

First Epistle of John

I wrote an epistle to our Ephesian church and to the other churches. I'm going to share it again with you -- you of the modern day who claim to know and serve God and worship him in your churches. I pray that these writings give you some glimpse of how the true followers of Christ lived back in our day. The early saints understood the power of God and lived by the Spirit, and were not as concerned about proper church organization as you are today. It might come as a shock to you, but your "perfect organizations" will not save you, as long as you have but a form of godliness, but you deny the power thereof. The Gospel is the power of God unto salvation. If there is no power, there is no salvation. You lack faith and its attendants: the gifts of the spirit. It is as there was no atonement made, and all is vain. But let me show you how it was in the beginning.

Chapter 1

1. That Word of life which was with God in the beginning manifested himself in our midst. Our eyes have looked upon him, and our hands have handled him – the Word of life.
2. For this life was manifested to us, and we have seen it, and we bear witness, and show unto you that eternal life, which was with the Father -- that the Father's gift of eternal life was manifested to us.
3. And we declare this to you that you might have the same communion as we have, for truly we have communion with the Father and with his Son Jesus Christ, who have taken up their abode with us, as he promised us. [And this promise is unto every soul who forsakes his sins and comes unto Christ, and calls on his Name, and obeys his voice, and keeps his commandments: for thus saith the Lord: "They shall see my face and know that I am."]
4. And we are writing these things to you that your joy might be as great as ours. [Even greater, for as each soul is added to the circle of fellowship, so the light burns brighter, and the love is that much sweeter, and the Spirit of the Lord is unrestrained.]
5. When you come to know the workings of the Spirit, you will perceive that God is light, and in him is no darkness at all.
6. Many come claiming that they "know" God or that they have "fellowship" with God. But if they walk in darkness, they lie and do not tell the truth. [For, this fellowship of which we speak is not a vain expression. It is literal communion with God. And, if you have once received this fellowship, it will change your life forever.]
7. And if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another and know each other as we are known. [We will see our sins and freely repent of them, confessing them to one another, and forsaking them.] The shedding of the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanses us sin, [for knowing that he forgives us, makes it possible for us to forgive ourselves and one another and not hide our sins and pretend that we have no sin.]
8. If we say that we have no sin, then we are committing the greatest sin of all because we are deceiving ourselves, and the truth is not in us.
9. But, if we confess our sins, the Lord, the Faithful one, forgives us our sins, and cleanses us from all unrighteousness, so we can walk uprightly and judge righteous judgment.
10. But, if we say that we have not sinned, we make him a liar, and his word is not in us. For if his word was in us, we would freely come to the light that our sins may be made known, that we might repent of them.

Chapter 2

1. Little children, [and I am calling you little children for such is of the kingdom of heaven, and I love you all as if you were my little children] I am writing these things to you so that you can avoid these mistakes and not make the biggest mistake of all -which is to deny that you have made mistakes [sins]. But if we sin, know that we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ. He is the one who judges us righteously.
2. He is our mediator with the Father, and he is here to remind us that it is our sins which separate us from the Father, and it is not the will of the Father that any of his children should be lost, but he sends his servants out to seek after that those sheep which were lost in their sins and bring them home safely into the fold. And, not for our sins alone, but for the sins of the whole world.
3. Many people who are not familiar with the voice of the Spirit ask "How can I know?" The true answer to this question is to seek the Spirit. Any other answer is not a complete answer, nor an honest answer. But I will give you some tests to use so that you will know how to judge your own progress, until you come to know the Spirit, which will tell you all the things you should do. So, how do we know that we know the Father? We know the Father, if we keep his commandments.
4. Whoever says "I know him", but doesn't keep his commandments is a liar, and the truth is not in him.
5. But whoever keeps his commandments, the love of God is perfected in him, and we will be in him as he is in us, even as he is in Christ and Christ is in him.
6. If a man says that Christ is in him, then he will do the works of Christ, and walk, even as Christ walked.

