

CHAPTER 3. THE RIGHTEOUSNESS OF BELIEVERS

3.1 Precondition

When we talk about the righteousness of believers, it is necessary to address several premises, that is, God is righteous and God is loving. As far as God's righteousness is concerned, all people are sinners. The result of sin is death, so everyone will die (1 Corinthians 15:22). And there is no human power or means to solve evil. As far as God's love is concerned, God is a God willing to give grace, God's active election and Christ's willing obedience make salvation complete, the work of the Holy Spirit makes sinners repent, and believers receive God's righteousness in Christ.

In Adam, all people have original sin. In 1 Corinthians 15:21-22 Death came by one man, and this man was in Adam, and in Adam all died. Why did the man in Adam die? Because Adam sinned, the hook of death was death (1 Corinthians 15:56). Therefore, the condition of Adam's life is the condition of the life of all who are in Adam, as it is written in 1 Corinthians 15:47-48 that he came from the earth, which is of the earth. Adam is The representative of all mankind.⁷⁶ Adam's attributes are all human attributes. If Adam is earthly, then all mankind is earthly. Just as Adam's

⁷⁶ Anthony C. Thiselton, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1284.

earthly life ended in death, so the earthly life of all men ended in death, without exception. And in the context of this passage, it is clear that the life of Adam stands in stark contrast to the life of Christ, that Adam's life was corrupt, humiliating, weak, and fleshly, and that the end of his life was the end of the life of all fleshly men, and that no fleshly man can boast before God (1 Corinthians 1:29). Because their lives cannot overcome the power of sin (1 Corinthians 15:58), they are mortal lives (verse 53). Such views are also found in Romans: "All have sinned and fall short of the glory of God" (Romans 3:23) and "the wages of sin is death" (6:23).

In Paul's theology, Sin is a deadly poison.⁷⁷ The Corinthians don't go into much detail about sin and death, but explains in Paul's Romans which was written in Corinth⁷⁸: sin was the entry of one man into the world, and death came from sin, and therefore death came upon all men, because all have sinned (Romans 5:12-19). When one man (Adam) sinned, all sinned. Blake even explained that Adam's sin was imputed to all men, and that is righteous⁷⁹. If one sins, death reigns over the sinner; if all sin, death reigns over all.

The first Adam was created by God in his own image (Genesis 1:26), and God

⁷⁷ Gordon D. Fee, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians*, Chinese translation by Chen Zhiwen, A Kernel of Wheat Christian Ministries, 1174.

⁷⁸ William M. Greathouse, *Beacon Bible Commentary*, Volume 8 Rom-2Cor, Albert F Nazarene Publishing House Harper, 21.

⁷⁹ Willhelmus a Brakel, *The Christian's Reasonable Service*, Vol 1, Chinese translation by Wang Zhiyong, Contemporary China Publishing House, 368.

breathed a breath of life into his nostrils and made him a living soul (Genesis 2:7). 1 Corinthians 15:45 also mentions again that Adam was a living spirit, which means that man is composed of two parts, one body part and one soul part. When Adam sinned, man's depravity was total, and 2 Corinthians 7:1, "All uncleanness of body and soul," emphasizes the total depravity of sin, the total depravity of the body, the total depravity of the spirit,⁸⁰ and there can be no other place that is not defiled by sin. And when Adam betrayed the source of righteousness, Sin takes over every part of the soul. None of it is clean. This also greatly negates the Catholic belief that human reason is undefiled, and that the reformers have long known, as mentioned in the one of Five points of Calvinism's TULIP⁸¹: Total Depravity. So the death of the sinner is a physical death and a spiritual death. The so-called spiritual death is the separation from God. The sinner has no credit at all in holiness and righteousness. Even if a person believes in the Lord, it is not his credit, and the erroneous idea of Arminius that after the fall there is still some credit for the righteous is contrary to the general principles of the Bible. The Westminster Confession of Faith written: By this sin they fell from their original righteousness and communion with God, and so became dead in sin, and wholly defiled in all the faculties and parts of soul and body.⁸²

⁸⁰ John Calvin, *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, Chinese translation by A Kernel of Wheat Christian Ministries, 196.

