

CHAPTER THREE

Entering 1 John's world with the view to identifying key symbols employed by the author in conveying his message.

3.1 Introduction

Any attempt to enter, identify and analyse the symbolic universe of any New Testament document, is fraught with difficulties. Before identifying and discussing some of the symbols and themes found in 1 John, it is vital that we consider briefly the relationship between this letter and the Gospel of John especially the authorship, the sequential question and the situation that prompted the author to write it. Conzelmann & Lindemann (1988:257) state that a working knowledge of the letters of John can best be achieved by considering them in relationship to the Gospel. The discussion conducted here would not be a detailed one, rather it will focus on the areas already mentioned, that is, the authorship and sequential questions. These we believe will shed light on whether either of them was dependent on the other and how far each influenced the other.

3.2 The authorship question

Regarding the authorship question, Coetzee (1993:202) states that the most important question in this regard is the relationship between the Gospel of John and 1 John. Is the same author responsible for both? Tenney (1985:374) says that if the criteria of vocabulary and style were ever adequate for

pronouncing judgement on the authorship, these three short letters must be attributed to one author who is also the author of the Fourth Gospel.

Having said this, we will not however, get into an in depth discussion of the authorship because many books have been written on the subject. Various theories concerning the authorship of both the Gospel and the letters have been proposed. An important question raised there is: did a single author write the gospel or was its production a community venture? A number of theologians have discussed the authorship question very extensively. The following are just a few of many who have made contributions to this question: Haenchen 1984; Morris 1971; Tasker 1989; Brown 1966; Fuller 1957; Stott 1964.

For our purpose the question of authorship of the gospel has been sufficiently discussed by J.A. du Rand in 'Guide to the New Testament' Vol 6 pp. 22-25. In this discussion du Rand (1988:25) concludes that the authorship of John's gospel cannot be attributed exclusively to any single historical figure, but that the evangelist was the personal element in the group within the Johannine community, which compiled the gospel, based on the authoritative interpretations of the beloved disciple, who had been an eye-witness. We concur with Painter (1979:4) who sums up the above view by stating that John should be seen as the origin of the tradition, which was ultimately expressed in the Gospel.

Regarding the authorship of 1 John, the question is whether the writer was John the Apostle, another John the Presbyter, an unknown pupil of John the Apostle, named the Presbyter, or whether 1 John was a product of the

Johannine community. Goppelt (1982:290) sees the author of 1 John in terms of an individual who had joined the company of a group. Bruce (1970:31) holds the view that the various arguments scholars have advanced for diversity of authorship are insufficient to overthrow the evidence both internal and external, for common authorship with the Gospel. Here we also list some authors who have dealt with the authorship question. For further reading consult the following scholars: Brown 1982; Edwards 1996; Westcott 1966; Marshall 1978; Schnackenburg 1975; Fuller 1957; Stott 1964.

For the purpose of this thesis, it will suffice at this point to voice our concurrence with Coetzee (1993:202), Thiessen (1943:308), Lenski (1966:363) and Freed (1986:376) who argue that elements common to both are so overwhelming, reaching to the marrow of each, that we have little doubt that the writer of the Gospel also wrote 1 John and further states that the author is none other than the apostle John, the son of Zebedee. Streeter also says that the three Epistles and the Gospel of John are so closely allied in diction, style, and general outlook that the burden of proof lies with the person who would deny their common authorship affirms this (in Brown 1982:20).

And for the purpose of this study (even though we make constant reference to the author), we assume that 1 John was in fact the work of John the apostle, whom we also assume wrote or was the origin of the Gospel of John. Even though the focus of this study is on 1 John, references to the Gospel of John will be made since as stated, this letter has a lot in common with the gospel, in language, theology, style and frame of reference.

3.3 In what sequence were they written?

Important in this regard is considering the sequence in which the Gospel and the letter came into being. This will enable us to determine which symbolic terms came into operation and in which context. This will also enable us to discover whether these have been applied either in 1 John or the Gospel without alteration or rearrangement and what they eventually came to mean. Lieu (1991:4) states that we will certainly not be in any position to determine this or to interpret 1 John without a prior decision being made as to whether or not the Gospel is to be presupposed.

Even though the dating of 1 John is a matter of guesswork, Brown (1982:32) and Smalley (1984:xxxii) date the gospel before the first letter of John. From this we can presume that some of the symbolic terms and concepts used in 1 John were taken from John's Gospel. In fact Brown (1982:32) in dealing with the dating of these argues for a span of ten years to allow debate to have arisen about the implications of John's Gospel. Perrin & Duling (1982:362) argue that the date of 1 John would not have been long after the Gospel, the reason being that the attention has shifted from external opponents ('the world'; 'the Jews') to false teachers within the community.

One of the assumptions of this thesis is that the readers of 1 John had access to either the written or oral versions of the Gospel. In any case the Gospel developed over a long period. The final date of fixing should be regarded as the date for the final redaction. This does not imply that the core of what is known as the Gospel did not exist much earlier. It indeed did.

Houlden (1973:25) asserts that it is not impossible that sections of 1 John developed like snowballs from a beginning in sayings of the kind found in the Gospels. Brown (1982:124); Van Staden (1991:495) endorse the view that the epistolary author was drawing upon the theology and wording of the Johannine tradition embodied in the Gospel of John and assumed the mantle of the evangelist as an interpreter of that tradition (the 'we' of the Johannine School), a priori, it is not inconceivable that he used John's Gospel as a model in structuring his comments in 1 John.

That the gospel and 1 John were written to address diverse situations in congregations somewhere in Asia Minor is less disputed. Robinson (1976:289) asserts that the Johannine epistles are intelligible only on the assumption that their readers have been their writer's pastoral concern from 'the beginning' and had been nurtured in Johannine Christianity.

But if we were to decide that these are not works of the same author, it would be surprising that the Gospel and 1 John have so much in common in terms of 'language, style, vocabulary, modes of expression and proclamation' (Coetzee 1993:202; Lieu 1991:16; Williams 1965:15). We think this commonality accounts sufficiently for the dependency of 1 John on the Gospel.

Dependency in this regard is seen in terms of the same symbols and concepts. Some of these are the antithetical word-pairs such as light-darkness, love-hate, truth-lie, children of God-children of the devil, knowing God-not knowing God, having life-not having life that are found in both. As we go on we will discover how the author uses these to communicate his understanding

of the gospel message to the Johannine community. For now we turn to examine the circumstances that led to the writing of this letter.

3.4 The occasion of 1 John

It is difficult to say with certainty when 1 John was written but with a measure of probability, we settle for a date around 100 AD (Coetzee 1993:203). 1 John was written probably for a congregation or group of churches somewhere in Asia Minor (Coetzee 1993:206). The occasion of 1 John was the struggle with the secessionists, who were former members of the community but had broken away (Brown 1982:29) over right doctrine and right practice (Klauck 1988:56) and who also were propagating a type of docetic Christology (Vorster 1975; Dunn 1990; Fuller 1971), denying the coming of Jesus in the flesh (1 Jn 2:22f; 4:2f; 5:6).

The clue to the purpose of 1 John lies in 1 Jn 2:19 (Fuller 1971:180). That heretical teaching had become a more coherent system of thought and its adherents were trying to persuade the rest of the church to follow them (Marshall 1978:4) can barely be doubted. This group posited a threat to the already constituted symbolic universe. The struggle in 1 John appears to have been on proper faith in Jesus as 'the incarnate Christ' (1 Jn 4:2) and 'the Son of God' (1 Jn 5:1,5) as well as the ethical implications of this faith on believers.

The context of 1 John is one of schism to which the author wrote to offer an encouragement and strengthening of Christians against the attacks of secessionists as well as to challenge the secessionist group that was positing

an alternative view of reality. Even though 1 John is not a letter in conventional terms, in its form and content it resembles a theological treatise or sermon, written with the obvious affection and concern for the spiritual welfare of those to whom it is addressed (Perrin & Duling 1982:363). 1 John was written to establish certainty (Tenney 1985:375).

3.5 A brief focused discussion on the basis of a discourse analysis of 1 John

3.5.1 Introduction

It has already been pointed out in the introduction that 1 John is more of a theological treatise (Conzelmann & Lindemann 1988: 258) or a pastoral document in a homiletic form (du Rand 1979:3; Aune 1987:218; Fuller 1971:181; Johnson 1999:565; Perrin & Duling 1982:363), or a tract in time of persecution (Edwards 1989:170), or it may also be regarded as the result of putting together a number of discrete sections rather than a single act of writing (Houlden 1973:25). Its structural arrangement does not conform to the conventional format of ancient letter writing. As du Plessis (1978:10) points out 'daar is geen aanhef, outeursgroet, danksegging, seënbede en groete aan die einde nie'.

The introduction as well as the conclusion, (regardless of whether one considers either 5:21 as the conclusion or 5:13, as Bultmann does) does not have the character of a letter (Conzelmann & Lindemann 1988:258; du Rand 1979:3). Du Plessis (1978:10-11) argues that 'dit wil egter nie sê dat ons nie met 'n egte brief te doen het nie'. This is echoed by Fuller who says that even

though 1 John has no epistolary introduction or conclusion, yet in content it is undoubtedly a letter (Fuller 1971:181; Painter 1979:112). According to Klauck (1991:32) the author is dealing with concrete addressees in a specific situation, he is seriously concerned about their well-being, he reflects on the necessity of writing and he refers to common experiences and history. The contents therefore suggest that it is a letter.

It is generally stated that in 1 John, *'lasst sich ein klar gegliederter aufbau nicht erkennen'* (Conzelmann & Lindemann 1977:293). According to De Jonge (1968:10) there is no pattern or systematic or logical progression of thought in its stylistic presentation (in du Rand 1979:2; Spivey & Smith 1969:437; Painter 1979:109). Observable, however, is that even though 1 John appears to be moving 'spirally' (Freed 1986:378; Fuller 1971:178) or in circles, there is progression of thought in that *'elke gedagtereeks lei na 'n volgende en voer die aanvanklike uitgangspunt steeds verder totdat die hoofpunt bereik word'* (du Plessis 1978:11). R. Law says that it moves like a winding staircase – always revolving around the same centre, always recurring to the same topics, but at a higher level (in Freed 1985:378-9).

Longacre (1992:271) rightly points out that every expositor has an outline of the book, and the outlines, although similar at some points of division, for the most part go their own ways. Attempts to divide 1 John structurally have been made and a variety of reasons given for each division. Some of the divisions are dependent on certain aesthetic or even dogmatic principles, leading in that case to part of the truth being often overindulged in and raised to the absolute (du Rand 1979:2). But when one reads 1 John, some of the proposed divisions

do not satisfy. They are upset by a series of repetitious and reiterations that occur throughout the letter (Lenski 1966:365).

This chapter is important in that it provides the backdrop against which discussion in the next chapter will be conducted. The purpose of this chapter is mainly to identify the symbols around which the author developed his theology as well as sections or verses where further discussion of these symbols is conducted. In the next chapter these symbols and theme will be discussed and developed further in a systematic manner. Our interest is not so much in providing a detailed exegesis of everything in the text but on the theological picture that emerges as the author employed symbols and symbolic language in developing his theology.

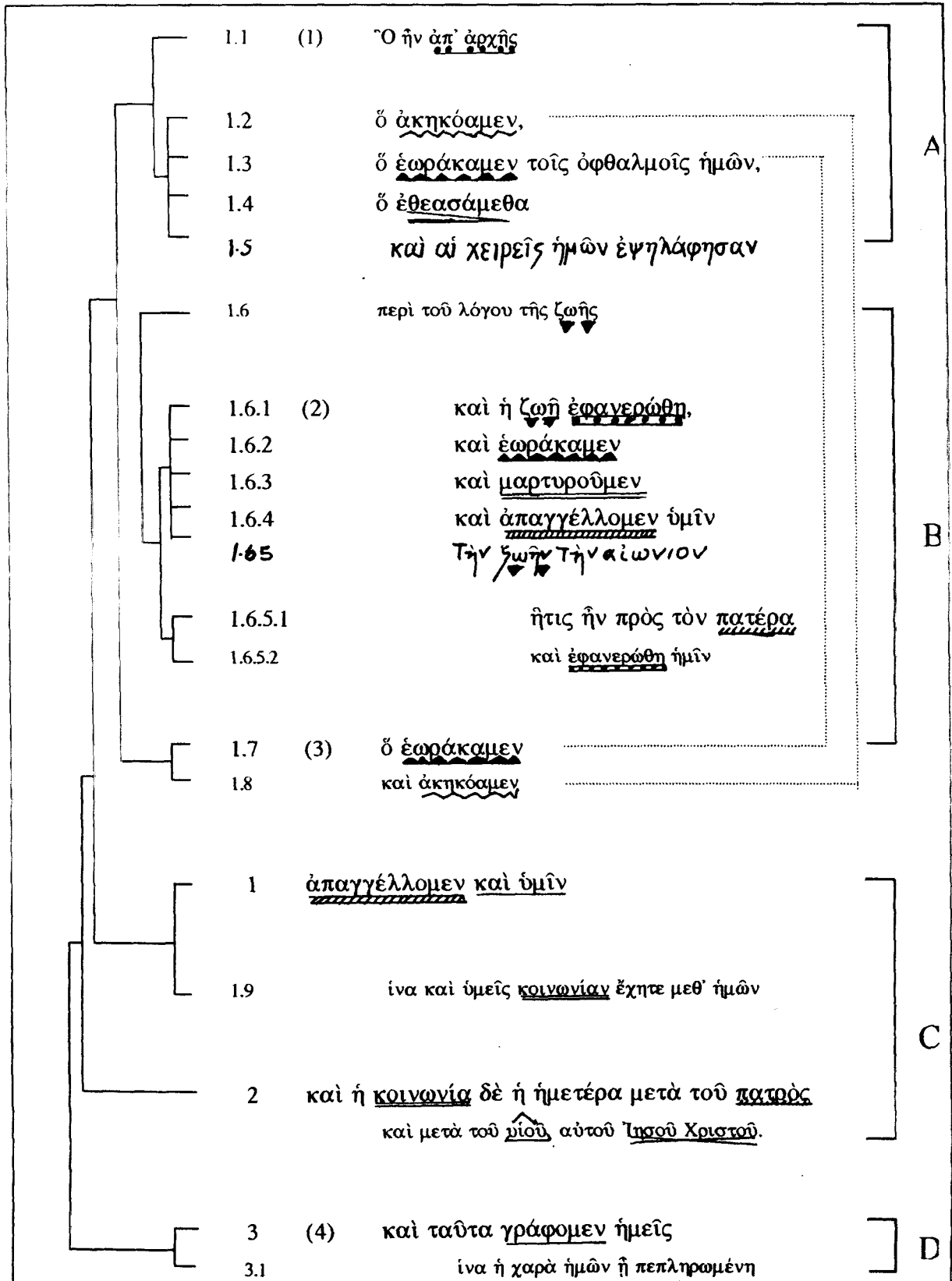
Since the focus is more on the theological orientation of the text, our purpose, therefore, is more that of gathering relevant information and systematising the message of 1 John with the view to drawing appropriate conclusions as to how the symbols or themes, that is, God, Jesus, the Holy Spirit, love, fellowship and many other, which have been identified, perceived as well as utilised by the author. This does not only involve grouping similar material together, but also explaining and interpreting the material within its original context and giving indications for the application of the material in present day situations. In terms of Berger and Luckmann's (1966) approach, it can be stated that the way in which one's symbolic universe is structured plays a major role in determining one's attitude towards the transcendent reality. What emerges in this kind of reading will give us a glimpse of what the author's symbolic universe might have looked like.

Having identified key symbols that governed the author's message, we will also establish whether his message hangs together, hence our discourse or structural analysis. The intention however is not to give a detailed discourse analysis but to offer brief comments on how the message hangs together. For our analysis of 1 John, we will basically follow du Rand's structural analysis of the Johannine letters, addendum to *Neotestamentica* 13, 1979. Where there is a difference of opinion, it will be pointed out and reasons given for our opinion.

3.5.2 A discourse analysis of 1 John and brief comments

Division 1 (Cola 1-3)

1 Jn 1:1-4



3.5.2.1 Brief remarks about the structure

What is given here is not a full discussion of every point. For a fuller picture, these comments should be read in conjunction with du Rand's remarks in *Neotestamentica* 13, of 1979. However a few important and relevant aspects are highlighted. However, focus in this chapter is on identificative and descriptive not interpretive or explicative. The latter will be done in the next chapter, which is a sequel to the present one.

1 John 1:1-4 may be divided into three subunits, which are grouped together by virtue of equal actants 'we' and 'you' (du Rand 1979:3). Colon 1 is made up of four asyndetic clauses. The 'we' endings of each verb refers to the apostles (Lenski 1966:373) or the tradition bearers (Brown 1982:160) and have the same semantic function.

Some scholars distinguish ἄπ' ἀρχῆς from ἐν ἀρχῇ and argue that the former phrase is a reference to the beginning of the Christian dispensation (Williams 1965:17; Lieu 1991:24) rather than the beginning of creation (Bruce 1970:34f.). Edwards (1996:70) refers to the ambiguity of the phrase, stating that it is not clear whether the preaching of Jesus or that of the community is intended. That which was from the beginning concerns the word of life. As Marshall (1978:103); Williams (1965:17) point out that the 'word of life' could be a reference to Jesus as the NIV; Stott (1964:73) have so easily assumed. This question however is not an easy one to settle (Schnackenburg 1975:61; Westcott 1966:6f.).

The four statements in verse one have a cumulative effect; the evidence is piled up leading to the revelation of what constitutes the climax of what the author is talking about- *περὶ τοῦ λόγου τῆς ζωῆς* (1 Jn 1:1) (Lenski 1966:373). *Ζωῆ* as a symbol plays a central role in the author's understanding of Jesus. The basic question however is: Why does the author associate Jesus with life? What is his understanding of life? The answer to these searching questions will be provided in the next chapter.

In verse 1, there is an obvious interruption caused by the addition of the parenthetical statement *περὶ τοῦ λόγου τῆς ζωῆς*. Colon 1.6.1 is another interruption providing explanation for *ζωῆ* mentioned in verse 1 (Brown 1982:153). This interruption further divides into independent comata, extending *τοῦ λόγου τῆς ζωῆς* (du Rand 1979:4). The aorist is followed by a perfect tense verb *ἑωράκαμεν*. This serves to accentuate what has already been said. If the interruptive sections were deleted, colon 1.5 would be followed by colon 1.7.

