and "old"? Or are there two under consideration here?

- 1) To cultivate brotherly love
- 2) To walk as Christ walked

New and old cf. [John 13:34](#); [John 15:12](#), [2 John 1:5](#); cf. [Leviticus 19:18](#), [Leviticus 19:34](#).

A New Standard -- "even as I have loved you." (to lay down one's life for another.)

A New Motive -- **1 John 4:11**.

1 John 2:9

1 John 2:9 The one who says he is in the Light and yet hates his brother is in the darkness until now.

Vs. 9 - An impossible inconsistency.

Whoever says -- For the fifth time the Apostle indicates a possible inconsistency of a very gross kind between profession and conduct ([1 John 1:6](#); [1 John 1:8](#); [1 John 1:10](#), [1 John 2:4](#)). We shall have a sixth in [1 John 4:20](#).

When one asserts that he is in this light, governing himself by this teaching of Christ. to love our enemies, and yet hates his brother, such an one is self-deceived. He is still in darkness. He is not in fellowship with God, for God is light.

his brother -- Does this mean 'his fellow-Christian' or 'his fellow-man', whether Christian or not? The common meaning in N.T. is the former; and though there are passages where 'brother' seems to have the wider signification, e.g. [Matthew 5:22](#); [Luke 6:41](#); [James 4:11](#), yet even here the spiritual bond of brotherhood is perhaps in the background.

hates -- The word **hate** (*miseo*) here does not indicate the *degree*, but merely the *fact* of such a disposition. When it exists in any degree, he who manifests it is yet in the darkness.

"We would say that there are persons whom we do not love, but this is not the same thing as hating them. . . . Our attitude is a neutral one. . . . But John will have none of this. His concept of love is caring for the needs of others, even to the point of self-sacrifice. If I am unwilling to do that for somebody in need, I love myself more than him. . . ." (Marshall)

Is vs. 9 in conflict with [Luke 14:26](#)? cf. [John 12:25](#).

Fourth century pagan historial Ammjanus wrote "the enmity of the Christians toward each other surpassed the fury of savage beasts against man." EGT vol. V, p. 176.

is in darkness even until now -- Or, as in [1 John 1:6](#), in order to bring out the full contrast with the light, *is in the darkness*.

even until now -- i.e. in spite of the light which 'is *already* shining', and of which he has so little real experience that he believes light and hatred to be compatible.

The word for '**now**' (ἄρτι) is specially frequent in John's Gospel: it indicates the present moment not absolutely, but in relation to the past or the future. The peculiar combination, 'even until now' (ἐως ἄρτι) occurs [John 2:10](#); [John 5:17](#); [John 16:24](#); [Matthew 11:12](#); [1 Corinthians 4:13](#); [1 Corinthians 8:7](#); [1 Corinthians 15:6](#), a fact much obscured in many translations.

1 John 2:10

1 John 2:10 The one who loves his brother abides in the Light and there is no cause for stumbling in him.

abides in the light -- Here is another of John's stylistic device of stating a fact and then giving the opposite. In verse 9, John expresses the negative idea of hating a brother and remaining in darkness; here, whoever loves his brother is in the light.

The verb "**abideth**" means more than merely *being* in the light; to abide is to remain (*menei*), and the tense (present indicative active) reveals a continuous action rather than a temporary state.

in him -- His own salvation and stumbling is under consideration here, not his influence over someone else. PC. He won't stumble, for he is walking in the light.

no occasion of stumbling -- His own, or another's? The verb "stumble" (skandalon) is derived from a word which designates a snare or trap. In **Matthew 18:7**, it obviously refers to an occasion of stumbling in the way of others. Here, however, the context, and particularly the verse which follows, appears to indicate that John had in mind an occasion of stumbling in one's own self.

in him -- May be "in it", i.e. the light. (Notice where different translations transpose the "in him." Before or after the "stumbling".) Greek = "*occasion of stumbling in him none there is.*"

1 John 2:11

1 John 2:11 But the one who hates his brother is in the darkness and walks in the darkness, and does not know where he is going because the darkness has blinded his eyes.

whoever hates his brother -- This presents the alternative to v. 10. "Brotherly love" is put positive and negatively.

in the darkness - And in the dark, (the absent of light) one stumbles.

walks in darkness -- Darkness is figurative and means the absence of truth. The truth of God requires that the brethren love each other, hence if one brother hates another he is not walking according to the word of God but is walking in darkness.

The darkness is his home and the scene of his activity. ‘The way of the wicked is as darkness: they know not at what they stumble’ ([Proverbs 4:19](#)).

where he is going -- The reverse of loving one's brother gives occasion for stumbling for he is blinded by darkness.

blinded -- ‘Blinded’ must not be weakened into ‘dimmed’: the verb means definitely ‘to make blind’ ([John 12:40](#); [2 Corinthians 4:4](#)). Animals kept in the dark, e.g. ponies in coal-mines, become blind: the organ that is never exercised loses its power. So also the conscience that is constantly ignored at last ceases to act. The source of the metaphor is perhaps [Isaiah 6:10](#) : comp. [Romans 11:10](#).

It is literally ‘blinded’, not ‘has blinded’, this is just one of those cases where the Greek idiom uses the aorist, but the English idiom should be rendered by the English perfect. (CBSC)

■ 1 John 2:12

1 John 2:12 I am writing to you, little children, because your sins have been forgiven you for His name's sake.

I write -- This epistle is meant.

I write -- Four times he says, “*I write*” (vs. 12, 13), and twice “*I have written*” (v. 14).

1) John's epistle; and 2) John's Gospel; 3) a lost epistle?

Note the Triplet: cf. PpC p. 23 chart.

First "*little children*" his readers as a whole

Second "*old among you*"

Third "*young among you*"

Question: Does the difference refer to age as men, or as Christians?

little children -- Greek *teknia* (see note at [1 John 2:1](#)). That the word embraces all faithful church members, old as well as young, is clear from the remainder of the verse. Messages to specific age groups appear in vs. 13, 14.

name's sake -- Jesus' character as Savior. "For his name's sake" means on the basis of his name, i.e., God, the Father, forgives on account of Christ's name and because of his advocacy of our cause. ([1 John 2:1](#).) It is through the name of Christ that we are privileged to approach the Father ([John 14:6](#); [Acts 4:12](#).)

Sins are forgiven -- The words "are forgiven" are translated from a Greek per-fect (*apheontai*), a tense pointing to past action with existing results. "You have been, and consequently stand forgiven of your past, or alien, sins." Gives the reason for writing, not the substance of what he has to say.

"I am not addressing you as unbelievers or casting doubt upon the sincerity of your faith. But because I am assured of you I write this epistle and I wrote the gospel." EGT

1 John 2:13

1 John 2:13 I am writing to you, fathers, because you know Him who has been from the beginning. I am writing to you, young men, because you have overcome the evil one. I have written to you, children, because you know the Father.

fathers -- As there was a special reason for addressing those who had but lately obeyed the gospel, so John also felt it needful to include instruction for those of more maturity in the Christian life, and who had long been faithful disciples of the Lord.

you know him -- The fathers were, therefore, addressed because "*you know him . . .*" The word "**know**," as here used, means far more than casual acquaintance. The verb is in the perfect tense (*egnokate*), "You came to know, and now know," and describes the rich and full experience which these fathers had with the Lord.

The Perfect tense is used throughout indicating permanent results of both Present and Past actions.

from the beginning -- He who "**is from the beginning**" was the Word, [John 1:1](#).

young men -- Evidence of their real interest in Christ.

Young soldiers' lot is to fight. Because of their victory they share in the gospel's message.

evil one -- Here, and often elsewhere in the Epistle, as also through the New Testament, the personality of Satan is clearly indicated. Far from being merely or solely an influence, he is revealed as a definite and distinct agent who must be resisted, repelled, and overcome by the saints. (See [1 John 3:8](#); [1 John 3:10](#).)

Those thus addressed by the apostle had "*overcome the evil one*." This they had done by remaining steadfast in the faith and not succumbing to the seductions of the devil. "And this is the victory that hath overcome the world, even our faith." ([1 John 5:4](#).)

children ... know -- The word "know" here is of the same tense, and has the same significance as in verses 3 and 4, literally, "you have come to know, and now retain this knowledge of the Father." Such knew him as their Father, because they were his children; they had been adopted into his family, and were by him regarded as such.

The last part of verse 13 belongs to the Second Triplet in v. 14. Some would believe this to refer to actual "children," but probably it refers to the whole of Christian relationship. If the case is a reference to literal children we would expect a different order.

1 John 2:14

1 John 2:14 I have written to you, fathers, because you know Him who has been from the beginning. I have written to you, young men, because you are strong, and the word of God abides in you, and you have overcome the evil one.

I write -- "*have written*"

fathers -- Their knowledge of the Savior comes from a long experience with the blessings that come from the Lord.

him ... who is from the beginning - (John 1:1-2 1 John 1:1-3); The reference is to the preexistent Christ who occupies eternity.

The nature, attributes, and characteristics of the Eternal One constitute a profound study; but these mature saints, from long and careful consideration of the facts available to them, had come to possess a knowledge of him who thus bridges the brief span of time before and after which is the eternity without end. It is a subject especially intriguing to those advanced in years and mature of mind.

young men -- Three characteristics of these young men are mentioned: (1) They were strong; (2) the word of God abode in them; and (3) they had overcome the evil one.

you are strong -- The occasion of their strength was in the fact that the word of God was in them. Ephesians 6.10.

the word of God abides in you -- John is here thinking of the written Word, the holy scriptures, which can "abide" or be hidden in the heart ([John 15:7](#); [Psalms 119:11](#); [Colossians 3:16](#)).

The Word of God in the heart both inspires and equips the soldier of the cross to fight the good fight (see on [Ephesians 6:17](#)). The Saviour Himself used the written Word in His struggle with the tempter ([Matthew 4:1-11](#)). Fighting man's battle as a man, the Saviour had no keener weapon than the words which the Holy Spirit had inspired for just such occasions ([Matthew 4:4](#); [Matthew 4:7](#); [Matthew 4:10](#)). It is only as Christians follow Christ's example, filling their memory with God's precious Word and following its counsel, that they can gain the victory over self and sin.

See [Ephesians 3:17](#) note on "Indwelling"

■ 1 John 2:15

1 John 2:15 Do not love the world nor the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him.

Do not love the world -- Those addressed in the verses immediately preceding --the children, fathers, and young men --though each is commended for having triumphed in his respective sphere, were nevertheless yet in the world, yet subject to its allurements and temptations, yet within the reach of the Evil One. There was, therefore, need that such an exhortation be given.

world -- Compare [James 4:4](#). John does not mean our material universe, because this world is God's creation and is good ([Genesis 1:31](#) : [1 Timothy 4:4](#)). Neither is it wicked people themselves, since God loves the world ([John 3:16](#)) of people whom he has created. John speaks of the world of darkness [evil] which is opposed to God and all that is good.

The "love" which men must not entertain for this world is evil desire. The love contemplated in [John 3:16](#) is that of divine compassion and redeeming mercy; here, it is the emotion of selfish desire, of avarice and worldly pride.

things in the world -- Things that rival and exclude the love for God. Transient things of the world. [Good illustration in EGT. Bride loves her *ring* more than she does the groom.]

The prohibition is exceedingly emphatic: "Love not the world, neither (*mede*) *no not either the things of the world.*" The meaning is, Do not love the world, no, nor anything that may be associated with evil and darkness.

First walking in the Light excludes hating the brethren.

Second, v.15ff, walking in the Light excludes all love of the world.

1 John 2:16

1 John 2:16 For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh and the lust of the eyes and the boastful pride of life, is not from the Father, but is from the world.

all that in the world -- John is referring to worldly values that are unacceptable to God.

For John, a war wages between people's evil desires and desires to please God. Paul identifies the same conflict and uses the same Greek word to do so (compare on [Galatians 5:19-21](#)).

lusts [desires] -- John uses the term negatively here for a strong desire for evil things.

desires of the flesh -- Lust as seated in the flesh. Lust which the flesh feels.

desires of the eyes --

Satan uses the eyes as a strategic avenue to incite wrong desires ([Joshua 7:20-21](#); [2 Samuel 11:2](#); [Matthew 5:27-29](#)). Satan's temptation of Eve involved being attracted to something beautiful in appearance, but the result was spiritual death ([Genesis 3:6](#) "pleasant to the eyes"). - MSB

Antithesis: Love of the world / Love of God

Antithesis: Lust of flesh, eye, pride / Walking in the Light

price in possessions [the arrogance of material possessions, LEB; boastful price of life, NASB]

-- The phrase has the idea of arrogance over one's circumstances, which produced haughtiness or exaggeration, parading what one possessed to impress other people ([James 4:16](#)).

