

A
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FELLOWSHIP – II

2 Corinthians 13: 11-14; Philipians 1: 3-6; 2: 1-4; 3: 10-12; 1 John 1: 6,7

W.L. Some of the brethren were not here this morning when we were looking at the thought of fellowship. I think we should make it clear that the fellowship of God's Son includes every true believer; we are not on sectarian ground. The fact that many are not true to it is something else. It is quite simply understood that we cannot walk in fellowship with believers who are not true to the fellowship of God's Son, Jesus Christ our Lord. I trust that sets out the position – we are not on sectarian ground. What we hold as to the truth we hold for all. In saying that we have been occupied with the great privilege of belonging to that fellowship, the fellowship of God's Son, Jesus Christ our Lord, it means that to enjoy that fellowship, the great dignity of it to which we have been called, we must come under the regulation, practically in our lives, of Jesus Christ our Lord. That is the true place and position of the Christian.

I thought in this meeting we would think briefly – we will need to discipline our minds and part, because it is a big subject – of what Paul speaks about, “the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you all”. What we know about that would be something to enquire into, what our experience is of the fellowship of the Holy Spirit. It is not something positional, it is a very deep and spiritual matter – the communion, the fellowship of the Holy Spirit. It is a very secret and inward matter. We were speaking about fairly practical matters in the first reading, involving most, if not all, of us. There was reference to the public side, the fellowship publicly; a good illustration is the hands of a clock being the public side, and the secret side of the fellowship, involving also the Holy Spirit, would be like the works of the clock. If the works are not right you can work away with the hands all day and get nowhere, so there must be underlying conditions and that would involve the fellowship or communion of the Spirit.

In Philippians it is quite remarkable that Paul speaks about the matter quite extensively, he refers to “your fellowship with the gospel”. That would mean that the Philippians, as having had the benefit of the glad tidings themselves, would be sympathetic with Paul and there is evangelical activity. Then in chapter 2 we have the reference “if any fellowship of the Spirit” – it is very significant that these first four verses precede, “let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus” (v 5), suggesting, I think, that the fellowship of the Spirit and these practical links among the saints are essential for the proper appreciation and understanding of the glory of the Lord’s person and the greatness of the stoop that He has taken. It is not just a technical matter, it is a matter to be enjoyed in a deep spiritual way. The suggestion in that passage “think the same thing, having the same love, joined in soul, thinking one thing ... but in lowliness of mind”, most of these features are inward and subjective. In chapter 3 it is very challenging. Paul speaks about “the fellowship of his sufferings”, and that obviously does not refer to the Lord’s atoning sufferings.

Then in 1 John it is quite clear that John lays out the basis practically of the fellowship, “If we say that we have fellowship with him, and walk in darkness, we lie, and do not practise the truth”.

Then the basis, from John’s standpoint, upon which we can have fellowship with one another is “if we walk in the light as *he* is in the light” – it is remarkable the way John puts it – “we have fellowship with one another”. So, the basis of our fellowship with one another is that “we walk in the light as *he* is in the light” and on that basis we have fellowship with one another. And he says “the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanses us from all sin”.

I thought that first we might have a look at this very intimate and sensitive matter of the communion of the Holy Spirit and just briefly with one another find out what we can say about, our experience of it.

K.J.S. Paul says “the communion of the Holy Spirit, be with you all”. Is that a collective idea? Can you say something about that.

W.L. I think that is helpful, it is a collective matter. “For the rest, brethren” – he addresses them collectively – “rejoice; be perfected”, and as in Philippians, “be encouraged; be of one mind; be at peace; and the God of love and peace shall be with you. Salute one another with a holy kiss. All the saints salute you”, the mutuality of it. Would there were more here today to enjoy these precious things and just to bathe ourselves in the great truth of the Holy Spirit, “be with you all”. I think it flows on from our individual experience of the gift of the Spirit and our experience of the Spirit of God active in the temple of God, and the Holy Spirit having His residence so sensitively in the assembly; then we can enjoy this great matter, “the communion of the Holy Spirit”. I think it is a wonderful matter, a tremendous depth in it, the fellowship of the Holy Spirit. We considered in the first epistle “the fellowship of his Son Jesus Christ our Lord” (1 Cor 1 :9), and here now we have at the end of the epistle “the fellowship of the Holy Spirit”.

J.W. Some of the things we touched on this morning were in relation to the fellowship in a more formal way. Do you think what you are speaking of now is more informal? We may be in fellowship formally, but are we really in the communion of the Spirit? That involves spiritual affinities and ability to enjoy and exchange spiritual things together.

W.L. Who could explain doctrinally the communion of the Holy Spirit? I could not. It is something very deep and sensitive and involves a nearness, not only that the Holy Spirit has taken His place in the economy and indwells us and indwells the assembly, but that there is this communion of the Holy Spirit, a sensitive relationship between the saints and the Holy Spirit known in a very real and intimate way. I think it culminates in “the Spirit and the bride say, Come”, Rev 22: 17. I think that is an illustration of the communion of the Spirit.

D.J.H. It would certainly govern our relations with one another, would it not? I find it personally, if I may say, an exercise as to having such relationships with all my local brethren.

W.L. I think that is helpful. All our relationships are to be governed by this communion or fellowship, that our link in that sense with one another is in this fellowship of the Holy Spirit. As we were saying, the fellowship of God's Son Jesus Christ our Lord, governs our public position, but this governs us secretly. It is something that the world cannot take account of and knows nothing of, just as in the Supper there is what we do outwardly that anyone can see, but the remembrance is a secret matter that no unregenerate person can touch.

E.O.P.M. I was wondering whether it linked, in its practical working out, with what Paul says in 1 Corinthians as to "all these things operates the one and the same Spirit", 1 Cor 12: 11. Reference was made this morning to the fact that if Christ is Lord to me and to you we would have no difficulty working things out. If we are all drawing from the same Spirit, this communing with the Spirit would be an easy matter, would it not?

