

1 JOHN

INTRODUCTION -

I. THE AUTHOR AND THE AUTHENTICITY OF THIS LETTER

The letter itself does not tell us who wrote it, nor to whom it was written. Nevertheless, without any doubt it was written by the apostle John. All the testimony of the witnesses points to this conclusion. Polycarp was a disciple of John and he testifies that John wrote it. Another disciple, Papias, gives the same testimony. Many of the so-called "Church Fathers" (authors and commentators of the first centuries of the Christian era) attribute this letter to John the apostle. Among them are: Tertullian, A. D. 155 -- 220; Clement of Alexandria, 150 --216; Irenaeus, 130 -- 200, who was a disciple of Polycarp; Origen, 185 - 254; and Cyprian, bishop of Carthage, 248 to 258, when he died.

The internal evidence also points to the author of this letter as being the same as the one who wrote the Gospel according to John. If the apostle John is the author of the Gospel according to John, he also is the author of this letter. The style, mode of expression, or diction of the two works, points to a common author.

The authenticity of this letter is established by establishing that John the apostle wrote it. The fact that it is found in ancient versions (for example, the Syriac Version, made early in the 2nd century) indicates its authenticity, for it was unanimously accepted as inspired by the early church. It was included in the ancient lists of canonical books.

The author identifies himself as an apostle upon affirming that he was an eyewitness of Jesus Christ (1:1-3). This was a requisite for being an apostle (Acts 1:8,21,22; 10:41).

The style and manner of expression were so well known to his readers that he

did not have to identify himself. Such a letter would indicate who wrote it and his authority for speaking. No fraudulent work would have such characteristics. Without doubt the letter is of John the apostle.

II. ABOUT THE AUTHOR

He was the son of Zebedee (Mark 1:20; Luke 5:10) and of Salome (Matt. 27:56 plus Mark 15:40), and brother of James (Matt. 4:21; Acts 12:2).

He was called by Jesus to follow him (Matt. 4:21), and to be an apostle (10:1-4). He, together with James his brother, were surnamed Boanerges, which means, Sons of thunder (Mark 3:17). They wanted to call down fire from heaven to consume the Samaritans (Luke 9:54).

He had the special privilege of accompanying Jesus when he raised the daughter of Jairus (Mark 5:37), when he was transfigured (Matt. 17:1,2), and when he prayed in Gethsemane (Mat. 26:36,37).

The mother of John, together with him and with James, asked Jesus on behalf of her two sons a special place in the kingdom (Mat. 20:20-23; Mark 10:35).

John, together with the other disciples, prohibited a certain person that he should cast out demons, because he did not follow them (that is, in their company). Jesus reprimanded them for that (Mark 9:38-41).

He was put in charge of caring for Jesus' mother (John 19:27). He was a witness of the resurrection of Jesus, and of his ascension to heaven (Matt. 28:16; Acts 1:2-11).

He was an unlearned man (Acts 4:13).

He was an intimate companion of Peter (Acts chapters 3,4; 8:14-25; Gal. 2:9).

He was a pillar in the church in Jerusalem (Gal. 2:9).

He was exiled to an island called Patmos (Rev. 1:9), where he received the revelation of Jesus Christ (ver. 1).

He wrote five books of the New Testament; namely, The Gospel of John, the three epistles or letters of John, and Revelation.

III. OUTSTANDING CHARACTERISTICS OF THE LETTER

Read again the second paragraph in Section I.

Let us note now the similarities between this letter and the Gospel according to John.

1. The following key words are found in both works: life, light, love, darkness, death, world, fellowship, and truth.

2. The repetition of ideas, within the same passage, occur in both works. Note 1 John 4:7-12, where the idea of "love" is repeated, and John 5:31-39 where the idea of "testimony" is repeated. Compare also 1 John 5:7-11.

3. The same energetic contrasts are found in the two works, such as life and death, light and darkness, sons of God and sons of the devil, love for God and love for the world, righteousness and unrighteousness, Christ and anti-christ.

4. Both works begin and end in the same general way. Compare John 1:1-4 with 1 John 1:1,2, and John 20:30,31 with 1 John 5:13.