Wealth used for the purposes of personal gain demonstrates a selfish view of self-worth. Instead, wealth should be used for the care for others ([1 John 3:16-18](#); [Revelation 3:17](#)).

1 John 2:17

1 John 2:17 The world is passing away, and also its lusts; but the one who does the will of God lives forever.

Note the Antithesis.

the world is passing away -- This shows John's awareness of coming end of the Judaistic system. He seems to allude that the appeal of the current religious system of Judaism was to the material.

Please note [Galatians 1:4](#); and [2 Corinthians 4:4](#), where Paul also is making the same kind of statement.

abides forever -- The great truth is that one who lives according the desires of the flesh and miss heaven. Those doing God's will are the one He wants to be with Him in eternity.

■ 1 John 2:18

1 John 2:18 The world is passing away, and also its lusts; but the one who does the will of God lives forever.

Vs. 18-24 A Warning Against Heretical Teaching EGT

Little children -- to all addressed in the epistle.

last hour -- Of what? Of the situation they faced. Here we see a connection of John's epistle to his Revelation ([Revelation 1:1](#), [Revelation 1:3](#) where his subject is concerning things that were "at hand" and to "shortly" come to pass. That is, the end of the Mosaical dispensation as seen in the temple worship and the existence of the Jewish nation. Thus, this was the "last hour" for these Jewish false teachers as they ridiculed and mocked the gospel.

The term "**last hour**" occurs only here in the N.T. (It is similar to the terms "the last days" and "the last times" and owes its expectations to Joel 2: Micah 4:1; and Daniel 2.) Theologically it refers to the "last days" of the Jewish dispensation. The Jewish sacrificial system and priesthood ended with the destruction of the Herodian temple in AD 70 by the Romans.

antichrist -- This is the first occurrence of the term "antichrist." Its usage is found only in John's epistles ([1 John 4:3](#); [2 John 1:7](#)).

heard that antichrist -- Christ himself had given this warning, men who claimed themselves to be Christ, [Matthew 24:4-5](#).

many antichrists -- Here John may be alluding to Jewish ([1 John 2:19](#)) teachers who spread false teaching about Jesus. By extension, the term could refer to anyone who is opposed to Jesus. ([Matthew 24:24](#); [Mark 13:22](#); [Acts 20:28-30](#))

ye have heard -- Had heard in the gospel of anti-Christ's coming. [Matthew 24:5](#), [Matthew 24:11](#), [Matthew 24:23-26](#), [Mark 13:22-23](#), [Acts 20:29](#), [2 Timothy 3:1](#), [2 Peter 2:1](#)

we know -- i.e. from the coming of these Jewish antiChrist's that the last hour is near, see John's message in [Revelation 1:1](#); "shortly" or "soon" and "at hand" [Revelation 1:3](#); and [Revelation 22:6](#); [Revelation 22:10](#).

■ 1 John 2:19

1 John 2:19 They went out from us, but they were not really of us; for if they had been of us, they would have remained with us; but they went out, so that it would be shown that they all are not of us.

They went out from us -- Although these false teachers went out from the Jewish community, they were not among Christ's apostles, nor did they represent the teachings of Christ or His apostles.

if they had been of us -- The false teachers did not believe in what John taught about Christ.

that it might become plain -- The teaching and life philosophy of the Jewish false teachers stood in clear contrast to what John and the Gospel proclaimed.

■ 1 John 2:20

1 John 2:20 But you have an anointing from the Holy One, and you all know.

you have been anointed by the Holy One -- (cf. [1 John 2:27](#)) John says that the recipients of his epistle had been anointed. This is parallel to Paul's statement (to these same readers) in [Ephesians 1:13-14](#) ; please see that, see also [Ephesians 4:30](#).

This is an allusion to the readers having received the Holy Spirit through the laying on of an apostle's hands. One of the spiritual gifts received through such action was the miraculous gift of "knowledge", [1 Corinthians 12:8](#); [1 Corinthians 13:2](#); [1 Corinthians 14:6](#); [Ephesians 1:17](#); and didn't need false teachers telling them anything different from what they knew to be the truth, see [1 John 2:27](#).

you all have knowledge -- One of the spiritual gifts received through such action was the miraculous gift of "knowledge", [1 Corinthians 12:8](#); [1 Corinthians 13:2](#); [1 Corinthians 14:6](#); [Ephesians 1:17](#);

Ye know all things -- This also refuted the Gnostics who claimed to have an "in" with regard to knowledge. John says "you Christians do know all you need, all God reveals." cf. [2 Peter 1:3](#). vs. 21 [1 John 2:21](#).

■ 1 John 2:21

1 John 2:21 I have not written to you because you do not know the truth, but because you do know it, and because no lie is of the truth.

you know it -- They had the correct teaching and understanding of Christ.

One of the spiritual gifts received through the laying on of hands from an apostle was the miraculous gift of "knowledge", [1 Corinthians 12:8](#); [1 Corinthians 13:2](#); [1 Corinthians 14:6](#); [Ephesians 1:17](#); Cf. [1 John 2:21](#); [1 John 2:27](#).

See also [Revelation 13:18](#), [Revelation 17:9](#) for an application of such "wisdom" to fit a need.

■ 1 John 2:22

1 John 2:22 Who is the liar but the one who denies that Jesus is the Christ? This is the antichrist, the one who denies the Father and the Son.

Who is the liar -- The "antichrist" or false teachers, were denying Jesus as the Christ, or God in the Flesh as the Son of God, and/or may have been teaching that the Father and the Son were indistinct. cf. 1 John 4:3

Anyone denying the true nature of Christ as presented in the Scripture is an antichrist (cf. 1 John 4:2; [2 Thessalonians 2:11](#)). The denial of Christ also constitutes a denial of God Himself, who testified to His Son ([1 John 5:9](#); [John 5:32-38](#); [John 8:18](#)).

1 John 2:23

1 John 2:23 Whoever denies the Son does not have the Father; the one who confesses the Son has the Father also.

does not have the Father -- John emphasizes that the only way to have a relationship with God the Father is through God the Son (compare [John 14:6](#)).

By denying the Son (see [1 John 2:22](#) and note), they show they do not have the Father either.

1 John 2:24

1 John 2:24 As for you, let that abide in you which you heard from the beginning. If what you heard from the beginning abides in you, you also will abide in the Son and in the Father.

heard from the beginning -- The gospel message they had heard from Christ and the apostles. The gospel cannot change. Let it remain, do not follow false teachers (cf. [2 Timothy 4:3](#)). Christian truth is fixed and unalterable ([Jude 1:3](#)).

abide in the Son and in the Father -- Remaining true and faithful to the Gospel message is a requirement for abiding in fellowship with Christ and the Father.

1 John 2:25

1 John 2:25 This is the promise which He Himself made to us: eternal life.

promise ... eternal life -- We must stay faithful to the truth and continue in fellowship with God and Christ to receive the promise of eternal life ([1 John 5:11-12](#); [John 6:63](#))

1 John 2:26

1 John 2:26 These things I have written to you concerning those who are trying to deceive you.

I write these things -- To give a warning about these false teachers, whom John calls "antichrists" in [1 John 2:18](#), because they spread false teaching about Christ.

to deceive [seduce] you -- They are endeavoring to lead you astray. The present participle indicates the tendency and habit but not the success of the antichrist teachers.

1 John 2:27

1 John 2:27 As for you, the anointing which you received from Him abides in you, and you have no need for anyone to teach you; but as His anointing teaches you about all things, and is true and is not a lie, and just as it has taught you, you abide in Him.

vs. 24 [1 John 2:24](#) // to vs. 27

the anointing that you received -- Receiving the spiritual gifts from the "anointing" of the Holy Spirit guarded the early believer from error (cf. see note at [1 John 2:20](#); [2 Corinthians 1:21](#))

the anointing ... abideth in you -- False teachers were saying, "let me teach you something specially known by me." John says, "you have the anointing of the Holy Spirit and this teaches you the truth about this matter."

the anointing teaches you -- This is an allusion to the readers having received the Holy Spirit through the laying on of an apostle's hands. One of the spiritual gifts received through such action was the miraculous gift of "knowledge", [1 Corinthians 12:8](#); [1 Corinthians 13:2](#); [1 Corinthians 14:6](#); [Ephesians 1:17](#); and didn't need false teachers telling them anything different from what they knew to be the truth, see [1 John 2:27](#).

See also [Revelation 13:18](#), [Revelation 17:9](#) for an application of such "wisdom" to fit a need.

abide in him -- An exhortation to remain faithful to the truth.

■ 1 John 2:28

1 John 2:28 Now, little children, abide in Him, so that when He appears, we may have confidence and not shrink away from Him in shame at His coming.

And now -- This may be the summary of what John has just said, or the beginning of the next thought in John's letter of being born of God.

when -- Not a doubting "if" but in assurance.

he appears -- Is this reference to the Second Coming, or more likely the Lord's coming in judgment upon Israel and Jerusalem, cf. Matthew 24, Mark 13, Luke 21. [Matthew 22:7](#). This is an indication this epistle was written for AD 70.

at his coming -- The exhortation to remain true and faithful to the Gospel is applicable whether this is reference to the judgment upon the Jews in AD 70 or to Christ's final coming.

■ 1 John 2:29

1 John 2:29 If you know that He is righteous, you know that everyone also who practices righteousness is born of Him.

he is righteous -- The antecedent of the pronoun "*he*" goes all the way to the word "Son" in [1 John 2:24](#), and referring to Christ, [1 John 2:22](#).

he who practices righteousness -- The one who practices righteousness is imitating the "Son" (Christ, [1 John 2:22](#); [1 John 2:24](#)). Here is the Jewish motif that one practicing something is called the "son of .." that thing.

born of him -- Reference to the believer's rebirth. Being like our Father is part of our proof we are born of Him. Jesus said of his enemies, "Ye are of your father the Devil."

born of him -- This suggests the idea for the next paragraph in ch. 3, of being born of God. (cf [John 3:3-5](#))

1 John 3:1

1 John 3:1 See what kind of love the Father has given to us, that we should be called children of God; and so we are. The reason why the world does not know us is that it did not know him.

Astonishment at God's love. From [1 John 2:28](#) on we have 46 occurrences of "love", all the same Greek word. [John 3:16](#).

Behold -- Plural; "Look at, see" "take notice"

what manner of love. -- [Ποταπην αγαπην](#). Clark: "What great love, both as to quantity and quality; for these ideas are included in the original term. The length, the breadth, the depth, the height, he does not attempt to describe."

called -- BKC "In the Bible the word "called" indicates that this is what one actually is (cf. "called to be holy," lit., "called saints" [1 Corinthians 1:2](#))."

sons -- The word "sons" (KJ) is not *Huios* (sons), but *teknon*, "born children,"

world not know us -- Because the world that lies in wickedness. MH "Little does the world perceive the advancement and happiness of the genuine followers of Christ." Barnes "Does not understand our principles; the reasons of our conduct; the sources of our comforts and joys."

not know Him -- [John 1:10](#)

1 John 3:2

1 John 3:2 Beloved, we are God's children now, and what we will be has not yet appeared; but we know that when he appears we shall be like him, because we shall see him as he is

Beloved-- This form of address only occurs once in the first part of the Epistle ([1 John 2:7](#)), just where the subject of love appears for a few verses: it becomes the more common form of address ([1 John 3:2](#); [1 John 3:21](#), [1 John 4:1](#); [1 John 4:7](#); [1 John 4:11](#)) now that the main subject is love. Similarly, in [1 John 3:13](#), where *brotherly* love is the special subject, 'brethren' is the form of address.

God's children -- By adoption; because we have been "born again" into God's family when baptized, see note at [Galatians 3:26-27](#).

has not appeared -- [CP-NT](#): "God has not revealed to us the manner of transformation we will experience when we meet our Savior. But we are assured that we will experience a transformation."

that when he appears -- "*he*" or "*it*" ? [PPT](#): "The context is strongly in favour of "*it*," *i.e.*, "if it shall be manifested *what we shall be*;" [1 John 2:28](#) seems to favour "*he*," *i.e.*, "if *Christ* shall be manifested." The context must prevail." [RWP](#):

"The subject may be Christ as in [1 John 3:9](#), or the future manifestation just mentioned. Either makes sense, probably "it" here better than "he."

be like him -- [WG](#): Is this speaking of our "purity" or metaphysical appearance? It is not saying that everyone will look alike *physically* in heaven. But that [BBC](#): "we will be free from the

possibility of defilement, sin, sickness, sorrow, and death." BKC: "Such a transformation will result from seeing **Him as He is.**" Barnes: "It is revealed to us that we shall be made like Christ; that is, in the bodies with which we shall be raised up, in character, in happiness, in glory." Barnes: "It is clearly implied here that there will be an influence in beholding the Saviour as he is, which will tend to make us like him, or to transform us into his likeness."

