

THE FIRST EPISTLE GENERAL OF

1 1]

JOHN.

[1 8

WRITER. The Apostle John, as unbroken tradition affirms, and as internal evidence and comparison with the Gospel of John prove.

Date. Probably A.D. 90.

Theme. First John is a family letter from the Father to His "little children" who are in the world. With the possible exception of the Song of Solomon, it is the most intimate of the inspired writings. The world is viewed as without. The sin of a believer is treated as a child's offence against his Father, and is dealt with as a family matter (1. 9; 2. 1). The moral government of the universe is not in question. The child's sin as an offence against the law has been met in the Cross, and "Jesus Christ the righteous" is now his "Advocate with the Father." John's Gospel leads across the threshold of the Father's house; his first Epistle makes us at home there. A tender word is used for "children," *teknia*, "born ones," or "bairns." Paul is occupied with our public position as sons; John with our nearness as born-ones of the Father.

First John is in two principal divisions: I. The family with the Father, 1.1-3. 24. II. The family and the world, 4. 1-5. 21. There is a secondary analysis, in each division of which occurs the phrase, "My little children," as follows: (I.) Introductory, the incarnation, 1. 1, 2. (II.) The little children and fellowship, 1. 3-2. 11. (III.) The little children and the secular and "religious" world, 2. 15-28. (IV.) How the little children may know each other, 2. 29-3. 10. (V.) How the little children must live together, 3. 11-24. (VI.) Parenthetic: How the little children may know false teachers, 4. 1-6. (VII.) The little children assured and warned, 4. 7-5. 21.

CHAPTER 1.

Part I. The family with the Father: fellowship.

(1) *The incarnation makes fellowship possible.*

THAT which was ^afrom the beginning, which we have ^bheard, which we have ^cseen with our eyes, which we have ^dlooked upon, and our hands have ^ehandled, of the ^fWord of life;

2 (For the ^glife was manifested, and we have seen ^hit, and bear witness, and shew unto you that ⁱeternal life, which was ^jwith the Father, and was manifested unto us;)

(2) *Fellowship is with the Father and with the Son.*

3 That which we have seen and heard declare we unto you, that ye also may have fellowship with us;

After
A.D. 90.

^a John 1.1; 1 John 2.13.

^b John 5.24; Acts 4.20.

^c John 1.14.

^d 2 Pet. 1.16,17.

^e Lk. 24.39; John 20.27.

^f John 1.1,14.

^g Rom. 16.26;

^h 1 Tim. 3.16.

ⁱ *Life (eternal).*

vs.1,2; 1 John 2.

25. (Mt. 7.14;

Rev. 22.19.)

^j John 1.1,18; 16.

28.

^k John 17.21;

^l 1 Cor. 1.9; 1 John

2.24.

^m John 15.11; 16.24;

ⁿ 1 Pet. 1.8.

^o John 3.20,21;

^p 1 Tim. 6.16.

^q 1 John 2.9-11.

^r *practise not.*

^s Ex. 27.20, note.

^t v.3; 2 Tim. 2.22.

^u *Sacrifice (of Christ).*

Rev. 1.5; (Gen. 4.4;

Heb. 10.18.)

and truly our fellowship is ^jwith the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ.

4 And these things write we unto you, that ^kyour joy may be full.

(3) *The conditions of fellowship.* (a) *The walk in the light.*

5 This then is the message which we have heard of him, and declare unto you, that ^lGod is light, and in him is no darkness at all.

6 If we ^msay that we have fellowship with him, and walk in darkness, we lie, and ⁿdo not the truth:

7 But if we walk in the ^olight, as he is in the light, we have fellowship ^pone with another, and ^qthe blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin.

(b) *The fact of indwelling sin admitted.* (Cf. 1 Cor. 11. 31, note.)

8 If we say that we have no sin,

¹ What it is to "walk in the light" is explained by vs. 8-10. "All things . . . are made manifest by the light" (Eph. 5. 13). The presence of God brings the consciousness of sin in the nature (v. 8), and sins in the life (vs. 9, 10). The blood of Christ is the divine provision for both. To walk in the light is to live in fellowship with the Father and the Son. Sin interrupts, but confession restores that fellowship. Immediate confession keeps the fellowship unbroken.

we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us.

