

# The Saints' Eternal Union With Christ

John Gill | Added: Apr 15, 2026 | Category: Theology

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The everlasting love of God, the Father, Son, and Spirit, is the bond of the elect's union to the sacred Three. What may be said of the three divine persons in general, is true of each of them in particular. They have all three loved the elect with an everlasting love, and thereby have firmly and everlastingly united them to themselves. Christ has loved them with an everlasting and unchangeable love, whereby His heart is knit unto them as Jonathan's was to David. He loved them as His own soul, as His own body, and the members of it. This is that cement which will never loosen, that union knot which can never be untied, that bond which can never be dissolved, from whence there can be no separation; for 'who shall separate us from the love of Christ? 'I am persuaded', says the apostle, 'that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord'. There are several unions which arise from other branches of this everlasting love-union, which are all antecedent to our faith in Christ.

1. There is an election-union in Christ from everlasting: 'God hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world'. This is an act and instance of everlasting love, by which the persons chosen are considered in Christ, and one with Him. Christ was chosen as an Head, His people as members with Him. Nothing is more commonly said by those who are esteemed sound divines, than this: now how Christ can be considered as an Head, And the elect as members of Him in this internal act of election, without union to Him, is hard to conceive.

Arminius and his followers, the Remonstrants, have frequently urged the text now mentioned in favour of election from faith foreseen, and their argument upon it is this: 'None are chosen to salvation but in Christ; none are in Christ but believers, who are ingrafted into Christ, and united to Him by faith, therefore none are chosen to salvation, but those who are believers in Christ, are ingrafted into Him and united with Him'. For they had no other notion of being in Christ, but by faith; like some others, who yet would be thought to be far from being in their scheme. But then, among other replies, they have been told by the Anti-Remonstrants, 'That it is certain that we are chosen and regarded in Christ before we were believers; which is fully proved from several places of scripture, which plainly make it appear, that the elect have some existence in Christ, even before they believe; for unless there had been some kind of union between Christ and the members, Christ would not have been their Head, nor could He have

satisfied for them’.

2. There is a legal union between Christ and the elect from everlasting: they are one in a law-sense, as surety and debtor are one; the bond of this union is Christ’s suretyship, which is from everlasting, and in which Christ engaged, as a proof of His strong love and affections to His people. He is the surety of the better Testament, that drew near to God the Father in the name of the elect, substituted Himself in their place and stead, and laid Himself under obligation to pay their debts, satisfy for their sins, and procure for them all the blessings of grace and glory. This being accepted of by God, Christ and the elect were looked upon, in the eye of the law, as one person, even as the bondsman and the debtor, among men, are one, in a legal sense; so that if one pays the debt, it is the same as if the other did it. This legal union arising from Christ’s surety-ship-engagements, is the foundation of the imputation of our sins to Christ, end of His satisfaction for them, and also of the imputation of Christ’s righteousness to us, and of our justification by it. Christ and His people being one, in a law-sense, their sins become His, and His righteousness becomes theirs.

3. There is a federal union between Christ and the elect from everlasting. As they were considered as one, He as Head, and they as members, in election; they are likewise considered after the same manner in the covenant of grace. Christ has a very great concern in the covenant; He is given for a covenant to the people; He is the Mediator, Surety and Messenger of it. It is made with Him, not as a single person, but as a common Head, representing all the elect, who are given to Him, in a federal way, as His seed and posterity. What He promised in the covenant, He promised for them, and on their account; and what He received, He received for them, and on their account. Hence grace is said to be given to them in Him before the world began; and they are said to be blessed with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ.

4. There is a natural union between Christ and His people; for ‘both he that sanctifieth, and they who are sanctified, are all of one’; that is, of one nature; ‘for which cause he is not ashamed to call them brethren’. This is an union in time, but is the effect of Christ’s love before time; ‘Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself likewise took part of the same’. The nature He assumed is the same with that of all mankind, but was taken to Him with a peculiar regard to the elect, the children, the spiritual seed of Abraham, who are members of His body, of His flesh, and of His bones. Now this natural union, which is the fruit of Christ’s everlasting love, is antecedent to the faith of New Testament saints.

5. It is sufficiently evident, that there is a representative union between Christ and the elect, both from everlasting and in time, which is

independent on, and prior to their believing in Him. He represented them as their Head in election, and in the covenant of grace, as has been already observed; and so He did, when upon the cross, and in the grave, when He rose from the dead, entered into heaven, and sat down at the right hand of God. Hence they are said to be crucified with Him, dead with Him, buried with Him, risen with Him, yea, to be made to sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus.

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