

The Second Epistle of John

...And this is love, that we walk according to His commandments. (2 John 1:6)

2 John 1-2

Someone read 2John 1:1-7

Someone read vv 8-13

Outline

The Salutation (1-3)

 The Writer (1a)

 The Recipients (1b-2)

 The Assurance (3)

The Message (4-11)

 The Occasion (4)

 Appeal for love and obedience (5-6)

 Warning vs False Teachers (7-9)

 Prohibition vs Aiding the Heretics (10-11)

The Conclusion (12-13)

Exposition

“whom I love in truth”

John having previously referred to himself impersonally as “the elder,” here uses the emphatic personal “I.” This signifies the intense affection John feels toward the lady and her children. The word translated “love” is what word in the Greek, do you think?

AGAPE = selfless love, it has been called the characteristic word of Christianity. It means a high, ethical love, which seeks whatever is best for the one loved. It is the very nature of God Himself (1John 4:8, 16).

“whom” is plural, here, meaning that John included the children of the chosen lady in his greeting.

“Truth” lacks the article, here, which may mean something like “in reality,” but because John follows this use with two uses with the definite article may justify the NIV rendering (“*the* truth”) signifying the Christian gospel.

In the end it makes no real difference: It was a love prompted by their mutual acceptance of the divine truth revealed in the Incarnate Son.

The rest of v1 – please read it – makes clear the scope and nature of this love. First, John speaks of his love for the chosen lady, he then goes on to speak for all true believers. “And not only I,” emphatically denies that it is true for only John, but includes “all” (Greek *pantes*) believers share this love for the recipients.

This contrasts with the heretics who don’t love the Lady and her children with a pure *agape* love. Indeed, John might have written that they – in reality – hated her (e.g., 1Jn 4:20).

The word rendered “know” literally means “have come to know.” It was not always known, but they came to know the truth at the point of conversion.

Someone read v2.

What do you think this verse means?

What does “for the sake of” mean?

Because of

Thayer defines the Greek (*dia*) as follows:

the ground or reason by which something is or is not done

2a1) by reason of

2a2) on account of

2a3) because of, for this reason

2a4) therefore

2a5) on this account

It makes clear that “truth” is the motivation as well as the context of all Christian love.

What does “abides” mean in this context?

To dwell, reside, or remain permanently. (Thayer)

“Truth may be said to have taken up a permanent abode in the hearts of all who love” (Robertson).

By what agency does the truth “abide” in us?

John 14:16-17

The indwelling Spirit reveals truth in the life of the believer, and produces an intimate and ongoing relationship with Father and Son. It is the distinguishing mark of the true believer.

And how long will this last?

“With us” begins the clause (“with us, it shall be”), stresses that the believer’s relationship with the truth is not temporal; God’s truth, embodied in Christ and made alive in our hearts by the HS, by its nature is unchanging; it will be with us forever (literally, “into the age”). This is the same phrase used by John in 1 Jn 2:17 and 5:20.

This assures us that this relationship into the future age of eternity which has no end.

Although assured of its permanence, as believers, we need again and again to be reminded of this truth as a living reality in our personal experience.

But that reality is not simply a static and objective entity or set of beliefs. We tend to think of truth as a number of abstract propositions that we are to comprehend and believe. But for the Elder, truth is a vital force that can be personified as living in us and being with us. Because it comes from the living God, truth is a dynamic power that abides with believers, enabling them to know what is true. And because truth comes from God, it exists forever and remains with the faithful, just as God exists eternally and remains in relationship with the faithful. If we could capture John's view of truth as a force that, because it is the work of God's own Spirit, shapes and empowers us, we might be less prone to think of truth as something that depends upon us to preserve it. In reality, we depend upon the truth to guard us--and not vice versa--because we depend upon God. Only as the truth abides in us do we abide in the truth. But we are somewhat too quick to reverse that relationship, and put human beings in the place where God's activity and power belong.

The truth is the common bond between fellow believers. We are commanded to love our neighbors and even our enemies. But as Christians, we have a special tie to the truth; it is the basis of reciprocal Christian love. Heretics may leave us (1Jn 2:19) and go out into the world; but in Christian society, truth shall remain secure. So long as the truth endures, in us and within us, so long our love for one another will also endure.

If this is so, and Christian love is founded on Christian truth, we shall never increase the love which exists between us by diminishing the truth we hold in common. In the desire for unity, we must beware of compromising the very truth on which true love and unity depend.