

# In Union

By R.T. Nusbaum

The truth of union with Christ should awaken certain realities in us. The believer is identified with Christ in His death (Romans 6:1-11), His burial (Romans 6:4), His resurrection (Colossians 3:1), His ascension (Ephesians 2:6), His reign (II Timothy 2:12) and His glory (Romans 8:17). We are co-crucified with Christ, co-resurrected with Christ, and co-seated with Christ in the heavens.

In John 15:1-6 the union is described as that of branch and vine. The branch is in the vine and the life of the vine is in the branch. Paul uses the example of the head and the body in Ephesians 1:22-23; 4:12-16; 5:23-32. This depicts the living union of Christ and the Church. The figure expresses the notion that, though different parts have different functions, they all have the same life. Paul compares the relationship to the identification of a husband and wife in Ephesians 5:23-32, stated in the declaration that they are "one flesh". Similarly, there is a marriage relation of Christ and the Church.

The Scriptures clearly describe a relationship between the believer and Christ in oneness and not just some theological acceptance. This union is not just symbolism but concrete. This union is real even if described as spiritual (I Corinthians 6:17; Romans 8:9f; Ephesians 3:16f). This union constitutes the new identity of the believer. This union is not merely a moral re-direction that could take place apart from the life of Christ as our life.

The life of Christ is now the life of the believer. Just as a union between head and body are vital, so this union is vital to our existence. Paul writes in Galatians 2:20,

*"It is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and delivered Himself up for me".*

In Colossians 3:3,

*"You have died and your life is hidden with Christ in God. When Christ, who is our life, is revealed, then you also will be revealed with Him in glory".*

Through the reality of union with Christ, the believer is able to put to death our old life, whether you call it the old man, the flesh or whatever, it is the "us" that was before and not the One whom we are now in union with (John 6:32-58; Galatians 2:20).

From Ephesians 1:4 ("He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world") we conclude that union with His overcoming life has always been the plan. Even so, union with Christ is God's intended means fruitfulness on our part (John 15:5).

Union with Christ is His means whereby we know and operate in our different functions, for we function as members of His body (I Corinthians 12:4-30). Union with Christ is God's basis of fellowship, for He fellowships in life and oneness.

### **The Truth As It Is In Christ**

The concept of being in Christ is based on the idea of corporate oneness. In Romans 9:12, a quotation taken from Genesis 25:23—the twins, Esau and Jacob, represent two nations, not individuals. We see this corporate oneness in these examples:

God created all men in one man—i.e., in Adam (Acts 17:26).

Satan ruined all men in one man—i.e., in Adam (Romans 5:12, 18a)

God redeemed all men in one man—i.e., in Christ (Titus 2:11; 1 John 2:2).

Just as in Adam all die, likewise Scripture declares that in Christ all shall live (1 Corinthians 15:21, 22). This two-sided union—You in Christ and Christ in you—is what constitutes true Christianity. \*\*\*