



Bible Student's Notebook™

The Herald of His Grace

Presenting *every man* perfect in Christ Jesus. Colossians 1:28

Volume X
Issue 237

The Believer's Union and Identification in Christ

by – Clyde L. Pilkington, Jr.

I have been crucified with Christ: nevertheless, I live; yet not I, but Christ lives 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 (Galatians 2:20).

The believer, as a member of the Body of Christ, has a very special and permanent union and identification in Christ. This involves *past, present* and *future* aspects.

“In Christ,” among other things, we are:

- Accepted (Ephesians 1:6)
- Alive (II Timothy 1:1; Romans 8:2)
- Blessed (Ephesians 1:3)
- Chosen (Ephesians 1:4)
- Complete (Colossians 2:10)
- Established (II Corinthians 1:21)
- Free (Galatians 2:4)
- New creatures (II Corinthians 5:17)
- One Body (Romans 12:5)
- Redeemed (Romans 3:24)
- Righteous (II Corinthians 5:21)
- Sanctified (I Corinthians 1:2; i.e., saints)
- Saved (II Timothy 2:10)
- Victorious (II Corinthians 2:14)

This identification that we have in Christ is so complete that we as members of the Body of Christ are actually called “Christ.”

For as the body is one, and has many members, and all the members of that one

*body, being many, are one body: **so also is Christ** (I Corinthians 12:12)*

Any “body” is identified with its “head.” Your physical body is “you” – identified by others with and by your “head.” If someone asks for your “identification,” invariably you will show them something with a “head shot.” You will not present them with a driver’s license with a picture of your hand, or your arm. You are identified by your head.

God’s *ecclesia* is identified by our Head as well. The one Body is called *Christ*. He is the Head and we are His members. Thus, we are in living union with the wonderful Lord Jesus Christ. We are the many-membered *Christ*.

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Bible Student's Notebook™

Paul Our Guide – Christ Our Goal

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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 (1 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 law (Galatians 5:1)
- the organic nature of the church, the Body of Christ (1 Corinthians 12)
- the distinct message and ministry of Paul, the apostle to the nations (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; 1 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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OUR PAST IDENTIFICATION IN CHRIST

In Christ We Were CRUCIFIED

I have been crucified (Galatians 2:20).

Knowing this, that our old man [humanity] was crucified with Him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin (Romans 6:6).

In Christ We Were DEAD

It is a sure saying: For if we died with Him, we will live together also with Him (II Timothy 2:11).

For if we have become planted together in the likeness of His death, nevertheless we shall be of His resurrection also (Romans 6:5).

Why did we experience this death?

For the FLESH – Galatians 5:19-24; Romans 8:5-8.

For the WORLD – Galatians 6:14; Romans 12:12.

For the LAW – Romans 7:4; Galatians 5:18.

For SIN – Romans 6:2, 7, 11 (Paul is the only Bible writer to teach this. Sin may allure and draw us; but our union in Christ has forever broken our union with its tyranny).

In Christ We Were BURIED

Therefore we were buried with Him by baptism into death: that as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life (Romans 6:4).

Buried with Him in baptism, in which also you were raised with Him through the faith of the operation of God, Who has raised Him from the dead (Colossians 2:12).

In Christ We Were RAISED

Even when we were dead in sins, has made us alive together with Christ (by grace you are saved); and has raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places, in Christ Jesus (Ephesians 2:5-6).

Buried with Him in baptism, in which also you were raised with Him through the faith of the operation of God, Who has raised Him from the dead. And you, being dead in your sins and the uncircumcision of your flesh, has He made alive together with Him ... If you then were raised with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sits on the right hand of God (Colossians 2:12-13; 3:1).

OUR PRESENT IDENTIFICATION IN CHRIST

Not only does our union and identification with the Lord Jesus Christ extend into the past, but it is alive and vibrant in the present.

It is sometimes proclaimed “Christ died so we might live,” and rightly so – but in a deeper sense He died so that we might die, and He lives that we might live.

*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** (Romans 5:10).*

We LIVE Together with Him

*Now if we are dead with Christ, we believe that we shall also **live with Him** (Romans 6:8).*

*For if we died with Him, we will **live together also with Him** (II Timothy 2:11).*

*I have been crucified with Christ: nevertheless, I live; yet not I, but **Christ lives 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** (Galatians 2:20).* ►

Our identification in Christ brings us into *living* union with the very Son of God. Our union with Him is not restricted to the past.

When we hear the gospel presented, sometimes we hear the resurrection omitted. Yet the gospel is about the death, burial *AND* resurrection of Christ.

... *Christ died for our sins, according to the Scriptures; and that He was buried, **and that He rose again** ...* (I Corinthians 15:3-4).

