

I John 3:21, 22

Verse 21

- (1) Condemn - the internal judgement of conscience.
To note accurately, usually in a bad sense.
To note judicially: to accuse: to accuse one's self.

Confidence - boldness - The idea of free, open speech lies at the bottom of the word: coming before God's bar with nothing to conceal.
(Vincent)

- (2) "If our heart condemn us not" - these words represent the heart attitude of a saint that so far as he knows has no unconfessed sin in his life, has nothing between himself and Christ.

Verse 22

Ask - present subjunctive, continuous action - repeated and continuous praying, day after day.
(Wuest)

- (3) We are able to look up to God in freedom from dismay and terror, enjoying the consciousness of His approval, and that fellowship with Him which brings His peace and power into our lives.

Boldness toward God is the effect of the assurance of heart mentioned in v. 19. On the other hand, the effect of the boldness itself is given in v. 22.
(Vine)

- (4) The main point is the dealing of our heart with God. "Boldness have we *παρὸς*, face to face with God. - boldness to step into God's presence.

(Lanski)

- (5) 19-23 - aware of shortcoming, they may be diffident (v. 20a) about approaching God. They can reassure themselves. God will assess them by a standard more reliable than their feelings - His knowledge.

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"Because we keep ... and do .." This presents a condition upon which our prayer is answered. Obedience to God and conformity to His will are pre-requisites to the reception of the answers to our prayers.

The reason is not ^{far} ~~far~~ to seek, for the one who is in the enjoyment of communion with God and fulfils His will, will make only those requests which are in accordance with His will.

Doing the things that are pleasing is more than keeping His commandments. The latter is included in the former. The practice of God's will is a higher standard than obedience to precepts and the believer is to seek to do that in which God delights as well as to obey what He commands. Obedience may be a matter merely of subjection; doing the things that are pleasing to Him is a matter of love. = Jno. 8:29

"In His sight" conveys the thought of the regard that God graciously pays to us.
(Vine)

- (3) The prerequisites for answered prayer are an uncondemning heart, the habitual keeping of God's commandments, and the habitual doing of those things which please Him.

Sight - a penetrating gaze.
(Wuest)

- (4) All requests are granted which can be put forward in the freedom of intercourse which has been described. John's assurance is given on the assumption that we keep God's commandments and do what pleases Him. If these considerable conditions are met, we shall ask aright and be answered.
(Torch)

- (5) We receive what we ask for in the moment of asking - a present tense -, though it may be a long time before the fulness of the boon desired is enjoyed by us.

We do what is pleasing in the sight of God when the grace of the risen and exalted Redeemer is at work within us.
(N.I.C.)

- (6) John is dealing with the problem of a guilty

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Suppose these sincere Christians come before God untroubled by even initial diffidence. They come confidently (v. 21) and have their petitions granted (v. 22a). On what ground? - their keeping of God's commandments, etc.

The aim of the whole passage is surely to give assurance, and not to strike terror into their hearts.

V. 21 - The same people as in v. 20, but now in what John considers the normal Christian state of heart.

Boldness - plain speaking. The freedom of the father-child relation in intercourse is its picture of the Christian at prayer.

In Christian prayer, all barriers are down, all fears cast aside. The true children, at home in their father's presence may say - and ask - what comes from the heart.

(Torch)

(6) We approach God as children to a Father and not as criminals to a judge.

(Cambridge)

Verse 22

(1) Keep - note the combination of keep and do. Watchful discernment - habitual practice.

(Vincent)

(2) We have freedom in asking and likewise the assurance of the effectiveness of our prayers. The primary condition of this is freedom from the consciousness of sin (v. 21). There must be no distance between God and us. The present tense of the verbs in this and the preceding verse indicates a continuance of the conditions referred to. To have boldness towards God and to receive from Him what we ask should be normal with us.

We may not see immediately the answer to our prayer. The granting is immediate, but the fulfilment may be a matter of waiting some considerable time. Faith leads us to await God's time.

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conscience. Doubtless John has in mind here the guilty conscience of a Christian. His heart will tell him he is imperfect, that he hasn't lived as a Christian ought to live.

John says that a refuge from a guilty conscience is to be found in the greatness of God.

The believers heart condemns on partial knowledge.

The greatness of God for the Christian doesn't lie in his justice that condemns sin, it lies in his mercy that saves from sin.

But when the Christian's heart has laid hold of the greatness of God and has come to have assurance rather than condemnation, the matter is quite different. Then there is boldness toward God.

(Conner)

Exegesis of John 3:19-24

vs 20:

○ A man's heart burdened w/ a sense of its own unworthiness forms an unfavorable opinion of the state of the soul, pronounces against its salvation.

"O is greater than our heart" - Because O is superior to our consciences in being ~~omni~~ omniscient, we may persuade our consciences before Him to acquit us. Our consciences thru imperfect knowledge may either be too strict or too easy w/ us: O cannot be either, for He knows & weighs all.

It means that He is a more perfect judge than our heart can be. It is the difference between conscience & Omniscience.

"and knoweth all things" - The "and" is exegetical; it ~~stands~~ explains the special ~~character~~ character of O's superiority when the soul stands before the judgment seat of conscience.

If our conscience condemns us, its verdict is neither infallible nor final. We may still appeal to the omniscient O, whose love implanted w/in us is a sign that we are not condemned & rejected by Him. (Cambridge)

vs 21 -

κατακρίνω - condemn

To know something against -
To know by experience -

Gal 2:11, of Peter's conduct, he being self-
condemned as the result of an exercised & enlightened
conscience - of self-condemnation due to an
exercise of the heart. (Vine)

παρρησία - boldness, freedom, liberty, shown
especially in speech - (Foulis)

- freedom of speech, ~~or~~ unreservedness
of utterance, or to speak without ambiguity,
plainly.

The absence of fear in speaking boldly;
hence confidence, cheerful courage (Vine)

vs 22 - αἰτέωμεν = ask, request, beg, petition

to be distinguished from ἐρωτάω - αἰτέω
more frequently suggests the attitude of a suppliant,
the petition of one who is lesser in position than
he to whom the petition is made - (Vine)

Jesus uses αἰτέω only of the prayer of others,
not of His own, which is always for him an ἐρωτάω
or δεῦρο - why?

① Basic meaning is to want something for oneself -
concerning Jesus, there is no question of His wanting
things for Himself, but only for others.

② αἰτέω suggests a far from humble demanding,
whereas Jesus never demands. ③ α. seems to presuppose
a lesser degree of intimacy than ἐρωτάω (Kittel)

1
 ὑμεῖς ὅ ἡκούσατε ἀπ' ἀρχῆς, ἐν ὑμῖν μένετω.
 (You that which you heard from beginning in
 you let it continually abide) (Permissive - Present
 Imperative),

ὑμεῖς - "you" is in the emphatic position. John has
 just been describing antichrist who depart from
 the truth to the lie. He now contrasts the
 believer - But as for you - very emphatic.
 This is an admonition - suggests a warning.
 The aorist "heard" points to a definite time when
 they first "heard". The emphasis is on the time
 of the reception. They are not to be moved from
 the old paths; they are to let the Gospel that
 they received when they were saved to have
 a home in their hearts.

ἀπ' ἀρχῆς - oft repeated phrase - emphasizing
 need to return to fundamentals. Epistle gives
 the fundamentals for living a victorious
 Xian life.

Note also the oft repeated word - "abide" -
 (remain) - giving an indication of the nature of
 salvation - ἐν ὑμῖν - It is an inward
 experience, a thing of the heart; not learning
 a creed or going thru a ceremony. But it
 is a point in your history which something
 external, eternal comes to "live" in you, to
 be a controlling factor in your life. When
 it comes, it comes to stay - a vital part of
 you - intimate relationship - not something
 to be laid aside on Monday & pick up again
 on Sunday.

2:24

"Christianity is both a message and an experience, a doctrine & a life." We must cling to the fundamentals of the Gospel, but we must be sure that they grip us just as truly as we grip them.

To remain is the essential thing. To receive in the beginning and not let what we received remain in us is fatal.

ἐὰν ἐν ὑμῖν μένῃ ὁ ἀπ' ἀρχῆς ἠκούσατε, καὶ ὑμεῖς
ἐν τῷ Υἱῷ καὶ ἐν τῷ Πατρὶ μένετε.

(If in you abides that from you heard, also you in the Son and in the Father abide.)

I John 5:3-5

Verse 3

Bapeṭai - heavy, difficult, weight, load, burden

(1) Keep - to attend carefully, to take care of, to guard, observe. The word in this connection speaks of a watchful, solicitous guarding and care of God's commandments lest we disobey them, with the thought that we are concerned with His honor and glory and our Christian testimony to the same.

Love - the saint's love for God is shown by his keeping His commandments. This should be the motivating factor in our keeping God's Word, our love to Him.

Love for God makes the keeping of His commandments a delight rather than a burden.

(A victorious Christian life is when keeping God's commandments is a joy and delight. You are a defeated Christian when they are burdensome, severe, overexacting.)

(2) God's commandments, being the expression of His love, are designed to keep us in the element of His love. The fulfillment of His commandments by us is the revelation of His character through our instrumentality. His commandments make known His nature, and we show His nature when we keep them. (Cf 4:8, 16)

Grievous - they do not impose a burden when they are kept. In the keeping of them there is great reward. (Psa. 19:11)

What imposes a burden is disobedience to His will. The more we fulfil it the happier we are.

The Lord supplies strength for the fulfillment of His commandments, His love makes them light, and He rewards the doing of it.
(Vine)

(3) For the love for God is this, i. e. consists in this: The truth implied in v. 2, that love involves obedience. Love to God implies obedience.

Verse 3, cont'd

Are not grievous. For two reasons:

- 1 - Because He gives us strength to bear them.
- 2 - Because love makes them light.
Cf - Matt. 11:30 (Cambridge)

(4) Cf 4:21 - There the idea is love is not love which disobeys the beloved's commands; here, that love to God means - or consists in - obedience to his commands.

Grievous: Lit. "heavy". John imagines a reader saying "But this obedience is impossible Lord!" and quickly writes 5:3-4a for his comfort.

