

## 1 John 1:1

### THE ARGUMENT

Concerning the penman of the First Epistle, it doth not appear there hath been any doubt, the ancients generally ascribing it to the apostle St. John. The time of his writing it is uncertain, some assigning to it an earlier, others a later date. It is thought to have been written directly to the Christian Jews, not living in Judea, but remote in Parthia, (where it appears great numbers of them resided), being styled by a noted father, "The Epistle to the Parthians." The design of it is to confirm them in the great fundamental doctrine of Christianity: That our Lord Jesus was the Messiah, against the attempts of divers apostate or degenerate Christians, who (whether this Epistle were of the former or latter date) did in his time deny, or essentially deprave, that most important article. And not only to induce them all most stedfastly to believe it, but to impress it more deeply upon their souls, to reduce the more licentious, to raise and quicken the dead and carnal to a more strict, lively, vigorous Christianity; and (which is greatly inculcated) to excite and inflame mutual Christian love among them, as that which would more strongly fortify them against the endeavours of seducers, and render their communion more pleasant among themselves. The other two Epistles are very much of the same argument, (though the latter hath somewhat of a different and peculiar concernment), but doubted by some whether by the same penman, upon very insufficient grounds, the matter and style, plainly enough, showing them to be this apostle's.

### Chapter Summary

1Jo 1:1-4 The apostle professeth to declare what he had formerly seen and known of the Word of life, to the end that others might have fellowship with him.

1Jo 1:5-10 The substance of his doctrine is: That to have fellowship with God, we must be holy as he is holy; and that if we confess our sins, we shall be forgiven through the blood of Christ.

Ver. 1. The order of discourse requires we begin with the last thing in this verse, *the Word of life*. This phrase, *the Word*, is by this apostle (not here

to inquire in what notion some, both Jews and pagans, before took it) familiarly used, to signify the eternal Son of God: and whereas this is his usual style in speaking of this sacred Person, as in the entrance of his Gospel, (so very like that of this Epistle), so often over in his Revelation, Re 19:13, and that afterwards in this Epistle itself, 1Jo 5:7, he so readily falls into the mention of him by this name, (as not doubting to be understood), it is scarce to be supposed, that being so constant to himself herein, he should use the same form of speech without any such intendment in this place, where the circumstances do both allow and invite us so to understand him. Nor doth the addition to it here, the *Word of life*, render it the less fit to be applied to this purpose, but rather the more; as serving to denote the peculiar excellency of this Word, that he is the living and vivifying Word; whereupon he also styles him in the following verse, simply, *the life*, and, *that eternal life*, ( which is fit to be noted here, viz. that these three expressions, *the Word of life*, *the life*, and *that eternal life*, do, by the contexture of the discourse, plainly mean the same thing, and seem in their principal intendment to be set down as so many titles of the Son of God), designing to represent him as the original and radical life, the root of the holy, divine life, to all who partake thereof, agreeably to his own words concerning him in the Gospel, Joh 1:4, *In him* (viz. the Word) *was life*, and *the life was the light of men* (i.e. the Word was a vital, enlivening light); and 1Jo 5:20, He (viz. the Son of God) *is eternal life*: and to our Lord's words of himself, *I am the life*, Joh 11:25 14:6; and that *the Father had given him to have life in himself*, Joh 5:26, and consequently, to be capable of being to others an original or fountain of life. Yet whereas by *the Word*, and *the Word of life*, is often signified the gospel, (1Jo 2:5 Php 2:16; and elsewhere), it seems not incongruous or disagreeable to this context, to understand the apostle, as designing to comprehend both the meanings together in one expression, apt enough to include them both. See Dr. Hammond in loco. Nor are they of so remote an import, considered in their relation to us, as not fitly to admit of being both intended at once. The Son of God being his internal Word, the Word of his mind, his Wisdom, (another appellation of him, frequent in Scripture, Pr 8:1-36 and elsewhere), comprehending all ideas of things to be created or done; to us, the immediate original of light and life, and by whose vivifying beams we are especially to be transformed into the Divine likeness: the gospel being his external word, the word of his mouth, the radiation of those beams themselves. As we do ourselves first conceive, and form in our minds, what we afterwards utter and express: only

whereas our thought, or the word of our mind, is fluid, and soon vanishes; God's (in whom is no change) is permanent, consubstantial and coeternal with himself: *The Word was with God, and the Word was God*, Joh 1:1. Neither are these two senses of *the Word of life* less fitly (or with more impropriety) comprehended together under that one expression, than in common discourse: speaking of the sun in reference to ourselves, we often comprehend together in our meaning, both the body of the sun itself and its beams; as when we say it enlightens us, revives us, shines in at this window, or upon that dial, we do not intend (as reasonably we cannot) to exclude either, but mean the sun doth it by its beams. And now the notion being settled of *the Word of life*, (which was necessary first to be done, and which required a larger discourse), we may the more easily perceive, how what is here said of it may, in the one sense or the other, be applied thereto.

*That which was from the beginning*; so the living Word, in the first sense, was, viz. when all things also began; which is not said itself then to have begun, as Joh 1:1: *In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and,* at the next step, *the Word was God*. And with what is said by this Word himself, (then taking another, but an equivalent, name, the Wisdom of God), Pr 8:22-30: *The Lord possessed me in the beginning of his way, before his works of old. I was set up from everlasting, from the beginning, or ever the earth was. When, &c. —Then I was by him, as one brought up with him, &c.:* where *from the beginning*, and *from everlasting*, we see is all one. See 1Jo 2:13,14. *Which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon, and our hands have handled*: these are all expressions indifferently applicable both:

1. To the person of the Son of God, primarily meant by *the Word of life*; for that same glorious Person who was from the beginning with the Father, viz. being now incarnate, became the object of these their very senses, to this and the other apostles, who had so frequent opportunity to hear, and see, and behold him, and even to handle him with their hands, Lu 24:39 Joh 20:25. And:

2. To the gospel revelation, a secondary (not unintended) notion of *the Word of life*, and whereof these latter expressions seem more especially meant; they denote the perfect certainty the apostles had (the rest of whom his manner of speaking seems purposely to comprehend with

himself) of that truth, which, as he after speaks, they testified; it being their office and business as apostles so to do; see Joh 15:27 Ac 1:21,22 4:20; and it was necessary they should be able to do it with such assurance as these expressions import.

Therefore having said, *which we have heard*, which imports a more overly notice, it is added, *which we have seen*, a much more certain way of knowing, as 2Pe 1:16,17; and *with our eyes*, a more lively expression of that certainty, as Job expresses his expected sight of his Redeemer, Job 19:27: and to signify it was not a casual, transient glance, it is further said, *which we have looked upon*, εθεασαμεθα, i.e. studiously, and of set purpose, bent ourselves to contemplate. Unto all which it is moreover added, *and our hands have handled*, εψηλαφησαν, which though literally not otherwise applicable than to the person of our Lord incarnate, yet is a most emphatical metaphor, elegantly representing their most certain knowledge and lively sense of his excellent doctrine; as the expression is usual of a palpable truth, to signify a most evident one. So is that implied to be a truth that may be felt, that this world hath a mighty and bountiful Sustainer and Lord, Ac 17:27; ψηλαφησειαν.

### 1 John 1:2

Ver. 2. He interrupts the stream of his discourse by this seasonable parenthesis, while he therein gives an account how *the Word of life, the life, that eternal life*, (already noted to be here all one, and chiefly to mean the Son of God), which being *with the Father* must be to us invisible, came to be so sensibly known to mortal men on earth; which he doth by telling us he *was manifested*; and that was sufficiently done, both who he was, and what he designed, in his partaking with us of flesh and blood, and *being found in fashion as a man*, whereby he subjected himself to the notice of our senses; and was hereupon said to have been *manifested in the flesh*, 1Jo 3:5 1Ti 3:16; the glory of his Divinity also shining forth most conspicuously in his God-like conversation, and wonderful works, through this veil, and confirming the truth of his heavenly doctrine, which more distinctly declared both that it was the Son of God who was come down into this wretched world of ours, and what the kind design was of his descent hither. So that what here the apostle says more briefly, that he was *manifested*, well admits the larger account which he gives of it in his Gospel, Joh 1:14: *And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father), full of grace and truth.* Whereupon (as he adds) he bears witness, and shows forth what he had seen so manifested, as it belonged to his

apostolical office to do.

### 1 John 1:3

Ver. 3. He now proceeds with what he intended, not only professing to testify most certainly known things, (which he further with great earnestness inculcates), but declaring also the end of this testimony; viz. not merely that they to whom he writes might know them too, (as if the being a Christian did only stand in having some peculiar notions from other men, and that they were only to know for knowing' sake), but that they might *have fellowship*, i.e. partake and communicate with them (viz. the apostles, and the whole community of living Christians) in all the vital influences, holy practice, the dignities, pleasures, and consolations belonging to the Christian state; whereupon he adds, *and truly our fellowship is with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ*: q. d. Nor are the advantages of that state, in their kind and nature, terrene, sensual, secular, but Divine and heavenly, such as are imparted to us by *the Father, and his Son Jesus Christ*; or, wherein we are truly said to participate, and have a communion with them. That blessed Spirit, who is the immediate author to us of all gracious communication, (whence this is also styled *the communion of the Holy Ghost*, 2Co 13:14), being in reality the Spirit of the Father and the Son.

### 1 John 1:4

Ver. 4. Not insipid, spiritless, empty, as carnal joy is, apt through the deficiency of its cause to admit of intermingled qualms; but lively and vigorous, 2Jo 1:12, well grounded, Joh 16:24, such as is of the right kind, and will grow up into the perfect plenitude and fulness of joy, Ps 16:11.

