



Bible Student's Notebook™

The Herald of His Grace

Issue 136

Our Way Home

IDENTITY IN JESUS CHRIST

by – C. Baxter Kruger

The evil one confuses us about our reality in Jesus Christ, spreads lies and misinformation about Jesus and us, so that we do not know the truth of who we are – beloved, accepted, reconciled, justified, embraced and adopted by God the Father Almighty in Jesus Christ ... And confusion about who we are in Jesus Christ means that we believe that we are not beloved, not acceptable, not reconciled, not justified, not embraced, not adopted. Confusion only means that we believe that we are not included in the circle of life that Jesus shares with His Father in the Spirit, that we are lost, empty, alone ...

Confused about this great fact, we assume that life comes from elsewhere. Perhaps it came from us. Perhaps we produced it. Perhaps the secret lies in the outer form of its expression. Thus, with all that we have, we desperately try to get the recipe just right. So we pour ourselves and our time and energy into the mechanical creation of the outer form. In our confusion we pursue things which have no actual substance in themselves, and the good and glorious life of Jesus Christ in us is suffocated ...

ECLIPSE OF OUR TRUE IDENTITY

The eclipse of our true identity as joint heirs with Jesus Christ in His life with His Father leaves us irresistibly vulnerable to every dazzling suggestion of the deceiver – *“What thou seekest is here. It is in this person, this job, this achievement, this*

amount of money, in this church, in this religion, this club, this adventure, this trip, this house, this relationship.” Then off we go personally and corporately into bondage, into the headlong pursuit of our secret idols, those things we believe will give us identity, meaning and life. We run to embrace them and they are empty, and even when we begin to suspect that they are empty, we get up and embrace them again. For there is nothing else, or so it seems.

We prostrate ourselves before the system. Why? Because we are confused about the source and secret of our true life and we believe that one or another of these things will give true life to us. The emptiness of these idols is like a huge black hole which sucks the life of Christ out of us. And we become black holes as well.

The good and glorious life of Jesus Christ in us, His peace and joy, His flourishing freedom, are thereby suffocated. But even more than this, His good and glorious life in us is thereby misused, parasitically exploited, to produce chaos – wrath, anger, malice, greed, slander, jealousy, hatred, anxiety.

(continued on page 1411)

Our Way Home – Identity in Jesus Christ....	1409
The Outsiders – Select Readings on God's <i>Ecclesia</i> , Part II	1412
Letters to the Editor	1415

Dear Siblings,

Greetings in our heavenly bond!

THIS ISSUE

Recently a brother recommended to me the writings of C. Baxter Kruger. I took his advice, and have not been disappointed. We are running a segment from his writings in this issue of the *Bible Student's Notebook*. I encourage you not to miss reading this one! I believe that you will find that it will really *hit home*.

JUSTIN, SUSANNAH, & EMMA

An update on Susannah, Justin, and Emma; they did close on their house here in Windber, and have purchased one in Weston, MO. They are now getting settled in good. "Grandma" has already flown to see them, and help them get things set up. "Grandpa" sure misses his "fairy princess" greatly!

GRANDPA AGAIN

Speaking of Susannah, she is expecting a second daughter at the end of August. So, I'll be a "Grandpa" yet again! The whole family here really misses them all, so it looks like we will surely travel the 15 hours to see them when the new baby arrives, if we haven't done so before.

MOTHER'S 80th BIRTHDAY

My mother will be celebrating her 80th birthday on May 23rd. We are collecting birthday cards from as many as possible. We will place the cards in a box wrapped as a present and give to her at her party. Would you please help me make this a special day for her!

If you know her personally, please share a favorite memory and/or picture with her in your card. Address the cards to my PO Box so she will not see them ahead of time:

Christine Pilkington
PO Box 265
Windber, PA 15963

My love to each of you. Until next week, your fellow,



Clyde L. Pilkington, Jr.

Bible Student's Notebook

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This weekly publication (52 times a year) is dedicated to:

- the proclamation of the riches of God's abundant, exceeding grace (Romans 5:20; 11:6; Ephesians 1:7)
- the affirmation of God's purpose to save all mankind through the death, burial, and resurrection of Christ (I Timothy 2:3, 4; 4:10; Titus 2:11)
- the "preaching of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery, which was kept secret since the world began" (Romans 16:25)
- true freedom and liberty apart from the law (Galatians 5:1)
- the organic nature of the church, the body of Christ (I Corinthians 12)
- the distinct ministry of Paul, the apostle to the Gentiles (Romans 11:13)
- the importance of receiving all whom Christ has received (Romans 14-15)
- the recovery of rich Biblical truth that has too long remained hidden under the veils of traditionalism, prejudice, misunderstanding, and fear (Mark 7:7, 13).
- the completeness of the believer in Christ (Colossians 2:10), with ...
 - total forgiveness of sins (Colossians 1:14)
 - identity in His death, burial, and resurrection (Romans 6)
 - adult sonship position (Galatians 4)

This publication is a joint effort of a few members of the body of Christ. It is a product of our individual lives and ministries together. We do not claim infallibility for its contents. Our readers are asked to be as the Bereans and search the Scriptures (Acts 17:10-11; I Thessalonians 5:21).

This publication is not connected with any "church," "denomination," "movement," "organization," "mission," "creed," "meeting," "school," "conference" or "fellowship."

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PATRIARCHS

Remember that it is our responsibility as husbands and fathers to take the truths we learn from God's Word, the truths that we hold dear, and impart them to our families.

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THE ONE SIMPLE TACTIC OF THE EVIL ONE

The tactic of the evil one is simple: blind human beings to their truth in Jesus Christ, darken their understanding and confuse their spiritual perception of their true identity. *“For if they do not know their true identity in Christ, they will be driven to find one somewhere else. Once they misunderstand the source and secret of their existence in Christ, they automatically think that they come from elsewhere – in people, position, things, events. Then we have them. Like a martin to a gourd they will follow every promise we set before them. And they will be left utterly empty, miserable, broken, devastated.”*

THE ANSWER TO OUR CONFUSION

The answer is, as the Bible insists, *faith* in Jesus Christ. There are no secret buttons to push, no magical elixirs to take, no special potions, no chants to recite or charms to handle. There are no decoder rings or esoteric theological classes to take and no mechanical principles to apply to our lives. It is not a matter of church membership, water baptism or being religious. The answer is faith – and faith means *un-confusion*, seeing clearly, discovering and knowing reality in Christ, embracing it, acknowledging it, loving it – responding to Jesus Christ with a serious and hearty and continuous *“Amen!”*

Faith in Jesus Christ means faith in the fact that He is in the Father, that He has a real and right relationship with God the Father Almighty. It means faith in the fact that He has included me in this relationship. And it means faith in the fact that I am a participant in His life, that He is my Lord, Savior, Salvation, my Life, my Home. And faith in this Jesus – not the religious Jesus of the icons or the impotent Jesus of the modern Church, but the Jesus in whom we have a real relationship with the Father – faith in this Jesus produces freedom for life. To believe in this Jesus means that we no longer see ourselves as lost, but found; that we no longer believe ourselves to be alienated or empty, but reconciled and filled. And this faith produces not hopelessness or anger, not greed or neediness,

but peace, confidence, security and joy.

To believe in this Jesus means that we believe ourselves to be known, accepted and cherished by the Father Himself. And what happens to us and in us when we encounter such Divine acceptance? What happens in us when we believe ourselves to be at-home with the Father? Are we plunged into bondage? Are we overwhelmed with fear and anxiety? Are we turned into religious androids? Are we enslaved to the crowd? No. We find ourselves released, set free from the very things that enslaved us. We find a new freedom from the tyranny of work and greed, a new freedom from the need for the approval of peers. We find ourselves at peace, filled with joy and hope, free to share life, free to rest, free to love, free to be who we are. We find ourselves flourishing ...

God is on the move, relentlessly and passionately at work in every quarter of the creation, patiently educating our souls, exposing our false believing and our stifling, deadening service to idols, that we may *know* the truth, so that the life of Jesus Christ may flower into unencumbered fullness in us ...

THE PURPOSE OF OUR SPIRITUAL CRISES

Our spiritual crises are the way home, basic training in proper faith. They are His scrutiny, designed to enlighten us, to un-confuse us, to lead us out of *faith in ourselves*, out of *faith in things*, into *faith in Christ* so that our participation in His life and knowing may be unhindered.

These moments of crisis are designed to make us *unbelievers*, to help us see that there is nothing in the thing we are pursuing – that it is an empty well and has no living water – so that we can stop believing and hoping in it, stop giving ourselves over to it as an end in itself, stop drinking its emptiness. They are designed to help us discern that Jesus Christ is the living water in us, that we may *believe* in Him and thus experience the un-damming of the river. They are a call to retreat from idolatry so that we can have the full knowledge and life of the true God. And Jesus Christ alone knows the Father. He alone knows the peace and

(continued on back page)

The Outsiders

SELECT READINGS ON GOD'S *ECCLESIA*

(Part II)

"Wherefore Jesus also, that He might sanctify the people with His own blood, suffered without the gate. Let us go forth therefore unto Him without the camp, bearing His reproach" (Hebrews 13:12-13).