It does not mean that God's commands are effortlessly simple to fulfil. Rather, they are not irksome or burdensome. Why? Partly, no doubt, because God does not demand what is too hard for men - more specifically, because whatsoever is born of God overcometh the world. (Torch)

(5) John sees in love and righteousness the two normal products of a redeemed life. The two are essentially one (v. 3), for there is no such thing as love for God independent of compliance with his commandments, and to the heart that loves, His commandments are not "grievous" - do not constitute a yoke difficult to bear. This is seen as a self-evident fact, because a thing begotten of God could not be a victim of the influences of the world. The Greek pronoun here is in the neuter gender, which generalizes the statement and makes it universally comprehensive. (Dana)

(6) In the keeping of the commandments of God true love to God always issues.

Grievous - They do not press on us an intolerable burden. (NIC)

(7) The love of God is a practical matter. It is to keep God's commandments. To love God is no

Verse 3, cont'd

mere matter of feeling or sentiment. It has at its heart the spirit of obedience. To love God is to obey him. John 14:15

This lack of grievousness is not due to a low standard set up by the will of God. His standard is a high one - 3:23.

His commandments are not grievous because there is sufficient motive and dynamic to obedience.
(Conner)

(8) Obedience is the only proof of love. We cannot prove our love to anyone in any other way than by seeking to please him and to bring him joy. Love can be exemplified only in obedience.

How can it be said that the tremendous commands and demands of Jesus are not a heavy burden on any man? There are 3 answers to that question.

1 - It is the way of God never to lay a commandment on any man without also giving him the strength to carry it out,

2 - Our whole response to God must be the response of love; and for no love no duty is too hard, no task is too great.

That which we would never do for a stranger we will willingly attempt for a loved one. That which we would never give to a stranger we will gladly give to a loved one.

3 - There is something in the Christian which makes him able to conquer the world.
(Barclay)

(9) Just to make the claim: "I am loving God," amounts to nothing, is, in fact, lying (1:6).

The commandments have been given for the purpose of keeping; doing what each one says, actually loving not merely in word but in deed.

Are these commandments burdensome, a heavy weight that is, if possible, to be avoided, to be complained about when it is shouldered? No.
(Lenski)

Verse 4

Ἰκᾶν - (ἰκάνω) - I conquer (transferred from battle to other conflicts)

(1) That overcometh - aorist tense, overcame, held to its strict tense. The victory over the world was, potentially, won when we believed in Jesus as the Christ, the Son of God. We overcome the world by being brought into union with Christ.

On becoming as He is (3:17) we become partakers of His victory (John 16:33). John 4:4

Our Faith: our faith is embraced in the confession that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God.
(Vincent)

(2) The reason why God's commandments are not burdensome is that obedience to them enables the saint to overcome the world.

Whatsoever is neuter in gender, the comprehensive, categorical neuter, expressing the universality of the principle, and refers to persons.

Born is again perfect tense.

Overcometh - to carry off the victory, come off victorious. The verb implies a battle.

Here the forces of the world system of evil, the flesh (totally depraved nature), the devil, and the pernicious age-system with which the saint is surrounded, are all engaged in a battle against the saint, carrying on an incessant warfare, the purpose of which is to ruin his Christian life and testimony. The verb is in the present tense, "is constantly overcoming the world." It is a habit of life with the saint to gain victory over the world. To go down in defeat is the exception, not the rule.

"This is the victory that overcometh..." the verbal form is an aorist participle, lit., "This is the victory that overcame the world."

Verse 4, cont'd

John says first, "is conquering," because the fight is in progress, then "that conquered" because the triumph is assured. (Wuest)

(3) Reason why keeping even the difficult commandment of loving others rather than oneself is not a grievous burden.

It is the world and its ways which make the Divine commands grievous, and the new birth involved in faith gives us a new unworldly nature and a strength which conquers the world.

For "Because whatsoever is born ..."

Whatsoever - neuter. The masculine would make the victorious person prominent, the neuter emphasizes rather the victorious power. It is not the man, but his birth from God which conquers.

Born of God used here and in vs 1 and 18. In all 3 cases we have the perfect, not the aorist, participle. It is not the mere fact of having received the Divine birth that is insisted upon, but the permanent results of the birth.

Overcame - aorist part., of a victory won once for all.

Faith is both the victory and the victor. In the faith which has won a decisive victory the believer goes on conquering. (Cambridge)

(4) This provides the reason why keeping God's commandments is not a burden grievous to be borne.

The reason state brings before us the character of the world; the spirit of the world is opposed to the fulfilment of the commandments of God. To do His commandments, therefore, is to overcome the spirit of the world.

The doing of His commandments is possible only to one who is borne of God, and the power to carry them out comes, not from self, but from Him.

A deep significance attaches to the collective neuter "whatsoever". 1 - It serves to give less prominence to the person who overcomes and to indicate rather the power which is imparted to him in virtue of his new birth.

Verse 4, cont'd

2. It serves to make the statement more comprehensive, by reason of what has just been said, as not merely persons are in view but the power that introduces them.

As in vs 1, the original has the perfect tense, and this stresses the permanent effect of the spiritual birth, namely, a lasting power victory over the world.

Hath Overcome - aorist tense takes us back to the beginning of the life, for the power for victory came when faith first began to be exercised, when we received Christ by faith and were born of God. For then we passed spiritually out of the sphere of the world into union with Christ.

