

is 'mystical', because it so far transcends all the analogies of earthly relationships, in the intimacy of its connection, in the transforming power of its influence, and in the excellence of its consequences."

-- Berkhof, *Systematic Theology*, p. 449.

Since Spirit baptism is employed in the definition of subjective union with Christ, this term should be defined. Spirit baptism is simply that act of the Holy Spirit by which He unites believing sinners to Christ and to the benefits of His redemption.

4. Safeguards against misunderstanding of the doctrine

Those theologians who treat this doctrine take care to point out what the doctrine is not. For example, A. H. Strong, in speaking of the nature of this union, says that it is not:

- (a) A merely natural union, like that of God with all human spirits, . . .
- (b) A merely moral union, or union of love and sympathy, like that between teacher and scholar, friend and friend, . . .
- (c) A union of essence, which destroys the distinct personality and subsistence of either Christ or the human spirit, . . .
- (d) A union mediated and conditioned by participation of the sacraments of the church, . . .

-- Augustus Hopkins strong, *Systematic Theology*
(Westwood, N.J.: Revell, 1907), pp. 799-800.

Millard J. Erickson warns us against inadequate models, such as the following:

- (a) The view that our union with Christ is metaphysical, in which view the believer becomes part of the divine essence.
- (b) The view that our union with Christ is mystical, in which Jesus takes over and lives the person's life for him.
- (c) The view that our union with Christ is a psychological or sympathetic oneness, in which the believer shares Christ's interests and ideals.
- (d) The view that our union with Christ is a sacramental union, in which the believer takes Christ into himself in the Lord's Supper.

-- Millard J. Erickson, *Christian Theology*
(Grand Rapids: Baker, 1985), vol. 3, pp. 949-951.

5. Union with Christ and other aspects of the application of salvation

A. H. Strong's discussion of this question deserves quotation, at least in excerpt form. Strong writes: