

The King's Highway

Rev. L. K. Mullen, Nov. 58

AN ADVOCATE OF SCRIPTURAL HOLINESS

VOL. XXXVIII

MONCTON, N. B., APRIL 15TH, 1958

No. 435

— UNION WITH JESUS —

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Jesus said, "I and my Father are one," and it is his loving purpose that you and I shall be able to say that, too; and say it now in this present time, in the face of the devil, and in holy, triumphant defiance of a frowning world and of shrinking, trembling flesh.

There is a union with Jesus as intimate as that of the branch and the vine, or as that of the various members of the body with the head, or as that between Jesus and the Father. This is shown by such scriptures as that in which Jesus said, "I am the vine, ye are the branches," and in his great intercessory prayer where he prays "that they all may be one; as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us." It is also shown in such passages as that in which Paul, speaking of Jesus, says that God "hath put all things under his feet, and gave him to be the head over all things to the church, which in his body," and that we "may grow up into him in all things, which is the head, even Christ," and again, "he that sanctifieth and they who are sanctified are all one.

This union is, of course, not physical, but spiritual, and can be known to the one who has entered into it by the direct witness of the Spirit; but this can be known to others only by its effects and fruits in the life.

This spiritual union is mysterious yet simple, and many of our everyday relationships partially illustrate it.

Where two people have interests or purposes the same, they are to that extent one. A liberal, conservative, or unionist is one with every other man of his party throughout the whole country insofar as they hold similar principles. This is an imperfect sort of union. And yet it is union. A husband and wife, or a boy and his mother, may be separated by continents and seas, and yet be one. For six months three thousand miles of wild waves rolled between me and a woman I rejoice to call "wife," but my heart was as absolutely true to her and my confidence in her fidelity was as supreme as now when we sit side by side—and we are one.

But more perfect, more tender, more holy and infinitely more self-consuming and ennobling and enduring is the union of the soul with Jesus than is any other possible relationship. It is like the union of the bay with the sea. It is the union of nature, a co-mingling of spirit, an eternal marriage of heart and soul and mind.

It is a union of will. Jesus said, "I came down from heaven, not to do mine own will, but the will of him that sent me," and again, "My meat is to do the will of him that sent me." And so it is with those who are one with Jesus. The psalmist said, "I delight to do thy will, O my God," and that is the testimony of everyone who has entered into this divine union. There may, and doubtless will, be times when this will is hard to the flesh and blood, but even then the soul says with its Lord, "Not my will, but thine, be done," and prays always, "Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven."

In the very nature of things there can be no union with Jesus without this union of will, for there is really very little of a man but his will. That is really all he can call his own. His mind with all its splendid powers and possibilities may be reduced to idiocy; he may be robbed of his property; his health, and even his life may be taken from him, but who can enter into the domain of his will and rob him of that?

It is a union of faith—of mutual confidence and esteem. God trusts him, and he trusts God. God can entrust him with the honor of his name and his holy character in the midst of a world of rebels. God can empower him and beautify him with his Spirit and adorn him with all heavenly graces, without any fear that the man will take the glory of these things to himself. God can heap upon him riches and treasures and honors without any fear that man will use them for selfish ends or prostitute them to unholy purposes.

Again the man trusts God. He trusts God when he cannot trace him. He has confidence in the faithfulness and love of God in adversity as well as in prosperity. He does not have to be fed on sweetmeats and live in sunshine and sleep on roses in order to believe that God is for him. God can mingle bitter with all the sweets and allow the thorns to prick him, and the storm clouds to roll all about him, and yet he will stubbornly trust on. Like Job, his property may be swept away in a day, and his children die about him, and yet with Job he will say, "The Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away; blessed be the name of the Lord," and still trust on.

God can be familiar with such a man. He can take all sorts of liberties with his property, his reputation, his position, his friends, his health, his life, and allow devils and men to taunt him: but the man unchangeably fixed in his estimate of God's holy character and everlasting love, will still triumphantly trust on.

It is a union of suffering, of sympathy. Once when I was passing through what seemed to me a perfect hell of spiritual temptation and suffering, the Lord supported me with this text, "In all their affliction he was afflicted" (Isa. 63:9). The prophet refers in these words to the afflictions of the children of Israel in Egypt and in the wilderness after their escape from the hard bondage of Pharaoh, and he says that in all their sufferings Jesus suffered with them.

Let her child be racked with pain and scorched with fever and choked with croup, yet the mother suffers more than the child; and so let the people of God be sorely tempted and tried, and Jesus agonizes with them. He is the world's great sufferer. His passion is forever. He once tasted death for every man. He suffers still with every man. There is not a cry of anguish, not a heartache, not a

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