



**T**HE 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; 2 For the truth's sake, which dwelleth in us, and shall be with us for ever. 3 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. 4 I rejoiced greatly that I found of thy children walking in truth, as we have received a commandment from the Father. 5 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. 6 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. 7 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. (2 John 1-7)

There should never be a lapse of Christian courtesy and deference paid to the honorable estate of womanhood. No one comes into this world apart from that agency of motherhood. All mankind, made in the image of God, deserve respect; however, that respect is multiplied by faith and service in this case.

Doubt not the detractors who challenge the author to be the Apostle John and not another John. The authorship of John was accepted by the early church fathers to include Irenaeus who was a disciple of Polycarp who, in turn, was a disciple of the Apostle John.

We have already written a series of studies on First John, and this now begins the series on Second John. This is a rather brief chapter that roughly outlines those principles elucidated in First John. But observe how John, the Apostle of Love, opens his salutation in this Second Epistle: "*The elder unto the elect lady and her children, whom I love in the truth.*" The term 'woman' bore much honor in the time of the apostles and was used by our Lord to denote a high degree of respect for that status, but lady adds a

certain gravity to the honor which the apostles John *seems* to intend based upon the good fruits of this particular lady's accomplishments both as a mother and a devoted adherent to the Lord (in my mind both are the same). I, too, share John's high regard for womanhood, and my own mother set that deeply held sentiment in my heart.

Do not be stumped by the reference of John to himself as elder and not apostle for such was his custom in humility. Peter, too, referred to himself as elder though he definitely was an apostle. Please remember our studies in both the Gospel of John as well as First John how John magnifies the gift of LOVE in all his writings. He loved the Lord Jesus Christ with such a constant and uncompromising love that he alone braved the dangers and wrath of the Jewish rulers by remaining at the foot of the cross of our Lord until all was finished. Let us neither forget the courageous women who also, more than the other disciples, remained there at the cross that day of Redemption.

The term 'elder lady' obviously refers to some especially sacrificial service this lady had provided to the Church. Is it not so today that there are women with an abundance of love and a deficit of pride who are able to arouse the local church body to a higher plane of love and service?

Such strong women of faith do not fail to convey that blessing to their children. If they fail of her faith, it is not for lack of sound teaching and demonstrated faith and love. She evoked love from others by first giving that love away to them. Isn't that precisely the example of our Lord? *"19 We love him, because he first loved us."* (1 John 4:19)

John and all of the Church loved this elder lady in truth. I have met men and women whom I have loved from the very first simply because I loved the truth in which they believed and lived. It seems that the Holy Ghost testifies mystically between the hearts of others of the conviction of Christ that is in them. The Christian must love, and never hate, the truth; and when one is filled with the truth of Christ, can we help loving them?

The salutation continues with a blessing: *"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."* We can only enjoy the grace, mercy and peace of God in truth and love. Remember the words of our Lord to the Samaritan Woman at Jacob's Well? *"23 But the hour cometh, and now is, when the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth: for the Father seeketh such to worship him. 24 God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth."* Simple belief is not enough with our Lord. Our belief must be demonstrated by a sacrificial love. We may have memorized the Bible from Genesis to Revelations, but if we do not harbor that Word with love in our hearts, and service to others, it is of no worth. Even the devil believes: *"19 Thou believest that there is one God; thou doest well: the devils also believe, and tremble."* (James 4:19)

The merits of a mother are discernible in her children, and John brings that out here: *"I rejoiced greatly that I found of thy children walking in truth, as we have received a commandment from the Father."* If we are bear hunters, we must know to follow bear tracks. If we seek a loving and good mother, we look to the tracks her children leave behind.

Love was the predicate of a moral and Christian people – even from Eden until now. John returns to the core of all his teaching of the Lord Jesus Christ: *"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."* I know some churches in my local area who are known for the truth they preach and insist upon, but they have a shameful lack of

that reinforcing love that sustains the truth. These become judgmental without setting an example of righteousness themselves. John reminds the elect lady that Commandment of the Lord Jesus Christ which is truly the only New Commandment the Lord gave us. Do you remember it, friends? *“A new commandment I give unto you, That ye love one another; as I have loved you, that ye also love one another. By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another.”* (John 13:34-35)

Our Lord gave us the summary of the two Tables of the Law called the great Commandment – and both Tables were sustained by that Love the Christian has for both God and his fellows. Under the Old Testament Church, the Commandments were enforced by strict ordinances and punishments; but under the New Testament Church, the Commandments of God are kept without abrogation by the power of LOVE! *“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.”* Please observe a verbal assent only is not sufficient – we must put feet to our obedience in love.

How does truth and love prevent our deception by the Great Deceiver? *“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.”* Any who deny that Christ came in the flesh and met all the marks and sanctions of the Son of God is an antichrist. We have emerging churches today that deny that faith in Christ is necessary for Salvation. That is preaching another Christ from that of the Gospels. We have some churches arising in Asia (example, Eastern Lightning), and spreading to America, that proclaim that Christ did not finish His work, but their own little leader has come to finish that work Christ could not finish. What blasphemy! Others preach that we can become as God-given enough practice! Or others teaching that Christ is a good teacher, but not the divine Son of God.

If we love the Truth, and its Author, we cannot be deceived by counterfeit gospels and counterfeit saviors.

The times are filled with falsehoods that seem to overwhelm the imagination. Many politicians in our own beloved America stagger as drunk men in the policies they advocate which are clearly immoral and full of deception. When we had believed that the outrage could grow no worse, another infidel steps up with proposals of wickedness in high places that baffles the mind and heart.

In these days, let us take the example of the elect lady and train up our children in the Walk and Way of Christ; let us labor in love with others in our midst to be examples of Christian virtue and obedience. *“17 For the time is come that judgment must begin at the house of God: and if it first begin at us, what shall the end be of them that obey not the gospel of God?”* (1 Peter 4:19) But if judgment of sin fails at the Church, where shall it be manifested? Churches, though commanded to judge sin, are fearful to judge sin in our day – they fear political correctness charges, or condemnation by the luke-warm of their church. We must stand up as men and women of backbone and label immoral behavior for what it is – SIN!