⁸¹ Loraine Boettner, *The Reformed Faith*, P&R Publishing, 23.

⁸² WCF 6:2

It addresses the error of traditional Arminianism in "making faith be the basis for justification as personal righteousness". This is essentially tantamount to justification by works. What does justification have to do with righteousness? In short, justification is what makes people righteous.⁸³

Adam sinned and provoked God's wrath against all mankind, making all mankind enemies of God.⁸⁴ Yet out of God's mercy and grace, He reconciled men to Him through Christ (2 Corinthians 5:18-20). The fact that the last Adam became the living Spirit truly declares that Christ is the essence of that spiritual life and the source of the spiritual body.⁸⁵

The Corinthian letter mentions in passing the relationship between sin and the law, that sin relies on the power of the law (1 Corinthians 15:55-56), and thus indirectly, in verse 57, through the victory of the Lord Jesus Christ for us, declares the terrible truth that no one is above this power. Therefore, no one can work the law, and no one can fulfill the righteousness of the law. Paul himself said that although there was nothing wrong with his actions and nothing wrong with his conscience, he could not justify it (1 Corinthians 4:4). The righteousness of conscience is not the true

⁸³ Willhelmus a Brakel, *The Christian's Reasonable Service*, Vol 2, Chinese translation by Wang Zhiyong, Contemporary China Publishing House, 337.

⁸⁴ John Calvin, *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, Vol 2, Chinese translation by A Kernel of Wheat Christian Ministries, 92.

⁸⁵ Gordon D. Fee, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians*, Chinese translation by Chen Zhiwen, A Kernel of Wheat Christian Ministries, 1153.

righteousness.⁸⁶ Righteousness in deeds also falls short of the standard of God's law, which condemns sinners, and man's actions are always against God (2 Corinthians 3:6). So in front of the law, all the people in Adam failed. Thank od! In the despair of mankind, he has done a wonderful thing, which he has made us overcome by Christ (1 Corinthians 15:57).

The victory of the Lord Jesus Christ for us shows that mankind has no solution to solve sin. All the wisest and wisest men in the world, are the ones who perish. All the good deeds and strategies of man are powerless to solve the problem of sin. All wisdom among men is foolishness and useless in the sight of God (1 Corinthians 1:20), and Christ is unknown to and even despised by wise men, scribes, debaters, and men of power. But they did not think that true wisdom is associated with righteousness, holiness, and salvation (1 Corinthians 1:30). No flesh and blood can boast before God, for salvation is truly accomplished only by Christ's blood and sacrifice on the cross. The victory of the Lord Jesus Christ for us (1 Corinthians 15:57) also shows that we cannot overcome sin or death, because sinners cannot work the law, and the power of sin is the law, and the hook of death is sin, but Christ really fulfilled the law, he defeated death, he swallowed up death (1 Corinthians 15:26, 54), and so, Through Christ's victory, all believers in Christ are also victorious.

The victory of the Lord Jesus Christ for us also shows that we cannot

⁸⁶ Anthony C. Thiselton, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 340.

overcome sin or death, because sinners cannot work the law, and the power of sin is the law, and the hook of death is sin, but Christ really fulfilled the law, he defeated death, he swallowed up death (1 Corinthians 15:26, 54), and therefore, by his victory, All believers in Christ are victorious too.

In speaking of God's grace and active action, it can be said that in the great work of redemption, which makes man righteous, every place is God's grace. God predestined us before the ages (1 Corinthians 2:7), God has called us (1 Corinthians 1:9), and God made Christ the righteousness of believers (1 Corinthians 1:30). God made Christ him to be sin who knew no sin, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God. (2 Corinthians 5:21). God has reconciled us to him through Christ (2 Corinthians 5:18). God has given us the Holy Spirit as proof (2 Corinthians 2:22), God has made Christ our victory (1 Corinthians 15:57), and it all comes from God (2 Corinthians 5:18). Therefore, it is only by God's grace that man can become a righteous man, and it is entirely God's merit, and man has no merit at all.