(c) *Sins confessed, forgiven, and cleansed.*

9 If we confess our sins, he is ^afaithful and ^bjust to forgive us *our* sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

10 If we say that we have not sinned, ^cwe make him a liar, and his word is not in us.

CHAPTER 2.

(d) *Fellowship maintained by Christ's advocacy.*

MY little children, these things write I unto you, that ye ^dsin not. And if any man sin, ^ewe have an ¹advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous:

2 And he is the ^gpropitiation for our sins: and not for ours only, ^hbut also for *the sins of the whole* world.

(e) *The tests of fellowship: obedience and love.*

3 And hereby we do know that we know him, if we keep his ²commandments.

4 He that saith, I know him, and keepeth not his commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him.

5 But whoso ^kkeepeth his word, in him verily is the love of God ^lperfected: hereby know we that we are in him.

6 He that saith he abideth in him ^mought himself also so to walk, even as he walked.

7 Brethren, ⁿI write no new commandment unto you, but an old commandment which ye had ^ofrom the beginning. The ^pold commandment is the word which ye have heard from the beginning.

8 Again, a ^qnew commandment I write unto you, which thing is true in him and in you: because the darkness is past, and the ^rtrue light now shineth.

9 He that ^ssaith he is in the light,

After
A.D. 90.

^a Rom. 3.25,26;
2 Cor. 5.21.

^b righteous.

^c 1 John 5.10; John 3.33; Rom.3.4.

^d *Sfn.* Rom.3.23, note.

^e *Advocacy.* (John 14.16,26.)

^f *Paraclete.* trans. Comforter in John 14.16.

^g *Gr. hilasmos that which propitiates.* See Rom. 3.25, note.

^h *Assurance.*

1 John 3.1,2. (Isa.32.17; Jude 1.)

ⁱ *omit italicized words.*

^j *kosmos* (Mt.4.8) = mankind.

^k John 14.23; Col.3.16.

^l Mt.5.48, note.

^m John 13.15; 1 Pet.2.21.

ⁿ 2 John 5.

^o 1 John 3.11.

^p John 15.10.

^q John 15.12.

^r John 1.9; 8.12; 12.35.

^s v.4; 1 John 3.14,15.

^t 1 John 3.15; 4.20.

^u John 12.35.

^v Acts 10.43; Col.2.13.

^w 1 John 1.1; Rev.22.13.

^x 1 John 4.4; Heb.2.14; Eph.6.11.

^y The little ones of the family; see v.12, *margin*.

^z Rom.8.15-17; Gal.4.6.

^a Rom.12.2; Gal.1.4; Jas.4.4.

^b *kosmos* = world-system. 1 John 3.13. (John 7.7; Rev.13.3.)

^c Mt.6.24; Gal.1.10.

^d *Law (of Christ).*

vs.7,8,15; 1 John 3.23,24. (Gal.6.2; 2 John 5.)

^e *Flesh.* Jude 23. (John 1.13; Jude 23.)

^f *Separation.* vs.15-17; 1 John 5.21. (Gen.12.1; 2 Cor.6.14-17.)

and hateth his brother, is in darkness even until now.

10 He that ⁴loveth his brother abideth in the light, and there is none occasion of stumbling in him.

11 But he that hateth his brother is in darkness, and ^uwalketh in darkness, and knoweth not whither he goeth, because that darkness hath blinded his eyes.

12 I write unto you, little children, because your ^dsins are ^vforgiven you for his name's sake.

13 I write unto you, fathers, because ye have ^wknown him *that is from the beginning*. I write unto you, young men, because ye have ^xovercome the wicked one. I write unto you, ^ylittle children, because ye have ^zknown the Father.

14 I have written unto you, fathers, because ye have known him *that is from the beginning*. I have written unto you, young men, because ye are strong, and the word of God abideth in you, and ye have overcome the wicked one.

The children must not love the present world (Rev. 13. 8, note).

