

Later in this section Strong quotes John Bunyan on the doctrine of union with Christ:

The Lord let me into the knowledge of the mystery of union with Christ, that I was joined to him, that I was bone of his bone and flesh of his flesh. By this also my faith in him as my righteousness was the more confirmed; for if he and I were one, then his righteousness was mine, his merits mine, his victory also mine. Now could I see myself in heaven and on earth at once -- in heaven by my Christ, my risen head, my righteousness and life, though on earth by my body or person.

A. A. Hodge, in his *Commentary on the Westminster Confession of Faith* pens the following notes on Chapter 26:

1. All saints are united to the Lord Jesus. We need to know what is the foundation and what is the nature of this union, and how it is established.

(1) As to the foundation of the union subsisting between the true believer and the Lord Jesus, the Scriptures teach that it rests in the eternal purpose of the Triune God, expressed in the decree of election (we were "chosen in him before the foundation of the world," Eph. 1:4), and the eternal covenant of grace formed between the Father and his Word as the mediatorial Head of his people, treating with the Head for the members, and with the members in the Head, and providing for their salvation in him. John 17:2, 6.

(2) As to the nature of this union of the believer with Christ, the Scriptures teach -- (a) That it is federal and representative, whereby Christ acts in all things as our federal Head, in our stead, and for our benefit. Hence our legal status is determined by his, and his rights, honours, relations, all are made ours in co-partnership with him. (b) That it is a vital and spiritual union. Its actuating source and bond is the Spirit of the Head, who dwells and works in the members. I Cor. 6:17; 12:13; I John 3:24; 4:13. Hence our spiritual life is derived from him and sustained and determined by his life, which we share. Gal. 2:20. (c) That it is a union between our entire persons and Christ, and therefore one involving our bodies through our souls. 1 Cor. 6:15, 19.

(3) As to the manner in which this union is established, the Scriptures teach that the elect, having been in the divine idea comprehended under the headship of Christ from eternity, are in time actually united to him -- (a) By the powerful operation of his Spirit, whereby they are "quickened together with Christ" (Eph. 2:5); which Spirit evermore dwells in them as the organ of Christ's presence with them, the infinite medium through which the fulness of his love and life, and all the benefits purchased by his blood, pass over freely from the Head to the members. (b) By the actings of faith upon their part, whereby they grasp Christ and appropriate him and his grace to themselves, and whereby they ever continue to live in him and to draw their resources from him. Eph. 3:17.

--A. A. Hodge, *The Confession of Faith* (London: The Banner of Truth Trust, 1958), pp. 322-323.