

# **Exegesis of First John**

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## **Introduction to First John**

### **Time**

Almost universally thought to have been written between 94 and 96 A.D.

### **Place**

### **Addressees**

Written to those Churches within his area of influence, comprising both Jewish Christians and Gentile Christians, this epistle is quite truly a “catholic” epistle, or universal letter. It had now been something like 60 years since the Resurrection of Christ, and the Church, at least in Asia Minor, was becoming recognized as an independent institution, not merely a branch of Judaism.

### **Occasion**

Originally written against Gnosticism, or “proto-Gnosticism,” I John can be just as timely against the opposite, but equal, errors of today. The Gnostics were hyper-rational mystics, minimizing the importance of experience. They asserted that the physical realm was evil and the eternal realm, while “good,” was many removes from the physical, and was accessible only to those enlightened minds that had the “true knowledge,” or gnosis.

Today, we, as a culture, are hyper empiricists, denying the importance, when not the very existence, of an eternal realm. Yet this position is, because of the impossibility of its being purely empirical, quite instructive. The importance we place on the physical, the material, the sensual, even the political is so unattached to a rational realm, and so permeated by mere pragmatism and desire, that mysticism, abounds. Many cannot live in psychological comfort in such an essentially meaningless environment. For these people, a mystical “leap of faith” to some supra empirical realm is a psychological necessity for many. We see religions everywhere, even among those who pretend (and genuinely believe themselves to be) free from religious taint. From Wicca to Evolutionary “science,” from psychology to scientology, mystical religions clutter and deface the spiritual landscape.

Unfortunately, we have gone a long way toward converting Christianity into just such a mystical leap, so that it is just one more among many religions or philosophies that offer comfort without

really attaching itself to the hard facts of everyday empirical "reality." This is the Church of the apostasy, and its members, in huge numbers, have no clue that empirical reality is what it is for no other reason than that the Creator God declared that it should be so. They are content to believe that God is just what we call that creative principle we see vaguely at work in the universe, and that might be called something else by other people. Man's psychological comfort before the god he will worship is characteristic of this "Christian" aberration.

Just as John's first epistle strikes at the very heart of Gnosticism by asserting that he had first-hand, empirical, knowledge of the eternal light and goodness, so it strikes at those whose experience is disjointed from the eternal verities, or who deny an eternal realm altogether. This happens because John plays one extreme against the other, by swinging, as it were, a double edged sword. With it he cuts those who deny the importance of experience in favor of some mystical knowledge gained in whatever manner one chooses, as well as those who claim that experience is all that matters, and the empirical has no rational basis.

On the other hand, we must be clear that Gnosticism is not a figment of antiquity having no trace or influence in today's world. Gnosticism waxes and wanes, and has, in the last several decades, enjoyed a renewed existence and vigor. Modern Gnosticism is specifically that system which separates the meaning of Christianity from its history, focusing on its "kerygma," (κερύγμα) and standing on what is left after "demythologizing" the Bible. It is easy to cite names, but doing so limits too narrowly the influence of neo Gnosticism.

Modern Gnosticism leaves the empirical world as it is, but, like all modern forms of mysticism, posits a "meaning" in the supra sensible realm. It is thus a Christian mysticism unrelated to history and accepted *in spite* of historical and "scientific" judgments. The rest of one's life is, or may be, as empirically based as anyone else's. Men now accept, or have forced upon them, a dichotomous universe where the "spiritual" aspect is wholly subjective and personal, and the physical aspect alone is susceptible to some degree of public verification.

John constantly refers to the interplay between what we *are* and what we *should do*, i.e., between the eternal and temporal, between the *state* of the believer and his *walk*. These Platonic categories are even visible in the vocabulary of "being in," Christ, "having fellowship" (or "having in common"), "participating in," or "abiding in" Christ. The believers, as particulars, are told to be "in the (eternal) light, to "walk" as He walked, and so forth. Only by "walking as He walked," can we come to "know" that we are "in" that eternal life. Knowledge will result from fellowship with the truth, and can be publically verified by comparison to the teachings of scripture and the similar experiences of other Christians. The rational meaning of *what is* may truly be gained empirically, from the observation of *its behavior*. This is the proposition underlying First John, and it is a proposition that has been roundly, repeatedly, and nearly unanimously denied by philosophers for many centuries,

By asserting that rational certainty has been based upon empirical data, he counters the arguments of the extremes both of rationalism and of empiricism.

## Notes

Eternal Life begins NOW.

John's first epistle is filled with contrasts, antitheses and "Platonic pairs." These seem to fall into a few main groups, as follows.

First of all, we are told that our behavior is *to partake of the eternal*. That is, we are to behave by "participating in" the character of God. This sounds for all the world like a form of Platonism. We will never claim that John was a Platonist, but the mechanics of his ontology are strikingly similar to those of Plato, and there is no other common term by which we may be understood.

God *is* light, we are *to walk* in the light

Jesus *is* Love, we *must love* one another

This leads to the Platonic contrast between the believers *state* and his *walk*. John is fond of pointing out that what we *are* is visible in what we *do*. He freely draws rational conclusions from empirical data. The very first thing he tells his readers is that what "was from eternity" past, "concerning the purpose of life," we heard, we saw, and we handled. No philosopher would dare go out on such a limb. Yet the notion that what something *is* can be determined by *how it behaves* is the very basis upon which John draws his conclusions about God, about Jesus, and about life.

If we "walk in darkness, the truth *is not* in us," i.e. is not part of us. It is *not of our essence*, (1:6)

If we do not *keep* His commands, we *are* liars (2:4), but, if we *keep* his word, His love *is perfected* in us,

If we *love* our brothers, we *are*, or *abide*, in the light, and scandal *is not part of our character* (2:10), but

If we *hate* our brother, we *are*, or *abide* in, the darkness; i.e. our state is in darkness (2:11).

Also, John is fond of letting action declare action and letting action prove knowledge.

Separation vs. Call.

Walking in the light rightly relates particulars to one another and to the Light Himself (1:7), but it also is the basis of our separation from, and mission to, those who are not in the light. Cf. "They went out . . ." From where? From the Light. "The world does not know us. . ." Why not? Because it is in the dark, and darkness cannot "know" light.

These propositions combine the specifically *rational* with the specifically *empirical*, by relating them in precisely the same way in which Plato related them, i.e. by showing the particulars

to be "*in*" the universals, or *to participate* in them, or "*to abide*" in them.

This pseudo Platonic ontology strikes at the heart of Gnosticism and subjectivism, because subjective states are hidden, whereas objective reality is publically verifiable. By inextricably linking the two, John cuts the ground from beneath the gnostic and any others who claim a mystical enlightenment, or posit a "spiritual" (rational) realm *detached* from the (empirical) realm of daily life.

John's use of verb tenses, particularly the perfect tense and subjunctive mood, are very revealing.

"Did not know us . . ." Did not rationally understand us [same as John's rational knowledge of the meaning of life!]. Not empirical "meet," or "become acquainted with."

### **Philosophical Implications**

John is asserting that Biblical epistemology is on surer ground as a result of revelation, which is both rationally fruitful and empirically verifiable. He ties eternal verity to empirical verification by reference to consistency of character.

Rationalism implies that to truly know something makes it impossible to be mistaken about it. We quickly confine such knowledge to mechanical or mathematical knowledge, i.e. knowledge about that which universal cause and effect relationships determine outcomes, and of which knowledge of the *cause* is possible. It affirms that empirical knowledge is subject to error and that the senses can be fooled or misled. Hence, empirical knowledge can never rise above mere belief or opinion. This necessitates some starting point beyond mere experience.

Today, empiricism thinks of *all* knowledge as coming from experience and that there are no innate ideas of privileged, undoubtable propositions. There is, however, *no interpretive principle* that explains experience, yet is itself *derived* from experience. That is, there is nothing in experience that gives a basis for explaining experience.

It is no great feat to show examples of the folly of using either rationalism or empiricism to the exclusion of the other. The problem is that there is no naturalistic way of satisfactorily combining the two. There is no natural solution that provides both a starting point beyond experience that makes sense both of experience and rational thought beyond mere mechanics. This has been the root of most epistemological controversy for over 2500 years.

And if we insist on beginning from our own consciousness, admitting nothing without first passing critical judgment upon it, we will continue with the problem for the next 2500 years and beyond.

The Gnostic solution was simply to discount experience altogether and posit a "rational" meaning beyond experience and attainable only by means of mystical "knowledge." It was, in short,

a mystery religion. .

The modern problem is that denying rationalism altogether, as we do, shuts one up in a universe defined and shaped by experience. Such an empirically defined universe has no room for meaning. (How would one empirically "discover" or explain such an idea as "meaning?") Such a universe defines itself as one in which everything, including man, is meaningless. This is psychologically unacceptable to most people, necessitating a "leap of faith," (not a rational process!), to something that will provide a psychologically satisfying value system. But this is mere wishful thinking. For there are Mormon, Muslim, and Methodist, Catholic, Confucian, and the occult, all vying for our affection and attention.

John provides the solution. He implies that 1) contrary to empiricism, his knowledge is real, true, and cannot be mistaken, but, 2) contrary to pure rationalism, it is based upon experience. And that 3) like the objects of rational knowledge, there is no change in the object of knowledge itself, yet 4) like the objects of empirical knowledge, the "object" in which these truths inhered were made manifest, or "became" the object of experience. Therefore his experience can 5) verify the eternal truths that were revealed to himself and others.

Contrary to those who urge circular reasoning as the besetting fallacy of this argument, it must be firmly asserted that unless the data and its meaning are revealed from the same source, and unless they are consistent one with another, there can be no certainty about eternal truth, for exactly the reasons the philosophers suggest, i.e. a lack of information and subjective bias, as well as the Biblical notion of the fallen nature of man seeking to make his own way in the universe without obligation to God.

John is able to reach rational certainty on the basis of empiricism by comparing the data of perception to the revelation granted to reason, hence beginning not from mere human consciousness, but from consciousness acting upon revelation. Herein lies the answer to Gnosticism, modern mysticism and all other epistemological conundrums in between.

## TRANSLATION OF FIRST JOHN

1:1 What was *from* the beginning, what we have heard, what we have seen with our eyes, what we have looked at, and our hands have touched, concerning the meaning of life -- 2 and the life was manifested and we saw; and we testify and we proclaim to you the eternal life which was from the father and was manifested to us -- 3 what we have seen and heard we proclaim also to you, in order that you also may have fellowship with us. And indeed, our fellowship is with the father and with His Son, Jesus Christ. 4 And we write these things to you in order that our joy may be complete.

1:5 The message that we heard from Him, and proclaim to you, is this -- That God is light and in him there is no darkness whatever. 6 If we say that we have fellowship with Him, yet walk in the darkness, we lie and do not practice the truth. 7 But if we walk in the light, as He is Himself in the light, we have fellowship with one another and the blood of Jesus, His son, cleanses us from all sin. 8 If we say that we have no sin we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us. 9 If we confess our sins He is reliable and righteous so that He might remit for us our sin, and cleanse us from all unrighteousness. 10 If we say that we have not sinned we make Him a liar and His word is not in us

2:1 My little children, I write these things to you in order that you might not sin. And if anyone should sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ *the* righteous. 2 And He is Himself the expiation for our sins, nor for ours alone, but also for the whole world. 3 And by this we know that we have come to know Him, if we should keep his' commands. 4 The one saying "I have come to know Him," yet does not keep His commands, is a liar and the truth is not in him. 5 But whoever keeps His word, truly, the love of God is perfected [completed] in him. By this we know that we are in Him. 6 The one claiming to abide in Him ought himself also to walk as He walked.

2:7 Beloved, not a new command do I write to you, but an old command which you have had from the beginning; the old command is the word that you have heard. 8 Again, a new command I write to you, which is visible in Him and in you, because the darkness is diminishing and the true light now shines. 9 The one claiming to be in the light and hating his brother is in the darkness until now. 10 The one loving his brother abides in the light and there is no scandal in him. 11 But the one hating his brother is in the darkness and walks in the darkness, and does not know where he is going, because the darkness has deprived his eyes of sight.

2:12 I am writing to you children because your sins are forgiven your sins are forgiven for His name's sake. 13 I am writing to you fathers, because you know the *One* from the beginning. I am writing to you young men, because you have overcome the evil one. 14 I wrote to you little children, because you know the father. I wrote to you fathers, because you know the *One* from the beginning. I wrote to you young me, because you are strong and the word of God abides in you, and you have overcome the evil one.

2:15 Do not love the World, nor the things in the world. If anyone loves the World, the love of the



Father is not in him. 16 Because everything in the World, the desire of the flesh and the desire of the eye and the pride of life, is not from the Father, but is from the World. 17 And the World passes away and its lusts, but the one doing the will of God abides into eternity.

2:18 Children, it is the last hour, and just as you heard that an anti-Christ is coming, even now many antichrists have arisen; whence we know that it is the last hour. 19 They *went* out from us, but in order that they might be manifested that none of them are from us; but they *were* not of us; for if they had been of us, they would have remained with us. 20 And you have an anointing from the holy One, and you know all things. 21 I do not write to you because you do not know the truth, but because you do know it, and because no lie is of the truth. 22 Who is the liar if not the one denying that Jesus is the Messiah; The one denying the Father and the Son, this one is the Antichrist. .23 Everyone denying the Son has not the Father; the one confessing the Son also has the Father. 24 Let what you yourselves have heard from the beginning remain in you. If what you heard from the beginning remains in you, you also will remain in the Son and in the Father. 25 And this is the promise that He himself promised to us, eternal life.

## FIRST PERICOPE (I JOHN 1:1-4)

“Ο ἦν ἀπ’ ἀρχῆς, ὃ ἀκηκόαμεν, ὃ ἐωράκαμεν τοῖς ὀφθαλμοῖς ἡμῶν, ὃ ἐθεασάμεθα καὶ αἱ χεῖρες ἡμῶν ἐψηλάφησαν περὶ τοῦ λόγου τῆς ζωῆς- <sup>2</sup> καὶ ἡ ζωὴ ἐφανερώθη, καὶ ἐωράκαμεν καὶ μαρτυροῦμεν καὶ ἀπαγγέλλομεν ὑμῖν τὴν ζωὴν τὴν αἰώνιον ἣτις ἦν πρὸς τὸν πατέρα καὶ ἐφανερώθη ἡμῖν- <sup>3</sup> ὃ ἐωράκαμεν καὶ ἀκηκόαμεν, ἀπαγγέλλομεν καὶ ὑμῖν, ἵνα καὶ ὑμεῖς κοινωνίαν ἔχητε μεθ’ ἡμῶν. καὶ ἡ κοινωνία δὲ ἡ ἡμετέρα μετὰ τοῦ πατρὸς καὶ μετὰ τοῦ υἱοῦ αὐτοῦ Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ. <sup>4</sup> καὶ ταῦτα γράφομεν ἡμεῖς, ἵνα ἡ χαρὰ ἡμῶν ᾗ πεπληρωμένη.

### A. TEXTUAL CRITICISM

No major variants in this pericope.????

### B. LEXICAL AND TOPICAL STUDIES

1:1 ἐθεασάμεθα (I Aorist, active, indicative, 1<sup>st</sup> person, plural, from θεάομαι) -- 1) *see, look at, behold*; 2) *perceive*. This is the next step up from mere seeing. It is not to see by chance, but to see deliberately and by design. It is to study.

1:1 ἐψηλάφησαν (I Aorist, active, indicative, 1<sup>st</sup> person, plural, from ψηλάφω) -- *grope after, handle, touch*. The sense of touch, tactile awareness, is the most intimate of the empirical means of knowledge.

1:1 λόγου (Noun, genitive masculine singular from λόγος) -- 1) *computation, reckoning*. 2) *relation, correspondence, proportion*. 3) *explanation*. 4) *inward debate*. 5) *continuous statement, narrative*. 6) *verbal expression or utterance*. 7) *a particular utterance or saying*. 8) *thing spoken of; subject matter*. 9) *expression, utterance, speech*. 10) *the Word of Wisdom, or God personified*.

In our context, it is quite clear that we have a difficult choice to make. As always, we will use the demands of the context to determine which of the lexical definitions best fits the passage. From the context we see several telling observations. 1) Our term modifies the word "life." 2) That "life" is said to be eternal. Remember, John's point is to tell us something "concerning the word of life." But it was the life *itself* that was made manifest. 3) Whatever it is that John wants to tell us about this "word of life" is centered in the fact that it is eternal, *or* "was from the beginning." 4) Finally, whatever it was that was eternal concerning this "word of life," was made manifest, and thereby empirically discernable.

It is clear that we must begin from the notion of "speaking;" or "word" -- specific forms of speaking, such as question, assertion, declaration etc. It is also clear that "word" is specifically opposed to deeds. Therefore, John is relating something not confined to deeds, or limited to

deeds (λόγος, as opposed to ἔργον). He has more in mind than that. "Words uttered," whether at once or on various occasions, that tend to *form or express a point of view or perspective* by forming a *unity of thought* may also be included here. Hence, the *subject matter* or *thing under discussion itself* is also included but insufficient. The *denotation* or *connotation* of words, or the larger *definition* or *essence* of the statement gets us closer to John's intent. Finally, we must broaden our understanding to include "the character or meaning of written or spoken communication." Because John is referring to the earthly life and ministry of Jesus as the "last word" from God (Hebrews) by which God's expectations and provisions for life are manifested, we must finally settle on the definition "*meaning, purpose, or explanation.*" Thus, John is telling his readers that he has empirical knowledge of the meaning, or purpose, of life, that it was intended to be eternal, filled with the light of God, and characterized by love for, and fellowship with, one another.

Our word is a verbal noun from λέγω, which means "to speak," or "to say." The notion contained in such speech is a coherent presentation of thoughts gathered together and expressed cogently. There are, thus, several corresponding fields of meaning between these two words. The most telling is the sense of "to mean," or "to give an account."

Furthermore, it is instructive that ῥήμα is *not* used. Because although it usually focuses simply on the word as an object in its own right, it *may* refer to the specific entity denoted by the word. Here, however, we are interested in something much broader than can be conveyed by this word.

What we have in I John is literally "an account" of life that we can know through experience. The account shows both the quality of eternal life and its behavior, and makes it the object of empirical knowledge.

1:1 ζῶης (Noun, genitive, feminine, singular, from ζῶη) – *life*, literally or figuratively. The context demands a literal understanding of the term. But it cannot be reduced to the *merely* physical, as the context shows. In the present context, the word *life* is used three times. The first is in the expression "*purpose of life*" or "*meaning of life.*" The second time it is used it is unmodified as the subject of the clause and is defined as a physical and temporal phenomenon. In its third use it is modified by the word *eternal*, which again defines it as a timeless phenomenon. So as it is used in this context, *life*, refers to the spiritual and moral aspects of *eternal* life made manifest in a specific *physical* life, that of Jesus (and then by those who follow Him).

1:2 ἐφανερώθη (1 Aorist, passive, indicative, 3<sup>rd</sup> person, singular, from φανερόω) -- *reveal, show, make known*. John uses the motif of hidden and revealed throughout this chapter. It is seen in the figure of light and darkness as well as truth and deception. We may, for example, think of the meaning of the word *revealed* as "*brought to light.*"

1:2 μαρτυροῦμεν (Present, active, indicative, 1<sup>st</sup> person, plural, from μαρτυρέω) -- *bear witness, testify*. Often used as a legal technical term, the idea is that of truthfully relating or confirming an event or a report.

1:2 αἰώνιον (Adjective, nominative, neuter, or accusative masculine and feminine, singular, from αἰώνιος) -- *eternal*, i.e. without beginning, without end, or without beginning or end. Its use with *life* clearly echos the concern for immortality, but as we see, is of a specific moral quality.

1:3 κοινωνίαν (Noun, accusative, feminine, singular, from κοινωνία) – *association, communication, fellowship, participation, sharing*. In logic, *general*, or *universal*. In our text the term means *common ground*, a *common understanding of*, and *participation in*, eternal life; it is not simply coffee-and-doughnut fellowship.

### C. GRAMMATICAL NOTES AND LITERARY DEVICES

1:1-4 Note the use of the first person plural instead of the first person singular in pronouns and verb endings known as the "literary plural," (*pluralis sociativus*) or the "editorial we."

1:1-2 Note the shift from the neuter of verse one to the feminine of verse two. The neuter refers to a case or situation viewed as a whole; it indicates that an *array* of facts is in view, NOT merely the life by which they became manifest.

### D. HISTORICAL AND BACKGROUND INFORMATION

No relevant data available. ????

### E. TRANSLATION

1:1 What was from the beginning, what we have heard, what we have seen with our eyes, what we have looked at, and our hands have touched, concerning the Word [account; purpose meaning] of life -- 2 and the life was manifested and we have seen; and we testify and proclaim to you the eternal life which was with the father and was manifested to us -- 3 what we have seen and heard we proclaim also to you, in order that you also may have fellowship with us. And indeed, our fellowship is with the father and with His Son, Jesus Christ. 4 And we write these things to you in order that our joy may be complete.

### F. EXPOSITION

1:1 "What was from the beginning . . ." The neuter demonstrative does not refer to God or to Jesus, but to an entire array of facts about them. As we shall see, John is anxious to show that that which is eternal and changeless was empirically met and personally known. Hence, the notion of "beginning" is, as it is in John's gospel, anarthrous and signifies the quality of the beginning.

1:1 " . . . what we have heard . . . " One of the primary senses for gathering together data, hearing is also necessary for receiving revelation and rational communication from others. Here, it may well include both. For it is, as noted above, an "array of facts" about which John is concerned. However, we may decide, as we progress in the text, that the empirical aspects of "what was heard" must include other information, such as explicit teaching, revelation, or communication received during the life of Jesus.

1:1 " . . . what we have seen with our eyes . . . " This is the sense *par excellence* of thorough empiricism, and is therefore sometimes placed in opposition to faith. John is quite clear that he refers to no "spiritual" seeing, no "vision," or revelation in dreams. The clause "with our eyes" dispels all possibility of any but the profoundest empiricism. He saw with his own eyes an array of data and facts which was "from the beginning." In a sense, "seeing is believing," as Thomas so vividly pointed out, and John is making the most of the fact.

1:1 " . . . what we have looked at . . . " Sharpens and emphasizes the empiricism to which John refers. That which he saw was not merely something that caught his eye, but something he conscientiously looked at and studied. Whatever it was that "was from the beginning," was the object of John's deliberate scrutiny.

1:1 " . . . and our hands have touched . . . " Another source for gathering data. "Handled," or "touched" must refer first and foremost to the daily interaction with one's surroundings. It would include any natural act from daily life that resulted in physical contact. Although on the basis of what we have read so far it is impossible to know specifically what the "array of facts" to which John refers may be, if we should hazard a guess that it is nothing other than the earthly life and ministry of Jesus, we begin to understand how their "hands touched" this array of facts. Eating, fishing, mending nets, participating in His ministry and other similar experiences that show Jesus to have existed in palpable form are what is meant here. But so is Thomas' touching the nail printed palms of the risen Lord. Notice the progression of the kinds of perception. First, they 'heard.

1:1 " . . . concerning the meaning of life . . . " This clause is universally translated in English using the term "Word of Life." That is the literal meaning, and has but one problem; we still are not told what the "Word of Life" means. We are left to guess. The meaning of the phrase may well have been intended to shock or excite the reader. As it stands in English, it merely mystifies him. If, one at a time, we substitute the many basic meanings of the word λόγος in this passage, we may begin to get a feel for the difficulty of the task. If we check the context, we see that John is doing something philosophically unique and surprising -- he is relating rational truth on the basis of empirical data; i.e., he is defining God's character, Christ's ministry, and the Christian walk on the basis of his experience with Jesus. John is explaining eternal relationships by reference to the transitory and physical realm. Hence, if we settle on "meaning," "purpose," "explanation," or perhaps "object" for our word, we will no longer be mystified by the expression "word of life," but will see that John is addressing one of the deepest recurring philosophical questions of all time. And as we shall see, he is answering it on the basis of his experience with the historical figure of Jesus.

1:2 "-- and the life was manifested . . . " John introduces a parenthetical statement which makes up verse two. He had not yet finished the thought of verse one when the magnitude of his enterprise demands that he depart from his catalogue of empirical devices to emphasize the object of his experience, *eternal life*. He insists that "the life" of which he is speaking was empirically discerned on his end by stating that it had been made "manifest" from God's end. Again, the text cannot refer to visions or some act of spiritual insight. What John saw he saw only because it had "been made visible." What he heard he heard only because it had been made audible. Furthermore the recurrent first person plural "we" (an "editorial we" in the present tense, but perhaps more of an "apostolic we" in the past tenses) may be nothing more than a device by which to indicate a publically verifiable phenomenon. Hence, John is again making it clear that the rational, immutable truth concerning the meaning of eternal life was made possible on an empirical basis because the meaning of life is to be found precisely in that life that had been made manifest.

1:2 " . . . and we saw; . . . " The result of the "life" being manifested was that "we saw." Not merely "we saw it," specifically, but "we saw" everything, clearly, as if for the first time. That is, the life and ministry of Jesus made sense of life. The mystery was gone. Their "eyes were opened and they saw." The whole burden of this pericope is to show that Jesus revealed in His person and ministry the eternal purpose of life. The ability to truly see at all was the result of the manifestation of the "eternal life."

However one interprets this clause, in English there should be a break between "and we saw," and the rest of the sentence which deals with testifying and proclaiming. The verb "saw" does not share the indirect object "to you" which is common to the verbs "testify" and "proclaim," and therefore muddles the sense of the whole sentence if a break is not provided. We avoid putting the same verb "manifested" twice into the same sentence. We also let the second occurrence of the noun "life," modified by the adjective "eternal" expand the first, unmodified, occurrence of the word. Finally, we avoid the confused sentence structure wherein one verb (saw) does not take an object, while the two other verbs ("testify" and "proclaim") take an indirect object (to you).

1:2 " . . . and we testify and we proclaim to you . . . " Testify and proclaim strengthen each other, the one being a technical term for legal testimony, the other a looser term for spreading news of some degree of importance.

1:2 " . . . the eternal life which was from the father . . . " The life that "was manifested," is now said to be "the eternal life," and what "was from the beginning," is here said to be "from the Father." There is absolutely no possibility that "life" here is anything other than the life that was Christ from eternity past, continued through His earthly life and ministry, and continues even now. Indeed, the word "life" is the key term in the first pericope. Its three occurrences show a progression of development that is crucial for understanding and interpreting the text. In verse one we are given specific information about the "purpose," or "meaning" of "life." In verse two we are told that this life, of which the purpose or meaning had been from the beginning, had been manifested to John. Then, also in verse two, we are told that the life itself is eternal, confirming the link between the human life of Jesus and the purpose or meaning of life that is

eternal. John is talking about the purpose, or the meaning, of eternal life as it came to light in the earthly life and ministry of the man Jesus. The purpose, or true meaning of life, which is, eternal, is the subject of what is to follow.

1:2 " . . . and was manifested to us -- " The idea of manifestation is reiterated. The restatement is for emphasis. It is a reminder that something unusual was revealed, made known, made verifiable, or became visible. The fact that it was made known "to us," may repeat the "editorial we;" But behind it, we cannot possibly be wrong in seeing the disciples in general, and John in particular. It is true, that not every person who saw Jesus understood Him or His ministry, hence the need for ministry. Nonetheless, the point of John's basic objectivity and the veracity of the Gospel is never to be thought of as apart from objective reality.

1:3 "what we have seen and heard . . . " This clause marks a return to the original enterprise by restating the empirical aspects of the knowledge to which John is "bearing witness."

"we proclaim also to you, . . . " "Proclaim" perhaps because the importance of the good news is more in view than the sense of legal witness might allow.

1:3 " . . . in order that you also may have fellowship with us." The notion here is to have something in common. In this case it is the understanding of life and its purpose. That which we have in common is best understood by implication, as the present and continuous enjoyment of eternal life.

1:3 "And indeed, our fellowship is with the father . . . " The eternal life we enjoy is "with the Father," who was from the beginning, and, as will be stated in the next pericope, is the light in which we are to walk.

1:3 " . . . and with His Son, Jesus Christ." And with Jesus, who is the definition, exemplar, and basis for this eternal life. Remembering that John is talking about life, and its purpose, or meaning, and what is eternal, seem to confirm this interpretation.

1:4 "And we write these things to you in order that our joy may be complete." The only way such common ground can be better is for people to understand it better in order to share it better. Life rejoices in more life. Truth rejoices in the spread of truth.

## **G. ETHICAL AND THEOLOGICAL CONSIDERATIONS**

1:1-4 All that God wants us to know about life (its eternal purpose, its loving nature, its objective status, its essence as a relationship to God) was revealed in the person of Jesus. John here lays the foundation for what is to follow. If we remember, throughout this epistle, that this is a book that counters error by majoring upon the very meaning of life, we will be on solid ground.

1:1 Just as Paul begins most of his epistles with theological truth and progresses to practical exhortation, so John begins with an epistemological statement and moves on to assurance. In

doing so, he provides a stunning demonstration of moving from the empirical data to rational certainty, all of it objectively defensible. Look at the statements here. John says that "we heard, we saw, we looked at, we touched." In verses two and three, he further states that now "we testify and we proclaim." The object of the empirical investigation, the meaning of life, now becomes the subject of proclamation.

