

STUDY OF FIRST EPISTLE OF JOHN

I. AUTHORSHIP: John the Apostle

1. Traditional position--Polycarp, Irenaeus, Clement of Ale.
2. Internal evidence.
 - (1) He claims to have been a physical witness to the Word of Life.
 - (2) He speaks with an apostolic authority.
 - (3) The contemplative mystical note sounds like John.

II. PLACE AND DATE OF WRITING.

1. Place: John spent the last days of his life in Ephesus; here he probably wrote I John.
2. Date: 90-95--late in his life.
 - (1) The assumed mature experience of the readers.
 - (2) The long established personal relations between readers and writer.
 - (3) The father-child relationship in the letter.
 - (4) The well-developed heresy of Gnosticism.

III. OCCASION AND PURPOSE

1. Occasion

Gnostic Cerinthus said that Jesus was physical son of Joseph and the "Christ" came upon him at the baptism and left him at the cross.

Gnosticism: popular form of Graeco-Roman philosophy. It was dualistic. Matter was essentially evil and spirit was essentially good. This resulted in a denial of the humanity of Jesus. The supreme emphasis was knowledge. Salvation was attained by knowing theories, rather than by trusting a person.

2. Purpose

- (1) Polemical: against the theory of Cerinthus as to the Person of Christ; and to set forth the true view of Christ.
- (2) Religious--to set forth some of the fundamental truths of Christianity.

IV. DESTINATION OF THE LETTER

Intended for the churches of Asia Minor.

V. CHARACTERISTICS OF THE LETTER

1. Encyclical--meant for many churches.
2. Polemical
3. Homiletical
4. Simple in its vocabulary and profound in its truth.
5. Intuition rather than logical.
6. Makes great use of contrast.
7. Makes great uses of strong emphatic terms.
8. Makes great use of repetition and parallelism.

VI. ANALYSIS

It develops in clusters around significant thoughts, such as righteousness, truth, regeneration, love and assurance.

PROLOGUE TO THE EPISTLE 1:1-4

I. CONTRAST WITH PROLOGUE TO THE GOSPEL.

1. Gospel emphasis on Divine nature.
2. Epistle emphasis on Human nature.

II. THE THEME: WORD OF LIFE applied to Christ.

1. Nature of the Word 1,2

- (1) Eternal--"From the beginning", antedates creation.
- (2) Human--seen, handled, really human.
 - a. Heard--ear witness
 - b. seen--eye witness
 - c. looked--contemplative witness, scrutinize closely.
 - d. Handled--touch witness.

2. Proclamation of the Word--verse 3/

"Declare" is the main verb; present tense--the continuous nature of this declaration.

- (1) The purpose of proclamation: "That you may have fellowship with us."
- (2) Meaning of fellowship: sharing together in a common partnership. Joint-fellowship: with the Father and Son.

3. Written Proclamation of the Word--verse 4.

"We write." Purpose: "that your joy may be full."

MAIN BODY OF EPISTLE

I. RIGHTEOUSNESS--1:5-2:11

1. Righteousness conditions our fellowship with God. 1:5-2:2

- (1) Character of God demands righteousness for fellowship
God is light: moral, holiness.
- (2) Character of man demands righteousness for fellowship
6,8. He habitually walks in darkness.
 - a. The claim to fellowship denied by impure living.
"Walk" is present tense--habitual practice.

b. Denial of the principle of sin--verse 8. No sinful nature.

- (a) Such a man is self-deceived--does not know himself.
- (b) The truth not in him--the truth as it is in Christ--he is not a Christian.

(3) The provision of God enables to fellowship--vs. 7,9, 2:1,2.

- a. Through cleansing in the blood of Christ.
 - (a) The condition of cleansing: walking in the light. Continuous action--the purity of life is not only a result but also a condition.
 - (b) The nature of the cleansing: continuous and complete.
 - (c) By-product and proof of cleansing: fellowship among believers.

- b. Through Forgiveness of Sin
 - (a) Condition; "if we confess"--customary habit.
 - (b) Surety of forgiveness: faithful and righteous--faithful to His word--Christ and cross.
Righteous: not only condemns but redeems.
 - (c) The accomplishment of forgiveness: cleansing.
- c. Through the Intercession of Christ--2:1,2
 - (a) The ideal: do not sin
 - (b) Reality: and if any sin.
 - (c) Nature of the intercession: advocate--one called alongside to help and defend.
 - (d) Qualifications:
 - i. With the Father--face to face
 - ii. The righteous One--Character.
- d. Through the Propitiary work of Christ.
 - (a) To render favorable--the offering that makes God favorable to man.
 - (b) Universality of the Propitiation: the whole world.

2. Righteousness Conditions Knowledge of God. 2:3-6

- (1) The claim: I know
- (2) The evidence--verse 3--He keeps his commandments; lives obediently, follows his will; perfects His love.

PREACHING IDEAS IN THE PASSAGE

Fellowship

- 1. Founded on facts of Gospel.
- 2. With Father and Son
- 3. With One another
- 4. Demands a life of holiness
- 5. Brings a deepening sense of sin.
- 6. Demands renewed confession of sin
- 7. Brings continual cleansing
- 8. Creates desire to bring others into this fellowship

Sin and the Christian

The message of the Preacher

- 1. From God
- 2. Centers in Christ
- 3. Purposed to bring men into fellowship with God.

Assurance

Person of Christ

- 1. Described as the Word of Life
- 2. Revealed as to His nature
 - (1) Eternal
 - (2) Divine
 - (3) Manifested, human

THE FIRST EPISTLE OF JOHN

God is Pro-Life

God is Pro-Fire

God is pro-light

1:1

ἐκ τῆς ἀρχῆς "That which was from beginning..."

- (1) Beginning, origin in the absolute sense--from the very beginning. (A & G)
- (2) ἦν not ἐγένετο, came into being. It was already existing when the succession of life began. (Vincent)
- (3) "From the beginning--" It is here contrasted with "in the beginning." The difference is that by the words, "in the beginning," the writer places himself at the initial point of creation, and looking back into eternity, describes that which was already in existence when creation began. "The Word was in the beginning." In the words, "from the beginning" the writer looks back to the initial point of time, and describes what has been in existence from that point onward. Thus, "in the beginning," characterizes the absolute Divine Word as He was before the foundation of the world. "From the beginning" characterizes His development in time. (Vincent)
- (4) The similarity to the opening of the Gospel is manifest: but the thought is somewhat different. There the point is that the Word existed before creation; here that the Word existed before the incarnation. The meaning of beginning must always depend upon the context. Here it is explained by "was with the Father" in verse 2. It does not mean the beginning of the Gospel, or even of the world, but a beginning prior to that. It is equivalent to "from all eternity." (Cambridge)
- (5) The Logos already was when time began. It "was" ere it "was manifested." (E.G.T.)
- (6) Why the five neuters (1-3)? The neuter conveys more than the masculine would, namely, in addition to the person all that the person was and is and ever will be for us. (Lenski)

ὃ ἀκηκόαμεν "Which we have heard" (Perfect Active Indicative 1st person, plural of ἀκούω)

- (1) The use of the perfect tense: denotes action "absolutely past which lasts on in its effects." This implies past, present, and future. Past act, present effects, and future consequence. For tomorrow's present is today's future. "We heard Him, it is still ringing in our ears, and we will never forget it."
- (2) With this clause we pass from eternity into time. The first clause refers to something prior to creation. Here both creation and the Incarnation have taken place. (Cambridge)

1:1

- (3) How they were able to do this verse 2 tells us twice: He was manifested, He was Incarnated, the Logos became flesh and tented among us. (Lanski)
- (4) Literally of sense perception. It is possible to hear and yet not to hear. Matt. 13:13. (A & G)
- (5) Some men we forget in a moment, but Christ's message has a permanent effect upon those who hear and understand--it has abiding results.

ὅ ἐωράκαμεν "Which we have seen." (Perfect, Active, Ind., 1st, plural of ὁράω)

- (1) Widened in a sense to mean, "I experience," Luke 3:16. (Souter)
- (2) Figure of mental and spiritual perception--to understand. (A & G)
- (3) Not hearsays, but the testimony of eye-witnesses. (E G T)
- (4) "With our eyes," emphasizing the direct, personal experience in a marvelous matter. (Vincent)
- (5) "With our eye" is added for emphasis. The Apostle would have us know the 'see' is no figure of speech, but the expression of a literal fact. (Cambridge)

ὃ ἑώρακεν "Which we beheld" (Aorist Active, Ind., 1st., plural of ὁράω)

- (1) See, behold, with physical eyes, but in such a way that a supernatural impression is gained. (John sees the dove and also becomes aware that it is the Spirit, John 1:33. In John 1:14-"We saw the person and work of Christ and perceived in them the Divine glory.) (A & G)
- (2) A spectacle which broke on our astonished vision. The seems to be the force of the transition from perfect to aorist. (E G T)
- (3) The word suggests a steady and deliberate gazing upon. John may be thinking of a special occasion. (N I C)
- (4) Making the historical manifestation to special witnesses. The word denotes calm, continuous contemplation of an object which remains before the spectator. (Vincent)

1:1

- (5) Note on the difference between ὁράω and θεάομαι.

