

## 2 John - Commentaries by Unknown Author

Christian Treasury: Volume 7, Remedy, The (1:6)

In 2 John 6, the Apostle John exhorts the elect lady and those with her by saying: "And this is love, that we walk after His commandments. This is the commandment, That, as ye have heard from the beginning, ye should walk in it."

John had seen the Lord in His wondrous life, had seen Him die on the cross, was a witness of His resurrection, beheld Him taken up into heaven, and was present on the day of Pentecost. That day of Pentecost was when the Holy Spirit came down from an ascended Christ to baptize believers into one body and thus form the Church. He also had lived long enough to see evil come into the circle of the professing Church.

But what is the remedy? Is it to begin afresh with a new and purer sect or an improved constitution? Listen to his reply by the Holy Spirit: "This is the commandment, That, as ye have heard from the beginning, ye should walk in it." So the Spirit of God makes it plain that He does not allow man's innovation to trespass upon the sacred principles of God's Word for the guidance of His people, no matter what their exercises may be, or whatever the date of their history.

Now apply this principle today and you must find yourself in one of two positions—either on God's ground of gathering the disciples at the beginning, or on some ground that man, in his fancied wisdom or mistaken zeal has set up since the beginning.

Christian Treasury: Volume 7, As Ye Have Heard From the Beginning (1:6)

If you look at 2 John 6, you will find that the elect lady and those with her are exhorted thus: "And this is love, that we walk after His commandments. This is the commandment, That, as ye have heard from the beginning, ye should walk in it."

John had seen the Lord in His wondrous life, had seen Him die on the cross, was a witness of His resurrection, and beheld Him taken up into heaven. He was present on the day of Pentecost when the Holy Spirit came down from an ascended Christ to baptize believers into one body and thus form the Church. He had lived long enough to see evil come into the circle of the professing church.

What is the remedy? Is it to begin afresh with a new and purer sect or an improved constitution? Listen to his reply by the Holy Spirit: "This is the commandment, That, as ye have heard from the beginning, ye should walk in it." The Spirit of God makes it plain that He suffers no innovation of man to trespass on the sacred principles of God's Word for the guidance of His people, whatever their exercises may be, or whatever the date of their history.

Now apply this principle today and you must find yourself in one of two positions—either on God's ground of gathering the disciples at the beginning, or on some ground that man, in his fancied wisdom or mistaken zeal, has set up since the beginning.

J. G. Bellett

Des Moines Conference: 2003, 2 John 1 (1:1)

### Reading

Covered in depth at all the first chapter, but I would still suggest that we go to the second, and as the spirit of God leads, we can certainly refer back to the 1st and so on. I'm sorry, not the second chapter, but the second epistle. 2nd Epistle of John. Verse one. The elder unto the elect lady, and her children, whom I love in the truth, and not I only, but also all they that have known the truth. For the truth's sake which dwelleth in US, and shall be with us forever. Grace be with you mercy and peace from God the Father and from the Lord Jesus Christ the Son of the Father, in truth and love. I rejoiced greatly that I found of Thy children walking in truth, as we have received a commandment from the Father. And now I beseech thee, lady, not as though I wrote a new commandment unto thee, but that which we had from the beginning, that we love one another. And this is love that we walk after His commandments. This is the commandment that, as you have heard from the beginning, ye should walk in it. For many deceivers are entered into the world who confess not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh. This is a deceiver and an Antichrist. Look to yourselves that we lose not those things which we have wrought, but that we receive a full reward.

Whosoever transgresseth and abideth not in the doctrine of Christ, hath not God. He that abideth in the doctrine of Christ, he hath both the Father and the Son. If there come any unto you, and bring not this doctrine, receive him not into your house, neither bid him Godspeed, for he that biddeth him Godspeed is partaker of his evil deeds. Having many things to write unto you, I would not write with paper and ink, but I trust to come unto you and speak face to face, that our joy may be full. The children of Thine elect sister greet thee. Amen. Just make one short comment that I've personally enjoyed. We have here a father speaking now in the most endearing terms to those that are precious to his heart. And though love is mentioned in both of these chapters, that is in both of these epistles, the 2nd and the 3rd, it seems that in the second that love led to the warning of those that would bring a wicked doctrine and these things into the home. And in the third chapter there

is the Father encouraging 1 to go on in love, it seems like you might say, at least for myself, it's helped me to think of the second epistle as a little bit of an explanation of the verse we have in first John. God is light, and that light comes in and it shows the deceivers that would come into the home and love would warn against them and keep that home. Protected and the children and those in it. And then in the third epistle you have one who is seeking to have a prominent place. How? How are they going to go on in spite of such difficulties in the assembly? Well, he says to Gaius in verse six of the third, which have borne witness of thy love before the assembly. And so on. So it seems that light is taken up and encouraged in love by a father, and that father in love takes up the thought of love. God is light and God is love. In the 3rd. And we need them both, don't we? And here is a father who is opening his heart now for the preservation. And I'm using this as just a general thing, but here's a father opening his heart for the preservation of the home and the preservation of the assembly, light and love. Isn't it interesting that? Spirit of God directs. The instruction as to keeping out of the home. That which is dishonouring to the Lord. Directs that to a woman. And. To the encouragement of receiving. To a man, and I believe that it's the wisdom of God in doing so, who keeps the home. Fathers out making a living or whatever, But constantly Satan makes an assault on the home, doesn't he? And not just one deceiver, but many deceivers. And the wisdom of God is brought out here in shutting the door. I've enjoyed the thought that in the in the 6th of Deuteronomy. The Scriptures were to be written upon. The doorposts upon the boats and upon the gates. The gates are that which keep out and let in, aren't they? And it's the Word of God that is the. Arbitrator of who should come in and who should not come in. There's a danger of keeping out those who should come in, and there's a danger of letting in those who should not be let in, in this particular epistle. The Spirit of God occupies us with some who should be denied entrance, the word of God being upon the gates of the house, and I believe it's very, very important for the preservation of the.

