

# NOTES ON THE EPISTLES OF JOHN

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# COMMENTARY ON 1 JOHN 1

## 1 Jn 1:1<sup>1</sup>

Here we have the neuter relative pronoun which is rendered “that which.” In Jn 1:1<sup>2</sup>, John writes of the Word who was in being in the beginning, before all things were made, who was with (Gk. pros, toward) God, in perfect communion and intercourse with God, and that He was God, truly and fully God in essence, nature and attributes, for “the Word was God.” By Him all things were made. But in this epistle John writes of that which was from the beginning concerning the Word of life. That which was from the beginning was in due time heard, seen, beheld and handled. In Jn 1:1<sup>3</sup>, John writes of the Word “who” was in the beginning, but in this epistle he writes of “that which” was from the beginning concerning the Word.

The Word was the One by whom Deity was revealed, and there was that which men on earth heard of Him. In due time men saw with their eyes those things about Him which became indelibly impressed upon them, so that they said, “We cannot but speak the things which we saw and heard” (Acts 4:20<sup>4</sup>). He was not only seen with the eyes, but the apostles and others beheld, that is, viewed with attention, gazed upon, that which was revealed in the incarnate Word. Then as He came still closer to them, they could say that their hands handled the Word who had become

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1. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/1%20John%201.1>

2. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/John%201.1>

3. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/John%201.1>

4. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Acts%204.20>

flesh. From the remoteness of the beginning the Word of life came ever nearer and nearer to men, and when raised from the dead, in order that they might be fully convinced that He was still in the flesh, He said, "Handle Me, and see; for a spirit hath not flesh and bones, as ye behold Me having" (Lk.24:39<sup>5</sup>). In this place also it says that "He shewed them His hands and His feet" (verse 40), the very hands and feet that bore the wounds of the nails by which He was hanged on the cross.

### 1 Jn 1:2<sup>6</sup>

When the Life was manifested or brought to light, the apostles could say, "We have seen, and bear witness, and declare unto you the Life, the eternal, which was with the Father." Quite evidently the Life is not an abstract thing, but a blessed Person. We gather this from 1 Jn 5:20<sup>7</sup>, where reference is made to God's Son, Jesus Christ; "This is the true God, and eternal life." Eternal life is in the Son, consequently, "He that hath the Son hath the life" (1 Jn 5:12<sup>8</sup>). And, as Paul says, "The free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord" (Rom.6:23<sup>9</sup>). Christ is our life. "When Christ, who is our life, shall be manifested, then shall ye also with Him be manifested in glory" (Col.3:4<sup>10</sup>). Whilst the Gospel according to John was written that "ye may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing ye may have life in His name" (Jn 20:31<sup>11</sup>), the first epistle of John was

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5. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Luke.24.39>

6. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/1%20John%201.2>

7. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/1%20John%205.20>

8. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/1%20John%205.12>

9. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rom.6.23>

10. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Col.3.4>

written to teach believers how to live the life that they had obtained through faith in Christ.

If the apostles were to know the character of this new life that they might be able to live it and teach it to others, it was necessary that the Life should be manifested. The apostles who lived with and followed the Lord saw the manifestation of the life in Him. They saw how He lived and walked amongst men, how He talked and acted. The lives of the disciples were such that they were called Christians (Acts 11:26<sup>12</sup>); they were Christ-like people. They lived like Him. Paul, who was one of the chief teachers in Antioch, where the disciples were first called Christians, later wrote to the Corinthians, “Be ye imitators of me, even as I also am of Christ” (1 Cor.11:1<sup>13</sup>). The apostles, being men of like passions with us, had the old Adamic nature in their flesh, and they needed to have demonstrated to them in the life of the Lord how they were to live to please God. Paul often emphasizes his manner of life in connexion with his preaching of the gospel: “Ye know what manner of men we shewed ourselves toward you for your sake. And ye became imitators of us, and of the Lord” (1 Thess.1:5<sup>14</sup>,6<sup>15</sup>). In John’s Gospel it is the gift of life, and in this epistle it is how to live that life. Many vainly seek to live the life of a Christian without having obtained life, being yet dead in their trespasses and sins.

1 Jn 1:3<sup>16</sup>,4<sup>17</sup>

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11. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/John%2020.31>

12. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Acts%2011.26>

13. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/1%20Cor.11.1>

14. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/1%20Thess.1.5>

15. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/1%20Thess%201.6>

The object in the manifestation of the Life is fellowship, first, fellowship with the Father and with the Son, in that fellowship which is produced by the power of the indwelling Spirit of God (2 Cor.13:14<sup>18</sup>; Phil.2:1<sup>19</sup>). Then, as the result of each walking in the light of God, fellowship with one another (verse 7). Not only does life issue from the Lord, He is also the Light that came into the world; He is the one and only Light of this world. “In Him was life; and the life was the light of men” (Jn 1:4<sup>20</sup>). “There was the true Light ... coming into the world,” and His purpose in coming was to lighten every man. We first need life to enable us to walk, and we need light to teach us how to walk, even to follow the Lord. No one can possibly walk who has not first received life. Fellowship here is fellowship with (Meta, together with), not that fellowship or community into which those in the church of God in Corinth and all similar churches were called, which latter is synonymous with that fellowship in which those in the church of God in Jerusalem continued steadfastly (Acts 2:42<sup>21</sup>; 1 Cor.1:9<sup>22</sup>). Fellowship means a sharing in common. It began with the Father and the Son sharing with the apostles the spiritual things of the New Testament. These things the apostles shared with others in their oral ministry and by their inspired writings in the books of the New Testament. These Scriptures are the basis of divine fellowship. John wrote this epistle to promote

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16. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/1%20John%201.3>

17. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/1%20Jn%201.4>

18. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/2%20Cor.13.14>

19. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Phil.2.1>

20. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/John%201.4>

21. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Acts%202.42>

22. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/1%20Cor.1.9>

fellowship and in it he also shows what will hinder fellowship and cause it to cease altogether. John tells of the joy he had in writing his epistle; he says, “that our joy may be fulfilled.”

1 Jn 1:5<sup>23</sup>,6<sup>24</sup>

All man’s works are evil in God’s sight. “There is none that doeth good, no, not so much as one” (Rom.3:12<sup>25</sup>). Hence it is, “This is the judgement, that the light is come into the world, and men loved the darkness rather than the light: for their works were evil” Jn 3:19<sup>26</sup>). Even in those who have been turned from darkness to light (Acts 26:18<sup>27</sup>), there is much of darkness as to the knowledge of God and of His will, but in God, who is light, there is no darkness at all. This is the message which the Lord taught His apostles. The gods of the heathen bear no resemblance to Him, for they have eyes and see not, and ears but they hear not, and a mouth but they cannot speak, and, alas, they that make and serve them become like unto them. But in contrast, those that know their God, and walk in fellowship with Him, take on His likeness. If we should say that we have fellowship with Him and walk in the darkness, we lie and do not the truth.

It would be a contradiction in terms, if we said we walked with One who is light and walked in darkness at the same time. To walk in the light means that we walk according to His word. The word of God is the only source of light to men in this world, and

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23. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/1%20John%201.5>

24. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/1%20Jn%201.6>

25. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rom.3.12>

26. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/John%203.19>

27. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Acts%2026.18>

apart from it the darkness is dense and complete. Walk signifies the behaviour or deportment of anyone. We manifest the inward condition of our hearts by our walk. Fellowship being an inward experience of the heart in touch with God, so we may measure inward condition by outward behaviour.

1 Jn 1:7<sup>28</sup>

Man originally lived in fellowship with the LORD God his Creator, but when he disobeyed the command of God and sin entered, death spiritually resulted and fellowship ceased. The Lord came that we might have life, and have it abundantly (Jn 10:10<sup>29</sup>). This opened the way that those who have this new life in Him should so walk that they might know the experience of Eden again. The standard is that we are to walk in the light as He is in the light, a high standard indeed, but God can only have one standard. If each one so walks, then we have fellowship with one another. Fellowship is not politeness nor is it friendliness; it cannot be manufactured.

It is the result of the Lord's coming from heaven and teaching the truth of God, and if the children of God walk in the light of that truth then they will have fellowship with one another. Remember that as in Eden the breaking of God's command resulted in the destruction of fellowship, even so it will be now. It is this matter of disobedience that has resulted in the scattering of God's children and the ceasing of fellowship. Those who walk in God's light find out their many defects, and realize their need of cleansing. Hence we have available the one and only cleanser

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28. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/1%20John%201.7>

29. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/John%2010.10>

from sin, even the blood of Jesus, God's Son. It is the same bloodshedding that cleansed the believing sinner on the day of his salvation, but here it is not the cleansing of the believing sinner, but the cleansing of God's children. In 1 Jn 1 it is not the matter of union with Christ that is in view, but that of communion with Him.

1 Jn 1:8<sup>30</sup>,9<sup>31</sup>,10<sup>32</sup>

It is needful that the believer should know something of his own complex person. On the one hand he is not free from sin, and cannot say that he has not sinned; if he should say so, then the truth is not in him and he is a liar. On the other hand, "whosoever is begotten of God doeth no sin, because His seed abideth in him: and he cannot sin, because he is begotten of God" (1 Jn 3:9<sup>33</sup>). Here would seem to be at first sight a head-on collision between two statements of Scripture by the same writer, if it were not for the fact that we know that there is still the old man or nature in the flesh of the believer, as Paul says, "For I know that in me, that is, in my flesh, dwelleth no good thing" (Rom.7:18<sup>34</sup>), and that there is also in him "the new<sup>34</sup> man, which after God hath been created in righteousness and holiness of truth" (Eph.4:24<sup>35</sup>).

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30. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/1%20John%201.8>

31. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/1%20Jn%201.9>

32. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/1%20Jn%201.10>

33. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/1%20John%203.9>

34. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rom.7.18>

35. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Eph.4.24>

Judicially our old man was crucified with Christ, that the body of sin might be done away or annulled [ Rom.6:6<sup>36</sup>; the same word rendered “done away” (RV) here, used of the devil in Heb.2:14<sup>37</sup>, Gk. *katargeo*, does not mean to destroy in the sense of annihilate, but to render ineffective or unproductive]. The believer has sin in him, that is in his flesh, and John says that if the child of God should say that he has not sinned he makes God a liar, a very serious thing to do, and His Word is not in him. Confessing sins is the responsibility of the child of God. The sinner is not forgiven on the ground that he confesses his sins to God, far less is he forgiven if he confesses his sins to a priest. No mortal man, whoever he may be, in whatever office of any church he may be, can forgive one sin or make atonement by any mass or prayer he may make. The forgiveness of sins by man is a hoax, plied with the devilish arts of the evil one on credulous people who from their childhood are easily deceived. The forgiveness of the sinner is on the ground of faith in the Sin-Bearer.

The words of Peter to Cornelius and his household make the matter of forgiveness crystal clear: “To Him (Christ) bear all the prophets witness, that through His name everyone that believeth on Him shall receive remission of sins.” Faith and faith alone in Christ results in the sinner being forgiven all his sins. This is clearly seen in the fact that the Holy Spirit fell on all them that heard Peter’s word (Acts 10:43<sup>38</sup>,44<sup>39</sup>). Paul’s testimony in the synagogue of Antioch is similar to Peter’s, “Be it

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36. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rom.6.6>

37. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Heb.2.14>

38. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Acts%2010.43>

39. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Acts%2010.44>

known unto you, ... that through this Man is proclaimed unto you remission of sins: and by Him everyone that believeth is justified from all things, from which ye could not be justified by the law of Moses” (Acts 13:38<sup>40</sup>,39<sup>41</sup>). The believing sinner is forgiven [which means that his sins are sent away, never to return, on Him on whom God laid the iniquity of us all (Isa.53:6<sup>42</sup>; 1 Pet.2:24<sup>43</sup>)] and he is justified by God, declared righteous, so righteous that no charge can be laid against him (Rom.8:33<sup>44</sup>,34<sup>45</sup>). The sinner believes in Christ and is forgiven and justified, but the sinning child of God confesses his sins to his heavenly Father and is forgiven. Justification is not connected with this forgiveness. This is not that he may be saved, but that he might live in fellowship with the Father and the Son in the fellowship or communion of the Spirit (2 Cor.13:14<sup>46</sup>; Phil.2:1<sup>47</sup>) who dwells within him. We must be careful to distinguish between union with Christ, which is for ever, and communion with Him, which sin can affect and sometimes destroys.

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40. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Acts%2013.38>

41. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Acts%2013.39>

42. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Isa.53.6>

43. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/1%20Pet.2.24>

44. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rom.8.33>

45. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rom%208.34>

46. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/2%20Cor.13.14>

47. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Phil.2.1>

## COMMENTARY ON 1 JOHN 2

1 Jn 2:1<sup>1</sup>,2<sup>2</sup>

The gracious provision for the forgiveness of sin should not be taken as an encouragement, but rather a deterrent, to sin. Let none turn the grace of God into licence to do evil, but rather let us be thankful for God's gracious provision to meet our weaknesses, for they are many. A learned scholar says of the verb "sin," which is aorist 2 subjunctive, "The moods of the aorist usually express single definite actions not contemplated as continuing." Then the writer who makes this quotation from this scholar suggests the translation of the verse as follows: "My little children, these things write I unto you, that ye may commit no act of sin; and if any (of us) shall have committed an act of sin, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous." John wrote to his little children, who were also God's children, that they might not sin, but if they did, then they had an Advocate with the Father.

God's children have two Advocates, Comforters or Helpers, Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit. The Lord promised His disciples, "I will pray the Father, and He shall give you another Comforter, that He may be with you for ever ... for He abideth with you, and shall be in you" (Jn 14:16<sup>3</sup>,17<sup>4</sup>). Though all God's children have two Advocates or Comforters, God's people have but one

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1. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/1%20John%202.1>

2. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/1%20Jn%202.2>

3. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/John%2014.16>

4. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Jn%2014.17>

High Priest. The office of High Priest should not be confused with the work of the Advocate. The Lord as the Advocate is with the Father on behalf of the Father's children, so that they might live in fellowship with their Father, but it is in connection with the service of a people that the High Priest makes propitiation. Besides being the propitiation for the sins of God's children He is the propitiation for the whole world. The words "the sins of" the whole world shown in italics in the AV/KJV are not part of the inspired Word. Thus the Lord is the propitiation (1) for the whole world in the matter of salvation, (2) for the sins of the children of God in the matter of fellowship, and (3) as a Priest to make propitiation for the sins of the people of God in the matter of service.