5. There is a great number of parallel passages, or similar in expression, in the two works. Compare the following:

1 John	Gospel of John
1:1,2	1:1,4,14
1:4	15:11; 16:24
2:5	14:23
2:6; 3:24; 4:13,16	5:4
2:8; 3:11	13:34
2:8,10	1:5,9; 11:10
2:11	12:35
2:13,14	17:3
2:23	15:23,24
2:29	3:3

3:1	1:12
3:2	17:24
3:8	8:44
3:13	15:18-20
4:9	3:16
4:12	1:18
5:3	14:15
5:9	5:36
5:12	3:36
5:13	20:31
5:14	14:13,14
5:20	17:2

The word "love", and derivatives of it, characterize this letter in great manner. This word, and its derivatives, is employed some fifty times throughout this letter.

The word "know", and various forms of it, appear in this letter with frequency, probably in refutation of the prevalent Gnosticism of the time. (On Gnosticism see Section VII of this Introduction).

In this letter several assurances are emphasized. See 3:14,19,24. In equal manner is emphasized the idea of "fellowship", based on righteousness and love (1:3-10).

Another outstanding characteristic of this letter is that the author, as does also the author of the Gospel according to John (doubtlessly the two are the same, the apostle John), not only affirms or denies some proposition, but in order to emphasize the affirmation, denies the contrary part, and in order to emphasize the negation, affirms the contrary. We have examples of this in John 1:20; 3:36; 5:24; 6:22; 1 Juan 2:4,27; 4:2,3.

This letter, or epistle, seems to be more like a tract, because it lacks the epistolary salutation at the beginning and at the end. But on the other hand, it is very epistolary in that the author repeatedly says, "I write unto you", and some 36 times he directs himself to the readers, calling them, "my little children", "brethren", "beloved", etc.

IV. TO WHOM THE LETTER WAS WRITTEN

As it is not known who the original recipients of this letter were, neither is it known when it was written, nor from where. Every conclusion is pure conjecture. It seems to be a letter from an aged person, and the early writers tell us that John spent his old age in the area of Ephesus.

There is no reference to persecution in this letter. Everything points to a period of external peace. This would indicate a date posterior to 80 A. D., and before 94, when the persecution of Domitian arose, he who was the last of the twelve Cesaers. Some commentators fix the date of 90 A. D. as the most probable one for this letter. The heresies treated in it also point to a date late in the first century, because these did not have their beginning and circulation until then.

Nevertheless, some consider that 2:13,18 indicate a date anterior to the destruction of Jerusalem (A.D. 70), affirming that the readers had known Jesus in the flesh, and that the "last hour" referred to the end of the Jewish nation.

V. THE GENERAL CONDITIONS AND CIRCUMSTANCES OF THE TIMES WHEN THIS LETTER WAS WRITTEN

There is no reference to general persecution, nor any indirect indication respecting it. It seems that the letter was written in times of favorable external conditions. The matters treated point rather to internal conflicts in the church of the area of the original readers (2:13,17; 5:4).

False teachers had arisen (4:1-6). This letter combated their false philosophy, and the corrupt practices which this produced. Thus it is that the opposition that the church was meeting was not so much external (physical persecution) as internal (worldliness in the form of false philoso-

phies and carnal deeds). Christians were being seduced by these false teachers. They seem to have been the Gnostics, according to the point of emphasis of this letter, and the things condemned in it.

VI. THE PURPOSE OF THE LETTER

The author himself states the purpose in 1:3,4; 5:13. Furthermore, the things treated in the letter indicate what his purposes are. John had lived unto an advanced age, and therefore had seen the appearing of many corruptions in the church in form of doctrines and practices. He wrote three letters to reaffirm the truths touching the person and work of Jesus Christ, and to combat the false doctrines and condemn the corrupt practices that these produced. Therefore this letter abounds in exhortations to perseverance and fidelity in the faith of Jesus Christ, and in warnings against the seductions of the lusts of the flesh, and against the false teachers, many of whom were apostate brethren (2:19), the anti-Christ.