Of the Lord's people that this epistle be understood and practiced. Trying to add Brother \*\*\*\*. Just a quick comment to your excellent point. Turn please to Proverbs chapter 14. This was pointed out to me sometime back, and it has been a tremendous help and an encouragement to me, and I would like to share it, especially at least what the Lord has made good to one's own heart for our beloved sisters. In light of what our brother \*\*\*\* has said about the Home Proverbs chapter 14, I'm going to read it in the King James Version. First of all, that we have every wise woman buildeth her house. I'm going to read it in Mr. Darby's translation. The wisdom of women buildeth their house. I believe there is, as our brother has mentioned, in that God-given sphere, the Lord gives a special wisdom to the woman, and that wisdom, if used in the fear of God that's given to a woman in the home, builds that home. May the Lord help us to encourage our beloved sisters. By. Just by encouraging them to be builders, to use the wisdom God has given as a woman in a home to build that home. And I'm sure that there's no no man in the room that would deny that when it comes to just plain good solid intelligence, his wife got it all over him. But. She has a tender heart. And she. Has deep compassions. And Satan used that way back in the Garden of Eden against Eve. And so how fitting that here the apostle Paul directs his comments to the woman of the home in the way he does it. Don't forget that he was probably maybe in his early 90s when this was written. I don't think there's anybody in this room that's that old that has quite the intelligence that we are reading here, but it's amazing the spirit of God uses this. To touch the woman. Not that she lose her tender and. Gracious heart, but that she used the wisdom that you've just talked about to resist this evil. 1 And that's what we've got before us in this chapter. The enemy has always been busy to destroy what God has set up and established for the blessing of man on the earth. There were two great institutions set up and established for the blessing of man on the earth. The first was the home, the family, and the second was the assembly. And when has there ever been a day, brethren, when the enemy is as busy to destroy the home as the day in which we live? And not just the home, but the Christian home. You know, I hear about things that take place in sad situations that when I was growing up, you heard about in the world. You heard about in the homes where the parents weren't believers. But aren't we hearing things that are coming into the home today? Situations and attacks that you never heard about a few years ago. Satan is busy, I say to throw down and everything that God has established for the blessing of man. And I believe we need to be careful. And this epistle is a warning. You know in other of the Apostolic writings and other of scripture in the New Testament we have warnings against worldliness coming into the home, and we often read those and we say, yes, we need to keep the world out of our home. But this is something a little different here, isn't it? This is not necessarily looseness or what we would consider worldliness. This is false teaching. And brethren, sometimes when I go into the homes of the Saints of God, I see things in that home. Books in that home, writings in that home that I sometimes it makes me cringe. In my soul, I'm speaking very, very plainly. We say, well, we wouldn't have this in the home and we wouldn't have that because it's worldly, or it's evil, or it's whatever. But what about those things that subvert our souls and undermine the truth?

This lady was written to hear not so much in connection with guarding against worldliness coming into the home, but in connection with things that were not according to the truth we've had before us in the meeting previous the person of Christ, the work of Christ. And brethren, if there are those things that undermine the truth of God in that regard, let's be careful, sisters, brothers, let's be careful that we don't allow those things in our home. And if you allow me just to say this too, in connection with the sisters, I believe this epistle shows the need for a sister being well rooted and grounded in the truth. When that knot comes at the door, when that book comes into the house, how is the sister going to detect that it's false? She's going to detect that it's false and needs to be kept out by being grounded and established in the truth herself. I think sometimes the sisters feel that reading good solid ministry is just for the brothers. It's not sisters. Young sister learned to go to your father's bookshelf, pull off some of those good helps on scripture. Good Christ, exalting ministry. That was written by men who went on in the truth of God. Of course, there's no substitute for the word of God. You need that every day. But read those helps. Be grounded, be rooted in these things. And then you'll be like the teller at the bank. When something counterfeit is handed to the teller at the bank, how does she detect it? Because she's used to false money. No, she'd lose her job. If she handled and got used to false money, but she detects it because she is used to that which is real, and as soon as a counterfeit bill is handed across the counter, she says, oh, that doesn't have the feel and you'll only detect that which doesn't ring of the truth if you're established in the truth yourself. Some years ago in the Dominican Republic, my attention was called to a a verse that I had never thought in that about in that connection, and that is first Timothy 2 and verse 11. We often talk about verse 12. But verse 11 is important, and it bears out what Brother Jim has been saying. What does it say? Let the woman don't pay any attention to let her husband learn. What does it say? Let the woman learn. She's to learn, and his brother in Dominican Republic called that to my attention. They said wow, I've never thought of that before, but it does. It's a positive exhortation to learn, isn't it? Now, how she learns and what she does with what she learns is what the the next verse takes up. He isn't called upon to teach, but she she is called upon to stand as a guardian at the door of the house on those things. And if she doesn't learn, and I I I enjoyed that thought. There it is, a positive exhortation. To his sister to learn. Is putting forth the best authors today in this regard? And one of the earmarks, if you pick up a book, your interest is captured. Oh, this is great. This is following along. And all of a sudden you come to a bump and you say, well, this don't sound quite right, but let's go on. And so again, you, you go on and then you hit another situation. Well, by the time we hit the second one, we better realize that this book is to go, because that isn't the truth of God. We don't receive it that way. And one

of the books that I had in my hand recently was a name of one that we well know that was used for blessing in the 1800s. And I picked up this book. He had the same name and his bowl on the front cover. Very interesting writer, but all of a sudden he come to a bump. Something's not right here. It's just best to close it and set aside. We're not equal to. Cope with this kind of reading. That's important what you say, because it was said to Ruth Gleen not in another man's field, and were to know the truth and were to learn it from those whom we've known. And when we pick up books by people that we don't know the end of their conversation, we don't know how they live. We don't know what their doctrine is. It may even sound all right, but we're not to learn the truth from them. We're to learn the truth from men that we've known, how they've raised their children, how they've walked before God in the assembly, how they've ended their conversation. It says, considering the end of their conversation or the end of their way of life. And you may hear some pretty good things if you.

Listen to. Things from all different kinds of places. And Moses desired that all them in the camp would prophecy. But we're not to go to the camp to listen to prophecy. I walked by the Catholic Church and I know that they read the scriptures in the Catholic Church. I know a man who was looking for wisdom as to what to do. He prayed to God and the priest got up and said let him that name it the name of the Lord depart from iniquity in that very scripture. Let him out of there. But I'm not going to go there to listen to it. And so we can thank God for anything help that anybody gets, but we shouldn't go to those who do not know. We have not known how they ended their conversation. And you may pick up a book on the assembly by somebody who's never walked in the truth of the Assembly. It would be like me writing a tourist guide to Moscow. I've never been there. I might tell you all kinds of interesting things, but I don't know a thing about the place. And so I can't write about the truth of the assembly if I've never been there. We're going to read about the difficulties in the next epistle of a man who was there. We need to get the truth from those who have walked in the truth and valued the truth. And there's something else here. And I believe because it's Speaking of the home that's important, is that I whom I love in the truth. And we often say divine love loves the unlovely, and that is true. But the sphere of John's affections were for those that loved he loved them in the truth, and those who had known the truth. And the home is the home is to be that sphere where the truth is to be the environment of truth in the home. And we can disturb that by bringing in influences into the home of those that really don't love the truth or know the truth. There's nothing wrong with seeking the fella. It's the positive thing in Christianity to love those that walk in the truth and have known the truth. Sorry, certainly those that have. Followed the word of God and written profitable ministry is good. But you know, we only have one real touchstone. Only one. We don't have Darby. We don't have Kelly. We don't have Macintosh. We only have one. And here it is right here in our hand. And the Bereans were sitting under the ministry of the apostle, the greatest apostle that ever lived. And when they got all through, it says they searched the scripture. You know, that's what we have to do. If we read a book and maybe it, it sounds good and we're not quite sure. Hey, the place to go is right here. It's the only touchstone we have. I say it again, It's the only touchstone we have. We don't have Darby as a touchstone. We don't have Kelly as a touchstone. We have the word of God and brethren. That's what John is saying to this lady. That's what he's telling. I remember in a conference once in the East, I someone raised a question. What is the truth? We have a kind of a narrow view of that sometimes. I think we we talk about the truth of gathering as being the truth, and now I value that. I appreciate the truth of gathering. But a brother answered in a wonderful way, and I've treasured his answer ever since. The truth is God's viewpoint on any matter Now, bearing out what our brother Dave said, where else are you going to get God's viewpoint? You might get help toward understanding it from all these wonderful writings. I have a little bit of fear and I've expressed it to some of what I call The CW 21, page 64. Syndrome where people? Think that ends the conversation. CW meaning collected writings which I value and having in my in my library and also in the disk that has them on. But that isn't the final answer on anything. That's not the final answer. So let's be careful of CW 21 page 64 syndrome that we so easily fall into where we think that settles the matter because we found a quotation in the collected writings that seems to to support that and that's not to take away at all from that ministry. That's wonderful ministry. I've enjoyed it and with the many four of us would enjoy it together. But when John talks about the truth here.