### 1 John 1:5

Ver. 5. It being the professed scope and design of his writing, to draw men to a final participation and communion with God in his own blessedness, he reckons nothing more necessary to it, than to settle in their minds a right notion of God. Which, that it might be the more regarded, he introduces with a solemn preface;

*This then is the message,* &c., (though the word also signifies promise, it here more fitly bears this rendering), to notify:

1. That this which follows was not an imagination of his own concerning God, but his true representation of himself.

2. That it was given him in charge to be delivered and communicated to others; a message a man neither hath of himself, nor is to reserve to himself, *we have heard it of him, and declare it to you*, as (consonantly hereto) he speaks. It is the Divine pleasure it should be published to the world, and that all men should know that as from him, i.e. that he is not a Being of mere power, as some, or of mere mercy, as others, are apt to fancy of him, either whereof were a very maimed and most disagreeable notion of the Deity: power without goodness were apt to run into fury; goodness without wisdom and righteousness would as naturally turn to a supine indifferency, and neglect of distinguishing judicially between good and bad; things neither suitable to the Governor of the world, nor possible to the absolutely perfect Being.

*God is light*; in God all true perfections and excellencies must be understood eminently to concur; and of them more could not have been comprehended under one word, (especially that belong to him considered relatively to his creatures, of which perfections it concerns us to have more distinct, formed, positive conceptions in all our applications to him), than are here some way represented or resembled by *light*, viz. that he is a Being of most lively, penetrative vigour, absolute simplicity, immutability, knowledge, wisdom, sincerity, righteousness, serenity, benignity, joy, and felicity, and especially of most bright and glorious holiness and purity; and in whom *is no darkness at all*, nothing contrary or repugnant hereto.

### 1 John 1:6

Ver. 6. Light and darkness are frequently put for holiness and wickedness, Lu 16:8 Ro 13:12 Eph 5:8 1Th 5:5. The sum then is: That if any pretend to friendship with God, or to have received holy and gracious influences from him, and do yet lead wicked lives, they are liars, even guilty of a practical lie, doing what makes their profession false and insincere.

### 1 John 1:7

Ver. 7. *But if we walk*; which is a continued and progressive motion, i.e. do persevere and improve in holiness.

*In the light*; being transformed into the holy image and likeness of God, and showing themselves *the children of light*, as he is *light*, and *the Father of lights*. *We have fellowship one with another*; have fellowship with him, μετ αυτου, as one copy reads: however, we must comprehend God, and

this the contexture of discourse shows.

*And the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin;* καθαριζει lest our purity and holiness should be thought to have deserved such a privilege, it is cautiously added, *and the blood,* &c. is that which alone expiates, or makes atonement for our sins (the proper notion of cleansing here). Our former sinfulness and present imperfect holiness render it impossible God should admit us to communion with him for our own sakes, or without such an intervening sacrifice; καθαματα usually signifying expiations. And if we further extend the notion of cleansing, so as to comprehend internal subjective purification, (which also the word may admit), the further meaning is, that even that purifying influence, whereby we are qualified for present holy walking with God, and for final blessedness in him, we owe to the merit and procurement of the Redeemer's blood.

### 1 John 1:8

Ver. 8. In pursuance of which scope, he fitly adds: *If we should say,* i.e. either profess it as a principle, or think in our minds, or not bear in our hearts a penitential, remorseful sense, correspondent to the contrary apprehension; such as is implied in confessing, 1Jo 1:9; for saying usually signifies the habitual bent and disposition of the heart and practice, Job 21:14 Jer 22:21.

*That we have no sin;* viz. that we are so innocent creatures as not to need such an expiatory sacrifice as that above mentioned, and such purifying influence thereupon, but that we may be admitted to communion with God upon our own account, and for our worthiness' sake, without being beholden to the blood of Christ.

*We deceive ourselves,* delude our own souls.

*And the truth;* i.e. the system and frame of gospel doctrine, as 2Jo 1:1,2,4.

*Is not in us;* cannot be duly entertained, lies not evenly and agreeably with itself in our minds, or hath no place with effect in us, as Joh 8:37.

## 1 John 1:9

Ver. 9. But on the contrary, *if we confess our sins*, if we apply ourselves to him suitably to the condition of sinners, confessing ourselves such, with that self-abasing sense of sin which may dispose us to accept and apply his offered remedy, (upon which it is implied we will do it), *he is faithful*, so true to his promise, *and just*, fidelity being a part of justice; or there is with him that equity and righteousness, (which sometimes signify goodness, or clemency, 1Sa 12:7 Ps 112:9, and which, more strictly taken, permit him not to exact from us the satisfaction which he hath accepted in the atonement made by his Son, in his own way applied, and upon his own terms to be reckoned unto us), that he will not fail *to forgive us our sins*.

*And to cleanse us from all unrighteousness;* which may either be added as a further expression of the same thing; or may, moreover, signify his vouchsafing that purifying influence of the Spirit of Christ, (obtained also by his blood), which shall both purge away, and prevent, the defilements that would render us incapable of his own holy communion.

## 1 John 1:10

Ver. 10. *If we say that we have not sinned:* see 1Jo 1:8,9.

*We make him a liar;* which they make him that believe not his word, 1Jo 5:10, expressly charging all men with sin, Ro 3:19,23.

*And, consequently, his word, or truth,* as 1Jo 1:8, which we contradict, *is not in us*. The sum is: That we are not to be received into God's holy society and communion under the notion of always innocent and unoffending persons, but as pardoned and purified sinners.

## 1 John 2:1

### Chapter Summary

1Jo 2:1,2 Christ is our advocate with the Father, and a propitiation for the sins of the whole world.

1Jo 2:3-6 Rightly to know God is to keep his commandments,

1Jo 2:7-11 the chief of which is, to love one another.



1Jo 2:12-14 The apostle addresseth Christians of all ages severally,  
1Jo 2:15-17 and warneth them against an inordinate love of this world,  
1Jo 2:18,19 and against deceivers, who were many.  
1Jo 2:20-28 He showeth the means they had of knowing the truth, and of distinguishing false teachers; and pointeth out their obligation to abide in the truth which they had been taught,  
1Jo 2:29 he that doeth righteousness is born of God.

Ver. 1. He endeavours in this to steer them a middle course, that they might neither presume to sin, nor despair if they did; and bespeaks them with a compellation, importing both authority and love; well becoming him as then an aged person, an apostle, their teacher, and who was their most affectionate spiritual father. And lets them know, the first design of what he was now writing (had hitherto written, and was further to write) was: That they might to their uttermost avoid sinning at all: but adds, if, through human frailty, they did sin, *we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous;* implying our need of Christ for renewed as well as first pardon; and not of his death only, but continual intercession; and represents the advantages Christ hath for success in his interposing for us, in respect both of his relation to God as his Father, (which is put indefinitely, *the Father*, that the consideration might not be excluded of his being our Father also), and his righteousness, by which he could not but be acceptable to him.

### 1 John 2:2

Ver. 2. *And he is the propitiation for our sins:* the adding of these words, shows that our Lord grounds his intercession for pardon of sin unto penitent believers, upon his having made atonement for them before; and therefore that he doth not herein merely supplicate for favour, but (which is the proper business of an advocate) plead law and right; agreeably to what is said above, 1Jo 1:9.

*And not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world;* nor is his undertaking herein limited to any select persons among believers, but he

must be understood to be an Advocate for all, for whom he is effectually a Propitiation, i.e. for all that truly believe in him, (Ro 3:25), all the world over.

### 1 John 2:3

Ver. 3. This faith is often in the Holy Scripture signified by the name of knowledge, Isa 53:11 Joh 17:3, viz. an appropriative, transformative knowledge, by which we own and accept God in Christ, as ours, (expressed also by acknowledgment, επιγνωσις, Eph 1:17 Col 2:2), and are changed into his likeness, 2Co 3:18. The meaning then is: That we perceive, or discern ourselves to be sincere believers, and consequently that Christ is both our Propitiation and Advocate, when it is become habitual and easy to us to obey his commandments.

### 1 John 2:4

Ver. 4. *A liar*; a false, hypocritical pretender, as 1Jo 1:6.

### 1 John 2:5

Ver. 5. His faith *worketh by love*, Ga 5:6; his love is *perfected*, and attains its end in obedience, whereof it is the vital principle, 1Jo 5:3 Joh 14:15. Such an efficacious governing knowledge of him, therefore, as, by the power of the love which it produces, subdues our souls to the obedience of him, is a certain proof to us of our union with him, 1Jo 5:20, and relation to him.

### 1 John 2:6

Ver. 6. And this proof we ought to give. For whereas our Lord Jesus Christ was not only our Lawgiver, but our pattern, and practised himself what he commanded us; if indeed we have an abiding, real union with him, we partake of his Spirit, Ro 8:9, which must be understood to work uniformly, and enable us *to walk* (in the main of our course, according to our measure

of that Spirit) *as he walked*.

### 1 John 2:7

Ver. 7. This commandment must be that which he insists on, 1Jo 2:9-11, and which in different respects he calleth both *old* and *new*. Not *new*, he says, in opposition to their Gnostic seducers, to intimate he was not about to entertain them with vain novelties, as they did; all whose peculiar doctrines were no other than innovations upon true Christianity: but *old*, viz. a part of original Christianity, as it came pure first from our Lord Christ himself; the *commandment*, or word, *which they had*, or had heard, *from the beginning*. This phrase, *from the beginning*, being here put in conjunction with some act of theirs, *ye had*, or have heard, as also 2Jo 2:5,6, shows it to intend a much later term of commencement than 1Jo 1:1. Though also, considering them as Jews, whom he here writes to, it might run up as high as the law given by Moses; or, even as men, to the creation, and the first impression of the law of nature (whereof this was a very noble part) upon the heart of man.