ὁράω denotes a physical act, but emphasizes the mental discernment accompanying it, and points to the result rather than the act. θεάομαι is gazing with a view to satisfying the eye, while ὁράω is beholding more critically, with an inward spiritual or mental interest in the thing beheld, and with a view to acquire knowledge about it. (Vincent)

θεωρεῖν would be used of a general officially reviewing or inspecting an army; θεάσθαι of a lay spectator looking at the parade. (Thayer)

- (6) "Beheld" implies a deliberate and perhaps pleasurable sight. We can hear and see without intending to do so; but we can scarcely behold and handle unintentionally. (Cambridge)
- (7) "We did actually behold." As the perfect stresses the continuing effect, so the aorist stresses the actuality. (Lenski)

καὶ αἱ χεῖρες ἡμῶν ἐψηλάφησαν "And our hands have handled."
(Aor. Pass. Ind., 3rd, plural of ψηλαφάω)

- (1) Feel about for, grope after, handle. (A & G)
- (2) The word is used of the fumbling of a blind man in Gen. 27:12, LXX. (E & T)
- (3) "Handle" seems to be a direct reference to the test demanded by Thomas and offered to the other disciples. No greater proof of the reality of His body before and after the Resurrection could be given. (Cambridge)
- (4) It occurs in the O.T. (Deut. 28:29; Job 5:14; 12:25) of groping in the dark. Now that the eternal Logos has been manifested, we no longer fumble in the dark, feeling after God; in Christ we have grasped hold of reality. (N I C)

περὶ τοῦ Λόγου τῆς ζωῆς "Concerning the Word of Life."

- (1) περὶ root meaning: around. With the genitive case: about, concerning--implies general relationships. (D & M)
- (2) τοῦ Λόγου of a statement of definite content, declaration--
of revelation by God: a. God's word, command, commission.
b. The Divine revelation through Christ and His messengers, the Christian message, the Gospel.

The Logos: it is the distinctive teaching of the Fourth Gospel that this Divine 'Word' took on human form in a historical person, that is, in Jesus. "There is one God who has revealed Himself through Jesus Christ His Son, who is the Word preceding from silence." (A & G)

- (3) βίωσις used of life in the physical sense; means of sustenance, livelihood. It is used of the supernatural life belonging to God and Christ, which the believers will receive in the future but which they also enjoy here and now. (A & G)
- (4) This is the second person of the Godhead who is called the "Word" because He is the complete and final revelator of the will and the thought of God. Life--is the divine essence intself in its personality and activity. He who "is the Life" eternal and in eternity was manifested as the Bearer of Life to us who were dead in our sins. (Lenski)
- (5) Genitive with a preposition--the preposition is strongly in favor of "Word", i.e. the personal Logos, rather than "word," i.e. doctrine. The "Word" means the Son of God, in whom had been hidden from all eternity all that God had to say to man, and who is the living expression of the nature and will of God. But of the two terms, Word and Life, the latter is here the emphatic one as shown by verse 2, and by the fact that 'the Life' is one of the main topics of the epistle, whereas 'the Word' is not mentioned again. The Word which is the Life is the meaning. Christ is at once the Word of God and the life of men. (Cambridge)
- (6) The Word who gives life. (E G T)
- (7) He is the Logos who is the Life and who communicates to all believers the fulness of the life eternal. (N I C)
- (8) Logos is, first of all, a collecting or collection both of things in the mind, and of words by which they are expressed. It therefore signifies both the outward form by which the inward thought is expressed, and the inward thought itself. In John the Word is the Revealer and interpreter of the hidden being of God; the reflection and the visible image of God; an the organ of all His manifestations to the world. The phrase 'the Word of Life' occurs nowhere else in the New Testament. 'Life' expresses the nature of the Word. (Vincent)

Translation of verse one: "That which was already existing from the very beginning, which we have heard, and continue to hear, which we saw with our eyes with the result that we had a continuous spiritual perception and experience, which we deliberately and steadfastly gazed upon, which our hands actually handled and investigated as a blind man groping in the dark--concerning the Word which is the Life and which gives Life."

1:2

καὶ ἡ ζωὴ ἐφανερώθη "And the life was manifested" (Aorist passive, Ind., 3rd, sing. of)

- (1) Reveal, make known, show--passive: become visible, be revealed. (A & G)
- (2) Corresponding with "the Word was made flesh." John 1:14. The two phrases, however, present different aspects of the same truth. 'The Word became flesh', contemplates simply the historic fact of incarnation. 'The Life manifested,' sets forth the unfolding of that fact in the various operations of life. The one denotes the objective process of the incarnation as such, the other the result of that process related to human capacity of receiving and understanding it. The manifestation of life was a result of the incarnation of the Word, but it is not co-extensive with it. (Vincent)
- (3) Became such that He could be known by men. (Cambridge)
- (4) Verse 2 is a parenthesis reiterating the assurance of the reality of the manifestation. The Apostle heaps assurance upon assurance with elaborate emphasis. (Cambridge)
- (5) The aprist states the past fact. The verb includes the whole manifestation from the incarnation to the ascension but especially from the baptism until the ascension, the time the Apostles beheld His glory. (Lanski)

καὶ ἐώρακαμεν "And we have seen." (See under vs. 1)

- (1) This is the result of the manifestation: the Divine life has become perceptible by the senses. (Cambridge)
- (2) For the second time John says "and we have seen" and lets this one verb suffice; he uses the perfect to indicate the extent of their seeing the manifestation. (Lanski)

καὶ μαρτυροῦμεν "And we are testifying." (Present, act, Ind. 1st plural of)

- (1) Bear witness, confirm, testify, speak well of, approve--testify of Jesus. (A & G)
- (2) According to the Lord's parting charge. (E G T)
- (3) One of John's characteristic words. (Vincent)
- (4) Testimony to the truth with a view to producing belief in the truth, on which eternal life depends. (Cambridge)

1:2

- (5) Not for themselves alone have they seen, but they have seen as witnesses who are ever to testify and declare what they have seen. (Lenski)

καὶ ἀπαγγελλόμεν ὑμῖν "And we are declaring to you." (Present
(Active, Ind. 1st, P, of)

- (1) Report, announce, proclaim. (A & G)
- (2) With preposition ἀπὸ the emphasis is on the source of the message. (Vaughn)
- (3) The message comes from God. (Vincent)
- (4) Observe the note of wonder in the Apostle's language. Speech fails him. He labours for expression, adding definition to definition. (E G T)
- (5) Three ideas in the Apostolic message: Have seen--bear witness show-- experience, testimony, announcement. (Vincent)

τὴν ζωὴν τὴν αἰώνιον "The life the eternal."

- (1) Without beginning or end; of God. (A & G)
- (2) The life, even the eternal life. αἰώνιος eternal, describes the life in its quality of not being measured by time, a larger idea than that of mere duration. (Vincent)
- (3) Here both "the Life" and "the life, the eternal one," have the article of previous reference which refers back to "the Logos of the Life." Still more decisive is the relative--"who as such was with the Father." He adds "eternal" because he wants us to understand that Christ the Life was a person whose distinctive quality it is that He was with the Father even in all eternity. (Lenski)
- (4) The repetition of the definite article emphasizing the two ideas of "life" and "eternal." (N. I. C.)
- (5) John's "eternal life" has nothing to do with time, but depends upon our relation to Jesus Christ. Eternal life can be possessed in this world. (Cambridge)

ὅστις ἦν πρὸς τὸν πατέρα "Who was with the Father."

- (1) "Which was indeed with the Father"--it is not the simple but compound relative, denoting that what follows is a special attribute; "which was such as to be with the Father." "With the Father," indicates the distinct Personality of the "Life." Was: at home with, face to face with the Father. (Cambridge)

- (2) πρός --the face to face preposition, employed for living relationships, intimate converse. (Lanski)
- (3) ἥτις --not the simple relative, ἥ, which, but defining the quality of life and having at the same time a kind of confirmatory and explanatory force of the word 'eternal'; seeing that it was a life divine in its nature--"With the Father"--and therefore independent of temporal conditions. (Vincent)
- (4) πρός τὸν πατέρα --~~In living, active relation with the Father.~~ The life came forth from the Father and was manifested to men, but to the end that it might take men unto itself and unite them with the Father. The life eternally tended to the Father, even as it emanated from Him. The manifestation of life to men was a revelation of life, as, first of all and beyond all, centering in God. Hence, though life, abstractly, returns to God, as it proceeds from God, it returns bearing the redeemed world in its bosom. (Vincent)
- (5) The preposition of motion with the verb of repose involves eternity of relation with activity and life. (Coleridge)
- (6) πρός With the accusative--1. of place, towards. 2. in company with someone. (A & G)

καὶ ἐφανερώθη ἡμῖν "And was manifested to us."