3.2 Imputation of Righteousness

3.2.1 The Origin of the Imputation

Imputation, although this word is not found in the Bible, the verb "imputed " is often found in both the Old and New Testaments. "Imputed" means "to be put in a record or account," and this can be applied to both righteousness and sin. In Genesis chapter 15, Abraham believed God, and God counted him as righteous. In Leviticus

chapter 16, the high priest Aaron would lay his hands on the lambs and then confess the sins of the Israelites. All the sins of the Israelites were counted or transferred to the lambs. Because of Phinehas's jealous heart, he killed the adulterous Simeon and the Moabite woman at Shittim (Numbers 25:7-8), and the Bible counts his zealous actions as righteousness for generations to come forever (Psalm 106:31). As David said, blessed are those who are justified by God beyond his works (Psalm 32:1-2).

When the merits already accomplished by one person are attributed to another, even if that person has done nothing, he is considered and declared to have done them himself, as if he had actually done them himself. This is righteous.⁸⁷ Isaiah 61:10 also mentions that God puts righteousness on us as a robe. As Martin Luther said, it is external righteousness, it is righteousness that is put on sinners, it is vicarious righteousness. Jeremiah also speaks of the Lord as our righteousness (Jeremiah 23:6).

The first imputation begins with Adam, who sinned and died. In Adam all die (1 Corinthians 15:22). This verse confirms the imputation of sin. It means that his sins are imputed to all mankind, and his end is counted as the end of all mankind. Imputed sin does not mean that man must be regarded as Adam because of his inherited corruption; that is, because he has the same humanity as Adam, he will indeed commit the same sin that Adam committed. It means that the sin of breaking the covenant that Adam originally committed is imputed to man⁸⁸. Denying or perverting this truth lays

⁸⁷ Willhelmus a Brakel, *The Christian's Reasonable Service*, Vol 2, Chinese translation by Wang Zhiyong, Contemporary China Publishing House, 345-346.

⁸⁸ Willhelmus a Brakel, *The Christian's Reasonable Service*, Vol 2, Chinese translation by

the foundation for denying that sin comes from Adam, and thus denies the origin of original sin. By analogy, it denies the imputation of Christ's righteousness.⁸⁹ Adam's sin is imputed to us because we have a covenant relationship with him.⁹⁰ There is little talk of the covenant in the Corinthian Epistles, but it is not absent. First, when it comes to Adam's sin, the Old Testament already mentions him as a covenant violator, and uses this to describe how the Israelites broke the covenant of God (Hosea 6:7).

In 1 Corinthians chapter 11, the Lord Jesus clearly taught that his blood is the new covenant with us. Since there is a New Testament, there must be an Old Testament, but the situation of the Old Testament shows that mankind has constantly broken the covenant and failed, so that the Old Testament has become a minister of condemnation (2 Corinthians chapter 3). As long as the Old Testament cannot point to Christ, it is like reading it with a veil, and the meaning of the words read out can only bring death to people in the end (2 Corinthians 3:6). In Augustine's *City of God* (Latin: *De Civitas Dei*), he talked about Adam's initial relationship with God as a holy covenant (Latin: *testamentum pactum*), and thus the imputation of Adam's sin to his descendants. Adam was the representative of the whole human race, and the transmission of sin was realistic, not federal.⁹¹

Wang Zhiyong, Contemporary China Publishing House, 369.

⁸⁹ Ibid, 367.

⁹⁰ Ibid, 369.

⁹¹ Louis Berkhof, *Systematic Theology*, Wm. B. Erdmans Publishing Company, 211.

There is also much information about attribution in the prophets, especially Isaiah chapter 53, which describes in detail how the innocent sufferer suffered in place of God's people: indeed He bore our transgressions and carried our pain, He suffered for our transgressions and was bruised for our sins. Through his punishment we have peace; By his stripes we are healed. The Lord laid the iniquity of us all upon him, and he suffered for the sake of God's people. He was oppressed and judged; he poured out his life to the point of death; He was counted among the criminals, bearing the sins of all, and interceding for the criminals. Indeed, he was a man who did not commit violence, who had no deceit in his mouth, a righteous servant of God, who so carefully depicted the punishment of the only righteous servant of God in place of God's people. Here it is said that the sins of God's people were laid on this righteous servant, who alone bore their sins to death. But the righteousness of this servant came to those who knew him and were justified.

