

CRUCIFIED WITH CHRIST.

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application.**

Crucified with Christ.

THE cardinal truth that "Christ died for us" must not be confused with the closely related truth that "we died with Christ" (Rom. v. 8 ; vi. 8, R.V.). If we say His death was our death, or, *in* His death we died ; besides being contrary to the form of sound words, we exclude the truth that we died *with* Him, and claim no more than that He died *for* us. It was impossible that He should have died for our sins, or even for one sin, without being "made sin," that is, representing it under the judgment of God. In His spotless person, in His holy flesh He bore the judgment of our sins and thus "sin in the flesh" was condemned. The judgment of the fruit, that is, sins, necessarily included the condemnation of the root, or, "sin in the flesh." But the root or principle of sin was not in Him, even when "made sin for us." When bearing divine judgment He was in the "likeness" only, not in the reality of "flesh of sin." We on the contrary had our whole being in the "flesh of sin." Therefore the condemnation of "sin in the flesh" was our condemnation as men in that condition.

Our whole state as men in the flesh has been condemned. We have been crucified with Christ and we have died with Him to sin (Gal. ii. 20 ; Rom. vi. 8). We have been "crucified," we have "died" and we are "dead to sin." Dead *in* sins was our condition before we were quickened and raised up with Christ. Dead *to*

sin is our present and everlasting relation to sin in virtue of having died with Christ to it. Dead to sin is not a condition, though it characterises our new condition "in Christ Jesus" (II). On our account Christ had to do with sin sacrificially and died to it. We who were bondservants to sin died in this relation to it under the judgment which was reflected upon us by His sacrifice. Thus we died when He died, we died with Him.

The argumentative question in Rom. vi. 2, is resumed in verse 6 and based on the evident and known truth that our old man has been crucified with Christ, by which we in our relations as men in the flesh died with Him.

The baptismal argument against our continuing in sin is introduced by the way (vers. 3-5). For if none doubted that they had been "baptised unto (identification with) Christ Jesus," some at least might be "ignorant" that all who had been thus baptised were also and of necessity "baptised unto (identification with) His death." By baptism they were outwardly identified with Christ here in the world where He died—died to sin.

Baptism is a symbol of burial. It is not the setting forth in figure that we have died with Christ to sin. It speaks of the washing away of sins in other and quite different relations* (Acts xxii. 16). In baptism we have been

* When baptised the Apostle ceased to be visibly identified with those who hated Christ's name. By baptism he left their ranks and thus outwardly washed away the "sins" that marked his former career.

identified with Christ "in the likeness of His death." We are, therefore, by profession in a corresponding or like relation to all that He died to here. He died to sin and was buried. But we could not say of Him that He was buried to sin. In our case it was as buried in figure with Him that we professed to leave the world as a moral system away from God, and thus be conformed to His death Who died to it. Therefore it is the likeness of His death, not burial, that is seen in our relation to sin as baptised. Then it becomes evident that we are also identified with Christ ~~as~~ raised up to newness of life. *who is*

But we must not lose sight of the fact that baptism is only and always a figure designed to set forth our transition from the world to Christ. It is the divinely appointed sign by which we professed to leave the world, viewed morally, to which we naturally belonged and with which we were identified, to belong to Christ and to be identified with Him in His present relation to it, that is, the world.

In Colossians we see baptism similarly connected with the truth that we have been crucified with Christ (ii. 11, 12). The Colossian saints had been turned away in some measure from the all-sufficiency of Christ to "philosophy and vain deceit," to the workings of the natural mind in matters of religion, and thus to ordinances of man's devising, such as, "Handle not, nor taste, nor touch" according to the precepts and teachings of men (8, 21, 22). The true antidote to this and to every like device of

the enemy is to be filled with the "full knowledge" of God's will as now revealed in Christ (i. 9).

Hence the epistle unfolds the glory of the person of Christ, and tells of the present and future results of His atoning death. It assures us that we are complete in Him (ii. 10). Our spiritual state in Him before God is without defect or deficiency. We are complete or "filled-full" in Christ and Christ is in us (i. 27). The apostle laboured energetically to "present every man perfect in Christ" (28, 29). By admonition and teaching he laboured that all who had *received* Christ might be grounded in the truth that they are *in* Christ—are "rooted and built up in Him," and thus be assured or "confirmed" in the faith. For as having received Christ we are exhorted to "walk in Him" (ii. 6, 7).