He's not talking about the collective writings, is he? That's not what he's talking about. He's talking about God's viewpoint, and it's particularly in the in the gut and the epistles of John. He's talking about God's viewpoint as to the person and work of the Lord Jesus Christ. We get. Worked up over moral sin, and rightly so. But I remember a brother ministering one time on the final chapters of Judges. I think starting with Chapter 17. It's no longer the history of of the Book of Judges. It's really a moral summary of the Book of Judges. And the events don't necessarily come after the story of Sampson Sampson's The Moral close of That. Of the Book of Judges. And then comes two summaries, and the children of Israel, when? The concubine was handled in a way that was disgraceful. They rose up in anger. They came right to the to the to the battle for that. But what about when the truth of the worship of the living God was affected? Was it the same exercise? I'm afraid that we can get worked up over moral sin a lot more quickly than we can over doctrinal sin. Doctrine is serious. Doctrine meaning teaching. Teaching and if we know the truth of God as to the person and work of the Lord Jesus Christ, particularly in the ministry of John here, I don't think it necessarily refers to assembly truth, does it? It's talking about the truth as to the person of Christ. It's vital. There could be no compromise on that. And if we know that, then that's why he talks about. The truth sake which abides in US and shall be forever for eternity. The truth is something that God has given to us graciously in His Word, and I believe we ought to make it our business to learn the truth. They say, does that brother minister the truth? Well, how do we know? If he ministers the truth, Brother Dave, how would we know better? Look at our Bible and find out. I think it is important, as \*\*\*\* said, that we see that what he refers to as the truth here is truth in connection with the person and work of Christ, because that's the basis. Nothing else is going to be right. There are many Christians who, as far as their manner of life put me to shame. They have a very pious manner of life. They have zeal for the Lord, but they're not clear on the sinless humanity of Christ. They're not clear on eternal security. And many of these things that go back and directly attack the deity of the Lord Jesus Christ. And this is what John was particularly bringing before them. And it's interesting in John chapter 8, there are two things mentioned that I've connected with this because you know, it's possible to know the truth and to be clear as ice and just as cold, but when we take up the truth and connection, relationship to the person of Christ, then our hearts are going to be affected. And when our hearts are affected, then there's going to be a practical moral effect, because our feet will follow. I'll just quote the scriptures. They're well known. But it says first of all, in John eight, he shall know the truth and the truth shall make you free. And that's certainly true and has been already said in these meetings. We need to be exercised to be well rooted and grounded in the fundamental doctrines of the word of God. And Paul said, thou hast fully known my doctrine that came first. And then the manner of life not reversed, might have a very impeccable manner of life, but not be sound on doctrine. And so ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall set you free. But then I used to ponder why. Shortly after that he makes another statement that takes us a little farther. He says, if the sun therefore shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed. And I believe that at least part of the thought is just this brethren, that we can know the truth and not have the heart engaged. It can be simply principles and doctrines that we, in an intellectual way, can enumerate. And certainly that's good. We need to have these things straight in our minds.

But you can't know the sun and not have the heart affected. And if we take up the truth in relationship to God's Son, the Lord Jesus Christ, the heart is going to be affected. Why does John's ministry affect our hearts so much? Because it's truth as to the person of the Lord Jesus Christ. So we know the truth, it makes us free. But if we know the sun, we're free indeed because the heart is engaged. And the Lord Jesus said if a man loved me, he will keep my commandments. And he also said. My commandments are not grievous. Heart is engaged. It's real Christian liberty. But, Jim, I have a question. Do you have a reason why you you quoted only half of that verse about you shall know the truth and the truth shall make you free. I've seen the post offices and public buildings that have that up on there. You shall know the truth and the truth shall make you free. But there's a preamble to that. What's the preamble? I know you've you've would have that in mind. But it's important to have this preamble in mind, if you continue in my word. Then are you my disciples indeed? And you shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free. That's a condition. If you don't continue in the word, you're not going to know the truth. Just in connection with Speaking of the truth, it's in the singular. And we went over to the restaurant there and if you like pizza, you could have pizza or hamburger. You could have hamburger. And it's a perfect place for a culinary heretic because heresy means to choose. And if you just wanted to eat salad, that's all you had to eat. And some people as believers, they're heretics. They want to choose. That's what the word in Greek means. But the truth is in the singular. And so when we speak of Christ. And we speak of the truth. It's the whole thing. And so if we turn to Matthew 13, I mean, there's many verses we read in Matthew 13. And verse 45. These verses are well known. Could turn to one in Ephesians 2. Again the Kingdom of heaven is like unto A merchant man seeking goodly pearls, who, when he had found one Pearl of great price, went and sold all that he had, and bought it. Now we know this is a picture of Christ giving himself to the church, Christ also, who loved the church and gave himself for it. I don't think my brother Henry would mind if I use this example. I love my brother Henry, but if I said I don't care too much for his wife, I'd be no friend of Henry's. He's got a lovely wife. You know, I'm not only interested in Henry, but I'm interested in his squirrel feet or two. And I think that the believer is interested in those things that interest Christ. It's the truth. You cannot separate and chop this up like like a self-serve restaurant. And so he loved her in the truth. And so it's the whole thing. The foundation of it we get later is if it's not on the foundation of the person and work of Christ, and it's not on the foundation of Christianity at all. But you know, somebody once, after they left the meeting, they left the Lord's table. They said I made a wonderful discovery, that every verse in the Bible is about me. Well, that's that's not true. There's a lot of things that are not about me at all. They're for my learning and my interest. And so we have great interest in what are going to be the rights of the Son of Man when he reigns and so on. And these things interest us because they interest the Lord. We love the Lord. And so I just say this in connection with the truth of the assembly is you're never going to get the truth really properly if you don't understand what Christ valued above everything else. And that was the assembly. You're not going to really get that. And I know I'm going to get accused, but I'm going to say it anyways. You're not really going to get the truth outside of the assembly because that's where God, that's where the pillar in support of the truth is. And you're going to get the truth by getting it from those who have walked in that pathway of the assembly. Because again, as I say, he loved himself. He sold all that he had for the truth of the assembly. And you think, well, what's this little group of Saints gathered together to the name of the Lord Jesus Christ?