The Bible affirms that righteousness or sin is counted to each person's account from God's perspective. The theological emphasis on imputed can be applied to three aspects: first, it is about the original sin of Adam being imputed to his descendants (sinology); second, it is about sinners imputing their sins to Christ through faith (Christ's redemption); and third, it is about the righteousness of Christ being imputed to believers (Soteriology).⁹²

⁹² J. V. Fesko, *The Doctrine of Imputation*, <https://www.thegospelcoalition.org/essay/the-doctrine-of-imputation/>.

3.2.2 Double Imputation

2 Corinthians 5:21, here is a double imputation, that is, the believers' sins are imputed to Christ, and Christ's righteousness is imputed to the believers. Christ, who was sinless, became sinful for the believers and died for the believers' sins (1 Corinthians 15:3), and the believers' sins are imputed to Christ. Christ becomes our righteousness (1 Corinthians 1:30) and we become the righteousness of God in Christ. This is called the imputation of righteousness, that is, the righteousness of Christ is imputed to the believers. The theory of imputation does not seem to be difficult to understand, but the fulfillment is actually accomplished through the suffering of Christ.

He is not guilty. By the standards of the law, He fully fulfills the righteousness of the law, and he becomes our righteousness, showing that we are perfect in Christ. The righteousness which Christ attained by obedience to the law is the righteousness of God in Christ⁹³. In Chapter 2 I have gone into detail from Christ's divine identity, divine work, and human fullness to the fact that Christ is the only righteous One. He was fully justified before God and qualified to fulfill God's plan of redemption, which is that he should be punished for the sins of believers by being sinless. Because he was sinless, he fully lived out the attributes of God, which are love, righteousness, holiness. This righteousness is the most fundamental, the foundation of our own

⁹³ Willhelmus a Brakel, *The Christian's Reasonable Service*, Vol2, Chinese translation by Wang Zhiyong, Contemporary China Publishing House, 349.

existing righteousness.⁹⁴

"To be sin" is not an ordinary phrase, but it means to "treat him as a sinner" and make him bear the punishment of sin. The Bible speaks of Christ being sinless. When Paul said God made Christ to be sin for us, Paul did it strongly, Determine that God caused Christ to bear the sins we sinners deserve.⁹⁵ We know that God is righteous, he hates sin, and those who sin must face God's judgment and punishment in righteousness, although in God's loving side, God wants to save people in Christ, but it does not mean that God will lower the standard of his righteousness, or that God will use cheating ways to do it, it is not like this, God is absolutely righteous and just, when Christ cried out on the cross, "My God, My God, why have you forsaken me?" (Matthew 27:46, Mark 15:34). So great and extremely serious was the sin of all the chosen since Adam that the Father God hid his face from his beloved Son Jesus Christ at this moment! On the cross, Christ could hardly breathe, but he cried out "Eli! Eli! Ramazabachthani?", this means "my God, my God, why have you forsaken me?".

At that moment, even heaven and earth were dark, and he was rejected by the Father! But that cry across time and space can be said to have shaken the whole world and echoed through time and space throughout the ages. Even 1,000 years before the Lord Jesus, this sound shocked the poet David, that was, the man after God's heart, in

⁹⁴ Lei Yu Tian and Andrew Ng Wai Man, *the Chinese Edition of Luther's Works*, Vol 1: Reformation Writinga 1, Literature Department, LC-HKS, 335.

⁹⁵ Leon Morris, *New Testament Cross*, Chinese translation by Li Lijuan, Religious Culture Press, 298-99.

a vision. What was said here "after God's heart", is not to say that David did not sin, but that David had the most comprehensive and profound understanding of Christ before he became flesh. One of the most important realizations and experiences is this: Psalm 22 begins with the line "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?" What a terrible thing to be rejected by God, what a terrible death! David even wrote down the terrible situation of Christ on the cross: Why go away and not save me? Don't listen to my groaning words? But I am a worm, and not a man, despised by all men and despised by the people, and so on. But this echo had also shaken the saints of all ages, and even us two thousand years later, and it has not disappeared, and will continue to reverberate in the church until the return of Jesus Christ. Christ paid a great price, and as Paul emphasizes, we were bought with a price (1 Corinthians 6:20, 7:23).