1 John 3:3

1 John 3:3 And everyone who thus hopes in him purifies himself as he is pure.

hope -- John's only reference to Christian hope. Gill: "for a true hope of that eternal happiness" WG: The hope of being like Christ, vs.2. MH: those who hope to live with Him. BBC: "**this hope** of seeing Christ and of being like Him." CP: "**This hope** is obviously referring to the hope that we will be changed and will be like him."

in Him -- BKC: (The pronoun probably refers to Christ, the Object of this hope)

purifies himself -- CP: "Purity does not come to the Christian through anything the Christian *is* or *has done*. Purity comes about through the shedding of Jesus' blood on the cross. -- Nothing but the blood of Christ can remove the guilt and stain of sin on our lives (see 1 John 1:7; 1 Peter 1:22; 2 Corinthians 7:1)." Note especially 1 Peter 1:22. One purifies himself by his obedience to the truth, in which the blood of Christ washes away his sins (Acts 22:16 Revelation 1:5).

He is pure -- BBC: "Notice that it says "**purifies himself, just as He (Christ) is pure.**" It does *not* say "just as He (Christ) purifies Himself." The Lord Jesus never had to purify Himself; He is pure."

1 John 3:4

1 John 3:4 Everyone who makes a practice of sinning also practices lawlessness; sin is lawlessness.

1 John 3:4-12. - Sin is absolutely incompatible with Christ's work of redemption and our union with him (verses 4-8), and also with being born of God, as is shown by the presence or absence of brotherly love (verses 9-12).

Ver. 4. - Once more the apostle turns from the positive to the negative.

"**commith sin**" = ASV "*doeth sin*" and parallel to 2:29 "*doeth righteousness*." *poieo* G4160. 1 John 2:29.

commits -- BBC: "The word **commits** is literally *does* (Greek, *poieo*). It is a matter of continual behavior, expressed by the present, continuous tense."

lawlessness -- BKC: "Usually in the Greek New Testament *anomia* is a general term like the English word "wickedness."

sin is ... transgression of the law -- definition of sin in general. The Greek having the article to both, implies that they are convertible terms. The Greek "sin" (*hamartia*) is literally, "a missing of the mark." God's will being that mark to be ever aimed at.

sin is lawlessness -- RWP: "(*he* ḥ*amartia* *estin* *he* ḥ*anomia*). The article with both subject and predicate makes them coextensive and so interchangeable. Doing sin is the converse of doing righteousness ([1 John 2:29](#)). The present active participle (*poio* ḥ*n*) means the habit of doing sin."

lawlessness -- CP: "It does not appear here that the "law" is referring to the Law of Moses. Rather, sin appears to be just the opposite of righteousness. Righteousness has already been described as obedience of the commands, or commandments, given to us through the Son."

1 John 3:5

1 John 3:5 You know that he appeared to take away sins, and in him there is no sin

Ver. 5. - PPC: Two additional reasons for the absolute separation of the children of God from sin.

(1) They know well that the Son of God was manifested in the flesh to put away the sins (of the world, [John 1:29](#));

(2) The Son of God was absolutely separated from sin

to take away sins -- RWP: (*hina* *tas* *hamartias* *are* ḥ*i*). Purpose clause with *hina* and first aorist active subjunctive of *airo* ḥ*as* in [John 1:29](#)

snd in Him is no sin -- BBC: The Incarnation brought into the world the One who is totally sinless and who had as an objective the removal of sin from the lives of His own (cf. [John 1:29](#); [Hebrews 9:28](#)).

in Him there is no sin. -- This is one of the three key passages in the N.T. dealing with the sinless humanity of the Lord Jesus Christ. Peter tells us that "He *did* no sin." Paul tells us that "He *knew* no sin." Now John, the disciple who knew the Lord in an especially intimate way, adds his testimony, "In Him *is* no sin."

[Hebrews 7:26](#) [1 Peter 2:23](#)

1 John 3:6

1 John 3:6 No one who abides in him keeps on sinning; no one who keeps on sinning has either seen him or known him.

PPC: (1) The Greek perfect expresses the present and permanent result of a past action, and is often equivalent to a present. (2) The fact of the man's sinning proves that his perception and knowledge have been imperfect, if not superficial, or even imaginary;

Whosoever abideth in him -- Barnes: See [1 John 2:6](#). The word here employed (μένων *meno* ḥ*n*) properly means to remain, to continue, to abide.

sinneth not -- RWP: (*ouch* *hamartanei*). Linear present (linear *meno* ḥ*n*, keeps on abiding) active indicative of *hamartano* ḥ*as*, "does not keep on sinning."

hath not seen him -- RWP: (*ouch* *heo* ḥ*raken* *auton*). Perfect active indicative of *horao* ḥ*as*. The habit of sin is proof that one has not the vision or the knowledge (*egno* ḥ*ken*, perfect active also) of Christ. He means, of course, spiritual vision and spiritual knowledge, not the literal sense of *horao* ḥ*as* in [John 1:18](#); [John 20:29](#).

CP: "John is not claiming that Christians do not sin, for he has already said (1:8-10) that if we claim to be without sin, we are liars. The expression "who lives in him," literally means "abides, or remains" in him. This statement was not intended to mean that we do not sin; it means we do not live a life of sin."

BBC: The question naturally arises, "When does sin become habitual? How often does a person have to commit it for it to become characteristic behavior?" John does not answer this. Rather he puts each believer on guard

PO&SB "The Greek means this: if we continue in sin, if we go on sinning and sinning, then we do not really know Christ."

■ 1 John 3:7

1 John 3:7 Little children, let no one deceive you. Whoever practices righteousness is righteous, as he is righteous.

Those led astray belong to Satan -v.7-8

- a. Don't let anyone led you astray -v.7
 - 1) Christ is all that is right.
 - 2) To be like Christ one must do what is right.
- b. The devil sinned from the beginning - v.8
 - 1) Anyone who sins belongs to the devil.
 - 2) The son of God came to destroy Satan's works.

Luke 9:23; Matthew 5:20;

Little children -- Notes at 1 John 2:1.

let no man deceive you -- That is, in the matter under consideration; to be deceived by persuasion that a man may live in sinful practices, and yet be a true child of God. From this it is clear that the apostle supposed there were some who would attempt to do this.

He who does righteousness is righteous -- This is laid down as a great and undeniable principle in religion - a maxim which none could dispute. It is worthy of all the emphasis which the apostle lays on it. The man who does righteousness, or leads an upright life, is a righteous man, and no other one is.

even as he is righteous -- As in 1 John 3:3, whether 'He' means the Father or Christ. It is the same pronoun (ἐκεῖνος) as in 1 John 3:3, and there is not here any abrupt *change* of pronoun. Here it seems better to interpret 'He' as Christ (1 John 2:2), rather than God (1 John 1:9). (CBSC)

■ 1 John 3:8

1 John 3:8 Whoever makes a practice of sinning is of the devil, for the devil has been sinning from the beginning. The reason the Son of God appeared was to destroy the works of the devil.

- b. The devil sinned from the beginning - v.8
 - 1) Anyone who sins belongs to the devil.
 - 2) The son of God came to destroy Satan's works.

[John 8:44](#); [1 Peter 2:24](#); [1 Peter 3:18](#); [Romans 8:11](#);

PO&SB "The works of Satan are destroyed by the death of Jesus Christ. His power, rule, and reign over lives is now destroyed--all by the death of Jesus Christ."

He who commits sins -- Habitually, willfully, characteristically.

is of the devil --

- (1) That all who commit sin resemble Satan, and are under his influence, since sin makes us resemble him.
- (2) "All who habitually and characteristically sin are of the devil." This latter seems to be the principal idea in the mind of the John. His object here is to show that those who sinned in this sense have no real evidence of piety, but really belonged to Satan.

for the devil has been sinning from the beginning -- The beginning of the world; or from the first account we have of him. It does not mean that he sinned from the beginning of his existence, for he was created holy like the other angels. Notes, [Jude 1:6](#). The meaning is, that he introduced sin into the universe, and that he has continued to practice it ever since.

The reason the Son of God appeared -- Christ became incarnate and appeared among people was for a purpose - [1 John 3:5](#). ([1 Timothy 3:16](#); [John 1:29](#);

was to destroy -- Literally, *that he might unloose or dissolve or undo*. Christ came to **undo** what Satan had caused.

the works of the devil -- Sin brings death, but Christ came to bring Eternal Life ([Romans 6:23](#)). His resurrection demonstrated his power over Satan and won for mankind the victory of eternal life in heaven ([Hebrews 2:14](#); [Hosea 13:14](#); [1 Corinthians 15:54-56](#)).

This victory is for those who follow righteousness but not for those who follow after the likeness of the devil.

1 John 3:9

1 John 3:9 No one born of God makes a practice of sinning, for God's seed abides in him, and he cannot keep on sinning because he has been born of God.

The difference between those who belong to God and those who belong to Satan. v.9-10

- a. Those belonging to God do not continue sinning -v.9
 - 1) Because the new life from God remains in them.
- b. God's children don't continue sinning
 - 1) Because that is inconsistent with being God's children.
- c. We see the difference between being God's children and children of Satan -v.10
 - 1) Those not doing right are not God's children
 - 2) Those who don't love their brothers and sisters are not God's children.

born of God -- Just as a son born of his father bears characteristics of his father, so one born of God bears the characteristic of righteousness, and does not practice a life of sinfulness. [John 3:3-5](#); [1 Peter 1:3](#); [1 Peter 1:23](#); [1 Peter 2:2](#); [1 John 2:29](#); [1 John 3:9](#); [1 John 5:1](#); [1 John 5:4](#); [1 John 5:18](#);

makes a practice of sinning -- "To sin means to continue in sin; to constantly sin; to practice sin; to habitually sin; to live in sin, this needs to be clearly understood. Scripture is not saying that a person reaches sinless perfection while on earth." - PO&SB

God's seed abides in him -- The seed of the new birth [Joshua 3:3-5](#); the seed of the new creation [2 Corinthians 5:17](#); the seed of the new man [Ephesians 4:24](#), [Colossians 3:10](#); the divine nature [2 Peter 1:4](#), the incorruptible seed of God's Word [1 Peter 1:23](#).

he cannot keep on sinning because he has been born of God. -- To be righteousness one must bear the resemblance (characteristic) to God who does not sin ([2 Corinthians 5:21](#); [1 Peter 2:22](#); [1 John 3:5](#)) ; if not, his resemblance is to his father, the devil ([John 8:48](#)). See next verse also.

1 John 3:10

1 John 3:10 By this it is evident who are the children of God, and who are the children of the devil: whoever does not practice righteousness is not of God, nor is the one who does not love his brother.

1 John 3:10-17

1. Love reveals one's true nature: Shows that one is either a child of God or of the devil.
2. Love is the message heard from the very beginning.
3. Love does not persecute the righteous.
4. Love is the proof that one has passed from death to life.
5. Love does not hate
 - a. Hate is murder
 - b. Hate exempts one from eternal life.
6. Love is the proof that one understands the love of Christ
7. Love has compassion and gives to meet the needs of people.

v.10 We can look at one's nature (one professing to be a Christian) and tell whose child he really is.

By this -- Whether one is continually practicing sin.

it is evident -- Jesus says "By their fruits you will know them." [Matthew 7:16](#); [Matthew 7:20](#); [Colossians 1:10](#)).

children of God ... devil -- This is a reiteration of [1 John 3:9](#).

love his brother -- An additional characteristic of righteousness that John expands upon is "loving his brother." This will bring his point of [1 John 3:18](#). The sense is that true brotherly love is an essential characteristic of a Christian. See [John 13:34-35](#).

1 John 3:11

1 John 3:11 For this is the message that you have heard from the beginning, that we should love one another.

1 John 3:11-24

We Must Love Each Other

1. We must love each other-- vv. 11-15
 - a. Not like Cain - who was evil. -12
 - b. The world will hate us (as Cain hated Abel - v.13 implied)
 - c. Because we love, we've come to Life. -14
 - d. He who doesn't love, is dead still.
 - e. One who hates his brother is a murderer. -15
 - f. Murderers don't have eternal life.

from the beginning -- Since the beginning of gospel proclamation, love has been a central theme of Christianity (*see notes on [1 John 1:1](#); [1 John 2:7](#)*).

John emphasizes what they heard “from the beginning” ([1 John 1:1](#); [1 John 2:7](#), [1 John 2:24](#)) to emphasize that the false teachers were preventing that which God, through the apostles, proclaimed.

■ 1 John 3:12

1 John 3:12 We should not be like Cain, who was of the evil one and murdered his brother. And why did he murder him? Because his own deeds were evil and his brother's righteous.

Cain -- Did not love his brother so he murdered him and did an unrighteous deed.