Faith not merely brings to us the new birth, but with it the power to overcome the opposition of the spirit that characterizes the world.

The victory which was thus gained by faith, the proving of things not seen, brought us into a life which was designed to be characterized by victorious power. (Vine)

(5) Born of God - Every Christian "has within himself a power, that of his new birth from God, strong enough to overcome the resistance of all the powers of the world, which hinder him from loving God, i.e. from keeping his commandments.

This passage first emphasizes the victory which is their Christian title, and makes precise the doctrines which are essential Christian truth. (Cambridge)

(6) In all our endeavors to live according to the will of God we have against us the power of the world, of paganism, or of human society organized without God, the world in which the desire of the flesh, etc. is at work, but He who is in us is greater.

Man's faith must be in lively exercise laying hold on the power of God. You can look back to many occasions, John says, when your faith overcame the world. (NIC)

Verse 4, cont'd

(7) This section continues still farther the proof of a genuine Christian profession.

The Gnostic taught that the great means of achievement in the religious realm was gnosis. John asserts that it is pistis (faith), and cites as proof that those who are really winning a victory over the temptations of the world about them are those who accept Jesus as essentially the Son of God.

The faith described and defended here is far from presumptive faith. It is confidence in reliable testimony.

The latter clause of vs. 4 marks a quite decisively the transition to a new point of emphasis. The stress in the Greek upon the idea of faith cannot be conveyed in English.

In rigidly literal rendering it would read, "and this is the overcoming - the-world victory: our faith." The victory which has vanquished the world is the true Christian's faith, and not the Gnostic's gnosis. The adherents of gnosis lived in the world's corruption and laid no claim to purity of conduct. The one living a life pure from the world's defilements is the one believing in the divine Sonship of Jesus (v. 5). The word "Jesus" here is really the predicate, and is in a position which makes it emphatic. What true faith asserted was, "The Son of God is certainly Jesus."
(Dana)

(8) οτι makes the victory the reason that our keeping God's commandments in love for God cannot be burdensome. - They have been born from God, have been filled with strong, spiritual life, and are thus victorious over the world, over this power which would interfere with their keeping of God's commandments.

What is this victory? The aorist part. goes back to the beginning of the victory. It is "our faith." When God, then, asks us to believe (4:23) he is asking us only to be victorious.

Both faith and love show that we have been born from God (v.1), that the power of a new life is in us, that in believing and in loving this power of the new life is showing its activity.

Verse 4, cont'd

It does so positively in regard to God and to God's children who are in the same victorious army with us and negatively in regard to the world, in keeping up our victory over it (present tense).
(Lenski)

(9) There is something in the Christian which makes him able to conquer the world. The world, is the world apart from God, the world in opposition to God, and the world which tries to make us forget God, and to abandon the standards of God. That which enables us to conquer the world is faith.

John defines conquering faith - It is the belief that Jesus is the Son of God. The conquering faith is belief in the Incarnation. Why is this so?

It means that God cared enough for men to lay aside His glory and take on human limitations. It means that God shares in all the manifold activities of human life. It means that God is involved in the human situation.

It means that God is in the business of living along with us. Faith in the Incarnation is the conviction that God shares and God cares.

Once we possess that faith certain things follow -

1 - We have a defence to resist the infections of the world. On all sides there is the pressure of worldly standards and motives. On all sides there are the fascinations of the wrong things.

It is the fact of experience that goodness is easier in the company of good people. And if we believe in the Incarnation we have the continual presence of God in Jesus Christ.

2. We have the strength to endure the attacks of the world.

3. We have the indestructible hope of final victory. The world did its worst to Jesus -- and it failed. After the Cross came Resurrection, and after Resurrection came glory - and that's the Christ who's with us.

If we believe in the Incarnation, then we have with us forever Christ the Victor to give us the victory.
(Barclay)

Verse 4, cont'd

(10) Whatsoever - The source of victory is in the regenerating power of God rather than in the personality of the subject of regeneration.

Faith appropriates the power of God. Faith is the consciousness of helplessness on the part of man, but it is also the consciousness of the sufficiency of God; it is also opposition to sin and evil.

The one born of God had his initial victory over the world when he was born of God, but he also has continuous victory by virtue of the fact that God lives in him. Both the initial victory and the continuous victory came through the power of God appropriated by faith.

The initial victory constitutes the guarantee of continuous victory. The faith that linked the Christian initially to God in Christ has in it all the potentialities of victory over the world that will be needed during the course of warfare here on earth.

There is not, however, anything in that initial act of faith that constitutes any kind of mechanical guarantee of further and continuous victory over the world. Such continuous victory must be won, day by day, by faith in God and striving against evil. (how? - by Love)
(Conner)

(11) The world is a prolific source of temptations that inevitably tend to make God's commandments burdensome to those who strive to obey them fully. Always the world brings to bear against those whose aims are spiritual, a force of ideas and estimates - as of "success," "happiness," "honor" _____ of social influences, which he must conquer or to which he must succumb (There's no substitute for victory.)

Such an environment would necessarily render the requirements of the Christian life a grievous and a galling yoke but for this - "whatsoever is born of God..."