Therefore, when Jesus was to bear the sin of some sinners in his sinless capacity, he truly bore the debt of sin, and he truly suffered the punishment of God's righteousness to death. This is very unfair to Jesus Christ, but it manifested God's great mercy and love, and it is also a true manifestation of God's righteousness. On the cross, Christ's blood sacrifice satisfied God's righteousness and averted God's wrath. How terrible that punishment was, and how great that sacrifice was, is difficult for us to measure on a human scale, because it is a secret thing that God wants to do. God took the initiative of grace, through Christ's resurrection from the dead, to completely defeat death and sin, so that all who are in Christ are not condemned, but

are righteousness. We become righteous, and this righteousness comes from God's imputation, not from what we ourselves possess or deserve. Mark Jones states:

At the cross, Jesus Christ became the 'greatest sinner who ever was' by imputation. Imputation was an act of God through which he credited our sins to Christ on the cross. In this 'glorious exchange' of imputation, God then makes an effectual grant and donation of a real and perfect righteousness to his children. He credits - or accounts to us the righteousness of Christ. Our sins were therefore imputed to Christ on the cross so that his perfect righteousness could be imputed to us when we receive Christ through faith.⁹⁶

It is clear that the righteousness of the believer in Christ is not his own, and Martin Luther speaks of it in the "two kinds of righteousness" as a foreign righteousness, another righteousness imported from without.⁹⁷ And Christ has the righteousness that becomes us (1:30), and Christ's righteousness becomes our righteousness, and all that He has is our abundance, even Christ himself belongs to us.⁹⁸ All the premises and results of righteousness are the work of God's grace. Our righteousness is entirely due to the mercy of God and the credit of Christ. The forgiveness of sins, the suffering and obedience of Christ in the place of sinners, the imputing of His righteousness to undeserving sinners, and the righteous treatment of

⁹⁶ Mark Jones, *Knowing Christ*, The Banner of Truth Trust, 106.

⁹⁷ Lei Yu Tian and Andrew Ng Wai Man, *the Chinese Edition of Luther's Works*, Vol 1: Reformation Writing 1, Literature Department, LC-HKS, 334.

⁹⁸ *Ibid*, 335.

believers are all free grace from beginning to end.⁹⁹

3.2.3 How Can Believers Obtain Righteousness

3.2.3.1 By faith

Martin Luther spoke of the outer righteousness, This is the righteousness of Christ justified by faith.¹⁰⁰ Of course, he finds the important teachings mainly in Romans, but from the Corinthian letters, the teaching of justification by faith does not seem obvious, only in 1 Corinthians 1:21, which emphasizes that God saves believers through Christ. And 2 Corinthians 3:4 records that we have faith in God through Christ. This redemptive faith is also called justified faith. But, Paul did teach that God imputes to believers an external, divine righteousness, which is ours as a gift of grace.¹⁰¹ God "counts" righteousness to ungodly sinners who look to Christ by faith, not by works, and on the contrary do not blame their own sins on them. However, the Corinthian letter does not talk about how believers are justified from the perspective of "faith," but righteousness from the perspective of "union with Christ."

3.2.3.2 Union with Christ

"Union with Christ" is extremely important. John Owen said: The greatest,

⁹⁹ Louis Berkhof, *Systematic Theology*, Wm. B. Erdmans Publishing Company, 524.

¹⁰⁰ Willhelmus a Brakel, *The Christian's Reasonable Service*, Vol 3, Chinese translation by Wang Zhiyong, Contemporary China Publishing House, 260.

¹⁰¹ John Piper, *Counted Righteous in Christ should be Righteousness*, Crossway, 52.

most precious, most glorious of all graces in union with Christ, the purpose is for us to enjoy this grace.¹⁰² We know that Christ is the righteous, that He is holy, that he has perfect righteousness, and that he is also the righteousness, holiness, and salvation of believers, but if I am not united with the Lord, what is the point of knowing that? For even the devils know that Jesus is the righteous, but they have nothing to do with Christ, and Christ cannot be their righteous.