That's what the Son of God had in mind, in view, of course, of the whole church in heaven. But he valued that. And so we can't separate segment, chop things up. This was dear to the heart of Christ. And so when he said he loved this woman and the truth, and that's what the home speaks of, you know, the home speaks of the whole situation of an individual, of his relationship to his wife and his children, what they do on Tuesday night, what they do on Wednesday night, he just doesn't speak of a narrow part. You can speak about your work life and you can speak about different things. But in the home it all comes out. And so he loved her in the truth. And those that know knew the truth. Scripture speaks of the Christ. It speaks of Christ and his body. And he's the head. I'd like to add somewhat. What's just been said because every mark what I'm going to say and it's scriptural. Every single child of God that knows the Lord Jesus Christ as Savior is part of that body. I don't care where they're found. The Lord doesn't appreciate those that don't follow in His pathway, but we just had it this morning, the truth of where we stand, and that truth covers every single child of God. I hope we don't get mixed up and deceived to think that there are. Christians that are not part of the body. That's not true. They are all part of the body and the Lord Jesus loves each and every blood bought soul just as much as he loves the other one. I hope we never forget that. We want to make it very clear too that the truth of God stands for all time. The truth of God is not just good for one generation or one culture. And then we have to come along and reapply it or readjust it. The truth of God stands for all time. If I give up the truth of God, that doesn't change the truth of God. If I don't walk in the truth of God, that doesn't change the truth of God. Just go back to first John 2 for a moment for a verse. First, John chapter 2 and verse 7. Brethren, I write no new commandment unto you, but an old commandment which he had from the beginning. The old commandment is the word which ye have heard from the beginning. John wasn't saying to these ones. Now you've got something new. There's going to be a fresh revelation. There's always a fresh enjoyment of scripture, but not a fresh revelation. And John was simply bringing before them the truth of God as it was established at the beginning. John wrote later than the other apostles. It was given to Paul to fulfill or fill up the word of God. There was no revelation beyond what was given to Paul, but John's desire was that the Saints of God would walk in the truth that had been laid down. When you turn over to the book of Jude, you find appalling days of apostasy and giving up days very parallel to the days in which we find ourselves, brethren. What did you tell the Saints to do to get some new application of Scripture or new revelation? No, he told them, earnestly contend for the faith once delivered to the Saints. And it's interesting too. In the Old Testament, when there were times of real blessing and revival in Israel, what was it? Was it finding some new truth? No, it was finding a copy of the law in the trash of the Temple. It was the law read in the ears of the king and the people. And it was a going back to that which had been established at the beginning. And, brethren, I say this because it burdens my heart again. Some of our young people from their Christian friends, they hear that there's fresh revelation that there's something new and that scripture doesn't really apply that way anymore, that that was all right for the Apostle Paul or John, That was all right back in our grandfather's Day. But scripture doesn't really apply that way anymore.

Oh, I say, it's a red light. Be warned, I say the truth is good for all time. Yes, we can apply it to our present situation. And yes, perhaps as the people of God we're passing through things that we have to say we've not passed this way heretofore. But nevertheless, the blessing and the safeguard for the preservation of our households, for our families, and for the people of God collectively is going to be to go back. And be established in that which was given at the very beginning. Couple of days before my father went home to be with the Lord. Some of us in the family were visiting him in the hospital. And he called our attention to a verse. In Ezra 7, that has meant a lot to him. Verse 10. Ezra had instructed his heart to seek the law of the Lord, that is, to get the doctrine straight. And I'm going to read it wrong just to call your call attention to it and to teach in Israel the statues and ordinances. No, no, that isn't God's way. Sometimes young people will ask you why do we don't? Why don't we have seminaries in Bible schools and like some of the other people do? And I often answer them that. That's not God's way. God's way is We learn the truth, do it, and then teach it. So walking in the truth is an important thing in Psalm 25 and verse 5. The Psalmist says, Lead me in thy truth. JND translation says make me to walk in thy truth. God never gives us anything. That's just for our

intellect. Everything he gives us is to have a practical effect in our lives. All truth is to be walked in and in the 48th Psalm he talks about. Walking about Zion, it says Walk about Zion, count the bulwarks. Then you'll be able to tell it to the generation that follows. And I believe that unless you and I walk in these things, beloved, it doesn't matter how many books we have on our shelves, how many books we read. Unless we walk in the truth, we'll never be able to communicate it livingly to the generation that follows. Because we do have that responsibility, don't we, To pass the truth on to the next generation. Paul said to Timothy that he was to continue in the things that he had learned from Paul, and then he was to commit them to faithful men, Not just anybody, but to faithful men who would be able to teach others also. Because I believe that that's the way the truth is handed from one generation to the next, and it ought to exercise any who take part in public ministry. Be it on an occasion like this or back home in the local assembly, that we speak the truth clearly, that we have enjoyed it in our own souls, that we're walking in it. That it might have moral weight, as has been mentioned. But then to be able to pass it on clearly so that the next generation can take hold of it and walk in it and pass it on to the next generation. I don't remember Brother Chapter Brown, but I did remember hearing a quote from him that I thought was. Rather beautiful, he said He wanted his exercise was that he wanted to pass on the truth to others in the with the same purity with which he had received it from others himself. I thought that was a very good exercise, to pass on the truth in the same purity with which he had received it from the older generation. John had spoken in the first epistle. Second chapter, my children. And then in this next 30 pistol he speaks of my children. And that's a spiritual.

Connotation to it, and in our chapter in our book To this elect Mother, he says, Thy children, I just would like to have this exercise before the reading is over. That the family in God's mind, it's a wonderful institution and it's an institution that has its spirit nature, but the purpose of. The family in God's thought is that it would be a sphere in which spiritual things could be taught within the confines of the home, and the mother played a great role in that. And so Paul, John says, I rejoiced to hear of thy children walking in truth. And so with the younger ones. Here some of you are contemplating. Marriage and establishing of home. Some of you are establishing homes. Remember the the great end of the family relationship is not a simply the earth. But it's to be used as a tool where the truth of God which will never end. In essence, the truth in these epistles is has already been brought out eternal life, Christ himself, but God would desire us that in the family circle the truth, the spiritual truth of God, would be communicated to the children and within the family circle in such a way. That the children would walk in truth. That's God's mind for your family, and there are a lot of influences upon the family now. I can. From my own experience, it was not an exercise to have a happy family, but it was an exercise to have a family that would addict themselves to the ministry of the Saints and to walk in truth. So that is the high calling and purpose. Of this natural relationship of the family, it is to seek by God's grace to mold your children that they will walk in truth because the apostle says we're running out of time. And verse 8, verse seven, he speaks of many deceivers and again it's particularly in connection with the person of Christ. Denying that Jesus Christ come in flesh. None of us came in flesh. The Son of God did. But then he says in verse eight, Look to yourselves. That we lose, not those things which we have wrought, That we, I believe, is the apostles, but. I think there could be a lawful application to a year older brethren. This epistle started out simply with that expression the Elder. It's not an official title of sometimes. We spoke of the elders as being an official capacity in the early church. It's not that, it's just simply an older. Servant of the Lord is not even presenting himself as an apostle, but it it's an older brother. Longing to see that our children would walk into and so he says. He wanted to not lose or have a full reward. He wanted a full reward. It isn't for Reward's sake, but for the blessing of those whom he had greatly influenced in his life. The greatest thing he could think of, the greatest joy he could have, was to see them go on embracing the truth that he so loved and valued from the beginning. And so I just want to encourage some of your younger ones. It's important to those of your older brethren to see you develop and go on and walk in the truth.

