

Ascension Christology Rediscovered and Applied to Missional Ecclesiology

Ascension Spiritually Illustrated

The ascension, (not the resurrection or parousia) thus becomes the climax of Jesus-history and the eschatological event fulfilling all the hopes of Israel.

The kind of ecclesiology we, wish to do is quite impossible, then, without careful attention to the ascension... the church is marked off from the world... by its mysterious union with one whose life, though lived for the world, involves a genuine break with it.

Douglas Farrow, *Ascension and Ecclesia* (p. 11, 17)

(Commenting on the ascension in Luke as the hinge event uniting his first and second gospel (Luke/Acts)

Ascension Spirituality will focus on Christ's Ascended Ministry via the advent of Christ by the Holy Spirit in, with and through the NC "temple" context wherein Christ is in the midst of us, and we are in the heavenly presence of Christ by means of our mystical union in Christ, wherein it has been said:

*No extent of space interferes with the boundless energy of the Spirit,
which transfuses life into us from the flesh of Christ.
John Calvin, Corpus Reformatorum, 37:4*

Ascension Spirituality is Characterized by: Temple-Ecclesia Presence

Eph. 1:22 *And he has put all things under his feet and has made him the head over all things for the church, 23 which is his body, the fullness of him who fills all in all.*

2:19 *you are citizens with the saints and also members of the household of God, 20 built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, with Christ Jesus himself as the cornerstone. 21 In him the whole structure is joined together and grows into a holy temple in the Lord; 22 in whom you also are built together spiritually into a dwelling place for God.*

Dynamics of Ecclesial (temple) Spirituality:

The Holy temple under the NC is no longer defined by a certain architecture or place on earth, but by Christ vis-à-vis the Holy Spirit working in the community of faith as to mediate himself, his offices, prophet, priest and king on earth as it is in heaven! Therefore, 3 spiritual dynamics of ascension spirituality

- **Confessional Spirituality:** Christ as prophet vis-à-vis the Holy Spirit in, with and through the ministry of Word/apostolic teaching (confessionalism—there is a mental aspect of true Spirituality life of the mind...wherein Christ is with us) e.g. we access Christ via the mind in Word.
- **Communal Spirituality:** "Koinonia"-- Christ as king vis-à-vis the Holy spirit in, with and through the ministry of community formation under Christ's exclusive Lordship wherein Christ is with us-- we access Christ via relationship via community.
- **Sacramental Spirituality:** Christ as priest vis-à-vis the Holy Spirit in with and through the ministry of sacramental (sacramentalism) assembly: We are united to Christ mystically via the sacrament,
 - Will take special notice of the "in him" (In Christ) language of the NT

- Ephesians 21 x's!
Will take special notice of the sacramental focus upon "Heaven" to earth to heaven (ascension)
- Ephesians 8 x's associated with "in Christ"

Illustrated:

Eph. 1:3 Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us **in Christ** with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places, **4** just as he chose us **in Christ** before the foundation of the world to be holy and blameless before him in love.

- Note: Whatever else being "in Christ" is—it has to do with "every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places"—it has something to do with our relation NOW to heaven!

Eph. 1:7 In him ... 9 he has made known to us the mystery of his will, according to his good pleasure that he set forth in Christ, 10 into a plan for the fullness of time, to gather up all things in him, things in heaven and things on earth.

Eph 1: 20 God put this power to work in Christ when he raised him from the dead and seated him at his right hand in the heavenly places, **21** far above all rule and authority and power and dominion, and above every name that is named, not only in this age but also in the age to come. **22** And he has put all things under his feet and has made him the head over all things for the church, **23** which is his body, the fullness of him who fills all in all...

- Note: And again, where is Christ at work—"at the right hand of God in the heavenly places"
- Oh, but look again—where is Christ at work—in the church "which is his body, the fullness of him who fills all in all"
- What kind of "mystery" is here spoken of, that to be "in Christ" is to partake in some way with, in? Christ in heaven, even while we are on earth,

Baptismal Identity in Christ:

Baptism, more than a ceremonial sign that signifies something about the gospel of Christ, is something that the NT speaks of as executing the gospel of Christ in some sense, as actually effecting it into our lives...

Rom. 6:4 Therefore we have been buried with him by **baptism** into death, so that, just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, so we too might walk in newness of life.

Col. 2:12 when you were buried with him in **baptism**, you were also raised with him through faith in the power of God, who raised him from the dead.

1Pet. 3:21 And **baptism**, which this prefigured, now saves you—not as a removal of dirt from the body, but as an appeal to God for a good conscience, through the resurrection of Jesus Christ,

Eph. 2:4 But God, who is rich in mercy, out of the great love with which he loved us ... raised us up with him and seated us with him in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus,

Our new Condition, even identity in Relation to Christ's ascended ministry: ; : related to Christ's resurrection

raised us up with him...(1:19)

Our new IDENTITY AND PRESENCE IN CHRIST... WITH CHRIST IN Christ's exaltation

seated us with him in the heavenly places (1:20)

Reformational Commentary:

Calvin:

And hath raised us up together.

- The resurrection and sitting in heaven, which are here mentioned, are not yet seen by mortal eyes.
- Yet, as if those blessings were presently in our possession, he states that we **have** (already) received them;
- and illustrates the change which has taken place in our condition,
 - . It is as if we had been brought from the deepest hell to heaven itself.
- yet in Christ we already possess a blessed immortality and glory;
- and therefore, he adds, **in** Christ Jesus.
- Hitherto it does not appear in the members (our bodies are still on earth), but only in the head (as something we only know by faith)
- and **yet**, in consequence of the secret union, it belongs truly to the members.

Therefore, says Calvin

- Some render it, *through Christ*; (as to reduce the ministry—as to speak as if our heavenly status were really only vicarious or credited) but, for the reason which has been mentioned, it is better to retain the usual rendering, *in Christ*.
- We are thus furnished with the richest consolation. Of everything which we now want, we have a sure pledge and foretaste in the person of Christ.

On Ephesians 1:10

“In Him.. In Christ” sacramentally = Mystical and life giving communion with Christ in heaven

The flesh of Christ, is life-giving, not only because once in it our salvation was obtained; but because now we being united to him in sacred union, it breathes life into us... because being by the power of the Spirit engrafted into the body of Christ, we have a common life with him; for from the hidden fountain of divinity life is, in a wonderful way, infused into the flesh of Christ and thence flows out to us... Christ is absent from us as to the body; by his Spirit, however dwelling in us, he so lifts us to himself in heaven, that he transfuses the life-giving vigor of his flesh into us, as we grow by vital heat of the sun.

John Calvin, Institutes...

In other words:

We expect salvation from him — not because he stands aloof from us, but because engrafting us into his body he not only makes us partakers of all his benefits, but also of himself... you become a member of him, and hence one with him... It will never do to separate Christ from us, nor us from him; but we must, with both hands, keep firm hold of that alliance by which he has riveted us to himself.

Institutes, III.2.24

What this means for us:

1. Ascended with him into Heaven— Our Christian Assurance

Rom 6: 3 Do you not know that all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? **4** Therefore we have been buried with him by baptism into death, so that, just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, so we too might walk in newness of life.

Rom. 6:5

For if we have been united with him in a death like his, we will certainly be united with him in a resurrection like his. **6** We know that our old self was crucified with him so that the body of sin might be destroyed, and we might no longer be enslaved to sin. **7** For whoever has died is freed from sin. **8** But if we have died with Christ, we believe that we will also live with him. **9** We know that Christ, being raised from the dead, will never die again; death no longer has dominion over him.

The Basis for Christian Assurance—

This the Apostle teaches us: "The body is dead because of sin; but the spirit is life because of righteousness," (Rom. 8:10)... He tells us that the condemnation which we of ourselves deserve is annihilated by the salvation of Christ; and to confirm this he employs the argument to which I have referred, viz., that Christ is not external to us, but dwells in us; and not only unites us to himself by an undivided bond of fellowship, but by a wondrous communion brings us daily into closer connection, until he becomes altogether one with us.¹

Our justification... rests on the objective merit of Christ, by whose blood alone propitiation has been made for the sins of the world. But this justification, to become ours in fact, must insert us into Christ's life... We must have Christ himself formed in us more and more in a real way in order that he may be made unto us of God, wisdom and righteousness and sanctification, and redemption... Christ life... rests not in his separate person, but passes over to his people; thus constituting the Church, which is his body, the fullness of Him that filleth all in all.

John Nevin, The Mystical Presence of Christ

As then related to these two aspect of salvation——legal (or imputed) and actual union with Christ's nature-- Nevin described how, "our interest in the one sacrifice accomplished on the cross... include(s) a true participation in the life of him by whom the sacrifice was made. We can make no intelligible distinction here between the crucified body of Christ and his body and that which is now glorified in heaven... To partake of the "broken body" and "shed blood" of the Redeemer, if it means a real participation in his person at all, must be to communicate with him as now exalted at the right hand of God."² In other words, salvation was not merely the result of forensic imputation; it presupposed the vivifying communion with the incarnate life of Christ in the present era awaiting its glorified consummation in heaven. As affirmed by John Adger as well, "there is a legal difficulty which justification removes. But does there not remain a difficulty as to the vital connection? Must there not be some nature tie of life betwixt the Redeemer and his people?"³

2. Ascended with him into Heaven --A New Identity in Christ

To be baptized is to render our other identities as relatively obsolete in so far as our redemption is concerned and the way we ultimately relate to God and one another!

