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COMMENTARY

Barnes' Notes on the Bible
Volume 17 -
3 John
By A. Barnes

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3 JOHN

INTRODUCTION

SECTION 1. THE AUTHENTICITY OF THE SECOND AND THIRD EPISTLES OF JOHN.

The authenticity of these two Epistles was doubted by many in the early Christian church, and it was not before a considerable time had elapsed that their canonical authority was fully admitted. The first of the three Epistles was always received as the undoubted production of the apostle John; but, though not positively and absolutely rejected, there were many doubts entertained in regard to the authorship of the Second Epistle and the Third Epistle. Their exceeding brevity, and the fact that they were addressed to individuals, and seemed not designed for general circulation, made them less frequently referred to by the early Christian writers, and renders it more difficult to establish their genuineness. The evidence of their genuineness is of two kinds — external and internal. Though, from their brevity, the proof on these points must be less full and clear than it is in regard to the First Epistle; yet it is such as to satisfy the mind, on the whole, that they are the production of the apostle John, and are entitled to a place in the canon of Scripture.

(1) EXTERNAL EVIDENCE. The evidence of this kind, either for or against the authenticity of these Epistles, is found in the following testimonies respecting them in the writings of the Fathers, and the following facts in regard to their admission into the canon.

(a) In the church and school at Alexandria they were both well known, and were received as a part of the sacred writings. Clement of Alexandria, and Alexander, Bishop of Alexandria, quote them, or refer to them, as the writings of the apostle John. — Lardner's works, vi. 275; Lucke, p. 329. Origen, the successor of Clement, says: "John left behind him an epistle of very few "stichoi;" perhaps also a Second and Third, though some do not consider these genuine. Both these together, however, contain only 100 `stichoi.'" Dionysius of Alexandria shows that he was acquainted with all of them, but calls the two last **φερομενα** ⁵³⁴² — writings alleged to be

genuine. For the import of this word, as used by Dionysius, see Lucke's Com., pp. 33, 331.

(b) These Epistles were known and received in the western churches in the second and third centuries. Of this fact, an important witness is found in Irenaeus, who, on account of the place where he resided during his youth, and the school in which he was educated, deserves special regard as a witness respecting the works of John — Hug. He was born at Smyrna, and lived not long after the times of the apostles. He was a disciple of Polycarp, who was acquainted with the apostle John; and having passed his early years in Asia Minor, must, in the circumstances in which he was placed, have been familiar with the writings of John, and have known well what writings were attributed to him. He quotes the Second Epistle (~~Gal~~ 2 John 1:11), and with express reference to John as the author, under the name of “John, the disciple of our Lord.” In another place, also, he refers to this Epistle. After quoting from the First Epistle. he continues.

“And John, the disciple of Jesus, in the Epistle before mentioned, commanded that they (the heretics) should be shunned, saying,” etc.

He then quotes, word for word, the seventh and eighth verses of the Epistle.

(c) The African church, in the third century, regarded the Second Epistle, at least, as the production of John. At a synod in Carthage, under Cyprian, Aurelius, the Bishop of Chullabi, in giving his vote on the question of baptizing heretics, quotes the tenth verse of the Second Epistle as authority, saying, “John, in his Epistle, declares,” etc.

(d) There is some doubt in regard to the Syrian church, whether these Epistles were at first received as genuine or not. The manuscripts of the Peshitto, or Old Syriac version, at least since the sixth century, do not contain the Epistle of Jude, the Second Epistle of Peter, or the Second Epistle and the Third Epistle of John. Yet Ephrem the Syrian, in the fourth century, quotes the Epistle of Jude, the Second Epistle of Peter, and the Second of John, as genuine and canonical. Since this father in the Syrian church was not acquainted with the Greek language, (Lucke), it is clear that he must have read these Epistles in a translation, and as would seem most probable in some Syriac version. The probability would seem to be, since these Epistles are not in the oldest Syriac version, that there was

some doubt about their authenticity when that version was made, but that before the time of Ephrem they had come to be regarded as genuine, and were translated by some other persons. Their use in the time of Ephrem would at least show that they were then regarded as genuine. They may have been, indeed, at some period attached to the ancient version, but at a later period, as they did not originally belong to that version, they may have been separated from it — Lucke, in *loc.* At all events, it is clear that at an early period in the Syrian church they were regarded as genuine.

(e) Though there were doubts among many of the Fathers respecting the genuineness of these Epistles, yet they were admitted in several councils of the church to be genuine. In the 85th of the apostolic canons, (so called); in the 60th canon of the Synod of Laodicea; the Council at Hippo, (A.D. 393), and the third Council of Carthage (397 A.D.), they were reckoned as undoubtedly pertaining to the inspired canon of Scripture.

(f) All doubts on the subject of the genuineness of these Epistles were, however, subsequently removed in the view of Christian writers, and in the middle ages they were universally received as the writings of the apostle John. Some of the Reformers again had doubts of their genuineness. Erasmus quoted the sentiment of Jerome, that it was not the “apostle” John who wrote these Epistles, but a “presbyter” of the same name; and Calvin seems to have entertained some doubt of their genuineness, for he has omitted them in his commentaries; but these doubts have also disappeared, and the conviction has again become general, and indeed almost universal, that they are to be ranked among the genuine writings of the apostle John.

It may be added here, that the doubts which have been entertained on the subject, and the investigations to which they have given rise, show the care which has been evinced in forming the canon of the New Testament, and demonstrate that the Christian world has not been disposed to receive books as of sacred authority without evidence of their genuineness.

(2) There is strong INTERNAL evidence that they are genuine. This is found in their style, sentiment, and manner. It is true that one who was familiar with the writings of the apostle John MIGHT compose two short epistles like these, that should be mistaken for the real productions of the apostle. There are, even in these brief epistles, not a few passages which seem to be a mere repetition of what John has elsewhere said. But there are some things in regard to the internal evidence that they are the writings of the

apostle John, and were not designedly forged, which deserve a more particular notice. They are such as these:

(a) As already said, the style, sentiment, and manner are such as are appropriate to John. There is nothing in the Epistles which we might not suppose he would write; there is much that accords with what he has written; there is much in the style which would not be likely to be found in the writings of another man; and there is nothing in the sentiments which would lead us to suppose that the manner of the apostle John had been ASSUMED, for the purpose of palming upon the world productions which were not his. Resemblances between these Epistles will strike every reader, and it is unnecessary to specify them. The following passages, however, are so decidedly in the manner of John, that it may be presumed that they were either written by him, or by one who designed to copy from him: ⁶⁰¹⁶2 John 1:5-7,9; ⁶⁰¹¹3 John 1:11,12.