15 ^aLove not the ^bworld, neither the things *that are in the world*. ^cIf any man love the world, ^dthe love of the Father is not in him.

16 For all that *is in the world*, the lust of the ^eflesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world.

17 And the world passeth away, and the lust thereof: ^fbut he that doeth the will of God abideth for ever.

The children warned against apostates who deny the true deity of Christ.

18 Little children, it is the last time: and as ye have heard that antichrist shall come, even now are there many antichrists; whereby we know that it is the last time.

19 They ³went out from us, but they were not of us; for if they had been of us, they would not

1 Advocacy is that work of Jesus Christ for sinning saints which He carries on with the Father whereby, because of the eternal efficacy of His own sacrifice, He restores them to fellowship (cf. Psa. 23. 3; John 13. 10, note).

2 John uses "commandments" (1) in the general sense of the divine will, however revealed, "his word" (v. 5); and (2) especially of the law of Christ (Gal. 6. 2; 2 John 5). See, also, John 15. 10-12.

3 "Went out from us," that is, *doctrinally*. Doubtless then, as now, the deniers of the Son (vs. 22, 23) still called themselves Christians. Cf. 2 Tim. 1. 15.

doubt have continued with us; but *they went out*, ^athat they might be made manifest that ^bthey were not all of us.

20 But ye have an ^cunction from the Holy One, and ye know all things.

21 I have not written unto you because ye know not the truth, but ^dbecause ye know it, and that no lie is of the truth.

22 Who is ^ea liar but he that denieth that ^fJesus is the Christ? He is ^gantichrist, that ^hdenieth the Father and the Son.

23 Whosoever denieth the Son, the same hath not the Father: [*but he that acknowledgeth the Son hath the Father also.*]

24 Let that therefore abide in you which ye have heard from the beginning. If that which ye have heard from the beginning shall remain in you, ye also shall ⁱcontinue in the Son, and in the Father.

25 And this is the ^jpromise that he hath promised us, *even* ^keternal life.

26 These *things* have I written unto you concerning them that ^lseduce you.

27 But the ^manointing which ye have received of him abideth in you, and ye need not that any man teach you: but as the same anointing teacheth you of all things, and is truth, and is no lie, and even as it hath taught you, ye shall abide in him.

28 And now, ⁿlittle children, abide in him; that, when ^ohe shall appear, we may have confidence, and not be ashamed before him at his coming.

How the little children may know each other.

29 If ye know that he is ^prighteous, ye know that every one that ^qdoeth righteousness is born of him.

CHAPTER 3.

BEHOLD, ^rwhat manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, ^sthat we should be called the ^tsons of God: therefore the ^uworld

After
A.D. 90.

a 1 Cor. 11. 19.

b none *of them* are of us.

c 2 Cor. 1. 21.

d 2 Pet. 3. 1.

e the liar.

f 1 John 4. 3.

g Antichrist. vs. 18, 22; 1 John 4. 3. (1 John 2. 18; Rev. 13. 11-17.)

h John 14. 9-11.

i John 15. 5; Col. 1. 23.

j John 3. 16; 17. 2, 3.

k Life (eternal). 1 John 3. 14, 15. (Mt. 7. 14; Rev. 22. 19.)

l lead you astray. m. v. 20; John 14. 26; 16. 13.

n The general term for all children.

o 1 John 3. 2; 4. 17.

p 1 John 3. 7.

q practiseth.

r 1 John 4. 10; Eph. 2. 4-7.

s Assurance. vs. 1, 2; Jude 1, R. V. (Isa. 32. 17; Jude 1.)

t children.

u kosmos (Mt. 4. 8) = mankind.

v Christ (Second Advent). Jude 14, 15. (Deut. 30. 3; Acts 1. 9-11.)

w Rom. 8. 29; 1 Cor. 15. 49; Phil. 3. 21.

x practiseth *sin* practiseth also lawlessness; and *sin* is lawlessness.

y *Str.* Rom. 3. 23, note.

z John 1. 29; Heb. 9. 26.

a 2 Cor. 5. 21; Heb. 7. 26; 1 Pet. 1. 19.

b Satan. vs. 8, 10; Jude 9. (Gen. 3. 1; Rev. 20. 10.)

c Heb. 2. 14.

d undo.

e 1 John 5. 18; John 3. 6.

f practise.

g does not practise.

h See v. 7, note.

i 1 John 1. 5; 2. 7.

j v. 23; John 13. 34; 15. 12; 1 John 4. 7, 21; 2 John 5.

k kosmos = world-system. 1 John 4. 3-5. (John 7. 7; Rev. 13. 3.)

l John 15. 18-20.

knoweth us not, because it knew him not.