Gal. 3:27 As many of you as were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves

¹ Jean Calvin, *Institutes of the Christian Religion* 1559, ed. J. T. McNeill and F.L. Battles (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1960), III.2.24. c.f. Ronald S. Wallace, *Calvin's Doctrine of the Word and Sacrament*, (Edinburgh: Oliver and Boyd, 1953)

² Nevin, MP, p.170.

³ John Adger, *Life and Times* (Richmond, 1889) p. 313-25. Quoted in Holifield, p. 247.

with Christ. **28** There is no longer Jew or Greek, there is no longer slave or free, there is no longer male and female; for all of you are one in Christ Jesus.

If there was any doubt that the meaning of “clothed in Christ” means “new identity”-- Paul then relates it to our various other sources of identity...

Notice: he specifically addresses our gender identity, our demographic identity, our ethnic and/or family identity—and he says.. .

E.g. to in effect say-- Now that you have been baptized—you are no longer “man or women, this or that job or status in the world, not even this or that ethnicity or family – you are “all one in Jesus Christ”

When it comes to the grand schem of redemption—you are no longer any of these things (this by the way is huge—why we must be careful never to make any of these things the ultimate cause relative to the Christian faith—whereas Christians ought to be concerned for the various injustices that relate to how gender, race, economic status, labor, etc—these things—as important to our identity as they are—are NOT the basis of our union with Chris or as Christians with one another... Our other identities are subsumed UNDER Our Baptismal identity—which is the beginning of reconciliation across other identities even!

But again, my present point is to merely show from this passage how to be baptized is to assume a new baptismal identity that is “in Christ” one that renders our other identities obsolete in so far as redemption is concerned.

3. Ascended with him into Heaven—Basis for Christian Unity

From Ephesians-- In and through the church, “God brings ‘all things in heaven and on earth together under one head, even Christ.(Eph.1:10). Christian unity is theologically based upon the a-priori *spiritual* union that already exists between all true believers. Given that “the name of God and the glory of God” have been given to believers, this in itself constitutes an act of “God’s holy love in Jesus Christ by which his inner nature is revealed” such that “as God is one, so those who bear his name and the impress of his character must necessarily be one.”

As related to a sacramental theology of a real, albeit spiritual participation in Christ vis-à-vis the Eucharist, Newbiggin stated that

The unity which we must seek is thus a unity which arises from Christ from their being in him. It is not simply a unity of organization, nor is it simply an agreement about doctrine. It is a total mutual interchange of being-Christ wholly given to us, we wholly given to him. This is a unity involving the whole being of all concerned in it.

Start with Lord’s Supper, not end with it...

4. Ascended with Him into Heaven-- A New Behavior in the Imitation of Christ

More and more.. we partake of heavenly life on earth.. sanctification..

Set your eyes on heaven, where Christ is seated.. be ye imitators of Christ...

Eph. 5:1 *Therefore be imitators of God, as beloved children, 2 and live in love, as Christ loved us and gave himself up for us, a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God.*

but in this process of being like Jesus we discern the presence of Jesus even beyond the sacramental activities of the church..

5. Ascended with him into Heaven—A Transcendent perspective about life Life from the balcony:

Note: *For the Life of the World*, by Orthodox theologian Alexander Schmemmann:

The liturgy of the Eucharist is best understood as a journey or procession. It is the journey of the Church into the dimension of the Kingdom.

. . . Our entrance into the presence of Christ is an entrance into a fourth dimension which allows us to see the ultimate reality of life. it is not an escape from the world, rather it is the arrival at a vantage point from which we can see more deeply into the reality of the world.

. . . The early Christians realized that in order to become the temple of the Holy Spirit they must ascend to heaven where Christ has ascended. . . . This ascension was the very condition of their mission in the world, of their ministry to the world. . . . When, after this "liturgy of ascension," they returned into the world, their faces reflected the light, the "joy and peace" of that Kingdom and they were truly its witnesses. They brought no program and no theories; but wherever they went, the seeds of the Kingdom sprouted, faith was kindled, life was transfigured, things impossible were made possible. . . . In church today, we so often find we meet only the same old world, not Christ and His Kingdom. We do not realize that we never get anywhere because we never leave any place behind us.

- 6. Ascended into heaven—A Transcendent Temple in the Church's corporate Worship—**
The early Christians realized that in order to become the temple of the Holy Spirit they must ascend to heaven where Christ has ascended. . . .
Note—All the world is a sacrament—yes and no!

This has been articulated by Edmund Clowney in the following manner:⁴

The organic concept of the church that appears in the New Testament... presents a more theological, Christ-centered, spiritual view of the church as defined not by one earthly hierarchical center nor by many earthly congregational centers, but by a heavenly center that requires multifiform earthly manifestations. Earthly assemblies do not define but manifest the nature and the center of the church.

Koinonia Spirituality: Our union by the Spirit with Christ therefore unites us to one another, a very deep, ontological level.. as if to share in Christ is to share in one another. The "body of Christ" is the flesh and blood of Christ on earth by means of mystical union with Christ.

Eucharistic Spirituality: Christian participation in Christ's presence in the midst of us by the advent of the Holy Spirit acting in, with, and through the Eucharistic assembly in worship

⁴ Edmund Clowney, "Distinctive Emphasis in Presbyterian Church Polity," *Pressing Toward The Mark* (1986) .

Baptismal Spirituality: Christian identity in Christ, even now as to be seated with Christ in the heavenly places.

Heavenly Intercession: Christian advocacy in Christ

Missional Spirituality: Christ acting in, with and through via the

1) Greater Works....

12 "Truly, truly, I say to you, whoever believes in me will also do the works that I do; and greater works than these will he do, because I am going to the Father. 13 Whatever you ask in my name, this I will do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son. 14 If you ask me [1] anything in my name, I will do it.

Note: Greater doesn't mean that their works will surpass those of Jesus but that the works that Jesus has done on earth are merely the beginning and signs of the all encompassing power and glory with which he as the heavenly Lord will be clothed in the exercise of which the disciples will be involved—e.g. the works of the church during Christ ascended ministry

i.e. "greater... because I go to the father..."

And yet note- it is still Christ's work "will do the works that I do"
i.e.. Christ is STILL working in the ascended context "with the Father" in heaven..

But How???

Vs. 16ff, because, I will ask the Father and he will give you another paraklete!!!

2) Another paraklete"

*16 And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another **Helper (paraklete)**, [2] to be with you forever, 17 even the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it neither sees him nor knows him. You know him, for he dwells with you and will be in you.*

Note:

- **another**—Whatever the Holy Spirit is- it's function is to continue what Jesus did!! In this immediate context- (which is often negated in translations it seems) The work that Jesus is referring is his work of "witness" to the Father!!

9 Jesus said to him, "Have I been with you so long, and you still do not know me, Philip? Whoever has seen me has seen the Father. How can you say, 'Show us the Father'? 10 Do you not believe that I am in the Father and the Father is in me? The words that I say to you I do not speak on my own authority, but the Father who dwells in me does his works. 11 Believe me that I am in the Father and the Father is in me, or else believe on account of the works themselves.

Important to observe that this was NOT a rebuke per se to Philip—it was rather a question meant to set-up His answer—i.e. Philip—you know that true religion is the religion I have come to witness- that is—a religion concerning a personal God into which we enter a personal relationship...

IN seeing me, you HAVE seen the father—for I am from the father, and I my works and words are consistent with the Father...

Notice also—in the coming of the Holy Spirit—“I will come to you” (vs. 18

18 “I will not leave you as orphans; I will come to you. **19** Yet a little while and the world will see me no more, but you will see me. Because I live, you also will live. **20** In that day you will know that I am in my Father, and you in me, and I in you.

- Somehow, the *paraclete* will take Jesus place after Jesus bodily departure (c.f 16:7) and in his activity as *paraclete* will do nothing other than what Jesus has been doing except that in doing it he will continue and advance Jesus work of doing it..

- ***paraclete—How to translate??***

- “helper” (ESV), comforter (NIV), advocate...

notice how the *paraclete* is described in John...

- ***As live giving***

- ***As revealer/advocate/witness to truth!!***

Greek-hellenistic usage of *paraklete*—“advocate” defender, representative as in a court)

Note—in 1 Jn.2:1—Jesus himself is very clearly called “an advocate with the Father” and this function is attributed to the Spirit elsewhere in the NT (Ro 8:27)

Also—Called “the spirit of truth”! again defender or representative of true God..

Note—women as well—and “worship in spirit and in truth”

IN John *paraclete* seems to be related to “guiding into truth” and “bringing to remembrance” and etc.