Verse 4 cont'd

(11 - cont'd)

As the human body is unaffected by an external atmospheric pressure that would crush it to a pulp, but for the fact that there is an equal expansive pressure within the body itself; so ince "Greater is He that is in us, than he that is in the world," the world's hostile pressure is more than neutralized.

Belief itself may be regarded as the victory. Simply to believe in Christ is, in principle, complete victory over the world.

But the battle has to be fought out in detail; and our Belief is necessarily the spiritual weapon by which every successive temptation is met and overcome. What this Belief is the next verse declares: vs 5

The union of the human name "Jesus" with the full title "the Son of God," expresses vividly the world-conquering power of this belief.

1 - To do the will of God is to finish his work as Jesus did is the one true victory of life - to minister to, to give life as ransom - is to be emancipated from the lust of flesh, eyes and pride of life.

2 - This belief combines the power of Love and the assurance of immortality - as against "the world that passeth away."

3 - Above all, Belief is victory because it is the proof of union with Christ who, Himself victorious over the world, is the source of all-conquering power to them in whom He abides (John 16:33) (The victory must match each point of the world's character and power)
(Law)

Verse 5

(1) He that overcometh - The article with the participle denoting what is habitual; one who leads a life of victory over the world.
(Vincent)

(2) Belief is the real Incarnation of the Divine Christ - the Christian hallmark (v. 1) is, says John, indispensable for victory over the world.

Only an uncompromising doctrine of the Incarnation assures us that we have really seen God, and that His love is no wishful dream but truth - surely and historically manifested. This taken away, the godless world is victor. But this faith makes all faith strong and the believer invincible.

(3) This verse expresses the particular point in regard to which the faith that brings the new birth and overcomes the world is exercised, namely, that Jesus is the Son of God.

Such faith, then, brings to one who exercises it, a power to overcome in him all that is characteristic of the world. It brings into his life, for example, the means of loving as God loves, in contrast to the spirit of selfishness and strife that is in the world.
(Vine)

(4) Overcometh - present tense. The Apostle appeals to the daily experience of every victorious Christian.

The faith that conquers is no mere vague belief in the existence of God, but a definite belief in the Incarnation.

The one sole Victor, who is such in the highest and unique sense, is Christ.

Belief in Christ is at once belief in God and in man. It lays a foundation for love and trust towards our fellowman. Thus the instinctive distrust

Verse 5, cont'd

and selfishness, which reign supreme in the world,
are overcome. (Cambridge)

(5) Our faith is embraced in the confession
that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God. A
heart belief in the incarnation with all that
that implies results in an individual who gains
victory over the world. (Wuest)

(6) The content of this faith.

If our faith is the victory, the victor is
the believer. This makes the abstract statement
concrete. Yet everything depends upon what we
believe.

In v. 6 John again links into all that he
has said on the deity of Jesus and the power
of his blood. (Lenski)

I John 5:9-10

Verse 9

(1) The sense of the word "receive" is "to accept as valid." If we are accustomed to accept a testimony in regard to earthly facts, how much more shall we rely confidently upon the Divine testimony. (Vine)

(2) Follow NEB: "And this threefold testimony is indeed that of God Himself, the witness he has borne to his Son."

Three points are distinguishable in v. 9
1 - The testimony to Christ of water, blood and Spirit is, in a true appraisal, God speaking; God bearing witness.

2 - We accept human evidence (9a): Divine witness must surely have our even readier acceptance.

3 - This Divine witness is that of God Himself concerning His Son.

Any father's witness to his Son has special claim to acceptance. Witness of the Divine is invaluable, and witness of the Divine Father concerning his own Son represents the very acme of reliability. (Torch)

Verse 10

(1) This verse expands vs. 5. The present continuous tense, "he that believeth," expresses the habitual attitude of faith. This is the first time in this Epistle where the verb "to believe" is followed by the preposition eis, which, in this construction, combines the thoughts of the direction in which faith is exercised and the rest it reposes on its object. Faith thus exercised involves the fullest trust in, and reliance upon, a person.

The construction is found some 40 times in the Gospel of John.

Witness - For other passages concerning the witness of the Spirit in our hearts, cp. Rom 8:16; Gal. 4:6. The one who accepts the witness of God and believes on His Son has the continual witness internally. The witness is an abiding possession

I John 5:9-10, cont'd

which glorifies God. (Vine)

To John's impressive list of witnesses authenticating true belief - the Spirit, The Spirit in agreement with The Water and The Blood, the Divine Father testifying concerning his own Son - he adds this last; the confirming witness in the heart - granted to the true believer as he goes on living his life personally committed in trust and obedience to Christ. (Torch)

(3) "To believe on or into." It describes the faith which moves towards and rests on its object.

This faith must always be in exercise - "he that believeth." We have a present tense with similar significance in John 1:12. Such a believer as is here described has the witness in him, as an abiding possession. The external testimony, the words, works, etc. of Christ accepted with the whole heart; becomes inward certainty. (NIC)

1 John 5:

vs 14

ἡ ἀπορία - boldness, freedom, liberty, shown especially in speech -

- unsurpassedness of utterance; the absence of fear in speaking boldly

αἰτιόμεθα = ask, request, petition -

① Boldness - Twice John has used this word in reference to our judgment day (2:28; 4:17), and twice in prayer (3:21 & here). In the literal sense: "complete freedom of speech."