✓ The manifestation would be little to us, if we had no share in it. But that Being who was from all eternity with the Father, has been made known and has been made known to us. (Cambridge)

Translation of verse two: "And the life was made known, and we saw it with the abiding result that we still see it, and we are continually testifying (concerning Jesus) and are continually reporting to you the life which is eternal which was at home with the Father in personal communion and fellowship from all eternity, and was made visible and known to us."

1:3

ὅ ἐώρακαμεν καὶ ἀκηκόαμεν, ἀπαγγέλλομεν
καὶ ὑμῖν

"That which we have seen and heard we are declaring to you also." (See above v. 1)

- (1) John continues as he began in verse 1. But this is not mere repetition for the sake of emphasis. The repetition is now illuminated by all that verse 2 adds. All that verse 1 conveyed is thus revealed in verse 3. (Lanski)
- (2) καὶ ὑμεῖς "You also," who have not seen Jesus. (E G T)
- (3) καὶ ὑμῖν, it is we who are described; we that are pointed out, who have not seen and heard Jesus as contrasted with the eye-witnesses. (Vincent)

- (4) In verse 1, he is thinking mainly of what he has to declare;
in verse 3, he is thinking mainly of why he declares this.
(Cambridge)

ἵνα καὶ ὑμεῖς κοινωνίαν ἔχητε μεθ' ἡμῶν "In order that you also might have fellowship with us." (Present, Act., Subj., 2, plural.)

- (1) Association, communion, fellowship, close relationship. Participation, sharing in something. Phil. 3:10-"sharing in his suffering." (A & G)
- (2) Used of fellowship with persons almost always. John's conception of the Church: each member of it possesses the Son, and through Him the Father; and this common possession gives communion with all members as well as with the Divine Persons. (Cambridge)
- (3) This word introduces us to one of the main thoughts of the Epistle. The true life in man, which comes through acceptance of Jesus as the Son of God, consists in fellowship with God and man. The word denotes a common interest. It comes from *κοινός*: common--a relation between individuals which involves a common interest and a mutual, active participation in that interest and in each other. Cooperation in the widest sense; participation in sympathy, suffering, and labor. (Vincent)
- (4) Not merely knowledge through hearsay of what the Apostles had known as eye-witnesses, but personal and direct communion with the Living Lord. (E G T)
- (5) It may have some reference to sharing worldly goods which marked the church in the early days. God shares all the good things of His grace with those who are His through vital union with Christ. Salvation leads them to a personal possession of all that God means them to have and enjoy. This sharing of His life commits the child of God to a life of holiness. (N I C)
- (6) ἵνα introduces adverbial clause of purpose--in order that. (Vaughn)

καὶ ἡ κοινωνία δὲ ἡ ἡμετέρα μετὰ τοῦ πατρὸς
καὶ μετὰ τοῦ υἱοῦ αὐτοῦ Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ.
"And the fellowship, moreover, of ours is with the Father and with His Son Jesus Christ."

- (1) μετὰ with-With genative; in company with someone--to denote the company in which an experience or an activity takes place. (A&G)
- (2) Note the repeated preposition, μετὰ, with, distinguishing the two persons and coordinating the fellowship with the Father and with the Son, thus implying sameness of essence. ἡ κοινωνία δὲ ἡ ἡμετέρα, The fellowship, that which is ours--possessive pronoun, indicating fellowship as a distinguishing mark of Christians rather than as merely something enjoyed by them. (Vincent)

(3) καὶ adds this, δὲ marks it as being another point. There is no fellowship with the Father only--Father and the Son. Apart from Jesus Christ no man is in fellowship with God. (Lenski)

(4) There is a gracious constraint on all who know this blessed fellowship to bring others into it. (E G T)

1:4 καὶ ταῦτα γράφουμεν ὑμεῖς ἵνα ἡ χαρὰ ὑμῶν
ἢ πεπληρωμένη
"And these things we are writing in order that our joy may be filled."

(1) Christians should long for fulness of joy, so that they may have not just a drop or two in the bottom of the cup but may have a cup that runs over. (N I C)

(2) He states the purpose. Both "write" and "We" are emphatic. It is a permanent message which is sent, and it is sent by Apostolic authority. That your joy may be made full and remain so. The joy is that serene happiness which is the result of conscious union with God and good men, and a conscious possession of eternal life. (Cambridge)

FIRST MAIN DIVISION OF THE EPISTLE

1:5

(1) Light, that illuminates the spirit and soul of man, is general the element in which the redeemed person lives, rich in blessings without and within. Used of Messenianic salvation, the Gospel. (A & G)

(2) The being of God is always viewed from one angle because our finite minds cannot take in the whole of God with one mental grasp. (Lenski)

(3) A statement of the absolute nature of God. Not a light, not the light, but God IS light, in His very nature. Physically it represents glory; intellectually, truth; morally, holiness. In the Old Testament, light is often the medium of God's visible manifestation to men. It was the first manifestation of God in creation. (Vincent)

(4) "No darkness at all." The denial is very strong, the negation being doubled in the Greek; none whatever, none at all. Moral darkness--sin and error. John is laying the foundation of Christian ethics, of which the very first principle is that there is a God who intellectually, morally, and spiritually is light. (Cambridge)

1:6

1:6

- (1) Walk expresses not merely action, but habitual action. A life in moral darkness can no more have communion with God than a life in a coal pit can have communion with the sun. (Cambridge)
- (2) Not merely must we know the truth, or understand the truth, or speak the truth; we must DO the truth. Truth expresses that which is highest, most completely in conformity with the nature and will of God, in any sphere of being. (Vincent)
- (3) The life of practical godliness is expected of us. We may say that we have fellowship with God, but no amount of fair speech will make up for the want of such practical godliness. (N I C)

1:7

- (1) To make steady progress in the life of conformity to the revealed will of God, who is light. (N I C)
- (2) To walk in the light is above all to believe the light, the truth, and then also to obey it in word and in deed. What is in the soul will become manifest in the conduct; this is not a mere claim that contradicts open evidence. (lenski)
- (3) Fellowship with God exhibits and proves itself by fellowship with Christians. (Vincent)
- (4) Cleanseth-Note the present tense--what goes on continually. (Cambridge)
- (5) The blood means the life freely given, freely sacrificed as an atonement for sin. (N I C)

1:8

- (1) Distingusih "to have no sin," and "have not sinned," corresponding to the sinful principle and its manifestation in specific acts. Deceive: lead astray. (E G T)
- (2) The truth: the whole Gospel. All reality is in God. (Vincent)
- (3) John is dealing with the heresy of perfectionism. He is dealing with indwelling or original sin. No one who really understands the exacting requirements of God's law can ever think of himself as sinless. (N I C)
- (4) We do for ourselves, what Satan the arch-deceiver endeavors do for us. The truth is not in us because we are in an atmosphere of self-made darkness which shuts the truth out. (Cambridge)

1:9

- (1) The confession of the particular sins which we have committed is a guarantee of sincerity. God is faithful to His promise to us. He keeps His promise of mercy without losing His character of righteousness and justice. (Cambridge)
- (2) Genuine, wholehearted confession involves forsaking of that sin. The confession is to God. (N I C)
- (3) Confess--to say the same thing as another--to admit the truth of an accusation. The plural "sins" indicates that the confession is to be specific as well as general. (Vincent)
- (4) He would be unrighteous if He broke His promise ratified by the blood of Jesus. (E G T)

1:10

- (1) Perfectionism has two causes: 1. the stifling of conscience; 2. Ignorance of His word. (E G T)
- (2) Sin--committed sins; sin regarded as an act. Word: the Divine message. (Vincent)
- (3) Perfect tense: present result of past action: we may claim that we are in the condition of having avoided acts of sin. (N I C)
- (4) God's revelation of Himself has no home in our hearts. (Cambridge)

2:1

- (1) Advocate: one summoned to the side of another especially to serve as his helper, spokesman, or intercessor. (Cambridge)
- (2) God is not merely judge, He is the Father and our Advocate is with the Father, always at home with Him. (N I C)
- (3) By the "we have" John assumes the possibility of sinful acts on the part of Christians, and of himself in common with them and their common need of the intervention of the Divine Advocate. (Vincent)

2:2

- (1) Propitiation: the means of appeasing. (Vincent)
- (2) Our Advocate does not plead that we are innocent or adduce extenuating circumstances. He acknowledges our guilt and presents His vicarious work as the ground of our acquittal. (E G T)

- (3) Not Christ has provided the propitiation, or has offered it, but He IS the propitiation. He is high priest, altar and sacrifice all in one. (N I C)
- (4) This condition of things is perpetual; it is not something which took place once for all long ago. (Cambridge)

2:3

- (1) Know: Progressive knowledge gained by experience. Divorced from holiness of life, no enlightenment can be a knowledge of God. There is only one way of proving that we know God, and that is by loving obedience to his will. (Cambridge)
- (2) Keeping the commandments means being vigilant and watchful to discover them and to observe them strictly--such is the force of the word. (N I C)
- (3) Know--perceive; by experience from day to day. (Vincent)

