that this germ of life ean be coexistent  
with it; can be firmly implanted and  
abiding [see John v. 38] in the man).

**16–18.**] *Description and enforcement of  
true love*. The Apostle has hitherto shewn  
that brotherly love is the truest test as  
between the children of God and the children   
of the devil. But, that no one may  
deceive himself or be deceived by others,  
it is now necessary to lay down, what is  
true and Christian love.

**16.**] *Example of true love in Christ, and enforcement  
of it on us*. **In this** (see above, ver. 10,  
and note, ch. ii, 3) **we have the know-  
ledge of** (“we have arrived at and possess   
the apprehension of:” knowledge,  
as an act of the understanding proceeding   
on intellectual grounds. Here however   
it is used entirely within the sphere  
of the Christian of union with  
Christ. None can understand true love as  
shewn in this its highest example, but he  
who is one with Christ, and has felt and  
does feel that love of His in its power on  
himself. See note on ch. ii. 8) **love** (i.e.  
what love is: the nature of love true and  
genuine: that perfection of love, which we  
are commending. So most of the Commentators.   
Some have held to the insertion   
of the words *“of God”* (as A.V.)  
after **love**, which has hardly any authority.  
But there can be but little doubt that the  
other is the right view. The love of God  
to us is not that which would, *as such*, be  
adduced as a pattern to us of brotherly  
love; it is true that in the depth of the  
matter, all true love is love after that pattern:   
but in a passage so logically bound  
together it is much more probable that the  
term common to the two, Christ and ourselves,   
would be, not divine love, which as  
such is peculiar to Him, but love itself  
simply, that of which He has given the  
great example which we are to follow), **that  
He** (Christ, as the words beyond question  
shew) **laid down His life for us** (i.e. *died*:  
not as Grotius, who in all the places where  
it occurs maintains that it is only to *expose  
life to danger*, which would entirely enervate   
the Apostle’s saying here. The term  
**for us** carries in it and behind it all that  
we know of the nature of the death which  
is spoken of: but the vicariousness and  
atoning power of Christ’s death are not  
here in consideration : it is looked on here  
as the greatest possible proof of love, us in  
John xv, 13): **and we** (emphatic: we on  
our part as followers of Christ) **ought on  
behalf of the brethren to lay down our  
lives** (on **lives**, Socinus says well: “ He  
says not, that we ought to lay down our  
‘*life*,’ as if one were bound to die for many,  
but, our *lives*, because each ought to die  
for each.” The Apostle states the duty generally;   
and thus stated it is clear enough.  
As Christ did in pursuance of His love, so  
ought we to do in pursuance of ours, bound  
as we are to Him not by the mere force of  
an outward example, but by the power of  
an inward life. But naturally and necessarily   
the precept finds its aerate tion only  
in those cases where our Heavenly Father's  
will sets the offering of such a sacrifice in  
the course and pursuance of our brotherly  
love, which He has ordained).

**17**.] **But** (“by the adversative connexion  
of ver. 17 with ver. 16 the Apostle marks  
the passage from the greater, which is  
justly demanded of us, to the lesser, the  
violation of which is all the more a transgression   
of the law just prescribed” Düsterdieck)   
**whosoever hath the world’s sustenance,   
and beholdeth** (the Greek word  
gives more than “*seeth*,” which would  
imply only the casual sight: it is the  
standing and looking on as a spectator:  
so that it ever involves not the eye only,  
but the mind also, in the sight: it is to  
*contemplate*, not simply to *see*. St. John  
is very fond of this word, and wherever it  
occurs, this its meaning may be more or  
less traced. There is then in this unmerciful   
man not merely the being aware of,  
but the deliberate contemplation of the  
distress of his brother) **his brother having  
need, and shutteth up** (the shutting is  
then and there done, as the result of the  
contemplation: not a mere constitutional