Remarkable also is the way the author uses the tenses. In the first cola two perfects '*ἄκηκόαμεν*' and '*ἑωράκαμεν*' followed immediately by two aorist, '*ἑθεασάμεθα*' and '*ἑψηλάφησαν*', are used. The perfects probably convey the continuity of the effect of hearing and seeing in the present time and in the lives of the tradition bearers. Williams (1965:17) suggests that the vivid words heard, seen it, looked upon it, felt it, seem to suggest the vivid contacts of the first disciples with Jesus himself. The repeated relative clauses of verse 1 find an explanation in the phrase *περὶ τοῦ λόγου τῆς ζωῆς* and together with them constitutes the object of *ἀπαγγέλλομεν*.

By adding in colon 1.6.1 a parenthesis, which is introduced by 'καὶ', the author makes an independent elucidative statement, a colon extending from the focal statement τοῦ λόγου τῆς ζωῆς. The word which is life is presented as having existed from the beginning (ἀπ' ἀρχῆς), as being manifested (ἐφανερώθη) and sensory experienced, emphasised by the perfect verbs, ἀκηκόαμεν and ἑώρακάμεν, the effects of which lead to bearing witness (μαρτυροῦμεν) and proclamation (ἀπαγγέλλομεν). The logos of life therefore, is the object of the proclamation of the author (Panikulam 1979:132).

The location of ζωῆ or τὴν ζωὴν τὴν αἰώνιον ἣτις ἦν πρὸς τὸν πατέρα appears to be a clear reference to the pre-existence of the logos. The logos of life was manifested ἐφανερώθη. The aorist ἐφανερώθη emphasises the manifestation in a precise moment in history of that which was ἀπ' ἀρχῆς. If a comparison is made with the prologue of John's Gospel, this appears to be a reference to the fact that Jesus as incarnated; the logos became flesh and tented among us (Lenski 1966:371).

Fuller (1971:179) is of the opinion that the strong statements of 1 Jn 1:1-4 must not be taken to imply apostolic authorship or eyewitness of the historical Jesus. To 'see' is the common experience of the whole fellowship, resting as it does on the work of the Paraklete in transmitting the words of Jesus to later generations. If authorship of 1 John as tradition attributes it to the apostle John is accepted, then it is possible that the verbs used are an allusion to a concrete situation of seeing, touching and hearing the historical Jesus.

Colon 1.7 beginning exactly as colon 1.3 thereby accentuating all that has been stated above but also moving further to stating the ultimate purpose of proclamation as— ἵνα καὶ ὑμεῖς κοινωνίαν ἔχητε μεθ' ἡμῶν. Their κοινωνία as witnesses and those who proclaim is μετὰ τοῦ πατρὸς καὶ μετὰ τοῦ υἱοῦ αὐτοῦ Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ (1 Jn 1:3). Κοινωνία understood within the symbolic framework of family in the Mediterranean context constitute an important symbol, which describes a state of openness, freedom, cleanliness, mutuality and common heritage. This fellowship is made possible by the acceptance of the life the Father manifests and imparts in the incarnate Son. The assertion of a fellowship with the Father is altogether absent elsewhere in the Bible and this new relation mentioned here is made possible because people could share the life of the Father in his Son (Panikulam 1979:132).

Du Rand (1979:4) states that the prologue is closed off – as a summary – in colon 3. What are 'these things' – 'ταῦτα' which the author is writing about? According to Du Plessis (1978:23) these things 'is duidelik die betekenisvolle uitspraak wat hy so pas gedoen het', that is, a reference to all that the author has said or written thus far or to what has to follow (du Rand 1979:4).

3.5.2.2 Descriptive identification of important symbols and themes

Concerning the theology of 1 John, Lieu (1991:22) states that it cannot be separated out topic by topic; themes and ideas are interwoven, and it is impossible to explore one without having to say something about the others as well. Having said that, below we will show symbols and themes that are

discernible in the prologue. First, the author seems to claim an unequivocal authority (Lieu 1991:23) for the 'We'.

On a human level they have heard, seen with their eyes, touched with their hands, hence their proclamation. This sounds like a clear claim to vivid contact of the 'We' with Jesus (Williams 1965:17), the eyewitnesses or tradition-bearers that speak for the Johannine School (Edwards 1996:69). According to Hills (1991:373) the 'we' are those who have the incontestable right to remind the local community of that which was from the beginning and of that teaching which can confirm the κοινωνία or fellowship of the author(s) with the readers – and in 1 John, of both with God.

What is it that has been sensory perceived? The author's answer is: It περὶ τοῦ λόγου τῆς ζωῆς. It is this word of life, which was with the Father but has been made visible, which the 'We' proclaims. Scholastic opinion is divided as to what the λόγος in this prologue stands for. What did λόγος represent in the author's stock of knowledge that he should link it with ζωῆ ? Edwards (1996:70) on the one hand, argues that the answer to this puzzle depends on whether the prologue draws from the Gospel's prologue. If it does, then a reference to Jesus as the eternal word is possible. Other scholars who translate λόγος as a reference to Jesus are: Balz, Boismard, Braun, Bultmann, Coetzee, de Ambroggi, du Rand, Hauck, Milch, Schnackenburg, Schneider, also KJV and JB.

Lieu (1991:23) on the other hand contends that, that which was heard, seen and handled is not Jesus, the Son, or even 'the word who was in the

beginning' (cf. John 1:1), but 'that [thing: neuter] which was from the beginning ...concerning the word of life'. Therefore she concludes that it was life, not Jesus that was manifested (v.1), thus accentuating the centrality of ζωῆ as a symbol here. The following scholars are among those who represent this position: Barclay, Brooke, Bruce, Dodd, Houlden, Marshall, and Stott.

Our position in this study is that the 'Word' is a reference to Jesus. The 'Word' is associated with the symbol or metaphor of life. A comparison of the life-symbol in 1 Jn 1:1-4 with 1 Jn 5:20 where Jesus is clearly identified with the life-symbol, corroborates our position. The central theme of the prologue is the proclamation of life-Jesus, Jesus who was revealed at a particular time in history. Why is Jesus identified with life? What does life within the universe of the readers of 1 John symbolise? These questions are important as we seek to discover the world within which these symbols developed and ultimately what the readers understood as they listened.

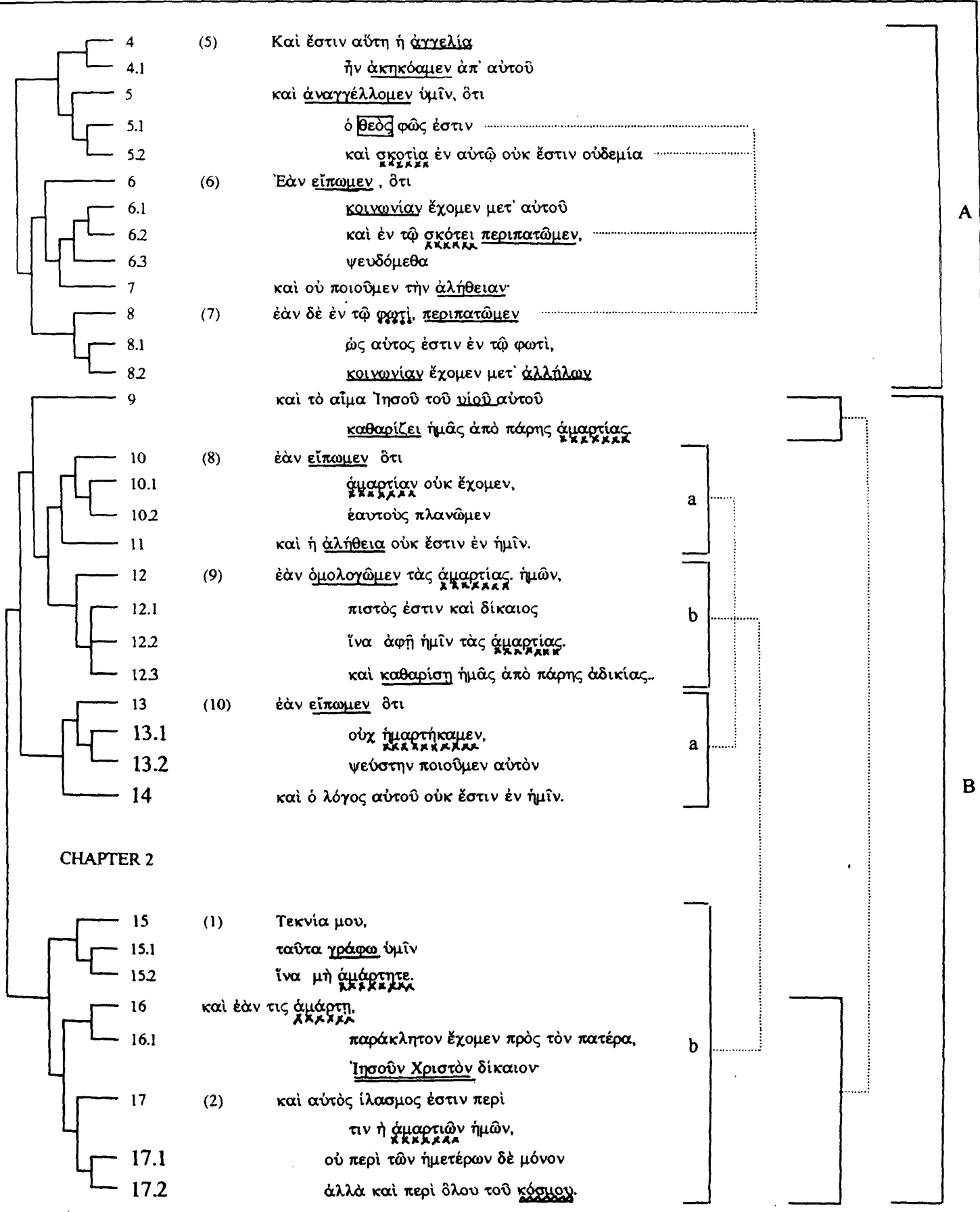
In 1 Jn 1:1-4, the life-symbol is clearly identified and the usage of functional words such as 'ἀκηκόαμεν' and 'ἑώρακάμεν' followed immediately by 'ἔθεασάμεθα' and 'ἐψηλάφησαν', intensify the association of life with Jesus and therefore with God. ζωῆ or τὴν ζωὴν τὴν αἰώνιον ἣτις ἦν πρὸς τὸν πατέρα. God and Jesus Christ are identified with true life.

In as far as the proclamation of Jesus the life, the author states in no uncertain terms that those who accept and appropriate for themselves what is being proclaimed enter into a new relational state with one another and with God, that is, they have κοινωνία μεθ' ἡμῶν. Καὶ ἡ κοινωνία δὲ ἡ ἡμετέρα

μετὰ τοῦ πατρὸς καὶ μετὰ τοῦ υἱοῦ αὐτοῦ Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ. Κοινωνία is enjoyed only in the context of the Father and Son. Father and Son are two more symbols in this section, which are significant. It will suffice at the moment to point out that the father-son symbols as used in relation to God and Jesus are pregnant with meaning. In order to discover their meaning, one has to delve into the author's symbolic universe, which encompassed and gave meaning to these words (Joubert 1995:51). Since our task here is to identify these symbols, we will content ourselves with this but an attempt will be made in the next chapter to unpack their meaning.

3.5.3 Division 2 (Cola 4-45) 1 John 1:5 – 2:17

Section 2.1 1 Jn 1:5-2:2



3.5.3.1 Brief remarks about the structure

In colon 4, the author used καὶ which connects the statement in verse 5 to the preceding one. Brown (1982:192) states that ambiguity as to whether the primary direction of the ‘this’ is to what precedes or to what follows is one of the more annoying grammatical peculiarities of the Epistles. The context seems to suggest that the ‘this’ points forward to the actual content, which is proclaimed. The ἀγγελία has been heard ἀπ’ αὐτοῦ, which no doubt is a reference to Jesus Christ (Lenski 1966:383; Brown 1982:193). The ἀγγελία is ὅτι ὁ θεὸς φῶς ἐστὶν καὶ σκοτία ἐν αὐτῷ οὐκ ἔστιν οὐδεμία. The antithetical dualism of light and darkness is introduced. In the world where there was no electricity, what did light signify? What kind of information got activated in the hearers as the author spoke of God as light? These questions will be answered in the next chapter.

In cola 6,8,12, 13, and 16 follow a series of six conditional clauses. Du Rand (1979:5) points out that by means of conditional clauses, the stylistic antithetical device in cola 4-17 acts as a unifying principle. By the use of ἐὰν in both the negative and positive statements the conditional clauses are made vivid. Fellowship with God introduced in colon 1.9 is picked up in colon 6.1 and its implications with reference to light are spelt out. Preposterous self-contradictory claims (Lenski 1966:386) of walking in the light while one continues to live in darkness are not acceptable. Light and darkness are two important symbols we need to note here. They are important in that the author’s argument is cast along these opposites, which represent two opposing

domains. Walking in the light is proof of fellowship with God (du Rand 1979:6) and with one another.

Another important symbol, which the author activated as he dealt with the implication of being in fellowship is the whole notion or idea of cleansing of sin with the blood. This is an allusion to the Jewish ceremony of sacrificing lambs for the cleansing of sin. In this instance, it is Jesus' blood as opposed to that of the lamb that cleanses and enables people to be in fellowship with God and one another. For the cleansing to become a reality, and fellowship with God and one another to be firmly established the author is convinced that acknowledgement and confession of sin are essential.

Between cola 9 and 17, ἁμαρτία is mentioned eight times, thus identifying it as another symbol. The occurrence of ἁμαρτία is in the context of Jesus' sacrificial death symbolised by his blood. The theme of sin and Jesus' sacrificial death links colon 14 and 15 together. What does the word ἁμαρτία represent in the author's context? Discussion of the meaning of ἁμαρτία is deferred to the next chapter.

3.5.3.2 Descriptive identification of important themes

What constitutes the central theological premise of this section is the fact that 'God is light and in Him there is no darkness at all' (1 Jn 1:5). Light and darkness stand for two opposites. Bruce (1970:41) states that it is in the ethical sense that John here affirms that 'God is light, and in him is no darkness at all'. He further states that what this statement implies is that God

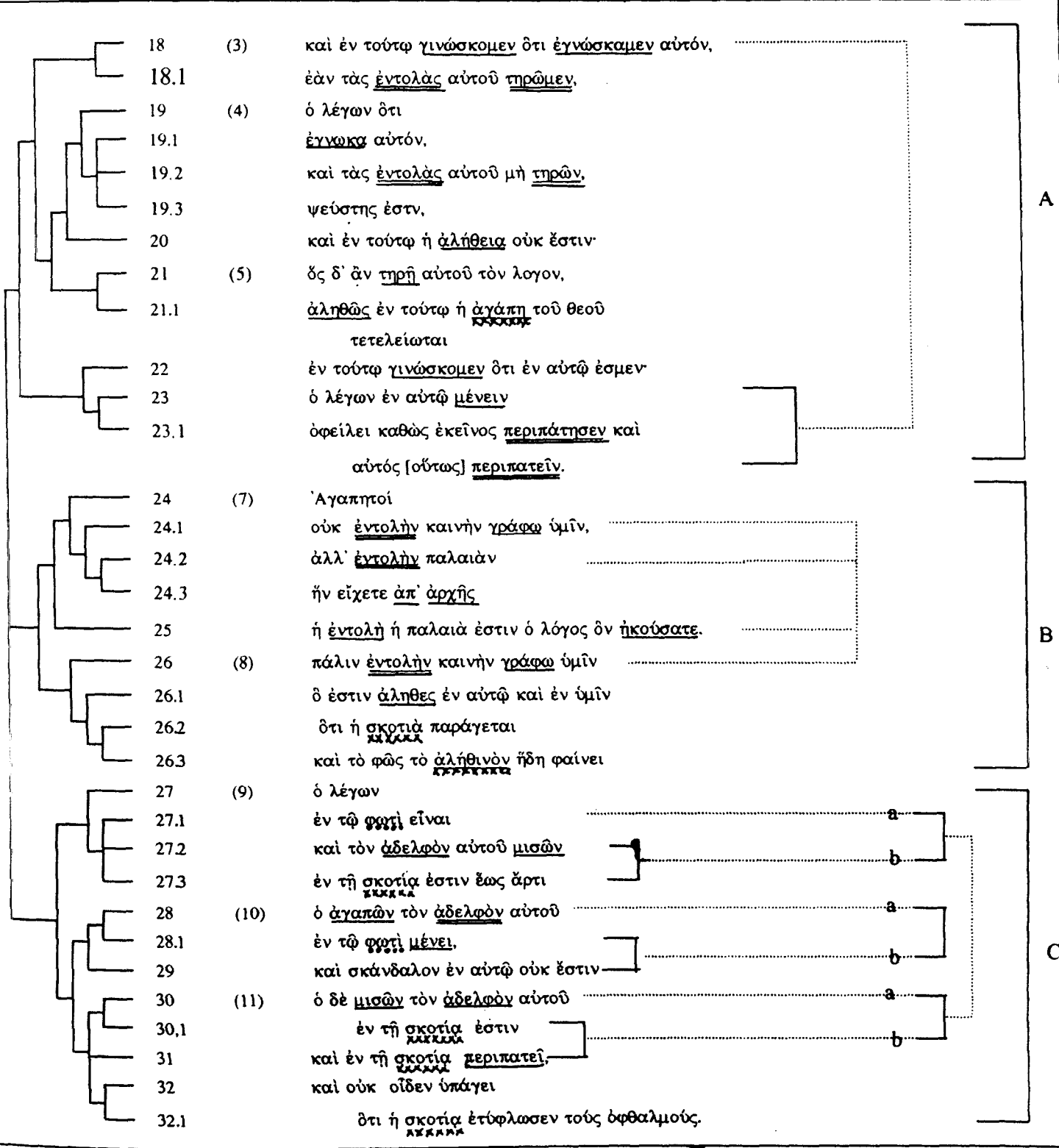
is the source and essence of holiness and righteousness, goodness and truth; in Him there is nothing that is unholy or unrighteous, evil or false.

Group terminology, that is, family language, is also evident in this section and is stated in terms of fellowship, forgiveness, cleansing and right conduct. Fellowship with God who is light means sharing a common life that belongs to Christians, a life of fellowship with God and with other Christians, and the process of our being cleansed from all sins is going forward (Williams 1965:20). The blood of Jesus which functions in a cultic sense here has significance within κοινωνία context.

