



## The Elect Lady

*"The elder unto the elect lady and her children ... 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." II John 1, 5*

John's Second Epistle is addressed to "the elect lady and her children." This address has always puzzled Scripture scholars who have wondered whether the letter was written to a particular woman and her family or to a church symbolically called "the elect lady." Though the latter interpretation is probably the correct one, the former is more suitable for our purposes. We will, therefore, view John's letter as advice to Christian mothers.

The letter impresses on us an ageless truth: the fundamental importance of every mother's role in family life. In the Christian family her importance cannot be overestimated. She it is who must foster and protect love in the home; first, love of God and then mutual love in the family. "And this is love, that we walk after his commandments."

John, in his letter, stresses the children's dependence on their mother for their Christian training and formation. He commends the elect lady because "I found certain of thy children walking in truth." Likewise it is the mother who would have received a rebuke had he found her children otherwise.

A second point raised in the letter is of crucial moment particularly at the present day. John warns the elect lady to guard her home and her children against the assaults of un-Christian ideas and customs. "If there come any unto you, and bring not this doctrine, receive him not into your house, neither bid him God speed."

This counsel is surely of maximum importance at the present day, when every Christian home is infiltrated with pagan attitudes and practices. John's advice to Christian mothers is stern. They must not let themselves and their families be swept off in the tide of falsity. They must use vigorous discipline and strenuously exclude from their homes every harmful influence that threatens the Christian faith of their children.