The following note is by Mr. William Kelly: "I see no reason for giving up the common view of Christians, that Jesus is called the Paraclete, as taking up the cause of believers with the Father: as for a similar reason the Holy Spirit is so styled by John, as to His place in and with them on earth, though of course carried on in a different way (Jn 14:16<sup>5</sup>). It is not correct to say that the propitiation of Jesus is here stated to be for the sins of the whole world. The English version says so, I know, but it is by inserting words which are better left out. He is the propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only, but also for the whole world. There is provision for it to the uttermost; but Scripture never speaks of the sins being borne away, save of believers. And it is as plain as possible that this very passage discriminates between 'us' and the 'world,' even as to expiation; while advocacy with the Father is in no way connected with the world, but with the family of God."

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5. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/John%2014.16>

1 Jn 2:3<sup>6,4</sup>

Here is the test of knowledge, and the Lord, in Jn 14:21<sup>8</sup>, made the keeping of His commandments the test of love. “He that hath My commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth Me.” Many movements of our time, “Youth movements” and such-like, characterized by such a term as, “all one in Christ,” have little time or place for the sobering Word of the Lord and of John. Obedience to the commandments of the Lord is set aside and there seems to be little more than froth and foam of the turbulent activity of the flesh. Others seek to sketch a better plan than that outlined clearly in the Lord’s commandments. The Psalmist said, “I will run the way of Thy commandments, when Thou shalt enlarge my heart” (Ps.119:32<sup>9</sup>). But those who are in the movements indicated characterize those who go in “the way of God’s commandments” as narrow-minded, but instead, they are such as are narrow, for the word of God can find no way of entrance into their hearts. They need enlargement of heart. John’s words are powerful and plain, that such as say they know God, yet keep not His commandments, are liars and the truth is not in them. Strong words indeed!

1 Jn 2:5<sup>10,6</sup><sup>11</sup>

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6. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/1%20John%202.3>

7. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/1%20Jn%202.4>

8. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/John%2014.21>

9. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Ps.119.32>

10. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/1%20John%202.5>

11. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/1%20Jn%202.6>

We are told in 1 Jn 5:3<sup>12</sup>, “For this is the love of God, that we keep His commandments.” This is not a description of the immensity of God’s love, or of how it has been manifested in our case (1 Jn 4:9<sup>13</sup>, 10<sup>14</sup>), but it is the way in which the love of God is manifested by us and the way by which we reflect His love to Him and to others. Without obedience to His word, which is the only way we keep His word, His love is not perfected in us; it has not effected in us that which is God’s will that it should. The child of God keeps the word by doing, just as an electric dynamo keeps electricity in itself, namely by rotating and by movement. If it stops then there is no electricity and consequently no power. In the obedience of the Lord unto the death of the cross, we learn the love of God, and this love which reaches us through obedience should have like actions in us in our obedience to God’s Word. By this means we know that we are in Him. This is the condition of “abiding in Him,” not “being in Christ by being united to Him as members of His Body,” the Church. Verse 6 shows this to be the case. The steps John indicates are plain; (1) keeping His Word, (2) abiding in Him, (3) walking as He walked. Walk describes the life and behaviour of a disciple of the Lord. Christ is ever our pattern, if we would be truly Christians.

### 1 Jn 2:7<sup>15</sup>

The old commandment is, “Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself,” which, Paul shows, sums up all the commandments of

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12. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/1%20John%205.3>

13. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/1%20John%204.9>

14. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/1%20Jn%204.10>

15. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/1%20John%202.7>

God in man's relationship to his neighbour (Rom.13:8<sup>16</sup>,10<sup>17</sup>). "Love therefore is the fulfilment of the law." The Lord in one sentence summed up the meaning of the whole Old Testament in this matter of man's behaviour to his neighbour: "All things therefore whatsoever ye would that men should do unto you, even so do ye also unto them: for this is the law and the prophets" (Matt.7:12<sup>18</sup>).

### 1 Jn 2:8<sup>19</sup>

The new commandment is that which is contained in Jn 13:34<sup>20</sup>,35<sup>21</sup>; "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." This commandment "is true in Him, and in you," and cannot find a place among any but the Lord's disciples. The old commandment of the law was "Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself;" but the new commandment is that we shall love each other as the Lord loved us. How can this be attained in any measure? only by the abandonment of self and self-interest by the power of the Holy Spirit within us. This is better expressed in the words of Paul, in regard to himself, "I have been crucified with Christ; yet I live; and yet no longer I, but Christ liveth in me" (Gal.2:20<sup>22</sup>). Saul was dead, but Christ was alive in

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16. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rom.13.8>

17. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rom%2013.10>

18. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Matt.7.12>

19. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/1%20John%202.8>

20. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/John%2013.34>

21. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Jn%2013.35>

22. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Gal.2.20>

Paul. Only by Christ living in us can we in any measure love as He loved. The darkness of unbelief, of jealousy, hatred, and every evil work, passes away where the true light of the light and love of Christ sheds its health-giving, purifying rays.

1 Jn 2:9<sup>23</sup>,10<sup>24</sup>,11<sup>25</sup>

Hatred and darkness are associates even as love and light. One cannot be in the light and yet hate his brother. John goes further, we might say, in 1 Jn 3:15<sup>26</sup>, when he says, “Whosoever hateth his brother is a murderer: and ye know that no murderer hath eternal life abiding in him.” He does not say that no murderer has eternal life, but he says that no murderer hath eternal life “abiding in him.” All members of the Body of Christ are in Christ and have Christ in them the hope of glory (Col.1:24-27<sup>27</sup>), but many such may not be abiding in Him (Jn 15:4<sup>28</sup>,5<sup>29</sup>). “Brother” here is not a brother in the flesh, but one who is a brother by the new birth, so that a child of God may live in the darkness because of his behaviour. In contrast to this, a brother who loves his brother abides in the light, and his correct and praiseworthy behaviour gives no occasion for anyone to stumble. But one who hates his brother is in the darkness and walks in the darkness, and like a blind man knows not whither he goes, for he is blinded by the darkness of his own wickedness.

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23. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/1%20John%202.9>

24. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/1%20Jn%202.10>

25. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/1%20Jn%202.11>

26. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/1%20John%203.15>

27. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Col.1.24-27>

28. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/John%2015.4>

29. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Jn%2015.5>

1 Jn 2:12<sup>30</sup>

Little children are not expected to know much, but they should know this quite clearly, that their sins are forgiven through (Gk. dia, by means of) His name. The infinite value of the name (which signifies the Person) of the Redeemer is the ground of divine forgiveness.

1 Jn 2:13<sup>31</sup>,14<sup>32</sup>

Whilst the children know that which is recent in their experience, even the forgiveness of their sins, the knowledge of the fathers stretches back over the ages to Him who was from the beginning, but who had been manifested, as in ...

1 Jn 1:2<sup>33</sup>

It is precious to hear the exuberant joy of those newly born again over the fact that their sins are forgiven, but it is pitiful when fathers make no advance from that state, in whose soul there are no deeper soundings of the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. "That I may know Him" was the yearning of Paul at the end of his life as it had been at the beginning (Phil.3:7-12<sup>34</sup>). Young men should be the warriors, those who join issue with the evil one. Those who are here addressed had been in the battle and had overcome the devil. "The evil one" describes one who is utterly bad; one who gives no quarter. In any battle with him it is

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30. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/1%20John%202.12>

31. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/1%20John%202.13>

32. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/1%20Jn%202.14>

33. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/1%20John%201.2>

34. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Phil.3.7-12>

war to the death. The devil may flee (Jas.4:7<sup>35</sup>) but let not the Christian soldier think he will escape if he should flee from him. There is no armour for the soldier's back. We have in these verses the subdivision of God's children into children, fathers and young men. John says, "I write," and, again, "I wrote."

The little children whose sins were forgiven know or have known the Father. The Spirit of His Son has come into their hearts, whereby they cry, "Abba, Father" (Rom.8:15<sup>36</sup>; Gal.4: 6<sup>37</sup>). Fathers are again said to know or have known Him which is from the beginning. The young men were strong because of the Word abiding in them, and by the power of the Word they had overcome the evil one. Satan cannot stand before what is written in the Word of God. When the Lord said, "It is written", three times in the temptation, Satan's power of deception utterly failed. As light dispels darkness, so truth overcomes error. "No lie is of the truth" (1 Jn 2:21<sup>38</sup>). Young men should diligently read the Word, store their minds with the sacred writings, so that when the day of battle and war with the evil one comes it may find them prepared for the fight. But if in time of peace they have squandered their time on questionable employments they may be found quite defenceless against the foe.

1 Jn 2:15<sup>39</sup>,16<sup>40</sup>

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35. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/James.4.7>

36. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rom.8.15>

37. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Gal.4.%206>

38. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/1%20John%202.21>

39. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/1%20John%202.15>

40. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/1%20Jn%202.16>

Why should children of God direct their affections towards and set their love upon such a heartless thing as the world? It has no heart to return any love bestowed upon it. Its pleasures and its things have an appeal to the carnal and material, but afford no satisfaction, no pleasure to the soul in its higher and spiritual life. It can never minister to the human spirit which, freed from the bondage of sin, stretches its hands upward to grasp heavenly and eternal things. The Lord's sheep who seek their pasture in the world's fields are grazing among weeds which are poisonous to spiritual life, where there are but the pleasures of sin which are but for a season. Of old, Moses turned away from these. Upon the palace and upon all that the world had then to offer, he turned his back and set his face towards the brickfields, the wilderness, and, above all, toward God.

The world of the Pharaohs has disappeared, save in the mummified relics of a glory which has passed away, but that Moses, who despised the world, its glory and its gifts, lives on in the imperishable record of the divine Scriptures, the first part of which he wrote 'midst the wastes of the Sinaitic desert. Men who went outside the world system of their day wrote the Scriptures, and men who would read and understand these writings must go outside the world system of their time. The truths of the Bible can never mix with the world, and to obey its words we must be prepared to "go forth unto Him without the camp, bearing His reproach" (Heb.13:13<sup>41</sup>), for no one was ever more truly outside the world system than the Lord Himself. Two loves cannot exist in the same heart, just as no man can love and serve two masters, or love equally two women at the same time, as witness the life

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41. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Heb.13.13>

of Jacob. If children of God love the world, they cannot love the Father.

The world and God being two opposites, the world hated the Father and the Son (Jn 15:24<sup>42</sup>) and crucified the Son, and it hates the Lord's disciples. Then we are told what is in the world, (1) "the lust of the flesh," (2) "the lust of the eyes," and (3) "the vainglory of life." These three things are seen in Eve's temptation and sin, and in the Lord's temptation without sin. (1) It is said that "the woman saw that the tree was good for food." In the Lord's temptation the tempter said, "If Thou art the Son of God, command that these stones become bread." "If" here is not the if of doubt, but the premise of an argument, for the devil knew well who He was, and it had been plainly declared in the hearing of the devil in the Father's words at the Lord's baptism, "This is My Beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased" (Matt.3:17<sup>43</sup>). The Lord could not be tempted as God or the Son of God in the wilderness, for the Divine nature cannot be tempted of evil things (Jas.1:13<sup>44</sup>); He was tempted as Man, as His reply clearly shows: "It is written, Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God." Where Eve failed in rejecting the Word of God, the Lord triumphed by means of God's Word. (2) It is told us in Luke that the devil led the Lord up (the RV leaves out "an high mountain" as in the AV/KJV, though it is given in Matthew) and showed Him all the kingdoms of the world in a moment of time.

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42. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/John%2015.24>

43. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Matt.3.17>

44. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/James.1.13>

Was ever such worldly glory and power flashed before the eyes of man in a moment of time, before or since? We believe, never! All this the devil claimed as his, and that he had power to give it to whomsoever he would (we may well, I think, doubt his claim), and all this would be the Lord's on one condition only, if He would worship before the devil. The bait which many myriads have greedily swallowed was utterly and immediately rejected by the Lord, who said, "It is written, Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and Him only shalt thou serve." But Eve in her innocence looked and took and fell, for the forbidden fruit "was a delight to the eyes." How easily she was fascinated! Colour schemes are still fashionable and fascinating to her daughters. We need to be careful about what we allow our eyes to see, for it is well to remember that the eye is but the lens of the mind and scenes and pictures may be fixed indelibly for life on the mind which may be a deadly menace to spiritual life.

Let us guard against having wandering eyes and a wandering mind. Remember that you cannot see clearly through glass which is dipped into a filthy pool, and you cannot have purity of thought where the mind is defiled by things the believer should not look upon. Was there ever a day such as the present when the lust of the eyes is catered for in ever increasing volume? (3) Then as to the vainglory of life, we are told that when the woman saw that "the tree was to be desired to make one wise, she took of the fruit thereof, and did eat; and she gave also unto her husband with her, and he did eat." Earthly, natural, sinful wisdom burst in upon the minds of the guilty pair. The bait of the serpent was swallowed – "for God doth know that in the day ye eat thereof, then your eyes shall be opened, and ye shall be as gods (RVM),

knowing good and evil.” Was ever the glory of innocence so despised? and in the hand which so easily gave it up was placed only vainglory! Pure gold was given up for tinsel. Inward peace, like the surface of a lake on which is reflected the glory of heaven, was given away for a dark, storm-tossed, condemned conscience, which knew what was right to do but had no power to do it.

Such was the plight of man by the fall and such it is still. In contrast to this, the devil led the Lord to Jerusalem and set Him on the pinnacle, the wing or edge of the temple. Here again he repeats, “If Thou art the Son of God,” and encourages Him in vainglory to presume upon divine providence, wrongly quoting from Ps.91:11<sup>45</sup>,12<sup>46</sup>, by leaving out the words that are vital to the whole passage – “to keep Thee in all Thy ways.” The Son of God needed no angelic keeping, or ministrations, as He received in the garden of Gethsemane (Lk.22:43<sup>47</sup>), but the Son of Man was ministered to and kept by angels in the weakness of His Manhood (Matt.4:11<sup>48</sup>), even as saints are the object of angelic ministrations (Heb.1:14<sup>49</sup>).