(b) The fact that the NAME of the writer is not affixed to the Epistles is much in the manner of John. Paul, in every case except in the Epistle to the Hebrews, affixed his name to his Epistles; Peter, James, and Jude did the same thing. John, however, has never done it in any of his writings, except the Apocalypse. He seems to have supposed that there was something about his style and manner which would commend his writings as genuine; or that in some other way they would be so well understood to be his, that it was not necessary to specify it. Yet the omission of his name, or of something that would lay claim to his authority as an apostle, would not be likely to occur if these Epistles were fabricated with a design of palming them upon the world as his. The artifice would be too refined, and would be too likely to defeat itself, to be adopted by one who should form such a plan.

(c) The apparently severe and harsh remarks made in the Epistle in regard to heretics, may be adverted to as an evidence that these Epistles are the genuine writings of John the apostle. Thus, in ⁶⁰¹⁰2 John 1:10, he says,

“If there come any unto you, and bring not this doctrine, receive him not into your house, neither bid him God speed.”

So in ⁶⁰¹⁰3 John 1:10:

“If I come, I will remember his deeds which he doeth, prating against us with malicious words,” etc.

It has been made an objection to the genuineness of these Epistles, that this is not in the spirit of the mild and amiable “disciple whom Jesus loved;” that it breathes a temper of uncharitableness and severity which could not have existed in him at any time, and especially when, as an old man, he is said to have preached nothing but “love one another.” But two circumstances will show that this, so far from being an objection, is rather a proof of their genuineness. One is, that in fact these expressions accord with what we know to have been the character of John. They are NOT inappropriate to one who was named by the Master himself, Boanerges — a son of thunder, (~~<4087>~~ Mark 3:17); or to one who was disposed to call down fire from heaven on the Samaritan who would not receive the Lord Jesus, (~~<4054>~~ Luke 9:54); or to one who, when he saw another casting out devils in the name of Jesus, took upon himself the authority to forbid him, (~~<4038>~~ Mark 9:38). The truth is, that there was a remarkable mixture of “gentleness” and “severity” in the character of John; and though the former was the most prominent, and may be supposed to have increased as he grew old, yet the other also often manifested itself. There was that in the character of John, which, under some circumstances, and under other teaching than that of the Lord Jesus, MIGHT have been developed in the form of great exclusiveness, bigotry, and sternness — perhaps in the form of open persecution. Under the teaching of the Saviour, and through his example, his milder and better nature prevailed, and so decidedly acquired the ascendancy, that we almost never think of the harsher traits of his character. The other circumstance is, that it would never have occurred to one who should have attempted to forge an Epistle in the name of John, to have INTRODUCED a passage of this kind. The artifice would have been too little likely to have accomplished the end, to have occurred to the mind, or to have been adopted. The public character of John was so amiable; he was so uniformly spoken of as the “disciple whom Jesus loved;” gentleness and kindness seemed to be such pervading traits in his nature, that no one would have thought of introducing sentiments which seemed to be at variance with these traits, even though, on a close analysis, it could be made out that they were not contrary to his natural character.

(d) Perhaps, also, the appellation which the writer gives himself in these two Epistles, (ὁ ~~<3588>~~ πρεσβυτερος ~~<4245>~~ — the elder), may be regarded as some evidence that they are the writings of the apostle John; that is, it is more probable that he would use this appellation than that any other writer would. It has, indeed, been made a ground of objection that the use of this

term proves that they are NOT the productions of John. See Lucke, p. 340. But, as we have seen, John was not accustomed to prefix his own name to his writings; and if these Epistles were written by him when he was at Ephesus, nothing is more probable than that he should use this term. It can hardly be regarded as an appellation pertaining to “office,” for as there were many “elders” or “presbyters” in the church, (^{<4017>}Acts 20:17), the use of the term “THE elder” would not be sufficiently distinctive to designate the writer. It may be presumed, therefore, to have a particular respect to age; and, under the circumstances supposed, it would apply to no one with so much propriety as to the apostle John — one who would be well known as the aged and venerable disciple of the Saviour. Compare, however, Lucke (pp. 340-343) on the use of this word.

SECTION 2. OF THE PERSON TO WHOM JOHN ADDRESSED HIS SECOND EPISTLE.

This Epistle purports to be addressed, as it is in our translation, to “the elect lady” — **εκλεκτη** ^{<1588>} **κυρια** ^{<2959>}. There has been great diversity of opinion in regard to the person here referred to, and there are questions respecting it which it is impossible to determine with absolute certainty. The different opinions which have been entertained are the following:

(a) Some have supposed that a Christian matron is referred to, a friend of John, whose name was either **Εκλεκτη** ^{<1588>} (Ecclecte), or **Κυρια** ^{<2959>}, (Kyria). Oecumenius and Theophylact supposed that the proper name of the female referred to was “Ecclecte;” others have adopted the other opinion, that the name was “Cyria.”

(b) Others among the ancients, and particularly Clement, supposed that the church was denoted by this name, under the delicate image of an elect lady; either some particular church to whom the Epistle was sent, or to the church at large. This opinion has been held by some of the modern writers also.

(c) Others have supposed, as is implied in our common version, that it was addressed to some Christian matron, whose name is not mentioned, but who was well known to John, and perhaps to many others, for her piety, and her acts of kindness to Christians. The reason why her name was suppressed, it has been supposed, was that if it had been mentioned it might have exposed her to trouble in some way, perhaps to persecution.

(d) Recently, Knauer (Studien und Kritik., 1833, Heft 2. s. 452, ff.) has endeavored to show that it was addressed to the Virgin Mary, who is supposed then to have resided in Galilee. The improbability of this opinion is shown by Lucke, pp. 352,353.

These questions are not very important to be determined, even if they could be with accuracy; and at this period of time, and with the few data which we have for forming a correct judgment on the subject, it is not possible to settle them with entire certainty. The probable truth in regard to this point, and all which it seems now possible to ascertain with any degree of certainty, may be expressed in the following specifications:

(1) The letter was addressed to an individual, and not to a church. If it had been to a particular church, it would have been specified, for this is the uniform mode in the New Testament. If it were addressed to the church at large, it is in the highest degree improbable that John should have departed from the style of address in his First Epistle; improbable in every way that he should have adopted another style so mystical and unusual in a plain prose composition. It is only in poetry, in prophecy, in compositions where figurative language abounds, that the church is represented as a female at all; and it is wholly improbable that John, at the outset of a brief Epistle, should have adopted this appellation. The fact that it was addressed to an individual female is further apparent from the mention of her children: ^{<600>}2 John 1:1,4,

“Unto the elect lady and her children;” “I found of thy children walking in truth.”