Cain -- Scripture presents Cain outwardly as a God-worshiper who even offered sacrifice ([Genesis 4:3-5](#)). Cain's murderous actions, however, revealed that inwardly he was a child of the Devil (cf. [John 8:44](#)).

who was of the wicked one and murdered his brother -- In [1 John 3:12-17](#), John presents the first of three behaviors of the devil's children manifesting their lack of love—murder, the ultimate expression of hate.

his works were evil -- Cain's offering was not acceptable (cf [Gen 4:5](#)). His jealousy was behind his hate and murder, as in the case of the religious leaders who had Christ executed.

■ 1 John 3:13

1 John 3:13 Do not be surprised, brothers, that the world hates you.

- b. The world will hate us (as Cain hated Abel - v.13 implied)

the world hates you -- John tells his audience not to be surprised if people dislike and persecute them because of their faith. John's audience lived in a culture that often opposed the values of Christianity.

History is filled with stories of the persecution of the saints by the world ([Hebrews 11:36-40](#)). This does not surprise believers because hateful Satan is their father ([1 John 3:10](#)).

■ 1 John 3:14

1 John 3:14 We know that we have passed out of death into life, because we love the brothers. Whoever does not love abides in death.

- c. Because we love, we've come to Life. -14
- d. He who doesn't love, is dead still.

passed from death to life, because we love -- Becoming a Christian is a resurrection from death to life, and a turning of hate to love (cf. [Galatians 5:6](#), [Galatians 5:22](#)). A lack of love indicates that one is spiritually dead. Love is the sure test of whether someone has experienced the new birth or is still in the darkness of spiritual death ([1 John 2:9](#); [1 John 3:11](#))

because we love the brothers -- John once again advocates that a person can measure if they know Jesus— and have truly moved out of the realm of darkness and death, into the realm of light and life— by whether or not they love other Christians.

abides in death -- Someone who is characterized by hate.

1 John 3:15

1 John 3:15 Everyone who hates his brother is a murderer, and you know that no murderer has eternal life abiding in him.

- e. One who hates his brother is a murderer. -15
- f. Murderers don't have eternal life.

who hates his brother is a murderer -- John applies the example of Cain murdering his biological brother to hatred between siblings in the Lord (other believers). Hatred comes from the same emotional place as murder—a point that Jesus also made ([Matthew 5:21-24](#); compare [1 John 3:17](#)).

Whoever hates his brother is a murderer -- John presents the second of 3 characteristics of the devil's children with respect to their lack of love. Hatred is spiritually the same as murder in the eyes of God, i.e., the attitude is equal to the act. Hate is the seed that leads to murder, as seen in the example of the hatred of Cain for Abel that resulted in murder (*see notes on* [Matthew 5:20-22](#); cf. [Galatians 5:19-21](#); [Revelation 22:15](#)).

does not have eternal life -- The act of murder shows a complete rejection of the living God's authority over life. A person cannot be hate-filled while being in authentic relationship with Jesus, the authenticator of eternal life.

1 John 3:16

1 John 3:16 By this we know love, that he laid down his life for us, and we ought to lay down our lives for the brothers.

1 John 3:11-24

We Must Love Each Other

2. We know what real love is-- vv. 16-18
 - a. Jesus gave His life for us, this is real love. -16
 - b. We should do such for our brothers and sisters.
 - c. Seeing brothers & sisters in need and not helping is not love. -17
 - d. We should love in deed & truth (actions) and not just in words and talk. -18

By this we know love -- With this phrase, John introduces the standard of love that is reflected in genuine Christianity. It becomes the measuring stick for every expression of love ([1 John 3:18](#)). John presents the third characteristics of Satan's children in terms of their lack of love. Satan's children are marked by indifference toward other's needs ([1 John 3:12](#), [1 John 3:15](#)). **He**

he laid down his life for us -- This expression is unique to John ([John 10:11](#), [John 10:15](#), [John 10:17-18](#); [John 13:37-38](#); [John 15:13](#)) and speaks of divesting oneself of something. Christian love is self-sacrificing and giving. Christ's giving up his life for believers epitomized the true nature of Christian love ([John 15:12-13](#); [Philippians 2:5-8](#); [1 Peter 2:19-23](#)).

lay down our lives for the brethren -- God calls Christians to that same standard of love for one another as He had for us (see v. 16a).

lay down our lives -- The ultimate act of self-sacrifice, which every believer in Jesus should be willing to make (compare [1 John 2:8](#)). John sees this act as being practiced primarily in everyday acts of compassion.

■ 1 John 3:17

1 John 3:17 But if anyone has the world's goods and sees his brother in need, yet closes his heart against him, how does God's love abide in him?

c. Seeing brothers & sisters in need and not helping is not love. -17

whoever has this world's goods ... and shuts up his heart -- True love is not limited to the supreme sacrifice of giving one's life (v. 16), but shows up in lesser sacrifices as well.

Genuine Christian love expresses itself in sacrificial giving to other Christian's needs (i.e., "his brother"). It is a practical love that finds motivation in helping others ([1 Timothy 6:17-19](#); [Hebrews 13:16](#); [James 2:14-17](#)).

Where it does not exist, it is questionable that God's love is present. If that is so, it is also questionable whether the person is the Lord's child ([1 John 3:14](#)).

observes his brother in need -- John calls for practical love: meeting the needs of those within the Christian family, and by extension, all people. John may have specifically had other churches in need in mind, like the church in Smyrna (see [Revelation 2:9](#) and note).

■ 1 John 3:18

1 John 3:18 Little children, let us not love in word or talk but in deed and in truth.

d. We should love in deed & truth (actions) and not just in words and talk. -18

Having a Clean Heart - 3:18-24

1. A clean heart is wrought by loving in deed and not in word only.-v.18-19
 - a. Love assures truth
 - b. Love satisfied conscience
2. a clean heart is wrought by God's knowledge -v.20-21
3. A clean heart is wrought by keeping the commandments -v.22
4. A clean heart is wrought by keeping the supreme commandment of God -v.23
5. A clean heart is wrought by the Spirit dwelling within v.24

in word or in tongue ... in deed and in truth -- Claiming to love is not enough. Love is not sentiment, but deeds.

■ 1 John 3:19

1 John 3:19 By this we shall know that we are of the truth and reassure our heart before him;

1 John 3:11-24 **We Must Love Each Other**

3. How we can know we belong to truth-- vv. 19-24

- a. "On the condition that our heart or conscience has been properly informed of God's truth and trained in the way of the Christian life, its verdict in this particular is reliable" - Frank Cox.
- b. When we don't condemn ourself, we can come before God without fear. -v21
- c. God gives us what we ask for (implied "forgiveness") when we obey God's work. v.22 ***
- d. God commands that we believe ("trust") in Jesus and love one another. v.23
- e. Those who obey God abide in Him and He in them (us). 1) We know this, because of the Spirit He give us. -v.24

by this we know -- A lifestyle of love in action is the demonstrable proof of following Christ's example (see v. 16).

convince our heart before him -- Describes a re-centering of the life of the believer on the personhood and values of Jesus— this results in the believer changing their ways to be more like Christ.

shall assure our hearts before Him -- John gives 3 benefits of love for the true Christian. The first benefit is assurance that we pass the test of being Christ-like (cf. [1 John 4:7](#); [John 13:34-35](#)).

■ 1 John 3:20

1 John 3:20 for whenever our heart condemns us, God is greater than our heart, and he knows everything.

[Two different ideas.] 1) & 2) -20

- 1) If our hearts condemn us (our conscience) we should know that God condemns us more (greater.)

"If our heart condemns us, God also condemns us. God is greater than our conscience; he knows more against us than our conscience knows." - Frank L. Cox

OR

- 2) If our conscience feels guilty, know (remember) God still forgives us. (Therefore we shouldn't feel guilty.) See NIV. [God forgives us thru Christ's death for us - v.16.] "God know how to remove *all condemnation* from our hearts."

if our heart condemns us, God is greater -- God knows those who are truly His ([2 Timothy 2:19](#)) and wants to assure His own of their salvation. Although Christians may have insecurities and

doubts about salvation, God does not condemn them ([Romans 8:36-39](#)). Displaying love as a pattern of life, is the proof that believers stand uncondemned before God.

He knows everything -- "There is nothing, absolutely nothing, that is hid from God. No cover of darkness, no closed doors, no place off the side of the road, no place in the woods--no secret is unknown to God." - [PO&SB Hebrews 4:13](#).
[Jeremiah 16:17](#);

1 John 3:21

1 John 3:21 Beloved, if our heart does not condemn us, we have confidence before God;

When we don't condemn ourself, we can come before God without fear. -v21

confidence toward God -- Love banishes self-condemnation. When a Christian recognizes in his life that he is following the Lord's will and manifesting love in deeds and actions, it results in confidence about his relationship with God.

1 John 3:22

1 John 3:22 and whatever we ask we receive from him, because we keep his commandments and do what pleases him.

whatever we ask -- God gives us what we ask for (implied "forgiveness") when we obey God's word. v.22 ***

A clean heart is wrought by keeping the commandments of God and doing the things that please God.

whatever we ask we receive -- In terms of their spiritual needs and the provisions required for God's work, a believer will receive what they need (compare John 16:23–24). - FSB

The second benefit of love is answered prayer (see v. 19). Since love is the heart of obedience to the gospel (cf. [Matthew 22:37-40](#); [Romans 13:8-10](#)), its presence in a life evidences submission to God which He blesses by answered prayers.

1 John 3:23

1 John 3:23 And this is his commandment, that we believe in the name of his Son Jesus Christ and love one another, just as he has commanded us.

A clean heart is wrought by trusting in Christ and keeping God's supreme commandment.

3:23, 24 These verses again repeat the 3 features of this epistle— believing, loving, and obeying— which are the major evidences of true salvation.

believe in the name of his Son -- Belief in Jesus meant acknowledging that the eternal God as Son came in the flesh. This necessitated living by Jesus' values.

1 John 3:24

1 John 3:24 Whoever keeps his commandments abides in him, and he in them. And by this we know that he abides in us, by the Spirit whom he has given us.

Those who obey God abide in Him and He in them (us).

1) We know this, because of the Spirit He gives us. -v.24

by his Spirit -- Probably referring to the Holy Spirit as the one "he gave us" appealing to their knowledge of God providing miraculous gifts in the infant church which served as evidence that God was abiding with them. See note at [1 John 2:21](#); and [1 John 2:27](#). (cf [1 John 4:13](#)).

We know that he abideth in us, by the Spirit -- The Spirit that dwells in us is manifest by its fruits. If we bear the fruits of the Spirit in our lives it is proof that Christ dwells in us. If we are led by the Spirit we are the sons of God ([Romans 8:14](#)). - PNT

1 John 4:1

1 John 4:1 Beloved, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits to see whether they are from God, for many false prophets have gone out into the world.

Paragraph: 1 John 4:1-6 -

Warning Against False Teachers

1. Many False Prophets Have Gone Out Into the World v.1-3

Believe not every spirit -- (μὴ παντὶ πνευματι). "Stop believing," as some were clearly carried away by the spirits of error rampant among them, both Docetic and Gnostics. Credulity means gullibility and some believers fall easy victims to the latest fads in spiritualistic humbuggery.

spirits -- "The spirits are teachers, prophets -- men who claim to have a special revelation from God." - Frank L Cox

"In all ages of the church persons have arisen who claimed to possess supernatural powers, or to have received special revelations. John does not say that they all are insincere and time-serving; but he reminds us that they may be, and that their claims must always be the delusion of fanatical enthusiasts; they may be the lies of fanatical impostors." - Homiletic Commentary.

prove the spirits -- Put them to the acid test of truth as the metallurgist does his metals. If it stands the test like a coin, it is acceptable (*dokimos*, [2 Corinthians 10:18](#)), otherwise it is rejected (*adokimos*, [1 Corinthians 1:1](#); [2 Corinthians 1:1-7](#)).

test -- try, prove. "run an assay on them as a metallurgist does his metals, and determine whether they were of God. They were to be able to do either by exercising miraculous power in the discernment of spirits ([1 Corinthians 12:4-11](#)), or by comparing the claims of these men with the known teaching of the Holy Spirit through properly accredited representatives. Today we test such teaching by comparing them with the New Testament. [Isaiah 8:20](#)

many -- Then and now!

whether they are of God -- There were those in the early Christian church who had the gift of "discerning spirits," (see the notes at [1 Corinthians 12:10](#)).

prophet -- One who spoke as a spokesman of God.

■ 1 John 4:2

1 John 4:2 By this you know the Spirit of God: every spirit that confesses that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is from God,

- b. This is how you can know God's Spirit. -2
 - 1) The Spirit from God confesses that Jesus Christ came in human form (fleshly).
 - 2) The Spirit of the anti-Christ rejects Christ's coming in the flesh. [1 John 4:3](#)
- c. You heard the enemy of Christ was coming, he is already here now. v.3

By this you know -- Here is the way you can come to recognise, or perceive. [1 John 3:19](#).

