*us,*—from the Church: but the other is  
more likely) **into the world** (compare  
John xvi. 38, which tends to fix the meaning   
of the words *“are gone forth”* above).

**2, 3a.**] *Test, whereby the spirits are  
to be tried.* **In this** (see above, ch. iii. 10,  
&c.) **ye know** (apprehend, recognize) **the  
Spirit of God** (the Holy Spirit, present,  
inspiring, and working in men’s spirits):  
**Every spirit which confesseth** (the  
action is attributed to the spirit, which  
really is that of the man by the spirit.  
The confession is necessarily, from the  
context here, not the genuine and ascertained   
agreement of lips and life, but the  
outward and open profession of faith: see  
2 John 7–10, where *bringing this doctrine*   
is its equivalent) **Jesus Christ come  
in the flesh** (not equivalent to, as A. V.,  
*“that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh.”*If it were, the confession, or the preaching,  
would be simply of the fact enounced:  
whereas in each case it is the PERSON  
who is the object, or primary predicate:  
the participle carrying the attributive, or  
secondary predicate. This is abundantly  
shewn here, by the adversative clause,  
where it is simply *“not confessing Jesus.”*  
The confession required is, “Jesus Christ  
come in the flesh.” This perfect gives the  
present endurance of a past historical fact.  
The words imply the pre-existence and  
incarnation by their very terms: but  
they do not *assert* these doctrines, only the  
verity of our Lord’s human nature), **is of  
God** (has its origin and inspiration from  
Him by His Spirit).

**3 a**.] conversely: **and every spirit which does not  
confess** (literally, by the form of tho  
clause, *“refuseth to confess”*) **Jesus** (in  
the complex of all that He is and has  
become, involved as it is in His having  
come in the flesh), **is not of God.**

**3 b.**] This has been already virtually  
explained on ch. ii. 18. **And this is the  
[spirit] of antichrist** (so nearly all the  
Commentators supply the ellipsis, and  
rightly) [**of**] **which ye have heard** (the  
reference is not to ch. ii, 18, but to the  
course of their Christian instruction in  
which this had been taught them) **that it  
cometh** (the present used as so often of that.  
which is a thing fixed and determined, without   
any reference to time: *“that it should  
come”* of the A. V. is in sense very good,  
but does not quite suit the perfect *“ye have  
heard,”* which seems grammatically in  
English to require “that it shall come:”  
*“that it must come”* would perhaps be  
better), **and now it is in the world already**  
(viz., in the person of these *false prophets,*  
who are its organs).

**4.**] **Ye** (so we  
had **ye**, ch. ii. 24, 27: his readers clearly  
and sharply set against the antichristian  
teachers) **are of God, little children**  
(thus he ever speaks to his readers, as  
being children of God, see ch. iii. 1 ff.,  
13 ff., 19, 24, &c.), **and have overcome**  
(there need not be any evading or softening  
of this perfect: see ch. ii, 14. It is faith  
outrunning sight: the victory is certain in  
Him who said, “*I have overcome the world,*”  
John xvi. end. The ground of this assurance   
follows) **them** (the false prophets,  
thus identified with antichrist), **because  
greater is He** [**that is**] **in you than he**[**that is**] **in the world.**

**He** [that is]  
**in you** is most naturally understood of  
GOD, seeing that *“ye are of God”* preceded;   
for he who is *“of God”* has God