Union with Christ, "union" in Bible Greek: κοινωνία¹⁰³, has the meaning of sharing together, and also the meaning of fellowship. In 1 Corinthians 1:9, Paul means "partaking with him in Christ" and, in context, fellowship with the Lord¹⁰⁴. 2 Corinthians 6:14 speaks of the incommensurability of the yoke of righteousness and unrighteousness, and therefore of union with Christ, with the life of righteousness, with the essence of holiness, so that there is a new life, and with this new life the old is forsaken, and all things are renewed. The pattern of this new life can be seen more clearly in Ephesians 4:20, which is to cast off the old man in deeds and to be replaced with a new mind, with the righteousness and holiness of truth.

In the Corinthian Epistle, there are many passages related to the union of Christ, in addition to "union with Christ" (1 Corinthians 1:9), there are 26 references

¹⁰² John Owen, *An Exposition of the Epistle to the Hebrews*, in *The Works of John Owen*, vol. 20 (Edinburgh: Banner of Truth, 1991), P 148, from PuritanTheology, ed. by Joel R Beeke, 483.

¹⁰³ GNT, 1 Corinthians 1:9.

¹⁰⁴ Leon Morris, *Tyndale New Testament Commentaries: The First Epistle of Paul to The Corinthians*, Wm. B. Erdmans Publishing Company, 38.

to "in Christ", of which "in Christ" 13 times, "in Jesus Christ" 6 times, "in the Lord" 5 times, and "in Him" 2 times. Union with Christ means you are in Christ.¹⁰⁵ It also expresses that Christ is in you.¹⁰⁶ Because He lives in me, all grace, because He lives in me, all grace, righteousness, life, peace, and salvation in me belong to Christ. 1 Corinthians 1:30 In Christ Christ becomes our wisdom, righteousness, holiness, and salvation, which are also mine, and through the union and connection of faith we are spiritually one. In union with Him, we are not only forgiven and justified, we are also transformed into His holy image. Christ gave himself to us without condemning and sinning us (not being justified) or corrupting and depraving us (not being sanctified). And everyone who believes in Christ is one with Christ and has the righteousness of Christ. So the sin couldn't have stayed on him. In Christ it is possible to be united with the life of Christ, the union established between Christ and those whom the Father has given him, and by this union, the righteousness of Christ is imputed forever to those who belong to Him.¹⁰⁷ If this "alien righteousness" is always outside of us, it has no meaning for us. Unless we are one with Christ, what He has has nothing to do with

¹⁰⁵ Rankin Wilbourne, *Union with Christ*, translated by Max Wong, Christian Communications LTD, 47.

¹⁰⁶ *Ibid*, 53.

¹⁰⁷ Lei Yu Tian and Andrew Ng Wai Man, *the Chinese Edition of Luther's Works*, Vol 1: Reformation Writing 1, Literature Department, LC-HKS, 335.

us.¹⁰⁸ As Calvin said, Christ cannot be divided into pieces.¹⁰⁹ We cannot be united with Christ only in parts of Him, but in the whole of Christ.

1 Corinthians 10:16 speaks of "partaking in the blood of Christ and the body of Christ," indicating that through the Eucharist we know and experience that Christ is in us and we are in Christ, and that our union with Christ constitutes the body of Christ, which is the Church. We are the body of Christ and Christ is our head, indicating that believers are united with Christ (1 Corinthians 12:27), that all the grace and blessings God has promised us can only be enjoyed in Christ, and that the effects of Christ's death and redemption on the Cross can only be enjoyed in Christ.

In Christ we have a new life (2 Corinthians 5:17), a life of righteousness. We are at peace with God (2 Corinthians 5:18), so we are seen as righteous, and righteousness and unrighteousness cannot be reconciled (2 Corinthians 6:14). We become children of God in Christ (2 Corinthians 6:9), as Romans 8:18 says, to be children is to be heirs, heirs of God, heirs sitting with Christ. This also indicates the identity of the believer as righteous. In Christ we are accepted as children of God, and in Christ we receive all kinds of blessings.

By union with Christ, union with the Lord is not a substantive union, but a covenant union, We deny that the essence of Christ is mixed with our own.¹¹⁰ Of

¹⁰⁸ John Calvin, *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, Westminster Press, 537.