This letter emphasizes the deity of Jesus and severely condemns those that deny it. It condemns the carnal practices which the false teachers advocated (2:15-17; 3:3,10).

John wrote the Gospel according to John in order to present the evidences that produce faith in Jesus Christ (20:30,31), and this letter in order to present the kind of conduct that that faith in Jesus Christ produces.

This letter emphasizes that human wisdom is not superior to Divine wisdom, to the faith in Christ Jesus. Only by adhering to the faith in Christ is there promise of life eternal. The foolishness of the preaching of the cross of Christ will always be the wisdom of the church and to which she must faithfully follow (1 Cor. 1:21,30; 2:1,5).

In order to be able to understand a

given proposition, we have to understand what the purpose of the author upon presenting it is. We have seen the purpose of John upon writing this letter. It is evident that the error treated is that which is opposite the exhortations and points of emphasis of the author. But this error well describes Gnosticism which had its beginnings in the time of John. If we interpret some given verse of this letter, keeping in mind just who these false teachers were, and what they taught, we will not fall into false interpretations, a thing which those do who ignore this truth.

VII. ABOUT GNOSTICISM

1. The word *Gnosticism*, according to the Abbreviated Encyclopedic Dictionary, means the "philosophic and religious doctrine of the first centuries of the Church, a mixture of the Christian beliefs with Jewish and oriental ones, which divided itself into various sects, and which pretended to have a mysterious and intuitive knowledge of divine things." This name is derived from the Greek word GNOSIS, which means "knowledge." The Gnostics claimed to have a knowledge superior to all others. They misapplied John 17:3, claiming that the only important thing was knowledge, and according to them this knowledge was the philosophy which they advocated. Their system was one of intellectuality, and not of morality. According to them, the expressions of the apostle Paul respecting "free from the law" mean free from all moral restriction.

2. The Gnostics were of two principal groups: the Docetae (or, Docetists), and the disciples of Cerinthius.

a. **The Docetae.** These denied the *humanity* of Christ. According to them, Christ did not have a literal or physical body. Everything was an apparition, or imagination. For this reason they were also called the **Phantasiastae** (Phantoms,

ghosts). John called them the "anti-Christ" (2:18) because they denied the humanity of Christ. He proved them false with that of 1:1-3. They affirmed that all that was attributed to Jesus (his incarnation, work, suffering, resurrection and ascension) was pure imagination. Therefore they concluded that in reality he did not die to make satisfaction for our sins. John answered them in 2:2. They concluded that we do not have to suffer for our faith, as neither did Jesus Christ in reality suffer.

b. **The Cerinthians.** These denied the *deity* of Jesus. They were of the doctrine of a certain Cerinthius, a contemporary of the apostle John. He claimed (according to the testimony of Irenius in his book against heresies) that Deity or Divinity entered into Jesus when he was baptized, and that it left him when he was crucified. According to him, Jesus was born the son of Joseph, and not miraculously of the virgin named Mary. Cerinthius was a Jew of Egypt, who combined some Jewish ideas with Gnostic philosophy. He retained circumcision and the observance of the Sabbath. The result was spiritualized Judaism.

The Cerinthians, as also the Ebionites, were Unitarians. They claimed that before and after the Christ dwelt in him, Jesus was merely a man. They admitted all that was said respecting the history of Jesus, but denied that in reality he was the Son of God (2:22). John answered them with that of 4:15 and 5:5.

(The Jews also denied the deity of Jesus -- John 5:17,18; 10:33; Matt. 10:63-68 --, but these that denied it and who are under consideration in this letter were of more recent origin (2:18).

3. Basically, Gnosticism considered all matter as being of an evil nature. They affirmed that the world was created by an evil principle (and not by God who is pure and who is light). *Pagan dualism* was the

base of their belief. (Dualism = a religious or philosophical system which admits two principles, like good and evil, soul and body, etc. -- Larousse Dictionary). From this they concluded that God could not inhabit a material or physical body. They denied the incarnation of Christ!

