

Two Cardinal Facts

by Lewis Sperry Chafer

The sermon explores the profound truths of being 'in Christ' and Christ being 'in us', emphasizing the believer's new identity and righteousness before God.

Scripture: John 10:28, John 14:20, Romans 3:22, Romans 6:23, 1 Corinthians 12:13, 2 Corinthians 5:21, Galatians 2:20, Ephesians 1:22, Colossians 3:4, 1 John 5:12

Topics: "Union With Christ", "Righteousness By Faith"

Description

Lewis Sperry Chafer delves into the profound truths found in John 14:20, emphasizing the believer's dual position in Christ: 'Ye in me, and I in you.' Being 'in Christ' signifies an organic union with Him, forming the body of Christ, the church. This union grants believers a new standing before God, the righteousness of God, which is distinct from self-righteousness or right conduct, and is solely attributed to God's grace. Additionally, Christ dwelling in believers imparts eternal life, making them legitimate children of God and heirs of His glory, leading to a life lived by faith in the Son of God.

Transcript

OF THE foregoing thirty-three positions into which a believer is brought by the sufficient power and sovereign grace of God, two should be considered at length; both because of their prominence on the Sacred Pages and because of their fundamental character. They are both stated in Jhn 14:20, and are the words of Christ: "Ye in me, and I in you." Though the choice of words here would remind one of the first page of a child's primer, these words, nevertheless, contain, in germ form, two great lines of truth which are subsequently developed in the Epistles of the New Testament. True these words present a paradox to human minds; but this may be but added evidence of their divine character. There are no paradoxes with God.

In this passage the saved one is first said to be "in Christ." This particular phrase, with its equivalent "in Him," is used many times in the New Testament and with deep meaning. It is found twenty-eight times in the first chapter of Ephesians alone. The phrase states a position in Christ which means nothing less than an organic union with Christ. This union is formed through the power of God when one is saved. It is the work of the Spirit by which a member is baptized into the one body. Two figures are used in the Bible to illustrate this union: The vine and the branches, and the head with its members in the body. We are familiar with the process of grafting a branch into a tree, but not so familiar with the thought of joining a member into a human body; yet this is the exact meaning of this Scripture. There is a time when the

individual is without Christ; and again a time when, through believing, he is "in Christ." This stupendous change is described in 1Cr 12:13: "For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body, whether we be Jews or Gentiles, whether we be bond or free; and have been all made to drink into one Spirit." This organism which is composed of Christ the Head and all the members joined to Him by the Spirit is that which in the Bible is called "the church which is his body." This must be distinguished from all outward, or visible, organizations. To this organism, His body, every believer is perfectly and eternally joined by the baptism of the Spirit at the instant he believes. He is then "in Christ."

To be in Christ is to possess a new standing before God; a standing which is no less than the infinite righteousness of God.

The word "righteousness" is used with four distinct meanings in the New Testament and the various meanings should always be held in mind. (1) God Himself is said to be righteous (Rom 3:25, 26); (2) Self-righteousness, expressed by Paul as "mine own righteousness" (Phl 3:9), "Their own righteousness" (Rom 10:2); (3) A righteousness of daily life which is produced in the believer by the unhindered Spirit (Rom 8:4); (4) The righteousness of God which is said to be reckoned to the one who believes: "A righteousness from God which is unto all and upon all who believe" (Rom 3:22). The fourth meaning of the word is that aspect of righteousness which is now under consideration and that which provides the child of God with a perfect standing. This righteousness must be absolutely disassociated from all other forms of righteousness. It is not an attribute of God; it is in no way produced in life by the Spirit; and is as certainly unrelated to self-righteousness in every form. It is in no way related to right conduct. It is that which we become when we are vitally joined to Christ.

A human member severed from a body is both meritless and loathsome in itself; but if it were instantly and perfectly joined to a living body it would at once lose its former character, and from that time forth it would be recognized and honored as a part of the new body in which it is found. If that new organism was the body of the most honored person in the world, the new standing of that new member would be that of the one to whom it is joined. In like manner if that new person to whom a member is joined is the Christ of God, that new member will have a standing which is none other than the righteousness of God.

This, it must be repeated, is not a righteousness of man's making: it is distinctly said to be "made" unto the believer by God Himself. This is clear from the following passages: "Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us * * * righteousness" (1Cr 1:30); "For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him" (2Cr 5:21); "For I bear them record that they have a zeal of God, but not according to knowledge. For they being ignorant of God's righteousness, and going about to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted themselves unto the righteousness of God. For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to everyone that believeth" (Rom 10:2-4); "That I may win Christ, and be found in him, not having mine own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith" (Phl 3:8, 9); "But now the righteousness of God without the law is manifested, being witnessed by the law and the prophets; even the righteousness of God which is by faith of Jesus Christ unto all and upon all them that believe" (Rom 3:21, 22); "For what saith the scriptures? Abraham believed God, and it was counted unto him for righteousness. Now to him that worketh is the reward not reckoned of grace, but of debt. But to him that worketh not, but believeth on him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness. Even as David also described the blessedness of the man, unto whom God imputeth righteousness without works" (Rom 4:3-6); "And therefore it was imputed to him (Abraham) for righteousness. Now it was not written for his sake alone, that it was imputed unto him; but for us also, to whom it shall be imputed, if we believe on

him that raised up Jesus our Lord from the dead; who was delivered for our offences, and was raised again for our justification" (Rom 4:22-25); "Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us," and "He hath made us accepted in the beloved" (Gal 3:13; Eph 1:6); "I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ, * * * For therein is the righteousness, of God revealed (a righteousness from God) from faith to faith" (Rom 1:16, 17).

