17, which God *bore* witness to, but one  
abiding and present. And these verses  
explain to us what that testimony is. **He  
that believeth in the Son of God hath the  
testimony** (just spoken of; the testimony  
*of God*) **in him** (i.e. in himself. The two  
readings do not differ in sense. The object  
of the divine testimony being, to produce  
faith in Christ, the Apostle takes him in  
whom it has wrought this its effect, one  
who habitually believes in the Son of God,  
and says of such an one that he possesses  
the testimony in himself. What it is, he  
does not plainly say till below, ver. 11.  
But easily enough here we can synthetically   
put together and conjecture of what  
testimony it is that he is speaking: the  
Spirit by whom we are born again to eternal   
Life, the water of baptism by which  
the new birth is brought to pass in us by  
the power of the Holy Ghost [John iii. 5,  
Titus iii. 5], the Blood of Jesus by which  
we have reconciliation with God, and purification   
from our sins [ch. i. 7, ii. 2], and  
eternal life [John vi. 53 ff.],—these three  
all contribute to and make up our faith in  
Christ, and so compose that testimony,  
which the Apostle designates in ver. 11 by  
the shorter term which comprehends them  
all): **he that believeth not God** (St. John,  
as so frequently, proceeds to put his proposition   
in the strongest light by bringing  
out the opposite to it. The *believing*  
simply is wholly different from “*believing  
on*” above. That is the resting trust of  
faith: this the mere first step of giving  
credit to a witness. And thus it is tacitly  
assumed that one who does not believe in  
the Son of God, gives no credit to God  
Himself) **hath made Him a liar** (perfect  
tense, because the state of discredit implies  
a definite rejection still continuing. On  
the expression, see ch. i, 10), **because he**  
**hath not believed in** (here, not only, hath  
not credited, though that was the more  
shameful rejection of God’s word : but now  
the *full* rejection—the refusal to *believe  
in*, cast himself on God’s testimony) **the  
testimony which God hath testified concerning His Son.**

**11.**] *Wherein this testimony consists.*  
**And the testimony** (just spoken of) **is  
this, that** (consists in this, namely, that  
....) **God gave** (not, as A. V., “*hath  
given.*” This is of especial importance  
here, where not the endurance of a state,  
but the fact of the gift having been once  
made, is brought out. The present assurance   
of our possessing this gift follows in  
the next clause, and in ver. 12) **to us** (not  
*decreed*, or *promised*, but gave, absolutely)  
**eternal life, and** (this clause does not depend   
on “*this is the witness, that...,”*  
but *ranges with* that clause: “*this is the*  
*witness, &c.; and this life is, &c.*”) **this  
life is in His Son** (is in Him essentially  
[John i. 4, xi. 25, xiv. 6], bodily [Col. ii.  
9], energetically [2 Tim. i. 10]. Here  
again, as ever in this Epistle, we have to  
guard against the evasive and rationalistic  
interpretations of the Socinians, that “the  
reason of our getting eternal life from God  
is found in Jesus Himself” [so Socinus]:  
that in is put for *“by,”* and is for “*happens*” [so Grotius]).

**12.**] *Conclusion of the whole argument*  
from ver. 6: dependent on the lust clause  
of ver. 11, and carrying it on a step further,   
even to the absolute identity as matter  
of possession for the believer, of the Son of  
God, and eternal life. **He that hath the  
Son, hath the life: he that hath not the  
Son of God, the life hath he not.** First  
notice the diction and arrangement, on  
which Bengel has well remarked, “The  
verse has two members: in the former ‘*of*