

## ***2:7 The Commandment You Had from the Beginning***

### **THE WORD YOU HAVE HEARD.**

CLEMENT OF ALEXANDRIA: You had the commandment through the law and the prophets. ADUMBRATIONS.<sup>38</sup>

### **NO NEW COMMANDMENT.**

DIDYMUS THE BLIND: Some people were apparently objecting that the Evangelist's teaching was a new thing, and so he had to insist that this was not so. COMMENTARY ON 1 JOHN.<sup>39</sup>

### **THE COMMAND.**

CYRIL OF ALEXANDRIA: John is talking here about love. The commandment was not new, because long before that time it had been proclaimed by the prophets. CATENA.<sup>40</sup>

### **FROM THE BEGINNING.**

ANDREAS: Someone may ask how it was possible for the hearers of this letter to have known the commandment from the beginning, since they were not Jews (as appears from the end of the letter, where they are told to keep themselves from idols). But is there not a commandment which is old, which has existed from the beginning and which all people everywhere have heard? For everybody, even domestic animals, naturally loves those who are close to them. CATENA.<sup>41</sup>

## ***2:8 The Darkness Is Passing***

### **THE DARKNESS OF PERVERSION.**

CLEMENT OF ALEXANDRIA: The darkness is the darkness of perversion, and the light is the light of faith, working in us according to God's foreordained plan. ADUMBRATIONS.<sup>43</sup>

### **A NEW COMMANDMENT.**

HILARY OF ARLES: The commandment is true in him because he loved us so much that he died for us, and it will be true in us also if we love one another. INTRODUCTORY COMMENTARY ON 1 JOHN.<sup>44</sup>

## **THE TRUE LIGHT.**

ANDREAS: The new dimension to the commandment is that now the light has come into the world, our Lord Jesus, because of whom the power of the devil has passed away. CATENA.<sup>45</sup>

## **LOVING ENEMIES.**

OECUMENIUS: The commandment is new in that it is no longer restricted to Israel as it was under the law of Moses. Under that law it was normal to love one's friends and to hate one's enemies, as Jesus himself testified. <sup>48</sup> But he then turned that around by saying that we should love our enemies and do good to those who hate us, concentrating on the fact that these people are human beings like ourselves and not worrying about how they feel toward us. COMMENTARY ON 1 JOHN.<sup>49</sup>

## **2:9 Saying One Is in the Light**

### **LIVING IN THE LIGHT.**

CLEMENT OF ALEXANDRIA: The light is the truth, and a brother is not just our neighbor but the Lord [Jesus] as well. ADUMBRATIONS.<sup>51</sup>

### **ONE WHO HATES.**

HILARY OF ARLES: The person who hates is in darkness until he repents or until he discovers love. INTRODUCTORY COMMENTARY ON 1 JOHN.<sup>53</sup>

### **HATE AND LOVE.**

ANDREAS: How can someone say that he belongs to Christ and at the same time hate his brother for whom Christ died? Or if someone says he belongs to God and yet hates Christ, who has become our brother by becoming a man, he is not of God but of the devil. For if he were of God, he would love the brother who had been sent to him and anointed by grace. CATENA.<sup>54</sup>

## **2:10 *Brotherly Love***

### **NO CAUSE FOR STUMBLING.**

HILARY OF ARLES: Someone who loves his brothers is in no danger of stumbling. INTRODUCTORY COMMENTARY ON 1 JOHN.<sup>56</sup>

### **LOVING THOSE OF THE SAME NATURE AS YOURSELF.**

THEOPHYLACT: Even the Gentiles have always accepted the law or command which appears to derive from nature, that we should do good to those who are of the same nature as we are. The reason for this is that man is a rational and social animal who cannot exist without mutual love. Ancient tales even relate that there were many people who were prepared to sacrifice themselves on behalf of others, and the Savior himself calls this the highest form of love: "Greater love has no man than this, that a man should lay down his life for his friends." <sup>58</sup> COMMENTARY ON 1 JOHN.<sup>59</sup>

## **2:11 *Walking in Darkness***

### **EXTINGUISHING LOVE.**

ORIGEN: Whoever does evil and hates his brother has extinguished the lamp of love, and therefore he walks in darkness. SERMONS ON LEVITICUS 13.4.<sup>60</sup>

### **LOSING SIGHT OF LOVE.**

HILARY OF ARLES: The person who loses sight of love will not know which way to turn when it comes to doing good works. INTRODUCTORY COMMENTARY ON 1 JOHN.<sup>62</sup>

### **BLINDED BY DARKNESS.**

ANDREAS: Those who hate Christ do not realize that they have become the inheritors of eternal fire. This is what the devil makes them suffer, because he has blinded their inner vision. CATENA.<sup>63</sup>

## ***2:12 Your Sins Are Forgiven for His Sake***

### **LITTLE CHILDREN.**

CLEMENT OF ALEXANDRIA: “Little children” means those whose sins have been forgiven. ADUMBRATIONS.<sup>65</sup>

### **IN NEED OF INSTRUCTION.**

OECUMENIUS: John knew that not everyone would receive the gospel message with the same understanding or commitment. Some would respond like children in need of further instruction, and to them he expounds the forgiveness of sins through faith in Christ. COMMENTARY ON 1 JOHN.<sup>67</sup>

## ***2:13 Fathers and Young People***

### **YOU HAVE OVERCOME THE EVIL ONE.**

CLEMENT OF ALEXANDRIA: By “fathers” John means those perfect people who understood everything from the very beginning and readily perceived that the Son had always existed. ADUMBRATIONS.<sup>68</sup>

