

## COMFORT FOR THE HOUSEHOLD OF FAITH (I JOHN 2:12-14)

Throughout this epistle John the pastor is revealed in his care for his people (Acts 20:28 *cf.* I John 1:4; 2:1; 2:28 etc.) He has been ruthlessly blunt in dealing with the issues of the gospel (sin, Ch. 1:6-2:2; obedience to God 2:3-6; love of the brethren 2:7-11), and he is about to launch into another evidence of saving faith (2:15), but here he pauses add a parenthetical note of comfort. In essence John is saying here, I do not write to you in ignorance or demand the impossible from you. I can be blunt concerning these issues and I can expect this life from you, because there are certain things I believe concerning you; *"your sins are forgiven," "ye have known the Father"* and *"ye have overcome the wicked one."* On these three basic assumptions John makes his appeal to the Christian character.

**Little Children.** John address all believers in general with this phrase throughout his epistle (τεκνία 2:1, 28; 3:7, 18; 4:4; 5:21). This is the word he uses in 2:2 (τεκνία - offspring; *emphasizes kindship*) and in Vs. 13 John uses a different word (παιδία - young child; *emphasizes subordination*). I mention all this to point out that John is not speaking of all Christians in general. The parallelism in these verses indicates that he is speaking of different levels of spiritual maturity. John confirms and comforts the mind of the *"babes in Christ"* (cf. I Corinthians 3:1) with the truth that they are born into his family, by the forgiveness of sin (τεκνία) and are under the tutelage of Christ (παιδία), *cf.* Matthew 11:29.

**Fathers.** John moves now to the upper end of the spectrum and addresses those who are spiritually mature with the words *"because ye have known him that is from the beginning."* (The same in each address; Vs. 13a & 14a). This is an address to the consciousness of God's immutable nature in all of life and their fitting confidence and mature stability (cf. Psalm 37:25; Job 32:7; Ephesians 4:14).

**Young men.** Youth has everything against it; appetite, vigour, passion, boldness and drive. All of this intense energy juxtaposed with no experience can be a recipe for disaster. David felt this when he prayed in Psalm 25:7 *"Remember not the sins of my youth"* But John encourages them with the words *"ye have overcome...ye are strong"* because *"the word of God abideth in you."* Notice in each case how John applies Christ; forgiven, having his word in us and knowing him.