

The Eternal Duality

by Norman Grubb

Norman Grubb explores the profound duality of our identity in Christ, emphasizing the distinction between our individuality and our expression of His life within us.

Scripture: Mark 11:23, John 14:20, Romans 8:1, Galatians 2:20, 1 John 1:9

Topics: "Union With Christ", "Christ Consciousness"

Description

Norman Grubb addresses the confusion surrounding the expressions 'Christ as me' and 'Christ as you' in comparison to 'Christ in me', emphasizing the importance of understanding the dual nature of believers as distinct from Christ while also being united with Him. He delves into the Scriptural basis of these expressions, highlighting the need to recognize our identity in Christ without equating ourselves to Him, but rather as vessels through which He operates. Norman emphasizes the shift from sin-consciousness to Christ-consciousness, urging believers to live in the reality of their union with Christ and operate in His power and sufficiency.

Transcript

Letter to Norman and his response regarding the use of the expression "Christ as me" and "Christ as you."

Editors Note:

There is no question that puzzles and upsets newer readers of UNION LIFE more than our frequent use of the expression "Christ as me," (which obviously has implications that go a lot farther than the expression "Christ in me"). Large sections of a recent exchange of letters between Norman and a long-time friend are reproduced below to clarify this issue. The friend's letter is an honest, intelligent and valid statement concerning the paradoxical truth of "Christ in us". Norman's response is a sensitive, masterful handling of the question posed by the friend as to the Scriptural basis of our use of the expressions "Christ as me" and "Christ as you".

My dear Norman,

One of the most dynamic changes ever brought to my life was when the Spirit revealed to me Galatians 2:20. (I had, of course, mentally known the verse for a long time.) Where I would take issue with you, Norman, is your projection of the words "Christ in you" to "Christ as you."

The "I, yet not I" of Galatians 2:20 is one of those dichotomies in Scripture like Calvinism and Arminianism. Truth, as you have said, does not lie with either, nor in between. Truth is BOTH. However, up to the moment, I cannot find "Christ as me" in Scripture, unless you mean "similar to me" or "me similar to Him." He is the Firstborn in resurrection of many brethren. The Body is one with the Head, and the Head is one with the Body--but they are still two--even though being HIS Body. I am created a new creation IN Christ; not created AS Christ. I was dead, but God made me alive IN Christ; my new weak born-again self is the means of expressing Him; not Him. He is bringing many sons to glory (of His nature, but not Him). He was incarnate in Mary, but was not Mary. I cannot BE Him, or He would not be interceding for me; I cannot sit with Him in glory (Eph. 2) if I AM Him. I am exhorted to see only Christ in you and in myself; therefore I can see you and me. Every sin I commit is not (as the magazine almost blasphemously declares) an expression of Christ in ANY way (imperfect or not), but needs forgiveness through the Blood of Christ (to use the New Testament expression), the implication of which every Christian should know even if the world does not.

All things work together towards the good of being a projection of Christ (Rom. 8:28, 29) - not Christ Himself. My "old nature", which was always spiritually dead, anyhow, though eternal, is dead in every sense, because it died with Him who is eternal life. Any problem I have as a new creation is through trying to live life in terms of the old human life. Yes, I am to learn to live in union with Christ; BUT YOU CANNOT HAVE UNION OF ONE PERSON. You can have two people who so live that one is the expression of the other (me of Christ to the world; Christ of me before the Throne), but being the expression of each other does not make us one person. I, yet not I. Him, yet not Him. You can, in the Spirit, have two people living in one another (they are so much one)--"I in Christ", "Christ in me"--but Christ cannot say, "I am John Jones", and I cannot say, "I am Christ". Christ is a perfect expression of me ("accepted in the Beloved"); I am an imperfect expression of Him--the one to God, the other to the world. But neither IS the other. I have no life but His, but He eternally exists quite apart from me.

In His love and mine,

(A Friend)

My dear Friend,

Yes, you have hit a real point to which I have given much consideration. You are, of course, Scripturally right. We are forever an eternal duality, which is ridiculous (or rather, blasphemous) to seek to bridge over or dissolve. I go wholly with you in your underlined differentiations between us and Him, and have never had one moment of questioning of those distinctions. I don't see how a saved sinner and indwelt (or replaced?) saint can do so.

