

2 JOHN

2 JOHN — WHEN LOVE AND TRUTH MEET FALSE TEACHERS

The second epistle of John is addressed to whom? The word lady in the Greek is *Kyria*, which may be translated as a proper name, and perhaps in this case it should be so understood. *Kyria* was a common name among the Greeks and refers here, it may be, to some notable saint in the neighborhood of Ephesus, to which John ministered in his old age. The letter is brief, for the writer is soon to make a visit to this sister in Christ and to speak with her face to face (v. 12).

THE SALUTATION (VV. 1-4)

John's greeting is interesting for three or four things:

1. The deep humility of the writer;
2. The tender regard for the sister to whom he writes;
3. The solicitude for the honor of Jesus Christ;
4. The insight into the spiritual condition of this sister's household.

THE BURDEN OF LOVE (VV. 5-11)

The burden message of the letter follows (vv. 5-11). This burden is the old one of John — love. But love in the New Testament means not a passion, not an emotion, but a life. An abiding principle influencing for righteousness, this is Christian love. Is not that what John says here (v. 6)? See how the idea is emphasized in verse 7. Not to love is not to hold to the truth in doctrine and to practice it in life. False teachers do not love. They may be amiable in their social relations, but they have not this Gospel love. They are deceivers, and love and deceit do not go together. And mark the central fact of that truth which constitutes love — the confession that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh. This strikes at the Jew's denial of Jesus, certainly, but also how can Christian Science, which denies the material body confess this? Changing the language again to conform to the RV, we

see that they are the deceivers and the Antichrist in spirit who fail to confess that He "cometh in the flesh." It is Christ's second coming John has in mind as truly as His first coming.

In the light of the above consider the warning in verse 8. There is danger of believers losing something which belongs to them. That something is "a full reward." (Compare ^{<2915>}Luke 19:15-27; ^{<4181>}1 Corinthians 3:11-15; ^{<6021>}2 Peter 1:21. See ^{<4167>}Matthew 16:27; ^{<6212>}Revelation 22:12.) Does not the comparison of these passages bear out verse 7 as rendered by the Revised Version?

What is it to transgress as given in verse 9? By the "doctrine of Christ" is not meant merely the things He taught while in the flesh, but the whole doctrine concerning him, i.e., the whole of the Old and New Testaments. To deny the truth concerning Christ is to deny His first and His second coming, and He who denies this "hath not God." He may speak much of the "Father," but he only has the Father who has the Son. To have the One you must have the other (v. 9).

Observe how strenuous we should be in maintaining this doctrine (v. 10). The command "receive him not into your house," is relative. It means not that we are to deny him meat and shelter altogether, if he be in need of them, but that we are not to fellowship him as a brother. Even our personal enemies we are to bless and pray for, if they hunger we are to feed them and if they thirst give them drink. But those who are the enemies of God by being enemies of his truth, we are to have nothing to do with in the capacity of fellow-Christians. We must not aid them in their plans or bid them God speed. How would such a course on our part involve us (v. 11)?

The apostle closes with that allusion to his visit already referred to, and a greeting from Kyria's elect sister. Did this mean her sister in the flesh or only in the faith? And in this last case was it the apostle's wife?

QUESTIONS

1. How may we translate "lady" and to whom may it refer?
2. Can you discover in the text the four points under the Salutation?
3. What is the message of this letter?
4. What is Christian love?
5. What is its central fact?

- 6.** Who are spiritual Antichrists?
- 7.** Have you examined the parallel scriptures on the subject of reward?
- 8.** What is meant by the doctrine of Christ?
- 9.** Explain "receive him not into your house."