Spirit of God -- A prophet truly inspired of God.

every spirit that confesseth -- This idea of 'confessing' one's belief is specially frequent in S. John: [John 2:23](#); [John 4:15](#); [2 John 1:7](#); [John 9:22](#); [John 12:42](#); comp. [Romans 10:9](#).

come in the flesh -- "It is interesting to observe that the heretics -- did not deny Christ's Divinity, but his humanity." "If there were teachers in ancient days who denied Christ's humanity, there are teachers in modern days who deny his Divinity." - Frank L. Cox.

■ 1 John 4:3

1 John 4:3 and every spirit that does not confess Jesus is not from God. This is the spirit of the antichrist, which you heard was coming and now is in the world already.

that confessing not -- Test of the false prophet. See [Deuteronomy 13:1-3](#); [Deuteronomy 18:21-22](#);

come in the flesh. -- The Spirit of the anti-Christ rejects Christ's coming in the flesh. v. 3
You heard the enemy of Christ was coming, he is already here now. v.3

heard before -- They had been previously warned. cf. [Acts 20:28-30](#)

now already -- These false teachers, antichrists, were already present when John wrote this.

antiChrist -- simply means one against Christ. Note that John does not indicate one particular person as "the Anti-Christ" who is yet to come, still in our future (or present secretly) as some false doctrines today maintain.

■ 1 John 4:4

1 John 4:4 Little children, you are from God and have overcome them, for he who is in you is greater than he who is in the world.

New Paragraph: **The Need for Brotherly Love**

OUTLINE: *continued*

2. You Belong to God. vs.4-6
 - a. You have defeated the false teachers. v.4
 - b. God's Spirit in you is greater than Satan in the world. v.4
 - c. The false teachers belong to the world -- v.5
 - 1) What they say (teach) is from the world.
 - 2) It is the world who listens to them.
 - d. We belong to God. v.6
 - 1) Those who know God listen to us (inspired apostles).
 - 2) Those not of God not listen to us (apostles).
 - e. Therefore: we know which Spirit is true, and which is false.

Little children -- cf. note at [1 John 2:1](#).

you are from God -- You are of His family, you have embraced His truth, and you show His spirit in your lives.

you have overcome them -- They had already withstood the deceivers and false prophets ([1 John 4:1](#)) and found their messages to be lies not to be trusted.

overcome -- is from a perfect verb, thus indicating that John's readers had earlier reached a decision regarding the nature of these teachers and had rejected them; and an abiding conviction yet remained with them of this matter.

he who is in you is greater -- God and the Truth.

he who is in the world -- Satan and his henchmen,. 'The ruler of this world' ([John 12:31](#)), the devil, the father of these lying teachers ([1 John 3:10](#); [John 8:44](#)), whose works Christ came to destroy ([1 John 3:8](#)). By saying 'in the world' rather than 'in them', the Apostle indicates that they belong to 'the world'.

 **1 John 4:5**

1 John 4:5 They are from the world; therefore they speak from the world, and the world listens to them.

OUTLINE *continued*

- c. The false teachers belong to the world -- v.5
 - 1) What they say (teach) is from the world.
 - 2) It is the world who listens to them.

Being unspiritual in nature, they are unspiritual in speech. Being unspiritual, they attract the unspiritual.

They are of the world -- This follows, though it has not yet been stated, from their not being 'of us' ([1 John 2:19](#)): for there is no middle position. The verse is another reminiscence of the Lord's farewell discourses: 'If ye were of the world, the world would love its own' ([John 15:19](#); comp. [John 17:14](#)).

therefore speak they of the world -- Compare the notes at [John 3:31](#). This may mean either that their conversation pertained to the things of this world, or that they were wholly influenced by the love of the world, and not by the Spirit of God, in the doctrines which they taught. The general sense is, that they had no higher ends and aims than they have who are influenced only by worldly plans and expectations.

Therefore of the world they speak -- as in [John 3:31](#), the Greek order is impressive and worth preserving. The impressive repetition of 'the world' is very characteristic of John's style; e.g. [John 1:10](#); [John 3:17](#); [John 15:19](#); [John 17:14](#). Comp. 'He that is of the earth, of the earth he is, and of the earth he speaketh' ([John 3:31](#)):

and the world hears [listens to] them -- The people of the world - the frivolous ones, the rich, the proud, the ambitious, the sensual - receive their instructions, and recognize them as teachers and guides, for their views accord with their own.

1 John 4:6

1 John 4:6 We are from God. Whoever knows God listens to us; whoever is not from God does not listen to us. By this we know the Spirit of truth and the spirit of error.

Spirit of truth -- This refers to a "disposition friendly to and favorable toward the truth."

OUTLINE:

d. We belong to God. v.6

1) Those who know God listen to us (inspired apostles).

2) Those not of God not listen to us (apostles).

e. Therefore: we know which Spirit is true, and which is false.

"Wherever there is Divine inspiration there is essential harmony with other Divine inspiration."

We are of God -- 'We' with great emphasis, like 'you' (plural) in [1 John 4:4](#), in contrast to the false prophets. 'We' here is probably not equivalent to 'you', because the 'we' means the Apostles. See on [1 John 4:14](#) and on [1 John 1:4](#).

Whoever knows God listens to us -- Every one that has a true acquaintance with the character of God will receive what we are teaching. ([John 8:47](#); [John 18:37](#)). Here the antithesis is "*whoever is not from God does not listen to us.*" Indicating that those who do not *listen* to the teaching of the apostles are not from God.

Hereby -- By this; to wit. Here begins a fresh sentence stating the way truth can be determined from error.

we know the spirit of truth and the spirit of error -- Knowing the "*spirit of truth*" is a simple matter of whether one is hearing the teaching of the apostles [*"we"*] or not.

It may be added that the same test is applicable now. Those who do not receive the plain teaching laid down in the word of God, whatever zeal or piety they may claim, have no foundation for claiming the name Christian.

1 John 4:7

1 John 4:7 Beloved, let us love one another, for love is from God, and whoever loves has been born of God and knows God.

1 John 4:7-21 Godly Love

1. We should love each other. -v.7-10
 - a. Because love comes from God - v.7
 - 1) Ones who love become God's child
 - 2) And know God.
 - b. Those who don't love do not know God. V.8
 - 1) Because God is love.
 - c. God showed his love in sending Christ into the world. V.9
 - 1) So that we could have life through him.
 - d. This is real love: v.10
 - 1) Not our love for God
 - 2) God's love for us
 - a) He sent Christ to die and take away our sins.

Beloved -- This form of address occurs first at ([1 John 2:7](#)), just where the subject of love appears for a few verses: it becomes the more common form of address ([1 John 3:2](#); [1 John 3:21](#), [1 John 4:1](#); [1 John 4:7](#); [1 John 4:11](#)) now that the main subject is love. Similarly, in [1 John 3:13](#), where brotherly love is the special subject, 'brethren' is the form of address.

let us love one another -- This verse introduces the subject of "love" which John dwells on more than any other.

Compare [John 13:23](#). On the duty here enjoined, see the [John 13:34-35](#) notes, and [1 John 3:11](#), [1 John 3:23](#) notes.

for love is from God -- And 'we are of God' ([1 John 4:6](#)), and 'you are of God' ([1 John 4:4](#)); therefore there should be the family bond of love between us.

What is here said by the apostle is based on the truth of what he elsewhere affirms, [1 John 4:8](#), that God is love. Hatred, envy, wrath, malice, all have their source in something else than God. He neither originates them, commends them, nor approves them.

- (1) All true love has its origin in God.
- (2) Real love shows that we have his Spirit, and that we belong to him.
- (3) It assimilates us to God, or makes us more and more like him.

whoever loves has been born of God and knows God -- Since God is love, his children are expected to be like him., and be filled with love also. To love shows that one knows God.

is born -- God's children look like Him. *"God is love!"*

"The spirit of truth is also known by a man's disposition." - Frank L. Cox

1 John 4:8

1 John 4:8 Anyone who does not love does not know God, because God is love.

Anyone who does not love -- Here "love" is translated from the present active participle of *agapao*. He who does not continue to love does not know (is without acquaintance) God.

does not know God -- "Know" is aorist active indicative (*ouk egno ton theon*) "has not once known", hence has never known God, Thus, was never converted to be one of God's children, who are like Him.

God is love -- This is the third of John's great statements respecting the nature of God: 'God is Spirit' ([John 4:24](#)); 'God is light' ([1 John 1:5](#)), and 'God is love'.

See on [1 John 1:5](#). Here, as in the other cases, the predicate has no article, and expresses a quality which which embraces all that GOD *is*. This is clear from John's argument, that because God is *full of love*, that one who does not love cannot have known God.

1 John 4:9

1 John 4:9 In this the love of God was made manifest among us, that God sent his only Son into the world, so that we might live through him.

In this -- John to now to give the proof or demonstration of God's love.

the love of God was made manifest -- God's love for all mankind is demonstration is the coming of Jesus Christ into the world to die as the price for redeeming man from the clutches of sin.

that God sent his only Son -- See note at [John 3:16](#).

only begotten -- is *μονογενής*, and signifies *the-only-one-of-its-kind*, and was so used to distinguish Jesus from all other sons of God.

that we might live through him -- He died that we might have eternal life through his sacrifice. The "measure" of God's love, then, which was manifested in the gift of a Saviour, is to be found.

1 John 4:10

1 John 4:10 In this is love, not that we have loved God but that he loved us and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins.

Herein is love -- Real love can be seen in God's love or us, look at the cross! [Romans 5:8](#)

not that we have loved God -- To speak of the greatest measure of love then is not to speak of one's love to God, but it is found in God's love for us.

he loved us -- This is the real measure of love, God's love for us.

sent his Son -- The ultimate demonstration of love.

propitiation -- The word occurs here and in [1 John 2:2](#) only. It means that which is most fitting, appeasing, or perfectly answering the need at hand.

The need for man's atonement, the fitting sacrifice to be paid for sin, could only be by Christ's sacrificial death.

The essentials of a sacrifice are two: 1) a priest to offer, and 2) a victim to be offered. Christ was both, in that he offered up himself for our sins [Hebrews 9:14](#).

■ 1 John 4:11

1 John 4:11 Beloved, if God so loved us, we also ought to love one another.

we ought also -- We need to love those God loves. [John 13:35](#)

OUTLINE:

1 John 4:7-21 Godly Love

2. How We Should Imitate God's Love - v.11-12

- a. God loves us and we should love each other - v.11
- b. If we love each other God lives in us -v.12
 - 1) (Though no one has ever seen God)
 - 2) God's love is made perfect in us.

■ 1 John 4:12

1 John 4:12 No one has ever seen God; if we love one another, God abides in us and his love is perfected in us.

seen God -- The noun "God" is without the article here, and thus, reference is made to the divine nature, and not the the first person of the Godhead exclusively.

The word God is properly applied to each of the divine persons of the Godhead, since it is the name of the *nature* which each possess in common. Since there is but one divine nature, there is but *one God*. Each of the persons of the Godhead possesses the divine nature, and thus each is properly referred to as God. It is hence entirely in order to say, "God, the Father ([1 John 4:9](#))" and "God, the Son ([1 John 1:1-3](#))", and "God, the Holy Spirit ([Acts 5:3-4](#))". The Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit do not constitute three separate Gods; there is but one God ([Deuteronomy 6:4](#)). These three divine personalities are of but ONE essence, ONE nature, and this one nature is God, and the only God.

God dwelleth in us -- See note at [Ephesians 3:17](#) for "*Indwelling*"

■ 1 John 4:13

1 John 4:13 By this we know that we abide in him and he in us, because he has given us of his Spirit.

dwell (abide, live) -- Thus, Christ dwells in us as well as the Holy Spirit.

How the Spirit dwells in us must be learned from other passages such as [Galatians 3:2](#), "*Did you receive the Spirit by the works of the law, or by the hearing of faith?*" which is a rhetorical question, put in this manner for emphasis. The word of truth --the gospel-- is the instrument by which the Spirit exercises his influence on both saint and sinner (cf. [Romans 8:9](#), [Galatians 4:16](#), etc).

OUTLINE *continued***1 John 4:7-21 Godly Love**

3. We know that God loves us -v.13-16
 - a. We know we live in God and He lives in us - v.13
 - 1) Because He gave us his Spirit.
 - b. The Father sent His Son to be the Savior of the world -v.14
 - 1) We have seen His Son
 - 2) We testify of it to the world
 - c. Jesus is the Son of God - v.15
 - 1) Whoever confesses this has God living inside him
 - 2) And this one live in God.
 - d. We know the love God has for us -v.16
 - 1) And we trust that love

we know ... because he has given us of his Spirit -- cf. [1 John 3:24](#). Referring to the Holy Spirit as the one "he gave us" appealing to their knowledge of God providing miraculous gifts in the infant church which served as evidence that God was abiding with them. See note at [1 John 2:21](#); and [1 John 2:27](#). (cf [1 John 3:24](#)).