CHRIST ALONE

We want to say again ... that our burden of message is the fullness of Christ. Not the establishment or extension of a Movement; not the propagation of a particular teaching; not the constituting of a new "Fellowship;" but Christ! We have no tradition to keep going, and nothing here on this earth that we want to preserve. We think that we have seen something – however little – of God's thoughts and intentions for His Son, and if we do not follow the generally recognized and established system and order of organized Christianity, it is only because we have seen how much this limits real spiritual measure and so often puts *things* in either His place, or His way.

T. Austin-Sparks (1888-1971)
A Witness and a Testimony

LET US CHECK OUR MOTIVES

"For other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ" (I Corinthians 3:11).

Do I attempt to draw men to myself and into my orbit so as to use them for "my church" or little kingdom, or do I seek always to thrust them upon Christ and what He desires for their life and ministry? ...

Do I make others more dependent upon me and the spiritual food I can give them, or make them more dependent upon the Lord as their source?
...

Can I rejoice when, after many years, I have nothing visible or monumental to which I can point to and glory in as the fruit of my labors? ...

Do I insist upon the "letter-acceptance" of my private interpretation so as to bring lives into my orbit and into subjection to my ministry? ...

Look down through the centuries, and note how every fragment or faction of people building upon their own private foundations have always emphasized their mark or sign of circumcision. Nor will they really accept or wholly fellowship with you until they have brought you into full submission to their particular mark of circumcision ... How subtle and how divisive is the enemy in turning men to "other foundations" so as to keep them from enjoying Him and the common expression of His life and fellowship.

DeVern Fromke
No Other Foundation, pp. 41-42

UNITY IN JESUS CHRIST

I am sure our safe place of unity is always in Jesus Himself, and not in any viewpoints concerning Him, and that is our happy meeting place. We are "*members one of another.*" I stand there. God's calling and commission is to each of us, and we need each other ...

How love edifies!
Norman P. Grubb (1895-1993)
Notes From Norman

THE BASIS UPON WHICH CHURCHES ARE FOUNDED

Q. What is the historical basis on which the assemblies or churches as such are founded?

A. Nothing is said in Scripture about any “basis on which the assemblies or churches as such” are to be founded, because the church or one Body is already founded in Christ. No mention is made of church “officials” after the first epistle of Timothy. Up to then the church was seen in its *rule*. After that the church is seen only in its *ruin*. In II Timothy ... all is intensely personal and individual. That is why no mention is made of church officials. Corporate testimony has failed, and all attempts to restore it in any shape or form are doomed to disaster. Any attempt to patch up the old garment only makes the rent worse. It is better to recognize and labor for the “One Body” which the Holy Ghost is now making in Christ, than to spend one’s time about, and break one’s heart over, the bodies which man is making.

E.W. Bullinger (1837-1913)
Things To Come, May 1900, pp. 128-129

THE SCRAMBLE FOR POPULARITY

Popular Judaism slew the prophets and crucified Christ. Popular Christianity killed the reformers, jailed the Quakers and drove John Wesley into the streets. When it comes to religion, the crowds are always wrong. At any time there are a few who see, and the rest are blinded. To stand by the truth of God against the current religious vogue is always unpopular and may be downright dangerous ...

Christianity’s scramble for popularity today is an unconscious acknowledgment of spiritual decline. Her eager fawning at the feet of the world’s great is a grief to the Holy Spirit and an embarrassment to the sons of God ...

Lot was a popular believer. He sat in the gates of Sodom. But when trouble struck, he had to send

quickly for Abraham to get him out of the jam. And where did they find Abraham? Out on the hillside, far away from the fashionable crowds. It has always been so. For every Elijah there have always been 400 popular prophets of Baal. For every Noah there is always a vast multitude who will not believe it is going to rain.

A.W. Tozer (1897-1963)
The Next Chapter After the Last, pp. 20-21

WHAT IS A “PARTY SPIRIT?”

What is a “party spirit”? It is that which causes men to be more zealous for their own view, for their own vision, for their own methods and their own group than for Christ and the eternal purpose of God.

Let us beware of becoming movement minded! Live *unto* and *for* the whole Body of Christ or we will find ourselves stranded upon *another foundation*. With simplicity of heart, belonging to Christ rather than to any man or any emphasis of truth ... It is important to remember that we can fellowship with individuals as those who share the life of Christ even though we may not find basis for fellowship with the system or *other foundation* in which they are yoked.