According to His Will - There are definite conditions to answered prayer - ~~in X's name (John 14:13)~~. Here is one. Prevailing prayers meet the purposes of God upon their march. Prayer isn't a technique for using the power of God for the achievement of our private desires. It is the dedication of our will to God in which we invite Him to make us more serviceable for His purposes.

"Do His will as if it were thine, that He may do thy will as if it were His."

②

Hearth us = I is deaf to selfish prayers. only if what we ask of ourselves will enable us to do His work more effectively, will I listen to us. (D. Lewis)

② ask = middle voice, signifying that the petitioner has a more ~~than~~ special interest in the matter, his request than the active voice would imply.

Since the will of I in His children has as its design their greatest possible benefit, it is only Divine grace that puts the stated limitation upon the fulfillment of our request. Your prayer has as its object, not our self interest, but our brothers real good, the condition^{is} fulfilled & prayer will be answered in I's time & way. ~~For~~

In the other condition laid down in the Epistle in regard to answered prayer, see 3:22. The two passages are very similar in this respect.

If we keep I's commandments & do what is pleasing in His sight (3:22) our actions evince an attitude of heart that is consistent with the will of I. (Vine)

③ stipulations to answered prayer: Ask according to His will. ② "we know that he hearth us what-soever we ask" (V. 15). (Damon)

④ The Xian enjoys fearless freedom in prayer in his Father's presence. The matter of 3:21 is now developed. In prayer, whenever we rightly ask, God listens to us.

Even so, there is a limit to His hearing ~~and~~ our asking. Our right asking, we learned in 3:21, implies our obedience to God. Now we learn, God hears us in whatever we ask according to His will. Cf - Jn's Prayer + Matt 26:39, 42.

"Prayer isn't a crying up the chimney of the universe to a celestial Santa Claus"; it is an aligning of our wills w/ God's sovereign will.
(Jarch)

⑤ according to his will. This is the only limitation, & it is a very gracious limitation. His will is always for His children's good, & therefore it is only when they ignorantly ask for what is not for their good that their prayers are denied.

Hearth of course means that He hears & grants what we ask -

Cf - Prov 10:24

Ps 34:15

(Cambridge)

⑥ The thought ~~seems~~ seems to be that since the believer has the assurance of eternal life, he has the further assurance that when he prays, submitting himself to God's will, he finds a sympathetic ear.

God listens when Christians pray in accordance w/ his will, when they submit to him, bringing their wills into line w/ his.

If his will is recognized as the only all good, & if the things that are in accordance w/ his will are sought in earnest prayer, he is glad to receive & give heed to prayers.

(Cmnr)

⑦ John reminds us of the great boldness & confidence we have — πρὸς αὐτόν, "face to face" w/ God when they go to him in prayer.

w/ — "πρὸς" the "face to face", preposition, implies intimate contact. In prayer, we are in the

Very presence of God. (Linski)

⑧ Boldness = includes both the right one enjoys — that of open & free speech — & the feeling of confidence w/ which this is ~~also~~ exercised.

John is virtually repeating here the assurances once given ~~John~~ by Jesus to His Church. ⑥

The supplications of men who pray in the Holy Ghost are virtual ~~prop~~ prophecies.

To "ask according to" the Father's "Will" signifies the submission of the suitor's wish & judgment to the Giver's.

Boldness = The free speech of him who expresses his mind, or presents himself to another without misgivings or entanglement.

(Findley)

⑩ True prayer isn't asking for what we want, but for what He wants. (Barclay - 1)

① "we know he hears us -" we know it as a fact.

"He hears" is to be understood in its full sense: "we know that we have the askings that we have asked from Him." He hears & grants.
(Lewski)

② John goes here from the general to the particular. If there is assurance that I hear whatever the believer asks, then he knows further that I grant the particular petitions that he asked. ~~Notice that John~~

Notice that John doesn't say that if I hear whatever we ask (according to his will) he hears particular petitions. That is true. But what the apostle is here affirming is the believer's consciousness of being heard.

know = a strong word that denotes certain, unquestioning assurance - assurance that specific petitions are granted.

of Mark 11:25 - This is taking the thing by faith before it is given in outward reality. I don't disappoint such faith on the part of his children

John uses here the perfect tense when he speaks of the petitions that have been made. The perfect Tense denotes something done in the past & continuing in force until now. Perhaps John is thinking of petitions made in the past which faith has held up before & till now.

The perfect tense suggests that petitions have been made & that prayer & faith have held them up before the Father's face. Such faith has brought the assurance that our petitions have been granted. The thing asked for has been received in anticipation. There is assurance answered prayer.

(Cmner)
 (3) The fact that God hears doesn't mean merely that He listens to us: it means that our petition is granted. (N K)

(4) He answers even while we ask. John says, not "we shall have," but we have our petitions -
 Here is the paradox that contains the secret of prayer: that in proportion as it becomes real prayer it carries its answer upon it. (Toeh)

⑤ on the ground that our union w/ X gives us boldness towards D, & that our will is subject to His will, we have the assurance that the petitions, presented in the spirit of unselfishness & submission, have already been granted.
(Vine)

⑥ The emphasis of the verse falls upon the words, "we have." Since what we ask is according to D's will, we know that we have it. Though the fulfilment may not yet be apparent, it exists in the sphere of Divine thought & will, which is the sphere of reality, & only awaits manifestation. The certainty of this ought to fill us w/ joyful expectation (Jm 16:24). "A door is thus opened into all the treasures of heaven."