### 1 John 2:8

Ver. 8. Yet also he calls it *a new commandment*, as our Saviour did, Joh 13:34, upon the subjoined accounts.

*Which thing is true;* i.e. evident, or verified, fulfilled, exemplified.

*In him;* viz. in that new and high demonstration he had given of the sincerity and greatness of his own love, laying down his life for us, as Joh 15:13.

*And in you;* or, us, (as some read), i.e. the mind of God herein is by a new and fresh light most evidently and gloriously signified in or among you, (the subject being here collective and plural, admits this varied and very usual sense of the particle *in*), inasmuch as *the darkness is past;* i.e. the heathenish ignorance that made the world barbarous; a darkness in which the furious lusts and passions of men are wont to rage, turning this earth into another hell, Ps 74:20, is in a great measure vanished; and also the

dark umbrage of the Judaic dispensation, (some read σκια for σκοτια, not *darkness*, but *shadow*), in which the love of God to men was more obscurely represented, is past away and gone, *and the true light now shineth*; the love and grace of God towards sinners (the pattern and argument of our mutual love to one another) shines with *true light*, that is evident, in opposition to darkness, or immediately substantial, in opposition to type or shadow, as Joh 1:9,14,17: representing the gracious design of God, and his very nature, who *is love*, 1Jo 4:8,16, with so bright and glorious beams as ought to transform us into his likeness; and which therefore render the mutual hatred of one another the most incongruous thing to us in the world. Whereupon he adds ... (see 1Jo 2:9).

### 1 John 2:9

Ver. 9. To be *in the light*, signifies to be under the transforming, governing power of it, as the phrases import of being *in the flesh*, and *in the Spirit*, Ro 8:9, being expounded by walking *after the flesh*, and *after the Spirit*, 1Jo 2:1. He therefore that *hateth his brother*, a thing so contrary to the design of the gospel, whatever he pretends, *is still in darkness*, under the power of the unregenerate principle of impure and malignant darkness: the gospel hath done him no good, is to him but an impotent and ineffectual light, in the midst whereof, by stiff winking, and an obstinate resistance, an exclusion of that pure and holy light, he creates to himself a dark and a hellish night.

### 1 John 2:10

Ver. 10. *His brother*, put indefinitely, must be understood universally, i.e. he that loveth not this or that fellow Christian, upon some personal or private reason, but *all*, upon one and the same common and truly Christian account.

*Abideth in the light*; shows or doth demonstrate the settled, constant power, the regenerate, Divine principle hath over him.

*And there is none occasion of stumbling in him*; Greek, no scandal; no inconsistent thing, that ought to occasion him to judge otherwise of

himself, or others to think otherwise of him.

### 1 John 2:11

Ver. 11. Hath no principle to guide or govern him, but what is common to the unregenerate world, so that his whole life is a continual error; nor doth he understand or consider the tendency of his course, being still under the power of an affected darkness, that makes his eyes, or understanding, of no more use than if he were quite blind, or had none at all. So weighty and important is the precept which he had to lay down, 1Jo 2:15, of not loving the world, &c., that he introduces it with the solemnity of a most pathetic preface, contained in these three following verses, wherein he applies himself severally to the distinct orders and ranks into which Christians were capable of being reduced, the matter being of common and equal concernment to all of them. And he speaks suitably to the condition and state of each, such things as whereby he might most effectually insinuate with them, and oblige them deeply to consider what he had to say; doubling also his application to each of them, out of the earnestness of his intention and endeavour to fasten the exhortation upon them which was to follow.

### 1 John 2:12

Ver. 12. He here uses an appellation before (1Jo 2:1) applied to all in common, being put alone; but being now set in contradistinction to others, must be understood to intend a distinct rank of Christians, viz. those more newly entered into the Christian state; and to them he suggests the free remission of their sins *for his name's sake*, i.e. for his own sake, as the reason why they should, out of ingenuity, and a new, recent sense of God's mercy towards them, comply with his holy pleasure in the following precept. The remission of their sins being a first and most early privilege with them, that commenced from the beginning of their sincere Christianity, and which was sealed to them in their late baptism, it is the more fitly mentioned to this first rank of Christians.

### 1 John 2:13

Ver. 13. *Unto fathers*, because to such belong much experience, and the knowledge of ancient things, he ascribeth the knowledge of *him who is* the Ancient of days, *from the beginning*, and than whom none is more ancient, and whom they should be supposed so well to know by their long continued course in religion, as fully to understand his good and acceptable will, what would be pleasing and what displeasing to him.

*I write unto you, young men, because ye have overcome the wicked one:* to such as were in the flower of their strength and age in Christianity, he attributeth victory; to whom therefore it would be inglorious to slur the honour of that noble conquest they had gained over *the wicked one*, the *god of this world*, as he is elsewhere called, 2Co 4:4, by suffering themselves again to be entangled in its snares and bands. His method is, we see, to place this order of Christians last, as a middle state, which he would have us conceive afterwards to be interposed between the other two; which method we find he observes in going over them again the second time.

*I write unto you, little children, because ye have known the Father:* he again first begins with his *little children*, whom he now bespeaks by another compellation in the Greek, (before  $\tau\epsilon\kappa\nu\iota\alpha$ , now  $\pi\alpha\iota\delta\iota\alpha$ ), importing no material difference, except this latter signify more capacity of instruction; and he now also gives them another character, which implies so much, that he not only considers them as the passive subjects of a privilege, remission of sins, which they were capable of in the first moment of their being born into the Christian state, (as the word  $\tau\epsilon\kappa\nu\iota\alpha$ , above, seems to intimate), but as being able to use their understanding, and consider whose children they were, *because ye have known the Father*; before said also of the eldest sort of Christians; but he is there mentioned by a description more suitable to their more aged state; and therefore the knowledge ascribed to the one, and to the other, though the same in kind, must, in respect of degrees, be accommodately understood.

### 1 John 2:14

Ver. 14. To the former sort he only repeateth what he had said before,

supposing their greater wisdom to need no more; (see L. Brugens. Not. in Bibl. Sacr. of the insertion of this clause); only the repetition importeth his earnest desire they would again and again consider it. The other he also puts in mind of their active strength and vigour, and of the rootedness which the gospel must now be supposed to have in them, whereby they were enabled to *overcome the wicked one*. And by all which endowments they were all both enabled and obliged to comport the better with the following precept, and its enforcements.

### 1 John 2:15

Ver. 15. What he here means by the forbidden object of our love, must be gathered from his own explication, 1Jo 2:16. The love itself forbidden, in reference thereto, is that excess thereof, whereby any adhere to terrene things, as their best good; wherewith, as he adds, any sincere love to God is inconsistent, as Mt 6:24 Lu 14:3: a consideration so awful and tremendous, that it is not strange the precept it enforces should have so solemn and urgent an introduction.

### 1 John 2:16

Ver. 16. Here he explains his meaning, what, under the name of *the world*, and *the things* of it, we are not to love, or under what notion we ought not to love it, viz. the world as it contains the objects and nutriment of these mentioned lusts; either more grossly sensual, called *the lust of the flesh*, viz. of gluttony, drunkenness, whoredom, &c. Ro 13:13,14; or that which is excited more immediately by the fancy, unto which the eye especially ministereth, the excessive appetite of much wealth, and great possessions; which the eye is therefore said to desire, and not to be satisfied with, Ec 2:8-10, and Ec 4:8; called therefore *the lust of the eyes*. And again, the ambitious affectation of the pomp and glory of the world, vain applause, the unmerited and overvalued praise and observance of other men, with power over them, affected for undue ends, or only with a self-exalting design, meant by *the pride of life*, forbidden by our Saviour to his disciples, Mt 20:25,26. This triple distribution some observe to have been before used by some of the ancient learned Jews, and imitated by certain of the more refilled heathens; whence, as being formerly known and

understood, the apostle might be induced to make use of it. And these lusts are therefore argued to be inconsistent with the love of the Father, as not being of him, but *of the world*; not from the Divine Spirit, but the spirit of the world.

### 1 John 2:17

Ver. 17. He sets the difference in view, of living according to the common genius, will, or inclination of the world, (which is lust), and according to the Divine will, that he who unites himself in his will and desire with the former, which vanishes, (objects and appetite altogether), must (which is implied) perish therewith; but he that unites himself with the supreme eternal good, by a will that is guided by and conformed to the Divine will, *abideth for ever*, partakes a felicity coeternal with the object and rule upon which his heart was set, and which it was guided by.

### 1 John 2:18

Ver. 18. *The last time*; the time here referred to seems to be the destruction of Jerusalem, and the finishing of the Jewish state, both civil and ecclesiastical. In the Greek, the last hour, the approaching period of Daniel's seventy weeks, as Mr. Mede understands it, in his Apostacy of the Later Times. Whereas therefore it was now a known and expected thing among Christians, that the eminent *antichrist*, or antichristian state, (expressly foretold, 2Th 2:1-17), was to come, or take place; therefore the apostle says, *ye*, i.e. the generality of Christians, *have heard* so much. So he says, *even now*, as the forerunners of that eminent one, *are there many antichrists*, (foretold also by our Saviour, Mt 24:5,24), viz. noted heretics and seducers then in being: not such falsely assuming vicarious Christs, as only pretended to do that part which the Jews expected from their Messiah, the delivering them from the Roman tyranny, and so set up to be merely civil or secular Christs, having themselves never been Christians, but such as had revolted from Christianity, and now laboured fundamentally to subvert it, denying Christ to be *come in the flesh*, 1Jo 2:22 2Jo 1:7; having been before professed Christians, as appears by the following words.