DeVern Fromke
No Other Foundation, p. 44

I REFUSE TO COMPETE

Dear Lord, I refuse henceforth to compete with any of Thy servants ... I will not compare myself with any, nor try to build up my “self-esteem” by noting where I may excel one or another in Thy holy work. I herewith make a blanket disavowal of all intrinsic worth ... I pray for others and to rejoice in their prosperity as if it were my own. And indeed it is my own if it is Thine own, for what is Thine is mine, and while one plants and another waters it is Thou alone that giveth the increase.

A.W. Tozer (1897-1963)
The Price of Neglect, pp. 104-105

GOD SEEKS A MAN

God seeks not men but a man. Never has He been impressed or depressed by numbers, equipment and ability. Never has He been impressed or depressed by personality, prestige or popularity. Much of what we call wisdom is sheer foolishness with God. Some jobs may depend on what you know, but the work of God depends upon Whom you know.

George Bowen (1816-1888)

Cited by Edwin Harvey in *Royal Insignia* (1992), p. 43

NOT BEING A PART OF ANY "CHURCH"

It is my conviction and it is my experience that it is the divine privilege of the individual to lay hold of Christ in all that He can ever be to any man, and to enjoy all His rich blessings and fellowship wholly apart from any institution called a "church." Such things as nearness to God, likeness to Christ, devotedness to His Word and separation from the world can all be attained to and maintained by the individual believer in Jesus Christ without being any part of an organized company. He can be attached to Christ, to His name, to His Word, to His cause, yes, even to His people without being any part of any "church."

Those words may come as a shock to many who hold the popular conception that the chief expression of a man's relationship to Christ is to attend "church" on Sunday morning. Today as a rule men are classified under "those who go to church," and "those who do not go to church." All who go to church are considered to be good, honest, moral Christians. And even though this is not true, men persist in believing this lie. On the other hand all who do not go to "church" are considered to be heathen unbelievers whose morals are open to question. This is a greater falsehood than the first.

Otis Q. Sellers (1901-1992)

Christian Individualism: A Way of Life for the Active Believer in Jesus Christ (1961)

ELDERS, PASTORS AND CONSTITUTIONS

When Paul spoke to the elders of the assembly at Ephesus, he did not tell them to appoint successors, to choose a pastor or to make a constitution. He commended them "to God, and to the Word of His grace, which is able to build you up, and to give you an inheritance among all them which are sanctified" (Acts 20:32).

T.A. Roach

The Christian Shepherd, June 1999

INSTITUTIONS COMMONLY CALLED "CHURCHES"

This fact, that the "churches" we see today and the *ecclesias* of the New Testament are not in any way the same thing, is a truth that very few want to consider for fear that it may shout at them still louder. I seriously doubt if any actual objective study of the Greek word *ekklesia* has ever been made. If it were, it would be found that the institutions commonly called "churches" cannot be identified with and have no connection with the *ecclesia* of the New Testament. Many who recognize this try to resolve the difficulty by appealing for a distinction between "the visible church" and "an invisible church," but all who do this must remember that ... [these ideas are] foreign to the New Testament.

Otis Q. Sellers (1901-1992)

Christian Individualism: A Way of Life for the Active Believer in Jesus Christ (1961)

FRIENDLY ALIENS IN A FOREIGN LAND

The Christian is called to be a pilgrim and a stranger. He must suffer quietly the present discomforts and risks of being out of gear with the world's mighty machinery, national and international. ...

Christ's follower is to "set" his "affection on things above, not on things on the earth" (Colossians 3:2) ... No one can be both a pilgrim passing through a given country and a citizen of it. In

(continued on back page)



Letters to the Editor

I absolutely loved your article on “Fear” [BSN #130]. It truly rejoiced my heart. – **IL**

I thank God for you, your family, and your ministry. – **FL**

I have only recently discovered your web site and am now receiving the weekly BSN. I also ordered *Pagan Christianity* and was finally able to see in words what was inexpressible in my heart. I praise God for your openness and honesty ... Thank you so much for your work. I knew something was wrong from the very foundation of my Christian experience, but was unable to describe my concerns in words. Now by GOD’S Grace and your obedience I am seeing things so much clearer. God bless you. – **GA**

I welcome your fellowship in the Lord. We have known each other for many years now, appreciating each as the Lord has worked in us *the work of faith, the labor of love and the patience of hope*. Our doctrinal differences aside, your love and kindness towards the saints is always my fond remembrance of you. – **WI**

What a great point [Daily Email Goodie #821], that we are never created with a “nature” of our own, but are always and only “vessels,” or “slaves,” at first of “*the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience ...*” (Ephesians 2:2), and then later as children and sons of God our Father (:18; Romans 8:15; Galatians 4:6).