The Son of Man was not vainglorious to cast Himself down into the Kidron valley, to do what God had never told Him to do, and so He said again, “It is written, Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God.” He, the Man Christ Jesus, is our example in all temptation; adherence to what is written is the sure defence against all the wiles of the devil. The flood-gates of sin and mis-

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45. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Ps.91.11>

46. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Ps%2091.12>

47. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Luke.22.43>

48. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Matt.4.11>

49. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Heb.1.14>

ery were opened upon the human race by the rejection of and disobedience to the Word of God, but the flood-gates of mercy were opened by the obedience of the Lord, obedience which was unto death, the death of the Cross. Let us be fully persuaded that all that is in, and is characteristic of, this world-system, which is not of the Father, and its lust for power and hatred of what is right, were truly manifested when it rejected the Father's Son, the Prince of Life. Remember, the friendship of the world is enmity with God (Jas.4:4<sup>50</sup>).

### 1 Jn 2:17<sup>51</sup>

Here we have what is passing and what is permanent, what passes with the using, and what remains by the doing. The world is like the daily newspaper, with its reports of the actions of men in the flesh, and is but fit material to kindle the fire with the next day; but he who reads the Bible and keeps what is written therein is as abiding and permanent as the Bible. "The Word of the Lord abideth for ever" (1 Pet.1:25<sup>52</sup>). "He that doeth the will of God abideth for ever." The latter acquires his permanence from the former.

### 1 Jn 2:18<sup>53</sup>

The closing days of the apostolic period were days in which many false teachers arose among God's people, and others crept in privily, as we learn from the epistles to Timothy, 2 Peter, Jude, and

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50. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/James.4.4>

51. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/1%20John%202.17>

52. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/1%20Pet.1.25>

53. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/1%20John%202.18>

the Revelation, who made havoc of the work of God, a havoc more deadly in character than that of Saul of Tarsus, who laid waste the church of God in Jerusalem. He persecuted the saints, but he did not corrupt them as these antichrists did. The work of the antichrist is in part told us in Dan.11:32<sup>54</sup>,34<sup>55</sup>: “And such as do wickedly against the covenant shall he pervert (corrupt, AV/ KJV) by flatteries: but the people that know their God shall be strong, and do exploits. And they, [the teachers of the people (RVM)], shall instruct many: yet they shall fall by the sword and by flame, by captivity and by spoil, many days.”

Then later we read, “But many shall join themselves unto them with flatteries. And some of them that be wise shall fall, to refine them, and to purify, and to make them white, even to the time of the end” (verses 34,35). Flattery, the praise of insincerity, is a deadly form of deception plied by those who are tools of the devil. Many have been caught in this spider’s web and have never escaped therefrom. It is a bait to which the flesh takes readily. The savage times described by the Lord in Matt.24:4-14<sup>56</sup> will be days of great peril, but ‘midst the foul flatteries on the one hand, and the violent martyrdoms on the other, there will be a people led by men of enlightenment, grit and courage, who will teach and instruct the people at the peril of their lives, and will yield not an inch of truth in the midst of the frightful turbulence and deceptions of the days of antichrist. Let us, like them, stand against the perils and evil teachings of our own day, for if John’s time was

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54. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Dan.11.32>

55. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Dan%2011.34>

56. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Matt.24.4-14>

the last hour, the clock of eternity is quickly approaching the last minutes of that hour.

1 Jn 2:19<sup>57</sup>

Where had the antichrists arisen, as stated in verse 18? Acts 20:30<sup>58</sup> supplies the answer: “From among your own selves (the elders) shall men arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away the disciples after them.” The antichrists arose in the churches of God; they sowed their poisonous doctrines and overthrew the faith of some (2 Tim.2:17<sup>59</sup>,18<sup>60</sup>), and then out they went with their followers. Thus sect after sect appeared in the first century and after, each with its own peculiar blend of poison, each pernicious and deadly. The verse says, “They went out from us, but they were not of us; for if they had been of us, they would have continued with us.” The doctrines of men (Matt.15:9<sup>61</sup>) and of demons (1 Tim.4:1<sup>62</sup>) cannot mix with the doctrine of the apostles (Acts 2:42<sup>63</sup>). Thus the false teachers, the antichrists, went out from among the Lord’s faithful disciples, and it became manifest what they were. As it was then, even so it is now.

1 Jn 2:20<sup>64</sup>

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57. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/1%20John%202.19>

58. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Acts%2020.2030>

59. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/2%20Tim.2.17>

60. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/2%20Tim%202.18>

61. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Matt.15.9>

62. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/1%20Tim.4.1>

63. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Acts%202.42>

64. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/1%20John%202.20>

Peter speaks of Jesus of Nazareth being anointed by God with the Holy Spirit and with power (Acts 10:38<sup>65</sup>). Saints also are anointed with the Holy Spirit; “Now He that stablisheth us with you in Christ, and anointed us, is God; who also sealed us, and gave us the earnest of the Spirit in our hearts” (2 Cor.1:21<sup>66</sup>,22<sup>67</sup>). Paul writes in Eph.1:13<sup>68</sup>,14<sup>69</sup>, “Ye were sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise, which is an earnest of our inheritance.” Thus the gift of the Holy Spirit to all believers in Christ is an anointing, and by His teaching (Jn 16:13<sup>70</sup>,14<sup>71</sup>) we shall be guided into all the truth, know things that are yet to come, and have declared to us the things of Christ. The condition laid down by the Lord is, “If any man willeth to do His will, he shall know (Gk. ginosko, to learn) of the teaching” (Jn 7:17<sup>72</sup>). Note, in contrast, the use of know (Gk. oida, to see), which means, not to learn, but to know, to see. By the Spirit’s anointing men who are but babes see things hidden from the wise (Matt.11:25<sup>73</sup>).

1 Jn 2:21<sup>74</sup>,22<sup>75</sup>

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65. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Acts%2010.38>

66. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/2%20Cor.1.21>

67. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/2%20Cor%201.22>

68. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Eph.1.13>

69. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Eph%201.14>

70. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/John%2016.13>

71. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Jn%2016.14>

72. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/John%207.17>

73. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Matt.11.25>

74. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/1%20John%202.21>

75. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/1%20Jn%202.22>

By the revelation of the Spirit, by the anointing of the Holy One, they knew (Gk. oida, to see) the truth, and it was because they knew the truth that John wrote to his dear little children that they might be warned against existing lies and liars, for, says he, “no lie is of the truth.” Lies and the truth can never unite. It is ever the devil’s aim to coat his lies with a semblance of truth, even as he seeks to fashion himself into an angel of light (2 Cor.11:14<sup>76</sup>). Who is the liar? The answer is, the antichrist. Why? because antichrist and antichristian teaching deny that Jesus is the Christ and deny the Father and the Son. The truest definition of who Jesus is was made by Peter when he said who he believed the Son of Man to be, “Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God” (Matt.16:16<sup>77</sup>).

All who believe in Him as such are born again, and are members of His Body, the Church, against which the gates of Hell cannot prevail. This is not the Romish church nor any other of the so-called churches of Christendom, but one composed of all believers in Christ throughout this whole dispensation of grace until the Lord comes. Who is Christ? He is, as to His manhood, “the Son of David.” This answer the Jews gave, when asked by the Lord, “What think ye of the Christ? whose Son is He?” But they were silent, and are to this day, when the Lord asked the further question, “How then doth David in the Spirit call Him Lord, saying, The Lord said unto my Lord, sit Thou on My right hand, till I put Thine enemies underneath Thy feet. If David then calleth Him Lord, how is He his Son?” Christ is David’s Lord as well as David’s Son. He is both God and Man.

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76. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/2%20Cor.11.%2014>

77. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Matt.16.16>

But in what sense is God the Father, and Jesus Christ the Son? The ancient and misleading statement, “Holy Mary, mother of God,” is still the central pillar of the religion of myriads, the logic of which is that Jesus is God, and Mary is the mother of Jesus, hence the illogical conclusion that she is the mother of God. Did Jesus become God by being born of Mary? No, certainly not, for He was God in the beginning (Jn 1:1<sup>78</sup>). There is not, and never was, motherhood in the Godhead, but in the Godhead there is both Fatherhood and Sonship. Women are not the mothers of gods, even though both men (judges) (Ex.21:6<sup>79</sup>) and angels (Ps.8:5<sup>80</sup>) are called in Hebrew *elohim* (gods, plural). “Mothers of gods” is mythology and paganism, as is the statement, “Holy Mary, mother of God.”

The Scriptures are ever careful, when speaking of the Lord in His manhood, to use the words “according to the flesh” (Gk. *kata sarka*) (Rom.1:3<sup>81</sup>; Rom.9:5<sup>82</sup>). The same considerations arise in the case of those who hold that Christ became the Son of God through His birth of Mary in Bethlehem. If this is so, then the whole argument of Paul as to the Person of Christ disappears, for the One who is the theme of the gospel which He preached is God’s Son, who was born of the seed of David, according to the flesh, and who is declared to be the Son of God with power, according to the spirit of holiness.

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78. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/John%201.1>

79. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Exod.21.6>

80. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Ps.8.5>

81. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rom.1.3>

82. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rom.9.5>

“According to the flesh” and “according to the spirit of holiness” describe the two natures of Christ as Man and as God, Son of Man and Son of God. Who was born of the virgin Mary in Bethlehem? The answer is, One who was to be called the Son of the Most High and the Son of God. Did He become the Son of God by that birth? He no more became the Son of God by that human birth according to the flesh than He became God by that birth. He became the Son of David by that birth. To Him shall be given the throne of His father David (Lk.1:32-35<sup>83</sup>), for He is the Son of David and the Son of Abraham (Matt.1:1<sup>84</sup>) and also the Son of Man (Adam) (Ps.8:4<sup>85</sup>; Heb.2:6-8<sup>86</sup>) in His manhood. But to confuse His manhood with His Godhood and to confound His being the Son of God from eternity, before all ages, with His being born the Son of Man in time, is a fatal mistake and a heresy of the worst kind. What happened at His incarnation was that He, the eternal Son, of uncreated essence and nature took the body prepared in the womb of His mother, a body of created substance of blood and flesh which God had prepared for Him (Heb.10:5-7<sup>87</sup>).

In contrast to Ps.40:6<sup>88</sup>, “Mine ears hast Thou opened (dugged)”, Heb.10:5<sup>89</sup> follows exactly the LXX (Greek Septuagint Version of the Old Testament) rendering of this psalm, “A body didst

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83. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Luke.1.32-35>

84. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Matt.1.1>

85. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Ps.8.4>

86. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Heb.2.6-8>

87. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Heb.10.5-7>

88. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Ps.40.6>

89. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Heb.10.5>

Thou prepare for me.” Human ears demanded a human body in which the will of God, which He heard with His ears, might be done. Jesus Christ is One person, not two beings, a Man called Jesus, and God the Son. He is One Person, the Son of God, only begotten and eternal, who became Man by a human birth according to the flesh. The Word, who was fully and truly God in the beginning (Jn 1:1<sup>90</sup>), became flesh in time (Jn 1:14<sup>91</sup>), and was “manifested in the flesh” (1 Tim.3:16<sup>92</sup>) “for your sake” (1 Pet.1:20<sup>93</sup>). To say that the Lord became the Son of God by His human birth is utterly wrong, and heretical, and antichristian. If God had no eternal Son, then God the Father is not the eternal Father. The Fatherhood of God and the eternal Sonship of Jesus Christ stand or fall together.

#### 1 Jn 2:23<sup>94</sup>

Anyone who says that the Lord’s Sonship as the only begotten Son began with His birth in Bethlehem has denied the Son and consequently he has not the Father. This would make the Fatherhood of God date from the incarnation, whereas it says, “When the fulness of the time came, God sent forth His Son, born of a woman, born under the law” (Gal.4:4<sup>95</sup>). From whence did God send Him forth? From His presence in heaven undoubtedly. The Lord Jesus said, “I came out from the Father, and am come into the world: again, I leave the world, and go unto the Father” (Jn

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90. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/John%201.1>

91. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/John%201.14>

92. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/1%20Tim.3.16>

93. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/1%20Pet.1.20>

94. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/1%20John%202.23>

95. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Gal.4.4>

16:28<sup>96</sup>). Note that it was One called the Father from whom the Son came out, before He came into the world.

Also, “God sent forth His Son,” and this sending forth was prior to His being born of a woman. Again it is said, “Because ye are sons, God sent forth the Spirit of His Son into our hearts” (Gal.4:6<sup>97</sup>). “Sent forth” in reference to the Spirit is the same Greek word as “sent forth” (Gk. *exapesteilen*) in regard to the Son: it literally means to send out from some person or place. The Son came out, because He was sent out from the Father. To deny such plain facts in relation to the Father and Son is to deny them both; this is the spirit of antichrist. But he that confesses the Son hath the Father also.

1 Jn 2:24<sup>98</sup>,25<sup>99</sup>

What these believers had heard from the beginning of their spiritual lives was that Jesus was the Christ the Son of the living God, the only begotten Son of God in whom they had believed, and in whom and from whom they had received eternal life (Matt.16:16<sup>100</sup>; Jn 3:16<sup>101</sup>;10:27-29<sup>102</sup>). If this divine truth were abiding in them, then they would abide in the Father and the Son, and the promise which the Son had promised to all who be-

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96. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/John%2016.28>

97. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Gal.4.6>

98. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/1%20John%202.24>

99. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/1%20Jn%202.25>

100. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Matt.16.16>

101. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/John%203.16>

102. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Jn%2010.27-29>

lieved was theirs. Without this life all are dead in trespasses and sins.

1 Jn 2:26<sup>103</sup>, 27<sup>104</sup>

The business of these false teachers, these antichrists, was to lead God's little children astray, that is, to make them wander. They had wandered from the truth themselves and they could but make those that hearkened unto them wanderers also. Thus Solomon wrote long ago, "The man that wandereth out of the way of understanding shall rest in the congregation of the dead" (Prov.21:16<sup>105</sup>). The noun "anointing" (like the Greek word *pneuma*, spirit) is a neuter noun, hence the definite article and pronoun must be in the neuter gender. Thus we have "as it taught you"; but it must not be concluded that either Gk. *chrisma*, "anointing," here, and *pneuma*, "spirit," elsewhere, used of the Holy Spirit, describes things, because in the correctness of grammatical usage, the neuter pronoun is used both in Greek and English. (See 1 Pet.1:11<sup>106</sup> and Rom.8:26<sup>107</sup> RV, etc.)