Prayer is asking (~~desire~~ waited); not devout meditation, but definite petition; not to wish only, but to will. No peculiar characteristics of Xian prayer is confidence. It isn't the mere abject cry of pain, helplessness, or blank despair sends up to an unknown D on the chance that he may hear & ~~be~~ help.

Xian prayer is essentially an active identification of the human will w/ the Divine will; & not confidence which is its distinctive privilege consists in two things — first, the persuasion that our will is in harmony w/ O's; & second, the certainty that O's will shall be done.

Prayer is a mighty instrument, not for getting man's will done in Heaven, but for getting O's will done in Earth.
(Law)

(7) Prayer is but a devotional expression of the same principle, by which the Xian man practically does, & his prayer is effective because it represents the kindly gift he does. (Int Bible)

447 W -

God is Life

"This is the true God, and Eternal Life." It is everywhere assumed in the Epistle that God is the absolute final source of that life - Eternal Life - the possession of which is the supreme end for which man, and every spiritual nature, exists.

Def 71
§ 120 It is nothing else than His self-communication to men, the transmission to us of His own nature.
"This is the true God, and Eternal Life."

Man alone, of terrestrial creatures, has capacity for the highest kind of life, which St. John calls Eternal Life.

The activities in which the Life is manifested are those of Righteousness, and Love. The life God lives is a life absolutely righteous and loving. Essentially, the Eternal Life is nothing else than the Divine Nature itself, regarded, not as abstract being, but dynamically, as the ground and source of all its own manifold activities - as the animating principle in virtue of which the Divine Righteousness and the Divine Love are not mere abstractions, but eternally active forces. A principle of self-communication and self-reproduction.

Eternally, the Father imparts Himself to His only-begotten Son. To men, Eternal Life is communicated as the result of a Divine act, by which, in the terminology of St. John, they are begotten.

Eternal Life

With this theme the Epistle begins and ends, while the purpose of the whole expressly is, "That ye may know that ye have Eternal Life". Its predominance is complete; it is the centre to which every idea in the Epistle is more or less directly related.

Biblical conception of spiritual life is derived directly from experience, that which fulfils the highest idea of his being, a vivid experience of God's favour and fellowship. Life is an experience of the supreme and eternal blessings of the Kingdom of God. The conception of Life is derived directly from the data of

actual or anticipated experience. It is conscious participation in the highest good for which man is made.

The Epistle

← Its subject-matter consists chiefly in the delineation of Eternal Life, positively and negatively, by means of its invariable and unmistakable characteristics, Righteousness, Love, and Belief of the Truth. These are its primary functions. Confronted by the Truth of God in the person of Jesus Christ, every one in whom the Life is quickened believes - beholds in Jesus the Incarnate Son of God; confronted by the Will of God, as moral duty or commandment, he obeys; confronted by human need, he loves, not in word, neither in tongue, but in deed and in truth. It is the animating principle that is manifested in them, of which they are the fruits and evidences. The human activity - doing righteousness, believing, loving - is the result and the proof of life already imparted, not the condition or the means of its attainment.

Physical Life, as has been said, may be defined from its phenomena.

→ The designation most frequently employed is simply "the Life". Elsewhere the Life is qualitatively described as 'eternal'. These forms of locution are used quite interchangeably. The ideas of duration and futurity which are originally and properly expressed by the adjective *αἰώνιος* have become in Johannine usage only one element, and that not the primary element, in its significance. Always Life is regarded as a present reality and the adjective "eternal" is added even when the reference to its present possession is most emphatic. Eternal Life is not any kind of life prolonged ad infinitum. The life of a Dives, though he should be clothed in purple and fine linen, and fare sumptuously through everlasting ages, would come never one inch nearer to the idea of Eternal Life. The category of time recedes before that of moral quality. Eternal Life is one kind of life, the highest, the Divine kind of life, irrespective of its duration. It is the kind of Life that is perfectly manifested in Christ.

Of this Life, God the Father revealed in Christ, is the sole and absolute source. Eternal Life is His gift to men; potentially, when He "sent His Son into the world that we might live through Him"; actually, when we believe in His name. For of this Life, again Christ is the sole mediator.

By the Incarnation of the Only-Begotten Son with the Eternal Life became incorporate with h manity, and remains a fountain of regenerative power to "as many as receive Him". Where it is said that the subject of the entire Apostolic announcement is "the Word of Life".

Here the mediation of Life through the historic Christ. The tense points to the definite historical act, the Incarnation, by which Eternal Life was communicated to humanity.

The life that was manifested in His Incarnation and that is given to men through Him is no other than that which He had as the pre-incarnate Word in His eternal fellowship with the Father.