Some Gnostics were ascetics, affirming that the body is evil and has to be ill treated; others were libertines, affirming that with the mind they were saving themselves according to their superior knowledge, although with their bodies they practiced all kinds of sensuality. Paul exposed their false philosophy (Col. 1:16; 2:8-23), as also did Jude (16-19) and Peter (2 Pet. 2:1-3).

4. The practical application of Gnosticism (for the great majority of them) was sensuality, because they affirmed that the spirit is pure and independent of the body, and that the body can sin because by nature it is impure. According to this philosophy let the body sin, and with this knowledge they could permit that their bodies practice such sensual things. Did not their superior knowledge permit them so to do? Thus they reasoned, and gloried in their "gnosis."

5. The Nicolaitans were called Gnostics by the writers of the early centuries. Their deeds or works were evil (Rev. 2:6,15). They affirmed that Christians are not under a system of morality, but free of all sin and that therefore they could not sin, nor be punished for sins committed. These Nicolaitans were very active in Ephesus and in Pergamum, according to Revelation chapter 2. John in his letter denounces the doctrine of such ones (1:8-10; 2:1-3; 3:4).

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(The following is a translation of a portion of the introduction of the Spanish work, NOTAS SOBRE COLOSENSES --Notes on Colossians-- by Wayne Partain):

D. "Take heed lest there shall be any one that maketh spoil of you through his philosophy and vain deceit ..." (Col. 2:8). The heresy of Colossae was a mixture of Judaism and incipient *Gnosticism* that taught that salvation is by means of *knowledge*, not by means of the pure gospel but by certain mysteries invented by men ("his philosophy and vain deceit", 2:8). The term *Gnostics* signifies those who *know*.

E. Some beliefs of Gnosticism (there was much difference between them):

1. There are two Gods: an inferior God called Demiurge, the God of the O. T. who created the universe, and a superior God (the Supreme God) who offered salvation to the world. Some of the Gnostics claimed that the God of the N. T. is the Supreme God, but others claimed that even the God of the N. T. was inferior to the Supreme God. Jewish literature produced some two centuries before Christ emphasized the absolute majesty and sovereignty of the Supreme God over the world and the existence of intermediate beings between the Supreme God and humanity, and, therefore, the acceptance of non-biblical concepts of the creation. The Gnostics wrote their own books about the creation, as also other "gospels" and other epistles. The intermediate series or emanations were called the "Pleroma." It was said that Christ was one of these emanations, that although he might have been one of the highest, or the highest, he was not the only one, but merely an emanation of the Supreme Being. The lowest of the emanations was called Demiurge, or Creator. Therefore, they taught that the Father of Jesus Christ, the God of the Christians, was very inferior to the Supreme God, and that the Scriptures of the God of the Christians were inferior to the revelation (the gnosis)

of the Supreme Being.

2. The Gnostics believed that there were *two eternal forces*, good and evil (this philosophy was called Dualism), and that the force of evil created the universe. They taught that sin did not exist in the heart, but in matter, or in the body. For them *redemption* was the liberation of the spirit from the material body. The *resurrection* of the body was emphatically denied. Salvation came by means of knowledge (gnosis) imparted by the Redeemer. The humiliation of the *Redeemer* consisted in leaving the world of light in order to come down to our world to gather the spirits embodied or tied up in matter.

3. They believed that this redeemer could not have a true body (1 Jn. 4:1-3); that "the Word became flesh" had to be explained so that it might signify something else. This was done in different ways: (1) that Christ had a *phantom* body (that when he walked he left no footprints), that in reality he was never born, and that he did not suffer on the cross; (2) that Jesus indeed was an ordinary human upon which came the divine Christ at baptism, and from which it left before the crucifixion; or (3) that a distinction was to be made between a celestial Christ and a terrestrial Christ.

4. The Gnostics had various sacraments: (1) baptism in water; (2) baptism by the Holy Spirit; (3) baptism by fire; (4) anointment with oil, (5) a supper; etc.