The antithetical formula of light and darkness serves to accentuate the criteria distinguishing who is in fellowship with God and who is not. The believer's ethical disposition is contrasted with the nature of God, so that all actions, which are contrary to God who is light, are seen as a denial or proof of being outside the sphere of fellowship with God. The central motif of this section is: God is light and believers must walk in the light. This motif works with contrasts in reality, i.e. good and bad in real life are measured against this.

3.5.3.3 Section 2.2 (Cola 18-32)

1 Jn 2:3-11



3.5.3.3.1 Brief remarks about the structure

As du Rand (1979:6) points out, three pericopes can be distinguished in cola 18 –32, A (18-23), B (24-26), and C (27-32). In pericope 18-23, γινώσκω occupies a central position. This theme is introduced in colon 18 and then expanded in cola 19-21. Whereas in the preceding section, cola 6-14, conditional statements were used, in this section the author employs the participial verb forms – (19, 23, 27, 30). The use of participles has a binding effect on this section. Semantically, γινώσκομεν as the subjective side of certainty corresponds with the objective side of the same matter (du Rand 1979:6; Lenski 1966:406). In other words to know God and to have fellowship with him are alternative ways of expressing the same reality (Marshall 1978:121; Lenski 1966:404).

Γινώσκω seems to be a communicative device employed by the author to remind his hearers that he has with them access to a common stock of knowledge. This could be seen as a symbolic language expressing the subjective certainty existing among them. Knowledge or fellowship with God is based on the fact that τηρῶμεν τὰς ἐντολὰς αὐτοῦ. Τηρεῖν embodies in it an element of obedience, which was central within the Mediterranean family context. Obedience also served as a distinguishing criterion for true membership of an earthly as well as heavenly family.

Ἀγαπητοί in colon 24 constitutes an important marker. Du Rand (1979:7) notes that Ἀγαπητοί slightly interrupts the course of the preceding structure. Marshall (1978:128) argues that it is preferable to see here the beginning of a

new sub-section closely linked to what precedes. Brown (1982:263); Marshall (1978:128); and du Rand (1979:7) point out that ‘beloved’ is used frequently in 1 John, indicating that the author is writing to those who already stand in the circle of Christian love. The idea of writing (γράφω), which was brought out in colon 15 is reactivated here. The author also through associative parallelism now picks up the idea of commandment (ἐντολή) in colon 18 which he develops further in cola 24-26. The dualistic and antithetical motif of light and darkness mentioned in cola 4-8, surfaces again in cola 27-32, but now in an ethic perspective with the accent on ‘walking in the light’ (du Rand 1979:5). A chiasmic construction -ἀδελφὸν αὐτοῦ μισῶν and ἀγαπῶν τον ἀδελφὸν as well as an ab ab form can be observed in cola 27-31 due to the antithetical parallelism. The same antithetical formula is used here as Love and hate, which are two important symbols within the context of family, are discussed.

3.5.3.3.2 Descriptive identification of important themes

The criterion or test for any claim of fellowship is outlined. The claim stands or falls with the obedience of the claimant to the commands of God (Williams 1965:22). The author also introduces another recurrent theme in the letter – knowledge of God (Edwards 1996:72). The criterion for knowledge of God is obedience to his commandments (du Rand 1979:31; Westcott 1966:45). The author’s purpose is to encourage believers to be obedient and to show their unity with the Father and Son by imitating (Westcott 1966:45) or walking as Christ did (1 Jn 2:6). Having mentioned commandment, the author states that the commandment is as old as the Christian message of the Gospel and yet as new as the latest realisation of its power (Westcott 1966:51).

The polarized opposites of light and darkness are helpful here in that they show that a person enters the light by loving his brother or enters the darkness by hating his brother (O' Neill 1966:16). Those who live in fellowship with God do not hate their brothers and sisters; the opposite is true of those who are out of fellowship with God. The whole question of doing the truth is introduced and cast along the same antithetical poles. Hating one's fellow human being means one is still walking in darkness, whereas loving one's fellow human being means walking in the light and doing the truth and being in fellowship with God, his Son and fellow Christians. What the author does here is to provide his readers with the right information from their symbolic universe to help them adjust their behaviour accordingly. He is forced by the situation not only to provide knowledge but also to draw or define the boundaries of the universe to which they now belong as Christians.

3.5.3.4 Section 2.3 (Cola 33-45)

1 Jn 2:12-17

	33	(12)	Γράφω ὑμῖν, τεκνία, <div style="margin-left: 20px;"> ὅτι ἀφένονται ὑμῖν αἱ ἀμαρτίαι διὰ τὸ ὄνομα αὐτοῦ. </div>		A
	33.1				
	34	(13)	γράφω ὑμῖν, πατέρες , <div style="margin-left: 20px;"> ὅτι ἐγνώκατε τὸν ἀπ' ἀρχῆς </div>	a	
	34.1				
	35		γράφω ὑμῖν, νεανίσκοι, <div style="margin-left: 20px;"> ὅτι νενικήκατε τὸν πονηρόν </div>		
	35.1				
	36		ἔγραψα ὑμῖν, παιδιά, <div style="margin-left: 20px;"> ὅτι ἐγνώκατε τὸν πατέρα </div>		
	36.1				
	37	(14)	ἔγραψα ὑμῖν, πατέρες, <div style="margin-left: 20px;"> ὅτι ἐγνώκατε τὸν ἀπ' ἀρχῆς, </div>	b	
	37.1				
	38		ἔγραψα ὑμῖν, νεανίσκοι, <div style="margin-left: 20px;"> ὅτι ἰσχυροὶ ἐστε </div>		
	38.1				
	39		καὶ ὁ λόγος τοῦ θεοῦ ἐν ὑμῖν μένει		
	40		καὶ νενικήκατε τὸν πονηρόν .		
	41		Μὴ ἀγαπᾶτε τὸν κόσμον <div style="margin-left: 20px;"> μηδὲ τὰ ἐν τῷ κόσμῳ </div>		B
	41.1				
	42		εἰάν τις ἀγαπᾷ τὸν κόσμον , <div style="margin-left: 20px;"> οὐκ ἔστιν ἡ ἀγάπη τοῦ πατρὸς ἐν αὐτῷ </div>		
	42.1				
	43	(16)	ὅτι πᾶν τὸ ἐν τῷ κόσμῳ , <div style="margin-left: 20px;"> ἡ ἐπιθυμία τῆς σαρκὸς καὶ ἡ ἐπιθυμία τῶν ὀφθαλμῶν καὶ ἡ ἀλαζονεία τοῦ βίου οὐκ ἔστιν ἐκ τοῦ πατρὸς ἀλλὰ ἐκ τοῦ κόσμου ἐστίν. </div>		
	43.1				
	43.2				
	43.3				
	43.4				
	43.5				
	44	(17)	καὶ ὁ κόσμος παράγεται <div style="margin-left: 20px;"> καὶ ἡ ἐπιθυμία αὐτοῦ ὁ δὲ ποιῶν τὸ θέλημα τοῦ θεοῦ μένει εἰς τὸν αἰῶνα. </div>		
	44.1				
	45				
	45.1				

3.5.3.4.1 Brief remarks about the structure

Cola 33-45 can be divided into two pericopes: A (33-40) and B (41-45). Pericope A may be divided further into six parallel clauses. The first set of three (cola 33-35) begins with the present tense γράφω and the second set of

three (cola 36-40) begins with the aorist tense ἔγραψα and largely repeats the first. Van Staden (1988:129) argues that ‘die feit dat die drie uitsprake wat begin met γράφω (praesens) gevolg word deur die drie met ἔγραψα (aoristus), het meergebring dat □ paar eksegete in die gebruik van ἔγραψα die verwysing na □ vorige skrywe gesien het; onder andere is die Johannesevangelie, 2 Johannes, □ verlore brief en □ bron van die huidige brief as moontlikhede voorgestel’. The view with which we concur is du Rand’s (1979:8), who states that the purpose of this parallel recapitulation-scheme is to accentuate.

Observable also here is that each set is directed in turn to children, fathers, and young men (Marshall 1978:135), basic symbols that are central within a family. The only variation is in cola 33 and 36, where as Du Plessis (1978:46) points out, the author ‘gebruik wel twee verskillende Griekse woorde vir kinders (τεκνία and παιδία) maar hulle het dieselfde betekenis’.

At first glance the message does not seem to have any connection with what precedes it but on closer look, colon 31.1 appears to refer back to colon 12, where members know the joy of being in fellowship with God because they have confessed and have been granted forgiveness. The use of the perfect tense ἀφέωνται indicates primarily the initial experience of forgiveness into which John’s readers would have entered at their conversion, while the present tense ἀφῆ suggests the continual forgiveness which the Christian needs (Smalley 1984:72). According to the author, forgiveness is not solely dependent on human confession but it is granted on account of his name, a phrase which directs our minds back to what John has said about the blood of Jesus and his role as advocate and offering for sin. (Marshall 1978:138).

Knowing him who is from the beginning seems to be a reference to the beginning of Christ's ministry. The idea of 'defeating the evil one' (colon 35) corresponds to the defeat of the evil one (colon 40) (du Rand 1979:8). The motif of victory τὸν πονηρὸν must be interpreted proleptically (du Rand 1979:8), that is, it refers according to Malatesta (Interiority 169) to the eschatological triumph of all Christians by reason of their faith (in Smalley 1984:75).

In cola 41-45 the author echoes his earlier thoughts, that is, that of victory over evil (du Rand (1979:8) and the moral responsibility expected of Christ' followers. This unit is set off by its lack of explicit vocatives and by the negative commands Μὴ ἀγαπᾶτε ...μηδε (ἀγαπᾶτε) 'do not love ...'. The other prevalent themes that also hold the unit together are: κόσμος 'world' (15-17) and θεὸς 'God' (15-17) (Miehle 1981:272).

In the writings of John, the world-κόσμος is an important symbol usually signifying mankind in rebellion to God (Marshall 1978:142). Believers must not love the world (κόσμος) or anything in it. Κόσμος, according to Bruce (1996:60) is any worldly orientation against God or the world organised, as it largely is, without reference to God and his will, or without that true knowledge of him that Jesus Christ gives (Williams 1965:28).

All that is in the world (colon 43) ἡ ἐπιθυμία τῆς σαρκὸς. This describes the desire of our fallen and sinful nature (Stott 1964:104). In short, all these, that is, ἡ ἐπιθυμία τῶν ὀφθαλμῶν καὶ ἡ ἀλαζονεία τοῦ βίου, are external allurements appealing to the senses, material in nature, by which the devil

tries to gain our love (Schönweiss 1986:458). This transient world and all in it is passing away and love for these things is not of the Father and therefore stands in contrast to him. Love of God and of the world are two opposites, the one cancels the other.

3.5.3.4.2 Descriptive identification of important themes

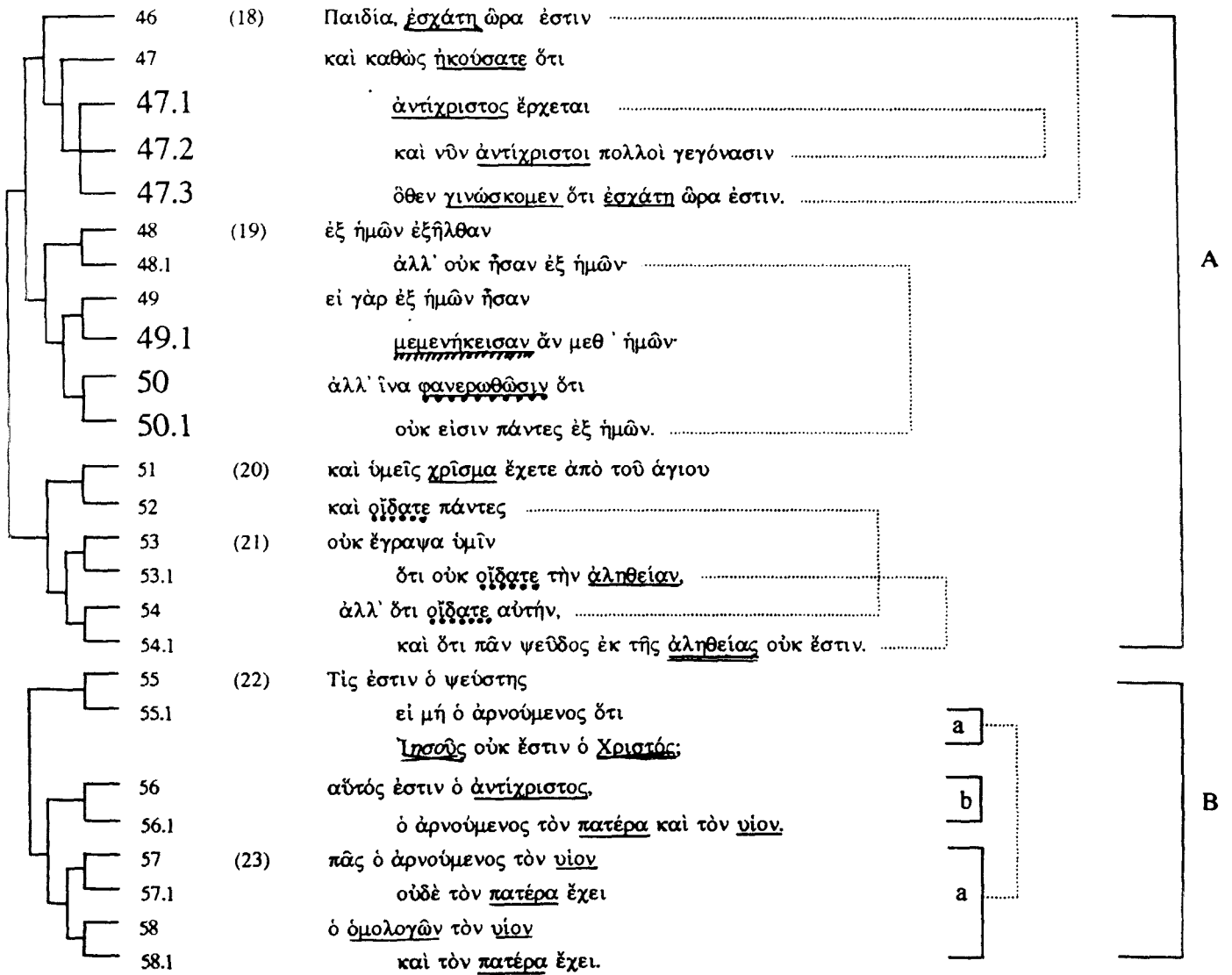
The central theme of this section is the encouragement and admonition given to believers. The following sub-themes continue the main theme of this section, that is, 'God is light and believers have to walk in the light'. The first sub-theme deals with forgiveness, which is on account of faith in Christ's name. Forgiveness is an important pre-requisite for remaining in fellowship or within God's family. In fact from 1 Jn 1:5, the theme of forgiveness has formed an integral part of the main theme.

A second sub-theme deals with 'knowledge', that is, knowledge of him who is from the beginning (ἀπ' ἀρχῆς). Believers know him and the consequent victory grounded in the knowledge of Jesus (1 Jn 2:13). Knowledge of Christ is consequential to their being members of God's family and being in fellowship with God and his Son.

The sub-theme of love, which in the foregoing verses was discussed in relation to brothers, is stretched and placed in the context of the world versus God. In these verses 15-17, a contrast is drawn between 'love of the world' and 'God's love'. Loving the world and all that is in it stands in contrast to having the love of the Father. Not loving the world is a sign of being in fellowship with the Father and thus possessing eternal life.

3.5.4 Division three Section 3.1 (Cola 46-66)

1 Jn 2:18-27



59	(24)	ὕμεις δὲ ἠκούσατε ἀπ' ἀρχῆς,
59.1		ἐν ὑμῖν μέντω.
60		εἰάν ἐν ὑμῖν μείνη
60.1		ὁ ἀπ' ἀρχῆς ἠκούσατε.
60.2		καὶ ὑμεῖς ἐν τῷ <u>αἰῶνι</u>
60.3		καὶ [ἐν] τῷ <u>πατρὶ</u> μένετε.
61	(25)	καὶ αὕτη ἐστὶν ἡ ἐπαγγελία
61.1		ἣν αὐτὸς πηγγείλατο ἡμῖν
61.2		τὴν ζωὴν τὴν αἰώνιον.
62	(26)	Ταῦτα ἔγραψα ὑμῖν
62.1		περὶ τῶν <u>πλανήτων</u> ὑμᾶς.
63	(27)	καὶ ὑμεῖς τὸ <u>χρῖσμα</u> ὃ ἐλάβετε ἀπ' αὐτοῦ
63.1		μένει ἐν ὑμῖν
64		καὶ οὐ χρειαν ἔχετε ἵνα τις διδάσκη ὑμᾶς
65		ἀλλ' ὡς τὸ αὐτοῦ <u>χρῖσμα</u> διδάσκει ὑμᾶς
		περὶ πάντων.
65.1		καὶ ἀληθές ἐστὶν
65.2		καὶ οὐκ ἔστιν ψεῦδος
66		καὶ <u>καθὼς</u> ἐδίδαξεν ὑμᾶς
66.1		μένετε ἐν αὐτῷ

3.5.4.1 Brief remarks about the structure

Most scholars agree that colon 46 marks a new section in the literary arrangement of 1 John (Smalley, 92; Marshall, 147; Brown, 362; du Rand, 9). Marshall (1978:147) admits that there is an immediate link between vv 17 (colon 44) and 18 (colon 46) in terms of their eschatology and antithetical structure (du Rand 1979:10). Those who are of the author's group, the group identified as being in fellowship with God, he addresses as children (παιδία). As Marshall (1978:148) rightly asserts, there is no particular force in the appellation. This appellation only serves to establish the identity of members of the Johannine church against that of the ἀντίχριστοι (colon 47). By

emphasising the ἐσχάτη ὥρα, the author enables his readers to situate the ἀντίχριστοι in the eschatological context (see Klauck 1988:62).

