

By Bessie Wilton

## Sunday School Lesson



### INTRODUCTION

Notable in the writings of the apostle John are plain, bold contrasts - light and darkness, life and death, truth and falsehood. Truth is the big word in his second and third epistles. It is rich with several interwoven meanings. Like a well-cut gemstone, it reflects the light from several facets and every facet sparkles. Truth, in its essence, is the reality, that lies behind any appearance. So we seek the truth of any matter, not being content with careless reports or outward appearances; "Ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free." (John 8:32)

### LESSON BACKGROUND

John's second and third epistles, totaling only 27 verses between them, speak of the joys and responsibilities in rendering hospitable assistance to religious teachers. It was a subject most pertinent to that time, near the end of the first Christian century, when preachers and teachers of the Word brought their message from city to city. Persecution, wickedness, and limitation in resources rendered public lodging sometimes dangerous and

inappropriate. Jesus had directed His disciples to accept private hospitality in their travels, and the apostles had continued to do so. The churches sometimes sent letters of recommendation to assure a faithful teacher's good reception in another city. So the aged apostle John wrote to one whom he addressed as "elect lady" and to a friend named Gaius. We can only guess about the identity of "elect lady." The "elect lady" was warned against receiving or encouraging teachers of falsehood, lest she become an accessory to their evil deeds. Gaius was encouraged to receive and help faithful teachers that he might become a participant in their good works. The principle is the same in both instances. For good or evil, we become responsible participants in what we help someone else to do. The truth of God is our judge.

### THE LESSON

"The 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. For the truth's sake which dwelleth in us, and shall be with us forever. 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. I rejoiced greatly that I found of their children walking in truth, as we have received a commandment from the Father. 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. 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. 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. Look to, yourselves, that we lose not those things which we have wrought, but that we receive a full reward." (2 John 1-8)

John possessed an elder's genuine concern for those he had taught and served, no matter how many they were or where they might be. He loved all the people and he loved the truth. He did not, however, allow his regard for people to reduce his insistence on truth, nor his love of truth to make him unfeeling toward people. He would speak the truth in love (Ephesians 4:15); and he would find pure joy in evidence of a faithful response.

It gave John great joy to find some of this lady's children walking in the truth. What about the rest of the lady's children? Some of them still at home were addressed in this letter. Perhaps others of them were not walking in the truth. That is quite possible in a large family, or in a church.

Walking in truth is living in truth. We are to conduct ourselves day by day in accordance with the truth we have been taught and have confessed concerning Christ, God's Son. Christ is Lord, so we shall obey Him. Christ is Saviour, in which fact we rejoice. Christ is Master or teacher, so we learn of Him and follow Him. Christ is the Son of God, so we revere Him.

Christian love and obedience are so interwoven that one may scarcely be distinguished from the other. We know that we love when we obey, and we know that we obey when we love. All of God's commands grow out of His limitless love. They express His love as they direct us for our eternal good. They direct us to reflect His love, doing what He says because we love Him, and loving because He says to do so. Whatever their background in Scripture or Christian teaching, John's readers would have received the love commandment very early in their instruction. The command to love according to truth leads to a warning against falsehood and deception. Love of the brethren prompts one to be careful in protecting them. Love among the brethren would prevent anyone's becoming victim to purveyors of false doctrine. Love, even of the false teachers, would prevent one from seeming to approve their self-destructive error.

It has been said that hope is a bridge provided by God to carry us from where we are to where He is. At God's end the bridge is firmly anchored in the truth of His being and the dependability of His Word, especially His living Word, Christ Jesus. At our end, the bridge's anchor and approach must be found in our response to God's truth - our belief of it, our faithfulness to it, and our reflection of it through word and deed. As John insists, the rejectors of God's truth - the liars and deceivers - have destroyed the bridge at their end and so have forfeited their hope. The truth within us - "Christ in you," as Paul said - is our hope in glory.



Tony Brown  
.....Famed journalist

## TV Producer Tony Brown Will Speak At N.C. State

Journalist Tony Brown, who also is host and executive producer of his television series, Tony Brown's Journal, will speak at North Carolina State University on Wednesday, April 9, at 8 p.m. in Stewart Theatre in the NCSU Student Center.

His talk, which is free and open to the public, is sponsored by the Black Students Board of the Union Activities Board. He will speak on black economics.

Tony Brown's Journal is the nation's longest running black affairs program. Shown weekly on more than 240 public television stations across the country, it has an audience of five million. Brown also writes a weekly newspaper column that is syndicated in more than 100 papers.

An educator, Brown was the first and founding dean, as well as professor, of the School of Communications at Howard University. In

1980 he founded Black College Day. He has spearheaded the movement to preserve black colleges.

In 1985 he founded the Buy Freedom Campaign, and as chairman of the Council for the Economic Development of Black Americans, he leads a movement to stimulate black business and create new jobs.

A native of Charleston, West Virginia, he earned a bachelor's degree in sociology and a master's degree in psychiatric social work from Wayne State University in Detroit. He has received numerous honorary doctoral degrees for his achievements in civil rights, education, and journalism.

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## Charlotte Students Listed Among Academic Achievers

Two Charlotte residents attending Bennett College in Greensboro, N.C., will be included in the latest edition of "Who's Who Among Students in American Universities and Colleges."

The campus' nominating committees and editors of the annual directory have included Mrs. Laleza Harris and Amanda Denise Smith, as a consequence of their academic achievement, service to the community, leadership in extracurricular activities, and potential for continued success.

They join an elite group of students selected from more than 1,400 institutions of higher learning in all 50 states, the District of Columbia, and several foreign nations.

A Bennett College Music Education major, Mrs. Laleza Harris is the daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Paul Harris of 530 Stegall St.

Amanda Smith, an English major, is the daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Archie Smith of 306 Roam Place.

Bennett College, affiliated with United Methodist Church, is a liberal arts college for women.

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