1 John 4:14

1 John 4:14 And we have seen and testify that the Father has sent his Son to be the Savior of the world.

have seen -- From *theaomai*, means to behold with adoring wonder.

1 John 4:15

1 John 4:15 Whoever confesses that Jesus is the Son of God, God abides in him, and he in God.

confess -- is in the aorist tense and has the force of that which is difficult to render into English, and reveals that the confession is a once-for-all act by which the one making it is commit to this concept of Christ with all the faculties of mind and body.

confess -- see [Romans 10:10](#) See [James 2:24](#) note "Being Saved" for the important part confessing our faith in Christ plays in our salvation.

See [Ephesians 3:17](#) note on "Indwelling"

1 John 4:16

1 John 4:16 So we have come to know and to believe the love that God has for us. God is love, and whoever abides in love abides in God, and God abides in him.

we know -- (*egno kamen*). Perfect active indicative, "we have come to know and still know"

The last part of [1 John 4:16](#) ought to be taken as the conclusion of the paragraph, rather than the start of a new one. John again affirmed the reality of the abiding experience enjoyed by all Christians who love. BKC

1 John 4:17

1 John 4:17 By this is love perfected with us, so that we may have confidence for the day of judgment, because as he is so also are we in this world.

day of judgment -- [2 Corinthians 5:10](#)

OUTLINE *continued*

4. God is Love - v.16b - 18
 - a. Those who live in love live in God. V.16
 - 1) And God lives in them.
 - b. This is how Love is made perfect in us: v.17
 - 1) We can be without fear on the day God judges us
 - 2) Because in this world we are like him.
 - c. Where God's love is, there is no fear - v.18
 - 1) Because God's perfect love drives out fear.
 - 2) It is punishment that makes a person fear
 - 3) So love is not made perfect in the person who fears.

1 John 4:18

1 John 4:18 There is no fear in love, but perfect love casts out fear. For fear has to do with punishment, and whoever fears has not been perfected in love.

fear -- is not that which the Psalmist declares is "the beginning of wisdom" ([Psalms 111:10](#)), a reverential, godly fear, which shrinks from any action which would displease God, the fear which an obedient child has for a loving father ([1 Peter 1:17](#)); but *terror, dread, slavish fear*, such as is characteristic of a slave in the presence of a cruel and heartless master.

1 John 4:19

1 John 4:19 We love because he first loved us.

he first -- God loved us **before** we loved him ([John 3:16](#)). Our love is in response to his love for us. *Agapo* $\bar{m}en$ is indicative (we love), not subjunctive (let us love) of the same form. (Note that there is no object express here for "**we love**" in many MSS.)

OUTLINE *continued*

5. How We Show Godly Love - v.19-21
 - a. We love because God first loved us - v.19
 - b. Those saying they love God but hate their brethren are liars -v.20
 - 1) They don't love brethren whom they've seen
 - 2) How can they love God whom they've not seen.
 - c. God commands that if we love Him we must also love our brothers and sisters.

1 John 4:20

1 John 4:20 If anyone says, "I love God," and hates his brother, he is a liar; for he who does not love his brother whom he has seen cannot love God whom he has not seen.

someone says -- John emphasizes the futility of professing to **love God** while at the same time hating one's **brother**. As spokes get nearer to the center of the wheel, so they get nearer to one another. Thus, as we get closer to the Lord, the more we will love our fellow believers. BBC

1 John 4:21

1 John 4:21 And this commandment we have from him: whoever loves God must also love his brother.

from him -- (*ap' autou*). Either God or Christ. See Mark 12:29-31 for this old commandment (1 John 2:7).

that he who loveth God love his brother also -- This seems to be a summary of John's statements in this chapter. cf. John 13:34-35. Compare John 15:12, John 15:17.

1 John 5:1

1 John 5:1 Everyone who believes that Jesus is the Christ has been born of God, and everyone who loves the Father loves whoever has been born of him.

Whoever believes that Jesus is the Christ -- The Greek construction "whoever believes" ("everyone who" followed by a present participle) is identical to what we have in 1 John 2:29; 1 John 3:3-4; 1 John 4:2-3; 1 John 4:7. The present participle *pisteuon* ("believes") shows that this is a continuous faith.

This is in contrast to the antichrists, who deny that Christ has come in the flesh and therefore do not understand His saving work at Calvary (see 1 John 2:22; 1 John 4:2).

is born of God, -- For "is born of God" (*ek tou theou gegennetai*) see 1 John 2:29; 1 John 3:9; 1 John 4:7. Marginal notes in some translations offers "begotten" as a possible translation for *gegennetai*. *Gegennetai* is a perfect tense form of the verb *gennao*.

It is a word not easy to translate since it can refer either to conception or birth, and thus may be rendered "begotten" (conceived) or "born" according to the emphasis of the context.

The Abbott-Smith's Greek Lexicon tells us that *gennao* is to be translated "beget" when referring to a *father's* contribution to new life. In reference to a *mother's*, the same word is translated "born" or "to bring forth." This being true, the marginal reading "begotten" is to be preferred in this context.

A big problem is the inconsistency of translations.

A major consequence of this whole discussion is its impact on the doctrine of the new birth. In [John 1:12-13](#) and [1 John 5:1](#), is John saying that everyone who believes has been "born" from God, or has been "begotten"? And "believing" is not only intellectual acceptance, but the full course of trusting and commitment, which would include obeying, [Hebrews 5:9](#); [John 14:15](#).

and whoever loves the Father loves the *child* born of Him. -- There is no word for "Father" in the Greek. All John wrote is "everyone who loves him who begat" (*pas ho agapon ton gennesanta*). The aorist participle *gennesanta* points back to the time of conversion, and according to the first part of the verse, the one who did the "begetting" is God.

loves the child -- God is the one who "begat" them; therefore they are brothers, the children of a common Father. Everyone who loves his father should love also his father's children because they are his own brothers and sisters.

"Loves" (*agapao*) always means to deliberately do what is spiritually best for the other person ([1 John 2:15](#)). Christians should love one another because they are members of the same family of God.

Faith and Love - v. 1-3 John's points:

1. Genuine faith in Christ is a sign of the new life. cf. [James 2:14-26](#)
2. The love of God involves the love of God's children.
3. The proof of our love for God's children is our obedience to God's commandments.
4. The proof of our love to God is our obedience to God's commandments.

1 John 5:2

1 John 5:2 By this we know that we love the children of God, when we love God and observe His commandments.

By this we know -- John's use of *en touto* ("by this") is pointing forward to what is said in the next clause and we have the answer to his question.

we love the children of God, when we love God and obey his commandments. -- John repeats the phrase "keep His commandments" twice in these two verses. Obedience is the third characteristic of an overcomer.

In these 5 verses, John weaves *faith*, *love*, and *obedience* all together inextricably. They exist mutually in a dynamic relationship i.e., as the genuine proof of love is obedience, so the genuine proof of faith is love.

The word "**keep**" or "**observe**" conveys the idea of continual faithful obedience (cf. [John 8:31-32](#); [John 14:15](#); [John 14:21](#); [John 15:10](#)). As we keep God's commandments, we treat our brothers differently than we would were we not keeping God's commands.

1 John 5:3

1 John 5:3 For this is the love of God, that we keep His commandments; and His commandments are not burdensome.

For this is the love of God -- "For" show that this verse is developing an idea introduced in verse 2. This is what is involved in "when we love God." As the following "that" clause explains, there is no such thing as true love of God which does not also involve obedience.

that we keep His commandments -- In essence, love for God is expressed, not so much by spoken words, or by beautiful thoughts, or by an emotion of the heart, as it is by habitual obedience to His commands.

and His commandments are not burdensome. -- *Bareiai* can be rendered grievous, severe, unsparing, irksome, oppressive.

The adjective *bareiai* (burdensome, heavy) is used in [Matthew 23:4](#) of the "heavy loads" (hundreds of man-made rules) imposed upon the people by the Pharisees.

1 John 5:4

1 John 5:4 For whatever is born of God overcomes the world; and this is the victory that has overcome the world--our faith.

For whatever is born of God overcomes the world; -- "For" suggests this verse is intended to introduce a reason why God's commandments are not burdensome. Obedience to them enable the child of God to overcome the world. That is a cause for joy, not grief! In the NASB, "victory" translates *nike* and "overcome" translates *nikesasa*.

"The world" in this context certainly includes a hesitation or refusal to obey God's commands.

and this is the victory that has overcome the world--our faith. -- There is a play on words in the Greek (*aute estin he nike he nikesara*) that is difficult to convey in English. Attempts to reproduce the paronomasia include, "this is the conquest that has conquered the world." **The world** that is overcome includes a disinclination to obey's commands.

our faith -- Depending on the context, the noun "faith" can refer to behavior, or to assent to the facts ([1 John 5:1](#)). The word often can rightly be translated "faithfulness" (see [Matthew 23:23](#)) a word that depicts a lifestyle of doing what God says. "**Faithfulness**" is the victory!

Doing God's commands, day in and day out, is how victory is won and the world overcome, and God's commands are proved to not be burdensome.

The Victory - v. 4-8 Here we see:

1. The conquering nature.
2. The conquering weapon.
3. The object of this conquering faith.

1 John 5:5

1 John 5:5 Who is the one who overcomes the world, but he who believes that Jesus is the Son of God?

Who is the one who overcomes the world -- "Who is" (*tis estin*; cf. [1 John 2:22](#)) suggests "What other person can do it (overcome the world)?" The implied answer is "no one!" The present participle (*nikon*) describes continuing activity: "the one who keeps on conquering the world."

but he who believes that Jesus is the Son of God? -- "He who believes" is present tense, expressing continual actions: "The one who continues to believe." Every individual believer, every one who keeps believing that Jesus is the Son of God incarnate, is the one who keeps on conquering the world.

To believe anything less about Jesus is to believe in somebody who does not have the ability to give us the victory over the godless world.

1 John 5:6

1 John 5:6 This is the One who came by water and blood, Jesus Christ; not with the water only, but with the water and with the blood. It is the Spirit who testifies, because the Spirit is the truth.

This is the one who came by water and blood -- There is a wide range of interpretations given to this verse but the general idea is rather agreed on by all.

"This one" is Jesus, who is Christ and the Son of God. Verses 1 and 5 have called attention to the imperative of believing who Jesus is. Now faith, or belief, depends on testimony since faith comes by hearing. ([Romans 10:17](#)). Verses 6-8 call attention to three witnesses on whose testimony the reasonableness of believing in Jesus as the Christ is grounded. The disagreement concerns exactly to what **water**, **blood**, and **Spirit** refer.

There is some sense in which the witnesses continue to "bear witness" (verses 7-8) long after the earthly ministry of Jesus has been completed. Whatever explanation we give to the witnesses must take this fact into account.

water and blood -- There is first the question whether to take these literally, or figuratively (symbolically).

(A) Water and blood refer to the two commands from Christ regarding baptism and the Lord's Supper. The two continuing commands for the believer to obey is his own baptism and observing the Lord's Supper as a continuing memorial.

(B) John alludes to the blood and water which flowed from Jesus' pierced side when the Roman soldier thrust a spear into his body while it hung on the cross ([John 19:34-35](#)). Strange

however that the wording order of blood and water are reversed. A bigger difficulty is to see the significance of the following words "not by water only, but by water and blood" which follows.

(C) It seems best to understand the "**water**" to refer to Jesus' own baptism in the Jordan River and the Father's testimony to him with a voice from heaven testifying "This is my beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased." [Matthew 3:17](#). The "**blood**" refers to Jesus' death on the cross which provided the sacrifice from man's sins. God bearing witness to His Son by raising Him from the dead three days later. This interpretation refutes the false teachers, such as the Gnostics, who deny Jesus' humanity and his literal death. The Holy Spirit testifies to these things through the words of the inspired apostles and continues to bear testimony to this truth today through the words of the inspired writers of the N.T.

Jesus Christ; not with the water only, but with the water and with the blood. -- Why has John added this sentence? Evidently he felt that further precision was necessary in order to make his meaning clear and unmistakable. The definite article "the" before "water" and "blood" is alluding to his previous statement about them.

And the Spirit is the one who testifies, because the Spirit is the truth. -- [These words are a part of verse 7 in the NASB and verse 6 in the KJV. Then the KJV/NKJV include a whole sentence that is not found in most modern translations, except sometimes in the margin with an explanation.]

who testifies [bears witness] -- The verb *bear witness* and the noun *testimony* both come from the same Greek word and are used a total of nine times in this section. The basic meaning is "someone who has personal and immediate knowledge of something."

The O.T. required two witnesses to the truth of a matter, and John here supplies abundant evidence.