Interestingly—In Qumran literature (Jewish writings), the “paraclete” was in contrast to the spirit of deception—thus again, a role of witnessing/advocating/defending” the true God against false gods!

John 4:23 But the hour is coming, and is now here, when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth, for the Father is seeking such people to worship him. **24** God is spirit, and those who worship him must worship in spirit and truth.”

John 14:26 But the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, he will teach you all things and bring to your remembrance all that I have said to you.

John 15:26 But when the Helper comes, whom I will send to you from the Father, the Spirit of truth, who proceeds from the Father, he will bear **witness** about me.

John 16:13 When the Spirit of truth comes, he will guide you into all the truth, for he will not speak on his own authority, but whatever he hears he will speak, and he will declare to you the things that are to come.

I.e. Just as Jesus as witnessed the father (advocated on behalf of the father)—so I will continue to do this by sending the Holy Spirit!

Another paraclete—after Christ's function of advocating on behalf of the father—who as we have seen in the Jewish way of thinking was paramount to knowing and participating in true religion with the "true and living God"—Christ is promising that this kind of religion is not going to die with Jesus's death, but that it will continue— even as a continuation of Jesus' ascended ministry— by the Holy Spirit...

And there can be no doubt that the Evangelist is speaking of the Spirit of God as he is mentioned repeatedly throughout the Gospel in his absolute divine mode of existence and life conferring power.

I.e. The idea here is NOT to point to a conceptual universe in which a variety of spirits both good and evil act individually and make themselves felt in the world, or to some mystical spiritualism in the world of the "spirits"—rather it is the Holy Spirit! The Spirit of Truth—etc. that is present in the world, but not of the world, that is present in our life, but not one with us still other, even if in union with us, in fellowship with us!!!

This is the spirit of truth wherein we continue to "dwell with God and God with us" albeit without becoming God ourselves...

Note:

Richard Gaffin, in his *Perspectives on Pentecost* has observed how, "As far back as the first chapter of John there is the promise that Christ will baptize with the Holy Spirit (vs. 33). This promise anticipates Christ's teachings in John 14-17 concerning His coming again *in the Holy Spirit*—a clear reference to Pentecost and the ensuing temple formation built upon the foundation of the apostles with Christ as the cornerstone.

In John 14-16, Jesus promised the coming of the Holy Spirit as yet "another" counselor and comforter. The point being made in 14:12ff especially is that the gift of the Holy Spirit is conditioned upon both His going to the Father and at the same time his coming back to them. Very carefully, Jesus says

"I will not leave you orphaned; *I am coming to you*. In a little while the world will no longer see me, but you will see me; because I live, you also will live. On that day you will know that I am in my Father, and you in me, and I in you" (vs. 18-20).

Note especially, however Christ will come again, it will have the effect of "Christ being in us, even as this is related to the father being in Christ!

Christ further speaks of making his "home with us" (vs. 14:23). And then immediately he says, "I have said these things to you while I am still with you. But the Advocate, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, will teach you everything, and remind you of all that I have said to you (vs. 25-26).

Here again, Christ will leave, but then "will "come" after "a short while" to manifest himself to them (14:23) just as at some time he will come again to take them to himself in his Father's house" (14:3). (I.e. a two phase "coming again" — one in, with and by the Spirit, the other by means of his glorified and bodily advent)

Again, as noted by Ridderbos—"The Spirit "dwells with them and will be in them (14:17) in order to maintain their fellowship with their heavenly Lord." (Ridderbos, p.483)

IN other words, as related to Christ Trinitarian unity with the Spirit, and then via the Spirit his Christological unity with believers, the work of the Spirit is envisioned NOT AS SOME addendum to the work of Christ. It is not some more or less independent sphere of activity that goes beyond or supplements what Christ has done. The Spirit's work is not a "bonus" added to the basic salvation secured by Christ. Rather, the coming of the Spirit brings to light not only that Christ HAS lived, and HAS done certain things, but that He is the source of eschatological life NOW! It is essentially Christ making good His promise, "And behold, I am with you until the end of the age!" (Mt.28:2) As then affirmed as well by Gaffin,

The gift of the Spirit is nothing less than the gift of Christ himself to the church, the Christ who has become what he is by virtue of his sufferings, death, and exaltation. In this sense the gift (baptism, outpouring) of the Spirit is the crowning achievement of Christ's work. It is his coming in exaltation to the church in the power of the Spirit. *IT completes the once-for-all accomplishment of salvation.* It is the apex thus far reached in the unfolding of redemptive history. Without it, the work that climaxes in Christ's death and resurrection would be unfinished, incomplete.(Gaffin, p.21.)

We still even in Christ's bodily absence, experience spirituality in a personal—as in single person—way as to then "define, regulate, particularize" our spirituality to be a specific "Christ" oriented spirituality—notice therefore,

1) Spirituality of Faith in Christ

abide in me and I in you

Note:

- 1) 14: **11** "Believe Me that I am in the Father and the Father is in Me (e.g the "word concerning who Jesus is and what he has come to do);
- 2) otherwise believe because of the works themselves (e.g. the work of Christ as related to his death and resurrection especially). **12** "Truly, truly, I say to you, he who believes in Me, the works that I do, he will do also; and greater works than these he will do; because I go to the Father.

I.e. Faith = putting our trust in Christ to do something for us—vs. in ourselves albeit with some vague/abstract "power" in us... it is Christ oriented spirituality is therefore "gift" oriented—as in what Christ GIVES to us by HIS WORKS!!

2) Christ oriented spirituality is a uniquely Christian way of Love

John 13:34 I give you a new commandment, that you love one another. Just as I have loved you, you also should love one another. **35** By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another."

John 14:15

"If you love me, you will keep my commandments. **16** And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Advocate, to be with you forever.

NOTE later: ,

15:9 "Just as the Father has loved Me, I have also loved you; abide in My love. **10** "If you keep My commandments, you will abide in My love; just as I have kept My Father's commandments and abide in His love. **11** "These things I have spoken to you so that My joy may be in you, and *that* your joy may be made full. **12**"This is My commandment, that you love one another, just as I have loved you. **13** "Greater love has no one than this, that one lay down his life for his friends.

Ephesians

3:17 and that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith, as you are being rooted and grounded in love. **18** I pray that you may have the power to comprehend, with all the saints, what is the breadth and length and height and depth, **19** and to know the love of Christ that surpasses knowledge, so that you may be filled with all the fullness of God.

E.g. Through the fellowship of believers in love, we fellowship with Christ... we are made to be “filled with all the fullness of God in our midst in the communion of the saints together in love!

Jesus mediates his fellowship in the fellowship of believers!

Again, WE hold that true spirituality is Christ oriented spirituality—and we experience Christ in/with/through the fellowship of Believers in love!

How?

**3) The PERSON OF CHRIST Is really present by the advent of Christ in the HOLY SPIRIT!!
Holy Spirit: Christ has come to us in the Holy Spirit that we might abide with Christ**

14:17 This is the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it neither sees him nor knows him. You know him, because he abides with you, and he will be in you.

John 14:25

“I have said these things to you while I am still with you. **26** But the Advocate, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, (when he goes to where we can't go bodily)

I.e. At Pentecost, the coming of the Holy Spirit was nothing less than the advent of Christ in the present age prior to his bodily coming again!

notice especially, Jesus is “abiding” with the disciples in the flesh, but when he leaves, the father sends the HS “in Jesus name” even as Jesus then says “I will come to you (vs.18)

4) The Instruments of the Spirit According to the Apostolic Foundation

What Jesus is promising is nothing short of his continued presence as it will be brought forth through the foundation of the apostles..

Eph. 2:20... built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, with Christ Jesus himself as the cornerstone. **21** In him the whole structure is joined together and grows into a holy temple in the Lord; **22** in whom you also are built together spiritually into a dwelling place for God.

1Cor. 3:10

According to the grace of God given to me, like a skilled master builder I laid a foundation, and someone else is building on it. Each builder must choose with care how to build on it. **11** For no one can lay any foundation other than the one that has been laid; that foundation is Jesus Christ.

There was an intense period of some 40 years when the spirit of God spoke through the apostles in order to witness to and interpret the death and resurrection of Christ, and to put in place a new context where by we are enabled to “abide in Christ”

1. Words given by HS come through the apostles:

14:26 ...will teach you everything, and remind you of all that I have said to you.

2Pet. 1:19

So we have the prophetic message more fully confirmed. You will do well to be attentive to this as to a lamp shining in a dark place, until the day dawns and the morning star rises in your hearts. **20** First of all you must understand this, that no prophecy of scripture is a matter of one’s own interpretation, **21** because no prophecy ever came by human will, but men and women moved by the Holy Spirit spoke from God.

2. Word in our midst by the sacraments:

1Cor. 10:14

Therefore, my dear friends, flee from the worship of idols. **15** I speak as to sensible people; judge for yourselves what I say. **16** The cup of blessing that we bless, is it not a sharing in the blood of Christ? The bread that we break, is it not a sharing in the body of Christ? **17** Because there is one bread, we who are many are one body, for we all partake of the one bread.

