

TRUE FELLOWSHIP AND THE CHRISTIAN'S ASSURANCE  
(1, 2 And 3 John)

I. INTRODUCTION.

- A. In A World Of Doubt And Skepticism, Can We Really Know That We Know Anything For Certain? In The Letter Of 1 John, We Gain A Sense Of Confidence.
1. Knowledge is presented as emphatic. The Greek word γινώσκω - *ginōskō*, is used 25 times and οἶδα - *oīda*, 15 times. These words give us the confidence that we are walking on sure ground. They are words meaning "to know."
  2. John, in this epistle, does not argue, but affirms. He states the truth and rests the case. He does not submit, nor does he suggest. He declares!
- B. The Letter Is A Solemn Warning Against All The Subtle, Seductive Errors Of Gnosticism; And A Protest Against Any Resemblance Of Compromise Where Christian Faith Is In Question.
- C. These Three Short Letters Are Filled With Words Of Love, Assurance, Fellowship, Joy And Eternal Life. Read Them And Be Encouraged By It. Study Them And Be Transformed Into A Victorious Christian Who By Faith Will Overcome The World. (1 John 5:4)

II. AIM.

- A. To Present The Analysis Of These Writings With The Hope Of Encouraging Deeper Studies.
- B. To Present The Scriptural Teaching Of Fellowship And Eternal Security.

III. OUTLINE.

- A. THE ANALYSIS OF THE WRITINGS.
  1. Outline of first letter.

- a. Introduction. (1:1-4)
  - b. The Christians walk in the light. (1:5 - 2:27)
    - 1) Walking in the light is conditional. (1:5 - 2:11)
    - 2) Walking in the light can be hindered. (2:12-27)
  - c. The Christian's attitude towards the love of God. (2:28 - 4:21)
    - 1) The evils which oppose love. (2:28 - 4:6)
    - 2) The love which opposes evil. (4:7-21)
  - d. The Christian's relationship to eternal life. (Life in the Son 1 *John* 5:11-12) (5:1-20)
    - 1) The possession of eternal life. (5:1-12)
    - 2) The confidence of eternal life. (5:13-20)
  - e. Conclusion. (5:21)
2. The contents of 2 *John* and 3 *John* can be summarized as follows:
    - a. 2 *John*. Do not show hospitality to those who reject the truth.
    - b. 3 *John*. Show hospitality to those who proclaim the truth.
  3. The date. Though some scholars date the letters shortly before the destruction of Jerusalem (A.D. 70), by far the majority date them from 90 - 95 A.D.
  4. The theme of:
    - a. 1 *John*. This first epistle is not unlike his gospel. The stated purpose of this epistle is, 5:13. In his gospel the purpose is the same. (*John* 20:30-31) The gospel was written to awaken belief; the first epistle was written to establish the certainty of faith.

- b. *2 John*. The believer must walk upon the path of truth and love being able to see the peril of walking off of the path into a departure from the truth.
  - c. *3 John*. Herein is a confirmation of the hospitable; a condemnation of the proud and arrogant and a commendation of a good Christian example.
5. The study of these three letters will help us to appreciate our great "family fellowship." Also, to "know" is to have "assurance." Are you assured of your salvation? If not, read and study *1 John*, for you should be. (5:13) If you are assured, rejoice! (1:4)

B. TRUE FELLOWSHIP AND SOME HINDRANCES TO IT.

1. Fellowship (Greek κοινωνίαν - *koinōnian*). This word introduces us to one of the main subjects of these three letters. Eternal life, which comes through acceptable obedience to Jesus Christ, establishes fellowship between God and man. The verb, *koinōneō*, means to come into fellowship, to be made a partner, a joint heir or participant. (*1 John 1:3 cf. Acts 2:42*) Partners with God! Think about that seriously.
2. Read carefully the introduction of *1 John 1:1-4*. The object of the writing is distinctly set forth. John bears witness to the historical Jesus as being the preexistent Word; (*Cf. John 1:1-18*) that he and they might have fellowship with one another in their common fellowship with the Father and with His Son, the result of this being their joy made full.
3. True fellowship, *koinōnia*, is that bond which binds Christians to each other, to Christ and to God.
  - a. It is the sharing of friendship by the abiding in the company of others and based upon common Christian knowledge. (*Acts 2:42; 2 Cor. 6:14; 1 John 1:3*)
  - b. It is a partnership in the work of Christ. (*Phil. 1:5*)
  - c. It is a company of those united in "the faith." (*Eph. 3:9*)

