

A. G. Daniells
Union With Christ

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IN the study of " A More Spiritual Ministry " it is clear that **Christ is the only source of spiritual life**, and that the **Holy Spirit is the medium through which Christ imparts His own life to the soul who will comply with the conditions for receiving this gracious endowment.**

Most forcefully is this truth set forth in the following statements:

"The Holy Spirit is the breath of spiritual life in the soul. The impartation of the Spirit is the impartation of the life of Christ."—"The Desire of Ages," p. 805.

"The work of the Holy Spirit is immeasurably great. It is from this source that power and efficiency come to the worker for God; and the Holy Spirit is the Comforter, as the personal presence of Christ to the soul."— Reprinted in " Christ Our Righteousness," page 162.

"Those who teach the word must themselves live in hourly contact, in conscious, living communion with God. The principles of truth and righteousness and mercy must be within them. They must draw from the Fountain of all wisdom, moral and intellectual power. Their hearts must be alive with the deep movings of the Spirit of God."—" Testimonies," Vol. VI, p. 48.

A " more " spiritual ministry involves that constant fellowship with Christ which more and more enlarges the capacity for being " filled with the Spirit " as it is so freely bestowed for the " work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ." This **fellowship with Christ means just what we understand by the terms " association," " companionship," " union."** It is a very close relationship indeed. In the New Testament this relationship is spoken of as " in Christ." Dr. A. T. Pierson tells us that this **phrase is used one hundred thirty times by New Testament writers. " In Christ " expresses a union and companionship closer than is possible in the experience of any two persons dwelling in the flesh. No greater honor, no greater blessing or happiness, could be bestowed upon man than to be permitted to maintain this intimate relationship. It is a relationship which should be prized above every other relationship on earth, and should never be severed.**

But here we pause for most serious reflection as to the genuine appreciation and unfailing constancy of this fellowship. As ministers of God, called, chosen, anointed for divine service, **do we day by day, year in and year out, maintain this joyful, uplifting, life-giving association? Do we prize our privilege of being " in Christ " so highly that we would not knowingly permit anything to break the union?**

It is at this vital point that so many, possibly all of us, fail, more or less. The **causes of failure are varied, but whatever they may be, the results are the same, and are always serious.** Perhaps one of the most common causes of a break in the divine fellowship is the pressure of our work. We get so busy doing the things which He has told us to do that we do not take time to commune with Him. This is a great mistake, a perilous deception. **Our frantic efforts to do something to advance the cause of God lead to the neglect of daily contact with the word of God,**— that word which is " like as a fire " to purify us from the dross and rubbish which would crowd out and grieve the Holy Spirit, which is " like a hammer that breaketh the rock in pieces " and keeps the fallow ground of the heart receptive for the impress of the Holy Spirit; that word which conveys the heavenly manna, the bread of life of which we must daily eat in order to maintain the spiritual life.

With neglect of the word, there follows the neglect of prayer. Instead of spending the first

hours of the day in communion with Him who is our life, our first thoughts rush out over the work of the day, and then the race with the affairs of life begins. What can follow such a program but spiritual weakness, loss of power, and serious inefficiency?

Brethren, **we must awaken to the important truth that no amount of busy activity for Christ can be substituted for personal, daily association with Him.** We indulge fallacious reasoning when we argue with ourselves that we are working so hard for the Lord that He will accept our activity in lieu of that fellowship which is involved by being "in Christ." **Working to advance the cause of God, however earnest and exhausting our efforts, will not beget nor develop spiritual life in the soul.** Suspended union with Christ breaks the flow of spiritual life to the believer.

"Your birth, your reputation, your wealth, your talents, your virtues, your piety, your philanthropy, or anything else in you or connected with you, will not form a bond of union between your soul and Christ."—"Testimonies," Vol. V, pp. 48, 49.

This sweeping statement surely shuts out every substitute the enemy may suggest.

"There is a wide difference between a pretended union and a real connection with Christ by faith. A profession of truth places men in the church, but this does not prove that they have a vital connection with the Living Vine."—"Testimonies," Vol. V, pp. 228, 229.

The difference between a pretended union and a real union is the difference between a mere profession and a real possession; between formalism and reality. Herein lies our danger, our peril. The minister of the gospel cannot realize too keenly the tremendous seriousness of this peril. A pretended union substitutes theory, form, activity — machinery — for a living experience, which involved a new birth, a new life, a new mind; in short, a new creation. This substitution results in spiritual feebleness and ultimate loss of the soul.

A. G. Daniells, Auckland, New Zealand.

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