We proceed next to the teaching of the Epistle regarding the communication of this Life to men. (a) The necessity of Regeneration is fundamental. Life, which consists in union with God - which is nothing else than participation in the Divine Nature - is not inherent in man as he is naturally constituted. The state of every man is a priori that of death, of spiritual separation from God. The recognition of their present state as one of Life is heightened by the remembrance of a former state which they now see to have been one of Death.

It implies not only that salvation - Life - has its ultimate origin in God, but that its communication, by whatsoever means, is directly and wholly His act.

It is not the product of man's own character, but of the new life imparted to him. Death cannot make response to life.

The same Holy Ghost who was the author of the Incarnation, who begat the full Life of God in the humanity of Jesus, is now given by Him to men to beget and foster in them the same Life that is in Him.

Those who are "begotten of God" are the "children of God". The fact that the nature thus communicated has not as yet reached its full stature, but contains the promise of a future and glorious development. We are children of God, but what it fully is to be children of God is not yet made manifest.

It is, the surpassing dignity thus bestowed upon us, the sublimity, beyond all understanding, of the privilege, that first calls forth the

Apostle's exclamation of amazement. That we should be called children of God. It signifies the new life-principle which is the formative element of the "new man". It is the divine Divine germ that enfolds in itself all the potencies of "what we shall be," the last perfection of the redeemed and glorified children of God.

This abides in him who has received it. 3:15
It stamps its own character upon human life,
and determines its whole development.

This life, creates a family-fellowship at once human and Divine. It is realized in the actual Christian community, and there only. But there spurious elements may intude themselves; as it proved when schism reveals those who, though they have belonged to the external organisation, have never been genuinely partakers of its life. Only among who walk in the same Light of God does true fellowship exist.

But this human relationship grows out of a Divine.

occurs some forty times in the Fourth Gospel. Its use to express the fact of God's (or Christ's mystical union with His people is peculiar to St. John).

Vine and the branches. The vitalising union by which the influx of Divine Life is maintained in those who are "begotten" of God, consists in two activities, not identical, not separable, but reciprocal - God's abiding in us, and our abiding in Him. These are two distinct actions, Divine and human.

The "abiding" of God in us is the continuous and progressive action of that same self-reproducing energy of the Divine nature of the initial act of which is the Divine Begetting. By the same power and mode of Divine action Life is originated and sustained. The Divine Begetting, the Divine Nature is permanently imparted to the children of God ("His" i. e. God's "seed abideth in him").

The branches of a tree are actually children of the tree. Structurally, a branch is a smaller tree rooted in a larger. Even a single-leaf with its stalk is simply a miniature tree, exactly resembling what the parent tree was in its first stage of growth, except that it derives its sustenance from the parent tree instead of from the soil. Fellowship of vines possessing a common life. It is the sap of the parent vine that vitalises all the branches. So does the Life of God vitalise him in whom He abides, sustaining and fostering in him those energies - Righteousness, Love and Truth, - which are the Divine nature itself. The language used is in no sense or degree figurative.

But this abiding of God in us has as its necessary counterpart our abiding in Him. Yet not so that the human activity is a mere automatic product of the Divine. We can invite or reject the Divine Presence; keep within or avoid the sphere of Divine influence; open or obstruct the channels through which the Divine Life may flow into ours. Hence, "abiding in God" is made a subject of instruction and imperative exhortation. And when the word "abide" is thus used, the idea of persistence or steadfast purpose, which is inherent in it, comes into view. As the abiding of God in us is the persistent and purposeful action by which the Divine nature influences ours, so our abiding in God is the persistent and purposeful submission of ourselves to that action. The only means of doing this which the Epistle expressly emphasises is steadfast retention of and adherence to the truth as it is announced in the Apostolic Gospel (cf. John 8:31) and as it is witnessed by the Spirit. Yet, although "keeping God's commandments," "abiding in love," and "confessing" Christ are exhibited primarily as the requisite effects and tests of our abiding in God, these effects become in their turn means.

What is this Life? The Apostle says only that God, the true God revealed in Christ, is Eternal Life. And only this can be the ultimate definition.

Eternal Life is the Divine nature reproducing itself in human nature; is the energy of the Spirit of God, of the Father and of the Son, in the spiritual nature of man.

It implies a renewal of nature. The very capacity of response to these is required. The chord in man's moral nature that responds to Christ and to the truths and motives of His gospel is silent, is broken. It must be restrung; and it is restrung in those who are "begotten of the Spirit." Only by this direct Divine agency is a renewal of the "moral temper," a "radical change of mind," effected. Character is renewed, not as in other religions and ethical systems, by the sole influence of new truths and motives, but by the renewal of the soul, the moral nature itself.

But the Divine Begetting is the renewal of the moral nature. The children of God are distinguished by no superhuman deeds or capacities. Instead of walking in darkness they walk in the Light; instead of doing sin they do righteousness; instead of hating they love; instead of denying, they confess Jesus as the Divine, and seek to walk even as He walked, and to purify themselves as He is pure. But these things they do because their moral nature has been renewed. The wineskin, so to say, remains the same, but is filled with new wine. No new faculty is created, but every faculty becomes the organ of a new moral life.

The life communicated is a new moral life; a life which is manifested in a new view of sin and righteousness; in a new view of Christ and of God; in new desire and power to do the Will of God, to love one another and to conquer the world.