This is not such language as one would use in addressing a church.

(2) It is probable that the “name” of this lady was designed to be specified, and that it was “Kyria,” (*Κυρια*)^{<259>}. This, indeed, is not absolutely certain; but the Greek will readily bear this, and it accords best with apostolic usage to suppose that the name of the person to whom the letter was addressed would be designated. This occurs in the Third Epistle of John, the Epistles of Paul to Philemon, to Timothy, and to Titus, and, so far as appears, there is no reason why it should not have been done in the case before us. The Syriac and Arabic translators so understand it, for both have retained the name Cyria. It may do something to confirm this view, to remark that the name Cyria was not uncommon, in subsequent times, at least, among Christian females. See Corp. Inscript. Gruter, p. 1127,

Numbers 11 **Φενιππος και** ^{<2532>} **ἡ** ^{<3588>} **γυνη** ^{<1135>} **αυτου** ^{<846>} **Κυρια** ^{<2959>}. Compare Lex. Hagiologic. Lips. 1719, p. 448, where two female martyrs of that name are mentioned. See also other instances referred to by Lucke, Com. p. 351. If these views are correct, then the true rendering of the passage would be, “The presbyter unto the elect Kyria.”

(3) Of this pious female, however, nothing more is known than what is mentioned in this Epistle. From that we learn that John was warmly attached to her, (^{<6015>}2 John 1:5); that she was a mother, and that her children were pious, (^{<6015>}2 John 1:1,4); and that she was of a hospitable character, and would be likely to entertain those who came professedly as religious teachers, (^{<6015>}2 John 1:10,11. Where or when she lived, or when she died, we have no information whatever. At the time of writing this Epistle, John had strong hopes that he would be permitted to come soon and see her, but whether he ever did so, we are not informed, (^{<6015>}2 John 1:12.

SECTION 3. THE CANONICAL AUTHORITY OF THE SECOND AND THIRD EPISTLES OF JOHN.

The canonical authority of these Epistles depends on the following things:

- (1) On the evidence that they are the writings of the apostle John. In proportion as that evidence is clear, their canonical authority is of course established.
- (2) Though brief, and though addressed to individuals, they are admitted into the canon of Scripture with the same propriety as the Epistles to Timothy, to Titus, and to Philemon, for those were addressed also to individuals.
- (3) Like those Epistles, also, these contain things of general interest to the church. There is nothing in either that is inconsistent with what John has elsewhere written, or that conflicts with any other part of the New Testament; there is much in them that is in the manner of John, and that breathes his spirit; there is enough in them to tell us of the way of salvation.

Of the time when these Epistles were written, and the place where, nothing is known, and conjecture would be useless, as there are no marks of time or place in either, and there is no historical statement that gives the information. It has been the common opinion that they were written at

Ephesus, and when John was old. The appellation which he gives of himself, "the elder," accords with this supposition, though it does not make it absolutely certain.

THE THIRD EPISTLE OF JOHN

NOTES ON 3 JOHN 1

This brief Epistle, written to a Christian whose name was Gaius, of whom nothing more is known (compare the notes at ~~600E~~3 John 1:1), and in respect to which the time and place of writing it are equally unknown, embraces the following subjects:

- I.** The address, with an expression of tender attachment, and an earnest wish for his welfare and happiness, ~~600E~~3 John 1:1,2.
- II.** A commendation of his character and doings, as the writer had learned it from some brethren who had visited him particularly;
 - (a)** for his attachment to the truth, and
 - (b)** for his kindness shown to the members of his own church, and to strangers who had gone forth to some work of charity, ~~600E~~3 John 1:3-8.
- III.** The writer then adverts to the fact that he had written upon this subject to the church, commending these strangers to their attention, but that Diotrephes would not acknowledge his authority, or receive those whom he introduced to them. This conduct, he said, demanded rebuke; and he says that when he himself came, he would take proper measures to assert his own authority, and show to him and to the church the duty of receiving Christian brethren commended to them from abroad, ~~600E~~3 John 1:9,10.
- IV.** He exhorts Gaius to persevere in that which was good — in a life of love and kindness, in an imitation of the benevolent God, ~~600E~~3 John 1:11.
- V.** Of another person — Demetrius — who, it would seem, had been associated with Gaius in the honorable course which he had pursued, in opposition to what the church had done, he also speaks in terms of commendation, and says that the same honorable testimony had been borne of him which had been of Gaius, ~~600E~~3 John 1:12.

VI. As in the second Epistle, he says, in the close, that there were many things which he would be glad to say to him, but there were reasons why they should not be set down “with ink and pen,” but he hoped soon to confer with him freely on those subjects face to face, and the Epistle is closed by kind salutations, ⁶⁰¹³3 John 1:13,14.

The OCCASION upon which the Epistle was written is no further known than appears from the Epistle itself. From this, the following facts are all that can now be ascertained:

(1) That Gaius was a Christian man, and evidently a member of the church, but of what church is unknown.

(2) That there were certain persons known to the writer of the Epistle, and who either lived where he did, or who had been commended to him by others who proposed to travel to the place where Gaius lived. Their particular OBJECT is not known, further than that it is said (⁶⁰⁰⁷3 John 1:7) that they “went for his name’s sake;” that is, in the cause of religion. It further appears that they had resolved NOT to be dependent upon the pagan for their support, but wished the favor and friendship of the church — perhaps designing to preach to the pagan, and yet apprehending that if they desired their maintenance from them, it would be charged on them that they were mercenary in their ends.

(3) In these circumstances, and with this view, the author of this Epistle wrote to the church, commending these brethren to their kind and fraternal regards.

(4) This recommendation, so far as appears, would have been successful, had it not been for one man, Diotrephes, who had so much influence, and who made such violent opposition, that the church refused to receive them, and they became dependent upon private charity. The GROUND of the opposition of Diotrephes is not fully stated, but it seems to have arisen from two sources:

(a) a desire to rule in the church; and

(b) a particular opposition to the writer of this Epistle, and a denial of any obligation to recognize his instructions or commendations as binding. The idea seems to have been that the church was entirely independent, and might receive or reject any whom it pleased, though they were commended to them by an apostle.