He is *ALIVE*, and we live together with Him. “*Christ lives in me*” is the glorious present-tense truth of Galatians 2:20. His love and giving only began at the Cross, and our life really only began in the reality of His resurrection. He is now actively in union with us, for we “*live by the Faith of the Son of God.*” Our union with Christ is not some cold, dead, historic event that happened before we were born, but something that is happening in the present, in “*the life that we now live in the flesh.*”

We Have an Inseparable Union with Him

Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? ... For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, will be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord (Romans 8:35-39).

Alive in Him, We Are *JOINT-HEIRS* with Christ

Most believers do not enjoy this living position in Christ, although they possess it. They do not enter into the divine reckoning.

Likewise reckon yourselves also to be dead indeed to sin, but alive to God through Jesus Christ our Lord (Romans 6:11).

Our reckoning includes, among other things, our being joint-heirs with Him.

And if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ ... (Romans 8:17).

Our union is so literal that it gives us possessions that we never had.

Alive in Him, We Are United with All Other Believers in Christ

From Whom the whole Body fitly joined together and compacted by that which every joint supplies, according to the effective working in the measure of every part, makes increase of the Body to the edifying of itself in love (Ephesians 4:16).

And not holding the Head, from Whom all the Body by joints and bands having nourishment ministered, and knit together, increases with the increase of God (Colossians 2:19).

So we, being many, are one Body in Christ, and every one members of each other (Romans 12:5).

That there should be no division in the Body; but that the members should have the same care for one another (I Corinthians 12:25).

OUR FUTURE IDENTIFICATION IN CHRIST

Not only does our union and identification with the Lord Jesus Christ extend into the past, and is alive and vibrant in the present, but it also extends into the future – past death and into resurrection.

In the future we will not lose our past or present union in Christ; but that identity will intensify and broaden as we bear the image of the Heavenly One. In our celestial likeness of Him, we will have an even greater identity with His Person.

*Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it does not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when He shall appear, **we shall be like Him** ...* (I John 3:2).

Think of it! Christ is the “*image of God*” (II Corinthians 4:4; Colossians 1:15).

and as we have borne the image of the earthy, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly (I Corinthians 15:49).

(see **UNION**, page 2242)

My Story

“We also believe, and therefore speak.”

Testimonies of Believers #7

Eric Phillips

I was raised, and still live, in the South with traditional Christian doctrine. I was in and out of several denominations. Some are certainly more fanatical than others, but they all had one thing in common: you don't ask questions and you just go on blind faith, or you are in danger of going to Hell.

So I imagine a lot of people here in the South go through life pretending to believe it until something happens, like the death of a loved one, that either drives them into fanaticism or they get angry with God and ultimately turn away. The latter is what happened to me.

I have always believed in God but have never been fanatical. I have always pondered things like, who or what is God; and if He loves us and wants us to believe in Him or go to Hell, why doesn't He do a better job of revealing Himself to us?

I would roll my eyes every time someone would get on a religious high horse and tune them out. It has been this way since I took *Introduction to the New Testament* in college. It was a critical look at the N.T.

I wondered, Why are we putting so much stock in things that are constantly being disproved with science, and refuting the science that disproves it? My problem was that it just didn't all add up. I did believe in God, but I was really just a church-attending Deist who considered the Bible nothing more than a scam that was developed and used to control the masses.

Christians could not give sufficient answers to any of my questions, and would just say that science is the work of Satan and that he is using it to confuse people. I was even told in a Baptist Sunday School class that dinosaurs never existed and that God spoke the fossils into existence. I was also told by

a Baptist preacher that I “had the blood of Jesus on my hands” because I had taken communion without being baptized first.

So the God to whom I was introduced from childhood was this deceiving tyrant who would trick you with dinosaur fossils and send a 5th grade child to Hell for eating communion wafers and drinking grape juice without first being dipped in water by a certified clergyman. But to keep the peace with my family and peers, and keep the preachers off my back, I went along with it for 22 years up until the day my Father, the most precious human being in my life other than my wife and kids, was suddenly killed in a motorcycle accident when another motorist failed to yield to his right of way.

For me, this is the point where I needed answers, and Christianity was not able to answer them sufficiently. I was not going to run toward religion like others do and spend the rest of my life trying to convince this tyrannous God Who has seemingly lost control of His creation, to let me spend eternity with Him.

I was not willing to turn away from “a God” altogether but I decided, at that time, that the God of the Holy Bible was not a God at all. Therefore, I turned to Deism and rebuked the Bible and the doctrines that had been shoved down my throat since birth. This is the point in my life when my eyes were truly opened. I was now free to explore, ask questions, and truly seek God.