2 Beloved, now are we the ⁴sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, ²when he shall appear, ³we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is.

3 And every man that hath this hope in him purifieth himself, even as he is pure.

4 Whosoever ²committeth ³sin transgresseth also the law: for sin is the transgression of the law.

5 And ye know that he was manifested to ²take away our sins; and ⁴in him is no sin.

6 Whosoever abideth in him sinneth not: whosoever sinneth hath not seen him, neither known him.

7 Little children, let no man deceive you: he that doeth ¹righteousness is righteous, even as he is righteous.

8 He that committeth sin is of the ⁶devil; for the devil sinneth from the beginning. For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, ⁴that he might ^ddestroy the works of the devil.

9 Whosoever is ⁶born of God doth not ^fcommit sin; for his seed remaineth in him: and he cannot sin, because he is born of God.

10 In this the children of God are manifest, and the children of the devil: whosoever ²doeth not ^hrighteousness is not of God, neither he that loveth not his brother.

How the little children must live together.

11 For this is the ⁴message that ye heard from the beginning, that ⁷we should love one another.

12 Not as Cain, *who* was of that wicked one, and slew his brother. And wherefore slew he him? Because his own works were evil, and his brother's righteous.

13 Marvel not, my brethren, if the ⁶world ^hhate you.

14 We know that we have passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren. He that loveth not *his* brother abideth in death.

15 Whosoever hateth his brother

1 "Righteousness" here, and in the passages having marginal references to this, means the righteous life which is the result of salvation through Christ. The righteous man under law became righteous by doing righteously; under grace he does righteously because he has been made righteous (Rom. 3. 22; Rom. 10. 3. note).

is a murderer: and ye know that no murderer hath eternal life abiding in him.

16 Hereby ^bperceive we the love of God, because he laid down his life for us: and we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren.

17 But whoso hath this world's good, and seeth his brother have need, and shutteth up his bowels of compassion from him, how dwelleth the love of God in him?

18 My little children, let us not love in word, neither in tongue; but in deed and in truth.

19 And hereby we know that we are of the truth, and shall assure our hearts before him.

20 For if our heart condemn us, God is greater than our heart, and knoweth all things.

21 Beloved, if our heart condemn us not, then have we confidence toward God.

22 And whatsoever we ask, we receive of him, because we keep his commandments, and do those things that are pleasing in his sight.

23 And this is his commandment, That we should believe on the name of his Son Jesus Christ, and love one another, as he gave us commandment.

24 And he that keepeth his commandments dwelleth in him, and he in him. And hereby we know that he abideth in us, by the Spirit which he hath given us.

CHAPTER 4.

Part II. The family and the world.

Parenthetic: The children warned against false teachers.

BELOVED, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God: because many false prophets are gone out into the world.

The marks of false teachers.

(a) The false doctrine of Christ's person.

2 Hereby know ye the Spirit of God: Every spirit that confesseth that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is of God:

3 And every spirit that confesseth not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is not of God: and this is that spirit of antichrist, whereof ye have heard that it should come;

After
A.D. 90.

^a Life (eternal). vs. 14, 15; 1 John 5. 11, 12, 13, 16, 20. (Mt. 7. 14; Rev. 22. 19.)

^b we know love.

^c John 15. 13; Gal. 2. 20.

^d Rom. 16. 4.

^e 1 John 4. 20.

^f Rom. 12. 9; Jas. 2. 15, 16; 1 Pet. 1. 22.

^g 1 Cor. 4. 4.