1 John 2:19

Ver. 19. *If they had been of us, they would no doubt have continued with us:* sincere and living Christians are so strongly held in with Christ, and the truly Christian community, by a union and bond of life, and by sense of pleasures which thereupon they find in that holy communion, with the expectation which their lively faith gives them of eternal life at last, that there is *no doubt* of their continuance.

*But they went out, that they might be made manifest that they were not all of us:* others, that are Christians upon external inducements, alter, as these do, and are permitted to do so, that the difference may appear between true and counterfeit ones, 1Co 11:19.

1 John 2:20

Ver. 20. See Poole on "1Jo 2:27".

1 John 2:21

Ver. 21. He prudently intimates his confidence concerning them, together with the pleasure he himself took (as any one would) in communicating the sentiments of holy truth to prepared, receptive minds; implying also, that any part of false doctrine doth so ill match and square with the frame of Divine truth, that judicious Christians may discern they are not of a piece.

1 John 2:22

Ver. 22. Especially may the ill accord be discerned between Divine truth and a lie, when the lie is so directly levelled against the foundations upon which the whole fabric is built, as the denying Jesus to be the Christ strikes at all. And though he that doth so, seems not only an *antichrist* as directing his opposition but against Christ, he really as much *denieth the Father*, who testified of him.

### 1 John 2:23

Ver. 23. To have the Father and the Son, is, by faith, love, and obedience, vitally to adhere to the one and the other. The latter part of this verse, though it be not in the ordinary Greek copies, is in some of the versions, and said to be in some Greek manuscripts also, whence it is supplied very agreeably to the apostle's scope, and usual way of writing.

### 1 John 2:24

Ver. 24. He only exhorts them to persevere in that faith which they at first received, whereby their union with God in Christ would be preserved entire.

### 1 John 2:25

Ver. 25. Which perseverance they are highly encouraged to by the promise of so great a thing as eternal life at length.

### 1 John 2:26

Ver. 26. So much he thought requisite to be said, in respect of their danger by seducers, though their safety was principally to depend upon what he next mentions ... See Poole on "1Jo 2:27".

### 1 John 2:27

Ver. 27. *But the anointing which ye have received:* it is evident, that the ancient anointing of persons to some eminent office, was not a mere empty rite of investiture, or authorization, but also a symbol of their qualification by another Spirit then coming upon them. Whereupon our Lord Jesus was eminently *the Christ, or anointed One*, not only as denoting his solemn investiture with the sacred offices of King, Priest, and Prophet, which were all wont to be entered into by unction; but as signifying also his receiving

the Spirit, (*not by measure*), by which he was most perfectly qualified for them. And whereas he is also said to have made those that believe on him, in a far inferior sense, *kings and priests to his Father*; to them also he imparts of the same Spirit, Ro 8:9, whence they are said to be anointed too, 2Co 1:21,22. And hence, as is here said, and 1Jo 2:27, they do not *need*, &c.

*Ye need not that any man teach you*; not as if they had absolutely no need at all of human teaching, for the apostle supposes not himself to be now doing a vain or needless thing; but that they had less need, having the internal principles of light and life in them, they were in a great measure capable of steering their own course. They had in themselves a living, ingrafted word, enabling them to teach and commune with themselves, as De 30:11,12 Ro 10:7-9. Hereupon their own reins could instruct them, Ps 16:7. Or, they could instruct themselves, εαυτους, as that may be read, Col 3:16, *the word of Christ dwelling richly* in them. Therefore they did not so need to be taught, as those that know not the first principles of the oracles of God.

*Teacheth you of all things*; i.e. all such necessary and essential things to the life and being of Christianity, of which sort that doctrine concerning the Messiah was, which he was now speaking of; not *all things* simply, for that had been to attribute to them far higher knowledge than he could pretend to himself, even that which was peculiar to God only. Nor was that knowledge which they had of those necessary things to be thought the effect of an immediate inspiration, but such as by ordinary external means they had already learned, but made vital and efficacious by the special sanctifying influence and operation of the Holy Ghost; who having begotten in them a correspondent impress to those great truths which are after godliness, formed the new creature in them, which is begotten of the word of truth, had made them capable of dijudication, or of distinguishing by a spiritual sense, Php 1:9,10, between things that were grateful, suitable, and nutritive to the life of the new creature in them, and such things as were noxious and offensive. Whereas, in reference to things more remote from the vitals of religion and godliness, none can assure themselves of such a privilege. And as to these, they are to expect it in the way of their own sincere and diligent endeavours and prayers, as the effect of the habit of grace, maintained and kept up in life and vigour; and a reward of their sincere resignation and subjection of heart and soul to the

governing power of truth, so far as it should be understood and known of them, according to that of our Saviour, Joh 7:17: *If any man will do his will, he shall know of the doctrine whether it be of God, &c.* And thus they might certainly keep their station, and *abide in him*; unto which they are therefore exhorted.

### 1 John 2:28

Ver. 28. He condescendingly includes himself with them, *that we may have confidence*; intimating, for their encouragement, the common mutual joy they should have together at Christ's appearance; he, that he had not been wanting in his endeavours that they might persevere; and they, that they had persevered; which is implied in the menace of the contrary, upon the contrary supposition.

### 1 John 2:29

Ver. 29. Lest he should be thought only solicitous to preserve among them the right notions of the Christian doctrine, as if that alone would suffice them for their salvation and blessedness, (which was the conceit of the Gnostics, touching their own notions, that the entertaining of them would save men, whatsoever men they were, or howsoever they lived), he subjoins this serious monition: *If ye know, &c.*, intimating, that whatsoever they had of the knowledge of God would avail them nothing, if, whereas *he is righteous*, they were not transformed by it into his likeness, and enabled thereby to *do righteousness*, which alone would evidence their Divine birth, since God hath no children destitute of his image, or who resemble him not.

### 1 John 3:1

#### Chapter Summary

1Jo 3:1,2 It is a mark of God's singular love toward us, that we are now called his sons, and designed for further happiness hereafter,

1Jo 3:3-10 and therefore we must obediently keep his commandments,  
1Jo 3:11-24 and love one another with true brotherly kindness and actual beneficence.

Ver. 1. So late mention having been made of that great thing, in the close of the foregoing chapter, being born of God, the holy apostle is here in a transport, in the contemplation of the glorious consequent privilege, to be *called his sons*; and of that admirable love, from whence the whole hath proceeded.

*What manner; ποταπην* or, how great!

*Called*, here, (as often referring to God as the author), signifies to be made, or to be, Mt 5:9,45 Joh 1:12 Ro 4:17. He confers not the name without the thing; the new, even a Divine nature, 2Pe 1:4, in regeneration; the real advantages and dignity of the relation by adoption; and all of mere (and the greatest) kindness and good-will, Tit 3:5-7. Hence he intimates, it ought not to be counted grievous, that *the world knoweth us not*, i.e. doth not own or acknowledge us for its own, is not kind to us, yea, hates and persecutes us; knowing often (after the Hebrew phrase) signifying affection, 1Co 8:3 2Ti 2:19; and accordingly, not knowing, disaffection, and the consequent effects, Mt 7:23. Nor should it be thought strange, *because it knew him not*: the Father, and the whole family, are to it an *invisum genus*, hated alike.

### 1 John 3:2

Ver. 2. Our present state he affirms to be unquestionably that of *sons*, whatsoever hardships from the world, or severer discipline from our Father, we must for a while undergo; but for our future state, it is much above us to comprehend distinctly the glory of it; *it doth not yet appear*, it is yet an unrevealed thing, Ro 8:18; a veil is drawn before it, which is to be drawn aside at the appointed season of the manifestation of the sons of God, 1Jo 3:19. But so much we in the general know of it, (so certain are the apprehensions of faith), that *when he shall appear*, or display his own glory in the appearance of his Son, who is then *to come in the glory of his Father*, Mt 16:27 1Ti 6:14-16, *we shall be like him*, as it befits children to

be unto their Father; i.e. his image shall then be perfected in us, which was defaced so greatly in the apostacy, is restored imperfectly in regeneration, Eph 4:24 Col 3:10, must be daily improved in progressive sanctification: so that as God was above said to be light, Christians are to *shine as lights*, as *the sons of God, without rebuke*, representing and glorifying their Father, Mt 5:16 Php 2:15 1Pe 2:9: but is then to be advanced in us to a far higher pitch than ever, in respect both of holiness and blessedness.

*For we shall see him as he is;* i.e. so far as the limited capacity of our natures can admit; and are therefore by that likeness to be qualified for such vision: which eternal, efficacious vision doth also continue that likeness, the causal particle, *for*, admitting both those references: see Ps 17:15.

### 1 John 3:3

Ver. 3. *Purifieth himself;* i.e. not only is obliged hereto, but by the efficacious influence of this hope, if it be of the same kind, (that *lively hope*, unto which Christians are said to be *begotten*, 1Pe 1:3), is daily more and more transformed, through a continual intention of mind towards the holy God, upon whom that hope is set, (for it is said to be hope *in him*, or rather upon him,  $\epsilon\pi\ \alpha\upsilon\tau\omega$ ), into the image of the Divine purity; knowing also, (which must be a potent inducement to very earnest endeavour this way), that our future conformity to God in glory and blessedness hereafter, depends upon our present vigorous and effectual pursuit of conformity to him in holiness here, Mt 5:8 Heb 12:14. And it is enforced by what follows.