The anointing is the Holy Spirit whom we have received, and He is our gracious Teacher, and never at any time does He depart from the truth. He is the Spirit of truth (Jn 14:17<sup>108</sup>; Jn 16:13<sup>109</sup>), hence He is true and is no lie. Men often depart from the truth,

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103. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/1%20John%202.26>

104. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/1%20Jn%202.27>

105. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Prov.21.16>

106. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/1%20Pet.1.11>

107. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rom.8.26>

108. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/John%2014.17>

109. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/John%2016.13>

but the blessed Spirit of God never does. He can and will teach God's children, if they are submissive to His will, without the aid of human instruments, but He uses human teachers, as we learn from Eph.4:11-13<sup>110</sup>, for the perfecting of the saints in their edification, so that they might attain to unity of the faith, and the full knowledge of the Son of God, unto full growth. The condition necessary to the spirit's teaching is that we abide in Him, the Lord Jesus. Whether we are submissive to the Spirit's teaching or not, one thing is here and elsewhere taught, that the Spirit or the anointing abides in us. The Spirit will not leave believers though He may be grieved and even quenched in them.

1 Jn 2:28<sup>111</sup>, 29<sup>112</sup>

Abiding in Him is conditional, whereas being "in Christ," as in 2 Cor.5:17<sup>113</sup>, etc., is unconditional for the believer. We are responsible to abide in Him. The RV says "If He shall be manifested," but the AV/KJV gives "when He shall appear" or be manifested. The difference arises from whether it should be "If (Gk. *ean*) He shall be manifested" or "when (Gk. *hotan*) He shall be manifested." Alford, who favours *ean*, suggests that to give the sense it might be rendered "in our time," though he does not favour the words appearing in the text. There is no doubt about the Lord's coming, the only doubt existed as to whether He would come when those in John's time were alive, and the same doubt exists in our day. The following is the note I made before I read Alford. It may, however, be that the measure of doubt

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110. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Eph.4.11-13>

111. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/1%20John%202.28>

112. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/1%20Jn%202.29>

113. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/2%20Cor.5.17>

in “if He shall be manifested” may mean if He is manifested during our lifetime, for undoubtedly the exhortation here refers to the attitude of living saints on earth, for the condition of having boldness and not being ashamed before the Lord at His coming or presence refers to the employments of saints on earth at that time and not to saints who are with Christ.

It may, alas! be that the Lord’s coming may take many unawares, for some may be occupied with things and be in places which are quite inconsistent with being brought face to face with Him. Will not shame burn deeply in their bosoms and be seen in their faces then? Let us rather be doing what is right when He comes, for, given that we know that He is righteous (many wish ever to think of His love and grace and forget the attribute that He is righteous), we know that every one that does or practises righteousness is begotten of Him. Unregenerate persons cannot do what is right in God’s sight. “There is none righteous, no not one.” “In this the children of God are manifested, and the children of the devil” (1 Jn 3:10<sup>114</sup>).

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114. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/1%20John%203.10>

# COMMENTARY ON 1 JOHN 3

## 1 Jn 3:1<sup>1</sup>

Divine love is manifested in different ways. “God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son” (Jn 3:16<sup>2</sup>). It was in this way that the love of God was manifested in our case (1 Jn 4:9<sup>3</sup>). God the Father also loves those who love the Son and obey His commandments (Jn 14:21<sup>4</sup>;16:26<sup>5</sup>,27<sup>6</sup>). “Christ ... loved the Church and gave Himself up for it” (Eph.5:25<sup>7</sup>). “God loveth a cheerful giver” (2 Cor.9:7<sup>8</sup>). But here, in the verse above, it is the Father’s love for His children, a love which He bears to all believers, which He has bestowed upon them, in that they are His own children begotten by Him. How precious and how close is this relationship! We are not merely called children of God, but we are such. Then we are told that because the world knew not the Lord to be the Son of God (Jn 1:10<sup>9</sup>), even so the world knows not believers as children of God. God’s work is in mystery now; shortly His work will be seen in manifestation.

## 1 Jn 3:2<sup>10</sup>

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1. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/1%20John%203.1>

2. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/John%203.16>

3. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/1%20John%204.%209>

4. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/John%2014.21>

5. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Jn%2016.26>

6. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Jn%2016.27>

7. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Eph.5.25>

8. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/2%20Cor.9.7>

9. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/John%201.10>

Here John repeats the fact that even now, while yet in mortal body, we are children of God. Then the AV/KJV says, “When He shall appear,” proclaiming the certainty of the Lord’s coming, but the RV gives “if He shall be manifested” as in 1 Jn 2:28<sup>11</sup> (see note thereon), the meaning being, if He shall be manifested during our lifetime. The passage indicates this, and especially so verse 3, in which saints are contemplated as purifying themselves, which cannot apply to saints in Christ who are with Christ. The manifestation of the Lord here is to His saints, not His Rev.to the world, for when the Lord is revealed to men at His coming as the Son of Man there will be no bodily change in those who see Him, for every eye shall see Him.

But when the Lord is manifested to His own they will take on His likeness as dewdrops on the grass shine and sparkle in the light of the rising sun. Then His youth, young men, shall be to Him as the dew in the beauties of holiness, fresh from the womb of the morning (Ps.110:3<sup>12</sup>). In the darkness of the present night saints are unseen and unknown, but in the dawn of the eternal day, in His glory they shall shine for ever. In the Lord’s coming again the Lord shall appear even as He now is on the throne of God as the glorified Man Christ Jesus. There will be no veiling of His glory with the veil of His flesh as when He came at the first. This manifestation of Himself to His own even as He is “shall fashion anew the body of our humiliation, that it may be conformed to the body of His glory” (Phil.3:21<sup>13</sup>). “For whom He

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10. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/1%20John%203.2>

11. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/1%20John%202.28>

12. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Ps.110.3>

13. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Phil.3.21>

foreknew, He also foreordained to be conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be the Firstborn among many brethren” (Rom.8:29<sup>14</sup>). How blessed, to see Him, to be like Him, and to be with Him for ever!

1 Jn 3:3<sup>15</sup>

This quite clearly is moral purification. The hope of the imminence of the Lord’s coming powerfully affects those who set this hope on Him. But in the measure in which we allow the thought of “My Lord tarrieth” (Matt.24:48<sup>16</sup>) to enter our hearts, we shall become lax, and may even engage in things which are very questionable for a Christian to do. But if we thought that the Lord is even at the door, how great would be the scurry to put away questionable employments! The Lord’s purity is to be the standard and measure of our purity – “even as He is pure.” He is ever the pattern in all things, and our conduct must in some sense be like His if we would walk with Him.

1 Jn 3:4<sup>17</sup>,5<sup>18</sup>

“Doeth sin” or practises sin shows the habit of the individual. “Doeth” is from the Greek word poieo, which means “to make, form, construct.” It shows the disposition of the mind to make and to do evil. The act of sin of which John writes in Chapter 1, which arises from the corruption of the flesh in us, is what we

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14. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rom.8.29>

15. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/1%20Jhn%203.3>

16. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Matt.24.48>

17. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/1%20Jhn%203.4>

18. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/1%20Jn%203.5>

hate and detest. Such as practise sin practise lawlessness, for in its nature sin is lawlessness, a word frequently rendered iniquity; it means being without law. When the Lord came to earth the chief purpose of His coming was to be the Sin-bearer. In Jn 1:29<sup>19</sup> we are told, “Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world” (original sin). In 1 Jn 3:5<sup>20</sup> He lifts, bears and takes away sins, not sin. He has taken away our many sins, and the sins of countless myriads. But in the Sin-bearer there is no sin, and never was, and, moreover, He did no sin (1 Pet.2:22<sup>21</sup>).

### 1 Jn 3:6<sup>22</sup>

Here is the sovereign remedy against practising sins of intent, even by abiding in Him. But whosoever practises sin, makes it in the mind and practises it through the flesh, has not seen (Gk. horao, “to see, discern, take heed”; this need not be confused with Gk. oida often used “to see by divine revelation”) Him, and knoweth (Gk. ginosko, “to learn, acquire knowledge, find out, come to a knowledge of”) Him not. This verse does not teach that such as practise sin have never been saved, but that they have not seen or discerned the Person of the Lord and His sinless character and ways and consequently have not learned of or from Him who said, “Take My yoke upon you, and learn of (or from) Me; for I am meek and lowly in heart” (Matt.11:29<sup>23</sup>). Paul says, “But ye did not so learn Christ; if so be that ye heard Him, and were taught in Him, even as truth is in Jesus” (Eph.4:20<sup>24</sup>,21<sup>25</sup>).

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19. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/John%201.29>

20. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/1%20John%203.5>

21. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/1%20Pet.2.22>

22. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/1%20John%203.6>

23. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Matt.11.29>

So knowing, seeing and abiding in Him is the cure against practising sin.

1 Jn 3:7<sup>26</sup>,8<sup>27</sup>

At a time when men were bringing in destructive teaching, the practice of which led to loose living, and others were turning the grace of God into lasciviousness, it was necessary for faithful men to warn the saints against the wiles of the times and to show that the practice of righteousness was of first importance. John repeats here the warning against God's children being led astray or made to wander. Righteousness here is the practice of doing right, not imputed righteousness. This is what James calls being justified by works (Jas.2:21<sup>28</sup>); a man is not only to be justified by faith, but also by works, the latter should follow the former, but should never be confused with it (Jas.2:17-26<sup>29</sup>). The devil sins and has sinned from the beginning. His profound intellect is engaged in the forming of sin and doing it without cessation. Not one good thought has filled his mind since he sinned and fell.

He who follows a similar course to that of the devil, forming sin and practising it, is of the devil. To be "of the devil" is as to the conduct of the person in view. Alas, a believer may so allow the devil to dominate him through sin in the flesh that he exhibits nothing of the divine likeness. The Son of God was manifested

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24. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Eph.4.20>

25. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Eph%204.21>

26. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/1%20John%203.7>

27. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/1%20Jn%203.8>

28. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/James.2.21>

29. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/James.2.17-26>

to take away sins, but He was not manifested to take away the sins of the devil, but to destroy the devil's works. The devil's vast schemes and plans, his works involving the employment of vast hosts of wicked spirits and of evil men, will one day crumble to dust. For "the LORD shall punish the host of the high ones on high, and the kings of the earth upon the earth" (Isa.24:21<sup>30</sup>). The cause of the complete destruction of the devil's works is Calvary, even as the Lord said, "Now is the judgement of this world: now shall the prince of this world be cast out. And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto Myself" (Jn 12:31<sup>31</sup>,32<sup>32</sup>). The loud cry of the Lord, "It is finished," has shaken the devil's works and kingdom to their foundation and in due time the Lord will march in triumph to claim His own.

### 1 Jn 3:9<sup>33</sup>

This describes the believer as to his new nature even as 1 Jn 1: 8-10<sup>34</sup> describes what is true as to his old nature. As "the old man, " the flesh, is ever evil and evil-doing, the new man, the true and real self of the person who is begotten again, does no sin and cannot sin, because God's word, the seed by which he was begotten again (1 Pet.1:23-25<sup>35</sup>), remains in Him. Thus there is in all believers, the carnal part which is yet in his flesh, which is sinful and sinning and must be mortified or made dead (Col.3: 5<sup>36</sup>), if

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30. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Isa.24.21>

31. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/John%2012.31>

32. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Jn%2012.32>

33. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/1%20John%203.9>

34. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/1%20John%201.%208-10>

35. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/1%20Pet.1.23-25>

36. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Col.3.%205>

the believer is to enjoy peace; and there is the spiritual part, for the believer, as to his real self, is no longer in the flesh, but in the Spirit (Rom.8:9<sup>37</sup>), and cannot sin. If it were possible for the person who is begotten again to sin, in the sense of which John is writing here, then he would have become a sinful, fallen creature and would require to be born again.

But there is no such thing in the Scriptures as being born again, and again, and again, as some of those teachers of the falling away doctrine would have people believe. If one new birth is not sufficient, then there is not another new birth spoken of anywhere in Scripture, and the person who has fallen away (if this were possible) is doomed; hell would be his portion. Fortunately, however, no such doom awaits the person who is born again, for he cannot sin.

### 1 Jn 3:10<sup>38</sup>

Though the child of God has many a struggle within himself with the flesh and its works, and casts many a weary glance forward and upward to that day when he shall be delivered from “the body of this death” (Rom.7:24<sup>39</sup>,25<sup>40</sup>), the day of adoption and the redemption of his body (Rom.8:23<sup>41</sup>), yet as to his conduct among men he is seen to be different from them, because of the new and eternal life that is in him, by being exemplary and godly in his behaviour. In this way the children of God are man-

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37. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rom.8.9>

38. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/1%20Joh%203.10>

39. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rom.7.24>

40. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rom%207.25>

41. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rom.8.23>

ifest. Let it be quite clear that a child of God does not become a child of God or a Christian by the life he lives, but that he lives the new life because he is a child of God.

No one can live as a child of God who is not a child of God. As the children of God are manifest by their behaviour, so also are the children of the devil manifest by their behaviour, each manifests who his father is. Sometimes the devil's wolves put on sheep's clothing, and in other cases the Lord's sheep cannot very clearly be identified. The devil cannot change the nature of his children, but he may fashion the outward appearance to the exact opposite of what is within, even as he may fashion himself into an angel of light, though inwardly he is the prince of darkness, and his ministers also may fashion themselves as ministers of righteousness, and well does the apostle add, "whose end shall be according to their works" (2 Cor.11:14<sup>42</sup>,15<sup>43</sup>).

We are told in the above verse of two things which show that a person is not of God, (1) "whosoever doeth not righteousness," and (2) "he that loveth not his brother." We ask, Is it possible for a believer not to love his brother? We must, alas! say, "Yes, it is possible." If it were impossible, why the instruction to love the brethren and not to hate them? So also it is possible for a believer not to practise righteousness, that is, "doing what is right." Thus we must come to the conclusion that to be "of God" and to be "begotten of God" are two quite different things. The one has to do with conduct, and the other with birth. The conduct of a child of God may be very different from what it ought to be.

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42. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/2%20Cor.11.14>

43. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/2%20Cor%2011.15>

1 Jn 3:11<sup>44</sup>,12<sup>45</sup>

The command and exhortations to love one another are the most common in the teaching of the Lord and His apostles. Those who were written to had heard this divine message from the beginning. The conduct of Cain is held up as a warning to those who would hate their brethren. Why did Cain hate Abel and kill him? The answer is that he had listened to the voice of the evil one and had rejected the word of God. Hence it could not be otherwise than that his works were evil. Abel in contrast had accepted and acted upon the word of God, and as a result his works were righteous. So God and the evil one came into collision in these two brothers. Thus because Abel did what God commanded and so condemned his brother for his disobedience, Cain slew him in hatred and malice.