Cola 46-66 as du Rand (1981:5-6) shows in the addendum to Neotestamentica 13, can be divided into three groups: A (46-54), B (55-58) and C (59-66). Pericope A may further be divided into three clusters. In the first cluster cola 46-47, one can observe an antithetical parallelism between ἐσχάτη and ἀντίχριστος creating a chiasmic pattern ab ba. Here the author identifies in no uncertain terms the group he associates with the ἀντίχριστοι and the ushering of the eschatological period. In terms of the symbolic universe of John the ἀντίχριστοι represent the deviant group. The usage of the appellation ἀντίχριστοι is one device the author employs in order to demonise this group.

In the second cluster cola 48- the author traces the origin of the ἀντίχριστοι with the structural emphasis on οὐκ ἦσαν ἐξ ἡμῶν, and ἵνα φανερωθῶσιν the test for disclosure (du Rand 1979:11). In the third cluster cola 51-54 a reference to the second group, namely, believers, is made. What identifies them from the previous group – the ἀντίχριστοι, is the χρῖσμα ἔχετε ἀπὸ τοῦ ἁγίου. The χρῖσμα enables them to know every thing - (οἴδατε πάντες).

In pericope B the author having identified the existence of the ἀντίχριστοι in cola 46-47, now turns to what constitutes their id entity (cola 55-57), that is, they are liars because they deny that Jesus is the Christ. Denying Jesus Christ –the Son amounts to denial of the Father. That the second group, identified in cola 51-54 belongs to or has God is demonstrated by their confession of the

Son (colon 58). Confessing Jesus as the Christ plays a very important role here in that it discloses the true identity of those who belong to God.

In pericope C, there is a slight play on words reflecting the Johannine stylistic preference for variety (Brown 1982:356), creating a chiasmic pattern ab ba in cola 59-60.1. ὑμεῖς ὃ ἠκούσατε ἀπ’ ἀρχῆς- (what you heard from the beginning) seems to be a reference to the time of their conversion, that is, when they heard the message for the first time. What they heard (the word or doctrine) should be permitted to ‘dwell’ (μενέτω) in them (Smalley 1984:118). If what they heard is allowed to dwell in them, they will also dwell in the Son and in the Father. Remaining in the Son and in the Father leads to the promised promise – eternal life (colon 61).

In cola 62-67, the author issues a warning concerning those who are out trying to lead believers astray. He reiterates the living presence in them of the χρίσμα mentioned in cola 51-54. The χρίσμα διδάσκει ὑμᾶς περὶ πάντων and it is not counterfeit, hence their being exhorted to remain or dwell in him. What is the author representing by the word χρίσμα? Discussion on this will be engaged in the following chapter.

3.5.4.2 Descriptive identification of important themes

In this section the writer asserts that a certain division, which has occurred in the church, has a deep significance (Williams 1965:30). The author infers from the appearance of false teachers, in the shape of those who departed from the community (Edwards 1996:75) against whom he warns his readers that the end-time Antichrist is now at hand and that his spirit is active in these

teachers (Klauck 1988:62); that is how 'we know that it is the last hour (Bruce 1996:65).

The central theme of this unit is found in verse 23. The phrase ὁμολογῶν τὸν υἱὸν - 'acknowledging the Son' places the emphasis on the positive value of acknowledging that Jesus is the Christ against the negative status of those who do not do so, the latter are antichrist. (Miehle 1981:274). The two opposing groups are identified, that is, the presence of the antichrist in contrast to those who have the χρίσμα (du Rand 1979:31). The latter group possess knowledge of the truth, knowledge, which they demonstrate by confessing Jesus as the Messiah, the Son of God.

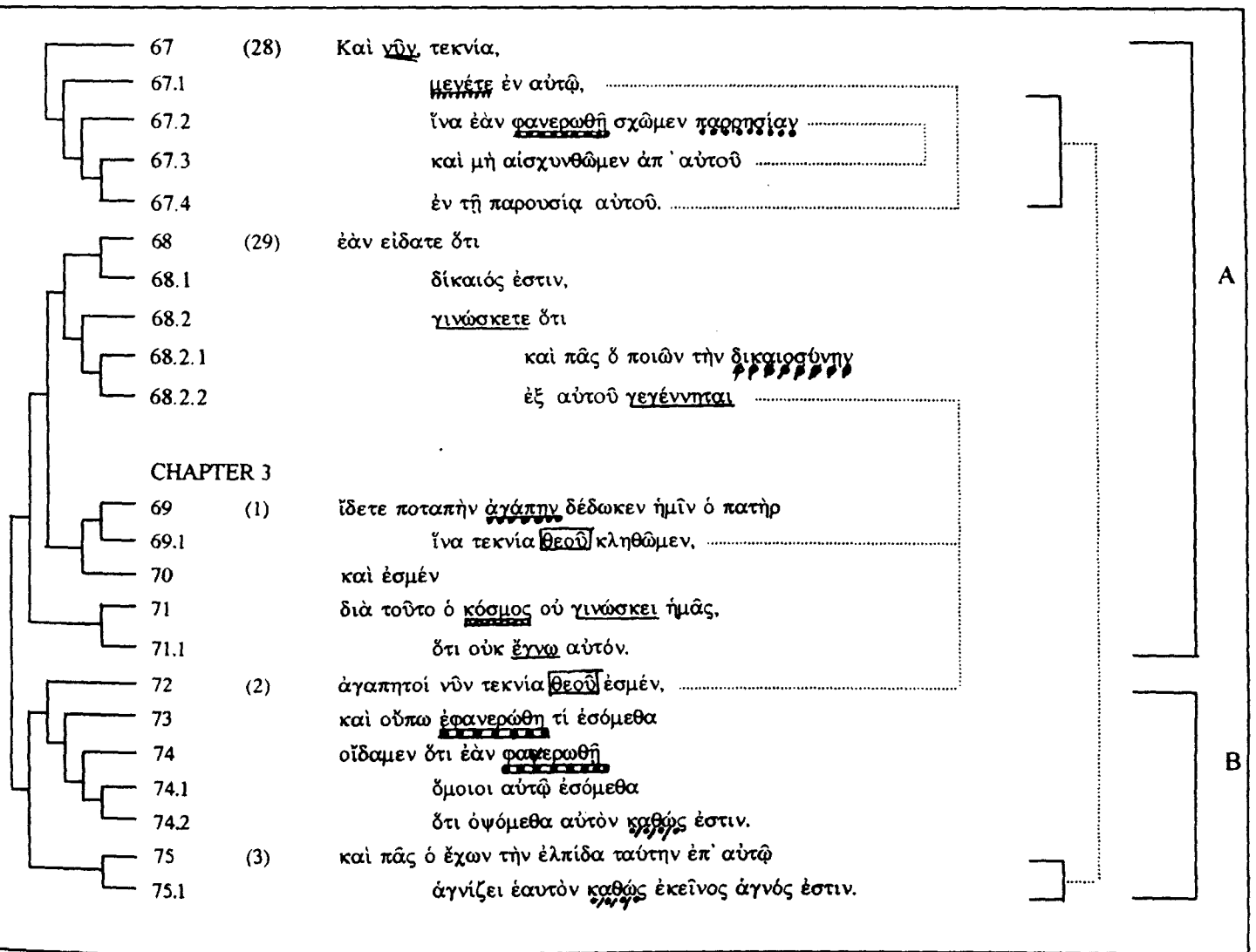
It is therefore in the confession that each group's alignment can be distinguished, whether it is of God or in opposition to God – of the antichrist. Verses 18 and 19 are considered to be a further justification both for acknowledging the Son and for letting his message remain in one's heart (Miehle 1981:274). Members of God's family like any healthy human family are properly aligned, a fact demonstrated by their acknowledgement of who Jesus is.

The former group, the children of the devil are precisely those false teachers who are denounced throughout the whole epistle (Feuillet 1973:207). They are not only called the antichrist, but they are also called 'liars' and 'deceivers' because they deny that Jesus is the Christ (Edwards 1996:75). Believers or those who possess the χρίσμα are therefore called upon to remain (μενέτω) in Christ.

The theme of abiding or remaining in Christ μένετε ἐν αὐτῷ is reintroduced. Verses 26 and 27 are therefore a recapitulation of the main points of above paragraphs. To cling to what they were taught was to have the secret of unbroken fellowship with Christ, the source and subject of the teaching (Williams 1965:33). It is within the fellowship that the Spirit operates; it is there that he teaches the people of God (Bruce 1970:76).

3.5.4.3 Section 3.2 (Cola 67-75)

1 Jn 2:28-3:3



3.5.4.3.1 Brief remarks about the structure

Brown (1982:362) asserts that the real problem for the structure of the present unit is not the beginning but the end, with scholars evenly divided as to whether this section ends with 2:27 (colon 66) (Schnackenburg, 141) or 2:28 (colon 67) (Bultmann 1967:43; Feuillet 1973:200) or 2:29 (colon 68) Westcott, 68). While Καὶ νῦν τεκνία in colon 67 appears to cause structural interruption, stylistically it combines with the previous through the parallel command μένετε ἐν αὐτῷ (Smalley 1984:127) in colon 67. Μένετε ἐν αὐτῷ also achieves an easy transition to his (the author's) next line of thought by a repetition of the phrase, which serves to underline and emphasise its importance (Marshall 1978:165). The command to remain in Christ is strengthened by a forward glance at the coming of Christ. Du Rand (1979:10) points out that the usage of νῦν and ἐὰν φανερωθῆι creates an eschatological tension with functional value.

In spite of the close connection with the foregoing verse, there is difference of opinion, with several writers regarding 2:28 (colon 67) as the start of the new section (Smalley 1984:128; Marshall 1978:164-5; du Rand 1979:7). Its transitional value lies in the fact that it picks up the eschatological reference of 2:18 (colon 46), which had been muted since 2:23 (colon 57). Ἐὰν φανερωθῆι also shows the author's orientation towards the future. Παρρησίαν, which has been translated 'confidence' refers to the democratic right of a citizen to express an opinion freely and in public (Smalley 1984:130; Marshall 1978:166). A chiasmic arrangement ab ba is observable when φανερωθῆι σχῶμεν παρρησίαν is arranged parallel to καὶ μὴ αἰσχυρθῶμεν ἀπ' αὐτοῦ ἐν τῇ παρουσίᾳ αὐτοῦ.

As du Rand (1979:13) points out, colon 67 is followed by 68–71 in which the readers are made aware of their present status: children of God. Children of God act righteously because they originate from Him (ἐξ αὐτοῦ γεγέννηται). The author introduces here the symbol of birth, which within the Mediterranean context symbolised belonging. The identity of believers as children of God is based on the fact that they have been born of Him and therefore as members of his family enjoy fellowship with God and with one another. Their identity is concealed from the world because the world failed to recognise Christ. Further discussion on birth as a symbol will be discussed in the next chapter.

Cola 72-74 deals with the reality of their present status, that is, ‘they are children of God’. This knowledge gives them hope that when he appears, they shall be like him, for they will see him as he is (1 Jn 3:2). Any one who cherishes such future hope cleanses ἀγνίζει ἑαυτὸν. Purity of life seems to be a prerequisite for those who hope to see him. Du Rand (1979:13) points out the proleptic function of ἀγνίζει with respect to τὰς ἀμαρτίας ἄρη (78.1).

3.5.4.3.2 Descriptive identification of important themes

The theme of this unit is derived from the phrase μένετε ἐν αὐτῷ which the author reiterates in verse 28. This is an exhortation to remain in Christ. Remaining in Jesus presupposes an intimate and ongoing relationship with the Father through the Son, which is only possible for the faithful (Smalley 1984:128). Those who remain in Christ can look forward to his coming with confidence (Bruce 1970:78).

Westcott (1966:83) argues that there can be no doubt that Christ is the subject in verse 28 and that since no personal pronoun is introduced, it is logical to assume that Christ is the subject of this verse also. Along with Westcott are the following scholars: Brooke 1912:68; Marshall 1978:168; Schnackenburg 1963:166-167; Schneider. Against this position and in favour of God being the subject of verse 29, are the following scholars: Bruce 1970:79; Williams 1966:34; Stott 1964:122; Feuillet 1973:205; Smalley 1984:133; O' Neill 1966:31; De Jonge 1973:131.

In verse 29, the author introduces the theme of the community's righteousness, a theme that extends down to the middle of 3:10, where there occurs a further change of theme, from righteousness to love (O' Neill 1966:31). The author makes it clear that membership in the family of God is to be recognised by the family likeness. Family likeness within the context and symbolic universe of 1 John was the operative word. Since the Father of the family is righteous, the children are expected to bear the same likeness and practice righteousness (Bruce 1970:79). The author describes the relationship which leads to membership of God's family in terms of being ἐξ αὐτοῦ γεγέννηται. Everyone who does what is right as opposed to all who commit sin; has been born of God (Brown 1982:383). In the context of family, birth, becomes an important symbol.

Inherent in verse 2:29 and 3:1-3 is the theological truth that believers are related to God, through Christ as children of the Father (Smalley 1984:140), they have been born of Him. To be born of God is of course differentiated from physical birth. They are not born through a human agency but their birth has been engineered from above. This fact is corroborated well in John's

Gospel, where the author states in no uncertain terms that the right to be children of God is a gift of God; that the children of God are born not of natural descent, nor of human decision or a husband's will, but born of God (Jn 1:12-13). This of course is a reference to spiritual birth but the full meaning of this symbol will be unpacked in the next chapter.

The same point is made in 1 Jn 3:1-3, where the author exclaims in wonder at God's great love that they should be called children of God (Edwards 1996:76). This gift of love is as Westcott (1966:95) puts it, not simply exhibited towards the believers, but imparted to them. As a result believers stand in a relationship of children to God, which is not only a matter of names and titles; but also a solid reality (Williams 1965:35). There is a strong degree of intimacy and filiation in the manner they are described as members of God's family (Smalley 1984:141). When the author called believers children of God, what was their understanding of this? Within the universe of 1 John, members of the Johannine community knew exactly the implications of being God's children.

The believers' identity as children of God, even though unrecognised by the world at present, rests on the eschatological hope that when he is revealed at his parousia, they will be like him (Edwards 1996:76). The one whose likeness they will bear is pure – he is indeed the norm of purity – and a hope that rests 'on him' cannot but have a purifying effect on the one who so hopes (Bruce 1970:88). The sudden switch from the corporate reference of verses 1-2 ('we are God's children'; 'we shall be like him'; 'we shall see him') underscores the importance of the ethical demands, which are laid upon every believer who is a true child and member of God's family (Smalley 1984:148).

3.5.4.4 Section 3.3 (Cola 76-89)

1 Jn 3:4-10

76	(4)	πᾶς ὁ ποιῶν τὴν ἁμαρτίαν καὶ τὴν ἀνομίαν ποιεῖ,	A
76.1			
77		καὶ ἡ ἁμαρτία ἐστὶν ἡ ἀνομία.	
78	(5)	καὶ οἴδατε ὅτι ἐκεῖνος ἐφανερώθη	
78.1		ἵνα τὰς ἁμαρτίας ἄρῃ	
79		καὶ ἁμαρτία ἐν αὐτῷ οὐκ ἐστίν.	
80	(6)	πᾶς ὁ ἐν αὐτῷ μένων οὐχ ἁμαρτάνει·	
81		πᾶς ὁ ἁμαρτάνων οὐχ ἑώρακεν αὐτὸν	
82		οὔδε ἔγνωκεν αὐτὸν.	
83	(7)	Τεκνία, μὴ εἰς πλανάτω ὑμᾶς·	
84		ὁ ποιῶν τὴν δικαιοσύνην	
84.1		δικαίος ἐστίν	
84.2		καθὼς ἐκεῖνος δικαίος ἐστίν·	
85	(8)	ὁ ποιῶν τὴν ἁμαρτίαν ἐκ τοῦ διαβόλου ἐστίν,	
85.1		ὅτι ἀπ' ἀρχῆς ὁ διάβολος ἁμαρτάνει.	
86		εἰς τοῦτο ἐφανερώθη ὁ υἱὸς τοῦ θεοῦ	
86.1		ἵνα λύσῃ τὰ ἔργα τοῦ διαβόλου.	
87	(9)	Πᾶς ὁ γεγεννημένος ἐκ τοῦ θεοῦ	
87.1		ἁμαρτίαν οὐ ποιεῖ,	
87.2		ὅτι σπέρμα αὐτοῦ ἐν αὐτῷ μένει	
88		καὶ οὐ δύναται ἁμαρτάνειν	
88.1		ὅτι ἐκ τοῦ θεοῦ γεγέννηται.	
89	(10)	ἐν τούτῳ φανερά ἐστίν τὰ τεκνία τοῦ θεοῦ	
89.1		καὶ τὰ τεκνία τοῦ διαβόλου	
89.2		πᾶς ὁ μὴ ποιῶν δικαιοσύνην	
89.3		οὐκ ἐστίν ἐκ τοῦ θεοῦ καὶ ὁ μὴ ἀγαπῶν τὸν ἀδελφὸν αὐτοῦ	

3.5.4.4.1 Brief remarks about the structure

Cola 78-89 and cola 90-103 repeat and reiterate what was discussed in cola 4-17 and cola 18-32. The stylistic tool the author employed is called associative parallelism and is a familiar Johannine form (du Rand 1979:10). Cola 76-89.3 may be divided into two pericopes: A (76-86) and B (87-89). In pericope A, ἁμαρτία is mentioned eight times thus constituting the dominant co-structural

marker (du Rand 1979:13). It is also an important symbol that distinguishes between members of God's family and those who belong to the devil ἐκ τοῦ διαβόλου (colon 85). Obviously here the author seeks to emphasise to his readers what sin is. He describes it as breaking the law and therefore lawlessness (colon 76.1) and as being instigated by the devil (Marshall 1978:184).

In cola 80-81, the author uses πᾶς ὁ to emphasise the serious implications of individual belief and behaviour (Smalley 1984:158). Jesus Christ's appearing as the author states was in order that sin might be removed (ἄρη). Colon 85 and 85.1 show a chiasmic pattern: ἁμαρτίαν (a) διαβόλου (b) διάβολος (b) ἁμαρτάνει (a) (du Rand 1979:14, Smalley 1984:171).

Pericope B (cola 79-89) distinguishes the children of God from the children of the devil. The children of God do not do (ποιεῖ) sin because God's σπέρμα is in them. Sin has no hold or power over them ὅτι ἐκ τοῦ Θεοῦ γεγέννηται (colon 88.1). The doing of δικαιοσύνην and the practising of ἀγαπή are also distinguishing features between the children of God and the children of the devil (colon 89). The children of God do righteousness and practice love whereas those of the devil do not practice δικαιοσύνην and ἀγαπή.