The point of life, the focus of life, the object, purpose, or meaning of life, the reason for having life in the first place, is answered in what follows. Because of the certainty with which John draws his conclusions we must either accept or reject the whole argument. We cannot parcel it out and give credence to the empirical part and not to the rational conclusion. Nor can we have John's rational explanation not verified by empirical processes. We may think John mad, but we cannot refute his arguments themselves.

If John truly had the empirical experience of the eternal truth that he claims to have had, we can do nothing but accept or reject his teaching. This teaching concerns the quality or character of (eternal) life, as it may be shared temporally and gained everlastingly, by pointing out its main feature, i.e. its being within the moral, spiritual, and epistemological character and plan of God. Jesus lived in a fellowship with God that was so close that neither taking upon Himself a paltry human existence nor a crucifixion could shake it.

There are, of course, and will continue to be, obstacles, unbelievers, compromises, antichrists, and doubters -- those who "walk in darkness." These moral spheres of light and darkness form the very basis of Christian separation and witness, ideas that come to the fore in John.

1:3 We see here the first intimation of the theme of Christian separation from the world. The theme will be treated more fully later, but it is introduced here. The idea that John wants his readers to have common ground "with us" implies that they may not now be able to enjoy that fellowship. There is something that John has and cannot relinquish that others do not have, or want, or enjoy. It is important that the fellowship of which John speaks centers on the fellowship with God and his son Jesus. This points out the boundaries between two camps, those in fellowship with God, and those outside it. The nature and quality of those boundaries will soon be defined.

There are, then, two basic ideas inimical to Gnosticism put forth at the very beginning of the epistle. The distinctness of the roles of Father and Son, and the identity of the eternal life with the historical Jesus.

In today's neo-Gnosticism, where the heretical and apocryphal and pseudepigraphal writings lead modern "scholars" to the conclusion that there were "many Christianities" and the belief that orthodoxy was *nothing more* than the choice of the political winners, we must reevaluate their merits on the basis of their teachings. John's teaching is generous but *exclusive*. That is, all may join the fellowship, *but none may redefine it*. The Gnostic denied entrance to any but the "enlightened," and made a game of obscurity.



## **H. SUBJECTIVE IMPLICATIONS – PSYCHOLOGICAL AND DEVOTIONAL**

Non Emotive Text

### **I. PARAPHRASE**

What was from the beginning concerning the very purpose of life, we heard and saw; in fact we studied it and touched it with our hands. -- The life itself was manifested, and we saw. And we testify and announce to you this eternal life which came from the Father and was manifested to us. -- What we have learned from personal contact we announce to you so that you, too, may have everything in common with us. And our common ground is with the Father and His son Jesus Christ. We write these things to you so that our joy may be made perfect.

## SECOND PERICOPE (FIRST JOHN 1:5-10)

Καὶ ἔστιν αὕτη ἡ ἀγγελία ἣν ἀκηκόαμεν ἀπ' αὐτοῦ καὶ ἀναγγέλλομεν ὑμῖν, ὅτι ὁ θεὸς φῶς ἐστίν καὶ σκοτία ἐν αὐτῷ οὐκ ἔστιν οὐδεμία. <sup>6</sup> Ἐὰν εἴπωμεν ὅτι κοινωνίαν ἔχομεν μετ' αὐτοῦ καὶ ἐν τῷ σκότει περιπατῶμεν, ψευδόμεθα καὶ οὐ ποιοῦμεν τὴν ἀλήθειαν. <sup>7</sup> Ἐὰν δὲ ἐν τῷ φωτὶ περιπατῶμεν ὡς αὐτὸς ἐστίν ἐν τῷ φωτὶ, κοινωνίαν ἔχομεν μετ' ἀλλήλων καὶ τὸ αἶμα Ἰησοῦ τοῦ υἱοῦ αὐτοῦ καθαρίζει ἡμᾶς ἀπὸ πάσης ἁμαρτίας. <sup>8</sup> Ἐὰν εἴπωμεν ὅτι ἁμαρτίαν οὐκ ἔχομεν, ἑαυτοὺς πλανῶμεν καὶ ἡ ἀλήθεια οὐκ ἔστιν ἐν ἡμῖν. <sup>9</sup> Ἐὰν ὁμολογῶμεν τὰς ἁμαρτίας ἡμῶν, πιστός ἐστιν καὶ δίκαιος, ἵνα ἀφῇ ἡμῖν τὰς ἁμαρτίας καὶ καθάρισῃ ἡμᾶς ἀπὸ πάσης ἀδικίας. <sup>10</sup> Ἐὰν εἴπωμεν ὅτι οὐχ ἡμαρτήκαμεν, ψεύστην ποιοῦμεν αὐτὸν καὶ ὁ λόγος αὐτοῦ οὐκ ἔστιν ἐν ἡμῖν.

### A. TEXTUAL CRITICISM

No major variants in this pericope.

### B. LEXICAL AND TOPICAL STUDIES

1:5 φῶς (Noun, nominative, neuter, plural, from φῶς) – *Light*, whether literal or figurative. Although the usage here is figurative, it objectifies the relationship between the Life and the Light in a most powerful way. The *purpose of life* as seen in the human life of Jesus, is to *enjoy eternal life*, which is nothing more than being rightly related to God. We "enjoy" God by "participating in" or "sharing in" His character, thereby having His character define us. If we are not so defined, we are not "in the light," and His truth and character are not "in us."

1:5 σκοτία (Noun, nominative, feminine, singular, from σκοτία) -- *Darkness, gloom*, whether literal or figurative. Here, in contrast to the light, it represents that quality of hiddenness which bespeaks moral and spiritual lostness. Just as every person recognizes light and the things in the light, so those things in the dark are unknown and, indeed, unknowable. Whatever moral certainty we possess, we have by virtue of its being in that light wherein all things are made visible. Whatever lies in the darkness is unknown and morally questionable at best. This is more than a mere contrast of physical conditions, however. For, figuratively, darkness is the antithesis of the very nature of clear, objective knowledge. It is the hidden, subjective, states of the human situation that are addressed with this word. It is no wonder that "darkness" is so often used in the Gospels as a description of conditions in Hell.

1:6 περιπατῶμεν (Present, active, subjunctive, 1<sup>st</sup> person, plural, from περιπατέω) -- *walk around, go about*. Figuratively, *live*. The "walking about" in darkness might be termed "stumbling about" except that such a condition might logically prepare one to seek the light, an implication not found in this context. Those who walk about in the dark may do so deliberately, in order to hide their deeds from those in the light. But that is not the point of the text. All John wants to do is point to

the contrast between living in darkness and living in the light. It is the contrast of realms, or spheres, that are here in question, not the human response to them

1:6 ψευδόμεθα (Present, middle, indicative, 1<sup>st</sup> person, plural, from ψεύδομαι) -- *lie, deceive*. It should be remarked that the force of the middle voice here is probably not negligible. Although the notion of a lie cannot be denied, its force is somewhat more subtle. It may include the situation wherein one lies to himself, (such as self deception or denial) or in some other sense intimately linking one with his behavior.

1:6 ποιομεν (Present, active, indicative, 1<sup>st</sup> person, plural, from ποιέω) -- 1) *do, make*; 2) *cause, bring about*; 3) *accomplish*, 4) *keep, celebrate*. The present tense indicates continuous action happening at the moment. It may be continual or momentary, but here it is viewed as continuing. Thus, to speak of "doing" something continuously, means "practicing" it. The context is clear that those who *are* in darkness are not *doing* the truth. But the *practice* of truth is coterminous with walking in the light. Hence, *practice* is the best translation of our term.

1:6 ἀλήτηαν (Noun, accusative, feminine, singular, from ἀλήθεια) -- 1) *truth*; 2) *reality* (as opposed to *mere appearance*) 3) *truthfulness, dependability, uprightness*. Here we are concerned with truth as a personal quality. In v. 8, "truth" will be contrasted to the state of being we call denial, or self deception. In both verses six and eight there is a parallel between "being in darkness" (lying) and "not doing the truth." These verses sharpen the antithesis between subjective and objective; appearance and reality. "Practicing the truth," means "being real" and not hiding from the objectively revealed truth. All else is subjectivity and leads to self deception.

It is interesting to note that ἀλήθεια, as a noun, is cognate with the adjective ἀληθής. This word is formed by adding the alpha privative, α (meaning "un") to the word λήθω, the collateral form of λανθάνω. The shortened form is the one used in compound words, and means 1) *escape notice*, 2) *make one forget*, 3) *let a thing escape one, forget*. In short, it is the *hidden, forgotten, or unnoticed*. Hence, "truth" is literally to be "*unhidden, or unforgotten*;" it is *manifested and brought to our attention*. It is no longer hidden, but *revealed*.

1:7 ἁμαρτίας (Noun, accusative, feminine, singular, from ἁμαρτία) -- *sin*, whether the act, or the result. Any departure from the way of righteousness, whether of God, or man. In Paul, sin is often personified as a power to which man is subject. In Hebrews and the Old Testament, sin is seen as a power that deceives men and leads them to destruction. But in John, sin is a condition opposed to ἀλήθεια.

1:8 πλανμεν (Present, active, indicative, 1<sup>st</sup> person, plural, from πλανάω) -- 1) *lead astray, cause to wander*; 2) *deceive*. The passive voice means 1) *to go astray, be misled*; 2) *to be mistaken, or be deceived*. In this case, the term is used in connection with delusion, or self deception. Intellectually, self deception may be worse than a mere lie, from which one may be reclaimed. That one can be brought out of self deception is less likely.

Thus there is a subtle but chilling difference between lying and self deception. If one is content merely to lie to others in order to protect himself from displeasure, he is merely projecting his

subjective needs and views on others. And his lie may be discovered. He can be shown his lie, and perhaps "straightened out" by the cumulative weight of objective evidence. But if one lies to himself, he is exercising his subjective state on himself as well as others, and he often cannot be set straight by objective evidence. The objective evidence will itself be subject to the definitions of the liar. In extreme cases, such liars are simply unreachable. This is the danger of "walking in darkness." For every liar is capable of falling down the subjective hole wherein he will believe his own imaginings in preference to the truth, and might no longer be able to distinguish his subjective states from objective reality. Our culture smacks of it.

1:9 ὁμολογῶμεν (Present, subjunctive, active, 1<sup>st</sup> person, plural, from ὁμολογέω) -- 1) *promise* (with a vow?) 2) *agree, admit) confess, make a confession;* 4) *declare Publically, acknowledge, confess* 5) with a dative, *promise*. Here, the notion includes both a *confession* of guilt, and an *agreement* as to its nature and just penalty.

1:9 πίστος (Adjective, nominative, masculine, singular, from πίστις) -- 1) That which promotes or causes belief, such as: a) *faithfulness, reliability;* b) *solemn promise, oath, c) proof, pledge.* 2) In the, active sense, a mental or spiritual state of *trust, confidence, faith, belief* 3) In a passive sense, that which is believed, such as, *body of doctrine, religion*. Here, John is describing Jesus as being faithful and Just in forgiving us when we confess our sins. In a text dealing with eternal life, it must describe an eternal attribute. While *faithful* relates this characteristic, too often we confuse it with the act of believing. In the present context, it is helpful to distinguish it from *belief* as such. A reading of *reliable* is therefore desirable to show that Jesus, the man who still lives and is still "in the light," can be counted on to forgive confessed sins.

1:9 δίκαιος (Adjective, nominative, masculine, singular, from δίκη) -- *upright, just, righteous*. This term, coupled with the following term, constitute what might be called an "antithesis of character."

1:9 ἀδικίας (Noun, genitive, feminine, singular, ἀδικία) -- 1) *wrong doing, misdeeds;* 2) *unrighteousness, wickedness, injustice*. The two terms are from the same root, but the latter is prefixed with the alpha privative. The contrast is between the eternal character of Jesus on the one hand, and the state and behavior of the sinner on the other. Thus, what we confess, acknowledge, and condemn as inevitable but irreversible unrighteousness in ourselves, Jesus might easily deal with, because he has no such condition, but is characterized by eternal righteousness. The implication is that whereas sin makes us unreliable and impotent, acknowledging it as the cause and condition of our unrighteousness allows us to seek the forgiveness of Him who has no such impediments, but who is forever reliable and righteous..

1:9 ἀφή (Noun, nominative, feminine, singular, from ἀφίημι) -- 1) *to let go, send away, divorce;* 2) *cancel, remit, pardon;* 3) *leave, give up, abandon;* 4) *let, let go, tolerate*. The notion of *sending away* in a personal sense is reminiscent of the scapegoat in the Old Testament. Here, the sense of *remit*, or *cancel* is especially in view, owing to the eternal character of Jesus, and His ability to *forgive* and cleanse. It seems clear that neither the sense of *abandon* nor *tolerate* can possibly provide the meaning the context demands.

### C. GRAMMATICAL NOTES AND LITERARY DEVICES

1:5 Metaphor: God *is* Light

1:5 Pleonasm, or overstatement via use of more words than are grammatically necessary, is seen in the expression "God is light, and in Him there is no darkness whatever."

1:5 Double negatives, in Greek, emphasize, rather than cancel one another.

1:6, 7 These verses contain conditional sentences. They fall under the heading of First Class Conditional Sentences, although Goodwin and Burton place them in the fifth class. They are known as "present general suppositions." They are simple, present tense hypothetical syllogisms of a general nature.

These Conditionals form antitheses, for they suppose opposite things and point to opposite conclusions. The force is as follows. "If we should . . . walk in darkness, then, . . ." But *on the other hand*, if we should walk in the Light, . . . then . . ." The phrases "claim to have fellowship with him," and "as He is in the light" do not change the force of the conditionals, but sharpen the nature of the antithesis. Thus, the idea is that there is no such thing as fellowship with Him in the darkness. There is a total separation of light and darkness, and to say that you have fellowship, or common ground, with Him, while walking in darkness, is a lie. Indeed, only by being in the light is it possible to have common ground with Him and with each other.

1:8 Pleonasm (negatively stated): We deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us."

1:9 Note the presence of asyndeton

### D. TRANSLATION

1:5 "The message that we heard from Him, and proclaim to you, is this -- That God is light and in Him *there* is no darkness whatever. 6 If we say that we have fellowship with Him, yet walk in the darkness, we lie and do not practice the truth. 7 But if we walk in the light as He is Himself in the light, we have fellowship with one another and the blood of Jesus, His son, cleanses us from all sin. 8 If we say that we have no sin we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us. 9 If we confess our sins He is reliable and righteous so that He might remit our sin for us, and cleanse us from all unrighteousness. 10 If we say that we have not sinned we make Him a liar and His character is not in us

### E. HISTORICAL AND BACKGROUND INFORMATION

No relevant data available. ?????

## F. EXPOSITION

1:5 "The message that we heard from Him . . . " Already we have the relationship delineated in the Gospel of John between God the Father, and the One whom He sent. It is important to notice that John does not identify The One with The Other but joins them in an intimate relationship that we may share. First, we are told that that of which he speaks was "in the beginning," and was "with the Father." Second, the "fellowship" John enjoyed was "from the Father and with His Son, Jesus Christ." Clearly, "the message" to which John here refers was brought by Jesus. The context has already prepared us for the idea that "what was from the beginning . . . concerning the purpose of life" is the burden of "the message," i.e. the nature of God and our proper relationship to Him..

1:5 " . . . and proclaim to you. is this . . . " The very same message that John heard, he now proclaims. It is not to be understood that John has not proclaimed this message before, but that this is another proclamation of the same message. That message, considering the length and complexity of the prolog, seems quite simple. There is, however, more ethical and theological depth in this simple message than in most sermons. This is because John's simple sentences are often subject to great latitudes of meaning and must therefore be carefully handled.

1:5 " – That God is light . . . " This is the substance of the message. And the veracity of the message is vouchsafed and confirmed by the fact that the bearer of the message was the one who "became manifest," and demonstrated the message. In essence, life is enjoying, and bearing witness to, the nature of God by being rightly related to Him. That nature can be summarized as light unalloyed with any form or degree of darkness. The physical picture doubtless bears witness to any number of figurative senses. Intellectually, morally, spiritually, and in any other way one wishes to describe God, light satisfactorily explains His nature. At this point, the word "sent" has not been used, but the point remains that the eternal God had an eternal witness to his nature become manifest in empirical, physical, and temporal form. By any conception, this is a tremendous statement.

1:5 " . . . and in Him there is no darkness whatever." The Greek double negative stresses the absolute antithesis of light and darkness, allowing for nothing in the character of God that is not light. This figurative language provides as sharp a distinction as John can make between an unabashedly empirical description of the rational truth that is God, and the sinful, uncaring nature of man (cf. Genesis 1:4; John 1:5).

1:6 "If we say that we have fellowship with Him, . . . " The antecedent of "Him" is still Jesus, the one who was manifest, who was heard, seen, and touched, and the author of John's message that "God is light." It may seem that the fellowship John is advocating is with God, who has been identified with light. But the fellowship is not *with* the light, but with all those who are "*in* the light," including the One whose behavior we are to imitate, the messenger and witness, Jesus.

The word "fellowship" should not be limited to the coffee and doughnuts variety. It is both profound and eternal, and in this context means at the very least a "possession in common,"

including what we must call "common ground." The common ground, or the common sphere, is the very light in which we are to walk.

1:6 " . . . yet walk in the darkness, . . . " Here, "walk" means nothing less than "live." It is the continuous process of deliberate life. There can be no common ground, now or ever, with the *eternal* Life if we spend our lives in the darkness. It will not do to claim that God loves us even here, or hide behind any of the other half truths available to us. Those in darkness have nothing in common with God, because He *is* light, or with Jesus, because He is *in* the light. It may seem a tiresome exercise to keep stressing this idea, but the profundity of the point easily may be lost in the simplicity of the language and illustration. If we will but think of a giant circle of light cast upon a stage in a darkened theater, we may begin to see the basis for one of the New Testament teachings most grossly overlooked in our time, that of separation of believers from the world. For clearly John has in mind the notion that because there is nothing in common between those in darkness and those in the light, there will be no experience in common between those walking in these mutually exclusive spheres. Nor is this just a pretty picture in which we can move back and forth between light and darkness. John is talking about having fellowship, sharing something in common. Those who are in darkness may well come into the light, but those truly in the light will never again satisfy themselves with living in the darkness. This is made more explicit later, but already is implied in the figure of light and darkness.

1:6 " . . . we lie and do not practice the truth." This clause defines the nature of our fellowship. If we are in the darkness, we lie. The subjective needs of darkness may require us to lie to others, and perhaps to ourselves. Or, perhaps, *primarily* to ourselves. In any case, the joining of darkness to lies is again a picturesque way of making a profound point.

The notion of practicing the truth provides a further contrast, that between merely "saying", and habitually "doing." Those in the darkness neither habitually *say* the truth nor habitually *do* it. Obviously, not every word or deed of those in darkness is untrue, but those that seem not to be are the result of inconsistency and are uncharacteristic of their whole life. And even their motives render suspicious the very nature of their extraneous "good deeds."

Can there ever be true fellowship, or common ground, among liars? How do those who have sought to deceive others, or, sold out to their own self delusion, find any basis for fellowship of any kind? There can be no objective measure by which to judge the various lies, much less whether there is anything in common. It should be remembered that in the darkness, God brought upon Egypt for three days "they saw not one another, neither rose any from his place;" i.e., there was no fellowship in the darkness. This impossibility of fellowship begins to look like one aspect of Hell, where there can be no communication, because there is no objective basis between delusional souls upon which to base it.

1:7 "But if we walk in the light . . ." This begins a contrasting state of affairs, not on the basis of who we are, or what we do, so much as in whose sphere we live. The contrast is between light and darkness and the difference it makes in our lives; the contrast does not focus on our character *per se*. The notion here is that of having a continuous existence characterized by light and truth rather

than by darkness and deception. So long as we are "in" the light, we will reflect the light. If we are in the darkness, we will reflect nothing.

1:7 " . . . as He is Himself in the light, . . . " It is not accidental that the verbs change mood from subjunctive to indicative. The one who "was from the beginning" *is still* in the light, His human life but a parenthetical moment to demonstrate to all what it *means* to be "in the light."

1:7 " . . . we have fellowship with one another . . . " This "fellowship" is primarily with the "One" who is Himself "in the light," but is also with others who "walk in the light." This idea of "fellowship" is a platonic notion. To be "in" the light is "to participate" in it; to share and manifest its characteristics. That is precisely the basis for, and result of, "fellowship" with light. We become "visible" and behave as if we can see and be seen, whereas those participating in, or "walking in darkness" behave as if they cannot see and hope that they cannot *be* seen. If there is a dichotomy between the *spheres* in which we participate,<sup>1</sup> *ipso facto* there will be a dichotomy, or separation, in the behavior of the participants. The behavior of those walking in light will be as different from those walking in darkness as the quality of light is from the quality of darkness. If we remember that darkness is the *absence of light*, we can see that this very lack of light is the *only thing* those in darkness have in common with one another.

" . . . and the blood of Jesus, His son, cleanses us from all sin." The physical death of Jesus, the shedding of the blood of the temporal man, is in view here. But this too, has eternal effects. Again, the *eternal* purpose of life is made clear by the human being whom John knew, and who is "in the light." Those in spiritual darkness can neither see the need for, nor appropriate for themselves, the blood of Jesus.

"Cleanses," in the present tense, refers to the ongoing process for which all Christians recognize a need. This cleansing extends to "all" sins, not just a few sins or to certain kinds of sin.

1:8 "If we say that we have no sin . . . " This is a gentle hypothetical in which John includes himself. The notion of "having no sin," in the present tense, means both that we have no *original* sin, and that we have no *impulse* to sin. Only the One who is only and eternally "in the light" can truthfully make this claim.

It is the sin principle that is in view here, and applies even to Christians. John was not writing to the unsaved, or even to brand new believers. He was writing to sinners who perhaps were not as vigilant as they once had been. Furthermore, he was writing to those beset on all sides by heresy, particularly Gnosticism.

1:8 " . . . we deceive ourselves . . . " When "walking in darkness" was asserted to be the character of life, we were said merely to be lying. Now, however, when the assertion is that "we have no sin," it is clear that we believe our own lie and we are found to be deluded. Self deception is consonant

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<sup>1</sup> Paul makes it clear that those in the light are not to "yoke themselves" together with those in darkness. II Cor. 6:14.



only with darkness. How great a lie must it be then, while still in darkness, to claim to be in the light? And how great is that deception if we come to believe that we have no sin? While having fellowship only with those in the dark, to try to convince ourselves and others that we really have fellowship, or common ground, with those truly in the light, may seem to be a simple lie. But its maintenance requires more and more lies until, perhaps, we come to believe them ourselves. To believe that we have no sin is not a simple lie, but a profound delusion. .

1:8 " . . . and the truth is not in us." The unmistakable implication is that if we are not living "in" the light, then the truth is not "in" us. The truth is of the very definition of light, for in the light we and everything else is visible and clear. Therefore, life lived "in" the light will resonate with the character of truth.

1:9 If we confess our sins . . . " This "confession" is no mere admission, but a concurrence in judgment as well. Confessing our sins means not just acknowledging them, but agreeing with God's assessment of them as well. Therefore, we will hate our sins.

The subjunctive mood that runs throughout this sentence is first seen in the term "confess." A stronger reading would be "if we *should* confess our sins . . ." The following subjunctives would be most accurately read "He *might* remit to us our, sins and *might* cleanse us from all unrighteousness." These subjunctives represent possibilities, not certainties. However, John indicates that Jesus' forgiveness and cleansing depends on our confession rather than upon whim or caprice. That is, there is nothing unlikely about being forgiven, nothing upon which Jesus' forgiveness is contingent except our confession.

1:9 " . . . He is reliable and righteous . . . " The verb "is" provides the only verb in this sentence in the indicative mood. While confessing our sins is dependent upon our behavior, the reliable and righteous nature of Jesus is eternal and not subject to the vagaries of life. Hence, He is always ready and willing.

1:9 " . . . so that He might remit for us our sin, . . . " This literal translation may be somewhat misleading. Although the verbs *remit* and *cleanse*, as noted above, are in the subjunctive mood, they should not be thought to indicate a possibility of *not* being forgiven. The possibility of *not* being forgiven resides only in the condition of *not confessing* our sins. Hence, any degree of probability in these subjunctives resides in *us*, not in the One who is eternally "reliable and righteous." In this text, our sins will be forgiven, depending only upon our confession of them.

Nor should we think of such confession as being made to any but God and perhaps the party sinned against. There is absolutely no intimation here that a priest is necessary for confession to be efficacious.

1:9 " . . . and cleanse us from all unrighteousness." Furthermore, the Righteous One will wipe away the unrighteousness that stains our character and besets our way, which results from and conditions our behavior. This is no mere restatement of the idea of forgiveness, but a different notion altogether. Whereas forgiveness frees us from the punishment for sin, cleansing removes the pollution of sin from our lives. It represents a new beginning.

1:10 "If we say that we have not sinned . . . " This, too, is more than a literary repetition. That we "have no sin" may refer to original sin or to the personal impulse to any particular sin, including sin after salvation, and denotes the inward principle of sin. Here, however, John is speaking of particular sinful acts of behavior we have committed or ungodly attitudes we have fostered, and their resultant condition. The perfect tense is used in its regular function, making the statement mean to deny that we are "in the state resulting from having sinned," i.e. *dirty* and *guilty*.

1:10 " . . . we make Him a liar . . . " Not that we can change the eternal character or constitution of the One from the father, but we further manifest the result of sin in our own persons by representing that the truth is not "in" Him. The clause is better understood as "we make Him *out to be* a liar," or "we *would* make Him *seem to be* a liar." That is, if we claim that we are not what we are, i.e., sinners, lost and helpless, by implication we claim that He is *not* what He eternally has been, and that He *cannot* do what He came to do, despite His own assertions to the contrary.

1:10 " . . . and His character is not in us." His word (again, the *λόγος*) here can be understood as that purpose and character revealed in His teachings, and exemplified in His behavior. It is specifically God's truth about the purpose of life and our relationship to Himself. It includes the simple knowledge of the written word of revelation, but it includes also the essence denoted by that revelation. This is made clear by the prepositional phrase that follows.

The notion of His truth, purpose, character, or meaning not being "in us," denotes a state of privation, a state of being without something. It is not the case that such people have not heard some of the words in the Bible, or heard some of the words spoken about Jesus. It is a matter of their not understanding, appropriating and remaining within the limitations imposed by those teachings. And this again reminds us that John is describing two permanent states, or camps. These are the two with which he began, those of light and its absence, and now further described as truth and its absence. The picture is clear: One is either living in the light and is therefore "enlightened," with eternal and objective truth, or he is living in the dark and therefore is not characterized by the truth.

## G. ETHICAL AND THEOLOGICAL CONSIDERATIONS

Two truths are developed and interwoven here. The first concerns the relationship between light and darkness, truth and error. The second shows the relationship between behavior and status, between what we *do* and what we *are*.

To take the second of these first, we may note that John is speaking about character, not isolated acts or sins. He means to divide people into two groups, those whose character is, and whose behavior most often shows, an intimate familiarity with truth, and forgiveness, and those whose lives do not participate or share in such character. The list of qualities that indicate that a person is "in the light," will be expanded in the coming paragraphs, but what is important to notice here is the mutually exclusive nature of these two spheres.

They cannot merge, or be compromised with one another, because the one is defined as the absence of the very features that characterized the other. And it is not possible both to have and not to have

something. Thus, we see that the one having light cannot be in the dark, and the one characterized by sin and guilt does not have (because he has not availed himself of) forgiveness and cleansing. Again, he who exhibits the truth is not a liar. Because we are subsuming behavior under character, and judging character by behavior, we can speak of exclusive realms between which, by definition, no compromise is possible.

The pinch comes because John expects our (new) character to be manifested to those around us just as the eternal Character of Jesus was made clear to those around Him.

## **H. SUBJECTIVE IMPLICATIONS – PSYCHOLOGICAL AND DEVOTIONAL**

Non Emotive Text

### **I. PARAPHRASE**

The message that we heard from Him, and which we now proclaim to you is this: That God is Light and in Him there is no semblance or possibility of darkness whatever. If we think that we enjoy an intimate fellowship with Jesus, yet live in a way characterized by darkness, we are lying and not practicing the truth He showed us. But if we exemplify the light in which we walk, as He Himself walked and still remains, we do indeed have such a common ground with Him and with each other, and the blood of Jesus, God's son, washes away all our sin and its stains. If, on the other hand, we claim to be free of sin and its stain, we are deluding ourselves, and we can neither partake in nor exemplify His character. If we acknowledge our sins and deplore their effects, we will find that He is reliable and righteous so that He might forgive us those sins and wash away our dirtiness and guilt. If we were to say that we have no need of such cleansing because we are not stained by sin, we make Him out to be a liar, and the truth of His purpose and character are wholly absent from us.