Embracing the truth, That expression you used really explains what he means by commandment. That the truth of God has the power of a command over my heart. It's to embrace it. It's not like the 10 Commandments, an external law that was against me, but it was embracing something that I love and going on in it. It's just thinking in connection with the sister back in the third chapter in of Genesis, in connection with Eve. When God created the man and the woman, he called their name Adam. Charles Hayhoe used to say Mr. and Mrs. Adam he. Called their name Adam. But when you come down to the third chapter, after the fall, the curse is pronounced upon Adam. He was responsible. He was held responsible for what had happened and the curses pronounced, And so he comes and after having pronounced this curse. He looks now I believe in faith. I'm going to just read from the 19th verse, just to get the sense. But it's really the 20 and 21st verse that I had in mind. In the sweat of thy face thou shalt eat bread till thou return unto the ground, for out of it was thou taken, for dost thou art and unto dust thou shalt return. And Adam called his wife's name Eve, because she was a mother of all the living. I think that was real faith on Adams part. Instead of turning to her and say look at what you got me into, he said This is going to be the mother of all the living and this dear sister here to whom John wrote, it's the mothers in the assembly that have replenished the assembly. Thankfully there have been those that have been saved out of ungodly backgrounds. But Even so, in a Christian land you get out somebody who is a professing Christian and preach that You say we got to get people in from the outside. We're really preaching to people who. It really is a breakdown in the family that they don't know the gospel because they come from, by and large, from a professing Christian background and they don't know the gospel. But what a wonderful and normal thing that children are born into the family and they're raised in the nurture and admonition of the Lord, and they're brought into the assembly and in that way. We can just. I see real faith on Adam's part. This is the mother of all the living, and So what a privilege that the sister has in the home. To nourish up the children. In an environment in which they're going to value the things of God, and that the word of God now has the power. Of a commandment on the heart as you use that word, embracing the truth that struck me. Well, those that come with false teaching, she's instructed to not even allow them in the home or bid them Godspeed. And I think this is a good word to all of us, but to sisters particularly, you might go to the door and there stands someone who's got some literature and has something to tell you that's contrary to the person and work of Christ. And you might think, well, by inviting them into the home and having a discussion with them, you're going to be able to help them or convince them of another point of view. You're going against Scripture and sisters. If you go against the word of God, you cannot expect blessing, God's sovereign, of course. But you cannot expect blessing when you go against the word of God. And there may be a number of reasons why you're not to allow this in your these ones in your home or bid them Godspeed. But I thought of it in connection with the children. If you invite this person to your kitchen table with their literature in hand and all their arguments that they're going to put forth, who's going to be listening? Not only you, but if there's children in the home, they're going to hear all this stuff that's contrary to the to the teaching of the word of God, that's contrary to the person and work of Christ. Do you want your children to hear all that kind of stuff? That's not what's going to preserve your children. Hearing all that's false. Know what's going to preserve your children is keeping what's false out, not letting them hear it at all. So that all that they hear the truth from you and they don't hear that, which is false. They don't have to listen to some debate at the kitchen table some morning because you've allowed this person. Into your home and to allow this person into your home, You really become partaker of their evil deeds. In a sense, you're really having fellowship with them. Whatever you allow in your home, you're condoning it. Do I allow things in my home? Everything I and everyone I allow

to come into my home? I'm really saying I put my, my seal of approval on it. And in the minds of your children, they look at it in that way. And I believe This is why John is very, very careful to bring this out to this sister that she is not to allow in the home.

That which is contrary to the person of Christ. We can be a help to them. But we're never wiser than the word of God. Know this question of Christ coming in the flesh, her brother Henry said. We didn't come in the flesh. I begat sons, but they had a beginning. In time I brought forth sons, but God brought forth his son. He was the eternal son of God. And there's a translation of the Bible that says you are my son Today I've become your father. It's blasphemy to say that. Thou art my son. This day I've begotten. He brought the Son unto us. A child is born unto us, a son is given. He was always the eternal Son of God. And there are even those that have been contaminated, that behave in a very brethren way. But they've been contaminated by this filthy awful thought that Jesus became the Son of God. He didn't become the Son of God. And sometimes ones may take up with this in ignorance and sometimes in self will. But I remember our dear brethren in Egypt. A young man arrived there at the conference, and he had one of these translations. And the brethren approached them, and I. I just saw the gentleness with which they did it. They walked up to them and they said, brother, you don't have a holy Bible. And he kind of looked at his Bible and he looked at them and they took it out of his hands and they read that verse in Hebrews and out of the second Psalm. He said God never became the father of Jesus. He was the Father was the He was the eternal Son. And and he kind of blushed. And he said they smiled at him and they said we'll get you a holy Bible. And they took that one out of his hands and he said, we'll trade you, but we don't want you giving this to anybody else. And so it's not just these people knocked two by two on the doors. There's more subtle ways in which this doctrine in which man has made much of and the son of God has brought down low. And so it's a very, very serious matter because it attacks at the very foundation of Christianity upon this rock. I will build my church and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it. And if we're not clear as to the. Truth that the Father sent the Son to be the Savior of the world and the sinless humanity of the Lord Jesus Christ, if we don't abide in that doctrine. Then we're not in the foundation of Christianity at all. I know our time is gone, but I'd just like to make one more remark quickly where it says whosoever transgressed it, that really is the thought of going forward or progress. We had a man show up at our meeting and when we were still in Chatham and talked about new light. There was new light. He had gone forward, didn't go forward at all. I remember Mr. Begg telling him that's not new light at all. That's garbage and. The idea that there's going forward in the things of God as to the person of Christ is a foolish idea. We have it all right here, and I believe that the Christian Church has held all that is essential as to the person of Christ. From the very beginning. We can go no farther, can we, brother, than to know him. That I may know him and the power of his resurrection. Of course, the truth associated with his person and word. Let's see saying Kim #174. Hymn number 17 for opation Spotless 1. Through Jesus, thou art enough. Oh, patience.