2:4

- (1) The previous statement is enforced by a strong statement of the opposite of it. (N I C)
- (2) By the negative which he uses, John states the case as gently as possible, without asserting that any such person exists. (Cambridge)

2:5

- (1) Word: a wider expression than commandments, covering the sum total of the revelation of God's will. Obedience, not feeling, is the test of love. (Cambridge)
- (2) The redeeming love of God has reached its end, has attained to the goal that love had in view. (N I C)
- (3) The love which God has made known and which answers to His nature. (Vincent)

2:6

- (1) We get like Him by imitating him, and our likeness to Him is evidence to ourselves and to the world that we are His. (E G T)
- (2) Ought: obligation, put as a debt. (Vincent)
- (3) The man who makes this high claim for himself should feel bound, by an inward obligation springing out of a sense of infinite debt to Christ. (N I C)
- (4) He who declares his position is morally bound to act up to the declaration which he has made. (Cambridge)

2:7

- (1) From the beginning--from the beginning of your Christian lives.
(N I C)
- (2) The commandment of love is both old and new. Old, because John readers have had it from the beginning of their Christian experience. New, because, in the unfolding of the Christian experience, it has developed new power, meaning, and obligation and closer correspondance with the facts of Christ's life.
(Vincent)
- (3) Beloved: about to enjoin love, he begins by loving.
(E G T)

2:8

- (1) From another point of view, it is a new commandment. It is a fact that hatred of one's brother clouds the soul and shuts out the light. (E G T)
- (2) Darkness is never personal; it is the result of the absence of God. (Cambridge)

2:9

- (1) Again John dwells on the thought that saying is not enough; profession must be tested by conduct. He that says he is in the light and hates his brother is in reality in darkness up to this very moment, though the light is shining all around him. (N I C)
- (2) Men fall into two classes, those who are in fellowship with God, and therefore walk in light and love, and those who are not in fellowship with God, and walk in darkness and hate.
(Vincent)
- (3) He says and perhaps thinks that he is in the light, but he has never seen the light; it has never shone on him.
(E G T)

2:10

- (1) He does not merely catch glimpses of the light, but abides in it; there is nothing in him to trip him and make him fall.
(E G T)
- (2) His home is in the light. Stumbling: snare, or trap.
(N I C)
- (3) Not that he leads others astray, but that there is nothing to cause himself to fall; it is his own dark condition that is contemplated. (Cambridge)

2:11

- (1) The darkness is his home and the scene of his activity.
(Cambridge)

- (2) He has no idea where he is going and is in the danger every moment of falling. (N I C)
- (3) The blindness is no new state into which he has come.
(Vincent)
- (4) John recognizes no neutral attitude between love and hatred.
(E G T)

I John 1:1,2

(1) The things John saw and heard concerned the Word of Life.

Word - Logos, refers to the total concept of something. Christ is the Logos of God in the sense that He is the total concept of God seen through a human medium, His humanity consisting of His human body, His human limitations, and His human life lived on earth in the power of the Spirit.

The definite article is used which indicates the particular life that God is and which was revealed in concrete form in the humanity of our Lord.

V. 2 - This life which God is was manifested.
"To make manifest or visible or known what has been hidden or unknown."

This life which is invisible was made visible to the human race through the humanity of our Lord. We put light which is invisible through a prism, break it up into its component parts, and it becomes visible. The beauty of the life that God is, broken up into its various parts such as love, grace, humility, etc., is seen through the prism of the human life of Christ.

The Incarnation of the Son of God was the making visible to human understanding, the life which God is.

Eternal - Since this life is without beginning it must be uncreated, thus, diety in its essence.

Life - The absolute fullness of life, both essential and ethical, which belongs to God.

The ethereal and spiritual qualities of this life which God is, are communicated to the sinner when the latter places his faith in Christ as Saviour, and this becomes the new, animating, energizing, motivating principle which transforms the experience of that individual, and the saint thus lives a Christian life.

The message of John is that since the believer is a partaker of this life, it is an absolute necessity that he show the ethical and spiritual qualities that are part of the essential nature of

I John 1:1,2, cont'd

of God, in his own life.

If these are entirely absent, John says, that person is devoid of the life of God, and is unsaved.

The ethical and spiritual qualities of this life were exhibited to the human race in the earthly life of Christ. His life thus becomes the pattern of what our lives should be in holiness, self-sacrifice, etc.
(Wuest)

(2) The Apostle sets forth Christ as having come into human experience from the eternity of the past. Having been pre-existent He became manifested.

Heard, seen, beheld, handled - This expresses a progress of experience in relation to Christ. It suggests a deepening degree of intimacy. The perfect tenses signify the abiding effect of the experiences. The aorist marks the definiteness of the events referred to in the personal contact of the Apostle with Christ.

Concerning the Word of Life: This phrase gives the immediate subject about which John is writing.

The Word of Life combines the two truths that He is Himself life and that He imparts it, as the life (John 14:6), He is the personal expression of what God is, the interpreter of His nature (Cf. Jn 1:18), but as He also Himself said, He came that they might have life. (Jn 10:10).

V. 2 Manifested - This verse expands and confirms the statement in v. 1 stressing the personality of "the Word of Life."

(Life became personified in Christ)

V. 3 - The Life was manifested not merely to reveal God but to bring the redeemed into relationship with Him.
(Vine)

(3) The Gospel emphasizes the deity of Christ while the epistle emphasizes the humanity of Christ.

I John 1:1,2 cont'd

The prologue of the Gospel sets forth the actual diety resident in humanity and thereby revealing God to the world. The prologue of the epistle sets forth diety revealed through actual humanity.

We have seen - The perfect tense signifies that the impression still abides. It is an object which remains in memory as having been literally seen with the physical eyes.

Looked up - to scrutinize closely - describes the intentness with which they contemplated him; emphasizes the thoroughness with which he, in his humanity, was observed.

V. 2. The Logos was the active expression and perceptible manifestation of diety.

V. 3. It is the believer's privilege to participate in the blessedness of the divine life and divine nature. In V. 4 John reveals that he cannot be fully happy until he is sure that the readers share his conviction of truth and his experience of redemption.

(Dana)

(4) hands handled - denotes not the bare handling, but the exploring use of the hands that tests by handling.

John asserts the abiding reality of the audible and visible manifestation of the eternal life in Christ. (Actually incarnate - John says it twice).

1 - John witnessed the supreme manifestation of God. The secret of the universe stood unveiled before his eyes, the everlasting fact and truth of things, "That which was from the beginning."

The source of spiritual life to men is that which was, in the first instance, the source of natural life to all creatures.

John affirms in the strongest terms possible the fact that "the eternal was manifested," that it took visible, palpable form of flesh and blood in Jesus, the Son of God (Cf. v.7). This life of life, the essential offspring of the diety, became incarnate that it might hold fellowship with men; it was slain, that its blood might cleanse them from iniquity.

I John 1:1, 2 con'td

- God's secret lying deep at the heart of time, lodged and wrapped up in the world from its foundation, till it "was manifested" in the Only-begotten. Such was the life coming from the Father that appeared to the eyes of the witnesses of Jesus, the one life and love pervading all things, the source and ground of finite being.

2 - John asserts the actuality of the revelation of the life of God in Christ

John feels that the things he declares demand the strongest evidence. He has not believed them lightly, and he does not expect others to believe them lightly.

3 - There is founded upon the fact attested by John, and derived from the eternal life in Christ, a divine fellowship for men. v. 3

To communicate these truths, to see this fellowship established among men is the apostle's delight, the business and delight of all those who share his faith and serve his Master.

If the life manifested in Christ was eternal, then it is living and real today.

The manifestation of God in Christ makes fellowship with God possible.

(Findlay)

Notes on I John 1:5-2:2

(1) With striking logical accuracy John begins with the essential nature of God - "God is light".

That light has been able to search the heart of man only as it has beamed across Calvary.

Verse 6 One must ignore the character of God if he is to suppose that he can persist in a course of moral corruption and still have fellowship with God.

There are those actually making the claim that they lived in fellowship with God, and yet continued in unrestrained corruption. To have fellowship with God implies a moral affinity. There could be no fellowship between rankly different characters.

There can be no common experience with the divine if "we walk in the darkness."

For me to claim fellowship with such perfect light and live in the darkness of moral corruption, was a claim false on the face of it. Such a course of action is obviously self-contradictory, and out of accord with fundamental truth. John laid verse 5 as a premise, and in verse 6 draws his conclusion.

There must be a spiritual cleansing by virtue of the atoning work of Jesus before one is fitted for that higher fellowship of the Christian life.

John presupposes that it is possible for a Christian to attain to a state where it is morally consistent for him to have fellowship with God.

There are two predicates of this moral affinity.

(1) The first is the earnest effort of the believer to walk in the light "as He is in the light."

