our sins: next requires that we keep His  
commandments. **And in this** (so literally :  
this is the conditional element : in  
this is placed, on this depends, our knowledge.  
In ch. iii. 24 [see below], the **in  
this** is resumed by the words, “*By His  
Spirit which He hath given us*”) **we  
know** (from time to time, from day to  
day) **that we have the knowledge of him**(have acquired and retain that knowledge :  
this *knowledge* is not, as some make it,  
the *love* of God, as neither of course is it  
mere theoretical knowledge: but is that  
inner and living acquaintance which springs  
out of unity of heart and affection), **if**  
(the token, that we have the knowledge of  
Him, is present, *if*, i.e. it being assumed  
that) **we keep** (as a habit, from time to  
time, these **commandments** being necessarily  
prescriptions regarding circumstances  
as they arise) **His commandments**(first as to the expression. St. John never  
uses the word “*law*” for the rule of Christian  
obedience: this word is reserved for  
the Mosaic law, John i. 17, 46, and, in  
all, fifteen times in the Gospel : but almost  
always *commandments*, — sometimes *the  
word of God* or *of Christ*, John viii. 52  
f.; xiv. 23 f.; xvii. 6, our ver. 5. And as  
a verb he always uses “*to keep*,” very  
seldom “*to do*; and *to keep* preserves its  
peculiar meaning of *watching*, guarding as  
some precious thing, “observing to keep.”  
Next, *whose* commandments? The older  
expositors for the most part refer “*Him*,”  
“*His*,” “*in Him,*” verses 3—6, to Christ.  
Most modern Commentators understand  
these pronouns throughout of God, and  
the second “*He*” in ver. 6, of Christ.  
That this latter is the right understanding  
of the terms, is supposed to be shewn by  
the substitution (?) in ver. 5 of the words  
“*of God*” for “*His*,” and its taking  
up again by “*in Him*” in ver. 6, followed  
by “*even as He walked.*” But of  
this I am by no means thoroughly persuaded:  
see note, ver. 6).

**4.]** *Assertion*, parallel with ch.i. 8, *of  
the futility of pretending to the knowledge  
of God where this test is not fulfilled.***The man saying, I have the knowledge of  
Him** (see above)**, and not keeping His  
commandments, is a liar** (answers to *we  
deceive ourselves*, ch. i. 8), **and in this  
man the truth is not** (see above on ch. i.  
8, where the words are the same:

**5.]** *assertion of the other alternative,*not put as before, but, as usual, carried  
further and differently expressed: *an  
opposition with an accession*, as Grotins  
calls it):**— but whoso keepeth His word**(synonymous with *His commandments*,  
considered as a whole: on the mode of expression,  
see above), **of a truth in him is  
the love of God perfected** (why should  
this transition be made from knowledge to  
love? Love presupposes knowledge, and  
is a further step in the same *fellowship*  
with God: not indeed that the former  
step is passed through and done with,  
but that true knowledge and love increase  
together, and the former is the measure  
of the latter, just as keeping God’s  
commandments is the test and measure of  
true knowledge of Him. And thus in the  
final and perfect ideal, the two are coincident:  
the perfect observation of His commandments  
is the perfection of love to  
Him. It is manifest, from what has  
been said, that this **love of God** must be  
our love towards God, not His love towards  
us). **In this** (in the fact of our progress  
towards this ideal state of perfection  
of obedience and therefore of love:—thus  
assured that the germ of the state is in  
us and unfolding) **we know that we are  
in Him** (this completes the logical period  
which began in ver. 3, by reasserting that  
verse, carrying however that assertion yet  
deeper, by substituting “*we are in Him*”