### 1 John 3:4

Ver. 4. Which is added, to signify nothing can be more unreasonable, than the expectation of partaking with God in the glory and blessedness of the future state, if we now allow ourselves in a course of sin, or of transgressing his holy law, which is the very notion of sin; and is again further enforced from the design of our Redeemer.

### 1 John 3:5

Ver. 5. Implying how great an absurdity it were, to expect salvation and blessedness by our sinless Saviour, and yet indulge ourselves in sin, against his design, not only to expiate our sins, but make us sinless like himself.

### 1 John 3:6

Ver. 6. By *sinneth*, he meaneth the same thing as afterwards by *committeth sin*: see 1Jo 3:8,9. Seeing and knowing intend inward union, acquaintance, and converse; such as abode in him implies: see Joh 5:37 3Jo 1:11.

### 1 John 3:7

Ver. 7. This caution implies the zealous endeavour of the seducers of that time, to instil their poisonous doctrine and principles of licentiousness; and his own solicitude, lest these Christians should receive them, and be mischiefed by them. Whereas therefore they were wont to suggest, that a merely notional knowledge was enough to recommend men, and make them acceptable to God, though they lived never so impure lives; he inculcates, that only they that did righteousness, viz. in a continued course, living conformably to the rules of the gospel, were righteous; and that they must aim to be so, *even as he is righteous*; not only making the righteousness and holy life of Christ the object of their trust, but the pattern of their walking and practice.

### 1 John 3:8

Ver. 8. *He that committeth sin*: the apostle's notion of committing sin may be interpreted by his own phrase, 3Jo 1:11, ο κακοποιων, *a doer of evil*; and by that, used in both Testaments, *a worker of iniquity*; which is not every one that doth any one single act of sin; as his ο ποιων δικαιοσυνην, 1Jo 3:7, *a doer of righteousness*, and ο αγαθοποιων, 3Jo 1:11, *a doer of good*, is not every one that doth any one righteous or good

action; any more than we call him a worker or maker of any thing, (as signifying a manual occupation), who only makes a single attempt, but him who hath acquired the habitual skill, and doth ordinarily employ himself accordingly. A worker or maker of sin, (as we may fitly render this ο ποιων την αμαρτιαν), is an habitual or customary sinner; one that sinneth with deliberation, not by surprise, from a prevailing habit, that either continueth him in a course of actual known sin, or that withholdeth him from repenting sincerely, and turning to God from the sin which he hath committed; by which repentance he should not only refrain from further gross acts of sin, (which an impenitent person upon other inducements may do), but mortify and prevail against all sinful habits and inclinations. In the same sense he useth the expression of sinning, 1Jo 3:6,9. And such a sinner, he says, *is of the devil*; as if he were born of him, were his child, really conformed to him, and having his sinning nature. As our Saviour tells the Jews, having applied to them the same phrase before of committing sin, Joh 8:34, that they were of their father the devil, Joh 8:44. As also this apostle, 3Jo 1:11, says: *He that doeth good is of God*, i.e. born of God, or his child; as we find he uses the expressions of being *born of God*, and being *of God*, promiscuously, and with indifference, 1Jo 3:9, 10 5:18,19, the latter being elliptical in reference to the former. Whereas sin was therefore originally the devil's work, he adds, (as a further engagement against it), that *the Son of God was manifested*, (as 1Jo 3:5), appeared in the flesh, showed himself in this world of ours, on purpose *to destroy*, or (as the word signifies) that he might dissolve the frame of all such works.

### 1 John 3:9

Ver. 9. To be *born of God*, is, (in the words of a very learned annotator, Dr. Hammond), "to have received some special influence from God, and by the help and power of that, to be raised to a pious life. Agreeably, γεγεννημενος εκ του θεου, *he that hath been born of God*, is literally, he that hath had such a blessed change wrought in him, by the operation of God's Spirit in his heart, as to be translated from the power of darkness into the kingdom of his own dear Son; transformed in the spirit of his mind, i.e. sincerely changed from all evil to all good; from an obedience to the flesh, &c., to an obedience to God. Only it is here to be noted, that the phrase is not so to be taken, as to denote only the act of this change; the



first impression of this virtue on the patient, the single transient act of regeneration; or reformation; and that, as in the preter tense, now past, but rather a continued course, a permanent state: so as a regenerate man and a child of God are all one, and signify him that lives a pious and godly life, and continues to do so," &c. To the same purpose this author also speaks, note on Joh 1:13, and in his paraphrase on that verse: "Those which live according to the will of God, and neither the natural, nor carnal, nor bare moral principle." This change, introducing the consequent course, divers texts of Scripture explain, Joh 3:3,5,6 2Co 5:17 Eph 2:10 4:24 Jas 1:18, &c. Now of one thus born of God, it is said, he *doth not commit sin*, as 1Jo 3:8, and for the reason here alleged.

*His seed*; the principles of enlivened holy truth, as 1Pe 1:23 Jas 1:8.

*And he cannot sin*: which is not to be understood simply, as if he could not sin at all, which were to contradict what he had said before, 1Jo 1:8, and supposed, 1Jo 2:1; but he cannot commit sin, as 1Jo 3:8. And it is plain the apostle intends by these two expressions the same thing. He cannot *sin*, i.e. do an act of known, gross sin, deliberately, easily, remorselessly, maliciously, as Cain, 1Jo 3:12, out of a hatred of goodness: or, do not such acts customarily, or not so *unto death*, ( as 1Jo 5:16), but that through the advantage of inlaid principles, or the remaining seed, by dependence upon the grace, Spirit, and covenant of God in Christ, he may timously recover.

*Because he is born of God*; i.e. inasmuch as it belongs to his temper and inclination, in respect of the holy new nature received in regeneration, to abhor from the grosser acts, much more from a course of sin; see Ge 39:9 Ac 4:20 2Co 13:8 Ga 5:17: and to his state, as he is a child of God, to have that interest in the grace of Christ, that he may implore, trust, obtain, and improve it, to his being kept from such destructive sinning. And it being evident, by his deep and thorough change, that he is born of God, and chosen to be an heir of eternal life, (as his children are heirs), he may and ought (not in a way of presumptuous negligence, but of vigilance and humble dependence) certainly to expect being so kept. Nor is it strange so much should be affirmed, upon so unspeakably better grounds, of the Christian state, when such boasts are to be read concerning some among the pagans, that one might as soon divert the sun from its course, as turn such a one from the course of righteousness. Though we may also suppose this form of speech might be intended by the apostle to be understood by

the more superficial professors of Christianity, (who might be generally apt enough to look upon themselves as born of God, and his children), as parenetical, and more enforcingly hortatory, in pursuance of his former scope, to keep them off from the licentious courses of their seducers; q. d. It cannot be, that you, who avow yourselves born of God, should do like them. So we usually say, that cannot but be, or cannot be, which we apprehend more highly and clearly reasonable should be, or not be. *Non potes avelli*, &c. Such rhetoric the apostle uses with Agrippa, *I know that thou believest*, as if it were impossible he should not.

### 1 John 3:10

Ver. 10. Upon what was said, he reduces all men each to their own family and father, concluding it manifest whither they belonged; i.e. he shows, upon the grounds before expressed, who do not belong to God and his family, leaving it thence to be collected, since two fathers and families divide the world, to which they must be reckoned; i.e. they belong not to God, and consequently to that worst of fathers, who first, in the general, do not righteousness; the devil being the first sinner, they are his descendants; and who next, particularly, love not their brethren, which most expressly demonstrates a diabolical nature.

### 1 John 3:11

Ver. 11. *From the beginning*: see 1Jo 2:7,8: q. d. They cannot be of God, therefore, that cross so fundamental a precept, so expressive of his nature and will.

### 1 John 3:12

Ver. 12. And what again, on the other hand, (q. d.) can be more devil-like, than such a temper as Cain's was, whose hatred of his brother brake out into actual murder, upon no other account but because his brother was better than he? Which showed him to be *of that wicked one*, of the serpent's seed: so early was such seed sown, and so ancient the enmity between seed and seed.

### 1 John 3:13

Ver. 13. This being so devilish a quality, and the world so generally under his power, as *the god* of it, 2Co 4:4, it is not to be thought strange, that good men should be the marks and designed objects of the world's hatred.

### 1 John 3:14

Ver. 14. The notion of *brother* must not be understood so narrowly, as only to signify such as we have particular inclination to, as being of our own party and opinion, or kindred, or who have obliged us by special kindness; for to confine our love within such limits, were no argument of our having *passed from death unto life*, or more than is to be found with the worst of men, Mt 5:46,47. Nor must it be understood exclusively, of the regenerate only; but must be taken, first, more generally, in the natural sense, for all mankind, in the same latitude as *neighbour* in that summary of the second table: *Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself*; originally intended not to Jews, as such, but men; and therefore excludes not our enemies, by our Saviour's interpretation, Mt 5:43,44. Secondly, in a more special (viz. the spiritual) sense, for such as are our brethren by regeneration, so the children with us of the same Father; i.e. whereas the blessed God himself is the *primum amabile*, the first object of love, all others (persons or things) ought to be loved proportionably to what prints or characters of the Divine excellency we find impressed upon them. Human nature hath resemblances in it of his spiritual, intelligent, immortal nature; regeneracy, of his holiness. And so he loves his creatures himself, severing their malignity, (where that is to be found), that is of themselves, from what of real good there is in them, which is from him. When therefore a correspondent frame of love is impressed upon us, and inwrought into our temper, his image, who *is love*, is renewed in us, which, in this noble part of it, the devil had so eminently defaced in the world, possessing the souls of men with mutual animosities and enmities against one another, but especially such as should be found to have upon them any impress of the most excellent kind of goodness, i.e. of true piety and holiness. And by this renovation of his image in us, whereby we are enabled to love others for his sake, and proportionably to what characters

of him are upon them, we appear to be his children, Mt 5:45, begotten of him into a state of life, out of that death which is upon the rest of the world, Eph 2:1, and wherein every one still abides that thus loves not his brother.