1Cor. 11:23

For I received from the Lord what I also handed on to you, that the Lord Jesus on the night when he was betrayed took a loaf of bread, **24** and when he had given thanks, he broke it and said, “This is my body that is for you. Do this in remembrance of me.” **25** In the same way he took the cup also, after supper, saying, “This cup is the new covenant in my blood. Do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me.” **26** For as often as you eat this bread and drink the cup, you proclaim the Lord’s death until he comes.

3. Christ with us in Prayer:

Rom. 8:26

Likewise the Spirit helps us in our weakness; for we do not know how to pray as we ought, but that very Spirit intercedes with sighs too deep for words. **27** And God, who searches the heart, knows what is the mind of the Spirit, because the Spirit intercedes for the saints according to the will of God.

Rom. 8:31

What then are we to say about these things? If God is for us, who is against us? **32** He who did not withhold his own Son, but gave him up for all of us, will he not with him also give us everything else? **33** Who will bring any charge against God’s elect? It is God who justifies. **34** Who is to condemn? It is Christ Jesus, who died, yes, who was raised, who is at the right hand of God, who indeed intercedes for us. **35** Who will separate us from the love of Christ?

... this process completed the what Christ promised in John 15:15...

John 15:15

I do not call you servants any longer, because the servant does not know what the master is doing; but I have called you friends, because I have made known to you everything that I have heard from my Father.

John 20:21

Jesus said to them again, “Peace be with you. **As the Father** has sent me, so I send you.”

Acts 1:8

But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth."

Col. 4:2

Devote yourselves to prayer, keeping alert in it with thanksgiving. **3** At the same time pray for us as well that God will open to us a door for the word, that we may declare the mystery of Christ, for which I am in prison,

Therefore, *missio dei* as pertaining to a theology of God as then applied to a theology of the church!

Ecclesiology is Christology applied—and Christology is nothing less than the triune mission that is inherent to God's nature to reveal and save.

To use the language of Vatican II, "the church is missionary by its very nature."

NOT—a church that does missions—but a church that is more radically described as "missional"—albeit at home and abroad.

Guder:

Rooted in the Trinitarian nature and action of God, this ecclesiology derives its purpose from God's mission. It defines the way it goes about its work by means of God's self-disclosure in the history of Israel and supremely in the earthly ministry of Jesus. As an ecclesiology of Pentecost, this doctrine confesses the church's dependence upon the empowering work of the Spirit as it enables witness to Christ in all that the church is, does, and says. It will be the work of the Spirit to guide the missional church in its disciplined engagement with God's Word as the instrument God uses for the continuing formation of the community of the word for its vocation. As a result of that biblical formation, the community will grow in its understanding of how its corporate public witness must be practiced, and at the same time, how each member will lead his and her life as an apostolic missionary in the daily neighborliness of witness to Jesus Christ.

Such an ecclesiology pays particularly close attention to the "as" and the "so" in John's missional summary: "As my Father has sent me, so I send you." God's incarnational action in history provides the church the content of its witness and defines how it is to be carried out. "Mission in Jesus way" has become a much explored theme in missional theology these last decades, and such thinking must shape our missional ecclesiology. Theological ethics must school the missional church to practice witness with integrity, must guide the community to discern how, in fact, we are to "live our lives worthy of the calling with which we have been called." The dominical and apostolic formation of the missional church focuses upon the concrete obedience of the called community and of all its members; it works intentionally on the transparency and integrity of its common life and its scattered life in an often hostile world.

There is particular urgency today for a missional ecclesiology to reclaim the profoundly eschatological character of the church's calling. The theological reductionism of both gospel and church has been accompanied, over the centuries, by a great loss of that future tense of faith that should powerfully shape our present life and action. In place of fruitless speculation about events that have not yet happened, we must focus upon the certainty of our hope that enables us now to witness to Christ fearlessly and point away from ourselves modestly. A missional ecclesiology will always be candid about its penultimate nature; the continuing conversion of the church will necessitate obedient and serendipitous re-visiting of

all our theological formulae and propositions. This does not mean that the gospel is not sufficient to the task; it means that the church lives with the open confession that its grasp of and response to the gospel is always partial, that there is yet more healing to be done, more conversion to submit to, more wonder to worship.

Christendom: that speak of "mission" as that activity done by agents of western Christendom when they are planting churches in non-western cultures, and "evangelism" as that activity within Christendom which strives to make people who are culturally Christian into active and practicing Christians. In either instance, the language of mission and evangelism has referred to one of the several things that Christian communities may be involved in, perhaps even to one of several primary emphases of the church. We often find "mission" listed next to things like "worship" and "service" in contemporary discussions of the church's purpose and practice. Rarely, however, would either term appear in any classical discussion of the doctrine of the church emerging from the Christendom tradition.

This is different than saying the church is missionary by its very nature"

What is its nature? Sacramental—e.g. in sacramental union with Christ, even as Christ is in union with the father and the Spirit.

++++

Paul wrote to the Corinthians, after a particularly evocative exposition of the gospel and its calling: All this is for your sake – and Christendom would like to stop there, would like to leave us as Christians enjoying the benefits of our salvation and working away at the threats to our blessedness that arise both out of the world and our own rebellions. But the text has no period. It says, All this is for your sake so that grace, as it extends to more and more people, may increase thanksgiving to the glory of God (2 Cor. 4:15). The purpose of God's mission is ultimately the acknowledgment and enjoyment of the glory of God; it happens as grace extends to more and more people; the evidence of that spread is growing thanksgiving to God which displays before the world the loving character and purposes of our God. It is the task and privilege of a missional ecclesiology to serve God's glory by guiding the church to an ever growing understanding of who it is and what it is for. Thus, every classical theme of ecclesiology, the doctrine and practice of the sacraments, of ordered ministry, of membership, of stewardship, of spiritual disciplines, will be drawn into and redefined by the foundational vocation of the church to be Christ's witness, to lead its life worthy of its calling, to be Christ's letter to the world, to be, as Peter summarized it, "a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, God's own people, in order that you may proclaim the mighty acts of him who called you out of darkness in his marvelous light" (1 Peter 2:9).

Jesus said to them again, "Peace be with you. **As the Father** has sent me, so I send you."

John 4:34

Jesus said to them, "My food is to do the will of him who **sent** me and to complete his work.

John 4:38

I **sent** you to reap that for which you did not labor. Others have labored, and you have entered into their labor.”

John 5:23

so that all may honor the Son just as they honor the Father. Anyone who does not honor the Son does not honor the Father who **sent** him. **24** Very truly, I tell you, anyone who hears my word and believes him who **sent** me has eternal life, and does not come under judgment, but has passed from death to life.

John 5:30

“I can do nothing on my own. As I hear, I judge; and my judgment is just, because I seek to do not my own will but the will of him who **sent** me.

John 5:33

You **sent** messengers to John, and he testified to the truth.

John 5:36

But I have a testimony greater than John’s. The works that the Father has given me to complete, the very works that I am doing, testify on my behalf that the Father has **sent** me. **37** And the Father who **sent** me has himself testified on my behalf. You have never heard his voice or seen his form, **38** and you do not have his word abiding in you, because you do not believe him whom he has **sent**.

John 6:29

Jesus answered them, “This is the work of God, that you believe in him whom he has **sent**.”

John 6:38

for I have come down from heaven, not to do my own will, but the will of him who **sent** me. **39** And this is the will of him who **sent** me, that I should lose nothing of all that he has given me, but raise it up on the last day.

John 6:44

No one can come to me unless drawn by the Father who **sent** me; and I will raise that person up on the last day.

John 6:57

Just as the living Father **sent** me, and I live because of the Father, so whoever eats me will live because of me.

John 7:16

Then Jesus answered them, “My teaching is not mine but his who **sent** me.

John 7:18

Those who speak on their own seek their own glory; but the one who seeks the glory of him who **sent** him is true, and there is nothing false in him.

John 7:28

Then Jesus cried out as he was teaching in the temple, “You know me, and you know where I am from. I have not come on my own. But the one who **sent** me is true, and you do not know him. **29** I know him, because I am from him, and he **sent** me.”

John 7:32

The Pharisees heard the crowd muttering such things about him, and the chief priests and Pharisees sent temple police to arrest him. **33** Jesus then said, "I will be with you a little while longer, and then I am going to him who sent me.

John 8:16

Yet even if I do judge, my judgment is valid; for it is not I alone who judge, but I and the Father who sent me.

John 8:18

I testify on my own behalf, and the Father who sent me testifies on my behalf."

John 8:26

I have much to say about you and much to condemn; but the one who sent me is true, and I declare to the world what I have heard from him."

John 8:29

And the one who sent me is with me; he has not left me alone, for I always do what is pleasing to him."

John 8:42

Jesus said to them, "If God were your Father, you would love me, for I came from God and now I am here. I did not come on my own, but he sent me.

John 9:4

We must work the works of him who sent me while it is day; night is coming when no one can work.

John 9:7

saying to him, "Go, wash in the pool of Siloam" (which means Sent). Then he went and washed and came back able to see.

John 10:36

can you say that the one whom the Father has sanctified and sent into the world is blaspheming because I said, 'I am God's Son'?

