exhortations to brotherly love, but this  
time in nearer and deeper connexion with  
our birth from God, and knowledge of Him  
who is Himself Love, vv. 7,8. This last  
fact he proves by what God has done for  
us in and by His Son, vv.9–16: and establishes   
the necessary connexion between  
love to God and love to man, vv. 17–21.

The passage is in connexion with  
what went before, but by links at first sight  
not very apparent. The great theme of  
the whole was enounced ch. ii. 29. The  
consideration of that has passed into the  
consideration of that righteousness in its  
highest and purest form of love, which has  
been recommended, and grounded on His  
love to us, in ch. iii. 11—18, where the  
testimony of our hearts came in, and was  
explained—the great test of His presence  
in us being the gift of His Spirit, iii. ult.  
Then from the necessity of distinguishing  
and being sure of that His Spirit, have been  
inserted the foregoing tests and cautions  
respecting truth and error. And now he  
returns to the main subject. The *knoweth  
God, is* and *hath been begotten of God,*  
the taking up again of God’s love to us in  
Christ at ver. 9 from ch. iii. 16, the reiteration   
of the testimony of the Spirit in ver.  
13, all serve to shew that we are reading  
no collection of spiritual apophthegms, but  
a close and connected argument, though  
not in an ordinary style.

**7, 8.**] **Beloved** (as before, marks the fervency   
and affection of the Apostle turning  
to his readers with another solemn exhortation.   
Here the word is especially appropriate,   
seeing that his own heart is full of  
that love which he is enjoining), **let us love  
one another: because** (he at once rests the  
exhortation on the deepest ground) **love**  
(abstract, in the widest sense, as the following   
words shew) **is from God** (has its  
origin and source in God: He is the well-spring   
and centre of all love); **and every  
one that loveth** (there is no need to supply   
an object after loveth, as God is supplied   
in the Alexandrine MS., and *“his  
brother”* in some later versions: indeed  
to do so would be to narrow the general  
sense of the Apostle’s saying: all love is  
from God: every one that loveth, taking  
the word of course in its pure ideal sense  
in which the assertion follows from the  
former), **hath been begotten of God** (has  
truly received within him that new spiritual   
life which is of God: see note on ch.  
ii. 29), **and knoweth** (in his daily walk and  
habit, recognizes and is acquainted with  
God: by virtue of that his divine birth and  
life) **God**:

**8.**] (*Contrast*, but with some remarkable   
variations) **he that loveth not** (general,   
as before: no object: he that hath not  
love in him) **hath never known God** (hath  
not once known: has never had in him  
even the beginnings of knowledge of God.  
So that the past tense makes a far stronger  
contrast than the present, *“knoweth not,”*  
would. That is excluded, and much more);  
**because** (reason why he who loveth not.  
can never have known God) **God is love**  
(love is the very essence, not merely an  
attribute, of God. It is co-essential with  
Him: He is all love, love is all of Him:  
he who has not love, has not God.

It is not the place here to enter on the theological   
import of this weighty and wonderful sentence.   
It will be found set forth in  
the first of my Sermons on Divine Love,  
Quebec Chapel Sermons, vol. iii,

But it may be necessary to put in a caution  
against all inadequate and shallow explanations   
of the saying: such as that of  
Grotius (after Socirus), “God is *full of  
love*:” Benson, “God is the most benevolent   
of all beings: full of love to all His  
creatures:” Whitby, “The Apostle intends   
not to express what God is in his  
essence... but what He is in demonstration   
of Himself, shewing great philanthropy   
to men:” Hammond, “God is  
made up of love and kindness to mankind:”   
Calvin, “ This it is which is His  
nature, to love men: ... he is not speaking   
of God’s essence, but merely teaching,  
what He is felt to be by us,” &c. &c. In  
all these,—in the two last by supplying  
an object, *“men,”* which is not in the  
sacred text, the whole force of the axiom  
as it stands in the Apostle’s argument is  
lost. Unless be is speaking of the essential