**11.] But** (whereas) **he that hateth  
his brother** (see above) **is in the darkness**(has never come out of it : corresponds to  
“*abideth in the light*” above: denotes his  
state, whereas “*walketh*” indicates more  
his outward acts)**, and walketh in the  
darkness, and knoweth not where he  
goeth, because the darkness blinded** (it is  
a matter of old standing: “*blinded*,” and not  
“*hath blinded*,” because it is no new effect  
of a state into which he has lately come, but  
the long past work of a state which is supposed  
to be gone by and is not) **his eyes.**

**12—14.]**  *Threefold address to the  
readers, accompanied by a threefold reason  
for writing to them; all repeated  
by way of parallelism, with some variations  
and enlargements*. On the connexion  
and explanation of these verses,  
it may be observed, 1) that we have three  
classes of readers, denoted the first time by  
*little children, fathers, young men*, and  
the second time by *children, fathers, young  
men*. 2) that all three are addressed the  
first time in the present, “*I write*,” the  
second time in the past, “*I wrote,*” or  
“have *written*.” 3) that while to the  
*fathers* and *young men* the same words  
are each time used [to the latter with an  
addition the second time], the *little children*  
and *children* are differently addressed.  
The first question arising is, what do these  
three classes import, and how are they to  
be distributed among the readers? It is  
obvious that the chief difficulty here is with  
*little children* and *children*, the words  
for which in the original are not only different  
in degree, but also radically. The  
former word is used by our Apostle once  
with “*my*,” ch. ii. 1, and five times without  
“*my:*” ch. ii. 28, iii. 18, iv. 4, v. 21;  
but always as importing the whole of his  
readers: and once it is reported by him as  
used by our Lord, also in a general address  
to all His disciples, John xiii. 33. *Children*  
is used by him similarly in our ver. 18, and  
reported by him as used by our Lord in a  
general address, John xxi. 5. These facts  
make it very probable that both the words  
are here used as general designations of all  
the readers, and not as a designation of  
any particular class among them. And  
this is made more probable, by the fact  
that if *little children* and *children* did point  
out the children among them, properly or  
spiritually so called, the rank of classes  
would be different from that which would  
occur to any writer, viz. neither according  
to ascending age nor to descending, but  
children, fathers, young men. We seem  
then to have made it highly probable that  
*little children* and *children* address all the  
readers alike. Now if we lay any stress  
on the third circumstance above mentioned,  
that *little children* and *children* are  
differently addressed, and not so *fathers*  
and *young men*, and endeavour therefrom  
to deduce any distinction between  
*little children* and *children* in the age or  
qualities expressed by them, I conceive  
that we shall establish nothing satisfactory.  
If a reason for this variation of address is  
to be discovered, it must be sought in the  
parallelism of the passage. With these  
preliminary remarks, we come to the details.  
**I write unto you, little children**(see above)**, because your sins have been**  
(perfect) **forgiven you for the sake of His**  
(Christ’s) **name** (*Jesus Christ*, the Saviour,  
the anointed One, bringing to mind all the  
work wrought out by Him for us, and all  
the acceptance of that work by the Father:  
so that it may be well said that on account  
of, for the sake of, that Name which the  
Father hath given Him, which is above  
every name, our sins are forgiven).

**13.] I write unto you, fathers, because  
ye know him that was** (compare ch. i. 1)