

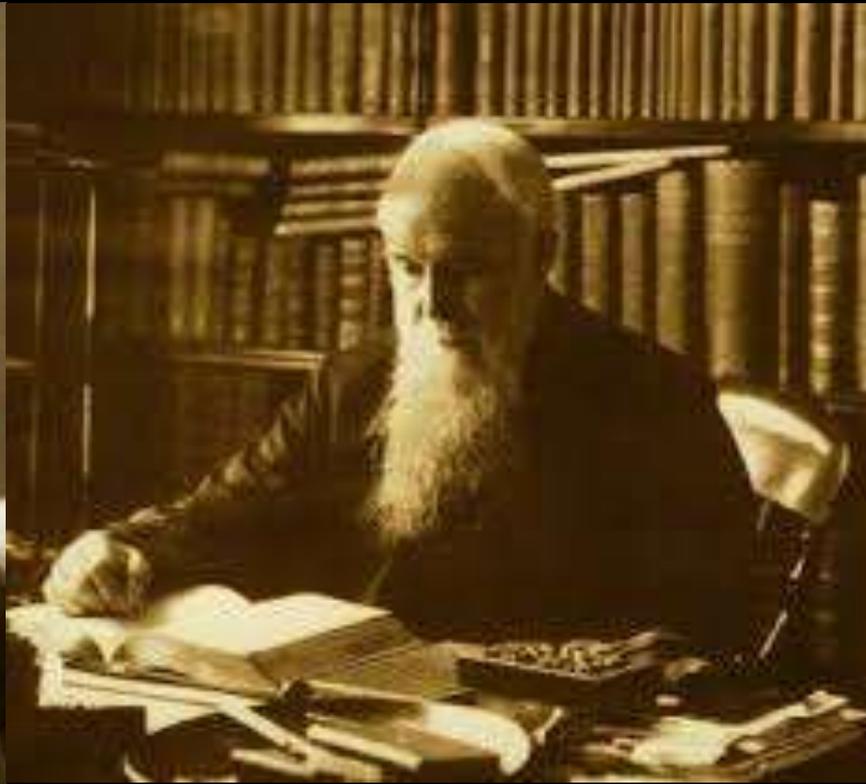
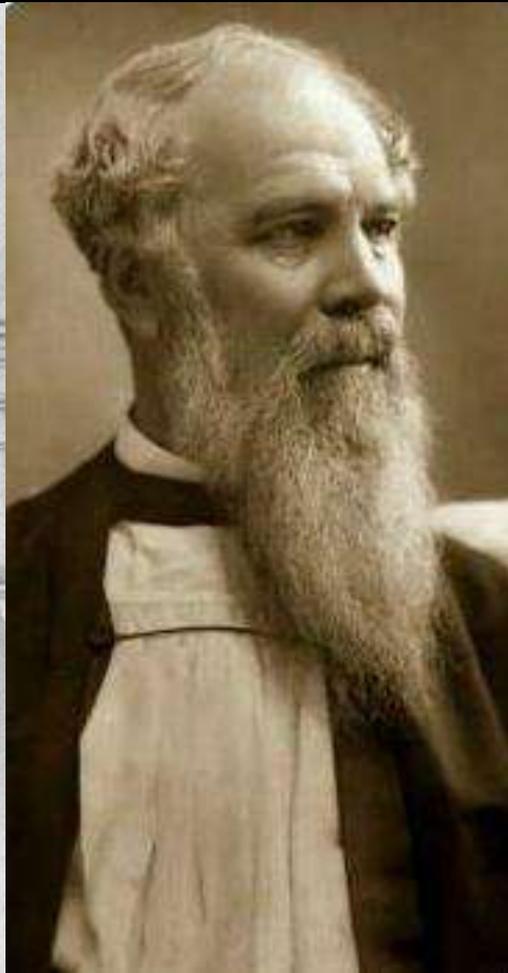
“Avowed atheists are not a tenth as dangerous as those preachers who scatter doubt and stab at faith.” – Charles Spurgeon



II. *The young preacher in action at New Park Street*

“Let us be on our guard against false doctrine. Unsound faith will never be the mother of really sound practice, and in these latter days, departures from the faith abound. See then that your loins be girded about with truth, and be very jealous of receiving anything which cannot be proved by the Bible. Do not think for a moment that false doctrine will meet you face to face, saying, ‘I am false doctrine, and I want to come into your heart.’ Satan does not go to work in that way. He dresses up false doctrine like Jezebel—he paints her face and attires her hair, and tries to make her like truth. Do not think that those who preach error will never preach anything that is true. Error would do little harm if that was the case. No! Error will come before you mingled with much that is sound and Scriptural.” ~ J. C. Ryle

