

Objective union with Christ is that relationship in which human beings, through God's sovereign and gracious choice, are joined to Christ positionally and representatively, and are viewed as one with Him in the plan, the accomplishment, and the application of salvation.

Speaking of this aspect, Berkhof writes:

In virtue of the legal or representative union established in the covenant of redemption Christ became incarnate as the substitute for His people, to merit all the blessings of salvation for them. Since His children were sharers in flesh and blood, "He also in like manner partook of the same; that through death He might bring to nought him that had the power of death, that is the devil; and might deliver all them who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage," Heb. 2:14, 15. He could merit salvation for them just because He already stood in relation to them as their Surety and Mediator, their Head and Substitute. The whole Church was included in Him as her Head. In an objective sense she was crucified with Christ, she died with Him, she arose in Him from the dead, and was made to sit with Him in the heavenly places. All the blessings of saving grace lie ready for the Church in Christ; man can add nothing to them; and they now only await their subjective application by the operation of the Holy Spirit, which is also merited by Christ and is sure of progressive realization in the course of history.

-- Berkhof, *Systematic Theology* pp. 448-449

3. Subjective union with Christ

Most of the scriptural data appear to speak of this aspect of union, and we may define it as follows:

Subjective union with Christ is that relationship in which human beings, through Spirit baptism, are joined to Christ actually and experientially, and are made spiritually, vitally, mysteriously, and indissolubly one with Him.

Berkhof defines this aspect of union as follows:

This union may be defined as that intimate, vital, and spiritual union between Christ and His people, in virtue of which He is the source of life and strength, of their blessedness and salvation. That it is a very intimate union appears abundantly from the figures that are used in Scripture to describe it. It is a union as of the vine and the branches, John 15:5, as of a foundation and the building that is reared on it, I Peter. 2:4, 5, as of a husband and wife, Eph. 5:23-32, and as of the head and the members of the body, Eph. 4:15-16. And even these figures fail to give full expression to the reality. It is a union that passes understanding. Says Dr. Hodge [A. A. Hodge]: "The technical designation of this union in theological language