3.5.4.4.2 Descriptive identification of important themes

Purity characterises those who have been born into God's family. The author emphasises that members of God's family do not commit sin. The criteria that the author used for distinguishing the children of God from those of the devil

rests on ‘committing sin’ or ‘not committing sin’. Christ, in fact appeared so that he might take away our sins (1 Jn 3:5). In this verse his work of removing sins and his personal sinlessness are brought together (Stott 1964:127). As Edwards (1996:76) points out the familiar dualism is hammered home, but the theme is amplified with a new thought: those born of God cannot sin because God’s σπέρμα is in them (Edwards 1996:76).

The distinction between the children of God and those of the devil is worked out in terms of sin and righteousness. O’ Neill (1966:36) mentions the fact that the division between the children of God and the children of the devil (3:7-10) is closely paralleled in the Qumran division between the sons of light and the sons of darkness. The children of God are his because they are born ἐκ Θεοῦ.

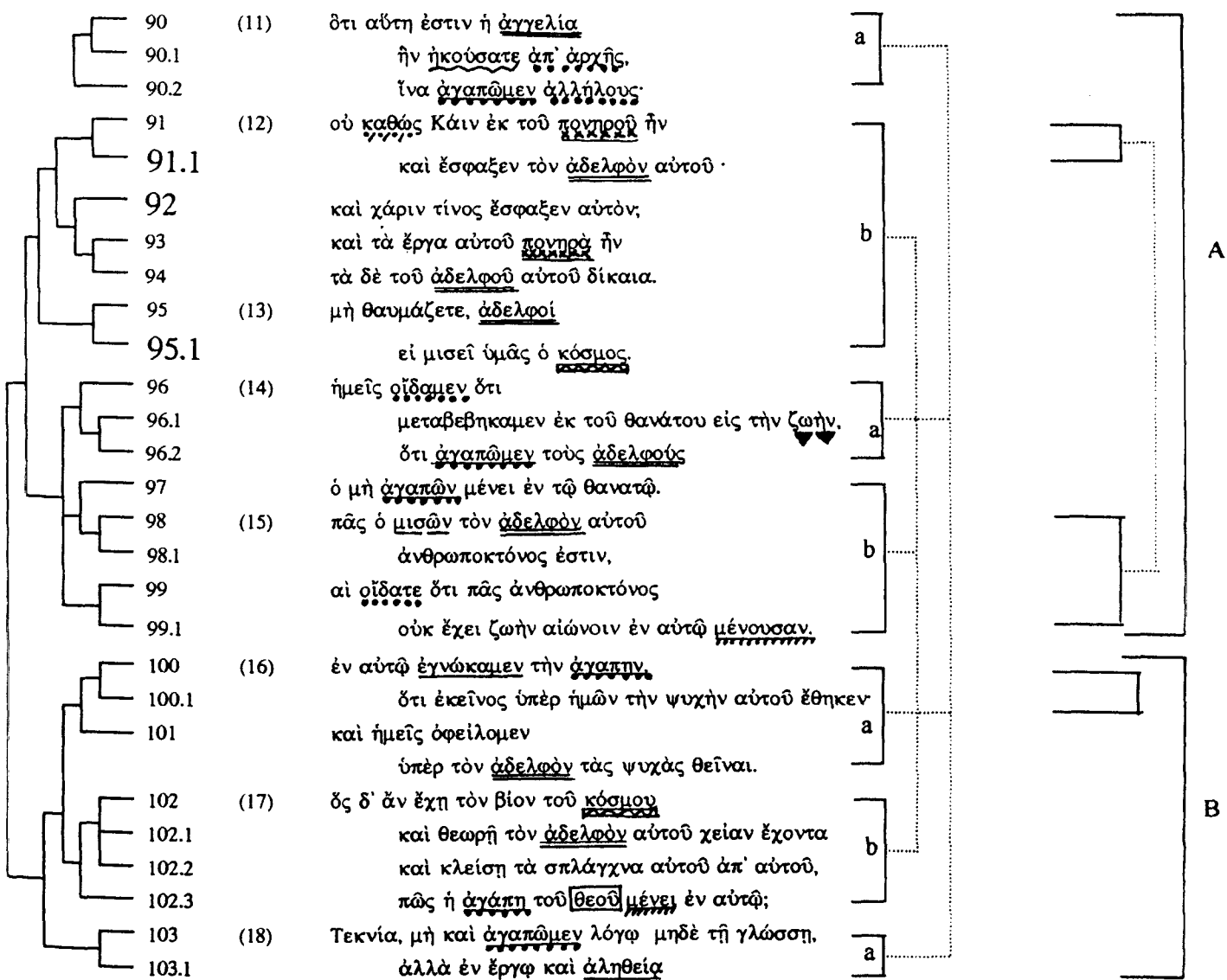
‘Children of God’ indicate an intimate familial bond that exists between them and God or rather their introduction into the most intimate social structure, where they – irrespective of age or sex – become part of God’s family (Van der Watt 2000:182). Sin, therefore, is by its very nature an abomination to God and irreconcilable with membership of His family. Sinful behaviour reveals a kind of family likeness (Williams 1965:37). In fact it marks a connexion with the devil as righteousness with Christ (Westcott 1966:101).

Having established the fact that the children of God do not sin deliberately and continually because of who they are – children born of God, the author introduces another criterion by which the two opposing groups are to be identified. First, anyone who does not do what is right is not a child of God. Obviously she/he is a child of the devil. Second, anyone who does not love

his brother is also not of God but the devil (1 Jn 3:10). The author's statement clearly has to do with defining boundaries. After what he has stated with regard to God's children and those of the devil members of his symbolic universe know what is expected of them.

3.5.4.5 Section 3.4 (cola 90-103)

1 Jn 3:11-18



3.5.4.5.1 Brief remarks about the structure

Cola 89 provides a transition from the previous section, in which the author sets out a negative condition for living as God's children to the present passage, in which the second condition to be described is positive in nature (Smalley 1984:179). The condition set out for children of God is that they should be obedient especially to the love commandment. Within the context of family, love is an important symbol. Members of the family love one another hence the emphasis that God's children are obedient to the love commandment. This pericope (cola 90-103) forms a parallel to 1 Jn 2:3-11 (cola 18-30).

The author constantly compares and contrasts two opposing positions to reinforce to members of his symbolic universe behaviour commensurate with their new status and to draw clear demarcatory lines within which such behaviour is acceptable.

Cola 90-103 can be divided into two pericopes: A (90-99) and B (100-103). In pericope A, the author is contrasting love and hatred for the brother. The contrast between Cain's attitude and that of his brother serves to intensify author's argument that like Abel's righteousness, the Christian community should be loving towards one another. Love one another is the content of the ἀγγελία which they heard from the beginning. Ἀρχη could be a reference to the beginning of the reader's knowledge of the Christian message (Marshall 1978:189).

Haas et al (1972:87) points out that the aorist ἠκούσατε refers to the action

of hearing 'regarded as a completed whole irrespective of its duration'. Cain's action of murdering his brother showed that his origin is ἐκ τοῦ πονηροῦ. Not only murder but also sin in general derives from the devil. Cain as a sinner and ἀνθρωποκτόνος has no ζωὴν αἰώνιον ἐν αὐτῷ (colon 99). Ζωὴ αἰώνιος belongs to the children of God who love one another. Those whose actions emulate Cain's belong together with him to the evil one.

In pericope B (cola 100-103) the author now turns to consider positively the nature of love (Marshall 1978:192). By bringing in the example of Christ in colon 100, the author accentuates the demand for brotherly love. Christ is the example *par excellence* of what love is, he leads by example. He laid down his life for us and we ought to lay down our lives for our brothers and sisters. Love, according to the author is not a matter of words but action. 'If anyone has material possession and sees a brother or sister in need καὶ κλείση τὰ σπλάγχνα (the seat of natural passions, including anger and love) (Marshall 1978:197), how can s/he claim to possess the love of God. Colon 103 stresses the importance of demonstrating love in action and in truth, not just in word or tongues.

3.5.4.5.2 Descriptive identification of important themes

In the above pericope the author identified one of the distinguishing characteristics between the children of God and those of the devil as being the doing of righteous deeds as opposed to sinning. Now in the present pericope love, an important symbol within the author's symbolic universe especially as it relates to family is set out as another distinguishing criteria. Brotherly love distinguishes the children of God from the children of evil

(du Rand 1979:32). Loving one another for the children of God is not a matter of choice but a command (1 Jn 3:11) (O' Neill 1966:38). Westcott (1966:110) claims that the phrase 'love one another' has a broader social dimension than just 'loving the brotherhood', a response, which is directed to the members of the church (Smalley 1984:183). Believers as children of God are bound to reproduce in themselves the family likeness (Bruce 1970:93).

Cain who murdered his brother (Gen 4:8) is cited as an example of hatred, a prototype of the world (Stott 1964:144) and an opposite of love. Marshall (1978:189) points out that the example of Cain is the only specific allusion in 1 John to the Old Testament. Lieu (1993) on the other hand has shown that Old Testament language and thought permeate this text. Cain's hatred, which culminated in the killing of his brother, represents the hatred of the world and indicates clearly to which family he belonged (Bruce 1970:94), he is in fact, the case of extreme opposite attitude (Williams 1965:38).

To be without love is to be in the realm of death – for no love means hatred, and hating is murder, and to be a murderer is incompatible with being filled with eternal life (Williams 1965:40). Love redeems one from the realm of death to the realm of life (1 Jn 3:14), for murder and hatred are opposites of love and life and murderers have no eternal life as a present and permanent possession (Stott 1964:146). The language exhibited in this verse is that of realized eschatology (Edwards 1996:77).

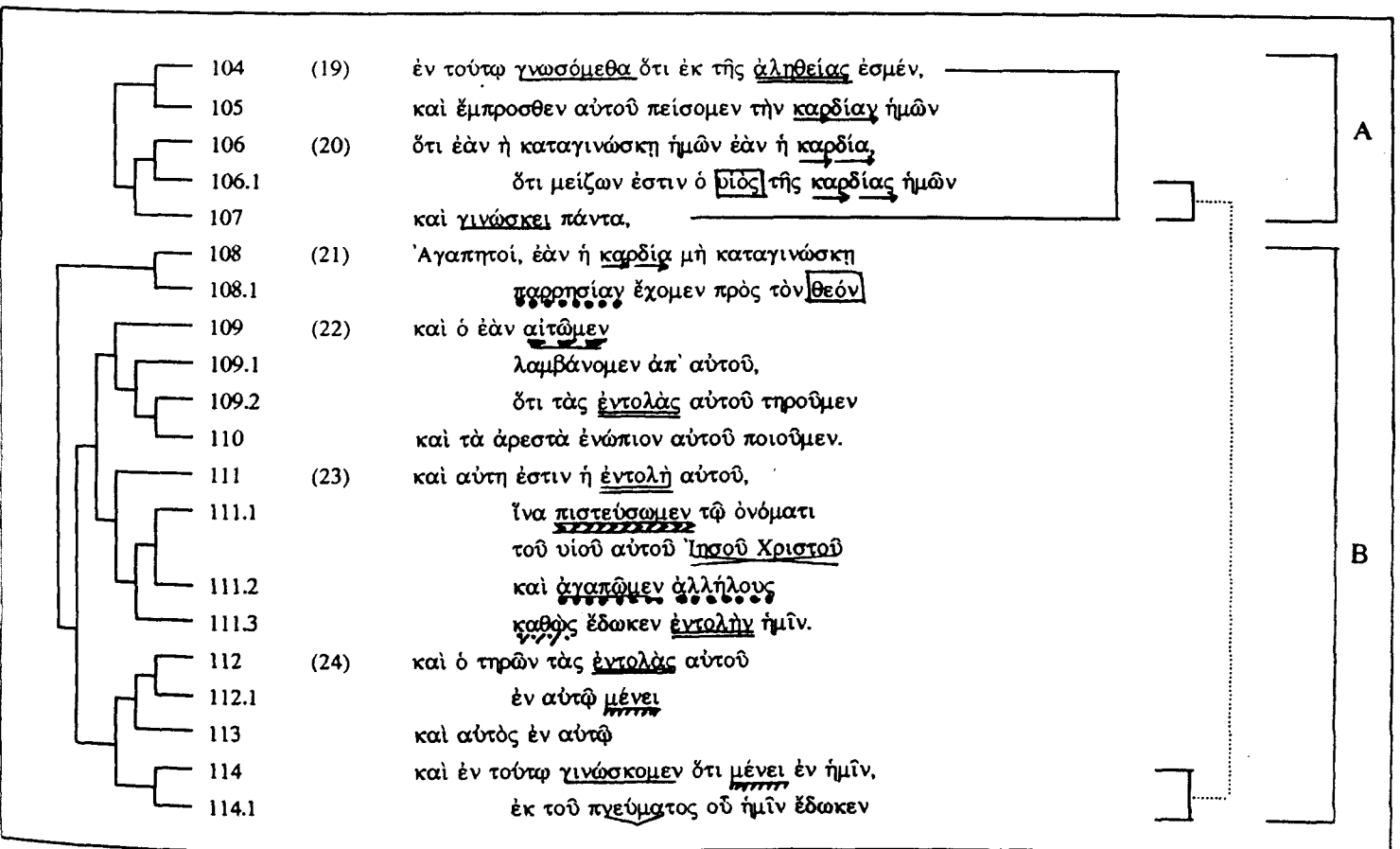
For believers, Jesus is the supreme example of love (Bruce 1970:96). If a believer is prepared to imitate Jesus by truly laying down his/her life for others, then he/she is a true child of God. Believers are beckoned to

demonstrate their love by their actions (Edwards 1996:77). In verse 17 the author brings us down with a bump (Williams 1965:41; Marshall 1978:194).

Following Christ's example issues in being prepared to open one's heart to the needy brother or sister. This, as Marshall (1978:194) states is a high ideal, to which we should enthusiastically consent. Hardening one's heart is contrary to having the love of God in one's heart, readers are urged to love in action and in truth (Edwards 1996:77). To be like Christ, believers must be merciful, especially towards the needy (Smalley 1994:198). Christian love is not a matter of high sounding words or phrases, it is a matter of practical behaviour and genuine reality (Williams 1965:41; Marshall 1978:197).

3.5.4.6 Section 3.5 (Cola 104-114)

1 Jn 3:19-24



3.5.4.6.1 Brief remarks about the structure

The link between cola 104-114 and what has gone before seems to be the word ‘truth’ (ἀληθείας) (Stott 1988:148; Smalley 1984:200). The passage can also be regarded as a bridge to the remaining part (Marshall 1978:196, Brown 1982:454). Even though ἀληθεία acts as the hinge between cola 103 and 104, it would appear that γινώσκειν is central in this section. As Brown (1982:455) points out the author is saying that we shall know and [by that knowledge] we shall convince. It is with the knowledge that we belong to God that we act.

Longacre (1992:275), and Smalley (1984:199) contend that the passage 1 Jn 3:19-24 as a whole may be regarded as a unity, governed by the thought in verse 19a. Whilst the reading does confirm the unity of verses 19-24 (cola 104-114), this passage, however, exhibits a clear division into two pericopes: A (104-107) and B (108-114).

Ἐν τούτῳ in most instances when followed by ὅτι refers to what follows. But there are other instances when it refers to what precedes it. Colon 104 seems to be one such instance when it refers to what precedes it (Smalley 1984:200). Ἀληθείας links up with cola 103 where the author stated that truthfulness of love has to be manifested in acts of love. The knowledge that we are of the truth (ἐκ τῆς ἀληθείας ἐσμέν) sets our heart at rest before God (colon 105). If our hearts condemn us, the assurance we have is that God is greater than our hearts καὶ γινώσκει πάντα (colon 107).

Pericope B (cola 108-114) looks at the positive side, that is, if the heart does not condemn. If this is the case, then we have *παρρησίαν πρὸς τὸν θεόν* (colon 108), that if we ask, we shall receive (colon 109) because we are obedient to his commandments (109.2) and do *τὰ ἀρεστὰ* him (colon 110). Confidence before God is one result of an untroubled conscience (Smalley 1984:204). If we keep God's commandments, we dwell in him and his Spirit gives us knowledge that we truly dwell in him. (Colon 114). Du Rand (1979:17) contends that *ἐν τούτῳ* (colon 114) refers proleptically to the *πνεῦμα*, which we have received.

3.5.4.6.2 Descriptive identification of important themes

In the previous section, believers were exhorted not to harden their hearts towards their needy bothers and sisters but to demonstrate their love in action and in truth (Edwards 1996:77; Bruce 1970:98). In the present section, its thesis is stated in verse 19 and 20, 'This then is how we know that we belong to the truth, and how we set our hearts at rest in his presence, whenever our hearts condemn us. For God is greater than our hearts and he knows everything' (Longacre 1992:275).