### THIRD PERICOPE (I JOHN 2:1-6)

Τεκνία μου, ταῦτα γράφω ὑμῖν ἵνα μὴ ἀμάρτητε. καὶ ἐάν τις ἀμάρτη, παράκλητον ἔχομεν πρὸς τὸν πατέρα Ἰησοῦν Χριστὸν δίκαιον· <sup>2</sup> καὶ αὐτὸς ἱλασμός ἐστιν περὶ τῶν ἁμαρτιῶν ἡμῶν, οὐ περὶ τῶν ἡμετέρων δὲ μόνον ἀλλὰ καὶ περὶ ὅλου τοῦ κόσμου. <sup>3</sup> Καὶ ἐν τούτῳ γινώσκουμεν ὅτι ἐγνώκαμεν αὐτόν, ἐὰν τὰς ἐντολὰς αὐτοῦ τηρῶμεν. <sup>4</sup> ὁ λέγων ὅτι ἔγνωκα αὐτόν καὶ τὰς ἐντολὰς αὐτοῦ μὴ τηρῶν, ψεύστης ἐστίν καὶ ἐν τούτῳ ἡ ἀλήθεια οὐκ ἔστιν· <sup>5</sup> ὃς δ' ἂν τηρῇ αὐτοῦ τὸν λόγον, ἀληθῶς ἐν τούτῳ ἡ ἀγάπη τοῦ θεοῦ τετελείωται, ἐν τούτῳ γινώσκουμεν ὅτι ἐν αὐτῷ ἐσμεν. <sup>6</sup> ὁ λέγων ἐν αὐτῷ μένειν ὀφείλει καθὼς ἐκεῖνος περιεπάτησεν καὶ αὐτὸς [οὕτως] περιπατεῖν.

#### A. TEXTUAL CRITICISM

No major variants in this pericope.

#### B. LEXICAL AND TOPICAL STUDIES

2:1 παράκλητον (Noun, accusative, masculine, singular, from παράκλητος) -- *mediator, intercessor, helper*. Literally, it is *one called to the side of*. It was used as a legal technical term for what we would today call an attorney. This is a useful image because it pictures Christ as the person called to speak for, defend, or otherwise to speak on behalf of someone to a third party, in this case, God.

2:2 ἱλασμός (Noun, nominative, masculine, singular, from ἱλάσκομαι) -- *propitiation, conciliation, expiation*. The Hebrew term upon which this concept is largely built (כָּפַר) *to cover*, or *to wipe away*. In the Old Testament the word was never used in the sense of man's action toward God, although it was occasionally used in reference to man's actions toward another man. In relationship to God, it is always He who initiates the action or accepts a righteous person (e.g. Moses, Phinias) as the identity of the sinful people and thus wipes away their sin by seeing them "in" the righteous person.

In John, Jesus is both the righteous person with whom the sinners are identified and the sacrificial victim God has chosen to accept as the sacrifice for sin. In this way, Jesus both *was historically* (as our sacrifice) and *is eternally* (as our mediating high Priest) our propitiation. Cf. *Interpreters Bible Dictionary*, vol. 2, under "expiation."

2:2 κόσμος (Noun, genitive, masculine, singular, from κόσμος) -- This word has a wide variety of meanings. The various fields of meaning include the following; 1) *adornment, adorning*; 2) Philosophically, the total of everything here and now -- *the universe*; 3) *total of all beings above animals*; 4) the planet upon which we live, *earth*; 5) *mankind*; 6) *the scene of earthly joys, possessions, cares, and sufferings*; 7) *the world* and everything that belongs to it; 8) *totality*. Picking through these concepts, it is clear that for both John and Paul, the word conveys the notion of the world and everything that belongs to it (7), but also, negatively, the scene of earthly joys,

possessions, cares, and sorrows (6). For both of them, the world appears as that which is at enmity with God, i.e. lost in sin, wholly at odds with everything divine, ruined, and depraved. It is unjust and hostile to good; it is ruled by the devil. "The Christian must have nothing to do with this world of sin and separation from God; but must keep himself unstained by the world (James 1:27). It represents all the forces in opposition to God." -- Cf. B.A.G.

2:3 γινώσκομεν (Present, active, indicative, 1<sup>st</sup> person, plural, from γινώσκω) -- 1) *know, come to know*; 2) *learn of, ascertain, find out*; 3) *understand, comprehend*; 4) *perceive, notice, realize*; 5) euphemism for *sexual relations*; 6) *have come to know, know*; 7) *acknowledge*. John's use of this word is based upon the empirical, temporal perceptions of the earthly life of Jesus. Yet the knowledge of which he speaks is certain, unchanging, eternal. Here, it is clearly a coming to *know certainly by means of perceiving*. John's knowledge of the purpose of life, as being eternal, is based upon his perceptions of the historical man, Jesus. Furthermore, he is concerned that his readers exemplify the light and love to those around so that they might be assured of their own certainty of the truth of John's assertions. At this point, John is not so much concerned with witness to others as he is in living consistently and manifesting the eternal in the temporal. John is saying, in effect, that unless we, too, are *manifesting* the eternal purpose for life in our temporal lives, then we do not truly *know* the eternal purpose for life.

2:5 τετελείωται (Perfect, passive, indicative, 3<sup>rd</sup> person, plural, from τηρέω) -- 1) *complete, finish; bring to an end, accomplish*; 2) *fill, perfect, bring to its goal, complete*. Here the meaning is *brought to completion, accomplished, or perfected*.

2:6 μένειν (Present, active, infinitive, from μένω) -- 1) *remain, stay*; 2) *await, wait for*. The word is used figuratively here as of "someone who does not leave the realm or sphere in which he finds himself;" *remain, continue, abide*. "The phrase 'to remain in' is frequent in John and denotes an enduring or eternal personal communion." -- RAG.

2:6 ὀφείλει (Present passive, indicative, 3<sup>rd</sup> person, singular, from ὀφείλω) -- 1) *owe, be indebted*; 2) *be obligated*. This is a stronger expression of ethical duty than the English word "ought"

### C. GRAMMATICAL NOTES AND LITERARY DEVICES

2:4 Pleonasm (negative statement): "is a liar and the truth is not in him."

### D. HISTORICAL AND BACKGROUND INFORMATION

No relevant data available.

### E. TRANSLATION

2:1 My little children, I write these things to you in order that you might not sin. And if anyone

should sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ *the* righteous. 2 And He is Himself the propitiation for our sins, nor for ours alone, but also for *the sins of* the whole world. 3 And by this we know that we have come to know Him, if we should keep his commands. 4 The one saying "I have come to know Him," yet not keeping His commands, is a liar and the truth is not in him. 5 But whoever keeps His word, truly, the love of God is perfected in him. By this we know that we are in Him. 6 The one claiming to abide in Him ought himself also to walk as He walked.

## F. EXPOSITION

2:1 "My little children, . . ." This expression of fondness and familiarity indicates warmth of feeling, and may well imply that the original audience were the result of John's own missionary activity. John sees the Church as a family of brothers, with elders assuming the role of paternal guide -- hence, the expression prepares John's readers for parental instruction.

"I write these things to you . . ." These things being the pattern described in Chapter One and the particular teachings that conform to that pattern in what follows. The pattern is that Jesus is our example of walking uprightly "in the light." That the very meaning of life is incorporated in His example; and our lives, too, demonstrate *what* we are, or *where* we are. We are to be imitators of Jesus, and on that basis to have common ground with one another. What follows will assume and illustrate the truth of these ideas.

"in order that you might not sin." The reason these things are important is that they can prevent us from sinning, or wandering from that circle of light. The circle of light, the fellowship with others withing that circle, and the forgiveness necessary to the enjoyment of that light, define sin and forgiveness for the Christian, and describe his daily "walk," or behavior.

"And if anyone should sin, . . ." The sin spoken of here is an act, or several acts. It is not to be considered the nature of John's readers. He is well aware of the human nature. He is concerned that his readers maintain their new character, their new relationship, their new fellowship. The fellowship is real, and salvation eternal. The light is clear, and His example is compelling. Yet there is still the tendency to sin within every person, Christian or non Christian. John is concerned to make sure that sin is only a moment, minimized, and quickly forgiven rather than a description of his readers character and eternal state.

"we have an advocate with the Father, . . ." For those acts of sin that so easily beset even Christians, there is a ready helper who stands in our place before the Father.

Jesus Christ *the* righteous." Jesus is our helper, advocate, or attorney, who pleads our case for acts of sin. He alone has a right to be heard by the righteous God. It is His character as a righteous person (the English versions are not wrong in interpolating the article, thus THE righteous person) that avails with the Father.

2 "And He is Himself the propitiation for our sins, . . ." The word "propitiation" has been the center

of some controversy. Properly speaking, it denotes the appeasing of an angry god, a concept not in favor with many moderns. Expiate, on the other hand, refers to inanimate objects. [Cf. The Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible]. Nonetheless, such a simple clause as we have here leaves no doubt that Jesus is able to stand before God on our behalf and that it is in some way linked to the fact that He was Himself responsible for appeasing God, who was angry about sin.

John, has already shown all to sin, some by their own admission, and the rest by their denial (I John 1:8-9). He has already shown that there is no moral darkness, or sin, in God (I John 1:5). The very fact that Jesus "who was from the beginning," (I John 1:1) came was to tell us about the purpose of life and reestablish the fellowship of life (I John 1:3) indicates the fact that there was nothing we could do for ourselves except wander in the darkness. There may be no nice way to say it, no way to candy coat it, but man is a sinner, and the only solution to his problem lies in Jesus as our advocate and propitiation for sins.

nor for our's alone, . . ." Jesus mission was clearly not simply for the sins of a few. Theology must come to grips with the fact that what is *eternally* true may seem *temporally* problematic for us (and *vice versa*), because we simply have no choice but to see things in a temporal way. It is easy to talk of election, but we still must be about the task of evangelism. It is easy to talk about predestination, but we must still live as if we are morally free agents. One of the most surprising things about I John is that there is a great deal to be learned about the relationship of the eternal to the temporal. That is what is meant by the entire prologue (I John 1:1-5).

"but also for the *Sins of the* whole world." Those who wish to cling to their sins, their attitudes, their erroneous views, do so at their own peril. Jesus is adequate for the situation, no matter whose it is, no matter how bad it might be. He has appeased God for the sins of the entire world, that sphere that has no other business but to oppose God. How great a condemnation will they receive who turn their backs on such an offer, or treat it lightly, as if it were cheap? How surely do they deserve to drown who, from the seats of their sinking dingy, refuse passage on the waiting rescue ship?

3 "And by this we know . . ." The two tenses of "know" in this verse are instructive. Here it is in the present tense, meaning that we *recognize*, or *have an awareness of* something. We know in the present moment and have the experience of knowing.

"that we have come to know Him, . . ." That we are in a continuous, perpetual, or eternal, state of knowing Him. That is, we are now in a state that is predicated upon our permanent knowledge of Him. The tense of the verb "know" in this phrase is in the perfect. It focuses attention upon the state of being that results from some action. English does not use the perfect tense as frequently, but examples might include "I am married," the state of being that resulted from the action of saying "I do," and having the pronouncement intoned by the officiating person that you are now "husband and wife." Another example might be "I'm home." There is an abiding condition, or state of being, that resulted from the action of coming home and going into the house. The action resulted in a state of being. The state of being here is "knowledgability" about God, an experiential banishment of Ignorance.

Thus, John is saying that we are aware, or recognize, that we have a permanent and personal

knowledge of God.

"if we keep his commands." This conditional, in the subjunctive voice in the Greek, provides the basis upon which we become aware of our knowledge of, and relationship with, God. It is the same principle John has, in different ways, reiterated several times already. What we are, is clearly indicated by what we do. It is not a case of keeping God's commands in order to get something, to merit praise, or earn salvation. It is a simple case of knowing who we are. Just as a person waking in the light *knows* he is in the light because he does not keep bumping into things, so a person who is keeping God's commands knows something of God and His purpose for life. What we *are* becomes manifest as what we *do*; what we do proves what we *are*.

4 "The one saying 'I have come to know Him,' . . ." John again demonstrates with an example. If a person claims that he is a Christian, or that he has certain knowledge of God, he is making a statement that, contrary to opinion from John's time to the present, *can* be demonstrated, unlike the belief of the gnostics, who claimed that God was so remote as to be unreachable by anyone still in the flesh except through some mysterious "gnosis." Modern Gnostics make similar claims on the basis of empiricism, thereby necessitating the now infamous "leap of faith."

"yet not keeping His commands, . . ." This is the point of proof, or demonstration. No Gnostic could make such a connection between ultimate reality and behavior. (Few moderns can either) The Gnostics saw behavior as being so far removed from ultimate reality that it simply did not matter, either eschewing contact with matter as far as asceticism made it possible, or living lives of debauchery and license because what they did with their material bodies did not matter.

"is a liar and the truth is not in him." There is, contrary to Gnostics ancient and modern, an intimate connection between what we *are* and what we *do*, and how we *know*. John minces no words in labeling those who say otherwise. Here, the point is truly reiterated, since both halves of the statement involve the status of the person. First his character is revealed when John says that he *is* a liar. It is reiterated and strengthened when he says that the truth *is not in him*, also a reference to character, or status, rather than mere behavior.

5 "But whoever keeps His word, . . ." The contrary position is now laid out. The person who keeps, observes, or practices keeping God's word, i.e. his commands, is in a different position. He has a different character. There is, in verses 4 and 5, an anticipation of John's equation of God's "commands" with God's "word. (I John 2:7)"

"truly, the love of God is perfected in him." That is, the love of God is completed, or brought to perfection, in the one who "keeps His word." What is that "word?" That it is the "love" of God that is spoken of as being "perfected" provides the clue. It is not His mercy, or justice that is said to be perfected, but His love. Furthermore, because the notion of "being perfected" includes the idea of completed, and that which is spoken of here as being *completed* involves an abstraction, the only conclusion available is that John is speaking about the Great commandments. Only the practice of loving God and loving neighbor puts an abstraction into practice making it visible, and making such a pronouncement as "it is completed," or "finished," possible. The idea is nothing more than this: Whoever practices God's word, which is to love God with all ones heart and mind, and to love his



neighbor as he loves himself, demonstrates a character in which God's love has taken root, and manifests itself in behavior. God's love is perfected in him who practices it. The eternal may become visible in anyone who participates in, or exemplifies God's character. This is surely a titanic statement.

"By this we know that we are in Him." It is precisely by this demonstration that we know God. That is, we know him, again, in the same way we know that we are in the light. When we practice God's love, we know that we are participating in the personality and character of One who is entirely other than ourselves. We know our own inclinations and our own desires. We also know that when we practice God's love, we are doing something by nature foreign and often inimical to our own nature. Practice *doing* what God *is*, takes us out of ourselves, out of the darkness, and puts us in the light. We realize that we have come to know God when we stand in a light foreign to our own nature and desires that bids us do His desire, and participate in His character.

6 The one claiming to abide in Him . . ." Here, John alters his argument. He has just argued from behavior to character, from temporal to eternal, from general to universal. Here, he will argue from universal to particular. The notion of *abiding*, or *remaining*, here indicates a state of being, a participation in a realm or sphere. It is not behavior that is at issue here, but the *sphere* and *status* of ones being. "In Him" names that sphere; and since He has already been linked with that which is eternal. We are on safe ground stating that we are here interested in one's eternal status.

"ought himself also to walk as He walked." But once again, the eternal is irrevocably linked with the temporal, the particular, i.e. behavior. This is a recapitulation of the idea of our *walking* in the light as He *is* in the light, but here we are told that we should *walk* in the love as He *walked* in the love. The figure has changed slightly. Whereas before we were to *do* what He *is*. Here we are to *do* what He *did*, i.e. model our behavior after His.

## **G. ETHICAL AND THEOLOGICAL CONSIDERATIONS**

The notion that "as a man thinks in his heart, so is he," is writ large in this pericope. Whether exemplifying the eternal in our temporal living, or modeling our temporal living upon His temporal life, the connection between what we *are* and what we *do* as being visible in behavior is everywhere to be seen in our text. This is consistent with the teachings of both Jesus and Paul.

## **H. SUBJECTIVE IMPLICATIONS – PSYCHOLOGICAL AND DEVOTIONAL**

Non Emotive Text

## **I. PARAPHRASE**

2:1 My little children, I am writing these things to you so that you might refrain from sin. Yet if anyone sins, he should remember that we have a spokesman before the Father, Jesus Christ *the*

righteous. 2 And it is He who is the propitiation for our sins, the very things that separate us from God. And He has appeased God not for our sins only, but also for the *sins of the* whole world. 3 And this is how we recognize the fact that we have come to know Him; if we are observing his commands. 4 Anyone saying "I have come to know Him," but who is not observing His commands, is simply a liar -- there is no truth in him. 5 But whoever conforms to His word, truly exemplifies the love of God which is made perfect in him. By this we know that we truly partake of His eternal character. 6 Anyone who claims to partake in His character ought himself to behave as He behaved.

## FOURTH PERICOPE (I JOHN 2:7-11)

**1 John 2:7-11** Ἀγαπητοί, οὐκ ἐντολὴν καινὴν γράφω ὑμῖν ἀλλ' ἐντολὴν παλαιὰν ἣν εἴχετε ἀπ' ἀρχῆς· ἡ ἐντολὴ ἡ παλαιὰ ἐστὶν ὁ λόγος ὃν ἠκούσατε. <sup>8</sup> πάλιν ἐντολὴν καινὴν γράφω ὑμῖν, ὃ ἐστὶν ἀληθὲς ἐν αὐτῷ καὶ ἐν ὑμῖν, ὅτι ἡ σκοτία παράγεται καὶ τὸ φῶς τὸ ἀληθινὸν ἤδη φαίνει. <sup>9</sup> Ὁ λέγων ἐν τῷ φωτὶ εἶναι καὶ τὸν ἀδελφὸν αὐτοῦ μισῶν ἐν τῇ σκοτίᾳ ἐστὶν ἕως ἄρτι. <sup>10</sup> ὁ ἀγαπῶν τὸν ἀδελφὸν αὐτοῦ ἐν τῷ φωτὶ μένει καὶ σκάνδαλον ἐν αὐτῷ οὐκ ἔστιν. <sup>11</sup> ὁ δὲ μισῶν τὸν ἀδελφὸν αὐτοῦ ἐν τῇ σκοτίᾳ ἐστὶν καὶ ἐν τῇ σκοτίᾳ περιπατεῖ καὶ οὐκ οἶδεν ποῦ ὑπάγει, ὅτι ἡ σκοτία ἐτύφλωσεν τοὺς ὀφθαλμοὺς αὐτοῦ.

### A. TEXTUAL CRITICISM

No major variants in this pericope.

### B. LEXICAL AND TOPICAL STUDIES

2:7 ἐντολὴν (Noun, accusative, feminine, singular, from ἐντολή) -- *Command, commandment, order*. What is here called "the command of God" will soon (verse 5) be equated with "the word of God." John refers to the Old Testament commands known as "the Great Commandments," (ἐντολή) not to law as an institution, or as a body of commandments known as The Law (whether νόμος is viewed as narrowly as the Ten Commandments or as broadly as the entire Old Testament). The statement that his readers "already have the old command" refers to the Old Testament citation of this "Great Commandment." The "new command" he writes reflects the new scope and more thorough understanding of the Great Commandment as it was treated by that Eternal Life, Jesus. The teaching here points directly at His teaching and example of loving others -- all others. John has given us the 'punch line' without the parable. The purpose of life, as seen clearly "in the light," is to embody and exhibit love.

2:7 καινὴν (Adjective, accusative, feminine, singular, from καινός) Too often, we think of "new" in the purely historical sense of "unprecedented," or of having to do only with time. The term under consideration here has the following fields of meaning: 1) *unusual*; 2) in the sense of something not previously present, *unknown, strange, remarkable, or novel*; 3) and in contrasts with the old, such that a) there is no criticism of the old, or b) the old is viewed as obsolete and in need of replacement by the new.

It is imperative that we see two facets here. John is saying that he is not writing a command that is *unknown, strange, or remarkable*, but an old and well known command. But then he goes on to say that he is, indeed, writing a command that is perhaps (1) *unusual*, but which by implication (3a) does not criticize or seek the replacement of the old. In our context, this is nothing more than saying he is writing with a new twist to an old command; the new twist is that we should really live the old command thoroughly, i.e. fulfill the "Royal Command" (James 2:8). One is reminded of Jesus' statement that "not one jot or tittle of the (old) law shall pass away until all shall be fulfilled," which

He did. Jesus was the embodiment of the law just as John advocates that we should be embodiments of Love.

2:8 ἀληθές (Noun, nominative and accusative, neuter singular, from ἀλήθης) -- 1) *truthful, righteous, honest*; 2) *true*; 3) *real, genuine*. The sense in this context is not *true*, for the word of God is true without regard to people. The meaning here has to do with the fact that it is "in Him and in you." The truth of God's word in no way depends upon it being "in us." What John is saying here is that the new commandment is real, or genuine "in Him and in you." That is, it is visible, demonstrative, manifest in the lives of those who are "in the light." Hence the notion is that God's word is *real* in Him and in you, means that it has been appropriated and vindicated in experience.

Furthermore, commands, as such, cannot be true or false; but neither can they be real. The context demands that the command be something other than simple orders or commandments, and that they be real or genuine. The overall effect, particularly when dealing with concepts such as "walking in the light," "remaining in Him," and ultimate reality being visible in behavior, demands that we choose something on the order of *genuine, real*, or better yet, *visible, or verifiable*. Indeed, verifiable is specifically what John is talking about, particularly in light of the Gnostic heresy.

2:8 παράγεται (present, passive, indicative, 3<sup>rd</sup> person, singular, from παράγω) -- *pass by, disappear, pass away* (intransitive). The darkness in which all men walked before the advent of Jesus as the Messiah, is now passing away. Not that it is not still dark in many quarters, but that the light is now penetrating the hearts and minds of more and more men and women, and in far flung regions. In John's day, evangelism was in full progress. With the approach of the truth, the darkness disappears, personally, socially, and geographically.

2:8 φαίνει (present, active, subjunctive, 3<sup>rd</sup> person, singular, from φαίνω) -- 1) *shine, be bright*; 2) *flash*; 3) *appear, be revealed*. While light and darkness are opposites, their behavior may not be so exact, but in any case the idea presented here is difficult to describe in smooth English. The true light "was from the beginning, because, John tells us, "God is light." Hence, the appearing that the true light is doing has to do only with its temporal manifestations. Its eternal character has always been what it is. Like the darkness, which is said now to be fading, or passing away, we are dealing here with that which is *genuine* in John's readers, and therefore with a temporal manifestation. We are talking in terms of decrease ( darkness) and increase (light), hence the need to tailor our words to the context. If the darkness is now *disappearing, fading, or passing away*, then the light must be doing something similar, such as *brightening, flashing, spreading, intensifying*, or some such process.

2:9 ἀδελφόν (Noun, accusative, masculine, singular, from ἀδελφός) -- 1) *brother*, either literally or figuratively; 2) *fellow countryman*; 3) *neighbor*; 4) term of formal address.

Here, John uses the term "brother" in its widest scope. We must remember two things taught specifically by the "Eternal Life," who "was manifest," and of whom John bears witness.

The first is the situation that arises if we take the scope of the term to be too narrow, as literal

brother, male relative, fellow national, or even a member of the same religious group. For very few people actually hate their relatives. Jesus asked what praise such behavior ought to occasion, "for do not the Gentiles the same?" In other words, more latitude is expected when bestowing our graces upon others than that of restricting them only to our favorites.

The second thing we need to remember is the parable of the Good Samaritan. Jesus' final question to the lawyer was "*who* was neighbor to this man?" It was not the priest. It was not the Levite. It was the lowly Samaritan who proved himself neighbor to the injured Jew by helping him.

This is the more telling when we recall the trick question the lawyer asked to get the parable told in the first place. He asked Jesus "what shall I do to inherit *eternal life*?" This immediately puts us on notice that the topics of these two passages overlap.

Furthermore, Jesus asked the lawyer what is to be found on the subject "in the law." The lawyer rightly cites the Great Commandments to love God and to *love neighbor*. Again, the topic of love is also parallel to the discussion in I John 2. The trick question put to Jesus, but which backfired in the face of the lawyer, was "and just who is my neighbor? He learned that neighbor *is* who neighbor *does*. Here, too, we learn that brothers are not such by birth, *but by our behavior toward them*.

2:9 μισῶν (Nominative, present, active, participle, masculine, singular, from μισέω) – *hate, detest, abhor, persecute*. Again, because of the context, dealing, as it does, with temporal reality and human behavior, we must first take the term in its widest possible sense before we narrow it down. John is dealing with extremes, with opposites. There is no middle ground here, so whatever may qualify as *hate* qualifies here. Put simply, whatever is not positive beneficence toward others, including even indifference, is hatred.

2:10 μένει (Present, active, indicative, 3<sup>rd</sup> person, singular, from μένω) -- *await, wait for* (transitive); 2) *remain, stay* (intransitive). "Figuratively, it is used of someone who does not leave the state or sphere in which he finds himself," thus, *remain, abide, continue*. -- B.A.G.

The sense here is "tempo-eternal;" that is, a temporal abiding *in* that which is eternal, with the expectation of *eternal abiding*. That is, we abide, or remain in the eternal until we are no longer bound by time. If the eternal character abides in us, then we know we will eternally abide with Him. Thus, eternal life can be divided into two parts, the temporal aspect and the post temporal aspect of heaven. This word, placed in this context, implies that eternal life begins today, in time, and not later, at the judgment, as many think. *Abide* is the best possible translation into English.

2:10 σκάνδαλον (Noun, nominative and accusative, neuter, singular, from σκάνδαλον) – 1) *trap*; 2) *temptation, enticement*, 3) *that which gives offense, causes revulsion, or arouses opposition*. Here again, the widest possible latitude should be given the word because of the general nature of the context. The one who loves his brother remains, or abides, in the light, and because he is in the light, he neither has nor provides any "cause of stumbling". He provides no temptation, he gives no offense. All of these ideas apply in this text.

2:11 ἐτύφλωσεν (I Aorist, active, indicative, 3<sup>rd</sup> person, singular, from τυφλόω) -- *Blind, deprive*

*of sight*. Here, we may best render the term "deprive of sight," since it is intense light, rather than deep darkness that actually blinds people. The darkness does indeed deprive our eyes of sight, by the sheer absence of light. It may indeed be true that people abide in the darkness deliberately, making their "blindness" deliberate and willful, and therefore maybe permanent, but that is not here the burden of our text.

### **C. GRAMMATICAL NOTES AND LITERARY DEVICES**

No grammatical anomalies.

### **D. HISTORICAL AND BACKGROUND INFORMATION**

No relevant data available.

### **E. TRANSLATION**

2:7 Beloved, not a new command do I write to you, but an old command which you have had from the beginning; the old command is the word that you have heard. 8 Again, a new command I write to you, which is visible in Him and in you, because the darkness is diminishing and the true light now shines. 9 The one claiming to be in the light and hating his brother is in the darkness until now. 10 The one loving his brother abides in the light and there is no scandal in him. 11 But the one hating his brother is in the darkness and walks in the darkness, and does not know where he is going, because the darkness has deprived his eyes of sight.

### **F. EXPOSITION**

2:7 Beloved, . . ." Again John begins with a tender word, reminding his readers both of who they are, and who he is, but most pointedly, who He is. Just as "Little children" prepared his readers for parental guidance, so "Beloved" prepares them to think in terms of love -- and its absence.

"not a new command do I write to you, . . ." The use of the word command serves as a transition from the previous pericope admonishing the readers to keep the commands of God, to the present task of defining more closely the nature of those commands. Here, we are not dealing with a new command, such as leaders of religions the world over are wont to issue from time to time. John is clear that nothing new or strange is being introduced to his readers.

"but an old command which you have had from the beginning;" Rather, John is bringing to the attention of his readers the nature of what he is advocating, as old knowledge. Indeed, they have had it from the beginning. Here, we must remember that while the truth existed from the beginning, John is here talking about the beginning of the Christian life. His readers have had this old command from the beginning of their Christian experience.

"the old command is the word that you have heard." More explicitly, the old command is the word they have already heard, perhaps in connection with their very conversions in the first place, as well as the godly instruction they received thereafter. The construction in Greek is concrete. *The command is the word*, and *the word is the command*; that is, the terms are reversible, or coextensive. They are synonyms. This reference to "the word," here obviously written or spoken, and not merely eternal in some mysterious way, may refer to the Old Testament, the Word of the Gospel, or perhaps simply to the Great Commandment to love God with all one's heart and soul and mind, and his neighbor as himself. The context makes it abundantly clear that we are speaking about the Great Commandment, or what James calls the Royal Commandment, to love our neighbor as ourselves (cf. especially 2 John 5). Many, of course, claimed to do so, for the command, or "word" was true *to* them, or true *for* them.

8 "Again, a new command I write to you, . . ." The paradox here is only apparent. "Again," here, means something on the order of "in another sense," or "from a different perspective." There is no new command as such, but a new intensity, a new interpretation, a new thoroughness, a new godliness visible in it. If we remember the parable of the Good Samaritan, and the Sermon on the Mount, we will recall the new intensity and depth Jesus lent to the "old" commands. He issued nothing new in them, He simply interpreted them as God had originally intended them to be interpreted with no excuse or legalistic self-serving. And He lived the truth He spoke. Love became a concrete entity *in* His behavior.