W.L. Yes. I think of the Lord's claims over us in lordship must be recognised before we can experience the communion and fellowship of the Spirit. If I, as an individual, or any local meeting collectively, is not under the Lord's lordship, and by extension, does not know something of his headship, how can we know the fellowship or communion of the Holy Spirit? The Holy Spirit acts in relation to Christ's lordship; it must be so.

G.W.B. What is the difference between this and the unity of the Spirit that is spoken of in Ephesians 4 (see Eph 4: 3)?

W.L. I think they are very similar. If you have persons together who are enjoying the fellowship or communion of the Holy Spirit, you would find the expression of the unity of the Spirit. I think that illustration as to the clock has been used, the hands reflect the works; if what is underlying is right – the unity of the Spirit, or the fellowship or communion of the Spirit – things outwardly will be no problem.

P.M. Does it suggest that there is resource and supply for the maintenance of all that is required here, and it takes its character

from the Holy Spirit?

W.L. I think that is helpful. So, not only individually, but collectively. I do not think we know too much about it, one speaks personally. What do we know about drawing from the vast reservoir that is in the Holy Spirit. Who is in constant touch, moment by moment, with that scene of glory of the Father and the Son, intimately in touch with it? The fellowship or communion of the Holy Spirit would mean that by the Spirit, as drawing upon Him, we are in touch with that world.

P.M. Was it not a great moment when the Spirit came at Pentecost and all the resources from the divine side were present in the assembly. That has continued right down to the present day, livingly, has it not?

W.L. It certainly has, and that by the Spirit.

D.H. In Peter's second epistle there is a long list of spiritual matters, and then he goes on to say "wherefore the rather, brethren, use diligence to make your calling and election sure" (2 Peter 1: 10). Is that calling something on the line we are speaking of, or is it the Christian calling generally?

W.L. I think it would be a general calling, but specific to those to whom Peter was writing. So all these matters we are speaking about are available to every believer, and God's mind, I am sure, with deep longing is that all should be drawn into it. But then, are we making our calling and election sure? I think that means that we are persons who are practically in the gain of it.

D.E.R. The fellowship of the *Holy* Spirit should be noted should it, as though the *Holy* Spirit would give character to the fellowship?

W.L. I wondered why Paul says "the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you all" to the Corinthians, and to the Philippians he says "if any fellowship of the Spirit". One's simple impression about it is that there were conditions at Philippi where the insistence on the matter of the *Holy* Spirit was not exactly required as it was at Corinth. We know that, even at the end of 2 Corinthians, things were still not quite

right. So Paul, even there, stresses the communion of the Holy Spirit. Does that appeal to you?

D.E.R. That is what I was thinking.

B.E.S. The communion of the Holy Spirit is put on a level with “the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God”. Does that suggest that there is something objective in it; it is not just a matter of state, or a state of unity?

W.L. It is something to be entered into and sets out that the greatness of the economy is involved in it, three divine Persons all involved in the matter. “The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ”, he uses that as a great lever earlier in the epistle, “ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ”, 2 Cor 8: 9. What a lever that is in the soul, but then the love of God – think of the greatness and vastness of God’s love! But then I think it is enjoyed in the communion of the Holy Spirit. We would never know properly or enjoy the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ or the love of God, apart from intimacy with the Holy Spirit.

A.McS. Philippians and 1 John are written to persons who know how to use the Spirit. The intimate light enjoyed in 2 Corinthians 13 is really by persons who have arrived at a point in their exercises where they are able to use the Spirit they know something about deliverance. That is the intimate side. The side that is worked out in Philippians 2, do you not think, is persons who are able to use the Spirit?

W.L. I am sure of that, and along with that think of the beauty of it, that One who is a divine Person and has taken a relatively inferior position in the economy, the third place, I speak reverently, has placed Himself at our disposal. Think of the grace of that! He is available for us, and all the power that belongs to Him, all the resources that we have said that He has, He has made Himself available to us so that we should use Him. I do not think it is irreverent to use that expression, that we should use Him. Speaking reverently, that is what He is there for, that we should make use of Him. For instance, in Romans “if, by the Spirit, ye put to death the

deeds of the body”, Rom 8: 13. He is available to us for all these matters, available to us to cry “Abba Father”, (v 15), available to us in access to the Father, available to us in the service of God. Think of the grace of the Spirit!

Paul touches in chapter 1 of Philippians, “your fellowship with the gospel, from the first day until now”. I suppose the Philippians would be very evangelical persons, and it is right to be evangelical, but it is right to be evangelical within the boundaries of the fellowship, which means the boundaries of the death of Christ. It is wrong for persons with the light that is available to descend to worldly means of popular evangelism or anything of that character. I am not saying we should not be simple, or like Philip draw alongside the eunuch in his chariot (see Acts 8: 27); we should be able to do that in a priestly way, but “fellowship with the gospel”, I think would mean that we maintain the elevated dignity of the greatness of the gospel, the glad tidings of God concerning his Son (see Rom 1: 1), and do not let us descend from that, or form links in fellowship with persons who are not faithful to the fellowship of God’s Son.

J.W. Do you think that in this epistle we get what is heavenly in character here, that would be maintained by the Philippians? Paul’s glad tidings would have a heavenly character and that would be maintained by those who have fellowship with the glad tidings?

W.L. That is fine, and it would go on to “that ye may judge of and approve the things that are more excellent, in order that ye may be pure and without offence for Christ’s day” (Phil 1: 10), so that the Philippians would be in accord with the fellowship of the gospel.

J.W. I was thinking of what you were saying as to the dignity – the heavenly character and heavenly colour must be maintained in the glad tidings.