But I find the experiential emphasis of God's understanding men of the Bible (right up to the Saviour Himself as "Son of Man"--His favorite title) was their recognition of their calling to act as God. God called Moses "a god", and Jesus confirmed that we are all gods to whom the word of God has come (as you say, I needn't quote chapters and verses to you). God constantly summons us to "Go in this thy might." Elijah said there wouldn't be dew nor rain but according to his (Elijah's) word. Peter said, "Such as I have I give I thee." Jesus was always saying "I", "I", "I", but when questioned would always say He could do nothing but what he saw the Father do, say, etc. And He ended by saying that if they saw Him they saw the Father, yet He was the Son. John picked this up and said, "As He is, so are we in this world." And we must not forget that great statement which underscores the fact that final truth can only really be put in contradictory

forms: "I live, yet not I, but Christ in me." (It is the statement on which we base our oft-used word of "Replacement".)

Therefore the truth is, as you say, that both sides are true. But our calling is to emphasize the enormous lack among God's redeemed people of that move-over to our enablement, because HE is the real ONE operating through us as Vine through branch, Head by body, Living Water out of vessel, etc. We purpose to close that debilitating gap between Vine-branch and Head-body frequently stressed by many evangelicals. We stress ourselves as kept, united, indwelt selves in which the self in its union operates as He. And this moves right on to an inner fixed consciousness where we live spontaneously as He, our recognition having moved over from sloshing around in Romans 7 to a liberated Romans 8, and thus on to an outpoured Romans 9-15 for the world. This focus (of knowing who we are in Gal. 2:20, etc.) makes a vital difference in our ministry as we can transfer our "seeings" from His fixed settlements in us and as us, to those wider stretches of faith, calling the things that be not as being. We can then replace beseeching prayer with words of faith. (Mark 11:23 tells us to pray precisely as Jesus Himself did: "Say unto the mountain...")

This is probably the key to the liberating influxes of the Spirit so evident in these great days in the various outpourings of the Spirit, such as the various Pentecostal forms, which have given to so many the inner consciousness of Spirit-baptism with power. This understanding must move on (as with Peter in the great Antioch crisis) to knowing Him as an inner Person. Paul's key Galatians 2:20 was given for Peter's enlightenment, though I don't think even mighty Peter ever really saw it, because of his remark in 2 Peter 3:16 (which we might also apply to some critics of Union Life!!). For this reason, Peter's letters are great beginner's letters (the sincere milk of the word), but contains no mention of the inner Christ, while Paul builds the living temple of redeemed unified humans, and John puts the roof on.

And that may be why there have always been these farther-out companies of believers--holiness groups of different kinds, Holy Spirit people, the great Mystics (my favourites!), the Montanists--all whom have always been suspect to the orthodox, more Bible- than experience-oriented evangelicals.

All I know is that God's people are full of sin-consciousness, self-condemnation, and self-belittling (in place of rising up as equipped, holy sons of God). When we mention the epistle of John, 99 out of 100 will jump up to ask, "But do you stand by 1 John 1:9?" Yet the whole letter is union: in the light as he is in the light, walking as He walks, knowing with His inner knowing, living right as He lived right, loving as He loves, and believing with His faith. All union, union, union; and just that passage of 1:9 for our occasional slips into sin (not temptations), though even then he writes this "that we sin not", and has said that those born of God cannot sin (but might commit a sin--a big difference, as you know).

So you see, we are up against an evangelical world of negative sin-consciousness rather than liberated, spontaneous Christ-consciousness. This is why I believe that God has called Union Life to make this re-interpretation of the top-line "being in Christ as Christ". We find this focus right through a host of Bible lives and epistle interpretations, underscored by Paul's favourite word "all, all, all" to emphasize our Christ-sufficiency, Christ-enduement and Christ-union.

Much love,

Norman

Source: <https://sermonindex.net/speakers/norman-grubb/the-eternal-duality/>

Grow in Your Walk with Christ

Listen and read messages that will stir your heart for Christ and point you to deeper repentance and devotion.

- 50,000+ Sermons from speakers past and present
- 3,900+ Classic Christian Books freely readable online
- 1,200+ Bible Translations and Commentaries
- Over 450k forum posts — Join our vibrant online Christian forum

www.sermonindex.net