"which is visible in Him and in you, . . ." That is, the content of the "new" perspective on the old command was visible *in* the earthly life of Jesus, still characterizes Him as He stands before the Father as our advocate, and is now even visible *in* the Christians. The truth, owing to the new thoroughness Jesus insisted upon, made it not true merely *to* one, or *for* one, but visibly *in* one, as expressed by his behavior. That is what John is talking about. He is interested in making the truth visible to ourselves and others, by "*walking in*," the truth of God's purpose of life, just exactly as Jesus had made it visible to him.

The usual translations of this passage read "is true in Him and in you." There is nothing *wrong* with this translation other than the fact that with this understanding of the phrase, there is no sense in which this "new command," or "word," can be false, so it carries no information. Linguistically, it is meaningless. Would the command be false, for example, if it were not "true in us?" Is it the situation of being "in him and in you" that makes the command true? Truth is independent of people and does not depend for its status on being exemplified.

Furthermore, while there is a sense in which we must agree that whatever is true is so because it is based upon God's character; that whatever is of God is, by definition, true, we must not read into our present text any unnecessary theology such as the Trinity. That is not what John is teaching, and if

we read it into the text, we will miss what he *is* trying to teach. Assuming, then, that if what is true is true because it is "in" God, and Jesus is in some sense God, and therefore, what is "in" Jesus is true, we still have a huge interpretive problem. Why did John jump precariously from teaching about eternal life being exemplified in temporal life to a teaching about the Trinity? If whatever is true is true because it is "in" Jesus, what is the point of saying that it is true "in you" This means that

whatever is true is so because it is "in us."

This will never do. The context demands that we speak of the command as being *genuine, real*, or better yet, visible;; not only *genuine*, but *verifiably so*. Only thus are we able to maintain the emphasis the context demands, i.e. living, or exemplifying the eternal purpose of life -- *walking* in the light, indeed, *abiding* in the light. In short, the context is still that of Christian emulation of Jesus.

If what we know of "the purpose of life" we know by what John "heard and saw and touched, concerning the purpose of life," and we are to imitate Him; and if John's readers did in fact walk in the way that Jesus walked, i.e. "walked in the light as He was in the light," then they too, were providing something visible about what is by nature invisible. As He walked, and manifested the purpose of life, so John's readers are also to walk, and indeed *do* so walk. It is this and nothing else that satisfies the context. Just as Jesus was a walking vindication of God's truth concerning the "purpose of life," so John's readers also, in following His example, were also walking vindications of it. The truth that Jesus exemplified is also to be exemplified by His followers, which John says his readers were doing. We are to have the same effect on those around us as He had on John! This is another titanic truth!

"because the darkness is diminishing. . ." That is, the new command is verifiably genuine, for two reasons. The first is that the darkness in which John's readers had once walked, and which had at one time characterized them, is now diminishing, or disappearing, as they mature in the knowledge and walk of the faith.

"and the true light now shines." That is, the more they make the "purpose of life" visible in their lives, the more they emulate their Lord, the truer is the command which is "in them," just as it was absolutely true in Jesus. Again, verification of the assertions will be demonstrated by examples that follow.

9 "The one claiming to be in the light. . ." Once more, the hypothetical case, of which there were doubtless many exemplars, is set before John's readers. One may make the right claim, knowing what seems true *to* him, or true *for* him and believe that morally and spiritually he is in pretty good shape. After all, he knows God's word.

"and hating his brother. . ." Again, it is important to realize that the terms "hate" and "Brother" must be as inclusive as possible. Anyone who justifies the poor treatment of another can be said to hate his brother.

"is in the darkness until now." That is, eternally until this point, at which moment it may be changed. This little phrase is very important. It points up the fact that if the situation *can* be remedied, it can *only* be done temporally, i.e. *in time*. That is, mankind's darkness may extend backward as far as we want to extend it. But it need go no further than right now; it need not issue in a future eternity of darkness. Such people as John has just hypothesized, may have been banging about in the dark forever, but they have now the opportunity to step forward into the light. There is certainly a case for election, foreknowledge, and predestination. But not in this passage. Here, John is telling us



that such folk are in the darkness "until now," holding forth the intriguing possibility that, as free moral agents, they may choose to do otherwise in the future.

10 "The one loving his brother. . ." Without going further either by denying free will altogether, or yet declaring how it should be exercised, John stays with his point and counterbalances his hypothetical case with its opposite. Note that this is not a hypothetical case. There is no "if one should," or "if anyone." The hypothetical is opposed by the reality of those who do, in fact, love their brothers. Furthermore, there is no statement here about claiming to be "in the light" Such a claim is either not made, or is assumed. In either case, it is not important. The important aspect is the love of one's brother.

"abides in the light. . ." Yet, ironically perhaps, the one not making the claim, but doing the deed, gets the reward. That is, the one loving his brother may not worry so much about being in the light as he does about the care of his brother. But he gets the light any way. As John has said, we know that we are in the light if we keep his commands. Here, the one loving his brother, proves that he is already in the light, and *abides* there.

"and there is no scandal in him. There is no moral outrage, no cause of stumbling, no double dealing, no hypocrisy, no enticement to unrighteousness, in the person who loves his brother, who selflessly puts the needs of others before his own or in the light in which he walks. Those who follow the example of Jesus in this, may indeed, like their exemplar, suffer, but also like Him, not justly. For there will be nothing blameworthy in him. One cannot help but think of Jesus before His judges.

11 "But the one hating his brother. . ." Again, on the temporal level, the one behaving in this manner, and doing less toward others than he should, is in view here. This "one" has also ceased to be hypothetical.

"is in the darkness. . ." The one hating his brother is now said to *be* (one might have almost expected *abides*) in the darkness. With this, John again connects the temporal realm of behavior with a permanent state, that of darkness. That is, a person whose temporal situation is characterized by hatred for his brother, is displaying where he *is*, that is, the realm in which *he is at home*.

"and walks in the darkness, . . ." This equates the behavior of hating with the habits of life. "Hating brother" *means* "walking in darkness." By this we recognize that hating ones brother is the *verification* of walking in, and being in darkness.

"and does not know where he is going, . . ." So much is obvious. But there is a neat bit of word play here. One of the Greek words for *know* is also the word for *see*. In the perfect tenses, the Greek word "see" means "know." If one is in the state of *having seen*, then he *knows*. The idea is not far from our adage that "seeing is believing." Thus a Greek could use one word to say that he *saw* Jesus (imperfect tense) and therefore, *knows* Jesus (perfect tense) using the same word. Here, because the one who hates his brother cannot *see* where he is going, he cannot *know* where he is going.

"because the darkness has deprived his eyes of sight." Again, darkness does not blind us, but it does

deprive us of our ability *to see*. Consequently, it deprives us also of our ability *to know*!

## **G. ETHICAL AND THEOLOGICAL CONSIDERATIONS**

John continues to build upon his theme of empirical knowledge of eternal verities. He continues to assert that, like the Exemplar who manifested the "purpose of life," we, too, can reflect something of that eternal truth primarily to each other, but also to those around us, by living like He lived.

This involves not merely "being hearers of the word," but "doers" of it (James 1:22). The old command, whether that is thought to be nothing more than "to love God," which seems suitably abstract, or the whole Old Testament with ritual observances, we have had from the beginning. There is no fault with the old command. But it is the *new* perspective on the command, the new thoroughness with which Jesus imbued and exercised those teachings, that led Him to love all and thereby give visible evidence of what was meant by the old command.

John has dealt with walking in the light. Now he turns his attention on love. It is imperative that we understand that the difference between the "old command" and the "new command," is that the old may have been true *for* us or seemed true *to* us, but the new command is demonstrably true *in* us. Christianity is simply nothing if its objective truth does not manifest itself in a subjective exercise that vindicates the person and nature of God.

## **H. SUBJECTIVE IMPLICATIONS – PSYCHOLOGICAL AND DEVOTIONAL**

Non Emotive Text

## **I. PARAPHRASE**

2:7 Beloved, I am not writing to you with a new command, but with the same old command you have had since the very beginning of your Christian life, This "old command" is nothing other than the word you have already heard. 8 Yet I am writing to you with a new expectation. It has the character of a new command because it is to make the old command visible in your very behavior. The truth of the word is then verifiable; as it was in Him, now also in you, because the darkness which characterized not only the world but also your own lives, is now diminishing and the true light becoming ever brighter. 9 Anyone who claims to *be* in the light yet who hates his brother is really still in that great darkness. 10 Those, on the other hand, who love their brothers live in the light and there is moral deficiency with them. 11 But the one who hates his brother both lives and walks in the darkness. He cannot *see* where he is going, and so he cannot *know* where he is going, because the darkness has made sight impossible and his eyes therefore useless.

## FIFTH PERICOPE (I JOHN 2:12-14)

γράφω ὑμῖν, τεκνία, ὅτι ἀφέωνται ὑμῖν αἱ ἁμαρτίαι διὰ τὸ ὄνομα αὐτοῦ. <sup>13</sup> γράφω ὑμῖν, πατέρες, ὅτι ἐγνώκατε τὸν ἀπ' ἀρχῆς. γράφω ὑμῖν, νεανίσκοι, ὅτι νενικήκατε τὸν πονηρόν. <sup>14</sup> ἔγραψα ὑμῖν, παιδία, ὅτι ἐγνώκατε τὸν πατέρα. ἔγραψα ὑμῖν, πατέρες, ὅτι ἐγνώκατε τὸν ἀπ' ἀρχῆς. ἔγραψα ὑμῖν, νεανίσκοι, ὅτι ἰσχυροὶ ἐστε καὶ ὁ λόγος τοῦ θεοῦ ἐν ὑμῖν μένει καὶ νενικήκατε τὸν πονηρόν.

### A. TEXTUAL CRITICISM

No major variants in this pericope.

### B. LEXICAL AND TOPICAL STUDIES

2:12 ὄνομα (noun, neuter, accusative, singular, from ὄνομα) 1) *name*; 2) *title, category*; 3) *person*; 4) *office*.

2:13 πατέρες (noun, masculine, vocative, plural, from πατήρ) *father*, literal or figurative.

2:13 νεανίσκοι (noun, masculine, vocative, plural, from νεανίσκος) 1) *youth, young man*; 2) *servant*.

2:13 νενικήκατε (perfect, active, indicative, 2<sup>nd</sup> person, plural, from νικάω) 1) *intransitive -- conquer, prevail*; 2) *transitive -- conquer, overcome*.

2:13 πονηρόν (adjective, masculine, accusative, singular, from πονηρός) 1) *sick, spoiled*; 2) *as a substantive, wicked person, devil*.

2:14 παιδία (noun, neuter, vocative, plural, from παῖς) *little child, infant, toddler, or young child*. The Vulgate translates it *parvuli*, which brings out the contrast with *filioli*, by which it translates the Greek τεκνία of verse 12. This is the word used by Paul in Galatians 4:19 wherein he shows the same fatherly concern for his spiritual "children" that John shows here.

2:14 ἰσχυροί (adjective, masculine nominative, plural, from ἰσχυρός) *strong, mighty*.

### C. GRAMMATICAL NOTES AND LITERARY DEVICES

No grammatical anomalies.

## D. HISTORICAL AND BACKGROUND INFORMATION

No relevant data available.

## E. TRANSLATION

2:12 I am writing to you children because your sins are forgiven for His name's sake. 13 I am writing to you fathers, because you know the *One* from the beginning. I am writing to you young men, because you have overcome the evil one. 14 I wrote to you little children, because you know the father. I wrote to you fathers, because you know the *one* from the beginning. I wrote to you young me, because you are strong and the word of God abides in you, and you have overcome the evil one.

## F. EXPOSITION

John has just set forth antitheses designed to correlate one's behavior with his spiritual state. This was by way of elucidating what is the eternal purpose of life. Here, he pauses to be more inclusive of his readers and to reassure them concerning their Christian lives. His assertions are still rather general, but serve the purpose of recognizing the spiritual status of his readers at their various stages of maturity. In this way, he also prepares his readers to continue with him when he develops the further implications of these antitheses in what will follow.

2:12 "I am writing to you children . . ." The purpose of writing follows. The best thought is that John refers to the present treatise and addresses it to the "children" to whom he ministered. The term "children" is one of familiarity and endearment. One is reminded of Paul's expression in Galatians 4:19 where he says "my children, for whom I am again in travail until Christ should be formed in you." John seems not to be in any travail, but he certainly was earnest in seeing to it that Christ "was formed" in his readers, as the first four paragraphs demonstrate.

These verses have occasioned much discussion on three points, namely, 1) why the repetition of this device with a change in the tense of the word "to write" from present tense in the first three occurrences, to the aorist in the second three?<sup>2</sup> 2) Why does John change from "children" to "little children," in his address?<sup>2</sup> 3) Who are the referents? Whom is John addressing by means of these divisions?

To take the last question first, we must recognize that all three terms of address, *children*, *fathers*,

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<sup>2</sup> The majority of translations mishandle this by reversing the occurrence. That is, they translate "little children" first and "children" second. The reason for this is to bring out the warmth of the personal address. Indeed some translations interpolate "my" into the translation of "little children." But the lexical values of these words is clear. And in any case, even those who so translate these verses still note the change of the Greek words.

and *young men* are figurative. There is no other possibility in this context. The addressees are defined not by their persons, but by the stature of the category in which they are placed. That is, fathers are not the ones who have children, but who "know the *One* from the beginning," etc. By the terms for children, John has in mind all those in whom his labors had produced fruit. These are not children physically or chronologically. These are John's "spiritual" children and perhaps his spiritual "grandchildren," and are divided into two groups, fathers and young men. This subdivision may represent the older, more mature Christians as "fathers" and younger, or newer Christians as "young men." Because of the figures used, it may be that "fathers," in addition to being more mature, also represent those who became Christians directly under the ministry of John, while the "young men," are the results of the evangelistic work of these "fathers."

The second problem, that of the use of different words for "children," may well be connected with the problem of the change of tense. The first term means *children*, and is a term of familiarity, often used figuratively for descendants, whether physical, intellectual, spiritual, or otherwise. But the term refers primarily to *relationship*, not to *maturity*. It is a much warmer expression than "friends," and focuses on a closer relationship. Had John said, for example, "friends, your sins have been forgiven," he would not have invoked the relationship he has built upon and upon which he soon will build further. On the other hand, "children, your sins are forgiven," reminds the readers that their current status before God is the temporal result of John's work as their teacher and spiritual father, and prepares them to listen further as *children to a loving father*.

The second term, that for "little children," *does* make reference specifically to age. The age is that from infancy to early childhood. This may help our understanding of the first question, that of the shifting tense of the verb *to write* from the present tense to the aorist, or simple past, tense. The question is, what different writings are meant? "I am writing," and "I wrote," may be variously interpreted, but none of the other interpretations are as compelling as that which makes the writing referred to in the present tense the current epistle, and that referred to in the aorist tense the Gospel of John. In the first place, this makes good sense grammatically. In the second place, the epistle constantly alludes to the Gospel as being antecedent, whether temporally or logically. In the third place, if John addresses the readers of the current writing as children, and implies that the readers of

the Gospel were in some sense infants, or temporally younger as believers, than the readers of the epistle, we see not only why the shift in verb tense was desirable, but we get a further insight into the progressive, temporal, nature of the eternal "purpose of life" as it is worked out from obedience in youth to the intellectual stability of the fathers.

"because your sins are forgiven . . ." Literally "because the sins are forgiven to you." This is the most general category, under which both the "fathers" and the "young men" are subsumed. All alike were, and were cognizant of the fact, that they were forgiven sinners. What this amounts to is categorizing as his "children" all those whom he had evangelized, directly or indirectly, on the basis of their status as forgiven.

"for His name's sake." Literally "on account of His name." John immediately deflects credit or glory from himself to Jesus, by whom their forgiveness was effected. Usually translated as "for His name's sake," this phrase reminds us that the identity and character of a person were carried in his

name. The name was the audible and objective expression of the person. That frame of mind is almost wholly lacking in the empiricism of modern times. Now we separate the name from the other experiences of the phenomenon of the person. Even the old notion of protecting one's reputation is pale in comparison to the older notion.

13 "I am writing to you fathers, . . ." The first subgroup of his "children" John addresses is that of "fathers." Whether these are to be thought of as John's direct fruit, the more mature believers among his readers, or both, they are functionally defined by the following.

"because you know the *One* from the beginning." That is, the fathers are those who "know the *One* from the beginning." John refers both to the prolog to the Gospel, and to the opening lines of this epistle, where he identifies the "purpose of life," that "was from the beginning," and that "was manifest" as Jesus, as He whom the fathers "know." As we shall see, this is a more advanced state than others, and is perhaps a Christian parallel and corrective to the Gnostic "knowledge."

Whereas the gnostics had their esoteric knowledge that admitted one to fellowship, and was the very basis of their identity as the "enlightened ones," Christian knowledge meant nothing more than an ever growing knowledge of what was objectively secured and open for all to see, whether to accept or reject. Thus, the knowledge of the fathers was what happened naturally if those who believed paid attention to the object of their belief

It should be noted that the use of the masculine singular article as a substantive referring without question to Jesus, supports translating the neuter singular article used similarly in 1:1 as "that," and giving a broader meaning to it. The Neuter does *not* refer to Christ, but something Christ will show us.

"I am writing to you young men, . . ." The second subgroup of "children" addressed is that of "young men." These, in turn, may be thought of either as the "second generation" Christians arising from John's evangelistic work, or merely those who are not as mature as "the fathers," or perhaps both. They, too, are functionally defined by what follows.

"because you have overcome the evil one." "*Overcome*" is the word for *conquer, be victorious, defeat, or win*. It applies to military and political victories as well as in other similar contexts. Here, the foe defeated is "the evil one," doubtless to be understood as Satan himself. The guise of Satan, in which he was defeated, or the office he exercised when he was defeated, is not explicit, but because of what follows, it must at least include his character as the ruler of this world. For here, John is not talking about the victory over Satan that Jesus accomplished on the cross, but the struggle of the believer to overcome temptation in his daily life. This is perhaps a prerequisite to obtaining the deeper knowledge of the fathers.

The "young men," are not characterized as those having the deepest knowledge, or the sharpest theological acumen, but they are those who begin their Christian lives by doing the things that demonstrate a saving faith in Jesus. The "fathers" exhibit the highest level of intellectual, spiritual and "theological" maturity, being able to reason from the truth of the Gospel to a more or less complete way of thought and life consistent with the teachings they received. The "young men,"

because they may not have had time to develop such depth, are nonetheless able to receive the pragmatic lessons and exhibit by their behavior their temporal Christian blessings in daily life.

This is precisely what John has spent the first several paragraphs explaining. There are deep theological truths, and you may experience the blessing of them by living consistently with them. Furthermore, there comes with study, conviction, and consistent living, a deep knowledge of the "purpose of life," an understanding of "eternal life" that your life shows now "abides" in you."

14 I wrote to you little children, . . ." The tense now shifts to the simple past, or aorist. So, also, the word denoting children is different. We are now in a different context of similar design. John has apparently already written the Gospel of John for his readers. This was doubtless his way of educating and helping his disciples. At the time he did this, his readers were characterized as, and could be called, "little children."

"because you know the father." This also represents a high level of abstraction. For both the "fathers," and the "young men," base their status upon this very basic bit of knowledge. That is, the life of the Christian cannot be entered without first knowing the basic tenets of sin and condemnation, of utter helplessness before a righteous and just God. These notions, with the accompanying certainty that salvation is impossible to the sinner without the provision of the Father, form the very basis for becoming a Christian in the first place, much less a person whose life has been visibly changed or one whose knowledge has increased.

"I wrote to you fathers, . . ." Again, the more mature believers are addressed. Again, their identity is functionally determined, although nothing new is here added to their qualities or characteristics.

"because you know the *One* from the beginning." The same functional definition is given here as was given above. That is, they have a deeper knowledge of the outworking of God the Father as it was, and is, manifested in the "*One* from the beginning." The Gospel of John, if that is the referent of what John "wrote," was addressed to believers, some of whom were already mature in the faith. Already, some of the believers exhibited a deep knowledge of God, His character, and His will.

"I wrote to you young men, . . ." Again, John addresses the "young men." Their identity will be expanded in the following clauses. But it is important to notice that even at the time when John wrote his Gospel they already were clearly exhibiting Christian behavior.

"because you are strong. . . ." That is, spiritually and volitionally strong. They were at least strong enough to hear with sympathy and apply with determination the precepts that they were willing and able to learn. Christianity was no halfhearted venture, but demanded a commitment to follow Jesus.

"and the word of God abides in you, . . ." Even more important, and presumably the basis for their strength, was the fact that God's word was internalized and thus supported and maintained their walk. That is, they "walked in the light," they walked "in love," they applied God's word to their hearts and it sustained them. So truly did God's word vindicate itself in their experience, that they fainted not, nor turned back, but stayed the course, so that it was clear that God's word *abided* in them; that is, it remained in them as a permanent and characteristic condition of their lives and

spiritual status.

"and you have overcome the evil one." It is no surprise, then, that they defeated the evil one. They "were strong," and *the word* was said to "abide" in them. While this may not be the way Paul would have expressed it, it is clear that he would have agreed with John's assessment. It is difficult to see what possibly could have hindered these young men from going on to becoming *fathers* themselves.

## **G. ETHICAL AND THEOLOGICAL CONSIDERATIONS**

The theological implications of this pericope again connect the Christian life with both behavior and knowledge, the objective with the subjective, the temporal with the eternal. Although it is not stated in so many words, it seems clear that progress from the objective facts of the Gospel to the subjective behavior and status of personal belief, and from the pragmatic aspects of the faith seen in behavior to the deepening knowledge of the truth, are all assumed here. So much may be said simply of the text before us. But the continual allusion to the Gospel of John, makes such an assumption not merely plausible, but desirable.

## **H. SUBJECTIVE IMPLICATIONS – PSYCHOLOGICAL AND DEVOTIONAL**

Non Emotive Text

## **I. PARAPHRASE**

I am writing to you children because your sins have been forgiven in accordance with the name and nature of Jesus the savior. I am writing to you mature Christians, the spiritual fathers, because you truly know the One who from the very beginning characterized and exemplified the purpose of life. I am also writing to you who are spiritually "young men," because you have vanquished the evil one from the battlefield of your lives. I previously wrote to you little children because it was clear that you know the Father as the basis of all truth. I previously wrote to you spiritual fathers because even then you knew the One who from the very beginning defined the purpose of life. And I previously wrote to you spiritually "young men" because you showed yourselves to be strong. Even then it was clear that you were sustained by the word of God, and so were able to overcome the devil.



## SIXTH PERICOPE (I JOHN 2:15 -17)

Μὴ ἀγαπάτε τὸν κόσμον μηδὲ τὰ ἐν τῷ κόσμῳ. ἐάν τις ἀγαπᾷ τὸν κόσμον, οὐκ ἔστιν ἡ ἀγάπη τοῦ πατρὸς ἐν αὐτῷ. <sup>16</sup> ὅτι πᾶν τὸ ἐν τῷ κόσμῳ, ἡ ἐπιθυμία τῆς σαρκὸς καὶ ἡ ἐπιθυμία τῶν ὀφθαλμῶν καὶ ἡ ἀλαζονεία τοῦ βίου, οὐκ ἔστιν ἐκ τοῦ πατρὸς ἀλλ' ἐκ τοῦ κόσμου ἐστίν. <sup>17</sup> καὶ ὁ κόσμος παράγεται καὶ ἡ ἐπιθυμία αὐτοῦ, ὃ δὲ ποιῶν τὸ θέλημα τοῦ θεοῦ μένει εἰς τὸν αἰῶνα.

### A. TEXTUAL CRITICISM

No major variants in this pericope.

### B. LEXICAL AND TOPICAL STUDIES

2:15 ἀγαπάτε (Present, active, imperative, 2<sup>nd</sup> person, plural, from ἀγαπάω) – *love, cherish*. The word borders on φιλέω, the love of friendship, but focuses on the volitional aspect of the relationship. It is not that there cannot be, or develop, a real fondness, but that we are in control of the relationship. The text here in question is not concerned so much with how we may feel about things, as that we not focus our attentions on them so as to develop any deep feelings or habitual practices based upon them. The final result may indeed be an enslavement to the object of affection, but we are told here not to regard things in such a way as to become enslaved.

This is not to be regarded as abstinence, except where abstinence is impossible, but wherever it is possible, an attitude of detached temperance. The idea is simply not to become enamored of things, people, processes, relationships, or anything else the World deems important.

2:15 κόσμον (Noun, 2<sup>nd</sup> declension, accusative, masculine, singular, from κόσμος) The term quite clearly means not merely the *created realm*, but the *human system* in which creation provides the objects of human desire, and in which desire for things is the norm. It is the world of things we "idolize," or cherish, and the *spiritual system that fosters the love of them*.

2:16 ἐπιθυμία (Noun, 1<sup>st</sup> declension, nominative, feminine, singular, from ἐπιθυμία) -- *strong desire, longing, or yearning*, whether good or bad; *lust*. Here, the word is best rendered merely as yearning, or desire, because not every desire is intense, yet every desire may separate us from God by substituting creature for Creator. Furthermore, lust carries a negative connotation, making it appear as if John is only talking about those desires that are clearly abnormal or bad. But he is not. He is talking about even the most innocuous desire that may insinuate itself between the believer and his Lord. It need not be dope for which we lust that keeps us from God. It may be fine wine and good company.

We are dealing here, not merely with "lusts." We must not minimize the strength of the passage by overdoing the meaning of this single term. If we say "lusts of the flesh," for example, we automatically think of illicit sexual desire, drug abuse, or perhaps gluttony. That is, we minimize

the scope of the passage by relegating its reference to only those things we already *know* are bad, and so fail to see that *any* desire can qualify under the stricture given here. If we say "the desire of the flesh," we may include any physical urge or want that tends to overwhelm us or get in the way of our relationship to God. This might include, for example, wanting to "sleep in" on weekends, over indulge in exercise, or drinking too many soft drinks.

2:16 σαρκός (Noun, 3<sup>rd</sup> declension, genitive, feminine singular, from σάρξ) *flesh, body; man, human nature; corporeality*. In Paul's thought especially, the flesh is the willing instrument of sin, and is subject to sin to such a degree that wherever flesh is, all forms of sin are likewise present . . ." B.A. G. So it is with John in this passage, although we needn't go so far here, because John's topic is not the flesh, but love. There is, here, tacit agreement with Paul, without reading it into the text. By leaving the scope of the meaning less constrictive, we are better able to understand John's thought. John is clearly echoing the thought of Jesus "if your eye offend you . . ." – Matt. 5:27-30)

The flesh and the World system have a symbiotic relationship. The World system has things and fosters the belief that they are important. The flesh loves the things and agrees to measure life in terms of material and relationships. It is instructive to imagine what the world would be like if every person based his life on his relationship to God instead of his relationship to the World.

2:16 ἀλαζονεία (Noun, 1<sup>st</sup> declension, nominative, feminine, singular, from ἀλαζονεία) – *boaster, braggart; one who is characterized by presumptuousness. or arrogant pride*.

2:16 βίου (Noun, 2<sup>nd</sup> declension, genitive, masculine, singular, from βίος) -- *life*, 1) in its appearance; 2) as conduct; 3) as means of maintaining itself

2:17 θέλημα (Noun, 3<sup>rd</sup> declension, nominative, neuter, singular, from θέλημα) -- 1) subjective, *the act of willing*; 2) objective, *what is willed*.

2:7 αἰῶνα (Noun, 3<sup>rd</sup> declension, accusative, masculine, singular, from αἰών) -- 1) *very long time, eternity*; 2) segment of time, *age*; 3) *personification of the world*.

### C. GRAMMATICAL NOTES AND LITERARY DEVICES

In John 2:15-16 we see an example of parallelism. "If anyone loves the World, the love of the Father is not in him. Because everything in the World, . . . is not from the Father, . . ."

In 2:16 there is an extended metonymy, wherein the words *desire* (twice) and *pride* (once) is used for the objects of desire themselves. This allows one word to function both as a description of "everything in the World," and of that for which God is not responsible -- it "is not from the Father."

### D. HISTORICAL AND BACKGROUND INFORMATION

No relevant data available.

## E. TRANSLATION

2:15 Do not love the World, nor the things in the world. If anyone loves the World, the love of the Father is not in him. 16 Because everything in the World, the desire of the flesh and the desire of the eye and the pride of life, is not from the Father, but is from the World. 17 And the World passes away and its lusts, but the one doing the will of God abides into eternity.

## F. EXPOSITION

Having put forth several striking pairs of antithetical positions, John turns his attention briefly to reassuring his readers of their status. He then is ready to apply the device of antithesis the more practical matters of daily life.

2:15 Do not love the World, . . ." Do not cherish, revere, idolize, seek the favor of, or think too highly of the world. The notion is as broad as it is possible to make it, because John is seeking to put believers on that "narrow path," (Matt 7:14).