^h 2 Cor. 1. 12; Heb. 10. 19.

ⁱ John 15. 7.

^j Law (of Christ).

vs. 23, 24; 1 John

4. 12. (Gal. 6. 2;

2 John 5.)

^k John 6. 29.

^l John 13. 34.

^m John 14. 21.

ⁿ Holy Spirit. 1

John 4. 2, 13. (Mt.

1. 18; Acts 2. 4.)

^o prove.

^p earth.

^q Holy Spirit. vs.

2, 13; 1 John 5. 6,

7. (Mt. 1. 18;

Acts 2. 4.)

^r Rom. 10. 9, 10;

1 John 5. 1.

^s Antichrist. 2

John 7. (1 John 2.

18; Rev. 13. 11-17.)

^t kosmos world-

system. 1 John 5.

4, 5, 19. (John 7. 7;

Rev. 13. 3.)

^u Rom. 8. 31.

^v John 14. 30; 16. 11;

1 Cor. 2. 12.

^w Apostasy. vs.

1-5; Jude 3-19.

(Lk. 18. 8; 2 Tim.

3. 1-8.)

^x John 15. 19; 17. 14.

^y 1 Cor. 2. 12, 16.

^z 1 John 3. 10, 11, 23.

^a 1 John 3. 14;

1 Thes. 4. 9.

^b v. 16; 1 John 1. 5.

^c Rom. 5. 8.

^d Isa. 9. 6; John 3. 16.

^e kosmos (Mt. 4. 8)

= mankind.

^f Tit. 3. 5.

^g Gr. *hilasmos*.

See 1 John 2. 2.

^h Law (of Christ).

2 John 5. (Gal. 6.

2; 2 John 5.)

ⁱ Mt. 5. 48, note.

^j Rom. 1. 16, note.

^k kosmos (Mt. 4. 8)

= mankind.

^l hath love been

perfect with

us.

^m Day of judg-

ment. Rev. 20.

11. (Mt. 10. 15;

Rev. 20. 11.)

and even now already is it in the world.

4 Ye are of God, little children, and have overcome them: because greater is he that is in you, than he that is in the world.

(b) The world-marks of false teachers.

5 They are of the world: therefore speak they of the world, and the world heareth them.

6 We are of God: he that knoweth God heareth us; he that is not of God heareth not us. Hereby know we the spirit of truth, and the spirit of error.

The true children are born of God through faith in the propitiation of the Son of God.

7 Beloved, let us love one another: for love is of God; and every one that loveth is born of God, and knoweth God.

8 He that loveth not knoweth not God; for God is love.

9 In this was manifested the love of God toward us, because that God sent his only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through him.

10 Herein is love, that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins.

The love-life is shown by the life of love.

11 Beloved, if God so loved us, we ought also to love one another.

12 No man hath seen God at any time. If we love one another, God dwelleth in us, and his love is perfected in us.

13 Hereby know we that we dwell in him, and he in us, because he hath given us of his Spirit.

14 And we have seen and do testify that the Father sent the Son to be the Saviour of the world.

15 Whosoever shall confess that Jesus is the Son of God, God dwelleth in him, and he in God.

16 And we have known and believed the love that God hath to us. God is love; and he that dwelleth in love dwelleth in God, and God in him.

17 Herein is our love made perfect, that we may have boldness in the day of judgment: because as he is, so are we in this world.

18 There is no fear in love; but perfect love casteth out fear: be-

cause fear hath torment. He that feareth is not made ^aperfect in love.

19 ^bWe love him, because he first loved us.

20 ^cIf a man say, I love God, and hateth his brother, he is a liar: for he that loveth not his brother whom he hath seen, how can he love God whom he hath not seen?

21 And ^dthis commandment have we from him, That he who loveth God love his brother also.

CHAPTER 5.

Faith is the overcoming principle in the world-conflict.

WHOSOEVER ^ebelieveth that ^fJesus is the Christ is ^gborn of God: and ^hevery one that loveth him that begat loveth him also that is begotten of him.