O' Neill (1966:42) leaving aside verse 19 and 20, sums up the teaching in verses 20 and 21 that the person whose own heart does not condemn him/her can make petitions to God in confidence that he will receive whatever he/she asks because he/she keeps God's commandments. The author says that if believers demonstrate their love in action then they are of the truth (*ἀληθείας*) and they have confidence (*παρρησίαν*) before God. Confidence

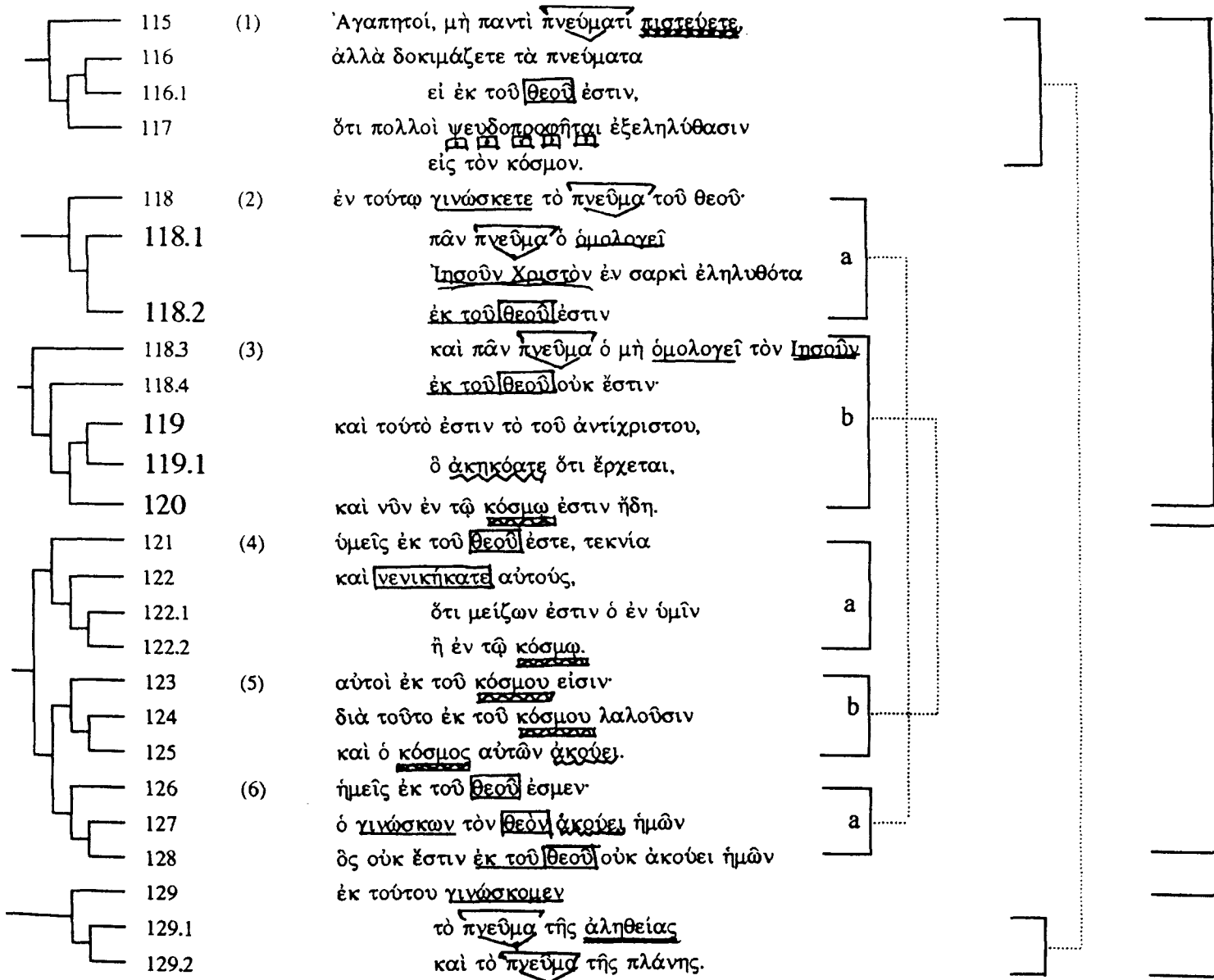
is assured even in the face of an accusing conscience because of God's mercy that immensely surpasses people's hearts (Feuillet 1973:208).

Faith, love, right conduct and obedience to God's commandments are inextricably bound up together (Edwards 1996:77). They are identified by the author as belonging to the realm of God and therefore belonging to all who are born of God. They are a source of confidence before God resulting from divine love and divine fellowship (Feuillet 1973:207). In verse, the author adds another reason for confidence, namely that *γινώσκουμεν ὅτι μένει ἐν ἡμῖν, ἐκ τοῦ πνεύματος οὗ ἡμῖν ἔδωκεν* (O' Neill 1966:42; Feuillet 1973:208). The mutual abiding between God and the believer is as a result of obedience to God's commandments. Obedience is not the course but the proof of His people's dwelling in Him (Bruce 1973:100).

3.5.4.7 Section 3.6 (Cola 115-129)

1 Jn 4:1-6

CHAPTER 4



3.5.4.7.1 Brief remarks about the structure

Cola 115-129 constitute a unit (Brown 1982:501; Marshall 1978:203; O' Neill 1966:46), concentrating on the Spirit-given ability to confess Jesus Christ truly as one come in the flesh (Brown 1982:502). It also has close relations with preceding units (du Rand 1979:10). The stylistic interruption provided by ἄγαπητοί in colon 115 raises the question whether cola 115-129 belong together with above cola 46-114. According to du Rand (1979:10) structural results show that cola 115-129 belong to division 3. Πνεῦμα from the previous section provides a transition by reference to the spirits in 3:24 (Colon 114.1) (Smalley 1984:217; Marshall 1978:203;), or a hinge to the next structural group (du Rand 1979:11). Πνεῦμα in colon 114 provides a transition-hinge to the present section. Brown (1982:501) and Marshall (1978:203) state that this passage 4:1-6 (cola 115-129) constitute a unit. Brown (1982:502) further states that within the unit, there is a clear subdivision between vv. 1-3 and 4-6. (Cola 115 -120 and cola 121-129).

The Johannine dualism is displayed in this section in the author's identification of the existence of two groups of spirits. The spirits are a symbol representing either good or evil. Therefore, that author in line with the Johannine style of argumentation, identifies these groups by drawing a contrast between the spirits which are ἐκ τοῦ θεοῦ (colon 118) and those which are not of God (cola 118-120) but of the world. He therefore establishes the criteria by which to test the spirits – confession. Every spirit that ὁμολογεῖ Ἰησοῦν Χριστὸν ἐν σαρκὶ ἐληλυθότα ἐκ τοῦ θεοῦ ἔστιν (colon 118.1,2). And πᾶν πνεῦμα ὃ μὴ ὁμολογεῖ τὸν Ἰησοῦν ἐκ τοῦ θεοῦ οὐκ ἔστιν (colon 118.3,4).

The argument in cola 115-120 is accentuated in cola 121-129. The two groups are strung between ὑμεῖς and αὐτοὶ in cola 121; 123; and 126 thus creating an aba construction. The ὑμεῖς are ἐκ τοῦ θεοῦ (colon 121, 126) whereas the αὐτοὶ are ἐκ τοῦ κόσμῳ (colon 123). Those who are of God listen to God's messengers. Those who are of the world do not listen to them but to those of their kind. Du Rand (1979:18) treats colon 129 as a separate pericope. Our contention against that division is the fact that it provides a conclusion to this whole section and for that reason we are convinced that it is part of it rather than a separate pericope. Ἐκ τούτου (literally – from this) appears to strengthen the argument that cola 129 belong together with the preceding section. Brown (1982:500) claims that ἐκ τούτου refers unambiguously to what has preceded.

3.5.4.7.2 Descriptive identification of important themes

The author acknowledges the existence of an opposing spirit to God embodied in the actions of those whom he calls ψευδοπροφῆται. As Edwards (1996: 78) states, the concept of false prophets is familiar from the Hebrew Bible and elsewhere in the New Testament; but that this must allude to a contemporary situation in the Johannine community. There had arisen among them those whom he identifies with ψευδοπροφῆται, which stands in opposition to the Spirit of God.

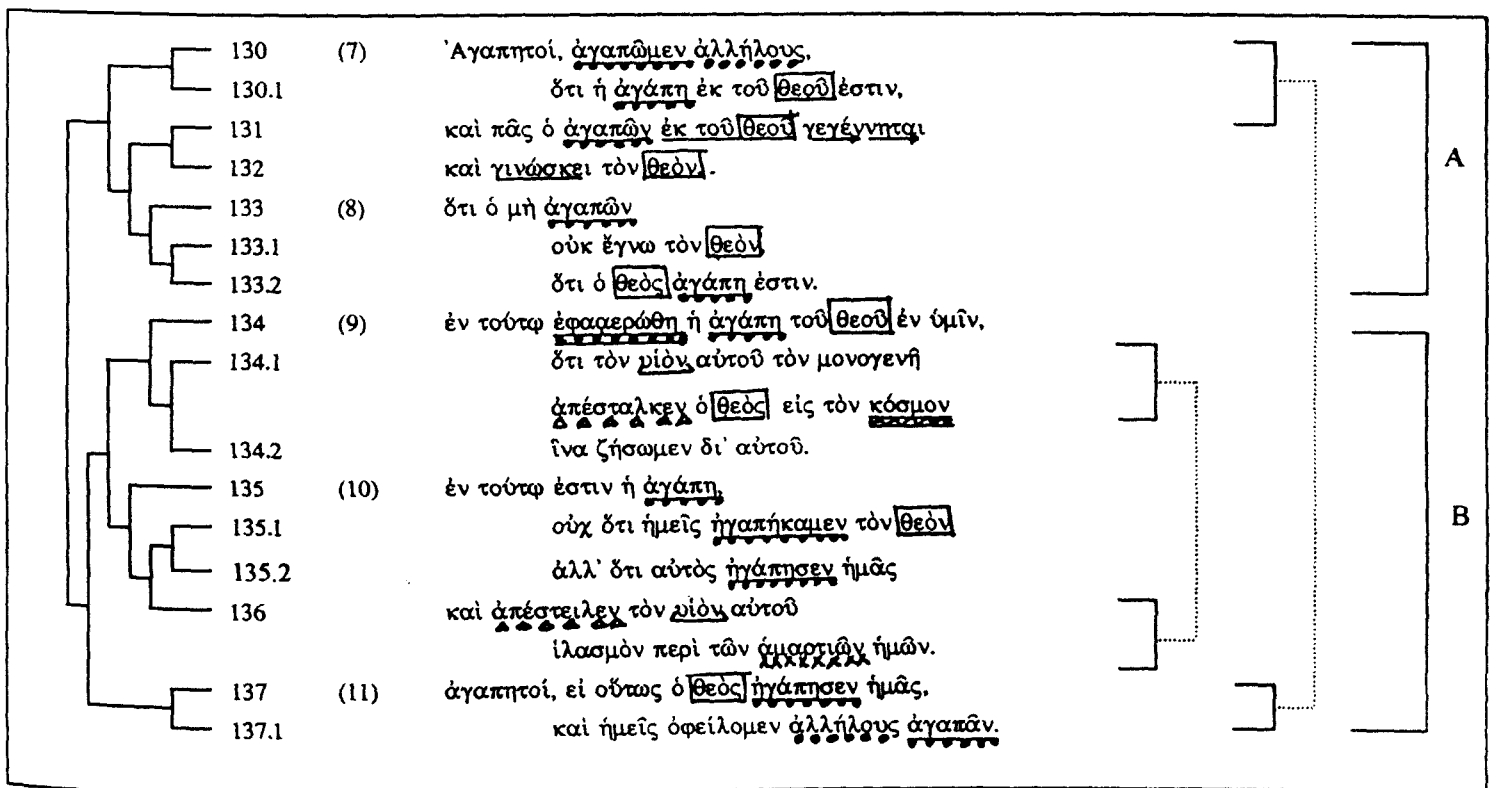
In verse 2 and 3, a criteria by which the spirits could be tested, is established, that is: πᾶν πνεῦμα ὃ ὁμολογεῖ Ἰησοῦν Χριστὸν ἐν σαρκὶ ἐληλυθότα ἐκ τοῦ θεοῦ ἐστίν (1 John 4:3) (O' Neill 1966:48), και πᾶν πνεῦμα ὃ μὴ ὁμολογεῖ τὸν Ἰησοῦν ἐκ τοῦ θεοῦ οὐκ ἔστιν, but of the antichrist of whom

they have heard that it was coming; and now it is in the world already. No matter how charming, how plausible, how eloquent the prophet in question may be, the test of their witness to Christ and His truth is the test by which they should be judged (Bruce 1970:105).

Believers are of God's family (Williams 1965:46) and have overcome the world because the one in them is greater than the one in the world (1 Jn 4:4). Another criteria by which the children of God could be discerned from those of the devil (Feuillet 1973:209), is treated in verses 4-10. The children of God listen to those who are of God whereas those who are not of God do not listen to us (Edwards 1996:78). Believers are therefore in no danger of confusing 'the Spirit of truth' with the 'spirit of error', the spirit that leads people astray (Bruce 1970:106).

3.5.5 Division 4, Section 4.1, Cola 130-165, 1 Jn 4:7-5:5

1 Jn 4:7-11



3.5.5.1 Brief remarks about the structure

Reference is made in colon 127 to the fact that believers are children of God and that those who know God listen to us (them) (JB). This provides a link with the present section in that in cola 132 and 133.1 reference to knowledge of God is made. In the previous section the dominant motif was filiation and that the readers are of God (du Rand 1979:20). In this section the author abruptly turns from his discussion of true and false spirits to appealing to his readers to love one another (Marshall 1978:210; Smalley 1984:235). However, the requirement of Christian love is related to the very nature of God himself (Smalley 1984:235). The believer's love of other believers is in response to God's own love demonstrated in his Son Jesus Christ. Ἀγάπη is the dominant motif in cola 130-137, occurring at least eleven times.

Cola 130-137 may be divided into two pericopes: A (130-133) and B (134-137). In pericope A, the author's hortatory injunction is stated in antithetical terms. He emphasises that love has its foundation and origin in God, and that whoever loves is born of God (identity) (1 Jn 4:7) (cola 130-131) and knows God (colon 132). The second part of the statement states the opposite, whoever does not love does not know God ὅτι ὁ θεὸς ἀγάπη ἔστιν. God is love has been described by Stott (1964:163) as the most comprehensive and sublime of all biblical affirmations about God's being.

Pericope B (cola 134-137) begins with ἐν τούτῳ, which in this case, as most scholars agree, seems to be a reference to what follows (Brown 1982:515). The love of God is revealed in that he sent (ἀπέσταλκεν) his only begotten Son into the world. The reason for the incarnation is in order that the world

might be saved through him (colon 134). Ἐν τούτῳ in colon 135 seems to be a reference to what has already been stated. The initiative to demonstrate love to humanity is God's; it does not originate with human beings. It is God who sent (ἀπέστειλεν) his only begotten Son to be an expiation for our sins (colon 136). The exhortation in colon 137 is based on the fact of God's love for us and is stated in conditional form. 'If' this is how God loved us, we ought to love one another (1 Jn 4:11).

3.5.5.2 Descriptive identification of important themes

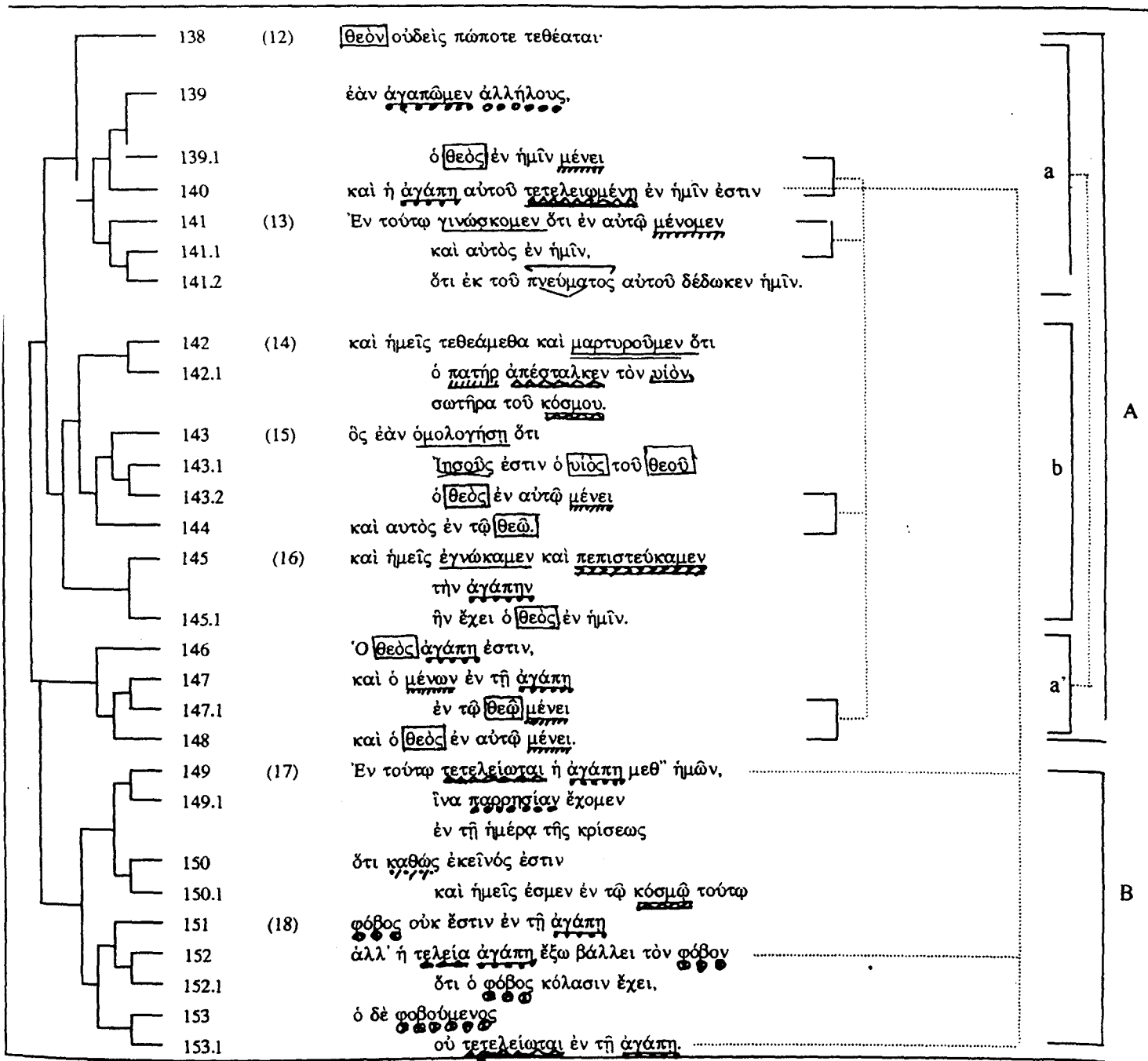
The theme of love dominates in 1 John, appearing first 2:5, 2:7-11, 15-17; 3:1-3, 10-18, 21-23, and in 5:1-3 (Edwards 1996:82). Klauck (1991:244) has described this section as *'eine sammlung von Liebesliedern'*. In this particular unit under discussion, the theme is derived from the initial exhortation found in verse 7, 'Beloved, let us love one another, for love comes from God'. The verses, which follow are theologically very significant since they are an amplification of the exhortation. The theme statement above reveals what is expected of the children of God. Since love has its wellspring in God, the children of God must reproduce their Father's nature (Bruce 1970:107).

