

4:15 *Confessing That Christ Is His Son*

Confessing His Humanity and Divinity.

Didymus the Blind: This needs to be properly understood. God will not dwell in anyone who does not obey his commandments, however much he may confess him with his lips. Some people are confused by the various names of Jesus, because they do not interpret the Scriptures correctly. They think that because he came out of the womb of Mary according to the flesh and was given the name Jesus at that time, he is not to be identified with the eternal Son of God, who did not think it robbery to be considered equal with God. They restrict themselves to the human form which the Word of God assumed, even though the being of the Word was never changed into humanity. To confess the one Lord Jesus Christ is to confess him as God and man, not as a man only. Commentary on 1 John.⁵⁷

4:16 *The Person Who Abides in Love*

Of One Mind.

Cyprian: Those who have refused to be of one mind in the church of God cannot abide with God. On the Unity of the Catholic Church 14.⁵⁹

One Who Has Love.

Basil the Great: If God is love, as John says, then it must be that the devil is hatred. As he who has love has God, so he who has hatred has the devil dwelling in him. Ascetical Discourses 2.⁶⁰

Trinitarian Communion.

Augustine: The Holy Spirit is commonly shared in some way between the Father and the Son. But this communion is itself consubstantial and coeternal. If it can appropriately be described as friendship, let it be so called—but it is better to call it love. It is a substance, because God is a substance, and God is love. On the Trinity 6.5.7.⁶¹

The Lover, the Beloved and Love.

Augustine: When we come to the subject of love, which is what God is called in Scripture, the Trinity begins to dawn a little, for there is the Lover, the Beloved and Love. On the Trinity 15.10.⁶²

4:17 Confidence for the Day of Judgment

How to Test the Progress of Love.

Augustine: This is how everyone ought to test the progress of love in himself, or rather his own progress in love, for if love is God there can be no progress or regress, and love is only said to make progress in you inasmuch as you make progress in love. Ten Homilies on 1 John 9.2.⁶⁷

Love Perfected in Us.

Hilary of Arles: In this world we must do our best to be generous, godly, merciful and patient, imitating God as closely as we can. Introductory Commentary on 1 John.⁶⁸

As He Is.

Andreas: Jesus said: "The ruler of this world is coming, and he shall find nothing in me."⁶⁹ We ought to be the same, so that nothing of this world may be found in us either. Catena.⁷⁰

4:18 One Who Feels Is Not Perfected in Love

Perfect Love Casts Out Fear.

Clement of Alexandria: The perfection of a faithful man is love. Adumbrations.⁷²

No Fear in Love.

Augustine: What John said is true. So if you do not want to have any fear, first of all see whether you have that perfect love which turns fear out of the door. But if fear is pushed out before such perfection is achieved, it is a matter of pride puffing up, not of charity building up. Sermons 348.1.⁷³

4:19 We Love Because God Loved Us First

Why We Love God.

Augustine: By God's grace we love him who first loved us, in order to believe in him, and by loving him we perform good works, but we have not performed the good works in order to love him. Letters 186.⁷⁷

God Exactly Understands Us.

Andreas: God loves us so much that even the hairs of our head are numbered, as it says in the Gospels. 78
It is not that God goes around numbering hairs but rather that he has exact understanding and complete foreknowledge of everything to do with us. Catena. 79

4:20 No One Can Hate His Brother and Still Love God

Not in Love, Not in God.

Augustine: He who does not love his brother is not in love, and he who is not in love is not in God, for God is love. On the Trinity 8.11.82

Seeing with the Heart's Eye.

Augustine: Why does a man not see God? Because he has not love. He has not love because he does not love his brother, and it follows that the reason for his not seeing God is that he does not love. The heart's eye must be continually cleansed and strengthened by love, in order to see that changeless being in whose presence the lover may always delight and enjoy it in the company of the angels for all eternity. Ten Homilies on 1 John 9.10.83

4:21 Love God and Love Your Brother Also

Fulfilling God's Commandments.

Andreas: The person who loves God keeps his commandments, and loving one's brother is the fulfillment of those commandments. The person who does not love his brother has not kept the commandments and by not keeping them has not loved God. The one who says he loves but does not do so is a liar. Catena.85

5:1 Those Who Love God Love His Children Too

One Who Loves the Parent Loves the Child.

Cyril of Jerusalem: We can turn this around and say that anyone who despises the Begotten also despises the One who begat him. Catechetical Lectures 11.7.1

Everyone Who Believes.

Didymus the Blind: This describes everyone who is born of God and does what God wants him to do. Commentary on 1 John.²

A Child of God.

Andreas: By practicing virtue, those who are born of God have become his children, his friends, just as Abraham was. Once again John touches on the doctrine of truth, revealing the depths of the unbelief of the heretics. Catena.⁴

5:2 Obedience Is the Test of Love

When We Love God.

Augustine: To love the children of God is to love the Son of God; to love the Son of God is to love the Father. Nobody can love the Father without loving the Son, and anyone who loves the Son will love the other children as well. Ten Homilies on 1 John 10.3.⁶

We Love the Children of God.

Theophylact: If we love God, then we must also love those whom God has brought to birth and who have become our brothers and sisters. Loving one another is a sign of how much we love God. Commentary on 1 John.⁸

5:3 Keep God's Commandments

The Substance of Love.

Didymus the Blind: The substance and ground of the love we ought to have for God is obedience to his commandments. Commentary on 1 John.⁹

Love, and You Do Well.

Augustine: The commandments of which John speaks are the two given by Jesus: Love God and love one another. Hold fast to this love and set your minds at rest. You need not be afraid of doing harm to anyone,

for how can you harm the person you love? Love, and you cannot but do well. Ten Homilies on 1 John 10.7.10

They Are Not Burdensome.

Andreas: Keeping the commandments is both the form and substance of our love for God. Those who obey them are brought close to God by them. If someone looks at them in the wrong way and says that they are heavy to bear, he is merely revealing his own weakness. Catena.11

5:4 Whatever Is Born of God Overcomes the World

Victory Through Faith.

Cyril of Alexandria: Neither a Jew nor a pagan nor a heretic can do anything in the face of this victory which is ours through faith. Catena.14

This Is the Victory.

Andreas: This means that such a person has overcome all evil and ungodliness. For our faith has destroyed all ignorance and driven out all darkness. Catena.15

Faith Overcomes the World.

Theophylact: Once you have become brothers and sisters in love, you must go on to the next stage, which is to overcome the world. For those who have been born again in God must expel every kind of unbelief from their midst. Commentary on 1 John.17