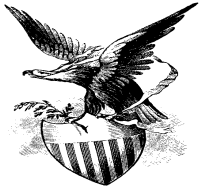


# Light Brings Salt

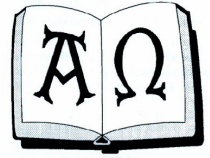
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## Iron Range Bible Church

*Dedicated to the Systematic Exposition of the Word of God*



### OUR MOTIVES FOR LIVING THE CHRISTIAN LIFE

Lewis Sperry Chafer

The Christian who is perfected forever, being in Christ, has, nevertheless, a life of imperfection to live so long as he is in this world. The new problem which he confronts is not one of how he should live that he might be accepted and perfected before God, but rather of how he, an accepted and perfected person, should live after these stupendous realities are accomplished by the grace and power of God. Until this vital distinction is comprehended and received, there will be no progress made in the extensive field of truth which directs the Christian's life and service in time.

Until positional truth is recognized and received to the extent that the saved one acknowledges that he is saved and perfected in the sight of God on no other ground than that, on his part, he has believed on Christ to the saving of his soul, and, on God's part, he is justified, being both forgiven and constituted righteous through the immeasurable twofold substitution of Christ—bearing condemnation because of the believer's demerit and offering Himself as the source of merit—there can be only confusion and misunderstanding about the true motivating principle in the Christian's daily life.

It could not be denied truthfully that the mass of professing Christians have been deprived of the knowledge of positional truth and because of this have never conceived of any other idea of Christian conduct than that they are obligated to make themselves acceptable to God by their own works of righteousness. Naturally, being so deprived of the knowledge of positional truth they are correspondingly ignorant of the true basis and motive for life truth.

This one distinction between positional truth and life truth constitutes one of the most vital contrasts between law and grace. It is declared that the Jew failed because he sought his righteous standing before God by means of the works of the law, being "ignorant" of the truth that God has provided all the standing and merit in and through Christ that His holiness could ever require. Because of this ignorance, the Jew went about "to establish his own righteousness" and did not "submit" or come under the bestowed righteousness of God, Christ being "the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believes in Christ."

Over against this, some Gentiles—to whom the law was never addressed and who had therefore never attempted to be owned of God through law-works of righteousness—attained instantly to the bestowed righteousness of God when they received Christ as Savior through faith in Him (Rom. 9:30–10:4). The

question of motive in the Christian's daily life is paramount in this discussion.

The body of truth now to be considered concerns the daily life of the believer, and no issue is more determining than that of the reason or principle which actuates the one who would attain to a God-honoring life in the way God appoints through the power of the indwelling Spirit. The Holy Spirit cannot cooperate or engender any reality of experience when the very basis of a grace relationship to God is ignored.

How, indeed, could the Holy Spirit empower a life which is wholly misguided and wrong in its objectives, methods, and motives? His benefits, of necessity, have significance only for those who recognize and believe that they are perfected once-for-all by simple faith in Christ as Savior and that their new obligation is not to make themselves accepted but rather to walk worthy of the One in whom they are accepted. In John 15:1–16 the words of Christ relative to abiding in Him are recorded. In this context a fundamental distinction must be drawn between the believer's *union* with Christ and his *communion* with Christ. Too often it is supposed that in this passage Christ is teaching that the branch, which represents the Christian, must maintain its union with the vine, which represents Christ. That communion, however, is in view throughout the passage is clearly indicated. In verse 2 it is written: "Every branch in me that beareth not fruit," and the words *in me* declare the perfect union of the fruitless branch to Christ. The obligation upon the branch is to continue in the relation to Christ which makes communion possible, whereby the divine life or energy may flow into the branch so that fruit may be produced. Salvation, which is union with Christ, and the

perfect standing which it secures continue always, since such benefits depend only on the believer's position in Christ (eternal security). However, the believer is ever facing the facts of his own weakness and of the masterful foes which are against him; and only by keeping Christ's commandments (application of truth), which means adjustment to His perfect will (cf. John 15:10), is the way kept clear for the needed divine power to flow into the believer as sap flows into the branch.

This passage illustrates the importance of a right objective and method in the Christian's life if he is to walk worthy of his calling through the imparted divine energy. Though in perfect and unalterable union with Christ, the believer will be fruitless except he remains in that obedient relation to Christ wherein the power of the Spirit may be realized in and through him. Christ declared in verse 10 that He kept His Father's commandments and abode in His love, and this is asserted as the pattern for the believer thus to abide in Him. Certainly, Christ was not striving to keep saved by doing anything required to that end; He did, however, keep in perfect communion with His Father through obedience to His will. Union with Christ is God's undertaking and is wrought for, and continues as the portion of, the one who merely believes; communion is the believer's undertaking—a specific plan of life which calls for an intelligent purpose and method of life, adapted to the precise will of God, on the part of the one who is saved.

Over the next several weeks I will be excerpting some of the teaching ministry of Lewis Sperry Chafer from his Systematic Theology. He has much to say that we need to pay attention to.