In my search as a Deist, all I found were books and organizations bent on tearing down religious doctrines and traditions and defaming the Bible and Christianity, while still believing in an unknowable God. I became one of these people for a short period of time; but I still had questions

(see **TESTIMONY**, next page)

TESTIMONY (continued from previous page)

and no real solid answers. Then I came across Martin Zender's website and started listening to his archived radio broadcasts. At first I thought, "this is the same old stuff in a different package." Yet the more I listened, the more I realized how much I had in common with Martin. As I listened I realized he was using more Scripture in 5-10 minutes of broadcasting than any preacher I have ever heard use in a whole month of Sundays, and he was literal and logical at the same time and welcomed challenging questions which he would answer confidently and completely. Within a few

months, my belief and faith in Christ was restored past any point it ever had been thanks to the likes of Martin Zender, Dan Sheridan, Clyde Pilkington and others.

I now read the Scriptures more intently and more frequently than I ever have, and I feel as though I actually know Christ personally; and I love and accept Christ as the Savior of the World, and not out of fear. You know you truly believe when you believe without being forced to profess your belief.

UNION (continued from page 2240)

For whom He did foreknow, He also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be the First-born among many brothers (Romans 8:29).

Who will change our lowly body, that it may be fashioned like to His glorious body, according to the working by which He is able even to subdue all things to Himself (Philippians 3:21).

Paul Billheimer has written wonderfully about this truth:

Created originally in the image of God, redeemed humanity has been elevated by means of a divinely conceived genetic process ... to the highest rank of all created beings ... This union goes beyond a mere formal, functional or idealistic harmony or rapport. It is an organic unity ... We become ... actual generated sons of God (I John 3:2), "*partakers of the divine nature*" (II Peter 1:4) ... generated by His own life ...

God purposed to have a family circle of His very own, not only created but also generated by His own life, incorporating His own seed, "*sperma,*" "*genes,*" or heredity. Long ago, even before He made the world, God chose us to be His very own, through what Christ would do for us (Ephesians 1:4; also 5:25-27, 32). In order to obtain this personal, organic family relationship, God conceived the infinitely vast and infinitely wise plan of creation plus redemption ... in order to bring "*many sons into glory*" (Hebrews 2:10) ...

Christ is the Prototype after which all other sons are being fashioned ... God's purpose in the plan of redemption – to produce ... an entirely new and unique species, exact replicas of His Son with whom He will share His glory and His dominion, and who will constitute a royal progeny and form the governing and administrative staff of His eternal kingdom.

While we recognize the infinite distinction between the "Son" and the "many sons" born into the family, yet such is their heredity ... that He recognizes them as bona fide blood-brothers ...

Christ is the divine Prototype after which this new species is being made. They are to be exact copies of Him, true genotypes ... As sons of God, begotten by Him, incorporating into their fundamental being and nature the very genes of God, they rank above all other created beings and are elevated to the most sublime height possible. – *Destined for the Throne*, First Edition, 1975, pp. 33-37

As members of Christ's Body we are indeed exceedingly rich. Not with the limited and uncertain riches of this world-system, but with the "*exceeding riches of His grace*" (Ephesians 1:7; 2:7). All that we have through our union with the Lord Jesus Christ, if it were not the record of Scripture itself, must surely be condemned as pure blasphemy. Yet it is true. It is true because God says so. We have been given a very unique and inseparable union and identification with Christ Himself; and this has permanently changed our *past, present and future*.



Just wanted to let you know that my wife and I and some of our friends have really been enjoying your *Daily Email Goodies* ... I'm sure it's an endeavor that may take you considerable time during the week. So thanks for providing these. We really loved the one about the "Potter" you sent out a few days ago and we had never really thought about the fact that the clay can't do anything to mar itself. That was an interesting angle and right in line with our views on God's sovereignty. – **WY**

I just read your most recent newsletter. Very good. I appreciated reading a bit of your personal story; helps me to relate to you better. I admire your work as a "tentmaker" rather than see your livelihood from the gospel. I am of like mind on that one; and as you have found in your own situation this opens up many doors for us to share the evangel freely. ... Hopefully we'll have opportunity to meet one day. And thanks for the great work you are "undertaking." (Sorry; couldn't resist the pun.) – **TN**

The "Mars' Hill" study in the *Daily Email Goodies* reopened my eyes toward the immense love God has for all. – **IA**

I just finished reading the letter [*A Personal Prayer of Faith*] you wrote in the *BSN* [#230]. I wrote that very same letter several times over the years! ... When the Lord called me out from the religious system, I never realized how much of the system came with me! When the Lord started to reveal Himself, it was NOT in an instant but a very slow process that is still going on. When I look back, I see Him in all my circumstances – every event was to bring me to see and understand Him and Him alone. (The Father is the cause of all things.) God used you and your ministry in ways you might not know. Thank you my brother for your letter and I thank the Lord for having you write it! All of His chosen will identify with every word. All is of LOVE ... Love will be ALL IN ALL! – **ME**

We thank you so much for the truth ... Keep up the good work ya'll have been doing. – **VA**

Thank you for the *Daily Email Goodies* and the topics you have been covering lately in them. I wrote to you a

few weeks ago about my family situation, and reading these messages have been helpful to me. My beliefs and opinions are not well received by my husband. My sons were taught that I have been brainwashed and that my beliefs are dangerous. A home can be a very lonely place when your own children do not care to listen to what you want to say. But since I told you about my situation I would like to tell you about something that God did for me yesterday that helped me to see that things are not always as they may seem.