### **MATURITY AND IMMATURITY IN FAITH.**

ANDREAS: The different ages here are to be understood in spiritual terms; they refer to our maturity in faith. First you must become a child and be weaned off evil. It is in this state that you must put off the weight of your old sins. Once you have done this, you can progress to the status of adolescents, when you must struggle against evil. Finally you will be deemed worthy of the deep knowledge of God which characterizes parents. This is the best and truest order of growth toward acceptance by the Father. CATENA.<sup>69</sup>

## ***2:14 Young Men, You Are Strong***

### **THE WORD ABIDES IN YOU.**

ORIGEN: In my opinion, if someone is a child inside, then he will appear to be a child on the outside as well, however old he is. The same is true of someone who is an overgrown teenager. But it also follows from this that anyone can be an adult and parent on the inside, whatever age they may be. CATENA.<sup>72</sup>

### **YOU HAVE OVERCOME.**

CLEMENT OF ALEXANDRIA: By strong “young men” John means those who have overcome their lusts. ADUMBRATIONS.<sup>73</sup>

### **THE MODEL OF COURAGE.**

CYRIL OF ALEXANDRIA: The young men are a model of courage, the elders are a model of understanding, and the sons and daughters are a model of what it means to be children in Christ. CATENA.<sup>74</sup>

## ***2:15 Do Not Love the World***

### **FRIENDSHIP WITH GOD.**

DIDYMUS THE BLIND: Since the nature of friendship with God is such that if anyone loves this world he is an enemy of God, it follows that if someone wants to be a friend of God and dwell in God’s love, he must turn away from love of the world and the things which are in the world. COMMENTARY ON 1 JOHN.<sup>76</sup>

### **THE VANITY OF THE WORLD.**

CYRIL OF ALEXANDRIA: What is there in the world but vanity, which is of no use to anybody? The distractions of the present life are unnecessary and pointless, as is the excessive abundance of worldly passions. CATENA.<sup>77</sup>

### **THE THINGS OF THE WORLD.**

EUCHERIUS: Do not love the world or the things in it, says the apostle, for all these things flatter our gaze with their deceptive show. Let the power of the eyes be focused on the light, not given over to error, and since that power is available for the enjoyment of life, let it not receive what causes death. EXHORTATION TO HIS KINSMAN VALERIAN.<sup>78</sup>

### **THE DESIRES OF THE WORLD.**

SEVERUS OF ANTIOCH: John means the lusts and desires of the world, which are ruled by the devil. CATENA.<sup>79</sup>

### **LOVING THAT WHICH VANISHES.**

HILARY OF ARLES: A wise father warns his children not to love things which quickly vanish away. This wisdom is the crowning glory of the supreme Maker of all things, and it is well-suited to everyone who is righteous. INTRODUCTORY COMMENTARY ON 1 JOHN.<sup>80</sup>

### **AT WAR WITHIN THE SOUL.**

ANDREAS: Lest anyone think that he has completely broken with the system of this world, John here reminds us that something of it remains inside us and that we are attracted by it because of the desires of our flesh, which are at war with our soul. From this it may be seen that the visible world is no longer loved by those who have risen above it, who no longer contemplate temporal things but gaze on eternity instead. CATENA.<sup>81</sup>

### **FLEE THE WORLD.**

SYMEON THE NEW THEOLOGIAN: Let us flee the world. For what have we got in common with it? Let us run and pursue until we have laid hold of something which is permanent and does not pass away, for all things perish and pass away like a dream, and nothing is lasting or certain among the things which are seen. DISCOURSES 2.14.<sup>83</sup>

## ***2:16 The Lust of the Flesh***

### **VEHEMENT LUST.**

AUGUSTINE: The stronger and more vehement the lust which is not from the Father but from the world, the more each one becomes willing to accept all annoyances and griefs in pursuing the object of his desires. ON PATIENCE 17.<sup>84</sup>

### **ENSLAVED TO BODILY DESIRES.**

AUGUSTINE: This love of the world, which contains in itself the universal lust of the world, is the general kind of fornication by which one sins against one's own body, in that the human mind is unceasingly enslaved to all bodily and visible desires and pleasures, left marooned and abandoned by the very Creator of all things. SERMONS 162.4.<sup>85</sup>

### **THE PRIDE OF LIFE.**

HILARY OF ARLES: The lust of the flesh is what pertains to our physical appetites, whereas the lust of the eye and the pride of life are what pertains to the vices of the soul, such as inordinate self-love, which does not come from the Father but from the devil. INTRODUCTORY COMMENTARY ON 1 JOHN.<sup>86</sup>

### **CORRUPTION FADES AWAY.**

ANDREAS: None of the vain pleasures of corruption will last. They are temporal and will fade away and in fact are flimsier than any cobweb. CATENA.<sup>87</sup>

## ***2:17 Time and Eternity***

### **ABIDING FOREVER.**

ANDREAS: In discussing with the Jews, Christ explained: "This is the will of the Father, that you should believe in the one whom he has sent." <sup>89</sup> The one who keeps his commandments will gain eternal life. CATENA.<sup>90</sup>

### **CLINGING TO PERISHABLE THINGS.**

OECUMENIUS: Wise people do not go on despising the gospel and clinging to the perishable things of this world, for that is just like trying to build a house on sand. COMMENTARY ON 1 JOHN.<sup>92</sup>