meaning of *from the beginning* is fixed to  
be, from the beginning of the Christian  
lives, from the time when they *heard the  
word*. Then as to *new*, and *old*, the explanation  
will be simple enough. The  
command to love one another cannot be  
said to be new, for it forms a part of the  
*word which ye heard*, nay, is the very sum  
and centre of that *word*: but again, it  
may be said to be new, inasmuch as it  
ever assumes new freshness as the Christian  
life unfolds, as the old darkness is  
more and more cleared away and the true  
light shineth: in that light we see light ;  
in the light of Him who maketh all things  
new.

That the *commandment* as such  
refers to the Iaw of love, thus indeed connected  
with Christ’s example here, but still  
to the law of love and no other, is plain  
from the whole usage of the Apostle; compare  
especially 2 John 4—6, where the  
very same train of thought occurs as here,  
the *walking in truth* being equivalent to  
*walking in light* here, being followed up  
by *“even as we received commandment  
from the Father,*” and that commandment  
being characterized, as here,—“*not as  
though I wrote unto thee a new commandment,  
but that which we had from the  
beginning*,” and finally being stated to be  
“*that we love one another*.” Indeed the  
whole process of that passage from this  
point is most instructive as to our present,  
one: “*And this is love, that we walk according  
to His commandments: this is  
the commandment even as ye heard from  
the beginning that ye may walk in it:*”  
where the same complex of the whole  
Christian walk is included in the one idea  
of love, and *love* identified with walking  
according to His commandments. Again  
in ch. iii. 11, the same formula is used in  
speaking of the law of love—“*This is the  
commandment which ye heard from the  
beginning, that we love one another:*”  
compare also ch. iv. 21, v. 3, iii. 22–24:  
again ch. iii. 14, iv. 16, John xiii. 35; ch.  
v. 1, 2, John xv. 10. To recapitulate :  
on the interpretation here adopted, the  
**commandment** is the command to walk as  
Christ walked, passing, as the context advances,  
into the law of love. This **commandment**is no **new** one, **but** an **old** one,  
seeing that they had it **from the beginning**,  
from the beginning of their faith,  
and it was in fact the sum of the word  
which they **heard**).

**8.] Again**  
(this takes up and contravenes what has  
been as yet said: as if it had been “in  
another view of the subject... .”)  
**a new commandment write I unto you**(“*new*,” in that it was first promulgated  
with Christianity and unknown before:  
not, in that he now renews, and  
impresses it anew on them. The meaning  
above given agrees well both with the context  
and with St. John’s habit of thought,  
as well as with matter of fact, and our  
Lord’s own words, John xiii. 34, xv. 12.  
“When I stand at the point of time indicated  
by the term ‘*from the beginning,’*  
and look forwards on the Christian life of  
the readers, the *commandment* appears a  
one long known; the readers have known  
it from the beginning as an essential commandment,  
they have had it as long as  
they have been Christians: on the other  
hand, if I look backward on the life of the  
readers before that *beginning*, whether they  
were before that Jews or Gentiles, this  
same commandment of necessity appears  
as a new one, essentially Christian, first  
beginning for the readers with that beginning;  
for even for the Jewish Christians  
the command of brotherly love is a new  
one, seeing that it is ordained *in imitation  
of Christ*, John xiii. 34”)**, which (**thing,  
viz. the fact that the commandment is a  
new one: see below) **is true in Him and in  
you: because the darkness is passing  
away** (not, as A. V., “*past:*” the verb is  
*present*), **and the true light is now shining**i.e. the commandment *is a new one*, and  
this is true both in [the case of] Him  
[Christ] and in [the case of] you: because  
[in *you*] the darkness is passing away, and  
[in *Him*] the true light is shining: therefore  
on both accounts the command is a  
*new* one : new as regards you, because you  
are newly come from darkness into light:  
new as regards Him, because He uttered  
it when He came into the world to lighten