We are further taught that in Christ we have been "circumcised with a circumcision not made with hands, in the putting off of the body of the flesh, in (or "by") the circumcision of Christ" (ver. II, R.V.) In the true and spiritual as also in the literal sense, the Colossian believers were uncircumcised before they put off the body of the flesh, that is, before they "died with Christ" (20). They put off the body of the flesh (see iii. 5, 8; 2 Pet. i. 14, etc.) when they "put off the old man" (Col. iii, 9). The "body of sin" in Romans (vi. 6) and "the body of the flesh" is the same body, only in Colossians it is not spoken of as the "bond-servant of sin," but as representative of the

believer's condition when "living in the world" and before he "died with Christ" (Col. ii. 20). In both epistles baptism and what it signifies is brought in parenthetically to witness of a present outward identification with Christ of the baptised.

We are in Christ. Our completeness is in Him (10). It is a present thing which we have in virtue of being in Him. We have put off the old man and have put on the new man (iii. 9, 10). Our circumcision was the putting off of the body of our flesh of sin morally, in (virtue of) the circumcision of Christ, and the circumcision of Christ was the putting off of the body of His (holy) flesh for our sins (i. 22).

Christ died for us and God raised Him from among the dead. And we, Jew and Gentile, "being dead" in our sins, "He quickened together with Him" (ii. 12, 13). As we were quickened together* with Christ, so we were spiritually raised with Him (iii. 1), and as raised with Him we have put on the new man, we are in a new condition wherein He is "everything and in all" (11). But we died with Christ *from* the elements of the world, from the elementary things which make up its religion. Therefore as no longer alive in the world we do not subject ourselves to its religious ordinances (ii. 20). We died with Christ and thus also we put off the old man. We are no longer in our old condition. We died and our life is hidden "with the Christ in God" until we are manifested with Him in glory (iii. 3, 4). Yet we live in our new life now, we are "alive to God" and "alive from the dead" (Rom. vi. 8, 11, 13).

For "if we have died with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with Him," that is, live as He now lives beyond the power of death for ever. We "believe" says the apostle—we justly account that if we died with Christ to sin and are thus absolutely and for ever freed from its *dominion*, we shall also live with Him, knowing that He being raised up from the dead, dies no more; death no more has dominion over Him (9). And for the same reason—exemplified in Christ—you also "reckon" or account yourselves to be not only dead to sin, but alive to God in Christ Jesus.

Baptism expresses in figure our burial with Christ to be outwardly identified with Him here and now in this world, while we are on earth and He is in heaven. As baptised we "put on Christ" in the sight of men. We were buried in baptism and raised by faith† (Col. ii. 12) to "walk in newness of life," not hidden, but visible amongst men (Rom. vi. 4). We are "in Christ" as raised with Him by divine power, and we "live with Him" as quickened (8).

Yet we are neither buried ~~and raised~~ in baptism, nor quickened and raised spiritually as having "died with Christ." Before we were quickened and raised with Christ, we were in our sins and not in any sense identified "with"

* We are "together" as quickened; not first brought together and then quickened.

† The allusion in Col. ii. 12 is not to any particular act of faith by the person baptised, but to that which is common to all believers.

Christ spiritually (Eph. ii. 5). But having as men in flesh of sin, "died (with Christ) to sin," we are *now* "dead to sin" (Rom. vi. 2, 11). We have been "crucified with Christ" and (in the flesh of sin) we live "*no longer*," but Christ lives in us (Gal. ii. 20). We are morally and spiritually formed anew. By divine power we have been quickened and raised to this end. We have put on the new man. Our old man has been "put off," not by our burial in baptism, but by circumcision, that is, crucifixion with Christ; and we (not our old man) quickened and raised with Christ.

It is the assured privilege of every believer to say with the apostle, "I am crucified with Christ," and to know that as having died with Christ, he is dead to all that Christ died to. In the epistle to the Galatians he records what was true of himself as a Jew under law (ii. 15, 19, 20). He believed on Christ Jesus, knowing that a man is not justified on the principle of works of law, but by the faith of Jesus Christ, and that on the principle of works of law no flesh shall be justified (16). To affirm otherwise would be to "set aside the grace of God" as of no account. For if righteousness (or justification) is by law, then Christ has died for nothing (21).

"Through (or 'by') law," says the apostle, "I have died to law." He was consequently in this relation to it. When under the law, he was under its curse (iii. 10). It could not justify him. It could and must condemn him. It meant condemnation to those who were under

it. Through law therefore—through what law is to all who are under it, he died to it by crucifixion with Christ, in order that he might live to God. He accepted the judgment of the cross as that which was due to himself. He was crucified with Christ, and under law he lived no longer.

Now he can say, "Christ has redeemed us out of the curse of the law, having become a curse for us" (13). The judgment borne by Him was due to us as sinners. Though it fell on Him and Him only, it was the condemnation of sin and guilt in us, and therefore the judgment of our condition in the flesh, whether as "sinners of the nations," or under the curse of an unkept law. Thus we died *with* Christ, we were crucified with Him, and we live no longer in our former condition in the flesh, or relation to law, but Christ lives in us. He is formed in us morally and characterises our new state.

T. J. L.

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