¹⁰⁹ *Ibid*, 798.

¹¹⁰ John Calvin, *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, Westminster Press, 730.

course, union with Christ remains mysterious, and 1 Corinthians 1:24 speaks of Christ as the wisdom of God, and this wisdom is the wisdom of mystery (1 Corinthians 2:7), although believers have the Holy Spirit to reveal spiritual words to them (verse 13). Union with Christ is also the work of the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit unites not only individuals with Christ, but the entire invisible Church (all who profess faith and truly have it) with Him. The believer will thus have a spiritual body, not a physical one, and will become a temple of God (1 Corinthians 3:16, 2 Corinthians 6:16) in which the Spirit of God will dwell (1 Corinthians 6:19), while the Spirit of Christ, who has given Him the power to do all holy works, is also in you. Now it also causes us to do all righteousness.¹¹¹ After Jesus Christ's resurrection and ascension into heaven, his work on earth is continued by the Holy Spirit, so that believers are truly united with Christ and will not be separated from him. Moreover, our union with Christ is a "spiritual" (in the Holy Spirit) union, and he who is united with the Lord is one spirit with the Lord. Paul uses union (κολλάω¹¹²), which is a powerful action, it is a very close union, indicating that the believer is spiritually connected to the Lord, is one with the Lord, has the heart of Christ, Even he acts like the Lord.¹¹³ In 2 Corinthians 13:14, the fellowship of the Spirit, which in the original κοινωνία means union,

¹¹¹ Mark Jones, *Knowing Christ*, The Banner of Truth Trust, 295.

¹¹² GNT, 1 Corinthians 6:17.

¹¹³ Leon Morris, *Tyndale New Testament Commentaries: The First Epistle of Paul to The Corinthians*, Wm. B. Erdmans Publishing Company, 102.

fellowship, is also really spoken of, union with the Lord, in the Spirit not only with the Lord, but also with all the members of the body of the Lord, not only with each other (2 Corinthians 5:19), but also with each other and with each other (1 Corinthians 12:25).

The Holy Spirit is the effective link between Christ and us through which we can truly call Jesus Lord (1 Corinthians 12:3). The Holy Spirit regenerates us so that we can enter the kingdom of God. The Holy Spirit gives us repentance and faith; The Holy Spirit also testifies to our hearts through various means, including prayer, Bible reading, fellowship with other believers, and so on, that we are children of God and bring us into fellowship with Christ. Our union with Christ is therefore a "spiritual" union. In union with Christ, we receive not only imputed righteousness (justification) but also given righteousness (sanctification)¹¹⁴. Not only are our sins forgiven, but we are glorified (1 Corinthians 2:7). When the trumpet sounds for the last time, God's people will be raised to glory in Christ (1 Corinthians 15:22).

Union with Christ, also addresses an important theme, that of our suffering with Christ (2 Corinthians 1:5). To be united with Christ and become members of his body; In Corinthians 12:27, You are the body of Christ, and each of you is a member. Christ is the head of all, and all are the body of Christ, members of each other. Be united with Him not only in His death, but also in his resurrection, so that the "power

¹¹⁴ Michael S. Horton, *Modern Reformation*, Jan./Feb. 1992 Vol. 1, 72.

that raised Christ from the dead" may be revealed in us, so that we may be renewed, fully sanctified, and filled with the stature of Christ. What Paul has been praising is Jesus Christ and his crucifixion (1 Corinthians 2:2). Because the core of the Gospel is that Jesus died and rose for our sins (1 Corinthians 15:1-4), the message of the cross is the power of God, and we preach the crucified Christ (1 Corinthians 1:18, 23). When a believer is called a Christian, it means that he is a man of the life of Christ, a follower of Christ, a Christ-like man. A follower of Christ. Paul said that believers should follow Him as he followed Christ. As he suffered many things in the Lord (2 Corinthians 11), he always found strength and comfort in the Lord, and as much as he suffered in Christ, he found comfort in Christ (2 Corinthians 1:5).