John 11:3

So the sisters sent a message to Jesus, "Lord, he whom you love is ill."

John 11:42

I knew that you always hear me, but I have said this for the sake of the crowd standing here, so that they may believe that you sent me."

John 12:44

Then Jesus cried aloud: "Whoever believes in me believes not in me but in him who sent me. **45** And whoever sees me sees him who sent me.

John 12:49

for I have not spoken on my own, but the Father who sent me has himself given me a commandment about what to say and what to speak.

John 13:16

Very truly, I tell you, servants are not greater than their master, nor are messengers greater than the one who sent them.

John 13:20

Very truly, I tell you, whoever receives one whom I send receives me; and whoever receives me receives him who **sent** me.”

John 14:24

Whoever does not love me does not keep my words; and the word that you hear is not mine, but is from the Father who **sent** me.

John 15:21

But they will do all these things to you on account of my name, because they do not know him who **sent** me.

John 16:5

But now I am going to him who **sent** me; yet none of you asks me, ‘Where are you going?’

John 17:3

And this is eternal life, that they may know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom you have **sent**.

John 17:8

for the words that you gave to me I have given to them, and they have received them and know in truth that I came from you; and they have believed that you **sent** me.

John 17:18

As you have **sent** me into the world, so I have **sent** them into the world.

John 17:21

that they may all be one. As you, Father, are in me and I am in you, may they also be in us, so that the world may believe that you have **sent** me.

John 17:23

I in them and you in me, that they may become completely one, so that the world may know that you have **sent** me and have loved them even as you have loved me.

John 17:25

“Righteous Father, the world does not know you, but I know you; and these know that you have **sent** me.

John 18:24

Then Annas **sent** him bound to Caiaphas the high priest.

John 20:21

Jesus said to them again, “Peace be with you. As the Father has **sent** me, so I send you.”

- 1) *fundamentally missionary nature of the church --It concerns the *missio Dei* that is related to a *participatio Dei* conception of the church in union with Christ, related then to a Trinitarian conception of God, that forms the loci of a “missional theology.”*

“It is impossible to stress too strongly that the beginning of mission is not an action of ours, but the presence of a new reality, the presence of the Spirit of God in power...”

As God is acting in, with and through the church, it can be rightly stated, using the language of Vatican II that “the church is missionary by its very nature.” A “missional theology” applied ecclesially affirms sacramental union with Christ is *in* the world, not of the world *and for* the world. Assumingly, a Trinitarian conception of God that is

missionally expressed ecclesially, missional theology will understand God's incarnational action in the world via the advent of the Holy Spirit acting in, with and through the church eschatologically.

I am especially interested in Guder's use of John 20:21 and how this relates to ecclesial evangelism (temple evangelism) less individual evangelism...

John 20:21

Jesus said to them again, "Peace be with you. As the Father has sent me, so I send you."

E.g. this follows of course the whole Last supper discourse, including the Priestly prayer of Christ, that I think points to an ecclesial fulfillment as related to the ascended ministry of Christ and His Pentecostal advent by the Holy Spirit in NC temple formation!

Guder: "Such an ecclesiology pays particularly close attention to the "as" and the "so" in John's missional summary: "As my Father has sent me, so I send you." God's incarnational action in history provides the church the content of its witness and defines how it is to be carried out."

a. There is this very interesting "just as" pattern or logic that is throughout the prayer indicating that Christ's prayer is linking his accomplished work on earth with his accomplished work in heaven through the church today!

The Just as language:

John 17:14

I have given them your word, and the world has hated them because they are not of the world, **just as** I am not of the world.

John 17:16

They are not of the world, **just as** I am not of the world.

John 17:21

that they may all be one, **just as** you, Father, are in me, and I in you, that they also may be in us, so that the world may believe that you have sent me.

This is all the more significant as it is one of the hallmarks of John's gospel—to record it in a way that wants to emphasize our union with Christ who is union with the Father...

John 13:15

For I have given you an example, **just as** I have done to you.

John 13:33

Little children, yet a little while I am with you. You will seek me, and **just as** I said to the Jews, so now I also say to you, 'Where I am going you cannot come.' **34** A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another: **just as** I have loved you, you also are to love one another.

John 15:10

If you keep my commandments, you will abide in my love, **just as** I have kept my Father's commandments and abide in his love.

Notice then the beginning of the Prayer:

4 I glorified you on earth, having accomplished the work that you gave me to do. 5 And now, Father, glorify me in your own presence with the glory that I had with you before the world existed.

- Christ's completed accomplishment which has "brought you glory" indicating the completed work as culminating in the cross.. How??
Christ is glorified in his suffering—He looks for glory in the last place that people would look for it, the cross.. and he sees this glory for which he prays as linked with his pre-incarnate glory with the Father...
- Notice then that Christ now prays for his own glorification (that will likewise glorify the father)—but this time, NOT THE GLORY TO BE REVEALED IN THE CROSS, BUT IN HIS ASCENDED MINISTRY.
- There is this clear assertion of Christ's pre-existence (1:1, 8:58, 16:28) – a pre-existence that is where described as having a unique glory with the Father .. he therefore looks for the same glory that was his before the task was undertaken on earth—his resurrection/ascention into glory!!
- **Christ is glorified in the Holy Spirit acting in/with/through the church.. thus, the focus of the prayers turn to his disciples:**
e.g. *10 All mine are yours, and yours are mine, and I am glorified in them.*

b. Again, therefore, notice the many times that Christ references his Unity with the Father as the basis of his prayer for his unity in the activity and life of the church!!!!

18 As you sent me into the world, so I have sent them into the world.

21 that they may all be one, just as you, Father, are in me, and I in you, that they also may be in us, so that the world may believe that you have sent me.

23 I in them and you in me, that they may become perfectly one, so that the world may know that you sent me and loved them even as you loved me.

26 I made known to them your name, and I will continue to make it known, that the love with which you have loved me may be in them, and I in them."

c) Again as to this first point concerning the "priestly" aspects of this prayer can also be observed in the use of the verb "to give" throughout Christ prayer:

In this prayer it occurs 17 times, mostly in the perfect tense (11-13 times) denoting the permanence of the gift... (c.f. 4, 6, 8,9,11,12,22,24)...

It is a gift that is certain and permanent that is being prayed for.. but to the present point ,it is significant to see that 13 times the "giver" is the Father to the son, as then to inform the remaining 4 times wherein the give is the Son to the church!

I.e. Just the father sent me, so I send you.. just as the father gives to me, I give to you..

Here again, this is the sacred language of priestly sacramentology—how it is that Christ becomes the priests that mediates God's favor and gifts to men... in that by his divinity he is in union with the Father and by his humanity he is in union with humanity- and how this whole transaction of giving is accomplished by the Holy Spirit whom Christ's sends upon his ascension into heaven..

Summary of 1st point:

To be clear, the language here is more than to suggest a mere "imitation of Christ" principle!

- If nothing but "imitation" principle—then Christ's prayer is NOT tied to yet another redemptive historical act of God per se, but is related to God's help in following the

example of the Trinity. Our unity, our service, our expressions of love, are here envisioned in the imitation of God!

- Under this imitation principle only, the prayer would be mostly focused on the exhortive, rather than the “Just as” indicatives

Rather, the language here is more in line with a “participation of Christ” principle!!!

- We will want to interpret the this prayer after the principle of *participatio dei* where the answer/fulfillment to the prayer is discovered in yet another redemptive historical work of God—as happened at Pentecost and as continued today sacramentally wherein a mystical union, is transacted, by means of the sovereign Christ acting in, with and by the Holy Spirit in the sacramental church.

Richard Gaffin, in his *Perspectives on Pentecost* has observed how, “As far back as the first chapter of John there is the promise that Christ will baptize with the Holy Spirit (vs. 33). This promise anticipates Christ’s teachings in John 14-17 concerning His coming again *in the Holy Spirit*—a clear reference to Pentecost and the ensuing temple formation built upon the foundation of the apostles with Christ as the cornerstone. So then, in John 14-16, Jesus promised the coming of the Holy Spirit as yet “another” counselor and comforter. The point being made in 14:12ff especially is that the gift of the Holy Spirit is conditioned upon both His going to the Father and at the same time his coming back to them. Very carefully, Jesus says

“I will not leave you orphaned; *I am coming to you*. In a little while the world will no longer see me, but you will see me; because I live, you also will live. On that day you will know that I am in my Father, and you in me, and I in you” (vs. 18-20).

Note especially, however Christ will come again, it will have the effect of “Christ being in us, even as this is related to the father being in Christ!

Christ further speaks of making his “home with us” (vs. 14:23). And then immediately he says, “I have said these things to you while I am still with you. But the Advocate, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, will teach you everything, and remind you of all that I have said to you (vs. 25-26).