7. Brothers and Sisters, I am not writing any new commandment, but I am reminding you of the same old commandment which we have had from the beginning.
8. However, I am writing this to you in a new moment of time, and I ask you consider this command anew, as if you were hearing it for the first time, that your understanding may be enlightened, and that you may live this commandment more completely. The darkness is past and a new light is shining in our midst. Can you see it? Are you walking in it, or are you stumbling around in the darkness?
9. Whoever says he is walking the light, but esteems his brother as less than himself, or who esteems his brother as greater than himself is, in reality, walking in darkness.
10. Whoever loves his brother as himself abides in the light. He does not stumble; nor does he give his brother occasion to stumble.
11. He who does not walk in the light does not know where he is going because darkness has blinded his eyes.
12. I write unto you, little children, because your sins are forgiven you for his name's sake.
13. I write unto you, fathers, because you have known him that is from the beginning. I write unto you, young men, because you have overcome the wicked one. I write unto you, little children, because you have known the Father.
14. I have written unto you, fathers, because you have known him that is from the beginning. I have written unto you, young men, because you are strong, and the word of God abides in you, and you have overcome the wicked one.
15. Do not love the world or focus your attention on the world or the material things that are in the world. If any man loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him.
16. For everything that is in the world, the desires of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world.
17. The world with all of its lusts and desires is temporary and will pass away, the Father abides forever, and you who are the children of the Father abide forever. Therefore, your desire should be to know his will, and abide in him forever.
18. Little children, these are the last days, and since you have heard that antichrist shall come, know this that even now there are many antichrists, as was prophesied concerning the latter days.
19. These antichrists have gone out from our midst, but they were never really part of us, for if they had been part of us, then they would no doubt have continued with us; but they left us, and made it clear to one and all that they have no part with us.
20. I have not written to you because you do not know the truth, for you have an anointing from the Holy One and know the truth of all things. You know that Jesus is the Christ, and you know the Father because that which you have heard from the beginning abides in you. [And those who continue in the Father and the Son, you will come to know them, and will of them receive promise of eternal life.]
21. Our god is a god of truth, and cannot lie, so you can trust in this promise. And you also know that no lie can come from the truth.
22. So, who is the greatest liar, and how does he lie? A liar is he who denies these things and worships some other Christ in his place. And this is the spirit of an antichrist.
23. Whoever denies the true Christ, the same does not know the Father: but he who acknowledges the true Christ also knows him who sent him.
24. Let that word which you have heard from the beginning remain in you. If that word remains in you, then you also shall continue in the Son, and in the Father.
25. And this is the promise that he has promised us -- eternal life.
26. Some of those who left us will come back to try to seduce you into following them, in an attempt to justify their own deeds by which they have sought to harm us.
27. But the anointing which you have received of the Spirit, abides in you, and you need not that any man should teach you, for the same anointing of the Spirit teaches you of all things, and is truth, and is no lie. [For you are taught by the Lord, himself] And even as he has taught you, so you should abide in the Spirit.
28. And now, little children, abide in Christ; in order that, when he shall appear, you may have confidence, and not be ashamed before him at his coming.
29. If you know that he is righteous, you know that every one that does righteousness is born of him. So, there is no need to be ashamed, whether you are standing before Christ, himself, or facing our enemies.

Chapter 3

1. What marvelous love that the Father has bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons and daughters of God! But the world does not know us or understand us, because it does not know or understand God.
2. My beloved brothers and sisters, we are now the sons and daughters of God our Father, who sees us as we truly are, even though we cannot see who we truly are. But we know this, that when Christ shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall then see him as he is.