My youngest son and I were just talking about a recent death of someone we both knew and he said to me that he can't understand why people get so sad at a death, because he is happy for them that they don't have to face any of the problems of this life anymore. He said he knows that they will live again, that God is love and He would never take a life without a reason and he knows that that person will live again. He said that for anyone to think someone is burning in hell forever would be to say that God actually doesn't love everyone; but God is a creator not a destroyer of what He has created and He is love, so He will not destroy. And then he said that though God will punish Satan in the lake of fire, God loves him too, and one day even Satan will change, that God's love will not fail. He said that is the way he sees it. I was overjoyed to hear what my youngest son was telling me with conviction in his words. I told him that he was right, that what he is telling me is totally biblical and that God Himself has allowed him to see that.

Earlier that morning when my sons were at school and I was home alone, I had poured out my heart to God and told Him that I know in this life I might have to live my whole life not seeing anyone in my house come to the truth, but that I would rather walk in the truth that He has given and feel the loneliness now, knowing that one day, even if it's in a future eon, my family will finally have their eyes opened, than to walk away and go along with everyone else for the sake of not being ridiculed. The Father let me know that He is working with my son; it doesn't matter that I wasn't able to study with him from my Bible all these years. If our Father wants to reveal something to anyone He will, no matter what the circumstances. And my son who does not always say a whole lot on the topic of God, and does not always show a lot of emotion but quietly thinks about things, has clearly thought about this. God certainly knows how to give good gifts. I just wanted to share the joy I feel. – **IL**

Clyde, just got your book, *The Salvation of All*, this morning, and I cannot put it down. Everything is so

beautifully and understandably explained! I LOVE the way that you tie everything into the gospel message. – SC

Thanks for the daily reminders of God’s work in our lives. I’m learning to be content in the simple things, but it isn’t always easy. I long for a simple lifestyle where I can just raise my kids in the love of the Lord and be the wife and mother I should be. Sometimes I forget how important that is, but God has a way of reminding me. So many families around me are falling apart, children in rebellion, and in hurts and pains from broken relationships – you name it. It puts in perspective how important this “everyday real” work of God is; for in so doing, we will be blooming in the place we were planted, allowing God to add the fruit. I pray my “life ministry” will produce many fruits for the Lord, even when it seems mundane at the time. Humility doesn’t always come easy. It’s easy to think we are supposed to do something BIG for God, when the biggest thing we can do is teach our children well and live our lives – everyday lives, as you said – through Him. “*In all your ways acknowledge Him and He will direct your paths.*” – TX

This *Daily Email Goodie* is so comforting to me right now as I am going through a necessary trial that God is putting me through for His purpose. I need what I am receiving to make the changes that He has purposed in my life. How can anyone believe they have limited control over their own existence when God operates the ALL. I am a living example of a lump of clay being formed for God’s Glory, and I appreciate this *Goodie*, brother Clyde. It is consoling me when I need it for sure. – Canada

Just finished your book *The Outsiders*. I thank God for you for this work. I couldn’t put it down. Read it all in one sitting. – PA

Thank you for the encouragement from Father today. ... I, too, have been learning these “things,” but they aren’t merely things learned. They are steps to the heart of our beloved Father and to the realization of our union with our precious Jesus – to know Him more and more, and find in Him everything we need! I greatly appreciate your work of edifying the saints, and thank Father for your ministry. – TN

This was an excellent and timely message, Clyde! God, the master gardener, didn’t plant anything in the Garden of Eden – or in the Universe – without the ultimate “landscape plan!” – SC

I’m really enjoying the daily dose of truth ... Keep the Word coming. – NC

Fellowship Opportunities

Saints are preparing to host fellowship-times all across the country. These are not organizationally-orchestrated series events; but rather just individual saints who are so moved by truth and the love of fellow believers that they are hosting gatherings in halls and homes, here and there.

Here is a list of gatherings that we are familiar with, and we will be making an attempt to be at each of them:

June 4-6

Youngwood (Pittsburgh, PA area)
For details contact: Joe Gardner
724-787-1068

June 11-13

Cortland (Cleveland, OH area)
For details contact: Ted McDivitt
Dmcdivitt1@aol.com

June 25-27

Monument (Colorado Springs, CO area)
For details contact: MaryAnn Broussard
mabsmailbox@earthlink.net

August 6-8

Harrodsburg (Lexington, KY area)
For details contact: Bob Evely
bob@GraceEvangel.org