Such are the marvels of His grace. Of ourselves we could be only conscious of our failure and sin, and wholly unable to provide a cure. He is able to make us the very righteousness of God in Christ. As we are made righteous in His sight, He is able to justify us now and forever "from all things from which we could not be justified by the law of Moses." "We are justified freely by his grace through the redemption which is in Christ Jesus."

This bestowed righteousness, then, is Christ who is the very righteousness of God, and He is made the righteousness of God unto us when we are found in Him. Such is the standing before God of every saved person whether he has come to understand his position or not.

There are practical values, however, in coming to know that we are now made the righteousness of God, and that this righteousness is so unrelated to our own merit, or demerit, and so related to Christ that it can and will abide without change through all eternity. Such knowledge will result in indescribable peace of soul. Oh the burden and yoke of a law that is always broken! The thought of a God Who is never satisfied! A standing that is always hopeless because of our utter helplessness! Then to know the liberty into which we have been brought that we need no longer vainly strive to make ourselves acceptable to God, but can believe that we are "made acceptable to God by Jesus Christ," and on no lower plain than that of the infinite Person of our Lord! There is indescribable rest and peace in realizing that we are already "accepted in the beloved." Such rest and peace would come to a multitude of God's children if they but knew and believed the word of His grace.

To know our perfect standing in Christ does not lead to laxity in daily life: it is the strongest possible incentive to holy living that human heart can know. Let there be no idle speculation here. It is the testimony of the Spirit of God we are dealing with, and that testimony is to the effect that man's merit, or demerit, cannot become a qualifying factor in the bestowed righteousness of God. It is distinctly for the one who "worketh not." Carelessness of life has never resulted from believing this revelation. God is most evidently concerned with the quality of the daily life of His child; but such an issue cannot be raised here. The divine order cannot be safely ignored, which is first to reveal the grace position, and then to appeal for the corresponding manner of daily life. God's children are too often fed on mere injunctions with no reference to the corresponding and related positions. This will always result in a hardening of heart and carelessness of life. God has clearly related the position to the conduct and in a positive order, and it is perilous to omit any aspect of the truth or to change the divine order of its application. True heart-searching and moral judgments follow almost without exhortation in those who come to understand the exceeding grace of God in their behalf.

The second vital fact mentioned in Jhn 14:20 is stated in the words of Christ, "I in you." Not only is the believer "in Christ," but Christ is in the believer. This is the fundamental Biblical fact concerning the Christian. He has received a deposit of eternal life, something entirely new to him, which is not known to any human being excepting those who have believed on Christ. Jesus said, "I am come that they might have life." This is a new life imparted, rather than a mere inspiration or example for living. It is on this sole point of possessing the new life that all Christian profession is to be judged. "Examine yourselves whether

ye be in the faith; prove your own selves. Know ye not your own selves, how that Jesus Christ is in you, except ye be reprobates?" (2Cr 13:5). There are upwards of eighty-five New Testament passages referring directly to this fact of a new imparted divine life. When these are considered, it will be found that this life is never possessed by an unsaved person; but it is revealed to be as certainly the present possession of every saved person, even the least of all believers. "He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life."

It is also revealed that this new life is none other than the indwelling Son of God. "He that hath the Son hath life; and he that hath not the Son of God hath not life" (1Jo 5:12); "When Christ, who is our life, shall appear" (Col 3:4); "Christ liveth in me" (Gal 2:20); "Christ in you the hope of glory" (Col 1:27). This indwelling One being the Son of God and eternal, the life is eternal. "I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish" (Jhn 10:28); "The gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord" (Rom 6:23).

This is the great supernatural fact of regeneration. By this regeneration legitimate children of God are formed who are by all right and title the true sons of God, and if sons, heirs of God and joint-heirs with Jesus Christ. They form a "new generation" or species, and their destiny is, in consonance with their new divine nature, in the eternal glory of the household and family of God.

The practical value of knowing this relation to God, or to be able to say, "Christ liveth in me," is but to be impelled to go on to the place wherein it may also be said, "and the life I now live, I live by the faith of the Son of God who loved me and gave himself for me." As certainly as a member is vitally joined to the body, so certainly the life of the Head flows into that member, and by this new vitality it is alive and in possession of every vital power. It also follows that such a member should be wholly submissive to the mind and will of the Head. How imperative, reasonable and blessed it is to be wholly yielded to Him that every thought of His great heart may find instant and perfect expression through every member in His own body!

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