Here again, Christ will leave, but then “will “come” after “a short while” to manifest himself to them (14:23) just as at some time he will come again to take them to himself in his Father’s house” (14:3). (i.e. a two phase “coming again” – one in, with and by the Spirit, the other by means of his glorified and bodily advent)

Again, as noted by Ridderbos—“The Spirit “dwells with them and will be in them (14:17) in order to maintain their fellowship with their heavenly Lord.” (Ridderbos, p.483)

IN other words, as related to Christ Trinitarian unity with the Spirit, and then via the Spirit his Christological unity with believers, the work of the Spirit is envisioned NOT AS SOME addendum to the work of Christ. It is not some more or less independent sphere of activity that goes beyond or supplements what Christ has done. The Spirit’s work is not a “bonus” added to the basic salvation secured by Christ. Rather, the coming of the Spirit brings to light not only that Christ HAS lived, and HAS done certain things, but that He is the source of eschatological life NOW! It is essentially Christ making good His promise, “And behold, I am with you until the end of the age!” (Mt.28:2) As then affirmed as well by Gaffin,

The gift of the Spirit is nothing less than the gift of Christ himself to the church, the Christ who has become what he is by virtue of his sufferings, death, and exaltation. In this sense the gift (baptism, outpouring) of the Spirit is the crowning achievement of Christ’s work. It is his coming in exaltation to the church in the power of the Spirit. *IT completes the once-for-all accomplishment of salvation*. It is

the apex thus far reached in the unfolding of redemptive history. Without it, the work that climaxes in Christ's death and resurrection would be unfinished, incomplete. (Gaffin, p.21.)

Again, returning to Christ's priestly prayer in John 17: and as note by Ridderbos--
"Everything is concentrated on the continuing SPIRITUAL (IE.. SPIRIT MEDIATED) fellowship of Jesus as the heavenly Lord with his disciples still on earth."
(Ridderbos, p.482)

We see in this language a kind of mystical union such as to enjoin us in Christ's work and ministry throughout this prayer therefore, even the work that Christ mediates on behalf of the heavenly Father!

ie.. our work by the Holy Spirit is somehow united to Christ's work both in his incarnation and ascension into heaven that is somehow united to the Father's greatest purpose and intent!

CHRIST'S SPIRITUAL PRESENCE DURING HIS "WORK OF PREPARATION" (ASCENDED MINISTRY)

a) Pen-ultimate Temple:

By the advent of the Holy Spirit TO EARTH—Christ is with us even now, through His Spiritually enlived word, Sacrament and the communion of the saints—we are really and truly in fellowship with Christ, even as he is bodily absent== the importance of the church—there is not real fellowship with Christ apart from fellowship in the visible church!!

John 14:16 *And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Advocate, to be with you forever. 17 This is the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it neither sees him nor knows him. You know him, because he abides with you, and he will be in you.... 18 "I will not leave you orphaned; I am coming to you. 19 In a little while the world will no longer see me, but you will see me; because I live, you also will live.*

14:25 *"I have said these things to you while I am still with you. 26 But the Advocate, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, will teach you everything, and remind you of all that I have said to you.*

Answer is the coming of yet "another" advocate/witness in the coming Christ AGAIN BY THE ADVENT OF THE HOLY SPIRIT WHO IS ONE WITH CHRIST EVEN AS CHRIST IS ONE WITH THE FATHER...

- *I.E. Jesus speaks of going to prepare a place for them in "my fathers house" (we have seen how this is synonymous to "temple" cf. chapter 2, even as temporary fulfilled in Christ body 2:21) the use of "household" is then used to speak of the fathers "house" and therefore the temple!!! So...*
- *How is the household/temple of God to be? The holy spirit who then sets apart a people who love one another—even as to complete the argument" as the father sent me, so I send you" in the power of the Holy Spirit—the church become then the temple of God,*

albeit mediated presence of Christ in our midst today...

- The community of believers will be drawn into God's own household when the paraclete comes. The paraclete, dwelling in the disciples, will mediate the continuing presence of Jesus.
- The description of the believers as the living temple of God is a matter of promise which is later fulfilled after Christ ascension into heaven the sending of the Holy Spirit to re-form the temple—Acts 2-3.

Ascended ministry and Another paraclete"

16 And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another **Helper (paraclete)**, [2] to be with you forever, **17** even the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it neither sees him nor knows him. You know him, for he dwells with you and will be in you.

Note:

- **another**—Whatever the Holy Spirit is- its function is to continue what Jesus did!! In this immediate context- (which is often negated in translations it seems) The work that Jesus is referring to is his work of "witness" to the Father!!

Notice also—in the coming of the Holy Spirit—"I will come to you" (vs. 18

18 "I will not leave you as orphans; I will come to you.

19 Yet a little while and the world will see me no more, but you will see me. Because I live, you also will live. **20** In that day you will know that I am in my Father, and you in me, and I in you.

- Somehow, the paraclete will take Jesus place after Jesus bodily departure (c.f 16:7) and in his activity as paraclete will do nothing other than what Jesus has been doing except that in doing it he will continue and advance Jesus work of doing it..

Richard Gaffin, in his Perspectives on Pentecost has observed how, "As far back as the first chapter of John there is the promise that Christ will baptize with the Holy Spirit (vs. 33). This promise anticipates Christ's teachings in John 14-17 concerning His coming again *in the Holy Spirit*—a clear reference to Pentecost and the ensuing temple formation built upon the foundation of the apostles with Christ as the cornerstone.

In John 14-16, Jesus promised the coming of the Holy Spirit as yet "another" counselor and comforter. The point being made in 14:12ff especially is that the gift of the Holy Spirit is conditioned upon both His going to the Father and at the same time his coming back to them. Very carefully, Jesus says

"I will not leave you orphaned; *I am coming to you.* In a little while the world will no longer see me, but you will see me; because I live, you also will live. On that day you will know that I am in my Father, and you in me, and I in you" (vs. 18-20).

Note especially, however Christ will come again, it will have the effect of “Christ being in us, even as this is related to the father being in Christ!

Christ further speaks of making his “home with us” (vs. 14:23). And then immediately he says, “I have said these things to you while I am still with you. But the Advocate, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, will teach you everything, and remind you of all that I have said to you (vs. 25-26).

Here again, Christ will leave, but then “will “come” after “a short while” to manifest himself to them (14:23) just as at some time he will come again to take them to himself in his Father’s house” (14:3). (I.e. a two phase “coming again” – one in, with and by the Spirit, the other by means of his glorified and bodily advent)

Again, as noted by Ridderbos—“The Spirit “dwells with them and will be in them (14:17) in order to maintain their fellowship with their heavenly Lord.” (Ridderbos, p.483)

IN other words, as related to Christ Trinitarian unity with the Spirit, and then via the Spirit his Christological unity with believers, the work of the Spirit is envisioned NOT AS SOME addendum to the work of Christ. It is not some more or less independent sphere of activity that goes beyond or supplements what Christ has done. The Spirit’s work is not a “bonus” added to the basic salvation secured by Christ. Rather, the coming of the Spirit brings to light not only that Christ HAS lived, and HAS done certain things, but that He is the source of eschatological life NOW! It is essentially Christ making good His promise, “And behold, I am with you until the end of the age!” (Mt.28:2) As then affirmed as well by Gaffin,

The gift of the Spirit is nothing less than the gift of Christ himself to the church, the Christ who has become what he is by virtue of his sufferings, death, and exaltation. In this sense the gift (baptism, outpouring) of the Spirit is the crowning achievement of Christ’s work. It is his coming in exaltation to the church in the power of the Spirit. *IT completes the once-for-all accomplishment of salvation.* It is the apex thus far reached in the unfolding of redemptive history. Without it, the work that climaxes in Christ’s death and resurrection would be unfinished, incomplete. (Gaffin, p.21.)

John 15 is organized around one major command,
vs. 4: *Abide in me as I abide in you...*

this whole passage is set into the context of Jesus leaving the earth, and what, on earth, we are to be doing as followers of Christ—the answer here given is “abide in Christ, even as Christ abides in us” as informed by the whole of John’s “temple” theology of the gospel

Illustrated:

In chapter 2, The Jews ask for a “Sign”—e.g. ‘what authority do you

have...

19 Jesus answered them, "Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up."

Destruction serves the purpose of reconstructing an even better temple!!

21 But he was speaking of the temple of his body. 22 After he was raised from the dead, his disciples remembered that he had said this; and they believed the scripture and the word that Jesus had spoken.

And yet, John makes it clear that the temple Jesus was referencing as being raised up on the third day was the "temple of his body" (vs. 21) and tells that after his resurrection the disciples remembers Jesus statement (vs. 22)

IN other words—whereas the "this" temple is refereeing to the literal temple that the Jewish authories were destroying, the temple that would replace it was none other the temple that Christ would build after his resurrection—e.g. pointing to his post-resurrected or ascended ministry!!

POINT: Just as you are destroying the typlotical temple—you will destroy the real and eternal temple (cruxifition)—and yet, what you do in malice, becomes the very means of Grace for God in fulfillment of his eternal plan—because the effect will be to do away with the era of a geographically located temple made with hands- and to conctruct that temple not made with hands in our midst—even the temple of Christ as this will be conctructed by the Holy Spirit in the NT church!!