Here, love is that deliberate love of choice, although it cannot be understood simplistically. This sort of love becomes a habit through repetition, and may actually produce the feelings of love. For example, if one chooses to go to an expensive restaurant and spend a lot of time and money catering to his pallet, he may have a good time and be none the worse off. If, however, the experience, including the music, the conversation, the entire ambience, is so captivating that it is repeated frequently until finally it becomes a focus of life, then we have an illicit love. The minute he becomes a captive of desire, he has a new idol. Feelings can be captured, or even stimulated, by means of habituation. And habituation is the repeated exercise of volition, often for the satisfaction of oneself.

Love of the world, then, is nothing more than the habituation to the ways of the world, its processes and protocols, its rewards and pleasures, wherever they may be found. The pleasures of the world range all the way from conversation to sexual deviancy, from fine wine to dope, from doting on grandchildren to being a rock band "groupie," and from political activism to terrorism. There is nothing that cannot be part of love for the World. Our examples show the extremes, from those considered to be "acceptable," or even laudable, to those considered to be illegal or immoral. As will become clear, John's point is that one is no better than the other in God's eyes (cf. James 2).

"nor the things in the world." The entire expression, "love not the World, nor the things in the World," means to love the created realm neither in whole nor in part. Not only are we not to love the world as a place, or system, or entity in itself, we are not to love the things in it, whether baseball, food, fame, money, collectibles, or any other thing, natural or man made. To love *things* is to demonstrate that we have been "given over" to "worship the creature rather than the Creator" (Rom 1:24-25). We must be careful in our assessment and err, if at all, on the side of austerity and

asceticism in order to avoid the snares of materialism. It is not that we may not *enjoy* life, but enjoyment must never become the *object* of life.

"If anyone loves the World, . . ." If anyone finds himself ensnared in materialism, or enslaved by his desires for the things the world offers him,

"the love of the Father is not in him." Clearly it is the person's love for the Father that is lacking here, and not God's love for the person. We have only to compare the two clauses to confirm this. Either a person loves the World and its things, or he loves the Father. The echo of Jesus' teaching at Matt. 6:24 is clear; we can neither *serve* nor *love* two masters. That these masters are indeed contrary will be seen in all of what follows, just as it has been established in the antitheses that preceded. But we have not left John's antitheses yet. We either have the love of the World *in* us, or we have the love of God *in* us.

16 "Because everything in the World, . . ." Again, the term "World" is used in its widest possible sense and here explicitly includes "everything. We must be prepared to see what John means by this in the next clauses. It is not merely the grass, or the clouds, or the mountains, but

"the desire of the flesh . . ." That is the longing of the "flesh" for the things in the world. Care must be taken to distinguish between desires as *feelings*, and desires as *objects* of feelings. As we showed in the lexical study, the "desire," longing, yearning, or lust can mean either the act of desiring, or the object of desire, as when we say "that car is his hearts desire, or the that one's wife is "the object of his affection."

The "things" of the World are not to be understood as the "desires" themselves, but the *objects* of desire. The desire of the flesh means the *object* of the desire of the flesh, i.e. whatever thing in the world that is the object of fleshly desire. And the "World" cannot be simply the things God created and pronounced "good." but the things as they become the objects of the lusts of men. These desires do not come from God, but from the World, here understood as the system bent on self satisfaction and the denial of God.

The desires of the flesh are those things for which we have appetites. Wine, women, and song are obvious examples. The desires of the flesh would also include our need for praise ("approbation lust"), too much food (gluttony) -- in fact, any of the objects of hedonism or epicureanism; anything in the world.

"and the desire of the eye . . ." Whereas the desire of the flesh pertains to the appetites and their satisfaction, the desire of the eye has to do with materialism and the covetousness that produces acquisitiveness. The love of things, of acquiring, collection, and even displaying them, reveals the presence of a strong desire for *things*.

"and the pride of life, . . ." Pride is not itself one of the "things of the world," either. It is the *attitude toward* things, whether material goods or personal accomplishment. It is the presumptuous attitude of self satisfaction based upon one's status, real or imagined, in the eyes of the World. It goes so far as to include pride, or arrogance based upon human endeavor. Fame, and reputation are two

example of two such objects of pride.

The term "of life" refers to life, in its appearance and maintenance, what we might call a *standard* of life. Thus, pride of life includes arrogance, boastfulness, or presumptuousness about one's style, standard or position in life. Again, it is not the standard of life itself, to which John objects, but the presumptuous attitude of smug self satisfaction that often accompanies it, as if we are *entitled* to our status because of some personal merit; as though we have a justifiable claim on God's grace or goodness.

This is antithetical to the attitude John means when he says "the love *of* (or *for*) God is not *ill* him. The "World," as a system, is antithetical to God, and we can only truly love one or the other. There is simply no compromise possible; those who try to compromise betray their true love.

"is not from the Father, . . ." Again, we must not take this to mean that food and water, sunsets and rain are not the creations of God. Here, it is the overweening desire of man, as exemplified by, and practiced in, the world that is meant. This shift of emphasis brings forth a lexical difficulty that must be addressed.

All the "things of the World" are assumed to be included in the "desire of the flesh, the desire of the eyes and the pride of life." This can be true only if the "things" are the objects of the desires and pride. And this objective use of the word is very common.

But when it is said that "all the things" . . . "are not from God," the emphasis of necessity shifts to the subjective aspects of desire and pride, because God, as the creator of all things, certainly *did* make the *objects* of desire. It is the attitudes, the *subjective* side of desire, that is "not from God."

This fits the context of antitheses set up by John if we view "the World" as that entity that is at enmity with God and misappropriates and misuses His creation. That is, the World is viewed as a system in which the creation of God provides the material for our lusts, and our lusts are rationalized and "normalized" in order to exclude God from our lives. It is the system that justifies and maximizes, even when it regulates, our desires, specifically in order to exclude God and ignore His claim on our lives. This is the very heart of the antitheses, because we either submit to God on His terms, or we don't, love Him as He is, or not.

When we understand the term "World" in this way, as that earthly system of self centeredness, then indeed can we say that "everything in the World (system), such as the desire of the flesh etc., is everything; it is everything opposed to God. Hence, by definition, it is not from the Father,

"but is from the World" This is confirmed by looking carefully at the prepositions governing the word "World." First is the prepositions "in." The second, translated "from," can also mean "out of" Ignoring the other phrases for the moment, we have the statement that "everything *in* the World (system) . . . is *out of* the World.(system). The things of the World can rise no higher than self serving entities and attitudes. What is born of the World is not from (or "out of") the Father, but out of the World. We have, then, this unhappy state of affairs. Things are either "*in* the World, *by* the World, and *for* the World, or they are *in* God, *by* God, and *for* God.

This, in a sense, completes John's antitheses, for it links his former antithetical topics (light and darkness, truth and falsehood, sin and forgiveness, and love and hate) with the character of God and the character of the World as a system. There remains but one more point to be made about the antitheses.

17 "And the World passes away . . ." The World, whether merely physical, or as the system united against God and for the gratification of personal desires, is, even now, in the process of passing away. Bible and philosopher, scientist and preacher, unite in pointing out the transitory nature of all "things" whatsoever. An physical existence as we know it is subject to the laws of nature, particularly the second law of thermodynamics. Even without an apocalypse or judgement, the earth is slowly dying, or passing away.

"and its lusts," The lusts, too, will pass, as the necessary consequences of the passing of the physical subjects and the objects of that those desires. Thus, the "World system" in its entirety will pass away.

"but the one doing the will of God . . ." Here, the antithesis is again spelled out. It is clarified in two terms. The "World" is set in opposition to the Father, and the worldly "desires and pride" are antithetical to the "will" of God. A person is either doing the Worlds bidding, and behaving in a worldly manner, or he is doing God's bidding by behaving in a godly manner. One is either *in* the light or he is *in* the darkness.

"abides into the ages." This does not teach the cessation of those who are not in the light. It is not the case that Christians live eternally but non Christians are destroyed. That which is destroyed in the World system in which those who walk in darkness serve their desires. The tragedy is that they will not change but will no longer have a sympathetic habitation in which to ignore God and serve themselves. The Christians, however, will go right on "being in the light." They will eternally be in the eternal light. For such is the meaning of "abide; such the meaning of "eternity."

## **G. ETHICAL AND THEOLOGICAL CONSIDERATIONS**

One can hear in the background to this peri cope the teachings of Jesus from the Sermon on the Mount at Matt 5:29-30, 6:24, and 7:14. Resonance is also heard with the teachings of Paul in Rom 1:24-25.

In Matt 5:29:.30, Jesus is talking about desire, or lust. He had just finished saying that adultery is committed in the heart of the one who looks on a woman with desire in his heart. The solution, for those who stumble, is shocking, but the point is clear: It is better not to be the victim of desire at any expense, than to fall prey to your own inner longings and lose your very life. Such is the penalty for loving the world.

In Matt 6:24, Jesus says plainly that "no one can serve two masters." John makes it plain that it is impossible to love two masters, the World and God, for the very same reason, i.e. compromise. Compromise reveals one's real *master*, his true love. Compromise is O.K. with the World,

specifically because it is NOT O.K. with God. That is to say, that in even such a seemingly small item as this, the World is as opposed to God as at any other point. The world does not mind if we want to go to church, and do the "churchy person's" thing, because it knows that it counts for nothing with God.

In Matt. 7:14, Jesus tells his audience that the way to eternal damnation is broad, and easy; that the gate is wide -- wide enough to accommodate any vehicle at all. Many, he said, go through that gate. He urged, on the other hand, that we go down the narrow path, and through the small gate, because although there are only a relative few who go through that gate, it is the gate to life.

In Rom. 1:24-25, Paul says that those who are under judgment are specifically those whom He "gave over," to "the desires of their hearts." It is true that this context has a much more sexual connotation than! John 2:15-17, but the principle is the same. Those who center their lives on their desires may have done so for so long that they are no longer able not to satisfy their desires; they may, in fact, be under judgement, and not merely freely indulging their lusts.

John is dealing with just such desires as come forth from the heart, are capable of captivating us in our behavior, and separating us from God, whence we are turned over to burn in our very desires. These desires do not have to be sexually oriented desires. Indeed, John is dealing with desire at a very general level. The sexual nature of desire, and its consequent behavior and judgment apply as surely to other areas of desire as they do to sexual desires.

## **H. SUBJECTIVE IMPLICATIONS – PSYCHOLOGICAL AND DEVOTIONAL**

Non Emotive Text

### **I. PARAPHRASE**

Do not cherish the World or overvalue the things you see in it. If anyone loves the World in this way, he has no love for the Father. Because everything in the World, seen as a system of the objects for self serving desire and pride, is not from God, but is a product of the World itself. And this World, with man's lusts for its pleasures, passes away even now, as do the pleasures themselves. But those who are concerned to do God's will abide with Him forever.

## SEVENTH PERICOPE (I JOHN 2:18-25)

Παιδιά, ἐσχάτη ὥρα ἐστίν, καὶ καθὼς ἠκούσατε ὅτι ἀντίχριστος ἔρχεται, καὶ νῦν ἀντίχριστοι πολλοὶ γεγόνασιν, ὅθεν γινώσκουμεν ὅτι ἐσχάτη ὥρα ἐστίν. <sup>19</sup> ἐξ ἡμῶν ἐξηλθαν ἀλλ' οὐκ ἦσαν ἐξ ἡμῶν· εἰ γὰρ ἐξ ἡμῶν ἦσαν, μεμενήκεισαν ἅν μεθ' ἡμῶν· ἀλλ' ἵνα φανερωθῶσιν ὅτι οὐκ εἰσὶν πάντες ἐξ ἡμῶν. <sup>20</sup> καὶ ὑμεῖς χρίσμα ἔχετε ἀπὸ τοῦ ἁγίου καὶ οἴδατε πάντες. <sup>21</sup> οὐκ ἔγραψα ὑμῖν ὅτι οὐκ οἴδατε τὴν ἀλήθειαν ἀλλ' ὅτι οἴδατε αὐτὴν καὶ ὅτι πᾶν ψεῦδος ἐκ τῆς ἀληθείας οὐκ ἔστιν. <sup>22</sup> Τίς ἐστὶν ὁ ψεύστης εἰ μὴ ὁ ἀρνούμενος ὅτι Ἰησοῦς οὐκ ἔστιν ὁ Χριστός; οὗτός ἐστιν ὁ ἀντίχριστος, ὁ ἀρνούμενος τὸν πατέρα καὶ τὸν υἱόν. <sup>23</sup> πᾶς ὁ ἀρνούμενος τὸν υἱὸν οὐδὲ τὸν πατέρα ἔχει, ὁ ὁμολογῶν τὸν υἱὸν καὶ τὸν πατέρα ἔχει. <sup>24</sup> ὑμεῖς δ' ἠκούσατε ἀπ' ἀρχῆς, ἐν ὑμῖν μενέτω. ἐὰν ἐν ὑμῖν μείνη ὃ ἀπ' ἀρχῆς ἠκούσατε, καὶ ὑμεῖς ἐν τῷ υἱῷ καὶ ἐν τῷ πατρὶ μενεῖτε. <sup>25</sup> καὶ αὕτη ἐστὶν ἡ ἐπαγγελία ἣν αὐτὸς ἐπηγγείλατο ἡμῖν, τὴν ζωὴν τὴν αἰώνιον.

### A. TEXTUAL CRITICISM

2:20 Two early and well attested variants vie for attention here. They render verse 20 as follows:

1) "... and you *all* know." The difficulty with this reading is that there is no object of knowledge; no word in the accusative and no οὔτι or ἵνα clause following the verb. The object of the knowledge held by John's readers 1) is not specified, 2) is held by all, and 3) therefore most likely refers to what immediately preceded, i.e. the statement about having an anointing from the Holy One. Thus, the sense would be "you have an anointing . . . and you all know *it*," or perhaps, "you have an anointing from the Holy One, and you all know *Him*." But because the object of knowledge is not specifically linked to an antecedent, they cannot simply be assumed without some explanation.

2) "... and you know *all things*." This reading supplies the object of knowledge so apparently lacking in the first reading. But if we consider the nature of that object, we are again submerged in difficulties. How can it be said that John's readers "know all things?" In what sense is this true? If they truly knew all things, there would certainly be no occasion for such an epistle as this one. And taking the word as figurative usage scarcely helps, because what can be meant by figurative knowledge?

The external evidence for these readings is divided unevenly, the number of MSS supporting the reading "all things" (or perhaps to be understood as "all men") in the vast majority. However, of the great MSS, the earlier, fourth century MSS Sinaiticus and Vaticanus, support the reading "you all know." (A very late MS omits the word entirely, but seems to be the only case of omission.)

On the principle of deferring to the most difficult reading, the choice is made no easier, for both readings are "difficult" With only the slightest advantage lying with the reading "know all things."

Only by recourse to the principle of adopting the reading that best explains the rise of the other readings can we make a choice. It seems a very little bit more likely that early copyists opted to change a figurative and nebulous term ("all things"), even though grammatically smooth, to an



intensive usage ("you all") that did not require quite so much explanation.

We also must remember John's penchant for sweeping statements or broad brush strokes. It is possible that "all things" was restricted to items of Christian teaching being questioned or challenged by gnostics and others.

We adopt, therefore, with hesitance, the reading "know all things."

## B. LEXICAL AND TOPICAL STUDIES

2:18 ἐσχάτη (Adjective, nominative neuter or accusative masculine or neuter, singular, from ἔχματος) -- 1) *furthest*; 2) *last, latest*; 3) *the end*. Coupled with the term "hour," there is little choice but to see this as referring to that last period of history, or perhaps better *salvation* history.

2:18 ὥρα (Noun, 1<sup>st</sup> declension, nominative, feminine, singular, from ὥρα) -- 1) *hour*; 2) *moment*; 3) *period of time*; 4) *indefinite time*. This represents an indefinite length of time. John could not possibly have meant a single hour, because it took longer than that to get the message written. This usage is common in the New Testament, and refers to the Church age, the time after the first advent of Christ and His second coming. As with the other ages of salvation history, this one has certain characteristics. In this age, God is dealing with men on an individual basis, rather than, for instance, with the nation of Israel and how men relate to Her.

2:18 ἀντίχριστος (Noun, 2<sup>nd</sup> declension, nominative, masculine, singular, from ἀντίχριστος) *antichrist, adversary of Messiah*. As the term is used in this passage, it first refers to The Antichrist, the "end time villain." But it also refers to those persons of every generation, including John's, who feel it incumbent upon themselves to redefine, deny, or alter, the clear Biblical teaching concerning the Messiah, and the Father who sent Him. Thus, there is one great end-time Antichrist, but innumerable little antichrists along the way. They are the leaders of apostasy, faction, and division within the ranks. It is not the case that Christians never have any genuine questions among themselves, or that there is not a genuine need for denominations, if they are justified in returning us to that pristine worship the Catholic Church compromised away over the centuries. However, not everything that goes on in Church can be so justified. Liberalism, Humanism, and the host of innovations brought about by Modernism, are not so designed, and are heretical. They are inspired not by those outside the Church, but by the false brethren within the Church. As long as the problems with the outside world remain outside, the Church has its separation, and can perform its function. When those on the inside insist on bringing in the corruption of the world, and compromising further with the World, it is a sign that antichrists have arisen and apostasy is in full swing. This, according to John, was what was happening among his readers.

2:19 ἐξῆλθαν (Aorist 2, active, indicative, 3<sup>rd</sup> person singular, from ἐξέρχομαι) -- 1) *go out*, or *come out*; 2) *retire*, 3) *get out*. The meaning in our text is clearly that of *going out*, in some sense, but that sense is not necessarily literal. John is not talking about missionaries sent forth by the elders of the local assembly. Nor is he necessarily talking about persons who decided to leave the church and go

back to their former lives as atheists or mystae. The context makes it abundantly clear that in "some sense, these people are still around. Several possibilities exist.

First, they may have incorporated strange doctrines from outside the Church into their teachings, forming sort of a hybrid religion. Such hybrids were common in the Roman World, as was eclecticism. Many people belonged to several religions, as Christianity and Judaism were the *only* religions in the Roman World that were *exclusive*, a lesson that has apparently been lost on many of us. They allowed no compromise with other belief systems, or philosophies that modified their own tenets. They claimed to be true, and hence in no need whatsoever of modification or compromise. It must be remembered that Christianity, at this early period, claimed to be the *completion* of Judaism, in the worship of Her Messiah, who had been promised centuries earlier. By representing these compromises as "new" truth, the antichrists didn't so much "go out," as "come forth" with new teachings.

If they failed to make inroads in the local assembly, they may have tried to lure new followers to their teaching by proselytizing on their own. In this case, they did indeed "go out" into the city on *local missions*, so to speak. On such occasions as they might have been requested to offer them, their pedigrees would have included their teachers, perhaps including John, or Paul. They might represent themselves of having developed a more *satisfying* synthesis of religion, for the "spiritually discerning."

Even if such antichrists were eventually thrown out of the local assembly, in which case they quite literally "went out," they likely would then only add insulting the "small minded, pure (or exclusivist?)" Christians to their "outreach." In any case, as the context makes plain, it is not the exact nature of how these antichrists "went out" that matters, but the fact that they customarily denied the fact that Jesus was the prophesied Messiah come in the flesh.

2:20 χρίσμα (Noun, 2<sup>nd</sup> declension, accusative, neuter, singular, from χρίω) -- *anointing*. This involves the application, by pouring, sprinkling, or rubbing in, of oil. The main lexical point here is that there are three words in our content that are built upon this word. The first is simply "anoint." The second is Christ, which means nothing more than "anointed one." Finally, we come to the antichrists, which are nothing more than anti Messiahs, or anti anointed ones. The fact that John's readers are said to have an anointing points to the fact that they have a mission given them by God, and mediated by The Anointed One, and that they must therefore see the "anti-anointed" for what they are, and in no way feel inferior to them for their "added knowledge."

2:20. Anoint -- "Persons or things were anointed in the Old Testament to signify holiness, or *separation* unto God," and hence from the World. "The importance and solemnity of the anointing is shown, first by the fact that it was a criminal offence to compound the holy oil for a common purpose. (Ex 30:32-33) secondly, by the authority which the anointing carried . . . Thirdly, by the effect produced in the anointed, the person or thing becoming holy (ex. 30:22-33) and sacrosanct (I Sam 24:7, etc.). Fundamentally the anointing was an act of God (I Sam 10:1), and the word 'anointed' was even used metaphorically to mean the bestowal of divine favor (Psa 23:5) or appointment to a special place or function in the purpose of God (Psa 60:15). Further, the anointing symbolized equipment for service, and is associated with the outpouring of the Spirit of God..

2:22 ἀρνουμενος (Present participle, active, nominative, masculine, singular, from ἀρνέομαι) -- 1) *deny*; 2) *refuse, disdain*; 3) *repudiate*; 4) *disown*. This is the simple action of the antichrists toward the Messiah, and the teaching regarding Him and His relation to the Father. As we have pointed out, Gnosticism was full of such opportunities to "be offended" by the teaching of the Gospels, most decidedly in the fact of the incarnation. No matter how we define the incarnation, it would not have suited the Gnostics, and so would have been "a stone of stumbling," much as it is today among "politically correct" congregations.

### C. GRAMMATICAL NOTES AND LITERARY DEVICES

19 Notice that a universal ("all") plus a negative ("no," or "not") is often handled best when translated into English as a universal negative ("none," "never," etc.).

22 Double negative -- denying that Jesus is not the Christ"

### D. HISTORICAL AND BACKGROUND INFORMATION

No relevant data available.

### E. TRANSLATION

2:18 Children, it is the last hour, and just as you heard that an antichrist is coming, even now many antichrists have arisen; whence we know that it is the last hour. 19 They *went* out from us, but in order that they might be manifested that none of them are from us; but they *were* not of us; for if they had been of us, they would have remained with us. 20 And you have an anointing from the holy One, and you know all things. 21 I do not write to you because you do not know the truth, but because you do know it, and because no lie is of the truth. 22 Who is the liar if not the one denying that) Jesus is the Messiah; The one denying the Father and the Son, this one is the antichrist. 23 Everyone denying the Son has not the Father; the one confessing the Son also has the Father. 24 Let what you yourselves have heard from the beginning remain in you. If what you heard from the beginning remains in you, you also will remain in the Son and in the Father. 25 And this is the promise that He himself promised to us, eternal life.

### F. EXPOSITION

The content of this pericope is a restatement of points made earlier, but now illustrated by the introduction of antichrists. The three main points are these: 1) John's readers are *in the light* because they "know the truth" (v. 20). 2) If that which they *heard from the beginning* "remains," or "abides," in them, then the Son and the Father "remain" in them (v. 24). 3) that person *remaining* in us, and in whom we are to *remain*, which was *proclaimed* to us, is the substance of what was promised to us, i.e. eternal life (v. 25).

An interesting question is whether these two "remainings" are really the same thing; whether *remaining in that which they heard from the beginning* was the same thing as *the Father and the Son remaining in them*. One may answer "yes" purely on Platonic grounds. That the character, attribute, or form, remains "in" one as long as *he is in it*. One may be inclined to reverse his answer when he realizes that this is not ethically an "I -- it" relationship, but an "I -- He" relationship. That is, that in which we are to abide is not a thing, although we often think of it as being so. What we heard was mediated to us, but it was no *thing*; it was a *person*. As such, we are dealing with two wills, not one. That which we are to allow to remain in us, also has a will. Thus, it is under no compulsion or obligation to remain in us. Herein lies the force of promise, one will to another. "If you will keep me in your lives, I will abide with you."

2:18 Children, it is the last hour, . . ." This is figurative language, because John would not have bothered to write a letter if only an hour remained when it would have taken days to deliver, circulate, and digest. The only thing certain about the "hour" is that it is, in some sense, "the last."

"and just as you heard that an antichrist is coming, . . ." This implicitly links the last hour, however that is to be understood, with the presence of antichrist. Apparently, although this may not be part of "what was heard from the beginning," John's readers had been made aware of it at a time prior to the writing of this epistle.

"even now many antichrists have arisen;" with the antichrists we see a new variety of life. Before, there were merely those "in the light," and those "in darkness." Now we are introduced to those who *seem* to be in the light, and who will not hesitate to be spokesmen for the true light, but who never really knew the light. Language gets a little tricky here, as the literal and figurative merge in the notion of "going out from us."

"whence we know that it is the last hour." Here we are told explicitly that the presence of antichrists is of the essence of the last hour. It becomes clear that this "last hour" is the last dispensation, the last way in which God will deal with man in order to effect their salvation by showing their need and His provision.

History, if it is viewed as the battle between good and evil, God and Satan, clearly has reached its most refined point with the advent of the prophesied Messiah. Only then could Satan have seen the exact shape of his Divine Enemy enough to have opposed Him specifically and by such various means. Only then could antichrists have arisen. There were no antichrists before the flood; there were none with Moses in Egypt; none in the Babylonian Captivity. Only when Messiah is revealed can anti Messiahs arise. Seeing antichrists arise confirms Jesus as the expected Messiah and proves this to be the "last" hour, age, or stage of salvation history.

19 "They *went* out from us, but in order that they might be manifested . . ." That the antichrists "went out from us," can be read several ways. First, at the literal level, that they went out means a literal leaving, although perhaps not at first a permanent or hostile separation. At the figurative level, as the following phrases tell us, they never "left," because they were never really a part of those "in the light;" they were, as John will tell us, "not of us." We must try to see in what sense these antichrists "went out from us."

The only way this "going out from us" makes sense is if those who "went out," represented themselves as being in some way members and spokesmen for those from whom they "went out." Only in this way can we make sense of John's words. If they had merely stopped coming to church, had distanced themselves from other Christians, or had denied what they had heard, they would have occasioned little or no comment.

However, they are called "antichrists," which indicates that they have, or seek to have, an effect similar to, even if opposite from, that of Jesus. The fact that they are said to have "gone out" furthers this impression. For while John is fond of the term "send," it is clear that the antichrists were not *sent*, but *went*. They resemble modern journalists who have nothing to say, but say it anyway. It is clearly implied that these people were preaching, teaching, or evangelizing. They gave the appearance of solidarity with the body of Christ, but preached messages that opposed or undermined everything He said, or implied or was.

Again, we are invited to look at the antithesis. Having "gone out from us" (i.e. behaving, walking, living, having a temporal existence) and claiming to be Christian, they are charged with not really *being* "of us," i.e. of not really having that *eternal character and fellowship* which marks those who are indeed "in the light."

Those who "went" were not "sent," because they were really never in the position from which they could *be* "sent." Put simply, those who "went out from us" were not what they represented themselves as being, because they *never were* what they claimed *to be*, nor were they ever in fellowship with Him or us.

That the antichrists to whom John refers were false prophets, false teachers, and counter evangelists of one degree or another is simply beyond dispute. A careful reading of the text reveals the fact, for they *were manifested* as antichrists and were not truly "of us."

"that none of them are from us; . . ." None of these antichrists are "of us," or "from us," no matter how benign they or their messages may seem. We are today inundated with antichrists of every stripe, from Moslems, who view Jesus as a prophet but deny His Messianic character and relation to the Father, to some of the sectarian and denominational divisions and televangelist who prosper by purveying error about Jesus, His mission, or His nature.

"but they *were* not of us; . . ." Here is a flat denial of the claims of antichrists to have fellowship with the Church.

"for if they had been of us, . . ." That is, if they had shared in the identity and character of Christians,

"they would have remained with us." They would not have "gone out," or "gone forth" with new messages and improvised and compromised teaching contrary to what John's readers "had heard from the beginning."

Our translation of verse 19 may still need some clarification in regard to the order of the clauses. That is because two thoughts are entangled in one another as if they and their conclusions came into

John's mind too quickly. This has required English translators to interpolate explanatory phrases and punctuate the sentence in an unusual way. The underlined portions in the following translations are interpolations.

Furthermore, the English prepositions "from" and "of" are translations of the same Greek preposition. This makes it easy to put the contrast in the wrong place, i.e. on the relationship of the antichrists to the Christians, rather than on their relationship to their eternal character. This is a little more obvious when we look at some English translations, most of which translate verse 19 roughly as follows:

"They went out from us, but they were not of us; for if they had been of us, they would have continued with us: but *they went out*, that they might be made manifest that they all are not of us." American Standard Version

"They withdrew from us but they did not belong to us; had they belonged to us, they would have remained with us, but they withdrew -- to make it plain that they are none of us." James Moffatt Translation

"They went out from us, but they were not of us; for if they had been of us, they would have continued with us; but *they went out*, that it might be plain that they all are not of us." Revised Standard Version

"They went out from us, but they were not of us; for if they had been of us, they would have continued with us; but *they went out* that they might be made manifest, that none of them were of us." New King James Version

"They went out from us, but they did not really belong to us. For if they had belonged to us, they would have remained with us; but *their going* showed that none of them belonged to us." New International Version

Paraphrases have run like this:

"These 'against-Christ' people used to be members of our churches, but they never really belonged with us or else they would have stayed. *When they left us it* proved that they were not of us at all." Living Bible

"Those enemies of Christ, [sic] but they left us. They didn't really belong with us. If they had really been part of our group, they would have stayed with us, but they left. This shows that none of them really belonged with us." Simple English

The struggle with the prepositions should be obvious, and the interpolated texts have been italicized for easy detection. Note also how the translations, and more so the paraphrases, lean toward making the "going out" literal, thus making antichrist one who simply quits attending a given local assembly. This obscures the meaning of the text rather than elucidating it.

