

2 John 1:1 (Ralph Evans) 141603

The Second Epistle of John, Second Epistle of John, The (1:1)

Verse 1. "The elder to the elect lady," and so forth. The Son of God having come, and given us an understanding that we should know Him that is true — of whom else could that be said? — grace and truth subsists (they flow together in the mind of the Spirit), by Jesus Christ. And being in Him that is true, the true God, we are responsible to maintain the truth individually. If the church fails practically in its place of pillar and ground of the truth, an elect lady's responsibility to, maintain the truth, in keeping Christ's word and not denying His name, is not affected by the general unfaithfulness. If any one comes, and brings not with him the true doctrine of Christ, he is not to be received into the house, nor greeted, under pain of being considered a partaker of his evil works.

Walking in truth (New Trans.) refers to a walk guided by the knowledge of the truth, as it is in Him, who is the Truth. We have seen that grace and truth subsist by Him. Creation and redemption, judgment and glory, are only understood from their relation to Him. Satan is known as Satan, because he is His adversary; the world, in its moral character, because it refused to know Him. "O righteous Father, the world has not known thee." But not only is Christ Himself personally the truth, as He said, "I am the truth," but of the Holy Ghost also it is said, "It is the Spirit that beareth witness, because the Spirit is the truth." The terms here are reciprocal, as in the sentence, "Sin is lawlessness," where the terms can be transposed, "Lawlessness is sin." And also in John 1, "The life was the light of men." The light of men was the life, and nothing else was that.

There are three that bear witness, but prominence is given in that precious passage to the witness of the Holy Ghost, because He is the living power of the testimony to, and in, the hearts of believers; it is through Him we understand the meaning of the water and the blood. If God has given us an understanding to know Him that is true, it is by the Spirit.

Verse 2. "Abides in us and shall be with us to eternity." Glorious thought! reminding us of John 14:17, "abides with you, and shall be in you." The Spirit is ever the power of truth. (Compare 2 Cor. 3:17). "The Lord is that Spirit," referring to verse 6. The Lord was in the mind of the Spirit, He, the Lord, was the Spirit of the Old Testament, so to speak, the true aim and object throughout. I think the connection of these verses 6 and 17, might be explained by these words of John, "the Spirit is the truth." The mind of the Spirit is certainly always the truth. Thus it would be the truth, by the truth uttering knowledge.

The obedience and love, so earnestly pressed, belong to the truth in which this beloved lady and her children walked; where they are not found, there the truth is not.

Verse 8. "Look to yourselves, that we lose not those things which we have wrought, but that we receive a full reward." Where does one find in these last days anything like this deep sense of responsibility to the Lord in service, as manifested in this verse, and also in 1 John 2:28, "Lest we [the apostles] should be ashamed before him at his coming," and "lest we should lose any of the things we have wrought," or come short of a full reward! Surely these exercises of the apostle's spirit might well awaken deep searchings of heart in many of us in this last time.