E.g. John is writing theology here—he is saying Christ is the temple himself in his early ministry—and in his ascended ministry after the resurrection will construct the temple of the last days. John is explaining Christ humiliation and cross as a necessary and intended aspect of the Messianic ministry—as to ultimate accomplish the purification and temple rebuilding that he was sent to do..

John 1:14 And the Word became flesh and tabernacled among us, and we have seen his glory, the glory as of a father's only son, full of grace and truth.

**2) Ultimate Stage (Rev. 20-21) Reunion of Heaven-Earth as "Temple of God"
Its not final!!!!**

I will come again and will take you to myself, so that where I am, there you may be also.

I.e. in the same breath he appeals to them to continue to believe in him, a motif carried through in what follows (vs. 10ff) .. and especially as

related to his teaching that his departure will not be final... but will keep his earlier promise (13:36) that they will follow him later..

Follow him where?

Revelation 21:1, *Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth; for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away...*

Here, the word is "new" as in *kainos*, not "new as in (*neos*)-- note the difference

neos

1. New, vs. aged old (wine)
2. young
3. novice

Here, in the sense of what a thing actually is?

kainon

1. "unused" (as in wineskins)
2. as in previously not present (unknown, strange, remarkable). (Mk.1:27, Ac17:19, Rv.2:17)
3. In contrast to something old or obsolete as in "revived." (Eph.2:15, 1 Cor.11:25, 2 Cor.3:6)

Rev. 21:2 *And heaven comes to earth... New Jeruslaem is established...*

That is, it is heaven that comes to earth!!!!

2 *And I saw the holy city, the new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. **3** And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying,*

"See, the home of God is among mortals.

He will dwell with them as their God; they will be his peoples, and God himself will be with them;

4 *he will wipe every tear from their eyes.*

Death will be no more; mourning and crying and pain will be no more, for the first things have passed away."

1. *Christ's resurrection was not an individual resurrection, but a "first fruit" resurrection as to be the first of many after him!!!*
2. *Our resurrection will be after the same type as his—BODILY*
3. *Our bodily resurrection will then require a bodily/physical "place"*

Luke 3:22... Acts 1:5... Acts 2:41-42... Acts 9:31

The same integration between Christ's bodily advent and his spiritual advent at Pentecost can be discerned in Luke's writings as well. For in comparing Luke 3:22 with Acts 1:5, Gaffin discerns how "the overall structure of Luke-Acts is related then to the connection between John's water baptism and Holy Spirit baptism."⁵ Gaffin therefore comments,

At the Jordan, the spirit was given to Jesus by the Father (Luke 3:22) as endowment for the messianic task before him, in order that he might accomplish the salvation of the church: at Pentecost, the Spirit received by Jesus from the Father, as reward for the

⁵ Richard Gaffin, *Perspectives On Pentecost*, (Phillipsburg, NJ, Presbyterian and Reformed Publishing Co. 1979), p. 17.

redemptive work finished and behind Him, was given by Him to the church as the promised gift of the Father...⁶

In other words, when Luke says in Acts 1:5 *for John baptized with water, but you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit not many days from now*, Luke in no uncertain terms renders Christ's reception of baptism during his incarnation as somehow incomplete apart from Christ's gift of baptism after his ascension! Therefore, we can say "all four gospels record the preparatory ministry of John the Baptist as pointing to Christ the "lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world" (John 1:29), and then point to "the one who baptizes with the Holy Spirit" (v. 33). "Whereas John' ministry is preparatory, Jesus' role is fulfillment."⁷

It is therefore not surprising that when Peter is asked to explain the meaning of Pentecost, he doesn't preach the "Holy Spirit," rather he preaches "Christ." "Peter's sermon in Acts 2:14-39 is basically Christ centered, even as it results in ecclesial formation! For the result of Pentecost was not merely individual conversions, but the presence of God in Word, Sacraments and Order as noted in Acts 2, where it is said that Christ was proclaimed such that those who "received" the message "were baptized" even as they "devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and *koinonia*, to the breaking of bread and the prayers. (Acts 2:41-42). Indeed, Luke's summary of the apostles' ministry throughout Acts is stated in terms of ecclesial formation. Paul, for instance, made it his business to appoint elders wherever he went demonstrating that the ultimate object of his labors was new churches (Acts 14:23). And while we clearly see preaching as one of the means used by the apostles in Acts, we come to this striking observation in Acts 9:31: "then the *churches* throughout all Judea, Galilee, and Samaria had peace and were edified." In other words, as summary to the work of the apostles, what we see is that church planting had been co-extensive with preaching.

Mt. 16

Mt 6

The overwhelming main theme of the Gospels—is that in the coming of Christ is the coming of the kingdom of God...

Matt. 4:17 From that time Jesus began to proclaim, "Repent, for the **kingdom** of heaven has come near."

Matt. 4:23 Jesus went throughout Galilee, teaching in their synagogues and proclaiming the good news of the **kingdom** and curing every disease and every sickness among the people.

The church is the epicenter of the Kingdom of God

The language of "kingdom in the Lord's prayer is related to "on earth as it is in heaven"—

Thy kingdom come, thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven!!!

Compare then This language as it shows up again only as it is related directly to the work of the church... in Mt 16... and as specifically identified as synonymous to the church.

⁶ Ibid, p. 17.

⁷ Gaffin, p. 14.

That the church is the “fortress” even of the Kingdom of God is made clear

Vs. 18: I will build my church, and the gates of Hades will not prevail against it.

This is taught elsewhere both in the OT and New
ekklesia "the church" = called out into an assembly
Dif. "a public assembly of citizens joined together under
a common government"

Hebrew counterpart often used to describe Israel as an
assembly of God's people.
Deut 4:10, 9:10, Lev. 23:31 Chron.13:1-2, 2 Chron. 1:2-
33, etc.

Therefore, in Hebrews 12:23, the new assembly
(ekklesia) is compared to the old assembly (ekklesisia)

*9 I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven, and whatever you
bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth
will be loosed in heaven."*

HOW, is the church so powerful--

*9 I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven, and whatever you bind
on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be
loosed in heaven."*

i. Keys = power to open and close something!!!

The Biblical context

*Was often used to describe the priestly role of those who guarded the
temple!!!*

1 Chron. 9:17-27 describes the “gatekeepers” (pvlai) of
the Temple have the duty of employing keys(tw'n kleidw'n)
to open it every morning

****Neh. 7:1ff (LXX, 17.1ff)**

Neh. 7:1 Now when the wall had been built and I had set
up the doors, and the gatekeepers (oiJ pulwroi), the
singers, and the Levites had been appointed, 2 I gave my
brother Hanani charge over Jerusalem, along with
Hananiah the commander of the citadel-- for he was a
faithful man and feared God more than many. 3 And I
said to them, "The gates of Jerusalem (pvlai lerousalhm)
are not to be opened until the sun is hot; while the
gatekeepers are still standing guard, let them shut
(kleievsqwsan) and bar the doors. Appoint guards from
among the inhabitants of Jerusalem, some at their watch
posts, and others before their own houses."

Isa.22:20-22

20 On that day I will call my servant Eliakim son of
Hilkiah, 21 and will clothe him with your robe and bind

your sash on him. I will commit your authority to his hand, and he shall be a father to the inhabitants of Jerusalem and to the house of Judah. 22 I will place on his shoulder the key of the house of David; he shall open, and no one shall shut; he shall shut, and no one shall open.

i.e. In the exercise of the “keys” of the kingdom, the gatekeepers (church-officers) will open and shut the doors of the visible kingdom of heaven. This will keep the people safe from the kingdom of darkness.

Prophecy Concerning coming Kingdom:

Is. 9:6-7, All previous government will be fulfilled by the Messiah

"and the government shall rest on His shoulders" he will be called wonderful counselor, prince of peace..."

ii. The power of keys is to “bind and loose” as related to opening and shutting!!

To Bind—to bring someone under authority and protection of the government of God’s kingdom... (e.g. both positive sense of binding someone into the governments protection, care... negative sense of binding someone under governments censure/discipline!

To Loose- to set someone outside the care/governance/protection/discipline of the kingdom ..

NOTICE then how this same language is just a couple of chapters later used by Christ, this time to speak to the issue of recovering a wayward Christian~!!

Mat. 18.15-18,

*“If another member of the church sins against you, go and point out the fault when the two of you are alone. If the member listens to you, you have regained that one. **16** But if you are not listened to, take one or two others along with you, so that every word may be confirmed by the evidence of two or three witnesses. **17** If the member refuses to listen to them, tell it to the church; (e.g. get the church, the pillar and bulwark, involved!!!)*

and if the offender refuses to listen even to the church, let such a one be to you as a Gentile and a tax collector. E.g. “loose him—excommunicate him...”

18 Truly I tell you, whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven.

19 Again, truly I tell you, if two of you agree on earth about anything you ask, it will be done for you by my Father in heaven.

20 For where two or three are gathered in my name, I am there among them.”

Think of the power here.. it is the power of bringing someone under salvation, protection, care—or not!!!