The two thoughts can be seen clearly by lining up the main ideas with their conclusions and omitting the extraneous material. The thoughts are as follows: 1) "They went out from us . . . in order that they might be manifested, because none of them are from us." The ellipsis contains the second thought and its conclusion. 2) "They were not of us, for if they had been of us, they would have remained with us." The two occurrences of the connective word "but," that was inserted in order for John momentarily to shift his focus, are not necessary when the focus is not shifted, i.e. when the thoughts are untangled.

The resulting translation supplies no text and fits nicely with John's antitheses, for those who "went out"(a temporal phrase) *did not remain*, or maintain the eternal meanings or purpose of life. Again, what people *do* shows what they *are*, or in this case, what they *are not*. This antithesis bears a closer look. Are we seeing here people who have fallen away from the faith, or people who have departed from a group without ever having truly been a part of it? Was their "faith" true and merely superficial, or was it entirely false? Did they "lose" their faith?

Many of the English versions inadvertently (or perhaps deliberately) place the contrast of the antitheses on the prepositions; that is, they contrast "going *out from*," with "not being *of*" Although this has much the same flavor as the Christian's "being *in* the World, but not *of* the World," it misses the emphasis of the antithesis. Indeed, the Greek prepositions are both the same. The Greek reads literally "*From* us they went, but they were *not from* us." The emphasis is clearly between *going* and *being*, as indicated by the verbs.

Drawing the contrast from the prepositions makes it sound as if John is not claiming them, or that he is renouncing them. What he is saying, however, is that the antichrists, those who "went out from us," were *never* Christians. If we remember the parallel antitheses between "walking" and "being," it is plain that John is saying that they walked (or lived) away from us, *because* they never were part of us. Substitute the antithesis of light. They walked away from us physically, but spiritually, they never were *of* us. Or think of the promise of fellowship. They never were "in fellowship" with the Light or those walking in the Light.

The point of contrast here is indeed the "location" and status of the antichrists; it is a double contrast based upon what has been so carefully set up throughout all of what has preceded. John's thesis is that you can tell what a person *is* by what he *does*. This, as we remember, is the very reason he was able to draw universal conclusions from empirical data in regard to Christ. Thus, those who "went out from" merely left the physical company of John. Their *identity* was the function of where they *were*; where, indeed. They had always been.. They *were* in darkness, hence, they *walked* in darkness, all pretension to the contrary aside. We may best present the contrast thus; "They may have gone away from us, but they never were *part* of us."

20 "And you have an anointing . . ." The contrast is between the antichrists, who "went out," and those who "have an anointing," or have been appointed and fitted for holy service.

"from the holy One, . . ." The anointing is itself from "the Holy One," or Messiah. We should not read developed theology back into the text. The Holy One may refer to God; the Holy One of God would be the Messiah. Commentators are not unanimous on this point, and it is possible that God

is "the Holy One." But the contrast between antichrists (literally "anti-anointed-one") and John's readers (the anointed ones) is heightened by the fact that their anointing is from, and characteristic of The Anointed One, Jesus, the Christ.

"and you know all things." This "knowledge" is the rational knowledge of "seeing with the mind's" eye. It is not the empirical knowledge spoken of thus far, but that deductive variety used in mathematical and syllogistic logic. It is the tool of theology, and is that sort of knowledge that one might have expected John to have used earlier when talking about knowing the "purpose of life."

21 "I do not write to you because you do not know the truth, . . ." Having told his readers that they are "anointed," and "know all things," John must explain why he is writing. He writes, again, not with a bunch of new information (cf. v ), . . .

"but because you do know it, . . ." John seeks now only to reassure his readers of their status by sharing with them the implication of the antichrists and their teachings.

"and because no lie is of the truth." He begins with a simple definition upon which he will base the following question.

22 "Who is the liar . . ." If God is not a liar, and Christ is not a liar, as their mutual testimony and our experience confirm that they are not, and if those who walk in the light, such as John and his readers, are not liars, who is, and how might we know?

"if not the one denying that Jesus is the Messiah?" The one denying that Jesus is the messiah is the liar. This included, in John's day, the Gnostics and various Jewish sects still in denial. Today the ranks of liars has swollen with the handiwork of the antichrists. Many sects, cults, and denominations, to say nothing of new philosophies and mysticisms deny or abridge the character of Jesus as the God-sent Messiah. One sees clearly what John means by this being the last hour when recounting the work of antichrists in producing so many cults and denominations over the centuries.

"The one denying the Father and the Son, . . ." Again, let us be sure we do not read any post-Nicene theology back into this text. The object denied has nothing to do with Trinitarian theology. It is based upon what immediately preceded, i.e. that Jesus is the Messiah, "the Anointed" One of God.

The relationship is what is said to be denied, not some mystical identity. In John's time, the Gnostics fit this description. They denied any connection between what was holy (the Spirit, or God) and the physical realm of human flesh and experience, thus making the incarnation, as well as creation, impossible on Biblical lines. If the spiritual reality we call God, cannot have contact with the evil material called "matter," one must deny that Jesus is the Anointed of God, and hence both the Father who prophesied and the Son who fulfilled those prophesies. There is a name for all who take such liberties with the Biblical teachings concerning God and His Messiah, whether Mormon or Muslim.

"this one is the antichrist." That is, the one against Christ. If He is not who He claimed to be, we are lost. If He is, all who define Him as they want Him are antichrists.



23 "Everyone denying the Son . . ." That is, everyone denying that Jesus is, was, and always will be the Son of God, the Messiah promised and sent by God,

"has not the Father; . . ." If you deny the Gift, you deny the Giver.

"the one confessing the Son . . ." However, the one claiming the Gift

"also has the Father." Or the Giver. The two stand together. The meaning of life is that it is to be lived on God's terms, in fellowship with Him. Having failed this, and made such life practically impossible, God has Himself taken the initiative, and provided a way to mend the rift between Man and God. This is the Savior, the Messiah, and He is the only way into Eternal Life. This is why the nature of the Gift is so important, and why to deny its essential character is to deny Him who gave it.

24 "Let what you yourselves have heard from the beginning remain in you." This is the Gospel, including "the old command" that John's readers had "heard from the beginning." It is, by extension, that which John had "heard" that "was from the beginning," and what he witnessed in Him who was the meaning of "eternal life."

"If what you heard from the beginning remains in you, . . ." That is, if the import and consequent manner of life we proclaimed to you, regarding the purpose of life, remains in you -- or characterizes your daily lives,

"you also will remain in the Son and in the Father." You will abide, continue, or remain in the Son, who was promised, and in God, who promised Him. You will abide in the Giver's character and His Exemplar's life.

25 "And this is the promise that He himself promised to us, . . ." That is, the essence of having the Gospel abide in us, and thereby abiding in Jesus and God, is the very substance of what He promised us, I.e.

"eternal life." It should be remembered that eternal life is not merely understood as a *quantity* of life, life everlasting, but as *quality* of life as well, life in fellowship with The Father and His Messiah.

## **G. ETHICAL AND THEOLOGICAL CONSIDERATIONS**

There may be a lesson to be learned here concerning separation. It is true that Christians are to separate from the World. But it may also be that the World cannot tolerate close or prolonged proximity to that which is *truly* righteous and will either persecute it or separate from it at length. One must ask which of the two, if either, is going on in modern America.

The problem of apparent apostasy, or "falling away," may arise because of claims the antichrist made concerning their lineage -- they may have claimed to have been in John's fellowship of believers as a means of establishing a pedigree of sorts, and thereby being able to gather an

audience. But John tells us that they "went out" specifically in order to manifest the fact that they were never part of his group, i.e. those who walk in the light. "Went out" does not necessarily imply severing ties with local assemblies, but does imply a ministry of a different character than that prescribed in the New Testament.

These antichrists pose a different problem than those who are merely "in the world." The person of the World is often, or at least pretends to be, happy with his darkness. The antichrist is more sinister in that he wants to deceive others and prevent those in the World from ever finding the light, and, if such were possible, would like to coax people already in the light out of it. Such counter conversions, according to John, can never really happen, but that appears to be the effort, nonetheless. In the long run, all that should happen is the polarization of the light and the darkness by means of those within the two spheres. Paradoxically, the imitation of evangelism presented by the forces arrayed against God will never succeed in calling anyone *out of* the light and *back into* the darkness, as God's evangelism *has* succeeded in calling some *out of* darkness *into* the light. In other words, counter conversion is not *real* conversion at all. The only real conversion is what happens when God draws someone forth from darkness and into the light by the marvelous "foolishness" of preaching. Apostasy occurs when those in the local assemblies do not zealously prosecute their offices and insist on truth *in* church, antichrists *out*.

In a sense, then, if the World is that System that is opposed to God, as we have maintained, then antichrists are the evangelists and apologists of any anti God religion, whether Islam, or Secular Humanism. They are not the people, but those who justify, propagandize, and proselytize through an endless variety of lies. They are the ones to whom the lost look for encouragement and reenforcement in their anti God stance. The antichrists are the ministers of darkness, and their varieties are endless. The one thing all have in common is a hatred for the light. When one variety or another ends up in charge of a local assembly, the wrong people fill the pews, the wrong lessons are taught, and the true Christian suffers or leaves that assembly.

## **H. SUBJECTIVE IMPLICATIONS – PSYCHOLOGICAL AND DEVOTIONAL**

Non Emotive Text

### **I. PARAPHRASE**

18 Children, we are now in the last age of God's mercy, and just as you have heard that in that age An Antichrist would come, even now many antichrists are arising. By this fact alone we recognize this as the last age of God's mercy. 19 Those antichrists appeared to be part of us, only in order that their true nature might become visible and it should be clear that they are none of us; clearly they were not our brothers because if they had been, they would have remained in His light and truth with us. 20 You, and all who are truly His, have an anointing, a commission, from the Holy One, and you know all that it is necessary to know.

21 I am not writing to you because you lack knowledge, or truth, but in order to reassure you that

you do, indeed, know the truth, and to remind you that no lie is of the truth, no matter who tells it. 22 So who, then, is a liar, if not whoever denies that Jesus was God's anointed in the flesh? Anyone who thus denies the Father and His Son is an antichrist. 23 Every person who denies, discredits, or minimizes the Messiah has no claim on the Father; on the other hand, anyone who confesses God's Son has a proper relationship to the Father as well.

24 So let what you have heard from the very beginning of your new lives concerning God and His Anointed One remain firmly in your minds and lives. If what you have heard from the very beginning about them remains in your lives, you will be showing that you remain in them. 25 This "remaining" is the eternal life that He Himself promised His followers.

## EIGHTH PERICOPE (I JOHN 2:26-27)

Ταῦτα ἔγραψα ὑμῖν περὶ τῶν πλανώντων ὑμᾶς. <sup>27</sup> καὶ ὑμεῖς τὸ χρίσμα ὃ ἐλάβετε ἀπ' αὐτοῦ, μένει ἐν ὑμῖν καὶ οὐ χρειάν ἔχετε ἵνα τις διδάσκη ὑμᾶς, ἀλλ' ὡς τὸ αὐτοῦ χρίσμα διδάσκει ὑμᾶς περὶ πάντων καὶ ἀληθές ἐστίν καὶ οὐκ ἔστιν ψεῦδος, καὶ καθὼς ἐδίδαξεν ὑμᾶς, μένετε ἐν αὐτῷ.

### A. TEXTUAL CRITICISM

No major variants in this pericope.

### B. LEXICAL AND TOPICAL STUDIES

26 πλανώντων (Present participle, active, genitive, masculine, plural, from πλανᾶω) – *lead, astray, deceive, mislead*. The context, as well as the participial construction, make it clear that this is an attempt, a tendency, a desire on the part of others, not an accomplished fact. John's readers have not followed false teachers, for the anointing, to teaching and spiritual empowerment, "abides in" them. The important thing for modern readers to remember is that the temptation to modify the gospel, to tamper with its teaching or meaning, has always been great. There has never been a time in church history when the desire to tamper with the scriptural teaching has not been in evidence, both inside and outside the Church.

These modifications run the gamut from theological quibbling about various nuances of Biblical teaching ("how many angels . . ." or the exact nature of Christ's person and ministry) to the damning and damnable compromise we call theistic evolution as well as the other forms of compromise with humanism. All alike are to be avoided, or at least entertained only insofar as scripture can address them.

27 χρίμα (Noun, 3<sup>rd</sup> declension, nominative, neuter, singular, from χρίμα) – *anointing*. Here, in the complete absence of any concrete evidence to the contrary, we must admit that John does not have anything mysterious in mind. He is simply using the language common to his time. Because John is writing within the framework of the meaning and character of eternal life, we have no choice but to see here those teachings having to do with Christian living. This, of course, relates to the Christian's relationship with God and his ability to live on this new basis. It is instructive to remember that anointing was, in the Old Testament, the imparting of an office and the necessary equipment with which to exercise it properly. Cf. Discussion on this word in the last pericope.

27 χρειάν (Noun, 1<sup>st</sup> declension, accusative, feminine, singular, from χρεία) -- *Need, necessity* (both as object and as subject). The point here is that there is no necessity for further teaching, because the readers already have the knowledge needed to maintain their renewed relationship with God. Nothing can be added but what dilutes or diminishes the truth they already possess.

27 διδάσκη (Present, active, subjunctive, 3<sup>rd</sup> person, singular, from διδάσκω) -- *Teach, instruct*. This

is doubtless a reference to such as who compromise the Gospel called antichrists in the preceding pericope.

### **C. GRAMMATICAL NOTES AND LITERARY DEVICES**

27 Anacoluthon, "and . . . you yourselves received . . ."

### **D. HISTORICAL AND BACKGROUND INFORMATION**

No relevant data available.

### **E. TRANSLATION**

2:26 These things I write to you concerning the ones deceiving you. 27 And the anointing you yourselves received from Him abides in you and you have no need that anyone should teach you. But just as His anointing teaches you concerning all things, and is true, and is not a lie, and even as it taught you, abide in it.

### **F. EXPOSITION**

2:26 "These things . . ." i.e. the foregoing.

26 "I write to you concerning the ones deceiving you." The passage concerning the antichrists contains the "these things;" here, they are subsumed under the heading of "those deceiving you." Most modern versions translate this phrase as "those who are *trying* to deceive you. Although the term "deceive" is not in the subjunctive, it is a present participle, indicating a tendency, or attempt. The attempt to deceive had not, at the time of the writing of this epistle, succeeded, for John points out that his readers "remain in their anointing, and have no need of a teacher. It is . . . conceivable that, as in the case of many of Paul's admonitions, this passage is a response to a report John had received concerning specific heresy that was going around, causing even good Christians to question the meaning of some of their fundamental beliefs. In any case, the deception was being attempted, and had produced enough of an effect to have occasioned this response, even though the context makes it clear that the deception was a failure.

27 "And the anointing you yourselves received from Him . . ." That is, the office and ministry, as well as the qualifications for their proper use, John's readers received from Christ in the hearing and acceptance of the Gospel. The anointing includes the status as Christian and whatever other function within the assembly believers may variously demonstrate.

"abides in you . . ." This could just as easily and accurately be translated "abides *on* you," or, for that matter, "abides *with* you." When we think of anointing, we remember the pouring of oil upon the

head and might think in terms of it remaining "on" one. The office and empowerment that comes with hearing and accepting the Gospel, however, is something that one might be admonished to keep "with" him. But all of this is included in the more intense notion of internalization which marks this whole epistle. Keeping the anointing "in" us assures us that we are *characterized* by it. That is the essence of John's epistle. The anointing remains in John's readers, and is evidenced by their behavior, most notably any discontent caused by the antichrists.

"and you have no need that anyone should teach you." This is not an assertion that once we are saved, there is no longer any need for study, meditation, or internal growth. Neither is it a declaration that there is no need for Christian teachers. It is an assertion that the Gospel is sufficient. There is no need for mystical additions to the Gospel, no need for esoteric knowledge or charismatic experiences, no need for foreign or alien interpretations that modify or undermine the intent and teaching of the Gospel. New insights into the meaning and application of the Gospel will always be needed and available. But these insights are not to alter the character of the teachings once received. (Theologians, beware!)

"But just as His anointing teaches you concerning all things, . . ." That is, the personal acceptance of the pure Gospel concerning the nature of God, and the work of Christ in reconciling man to God, disallows the undermining of the Gospel or its teaching, so it also promotes it to the place of prominence in finding and adhering to the true meaning or purpose of life. This is not an assertion that the person who is saved does not need to learn math, or that all he needs to know about math is contained in the Gospel. Remember, John is concerned here to remind his readers about that "purpose of life" that "was from the beginning."

"and is true, and is not a lie, . . ." This anointing, or application of the Gospel to the personal life, that John has introduced here, is absolutely certain. It is pure, unadulterated truth, and contains no hint of what is false. It is the bedrock of life, because it is the bedrock of man's (renewed) relationship to God. All else pales by comparison, both as to truthfulness, and as to spiritual importance.

and even as it taught you, . . ." Now, John reminds his readers of the primary truth of the Gospel, that which every new Christian learns, and upon which the rest of his "anointing" rests. He harkens "back to the basics," in order to show that all that comes afterward must share in the spiritual character of that foundation. "All that it has taught, and you have so laboriously but happily learned from the source of absolute truth," is in view here. "What you learned, without innovation or admixture, from the truth to which you so eagerly adhered" is in view here.

"abide in it." Again, the admonition to stand fast, to remain in that which they had received. There is no need, though there will frequently be temptation, to compromise the truth of what you have received. Stand fast. As has been pointed out in other connections, we abide in the truth by allowing it to abide in us. What we abide in is what animates and characterizes us, and is truly what abides in us.

## **G. ETHICAL AND THEOLOGICAL CONSIDERATIONS**

The Gospel, in its pristine purity, is the foundation and bedrock of Christian life, for it is the means to a renewed relationship with a once alienated God. It provides, in this renewed relationship, a basis for life that can only be called "eternal," not in terms of quantity alone, but first and foremost, in terms of quality. Eternal life is the life in fellowship with God and with Christ, and with each other, and cannot be had any better by mixing the Gospel message with heresy or conjecture, whether in psychology, philosophy, or theology.

## **H. SUBJECTIVE IMPLICATIONS – PSYCHOLOGICAL AND DEVOTIONAL**

Non Emotive Text

### **I. PARAPHRASE**

2:26 I mention these things because of the deception of those who would compromise the truth. Yet the anointing, as seen in your changed lives, which you yourselves received from Him, abides in you and cannot be increased or bettered by those teachers who compromise and would teach you to do likewise, but of whom you have no need. Instead, just as His anointing continues to teach and guide you every day concerning your relationship to God and your godly behavior, and is true, and is not a clever fabrication, and even as it taught you from the very beginning, abide in it.

## NINTH PERICOPE (I JOHN 2:28-29)

Καὶ νῦν, τεκνία, μένετε ἐν αὐτῷ, ἵνα ἐὰν φανερωθῇ σχῶμεν παρρησίαν καὶ μὴ αἰσχυνοῦμεν ἀπ' αὐτοῦ ἐν τῇ παρουσίᾳ αὐτοῦ. <sup>29</sup> ἐὰν εἰδῆτε ὅτι δίκαιός ἐστιν, γινώσκετε ὅτι καὶ πᾶς ὁ ποιῶν τὴν δικαιοσύνην ἐξ αὐτοῦ γεγέννηται.

### A. TEXTUAL CRITICISM

No major variants in this pericope.

### B. LEXICAL AND TOPICAL STUDIES

28 σχῶμεν (Aorist 2, active, subjunctive, 1<sup>st</sup> person, plural, from ἔχω) -- 1) transitive, *have, hold, keep*; 2) intransitive, *be situated*; 3) middle, *cling to, hold oneself fast to*. Here, the term is transitive, with the object being confidence.

28 παρρησίαν (Noun, 1<sup>st</sup> declension, accusative, feminine, singular, from παρρησία) – *openness, fearlessness, courage*. That which we are to have before Jesus, should He appear, seems best described as confidence, as it is most often translated.

28 αἰσχυνοῦμεν (Aorist 1, passive, subjunctive, 1<sup>st</sup> person, plural, from αἰσχυνομαι) – *to be ashamed, or disgraced*. The notion of *disgraced* may be a little strong for the context, but carries more of the right nuance than *ashamed*. We are led to believe that so far as our relation to God and Christ is concerned, we will be accepted. Salvation is not the issue here. The word must refer to some other facet of life, such as stewardship, or what one does with his anointing. The contrast with *having confidence* is helpful, for confidence is what might be expected of one to whom Jesus can say "well done good and faithful servant." Here, we are faced with a different case. Here, there is something of an embarrassment before the Lord, probably caused by failure in some matter. This conclusion is furthered if the text reads "so that *we* . . . may not be embarrassed." The progression of the pronouns, if we take our reading as the correct one, is this: *You* abide, for if *He* should appear, *we* . . . do not want to be embarrassed. Thus, it would appear, John is either using the editorial *we*, or he includes himself in the possibility of embarrassment along with his readers. It may be that John is suggesting that his readers' failure to abide in that which they knew from the beginning, or in their anointing, would result in personal embarrassment for himself before Jesus.

28 παρουσία (Noun, 1<sup>st</sup> declension, dative, feminine, singular, from παρουσία) -- *presence, coming*. The notion of presence is clear in this passage. The notion here is not that of the second coming, *per se*, but is similar to the modern question "what would Jesus do?" That is, John is simply posing a hypothetical situation to his readers, and asking them if they would rather have confidence before Jesus, or embarrassment. Would they rather be John's gift, so to speak, to Jesus, or would they choose to be an embarrassment to him before his Lord? How many times have we avoided sin by asking ourselves the question "If Jesus were to come right now, is this what I would want Him to



find me doing?" That is all that is involved here.

29 γεγέννηται (perfect, passive, indicative, 3<sup>rd</sup> person, singular, from γεννάω) – *beget, bear, cause*. Translations are divided between born and begotten, and there seems to be little difference. The important thing to remember is that the cause of the righteousness in those in whom it is found is God, and the fact that the righteousness is found in them is therefore proofboth of God's existence, and their relationship to Him.

29 "To know," and "to be." We have already seen the two words for "know," and here we see them in the same verse, making it necessary to dwell at some length on the contrasts between them and their respective "objects of knowledge," or "fields of being." We have noted that γινώσκω (Latin cognosco) refers to knowledge gained by experience, or knowledge that comes to us through our senses. Synonyms might include *meet, perceive, learn, or experience*. On the other hand, οἶδα, (Latin scio) refers to knowledge gained by reflection on the mechanical aspects of reality, such as mathematics and logic. It is the rational sort of knowledge and its field is that of rational thought, rather than experience. It is seeing "with the mind's eye." Owing to the two different "fields of being," and not to the nature of the respective kinds of "knowing," rational knowledge can produce certainty, while empirical knowledge generally renders only probability.

These areas of knowledge, or objects of knowledge comprise the two major kinds of being, the physical which is known *via* the senses, and the immaterial, which is known *via* reason. The relationship of knowledge to being is as follows. γινώσκω is to οἶδα as γίνομαι is to εἶμι. That is, the realm of existence in the physical, temporal world is characterized by change (γίνομαι), by a constant "becoming," *never by permanence*. Hence, all we can do, since we cannot truly have permanent knowledge of what is constantly in flux, is to perceive, or to experience repeatedly the temporal realm of its existence. But the eternal realm of being, of which we can have no sensual experience while in the temporal world, is characterized by permanence (εἶμι), and is accessible to reason in some measure. The knowledge gained by thought, or reflection on the changeless realm of being, is rationalism. It deals with the universe of the *unchanging*, the *eternal*, the *pure* and the *perfect*. Because it is knowledge *of the unchanging*, rational knowledge is *certain knowledge*, or at least as certain as it is humanly possible to attain. Empirical knowledge, that which arises from the perception of the sensible, physical, realm, is far from certain not only for the weakness of the tools of perception, but because of the changing nature of the world. Thus, our experiences may provide us with differing pictures of our environment (such as weather, personal relationships, and politics) every day, but what we know rationally (such as math or logic) is eternally true.

It is this difference in the kinds of knowledge that makes such mistranslations as the Vulgate (scitote, instead of cognoscite) and the failure of many English translations to note the imperative mood of the second occurrence of the word translated "know" (perceive) so important. The thought is this: If you would (*rationally and certainly*) *know* (this immutable fact) . . . then you must *learn*, or *perceive*, (these sensible data) . . ."

### C. GRAMMATICAL NOTES AND LITERARY DEVICES

29 “ἐάν with the subjunctive denotes that which under certain circumstances is expected from an existing general or concrete standpoint in the present.” Blass -- DeBrunner<sup>3</sup>. The first word for “know” is in the subjunctive; it is followed by another word for “know” in the imperative. Although this second form is also the form for the indicative, and although the subjunctive in such a conditional sentence is frequently followed by an indicative, the context and the nature of the expectation makes it clear that an imperative is required here. The point is identical if we insist on the indicative, but is much weakened. Thus, the sense seems to be “If you *would know* with certainty that He is righteous, *you must learn, perceive, or know*, that likewise everyone who practices righteousness is born of Him;” because “if you *would know* that He is righteous, *you are learning* that likewise everyone who practices righteousness is born of Him,” is weak. There is simply no way of doing justice to the conditional sentence in any other way.

Because the entire epistle to this point has been one exhortation after another “to remain,” or “abide,” in the light, the truth, and so forth, the idea that behavior manifests character is again implied. Thus, if we see a person who practices righteousness, we are to draw the conclusion that he is begotten of God.

29 Anthropopatheia, attributing to God a behavior, feeling, or character of Man. “*Begotten of God,*” or “*born of God.*”

#### **D. HISTORICAL AND BACKGROUND INFORMATION**

No relevant data available.

#### **D. TRANSLATION**

28 And now, children, abide in it [Trans question: righteousness?] so that if He should appear, we might have confidence and might not be embarrassed before Him in His presence. 29 If you would know with certainty that He is righteous, you must learn that likewise everyone practicing the righteousness is begotten of Him.

#### **F. EXPOSITION**

28 “And now, children, abide in it . . .” Again, the charge to abide in it. Granted that if it abides in us, we abide in the Father and in the Son, and granted that there is a great deal of slippage in John’s use of the personal pronouns, it is still best to translate as “abide in it,” for two reasons. First, grammatically, if we are to translate “in Him,” we must answer the question in whom. In God, or in Jesus. Let us not forget that the Trinitarian formulations came later, and should not be read into

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<sup>3</sup> P. 188, section 371, no. 4, Case of Expectation.

texts simply because we may. Here, the problem is that John would have said "abide in them," if he meant God and Jesus, just as he did in verse 24. The singular pronoun here demands the word "it." Furthermore, one must ask, if we abide in Him, how can we possibly suffer or cause embarrassment in His presence. How is His *presence* different or more important if we are *abiding* in Him. In other words, what difference does purely *physical* presence make to those who are *spiritually* in communication with Him at all times anyway?

There is yet another consideration. Whereas in verse 27 we are to "abide in it" in order to avoid the heresies, and false teaching of the antichrists, here, we are admonished to "abide in it" so as not to cause embarrassment to John, or perhaps to ourselves. The "it," is clearly the anointing, the Gospel message and empowerment, the light of righteousness in which we walk, that which we heard from the beginning. It partakes of the purpose of life, or eternal life. It is that truth which is an extension or characteristic of God. It is true that we come very close, here, to spirit embodied teaching, or to what may in other contexts be called the Holy Spirit. But to read the Holy Spirit into this text assures us that we will not do our job of exegesis properly. Because the text does not say so much.

"so that if He should appear. . ." Here is the hypothetical situation by which John wishes to judge the Christian life. He asks his readers "is your life such that it manifests your anointing? Does it square with the Gospel, that Good News you heard at the very beginning of your new life? Is it commensurate with the light, in which you are to walk? Does it ring with eternal truth? If Jesus should appear, would you feel the need to make excuses, or would you be able to point to your life and say "behold, Lord, what you have accomplished in me?"

"we might have confidence. . ." This, of course, is the desired response. John is as desirous as it is possible to be that his readers, the workmanship of his ministry, should be able to be confident in the presence of the Lord because of their unwavering stance in the anointing that He gave them.

"and might not be embarrassed. . ." This is the response to be feared. We do not fear it as a loss of salvation, but as a chastisement of time spent foolishly in pursuits not in keeping with the anointing. The embarrassment, shame, self-reproach, or outright disgrace is a possibility not to be taken lightly.