John writes of the testimony of God that comes through the Holy Spirit. Since the Spirit of God cannot lie, His testimony is sure. It is the Holy Spirit through the inspired apostles and their miracles and the inspired N.T. writers that give testimony to this truth recorded here.

the Spirit -- [Acts 2:4](#); [Acts 4:31](#); [Acts 5:32](#);

HOLY SPIRIT

Member of Godhead- [Matthew 28:19](#), [1 John 5:7-8](#),

"He"- [John 16:13](#); [John 1:1-17](#), [Acts 8:29](#),

Gave us God's word- [2 Peter 1:21](#),

"Sword of Spirit" is "Word"- [Ephesians 6:17](#),

Holy Spirit baptism- Occurred twice

1. On Pentecost-- To give power to the apostles (Jews)-- [Acts 1:8](#) & [Acts 2:1-4](#)
2. At Cornelius' house to show that Gentiles were included - [Acts 11:15-18](#) & [Acts 15:7-8](#).
3. Paul later wrote that there is now only "one baptism"- [Ephesians 4:4](#)
4. Baptism in the name of Christ is water baptism- [Acts 10:47-48](#) and [Acts 2:38](#). It is the baptism commanded of everyone in [Matthew 28:19](#), [Mark 16:16](#)

1 John 5:7

1 John 5:7 For there are three that testify:

The KJV/NKJV include a whole sentence that is not found in most modern translations. That sentence reads: *"For there are three that bear record in heaven, the Father, the Son, and the Holy ghost: and these three one one."* This sentence does not occur in any Greek Manuscripts of the New Testament, nor in any of the ancient versions, but is found first in a fourth century Latin sermon.

The inclusion of this sentence has led to the so-called "Comma Johanneum" (i.e. the Johannine [interpolated] clause) into the early English Bible. After the invention of printing, the first person to publish an edition of the printed Greek text was Erasmus. His first edition came out in the year 1516. Neither it nor his second edition included this additional verse. A mild controversy was stirred up because the verse was found in the contemporary Latin versions.

Erasmus insisted that his text was right, and was so sure of himself that he rashly promised to include the verse in his next Greek text if there was a single Greek manuscript that could be found in support of it. At length a copy turned up (there is some evidence that the manuscript shown to Erasmus, MS 61, [Codex Britannicus probably written in 1520] was translated from the Latin to the Greek and deliberately produced just to provide a "Greek manuscript" such as Erasmus demanded), and true to his word, Erasmus put this verse in his third edition (1522) of his Greek New Testament, though not without protest. He did not include it in subsequent editions of his Greek Text.

William Tyndale was the first man to translate the New Testament into English based on a Greek text (instead of Latin), and it was Erasmus' third edition which he used in making his translation. It was also Erasmus' third edition and Tyndale's influential translation that was used by the scholars who eventually produced the text that came to be called "the Textus Receptus" from which the King James Version was translated. This is how the "Comma Johanneum" became a part of the KJV/NKJV.

1 John 5:8

1 John 5:8 For there are three that testify: the Spirit and the water and the blood; and the three are in agreement.

For there are three that testify: -- "For" shows this verse serves to introduce an explanation of what was just said. In verse 6, John called attention to "by water and blood" then opened verse 7 with these words, "and the Spirit bears witness." Just in case we missed the *"and"* which shows that water and blood were witnesses just like the Spirit is, John now brings the three together and declares that they all "bear witness."

How can water and blood testify along with the Spirit? We need to look at the text from a Semitic point of view, wherein impersonal objects can be said to testify. For example, the heap of stones Jacob and Laban put together was called a witness ([Genesis 31:48](#)). (cf. [Joshua 4:5-7](#).)

"Three" reflects the practice of the ancient world of requiring a plurality of witnesses to establish a case. According to the Mosaic law ([Deuteronomy 19:15](#)) "One witness is not enough ... a matter must be established by the testimony of two or three witnesses." (See also [Deuteronomy 17:6](#); and [Matthew 18:16](#)).

the Spirit and the water and the blood; -- Although Spirit, water, and blood are all neuter nouns in Greek, they are referred to here by a clause written in the masculine plural. The verb "are" and the participle "bear witness" are present tense, suggesting a continuous testimony to Jesus that takes place at the present time. The Spirit, water, and blood, "are not merely witnesses who might be called, or who have once been called, but witnesses who are perpetually delivering their testimony" (Plummer).

and the three are in agreement. -- All three witnesses say the same thing; they are united in their testimony, all witnessing to the truth that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God.

1 John 5:9

1 John 5:9 If we receive the testimony of men, the testimony of God is greater, for this is the testimony of God that he has borne concerning his Son.

If we receive the testimony of men -- John presents an argument from the lesser to the greater. The testimony of three human witnesses in legal matters is enough to settle a matter. If the testimony of three human witnesses establishes the fact in a case, then certainly three divine witnesses should provide unimpeachable and irrefutable testimony to the facts concerning Jesus being the Son of God.

receive -- The present tense verb "receive" indicates something that habitually occurs. "Receive" is used in the sense of "accept as valid," see [John 3:11](#); [John 3:32-33](#).

the testimony of God is greater, -- "Greater" means "more worthy of acceptance." The divine witness is not limited to the Spirit but includes the witness of the Father.

for this is the testimony of God that he has borne concerning his Son. -- "For" has an explanatory force, identifying what it is to which God has testified. The "that" clause says God's testimony concerned His Son, a subject on which God the Father is fully competent to speak. Jesus Himself said, "No one knows the Son, except the Father" ([Matthew 11:27](#)).

has borne witness [NASB] -- This is in the perfect tense because God's testimony has permanent validity. cf. [John 5:36-37](#); [1 John 3:20](#); [John 12:28-30](#).

The Witness of God - v. 9-12 [Cox]

We see ...

1. The strength of it.
2. The value of it.
3. The possessor of it.
4. The contents of it.

1 John 5:10

1 John 5:10 Whoever believes in the Son of God has the testimony in himself. Whoever does not believe God has made him a liar, because he has not believed in the testimony that God has borne concerning his Son.

Whoever believes in the Son of God has the testimony in himself. -- Here the "testimony" ("witness") referred to is the fruit of *all* the evidence (cf. [1 Peter 5:7-8](#), etc.) on the heart, producing this result; that is, there is the deepest conviction of the truth that Jesus is the Son of God. Those who believe this testimony receive the Father's own witness in their hearts that they are right to trust in Christ. (We can trust what the Spirit says to the churches, [Revelation 2:7, 11, 17, 29; 3:6, 13, 22.](#))

Whoever does not believe God has made him a liar, -- Not to believe in the Son of God is equivalent to saying that God was not telling the truth when on numerous occasions He bore witness to His Son.

The perfect tense "has made" (*pepoieken*) suggests a definite choice made in the past, whose effects continue. The charge of making God to be a "liar" is directed against any who refuses to "believe in the Son of God" (i.e. become Jesus' obedient followers), whether they be the false teachers or those who choose to followers of the false teachers.

because he has not believed in the testimony that God has borne concerning his Son. -- The phrases of verse 9 are repeated for emphasis. Both perfect tense verbs in this clause ("has not believed" and "has borne [witness]") express past completed action with present continuing results.

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John is giving great emphasis to the testimony of God. He mentions testimony at least eight times. And, now, he states that if one believes in God, he has this testimony in his heart. Some commentators would infer that God has given a special message into the heart of those who believe him. It is my understanding that this is not the force of his argument. I would be surprised if John would use that type of argument to the gnostic heretics since this is their argument: that God has given them a special knowledge. What John seems to be saying here is that it is in one's heart because believing has come from hearing, receiving, and obeying God's message. One who does not believe God is making God out to be a liar, because that person has not received nor believed in the testimony that God has provided. College Press NT.

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1 John 5:11

1 John 5:11 And this is the testimony, that God gave us eternal life, and this life is in his Son.

And this is the testimony, -- "The witness is this (this is the witness)" is the same expression in [1 John 5:9](#) and has the same meaning here. John is calling attention to additional items included in the testimony God has given.

God's testimony concerned His Son (verse 9), but also there are two further truths to which God has borne testimony: that God has given us eternal life and that life is in the Son.

that God gave us eternal life, -- "That" is declarative, telling in what the "testimony" consists. "Eternal life" is emphatic in the Greek sentence structure. The phrase emphasizes the character or quality of what has been given, which is best describe as "spiritual life."

and this life is in his Son. -- This is the third item in this context included in God's testimony. First was the testimony concerning His Son (vs. 9), and second was the testimony concerning the gift of eternal life (vs. 11a). Now, third, God's testimony is that such life is in His Son.

The "is" is present tense, suggesting it is and always will be. "In His Son" is the only place where eternal life is constantly available, a point which verse 12-13 directly affirm. Those who have the Son have this life. those who are without the Son are without life, [1 John 5:12](#).

1 John 5:12

1 John 5:12 He who has the Son has the life; he who does not have the Son of God does not have the life.

See note on previous verse. [1 John 5:11](#).

We must be in fellowship with the Son, but we do not need anything more, like science, or other philosophy, or some "unknown" and "mysterious" secrets, in order to have eternal life. It rests with the Son and our faith in Him. We don't need other books, like the Koran, or Book of Mormon, or someother supposed revelation. God has given us his tesimony already!

1 John 5:13

1 John 5:13 These things I have written to you who believe in the name of the Son of God, so that you may know that you have eternal life.

New Paragraph in many Greek texts and English translations.

Summary of **5:13-17**: John tells us that one of his purposes for writing this letter has been to assure the believer that he has eternal life (vs. 13). Such assurance of salvation leads to boldness in prayer (vss. 14-15). Believers should pray for brethren who are sinning, but not for folk who are sinning "a sin unto death" (vss. 16-17).

These things I have written to you -- ‘I have written’ is literally, ‘I wrote’: it is the epistolary aorist, which may be represented in English either by the present or the perfect.

"These things" will cover the whole Epistle, and such is probably the meaning, as in [1 John 1:4](#), where John states the purpose of his Epistle in words which are explained by what he says here. There is nothing there or here, as there is in [1 John 2:26](#), to limit ‘these things’ to what immediately precedes.

to you who believe in the name of the Son of God, -- This first letter of John is addressed to those who have accepted this belief but still need assurance that through this name they have indeed received eternal life. So the author refers six times in vv.15–20 (in addition to v.13) to what we believers *know*.

so that you may know that you have eternal life. -- At the opening of the Epistle John said ‘These things we write that our joy may be fulfilled’ ([1 John 1:4](#)). The context there shows what constitutes this joy. It is the consciousness of fellowship with God and His Son and His saints; in other words it is the conscious possession of eternal life ([John 17:3](#)).

Eternal life not only refers primarily to an everlasting time but to a relationship with the person of Jesus Christ and possessing His nature (as in [1 John 5:11-12](#); [1 John 5:20](#); [John 17:3](#)).

Rights of God's Sons - 5:13-17 [Cox]

v.13 points out a reason why the little book was written.

1. The right to eternal life. -v.13
2. The right to the throne of grace. v.14 ff
3. The right to intercede for our brethren. v.15-16.

1 John 5:14

1 John 5:14 This is the confidence which we have before Him, that, if we ask anything according to His will, He hears us.

John in this context is thinking more of the Christian's right to approach God in prayer, than of the contents of the prayer (which he does so in the next verse) which must be according to the Father's will. WG

In this context, then, it is natural to suppose that John was thinking especially, though not exclusively, of a Christian's *right to ask* God for help in keeping His commands. BKC.

This is the confidence which we have before Him, -- This is the fourth and last time John has alluded to the Christian's "**confidence**" or "**boldness**" (*parresia*, absolute freedom of speech). Twice in connection with the day of judgment ([1 John 2:28](#); [1 John 4:17](#)), twice, and here, in connection with approaching God in prayer ([1 John 3:21-22](#)).

In each place where John speaks of "**confidence**" it is the Christian's connection with Christ and the Father which provides the grounds for great boldness or confidence toward them.

In this verse, the pronoun "**Him**" probably refers to God. The preposition *pros* ("**before**") points to an active approach to God as we come to Him in prayer.

that, if we ask anything according to His will, He hears us. -- The *hoti* ("that") clause (with its verbs "ask" and "hear") point to the confidence about God hearing and answering prayer. The promise of answered prayer here and in [1 John 5:14-15](#) repeats what John wrote earlier about answered prayer "*we have confidence before God; and whatever we ask we receive from him, because we keep his commandments and do what pleases him*" [1 John 3:21-22](#).

There, the request may have had something to do with helping one's needy brother. Here, one issue being prayed about is the brother who is seen committing a sin. The consistent use of the first person plural ("we") through the closing verses of this chapter implies that John is thinking of those readers who are Christians.

according to His will -- This is the qualification concerning the prayers to which God grants. God's will is for our best good, even when we don't understand it. We should have the confidence in God's promise to accept his answer, even when it may be years before we understand His answer ourselves.