“What is the best safeguard against false teaching?
Beyond all doubt the regular study of the Word of
God, with prayer for the teaching of the Holy
Spirit.” ~ Ryle



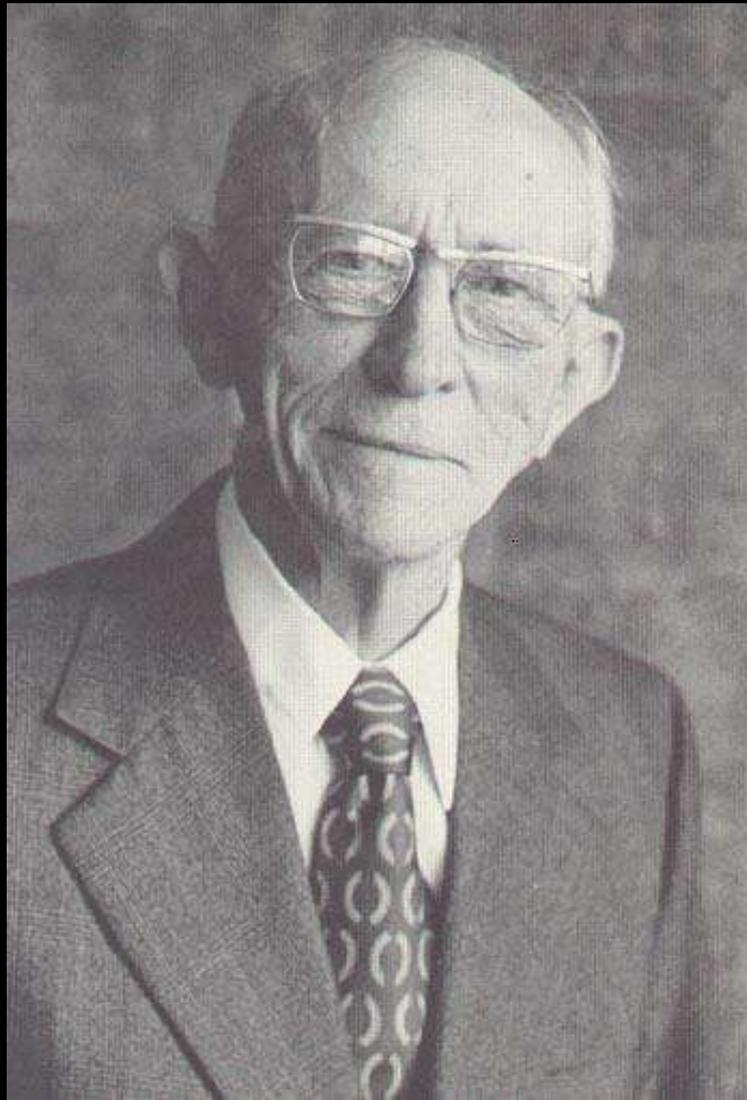
“It is a remarkable fact that all the heresies which have arisen in the Christian church have had a decided tendency to dishonor God and to flatter man.” - Spurgeon



“Over against the devil and his missionaries, the authors of false doctrines and sects, we ought to be like the Apostle: impatient, and rigorously condemnatory, as parents are with the dog that bites their little one, but the weeping child itself they soothe.” ~ Martin Luther



“The early Christians condemned false doctrine in a way that sounds almost unchristian today.” ~ Vance Havner



“If they had a social gospel in the days of the prodigal son, somebody would have given him a bed and a sandwich and he never would have gone home.” ~ Havner



John loves the church—the redeemed, rescued, reconciled, and gathered saints, purchased with the precious blood of Christ.

- He is unwilling to let them be taken in and distracted from their Savior by false teaching.
- He is unwilling to let the gospel be distorted in his generation, if there is anything he can do about it.
- He exhorts them strongly to walk in truth, and to love one another, because that is the thing that will help the saints to resist *together* the devastating impacts of false doctrine. They were never intended to fight this battle alone.

Interestingly, even pagan writers late in the 1st century recognized the problem of itinerant teachers who traveled from church to church: Greek writer Lucian writes “of a man who had found the easiest possible way of making a living without working. He was an itinerant charlatan who lived on the fat of the land by travelling around the various communities of the Christian, and settling down wherever he liked, and living luxuriously at their expense.” ~ William Barclay.

Sound familiar? Any of those charlatans still hanging around today?

And now he is done writing his short note to them...

“The Elder has come to the end of his sheet of papyrus. The ink, commonly made of (charcoal) soot and water thickened with gum (resin) was still wet.” ~ John Stott

But he is not done communicating with them.

In his short letter he has been gentle, he has been firm, he has been loving, he has been clear; he has given them truth and sound doctrine, he has given them imperatives and he has given them warnings—but he has “much to write to you,” much more that is weighing on his shepherd’s heart.