(5) In these circumstances, Gaius, as an individual, and against the action of the church, received and hospitably entertained these strangers, and aided them in the prosecution of their work. In this office of hospitality another member of the church, Demetrius, also shared; and to commend them for this work, particularly Gaius, at whose house probably they were entertained, is the design of this Epistle.

(6) After having returned to the writer of this Epistle, who had formerly commended them to the church, and having borne honorable testimony to the hospitality of Gaius, it would seem that they resolved to repeat their journey for the same purpose, and that the writer of the Epistle commended them now to the renewed hospitality of Gaius. On this occasion, probably, they bore this Epistle to him. See the notes at ~~606~~ 3 John 1:6,7. Nothing more is known of Diotrephes than is here specified. Erasmus and Bede supposed that he was the author of a new sect; but of this there is no evidence, and if he had been, it is probable that John would have cautioned Gaius against his influence. Many have supposed that he was a self-appointed “Bishop” or “Pastor” in the church where he resided; but there is no evidence of this, and, since John wrote to “the church,” commending the strangers to “them,” this would seem to be hardly probable. Compare ~~611~~ Revelation 2:1,8,12,18; 3:1,7,14. Others have supposed that he was a deacon, and had charge of the funds of the church, and that he refused to furnish to these strangers the aid out of the public treasury which they needed, and that by so doing he hindered them in the prosecution of their object. But all this is mere conjecture, and it is now impossible to ascertain what office he held, if he held any. That he was a man of influence is apparent; that he was proud, ambitious, and desirous of ruling, is equally clear; and that he prevailed upon the church not to receive the strangers commended to them by the apostle is equally manifest.

Of the rank and standing of Demetrius nothing more is known. Benson supposes that he was the bearer of this letter, and that he had gone with the brethren referred to in order to preach to the Gentiles. But it seems more probable that he was a member of the church to which Gaius belonged, and that he had concurred with him in rendering aid to the strangers who had been rejected by the influence of Diotrephes. If he had gone with these strangers, and had carried this letter, it would have been noticed, and it would have been in accordance with the apostolic custom, that he should have been commended to the favorable attentions of Gaius. In regard to

the authenticity and the canonical authority of this Epistle, see the introduction at the beginning of the Second Epistle.

3 John 1:1. *The elder* See the notes at **2 John 1:1**.

Unto the well-beloved Gaius Three persons of this name are elsewhere mentioned in the New Testament — Gaius, whom Paul in **Romans 16:23** calls “his host,” and whom he says (**1 Corinthians 1:15**) he baptized, residing at Corinth, (see the notes at **Romans 16:23**); Gaius of Macedonia, one of Paul’s companions in travel, who was arrested by an excited mob at Ephesus, (**Acts 19:29**); and Gaius of Derbe, who went with Paul and Timothy into Asia, **Acts 20:4**. Whether either of these persons is referred to here, cannot with certainty be determined. If it were any of them it was probably the last mentioned — Gaius of Derbe. There is no objection to the supposition that he was the one unless it is from the fact that this Epistle was probably written many years after the transaction mentioned in **Acts 20:4**, and the probability that Gaius might not have lived so long. The name was not an uncommon one, and it cannot be determined now who he was, or where he lived. Whether he had any office in the church is unknown, but he seems to have been a man of wealth and influence. The word translated “well-beloved,” means simply “beloved.” It shows that he was a personal friend of the writer of this Epistle.

Whom I love in the truth Margin, “or truly.” See the notes at **2 John 1:1**.

3 John 1:2. *Beloved, I wish above all things* Margin, “pray.” The word used here commonly means in the New Testament to pray; but it is also employed to express a strong and earnest desire for anything, **Acts 27:29**; **Romans 9:3**; **2 Corinthians 13:9**. This is probably all that is implied here. The phrase rendered “above all things” — **περι πάντων** — would be more correctly rendered here “concerning, or in respect to all things;” and the idea is, that John wished earnestly that “in all respects” he might have the same kind of prosperity which his soul had. The common translation “above all things” would seem to mean that John valued health and outward prosperity more than he did anything else; that he wished that more than his usefulness or salvation. This cannot be the meaning, and is not demanded by the proper interpretation of the original. See this shown by Lucke, in loc. The sense is, “In every respect, I wish that it may go as well with you as it does with your soul; that in your worldly prosperity,

your comfort, and your bodily health, you may be as prosperous as you are in your religion.” This is the reverse of the wish which we are commonly constrained to express for our friends; for such is usually the comparative want of prosperity and advancement in their spiritual interests, that it is an expression of benevolence to desire that they might prosper in that respect as much as they do in others.

That thou mayest prosper εὐδοουσθαί ^{<2137>}. This word occurs in the New Testament only in the following places: ^{<6010>}Romans 1:10, rendered “have a prosperous journey;” ^{<4362>}1 Corinthians 16:2, rendered “hath prospered;” and in the passage before us. It means, properly, “to lead in a good way; to prosper one’s journey;” and then to make prosperous; to give success to; to be prospered. It would apply here to any plan or purpose entertained. It would include success in business, happiness in domestic relations, or prosperity in any of the engagements and transactions in which a Christian might lawfully engage. It shows that it is right to wish that our friends may have success in the works of their hands and their plans of life.

And be in health To enjoy bodily health. It is not necessary to suppose, in order to a correct interpretation of this, that Gaius was at that time suffering from bodily indisposition, though perhaps it is most natural to suppose that, as John makes the wish for his health so prominent. But it is common, in all circumstances, to wish for the health and prosperity of our friends; and it is as proper as it is common, if we do not give that a degree of prominence above the welfare of the soul.

Even as thy soul prospereth John had learned, it would seem, from the “brethren” who had come to him, (^{<6003>}3 John 1:3), that Gaius was living as became a Christian; that he was advancing in the knowledge of the truth, and was exemplary in the duties of the Christian life; and he prays that in all other respects he might be prospered as much as he was in that. It is not very common that a man is more prospered in his spiritual interests than he is in his other interests, or that we can, in our wishes for the welfare of our friends, make the prosperity of the soul, and the practice and enjoyment of religion, the standard of our wishes in regard to other things. It argues a high state of piety when we can, as the expression of our highest desire for the welfare of our friends, express the hope that they may be in all respects as much prospered as they are in their spiritual concerns.