A contrast is drawn here between walking in the light and being in the light. The believer walks in the light; God is in the light. That in which the believer has a beginning and makes gradual progress is an abiding and eternal fact with God. Walking in the light is an ideal toward which the believer strives; it is a perfect and eternal realization with God.

The glory of the light in which God dwells may illumine the experience of the believer.

(2) The second predicate for the moral affinity which offers the basis for fellowship with God is the cleansing work of Christ.

To John this cleansing work of Christ provides the consistency in the believer's fellowship with God. "Cleanseth" is the progressive present of description - "goes on constantly cleansing us from all sin." It is complete cleansing and not sinless perfection which this verse contemplates.

Verse 9 - If we make a habit of confessing (customary present) our particular transgressions (the Greek uses the article here)

Have Not Sinned - Note the progress in John's denunciation of this error. He said first it is a lie to others (V. 6), then it is a lie to one's self (v. 8) and finally, it makes God a liar. (v. 10).

Chapter 2

The writer now hastens to caution his readers that he is not stressing this inevitable fact of sin and the privilege of forgiveness to give them further license for indulgence, but wishes to restrain them by assuring them of their guilt when they do sin, and encourage them with the consolation that when they do sin, they have one who will plead their cause with the Father.

Verse 1 - The objective of Christian experience is to be entirely free from sin. However, even here he still recognizes the inevitable. "If anyone does sin." The problem of sin must be settled in the personal experience of each individual.

If any one sins God is prepared to take care of the problem.

The ideal to be sought is that no single one of them shall ever commit any sin. This should be an ever present, ever thought an inevitably realized ideal.

Where sin does occur, God has made adequate provision for it.

Advocate - "One called alongside to help."

Sin presents a twofold problem: (1) We need a paraclete to enable us to weather the storm down here. This need the Holy Spirit supplies (I John 14:16). (2) But sin has also distorted our relation to God. We need a paraclete up there to take care of our interests at the Holy throne of God's judgment. This service Christ performs. The Holy Spirit is the earthly paraclete; Jesus is the heavenly paraclete.

Two qualifications: (1) He is "on equality with the Father." Such the Greek preposition signifies. The sinner has one pleading his cause who can approach God as an equal. (2) He is "Righteous." He stands vindicated. The sinner's advocate is one who has good standing at court.

(Dana)

I John

1. Times are Changing
2. Teaching is Changing *Duro*
3. Truth remains the same.

2. Safeguards against this
A - the apostolic word
B - the Anointing of the Spirit

I John 2:18-27

Verse 18

ἐσχατή	-	last, utmost, extreme
ᾠρα	-	an hour; sometimes generally of time;
γέγονα σιν	-	3 pers. pl. perf 2, ind. of
		Come into being.

(1) Last hour - occurs only here in N.T. John uses ᾠρα, hour, as marking a critical season - Jno. 2:4; 4:21; 23; 5:28. The dominant sense of the expression last days in the N.T., is that of a period of suffering and struggle preceding a divine victory. See Acts 2:17; James 5:3; I Pet. 1:20. Hence the phrase here does not refer to the end of the world, but to the period preceding a crisis in the advance of Christ's Kingdom, a changeful and troublous period, marked by the appearance of "many antichrists".

Antichrist - Peculiar to John in the N.T. The absence of the article shows its currency as a proper name. It may mean one who stands against Christ, or one who stands instead of Christ. While the false Christ is merely a pretender to the messianic office, the antichrist "assails Christ by proposing to do or to preserve what He did, while denying Him. Antichrist, then, is one who opposes Christ in the guise of Christ."

Cometh - ἐρχεται - The prophetic present, equivalent to is about to come. The same term is used of Christ (Jno. 14:3; 21:22).

(Vincent)

(2) A heresy had arisen in the bosom of the church, a fatal heresy, a denial of the possibility of the Incarnation, and therefore of the relation of fatherhood and sonship between God and man.

It was an evidence that the Gospel was winning its way. The era of simple and unquestioning faith in the apostolic testimony was past, and men were beginning to enquire and reason. A heresy has the same use in theology as a mistaken hypothesis in science: it provokes thought and leads to a deeper understanding. The heresy was "growing pains" for the church, *interesting evaluation*

The heresy - It arose within the church and claimed to be an enlightened Christianity. While calling themselves Christians, they were actually adversaries of Christ.

Beware of "improvements" on the old faith - *those who claim an enlightenment others do not have.*

Have arisen - in contrast to the true Christ who "was in the beginning" (EGT)

Note: Also the contrast with the thought in v. 24 - "That which you heard from the beginning" with "Have arisen". One of the telltale signs of false teaching is that it is new, *familiar message* differing from what we heard "from the beginning."

(3) Literally "a last hour." It is an eschatological term. According to the N.T., with the coming of Christ, with His death and resurrection and ascension, the last period of the world's history has begun.

The appearance of the antichrists on the scene is a sign of the beginning of the end, which may or may not be in the immediate future.

Christians should live as though the day of judgment is to be tomorrow, or today.
Cf. I Jn. 2:18, 22; 4:3; 2 Jno. 7

Antichrist: "You heard of him" John says: This was a favorite topic in early Christian teaching. Identified w/ Paul's "Man of Lawlessness" (2 Thess. 2:3) proving the personality of Antichrist.

Frequent in early Christian teaching: Justin Martyr, Irenaeus, Tertullian and Jerome deal frequently with the subject and all of these take antichrist to be a person.

He is yet to be revealed but has many forerunners.
(NIC)

(4) The last hour - Up until Christ's coming in the flesh, the course of things ran straight towards the end, nearing it by every step. But now, under the Gospel, it has altered its direction and runs, not towards the end, but along it, and on the brink of it; and is at all times near that great event which, did it run towards it, would at once run into it. Christ, then, is ever at our doors. (Bruce)

(5) It is in this section (2:18-28) that the crisis which called forth this letter comes into clearest view.

Note "the antichrist" (singular) and "many antichrists" (plural). The former "cometh"; the latter "have already arisen." The singular refers to one personal embodiment of evil to be manifested at the end of the age. The plural refers to those who embodied the antichristian spirit and were in a sense forerunners of the eschatological antichrist.

Robert Law explains that the Greek preposition anti, when prefixed to another word, denoted, "not opposition simply, but opposition in the guise of similarity." Antichrist then,

Verse 18

suggests someone who, assuming the guise of Christ, opposes Christ. He is both a counterfeit Christ and a rival Christ, a usurper and an adversary. (Vaughn)

(6) After two brief digressions, John reverts to his principle thesis, namely discrimination between the true and the false by means of tests. To the moral and social tests which he has already expounded (3-11), he now adds his doctrinal test. He first draws a clear distinction between the heretics and the genuine Christians (18-21); then defines the nature and effect of the heresy (22, 23); and finally describes the two safeguards against heresy which his readers already have (24-27). (Tyndale)

(7) John assures his readers that he is not writing primarily to teach them the truth, for they are already conversant with the things of the Kingdom. His desire is to confirm them in the truth they already know - because they are constantly menaced by error.

Children - παιδία - signifies the subordinate place of the child, the child as an object of instruction and care. (Dana)

(8) The enemy within is always the deadliest. This section and 4:1-6 are the only two direct attacks by the author. His principle and method should be noticed. The largest portion of the book is given to positive expressions about what it means to be enlightened, to know God, and to walk in truth. Error must be confronted directly but the best confrontation is a positive presentation of the truth - more positive truth, only a few passing and direct blows to error itself. A man is known by what he emphasizes. (Hendricks)

(9) Six times John writes μένειν, "to remain," in v. 24-28. These antichrists did not remain; they "went out from us." The governing idea is thus still the fellowship, the κοινωνία with God, which is also the Koinonia we have with one another. To remain is salvation, to go out is damnation. The antichrists went out and seek to induce us to go out. (Lenski)

(10) Little children - Again he uses the word that suggests his fatherly authority over them. He hopes that his "little children" will listen to him, their well-known and long-loved teacher and father in the spiritual life, rather than to these heretical teachers, to whom they are indebted for nothing. (Conner)

Faithful messenger

I John 2:18-27

Verse 19

(1) With us ^{μεθ' ἡμῶν} The emphasis is on fellowship rather than on the unity of believers as one body.
(Vincent)

(2) John now describes the relation of this antichristian teachers to the church. They did not arise in the heathen world; they were apostate Christians. They had at one time been members of the church, but only nominal members.

Note the fivefold repetition of "us" as indicating the Christian church. It was God's will and purpose that these spurious members should be known as such, that it should be made clear that they are not, any of them, of us.
(NIC)

(3) The early Christians recognized antichrist not only in the enemy who attacked them from without but also the enemy who seduced them from within.

To the tests already laid down - the test of obedience and one test of love - another, the test of perseverance or continuance, is now introduced. Steadfast persistence in the way of God, without turning aside from it, is inculcated and commended throughout the Biblical record. As the parable of the sower teaches, to make a spectacular beginning is not the important thing; it is those who "hear the word and accept it and bear fruit," who show the genuineness of their profession.
(*So this is what we emphasize & publicize. Not a novice*)

The fact that the dissenters had left the apostolic fellowship simply showed that at heart they had never belonged to it. Had they been securely built on the foundation of eternal life, they would not have been so easily shifted from it.