Here's the outline we're using for John's 2nd letter:

- v. 1-3 ~ John's greeting to the church he loves:
Grace, mercy, and peace
- v. 4-6 ~ John's request of the church he loves:
love one another.
- v. 7-11 ~ John's concern for the church he loves:
watch yourselves.
- v. 12-13 ~ John's desire for the church he loves: *a complete joy.*

John writes to a sister church—according to church history, John lived for many years in Ephesus, and with the exception of his banishment to Patmos, was based there. He likely wrote to a nearby church.

John's desire for the church he loves ~ 2 John 12-13

Welp, shall we maybe over-outline for a bit? This helps me to get things clearer in my mind, and maybe it helps you too. Here's what I did with v. 12-13—

- John's plan: to visit the saints he loves in person ~ v. 12
- John's desire: for the saints he loves to be full of joy ~ v. 12
- John's greeting: the mutual love of the churches John loves ~ v. 13

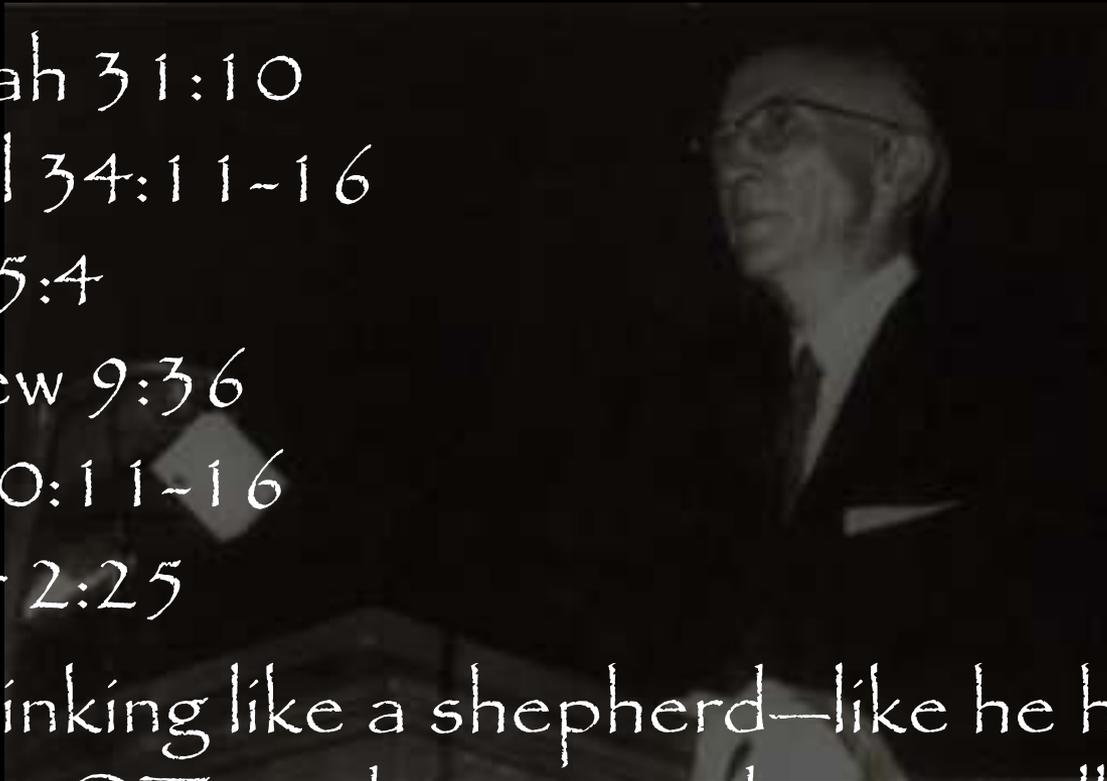
Think about this for a minute: what is the job of a shepherd? What are the things he has to do for his sheep?

John's desire for the church he loves ~ 2 John 12-13

Let's find out what a shepherd does...

- Psalm 23:1-3
- Psalm 29:8-9
- Isaiah 40:11
- Jeremiah 31:10
- Ezekiel 34:11-16
- Micah 5:4
- Matthew 9:36
- John 10:11-16
- 1 Peter 2:25

John is thinking like a shepherd—like he has seen in God in the OT, and witnessed personally in Jesus.



John's plan: to visit the saints he loves in person - v. 12

Ok—this is not a rocket science question: Why does John stop writing and plan to visit in person?

- He has more to say and he wants to say it in person. That's what the text says.

John felt he had more to say on this subject of warning against false teachers and exhorting to mutual purifying and protecting love, but rather than put it all into writing, he chose instead to come and speak to them face to face.

Why not just write it all down? Why come and talk to them face to face? What does written communication (by itself) lack?

John's plan: to visit the saints he loves in person - v. 12

"...I hope to come to you and talk face to face..."