W.L. You will remember Mr Lyon’s remarks about preaching the glad tidings of the glory of the blessed God. He said there is no competition in that field, and neither is there. But that persons are able to preach such a gospel, preach it from the standpoint of the knowledge of the glory of God – what dignity is in that!

P.M. Later in this chapter, he exhorts them to walk “worthily of the glad tidings of the Christ”, Phil 1: 27. Is that not essential if there is to be power in the glad tidings, that our walk is in keeping with it?

W.L. It must be so, that “ye may be pure and without offence”, not in Christ’s day, or at Christ’s day, but “for Christ’s day” (v 10). As in your state of soul, you are ready for it, you are living presently in the light of Christ’s day.

In chapter 2 “If then there be any comfort in Christ, if any consolation of love, if any fellowship of the Spirit” – again that intimate matter that the fellowship of the Spirit would involve our innermost feelings. It immediately says “if any bowels and compassions”, then “ye may think the same thing, having the same love, joined in soul, thinking one thing”. I would like somebody to help us as to the difference between thinking the same thing and thinking one thing.

D.J.H. There seems to be something very intimate, “thinking one thing”; you might come to an agreement, a consensus, to be thinking the same thing, but thinking one thing seems almost an organic matter.

W.L. I think that helps, and from the standpoint of “if any fellowship of the Spirit”, it is that I have an organic inward link. I suppose, if we asked everyone here today, What is the truth of the Lord’s sonship, we would all agree on that, but that is not sufficient, that is not an organic link. The fact that we agree on doctrine is absolutely vital, but it is not an organic link. I think what we get here in these inward suggestions is a very much an organic link. Our bonds are deep and real.

A.S. I was wondering whether you could say more as to the fact that this seems to open the way for the unfolding as to the detail as to the Person of Christ. Do you think that is really what fellowship has involved, that where the side of regulation is accepted and acknowledge and honoured it opens the door for the fellowship of the Spirit which relates to the unfolding of the glory of Christ.

W.L. If you go into a library with a religious section you will find dozens of books on the life of Christ, just technicalities, but this is

more than that. One feels that these first four verses have a deep inward character, for instance where we are joined in soul. Each of us here, I trust, has an individual real link with the Lord Jesus and a real appreciation of Him, but I think this passage suggests that we can arrive at a collective appreciation of Him, because of our inward organic link together. What that means to the Lord Himself to find persons collectively with a real appreciation of Himself!

A.M. I wondered if you get a real appreciation of it at Antioch in Acts 13 – they were ministering to the Lord and fasting and then the Holy Spirit said certain things. It led to the furtherance of the testimony.

W.L. That helps.

R.H.B. Is what you are saying illustrated in the first verse “If then there be any comfort in Christ”. That is not a reference to Christ personally, is it? It is a reference to the company, is it not? It goes on to speak of Christ personally in this chapter in all His attractiveness and grace, but there is here on the earth what is substantially of that character as a result of the Spirit’s work.

P.W. In 1 Corinthians 2, Paul says “we have the mind of Christ” (v 16). Would that be similar to the thought here – “thinking one thing” and thinking the same thing?

W.L. Yes and no. It would be involved in it, but I do not think we know much about that expression in Corinthians “we have the mind of Christ”. We speak about going to the Lord if some problem comes up in our lives or amongst us, and we go and speak to the Lord about it and find out what His mind is. But that scripture in Corinthians means that the saints have the same thinking faculty.

What do we know about that? We have the same thinking faculty as Christ, that is an amazing thing and I am quite sure that we do not know too much about, but it is there.

In chapter 3 “to know him, and the power of his resurrection, and the fellowship of his sufferings, being conformed to his death, if any way I arrive at the resurrection from among the dead. Not that I have already obtained the prize”, Paul is not speaking here, I think,

about the literality of resurrection; I think he is speaking about arriving at it spiritually. "To know the power of his resurrection", not just the fact of it, but the power of it and "the fellowship of his sufferings". As we were saying, it is obvious that that does not mean His atoning sufferings. We should enquire what it does mean, what "the fellowship of his sufferings" means. I think it means simply that we are here in our measure as He was here. We are here as He was here, like what we get in 1 Corinthians 11 "in the night in which he was delivered up" (v 23). It is still that night, and we can have the fellowship of His sufferings in the light of that, and we live our lives here in the light "being conformed to his death".

D.J.H. I have often thought of Peter's reference: he says "for Christ also has suffered for you, leaving you a model" (1 Pet 2: 21), whether that is an aspect of His sufferings that perhaps we do not realise that in order to give us a model He has suffered. That would be the fellowship of His sufferings, would it?

W.L. And there would be distinction between suffering for Him and suffering with Him. I think there is a clear distinction there. We may suffer for Him and not suffer with Him. Would the brethren agree on that?

D.J.H. Would that enter into His feelings for the public state of things in the assembly as seen publicly. How much do we enter into that feelingly?

W.L. I think that helps and would link with this. Paul says in Romans 8 "we suffer with him, that we may also be glorified with him" (v 17). "Suffer with him" – who of us has, in depth, any understanding of the Lord's feelings about the public state of Christendom? We get a glimpse of it in His addresses to these seven assemblies, "girt about at the breasts with a golden girdle", Rev 1: 13. That is because of the public condition His affections are restrained. How He feels about it! I think if we suffer with Him we are persons who are able to enter in to His feelings about the whole public breakdown.

E.O. Do you think that a climax can be reached when it speaks about “we ought for the brethren to lay down our lives”, 1 John 3: 16?

W.L. That is not exactly martyrdom, it means that that is the whole trend of your life. It says of some “they gave themselves first to the Lord, and to us”, 1 Cor 8: 5. I think that is the proper order. If you are fully devoted to the Lord it is consequential and morally right that you will lay down your life for the brethren.