### 1 John 3:15

Ver. 15. That life into which the regenerate are begotten, is nothing else than the beginning or first principle of eternal life, Joh 4:14, whereof they cannot but be destitute who hate their brethren; a thing so contrary to the Divine life, nature, and image, and which makes the person affected with it, in the temper and habit of his mind, a very murderer.

### 1 John 3:16

Ver. 16. *He laid down his life for us:* the intimate union between the Divine nature and the human in Christ, gives ground for the calling Christ's life as man the life of God; as, Ac 20:28, his blood is said to be God's *own blood*. And this testimony of God's love to us, his laying down his life for us, ought so to transform us into his likeness, that out of the power of that Divine principle, the love of God in us, (so that implanted love is called, 1Jo 3:17, *the love of God*), we should never hesitate, or make a difficulty, to lay down our lives for the Christian community, or even for the common good and welfare of men, being duly called thereto.

### 1 John 3:17

Ver. 17. i.e. If the love of God in us should make us lay down our lives for the brethren, and we be not willing, in their necessity and our own ability, to relieve them, how plain is the case, that it is not in us!

### 1 John 3:18

Ver. 18. q. d. It is a vain thing to make verbal pretences of love, without any real proof of it.

### 1 John 3:19

Ver. 19. *And hereby we know that we are of the truth;* i.e. this shall demonstrate to us, that we are the children of the truth, begotten by it, Jas 1:18, when we resemble it, have the correspondent impress of the gospel (that great representation of the love of God) upon us.

*And shall assure our hearts before him;* so shall our hearts be quieted, and well satisfied concerning our states God-ward.

### 1 John 3:20

Ver. 20. *If our heart,* or our conscience, *condemn us,* viz. in plain things, (as this of loving our brother is), and wherein the mind of God is evidently the same with our own conscience; his superiority, to whom our conscience is but an under-judge, ought much more to awe us, especially considering how much more he knows of us than we do of ourselves; as 1Co 4:4.

### 1 John 3:21

Ver. 21. But for their not condemning us, though the expression be merely negative, it must imply somewhat positive; for there are many whose hearts condemn them not, through ignorance of their rule, or oscitancy, self-indulgence, or neglect of themselves. But if after thorough search, with sincerity in the sight of God, our hearts do not condemn, but acquit us, as upright towards him, not willing to allow ourselves in any ill temper or practice, (such as, for instance, this of not loving, or neglecting, our brother), *then we have confidence* (liberty of speech the word literally signifies, which well suits with what follows) *toward God;* we have nothing to hinder or lie as a bar against us in our recourse to him.

### 1 John 3:22

Ver. 22. It is supposed, where there is that accord with God, that what was last, and is next after, said implies, there will be no disposition to ask any thing disagreeable to his will, or otherwise than as he hath expressed his will about the matter of prayer. And then, *whatsoever we ask, we receive*, i.e. are as sure to receive it, in the kind or in equivalence, as if we had it, 1Jo 5:14.

*Because we keep his commandments;* i.e. this is the cause of our certainty, being the evidence of our state God-ward, Ps 66:18,19; not of our receiving the things prayed for, which we only owe to his free promised mercy in Christ.

### 1 John 3:23

Ver. 23. Thus briefly is comprehended the whole of our duty towards God in Christ, and one another, in a like summary as that, Ec 12:13.

### 1 John 3:24

Ver. 24. *He that keepeth his commandments*, i. e. he whose whole soul is thus formed to obediential compliance with the Divine will, *dwelleth in him*; hath most intimate union with God in Christ; which is evident by that Spirit given to us, which hath effected both that holy frame, and that union: see Joh 14:23.

### 1 John 4:1

#### Chapter Summary

1Jo 4:1-6 The apostle warneth to try by certain rules the spirits that pretend to come from God.

1Jo 4:7-21 He presseth the obligation of mutual love upon Christians from the example and commandment of God.

Ver. 1. *Believe not every spirit;* i.e. not every one pretending to inspiration, or a revelation; *spirit*, whether good

or bad, being put for the person acted thereby.

*But try the spirits;* there being a judgment of discretion or discerning, common to Christians, *de jure*, and which they ought to endeavour for and to use upon such occasions, Ac 17:11 Php 1:9,10 1Th 5:21; and the attainment and exercise whereof is, in reference to the great essentials of religion, more facile and sure: as when heretofore among the Jews, any should attempt the drawing them off from the true God, as De 13:1,2; and so when with Christians it should be endeavoured to tempt them away from Christ, as the *false prophets* or teachers did, now *gone out into the world*.

### 1 John 4:2

Ver. 2. He here gives them the general rule, both affirmative and negative, which would suffice them to judge by in their present case; this being the great controversy of that time with the Jews: Whether Jesus were the Messiah? And whether the Messiah were as yet come or no? And with the Gnostics: Whether he were really come in the flesh, in true human nature? Or were not, as to that appearance, a mere phantasm? And he affirms: They that confessed him so come, were of God; i.e. thus far they were in the right, this truth was of God. Of the two litigating parties, this was of God, the other not of God; this took his side, that was against him. Yea, and they that not only made this true confession, but did also truly confess him, i.e. sincerely, cordially, practically, so as accordingly to trust in him, subject and devote themselves to him, were born of God, his very children, acted and influenced hereunto by his own Holy Spirit, as 1Jo 5:1,5 Mt 16:16,17 1Co 12:3.

### 1 John 4:3

Ver. 3. But on the contrary, concerning them who against so plain evidence denied him to be so come, the case was plain; as with the Jews, Joh 8:24, and with the present heretics, who denying the true manner, could not but deny the true end of his coming; and who also lived so impure lives as imported the most open opposition and hostility thereto, and so discovered must evidently that antichristian spirit, which it was foreknown would show itself in the world.

### 1 John 4:4

Ver. 4. Their being born of God, and their participation of a directive and strengthening influence from him, kept them from being overcome by the plausible notions, the alluring blandishments of the flesh and sense, the terror of persecution used towards them by these antichristian or pseudo-christian tempters; and enabled them to overcome, because the Divine Spirit in them was stronger than the others' lying, impure spirit.

### 1 John 4:5

Ver. 5,6. He giveth here a further rule whereby to judge of doctrines and teachers, viz. what they severally savour of, and tend to. The doctrines and teachers whereby these Christians were assaulted and tempted, were of an earthly savour and gust, tending only to gratify worldly lusts and inclinations, and to serve secular interests and designs; and therefore men only of a worldly spirit and temper were apt to listen and give entertainment to them. On the other hand, says he, (in the name of the asserters and followers of true and pure Christianity, comprehended with himself):

*We are of God;* i.e. our doctrine and way proceed from God, and tend only to serve, please, and glorify him, and draw all to him; therefore such as *know God,* i.e. are his friends, and converse much with him, *hear us;* the things we propose and offer are grateful and savoury to them, (as Joh 8:37,47), having manifestly no other aim than to promote serious godliness. And hereby may *the spirit of truth and the spirit of error* in matters of this nature be distinguished; the one being next of kin to purity, and holiness, and a godly life; the other, to sensuality, and a design only of gratifying the animal life.

### 1 John 4:7

Ver. 7. *Beloved, let us love one another:* in opposition to the malice and cruelty of these enemies to true and pure Christianity, he exhorteth to mutual love, not limited to themselves, as undoubtedly he did not intend,



see note on 1Jo 3:14; but that they should do their part towards all others, letting it lie upon them, if it were not reciprocated and mutual.

*For love is of God;* this he presses as a further discrimination; nothing being more evidential of relation and alliance to God, than a duly regulated love, which is of him.

#### 1 John 4:8

Ver. 8. Yea, since love is his very nature, and that *God is love*, those that love (upon the account and in the way above expressed) are born of him, partake from him that excellent and most delectable nature, know him by a transformative knowledge: but they that love not, they are mere strangers to him, and never had to do with him.

#### 1 John 4:9

Ver. 9. There could be no higher demonstration of his love, Joh 3:16.

#### 1 John 4:10

Ver. 10. In comparison of this wonderful love of his, in sending his Son to be a sacrifice for sins, our love to him is not worthy the name of love.

#### 1 John 4:11

Ver. 11. We discover little sense of this love of his to us, if we do not so.

#### 1 John 4:12

Ver. 12. The essence of God is to our eyes invisible, incomprehensible to our minds; but by yielding ourselves to the power of his love, so as to be transformed by it, and habituated to the exercise of mutual love, we come to know him by the most pleasant and most apprehensible effects,

experiencing his indwelling, vital, operative presence and influences, whereby he is daily perfecting this his own likeness and image in us. This is the most desirable way of knowing God, when, though we cannot behold him at a distance, we may feelingly apprehend him nigh us, and in us.

#### 1 John 4:13

Ver. 13. The near inward union between him and us, is best to be discerned by the operations of his Spirit, which is the Spirit of all love and goodness, 1Jo 3:24 Eph 5:9.