F. The influence of Gnosticism on Christianity was very great, because the church adopted its external forms. Gnosticism (1) used the church's forms of thought, (2) it used its nomenclature, (3) it recognized (in its way) Christ as the Savior of the world, (4) it imitated the sacraments of the (apos-

tate) church, (5) it professed to be an esoteric (secret) revelation of Christ and of the apostles, (6) it produced a number of apocryphal books (gospels, epistles, revelations). Therefore, although Gnosticism was diametrically opposed to Christianity, with this camouflage it succeeded in deceiving many persons because it passed itself off as a refining of Christianity. It even came to claim to be the only true Christianity, set apart only for the elect (the Gnostics, the knowers).

"Christianity was influenced by Gnosticism at least in seven ways: (1) In the midst of the general confusion introduced by the Gnostics, the church was obligated to establish certain norms that those who wanted to be Christians had to accept. These norms included The Apostles' Creed ... and The Apostolic Office, that is, the historic Bishopric. (2) The defense of the Christian faith led to the formation of the Christian dogmas, expressed in the philosophical terminology of the day. (3) The Gnostic emphasis on mysteries, spiritual hymns, and impressive rites gave rise to more delicate liturgical services in the churches. (4) Gnostic dualism and its hatred of matter paved the way for Christian asceticism, which in turn would lead to monastic life. (5) The intermediate beings of the Gnostics paved the way for the Saints in the Catholic Church. Observe the relative position of Sofia and the Virgin Mary in the two systems. (6) The superficial division of humanity into the two groups of elect and non-elect paved the way for the doctrine of predestination. (7) Although condemned by the church, the Gnostic movement has continued alive until today." (This data about Gnostic beliefs is found in "History of the Christian Church", by Lars. P. Qualben).

G. " The air was filled with religions of mystery ... These new teachers professed a

new thought with the conception of the world that attempted to explain everything on the supposition that matter was inherently evil, and that the good God could touch cursed matter only by means of a series of eons (in Gnosticism, an eon is eternal intelligence emanated from the supreme divinity), or emanations (manifestations) so distanced from it as to be able to avoid divine contamination and nevertheless with sufficient power as to be able to create evil matter ... when the Gnostics (those that know) embraced Christianity ... they applied to it the theory that they held about the universe. They were divided into two factions as respects Christ. The Docetists (from *DOKEO*, appear) maintained that Jesus did not possess a true human body, but only a ghostly body. It was in reality an eon, not possessing a real humanity. The Cerentians admitted the humanity of the man Jesus, but affirmed that the Christ was an eon that came in the form of a dove upon Jesus in his baptism, but that abandoned him at the cross ... Thus, Colossians seems to be written for our own days when so many are trying to deprive Jesus Christ of his deity" (A.T. Robertson). For example, the Watchtower witnesses say that Christ was not the Almighty God, but rather an inferior god; they, therefore, are polytheists (profess to serve two gods). Some of my brethren in Christ teach that when Christ came to earth he emptied himself of his attributes (at times they say that he did not have them, and at times they say that he did not use them, which means the same thing). Of course, if here on earth Christ had not had the attributes of God, then the witnesses would be right in proclaiming that He was not God, but rather a god. All these unite together with the Gnostics to depreciate the Deity of Christ.

H. "The Gnostics defended a variety of

postures concerning moral questions, as happens today among men. There were the ascetics with some rigorous rules, and the licentious element that broke all barriers for the flesh, while they pretended that the spirit maintained a strict relationship with God" (A.T.R.).

1. The ascetics sought for a fellowship with God by means of solitude, visions, and ecstatic experiences. The word *monk* comes from the Greek word *MONACHOS*, solitude. The monks live in *monasteries*; take vows of celibacy, of silence, of rejection of family and of personal possessions. Paul says that "Which things have indeed a show of wisdom in will-worship, and humility, and severity to the body; but are not of any value against the indulgence of the flesh" (2:20-23); rather they promote all forms of carnality. Of this heresy Paul speaks also in 1 Tim. 4:1-4.

2. Other Gnostics taught that the spirit was not affected by the deeds of the body, and for that reason, they promoted licentiousness. They believed that their fellowship with the Supreme Being elevated them far above earthly matters and that, for that reason, their personal conduct was not important, and the result was that they practiced drunkenness, fornication and all forms of dissolute living. This heresy is condemned in many passages. See, for example, 2 Tim. 3:1-5; 2 Pet. 2; Jude; Rev. 2:14,15,20.