V.E.W. It speaks of the “witness of the sufferings of the Christ”, 1 Pet 5: 1. Does it involve witness? It goes on to speak of “partaker of the glory”.

W.L. I would like to know more about that, more about what is involved in being “conformed to his death”.

A.K.T. Is there any link with Hebrews 13, “let us go forth to him without the camp, bearing his reproach” (v 13)?

W.L. I am glad you mentioned that, the emphasis on “to him” – “therefore let us go forth to him without the camp, bearing his reproach”. We might enquire what the camp is. For us in our day the camp is Christendom. Do not let us water down our judgment of Christendom. What we are saying is right that every believer belongs to the fellowship of God’s Son, and every true believer belongs to the body of Christ, and is part of the assembly, but do not let us water down the awfulness of Christendom. In practice there is a denial of being conformed to His death.

G.W.B. As to suffering with Him and suffering for Him, do we need a greater understanding, since His time of suffering is over personally – it is His time of glory – as to His deep feelings now?

W.L. I think most of us are pretty much governed by our own feelings. Something comes up in our lives, in our meetings, and we are largely governed in our outlook and often in what we say by our feelings as to the matter. I think there is a great secret in learning about how the Lord feels in things. There is a secret in that, learning about how the Lord feels about everything. We spoke this morning

about practical matters. Can we get some understanding about how the Lord feels – He feels infinitely, we feel in part. His feelings are perfect, ours never are.

J.W. We have to be with the Lord for that, do we not? I was thinking of Paul's tears (see Acts 20: 19) and wondered whether that would be an illustration of one who was suffering with him. He refers to it here: "I have told you often, and now tell you even weeping, that they are the enemies of the cross of Christ; ... who mind earthly things", Phil 3: 18-20. I wondered if that is an example of one suffering with Him.

W.L. I often wonder, in a very practical way, how many of us have wept over the sorrows of the testimony? How many of us as in the Lord's presence and catching on to His feelings, have wept as to the sorrows of the testimony?

J.W. We were reading the other day as to David at Ziklag and the way he wept, he mourned over Saul and Jonathan (see 1 Sam 30: 4).

W.L. That is most helpful. That is another thing that we should bear in mind as to the public aspect. I understand that a lot of things have been published as to the 'brethren' on the 'Internet'. It is disgraceful, we should have nothing to do with it – "Tell it not in Gath, carry not the tidings in the streets of Ashkelon", 2 Sam 1: 20. The brethren should have nothing to do with that kind of thing.

D.E.R. Many believers are content to let what they have before them be in the day to come, but in this section we see that the apostle shows us the depth of what he was pursuing at the present time in relating to a sphere beyond death so that he might arrive now, currently, at the resurrection, not literally, but in his heart and soul. He shows us the way to it in suffering through being prepared to be apart from all these things you are speaking about. It would encourage us to take that same step.

W.L. How true that is! It is put in the present tense up until verse 12 when he speaks about what is future, but he also says, and puts it in the present tense, "seeing that also I have been taken

possession of by Christ Jesus” (v 12). Who here has been taken possession of by Christ Jesus? Let us challenge ourselves, beloved brethren. Have I, have you, been taken possession of by Christ Jesus. That is more than acknowledging that we are divine property. This says that the Lord has laid his claim to us in a very practical way and has taken possession of us.

A.McS. Have you more to help us with as to “being conformed to his death”. I would like some help about it.

W.L. So would I. I do not know much about it, I must confess, “being conformed to his death”. I think it would involve what we have said earlier, that our lives practically are governed by the fact that He has died, and also what we get in 1 Corinthians 11 “announce the death of the Lord, until he come” (v 26). Sometimes I used to think that was quite strange. Why did Paul not say that we show forth his glorification until he come – “announce the death of the Lord, until he come”? I think it is a public bearing and would mean practically that there is no response in us to anything that is not conformed to His death. That is the death of Christ as the boundary of Christian fellowship. I think “being conformed to his death” would mean that practically you would keep yourself within that boundary. It is a question how much we know of what Paul says there.

A.McS. I am thankful for what you say. I had thought about Paul saying “I am crucified with Christ” (Gal 2: 20), and I had linked that with how he was willing in chapter 1 to withstand Peter to the face.

We speak about the loneliness of Paul in the prison, but I think he must have been lonely when he had to stand up to the leading brother and tell him he was of the wrong mind.

W.L. One of the most challenging things I find in relationship with my brother and brethren is what Mr. Darby said, How can I allow in my brother what I have judged in myself? I think that strikes at the root of a lot of the difficult relationships among us. We are cowards sometimes, we are afraid. We see a brother saying something wrong or doing something wrong we are afraid, we are moral cowards, instead of standing up and saying to the brother, Dear

brother, in a brotherly manner. There is a great need for it. It would clear the air in a lot of cases instead of going on with things simmering beneath the surface. These things that simmer beneath the surface inevitably lead to an explosion. That is what happens in localities.

D.J.H. If we have had any experience in this we know that the effect of it is to strengthen the brotherly relation. The enemy would suggest to us that it would break it or infringe upon it, but in practice it strengthens the brotherly relation if we are faithful with one another.

W.L. Peter says "our beloved brother Paul" (2 Pet 3: 15). What a bond was formed! I think in the main, if we are faithful to one another, we are sensible enough and morally great enough to accept adjustment. All of us need adjustment.

D.J.H. All this would enter into what has been said as to safety in the local assembly – salvation. We feel safe if we know this faithfulness is there.

W.L. That is true – that early ministry, The house of God and the gospel, in that order, confirms what we were saying earlier as to fellowship with the gospel. The house of God and the gospel; it is not without significance that that ministry was attacked by some who ought to have known better. How true it is what came out there, salvation in the assembly, and intelligent learned men countering it by saying Not at all, salvation is in none other, Acts 4: 12. They failed to distinguish between the fact of salvation in Christ and what was being spoken of as to practical salvation in the assembly.