Christian Friend: Volume 14, 2 John 10-11 (1:10-11)

The application of this scripture is primarily to teachers, to all such who did not bring "the doctrine of Christ;" i.e., the truth concerning His person, if not also concerning His work. It was the former rather than the latter that was in question in the apostles' days. (See 5: 7; 1 John 4:3, &c) It is, however, sometimes asked whether those who hold erroneous doctrines on this subject should in like manner be refused. Other scriptures deal with this point, but here the apostle is evidently concerned with those who move about from place to place in order to teach. But then, "if there come any to you," and take the place of teachers in seeking to propagate their errors, they are to, be treated as the apostle enjoins. As faithful to Christ, it is the responsibility of every head of a household to maintain the truth, and thus to exclude from his house that which would really undermine the foundations of Christianity. Christ must be first; and it would be impossible to maintain fellowship with Him and at the same time to be a "partaker of the evil deeds" of those who denied the full truth of His person and work.

Christian Friend: Volume 3, Truth and Love (1)

There is a peculiar rest to the heart in meditating on John's writings. For in them God in the grace of the Father and the Son seems to shine immediately on the poor sinner; and though all committed to man may have failed, yet in Jesus there is a something (and that the true eternal good) outliving all wreck and failure. The world is a ruin, we know; but the church in the world is a ruin also. Nothing can touch or even soil her, as "the LAMB'S wife." But as responsible to God on the earth, like as the garden of Eden was lost when in man's hand, and the inheritance of Israel was lost when in man's hand, so do I believe it is with the church also. All is safe in Christ, to be manifested in due time; but man holds nothing.

Now the comfort of the soul in reading the epistles of John is this—that he does not contemplate the church as the Lord's "candlestick." Paul does. He looks at it at Corinth, at Philippi, and elsewhere; and we may have to grieve, when reading his epistles to churches, that things are not in the same ecclesiastical power, and order, and grace that they once were. And such grief is holy, if it be in the measure of the mind of God, who has provided the relief for all this. But John does not call forth that grief; for he does not look at things ecclesiastical, but at things personal. He deals with the sinner and the saint in immediate personal connection with God, and thus deals with truths which are independent of all ecclesiastical outward state.

From this I do feel and judge that there is peculiar rest to the soul in meditating with John upon God's revelations. Because we must, in the present state of things, be conscious of sad disorder. But Jesus as Savior survives, the sinner still lives, and consciously has his being in our very selves, and there can be a meeting between the Savior and the sinner—happy, restoring, satisfying, though the light of the "candlestick" be gone; there can be a learning of the secrets of the Father and of the Son by the renewed mind, in the power of the Holy Ghost, who still also survives in the consciousness of our new man within, though again I may say, the light of the "candlestick" is no more.

Thus John meets very much the desire of the poor wearied saint now-a-days. He rises upon the soul to tell it there is something better, something more enduring, something even giving a brighter light than any "candlestick." And as this is the character of the message he bears to the soul, as it is of the Father, the Word, and the Comforter he speaks, and as they live and shine still for the poor sinner, though all else may have failed him, so the perfect stillness of the soul is that attitude in which His message is to be listened to. The soul to be silent,

and let the Lord pass by, revealing Himself. He will publish His own name, and what has the soul to do but, like Moses, to remain in the appointed "clift of the rock"? It is God Himself who has risen. Let the shoes of a busy talkative mind be taken off; for the place is a sanctuary where God is to be seen and heard. It is unto God that the Spirit by John would conduct the soul. And as the happiest human moments are enjoyed when a tide of influences or of affections is rolling on, and the soul has nothing to do but to stoop and let it roll on, and spend itself upon us, so our seasons of meditation on these precious divine oracles should have the savor of the like joy. God in His fullness has risen, and our joy is to look and to listen, to be, like Mary, at the feet of Jesus, simply receivers, drinking in the rain from such a heaven. For strikingly has it been said by another, "Mercy has now an unlimited vent towards the redeemed, as justice once had the like upon the Redeemer."

And I may add, there is much of the family of God in John. This also makes his witness very grateful to the affections of the renewed mind, to the thoughts of the saint, wearied, as I have said, with anxieties and searching about the church of God. John does not contemplate the saints in their formed and ordered condition as a "church," but in their more free character as members or children of the family. Thus he addresses his first epistle, not to any body as a church, but "to children, young men, and fathers;" and his second and third to private persons.

This has much struck me before now, while meditating on John. But ere we speak a little of his second and third epistles, as I proposed to do, I would take leave to add a little further here.

The dealings of the blessed God in this world of ours have more simplicity of purpose than we imagine. We have to look at God passing from one dispensation to another; yet in all we are taught that the great purpose before Him is, to manifest Himself in richest blessings, in love and mercy to poor sinners, unto His own eternal glory.

When the Savior commented on all that had gone before His ministry, he said, "My Father worketh hitherto." There we are let into the secret of the purpose of God. He came forth in the law to test what was in us; yet "our Father" had a deeper purpose than that, one with which His heart mixed itself. Mount Sinai was never the place of the Father's ministry. Moses and the angels might work in Sinai; but deeper than all, "my Father" wrought, said Jesus. Though a little hid under a large and more public thing, yet the mind of Christ coming to apply itself to all that had gone on before, He said, "My Father worketh hitherto." This lets the soul into this, that God from the beginning had been working in grace. The operation of the Father is another mode of expressing God working in grace. Here we get the unity of the divine design, from the beginning to the end, to be this, to bring Himself out to us poor sinners as "the Father of mercies." Whether He be manifested to us as destined for earthly or heavenly glory, it is still as "the Father of mercies" to poor brokenhearted sinners.

What is the gospel of John up to chapter 10:3? A trial whether man had learned that secret, that the Father had been working hitherto. In chapter 8 we have the Lord's mind brought out in contrast with the Jew on that point—"If ye had known Me, ye would have known My Father also." Why did they not receive Jesus? Because they had not been seeing the Father "working hitherto"—not learning God as poor broken-hearted sinners—not learning Him as the Father. If we do not learn Him in this character, we shall never learn Him aright.

What is the glory which passes before us in that gospel? "The glory of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth." This Gospel of John is the passing of that glory across this ruined world of ours; but no eye of the children of men could discern it, save the eye of poor convicted sinners.

There are many signs of this throughout that gospel. It may shine in the world, may pass from scene to scene, but it is the eye of the poor conscious sinner, and of none else, that meets it; it is the conscious sinner alone that understands it, that is gladdened by it, and falls into the train of it. Thus when John says (chap. 1), "Behold the LAMB OF GOD!" Andrew follows Jesus in that character, and the door of Jesus is opened to him He had followed Jesus as the LAMB OF GOD, he had gone after the "glory of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth;" and if any follow Jesus as such, His door shall be open to them. Just follow Jesus as the "LAMB OF GOD," and He opens His house, His heart, His glory. All opens to us at once. Nicodemus comes not so (chap. 3), and he has to go back to the brazen serpent, and there get the faculty to apprehend the glory of the Father, and the things of the kingdom.