I. Remember that for these false teachers Christ was simply one of the supposed emanations (*PLEROMA*). With all strength and clarity, then, Paul writes about the greatness and preeminence of Christ; that, instead of being an emanation, "in him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily" (2:9).

J. It is obvious that such errors were mixed with some aspects of Judaism (2:11-17).

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2 JOHN

INTRODUCTION -

I. THE AUTHOR AND AUTHENTICITY OF THIS LETTER

This letter was cited by Irenaeus, a disciple of Polycarp (bishop of Smyrna; died 155 A.D.), and by Papias. Clement of Alexandria made mention of it as a work of John the apostle. Origen, successor of Clement, recognized it but added that not everyone admitted its authenticity. It is not found in the Peshitta version; that it, the Ancient Syriac. Dionisius of Alexandria (disciple and successor of Origen, bishop from 248 A.D.) mentioned it, as did also Alexandria, bishop of Alexandria. It was received as canonical by such notables as Athanasius, Cyril of Jerusalem, Gregory Nacianceno, Jerome and Augustine. The Councils of Laodicea, of Hippo, and of Carthage, accepted it as canonical. It appears in the CODEX ALEXANDRINUS, and in the oldest existing manuscripts.

This letter, perhaps (as Origen observes) because of its being small and of a private nature, was not read with the frequency with which others were read, and for the same reason it would not be as greatly circulated and cited. This can explain why it was not generally received in the beginning.

The internal evidence also testifies to the authenticity of the letter as apostolic. The style of writing and the content point to the apostle John as the author of it, and also indicates that it is a companion letter to 1 JOHN.

It was the manner of the apostle John not to affix his name to his letters. The author of 2 JOHN refers to himself as "the elder." Without doubt the reference is to age, and to the respect which this deserves, and not to an office, for there were many elders of congregations. The apostle John was of great age, and the phrase would

identify him more so than any other of that period. It has been suggested that John may have used that phrase in order to hide his identity from those who would do him harm, but that is pure speculation.

All conservative scholars conclude that John the apostle is the author of this letter, as well as 3 JOHN. They base their conclusion on the testimony of the early writers, and on the internal evidence. The three letters, or epistles, incorporate the same doctrine, style and zeal against heretics. They are similar in sentiment, en phraseology and in manner of expression.

Verse 10 of the third letter evidences apostolic authority. Remember that John, being an apostle, had "the signs of an apostle" (2 Cor. 12:12), and as Paul could, so could he use them against false teachers (compare Acts 13:6-12).

II. GENERAL CHARACTERISTICS OF THE LETTER

It is like 3 JOHN in brevity, in form, and in general purpose. It is a private letter (or one written to a congregation, according to the interpretation of ver. 1), as is 3 JOHN. The grammatical construction of the two is similar. (Compare 2 JOHN 4, and 3 JOHN 3; 2 JOHN 12, and 3 JOHN 13,14). They have been called "the twin letters." They have the same introduction.

2 JOHN treats the same heresy (Gnosticism) as is treated in 1 JOHN. Key terms which are used in the letter are: truth (5 times), love (5 times), and walk (3 times).

III. THE PURPOSE OF THE LETTER

It is to confirm faith, and encourage and exhort to walk in love and in obedience in times of apostasy, and also to warn against false teachers. This letter is a mandate against having fellowship with error.

IV. WHEN IT WAS WRITTEN, AND FROM WHERE

It is impossible to determine this with

certainty. Primitive writers took little notice of 2 JOHN and 3 JOHN, perhaps because they were brief and of a personal and local nature.

John was an elderly person when he wrote this letter. The evidence points to a date around 90 A.D., a little after writing 1 JOHN. It is supposed that he wrote it from the area of Ephesus, although this can't be proved.

V. TO WHOM IT WAS WRITTEN

Concerning this point there is much controversy and conjecture. The Greek phrase says: EKLEKTE KURIA, which literally means, "to (the) chosen lady." KURIA is the feminine form of the word KURIOS, lord, or sir. EKLEKTE means "chosen, (and therefore) excellent."