- d. It is a fellowship in the Spirit. (2 Cor. 13:14; Phil. 2:1)
  - e. It is a fellowship with Christ. (1 Cor. 3:4)
    - 1) Expressed in the communion. (1 Cor. 10:16)
    - 2) Expressed in the suffering as a Christian. (Phil. 3:10)
  - f. It is fellowship with God conditioned by one's walk in the light. (1 John 1:3, 6)
3. Fellowship is conditional to "walking in the light." (1 John 1:5 - 2:11)
- a. God is light. This is a statement of God's absolute nature. (Cf. John 4:24 "God is Spirit" - 1 John 4:8, 16 "God is love.")
    - 1) James 1:17; 1 Tim. 6:16; 1 Pet. 2:9; Eph. 5:8; Col. 1:12. To be in Christ is to be in the light - Walking in the light affirms one's manner of life.
    - 2) God is contrasted to darkness. Darkness is a figure of ignorance, superstition, evil and sin. The Devil and his agents rule in the area/sphere of darkness. (Col. 1:13; Eph. 6:12)
  - b. Fellowship with God and one another is dependent upon our active life in Christ. The verb walk in *ver. 7*, is present active subjunctive, i.e. "If we keep on walking in the light."
  - c. If we keep on walking, the blood of Jesus keeps on cleansing. (As you read 1 John, notice all the continuous action verbs; those ending in "eth.")
  - d. Walking in the light has to do with personal holiness (1:5 - 2:2); complete obedience toward God and brotherly love. (2:7-11)
4. Fellowship can be destroyed by hindrances to one's walk in the light. (2:12-27 cf. 2 John 9-11)

- a. An appeal is made, based upon the Christian's knowledge of forgiveness of sins and relationship to God, to not allow the world of darkness to hinder the Christian's walk in the light. (2:12-14) "Overcome the evil one."
- b. The evils that threaten the fellowship. (2:15-23)
  - 1) The love of the world. (2:15-17)
  - 2) The belief of the Antichrist. (2:18-23)

*NOTE:* Those who love the world and those who are false teachers, have no fellowship with the Father or the Son.

5. Fellowship with God should cause the Christian, who knows God, to have the proper attitude toward God's love. (2:28 - 4:21)

- a. There are evils which would negate God's love. (2:28 - 4:6)
  - 1) The evil of sin which opposes righteousness. (2:28 - 3:10a)
  - 2) The evil of hatred which opposes love. (3:10b-24)
  - 3) The evil of error which opposes truth. (4:1-6)
- b. There is love which negates evil. (4:7-21)
  - 1) The love of God revealed. (4:7-10)
  - 2) The love of God imitated. (4:11-16)
  - 3) The love of God - its results. (4:17-21)

*NOTE:* True fellowship is based upon genuine love.

6. Fellowship with God results in the gift of eternal life which assures our hearts before Him. (5:1-20)

C. THE CHRISTIAN'S ASSURANCE.

- 1. Assurance. This word is not found as such in

John's epistles. However, there are words used to convey the idea of assurance, which means entire confidence, fulness, faith and persuaded. (Cf. 1 John 1:7; 2:3; 3:2, 19-20; 4:13; 5:4, 11-13; 2 John 9; 3 John 2-3) Our assurance is based upon KNOWING AND KEEPING THE COMMANDMENTS OF THE LORD.

- a. God's people, above all people, should know what they believe because of the revelation of God written for that very purpose (1 John 5:13), "These things have I WRITTEN unto you that ye may KNOW ye have ETERNAL LIFE."
  - b. May we assure our hearts before our God (1 John 5:18-19), being confident in what we believe and in whom we believe.
2. The letter of 1 John is truly one of "Blessed assurance, Jesus is mine! O what a foretaste of glory divine!"
  3. Consider these passages of assurance and certainty.
    - a. The testimony of eyewitnesses concerning the historicity of the object of our faith, Jesus the Christ. (1 John 1:1-4 cf. Heb. 11:1)
    - b. The assurance of forgiveness of sins. (1:9; 2:1-2, 12)
    - c. The assurance of being pronounced righteous based upon the cleansing work of Christ's blood. (1:7; 3:7)
    - d. The assurance of being like Christ when He comes. (2:28; 3:2 cf. 4:18) "As He is so are we in this world."
    - e. The assurance of faith overcoming the world. (Cf. 5:4-5 w/ 2:15-17; 4:4)
    - f. The assurance of eternal salvation. (5:11-13)
    - g. The certainties of the Christian faith. "WE KNOW." (5:13-21)
      - 1) Certainty of possessing eternal life. (ver. 13)

- 2) Certainty of answered prayer. (*ver. 15*)
- 3) Certainty of the believer's life of sanctification. (*ver. 18*)
- 4) Certainty of the absolute opposites of the believer and the world. (*ver. 19*)
- 5) Certainty that our convictions of Christ's incarnation are true. (*ver. 20*)
- 6) Certainty that we know Him and belong to Him. (*ver. 20*)

#### IV. CONCLUSION.

- A. The Knowledge That Jesus Christ Paid The Debt Of Sin And Became "The Propitiation For Our Sins" (*2:2*) In Order To Establish Fellowship Between Us, Who Believe On Him, And The Heavenly Father, Should Be The Taproot Of Our Assurance And Our Reason To Rejoice And Enjoy The Relationship.
- B. Jesus, Our Advocate, Is Coming Back Again.
  1. We are confident that when He comes we shall be "Like Him." (*1 John 3:2*)
  2. We are confident that while we wait for His coming, we are like Him. (*1 John 4:17*)
  3. We are confident that we know we have eternal "Life in the Son." (*1 John 5:11-13*) This is our fellowship and assurance.
- C. Brethren, Love One Another And Walk In The Truth. (*2 John 5-6*) May You Prosper And Be In Health Even As Your Soul Prospers. (*3 John 2*)