Such an expression used predicatively,  
leads us to look for some expression of our  
Lord's, or for some meaning w  
not appear on the surface to guide us.  
And such an expression leading to snch a  
meaning we have in John xvii. 3, “*This is  
eternal life, that they may know Thee the  
only true God, and Jesus Christ whom  
thou didst send*.” He is eternal life in  
Himself, as being the fount and origin of  
it: He is it to us, seeing that to know Him  
is to possess it. I own I cannot see, after  
this saying of our Lord with the words,  
**Thee the only true God**, how any one can  
imagine that tho same Apostle can have  
had in these words any other reference than,  
that which is given in those. 3) this charge  
is altogether inaccurate. As referred to  
the Father, there is in it no tautology and  
no aimlessness. It serves to identify the  
“*true One*” mentioned before, in a solemn  
manner, and leads on to the concluding  
warning against false gods. As in another  
place the Apostle intensifies the non-possession   
of the Son by including in it the  
alienation from the Father also, so here at  
the close of all, the *true God*, the fount of  
*eternal life*, is put before us as the ultimate   
aim and end, to be approached *in  
His Son*, but Himself the one Father  
both of Him and of us who live through Him.

**21.**] *Parting warning against idols.*  
**Little children** (he parts from them with  
his warmest and most affectionate word of  
address), **keep yourselves from idols** (or  
more literally, **from the idols**, viz. which  
are about you. The **idol** is properly a  
figure of an *imaginary* deity,—while an  
*image*, or *likeness*, is that of some real  
person or thing made into an object of  
worship. See Rom. i. 23, 1 Cor. x.19, xii. 2,  
and especially 1 Thess. i. 9, where, as here,  
“*the living and true God*” is opposed to  
*idols*. And there seems no justification  
for the departing from the plain literal  
sense in this place. All around the Christian   
Church was heathenism: the born of  
God, and they that were lying in the wicked  
one, were the only two classes: those who  
went out of one, went into the other:  
God’s children are thus then finally warned  
of the consequence of letting go the only  
true God, in whom they can only abide by  
abiding in His Son Jesus Christ, in these  
solemn terms,—to leave on their minds a  
wholesome terror of any the least deviation   
from the truth of God, seeing into  
what relapse it would plunge them).