1 Jn 3:13<sup>46</sup>,14<sup>47</sup>

The Lord warned His disciples of what would be the attitude of the world towards them. “If the world hateth you, ye know that it hath hated Me before it hated you. If ye were of the world, the world would love its own: but because ye are not of the world, but I chose you out of the world, therefore the world hateth you” (Jn 15:18<sup>48</sup>, 19<sup>49</sup>). The more unworldly and the more godly a believer is, the more will he be hated by the world. The Lord said

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44. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/1%20John%203.11>

45. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/1%20Jn%203.12>

46. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/1%20John%203.13>

47. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/1%20Jn%203.14>

48. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/John%2015.18>

49. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Jn%2015.19>

in His prayer in Jn 17:14<sup>50</sup>, “I have given them Thy word; and the world hated them, because they are not of the world, even as I am not of the world.” Whereas we were at one time amongst those who hated the brethren, the children of God, but now, because we ourselves have been born again, we love those we once hated. This love assures us that that great change has taken place, that we have passed from death unto life. But should a believer degenerate into a carnal condition and hate his brother, then he abideth in death, and is in the darkness. “He that saith he is in the light, and hateth his brother, is in the darkness even until now” (1 Jn 2:9<sup>51</sup>). Life, love and light form a trinity in John’s writings, as do death, hatred and darkness.

1 Jn 3:15<sup>52</sup>,16<sup>53</sup>

Thought is the parent of action, hatred the parent of murder, lust the parent of adultery. A person does not need to commit adultery to be an adulterer, he can be one in heart before the act is committed (Matt.5:27<sup>54</sup>,28<sup>55</sup>). So also one who hates his brother is a murderer in thought and intent. Note that it does not say that no murderer has eternal life, but that no murderer has “eternal life abiding in him.” It is possible for one to be in Christ, which describes the unchangeable relationship of all believers of this dispensation to Christ (2 Cor.5:17<sup>56</sup>; Rom.16:7<sup>57</sup>), and yet

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50. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/John%2017.14>

51. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/1%20John%202.9>

52. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/1%20John%203.15>

53. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/1%20Jn%203.16>

54. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Matt.5.27>

55. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Matt%205.28>

56. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/2%20Cor.5.17>

for that person not to abide in Him (Jn 15:4-7<sup>58</sup>). Having eternal life abiding in one means that that eternal life, the new life of the believer, is controlling his thoughts and actions, but if the new life is not actuating him he will be found thinking and acting according to the flesh. Divine love is seen in action in the great fact that the Lord laid down His life for us. He is the pattern of behaviour for believers towards each other, that where need exists love goes the length that we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren. The words of Paul in Heb.10:32-35<sup>59</sup> show how the Heb.in their early days shared in each other's sufferings. There have been many examples of this divine love operating in saints in all ages. Paul expressed it thus: "Yea, and if I am offered (poured out as a drink-offering, RVM) upon the sacrifice and service of your faith, I joy, and rejoice with you all" (Phil.2:17<sup>60</sup>).

### 1 Jn 3:17<sup>61</sup>

Here is a practical test of love. James speaks of right acting towards a needy brother as an act of faith, for he says that "faith, if it have not works, is dead in itself" (Jas.2:17<sup>62</sup>). As James speaks of meeting the need of the needy as a work of faith, John speaks of it as a labour of love. The Greek for "the world's goods" is bios. This word means "life, i.e. the present state of existence," and consequently applies to the substance or sustenance to maintain that state of existence. The word is derived from bia, force, impe-

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57. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rom.16.7>

58. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/John%2015.4-7>

59. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Heb.10.32-35>

60. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Phil.2.17>

61. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/1%20John%203.17>

62. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/James.2.17>

tus. The widow of Mk.12:44<sup>63</sup> cast into the treasury all her living (bios), all her means of sustenance. Well does John ask how the love of God can be abiding in one who sees his brother in need and has no compassion to assist him! Love, like faith, is intensely practical. They show themselves in deeds not words.

### 1 Jn 3:18<sup>64</sup>

Paul speaks of the tongue in 1 Cor.13<sup>65</sup>, the most beautiful treatise on love which was ever written. He says, "If I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, but have not love, I am become sounding brass, or a clanging cymbal." He says, among other things, that love is kind, which means the bestowal on someone of what is useful and profitable to them. Kindness is one of the excellencies of the fruit of the Spirit (Gal.5:22<sup>66</sup>,23<sup>67</sup>). Such as love with the tongue are often little better than a beast which licks its prey before it devours it. Love speaks in its actions, actions in truth which are the expression of the heart. Let love be seen in action and it is soon identified.

### 1 Jn 3:19<sup>68</sup>,20<sup>69</sup>

"Hereby" refers back to the previous verse, namely, to loving "in deed and truth," for in this we know we are of the truth. One

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63. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Mark.12.44>

64. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/1%20John%203.18>

65. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/1%20Cor.13>

66. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Gal.5.22>

67. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Gal%205.23>

68. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/1%20John%203.19>

69. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/1%20Jn%203.20>

who does not love in deed and truth will eventually find himself where the truth is not held and obeyed. Condition of heart will manifest itself. We cannot persuade or assure our own heart if we are not acting aright, and such as go on with a condemned heart will manifest themselves. God is greater than our heart and knows all, and if our own heart condemn us, how will we stand before God, an infinitely greater Judge?

1 Jn 3:21<sup>70</sup>,22<sup>71</sup>

How can we, if our heart condemns us, have boldness in prayer before God? Is this not the cause of so many prayerless and powerless lives? Believers are found indulging in things which are either positively wrong or very questionable, and the result is, they have no boldness before God (Gk. *parrhesia*, “freedom in speaking, boldness of speech”). Like a condemned criminal in court, they are silent because they are condemned in their heart. But if our heart condemns us not, then we have boldness toward God, and what we ask we receive from Him. What we ask may come at once or it may not come for a long time, but, as has been well said, “delays are not denials.”

We have to learn the meaning of the parable the Lord spake when he exhorted that men ought always to pray, and not to faint (Lk.18:1- 8<sup>72</sup>). All prayers that God hears He will answer in His own time and way. It is ours to pray, but we must leave the answering to Him. He knows best what to do, and when to do it. Praying and the answering of prayer are conditioned upon, “be-

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70. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/1%20John%203.21>

71. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/1%20Jn%203.22>

72. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Luke.18.1-%208>

cause we keep His commandments, and do the things that are pleasing in His sight.”

1 Jn 3:23<sup>73</sup>,24<sup>74</sup>

We have in this verse “His commandment” and “His commandments.” His commandment is twofold, that we should believe in the name of His Son Jesus Christ, and love one another. The one flows out of the other, on the principle that “whosoever loveth Him that begat loveth him also that is begotten of Him.” The RV margin says, “believe the name.” which is literally according to the Greek wording, but the dative case, I judge, implies “believe in (or on) the name.” Here John reveals who abide in Him, that is in His Son, and the Son in him, even such as keep His commandments, and this inward assurance that He abides in us is by the Spirit that He gave us. This assurance which is ours of abiding in Him and He in us, is through the indwelling Spirit. The Spirit also gives assurance of salvation, for “the Spirit Himself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are children of God” (Rom.8:16<sup>75</sup>).

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73. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/1%20John%203.23>

74. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/1%20Jn%203.24>

75. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rom.8.16>

# COMMENTARY ON 1 JOHN 4

## 1 Jn 4:1<sup>1</sup>

Here John returns to the same theme as in 1 Jn 2:18-23<sup>2</sup>, to the antichrists who, he says, “went out from us.” Some seem to think that because men may be born again evil spirits cannot speak by their mouths. If Satan could speak by the mouth of Peter, as he did, when the Lord said to Peter, “Get thee behind Me, Satan: thou art a stumbling-block unto Me” (Matt.16:23<sup>3</sup>), it is no difficulty for evil spirits to speak by the mouths of professing children of God, who lay themselves open to this possibility by following heretical teaching. Indeed the Spirit said expressly through Paul, that in later times some would fall away from the Faith, giving heed to seducing spirits and doctrines of demons. Men in hypocrisy would speak lies (1 Tim.4:1<sup>4</sup>,2<sup>5</sup>). The evils of the early centuries of this dispensation are well advanced in our time. The heresies of the early days are masquerading in a different guise under various aliases, but the doctrines of demons are the same fundamentally. The exhortation given here should be followed, that the spirits that speak by men should be proved, tested by the Word of God.

## 1 Jn 4:2<sup>6</sup>,3<sup>7</sup>

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1. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/1%20John%204.1>

2. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/1%20John%202.18-23>

3. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Matt.16.23>

4. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/1%20Tim.4.1>

5. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/1%20Tim%204.2>

6. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/1%20John%204.2>

We have here two spirits, (1) the Spirit of God, and (2) the spirit of antichrist; both are in the world and are actively engaged in using men as their instruments. In every case where men bear a true testimony that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh, that Spirit is of God. But every one who confesseth not (the) Jesus, referred to as Jesus Christ come in the flesh, that spirit is not of God, but is of the antichrist. Jesus Christ is Man; He, the eternal Word and Son of God, became flesh through the body of the Virgin, so that He might give His flesh for the life of the world (Jn 6:51<sup>8</sup>), by suffering in the flesh (1 Pet.4:1<sup>9</sup>). Thus He said, "He that eateth My flesh and drinketh My blood (by faith) hath eternal life" (Jn 6:47-54<sup>10</sup>).

#### 1 Jn 4:4<sup>11</sup>

He who is in you is God, I judge (see verses 13,15,16), and he that is in the word is the devil. Because God is greater than the devil, God's children had overcome the devil's servants, those through whom the spirit of antichrist was speaking.

#### 1 Jn 4:5<sup>12,6<sup>13</sup></sup>

How soon in this dispensation did Satan introduce, in Christendom, a counterfeit Christianity, but his teachings were of earth,

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7. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/1%20Jn%204.3>

8. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/John%206.51>

9. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/1%20Pet.4.1>

10. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/John%206.47-54>

11. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/1%20John%204.4>

12. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/1%20John%204.5>

13. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/1%20Jn%204.6>

not of God or heaven! The world received neither Christ nor His teaching. These false prophets and antichrists were of the world; their talk was of the world, therefore the world heard them. But in contrast, such as John and others were not of the world, and the Lord had given them God's word and the world hated them (Jn 17: 14<sup>14</sup>); they were of God, and such as knew (Gk. *ginosko*, to have assured knowledge of God, not simply persons who were born again) God heard (hearkened or listened to) them; whereas those who were not of God heard them not.

By this, in those that hear and those that do not hear, we know (Gk. *ginosko*, acquire knowledge of) the spirit of truth and the spirit of error. When the Lord said to Pilate that He had come into the world to bear witness unto the truth, and that "every one that is of the truth heareth My voice," Pilate said unto Him, "What is truth?" Pilate belonged to a deceptive world where truth, like the dove which Noah let out of the ark, found no resting place. Christ is the truth, and He said of the Scriptures, "Thy word is truth" (Jn 14:6<sup>15</sup>; Jn 17:17<sup>16</sup>; Jn 18:37<sup>17</sup>, 38<sup>18</sup>).

1 Jn 4:7<sup>19</sup>, 8<sup>20</sup>

Here again we have the oft-repeated exhortation to love one another. Love is of God. The world without natural love would be

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14. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/John%2017.%2014>

15. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/John%2014.6>

16. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/John%2017.17>

17. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/John%2018.37>

18. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Jn%2018.38>

19. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/1%20John%204.7>

20. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/1%20Jn%204.8>

a jungle; indeed men and women seek to make it so, a place of tooth and claw where it is the survival of the fittest. God has from the beginning implanted natural love in the breasts of human beings; this gives a measure of sweetness to human existence in this life. Satan by many ways works on the lustful passions of men and women, and especially in these days by cinema, television, novels, and other such like things and in other ways, to drive out the vestiges of natural affection from the hearts and homes of people, and to leave them with broken hearts and tear-filled eyes. The blessed Lord Jesus came to establish a deeper and truer love than that which was enjoined by the law of Moses, that man should love his neighbour as himself.

He said, "A new commandment I give unto you, that ye love one another; even as I have loved you" (Jn 13:34<sup>21</sup>). This divine love was to exist among the Lord's own and was to be the mark of discipleship. This love is shed abroad in our hearts through the Holy Spirit (Rom.5:5<sup>22</sup>), and great indeed is the consolation of this love in the Spirit (Phil.2:1<sup>23</sup>; Col.1:8<sup>24</sup>). It flows freely in hearts in which the Spirit dwells ungrieved. It can be in those only who are begotten of God, and it operates in those who know God (Gk. *ginosko*, such as have acquired a knowledge of God). The person who is barren of love knows not God, for God is love. This is a true description of the Divine Being; He is essential love; it is His very nature. It is also true that God is light, essential light, and in Him is no darkness at all. But we cannot say

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21. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/John%2013.34>

22. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rom.5.5>

23. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Phil.2.1>

24. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Col.1.8>

that love is God, or light is God, making that which is abstract of the Divine Being as though it were the Divine Being Himself. God is not simply loving, but He is love.

1 Jn 4:9<sup>25</sup>

God's love was manifested "in our case" (RVM) or, perhaps more literally rendered, "among" us, and that in the fact that He sent His only begotten Son into the world. The words of this passage and many others would lose their meaning if we should interpret them as teaching that He sent One who was not His Son to become His Son through incarnation at His coming into the world. The words plainly mean that He sent One who was, prior to this sending, His only begotten Son. To say other than this is a fatal error in interpretation and is actually heresy. The object of this coming was that we who were dead in trespasses and sins might live through Him, by receiving the Son and having the life that is in Him (Rom.6:23<sup>26</sup>; 1 Jn 5:11<sup>27</sup>,12<sup>28</sup>).

1 Jn 4:10<sup>29</sup>

We were loveless, "living in malice and envy, hateful, hating one another" (Tit.3:3<sup>30</sup>). We were entirely barren of divine love, having no love in our hearts toward God, and were enemies of God (Rom.5:10<sup>31</sup>; Col.1:21<sup>32</sup>); yet in that state God loved us, and

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25. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/1%20John%204.9>

26. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rom.6.23>

27. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/1%20John%205.11>

28. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/1%20Jn%205.12>

29. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/1%20John%204.10>

30. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Titus.3.3>

sent His Son to be a propitiation for (Gk. *peri*, concerning) our sins. Propitiation (Gk. *hilasmos*, expiation) means to give satisfaction for, to pay the penalty for. It means the same as the making atonement by the blood of a victim according to the law of sacrifice under the Old Covenant. Only by the death of a sin offering was the sin of the sinner forgiven of old. Christ is our propitiatory victim today (Rom.3:24<sup>33</sup>,25<sup>34</sup>). Reconciliation must not be confused with propitiation.