3. And it is this hope within each of us that causes us to purify ourselves, even as he is pure. [And what is purity except that we love God and esteem our neighbor as ourselves with all our heart, might, mind, and strength? Nothing held back. Nothing wavering.]
4. And now, my beloved, I must speak to you in plainness. Whoever commits sin is breaking the law, because sin, by definition, means to break the law.
5. And we know that Christ was manifested to take away our sins, and in him is no sin.
6. Whoever abides in him will not sin, but whoever commits sin has not seen him, neither known him.
7. Do not let anybody deceive you. He who does the works of Christ in the spirit of Christ is righteous, even as Christ is righteous.
8. But he who commits sin is of the devil, because the devil is a sinner from the beginning. For this reason, the Son of God was manifested, that he might destroy the works of the devil.
9. Whoever is born of God does not commit sin, because the Spirit of Christ abides in him and he cannot sin, because he is born of God, having received that Holy Spirit of Promise.
10. In this, the children of God are manifest, and so are the children of the devil made manifest. For he who does not do the works of righteousness is not of God. Neither is he that does not love his brother.
11. For this is the message that you heard from the beginning -- that we should love one another.
12. Do not be like Cain, who was that wicked one, who killed his brother. And why did he kill him? Because his own works were evil, and his brother's works were righteous. [Cain killed his brother in order to justify his evil works, that his own works might receive the praise of men, and that his righteous brother's works would be seen no more.]
13. Do not be surprised, my brothers and sisters, if the world hates you for the same reason.
14. We know that we have passed from death unto life, because we love one another. He, who does not love his brother, remains in death.
15. Whoever hates his brother is a murderer: and you know that no murderer has eternal life abiding in him.
16. This is how we can understand the love of God: because he laid down his life for us. And, therefore, to truly manifest the love of Christ we ought to be willing to lay down our lives for one another.
17. But here is a greater test of love, and a test that we can experience every day. Whoever has this world's goods, and sees his brother in need, and shuts up his bowels of compassion from him, how can the love of God abide in him?
18. My little children, it is too easy to speak of dying for one another -- something which is unlikely that we will ever be called upon to do, but will we pass the test of living for one another? Therefore, let us not love in word, neither in tongue only; but in deed and in truth.
19. And we will know if we are being honest and truthful with ourselves and with our neighbors if we experience peace in our hearts and in our conscience.
20. And if our heart accuses us, God is greater than our heart, and he knows all things.
21. Beloved, if our hearts are pure, we can approach God in confidence, knowing that
22. whatever we ask of him we will receive, because we keep his commandments, and do those things that are pleasing in his sight.
23. And this is his commandment, that we should exercise faith in the Name of his Son Jesus Christ, and love one another, as he gave us commandment. Whoever keeps his commandments dwells in him, and he in them.
24. And the way that we can know that he abides in us, is by the Spirit which he has given us.

Chapter 4

1. Beloved, there are many false prophets going out in the world, and there are many false spirits guiding them and would gladly guide you if they could. Do not believe every spirit or every teacher who comes to you, but test the spirits to see whether they are of God
2. Here's the test to determine the true Spirit of God: Every spirit that teaches the words of Christ which you have already received and who testifies that Jesus Christ, (who is and was and is to come in the flesh), is of God, is a true Spirit sent from God.
3. But any spirit which does not teach you the Doctrine of Christ and does not bear this same testimony is the spirit of antichrist, a substitute for Christ, which you have heard should come; and even now already is in the world.
4. You are of God, little children, and have overcome these evil spirits and false teachers: because greater is he that is in you, than he that is in the world.
5. They who are of the world have been overcome of the world: They speak about the world and the things in the world, and the world gladly listens to them.
6. We are of God. He who knows God listens to our message, but he who is not of God will not listen to us. And this is the way to tell the difference between the spirit of truth, and the spirit of error.
7. Beloved, let us love one another: for love is of God, even charity, or the pure love of Christ; and every person who loves with the love of Christ is born of God, and knows God.

8. But he who does not love, does not know God; for God is love.
9. The Father manifested his love for us because he sent us his only begotten into the world, that though him we might have life eternal.
10. This is godly love in that although we did not yet know him or love him, yet he sent his Son to save the world from sin, knowing that the world would not receive him, but would reject him and kill him.
11. If the Father can love us so greatly, we ought also to love one another.
12. No man has seen God at any time, except those who have faith. If we love one another, the Father dwells in us, and his love is perfected in us.
13. And we know we that we dwell in him, and he in us, because he has given us of his Spirit.
14. And we have seen and do testify that the Father sent the Son to be the Savior of the world.
15. Whoever bears this testimony, speaking with authority and pure knowledge [Has stood in the Presence of Christ], that Jesus is the Son of God, then God dwells in him, and he in God.
16. We have known and believed the love that God has for us. God is love; and he that dwells in love dwells in God, and God dwells in him.
17. And we will know that our love is made perfect, that we may have boldness in the day of judgment, and have no fear of torment or embarrassment when we are called to account for our deeds done in the flesh. Because as he is, so are we in this world.
18. There is no fear in love; but perfect love casts out fear. He who fears is not made perfect in love.
19. We love him, because he first loved us.
20. If a man says, 'I love God', but hates his brother, he is a liar: for if he does not love his brother whom he has seen, how can he love God whom he has not seen?
21. And this is the commandment, which have we received from him: he who loves God loves his brother also.