In chapter 4 the poor Samaritans receive Him, and He goes and dwells with them for two days. In that village "the glory of the only begotten of the Father" could unbosom itself, because He was received in character. Where there was an eye that had learned Jesus as the friend of sinners, there the glory could go. This is the way to receive Him in character, and all that Jesus wants is to be thus received. We see the opposite to this in chapter 2, where He says, "Woman, what have I to do with thee?" He was shining in "the glory of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth;" and if His own mother could not see Him in that glory He had naught to do even with her.

So in chapter 7 his brethren are distanced from Him; for they looked at Him in a glory that suited the world; but in the next chapter, and again in the ninth, a convicted adulteress, and a poor outcast excommunicated one, are brought and kept near Him; for they learned Him in that glory which met their necessities as poor sinners.

Thus is it through these chapters. And it is comforting to our souls to keep the path of this glory before us. And in chapter 10 we see this blessed Son of the Father as the Shepherd full of grace in the midst of His flock—His flock of poor convicted, believing, accepted sinners. And after all this we see this same one looking upward to the Father's house. For in chapter 14 this glory of the only begotten of the Father, that had been thus shining down here to poor sinners for awhile, is going again to its place; and Jesus says, "In My Father's house are many mansions. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto Myself; that where I am, there ye may be also." I rest on this promise of Jesus. When He comes again, He will receive me unto Himself. Is there not intimacy here? It is the first hope to rest on the sinner's soul. He is gone to the Father's house until all are gathered; when everything is ready, He will come out to receive the children unto Himself—He "will come again to receive" these poor redeemed sinners UNTO HIMSELF—to meet them in the air, and then they will all go together to the FATHER'S HOUSE. This is the immediate hope, beloved, of POOR SINNERS such as you and I.

This then is the trial in John. It is the application of "the glory of the only begotten of the Father" to the eyes and consciences of men, to see if they would receive Him in that character.

Matthew opens in a different style; but the same lesson is taught.

In chap. vs. we read, "Blessed are the poor in spirit: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven." This is in the style of Matthew, but in fullest moral harmony with John. One who had been learning law, learning God in terms of mount Sinai, must have had thoughts altogether disturbed by such a word as this. In law, it was the flesh trying to meet the demands of Sinai; but now He has to say, "Blessed are the poor in spirit: for theirs is the kingdom of God." There is no kingdom of God in the world that is not the kingdom of the Father. The law never furnished the kingdom; for it is to be furnished by the Father with poor sinners. The lesson in Matthew and John is one and the same. Whether we be going on to the heavenly part of the kingdom now, or the Jew to the earthly by-and-by, it is still the kingdom of the Father. It is the Father's kingdom from one end of it to the other, from the top to the foot of the hill; and none get into the kingdom, none become citizens of it, but those who, as Matthew speaks, are "the poor in Spirit," or as John says, "are born again" —those who have learned Jesus as "the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth."

So again, "Ye are the salt of the earth; ye are the light of the world." I judge that the word of value here is "ye." After Jesus had shown the character of the kingdom, that it was such as was to be taken by the poor in spirit (our only title to it, and we as convicted sinners are cast upon Him), He entirely changes the character of "the light" and "the salt." The light reflected from Sinai had been proposed to man if he could gather it; but now that which constitutes the "light of the world" is not Sinai light (the light of righteousness), but the light of the poor broken-hearted sinner reflected from the glory of the Father. That which, was proposed to man at Sinai he was unable to reflect; but what distinguishes us now is, that we are basking in the light of our Father, His beams shining on us—our poor souls advancing and beaming under the light of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth. There we must go to season ourselves, there to illuminate ourselves "salt" to season, "light" to shine.

Again, "If thou bring thy gift to the altar, and there rememberest that thy brother hath aught against thee; leave there thy gift before the altar, and go thy way; first be reconciled to thy brother, and then come and offer thy gift." What is the value of this to our souls, beloved? Why—that our Father will not value our offerings, as children and as worshippers, unless we are cultivating the affection of brethren; and this is quite as John says, "This commandment have we received from Him, That he who loveth God love his brother also" —there is perfect harmony between them. Our Father is working to fill a kingdom with children and with brethren-with citizens who shall know Him as their Father and each other as brethren. This was the simple purpose from the beginning, and He ever secures it. He not only brings each to Himself in love as His child, but all to each other in the sweet relationship of brethren. If we be not hallowing the confidence of brethren, our worship cannot be accepted. Our God is jealous of the rights which we have to render to each other, that we maintain affection amongst ourselves. He says, as it were, "You must come to me in the path of brotherly love, otherwise I cannot receive your gift; my altar is indeed among you, but I cannot receive your gift whilst you are without love to one another. If I see not my beloved family in order, my children in peace and love one with another, I cannot take my place amongst them." This is the gracious desire of the Father, the head of the family, "that he who loveth God love his brother also."

The Lord spoke what was familiar to His own soul from the beginning. In Eden, the patriarchs, Noah, Abram, Sinai, this was always the thing, and the mind of Christ goes beneath all to bring it forth, to bring out this treasure, "My Father worketh hitherto." There is one simple, undistracted design from the beginning to end. Whether we enter into the heavenly or the earthly part of it, it is "our Father's kingdom, a kingdom of children and brethren; this is His precious design, and though all else may fail, this shall be accomplished. Love never fails, for God never fails. His gifts and callings are without repentance.

Now these two epistles of John come in the train, in harmony with all this; and this too is the value of the book of Revelation. We may differ in our measure of attainment in the understanding of it; but we can together discern this precious feature there, all may agree in this joy, that though at the very beginning of the book the "candlestick," the public witness for God, may be gone, yet to the very end of the book, "the Bride, the LAMB'S wife," remains, as indeed I have already noticed. She may be put to shame in her stewardship; but as the beloved, the chosen of and for the LAMB, she stands forever, she survives all. So in these epistles. I see all else gone, save that which can never go—that which is established in the grace of God, in the love of the Father. Everything may fail, but the purpose of God before the foundation of the world can never fail.

Second Epistle Verses 1, 2. That truth which dwelleth in us, the gospel truth—that which reveals "the only begotten of the Father" —that truth shall never go, it shall be with us forever. It is that precious seed which has constituted us, poor sinners, children of the kingdom, "that word which by the gospel is preached unto you," and it "liveth and abideth forever."

Verse 3. Here the peculiar spirit of John shows itself. Paul says, in addressing the churches, "Grace be to you, and peace from God our Father, and the Lord Jesus Christ;" but John adds, "the Son of the Father, in truth and love." He brought out the intimacies of the Father; he had got at the under current; for he had lain in the bosom of Jesus, "the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth"—the sinner's place.