P.Mn. There was a new bond of fellowship in Joseph of Arimathaea and Nicodemus as they forsook all that had been their part and lot before to take down the body of Jesus (see John 19: 38).

W.L. That is a fine thought. We had a word on that recently in the ministry meeting, these men united in the death of Christ. It brought out the reality of what was in them. I think if we allow the impact of the fact that Christ died in our souls it would have a uniting and a sobering effect on us.

A.K.T. The Lord Jesus says to the suffering saints in Smyrna, “Be thou faithful unto death and I will give to thee the crown of life”.

Does that in anyway suggest being conformed to his death? I could not say much about it, but it is there.

W.L. The suffering assembly against which the Lord had no charge. That is quite significant. These two assemblies, Smyrna and Philadelphia against which the Lord has no charge. Would we not love to have local assemblies against which the Lord has no charge?

In John’s epistle “If we say that we have fellowship with him, and walk in darkness, we lie, and do not practise the truth”. As we know, John is very practical. Then the distinction is “But if we walk in the light as *he* is in the light, we have fellowship with one another and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanses us from all sin”. John is quite clearly and categorically stating that our fellowship with one another depends on “walking in the light as *he* is in the light”.

That is, we are walking in the full light of the revelation of God. From this aspect of fellowship that is the basis on which we have fellowship with one another.

Rd.B. I would like to ask as to a remark you made in the first reading as to the verse “the fellowship of his Son” (1 Cor 1: 9). You said that it is not the fellowship *with* his Son. I think you said there that we have association with Christ but we do not have a fellowship with Him. I would like you explain that a bit more in the light of verse 3 of this chapter.

W.L. The fellowship of the apostles is something special in the intimacy of their links with divine Persons – “that ye also may have fellowship with us and our fellowship is indeed with the Father and with His Son Jesus Christ”. The fellowship of the apostles was special to them, which none of us has, we are past that day. These apostles had a particular fellowship with the Father and the Son, because of the day in which they lived, and because of the intimate communications they had as apostles in that special fellowship, but linking it with what we have said as to John 17, the Lord says “they

who believe on me through their word” would be like “that ye also may have fellowship with us”. But, then what was said in the first reading that it is not the fellowship *with* God’s Son, some might ask the question, it says here “have fellowship with him”? It does not say fellowship with him. We need to be careful what scripture says.

John says “If we say that we have fellowship with him”. It is what persons may say, it is not the fact that he had fellowship with him, it is if we say that “and walk in darkness, we lie, and do not practice the truth”.

Rd.B. Are you thinking that fellowship with the Father and with His Son, Jesus Christ, was something that was peculiar to the apostles?

W.L. Indeed, John distinguishes it, “that ye also may have fellowship with us”. He does not say That ye might have fellowship with the Father and the Son as we have had fellowship with the Father and the Son. The fellowship of the apostles was with the Father and with His Son Jesus Christ. That is peculiar to the apostles. It has been said in the good teaching that they would pass the benefit of that on to others.

K.J.S. They actually had to do with “Jesus Christ come in flesh”, 1 John 4 :2. We shall never know what that is.

W.L. No, we will never know that. We will know Him in His glorified body. The basis is, “if we walk in the light as *he* is in the light, we have fellowship with one another”.

G.W.B. You have spoken about the full light, the truth by which we are governed; would it also include essentially being morally in the light? I was thinking that the first internal attack of the enemy was to introduce a small dark part into the assembly in Acts 5.

W.L. So quickly the enemy acted – the matter of Ananias and Sapphira. He quickly acted to destroy what was so precious. If we walk in the light suggests that it is a very practical matter; it is not just that we hold matters objectively, the thought of walking is something very practical.

P.H. Does it say of Enoch “and Enoch walked with God; and he was not, for God took him”, Gen 5: 24.

W.L. He walked with God, so pleasing to God, that God took him. It would link on too with the exhortation in verse 6 of chapter 2 “He that says he abides in him ought, even as *he* walk, himself also so to walk”.

Just to get this impression over that our fellowship with one another is conditional, it is not optional. If I have fellowship with my brethren it is on account practically from John’s standpoint here that I am walking in the light “as *he* is in the light”. And that “*he* is in the light” means it is the light of the full declaration of God.

J.W. I wanted to ask you how that affects our walk practically, walking in the light of the full revelation of God.

W.L. I think it links with what we had in Philippians, “being conformed to his death”. It would obviously link with “walk in the light as *he* is in the light”. We know what there was in the Lord’s life, but apart from the death of Christ, His ascending and the Holy Spirit coming we would never have known anything of God being in the light. It links with the beginning of John “No one has seen God at any time; the only-begotten Son, who is in the bosom of the Father, *he* hath declared him”, John 1: 18. I think that is what John is meaning here “*he* is in the light”, God has been declared from the standpoint of the Son in the bosom of the Father and we walk in the light of that. That is very elevating.

D.J.H. Would you say the power for it is in that benediction at the end of the 2 Corinthians, “The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit, be with you all”?

W.L. I am sure that is right, the Trinity is involved in it. God known in the economy, and each divine Person active in it in order that it should have its bearing spiritually upon us. I think it is a great incentive to walk in the light as “*he* is in the light” and to find others of the same calibre.

D.E.R. You rightly referred to the light as bringing in the revelation of God, but then the light also exposes. But then the encouragement is that there is the blood of Jesus still available.

W.L. That is helpful.

P.M. Does the reference to walking involve that it is a detailed and continual matter? It is not that I came into fellowship 50 years ago, but it is to affect my whole life, I am walking. Am I walking in the light?