^{<6003>}**3 John 1:3.** *For I rejoiced greatly when the brethren came* Who these were is not certainly known. They may have been members of the

same church with Gaius, who, for some reason, had visited the writer of this Epistle; or they may have been the “brethren” who had gone from him with a letter of commendation to the church, (~~600~~3 John 1:9), and had been rejected by the church through the influence of Diotrephes, and who, after having been hospitably entertained by Gaius, had again returned to the writer of this Epistle. In that case, they would of course bear honorable testimony to the kindness which they had received from Gaius, and to his Christian character.

And testified of the truth that is in thee That you adhere steadfastly to the truth, notwithstanding the fact that errors abound, and that there are many false teachers in the world.

Even as thou walkest in the truth Livest in accordance with the truth. The writer had made the same remark of the children of Cyria, to whom the second Epistle was directed. See the notes at ~~600~~2 John 1:4.

~~600~~**3 John 1:4.** *I have no greater joy than to hear that my children walk in truth* That they adhere steadfastly to the truth, and that they live in accordance with it. This is such language as would be used by an aged apostle when speaking of those who had been converted by his instrumentality, and who looked up to him as a father; and we may, therefore, infer that Gaius had been converted under the ministry of John, and that he was probably a much younger man than he was. John, the aged apostle, says that he had no higher happiness than to learn, respecting those who regarded him as their spiritual father, that they were steadfast in their adherence to the doctrines of religion. The same thing may be:

(a) of all the ministers of the gospel, that their highest comfort is found in the fact that those to whom they minister, whether still under their care or removed from them, persevere in a steadfast attachment to the true doctrines of religion, and live accordingly; and

(b) of all Christian parents respecting their own children. the highest joy that a Christian parent can have is to know that his children, whether at home or abroad, adhere to the truths of religion, and live in accordance with the requirements of the gospel of Christ.

If a child wished to confer the highest possible happiness upon his parents when with them, it would be by becoming a decided Christian; if, when abroad, in foreign lands or his own, he wished to convey intelligence to

them that would most thrill their hearts with joy, it would be to announce to them that he had given his heart to God. There is no joy in a family like that when children are converted; there is no news that comes from abroad that diffuses so much happiness through the domestic circle as the intelligence that a child is TRULY converted to the Saviour. There is nothing that would give more peace to the dying pillow of the Christian parent, than to be able to leave the world with the assurance that his children would always walk in truth.

3 John 1:5. *Beloved, thou doest faithfully* In the previous verses the writer had commended Gaius for his attachment to truth, and his general correctness in his Christian life. He now speaks more particularly of his acts of generous hospitality, and says that he had fully, in that respect, done his duty as a Christian.

Whatsoever thou doest In all your contact with them, and in all your conduct toward them. The particular thing which led to this remark was his hospitality; but the testimony respecting his general conduct had been such as to justify this commendation.

To the brethren Probably to Christians who were well known to him — perhaps referring to Christians in his own church.

And to strangers Such as had gone to the church of which he was a member with a letter of commendation from John. Compare the notes at **Romans 12:13**, and **Hebrews 13:2**.

3 John 1:6. *Which have borne witness of thy charity before the church* It would seem that they had returned to John, and borne honorable testimony to the love manifested to them by Gaius. Before what church they had borne this testimony is unknown. Perhaps it was the church in Ephesus.

Whom if thou bring forward on their journey **ὄυς** ^{<379>} ... **προπεμψας** ^{<311>}. “Whom bringing forward, or having brought forward.” The word refers to aid rendered to them in their journey, in facilitating their travels, either by personally accompanying them, by furnishing them the means of prosecuting their journey, or by hospitably entertaining them. Gaius probably aided them in every way in which it was practicable. It has been made a question whether this refer, to the fact that he had thus aided them in some visit which they had made to the church where Gaius was, or to a

visit which they purposed to make. The Greek would seem to favor the latter construction, and yet it would appear from the Epistle, that the “brethren and strangers” actually had been with him that they had been rejected by the church through the influence of Diotrephes, and had been thrown upon the hospitality of Gaius, and that they had returned, and had borne honorable testimony to his hospitality. These views can be reconciled by supposing, as Lucke does, that having been once on their travels, and having shared the hospitality of Gaius, they were purposing to visit that region again, and that John, praising him for his former hospitality, commends them again to him, stating the reason (^{<600E>}3 John 1:9,10) why he did not, in accordance with the usual custom, recommend them to the care of the church. They had now gone out (^{<600E>}3 John 1:7) on the same errand upon which they had formerly gone, and they had now equal claims to the hospitality of the friends of religion.

After a godly sort Margin, as in Greek, “worthy of God.” The meaning is, As becomes those who serve God; or as becomes those who are professors of his religion.

Thou shalt do well You will do what religion requires in these circumstances.

^{<600E>}**3 John 1:7.** *Because that for his name’s sake* The word “his” here refers to God; and the idea is, that they had undertaken this journey not on their own account, but in the cause of religion.

They went forth Or, “they have gone forth” — εξηλθον ^{<1831>} — referring to the journey which they had then undertaken; not to the former one.

Taking nothing of the Gentiles The term “Gentile” embraced all who were not “Jews,” and it is evident that these persons went forth particularly to labor among the pagan. When they went, they resolved, it seems, to receive no part of their support from them, but to depend upon the aid of their Christian brethren, and, hence, they were at first commended to the church of which Gaius and Diotrephes were members, and on this second excursion were commended particularly to Gaius. Why they, resolved to take nothing of the Gentiles is not stated, but it was doubtless from prudential considerations, lest it should hinder their success among them, and expose them to the charge of being actuated by a mercenary spirit. There were circumstances in the early propagation of Christianity which made it proper, in order to avoid this reproach, to preach the gospel

“without charge,” those to whom it is preached to contribute to its maintenance, and that it is the right of those who preach to expect and receive a support. On this subject, see the notes at 1 Corinthians 9, particularly 3 ~~4015~~ John 1:15,18.

~~4008~~ **3 John 1:8.** *We therefore ought to receive such* All of us ought hospitably to entertain and help such persons. The work in which they are engaged is one of pure benevolence. They have no selfish aims and ends in it. They do not even look for the supplies of their own needs among the people to whom they go to minister; and we ought, therefore, to help them in their work, and to contribute to their support. Doubtless, the apostle meant to urge this duty particularly upon Gaius; but, in order to show that he recognized the obligation himself, he uses the term “we,” and speaks of it as a duty binding on all Christians.