"before Him in His presence." This, perhaps, is the first use of the word "in" that might better be rendered by some other English preposition, such as *by*, *because of*, or *on account of*. Here, for the first time, we are not talking about that relationship of *abiding in* that means to "be characterized by." Here, we are speaking about the hypothetical presence of Jesus, and our response to it. It is not the spiritual relationship, but the physical presence we are here said to be "in." Hence, we may read with profit the other translations to see how they shape the text. We wish to "not be embarrassed before Him because of His presence." Or, we wish to "have confidence before Him, on account of His presence." These possibilities point us at what is meant by the text.

The text has nothing xxxxx *per se*. It has to do with how we would react at any moment in our lives, were Jesus to show up.

29 "If you would know with certainty. . ." Thus begins what may be called a Biblical epistemology. It begins with the quest for certain knowledge. This is what John's readers needed for their peace

of mind when facing the unsettling questions posed by the Gnostics and others. They needed not to know the truth, for they already knew that. They needed to know that their knowledge was true and sound, and could bear the weight of life and thought. They needed to know that they had not become intellectually inferior upon becoming Christians. And John gives them the way to assess their knowledge, and to square it with their experience, something no philosophy has ever been able to grant satisfactorily.

"that He is righteous. . ." The first thing of which we must be certain is that Christ is righteous, even in God's eyes. The Gospel presents this as being the case, but how can it be certain? How might we know with certainty that God Himself is righteous?

"you must learn. . ." Here, the empirical aspect of our knowledge is revealed. In order for Christians to know with certainty that Jesus is righteous, or that God is righteous, he must first learn something empirically. That is, there exists a bit of empirical knowledge, or learning, that will imply and substantiate the certain knowledge we seek. It is that which we must learn. And what is that item of empirical knowledge?

"that likewise. . ." That is, "in the same manner." that Jesus was righteous. . .

"everyone practicing the righteousness. . ." let us remember that we are not talking about a good deed, but a way of life, and not just a good life, but one that exhibits The Righteousness of God. Everyone practicing God's righteousness will also exemplify it. Each person who practices God's righteousness proves that like Jesus before him, he too

"is begotten of Him." Once more, we are set before the notion that behavior exemplifies, or manifests, character. If we practice the behavior of a son, and The Son did, then we can be absolutely certain that Jesus was the perfect Son as the record indicates He was, and that we too, to a lesser extent, but in the same way, have the character of sons.

This is exactly how John claimed to have drawn *rational*, *universal*, and *certain* conclusions about the nature of God and the purpose of life on the basis of empirical knowledge of Jesus. Now John's readers are invited not only to do so themselves, but to provide others with the empirical knowledge needed to "know" God as well. A parallel may help see the reasoning here.

It has been said that "power corrupts." We know this from experience. We see countless people who have been put in places of authority, or who have otherwise assumed such positions, and who seem to grow worse with time. There may be many reasons why, some of which are as benign as the impossibility of doing what is best because of outside influences, or the structure of the position. In any case, the person in power, in order to get anything done, eventually has either to inflict his own program on those over whom he wields power, or he has to implement his own means of getting the job done as others wish it to be done. Frequently, the position of power simply becomes a means for obtaining what the one in power wants. Again, this is the conclusion we draw from experience. We think that there may be some exceptions, but they are rare, and not particularly definitive of power.

It has also been added to the maxim stated above, that "absolute power corrupts absolutely." This we know logically and with certainty within the parameters assumed. We know that the corruption caused by power is always in proportion to the amount of power held. Consequently, if a little power corrupts a little bit, and a lot of power corrupts a lot, then logically, absolute power must corrupt absolutely.

Similarly, if we perceive that those practicing righteousness are godly, and realize that their godliness arises from some source other than themselves, we may be certain that Jesus was the perfect human and the Christ, who manifested God at every moment. Since we do not have direct access to the earthly Jesus, we must rely on reports. Thus, if the reports of Jesus are true, and practicing righteousness is the *sine qua non* of godliness, or "being born of God," then without doubt, the man Jesus was the perfect exemplar of being born of God. The assertion was not missed by the Gnostics, and should not be missed by modern readers either. But neither should we make more of it than is warranted.

Contrast "Christ is Righteousness (in the light, etc.) and  
Those practicing righteousness (walking in the light, etc.) are born of God.

That is, seeing people who are "in" Him guarantees the nature of Him "in" whom they abide.

## **G. ETHICAL AND THEOLOGICAL CONSIDERATIONS**

29 This verse is often used to establish, confirm, or defend the doctrine of the deity of Christ. Such dedication to theology has often prevented an accurate appraisal of the verse. It may well be implied that Jesus is divine, but such is not necessarily the case in this passage. In fact, the context makes such an inference a little less likely than the inference that Jesus' life truly reflected divine righteousness and therefore was, and is, a rationally reliable measure of God's expectations for man, or "the purpose of life."

We have here an epistemological mandate, one based upon the sharp antitheses John has laid down thus far. It is a specific statement of the rational certainty gained from his empirical data; and we are invited to follow him to his conclusions in daily life. The implications are that so long as there are people living righteous lives, there will be absolute proof of God; and that we are not only to produce such evidence, but to know it when we see it.

The issue is that if we want to *know with certainty* that Jesus was the manifestation *par excellence* of divine righteousness and the purpose of life, we must be prepared to recognize that same righteousness manifested in some of those around us. Two points must be made about this righteousness. First, we are not talking about a few "good deeds" scattered here and there, or a generally pleasing disposition, or a politically correct stance. What is meant is that divine righteousness that breaths God into the living context of him who "is in the light." Jesus exemplified it, and we should to.

Second, we are not referring here to sinless perfectionism. John has already made it clear that we

are not completely without sin, even as Christians. What can only be meant is periods of varying duration between bouts of failure wherein one's character, as manifested in behavior, is clearly of an alien and perfect quality. It is clearly *God's* character being shown, not that of the person in question.

If we can acknowledge that Christians manifest God's righteousness, i.e. a righteousness not their own, but completely alien to them, and inexplicable on any other basis than God's own righteousness mysteriously being found in them, even when punctuated from time to time by sin, we are able to be quite certain about Christ's character as perfect. For He alone never sinned, but *always* manifested God's righteousness. He alone did not deserve to die for sin. He alone was resurrected from the dead and visited with many eye-witnesses. He alone is the *complete* empirical proof of God's nature. But Christians can also be proof.

## **H. SUBJECTIVE IMPLICATIONS – PSYCHOLOGICAL AND DEVOTIONAL**

Non Emotive Text

### **I. PARAPHRASE**

28 And now, children, abide in the truth of your anointing so that if He should come to us in person, we might have perfect confidence and might not be embarrassed or humiliated before Him in His presence. 29 If you want to know with certainty that Christ is righteous you must learn that in just the same way everyone practicing God's righteousness is His son.

## **TENTH PERICOPE (I JOHN 3:1-3)**

ἴδετε ποταπὴν ἀγάπην δέδωκεν ἡμῖν ὁ πατήρ, ἵνα τέκνα θεοῦ κληθῶμεν, καὶ ἐσμέν. διὰ τοῦτο ὁ κόσμος οὐ γινώσκει ἡμᾶς, ὅτι οὐκ ἔγνω αὐτόν. <sup>2</sup> ἀγαπητοί, νῦν τέκνα θεοῦ ἐσμεν, καὶ οὐπω ἐφανερώθη τί ἐσόμεθα. οἶδαμεν ὅτι ἐὰν φανερωθῇ, ὅμοιοι αὐτῷ ἐσόμεθα, ὅτι ὁψόμεθα αὐτὸν καθὼς ἐστίν. <sup>3</sup> καὶ πᾶς ὁ ἔχων τὴν ἐλπίδα ταύτην ἐπ’ αὐτῷ ἀγνίζει ἑαυτόν, καθὼς ἐκεῖνος ἀγνός ἐστίν.

### **A. TEXTUAL CRITICISM**

**No major variants in this pericope.**

### **B. LEXICAL AND TOPICAL STUDIES**

**No theologically significant additions to previous vocabulary.**

### **C. GRAMMATICAL NOTES AND LITERARY DEVICES**

**No grammatical anomalies.**

### **D. HISTORICAL AND BACKGROUND INFORMATION**

**No relevant data available.**

### **E. TRANSLATION**

### ***F. EXPOSITION***

### **G. ETHICAL AND THEOLOGICAL CONSIDERATIONS**

**No new ethical or theological teaching in this pericope.**

### **H. SUBJECTIVE IMPLICATIONS – PSYCHOLOGICAL AND DEVOTIONAL**

Non Emotive Text

## I. PARAPHRASE



## **ELEVENTH PERICOPE (I JOHN 3:4-10)**

Πᾶς ὁ ποιῶν τὴν ἁμαρτίαν καὶ τὴν ἀνομίαν ποιεῖ, καὶ ἡ ἁμαρτία ἐστὶν ἡ ἀνομία. <sup>5</sup> καὶ οἴδατε ὅτι ἐκεῖνος ἐφανερώθη, ἵνα τὰς ἁμαρτίας ἄρῃ, καὶ ἁμαρτία ἐν αὐτῷ οὐκ ἔστιν. <sup>6</sup> πᾶς ὁ ἐν αὐτῷ μένων οὐχ ἁμαρτάνει· πᾶς ὁ ἁμαρτάνων οὐχ ἑώρακεν αὐτὸν οὐδὲ ἔγνωκεν αὐτόν. <sup>7</sup> Τεκνία, μηδεὶς πλανᾷτω ὑμᾶς· ὁ ποιῶν τὴν δικαιοσύνην δίκαιός ἐστιν, καθὼς ἐκεῖνος δίκαιός ἐστιν. <sup>8</sup> ὁ ποιῶν τὴν ἁμαρτίαν ἐκ τοῦ διαβόλου ἐστίν, ὅτι ἀπ' ἀρχῆς ὁ διάβολος ἁμαρτάνει. εἰς τοῦτο ἐφανερώθη ὁ υἱὸς τοῦ θεοῦ, ἵνα λύσῃ τὰ ἔργα τοῦ διαβόλου. <sup>9</sup> Πᾶς ὁ γεγεννημένος ἐκ τοῦ θεοῦ ἁμαρτίαν οὐ ποιεῖ, ὅτι σπέρμα αὐτοῦ ἐν αὐτῷ μένει, καὶ οὐ δύναται ἁμαρτάνειν, ὅτι ἐκ τοῦ θεοῦ γεγέννηται. <sup>10</sup> ἐν τούτῳ φανερά ἐστὶν τὰ τέκνα τοῦ θεοῦ καὶ τὰ τέκνα τοῦ διαβόλου· πᾶς ὁ μὴ ποιῶν δικαιοσύνην οὐκ ἔστιν ἐκ τοῦ θεοῦ, καὶ ὁ μὴ ἀγαπῶν τὸν ἀδελφὸν αὐτοῦ.

### **A. TEXTUAL CRITICISM**

No major variants in this pericope.

### **B. LEXICAL AND TOPICAL STUDIES**

No theologically significant additions to previous vocabulary.

### **C. GRAMMATICAL NOTES AND LITERARY DEVICES**

No grammatical anomalies.

### **D. HISTORICAL AND BACKGROUND INFORMATION**

No relevant data available.

### **E. TRANSLATION**

### **F. EXPOSITION**

### **G. ETHICAL AND THEOLOGICAL CONSIDERATIONS**

No new ethical or theological teaching in this pericope.

## **H. SUBJECTIVE IMPLICATIONS – PSYCHOLOGICAL AND DEVOTIONAL**

Non Emotive Text

## **I. PARAPHRASE**

## TWELFTH PERICOPE (I JOHN 3:11-18)

NOTE: This message comprises two distinct paragraphs, but because it relates to an extended antithesis, it will be treated as a single pericope.

Ὅτι αὕτη ἐστὶν ἡ ἀγγελία ἣν ἠκούσατε ἀπ' ἀρχῆς, ἵνα ἀγαπῶμεν ἀλλήλους, <sup>12</sup> οὐ καθὼς Κάϊν ἐκ τοῦ πονηροῦ ἦν καὶ ἔσφαξεν τὸν ἀδελφὸν αὐτοῦ· καὶ χάριν τίνος ἔσφαξεν αὐτόν; ὅτι τὰ ἔργα αὐτοῦ πονηρὰ ἦν τὰ δὲ τοῦ ἀδελφοῦ αὐτοῦ δίκαια. <sup>13</sup> [Καὶ] μὴ θαυμάζετε, ἀδελφοί, εἰ μισεῖ ὑμᾶς ὁ κόσμος. <sup>14</sup> ἡμεῖς οἶδαμεν ὅτι μεταβεβήκαμεν ἐκ τοῦ θανάτου εἰς τὴν ζωὴν, ὅτι ἀγαπῶμεν τοὺς ἀδελφούς· ὁ μὴ ἀγαπῶν μένει ἐν τῷ θανάτῳ. <sup>15</sup> πᾶς ὁ μισῶν τὸν ἀδελφὸν αὐτοῦ ἀνθρωποκτόνος ἐστίν, καὶ οἶδατε ὅτι πᾶς ἀνθρωποκτόνος οὐκ ἔχει ζωὴν αἰώνιον ἐν αὐτῷ μένουσαν. <sup>16</sup> ἐν τούτῳ ἐγνώκαμεν τὴν ἀγάπην, ὅτι ἐκεῖνος ὑπὲρ ἡμῶν τὴν ψυχὴν αὐτοῦ ἔθηκεν· καὶ ἡμεῖς ὀφείλομεν ὑπὲρ τῶν ἀδελφῶν τὰς ψυχὰς θεῖναι. <sup>17</sup> ὃς δ' ἂν ἔχη τὸν βίον τοῦ κόσμου καὶ θεωρῇ τὸν ἀδελφὸν αὐτοῦ χρεῖαν ἔχοντα καὶ κλείσῃ τὰ σπλάγχνα αὐτοῦ ἀπ' αὐτοῦ, πῶς ἡ ἀγάπη τοῦ θεοῦ μένει ἐν αὐτῷ; <sup>18</sup> Τεκνία, μὴ ἀγαπῶμεν λόγῳ μὴδὲ τῇ γλώσσῃ ἀλλὰ ἐν ἔργῳ καὶ ἀληθείᾳ.

### A. TEXTUAL CRITICISM

3:17 Both the Nestle-Aland and United Bible Society texts read μένει (present tense). The variant reading is so unimportant that the United Bible Society text does not even list it. However, this is a textbook example of using internal evidence for a reading. For Blass-DeBrunner makes a point of including this passage at the end of the section on "Doubtful or Deliberative Questions (p. 185), claiming that it ought to be understood as reading μενεῖ (future tense) because of the nature of such questions.

Granted that grammar makes for a poor substitute for textual criticism, it nonetheless provides a clue that is not to be overlooked. (See discussion in Grammatical Considerations.) For it is much easier to see scribes and copyists either assuming that they are strengthening John's point or misunderstanding the sense altogether, and recasting the future tense verb in the present tense, than the reverse. This is much truer when we remember John's love for the present tense, and the stative and behavioral aspects of the Gospel he is here discussing. Understanding why one might be tempted to substitute a rather vague future tense for an easily understood present tense, on the other hand, is not easily grasped. A copyist's error, of course, could have been responsible for the alteration, but that could have worked either way.

It is important to remember two things, first that "abiding" is a two way relationship, with man abiding *in the truth* and the truth abiding *in him*, etc. and second, that the subject of the passage is our love for others. On close inspection, the intention of God, either as the cause of our love (present tense variant) or as the *recipient* of our love (future tense variant) is equally strange in the immediate context, which deals with love for others as exemplified by Jesus and enjoined on us.

In addition, the best evidence, or at the very least, the earliest (granted, not the same thing) support the neglected variant, and we adopt it here.

## B. LEXICAL AND TOPICAL STUDIES

3:15, 16, 17 -- Life. In the space of these three verses, three different words commonly translated "life," are seen. One is reminded of the fact that Greek has four or five words for *love* whereas English has but one. Here, the English word "life" often does duty for three distinct Greek words. The three words are ζωή, βίος, and ψυχή.

ζωή is translated *life* and is simply the opposite of *inanimacy* or *death*. -- Every plant and animal has, or at one time had, this basic kind of life. This "life" is the mere possession of those processes of change and maintenance that allow respiration, growth, and reproduction. It is the most *basic notion* of life. In I John, the word is used 13 times, usually in the phrase "eternal life." The word occurs too frequently in the Gospel of John to be worthwhile counting.

To understand the difference between this notion of life and the others, it is interesting to note one of the most profound questions asked, but rarely answered in detail. "Is life worth living if I am only going to die anyway? wouldn't it have been better simply never to have come to life in the first place and remained inanimate instead?" Even those who answer "no" to this question usually do not have a satisfactory reason why not. If the evolutionists are right, and life is nothing more than respiration in physical matter, or "matter raised to consciousness," then the question simply has no answer, and suicide, murder, and terrorist bombings, to say nothing of abortion, are not things to be concerned about. They are merely the passing of matter from one form to another, like water changing into ice or steam.

Of the answers that are sometimes given, and presuppose that there *is* more to life than mere respiration, most have to do with life as βίος, or the *things and processes* of maintaining everyday life such as property and livelihood.. Βίος also includes in it, of necessity, the notion of life, but often includes these more abstract notions that attach themselves to the maintenance of physical life. It is life *with its means of maintenance, including property and position*, that is meant. In fact, it was this sort of "life" that the father of the prodigal son "divided to him." (The Greek reads literally "and he divided to him his life." This notion of "life" is what we mean when we say "he made a *life* for himself," or "get a *life*!" In I John the word occurs only in 3:16, and in the Gospel of John it is not found at all.

There is another answer, or sphere of answers, to our question, that which is reflected in the word ψυχή. This word is usually translated as "soul," but can be rendered "self," or "life" as well. It is what we mean when we say that a person is "the *life* of the party," or that "brevity is the *soul* of wit." Like βίος, ψυχή is used in I John only once, and in the same context. This word occurs only eight times in the Gospel of John.

Jesus, in addressing a different situation, answers our question by putting an interesting counter question -- "What shall it profit a man if he gain the whole world and lose his own *sou*!." The word translated there as "soul," is translated here in I John as *life*. It is life's *essence, the center of its meaning and importance*. As such it stands in the same relation to physical life (ζωή) as λόγος bears

to ῥῆμα. So it may more often be translated as "soul," or even as "self," but it may *not* be abstracted entirely from *life*, and may sometimes be translated as such. Even when *yuch* is used as a synonym for "spirit," it stands as the very essence of personhood or humanity.

What is interesting, in this context, is that sacrifice at these different levels of "life" also entails various degrees of magnitude. He who "merely" gives up his physical life is done with the transaction. With the sacrifice of physical life there is nothing more to consider; it all goes together. But one may sacrifice his βίος without dying, and continue to "enjoy" his physical life. That is, he may give up his comforts, his property, his means of living, and exist at a lower state of comfort or prestige. The early Christian monks did precisely that, as did Leo Tolstoy in the late 1800s. This is what Jesus asked the rich young ruler to do, when He said, "go, sell all that you own . . . and come follow me." The rich young ruler, it will be remembered, "departed, for he was very rich. He didn't want to part with his βίος, even to save his own ψυχή.

But to sacrifice one's *soul*, his very *self*, may include both of the former at some time, but may mean merely spending the years of one's (ζωή) as a servant. Does this begin to look familiar? One who has "put himself (his ψυχή) aside" and does the bidding of another, even to the point of loss of well-being or physical life, spends both his life and his death for others. This is what "the Good Shepherd" does for His sheep "as a ransom for many."

This allows us to get a better grasp of the nature of what John is telling us about divine love, the love that is to animate all Christians. For we are to put aside our *souls* for the brothers, just as Jesus did for us. This may mean becoming a servant, as Paul never tires of admonishing his readers. It may mean sacrificial giving of our means, or it may mean sacrificing our physical lives. But it *never* means *less* than putting our own lives aside in the interests of promoting the lives and well-being of others, just as Jesus did.

The question at the end of v. 17, then, involves us in this contrast. If we will not even go so far as to share our goods, the means to sustaining the merely physical life of the body, with others, how will we be able to claim that we are animated by divine, *soul* sacrificing, love? We are to sacrifice our *yuch* for the brothers as Jesus did. How can we claim to exhibit divine love when we will not even meet *purely physical* needs of others by giving of our βίος?

### C. GRAMMATICAL NOTES AND LITERARY DEVICES

3:17 The textual problem noted above is further explicated by the nature of the conditional sentence'. The acceptance of the future indicative is consistent with its occasional substitution for the subjunctive and the fact that the present indicative does not appear in the apodosis of conditional sentences. The subjunctive, the force of which might logically be expected here instead of the present indicative, has been used consistently throughout the preceding paragraphs, and therefore further necessitates either a subjunctive or a future indicative. What we have here is nothing more

them a "Future Supposition with more Probability," which makes use of the suitable substitute for the subjunctive, the future indicative. -- Burton<sup>4</sup>

The sense, then, is only mildly futuristic in the sense that the question (ow will the love of God abide in him?) *logically* follows the action of denying mercy to one's brother supposed in the preceding clause. This leaves the sense of the possible reality of the protasis almost to be expressed by the sense of "would" in the apodosis. The question "if. . . he should close his mercy against his brother, how will the love of God abide in him?" might have the quasi-subjunctive sense " . . . how *would* the love of God abide in him?" But because in English, the subjunctive sense is implied from the outset with the occurrence of the word "if," the translation does not change. That is, we have selected a more accurate and grammatically correct reading that need not affect the new translation at all.

3:17 Meiosis is a contrast formed by a comparison of a lesser to a greater, rather than of opposites. It is a comparison of relative magnitude. A good example is that of the brother with the beam in his eye trying to remove the mote from his brother's eye. In our present context, we are admonished for the possible failure to part with worldly goods, or the "means of life," for one in need, when we have had an example of one who defined love by putting aside His *very soul*. The contrast is between *giving of our abundance* and actually *sacrificing our selves* as Jesus did. If our exemplar "put aside" His very soul for the sake of others, and we will not even part with some material possessions for the sake of the needy, how can we say that the love of God abides in us?

#### **D. HISTORICAL AND BACKGROUND INFORMATION**

No relevant data available.

#### **E. TRANSLATION**

3:11 For the message that you have heard from the beginning is this, that we should love one' another; 12 not as Cain, *who* was of the evil one and slaughtered his brother; and for what *reason* did he slaughter him? Because his works were evil, but those of his brother righteous. 13 [likewise] do not be surprised, brothers, if the world hates you.

14 We know with certainty that we have passed out of death into life, because we love the brothers. The one not loving *others* abides in death. 15 Everyone hating his brother is a manslayer, and we know with certainty that no manslayer has eternal life abiding in him. 16 In this we perceive love, that He put aside His soul on our behalf, and we ought to put aside our souls on behalf of the brothers. 17 But whoever has the goods of the world and should see his brother in need, and closes his heart against him -- how does the love of God abide in him? 18 Children, we should not love in word or with the tongue, but in work and in truth.

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<sup>4</sup> Sect. 250, p. 104.

## F. EXPOSITION

These two paragraphs begin and end with admonitions concerning Christian love, the latter developing the former. In between, are parenthetical remarks made by way of explanation. The argument runs as follows:

- I First assertion -- love one another (3:11);
- II Parenthetical counter example -- Cain and Abel (3:12);
- III Conclusion to parenthetical counter example -- the World is like Cain (3:13);
- IV Second assertion -- love and hate contrasted (3:14-15);
- V Support for second assertion -- love defined (3:16);
- VI Support for second assertion -- practical example of hatred (3:17);
- VII Conclusion -- practical restatement of first assertion.

These sub headings show the logical relation of these verses one to another.

3:11 "For the message that you have heard from the beginning is this . . ." This is a clear reference to what John said earlier. It reiterates the point made in 2:7 linking love with that which "was from the beginning.".. From this is already clear what will follow.

"that we should love one another . . ." The wording of this clause seems to narrow the field of love. As we pointed out earlier (2:10-11) the object of our love is our brother. But is brother narrowly defined as fellow Christians, as many seem to think, or does it refer to our fellow man, which is more consistent with the teachings of Jesus. As we noted earlier, it makes little sense to restrict our love to those within our own group, i.e. fellow Christians, since to do so makes us no different than others.

On the other hand it is possible within the current context that John was referring to all in general, but *especially* to fellow Christians. The use of the terms "one another" bespeaks a narrower and more intimate group. The point seems to be that Christians should love each other *not to the exclusion of loving others*, but so openly and strongly as to present the World with an object lesson. Such love as is the essence of God, and the mark of the Christian's relationship to Him is to be openly advertised among men by our behavior one to another.

12 "not as Cain, *who* was of the evil one . . ." Here John begins an illustrative contrast. The point in citing Cain is to illustrate the link between hatred and murder, and recalls for us one of the great teachings from the Sermon on the Mount. Furthermore the contrast mutually defines hate and love in terms of behavior, or deeds.

First it must be mentioned that Cain is a negative example. That is, he is explicitly pointed out as an example of what the Christian is *not* to be. The behavior of Cain exemplifies that which we are explicitly to avoid. But more than this, as we will see, it is Cain's *attitude* that we are to avoid. As we see also with the teachings of Jesus and Paul, John assumes that behavior is the product of belief,

or attitude, or the condition of one's heart.

Second, John states that the evil impulse is from the "evil one." This can refer to none other than Satan himself. In the Sermon on the Mount, in the teaching concerning oaths, Jesus says that any more than a simple yes or no is "of the evil." James also, in a similar context, refers to "the evil one."

But we should not take this simplistically, in the sense of blaming Satan for all improper behavior. Rather, we may see Satan as the exemplar of evil behavior because of his evil heart, and acknowledge the fact that while he might encourage evil behavior, or help us to rationalize that which is less than perfect, he does not cause us to sin.

The example of Cain provides a perfect parallel between that behavior to which John has repeatedly admonished us -- that which is characterized by "walking in the light" and "loving one another" which demonstrates participation in the character of God, of making oneself transparent to God. Here, on the other hand, we are shown Cain, the first example of one who participated in the character of Satan, or made himself transparent to the character of Satan..

"and slaughtered his brother . . ." This fact is what we remember about Cain. The story was doubtless better remembered in John's time than in our own, about Cain's murder of his innocent brother because of the obedience he showed toward God in the sacrifice he offered. How this killing may be judged in modern society, whether a crime of passion or a cold blooded, premeditated murder, is immaterial. The salient feature is that it was an act of the will. As such it , demonstrated that Cain partook in the character of Satan.

"and for what *reason* did he slaughter him?" The question is designed to focus our attention on the contrast between God and Satan, between the Christian and the World, and between love and hate, by focusing on the deeds which reveal their character.

"Because his works were evil, . . ." As we have seen, Cain's nature partook of the character of Satan. It follows then, that his deeds were evil. This explains the *quality* of Cain's behavior. He was of the Evil One, and his character produced his behavior.

". . . but those of his brother righteous." The behavior of his brother, Abel, however, was righteous. That is, he partook of the character of God, and his behavior therefore pleased God. This fact alone *was all it took to displease Cain*. Where Cain's nature explains the *quality* of his behavior, it is Abel's righteous behavior that explains why Cain's evil behavior was directed at him. One of the fundamental principles of understanding the World and the way man operates, is to understand the nature of good and evil. Each deals with the other on its own terms, and seeks to exercise its character on the other. In the case of good, it seeks to make him who is evil become good. Failing that, good still seeks what is best for him who is evil. In the case of evil, it seeks to make him who is good become evil. Failing that, it seeks the worst for him who is good. It should be quite clear that only one of these principles is positive. It says "be like me; and if you cannot, at least enjoy good things." The principle of evil is always negative and destructive, for it says "be like me, or away with you." This is precisely why, in the "battle between good and evil," evil so often seems "to



win.” Just as with Cain and Abel, there is a principle which we must learn with regard to those who would be godly.

13 "[Likewise] do not be surprised, brothers, if the world hates you.” As surly as you are godly, you will be hated by the World. To the extent that one allows the World its freedom, he may be left alone, and only taunted from a distance on the basis of principle. But the minute one seeks to make public morals better, or in any other way provides an indictment of the World, and especially the moment one tries to abolish personal evil, he will bear the wrath of the World in outright hatred and persecution. That is, we may adopt a "live and let live" attitude, and save ourselves some personal misery. But even so, the very principle of evil, which characterizes the World, will make of the godly, a butt of abuse. But if the principle of good does not allow us to sit idly by, we will soon see the World's hatred in a stronger form.

The intent of this passage is easily summarized as follows: We have been told to love one another. The unrighteous and dead of the World hate, and sometimes kill, the righteous just as Cain killed Abel. Do not be surprised, then, if the World hates you.

14 "We know with certainty that we have passed out of death into life . . ." Again the use of the word for "know" that implies certainty. The object of this knowledge is the possession of eternal life. But equally, the object of this knowledge is the *past possession of death*. Specifically, the object of this knowledge is the conscious awareness of having once been dead spiritually, but now being alive spiritually. This is nothing other than the great awareness the grateful saved have upon the realization of how great is their salvation. It is therefore imperative that we recognize and remember the character of this knowledge *as certainty*.

"because we love the brothers.” The basis upon which we have this certainty is the quality of our behavior. That is, we prove our new status to ourselves and verify its authenticity by the change in our behavior toward others. Our old lives were not characterized by love for others, either quantitatively or qualitatively, as the new life is. God's love for us is made visible by our love for others.