W.L. Quite so. You mean it is a life-long thing. In other words, spiritually and morally we can never relax. Life's pathway, I suppose as the older brethren know, is a continual matter to the end. Again, what we have been saying, our feelings enter into it, but what it must mean to divine Persons to see persons walking in the light as "*he* is in the light". I think they are specially precious to divine Persons. Let us be among them, dear brethren, and from that standpoint, and I think it is one of the most elevated aspects of fellowship, the persons who are walking in the light as "*he* is in the light", and have fellowship with one another.

Key to Initials

R.H. Brown, East Finchley; Richard Brown, East Finchley; G.W. Bywater; D. Hawgood, Bexley; D.J. Hutson, London; P. Hutchinson, Rotherham; W. Lamont, Cumnock; P. Martin, Colchester; A. Munro, Grangemouth; E.O.P. Mutton, Walton; P. Mutton, Walton; A. McSeveny, Cumnock; E. Oliver, Redbridge; D.E. Remmington, St. Albans; A. Stay, St. Albans; B.E. Surtees, Felixstowe; K.J. Samways; A.K. Turner, Rotherham; P. Walkinshaw, Gillingham; V.E. Wraighte, Gillingham

CALLING UPON THE LORD OUT OF A PURE HEART

Norman J. Henry

2 Timothy 2: 22; Genesis 14: 18-24; 1 Kings 18: 21, 30-39; 1 Samuel 7: 5-11; Jonah 2: 7-9

I would like to follow the thought as to the calling upon the Lord out of a pure heart. We spoke in the reading of love in the circle of His own. You come to the meeting to enjoy the Lord and enjoy one another. But now, when we come to 2 Timothy 2, we are not in that pleasing suitable environment; we are in the presence of what is against Christ. We are in the face of what speaks of the adversary of Christ. Such a glorious Person is spoken of as having an adversary. You remember in the Old Testament the iniquity of the Amorites was not yet full. God was waiting until it was full-blown.

But there is another character that has been added to the world and I think we have that in John 13; a certain character marking the world which was not there previously and that is by Judas going out. Now the adversary is what opposes Christ and is the oppressor of His people. The footnote in Psalm 8 says the adversary of Christ and oppressor of His people is from within. The enemy is what is from without. How close the adversary came in John 13; Judas was there. He went out and that allowed the formation and completeness of the circle of love. He went out and that character was added to the world. I say that for the sake of the young. You do not see that character to start with at the beginning of your Christian pathway but you will soon find a peculiar character of opposition to what is of God and it is the opposition of the adversary. The name of Judas is linked with Judah, meaning praise – think of that! In such a one there was no work of God, yet he was in the place of privilege. It no doubt fulfilled prophesy as to ‘mine own familiar friend’. But nevertheless he comes so close. “His hand is on the throne of Jah” – how close he comes in the attack against what is of God. How are persons going to stand? There is every provision to stand in a dark day; that is a great encouragement to our hearts. If we enjoy love within how are we going to meet things when going out of the door?

I think we are going to meet them by calling on the Lord out of a pure heart. They are met without a change of character. The world is not meant to harden you or to make you brittle. You are meant to go out in it with the warmth of an inside company in your heart, a pure heart. It says, "But youthful lusts flee, and pursue righteousness, faith, love, peace with those that call upon the Lord out of a pure heart". That is a beautiful and strengthening position.

It was the position the apostle was in. It was a change of position as we know. In Pentecostal times they were together, there was nothing outside the company. But now in 2 Timothy days things had changed dramatically, and that condition has not altered since. From the time the apostle was here the awful condition of imitation has not altered. Much that has entered the profession is unreal. There was only one Judas but warns us as to the spirit of apostasy which prevails and it has the cunning, subtle image of what is imitative.

How is that going to affect me within? I must face it *out* of a pure heart, "Calling upon the Lord out of a pure heart". The service of God must go on, dear brother and sister, and as we face the world it must not undermine your part in the Supper and in the service of God.

Remember that, dear young brother and sister. We are very tender with you; we know some of the difficulties that you face. The world has become more unashamed in character. They do not seem to have shame for immorality today, they have lost that character.

Such is the depth to which they have dropped in the western world.

We want you to face things in the week so that we are preserved for the Supper and the service of God. That is the outlet for a pure heart. Where could a pure heart express itself but in calling on the Lord? Your week starts with the Supper and the service of God.

What an avenue for the heart! You go out with a sense of prison conditions in the world but waiting for the moment of release in the service of God. I want to enforce on you today that calling on the Lord is not a stoical thing but a real living character of a person who is in the love of God. That is what I believe. A person who keeps himself in the love of God, I think that is the character of the person

that has a pure heart. He is calling on the Lord out of a pure heart.

What a thing it must be for heaven to look down in a day of departure, when the love of the most has grown cold, and see persons who are calling upon the Lord out of a pure heart. We are in a day when even real believers are starting to wonder and question. You speak to believers and you find there is a question in their hearts. They have lost sight in some way of the One who has gone in.

Remember the test when Moses went up and they said, “we do not know what has become of him”. Many believers do not know what has become of Christ. He has gone in. But those who call on the Lord know what He is doing, they know His priestly support.

They are kept in life. Do we not need to be kept in life, dear brother and sister? Do we not need to be kept in the love of God? Oh that we might be!

