

## UNION WITH CHRIST.

Union  
with  
Christ.

The Gift of the Spirit leads to Union with Christ; and in this mystical union all the high benefits derived from the Source of blessing are one. To be IN CHRIST and to have CHRIST IN US are throughout the New Testament convertible terms; but this reciprocal indwelling is mediated by the Spirit common to the Head and His members: we are ONE SPIRIT with Him if we have become members of His mystical body. *He that is joined unto the Lord is one Spirit.*

1 Cor. vi.  
17.

Referred  
to Each.

1. Now all the prerogatives of the estate of grace are ours in virtue of our union with the Lord; each of them in particular is

distinctly referred to the same source. Generally, we are blessed with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places (or things) in Christ. Eph. i. 3. As treasured up in Him above, and our inheritance there, they melt into one indistinguishable blessing. But as the Spirit dispenses them to those who are united to Jesus on earth they are diverse, though still one in their diversity. Our fellowship with Him or in Him is our righteousness, whether as imputed justification or inherent conformity with the law. In Whom we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins; we are made the righteousness of God in Him. Our Christian sonship is based upon the same union, whether it is adoption or regeneration: we are one with the Firstborn among many brethren. If any man be in Christ, it is a new creation; and this new creation is a filial creation. He is our life; and we are quickened together with Christ by God, Who hath sent forth the Spirit of His Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father. Our consecration to God and interior holiness have the same ground and guarantee. Believers are sanctified in Christ Jesus. Rom. viii. 29. 2 Cor. v. 17. Eph. ii. 5. Gal. iv. 6. 1 Cor. i. 2

2. Thus union with Christ, incorporation by His Spirit into His mystical body, makes all the blessings of the Christian covenant one in Him. And this precious doctrine, the first declaration of which our Lord Himself uttered, pervades the New Testament. St. John gives the record of the Saviour's great saying, reserved for the last hours of His teaching, *Abide in Me, and I in you*; which was glorified in His prayer: *that they all may be one; as Thou, Father, art in Me, and I in Thee, that they also may be one in Us . . . I IN THEM, and Thou in Me.* And he has one echo at least of these very words: *Hereby know we that we dwell in Him, and He in us, because He hath given us of His Spirit.* But St. Paul, who was not present when the Saviour spoke to His disciples this word, has more than any other writer made it the signature of personal religion, especially of his own personal religion. To this note the Epistle to the Philippians is set; in it this union takes an unlimited variety of forms. But it is in the Epistle to the Galatians that it has its boldest utterance. There, and there alone, it has the character of a mystical, or, as is sometimes said, ethical or moral union with the Saviour's death. Thrice the Apostle speaks of crucifixion with Christ. First of his fellowship,

One in Him.

John xv. 4.  
John xvii. 21, 23.

1 John iv. 13.

- and that of every believer, with the virtue of His death to the law : *I through the law am dead to the law, that I might live unto God.*
- Gal. ii. 19, 20. *I am 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.* Here is Union with Christ's death and with His life as if both were his own through the mystical identification of faith : being dead with His Lord to the sentence of justice, he lived the life of justification. But that new life is itself the whole fulness of privilege in Christ. Secondly, he reverts to the same idea, peculiar to this Epistle, for the sake of showing that the regenerate life is fellowship with the virtue of His death to sin : *They that are Christ's have crucified the flesh with its passions and lusts.* Here the union is the continuous mortification and death of the old man or the corrupt nature, signified by flesh, still remaining in the believer. Thirdly, he returns back to himself, and exults in his sense of fellowship with the virtue of His death to the world and all in it that keeps the soul from God : *By Whom the world is crucified unto Me, and I unto the world.* It were easy to show that here justification, regeneration, and sanctification, each a perfected ideal realised, are signified ; that each defines for itself the whole Gospel privilege ; and that all are not indistinctly based on the union of the soul by faith with the dying and the risen Saviour. This for the present life ; in the life to come the glory to which they lead, and for which they prepare, is in like manner the blessedness of union with the Lord : to be *found in Him* is the Apostle's utmost aspiration.
- Gal. vi. 14. *By Whom the world is crucified unto Me, and I unto the world.*
- Phil. iii. 9. *By Whom the world is crucified unto Me, and I unto the world.*

Perver-  
sion.

3. This doctrine has been perverted in two ways. First, by those who resolve it simply into union with the Church and the fellowship of Christ by a genuine Christian profession : a style of interpretation which reduces the *IN* always to *BY*, in defiance of sound grammatical exegesis. Secondly, by those who interpret this mystical union with Christ as only the sovereign bestowment in time of a prerogative eternally decreed for the elect ; as if salvation had been absolutely and unconditionally provided in Christ for those given to Him before the world was by the Father. But, rightly understood, there is no aspect of the common salvation more wholesome in its influence than that which makes it

the fellowship of His death and life enjoyed by those who are regarded as suffering and crucified and risen and ascended with the Redeemer.