That we might be fellow-helpers to the truth All Christians cannot go forth to preach the gospel, but all may contribute something to the support of those who do; and in this case they would have a joint participation in the work of spreading the truth. The same reasoning which was applicable to that case, is also applicable now in regard to the duty of supporting those who go forth to preach the gospel to the destitute.

~~4009~~ **3 John 1:9.** *I wrote unto the church* That is on the former occasion when they went forth. At that time, John naturally commended them to the kind attentions of the church, not doubting but that aid would be rendered them in prosecuting their benevolent work among the Gentiles. The Epistle which was written on that occasion is now lost, and its contents cannot now be ascertained. It was, probably, however, a letter of mere commendation, perhaps stating the object which these brethren had in view, and soliciting the aid of the church. The Latin Vulgate renders this: “scripsissem forsan ecclesiae, “I would have written, perhaps, to the church, but Diotrephes,” etc. Macknight also renders this, “I would have written,” supposing the sense to be, that John would have commended them to the whole church rather than to a private member, if he had not been aware of the influence and opposition of Diotrephes. The Syriac version also adopts the same rendering. Several manuscripts also, of later date, introduced a particle, ($\alpha\nu$ ~~302~~), by which the same rendering would be demanded in the Greek, though that reading is NOT sustained by good authority. Against this mode of rendering the passage, the reasons seem to me to be clear.

(1) As already remarked, the reading in the Greek which would require it is not sustained by good authority.

(2) The fair and obvious interpretation of the Greek word used by the apostle, (εγραψα ^{<1125>}) without that particle, is, I “wrote” — implying that it had been already done.

(3) It is more probable that John had written to the church on some former occasion, and that his recommendation had been rejected by the influence of Diotrophes, than that he would be deterred by the apprehension that his recommendation WOULD BE rejected. It seems to me, therefore, that the fair interpretation of this passage is, that these brethren had gone forth on some former occasion, commended by John to the church, and had been rejected by the influence of Diotrophes, and that now he commends them to Gains, by whom they had been formerly entertained, and asks him to renew his hospitality to them.

But Diotrophes, who loveth to have the pre-eminence among them, receiveth us not Does not admit our authority, or would not comply with any such recommendation. The idea is, that he rejected his interference in the matter, and was not disposed to acknowledge him in any way. Of Diotrophes, nothing more is known than is here specified. Compare the analysis of the Epistle. If he was an officer in the church — a pastor, a ruling elder, a deacon, a vestry-man, a warden, or a private individual — we have no means of ascertaining. The presumption, from the phrase “who loveth to have the pre-eminence,” would rather seem to be that he was an aspiring man, arrogating rights which he did NOT have, and assuming authority to which he was NOT entitled by virtue of any office. Still he might have held an office, and might have arrogated authority, as many have done, BEYOND what properly belonged to it. The single word rendered “who loveth to have the pre-eminence,” (φιλοπρωτευων ^{<583>}), occurs nowhere else in the New Testament. It means simply, “who loves to be first” — meaning that he loved to be at the head of all things, to rule, to lord it over others. It is clearly supposed here, that the church would have complied with the request of the writer if it had not been for this man. What were the ALLEGED grounds for the course which he constrained the church to take, we are not informed; the REAL ground, the apostle says, was his desire to rule. There may have been at the bottom of it some secret dislike of John, or some private grudge; but the ALLEGED ground may have been, that the church was independent, and that it should reject all foreign

interference; or that the church was unable to support those men; or that the work in which they were engaged was one of doubtful propriety. Whatever was the cause, the case furnishes an illustration of the bad influence of one ambitious and arrogant man in a church. It is often in the power of one such man to bring a whole church under his control, and effectually to embarrass all its movements, and to prevent all the good which it would otherwise accomplish. When it is said, “but Diotrophes receiveth us not,” the reference is doubtless to John, and the meaning is, either that he did not acknowledge him as an apostle, or that he did not recognize his right to interfere in the affairs of the church, or that he did not regard his recommendation of these brethren. The first of these suppositions is hardly probable; but, though he may have admitted that he was an apostle, there were perhaps some reasons operating in this particular case why he prevailed on the church to reject those who had been thus commended to their hospitality.

~~6010~~ **3 John 1:10.** *Wherefore, if I come* He was evidently expecting soon to make a visit to Gaius, and to the church, ~~6014~~ **3 John 1:14.**

I will remember his deeds which he doeth That is, he would punish his arrogance and presumption; would take measures that he should be dealt with in a proper manner. There is no evidence whatever that this is said in a vindictive or revengeful spirit, or that the writer spoke of it merely as a personal matter. From anything that can be shown to the contrary, if it had been a private and personal affair merely, the matter might have been dropped, and never referred to again. But what had been done was public. It pertained to the authority of the apostle, the duty of the church, and the character of the brethren who had been commended to them. If the letter was written, as is supposed by the aged John, and his authority had been utterly rejected by the influence of this one man, then it was proper that that authority should be asserted. If it was the duty of the church to have received these men, who had been thus recommended to them, and it had been prevented from doing what it would otherwise have done, by the influence of one man, then it was proper that the influence of that man should be restrained, and that the church should see that he was not to control it. If the feelings and the character of these brethren had been injured by being rudely thrust out of the church, and held up as unworthy of public confidence, then it was proper that their character should be vindicated, and that the author of the wrong should be dealt with in a suitable manner. No one can show that this was not all that the apostle

proposed to do, or that any feelings of private vindictiveness entered into his purpose to REMEMBER what Diotrephes had done; and the existence of any such feelings should not be charged on the apostle without proof. There is no more reason to suppose this in his case than there was in the case of Paul, in administering discipline in the church of Corinth, (~~418~~1 Corinthians 5:3-5), or than there is in any instance of administering discipline now.

Prating against us The word “prate,” (φλυαρεω ^{<5396>}), occurring nowhere else in the New Testament, means to “overflow with talk,” (Greek φλυω ^{<5397>}, Latin: “fluo,” flow); to talk much without weight, or to little purpose; to be loquacious; to trifle; or, to use an expression common among us, and which accords well with the Greek, to run on in talk, without connection or sense. The word does not properly imply that there was malignity or ill-feeling in what was said, but that the talk was of an idle, foolish, and unprofitable character. As John here, however, specifies that there was a bad spirit in the manner in which Diotrephes expressed himself, the real thing which is implied in the use of the word here is, that there were much talk of that kind; that he was addicted to this habit of “running on” against the apostle; and that he was thus constantly undermining his influence, and injuring his character.

With malicious words Greek, “evil words;” words that were fitted to do injury.