Paul is about to go and is thinking of continuation of the testimony. Think of the pouring out of Paul, how acceptable to God! What a life he had and it was a sweet savour and it was about to be poured out as a libation (see Phil 2: 17). Think of what was refreshing for God in that life of Paul and now he is handing things to a younger man. There are younger men here: thank God for you, young brother and sister. We are before God about you, we pray for you. That is a feature of true fatherhood in our localities, to pray for the young coming on that they might be true Timothys, taking on the responsibility that is due to them in a darkening day. It has been called the day of apostasy, the darkening day, and Timothy is to continue. Paul is looking at further generations to follow. 2 Timothy was written to strengthen the situation. This young man was to be strengthened through the letter he received from the apostle as he tells him about certain things. He says, “youthful lusts flee”. Do not let lusts become entrenched. Do not let lusts get a hold, judge them at their inception. I say that as knowing there is not one person in this room, however spiritual, who has not the possibility of failing.

We have great men, godly men, in the Scriptures who erred for the moment. Only one person stood through every temptation. Satan

brought every temptation before Christ and He stood, but that cannot be said of any other man or woman. We just lean dependently on divine grace to keep us and the word is “youthful lusts flee”. Be active about it, do not linger. Linger and you will fall, and it gives birth to sin. Think of what happens and it causes sorrow, it will damage you. You remember these arrows with the burning points?

You say, well I will try and stop most of them with the shield of faith but I am not too vigilant and then one gets through. It is not the first strike that does the damage; it is after it has struck that it does the damage. It has a burning tip and once it enters it will burn and damage. Be preserved in the world that you are in. It says “youthful lusts flee, and pursue righteousness, faith, love, peace”. Think of a person doing that; think of the scope of his pursuit. There is plenty there to keep you busy. You will not be wondering what to do next; there is plenty to occupy you in pursuing righteousness, faith, love and peace with those that call upon the Lord out of a pure heart. I trust it is attractive to you. God remembered this for Israel when they did not have the power. He remembers your best days in your youth that you may have forgotten about. God remembers them and even today He might bring back to your memory thoughts of brighter days and cause committal in your heart, increase in committal in your heart and mine, to our best days for the Lord.

I have read of these men who give some suggestion of calling on the Lord out of a pure heart. Abram was first. He is not facing the lustful world here, like the 2 Timothy day that we are in; he is facing a world that is very plausible and cunning. He had dealt with the kings. He had come back from conflict. You might say he had proved enormous success. Maybe you feel that. Maybe you feel a measure of success in what you have done in what is right and then this character of the world comes and makes a very plausible and appealing suggestion. Will a man calling on the Lord out of a pure heart fall to this king? No, he will not. I find the most difficult is not the head-on force of the world in its attack; I find it is the sweet side. It is like the king's delicate food in Daniel. You say, well what harm will it do? It seems to help everyone else. I think the delicate food is

the sweetening of things that takes the moral character out of the truth. I think that is why it is the pulse that has a link with the royal seed in Daniel 1. These youths were of the royal seed and the pulse was in keeping with that. We used to hear persons say, Be true to the work of God in you. It is worth reminding ourselves that the pulse character of food is in keeping with the work of God in your soul. Think of the way men have written about the Scriptures. Think of what they have done to the truth. They have not necessarily gone in outright opposition to it, but sweetened it, made it a little more palatable so that there is no moral effect in your soul. Now if God is dealing within you it is bound to affect your soul. You could not be in the presence of Christ without some effect in your soul. I know that in John 5 the man goes out; he gets healing and goes out. He is typical of the Jew, that is what he represents, but normally coming into the presence of Christ and of God, you must be affected, it must have a moral affect on your soul and your salvation lies there.

Well, that was so with Abram. Abram says in effect, I will not take anything so that you can say that you have made me rich. Everything Abram had he had from God. Everything you have that is right you have from God. You even have your body from God, remember how you hold it. Remember that whatever you have that is right and to be held rightly, you have from God. Abram was blessed by Melchisedec who comes in at this point. It is very remarkable; Abram comes back and he is taken up you might say with the glory of the person and the personage of Melchisedec. He comes in at this point; you might say immediately alongside the king of Sodom making his demand. We might fall in these moments when the attack is not frontal. I am just raising a priestly attitude in your soul and mine; the spirit of judgment to recognise what is true. You remember in John's epistle the reference to the unction (see 1 John 2: 27); it teaches you inwardly what is true and what is false and it is the little children who have it. Now there is probably never a time when the unction is so needed as the present time when things have that glossy appearance and it is hard to recognise that is true and what is not. Well, as I say, the king of Sodom makes his appeal

and Abram refuses it. He will not be made rich by the King of Sodom. That is one who is calling on the Lord out of a pure heart.

He says himself, "I have lifted up my hand to Jehovah, the Most High God, possessor of heavens and earth" (v. 22). Think of that. If he lifts up his hand then he is not going to take anything from anybody else. That is a person who is calling on the Lord out of a pure heart.

When you come to Kings you have another dark day. Elijah is an interesting prophet because there is a change immediately he is introduced. He says in chapter 17, "there shall not be dew nor rain these years, except by my word" (v 1). Things have changed. No doubt we can foresee a literal change when the time of blessing will cease and maybe Elijah's prophesy will be fulfilled in the time immediately ahead of us. A time of grace and the appeal of grace will end and then there will be a different character. There will not be the rain and blessing falling on Israel. There will be something else. But here Elijah is facing Ahab. Ahab and Jezebel his wife represented an extraordinary character of apostasy in Israel and they had all these four hundred and fifty prophets of Baal and four hundred prophets of Asherah that ate at Jezebel's table continually.

It was quite a formidable arrangement of persons who were godless. They were idolaters and the prophet is one who calls on the Lord out of a pure heart. He let them have their say and they get to the point that they are hurting themselves; they are jumping on the altar and trying to get the thing to work and nothing is working. Elijah draws near and he takes the twelve stones and he rebuilds the altar of Jehovah which had broken down. Elijah took twelve stones according to the number of the tribes of the sons of Jacob. Think of the acceptance! I think one evidence of a person calling on the Lord out of a pure heart is that he or she is marked by whole ideas. There is always a temptation to drop whole ideas. We have good times together and we forget that we are only a few of the body of Christ.