Chapter 5

1. Whoever has faith that Jesus is the Christ is born of God: and everyone that loves him that begat loves him also that is begotten of him.
2. By this we know that we love the children of God, when we love God, and keep his commandments.
3. For this is the love of God, that we keep his commandments: and his commandments are not burdensome, [though they are strict and exacting].
4. And whoever is born of God overcomes the world: and this is the victory that overcomes the world, even our faith.
5. Who is able to overcome the world except he that has faith that Jesus is the Son of God?
6. For he has shown us the way, and through faith on his Name, we shall overcome and sit down on his throne, even as he overcame and is sat down on his Father's throne. This is he that came by water and blood, even Jesus Christ; not by water only, but by water and blood. And it is the Spirit that bears witness with our spirit, because the Spirit is truth.
7. For there are three that bear record in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost: and these three are one.
8. And there are three that bear witness in earth, the Spirit, and the water, and the blood: and these three agree in one.
9. We can receive the testimony of men through their words, but the testimony of God is greater: for this is the witness of God which he has testified of his Son.
10. Whoever exercises faith on the Son of God by doing his works has this witness within himself from the Spirit. For him that does not have faith in God, makes God out to be a liar, for unto such, the promises of God are not extended, because he does not believe the witness that God gave of his Son.
11. And this is the testimony that God has given to us: eternal life, and this life is in his Son.
12. It's as simple as this: he that has the Son has life; and he that does not have the Son of God does not have life.
13. I have written these things to you who have faith on the Name of the Son of God; that you may know that ye have eternal life, and that you will continue to believe on the Name of the Son of God.
14. And we have this confidence, that if we ask anything according to his will, he will hear us.
15. And we know that whatsoever we ask, according to his will, our petition will be granted.
16. Now, to work righteousness is to judge correct judgment. To work unrighteousness is to err in judgment, and such is sin -- a mistake that needs correction. If the Spirit of God abide in us, we can see clearly to correct our mistakes, so that we do not grieve the Spirit and sin unto death.
17. And, if we see a brother commit a sin which is not a sin unto death, we should help to bear his burden and pray for him, that he may repent and come back into life and light, and again partake in our fellowship.
18. We know that whoever is born of God does not sin; and he who is begotten of God keeps himself unspotted from the world, and that wicked one cannot touch him.
19. And we know that we are of the Father, and the whole world lies in wickedness because they do not come to the Christ, that he may draw them to the Father.

20. And we know that the Son of God has come to us, and has given us knowledge, that we may know him that is true, and we are in him that is true, even in his Son Jesus Christ. This is the true God, and eternal life.
21. Little children, keep away from idols. Amen.

Idols

What is an idol? Do you think you know an idol if you saw one? The only power that an idol has is that it is not seen for what it truly is. **An idol is an image of reality which you value more than reality itself.** As *A Course in Miracles* states: "An idol can be a body, a thing, a place, a situation or a circumstance, a performance or practice, an object owned or wanted, or a right demanded or achieved, they are all the same".

Do not get caught up in to form of an idol, as if it were "reality". Idols are nothing more than substitutes for your reality of who you truly are, no more, no less. In some dark way, you believe that without them you are incomplete, and lacking in whatever you believe the idol will supply: fame, purpose, personal worth, pleasure. Looking outward at idols instead of looking inward for the truth of who and what you are makes you a slave to your own perceived inadequacies.

An antichrist is an idol, because it is a false belief in Christ – a substitute for the real Christ. It is a thought-form which you have created with your mind. It is a cloud which obscures your view of the true Christ. But the false always depends for its existence upon the true, and the idol will always exist in opposition to the genuine.

It is our false beliefs (disbelief) that feed the idol. This is why false religions are based on belief, not faith. For belief feeds the illusion and keeps it alive and keeps us blind to the truth. True religion is based on faith, not belief, for by faith, or in other words, by seeking truth and acting on it, we see the light of the Holy Spirit to show us the veil which we have drawn between us and the truth, and with that light, we can see clearly to lift the veil that we might have knowledge of the truth. The truth does not need belief to be itself, for the truth is perfect knowledge of things as they are, as they have been, and as they will be. In other words, truth is a perfect knowledge of reality.

We have each created our own idols to give us that which we think we need. We each think that our own particular idol will give us more than what other men possess: more wealth, more beauty, more intelligence, or even more pain and suffering that we might gain the sympathy of the world. The operative word is "more". But no matter what forms the idol takes, it seeks to distinguish us set us apart from our other brothers and sisters and to, therefore, separate us from God. But God has said: "If you are not one, you are not mine."

Any idol which you worship and call "God" cannot give you anything which you do not already possess. Try the spirits. If such a teacher or spirit comes making this claim, either for himself or for another, offering you freedom, power, or knowledge in exchange for following him, to receive such a one is to look for salvation where it is not, and is to receive the anti-Christ.