

-IDENTIFICATION-

CHRIST DIED FOR US. Rom. 5:8.

You have heard this Scripture before. It is nothing new to you. Yet do you know what it means?

The great mass of Christendom today has little idea that on the cross of Calvary was a dual crucifixion. That Christ died as a martyr to a great cause, many will admit. But the average Christian has little comprehension of the fact that he might have had a part in that death on the cross. It is hard for him to realize that Christ died there as a substitute for him. It is still harder for him to realize that in that substitutionary sacrifice he was very intimately identified with the Victim.

Science has discovered certain laws in the material world. It has been found that when certain substances meet other substances that a reaction is bound to occur. There are similar laws in the spiritual realm. For example, when HOLINESS meets SIN, the reaction is WRATH. This was pictured to the Israelites of old by the fire falling upon the sin-offering outside the camp. In the process of making an offering, the offerer drew near and presented the offering. The offering was without blemish. After the all-seeing eye of Jehovah had examined the offering, the man put his hand upon its head, and the Word says; IT SHALL BE ACCEPTED FOR HIM TO MAKE AN ATONEMENT FOR HIM. The hand put upon the head of the offering signified substitution. It signified that sin had been transferred from the sinner to the victim of sacrifice.

The word ATONEMENT signifies A COVERING. This has a two-fold application. First, it is a covering for sin. This goes so far as to include satisfaction for sin. It covers the sinner from the consequences of his sin. Second, the blood of Christ covers the sinner with His excellency. This means that the sinner is covered by the righteousness of Christ.

It is a common practice among sheep herders that when a sheep has

lost a lamb and there is an orphan on hand, he takes the skin of the dead lamb and puts it on the orphan. The sheep then accepts the little orphan as her own. This is a little like the atonement. The only way we can ever be accepted of God is to be clothed with the righteousness of the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world. In ourselves is no good thing. In ourselves is nothing that can be acceptable with God. The Israelite put his hand on the head of the sacrificial victim. This was lean-on it, so to speak, and that is the idea implied in the original language. He could not LEAN on his own good works, for they are as but filthy rags in the sight of God. He could not rely or lean upon his own goodness, for his flesh was condemned to death. By the one man Adam, sin had entered the world. By sin had entered death. So all in Adam die. There is no escaping that verdict. There is only One who was acceptable with God. That was His own beloved Son. The only hope of any man is to get himself somehow identified with the Son and thereby gain access and acceptance with the Father. That way was provided on Calvary. Remember, sin that is not covered brings down wrath when it is met by the holiness of God.

The ark was pitched, without and within, with pitch. This pitch is KAPHAR which is the word for ATONEMENT. It was this covering of pitch which kept out the waters of WRATH from Noah and his family. How safe and secure they could feel as they rode out the storm of God's wrath with the atonement between. So we too can look to the atonement on Calvary. The wrath of God was poured out on Him Who became sin for us. There He died for us. He took the penalty which rightfully was ours. That is what we can lean upon. That is what we can depend on. He died as a substitute for us. He died as a substitute for ME.

These ideas of LEANING UPON and SUBSTITUTION bring in the further idea of IDENTIFICATION. This doctrine is especially emphasized by

the apostle Paul, altho others wrote concerning it also. If a man should go to jail for me in my place for something I had done contrary to the law, he would be assuming my guilt if he pays the penalty. That means that I am identified with him to that extent. For when he has finished paying the penalty, I am free from the penalty of the law. I have paid that penalty in his person.

As we study this identification with Christ we find that there is more than one phase of it. Also we find that there is a much more complete identification for the believer today than there was in the former dispensation.