John is concerned that his readers should not be shaken in their faith by the secession of their former associates. The seceding group by their action had shown that they were not true believers at all.

"They went out so that it might be clear that not all in our company truly belong to it."
(NEB)

Membership in a Christian society does not always imply that one belongs to the persevering saints.
(Bruce)

(4) They went out from us - It was their own doing, a distinct secession from our communion: in the Greek; "from us" comes first by emphasis. (Note the recurring theme of continuing or abiding - they didn't continue with the fellowship and so proves they were not saved.)

Verse 19

Cf Acts 20:30

"But they were not of us" - They have a foreign origin. The single act of departure (Aorist) is contrasted with the lasting condition of being "of us" (imperfect). "Of us" here is exactly analogous to "of the Father" and "of the world" in vs. 16.

"They would have remained" Secession proves a want of fundamental union from the first. *God*

"They went out ... that they might be made manifest" *all'eva* - John's favorite construction, "in order that," again points to the Divine government of events. (Cf with "they went out." It was their choice but behind it was the governing hand of God).

The process which all through the Gospel the Apostle depicts as a necessary result of Christ's coming, still continues after His departure; the separation of light from darkness, of the Church from the world.

God does not will that any should reject truth; but He wills that those who reject should be made manifest. (Cambridge)

(5) Verse 19: a valuable verse, alluding to the event which we take to have prompted the letter.

- They did not disavow Christianity; they claimed to have superior Christian truth (v. 20). They prophesied (4:1) and taught (2:27), expounding the inadequacies of "ordinary" Christianity. *Similar message*

Verse 19 treats the single fact - They went out from us - and one problem it posed for the faithful. "How could the seceders do it? Weren't they members of our fellowship? No. If they had really belonged to us they would never have broken fellowship. Yet God's providence is in their seceding: it is His way whereby they all stand revealed in their true colors, as potentially NOT OF US. *76*

(It is significant that it is not their teaching but their leaving of the fellowship that made it obvious they were not saved. Cf Matt. 7:16, 20 - the most revealing thing about them is not their doctrine but their relation to the church, the status of their fellowship.)

Made manifest expresses purpose, but God's, not the heretics. In what the seceders did God's provident purpose was being served. He meant them to be revealed in this way. (No attempt was made to talk them into staying.) (Torch)

- 1 - a familiar message
- 2 - a faithful messenger
- 3 - Fellowship maintained

*It was just peer teaching
Not identified them as false
Bc he felt they abandoned the fellowship*

Verse 19

(6) Their lack of kinship with the people of God had always existed, but their separation brought it to light.

From the heretics point of view they left the church because they were dissatisfied with what they found there - they went out that they might follow their own peculiar beliefs.

But John saw their departure as providential. By leaving the Christian fellowship the heretics unwittingly fulfilled a purpose of God. That purpose was that they be seen in their true character and that their opportunity for damaging the church be limited. Painful though it must have been for the fellowship of believers, the secession of the antichrists was in reality a benefit to them. The threat which they now posed for the people of God was far less dangerous than it would have been had they continued formally as a part of the Christian group. (Vaughn)

(7) John distinguishes sharply between the they who left and the us who remain. By their defection they have given clear evidence of the true character.

Their departure was their unmasking. (Law)
What is counterfeit cannot remain forever hidden.
I Cor. 3:13 and 4:5; Luke 12:2.

Light is shed by this verse upon two important doctrines: the perseverance of the saints and the nature of the church.

If the false teachers had been of us, they would have continued with us. This is stated as a principle. Those who are of us stay with us. Future and final perseverance is the ultimate test of a past participation in Christ. (Cf Heb. 3:14).

This verse also gives biblical warrant for some distinction between the visible and the invisible church. Only the Lord knows "them that are His" (2 Tim. 2:19). Some are with us yet not of us. They share our earthly company but not our heavenly birth. Cf 3:10 for a manifestation in moral behavior. (Tyndale)

(8) That any Christian might be actuated by a genuinely Christian motive in separating himself from the external fellowship of the church did not and could not present itself as a possibility to the inauguration of John or any of the disciples;

Imagination
These false teachers had not renounced the truth; for the truth they had never possessed.

Verse 19-

It was their unmasking; and this, again, was only the fulfilment of the Divine purpose (*ἡ αὐτοῦ θέσις*) which is ever the purity and edification of the church. (Law)

(The fellowship and life of the church ought to be such that it forces false teachers out of its company -
when false teachers don't leave, when they feel quite comfortable among us, we are in trouble and the church is backslidden - the spirit, etc. of the church ought to be such that all counterfeits are miserable within it and must leave. Cf Acts 6 - where a lie could not live in the holy atmosphere of the church.) They weren't voted out, they withdrew of their own choice.)

1 - "They went out - but not of us" - not a true member -
voluntary - their choice; not saved.
didn't feel comfortable w/ them.

2 - "If of us --- remained with us"

3 - That it might be shown not of us
Divine purpose behind the human purpose - The providence of God - God purposed it.
Behind the cosmetic reasons they gave is God's hand

(1) To show them for what they were - test of fellowship
God wants it obvious who they are - for our sakes
test of perseverance
(2) To purify the church

They went out because:

(1) They were not of us
(2) So we could know it - make it obvious
(3) To purify the church

(9) Now, as professing "believers", they were carrying on a missionary campaign among the pagans which was meeting with success (4:5). Perhaps some of the laity are disturbed by this news and are wondering if the heresy ought not to have been tolerated in order that a secession might be avoided. No, says, John, it was providential that they left us.

The church is not stronger, but weaker, if, in the name of religious tolerance, its witness to the ^{True} faith is compromised for the sake of larger membership figures. (Epworth)

Verse 19-

(10) The order of the words in Greek shows that John means to deny that a single one of those who went out belonged to the Christian company. "Not a one of them belonged to us."
(Conner)

(v. 19 identifies the antichrists of v. 18 as being a part of the church. Reading of them in v. 18 we would not have supposed they were within the church - but enemies from without. That they were a part of the church comes as a surprise.)

(11) The preposition meta, "with", implies not merely that they would have had company with (SUN) the believers, but that they would have had actual fellowship with them.
(Vine)

I John 2:18-27

Verse 20

χρῖσμα - anointing, referring to the gift of the Holy Spirit
(Souter)

"The act of anointing or that with which the anointing is performed."
(Moulton/Mulligan)

More limited in its use than ἀλείφω
it is confined to sacred and symbolical anointings.
(Vine)

(1) Unction - The word means that with which the anointing is performed - the unguent or ointment. In the N.T. only here and v. 27. The root of the word and of χριστός, ^{the Christ} is the same. The anointing is from the Anointed.
(Vincent)

(2) An expression of confidence in his readers: they will not be led astray; they have received a "chrism", the enlightening grace of the Holy Spirit.

χρῖσμα is suggested by ἀντιχρίστοι
"They are ἀντιχρίστοι, you are χριστοί"
The Holy - not the Spirit but either Christ or the Father - preferably, the Father.
(EGT)

(3) You have an advocate, John 2:1; now John tells them of another precious spiritual possession - "you have an anointing."

In O.T. and N.T., oil is a symbol of the Holy Spirit. "The Holy One" is, almost certainly, Christ, who is so designated elsewhere (Mk. 1:24, Jn. 6:69; Acts 3:14, Rev. 3:7).

You all know: Spiritual knowledge is not the privilege of any favored clique in the church. It is the privilege of the whole church.

Christians today under the guidance of the Spirit remain indifferent to any fancy religion that may spring up with a claim to superior knowledge. They are under the new covenant, so that they are not dependent for knowledge of God and His truth on any neighbor, however enlightened (Jer. 31:34). They have independent personal knowledge, as the result of the anointing from the Holy One.
(NIC)

(4) The noun chrisma means (a) oil (b) ritual anointing

Verse 20

with oil, (c) solemn anointing, in a figurative sense. In sense (c), for example, Jesus is Christos. At His baptism God anointed (ECHRISEN) Him with the Holy Spirit and power (Acts 10:38). "You (the pronoun emphatic, as in v. 27), too have an anointing." He is alluding to the heretics' vaunted chrisma. What follows means: "Yours is of no questionable nature and origin but is of the Holy Spirit and from the Holy One."

You all know - John does not mean that (as AV implies) his faithful members have nothing to learn but that ALL of them have sufficient truth for salvation. (Torch)

(5) In the O.T., the act of anointing was a ceremony in which priests, prophets and kings were consecrated to their life office.

You - emphatic. John is making a contrast between the heretics of 2:19 and "you true believers."

John says, "You too have an anointing, but yours is a genuine anointing, for you have received it from the Holy One."