Verses 4-6. This love from the beginning is that which survives all. The truth survives time, place, wreck, ruin, and everything; service may be all failure; but truth is as fresh in the wild woods now as it was in Jerusalem at first. So does love, that which it begets; truth is the seed of life, and love is the principle of the divine nature in the saints; and as the seed, so too that which it produces survives and lives.

Verses 7, 8. John does not take the place of Paul, addressing the churches in the aggregate character; but he writes to an "elect lady" whom no one knows anything about, except that she had "truth and love." She was known and "elect" of the Father, that was enough, and she is told to look to herself. This is increasingly in our day a valuable principle of truth. If there is anything which comes to us with peculiar value, it is that it comes to us as a personal, individual thing. In his preaching to Israel, the Lord says, "Who hath ears to hear, let him hear." He could assume that blindness rested on the nation, and so could say, "He that hath an ear, let him hear." So too in Revelation 2, 3 the Spirit could not trust the "candlestick" any more than Jesus could the nation of the Jews, and therefore says, "He that hath an oar to hoar, let him hear." So too here, the elect lady is told, "Look to yourselves." This applies to her personal and individual state of soul. And so we can now speak; for whatever the aggregate failure may be, the word remains "look to yourselves." We are "the elect lady" still, and are not to be made the sport of the deceivings of unrighteousness now, any more than when the church stood in power. The "candlestick" may be removed, but we are protected from error—the "truth and love" are with us, and we must "loop to ourselves."

Deborah was taken up in a day of strange informality. She was a strange successor to Joshua; but the Spirit was with her, and she could fight the battles of the Lord. So the "elect lady" here is made the guardian of the truth; she is told to let her hands hold truth in as much purity and

security as though she were a “candlestick.” And this is precious to us; for though we are alone, like her, we have authority to keep the deceiver outside the door. Something irregular this may appear. But in a day of apostasy, irregularity is the order of the Spirit, and the Spirit is always according to God.

Verses 9-11. How simple is the point of unity, “the doctrine of Christ,” of the Father, and the Son. If our souls were drinking more simply of the precious doctrine of the Father and the Son, we should be ashamed to talk of any difference of judgment, of being apostles of disunion. We want to get more light from “the Father and the Son.” “He that abideth in the doctrine of Christ, he hath both the Father and the Son.” If the light of that doctrine were full and clear on the soul of each of us, we would rebuke such a thought. But still he tells to this “elect lady,” “If there come any unto you, and bring not this doctrine, receive him not into your house, neither bid him God-speed: for he that biddeth him God-speed is partaker of his evil deeds.” He gives her authority to keep the deceiver outside the door; and so with us. Let every one of us be the weaker vessel (that is what she was), and if the deceiver come, we are to look to ourselves, and keep him outside!

And now, verse 12, “Having many things to write unto you, I would not write with paper and ink: but I trust to come unto you, and speak face to face, that our joy may be full.” Just as the departing Spirit of Christ, at the close of Revelation, leaves the volume, saying, “Surely I come quickly,” so here—I hope to come shortly to speak face to face with you, and then our joy shall be full. “I have many things to say unto you”—not all told out from Genesis to Revelation, not written “with paper and ink.” He hopes to come shortly, and then it will not be communication, with “paper and ink,” but “face to face, that our joy may be full.” O blessed hope! The lover of our souls, the LAMB in the throne, will feed us Himself at the fountain forever!

Third Epistle “The elder unto the well-beloved Gaius, whom I love in the truth.” We see the same spirit here as in the former epistle.

He desires that Gaius may prosper as well as be in health; for Gaius was distinguished, like some beloved ones now-a-days, in all offices of Christian hospitality, as we read of him in Romans 16. John might then desire all health and prosperity to him; for his prosperity was thus the servant of the saints. And he was now about to draw on this well-known grace of the beloved Gaius, in behalf of some who had gone forth to the service of the gospel in a very blessed self-devoting spirit.

And happy is it to get these notices of such sweet grace in the one, and such devoted zeal in the others, at a time when ecclesiastically things were bad.

And it must have been very sweet to John to be able to say, “I rejoiced greatly, when the brethren came and testified of the truth that is in thee, even as thou walkest in the truth.” This kept John’s heart so much at ease; this told him of his peculiar joy. Paul’s joy was at seeing the church walking in order. That might now be gone; but here it is, “I have no greater joy than to see my children walking in the truth.” We may be troubled at seeing the candlestick ruined; but there is a deeper joy—that of seeing the children “walking in the truth,” and when brethren come, to get a good report of them. It is sad to one’s soul to look abroad and see what ought to have characterized the dispensation, and then the present fruitlessness. But where does the Spirit lead us? —to this unfailling joy, “to see the children walking in the truth.” Let us pray the Lord to give us more sympathy; we want to have the Spirit leading us to this.

It is only here that the word “church” occurs in John’s writings. And we find that he had honored the church in the place that belonged to her, by commending Demetrius and his companions in the ministry of the gospel to the hospitality and fellowship of the church. But now he finds he can trust the church no longer, and he gets his relief in the personal individual grace of this “beloved Gaius.” He had honored the church at a distance; but he was disappointed. “Diotrephes, who loved to have the pre-eminence,” had got in, and John has to fall back upon that which can never fail, upon “truth and love” in the “beloved Gaius.”

As he leads us to “the elect lady” in the former epistle, so here he leads us to the “beloved Gaius;” and from that day forth the question has become one of individual, personal concern.

If the “candlestick” has failed, we are to cultivate “truth and love” in our own souls and among brethren. Thus the Spirit of God now teaches us to find relief and rest. Amidst the wreck and ruin of everything around, may He knit our souls together in “truth and love;” may He keep our souls in the doctrine of the Father and the Son. Do we not thus happily see, that when the church failed there was a turning to the individual grace and brotherly love that was still in the saints? And as this is an irregular and disorderly state of ecclesiastical things, John shows that personal grace still survived, and was the relief, when the soul might thus be wearied by all things around.

These two epistles thus gently breathe one spirit. The “lady” was cautioned against receiving certain ones; “Gaius” was exhorted to receive certain others. Both, in their several grace, were used by the apostle or elder of Jesus. And both epistles, as I have already observed upon the second, close with the expression of a hope that these lovers of each other “in the truth” would soon see each other “face to face,” till which time, much that might be added shall therefore be deferred. And so with Jesus. All has not been told out; having reached John, nothing is to be added with “pen and ink.” The spirit of revelation, as it were, has ascended back to heaven. The volume of written inspiration is closed. The paper and the ink is filled up and exhausted. John was the last to use it. But, as we know, that which is now “seen through a glass darkly” shall be seen “face to face,” “that which is now in part shall be done away, and that which is perfect shall come.”

And may we, beloved, always be ready—ready in the spirit of our minds to meet Him—longing with the desire of our hearts to see Him “face to face.” Then shall we learn many further precious unfoldings of His heart, and “our joy shall be full.”

And till then may we ever come together as “elect ladies,” and as “beloved Gaius,” each heart full, and kindling the love one in another! Amen.

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