The first point of identification is in the **DEATH OF CHRIST**. Paul's testimony in Gal. 2:20 is; "I have been crucified with Christ, nevertheless I live, yet not I, but Christ liveth in me and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God Who loved me and gave Himself for me." This clearly identifies the believer with Christ in His crucifixion. It shows that when Christ was crucified, the believer was judicially crucified with Him in the sight of God. All debt of sin was fully paid. The believer was cleared. Christ was the sinless One. He took the place of the believer. He made satisfaction for every claim that sin had. If He took our place before the Father, then we can take His place before the Father. If He identified Himself with us and our sin, then by virtue of that accomplished fact we can take His place in His sinlessness before the Father. That is our only ground of acceptance. That is the only way that God could be just and at the same time Justifier of every one who believes in Christ. We must ever remember that the wages of sin is death. But when we were yet without strength, (i.e. any strength to save ourselves) Christ died for the ungodly. As for us poor Gentiles of the present dispensation, we can only say, We were without Christ and without God, having no hope, but now we are made nigh by the blood of Christ.

The second point of identification is **BURIED WITH HIM**. We read in Col. 2:12, Buried with Him in baptism, wherein also ye are risen with Him thru the faith of the operation of God, Who hath raised Him from the dead. God reckons the believer to be, not only crucified with Christ, but also buried with Him. This baptism has nothing to do with water. Long after His baptism in the Jordan, our Lord spoke of a further baptism which He was to undergo. He said, I have a baptism to be baptized with, and how am I straitened will it be accomplished! When the waves and billows of God's wrath rolled over the Lord according to Psa. 42:7 He received a baptism. Here He was immersed and baptized. We were identified with Him in it. He was buried after His death. With this also the believer is identified.

We cannot stop here. Burial means death. Speaking thru the psalmist, the Lord said, Thou wilt not leave my soul in Sheol, (i.e. the grave). If Christ be not raised from the dead, we are indeed miserable creatures without hope. If Christ be not raised from the dead, then all the dead have perished. They will never rise.

But there is a spiritual application by which those who have died with Christ to the things of this world may also be raised with Him into newness of life. They need no longer walk in the flesh, but in the Spirit. The mass of Christians today has not had this experience. They are still in the flesh. They mind earthly things. They can hardly be distinguished from the unbelievers. They have life, but nothing more. Those who live in such a state will have their works burned up in the testing, but they themselves will be saved as by fire.

So our third point in identification with Christ is in **HIS RESURRECTION**. To the saints at Colossae Paul said, Ye are risen with Him. To the Ephesian saints Paul said, Raised up together; and again in Col. 3:1, Risen with Christ. Not only can a believer die and be buried with Christ, but he can be raised with Christ. Christ was

raised for or because of our justification. God was satisfied with the work of Christ on the cross. His resurrection was a definite sign and proof to us that all demands had been fully met in Christ and His one sacrifice. We are saved by the resurrection life of Christ. Without it there would be no salvation. For if, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of His Son, much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by His life, Rom. 5:10. Some have made the mistake of thinking that it was by His life and example before His death that we receive salvation. That is not true. He did leave an example for the believer in that life, but nothing of salvation. His humiliation and becoming a servant and being obedient, even unto death, are wonderful examples for us believers, but they can do nothing for the sinner, the one who is yet in sin. Life comes only by reason of His resurrection.

Now in these three points we have seen how that a believer may be identified with Christ in His death, burial, and resurrection. This was a message that was preached to Jewish believers of Acts times. It was also preached to such Gentiles as were grafted into the olive tree which represented Israel. It was preached to all who had hope in the kingdom of the heavens. You may search the gospels, the Acts of the Apostles, and all the epistles written during that time, and here and there will crop up these doctrines. But that is as far as the identification goes for those folks. They are limited to this earth in resurrection hope. They look forward to a King and a kingdom. They looked for a King Who would appear in the skies and descend to the earth to take over the throne of His father David. No one in the O T times had the hope of going to heaven after resurrection. Neither was that the hope of any in the N T up to the ends of the events as recorded in Acts. Our Lord offered Himself as King when here on earth. He offered a part in the kingdom to any of His brethren, the Jews, if they would only accept it by faith.

His apostles were given a commission to reoffer the King and the Kingdom after His death. That they faithfully did this is recorded in the Acts. They were able to reoffer the kingdom to the Jews because our Lord payed for their forgiveness on the cross so that they might have another chance. If, during the Acts period, Israel had repented and received Christ as her Messiah, the kingdom, the Millennium, would have started during the first century.