"The one not loving abides in death.” Here is confirmation of that fact" The one whose life is not characterized by love for others partakes in the nature of death. He who does not love is spiritually dead. This does not mean that there may not be certain people that are loved, but that they are exceptions to the rule, for love does not characterize all relationships.

15 "Everyone hating his brother is a manslayer . . ." Dealing with John's antitheses, particularly those involving love and hate, make plain the equation of the one hating his brother with his being a murderer. The antithesis defines whatever is not love as hate. And just as the feelings and behavior of love toward one's fellows demonstrates the presence and possession of eternal life, so the absence of love toward one's fellows, characterized as hatred, demonstrates the possession of death. And hatred at its most heinous is manifested in, but not limited to, murder. The developed idea seems to be that whereas love seeks the good of others, hatred does not. Instead, hatred seeks its own advantage. Hatred therefore objectifies the other for its own personal gain. Murder, of course, is the ultimate expression of treating another as an object. The frightening implication is that whoever

objectifies others is a potential murderer, because his central concern is his own gain.

"and we know with certainty that no manslayer has eternal life abiding in him." That is, no act motivated by hatred can be said to be characterized by love. Nor is it exemplary of that status verified by showing love, that is, eternal life. John's assertion is not that every person who has committed murder goes to hell. He is saying that behavior which *reveals* hatred, cannot be the *result* of love. At the point of the commission of such crimes, love is not the motivation and eternal life is not characteristic of the one performing them.

More pointedly, we must observe that such a person is characterized here as a "manslayer;" his nature, character, and motivation, have nothing to do with that love which characterizes eternal life. Hence he who is characterized by his behavior as a manslayer, is not a person who can be characterized as having eternal life. John is again speaking in antithetical categories.

16 "In this we perceive love, . . ." John again refers to the other kind of knowledge, empirical knowledge; that by which we *learn* or *perceive*. It may be worthwhile to pause again and consider the two kinds of knowledge. The first kind of knowledge, rational knowledge, is that which is certain, admits no error, and is verifiable. Such is the kind of knowledge we have when we come to assess our character, recognize it for what it is, and can verify our conclusions by reference to our behavior.

Here, however, we are concerned with empirical knowledge. By this we refer to knowledge which comes to us through our senses and is based upon perception. One of the logical conundrums philosophers face is the relationship between empiricism and rationalism. Without giving us a lecture on logic, John has shown himself logical by the way he presents these facts. We can only have a rational certainty about our character when we can verify our conclusions. And we can verify something only when we have an objective standard against which to compare it. Understanding an objective standard *may* be a matter of empiricism. In the case at hand we will prove to ourselves that we have passed from death to life on the basis of how loving our behavior is. And we have an absolute standard of love upon which to base our conclusions, only if we *perceive* (i.e. if we know by learning from experience) what that standard is. We must understand our character and behavior by seeing it clearly defined elsewhere.

"He put aside His soul on our behalf . . ." The illustration by which we learn, or perceive the absolute standard of love is found in the person of Jesus and his selfless life. We must not see this as merely his death on the cross on our behalf but as the very putting aside of himself on behalf of others in every situation. This is what Jesus meant when he said that in order for a person to be his disciple, he would have to "deny himself." Here, the text literally reads that he "put aside his soul," not merely his "life." This implies that Jesus put aside his own will and his own desires while he was yet in the midst of His life. Jesus was truly a man for others, and this was manifested in his selflessness, in this setting aside of himself every day of His life. It is by this that we perceive love. Thus, it is the absolute standard by which we are to govern and judge our lives.

"and we ought to put aside our souls on behalf of the brothers." Having discovered the absolute standard of love in the life and behavior of Jesus we are told to emulate him. Only in our emulation

of Him can we "know with certainty" that we truly have "passed out of death and into life." Again, we must remember that we are not talking about sacrificing our lives for others, although that may be included. Like Jesus, we are to live selfless lives dedicated to the benefit of others.

17 "But whoever has the goods of the world, . . ." By way of contrast comes a warning. The text literally reads "has the life of the world," And therein lies a fearful contrast. For while it is quite plain from the context that it is the means of maintaining life that is meant here, the fact that this is indeed what the world considers to be the essence of life should not be missed. "The goods of the world" means the wealth, fame, position, or anything else by which we maintain our physical lives, but it is all too frequently synonymous in the eyes of the world, with life itself.

The situation John will now describe involves one who has the goods of the world, and enjoys what *passes* for life among those of the World.

"and should see his brother having need, . . ." Again, the term "brother" is to be considered universal. The situation John describes is indeed that of our World, where some have the means to maintain their lives while others have undue hardships. There is nothing inherently wrong with this situation, but our response to it will demonstrate whether death or eternal life abides in us. The hypothesis, thus far, involves a man who has means confronted by one who has need. And within the present context, the response must be one either of love or of hatred.

"and closes his heart against him, . . ." In John's hypothesis the man of means, who meets a man in need has but two choices. The hypothesis continues with the man of means "closing his heart" against the man in need. There are various ways describing this but the point is that *mercy denied is hatred revealed*, as the following rhetorical question implies.

"how does the love of God abide in him?" How indeed can one assert either that he loves God, or that God's love is manifest in his life, when he will not even share the means of maintaining physical life with the brother in need, when Jesus, our exemplar, put aside his very soul on behalf of others even to the point of death on the cross?

18 "Children, we should not love in word or with the tongue, . . ." Whatever we may *call* this, it is . not "the love of God," but self-serving hatred. Regardless of what we may think, its character is clear. We are therefore admonished not to "love in word or with the tongue." Ours is to not be a superficial love that goes no deeper than mere speech. One might remember with great profit James 1:25-27 and 2:15-17.

"but in work and in truth." True love will be seen in works, just as James shows that faith is manifested in works -- and it will likely make us hated by the World. The gnostics, like many today, talk a good case. But in neither the ascetic nor the licentious variety of Gnosticism was love made manifest in action.

## **G. ETHICAL AND THEOLOGICAL CONSIDERATIONS**

Even if I John has thus far implied the deity of Christ, that is not the focus of the work. It may be argued that because the Gnostics denied that deity could come in contact with matter of any sort and certainly not that of sinful flesh, that John's statement that anyone who denies that Messiah had come in the flesh is antichrist, presupposes that the point being made is that Christ is deity. For how else could Messiah have come except "in the flesh?" He was a prophesied ruler and redeemer. How could He come any other way *but* "in the flesh?"

Yet it is not merely the notion that Messiah had come in the flesh that bothered the Gnostics. There was something else about John's statement that bothered them. A Messiah was acceptable so long as He was either *not* flesh, or was *only* flesh. But if He was *more* than flesh, even while *in* the flesh, the Gnostics had a problem.

But the same is just as true if the Messiah was human but allowed Himself to clothe and display the deity of God through His own life. This, too, puts Deity in contact with sinful flesh and evil matter. Furthermore, John was asserting that *every true believer* did the same thing, or ought to be doing the same that Jesus the Messiah had done, making his own humanity available to God.

It is essential to remember that the love of brother to which John here enjoins his readers is nothing less than the divine love inhabiting regenerate man. That is the force of the question in v. 17 "how will the love of God abide in him?" By some new gnosis? No. The entire text of I John to this point has majored on the relationship of the believer to God characterized by *abiding*, *continuing*, or *remaining* in God, and having the Father and the Son *abide* in the believer, or by "his anointing" *remaining* in him. The Exemplar of all John is saying, the One he has repeatedly held up to his readers is Jesus.

Not only does such close and intimate contact with the pure Spirit of God offend the Gnostics in general, the sort of ethical behavior this is calculated to produce was a special affront to the Cerinthian Gnostics. But it is precisely this relationship, and that kind of behavior that John is inculcating in his readers.

## **H. SUBJECTIVE IMPLICATIONS – PSYCHOLOGICAL AND DEVOTIONAL**

Non Emotive Text

### **I. PARAPHRASE**

3:11 The message you have heard from the very beginning of your Christian lives is that we should love one another. 12 We are not to be like Cain, who manifested the character of the evil one and murdered his brother; and why did he murder him? Because his own behavior manifested evil, but his brother's behavior had manifested righteousness. 13 So don't be surprised, brothers, if the World hates you for the same reason.

3:14 We can be certain that we are spiritually alive, and no longer dead, because we love our

brothers. 15 Whoever hates his brother is a murderer, and we are .certain that no murderer is characterized by eternal life. 16 We learn what love is from the fact that Jesus denied His very soul for our benefit, and we ought to deny our souls to benefit others. 17 But whoever has what the world calls "a life" and, seeing someone in need, denies him mercy;.how can it be God's love that characterizes him? 18 My children, we should not simply talk a good case! we must show our love in our behavior that it might be a true reflection of God.

## PARAPHRASE OF FIRST JOHN

1:1 What was from the beginning concerning the very purpose of life, we heard and saw; in fact we studied it and touched it with our hands. -- The life itself was manifested, and we saw. And we testify and announce to you this eternal life which came from the Father and was manifested to us. -- What we have learned from personal contact we announce to you so that you, too, may have everything in common with us. And our common ground is with the Father and His son Jesus Christ. We write these things to you so that our joy may be made perfect.

The message that we heard from Him, and which we now proclaim to you is this: That God is Light and in Him there is no semblance or possibility of darkness whatever. If we think that we enjoy an intimate fellowship with Jesus, yet live in a way characterized by darkness, we are lying and not practicing the truth He showed us. But if we exemplify the light in which we walk, as He Himself walked and still remains, we do indeed have such a common ground with Him and with each other, and the blood of Jesus, God's son, washes away all our sin and its stains. If, on the other hand, we claim to be free of sin and its stain, we are deluding ourselves, and we can neither partake in nor exemplify His character. If we acknowledge our sins and deplore their effects, we will find that He is reliable and righteous so that He might forgive us those sins and wash away our dirtiness and guilt. If we were to say that we have no need of such cleansing because we are not stained by sin, we make Him out to be a liar, and the truth of His purpose and character are wholly absent from us.

2:1 My little children, I am writing these things to you so that you might refrain from sin. Yet if anyone sins, he should remember that we have a spokesman before the Father, Jesus Christ *the* righteous. 2 And it is He who is the propitiation for our sins, the very things that separate us from God. And He has appeased God not for our sins only, but also for the *sins of the* whole world. 3 And this is how we recognize the fact that we have come to know Him; if we are observing his commands. 4 Anyone saying "I have come to know Him," but who is not observing His commands, is simply a liar -- there is no truth in him. 5 But whoever conforms to His word, truly exemplifies the love of God which is made perfect in him. By this we know that we truly partake of His eternal character. 6 Anyone who claims to partake in His character ought himself to behave as He behaved.

2:7 Beloved, I am not writing to you with a new command, but with the same old command you have had since the very beginning of your Christian life, This "old command" is nothing other than the word you have already heard. 8 Yet I am writing to you with a new expectation. It has the character of a new command because it is to make the old command visible in your very behavior. The truth of the word is then verifiable; as it was in Him, now also in you, because the darkness which characterized not only the world but also your own lives, is now diminishing and the true light becoming ever brighter. 9 Anyone who claims to *be* in the light yet who hates his brother is really still in that great darkness. 10 Those, on the other hand, who love their brothers live in the light and there is moral deficiency with them. 11 But the one who hates his brother both lives and walks in

the darkness. He cannot *see* where he is going, and so he cannot *know* where he is going, because the darkness has made sight impossible and his eyes therefore useless.

I am writing to you children because your sins have been forgiven in accordance with the name and nature of Jesus the savior. I am writing to you mature Christians, the spiritual fathers, because you truly know the One who from the very beginning characterized and exemplified the purpose of life. I am also writing to you who are spiritually "young men," because you have vanquished the evil one from the battlefield of your lives. I previously wrote to you little children because it was clear that you know the Father as the basis of all truth. I previously wrote to you spiritual fathers because even then you knew the One who from the very beginning defined the purpose of life. And I previously wrote to you spiritually "young men" because you showed yourselves to be strong. Even then it was clear that you were sustained by the word of God, and so were able to overcome the devil.

Do not cherish the World or overvalue the things you see in it. If anyone loves the World in this way, he has no love for the Father. Because everything in the World, seen as a system of the objects for self serving desire and pride, is not from God, but is a product of the World itself. And this World, with man's lusts for its pleasures, passes away even now, as do the pleasures themselves. But those who are concerned to do God's will abide with Him forever.

18 Children, we are now in the last age of God's mercy, and just as you have heard that in that age An Antichrist would come, even now many antichrists are arising. By this fact alone we recognize this as the last age of God's mercy. 19 Those antichrists appeared to be part of us, only in order that their true nature might become visible and it should be clear that they are none of us; clearly they were not our brothers because if they had been, they would have remained in His light and truth with us. 20 You, and all who are truly His, have an anointing, a commission, from the Holy One, and you know all that it is necessary to know.

2:26 I mention these things because of the deception of those who would compromise the truth. Yet the anointing, as seen in your changed lives, which you yourselves received from Him, abides in you and cannot be increased or bettered by those teachers who compromise and would teach you to do likewise, but of whom you have no need. Instead, just as His anointing continues to teach and guide you every day concerning your relationship to God and your godly behavior, and is true, and is not a clever fabrication, and even as it taught you from the very beginning, abide in it.

28 And now, children, abide in the truth of your anointing so that if He should come to us in person, we might have perfect confidence and might not be embarrassed or humiliated before Him in His presence. 29 If you want to know with certainty that Christ is righteous you must learn that in just the same way everyone practicing God's righteousness is His son.

3:11 The message you have heard from the very beginning of your Christian lives is that we should

love one another. 12 We are not to be like Cain, who manifested the character of the evil one and murdered his brother; and why did he murder him? Because his own behavior manifested evil, but his brother's behavior had manifested righteousness. 13 So don't be surprised, brothers, if the World hates you for the same reason.

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### **Excursus: Separation and Apostasy**

On the side of separation we have renewal, holiness, and witness. On the side of apostasy we have compromise and confusion. Separation is based upon antithesis; it draws the line between saved and unsaved, holy and profane, God and the World. It promotes holiness and forgiveness (and knows the difference between the two) on the basis of a renewed mind.

Apostasy, or the "falling away," involves seeking unity without God (cf. Constantine!).<sup>5</sup> The apostate may deny God or he may simply deem Him unimportant for the present need, and therefore relegate God to the spiritual and intellectual hinterland. So apostasy can be seen in any compromise that refuses to acknowledge or observe that separation defined by the Biblical line drawn between God and the World. Apostasy redefines holiness in terms of worldliness and operates without, indeed denies the need for, a "renewed mind."

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Worldliness is not just what "everyone is doing," that would include eating and sleeping and watching baseball games. Nor is it simply sin, because shift as the world's tastes might, there will always be one form of sin or another that is *not* socially acceptable. For example, in the 1950s homosexuality was strictly taboo, and the very word abortion in mixed company was considered a *faux pas*. But drunkenness was accepted and often even considered cute, even if the drunk was driving. And murder was routinely punished by death. In the first decade of the 2000's, however society at large will tolerate no hurtful speech and no drunk driving. (Even beer and liquor companies now add advise consumers "it's drink responsibly.") And murder is scarcely even newsworthy without other compelling circumstances such as being a "hate crime." Worldliness is dangerous precisely because it is sin that has found a host of practitioners and has become socially acceptable, like homosexuality and abortion. Worldliness is socially acceptable or even laudable sin and so is the basis of society's contradiction of God.

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<sup>5</sup> On the subject of Apostasy, cf. the following verses: I Timothy 3:1-5; Philippians 3:17-18; II Peter 2:1-2; Jude 4,8,11-13, 16. Note the frequent references to *separation*!



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These two options alone exist: *Separation* from the World, because of its antipathy to God, or *compromise* with the World, based upon forging or maintaining a false unity. As if we have not seen enough of this in 1 John, we shall see more of it in a few select verses that speak to the same point.

1) Peter, who both addresses his readers (1 Peter 1:1) as, and admonishes them (1 Peter 1:17, 2:11) to be, *sojourners*, or *pilgrims* (those pictures of social detachment and political separation) makes the Johannine point as follows. After telling them to "prepare your minds for action," (1 Peter 1:13) calling them "Children," as John does and, sounding a great deal like Paul, telling them "not to be conformed to the former desires," (1 Peter 1:14), and, again like John, telling them to emulate "the Holy One (1 Peter 1:15) he reminds them of God's command that "you shall be holy because I am holy" (1 Peter 1:16). This is the very reason separation of the believer from the World is not an option, but is of the essence of Christianity. There is simply nothing in common between the Holy God, and the World System.

But Peter goes on, and says to them "you are a chosen race," a "royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for God's own possession, so that you may proclaim the excellencies of Him who has called you **out of darkness into His marvelous light**." Not only is John's antithesis of Light and Dark used here in a most powerful and obvious way, *the theme of witness is sounded first*. That is, you are a "people" called out of darkness and into the light **in order to** "proclaim the excellencies of Him who called." The purpose of the separation, then is for witness and evangelism. This is not the church service we are talking about here, it is the daily life of the believer. It is for the *purpose of maintaining their separation and witness* that they are urged to live as pilgrims in verse 11.

2) Paul makes the point about compromise and separation in Romans 12:2, telling his readers not to be conformed to the "world." The word translated "world" really means "age," or "generation," and is so translated by the Vulgate. But because the truth is eternal, and does not apply merely to Paul's generation, but applies to *all* ages, and because both Paul and John view the World as what we have called "the World System," translating the term "World," in this context is quite permissible.

Paul tells his readers that they are to be "renewed" in their "minds" so that they can "prove" the will of God. The word "prove" is not strictly limited to deductive proof such as we have in mathematics and logic, but means to "try" or "test" something. It means to satisfy someone concerning something by testing it. It means a trial and its conclusion (however that may be accomplished) or "a demonstration." We are to *demonstrate* what is good, or *to satisfy ourselves by testing*, that what God calls us to, is indeed *good*.

In *demonstrating this to ourselves*, we also *demonstrate it to those with whom we associate* - i.e. those to whom we witness. Separation, seen here in the "renewal" of ones mind, is the basis of *witness*.

3) Finally, we come to James. James paints a terrible picture of the situation. Apparently his readers' minds are not "renewed," (Vulgate has "renovated"). Apparently they are still "conformed to their

former desires.” He mentions that the reason people "ask" and "do not receive," is because they "ask with wrong motives," desiring the boon for their own "pleasures" (James 4:3) Then he asks his readers if they do not know that "**friendship with the world is enmity with God.**" This is one of those statements in which the subject and object are interchangeable. That is, it is also true that "enmity with God" is "friendship with the World.” This, of course, lands the passage in the very middle of our own generation, because many, many local congregations are making "friendship with the world" central to their policy of "outreach" – reaching “the unchurched.”

Look at the aims, revealed and concealed, of churches that want "to grow," and mean by that to increase their numbers. What else but "friendship with the World" can we mean by being "purpose driven?" Or "seeker sensitive?" What else is it but "friendship with the World" that allows a church to abandon good hymns and psalms for rock 'n roll "music," or trite little folk tunes? What can we call setting aside the needs of the Christian congregation in order to stoop to satisfying the curiosity of the "unchurched?" Well, James provides us with another term for it; "enmity with God."

Those too blind to see, or hard hearted to admit, their shortsighted approach to godliness are, indeed, in terms of the other half of the proposition, "enemies of God.” It is this "friendship with the World" that most characterizes today's "modern," churches, charismatic and (as a result) non charismatic alike. But this "new" enmity with God is nothing more than the post 60's version of the watered down, secular, Christendom (*not* Christianity) which is heretical, apostate, and has *always* been at war with God. It is modern mysticism wherein one may have his worldly life but, with a leap of faith, and sufficient ignorance and imagination, may also view himself as a practicing Christian.

This is the apostate church the New Testament warns about. Whereas the first compromise produced *Roman* Catholicism, today's compromise is producing *Democratic* Catholicism. And it is again time for the protest of the monastics.

In times of apostasy, or compromise, Christian witness has demanded, both as a point of protest and as a means of survival, both the *doctrinal* separation and the *physical* separation known as monasticism. This was both a protest against the world and more so against the apostasy of the church; and it was judgment on the church as well. It is justified only because separation, i.e. *moral* distance, is the only basis upon which witness and evangelism can proceed. When the church itself has lost its separation, and thereby its ability to witness, it thereby becomes the *object* of witness. The monks witnessed *to* (and bore witness *against*) the *visible* church by their separation (moral *and* physical distance) *from* it and their non-participation *in* it. This is a more extreme form of that separation and witness than the church was originally intended practice in regard to the world. The truth that "bad company corrupts good morals" is just as true of the apostate church as it is of the World. When the admonition to "come out from among them" and to "be holy, for I am holy" no longer refers to the Christian being called out of the World, but to his being called out of the Church, then the church has apostatized. When, in order to "come out and be holy," one must leave not the world but the church, where are we?

The expression that every person is "either a missionary or a mission field" should remind us of where we should be. When the visible church comes to be in need of evangelism, it is time to separate from the visible church. It will be the members of the *true*, even if *invisible*, church who

do the evangelism. But what a sorry state of affairs when we are so confused about *who we are*, and *what the church is* that Christians have to *separate from the church in order fully to separate from the World!*

Therefore, the most pressing question for pastors, elders, deacons, and others involved with churchianity is one that Jesus asked: "shall the Son of man find 'the faith'? when He returns?" (Luke 18:8) Those who are concerned to exemplify *the faith* had better part company with those who do not.

## The Greek Article

### General

Sometimes, with a noun which the context proves to be definite, the article is not used. This places stress upon the qualitative aspect of the noun rather than its mere identity. An object of thought may be conceived of from two points of view: as to *identity* or to *quality*. To convey the first point of view the Greek uses the article; for the second the anarthrous construction is used. Also in expressions which have become technicalized or stereotyped, and in salutations, the article is not used. -- Dana and Mantey, *A Manual Grammar of the Greek New Testament*" page 149.

### Neuter Articles

The neuter article provides . . . a way of indicating that a whole clause is to be treated as a single entity -- as a kind of composite noun -- as when a sentence is quoted -- C. F. D. Moule, *An idiom Book of New Testament Greek*, p. 110.

### Nouns in Regimen

*Apollonius' canon* (quoted by Middleton, 36) is that 'nouns in regimen [i.e. the condition both of the governing and the governed noun" – Middleton] must have articles prefixed to *both* of them or *neither*.' Apollonius notes that βασιλευς is an exception; and Middleton himself (37) adduces a few more; adding (37, 38) that Philo is the only *prose* writer known to him who violates the rule, Josephus, by contrast, observing it. But it has to be added, by way of modifying the canon, as Middleton himself recognizes, that the *governing* noun may be anarthrous without necessitating the omission of the article with the *governed*. Thus, either

Governing noun  
/  
Governed noun

or

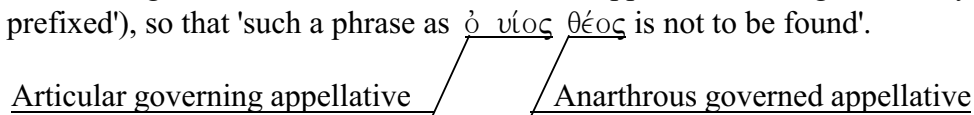
Governing noun  
/  
article  
/  
Governed noun  
/  
article

but rarely,

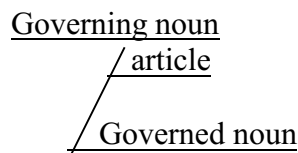
Governing noun  
/  
Governed noun  
/  
article

A further modification has to be made in respect of proper names and national appellations.

On the article with  $\theta\acute{\epsilon}\omicron\varsigma$ , see Middleton, 206-9. His main conclusion is that the usage conforms to *Apollonius' canon* ('that law of regimen which forbids an anarthrous appellative to be governed by one having the article prefixed'), so that 'such a phrase as  $\acute{\omicron}\ \upsilon\acute{\iota}\omicron\varsigma\ \theta\acute{\epsilon}\omicron\varsigma$  is not to be found'.

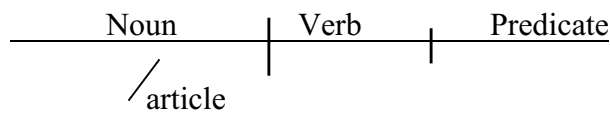


So NEVER thus:



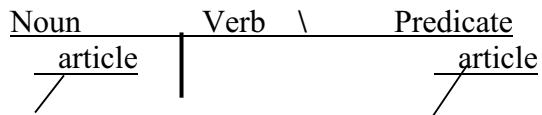
## Predicates

As a rule the predicate is without the article, even when the subject uses it. This is in strict accordance with the ancient idiom. Guildersleeve, (*Syntax*, p. 324) notes that the predicate is usually something new and therefore the article is not much used except in convertible propositions. Winer, indeed, denies that the subject may be known from the predicate by its having the article . . . . The subject is the definite and distributed, the predicate indefinite and undistributed.<sup>6</sup> The word with the article is then the subject, whatever the [word] order may be. -- A. T. Robertson, *A Grammar of the Greek New Testament in the Light of Historical Research*, p. 767.



Much more recently, E. C. Caldwell has made important observations on the matter. He formulates and supports with evidence a rule 'to describe the use of the article with definite predicate nouns in sentences in which the verb occurs. (1) *Definite* predicate nouns here regularly take the article. (2) The exceptions are for the most part due to change in word-order: (a) definite predicate nouns which follow the verb (this is the usual order) usually take the article; (b) definite predicate nouns which preceded the verb usually lack the article; (c) proper names regularly lack the article in the predicate; (d) predicate nominatives in relative clauses regularly follow the verb whether or not they have the article' (p. 20). C. F. D. Moule, *An idiom Book of New Testament Greek*, p. 115. Thus,

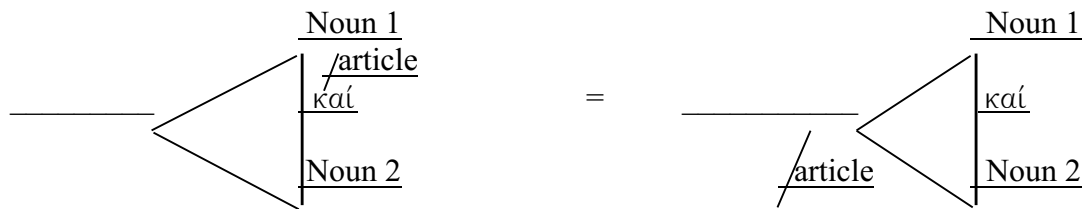
<sup>6</sup> "A proposition distributes a term if it refers to all members of the class designated by the term." -- Irving M. Copi, *Introduction to Logic*, p. 153. It should be obvious that in the case of a singular substantive restricted by a definite article refers *ipso facto* to all members of the class because there is only one member. Hence, the definite article distributes the noun it modifies. This logical property of the article makes further analysis of its use easier to pursue.



Except when Predicate Nominative 1) precedes the verb, or 2) is a proper noun.

### Nouns in Series - Granville Sharp Rule

With nouns connected by *καί* -- the following rule by Granville Sharp of a century back still proves to be true: "When the copulative *καί* connects two nouns of the same case, if the article or any of its cases precedes the first of the said nouns or participles, and is not repeated before the second noun or participle, the latter always relates to the same person that is expressed or described by the first noun or participle; i.e. it denotes a farther description of the first-named person." -- Dana and Mantey, *A Manual Grammar of the Greek New Testament*, p. 147.



## Greek Vocabulary – “To See,” and “To Know”

### Active Voice

Present	Imperfect	Future I Aorist	II Aorist	I Perfect	II Perfect	Pluperfect
εἶδῶ ὁράω	εἶρων	εἴσομαι ὄψομαι	εἶδον	εώρακα έόρακα	οἶδα έωράκειν	ᾔδειν

### Middle Voice

Present	Imperfect	I Aorist	II Aorist	Perfect	Pluperfect
		ὥψάμην			

### Passive Voice

Future	Future Perfect	I Aorist	II Aorist
ὀφθήσομαι		ὤφθην	

εἶδῶ [ 1) of perception, by sight -- *see, perceive*. 2) *feel, become aware of* (of any kind of sense perception). 3) *See, notice, note*. 4) *consider*. 5) *experience*. 6) *visit*.] εἶδῶ has no present active indicative in use, so ὁπάω [ 1) *to see, catch sight of, notice* -- of sense perception. 2) *experience, witness*. 3) figuratively, of mental or spiritual perception. 4) mentally *to look at* or *examine*.] is used instead. The perfect tense forms of ὁπάω (e.g. εἶδον) are used idiomatically in the sense of “to know, have knowledge of, be acquainted with;” that is, “to see with the mind's eye,” and are similar to the English expression “I see,” meaning. “I understand.”! The tense intensifies the actual meaning of “see,” as “I am in the state of having seen, and I now understand,” hence, “I know rationally.”

The cognate εἶδος; means “*form outward appearance; kind; sight*” from which we get the notion of “*form*,” or “*ideal*” that is the subject of Platonic epistemology.