#### 1 John 4:14

Ver. 14. He here signifies we are not left at any uncertainties, touching that matter of fact, wherein lies this mighty argument for the exercise of mutual love among Christians, God's having *sent the Son to be the Saviour of the world*; for, as he again inculcates, we testify upon eye-sight, having beheld him, and conversed with him, living and dying.

#### 1 John 4:15

Ver. 15. This discourse is most studiously and observably interwoven, of these two great things, mentioned 1Jo 3:23, faith in the Messiah, and the love of one another, as being the principal antidotes against the poisonous insinuations of the apostates. Of confessing: See Poole on "1Jo 4:2".

#### 1 John 4:16

Ver. 16. Inasmuch as the transformative efficacy of God's love upon us depends upon our certain apprehension of it, he doubles the expression of that certainty:

*We have known and believed,* i.e. we are assured of it, both by experimented effects, and by faith; implying, that by having this

conception of God thoroughly settled in our souls, that he *is love*, (as was also said, 1Jo 4:8), we shall be so thoroughly changed into his very nature and image, as to  *dwell in love*, as in our own element, or a thing now become wholly con-natural to us. Which will indeed be (by consequence) to be so intimately united with God, that he and we may truly (though in a sense most remote from identification, or being made the same, a horrid notion! Not only not inferred by what is here said, but inconsistent with it and refused by it, for things united are thereby implied to be distinct) be said to indwell one another.

### 1 John 4:17

Ver. 17. And by this means (viz. of our inwardness with God) doth our love grow to that perfection, that we shall have the most fearless freedom and liberty of spirit in the judgment day; our hearts no way misgiving to appear before him as a Judge, whose very image we find upon ourselves, he having beforehand, made us such even in this world, though in an infinitely inferior degree, as he is, compositions of love and goodness. Or, if *the day of judgment* should mean, as some conceive, of our appearance before human tribunals for his sake, such a temper of spirit must give us the same boldness in that case also.

### 1 John 4:18

Ver. 18. That he proveth from the contrary natures of fear and love. The fear which is of the baser kind, viz. that is servile, and depresses the spirit, hath no place with love, but is excluded by it, by the same degrees by which that love grows up to perfection, and shall be quite excluded by that love fully perfected: inasmuch as love is a pleasant, fear a tormenting, passion, which, as such, while it remains, shows the imperfection of love.

### 1 John 4:19

Ver. 19. His is the fountain love, ours but the stream: his love the inducement, the pattern, and the effective cause of ours. He that is first in love, loves freely; the other therefore loves under obligation.

## 1 John 4:20

Ver. 20. The greater difficulty here is implied, through our present dependence upon sense, of loving the invisible God, than men that we daily see and converse familiarly with. Hence, considering the comprehensiveness of these two things, the love of God, and of our brother, that they are the roots of all that duty we owe to God and man, the fulfilling of the whole law, Mt 22:37-39, he lets us see the falsehood and absurdity of their pretence to eminent piety and sanctity, who neglect the duties of the second table.

## 1 John 4:21

Ver. 21. Both ought to be conjoined, being required both by the same authority.

## 1 John 5:1

### Chapter Summary

1Jo 5:1-3 He that loveth God loveth God's children, and keeth his commandments.

1Jo 5:4,5 A true faith will enable us to overcome the world.

1Jo 5:6-10 The witnesses of our faith.

1Jo 5:11-13 God hath given to believers eternal life through his Son,

1Jo 5:14-17 and will hear and grant their petitions, made according to his will.

1Jo 5:18-20 God's children are distinguished from the world by abstaining from sin, and by a right knowledge.

1Jo 5:21 A caution against idolatry.

Ver. 1. *Whosoever believeth that Jesus is the Christ;* this is not meant of a mere professed, or of a slight and superficial, but of a lively, efficacious, unitive, soul-transforming, and obediential faith in Jesus as the Christ,

which is elsewhere made the effect of the regenerating power and grace of God, Joh 1:12,13. And as nothing can be more connatural to such a heaven-born faith, than the loving of him that hath begotten us to it; so nothing can be more certainly consequent and agreeable, than the loving of them too who are begotten also of the same Father, viz. with a correspondent love to the more excellent characters and image of God upon them, than are upon other men.

### 1 John 5:2

Ver. 2. It is not otherwise to be known that we truly love the children of God, as such; for if we do, we must love them upon God's account, in conformity to him, and obedience to his commandments; wherefore our true love to them supposes our love to him, and is to be evinced by it.

### 1 John 5:3

Ver. 3. *For this is the love of God,* i.e. this is the most lively, certain expression and effect of our love to God, our keeping his commandments, which are so little grievous, that true love can make no difficulty of doing so, Mt 11:30 Ps 19:11.

### 1 John 5:4

Ver. 4. He explains himself, viz. that to one who is born of God his commandments are not grievous, because such a one, in that divine birth, hath received a life and nature that makes him far superior to this world, exalts him above it, makes him victorious over the worldly spirit, (as 1Jo 4:4), over all worldly desires, and fears, and hopes, and joys, which are the great hinderances of our obedience to God.

*This is the victory;* i.e. the instrument, the weapon, by which they overcome, and which virtually includes in itself this victory over the world, as effects are included in the power of their cause, is their *faith*, that principle which in their regeneration (as above) is implanted in them.

### 1 John 5:5

Ver. 5. For that faith, viz. *that Jesus is the Son of God*, ( or the Christ, as 1Jo 5:1), fills the soul with so great things concerning him, and the design of his coming among us, and what we are to expect thereupon, as easily turn this world into a contemptible shadow, and deprive it of all its former power over us.

### 1 John 5:6

Ver. 6. For the explaining of this obscure place we must proceed by degrees.

1. It is evident, that *water and blood* cannot be here meant literally.
2. It is therefore consequent, that they must be intended to signify somewhat or other by way of symbolical representation, or that they must have some mystical meaning.
3. They ought to have such a meaning assigned them, as will both be agreeable to the expressions themselves, and to the apostle's present scope and design.
4. It will be very agreeable to the expressions, to understand by *water* the purity of our blessed Lord, and by *blood* his sufferings.
5. His manifest scope and design is, to show the abundantly sufficient credibility of the witnesses and testimony we have, to assure us that Jesus was the Christ, or the Messiah, and to induce us to believe this of him, with so efficacious and transforming a faith, as should evidence our being born of God, and make us so victorious over the world, as constantly to adhere to this Jesus by trust and obedience, against all the allurements and terrors of it.
6. This being his scope, it supposeth that the mentioned coming of Jesus, as Messiah, was for some known end, unto his accomplishment whereof these two, his purity and his sufferings, were apt and certain means, as that

they were to be considered under the notion of means, his being said to have come  $\delta\iota\alpha$ , by them, doth intimate. And in pursuance of this scope, he must be understood to signify, that his coming so remarkably by these two, did carry with it some very convictive proof and evidence of his being the Son of God, and the Messiah, sufficient to recommend him as the most deserving object of such a faith, and render it highly reasonable we should hereupon so trust and obey him, and entirely resign ourselves to his mercy and government. Wherefore also:

7. This his coming must here be understood in a sense accommodated hereunto, and is therefore in no reason to be taken for the very act or instant, precisely, of his entrance into this world, but to signify his whole course in it, from first to last, a continued motion and agency, correspondent to the intendment of his mission. To the clearing of which notion of his coming, some light may be gained, by considering the account which is given, 2Th 2:9,10, of the coming of antichrist, which is said to be *after Satan*, (as it were by his impulsion, and in pursuance of his ends and purposes), *with all power, and signs, and lying wonders*, and all deceivableness of unrighteousness; where it is manifest, coming must signify a continued course of doing business. So here, our Lord's coming must signify his continual employment for the despatch of the business about which he was sent.

8. The known business and end for which he was sent, was to reduce and bring back sinners to God.

9. How apt and necessary means these two, his purity and sufferings, were to this end, the whole frame of the gospel shows. His sacrifice of himself, in his sufferings, was necessary to our reconciliation; so he was to come and effect his work *by blood*: his purity was requisite to the acceptableness of his sacrifice; so it was to be done *by water*; without which, as was wont to be proverbially said among the Hebrews, there could be no sacrifice.

10. For the evidence his coming so remarkably by these two carried with it, for the inducing of us to believe him to be the Messiah, with such a faith, as whereby we should imitate his purity, and rely upon the value of his sufferings. We may see it in the note upon 1Jo 5:8, where the testimony of these two witnesses, the water and the blood, comes to be given in its own place and order.

11. Nor is it strange the apostle should use these mystical expressions to this purpose, if we consider what might lead him thereto: for we must remember, first: That he was a spectator of our Lord's crucifixion, and then beheld, upon the piercing of his side, the streaming forth of the water and blood; which, it appears, at that time made a very deep impression upon his mind, as his words about it in his writing his Gospel import: *There came out blood and water. And he that saw it bare record, and his record is true: and he knoweth that he saith true, that ye might believe,* Joh 19:34,35.

That he there lays so great a weight on it, imports that he apprehended some great mystery, if not intended, yet very apt to be signified by it. And, secondly: That he was a Jew, and (as is probable) wrote this Epistle to Jews, among whom the so frequent ablutions with water, as well as the shedding the blood of sacrifices, were most known things, and intended to typify (what they ought to have understood, and he now intimates) these very things, the purity and dying of the Messiah. Not to insist upon what he had long ere now occasion to observe in the Christian church, baptism, and the supper of our Lord, representing in effect severally the same things. Neither was this way of teaching unusual, nor these expressions less intelligible, than our Lord's calling himself (as this evangelist also records) a *shepherd*, a *door*, a *vine*, &c.