1 Jn 4:11<sup>35</sup>,12<sup>36</sup>,13<sup>37</sup>

The spring of all love is in that God has loved us. The channel of that love by which it reaches us is the gift of His Son. The power by which it flows is the Holy Spirit. If God so loved us, then that puts those who have received His love in the gift of His love under the obligation to love each other. If this is not so, then something has gone wrong. We should search and know what causes the lack of love. Though no one has ever beheld God, yet such is the marvel of divine grace, that if we love one another the unseen God abides in us, and His love is perfected in us, that is, it has reached its end or objective, in that we love God's children. Love is not perfected until it finds its expression in loving others. We would just be like a water main that is blocked, which is useless for its purpose until the blockage is removed and the water

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31. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rom.5.10>

32. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Col.1.21>

33. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rom.3.24>

34. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rom%203.25>

35. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/1%20John%204.11>

36. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/1%20Jn%204.12>

37. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/1%20Jn%204.13>

it receives from the fountain-head passes freely through. It is by the inward instruction of the Spirit, ungrieved within us, that we know that we abide in God and He in us.

1 Jn 4:14<sup>38</sup>

As the Son was the Son before He was sent, we learn here that it was the Father who sent Him. If the Son became the Son by His Virgin birth, then the Father could not have been the Father when He sent Him. According to the view of some, He could not be the Father until the incarnation of His Son. What a tangle of human reason is this! Fatherhood and Sonship stand or fall together. We believe emphatically what the Lord Himself said, that the Son had a glory with the Father before the world was (Jn 17:5<sup>39</sup>), and that the Father loved the Son before the foundation of the world (Jn 17:24<sup>40</sup>). The object of the Father in sending the Son was that He, the Son, should be the Saviour of the world; this is His character and God's purpose. Full provision is made for all in Christ. He died for all (2 Cor.5:15<sup>41</sup>), gave Himself a ransom for all (1 Tim.2:5<sup>42</sup>,6<sup>43</sup>), and tasted death for every man (Heb.2:9<sup>44</sup>).

1 Jn 4:15<sup>45</sup>,16<sup>46</sup>

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38. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/1%20John%204.14>

39. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/John%2017.5>

40. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/John%2017.24>

41. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/2%20Cor.5.15>

42. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/1%20Tim.2.5>

43. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/1%20Tim%202.6>

44. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Heb.2.9>

45. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/1%20John%204.15>

1 Jn 5:10<sup>47</sup>, 11<sup>48</sup>, says, “He that believeth on the Son of God hath the witness in him ... and the witness is this, that God gave unto us eternal life, and this life is in His Son.” But here, in verse 15, it is not he that believeth, it is “whosoever shall confess that Jesus is the Son of God.” Confess (Gk. *homologeō*) means literally “to use the same language or words of another.” Our confession of the Son of God is in using the words of the apostles and others, who in turn received them from the Lord, and He in turn from God (Jn 12: 47-50<sup>49</sup>). If any one publicly confesses that Jesus is the Son of God he has more than eternal life, for God abides in Him, and he in God. This is wonderful indeed, and an encouragement to the public confession of the Son. John repeats what he says in verse 9 about the love God has had in us, or in our case, and also repeats that God is love, and adds that he that abideth in love abideth in God, and God abideth in him.

- (1) If we love one another God abideth in us;
- (2) if we confess that Jesus is the Son of God, He abideth in us; and
- (3) if we abide in love, He abideth in us.

This abiding in God and He in us calls for heart exercise on our part in regard to such matters. Believers who live careless, indifferent lives, indulging themselves in material and carnal pleasures, know nothing of God abiding in them and they in Him.

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46. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/1%20Jn%204.16>

47. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/1%20John%205.10>

48. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/1%20Jn%205.11>

49. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/John%2012.1%2047-50>

1 Jn 4:17<sup>50</sup>

How happy a man was Paul when he said: “I know nothing against myself,” but he wisely added, “yet am I not hereby justified: but He that judgeth me is the Lord”! (1 Cor.4:4<sup>51</sup>) Moses who was so well used to the presence of God and with whom the Lord spoke face to face, as a man speaketh unto his friend (Ex.33:11<sup>52</sup>), said, “Thou hast set our iniquities before Thee, our secret sins in the light of Thy countenance” (Ps.90:8<sup>53</sup>). Yet despite our imperfections in this body of our humiliation (Phil.3:21<sup>54</sup>), in which we should know the plague of our own hearts (1 Kgs.8:38<sup>55</sup>), there may be perfect love in us by which we may have boldness in the day of judgement (at the judgement-seat of Christ) when “each man’s work shall be made manifest: for the day shall declare it, because it is revealed in fire” (1 Cor.3:10-15<sup>56</sup>).

The judgement-seat of Christ is one of reward, not of punishment. All who are present there are persons who have been saved by grace, and though their works may be burned up, they themselves shall be saved, yet so as through fire. Boldness means freedom of speech, which comes from a heart that is uncondemned, the exact opposite of a convicted and condemned person who stands in silence. If saints keep before them that as He is in this

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50. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/1%20John%204.17>

51. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/1%20Cor.4.4>

52. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Exod.33.11>

53. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Ps.90.8>

54. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Phil.3.21>

55. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/1%20Kings.8.38>

56. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/1%20Cor.3.10-15>

world, the One who is despised and rejected of men, even so are they in this world, and take their place with Him in His rejection (Heb.13:12<sup>57</sup>,13<sup>58</sup>; 1 Pet.2:3-5<sup>59</sup>), then they can look forward with joy to meeting Him and standing before Him in the day of judgement. That love for Him which led them to go outside the camp to Him will support their hearts in that day.

1 Jn 4:18<sup>60</sup>,19<sup>61</sup>

Gk. phobos (fear) is derived from phebomai, "to flee or run from, and signifies fear, terror, affright." This must be distinguished from that proper fear of God which is reverential fear, awe, veneration, which is akin to godliness. Very much is said in the Scriptures of that reverential fear of God which produces in those who fear Him the worship of God and a life of reverence of God. John is writing of fear as terror, by which love for their parents may be quite driven from children's hearts. Instead of love begetting love, cruelty produces terror, and they may tremble with fear when their parents come near to them. There is no terror in love. This is easily understood, and perfect love casts out terror. Instead of terror causing the saint to flee from God, as terror will cause the wicked to flee in the day of judgement (Rev.6:12-17<sup>62</sup>), the saint flees in all his troubles to God his Father as a child does to a loving parent. But he that is affrighted at God is not made perfect in love. When our hearts condemn us

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57. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Heb.13.12>

58. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Heb%2013.13>

59. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/1%20Pet.2.3-5>

60. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/1%20John%204.18>

61. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/1%20Jn%204.19>

62. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rev.6.12-17>

not, we come to God as to our home and resting place. So said Moses of the righteous of all times: “LORD, Thou hast been our dwelling place in all generations” (Ps.90:1<sup>63</sup>). We love because He first loved us. The parent by love begets love in the heart of his child.

1 Jn 4:20<sup>64</sup>,21<sup>65</sup>

John is very forthright and definite when he says that a man is a liar who says he loves God and at the same time hates his brother. It would seem that in that deceptive day, as in this, there were those who claimed to be right in their hearts toward God, and yet were wrong in their behaviour toward their brethren. Inward condition is easily measured by outward behaviour. “Even a child maketh himself known by his doings, whether his work be pure, and whether it be right” (Prov.20:11<sup>66</sup>). The Lord said, “A good tree cannot bring forth evil fruit, neither can a corrupt tree bring forth good fruit” (Matt.7:18<sup>67</sup>). We may seek to cheat ourselves, but we cannot cheat God, nor even our neighbours.

We always reveal what we are by what we do. We cannot be lovers of God who are not lovers of our brethren. God’s commandment is “love God and love your brother.” This is the same in principle as the meaning of the whole law and the prophets; “Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. This is the great and first commandment.

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63. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Ps.90.1>

64. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/1%20John%204.20>

65. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/1%20Jn%204.21>

66. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Prov.20.11>

67. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Matt.7.18>

And a second like unto it is this, Thou shalt love they neighbour as thyself. On these two commandments hangeth the whole law, and the prophets”; thus spake the Lord (Matt.22:37-40<sup>68</sup>).

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68. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Matt.22.37-40>

# COMMENTARY ON 1 JOHN 5

## 1 Jn 5:1<sup>1</sup>

How beautiful a thing on earth is that family where parents love their children and children love their parents, and the children love each other! So God ordained it in the beginning. But how soon sin and Satan blasted family life! The pleasure that might be among God's children has been much destroyed by sin. First of all, in the verse above it is explained to us how we become children of God, by believing that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God who was promised in the Holy Scriptures (Rom.1:1-4<sup>2</sup>). Those who love the Father who begat them love also those that are begotten by Him.

## 1 Jn 5:2<sup>3</sup>,3<sup>4</sup>

Here is a very important consideration in the matter of love for God's children. We learn (Gk. ginosko) that we love the children of God by loving God and doing His commandments. What can be more destructive of love in a family than children being disobedient to their parents? One of the characteristic evils of the apostasy of the last days is, "disobedient to parents" (2 Tim.3:1<sup>5</sup>,2<sup>6</sup>). It is also one of the evils of the Gentile world

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1. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/1%20John%205.1>

2. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rom.1.1-4>

3. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/1%20John%205.2>

4. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/1%20Jn%205.3>

5. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/2%20Tim.3.1>

6. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/2%20Tim%203.2>

(Rom.1:30<sup>7</sup>). Under the law, a stubborn and rebellious son was stoned to death in Israel (Deut.21:18-21<sup>8</sup>). The Lord said to His disciples, “If ye love Me, ye will keep My commandments” (Jn 14:15<sup>9</sup>). We are told here, that “this is the love of God, that we keep His commandments.”

Keeping His commandments is not a definition of the love of God, but is the effect of the love of God upon us and how it is manifested by us. Love which does not result in obedience to God’s commandments is not true love. We are not to love in word, neither with the tongue, but in deed and truth (1 Jn 3:18<sup>10</sup>). We are to love by doing. It is not difficult to obey God, for “His commandments are not grievous.” Any difficulty that arises comes from disobedience. Disobedience ever spoils the picture, and dark indeed is the record of disobedience revealed in the Scriptures.

1 Jn 5:4<sup>11</sup>,5<sup>12</sup>

We have already seen that “whosoever believeth that Jesus is the Christ is begotten of God” (1 Jn 5:1<sup>13</sup>), and that “whosoever is begotten of God doeth no sin ... and he cannot sin, because he is begotten of God” (1 Jn 3:9<sup>14</sup>), but in the verse above, it is not

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7. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rom.1.30>

8. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Deut.21.18-21>

9. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/John%2014.15>

10. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/1%20John%203.18>

11. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/1%20John%205.4>

12. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/1%20Jn%205.5>

13. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/1%20John%205.1>

14. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/1%20John%203.9>

“whosoever” but “whatsoever is begotten of God.” We know that in certain places of the Word men are called “things” as, for instance, in 1 Cor.1:27<sup>15</sup>,28<sup>16</sup>, and in Rom.4:17<sup>17</sup>: But here in verse 4 it does not appear to be persons that are in view, but every thing begotten of God. Some have thought that this refers to a “church of God” which is truly as much “of God” as a child “of God” is, but I am doubtful of the correctness of this interpretation, for a church of God may be overcome by the world, as witness the letters to the seven churches of God in Rev.2<sup>18</sup> and Rev.3<sup>19</sup>.

It seems rather to indicate whatsoever is begotten of God in a child of God by the operation of the Word and Spirit of God, whatsoever act of faith that is so produced in him overcomes the world. This thought seems to be reinforced by what follows, “and this is the victory that hath overcome the world (the apostle looks back to the past victory of faith), even our faith.” Dr. Westcott in his notes on John’s epistles, on this matter of “whatsoever is begotten of God,” states “John chooses the abstract form in order to convey a universal truth. The thought is not so much of the believer in his unity, nor of the Church, but of each element included in the individual life and in the life of the society.” This seems similar to the views expressed above, though in a much more scholarly way.

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15. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/1%20Cor.1.27>

16. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/1%20Cor%201.28>

17. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rom.4.17>

18. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rev.2>

19. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rev.3>

It seems to me that what John is saying is, that each act of faith, produced in the believer by the Word and Spirit of God, overcomes the world; it rises supreme above all the world's forces. The same consideration arises when God's people act together in faith in the carrying out collectively what God has commanded them. We can look back to the victory of faith in the many of Heb.11<sup>20</sup>, of the victory of men in the New Testament, and of the princely Leader and Perfecter of faith, and such victory as we ourselves may have won in a hostile world. Who is the overcomer? he only who believes that Jesus is the Son of God. Though this defines who the overcomer is, it does not describe how the victory is won, nor does it describe the phase of evil the world has plied upon the believer in regard to which he has overcome. That the world may overcome one who does believe that Jesus is the Son of God is not in doubt, for, alas, the world has swallowed many believers as to their life of service for the Lord.

1 Jn 5:6<sup>21</sup>,7<sup>22</sup>,8<sup>23</sup>

We do not tarry to speak of the three that bear witness "in heaven" (AV/KJV), which words eminent authorities say do not form part of the Holy Scriptures. Jesus Christ came to men "through" or "by means of" water (baptism) and blood (His death), not by water (baptism) only. He could never have reached us by baptism only, which is but a figure of death and

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20. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Heb.11>

21. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/1%20John%205.6>

22. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/1%20Jn%205.7>

23. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/1%20Jn%205.8>

resurrection (Rom.6:3-5<sup>24</sup>); He had to undergo death in all its awfulness whereof He said, “I have a baptism to be baptized with: and how am I straitened till it be accomplished!” (Lk.12:50<sup>25</sup>; Mk.10:38<sup>26</sup>). The Spirit has borne witness to such facts, even as the Lord said, “When the Comforter is come, whom I will send unto you from the Father, even the Spirit of Truth, which proceedeth from the Father, He shall bear witness of Me: and ye also bear witness, because ye have been with Me from the beginning” (Jn 15:26<sup>27</sup>,27<sup>28</sup>).