To pray **according to God's will** is to pray in accord with what He would want, not what we would desire or insist that He do for us ([John 14:13-14](#); [James 4:3](#)). John already specified that answered prayer also depends on obedience to God's commandments and avoidance of sin ([1 John 3:21](#); [Psalms 66:18](#); [John 15:7](#); [1 Peter 3:7](#)).

He hears us -- This means He hear us favorably; God has promised to listen to the prayers of His children! [The blessing of "priesthood".] Elsewhere we are told that God's ears are open unto the prayers of the righteous ([1 Peter 3:12](#)).

It is not "any" prayer that He responds to, nor is it just "anybody" to whom he listens. It is God's children (including John's readers), those who share eternal life, whose prayers He delights to hear. What an encouragement!

■ 1 John 5:15

1 John 5:15 And if we know that he hears us in whatever we ask, we know that we have the requests that we have asked of him.

And if we know that he hears us in whatever we ask, -- John's use of "if" is not expressing any doubt that God listens to His children's prayers. Some modern English translations substitute "because" for "if", lest the reader think the sentence expresses doubt.

The context of the next verse would indicate that what one is praying for is *forgiveness*.

we know that we have the requests that we have asked of him. -- Again John writes *oidamen* ("we know"), we are confident! Not only are we confident that loves to hear our prayers (1 John 5.14) but we are confident that He answer them too.

The point John is emphasizing is "God answer prayer!" Some of God's answers to His children's prayers are recognized immediately, others later, and some are not recognized in our lifetime. But this is John's point, God hears and answers prayers!

■ 1 John 5:16

1 John 5:16 If anyone sees his brother committing a sin not leading to death, he shall ask, and God will give him life--to those who commit sins that do not lead to death. There is sin that leads to death; I do not say that one should pray for that.

If anyone sees his brother committing a sin not leading to death, -- In the Christian's prayer he may offer intercession on behalf of others whose sins are observed. It is very possible that this topic of intercession for sinning brethren is the topic to which John has deliberately been leading.

"**If**" does not express doubt, but what actually does occur from time to time. The aorist subjunctive verb "sees" denotes a specific occasion when a brother is actually caught in the act of "committing a sin." (Alford, GTER).

What "**death**" is spoken about? "Death" is used three ways in the N.T. **1)** physical death ([Acts 2:24](#); [John 11:4](#)); **2)** the death of a man's spirit ([John 5:24](#); [Ephesians 2:1](#)); **3)** and the second death (hell, [Revelation 20:14](#)). Which of the three is intended here?

Obviously "**death**" and the "**eternal life**" in this passage must correspond. If so, "death" is the loss of "eternal life" which is the possession of those who have the Son ([1 John 5:12](#)).

Concerning "a sin not leading to death," will be noted later, but here we will focus on how sin can bring death to the Christian and cause him to forfeit eternal life.

"**Unto death**" (*pros thanaton*) speaks of a sin that is fatal to one's spiritual life, just as sickness "unto death" in [John 11:4](#) ([John 11:13-14](#)) means a sickness from which there is no hope of recovery.

he shall ask, -- What does a Christian ask when sees a brother committing a sin? At least that the sinner be given the opportunity to repent and to confess his wrong. And perhaps for wisdom to know how to do some fraternal intervention and rebuking in the sinner's life in order to encourage such repentance.

and God will give him life--to those who commit sins that do not lead to death. -- The "and" introduces what the result of this prayer will be. Most translations supply the words "God" and "lead" ("leading") to clear up English ambiguities.

"Life" here is the "eternal life" that [1 John 5:11-12](#) emphasized. "Those who" stands in apposition to "him" but the plural serves to generalize the preceding proposition, so this applies to all those whose sin is not a sin leading to death.

Sins which do not lead to spiritual death are possible for believers. Such sins can be forgiven and "eternal life" not forfeited.

There is sin that leads to death; -- What was just implied by John is now clearly and explicitly stated, there is sin that results in "spiritual death." [A few commentators believe John is making a play here between physical death and spiritual death. But the contrast has always been "death" verses "eternal life" so for the contrast to stand, "death" in this context must be spiritual death.]

Let us say in the beginning that while today there are divergent ideas about what John meant here, we believe the recipients of this letter knew exactly what John was talking about. By us not knowing the specific situation we must evaluate the various views and come to our own conclusion about which is right (if any of them).

Listing a few major view:

1) Any single sin (such as those named in [Galatians 5:18-21](#)) which is not repented of, thus causing the sinner to be lost. Guy N. Wood indicates that the "sin unto death" is any sin that a man will not confess (cf. [1 John 1:9](#)).

But if this is what John has in mind while writing this, why indicate that a Christian shouldn't intercede for such a sinner. Should not the Christian pray that the sinner will have opportunity to repent.

2) The Calvinist rejects that this is a Christian who has apostatized, saying that it is incompatible with the doctrine of uncondition eternal security. That the man, not to be prayed for, never was a Christian.

But John calls him a "brother" in [1 John 5:16](#), and by the sin "leading him to death" indicates he once was in Christ and had eternal life [1 John 5:13](#).

3) Some equate the sin unto death with the "blasphemy of the Holy Spirit" and equate it today with rejecting ultimately the message the Holy Spirit has given us through the inspiration of the N.T. writers.

The Pharisees rejected Jesus as Christ and ascribed the mighty works he did "by the Spirit of God" ([Matthew 12:28](#)) to the agency of Beelzebub. Jesus said such sin would never be forgiven in this age or in the age to come. ([Mark 3:29](#); [Matthew 12:22-32](#).)

4) Take into consideration the context of 1 John and his repudiation of the false teachers who rejected Christ coming in the flesh, sacrificing his fleshly body on the cross for our sins, and his resurrection to a new life. Whether these were Gnostics or their fore-runners this seems to be the battle John in waging in these chapters.

As long as one rejects Jesus as the Christ, the Son of God, there is no other means for salvation ([Acts 4:12](#); [John 14:6](#)). There is no need for Christians to pray for such to be saved.

John is also concerned for those who would be swayed by these false teachers, warning them that by turning away and rejecting Christ there was only "death."

I do not say that one should pray [make request] for that. -- The word for "pray" ("make request") is *erotao* (see [1 John 5:14](#)) and John may be implying that such prayer for one sinning unto death is presumptuous. It presumes to tell God what to do, to change His word. We should not be surprised if we pray for "one sinning unto death" and "nothing happens." Prayer for those who have turned away from Jesus, the world's only Savior, is a pointless exercise. Though we are confident God hears and answers we should not expect God's answer to our prayers to impinge on the sinner's freedom of will.

■ 1 John 5:17

1 John 5:17 All wrongdoing is sin, but there is sin that does not lead to death.

There is definitely sin that leads to death and sin that does not lead to death. What that specific sin is, John does not say. However, undoubtedly those who were reading John's original letter surely would have known. This is the reason this writer associates the "sin unto death" as the rejection of the humanity of Jesus; hence, he seems to be directing his teaching to the gnostic Docetics about whom this entire letter is concerned. CPNT

All wrongdoing is sin, -- No one should be misled and think sins are not serious. John has already characterized sin as unrighteousness ([1 John 1:9](#)); and lawlessness ([1 John 3:4](#)). By either definition, sin is violation of God's standard.

Whether it is a "sin leading to death" or a "sin not leading to death," it is "unrighteousness" and that is "sin" (*harmartia*, to miss the mark).

but there is sin that does not lead to death. -- This verse is apparently intended to encourage the exercise of Christian intercession. Although all wrongdoing is sin, the distinction between a sin unto death and a sin not unto death remains valid. Many evil deeds, although undoubtedly sin, do not lead to death, and can be forgiven (cf. [1 John 1:7-9](#); [1 John 2:1](#) ff; [1 John 4:10](#)). Intercessory prayer in these cases of "sin not unto death" is proper and will help the one in danger.

■ 1 John 5:18

1 John 5:18 We know that everyone who has been born of God does not keep on sinning, but he who was born of God protects him, and the evil one does not touch him.

We know that everyone who has been born of God does not keep on sinning, -- "We know" (*oidamen*) at the beginning of each of verses 18, 19, and 20 is the link which holds them together. What is affirmed in this verse is virtually identical to [1 John 3:6-9](#).

"Sins" is a present tense; the Christian is not to be habitually sinning. John has just admitted that Christians sin -- sins of "unrighteousness" and "sins not leading to death." But he repeats what he emphasized in [1 John 3:6-9](#) that Christians do not habitually sins.

John is aware of the difficulties involved in living the new life and of the quality of the opposition from the evil one. Still, John is adamant in his confidence that the evil one need not prevail. Christians do not have to continue in sin, nor should they.

but he who was born of God protects [keeps] him, -- John introduces a strong adversative "but." The word "keeps" ("protects") means to keep safe, to guard, to protect, to watch over carefully, to defend.

The one being kept (i.e. "him") is the believer. But who is the one doing the keeping? Who is the "he" who was born of God? Is it Jesus, or is it the believer who has been born again? Obviously, Jesus.

and the evil one does not touch him. -- "And" introduces the result of Christ's protection. The "evil one" is the devil. ([1 John 2:13](#) ff; [1 John 3:12](#)). Who is the "him" here? Is it the believers, or Jesus himself.

"Touch" here is *haptomai* and means to lay hold of or to grasp (see the word used of Mary Magdalene, [John 20:17](#), who tried to hold on to Jesus so He couldn't get away). The devil may tempt and harass the Christian, but he cannot capture him, or lay hold on him to harm him. As Jesus "keeps" the Christian, He puts limits on what the devil can do ([1 Corinthians 10:13](#)).

Certainties - v.18-21 [Cox]

The expression "we know" appears 4x in this paragraph. It indicates something unquestionable, something concerning which there is no doubt, something confirmed by evidence, observation, experience. It is applied to the following particulars:

1. The fact that God's children do not sin.
2. The fact that we are God's children.
3. The fact that those who are not God's children are under the influence of the devil.
4. The wonderful fact of the incarnation.

1 John 5:19

1 John 5:19 We know that we are from God, and the whole world lies in the power of the evil one.

We know that we are from God, -- John associates himself with the readers and thus with all Christian people. Not only is God the source of the believers' spiritual life and being, but believers belong to Him.

and the whole world lies in the power of the evil one. -- This is in dreadful contrast with the children of God. The word "lies (in the power of)" [*keimai*, [G2749](#)] is a common idiom and means to be the servant of some chief.

Believers are protected by God ([1 John 5:18](#)), while those who reject the truth of God's Son live under the power of the devil ([1 John 2:15-17](#); [1 John 3:8](#)). Who is the prince of this world in [Ephesians 2:2](#), who works in the children of disobedience.

■ 1 John 5:20

1 John 5:20 And we know that the Son of God has come and has given us understanding, so that we may know him who is true; and we are in him who is true, in his Son Jesus Christ. He is the true God and eternal life.

And we know that the Son of God has come, -- John's third and final affirmation is in fact the summary of the letter. It affirms the point of dispute with the false teachers. Christian faith has to do with Jesus Christ. He is the "Word of life" ([1 John 1:1](#)), "the eternal life" ([1 John 1:2](#)), which was with the Father and through the Incarnation came into human history.

and has given us understanding -- John had been with Christ and been taught by him, and was given the Holy Spirit to be his guide and lead him to understanding. And all this truth John has passed on so all the believers can also understand the truth. ([John 16:13](#)).

so that we may know Him who is true; --- [John 14:6](#); [John 8:32](#) [John 20:31](#).

and we are in Him who is true, in His Son Jesus Christ. -- John affirms God and His Son, who are one ([1 John 1:1-2](#)). Believers in Jesus embrace the idea of Jesus Christ, God as Son in the flesh and live according to His commands.

This is the true God and eternal life. -- The word "*true*" means "genuine" as opposed to what is false, as the false teachers were proclaiming.

This verse constitutes the summation of John's whole letter. The greatest certainty of all, the Incarnation, guarantees the certainty of the rest. This is the doctrinal foundation out of which comes love and obedience.

■ 1 John 5:21

1 John 5:21 Little children, keep yourselves from idols.

Little children, -- John closes on an affectionate note and with a final admonition. "Dear children" (cf. [1 John 3:7](#); [1 John 4:4](#)) reminds his readers of his genuine commitment to them.

guard yourselves from idols. -- John contrasts the term "*idols*" with "the true God" of the previous verse ([1 John 5:20](#)).

The word "**idols**" refers to anything that stands between people and God, whether physical or spiritual. All the falsehoods that John has opposed in the letter are forms of idolatry.

"There is no need to seek far-fetched, figurative explanations of "the idols" when the literal meaning lies close at hand, is suggested by the contrast and is in harmony with the known circumstances of the time." - Plummer

- the end of 1st John notes -