2 By this we know that we love the children of God, when we love God, and ⁱkeep his commandments.

3 For this is the love of God, that we keep his commandments: and his commandments ^jare not grievous.

4 For whatsoever is born of God overcometh the ^kworld: and this is the victory that overcometh the world, *even* our faith.

5 Who is he that overcometh the world, but he that ^lbelieveth that Jesus is the Son of God?

6 This is he that came by ^mwater and blood, *even* Jesus Christ; not by water only, but by water and blood. And it is the ⁿSpirit that beareth witness, because the Spirit is truth.

7 ^oFor there are three that bear record in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost: and these three are one.

8 ^pAnd there are three that bear witness ^qin earth, the ^rSpirit, and the water, and the blood: and these three ^sagree in one.

9 If we receive the ^twitness of men, the witness of God is greater:

After
A.D. 90.

^a Mt. 5.48. *note.*
^b vs. 10; 2 Cor. 5.14, 15.

^c 1 John 2.4; 3.17.
^d John 13.34; 15.12;
1 John 3.23.

^e John 1.12.
^f 1 John 2.22, 23;
4.2, 15.

^g John 1.13.
^h John 15.23.

ⁱ 2 John 6; Rev. 3.19.
^j Mt. 11.30.

^k *kosmos* = world-system. Rev. 11.15. (John 7.7; Rev. 13.3.)

^l *Faith*. vs. 1.4, 5, 10; Heb. 11.1-39. (Gen. 3.20; Heb. 11.39.)

^m John 19.34, 35; Heb. 10.5-7.
ⁿ Heb. 2.4.

^o It is generally agreed that v.7 has no real authority, and has been inserted.

^p *for*.

^q Omit "in earth."
^r *Holy Spirit*. vs. 6-8; Jude 19, 20. (Mt. 1.18; Acts 2.4.)

^s *or, are to one point or purpose.*
^t John 8.17, 18.

^u Rom. 8.16; Gal. 4.6.
^v 1 John 1.10.

^w John 3.36; 6.47, 48; 17.2, 3.

^x *ye may know that ye have eternal life who believe the name of.*

^y 1 John 3.22.

^z Rom. 3.23, *note.*

^a 1 John 3.4.
^b 1 John 3.9.

^c 1 Jk. 4.6; 2 Cor. 4.4.
^d *in the wicked one.*

^e 1 John 4.2.

^f 1 John 2.20, 27.
^g *Life (eternal)*. vs. 11, 12, 13, 16, 20; Jude 21. (Mt. 7.14; Rev. 22.19.)

^h *Dear children, guard yourselves.*

ⁱ *Separation.*
2 John 10, 11. (Gen. 12.1; 2 Cor. 6.14-17.)

for this is the witness of God which he hath testified of his Son.

10 He that believeth on the Son of God ^whath the witness in himself: he that believeth not God ^vhath made him a liar; because he believeth not the record that God gave of his Son.

11 And this is the record, that God hath given to us eternal life, and this life is in his Son.

12 He that ^whath the Son hath life; *and* he that hath not the Son of God hath not life.

13 These things have I written unto you that ^xbelieve on the name of the Son of God; that ye may know that ye have eternal life, and that ye may believe on the name of the Son of God.

14 And this is the confidence that we have in him, that, ^yif we ask any thing according to his will, he heareth us:

15 And if we know that he hear us, whatsoever we ask, we know that we have the petitions that we desired of him.

16 If any man see his brother ^zsin a sin *which* is not unto death, he shall ask, and he shall give him life for them that sin not unto death. There is a sin unto death: I do not say that he shall pray for it.

17 ^aAll unrighteousness is sin: and there is a sin not unto death.

18 We know that whosoever is ^bborn of God sinneth not; but he that is begotten of God keepeth himself, and that wicked one toucheth him not.

19 *And* we know that we are of God, and ^cthe whole world lieth ^din wickedness.

20 *And* we know that the ^eSon of God is come, and hath given us an understanding, that we may ^fknow him that is true, and we are in him that is true, *even* in his Son Jesus Christ. This is the true God, and ^geternal life.

21 ^hLittle children, ⁱkeep yourselves from idols. Amen.