The message of forgiveness and the reoffer of the kingdom was taken to every city and Synagogue where Jews were wont to congregate. Beginning at Jerusalem and ending up in Rome they consistently rejected the gospel which was to them. So at Acts 28:28 the offer of the kingdom was withdrawn. Israel was set aside for a time and counted, not first, but on an equality with the other nations of the world. The present dispensation is the great mystery or secret dispensation of the grace of God to us Gentiles. This dispensation does not have an earthly hope. It has a heavenly hope. It does not look for a King, but it looks for the manifestation of a Savior, the Head of the Church which is His Body. If a Jew would partake of the blessings and hope of this dispensation, he must do so without any advantage of nationality or covenant relationship with God. At one time it was impossible for a Gentile to receive any special blessing without becoming a Jew. Now a Jew cannot receive any special blessing without becoming as a Gentile. Jew and Gentile alike are blessed in Christ Jesus today, not in faithful Abraham as before the end of Acts. It is no longer the Jew first, but both are on an equality. The middle wall of partition which divided the Jewish and Gentile believers of the Acts period has been abolished. The two are now one new man, created so in Christ Jesus.

So since Acts 28:28 we have had added two more points of identification with Christ. The first of these is with HIS ASCENSION. By faith a believer today can be made

to sit together with Christ in heavenly places, Eph. 2:6. No longer can it be said that the meek shall inherit the earth. A new calling is being offered which is not on this earth. It is in heavenly places. We can experience the mighty power which set Christ at the right hand of the Father. We can have our citizenship in the same place. There is where we are to set our affections, not on the things here on the earth. If we have died with Christ, then our life is hid with Christ in God. We then await an earlier resurrection from among the dead, Phil. 3:11.

The second further point of identification of the believer today with Christ is in His MANIFESTATION. This is the EPIPHANEIA. It occurs in the heavenlies. When Christ, Who is our life, shall be made manifest, then shall ye also be made manifest with Him in glory, Col. 3:4. All peoples of the kingdom dispensation await a glorification when Christ will appear in the clouds on His way to the earth. But the believer today can hope to be manifested with Him in the heavenlies before He starts His earthward journey. The Church which is His Body is to be an example of His workmanship and to show forth the manifold wisdom of God to principalities and powers in the heavenly places. But those who have part in the kingdom here on earth will display to the nations of the earth the manifold wisdom of God. Each

person in any dispensation may have a part in the plan and purpose of God. But it is up to each one to find out what position is offered and what his duties are.

A workman who tries to work according to some other dispensation will certainly be ashamed. He must rightly divide the Word of truth. He must build according to directions. A building of hay, straw, or stubble will not abide, even tho it be built on the right foundation.

Let us seek to find all that God has to offer us. Let us go deeply into the experience of being crucified, buried, resurrected, ascended, and manifested with Christ.

-oOo-

The above article was given over WRSW radio station, Jan. 9, 1951.

I now have Welch's new book, The Prize of the High Calling. It is an exposition of Phil., price \$1.25.

For other books by Welch, see back numbers of TRUTH FOR TODAY.

Receipts for Nov. - A92 (Ind.) \$25., A93 (Ill.) \$10., A94 (Ill.) \$2., A95 (Ill.) \$2., A96 (Mich.) \$5., A97 (Mich.) \$5., A98 (Mich.) \$10., A99 (Mich.) \$10., A00 (Ariz.) \$25. Thanks so much. The expense was \$53.85.

Keep sending in the names and addresses of those who might like to get the paper.

Remember the radio program each Tue. nite at 7 and the class at my home right after it at 7.45.

Thanks for the many letters and cards, & especially your prayers.

TRUTH FOR TODAY
Oscar M. Baker
R 2, Warsaw, Ind. USA

Sec. 562, P.L. & R.

POSTMASTER:
If unable to
deliver, notify
sender on form
3547.