The Lord said, “I am ... the truth” (Jn 14:6<sup>29</sup>). “The Spirit is the truth” (verse 17). “Thy word is truth” (Jn 17:17<sup>30</sup>), and God is the “God of truth” (Ps.31:5<sup>31</sup>). Woe unto those who challenge the Scriptures in any of their words, and who would make God, who cannot lie, a liar in any part of His inspired Word! Here is the sure foundation of faith, the living Oracles of God. There are three who bear witness, the Spirit, who came upon the Lord at His baptism (Matt.3:16<sup>32</sup>,17<sup>33</sup>), and who came, as in Acts 2, as sent by the Son from the Father (Jn 15:26<sup>34</sup>), the water (His bap-

24. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rom.6.3-5>

25. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Luke.12.50>

26. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Mark.10.38>

27. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/John%2015.26>

28. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Jn%2015.27>

29. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/John%2014.6>

30. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/John%2017.17>

31. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Ps.31.5>

32. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Matt.3.16>

33. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Matt%203.17>

34. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/John%2015.26>

tism) and the blood (His atoning death), and these three are a perfect oneness in their testimony.

1 Jn 5:9<sup>35</sup>,10<sup>36</sup>

Here we have contrasted the witness of men and the witness of God. We receive continually the witness of men in their acting, speaking and writing, but God's witness must ever be greater than that of men, infinitely so. He has borne witness concerning His Son. In a lying world we can rest here with certainty and safety. Besides, he that believeth hath the witness in him, the witness of divine life, as stated later, but the unbeliever has made God a liar, by not believing the witness God hath borne concerning His Son. Into what responsibility and peril the unbeliever has launched himself in his unbelief to make the God of Truth a liar! Alas, there are many who do this.

1 Jn 5:11<sup>37</sup>,12<sup>38</sup>

The witness is that God gave us the life that is in His Son. This is what Paul says in Rom.6:23<sup>39</sup>, "The free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord," note "Through Jesus Christ," as in the AV/KJV Christ is the eternal life which was with the Father, and was manifested unto us (1 Jn 1:2<sup>40</sup>). The reception of Christ the Son of God by faith implies that we receive the life that is in

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35. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/1%20John%205.9>

36. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/1%20Jn%205.10>

37. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/1%20John%205.11>

38. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/1%20Jn%205.12>

39. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rom.6.23>

40. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/1%20John%201.2>

Him and thus He becomes our life (Col.3:4<sup>41</sup>). Many Scriptures clearly show that the believer has in possession now the gift of eternal life. He is one in life with Christ now and will shortly be one in glory with Him. Eternal life and immortality should never be confused. Eternal life is given to the sinner who believes, who has been dead in trespasses and sins, but though he has eternal life, he is still mortal, that is, subject to physical death. Mortal and immortal both relate to the body, never to the soul, in the New Testament. He who has the Son by faith has the life, and he who has not received the Son of God by faith has not the life.

1 Jn 5:13<sup>42</sup>

The assuring words of the previous verses, that believers have eternal life, having received the Son by faith, are here reinforced. These things John wrote that they might know (Gk. oida, see) that they have eternal life, the only condition being belief on (Gk. eis, into) the name of the Son of God. To believe on the name is all one with believing on the Person who owns the name. The name and the Person are one and the same. How assuring this verse is to all who believe on the Son of God!

1 Jn 5:14<sup>43</sup>,15<sup>44</sup>

In 1 Jn 3:22<sup>45</sup> the answering of prayer rests on the doing of God's will in the keeping of His commandments, but here it is condi-

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41. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Col.3.4>

42. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/1%20John%205.13>

43. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/1%20John%205.14>

44. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/1%20Jn%205.15>

45. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/1%20John%203.22>

tioned upon asking for what is according to God's will to give; both things need to be borne in mind in asking from God. James says, "Ye have not, because ye ask not. Ye ask, and receive not, because ye ask amiss, that ye may spend it in your pleasures" (Jas.4:2<sup>46</sup>,3<sup>47</sup>). From such we gather that

- (1) we may cease to ask,
- (2) we may ask amiss to squander God's gifts in an unworthy manner,
- (3) we may not be doing God's will, and thus our condition is wrong, and
- (4) we may not know His mind so as to ask according to His will.

Have we not felt, sometimes, as we listened to the prayers of some, like saying, "Ask something!" How needful for God to awaken us to our need and the need of others! Hannah when she prayed for a son wept sore, but when she knew that her prayer was heard she went her way, and did eat, and her countenance was no more sad. In due time her prayer was answered and she called her son Samuel (asked of God). Hannahs and Samuels are needed in our time. If we subscribe to the conditions of doing God's will and asking according to His will, then God will hear us, and every prayer that God hears He answers in His own time and way. He said to Moses, when the latter requested, "Let me go over, I pray Thee, and see the good land that is beyond Jordan," "Speak no more unto Me of this matter" (Deut.3:25<sup>48</sup>,26<sup>49</sup>).

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46. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/James.4.2>

47. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Jas%204.3>

48. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Deut.3.25>

David, too, though he was told that his child by Bathsheba would die, “besought God for the child” (2 Sam.12:14<sup>50</sup>,16<sup>51</sup>). Great men though these were, they prayed for what was not God’s will to grant. Samuel, too, mourned for Saul and was asked by the LORD “How long wilt thou mourn for Saul, seeing I have rejected him from being king over Israel?” (1 Sam.16:1<sup>52</sup>). In each of these cases God had revealed His will, and hence to ask what was contrary to His will was wrong.

1 Jn 5:16<sup>53</sup>,17<sup>54</sup>

“Sin unto death,” “unto” here is Pros, which with the accusative, as here, means, that to which anything tends. Sin in its nature is lawlessness (chapter 3:4), and all unrighteousness is sin, but all forms of sin are not of the same gravity; some sins are much worse than others. Adam’s sin was unto death. King Saul’s sin, by turning back from following the LORD in not fulfilling His commandment (1 Sam.15:11<sup>55</sup>), was unto death. The sin of the numbered men of the twelve tribes of Israel in refusing to enter the land of Canaan was sin unto death (Num.14:28-34<sup>56</sup>). This serious event in the history of Israel is taken up in Heb.(chapters 3 and 4) as a warning against failing to hold fast the boldness and glorying of the hope firm unto the end, and against falling away

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49. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Deut%203.26>

50. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/2%20Sam.12.14>

51. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/2%20Sam%2012.16>

52. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/1%20Sam.16.1>

53. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/1%20John%205.16>

54. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/1%20Jn%205.17>

55. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/1%20Sam.15.11>

56. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Num.14.28-34>

from the living God, which is sin unto death, as Heb.6:1-8<sup>57</sup> shows.

Sinning wilfully after we have received the knowledge of the truth (Heb.10:26-31<sup>58</sup>) is sin unto death. What we have in Jas.5:19<sup>59</sup>,20<sup>60</sup> is similar to what is contained in the above verse, about asking life for such as sin not unto death. “If any among you do err from (or is seduced from) the truth, and one convert him; let him know, that he which converteth a sinner from the error of his way shall save a soul from (Gk. ek, out of) death, and shall cover a multitude of sins.” Paul also speaks similarly in 2 Tim.2:24-26<sup>61</sup> of the work of the Lord’s servant in seeking to correct those that oppose themselves that they might recover themselves out of the snare of the devil. Let us ever fear to sin, and especially to sin this sin, of rebellious stubbornness against the will of God, which is sin unto death. In cases other than this we are to pray for, and seek, the restoration of such as go astray.

### 1 Jn 5:18<sup>62</sup>

We have here the statement of 1 Jn 3:9<sup>63</sup>, repeated, but the cause of not sinning is different. In 1 Jn 3:9<sup>64</sup> the reason given why one who is begotten of God cannot sin is because His (God’s) seed (1

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57. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Heb.6.1-8>

58. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Heb.10.26-31>

59. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/James.5.19>

60. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Jas%205.20>

61. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/2%20Tim.2.24-26>

62. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/1%20John%205.18>

63. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/1%20John%203.9>

64. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/1%20John%203.9>

Pet.1:23-25<sup>65</sup>) abideth in him. Here we are told that He who was begotten of God keepeth him. The whole analogy of Scripture supports “him” of the RV and not “himself” of the AV/KJV, and in particular the words of the Lord in Jn 17:12<sup>66</sup>: The Keeper of the souls of His saints is the Lord, He who was begotten of God, God’s only begotten Son. He keeps the one who is begotten of God so securely that the evil one cannot even touch him to do him harm.

### 1 Jn 5:19<sup>67</sup>

Here is a great contrast to what is stated in the previous verse. There, the one who is begotten of God is free from even the touch of the evil one, but here we are told that the whole world lies in the evil one, not in wickedness as in the AV/KJV, although that is nevertheless true. Should we not be abundantly thankful for that love of God through which we are now His begotten children?

### 1 Jn 5:20<sup>68</sup>

These three verses (18,19,20) begin with “we know” (Gk. oida, see), a knowledge which is ours by revelation. We know the Son of God is come and hath given us understanding. “Who hath given understanding to the mind?” asked God of Job (Job 38:36<sup>69</sup>). “The Lord” is the answer, and the same Lord came to

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65. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/1%20Pet.1.23-25>

66. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/John%2017.12>

67. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/1%20John%205.19>

68. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/1%20John%205.20>

69. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Job%2038.36>

give understanding to such as were “darkened in their understanding, alienated from the life of God because of the ignorance that is in them, because of the hardening of their heart” (Eph.4:18<sup>70</sup>). The object in giving this understanding to the child of God is that he might “know (Gk. ginosko, to acquire a knowledge of) Thee the only true God, and Him whom Thou didst send, even Jesus Christ” (Jn 17:3<sup>71</sup>). The believer has in the life which he has received the ability to know God. This is the true God, the Father, and Eternal Life, the Eternal Life which was with the Father, and was manifested unto us (1 Jn 1:2<sup>72</sup>) even the Son of the Father. Some, however, delete the definite article before “eternal life” and treat eternal life here as the revelation of God in Christ. About this there is much difference of mind. Many have even regarded the true God to be Christ.

### 1 Jn 5:21<sup>73</sup>

In contrast to the heavenly and sublime teaching of John concerning the Father, the Son, and the Spirit, idols are gross, dead, useless things. Paul said, “We know (Gk. oida, see) that no idol is anything in the world.” It is blind, deaf and dumb and suits the blind, deaf and dumb among men. “They that make them shall be like unto them; yea, every one that trusteth in them” (Ps.115:8<sup>74</sup>). Living saints need only the living God, but at the same time they need to guard themselves from idols.

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70. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Eph.4.18>

71. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/John%2017.3>

72. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/1%20John%201.2>

73. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/1%20John%205.21>

74. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Ps.115.8>

## COMMENTARY ON 2 JOHN

2 Jn 1:1<sup>1</sup>,2<sup>2</sup>

John writes of himself as “the elder,” as he does in 3 Jn to Gaius. He does not claim to be an apostle in his writings. He writes to the elect lady and her children. We may safely follow the AV/KJV and RV text that lady (Gk. kuria, the feminine of kurios, lord) is correct, and not that it is Kyria, a proper name. We may also dismiss the thought that kuria signifies a church that is addressed; if kuria is the church, who can the children of the church be, for the children are distinct from kuria? Jn loved this lady and her children in truth with a similar love to others who knew the truth, and for the truth’s sake which abode in them and would be with them for ever. This shows a bond of affection existing amongst those who know the truth beyond that which is true of those who are begotten of God (1 Jn 5:1<sup>3</sup>).

We are told in Jn 8:31<sup>4</sup>,32<sup>5</sup>, “Jesus therefore said to those Jews which had believed Him, If ye abide in My word, then are ye truly My disciples; and ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.” Those who are sanctified (set apart) in Christ Jesus, Christ having become their sanctification, as He is their wisdom, righteousness, and redemption (1 Cor.1:2<sup>6</sup>,30<sup>7</sup>), should af-

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1. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/2%20John%201.1>

2. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/2%20Jn%201.2>

3. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/1%20John%205.1>

4. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/John%208.31>

5. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Jn%208.32>

6. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/1%20Cor.1.2>

terwards be sanctified in the truth, and for this the Lord prayed, “Sanctify them in the truth: Thy word is truth ... And for their sakes I sanctify Myself, that they themselves also may be sanctified in truth” (Jn 17:17<sup>8</sup>,19<sup>9</sup>). The Lord walked a sanctified, separated path in this world and His example is our pattern. The will of God is “that all men should be saved, and come to the knowledge of the truth” (1 Tim.2:4<sup>10</sup>).

Some may be “ever learning, and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth” (2 Tim.3:7<sup>11</sup>). Paul was an apostle of Jesus Christ, “according to the faith of God’s elect, and the knowledge of the truth which is according to godliness” (Tit.1:1<sup>12</sup>). But if we sin wilfully after that we have received the knowledge of the truth, there remaineth no more a sacrifice for sins” (Heb.10:26<sup>13</sup>), hence there is no forgiveness and restoration for such as wilfully sin against the truth. Those who have bought the truth should never sell it: “Buy the truth, and sell it not” (Prov.23:23<sup>14</sup>). “The house of God, which is the church of the living God,” is “the pillar and ground of the truth” (1 Tim.3:15<sup>15</sup>); it is where the truth is to be found. It was from the house of God of old that God sent forth His light and truth to

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7. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/1%20Cor%201.30>

8. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/John%2017.17>

9. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Jn%2017.19>

10. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/1%20Tim.2.4>

11. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/2%20Tim.3.7>

12. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Titus.1.1>

13. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Heb.10.26>

14. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Prov.23.23>

15. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/1%20Tim.3.15>

lead men thither (Ps.43:3<sup>16</sup>,4<sup>17</sup>). It was “out of Zion, the perfection of beauty, God hath shined forth,” and He said, “Gather My saints together unto Me; those that have made a covenant with Me by sacrifice” (Ps.50:2<sup>18</sup>,5<sup>19</sup>). It will be even so in the millennium as in the past (Isa.2:3<sup>20</sup>).

Let us remember that the truth which we make our own now and which abides in us “shall be with us for ever.” May we have a heart to say like David, “Shew me Thy ways, O LORD; Teach me Thy paths. Guide me in Thy truth, and teach me; For Thou art the God of my salvation; On Thee do I wait all the day” (Ps.25:4<sup>21</sup>,5<sup>22</sup>).