3.3 Righteousness of Acts

3.3.1 This Righteousness from the Righteousness of Christ

Righteousness of acts is also the second kind of righteousness that Luther had stated, which is the fruit and end of the first righteousness.¹¹⁵ 2 Corinthians 9:9-10 specifically mentions that Christians are to do much good in the grace of God, to give alms and bear the fruit of righteousness. This fruit of righteousness corresponds, so to speak, to the fruit of the Spirit in Galatians 5:22-23.

This righteousness we have in ourselves, but which we do not by ourselves,

¹¹⁵ Lei Yu Tian and Andrew Ng Wai Man, *the Chinese Edition of Luther's Works*, Vol 1:Reformation Writinga 1 , Literature Department, LC-HKS, 336.

but through the imputed righteousness of the first Christ, which is the effective way of living in good acts¹¹⁶. When believers who become God's righteousness in Christ, this righteousness should be manifested in the lives of all believers, not just those of the apostles. If Christ is the source of "righteousness and holiness" (1 Corinthians 1:30), then those who become Him in Him should also embody righteousness and holiness. Perhaps this explains why Paul continues to urge Christians to live holy lives in 6:14-7:1. Christ was sinless, and by union with us, took our sins and died as our sin offering. We who are unrighteous, through our union with Christ, counted God's righteousness, are reconciled with God, and are transformed into the newly created. Because of union with Christ, we have our rightful status or place before God and we live righteously before the world. The believer becomes a new creation in Christ, no longer addicted to sin, no longer by physical form, but by the Holy Spirit, in the shape of the Lord (2 Corinthians 3:18).

This righteousness is the process of continuing the perfection of the first righteousness. Because it is trying to exclude old Adam, to destroy the sinful flesh, to hate the self, to crucify the flesh with evil desires. Act with love towards your neighbor¹¹⁷. In 1 Corinthians chapter 13, we find many great truths about love: Love is patient and has the gift of not being jealous, of not boasting, of not being arrogant,

¹¹⁶ Ibid, 336.

¹¹⁷ Lei Yu Tian and Andrew Ng Wai Man, *the Chinese Edition of Luther's Works*, Vol 1:Reformation Writinga 1, Literature Department, LC-HKS, 337.

of not seeking profit for itself, of not being selfish, of not loving unrighteousness, but of the truth.

3.3.2 How to Act Righteously

Even if a believer has in him the righteousness imputed to him by Christ, he cannot do what is righteous if he works by himself, by the flesh. This is why the Bible teaches believers to be sanctified, and sanctification means living a holy life and manifesting God's righteousness in it. Many of the believers in the Corinthian church were nominally Christians, but many were messed up in their lives, listing 11 sins in 1 Corinthians 6:9-10 alone: deceive, the sexually immoral, worship idol, adulter, practice homosexuality, stole, be greedy, drank, abuse, cheat and so on. These unrighteous cannot inherit the kingdom of God. But through the Holy Spirit, man can be empowered to live a holy life and do righteousness (1 Corinthians 6:11). Therefore, anyone who is in Christ is a new creation. The old has passed away; behold, the new has come (2 Corinthians 5:17).

3.3.3 Words and deeds will face the judgment of Christ

We must be careful not to do things as we please just because we are believers, but more careful (1 Corinthians 3:10) to imitate Christ. For in the day of the Lord's coming every man's work will be revealed, and every man's work will be tested by fire (versr 13). If the work can withstand the test of fire, then it will be rewarded;

otherwise, though it be saved, it will suffer losses (verse 14). 1 Corinthians 5:10 also emphasizes that we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, that each of us may be rewarded according to his deeds, whether good or bad. No one can escape.

In particular, 1 Corinthians 10 talks about the people of God in the Old Testament, who, despite experiencing great salvation from God, clung to sinful things: idolatry, testing the Lord, grumbling, etc., resulting in the vast majority of them dying in the wilderness as a final warning to us. As mentioned in 10:13, you must take care that you do not fall. Do not rely on yourself, but on God. And God's grace must be enough.

If they are false believers, deceitful and pretentious, their righteousness is false. For even Satan may pretend to be a servant of righteousness, but a false is false, and the Lord looks into the hearts of men, and their end will be according to their works (2 Corinthians 11:13-14). Their end, no doubt, is eternal death. For no one can escape the judgment of the Lord Jesus.