God, apart from being the wellspring of love is also the motivation for mutual love (du Rand 1979:33). This love which derives from God and which the New Testament enjoins, involves a consuming passion for the well being of others. (Bruce 1970:107). This consuming passion God demonstrated in the incarnation (Williams 1965:48) when He sent his Son into the world so that

humanity might live through him (1 Jn 4:9). The love the author is speaking about is not our love but God's love for us.

3.5.5.3 Section 4.2 (Cola 138-153)

1 Jn 4:12-18



3.5.5.3.1 Brief remarks about the structure

Having stated in colon 137 that we ought to love one another, in colon 138, the author slips in a contrasting statement, against which his conclusion must be understood (Marshall 1978:216). He states that ‘No one has ever seen God, but if we love one another, God dwells in us’ (1 Jn 4:12). The idea of God’s invisibility is familiar in the Old Testament (Smalley 1984:246; Marshall 1978:216). This verse also echoes what is stated in Jn 1:18 where the author draws a contrast between the invisibility of God and the fact of his revelation in his incarnated Son, Jesus Christ (Marshall 1978:216).

Cola 138-153 may be divided into two pericopes: A (138-148) and B (149-153). In pericope A, the author introduces the criteria for the mutual indwelling of God and the Christian (Brown 1982:556). The criteria is: brotherly love (colon 139) and faith in Jesus as the Son of God (colon 143). Three subunits are also discernible within pericope A, that is, 138-141; 142-145; and 146-148.

Cola 138-141 deals with the mutual abiding of God within the believer and the believer in God. The mutual abiding is on condition that the believer loves other fellow believers. By keeping the love command, God’s love is perfected (Τετελειωμένη) in them. Colon 141 introduces another criterion by which they will know they abide in God and God in them.

Cola 142-145 seems to provide an answer to the statement made in colon 138 that 'No one has ever seen God'. Colon 142 begins by stating that they have seen (τεθεάμεθα) the incarnate Son (du Rand 1979:22) and therefore testifies that Jesus is from God and has been sent to be the Saviour of the world (colon 142). Therefore, a true confession of faith in Jesus as the Son of God becomes another criterion for dwelling or remaining in God (colon 143). Cola 146-148, as du Rand (1979:23) rightly points out, are a mere recapitulation of the preceding cola 138-141. Pericope B, cola 149-153 deals with the perfection of love among believers, leading to their having confidence (παρησία) on the day of judgement. Where there is perfect love, there is no room for fear (colon 151). Fear and love cannot coexist (Marshall 1978:224).

3.5.5.3.2 Descriptive identification of important themes

1 John 4:11-21, as Longacre (1992:275) rightly points out acts like an amplification and paraphrase of the preceding paragraph. The author picks up what has already been said and continues his hortatory injunction that 'if God so loved us we ought to love one another'. In his amplification, he adds a considerable amount of new material (Longacre 1992:276).

Westcott (1966:150) right points out that the character of God's love carries with it an obligation to love (v.11) through the fulfilment of which by the Spirit we gain the highest possible assurance of fellowship with God (vv. 12, 13). Bruce (1970:110) provides a very apt summation when he says that the Spirit persuades and enables us to believe in Jesus as the Son of God; He

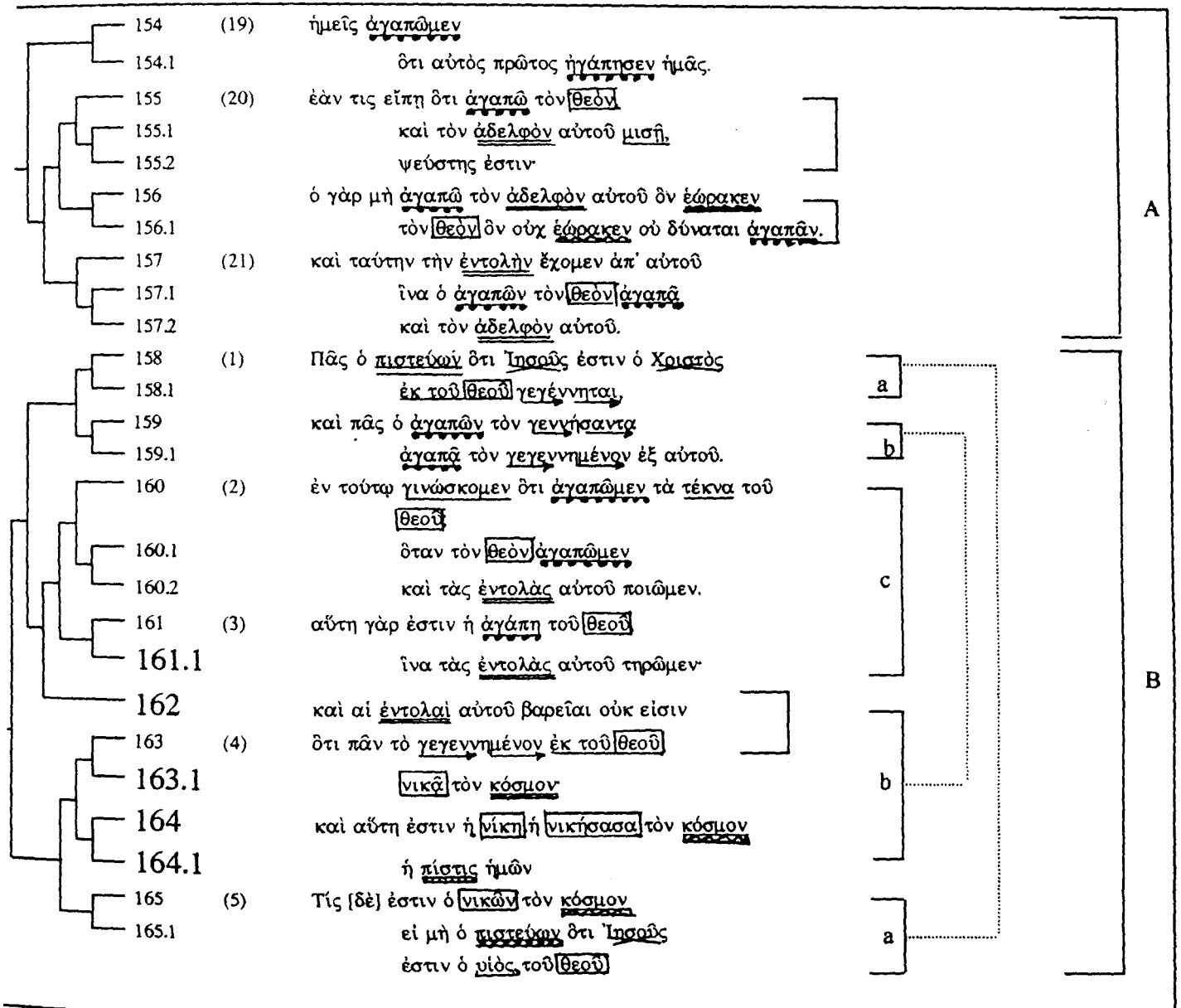
communicates to us the new life, which is ours as members of God's regenerate family.

In verse 17, the author reiterates what he stated in verse 12 but now he develops it in a new way (Williams 1965:50). The believer's dwelling in God is a source of confidence with which he or she will face judgement (Bruce 1970:113). Those who live in this relationship of love will not shrink on the day of judgement because in this world they are like him (1 Jn 4:17). True love excludes any fear (1 Jn 4:18). Fear, as Williams (1965:51) points out, anticipates and makes real the pains it fears and contemplates, it indicates a faulty love-relationship with God. The absence of fear is another criterion by which we judge whether we are in a relationship of love with God.

Just as fear has no place in a relationship of love, neither has hating one's brother. Love for God and hate for one's brother are mutually exclusive. It is impossible to love the unseen God, and to hate the brother who is visible (Williams 1965:51). Love for God becomes visible through love for the brother (du Rand 1979:33)

3.5.5.4 Section 4.3 (Cola 154-165)

1 Jn 4:19-5:5



3.5.5.4.1 Brief remarks about the structure

Section 4.3 may be divided into two pericopes: A (cola 154-157) and B (cola 158-165). Cola 154-157 continue the discussion on the same theme of love. According to the author, ἡμεῖς ἀγαπῶμεν, ὅτι αὐτὸς πρῶτος ἠγάπησεν ἡμᾶς. Brotherly love is in response to the love God has already demonstrated

in his Son, Jesus Christ. God's love, therefore, is prior (Marshall 1978:225); He loved us first (πρῶτον). If we fail to love a person whom we have seen, it is obvious then that loving God whom we have not seen is almost impossible. God's command is that whoever loves Him must also love his fellow human being (1 Jn 4:21). Love and faith are the contents of ἐντολή (cf. colon 111 above) (du Rand 1979:23).

In pericope B, cola 158-165, the themes of love and faith are pursued further. Colon 158 begins with an affirmation that whoever holds a true confession of faith about Jesus has been born of God (Marshall 1978:226). The test of whether believers love one another is by loving God and doing (ποιῶμεν) his commandments (τὰς ἐντολάς αὐτοῦ) (colon 160.2). Love for God and one another is dynamic love (Van der Watt 1999:509). It is seen in action as brought out by ποιῶμεν.

The commandment to love is not beyond their ability to keep (Marshall 1978:228), they are not βαρεῖαι. Brown (1982:567) states that the very status of being begotten by God makes Christians share in Jesus' victory over the world (colon 163). Faith in Jesus is the main constitutive factor in the victory, which believers have over the world (colon 164). Colon 165 accentuates the question of victory over the world by pointing out that the victor is one who believes that Jesus is the Son of God (NIV).

3.5.5.4.2 Descriptive identification of important themes

The theme of this unit can be summed up as follows: 'love for God entails love for God's children' (O' Neill 1966:54). This is summed up well in a

statement: 'We love because he loved us first'. What this means is that because of God's act of love in Jesus Christ, something has come into our hearts which releases a stream of love flowing out both to God and humanity (Williams 1965:51). Love if it is to remain in the Christian, must actively express itself in love for one's brother (Brown 1982:563).

According to the author, it is impossible to love the unseen God, and to hate the brother who is visible (Williams 196:51). Loving the brother whom one has seen is proof of the reality of the love of God. The author in chapter 5:1-5 continues the theme relating to the relationship between true love for God and love for God's children (Hiebert 1990:216). However, in 5:1 the theme of faith is mentioned, a thing, which has led many commentators to regard this as a sign that a new unit begins here (Brown 1982:565).

The faith that the author refers to here, is more than assenting to the proposition that Jesus is the promised Messiah; it means trust, commitment (Edwards 1996:83), a receptive attitude (Schlatter 1982:218), personal faith in Him, personal union with Him, who has been revealed 'in the flesh' (4:2) as the Christ and Son of God (Bruce 1970:116). Faith in Jesus is the key to victory over the hostile environment (Williams 1965:54).

Coming back to the theme of love, the author mentions that love for God issues in obedience, that is, in keeping his commandments (O' Neill 1973:54-55; Hiebert 1990:216), which are not burdensome. The reason why God's commandments are not burdensome lies in the fact that the new life imparted to members of the family of God carries with it a new desire to do his will and a new power to give effect to that desire (Bruce 1970:117).

Not only does the author in this unit continue with his treatment of the theme of love but previously discussed themes such as victory, divine begetting, and obedience to God's commandments are brought together here (Edwards 1996:78). The idea that those who are born of God overcome the world leads on to a further definition of that victory. The victory consists of faith in God's Son (O' Neill 1973:54).

3.5.5.5 Section 5.1 (Cola 166-178)

1 Jn 5:6-13

166	(6)	οὗτός ἐστιν ὁ ἐλθὼν δι' ὕδατος καὶ αἵματος, <u>Ἰησοῦς Χριστός</u>	A	
167		οὐκ ἐν τῷ ὕδατι μόνον,		
167.1		ἀλλ' ἐν τῷ ὕδατι καὶ ἐν τῷ αἵματι ·		
168		καὶ τὸ πνεῦμα ἐστὶν τὸ μαρτυροῦν,		
168.1		ὅτι τὸ πνεῦμα ἐστὶν ἡ ἀληθεία		
169	(7)	ὅτι τρεῖς τρεῖς εἰσὶν οἱ μαρτυροῦντες		
169.1	(8)	τὸ πνεῦμα καὶ τὸ ὕδωρ καὶ τὸ αἷμα		
170		καὶ οἱ τρεῖς εἰς τὸ ἓν εἰσιν.		
171	(9)	εἰ τὴν μαρτυρίαν τῶν ἀνθρώπων λαμβάνομεν,		
171.1		ἡ μαρτυρία τοῦ θεοῦ μείζων ἐστὶν		
171.2		ὅτι αὕτη ἐστὶν ἡ μαρτυρία τοῦ θεοῦ		
171.3		ὅτι μεμαρτύρηκεν περὶ τοῦ υἱοῦ αὐτοῦ.		
172	(10)	ὁ πιστεύων εἰς τὸν υἱὸν τοῦ θεοῦ		B
172.1		ἔχει τὴν μαρτυρίαν ἐν αὐτῷ.		
173		ὁ μὴ πιστεύων τῷ θεῷ		
173.1		ψεύστην πεποίηκεν αὐτὸν		
173.2		ὅτι οὐκ ἐπίσταικεν εἰς τὴν μαρτυρίαν		
173.3		ἣν μεμαρτύρηκεν ὁ θεός		
173.4		περὶ τοῦ υἱοῦ αὐτοῦ.		
174	(11)	καὶ αὕτη ἐστὶν ἡ μαρτυρία,	C	
174.1		ὅτι ζωὴν αἰώνιον ἔδωκεν ὁ θεός ἡμῖν		
175		καὶ αὕτη ἡ ζωὴ ἐν τῷ θεῷ αὐτοῦ ἐστίν.		
176	(12)	ὁ ἔχων τὸν υἱὸν	C	
176.1		ἔχει τὴν ζωὴν		
177		ὁ μὴ ἔχων τὸν υἱὸν τοῦ θεοῦ		
177.1		τὴν ζωὴν οὐκ ἔχει.		
178	(13)	Ταῦτα ἔγραψα ὑμῖν	C	
178.1		ἵνα εἰδῆτε ὅτι ζωὴν ἔχετε αἰώνιον,		
178.2		τοῖς πιστεύουσιν εἰς τὸ ὄνομα τοῦ υἱοῦ τοῦ θεοῦ		

3.5.5.5.1 Brief remarks about the structure

The demarcation of division 5 has posed a lot of problems for scholars. One group of scholars end division 4 at 5:4 (colon 163) (Brown 1982:512-3; Smalley 1984:274; Marshall 1978:218; Schneider 1961:180; The Jerusalem Bible (JB)). Another group ends division 4 at 5:5 (colon 165) (du Rand 1979:20; Du Plessis 1978:116; The Revised Standard Version (RSV)). A closer examination of these two verses shows a unity of thought. V.5 acts as a bridge between division 4 and 5 (Smalley 1984:275; Marshall 1978:230), linking up with the subject of faith and victory.

It has already been stated that colon 165, whether one decides to link it up with the preceding section or the present one, performs the same function of constituting the bridge to the section under discussion. Cola 166-178 may be divided into two pericopes: A (cola 166-173) and B (cola 174-178). In pericope A, μαρτυροῦν(τα) is mentioned ten times including colon 174, thus constituting “witness-bearing” a central theme of pericope A. Jesus came by water and blood and the Spirit (πνεῦμα) bears witness. Du Rand (1979:26) points out that the authenticity of the content of the witness in cola 166-168 lies in the testifying of the Holy Spirit.

In cola 172-173, πιστεύων features prominently thus emphasising the fact that the believer’s witness is dependent on believing in the Son of God. In pericope B, cola 174-178, there is a shift of emphasis from μαρτυρία to ζωὴν αἰώνιον. The fact of the believer’s possession of ζωὴν αἰώνιον is cast in term of witness from God (colon 174). Any person, who does not believe, makes God out to be a liar (ψεύστην). According to the author, the Son of

God is the embodiment of ζωὴν αἰώνιον (Colon 175) so that he who has the Son has life and he who does not have the Son of God has no ζωὴν. Jesus Christ is not only the content of witness; he is the ζωὴν αἰώνιον itself.

We have alluded above to the problems surrounding colon 178 with regard to whether it is part of this section or the concluding section. We will not engage in any further discussion here except to point out that it is a summary of section 5.1 (du Rand 1979:27) and that verse 13 functions as the introduction to this concluding section and acts as a bridge from the preceding section (Marshall 1978:243). Scholars have also pointed out the close parallel (which according to Brooke is by no means exact) that exists between colon 178 and John 20:31 (Brown 1982:605; Smalley 1984:290; Marshall 1978:243; du Rand 1979:27).