That there is not, nor ever has been this “struggle” of two natures, as taught and believed by most believers and expressed here by Grubb, I believe I have never heard a clearer explanation of it given.

What a beautiful description of the truth of our identity in Christ. Knowing this, we now can get past the barrier of Romans 7, and move on to Romans 8 to experience the fullness of our identity and relationship with God and Christ, as well as our “*whole family in heaven and earth*” (Ephesians 3:15).

I love the way he said that when “we dare to recognize this reality” that we “then get out of the confusion of Romans 7.” How true this is!

How many dear brothers and sisters do we know who are struggling in the confusion of this lie – I pray that we may find the grace and strength to share this truth with them that they may “now begin” their “liberated walk” of their true identity, being free to express themselves for who they really are: sons of Almighty God the Creator and Possessor of earth (and of all creation)! Only then can they (and we) walk with boldness and confidence in this life as the vessels of God’s grace and love that He created us to be. – **VA**

Warm greetings from the Netherlands, I just visited your family website, what a blessing to have a ministry [t]hat is based on a father; one committed and dedicated to recovery and sharing Biblical truths.

I have a small ministry dedicated to teaching Biblical identification truth to the Dutch.

I want to ask you if you could send some literature about the identification truths if that is possible. – **Netherlands**

(continued from page 1411)

dignity of the Father's embrace. He alone knows the flourishing, thriving joy of belonging to God the Father Almighty. He alone knows *home*.

WE HAVE BEEN INCLUDED!

What is happening within us now is that the startling, wonderful fact that He has included us is seizing our attention, engaging us personally, working within us to liberate us from serious and dastardly confusion that we may experience our inclusion fully. We are in spiritual school. We are under the tutelage of reality in Jesus Christ ...

Every confusion, every wrong turn, every misgiving are patiently and faithfully revealed for

(continued from page 1414)

relation to this present world system we cheerfully adopt the former status. To the end of his sojourn the right-minded alien, wherever he may be, will do his utmost to benefit those about him; but his activities must be conducted by his alienship.

The heart of an alien should be set on the things of his fatherland, where are his sovereign, his home, and his permanent estates, and should not be 'set' on the land where he is only a stranger and sojourner ... Now an ambassador is never a citizen of any state save that which sends him.

G.H. Lang (1874-1958)

The Christian a Friendly Alien

LAYING DOWN RELIGIOUS TRAINING

I think one of the most difficult things to convey to young people and enthusiastic laborers is that God's way is to ask them to lay down their religious training. Oh what a death! What frustration! After all those years of specialized training in a seminary or Bible college – and then to lay it aside! What a disgrace it appears to the present day religious mentality! How confusing to be employed in some way when you are "trained" for Christian service!

Yet here is the deciding issue. There is such a difference between a Spirit-wrought ministry and

what they are and are not. Again and again He brings us to the crisis point, places us at a fork in the road of our believing and bids us to retreat from idolatry and acknowledge the true God, in whom we move and live and have our being.

He is the one Word of God forever encountering us, that the reality of our inclusion in the flourishing, thriving joy of His belonging, our inclusion in the sheer delight of the Father in His Son, our inclusion in Their shameless, free-flowing communion in the Spirit may flower into unencumbered expression in us, and we may know *home* – the place where we belong.

Home

Chapter 3, pages 30-36



a professional ministry. I must honestly say – in my limited evaluation – it seems that often the greatest and most effective spiritual work is being done by those who are not "in the ministry" as such ... Having "seen" God's way they could no longer "fit into the traditional pattern" of professional service. As they left the "professional ministry" to pass through death into resurrection, God could accomplish a spiritual preparation and develop a truly Spirit-wrought ministry.

DeVern Fromke

No Other Foundation, p. 138

WHAT ABOUT PREACHING?

This may be a surprise to some, but there is no place for "preaching" in the gathering of saints. There are five Greek words that have all been translated into the English word "preach" and all simply mean "herald, publish, announce, proclaim, tell" the Good News. All of the instances where these Greek words are found in the New Testament are in the context of announcing the Good News to the lost and are *not* found in the setting of the believers' gatherings.

Nate Krupp

God's Simple Plan For His Church – And Your Place In It (1993), pp. 46-47