Holy One - This may refer to the Father. More probably, in view of the context, and of Mark 1:24, John 6:69, Acts 3:4, and Rev. 3:7, it refers to Christ. In the O.T. it is said that those who were anointed to high office were given the gift of God's Spirit (I Sam. 16:13; Isa. 61:1). At His baptism in the Jordan, when Jesus was consecrated to His saving ministry, He too, and in the fullest sense, received the Holy Spirit (Luke 3:22, 4:18, John 3:34, Acts 10:38).

"When, at your conversion, Christ consecrated you into His service, He gave you the gift of the Holy Spirit; and it is in virtue of this gift of the Spirit of Truth (John 14:17; 15:26), who will guide you into all truth (John 16:13), that you all know."

You all know: In the O.T. only selected people were anointed and given God's Spirit. The Asian heretics claimed that specially imparted knowledge of divine things was the privilege of their own select little coterie. (Epworth)

(6) Anointing - The term signifies not the act of anointing but the element with which the act is performed - literally, "anointing oil", "unguent". Here, however, it is used metaphorically of the Holy Spirit. That is to say, the "anointing" is the Holy Spirit received by the believer

Verse 20

in conversion. TEV expresses: "But you have had the Holy Spirit poured out on you."

It consists in the gift of the Spirit. It comes from the Holy One (Christ), and it gives a capacity for distinguishing truth from falsehood. 4-2 Conversion & Remains w/ us

The Christian's anointing gives a capacity for understanding spiritual things. This means that Christians, by virtue of their anointing have a knowledge that is certain and complete. It does not mean that they are omniscient. They "know all things" in the sense that they have all the knowledge that is required for salvation. The truth which they possess does not need to be supplemented by the vagaries of gnostic teaching. (Vaughn)

(7) The reader's loyalty to the truth is traced to the fact that they possess an unction.

Protection against the "antichrist" is the "chrism" they had received.

If the false teachers were antichrists, there is a sense in which every Christian is a true "Christ", having received the same spiritual "chrism" as He received. (2 Cor. 1:21, 22) (Tyndale)

(8) The seceders claimed to have been initiated into an advanced grade of knowledge, and may have spoken disparagingly of those who remained content with "elementary" teaching like those whom they left behind.

C. S. Lewis has warned us of the seductiveness of the inner ring, the temptation to gain admission at all costs to the exclusive elite of the people who really matter, who know what's what. The fascination of such an inner circle can be as powerful and dangerous in religion as in society. We are flattered by the idea that we are different from the rank and file, that we have access to deeper teaching, to more esoteric truth, even, it may be (and this is supremely soul-destroying) to a higher level of holiness than the majority. Christ crushed such pretensions when He thanked God for hiding from the wise and understanding things which were revealed to babes (Matt. 11:25). Paul did the same thing when he told the Corinthian Christians who prided themselves on their intellectual attainments that he could impart the "secret and hidden wisdom of God" only to those who were spiritually mature - that is, mature in agape rather than in gnosis - (I Cor. 2:6-3:3) (Bruce)

Verse 20

(9) All Christians in a secondary sense are what Christ is in a unique and primary sense, the Lord's anointed.

You all know - Christians are in possession of the truth in a far higher sense than any unchristian philosopher. All of the unbeliever's knowledge is out of balance and proportion. The assertion here is strictly in harmony with the promise of Christ. (John 16:13) (Cambridge)

(10) *χρίσμα*, a term expressing result, is not the act of anointing but the anointment received by such an act.

"You have it from the Holy One" indicates that the anointment referred to is something that is of a permanent nature. (Lenski)

v.27: "need no one to teach y^e -" no music - I don't need anyone to teach me what sounds good (Kiss or punk rock) but I need someone to teach me to play the music or read it.

I John 2: 18-27

Verse 21

(1) No sooner had he spoken of the antichrists than he hastens to reiterate his assurance of confidence in his readers. His readers had only to be reminded of their experience (^{of} ~~of~~ ^{Sate}), and it would keep them from being led astray. An experience is an anchor to the soul in time of storm. (EGT)

(2) They know the difference between truth and falsehood not because they have explored the mazes of falsehood but because they know the truth.

Those who have come to the "truth" as the truth is in Jesus (Eph- 4:21) have, it is implied, a built-in spiritual instinct which enables them to detect and refuse whatever is basically incompatible with that truth, no matter how speciously and eloquently it may be set before them. (Bruce)

(3) I have not written - epistolary aorist, repressed in English by the present or the perfect.

"I write as unto men who will appreciate what I say. I write, not to teach, but to confirm."

Many of us think that we can put the truth into people by screaming it into their ears. John had no notion that he could be of use to his children unless there was a truth in them, a capacity of distinguishing truth from lies, a sense that one must be the eternal opposition of the other. (Cambridge)

(4) Not only do they know . . . the truth, but they know the character of truth, that it is wholly true and self-consistent. (Tyndale)

(5) V. 21 is an expression of the apostle's confidence in the Asian Christians.

You know the truth - The idea seems to be that their insight into the truth gives John confidence that they will not only understand and appreciate his words but will make proper use of them.

No lie is of the truth - They recognize the essential and irreconcilable antagonism between truth and falsehood. The "lie" is the pernicious teaching of the antichrists. To say that it is not "of the truth" is to assert that it is utterly

Verse 21

foreign to the Christian revelation. It is therefore fraught with danger for the Christian fellowship. (Vaughn)

(6) I am writing to remind you that any so-called "knowledge" of God which may bear a superficial resemblance to the truth you possess, but which is actually a flat denial of it, is just a plain lie, to be exposed and uncompromisingly repudiated.

Note on The Truth

The Greek noun which is always translated "truth" in EVV (English Versions) is one of the Key words of John. In ordinary usage it meant a statement which corresponds to fact, in contrast to one which is false. John uses the word in this sense in 4:6; where truth is contrasted with error.

But the word was also used, in a religious and philosophical sense, to mean reality as opposed to mere appearance or fantasy; that which is real as opposed to that which is unreal. Paul often used the word in this sense, and this is what John nearly always means by "the truth". In his mind it stands for the unchanging, ultimate Reality, God as He really is - and for knowledge of that divine Reality as it has been given to men. When Jesus spoke of "the one true God" (John 17:3) he meant "real". So to John "the truth" means that whole revelation of God as He really is, in all His gracious nature and activity, which has been given to us by Christ; a revelation which has also disclosed what man is really meant to be, how real sin is, and what real life is like.

So, when Pilate, voicing the disillusionment of his age (and ours) in its quest for reality; asked, "what is truth?" Reality itself stood before him.

When John says "the truth is not in us", he means that the right understanding of Christ's revelation of God has not come home to us; that Christ, who is Reality, is not fully dwelling in us; that we are therefore living in a world of unreality, fantasy and make-belief.

In 1:6, John says "we do not the truth" (Cf Jno. 3:21). Christ's revelation of the real will and nature of God is not merely something to be accepted by the mind; it must be lived out in conduct which is inspired by that revelation. (Epworth)

(7) John wrote in order to have them use all the knowledge of the truth that they already have in order to detect as a lie all that is not of the truth but is of the devil.
(Lenski)

1 John 2:22

- ① a liar = "the liar" It marks the lively feeling w/ which the apostle writes. By the definite article, the liar, the lie is set forth in its concrete personality: the one who impersonates all that is false, as antichrist represents every form of hostility & opposition to X. The denial that Jesus is the X is the representative falsehood. He that denies is the representative liar.
He that denieth: the article w/ the participle denotes the habitual denial.

(Vincent)

- ② The abrupt question corresponds w/ a brief mental pause after v. 21. ~~to~~ "I have spoken & lies: what, nay rather, who is their source? The abruptness of v. 22 is remarkable. Clause stands by clause in stern solemnity w/out any connecting particles.

the liar, who offers in his own person the sum of all that is false; & not simply "a liar" who is guilty of a particular sin, the denial ~~that~~ of the fact "Jesus is the Christ" when grasped in ~~its~~ its full significance intellectual, moral, spiritual — includes all falsehood.

To deny the Father is to refuse to acknowledge O as Father.

(Westcott)

③ This heresy carries w/ it two serious consequences

1. The denial that Jesus is the X results in a denial of the Father-Son relationship w/ the Ohead. If Jesus is not the X then O is not Father & Jesus is not His Son.
2. To deny ~~is~~ that Jesus is the X, the Son of O is to deprive oneself of O as Father.

This is because X is the One who reveals the Father (~~John 4:6~~ Matt 11:27) & affords our only access to the Father (John 14:6). It follows then that those who deny the full deity & the real humanity of X are cut off from O. The O of those who deny the Son is not the true O, but a false image of their own thoughts, an idol.

V.24

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① as for you - the force of the emphatic you at the beginning of the sentence - contrasts the false teachers.

that which ye heard from the beginning - here the emphasis is on their reception of the message.

In 1:1 the emphasis is on the time of the reception as coincident of the origin of their faith.

In the Son & in the Father - compare the reverse order in v.22. Here the thought is that of rising thru the confession of the Son to the knowledge of the Father. Here the thought is of the issue of denial culminating in the denial of the Father.