Consider the following interpretations:

1. to a local church (Lenski, Barclay, Williams, Jamieson-Fausset-Brown, etc.). According to these commentators John directs himself to a local congregation, and the "children" are the members. An appeal is made to 1 Pet. 1:1 and 5:13, where it is affirmed that Peter also used the expression of a woman and her children in order to indicate a church and its members. (Note: the word "church" should not appear in the translation. The Greek text says only that "she that is in Babylon")

2. to an unnamed person of the feminine gender (Woods, Wuest, Henry, Lange, Clarke, Macknight, etc.). They favor the simple translation: "to the elect lady" (as it appears in the American Standard Version).

3. to a woman named Eklekte. This cannot be, unless her sister had the same name (ver. 13). The order of words in the Greek text are against this interpretation.

4. to a woman named Cyria (Caton, and others). KURIA, which means "lady", was used as a proper name. The form in Latin is Domina, and in Aramaic, Martha.

In this case the text would say: "to Cyria, the elect one."

5. to a person named Eklekte Cyria. Both words are considered proper names.

6. to Mary the mother of Jesus, or to Martha of Bethany. This interpretation is based on John 19:26,27, in the case of Mary, and in the case of Martha in that KURIA in Aramaic means Martha.

The author does not clearly identify the original recipient of the letter. Perhaps he did so to avoid possible persecution against himself, or against the recipient.

VI. AN OUTLINE OF THE CONTENTS OF THIS LETTER

1. The salutation, 1-3
2. The principal part of the letter, 4-11
 - a. The satisfaction of the author as to the fidelity of the brethren.
 - b. He commends love, which is to walk according to the commandments of Christ.
 - c. Warning against false teachers and about having fellowship with them.
3. The conclusion, 12,13.
 - a. The intentions of the author to visit the brethren.
 - b. He sends greetings.

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3 JOHN

INTRODUCTION

One should read first the Introduction to 2 JOHN. Much of what can be said about 2 JOHN can be said about 3 JOHN.

I. THE AUTHOR AND AUTHENTICITY OF THIS LETTER

The most radical of the modernist critics admit that both 2 JOHN and 3 JOHN have the same author. So the evidence respecting the author of 2 JOHN is equally applicable to 3 JOHN.

II. GENERAL CHARACTERISTICS OF THE LETTER

It is a private letter, as is 2 JOHN. It is brief and of the same style as 2 JOHN, having the same ending.

III. THE PURPOSE OF THE LETTER

This letter (1) praises a certain Gaius for his fidelity and hospitality toward brethren in the faith, and he animates him to continue in this, not being dissuaded by the opposition of perverse brethren, (2) reproves Diotrephes for his arrogance and rejection of apostolic authority, and (3) praises Demetrius for his fidelity in the truth.

It is a letter of stimulus and encouragement rather than one of warning, as is 2 JOHN. As 2 JOHN is against false doctrine, 3 JOHN is against schism.

IV. WHEN IT WAS WRITTEN, AND FROM WHERE

It is impossible to fix a date. The common opinion is that it was written during the old age of John, probably after the Gospel of John; that is, about 90 A.D. It was likely written from Ephesus or from close by there.

V. TO WHOM IT WAS WRITTEN

It was written to a certain Gaius. It is impossible to positively identify him. This was a common name in the Roman Empire. Two or three other persons in the New Testament wore this name. See Acts 19:29; 20:4; Rom. 16:23; 1 Cor. 1:14.

The little said about him in this letter points to a Christian of benevolence, to a man of material means, and to one of great devotion to the truth. His house and his heart were open.

VI. AN OUTLINE OF THE CONTENTS OF THIS LETTER

1. The salutation of John to Gaius and his eulogy of him because he walks in the

truth, 1-4.

2. A eulogy of Gaius' hospitality, manifested in his receiving the preaching brethren to accommodate them, 5-8 (in spite of the opposition of Diotrephes).

3. The opposition of Diotrephes, 9,10.

4. The good testimony concerning Demetrius, 11,12.

5. Final salutations, 13-15.