3.5.5.5.2 Descriptive identification of important themes

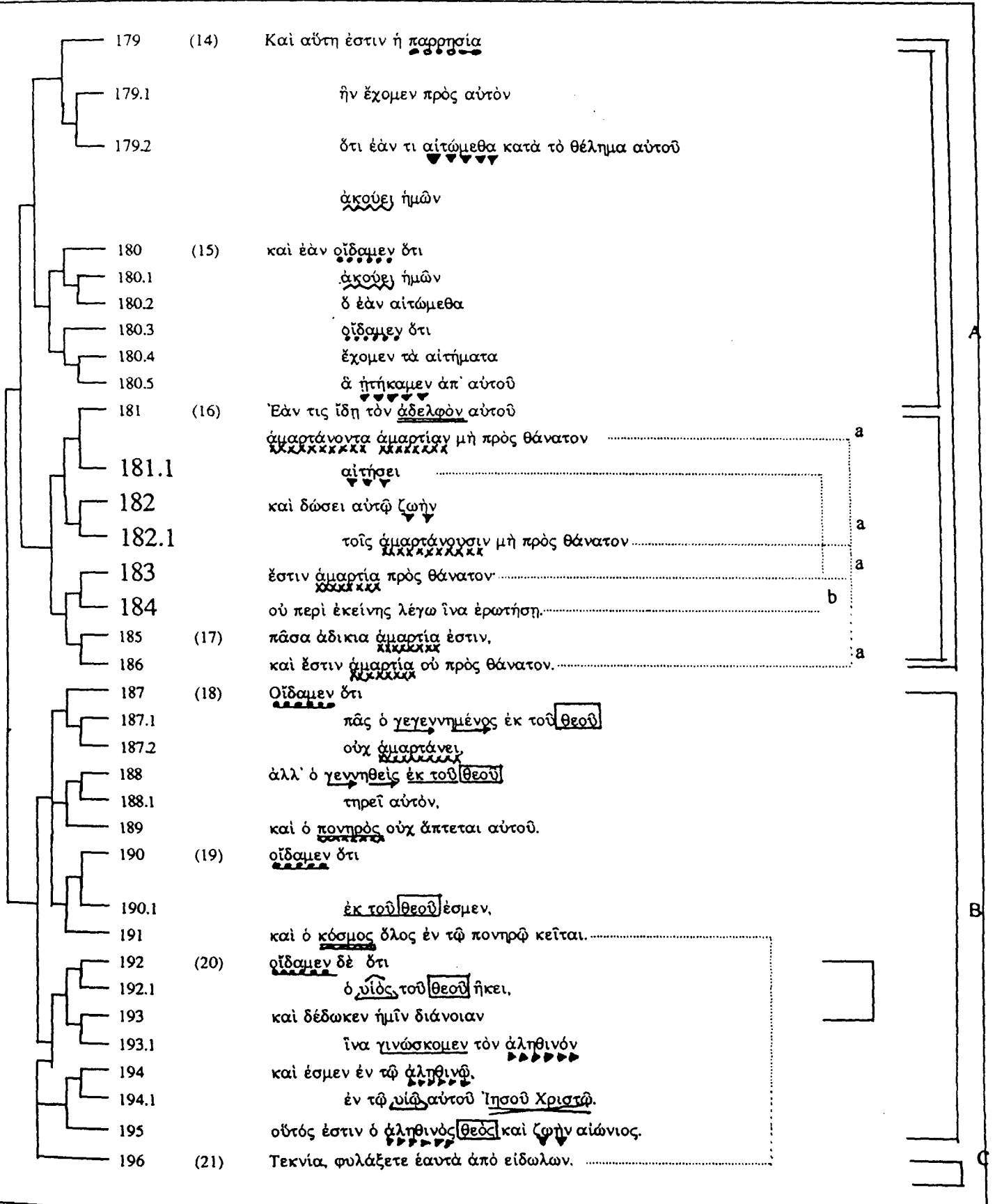
In verse 6 the emphasis is on the fact that there is more than one witness that Jesus is the Son of God, not only by water (of birth or baptism) but also by the blood he shed when He died on the cross (Miehle 1981:300). The theme of witness has not appeared since the Prooemium (Edwards 1996:79). The truth about Jesus Christ does not depend on the witness of the two but on the irrefutable witness of the Spirit (Williams 1965:56). The identity and the validity of the witnesses is then elaborated in greater detail in verses 8-9 (Miehle 1981:300). It is because the witness of the Spirit is true that we should accept it. The witness of the Spirit is the same as that of the Father. To accept the Spirit's witness is equal to accepting the Father's witness which he

has given about his Son. God's witness through the Spirit is far superior to human witness. It is a witness that does not belong to God alone, it is also said to be within the believer (Edwards 1966:79), that is, if a person chooses to accept this witness, the witness-bearing-Spirit resides within him or her (Bruce 1970:121).

The refusal to accept the witness of God in Jesus Christ is tantamount to calling God a liar. The acceptance of the reliability of the witness (Miehle 1981:300) means accepting the Son and he who accepts the Son receives eternal life, but if he or she refuses to accept the Son he or she does not have life (Marshall 1978:242). It is true, as Williams (1965:58) rightly points out that 'life indeed', true life, eternal life, is to be found from one source alone, from Jesus the Son of God who is the embodiment of eternal life (Bruce 1970:122). The life-symbol, which we identified earlier, is directly linked here with the person of Jesus, but it is a gift that is appropriated only through faith. Eternal life is the gift of life, the experience of fellowship with God through Christ (Stott 1964:185). Since eternal life is not separate from God but in God, believers by being united with Christ through faith are united with God (Westcott 1966:188).

3.5.6 Division Four, Section 5.2 (Cola 179-196)

1 Jn 5:14-21



3.5.6.1 Brief remarks about the structure

Issues surrounding the demarcation of division 5 are numerous. With regard to the present section, the issue concerns the structural position of colon 178 (du Rand 1979:25), whether it belongs to section 5.1 or 5.2. Brown (1982:605); Marshall (1978:242); Schneider (1961:184); the Jerusalem Bible (JB); New International Version (NIV) place colon 178 in the concluding section 5.2, whereas du Rand (1979:25); Du Plessis (1978:116); Smalley (1984:274) have colon 178 as part of section 5.1.

Du Rand (1979:27) notes that numerous motifs which occurred earlier in 1 John, occur again in section 5.2; for example the *παρρησία* motif (179), *ἀδελφὸν* (181), *οἶδα-γινώσκειν* (180,182,180,3, 187, 190, 192 193.1), *ζωή* (182 and 195), *ἁμαρτία* (181, 182, 183, 185, 187.2), *γεγέννημενος ἐκ τοῦ θεοῦ* (187.1, 188), and *ἕως τοῦ θεοῦ* (192.1, 194.1).

Colon 178, while it provides a conclusion to section 5.1 also introduces section 5.2. The following themes of knowledge and eternal life in colon 178 were identified earlier as pregnant with meaning within the symbolic universe of the author and his listeners, but now they are pursued further in cola 179-196. In colon 178, the author mentioned that he has written that they may know (*εἰδῆτε*). The 'know' motif runs through the whole section, that is, in cola 180,187,190, and 192 (Brown 1982:631). Likewise the theme of life mentioned in colon 178 reappears in cola 182 and 195.

This section may be divided into two pericopes: A (cola 179-186) and B (cola 187-196). Cola 179-186 deals with Christian παρρησία (confidence) (προς) in God. According to Brooke, the use of the preposition προς suggests a relationship, which is realised in active fellowship (in Smalley 1984:295). Christian παρρησία is based on the fact that whenever they ask κατὰ τὸ θέλημα αὐτοῦ, he hears (colon 179). Οἰδομεν in the context of this passage expresses their certainty at the fact that they have what they ask for. Κατὰ τὸ θέλημα qualifies this exuberant confidence; prayers have to be in accordance with God's will. The author then joins the thought of prayer to praying for the brethren who are committing sin (colon 181). Smalley (1984:297) sees this responsibility as the 'social' dimension of the Christian life.

Pericope B, cola 187-196, deals with certainty expressed in terms of οἰδομεν, that those γεγέννημενος ἐκ τοῦ θεοῦ do not commit sin (colon 187). The believer's certainty is accentuated by the fact that the one born (γεννηθεὶς) of God protects him and the evil one (ὁ πονηρὸς) cannot touch him. Γεννηθεὶς ἐκ τοῦ θεοῦ as rightly pointed out by Westcott, 194; Brooke, 148-49; Dodd, 138, is a reference to Jesus Christ (in Smalley 1984:303).).

Cola 190-191 continues the argument of cola 187-188, but the certainty of the children of God is set against unbelievers who are of the world which is under the power of the evil one (colon 191). Believers know that the Son of God has come to give them understanding (διάνοιαν) to know the true one (ἀληθινον), who is Jesus Christ (colon 194). Οὗτός ἐστιν ὁ ἀληθινὸς θεὸς καὶ ζωὴν αἰώνιος (colon 195). Colon 196, as du Rand (1979:28) notes is

syntactically loose from the rest but the contrast, which the author draws between the true God and εἰδώλων links this colon to the above cola.

3.5.6.2 Descriptive identification of important themes

The author states the reason for writing 1 John that it is to assure believers that they have eternal life (Edwards 1996:79). At verse 14, the author surprisingly introduces a new theme of prayer. The confidence-παρρησία, which is mentioned in this verse has to do with their present experience in prayer (Lieu 1991:89), that if prayers are made in accord with his will, then believers are sure that they will receive the things they have asked for (Williams 1965:59; Bruce 1970:123).

Believers are exhorted to pray for a fellow believer who is seen to be committing a sin and a prayer for such will be answered (Williams 1965:60). Believers should pray for all people unless their sin is 'unto death'. If it is, the author does not encourage intercession (Edwards 1996:80).

Those who are born of God do not continue sinning. This statement picks up the thought of 3:9. As Williams (1965:61) rightly points out, lawless behaviour in a Christian is ruled out, through the protection of the Son of God, who keeps him or her out of the clutches of the evil one. But believers know that they are of God's family as opposed to the world, which is under the control of the evil one (1 Jn 5:19). What is encouraging however, is the knowledge that believers have that the Son of God has come and has given them the ability to distinguish the True one (Edwards 1996:80) Jesus Christ, the true God and eternal life. The author ends by exhorting believers to avoid

anything that would lead them astray from this God who has revealed himself in Jesus (Marshall 1978:255).

3.5.7 Summary

An attempt has been made here to identify symbols that were not only conventional but central in the author's communication of his understanding of the divine mystery as he perceived it. Below we present a summary of what has been discovered in each division.

Division 1, constitutes the prologue of 1 John and begins by making reference to the ἀρχῆ. For the various possible interpretations of ἀρχῆ, see the commentary above on 1 Jn 1:1. The linking of ἀρχῆ with λόγος has led some theologians to thinking that this could be a reference to the pre-existence of Jesus the λόγος of God or the beginning could be the times when the tradition bearers first heard the message and believed (Williams 1965:17; Bruce 1970:35; Brown 1982:157). The relative clauses of verse 1 are repeated in verse 2 and both find their explanation in the phrase περὶ τοῦ λόγου τῆς ζωῆς, which constitutes the object of ἀπαγγέλλομεν. In verse two, the author claims sensory perception of τοῦ λόγου τῆς ζωῆς.

The central theme of the prologue as stated above is the proclamation of life, the life that has been revealed. Life has been identified in this division as an important symbol relating to the social conventions of the Mediterranean world. Those who accept and appropriate for themselves what is being proclaimed enter into a new relational state with one another and with God,

that is, they have *κοινωνία* with God and his Son and with fellow believers. *Κοινωνία* here is another symbol identified above, which is central to familial relations and represents an ideal state of family life within each family. The author points out that it is the proclamation of and reception of life that leads to fellowship-*κοινωνία* among the preachers and hearers and further leads still to a deeper reality, that is, fellowship with God and his Son. The Father and Son are two more important symbols we identified, which were common conventions operative within family and central in the author's stock of knowledge as he communicated his understanding of the Gospel message.

Division 2, cola 4-17 introduced another important symbol, the symbol of light. The author focused the reader's attention to the fact that God is light and the basis for fellowship. Ethical relationships among believers are defined in term of and against this background that God is light (Bruce 1970:41). Bruce further states that what this statement implies is that God is the source and essence of holiness and righteousness, goodness and truth; in Him there is nothing that is unholy or unrighteous, evil or false.

Believers who are in fellowship with God cannot continue doing the works of darkness, darkness being another symbol, which is used here in contrast to light. Hatred of one's fellow human being is excluded because it is in contrast to love, which belongs to God. But if believers fail to live up to this standard and fall into sin and therefore appeal to God's loving kindness and confess their sins, they are assured of God's forgiveness. Forgiveness plays a significant role in that without it fellowship within God's family is not possible. Over and above forgiveness believers are promised the help of the *παράκλητος*—Jesus Christ who is also their *ἰλασμος*.

What constitutes the central theological premise of this section is the fact that 'God is light and in Him there is no darkness at all' (1 Jn 1:5). Group terminology, that is, family language, is also evident in this section and is stated in terms of fellowship, forgiveness, cleansing and right conduct. Fellowship with God who is light means sharing a common life that belongs to Christians, a life of fellowship with God and with other Christians, and the process of our being cleansed from all sins is going forward (Williams 1965:20). The blood of Jesus which functions in a cultic sense here has significance within the *κοινωνία* context and provides continual purification (Westcott 1966:21).

But the buck does not stop there. The author introduces the theme of obedience to emphasise that it is a prerequisite to remain in fellowship with God, his Son and the rest of the Christian community. Obedience was an important word within the symbolic universe of the Johannine community. Also within the context of family, obedience is very central. Within the family of God, one must show obedience by keeping God's commandments (cola 18-32), which is, loving one's fellow Christians and walking as Jesus Christ walked (1 Jn 2:6).

The author also introduced another recurrent theme in the letter – knowledge of God (Edwards 1996:72). A comment has been made above on the importance of this word 'knowledge'. Within the author's universe it referred to the common stock of knowledge the author shared with the readers, which only could be demonstrated through obedience. Du Rand (1979:31) and Westcott (1966:45) see obedience to the commandments of God as the criterion for possession of knowledge. The author's purpose is to encourage

believers to be obedient and to show their unity with the Father and Son by imitating (Westcott 1966:45) or walking as Christ did (1 Jn 2:6).

A distinction is made in Section 2.3 (cola 33-45) between those who are in fellowship with God and those who belong to the world. Those who love the world are not of God but of the world. The children of God act in accordance with the θέλημα τοῦ θεοῦ, whereas those of the world love the world.

Division 3, cola 46-66) deals with a number of interrelated themes. The identity of the ἀντίχριστοι (cola 46-50) as well as those who possess the σχρῖσμα from God. The identity of those who are of this world and the children of God who are born of Him is established (cola 51-54). These are two symbols important in identifying and distinguishing who belongs to God and who does not.

The central theme of this unit however, is found in verse 23. The phrase ὁμολογῶν τὸν υἱὸν - 'acknowledging the Son' places the emphasis on the positive value of acknowledging that Jesus is the Christ against the negative status of those who do not do so, the latter are antichrist (Miehle 1981:274).

Each group distinguishes their origin by the nature of their confession. The ἀντίχριστοι deny that Jesus is the Christ whereas those who have the χρῖσμα of God confess the Son (cola 55-58). The author therefore exhorts believers to keep what they have heard from the beginning. The theme of abiding or remaining in Christ μένετε ἐν αὐτῷ is reintroduced. In order to remain in fellowship with the father and the Son, they must remain in him and as a result they will have παρρησία on the day of his revelation (cola 59-67).

Sin, is another symbol identified above, representing any action or violation of the group norms and values. It is also a distinguishing feature between those who are of the world and those born of God. The children of God are ethically upright (1 Jn 3:4-10) (cola 76-89). Love, which is a theme on its own, is also set up as a criterion for distinguishing the children of God from those of the devil. 'Children of God' indicate an intimate familial bond that exists between them and God or rather their introduction into the most intimate social structure, where they – irrespective of age or sex – become part of God's family (Van der Watt 2000:182). Love and children are two important symbols, which in this case are used in relation to God.

The children of God love one another and keep God's commandments as opposed to Cain who murdered his brother because he was of the evil one (ἐκ τοῦ πονηροῦ). The children of God show their love in action (1 Jn 3:11-24) (cola 90-103).

Chapter 4 begins by establishing the distinction between the spirits from the world and the ones from God. The identification is done through confession. The spirit of this world denies the incarnation of Jesus whereas the Spirit from God confesses Jesus as having come in the flesh (cola 115-129). The central theme of this pericope is having the right confession. He who confesses Jesus as having been born a human being identifies himself or herself as of God. The opposite is true of those who deny the incarnation of Jesus, they are of the spirit from the world.

Division 4, spells out that God is the foundation of true love, this love he demonstrated by sending Christ into the world to be its Saviour (1 Jn 4:9) and the ἰλασμος for our sins. The idea of loving one another in verse 7 is amplified in the following verses. The reason believers have to love one another is because love is of God. God is the one who first took the initiative to love. His love was demonstrated in the sending of His only begotten Son Jesus into the world. God's loving example in Christ should drive us into doing the same (cola 130-137).

Since God is the wellspring of love, the proper response to God's love is love for others (Edwards 1996:83). Believers are expected to exhibit the same loving character in their dealings with one another (Bruce 1970:107). Those who love their fellow human beings dwell in God and God in them. In this unit we observe a double command to faith and mutual love (Edwards 1996:83).

Loving ones brother is the first criterion for remaining in fellowship with God. The second criterion finds expression in the statement: whoever confesses that Jesus is the Son of God, God abides in him and he in God (1 Jn 4:15). Obedience to the love commandment and holding the right faith in Jesus as the Son of God result in victory over the world (cola 154-165).

Division 5, cola 166-196 provide a conclusion to 1 John and deals with witness about Jesus Christ which is authenticated by more than one witness, water, blood and the Spirit. It is witness that does not belong to God alone, it is within each person who has accepted the validity of the witness and ultimately put his or her faith in Jesus (Edwards 1996:79).

Jesus is the embodiment of eternal life, therefore, to accept him in faith is to receive eternal life and to reject him is tantamount to choosing the way of death and amounts to forfeiture of life (Bruce 1970:122).

In verse 13 (colon 179) the author writing to those who believe in the name of the Son of God, reiterates the purpose of his writing: 'I write this that you may know that you have eternal life'. The author wants to assure believers that they have eternal life (Painter 1979:123). Having given them assurance that they possess eternal life, the author moves on to a new theme of prayer. The word *παρρησία* - confidence is mentioned here in the context of prayer. Believers therefore are assured that when they ask in accordance with God's will their prayers will be answered (Williams 1965:59). Prayers are also to be offered for a member of the family of God who strays but not for those whose sin is unto death.

The concluding verses as Williams (1965:61) notes, closes with three great assertions, each introduced by '*we know*'. To be a child of God means one does not continue living in sin. Lawless behaviour is ruled out (Williams 1965:61). Believers receive a certain impeccability (Feuillet 1973:214) as a result of God's protection upon their lives. The certainty, which they possess, enables them to understand they possess eternal life. This confidence arises from the fact that they are in God because they are in, i.e. linked to and surrounded by, Jesus Christ (Williams 1965:61), who is the true God and eternal life (1 Jn 5:21).

Our aim as stated at the beginning of this chapter was to identify key symbols, which the author used as he provided members of his symbolic universe with fresh knowledge and insights in order to re-focus their attention to their new roles as members of God's family. The action of the breakaway group, which he now calls the Anti-christ convinced the author that members of his symbolic universe had not fully internalised all the typifications, meanings and responsibilities of their new identity as Christians. He was therefore forced in his argument to hop backward and forward demolishing as well as re-emphasising fundamental truths and defining boundaries that pertain to their new status and universe.

In this chapter, we have also been able to isolate and identify important symbols and themes that would help in the further development of this thesis. In order to come to terms with John's symbolic universe which the author reinterprets in order to provide new typifications, meanings and obligations associated with their new status as children or members of God's family, the discussion in the next chapter will further develop and systematically describe these symbols and themes.