(Vincent)

② the verb is an aorist & should be retained as such, as in v.7: it points to the definite period when they first were instructed in the faith. "Hold fast the Gospel when you first heard, & reject the innovations of these false teachers."

~~(Cambridge)~~

(Cambridge)

③ the pronoun you stands at the head of the sentence in contrast w/ the false teachers of whom the apostle has spoken.

The final strength of the Christians lies not in his own effort, but in the faith by which he is inspired. That is the power of God which he is charged not to hinder. -

"that which ye heard." - The first scriptural message of the Gospel apprehended in its unity. The word taken into the heart becomes a power fashioning the whole man.

"Let that abide in you" - The Gospel is described both as a medium in which the believer lives, (John 8:31), & as a quickening spirit which dwells in him (Col 3:16; 2 Tim 2).

You also... in the Son - The presence of the divine life carries w/ it of necessity the possession of divine fellowship.

(Vestcott)

④ Safeguards against Heresy 2:24-27

Having distinguished between the false teachers & the true believers, & having exposed the nature & consequences of the heresy, John now draws attention to the two safeguards which will ~~keep them~~ protect his readers from being led astray. Two things must abide in them - (1) that which had from beginning & (2) anointing).

v. 24 - "That which ye heard from the beginning" is the gospel, the apostolic teaching, the original message which had been preached.

It had not changed - would not change.

They must let it abide in them. It would not do so automatically; they must allow it to do so.

The continuous ~~other~~ obsession for some "new thing" is a mark of the Athenian, not the Xian (Acts 17:21).

Christian theology is anchored not only to certain historical events - but to the authoritative apostolic witness to these events. The Xian cannot forsake the primitive teaching of the Apostles.

for the subsequent traditions of men.

The apostolic testimony is directed essentially to the Son. That is why it will keep them true to Him if they remain true to it.

Moreover, they will continue in the Son, & in the Father, in the sense of experiencing an intimate spiritual communion w/ both.

(Lybale)

- ⑤ It is a faithful ~~of~~ adherence to the message that is intended & this carries w/ it faithful adherence to the Father & the Son to whom in that message the Spirit bears witness.

(Bruce)

- ⑥ They are urged to let the teaching which they have received in the past continue ~~the~~ to control their thinking & action. The antidote to heresy is a return to the teaching given at the beginning.

So important is this stress on the need to hold fast to the original Xian message that John repeats it for emphasis. Such adherence to Xian doctrine has as its results that the readers themselves will remain in the Son & the Father.

It is significant that "remain" expresses a continuing relationship. It is not enough merely to have heard & assented to the message in the past. The message must continue to be present & active in the lives of those who have heard it. They must continually call

it to mind + let it affect their lives.
(New Int'l)

VS 26

① But the apostolic teaching was not in itself enough to keep them in the truth. John does not underestimate the strength or the subtlety of the deceivers.

The present participle here as those who "would" deceive you. They have not ~~succeeded~~ succeeded, but they are in process of making the attempt.

It is possible for Christians to be deceived by false teachers, as is implied here, by others (3:7) + by themselves (1:8).

(Hyndale)

VS 27

(C) But as for you = emphatic, as in V. 24

(Vincent)

- ③ the "anointing" abides in "believers". By this John means that their experience of the Holy Spirit is not a temporary thing. He stays w/ them, remains in them, is retained in their hearts. (Vaughn)

- ③ Possessing knowledge by the Holy Spirit's direct illumination, "Ye need not that any man teach you."

In the last resort the Holy Spirit is our absolutely adequate Teacher, & we maintain our right of private judgment by His illumination of the Word of God.

The competence of the Holy Spirit to teach them is indicated in the next phrase, "That the same anointing ... is truth". w/ this knowledge of His Nature, & w/ further assurance that it hath taught you in the past, John looks confidently to the future & ends the paragraph w/ - "abide in Him." (Fynolle)

- ④ The Spirit of God, who both set the seal of immediate conviction upon the Truth itself & enabled them unfaillingly to ~~discern~~ distinguish it from all its counterfeits.

The Spirit both testifies & teaches. The teaching of the Spirit is not regarded as superseding the Word, but as concurrent & cooperative w/ it.

The teaching of Spirit & Word is the same
is substance of Jesus & (2) Result —
abiding in Him.

- (1) Enables us to recognize truth
- (2) " " " understand the truth.

John 2

(1)

V. 22, 23

① "The liar" it marks the lively feeling w/ which the apostle writes. By the definite article, the liar the lie is set forth in its concrete personality: the one who impersonates all that is false, as antichrist represents every form of hostility & opposition to X. The denial that Jesus is the Christ is the representative falsehood. He that ~~denies~~ denies is the representative liar, he that denieth - the article w/ the ~~definite article~~ participle denotes the habitual denial. Let, the one denying, the one who habitually represents this attitude towards X.

The words are aimed at the heresy of Cerinthus, a man of Jewish descent & educated at Alexandria. He denied the miraculous conception of Jesus, & taught that, after His baptism, the X descended upon Him in the form of a dove, & that then He then announced the unknown Father & wrought miracles; but that, towards the end of His ministry, the X departed again from Jesus, & Jesus suffered & rose from the dead, while X remained impassible (incapable of suffering) as a spiritual being.

The Father = the title, the Father occurs

always in its simple form in this epistle,
never his or our, or the Father in heaven,
(Vincent)

- ② Denial of the Father-Son relationship of Jesus.
False views of Jesus X mean also false views of
D. To deny the Son's Sonship is, ipso facto,
to be in no position to know D: it is to
deny the Father. (Kitschelt is in John's steps
in saying: "Without X I should be an atheist.")
You can't divorce Jesus X the Son & yet own
D the Father - Matt 11:27; 10:32; Mark 8:38.
(Jerch)

- ③ Their teaching amounted to a repudiation of the
whole Gospel. The use of the definite article
before "liar" suggests that anyone affirming that
Jesus is not the X is an arch liar. If such a
person is not a liar, John seems to say, then
there are no liars.

This heresy carries w/ it two serious
consequences. First, the denial that Jesus
is the X results in a denial of the Father-Son
relationship w/in the Ohead. The arrangement
of the two parts of this verse (22) suggests that
in Johannine thought affirming that Jesus
is the X is the same as affirming that
He is the eternal Son of D. Therefore, if Jesus

is not the X (in the full Johannine sense) the O is not the Father & Jesus is not His Son.

Second, to deny that Jesus is the X, the Son of O, is to deprive oneself of O as Father- vs 23a. This is because X is the One who reveals the Father (Matt 11:27) & affords our only access to the Father (Jn 14:6). It follows then that those who deny the full deity of the real humanity of Jesus X, as do some so-called Xian theologians, are cut off from O. Meyer: "The O of those who deny the Son is not the true O, but a false image of their own thoughts, an idol." Ross: "the man who denies the Son... is an orphan, a fatherless child in the vast loneliness of the universe."

(Vaughn)

④ - The nature & effect of the Heresy 2:22,23. The false teaching of those who have left the Church is now revealed. It is a denial that Jesus is the X. A study of these epistles makes it plain that by this phrase John does not simply mean a denial that Jesus was the messiah of the O.T. expectation. In the second part of this verse & in v. 23 he refers to Jesus as the Son. For a similar linking of the two expressions see v. 1 & v. 5 & cf. John 20:31; Matt 16:31. They denied the incarnation.

John's black & white contrasts are healthily clear sighted. Opposing views are not to him "complementary, ~~and~~ insight" but "truth & error."

He who perpetrates this lie is none other than the antichrist, not the personal ~~Antix~~ who is still to come, but a living embodiment of the spirit of antix. The heretic's theology is not just defective; it is diabolical. The fundamental doctrinal test of the professing Xian concerns his view of the Person of Jesus. If he is a Unitarian or a member of a sect denying the deity of Jesus, he is not a Xian.

The extreme seriousness of the lie is that a second denial is implicit in the first: he denieth the Father & the Son. (Jynbale)

⑤ This denial is deadly, because only in the X, the Son of God, who came in the flesh is eternal life to be had (5:11).

The false teachers probably did not expressly deny the Father. But words have value only in accordance with their meaning; the Corinthians & those ~~like them~~ like-minded might speak of "the Father" but they did not give the same meaning to the term as John does when he speaks of "the Father."

In John, the Father is He who has revealed Himself uniquely & fully in the incarnate Jesus, not only in the ministry of word & work but supremely so in His death on the cross.

In denying the Son, they denied the Father also, little as they may have intended to do so.

The knowledge of the Father is inseparable from the knowledge of the Son (John 8:19; 14:7).

To deny the Son is to deny the knowledge of the Father which He unfolds, & so to deny the Father Himself.

(Bruce)

V. 23
 Having disclosed the nature of the heresy, John now elaborates on its dual effects, which he has already mentioned at the end of the previous verse. He states the truth in absolute & ~~unequivocal~~ unequivocal terms, first negatively, then positively.

(Tyndale)