*And it is the Spirit that beareth witness:* that the Spirit is said to bear witness, see 1Jo 5:7,8.

### 1 John 5:7

Ver. 7. Having mentioned the Spirit's testifying in the close of 1Jo 5:6, he returns to give us in order, in these two verses, the whole testimony of the truth of Christianity, which he reduces to two ternaries of witnesses. The matter of their testimony is the same with that of their faith who are born of God, *that Jesus is the Son of God*, and the Messiah, as may be collected from what was said before, 1Jo 5:1,5, and what is said afterwards, 1Jo 5:9. What they believe, is no other thing than what these testify. For the first three, *in heaven*, that is not said to signify heaven to be the place of their testifying; for though the same thing concerning Jesus be also no doubt



testified to the glorious inhabitants of that world, yet that is not the apostle's present scope, but to show what reason we have, who inhabit this world, to believe Jesus to be Christ, and the Son of God.

*In heaven* therefore is to be referred to *three*, not to *bear record*, or witness; as if the text were read, which it may as well: There are three in heaven who bear witness; the design being to represent their immediate testifying from thence unto us, or the glorious, heavenly, majestic manner of their testifying. So the Father testified of the man Jesus by immediate voice from heaven, at his baptism and transfiguration: *This is my Son*, &c. The eternal Word owned its union with him, in that glory with which it so eminently clothed his humanity, and which visibly shone through it in the holy mount, whereof this apostle was a spectator, and whereto he seems to refer in his Gospel, Joh 1:14: *We beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father*, i.e. such as sufficiently testified him to be so, even the very Son of God. And the Holy Ghost testified, descending *as a dove* in a visible glorious appearance upon him, at his baptism also.

*And these three are one*, viz. not only agreeing in their testimony, as 1Jo 5:8, but in unity of nature: an express testimony of the triune Deity, by whatsoever carelessness or ill design left out of some copies, but sufficiently demonstrated by many most ancient ones, to belong to the sacred text: of which L. Brug. Not. in loc., with the other critics, and at large, Dr. Hammond.

### 1 John 5:8

Ver. 8. And for the three that are said to *bear witness on earth*; there is, first, *the Spirit*, who, though the Holy Ghost were in the former triad, needs not here be taken for another Spirit, but may be the same, considered under another notion, and as testifying in another manner; not transiently and immediately from heaven, as there, but stately, and as inacting instruments here on earth; extraordinarily, the man Christ Jesus, all his apostles and first disciples, in all the wonderful works which they did for the confirmation of the Christian doctrine; and ordinarily, the whole church of true Christians; for it animates the whole living body of Christ, and makes it, though in an imperfect measure, by a uniform course of actions, tending to God and heaven, an extant visible proof to the world of

the truth of that religion which obtains in it, and of his Divine power and nature who is the Head of it. Next, *the water*; i.e. the continual untainted, God-like purity of our Lord Jesus, through the whole course of his terrestrial state, manifestly showed him to be the Son of God, an incarnate Deity, inhabiting our world. And lastly, *the blood*, his suffering of death, considered in the circumstances, was a most conspicuous, clear testimony and indication who he was; so exactly according to the predictions of the prophets, attended with wonderful amazing concomitants, ending in so glorious a resurrection. And in and with both these *the Spirit*, complicating his testimony, did bear witness too, as is intimated (after the former mention of them both) in the latter part of 1Jo 5:6. It testified all along, both in his clear, immaculate life, and in the bloody death in which it assisted him, which it accompanied with so marvellous effects, and out of which at length it fetched him, Ro 1:4. And that part it took, as being *the Spirit of truth*, 1Jo 5:6, and, as it is there expressed, in the (more emphatical) abstract, truth itself.

#### 1 John 5:9

Ver. 9. A testimony above exception, being wholly Divine, as he himself argued, Joh 5:36,37 8:13,14,17,18.

#### 1 John 5:10

Ver. 10. i.e. If he truly believe, he hath the effectual impress of this testimony on his own soul; if not, he gives God the lie, as we do to any one whose testimony we believe not. See Poole on "Joh 3:33".

#### 1 John 5:11

Ver. 11. His testimony, that this is his Son and the Christ, imports so much, that eternal life is in him, as the source and fountain of it; so that he gives it to us in no other way than in and by him.

### 1 John 5:12

Ver. 12. And therefore, that we partake this life, or partake it not, as by faith we are united with him, or not united.

### 1 John 5:13

Ver. 13. That, discerning their own faith, they might be in no doubt concerning their title to eternal life, and might be thereby encouraged to persevere in the same faith.

### 1 John 5:14

Ver. 14. Viz. *according to his will*, not negatively, as it only doth not forbid our praying for, or enjoying, such and such things, but positively, i.e. according to his will signified:

1. By his commands, i.e. when the matter of our prayers is some spiritual good thing, which was before the matter of our duty; as when we pray for grace to enable us to be and to do what he requires us, as far as our present state will admit.
2. By his promises, which are more absolute and particular in reference to things of that nature, Mt 5:6 Lu 11:13.

In reference to things of an inferior nature, of a conditional tenor; or more general, the things promised coming under the common notion of good things, not in themselves only, but for us, in present circumstances; which, whether they be or no, he reserves to himself the liberty of determining, and doth only promise them, if they be; and so we are only to pray for them; for that is praying, according to what signification he hath given us of his will, in such cases. And so we are always sure to be heard in the former case, in the very particular kind, about which his will is expressly made known beforehand.

### 1 John 5:15

Ver. 15. In the latter, in that, or somewhat equivalent, or better; for if he determine that thing to be best for us, all circumstances considered, we shall have it; if he determine otherwise, (supposing we pray according to his will), we desire it not: for every one intends good to himself, when he prays for any thing, not hurt. And God answers his children according to that general meaning of their prayers, not always according to the particular (which may be often a much mistaken) meaning. According whereto, supposing the thing would be really and in truth hurtful, (and God's judgment is always according to truth), they constructively pray to be denied it; and the denial is the equivalent, nay, the better thing than what they particularly prayed for; and so they truly have their petitions: see 1Jo 3:22. Nor can any be understood to pray according to God's will as the rule, if it be not to his glory as the end, as the order and connexion of petitions shows in that admirable platform prescribed by our Lord himself. And is it possible to be the sense of any one that hath a sincere heart in prayer, that God would gratify him against himself? Therefore that latitude allowed the apostles, Joh 14:13,14 15:16 16:23, &c., must be understood to respect the service of the Christian interest, and is to be limited thereby, as some of the expressions show.

### 1 John 5:16

Ver. 16. *If any man see his brother sin a sin which is not unto death; viz. that appears not obstinate and incurable; he shall ask, i.e. with confidence, as 1Jo 5:14. But there is a sin unto death, i.e. which doth not barely deserve death, as all sin doth, nor which argues a person to be probably in a present state of death or unregeneracy, which the sinful ways may do of many that never made profession; but of such as have apostatized from a former specious profession into heresy and debauchery, and continue obstinate therein, against all methods of recovery; that are, as Jude 1:12, even twice dead, &c.*

*I do not say that he shall pray for it; i.e. I do not give that encouragement to pray for such, with that hope and expectation of success, as for others; though he doth not simply forbid praying for them neither.*

### 1 John 5:17

Ver. 17. He intimates they should be cautious of all sin, especially more deliberate, (which the word  $\alpha\delta\iota\kappa\iota\alpha$  seems to import), but would not have them account that every sin would make their case so hopeless, as such sin, which he called sinning unto death, would do.

### 1 John 5:18

Ver. 18. The great advantage is here signified of the regenerate, who, by the seed remaining in them, (as 1Jo 3:9), are furnished with a self-preserving principle, with the exercise whereof they may expect that co-operation of a gracious Divine influence by which they shall be kept, so as *that wicked one*, the great destroyer of souls, shall not mortally touch them, to make them sin unto death.

### 1 John 5:19

Ver. 19. And this he doth not exclusively assume to himself, but expresses his charitable confidence of them to whom he writes, that it was their privilege, in common with him, to be thus *of God*, or born of him; notwithstanding the generality of men were under the power of that before-mentioned wicked one, (as that phrase may be read), or in the midst of all impurity and malignity.

### 1 John 5:20

Ver. 20. It is here signified how satisfying a knowledge and certainty sincere Christians had, that Christ was indeed come, by that blessed effect they found upon themselves, viz. a clear and lively light shining, by his procurement and communication, into their minds, whereby they had other apprehensions, more vivid and powerful than ever before, of *the true God*, as Joh 17:3, so as thereby to be drawn into union with him, and to be *in him*: or, which in effect is the same thing, (so entire is the oneness between the Father and the Son), *we are in his Son Jesus Christ*, who also is *the*

*true God*, as Joh 1:1, and *eternal life*, as he is called, 1Jo 1:2.

1 John 5:21

Ver. 21. i.e. From those idolatrous communions with the Gentiles in their worship and festivals in their temples, which these pseudo-christians had latitude enough for, as appears by the apostle St. Paul's discourses, 1Co 8:1-13 10:14 (especially if any danger did urge); wherein, instead of that communion with the Father and the Son, which (1Jo 1:3) he was inviting them to, they should have *fellowship with devils*, as that other apostle tells his Corinthians, 1Co 10:20,21. And he might also have reference to the peculiar idolatries, which this sort of men are noted to have been guilty of towards their great sect master.