And not content therewith Not satisfied with venting his private feelings in talk. Some persons seem to be satisfied with merely talking against others, and take no other measures to injure them; but Diotrephes was not. He himself rejected the brethren, and persuaded the church to do the same thing. Bad as evil talking is, and troublesome as a man may be who is always “prating” about matters that do not go according to his mind, yet it would be comparatively well if things always ended with that, and if the loquacious and the dissatisfied never took measures openly to wrong others.

Neither doth he himself receive the brethren Does not himself treat them as Christian brethren, or with the hospitality which is due to them. He had not done it on the former visit, and John evidently supposed that the same thing would occur again.

And forbiddeth them that would From this it is clear that there were those in the church who were disposed to receive them in a proper manner; and from anything that appears, the church, as such, would have been inclined to do it, if it had not been for the influence of this one man.

And casteth them out of the church Compare ^{<ant>}Luke 6:22. It has been made a question whether the reference here is to the members of the church who were disposed to receive these brethren, or to the brethren themselves. Lucke, Macknight, and some others, suppose that it refers to those in the church who were willing to receive them, and whom Diotrephes had excommunicated on that account. Heumann, Carpzovius, Rosenmuller, Bloomfield, and others, suppose that it refers to these strangers, and that the meaning is, that Diotrephes would not receive them into the society of Christians, and thus compelled them to go to another place. That this latter is the correct interpretation seems to me to be evident, for it was of the treatment which they had received that the apostle was speaking.

^{<ant>}**3 John 1:11.** *Beloved, follow not that which is evil, but that which is good* There can be no doubt that in this exhortation the writer had Diotrephes particularly in his eye, and that he means to exhort Gaius not to imitate his example. He was a man of influence in the church, and though Gaius had shown that he was disposed to act in an independent manner, yet it was not improper to exhort him not to be influenced by the example of any one who did wrong. John wished to excite him to acts of liberal and generous hospitality.

He that doeth good is of God He shows that he resembles God, for God continually does good. See the sentiment explained in the notes at ^{<ant>}1 John 3:7.

He that doeth evil hath not seen God See the notes at ^{<ant>}1 John 3:8-10.

^{<ant>}**3 John 1:12.** *Demetrius hath good report of all men* Little is known of Demetrius. Lucke supposes that he resided near the place where the author of this Epistle lived, and was connected with the church there, and was probably the bearer of this Epistle. It is impossible to determine with certainty on this point, but there is one circumstance which seems to make it probable that he was a member of the same church with Gaius, and had united with him in showing Christian hospitality to these strangers. It is the use of the phrase "hath good report of all," implying that some testimony

was borne to his character beyond what the writer personally knew. It is possible, indeed, that the writer would have used this term respecting him if he lived in the same place with himself, as expressing the fact that he bore a good character, but it is a phrase which would be more appropriately used if we suppose that he was a member of the same church with Gaius, and that John means to say that an honorable testimony was borne of his character by all those brethren, and by all others as far as he knew.

And of the truth itself Not only by men, who might possibly be deceived in the estimate of character, but by fact. It was not merely a reputation founded on what “appeared” in his conduct, but in truth and reality. His deportment, his life, his deeds of benevolence, all concurred with the testimony which was borne by men to the excellency of his character. There is, perhaps, particular reference here to his kind and hospitable treatment of those brethren.

Yea, and we also bear record John himself had personally known him. He had evidently visited the place where he resided on some former occasion, and could now add his own testimony, which no one would call in question, to his excellent character.

And ye know that our record is true This is in the manner of John, who always spoke of himself as having such character for truth that no one who knew him would call it in question. Every Christian SHOULD have such a character; every man MIGHT if he would. Compare the notes at ^{<6015>}John 19:35; 21:24.

^{<6013>}**3 John 1:13.** *I had many things to write ...* This Epistle closes, as the second does, with a statement that he had many things to say, but that he preferred waiting until he should see him rather than put them on paper. Perhaps there were some things which he wished to say which he would not like to have exposed to the possibility of being seen by the public eye.

But I will not with ink and pen ... Notes at ^{<6012>}2 John 1:12.

^{<6014>}**3 John 1:14.** *But I trust I shall shortly see thee ...* Notes at ^{<6012>}2 John 1:12.

Our friends salute thee That is, your friends and mine. This would seem rather to refer to private friends of John and Gaius than to Christians as such. They had, doubtless, their warm personal friends in both places.

Greet the friends by name That is, each one individually. He remembered them as individuals, but did not deem it proper to specify them.

PRACTICAL REMARKS ON 3 JOHN

(1) It is proper to desire for our friends all temporal good; to wish their happiness in every respect, ~~600B~~ 3 John 1:2. The welfare of the soul is indeed the great object, and the first desire in regard to a friend should be that his salvation may be secured; but in connection with that we may properly wish them health of body, and success in their lawful undertakings. It is not common that in their spiritual interests they are so much more prosperous than they are in other respects, that we can make that the standard of our wishes in regard to them, but it sometimes does occur, as in the case of Gaius. In such cases we may indeed rejoice with a friend, and feel that all will be well with him. But in how few cases, even among professed Christians, can we (with propriety) make the PROSPERITY of the soul the standard by which to measure the happiness which we desire for them in other respects! Doddridge says,

“What a curse would this bring upon many to wish that they might prosper even as their souls prospered!”

Of how much property would they at once be deprived; how embarrassed would be their affairs; how pale, and wan, and sickly would they be, if they should be in all respects as they are in their spiritual interests!

(2) It is an unspeakable pleasure to a Christian to learn that his friends are living and acting as becomes sincere Christians; that they love what is true, and abound in the duties of hospitality charity, and benevolence, ~~600B~~ 3 John 1:3-6. When a friend learns this of a distant friend; when a pastor learns this of his people from whom he may be for a time separated; when those who have been instrumental in converting others learn this of their spiritual children; when a parent learns it of a son or daughter separated from him; when a teacher learns it of those who were formerly under his care, there is no joy that goes more directly to the heart than this — nothing that fills the soul with more true thankfulness and peace.