### 2 Jn 1:3<sup>23</sup>

This is not a salutation merely, but an assurance, that this excellent trio of blessings, grace, mercy, peace, shall be with us from both the Father and the Son, in truth, for it is no lie, and in love, for such is the attitude of Father and Son toward us.

### 2 Jn 1:4<sup>24</sup>

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16. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Ps.43.3>

17. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Ps%2043.4>

18. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Ps.50.2>

19. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Ps%2050.5>

20. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Isa.2.3>

21. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Ps.25.4>

22. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Ps%2025.5>

23. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/2%20John%201.3>

24. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/2%20John%201.4>

This verse further strengthens the thought that it is not a church that is addressed, but a lady, for Jn speaks that he found certain of (Gk. ek out of) her children walking in truth. “Certain” though in italics in the RV is implied in the preposition ek, “out of.” The truth in which they walked was according to the commandment which they had received from the Father and not according to what they or others thought to be truth. Truth is to be found only in God’s word.

2 Jn 1:5<sup>25</sup>,6<sup>26</sup>

What John writes here to this lady, that love finds its true expression in those who are God’s children in their obedience to His commandments, is what he wrote in 1 Jn 5:2<sup>27</sup>,3<sup>28</sup>, and this also the Lord taught from the beginning: “He that hath My commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth Me” (Jn 14:21<sup>29</sup>). Some talk of loving God though they pay no heed to keeping His commandments. We need to learn to speak as the Lord and His apostles have spoken and not from a fleshly mind. Where there is no obedience to God there is no real love for Him. Let us learn that we love the children of God when we love God and keep His commandments. This is a corrective and sobering truth.

2 Jn 1:7<sup>30</sup>

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25. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/2%20John%201.5>

26. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/2%20Jn%201.6>

27. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/1%20John%205.2>

28. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/1%20Jn%205.3>

29. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/John%2014.21>

30. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/2%20John%201.7>

In 1 Jn 4:2<sup>31</sup> we have the words, “Jesus Christ is come in the flesh”; this refers to His coming at His birth in Bethlehem. But here it is His coming again; He is the coming One in the flesh. He was raised in that body of flesh in which He died on the cross, whereof He said, “Handle Me, and see; for a spirit hath not flesh and bones, as ye behold Me having. And when He had said this, He shewed them his hands and His feet” (Lk.24:39<sup>32</sup>,40<sup>33</sup>). Those same hands He lifted up when He blessed them on the slopes of Olivet ere He returned to heaven: “He lifted up His hands, and blessed them. And it came to pass, while He blessed them, He parted from them, and was carried up into heaven” (Lk.24:50<sup>34</sup>,51<sup>35</sup>). Two angels told the disciples, “This Jesus, which was received up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye beheld Him going into heaven” (Acts 1:11<sup>36</sup>). He went to heaven in the flesh and shall so come again. The followers of Mrs. Mary Eddy (so-called Christian Scientists), and the followers of self-styled “Pastor” Russell (so-called Jehovah’s Witnesses) and others, deny these facts of Holy Scripture and are deceivers and antichrists.

### 2 Jn 1:8<sup>37</sup>

It may be impossible to say with certainty whether it should read “we have wrought,” that is, the divine doctrine which the apostles

31. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/1%20John%204.2>

32. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Luke.24.39>

33. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Lk%2024.40>

34. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Luke.24.50>

35. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Lk%2024.51>

36. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Acts%201.11>

37. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/2%20John%201.8>

had so carefully taught, or “ye have wrought,” the things which the elect lady and her children, and others, had wrought through their obedience to the truth contained in God’s commandments. Their reward would be seriously affected if they turned away from the truth. A full reward would be affected if they lost the things the apostles had wrought or what they themselves had wrought. It gets back to the important matter of holding fast the truth which has been committed to us. This is what the Lord meant in Rev.3:11<sup>38</sup>, “I come quickly: hold fast that which thou hast, that no man take thy crown.” One is reminded of the words of Boaz to Ruth, when he said, “The LORD recompense thy work, and a full reward be given thee of the LORD, the God of Israel, under whose wings thou art come to take refuge” (Ruth 2:12<sup>39</sup>). She had left her own land and people and god, and had come with Naomi to the land and people of Israel and, more than that, to the God of Israel. Hers was a great decision, and a great reward.

### 2 Jn 1:9<sup>40</sup>

The AV/KJV says “whosoever transgresseth,” but the RV follows another reading of the Greek, *proago*, which means “to go before,” or “taketh the lead,” (RVM). We learn from this verse how vital it is to be sound in the teaching of Christ, for if we abide in the teaching we have both the Father and the Son. This is what the Lord Himself promised to His disciples if they were obedient to the words of the commission of Matt.28:16-20<sup>41</sup>, “Lo, I

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38. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rev.3.11>

39. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Ruth%202.12>

40. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/2%20John%201.9>

41. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Matt.28.16-20>

am with you alway (all the days), even unto the end of the world (age).” It is solemn indeed in the case of those who have taken the lead but not faithfully held to the teaching of Christ, and have in consequence led many out of the way. Such things abound on all sides.

2 Jn 1:10<sup>42</sup>,11<sup>43</sup>

We cannot be faithful to the Lord and hospitable to destroyers of souls by their evil teaching. The comment of the apostle is clear; they are neither to be received into our homes nor are we to greet them as though we encouraged them in their evil works. If we love truth we shall hate evil. It becomes us to be like the Psalmist who says, “I hate every false way” (Ps.119:104<sup>44</sup>,128<sup>45</sup>).

2 Jn 1:12<sup>46</sup>,13<sup>47</sup>

To speak face to face, or more correctly “mouth to mouth” (Newberry, Mg.), is much the better way of communication at any time, but what would we have done without the permanent record contained in the letters of the apostles? Writing has an abiding value which conversation and oral ministry have not, however excellent these are at the time. We thank God for the inspired Scriptures. Writing at times may be irksome, but Paul said that to him it was not irksome and for the Philippians it was safe

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42. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/2%20John%201.10>

43. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/2%20Jn%201.11>

44. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Ps.119.104>

45. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Ps%20119.128>

46. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/2%20John%201.12>

47. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/2%20Jn%201.13>

(Phil.3:1<sup>48</sup>), and we have in his writings safety too, by holding to them we are safe from falling. By John's letter, the children of the elect sister of this lady sent their salutation. It is a beautiful family greeting sent by the aged Jn to those who were not only relatives in the flesh, but also in the Lord.

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48. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Phil.3.1>

# COMMENTARY ON 3 JOHN

3 Jn 1:1<sup>1</sup>,2<sup>2</sup>

It may be quite impossible to say who this Gaius is, whether Gaius of Macedonia (Acts 19:29<sup>3</sup>), Gaius of Corinth (Rom.16:23<sup>4</sup>; 1 Cor.1:14<sup>5</sup>), Gaius of Derbe (Acts 20:4<sup>6</sup>), or another Gaius. It was presumably a common name in those days. He was evidently one who was well known to John and beloved by him and others; the words “whom I love in truth” are similar to his words of address to the elect lady of the former epistle. It was John’s wish that his physical health and his prosperity might be equal to his soul’s prosperity (Gk. euodoo<sup>7</sup>, from eu, good, odos, way). Prosperity of soul is to be desired beyond all forms of prosperity.

3 Jn 1:3<sup>7</sup>,4<sup>8</sup>

Elders worthy of that name must similarly rejoice when they hear of their fellow-elders and others walking in truth and not in error. The truth in which Gaius walked is called “thy truth,” truth which this beloved brother had made his own, truth “which

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1. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/3%20John%201.1>

2. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/3%20Jn%201.2>

3. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Acts%2019.29>

4. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rom.16.23>

5. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/1%20Cor.1.14>

6. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Acts%2020.4>

7. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/3%20John%201.3>

8. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/3%20Jn%201.4>

abideth in us, and it shall be with us for ever” (2 Jn 2<sup>9</sup>). Gaius evidently had bought the truth. It is well when brethren can bear witness of each other’s steadfast adherence to the truth. There is joy in heaven (and on earth too) over one sinner that repenteth (Lk.15:7<sup>10</sup>); there is joy over brethren walking in the truth (2 Jn 4<sup>11</sup>) and there will be exceeding joy when the Lord sets us before the presence of the glory of God (Jud.24<sup>12</sup>). To John the joy over the salvation of sinners was no greater than his hearing of his spiritual children walking in the truth. Often the former is so magnified above the latter as to make the latter of small importance. Let us hold a just balance in the things of God, for “A false balance is an abomination to the LORD” (Prov.11:1<sup>13</sup>). We are sure that John’s balance in joy is correct, that there is no greater joy than that over children of God walking in the truth.

3 Jn 1:5<sup>14</sup>,6<sup>15</sup>

Here we have a class of brethren who moved about from place to place in the work of the Lord, after the pattern set by the Lord and His apostles. The Lord “went about through cities and villages, preaching” (Lk.8:1<sup>16</sup>). “Peter went throughout all parts” (Acts 9: 32<sup>17</sup>). Paul said that “from Jerusalem, and round

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9. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/2%20John%202>

10. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Luke.15.7>

11. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/2%20John%204>

12. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Jude.24>

13. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Prov.11.1>

14. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/3%20John%201.5>

15. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/3%20Jn%201.6>

16. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Luke.8.1>

17. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Acts%209.%2032>

about even unto Illyricum, I have fully preached the gospel of Christ” (Rom.15: 19<sup>18</sup>). Gaius did a faithful work in his love for the Lord and His workers in caring for them, and as Titus in Crete was exhorted to “set forward Zenas the lawyer and Apolos on their journey diligently, that nothing be wanting unto them” (Tit.3:13<sup>19</sup>), even so John encouraged Gaius that he did well to set forward these servants of the Lord, who are described as “brethren and strangers withal,” on their journey in a manner worthy of God. This manifest love of Gaius was borne witness to before the church where John was at that time.

3 Jn 1:7<sup>20</sup>,8<sup>21</sup>

The difficult and often dangerous work of those days was undertaken by those men who had been called by the Lord to it, because of the love they bare to the Name, the name of their Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. They went out not to be supported by worldly organisations or Gentiles or by gentilish ones, such as those who had to be treated as the Gentile and the publican (Matt.18:17<sup>22</sup>), that is, as persons outside the Fellowship. Those who preached the gospel and ministered the word were to be ministered to by those in the Fellowship, as Paul ordained in the churches (1 Cor.9:9-14<sup>23</sup>; 1 Tim.5:17<sup>24</sup>,18<sup>25</sup>). John says in regard

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18. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rom.15.%2019>

19. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Titus.3.13>

20. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/3%20John%201.7>

21. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/3%20Jn%201.8>

22. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Matt.18.17>

23. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/1%20Cor.9.9-14>

24. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/1%20Tim.5.17>

25. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/1%20Tim%205.18>

to these servants of the Lord, “We therefore ought to welcome such” (as well as set them forward on their journey worthily of God), “that we may be fellow-workers with the truth.”

3 Jn 1:9<sup>26</sup>,10<sup>27</sup>

Here we have a character the opposite of Gaius, namely Diotrephes, who loved to have the pre-eminence (Gk. *philoproteuo* – to love to be first), not perhaps, because he was chief in spiritual growth or ability, but he was a place-seeker; he loved the chief place, like the Pharisees of former times, who loved chief seats in the synagogues, salutations in the market places, and to be called “Rabbi.” Such a course was to be eschewed by the Lord’s disciples, among whom the person with the least opinion of himself was in the Lord’s view the greatest. The result of this pride of place in Diotrephes was that he refused to receive John or others of the Lord’s servants, because their spiritual power would immediately challenge his opinion of the place he thought himself to be competent to fill.

He not only would not receive them, but those who would he forbade, and cast those out of the church who dared to receive them. To what lengths does impudent pride go! The church here is, of course, not the Church which is His (Christ’s) Body (Eph.1:22<sup>28</sup>,23<sup>29</sup>), but is the church of God (1 Cor.1:2<sup>30</sup>). There were many churches of God in the days of the apostles, but there

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26. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/3%20John%201.9>

27. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/3%20Jn%201.10>

28. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Eph.1.22>

29. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Eph%201.23>

30. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/1%20Cor.1.2>

was and is but one Church, one Body of Christ. Diotrephes was not to be allowed to continue his lawless ways, for John anticipated a visit to the church where he was, when he would bring to remembrance his words and works. Such a state of things could not be allowed to continue in a church which was “of God.”

### 3 Jn 1:11<sup>31</sup>

The English word “mimic” is derived from the Greek *mimetes*, “an imitator.” “to imitate” means “to strive to resemble.” “Be ye imitators of me, even as I also am of Christ” (1 Cor.4:16<sup>32</sup>: 11:1). Seek to have a good ensample or pattern to work to. “Be ye therefore imitators of God, as beloved children; and walk in love” (Eph.5:1<sup>33</sup>,2<sup>34</sup>). “He that doeth evil hath not seen God,” says John. He has not seen the perfect Pattern of all good, for, as the Lord said, “None is good save one, even God” (Mk.10:18<sup>35</sup>). He is essentially good, others may be imitating His goodness and be relatively good. The Lord again said, “Love your enemies, and pray for them that persecute you; that ye may be sons of your Father which is in heaven: ... Ye therefore shall be perfect, as your heavenly Father is perfect” (Matt.5:44-48<sup>36</sup>). John’s teaching here about doing good is in alignment with that of the Lord and John’s fellow-apostles.

### 3 Jn 1:12<sup>37</sup>

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31. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/3%20John%201.11>

32. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/1%20Cor.4.16>

33. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Eph.5.1>

34. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Eph%205.2>

35. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Mark.10.18>

36. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Matt.5.44-48>

Demetrius, of whom John says but little, had the witness of all and of the truth as to his well- doing, behaviour the exact opposite of the proud evil-doing of Diotrephes.

3 Jn 1:13<sup>38</sup>,14<sup>39</sup>

What John had to write to Gaius about we may imagine, but we do not know. He said that it was not his will to write concerning many things. He hoped to come shortly, or immediately, and to speak with him mouth to mouth. He sends the Hebrew salutation of peace. The saints in the church where John was he calls friends (Gk. *philoï*), and sends their salutation to Gaius, and the saints, the friends with Gaius were to be saluted by name, personally.

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37. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/3%20John%201.12>

38. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/3%20John%201.13>

39. <https://biblia.com/bible/esv/3%20Jn%201.14>



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