Immediately you lose the active thought of the whole, in your mind and heart, I think you lose the quality intended of calling on the Lord out of a pure heart. So he first gets the twelve stones and built the

altar and, "he made a trench around about the altar, of the capacity of two measures of seed". Think of that, two measures of seed.

Even the trench was measured. What regard he had for God! You might say the capacity of as much of the death of Christ as possible. It was all measured. The heart is to be filled with the appreciation of the death of Christ and it says, "he put the wood in order, and cut the bullock in pieces, and laid it on the wood". Then he has four pitchers of water that he puts on three times, so that twelve pitchers of water are poured on the burnt offering and on the wood. He is still expecting the fire on it. Well, he is calling on the Lord out of a pure heart. His motives are pure, his motives are right and he calls on Jehovah. I love to think of it. He says, "Jehovah God of Abraham, Isaac and Israel". The whole thoughts he has in mind as he approached God. Elijah has whole thoughts and he turns to God and he prays and he calls on God, "let it be known this day that thou art God in Israel". Would we not want God to be magnified in the whole of the hearts of Israel today? Do we not want it? Do we not want every believer to get some impression of the God? Elijah says "Answer me, Jehovah, answer me, that this people may know that thou Jehovah art God and that thou hast turned their heart back again". Think of that, think of God's desire for pure hearts in Christendom. Does He only want the two or three that are prepared to answer to Him? Would to God that everybody would come out.

Would to God that every person followed the same route and found fellowship together. We find fellowship together once we have taken the step. So here it says, "And the fire of Jehovah fell, and consumed the burnt-offering, and the wood, and the stones, and the dust, and licked up the water that was in the trench". How embrative the pleasure of God is. Once you move in that way God takes possession of the whole thing. Think of it, every offering depended on that basis; every approach to God is on the basis of the total committal of Christ, even unto death. What affection, what love, what motives were in Christ! On the basis of that God takes this one up and it says, "And the fire of Jehovah fell, and consumed the burnt offering, and the wood, and the stones, and the dust and licked up the water that was in the trench". How embrative are the

thoughts of God about this man's approach. I think it shows to us how God loves us calling on the Lord out of a pure heart. He hates worldliness, "God so loved the world", John 3: 16. It is not the world of men as they are in sin. God anticipates the blessing, He does so because He does not want men to perish. He loves the world of men enjoying eternal life. He wants men to enjoy it with the pressure of death removed and everything put right. God anticipated that and He was prepared to make that offering, that giving of His only-begotten Son in order to bring the sinner in.

In 1 Samuel 17, Samuel is at Mizpah and he takes a sucking lamb. You see a person calling on the Lord out of a pure heart knows what is absent. Our brother said today that love between each other would recognise anything that would come in to spoil it and would correct it. Well, here is Samuel and he knew what was missing in Israel. He knew that character of Christ, that beautiful character of Christ as a sucking lamb, was missing. The characteristics were missing in Israel and he offers it up as a whole burnt-offering and God answered. Did he answer Israel? No, He answered Samuel, the man who was calling on the Lord out of a pure heart, because Samuel knew what was lacking and he took the step and offered up this sucking-lamb. Keep that characteristic of Christ before your affections. There is nothing like the appealing presentation of Christ as the sucking-lamb – the dependent one – offered up as a burnt-offering. You say it is not the full mature thought in the bullock. No, it is the sucking-lamb, characteristics so needed in a time of departure, and Samuel offers it up and God answer him.

Finally, I think that the whole book of Jonah is about the securing of a pure heart in Jonah. I do not know how you would have felt if it was written about you, if your name was at the top of this book, because at the end Jonah is left, I was going to say, high and dry. He goes through this experience, which is a mighty experience, the 'sign of Jonas the prophet', but his glad tidings are accepted and they repent and then he is upset about it and then God prepares the gourd to protect him from the sun and then a worm eats

the gourd and it collapses and he is exposed and he just about gives up. I think through it all God secured a pure heart in Jonah. He anticipates it in the great fish. Jonah knew the sanctuary in the fish, the great fish that God had prepared. I think God works in our experience. You might think things seem pretty hopeless but God knows the end from the beginning and all things work together for good. You might say this one did not, but the whole thing worked together for good for Jonah. Jonah is a type in a sense of those who will yet follow in service. He was not in Israel, he was not sent to Israel. That is what will happen to the Jewish missionaries, they will be sent out. Before God takes up Israel He shows that he can do with Jonah. He was sent to Nineveh and in principle it is like the everlasting glad tidings going out. These men will need a pure heart. The missionaries will. What they will suffer! Some of them will suffer even unto death. Think of that, think of what these men will undergo, but they will be faithful to the Lord. They will be a faithful remnant in the face of apostasy. The main part of the Jews will have made a covenant with what is evil. Yet there will be a faithful remnant that will go through and these persons will, I think, call on the Lord out of a pure heart. I do not doubt it. Why should I be lacking now, brethren? Why should I be one that is not actively calling on the Lord out of a pure heart? Jonah arrived at it through his experiences and they were harrowing experiences he went through. I think at the end his heart was secured. In fact the book shows God reached His end in Jonah. There is an actual book written about him, so there must be something positive arrived at for God's glory and the fact that a sign shall not be given save the sign of Jonas accredits what that man arrived at and what God arrived at in that man.

I have given a poor presentation but I do not doubt it is a current word that we need, to call on the Lord out of a pure heart and to keep in the love of God. When you go out into the world from the circle of affection you are not going out as Judas went out because he never was in it, but you go out with a heart that is full of the love of God and you will not allow the king of Sodom or any other to spoil

what you have. Keep yourselves in the love of God; that is the blessing that is put on everyone here.

BUCKHURST HILL

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