(3) It is the duty and the privilege of those who love the cause of religion to go and preach the gospel to those who are destitute, expecting to receive nothing from them, and doing it as a work of pure benevolence, ~~600B~~ 3 John 1:7. The missionary spirit existed early in the Christian church,

and indeed may be regarded as the “prevailing” spirit in those times. It has always been the prevailing spirit when religion has flourished in the church. At such times there have been many who were willing to leave their own quiet homes, and the religious privileges connected with a well-organized church, and to break away from the ties which bind to country and kindred, and to go among a distant people to publish salvation. In this cause, and with this spirit, the apostles spent their lives. In this cause, the “brethren” referred to by John went forth to labor. In this cause, thousands have labored in former times, and to the fact that they were “willing” to do it is to be traced all the happy influence of religion in the world. Our own religious privileges now we owe to the fact that in former times there were those who were willing to “go forth taking nothing of the Gentiles,” devoting themselves, without hope of reward or fame, to the business of making known the name of the Saviour in what were then the dark places of the earth. The same principle is acted on now in Christian missions, and with the same propriety; and as we in Christian lands owe the blessings which we enjoy to the fact that in former times there were those who were willing thus to go forth, so it will be true that the richest blessings which are to descend upon India, and Africa, and the islands of the sea, will be traced in future times to the fact that there are in our age those who are willing to follow the example of the apostles in going forth to do good to a dying world.

(4) It is our duty to contribute to the support of those who thus go among the pagan, and to help them in every way in which we can promote the object which they have in view. So John felt it to be the duty of the church in regard to those who went forth in his time; and so, when the church, under the influence of Diotrephes, had refused to do it, he commended Gaius for performing that duty, ⁶⁰⁰⁶3 John 1:6,8. Now, as then, from the nature of the case, missionaries to the pagan must go “taking nothing” of those among whom they labor, and expecting that, for a long time at least, they will do nothing for their support. They go as strangers. They go to those who do not believe the truth of the gospel; who are attached to their own superstitions; who contribute largely to the support of their own temples, and altars, and priesthood; who are, as yet, incapable of appreciating the value of a purer religion; who have no desire for it, and who are disposed to reject it. In many cases, the pagan to whom the missionary goes are miserably poor, and it is only this religion, which as yet they are not disposed to receive, that can elevate them to habits of

industry, and furnish them with the means of supporting religious teachers from abroad. Under these circumstances, no duty is more obvious than that of contributing to the support of those who go to such places as Christian missionaries. If the churches value the gospel enough to SEND their brethren among the pagan to propagate it. they should value it enough to minister to their needs while there; if they regard it as the duty of any of their number to leave their comfortable homes in a Christian land in order to preach to the pagan, they should feel that those who go make far greater sacrifices than those who contribute to their support. THEY give up all; WE give only the small sum, not diminishing our own comforts, which is necessary to sustain them.

(5) For the same reason it is our duty to contribute to the support of missionaries in the destitute places of our own land, ~~6008~~3 John 1:8. They often go among a people who are as destitute, and who will as little appreciate the gospel, and who are as much prejudiced against it, and who are as poor, as the pagan. They are as likely to be charged with being actuated by mercenary motives, if they ask for support, as missionaries among the pagan are. They often go among people as little able and disposed to build churches and school-houses as the pagan are. Nothing is more obvious, therefore, than that those who have the gospel, and who have learned to prize and value it in some measure as it should be, should contribute to the support of those who go to convey its blessings to others, until those to whom they go shall so learn to prize it as to be able and willing to maintain it. That, under a faithful ministry, and with the Divine blessing, will not be long; ALWAYS for the gospel, when it secures a hold in a community, makes men feel that it confers infinitely more blessings than it takes away, and that, even in a pecuniary point of view, it contributes more by far than it takes. What community is more prospered, or is more rich in all that promotes the temporal welfare of man, than that where the gospel has the most decided influence?

(6) We may see from this Epistle that churches “ought” to be united in promoting the cause of religion, ~~6008~~3 John 1:8,9. They should regard it as a common cause in which one has as much concern as another, and where each should feel it a privilege to cooperate with his brethren. One church, in proportion to its ability, has as much interest in the spread of Christianity as another, and should feel that it has much responsibility in doing it. Between different churches there should be that measure of confidence and love that they will deem it a privilege to help each other in the common

cause, and that one shall be ready to further the benevolent designs undertaken by another. In every Christian land, and among the people of every Christian denomination, missionaries of the gospel should find friends who will be willing to cooperate with them in advancing the common cause, and who, though they may bear a different name, and may speak a different language, should cheerfully lend their aid in spreading the common Christianity.

(7) We may see, from this Epistle, the evil of having ONE troublesome man in the church, ~~GOOD~~ 3 John 1:10. Such a man, by his talents, his address, his superior learning, his wealth, or by his arrogance, pride, and self-confidence, may CONTROL a church, and effectually hinder its promoting the work of religion. The church referred to by the apostle would have done its duty well enough, if it had not been for one ambitious and worldly man. No one can properly estimate the evil which one such man can do, nor the calamity which comes upon a church when such a man places himself at its head. As a man of wealth, of talents, and of learning, may do great good, if his heart is right, so may a man similarly endowed do proportionate evil if his heart is wicked. Yet how often has the spirit which actuated Diotrephes prevailed in the church! There is nothing that confers so much POWER on men as the CONTROL in religious matters; and hence, in all ages, proud and ambitious men have sought DOMINION over the conscience, and have sought to bring the sentiments of people on religion to subjection to THEIR will.

(8) There may be circumstances where it is proper — where it is a duty — to receive those who have been cast out of the church, ~~GOOD~~ 3 John 1:8. The decisions of a church, under some proud and ambitious partisan leader, are often eminently unjust and harsh. The most modest, humble, devoted, and zealous men, under a charge of heresy, or of some slight aberration from the formulas of doctrine, may be cast out as unworthy to be recognized as ministers of the gospel, or even as unworthy to have a place at the table of the Lord. Some of the best men on earth have been thus disowned by the church; and it is no CERTAIN evidence against a man when he is denounced as a heretic, or disowned as a member, by those who bear the Christian name. If we are satisfied that a man is a Christian, we should receive him as such, however he may be regarded by others; nor should we hesitate to help him forward in his Christian course, or in any way to assist him to do good.

(9) Finally, let us learn from the examples commended in this brief Epistle, to do good. Let us follow the example of Gaius — the hospitable Christian; the large-hearted philanthropist; the friend of the stranger; the helper of those who were engaged in the cause of the Lord — a man who opened his heart and his house to welcome them when driven out and disowned by others. Let us imitate Demetrius, in obtaining a good report of those who know us; in so living that, if the aged apostle John were still on earth, we might be worthy of his commendation, and more than all, of the approbation of that gracious Saviour before whom these good men have long since gone, and in whose presence we also must soon appear.