He needed to instruct the saints—

- False teaching must be countered in person - 1 Tim. 1:3-4; Titus 1:9-14, 3:9-11
- Teaching truth and sound doctrine is essential - 1 Tim. 4:1-8, 6:3-10; 2 Tim. 4:1-4; Titus 2:1
- Believers are never done learning - Col. 1:9-10; 2 Pet. 1:13, 3:1-2, 3:18; Jude 17; Proverbs 19:27
- Christians should always be teachable - Prov. 5:12-13, 9:9, 12:1, 13:10, 13:18, 21:11, 25:12, 26:12, 29:1. The greatest sin in Proverbs: not being teachable, but being wise in your own eyes.

John's plan: to visit the saints he loves in person - v. 12

“...I hope to come to you and talk face to face...”

Barclay: “John was wise and John knew that letters can often only bedevil a situation, and that five minutes heart to heart talk can do what a whole file of letters is powerless to achieve. In many and many a church, and in many and many a personal relationship, letters have merely succeeded in exacerbating a situation, for the most carefully written letter can be misunderstood and misinterpreted, when a little speech together would have mended matters.”

John's desire: for the saints he loves to be full of joy - v. 12

“...so that our joy may be complete.”

Well now...what does *that* mean?

- Would their joy somehow be incomplete if John hadn't shown up in person?

Think about this: if John had decided his letter was enough and had stayed home...and some of the folks in the church he had written to began to be influenced by this false teacher...what could happen?

- It could have led to a division of the church, a destruction of their unity.
- Any joy in the believers would have drained away, replaced by discouragement.

John's desire: for the saints he loves to be full of joy - v. 12

“...so that our joy may be complete.”

Jesus speaks of complete, full joy in John 15:11, 16:24; John writes of it in 1 John 1:3-4 and again here in 2 John 12. What's the connection between those? Or we could put it this way: the NT knows nothing of perfect, or full, joy apart from...what?

Fellowship.

Joy is always in the context of fellowship -

- Fellowship with the Father and the Son, which has as one of its evidences obedience.
- Fellowship among believers.

John's desire: for the saints he loves to be full of joy - v. 12

“...so that our joy may be complete.”

John and the believers he is writing to will have full, complete joy as they are strengthened by the elder apostle's encouragement and teaching—when the believers are intent on loving each other with a strong, protecting, purifying love, the church will be protected from distraction and division—it will be a unified, warm, loving body of believers, a source of great, full joy in the Lord among them.

- John found full, complete joy in seeing the saints he loved reject error, embrace truth, and love each other.

- John's greeting: the mutual love of the churches
John loves – v. 13

And, finally, in v. 13, John's home church (likely Ephesus) sends greetings to John's readers.

- It is possible that a few of them may have had some acquaintance, but it is likely not more than that. Travel was not an easy or quick thing late in the 1st century, and it is doubtful whether many believers knew others in distant cities.
- But whether they knew each other or not, they did know this: anyone bearing the name of Christ (Christian) was family, and they cared about their stability and perseverance in Him.

We close with a couple of quotes, the first from John MacArthur, summarizing the letter of 2 John: "In an age of relativism and skepticism, the church must remain firmly anchored to the solid foundation of divine truth. There is no place for insipid, shallow, theologically contentless preaching, for worship based on emotion devoid of truth, or for tolerating false teaching. There is no virtue in ignorance; no substitute for learning, loving, and guarding the truth. Only by so doing will the church be able to fulfill its divine calling to be the 'pillar and support of the truth' (1 Tim. 3:15), shining the light of God's truth in the world of darkness."

Article 7 of the Belgic Confession, 1561 –

“We believe that these Holy Scriptures fully contain the will of God, and that whatsoever man ought to believe, unto salvation, is sufficiently taught therein. For, since the whole manner of worship, which God requires of us, is written in them at large, it is unlawful for any one, though an apostle, to teach otherwise than we are now taught in the Holy Scriptures: nay, though it were an angel from heaven, as the apostle Paul says. For, since it is forbidden, to add unto or take away anything from the word of God, it does thereby evidently appear, that the doctrine thereof is most perfect and complete in all respects...”

Article 7 of the Belgic Confession, 1561 –

...Neither do we consider of equal value any writing of men, however holy these men may have been, with those divine Scriptures, nor ought we to consider custom, or the great multitude, or antiquity, or succession of times and persons, or councils, decrees or statutes, as of equal value with the truth of God, for the truth is above all; for all men are of themselves liars, and more vain than vanity itself. Therefore, we reject with all our hearts, whatsoever does not agree with this infallible rule, which the apostles have taught us, saying, Test the spirits whether they are of God. Likewise, if there come any unto you; and bring not this doctrine, receive him not into your house.”