***John 20:23** Whose soever sins ye remit, they are remitted unto them; and whose soever sins ye retain, they are retained. KJV*

***John 20:23** If you forgive the sins of any, they are forgiven them; if you retain the sins of any, they are retained.” NRSV*

In what sense exactly does this church “bind and loose”

Declaratively only—e.g. Christ ordinarily “speaks” through the church his judgments as a act of binding and loosing (albeit acknowledging that the church is fallible)

Instrumentally only—the church by its activity and ministry of word and sacrament and communal activity/pastoral care—are only instruments in the hands of the agent of power..

That is to say, the church IS THE KINGDOM OF GOD on earth, even as whatever power is related to the kingdom of God is related to the power that is executed in and through the church!!! And as screwtape counseled wormwood—not some invisible ideological church, but that church that is visualized, externalized, concretized in the visible, parish, community of assembled believers upon the foundation that was given through the apostles—this is exactly what our passage says—notice therefore...

1 Cor.3:16... 2Cor.6:16

In other words, we have seen how apart from the church, we do not have full access to Christ by means of His advent in the Holy Spirit. The gospel according to Paul is not a transition from temple to “no temple” as some would have it. In this regard, Paul's teaching for us under the New Covenant is no different than the prophetic teaching under the Old Covenant, that salvation is described with the promise “I will dwell with them” (2 Cor. 6:16). This is also Paul's point in 1 Corinthians 3, even as Richard Hayes has observed,

Paul dares to assert [that] the community is the place where God dwells. “Do you not know,” he asks, “that you [plural] are God's temple and that God's Spirit dwells in you [plural]?” (3:16). To read this last sentence as though it spoke of the Spirit dwelling in the body of the individual Christian would be to miss the force of Paul's audacious metaphor: the apostolically founded community takes the place of the Jerusalem temple as the place where the glory of God resides.⁸

Ephesians: The Ascended Ministry of Christ and Temple Spirituality

(Eph. 1:22-23, 2:11ff, 4:16, etc)

- Eph. 1: the church, which is his body, the fullness of him who fills all in all...
Temple language
OT: “filling” reference to shikanah glory in temple (glory fills the temple)
Ex. 40:34 Then the cloud covered the tent of meeting, and the glory of the LORD filled the tabernacle. **35** Moses was not able to enter the tent of meeting because the cloud settled upon it, and the glory of the LORD filled the tabernacle.
Eph.-- Note for instance
1:22 *And he has put all things under his feet and has made him the head over all things for the church, **23** which is his body, the fullness of him who fills all in all.*

⁸ Richard B. Hayes, *Ecclesiology and Ethics in 1Corinthians*, (located on the web.) N.p.

2:20 built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, with Christ Jesus himself as the cornerstone. 21 In him the whole structure is joined together and grows into a holy temple in the Lord; 22 in whom you also are built together spiritually into a dwelling place for God.

Notice then the language of “building up” and “joining together”—both of which are repeated in our text and are here directly related to the NC temple formation that is established upon the cornerstone of Christ and the foundation that is laid by apostolic authority/teaching...

- Eph. 2:11ff Once... but now (x2)

That the ministry of the Holy Spirit is BOTH individual and corporate in reality can be discerned as well in the very carefully crafted argument of Ephesians 2. For beginning in Ephesians 2:1, Paul will utilize a “once... but now” literary framework to describe the work of the Holy Spirit in personal salvation.⁹ And yet, all too often, this is where we stop reading. We should therefore be careful to notice how the “once... but now” framework is explicitly repeated by Paul beginning in vs. 11, and completed in vs. 21.¹⁰ The repetition speaks volumes—as to say in bold terms, “this is still about the gospel!” This time, the emphasis is corporate, about a people once estranged from God by means of being alienated from the corporate presence of God!

- Eph. 2:22fftabernacle of God (vs. 22... c.f. Psm.46:4, etc)

According then to Ephesians, Paul makes the case for the gospel that assumes the church “built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, with Christ Jesus himself as the cornerstone.” And notice especially that Paul explicitly references a “structure” that is being “joined together” such as to grow into a holy temple in the Lord,” even that which is “in Christ” being “built together spiritually into a dwelling place for God” (Eph. 2:20ff). E.g. Christ’s advent in the Holy Spirit acting in, through and with the *visible* Church! This is even more clear when it is further observed how this language of “being joined together” is used again in Ephesians 4:16 concerning the descent of Christ in the Holy Spirit related to the institution of the apostolic and then post apostolic offices! Their purpose was again to “join together” the body of Christ— probably a reference to their role of “organizing” churches.¹¹ As constructed then upon the apostolic foundation, one can at the very least conclude that the construction of an assembly included instructions in “doctrine, sacrament and government all of which was related to the “building of the temple.”¹²

⁹ pote (vs. 2ff)... de« (vs.4ff)

¹⁰ pote...nuvn (vs. 11ff)... nuni« de«« (vs.13ff)

¹¹ sunarmologoume÷nh, see also Ephesians 4:16. According then to Louw and Nida, this word can be used synonymously with “assemble,” arrange, structure or even “organize.” In 1Cor.12:20 for instance, God is said to “structure (sugkeraçnnumi) the body of Christ as to give some greater honor than others.. And perhaps most significantly, Titus 1:5 applies the verb e’pidiorqo/w to mean “set in order” or even “organize” as to establish a church by means of the training and appointment of elders. Louw & Nida, #62.3,4,5. C.f. T. David Gordon’s “Equipping” Ministry in Ephesians 4?”, *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society* (March, 1994).

¹² This is perfectly illustrated when Paul speaks about the “pattern of sound words” related to his instructions to his young protégé, Timothy “in order that” he might “know how *one ought* to conduct oneself in the household of God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and bulwark of the truth” (1 Timothy 3:14-15). And would it surprise us that Paul’s “instructions” to Timothy covered such topics as instructions on ordination (1 Tim 3), worship (1Tim 2) and doctrine (1Tim 1) as no doubt being worked out in an assembled context? Surely then, the “whole structure” being “joined together” upon the apostolic foundation spoken of in Ephesians

- Eph. 4: Ascended/Descended (The Ascended Ministry of Christ explained)

Eph. 4:7

But each of us was given grace according to the measure of Christ's gift. **8**
Therefore it is said,

“When he ascended on high he made captivity itself a captive;
he gave gifts to his people.”

9 (When it says, “He ascended,” what does it mean but that he had also descended into the lower parts of the earth? **10** He who descended is the same one who ascended far above all the heavens, so that he might fill all things.)

- **Ascended/Descended**

- *Ascended... descended...*

Priestly pattern initiated by Moses especially as succeeded by Levites... here fulfilled in Christ..

Heb. 10:21 and since we have a great **priest** over the house of God,

10 He who descended is the same one who ascended far above all the heavens, so that he might fill all things.)

R/H Observation and Context!!

We should, at this point, observe a very important Old Testament pattern that is already exposed concerning the theological nature of God's salvation. The pattern concerns a “once and for all” aspect of salvation history related to God's presence by the Holy Spirit that is continually applied and experienced by God's liturgical presence in the Holy Spirit acting through Word and sacrament in the tabernacle. In other words, as illustrated in the Mosaic context, God's saving activity was related to the “Glory-Spirit” (Kline's expression) of God that led Israel through the wilderness, even the same Glory-Spirit that eventually settled upon the tabernacle in Exodus 40:34. Concerning this pattern, Torrance has observed that the “once and for all event” of God's salvation in the Exodus was accomplished through the mediation of Moses directly, but then it was “remembered and participated in by the liturgy of the Old Covenant as mediated through the priesthood in a secondary sense.”²³

Even while salvation was an ongoing and dynamic reality by means of the priestly liturgy of the temple, it was a once and for all historical reality as related to the historically grounded word-deed-word pattern of God's special revelation. Or, to state it differently, one can discern between a “revelatory Word” by the Holy Spirit as contained in the “once and for all” historical aspect and a “dynamic Word” by the Holy Spirit acting continually in the temple; for example, the “Word” according to Moses was final and complete under the old covenant even as the “Word” was effectually dynamic within the sacramental liturgy of the Aaronic temple. Accordingly, Torrance explains:

Over against Moses, and in secondary status, Aaron is regarded

included such things! And as such, the “temple” being spoken of in Ephesians is both “spiritual” as to be animated into Christ by the Holy Spirit AND organized as to take on a definable and even “orthodox” form.

as the liturgical priest who carries out in continual cultic witness the actual mediation that came through Moses. In this way, the cult was a liturgical extension into the history of Israel and her worship of the once and for all events of Exodus and Sinai... That which took place once and for all in the lawgiving and covenantal atonement is enshrined in the liturgy of the Tabernacle. But it is extended cultically into the life and history of Israel in such a way as to make clear that the priestly sacrifices and oblations are carried out as liturgical witness to the divine glory and obedience to God's proclamation of his own Name in grace and judgment, in mercy and truth. (*Royal Priesthood*, p. 4)

In other words, God was present to humanity (an incarnational aspect of God's salvation) by the advent of the Holy Spirit acting through the priesthood, both in its Mosaic "once and for all" context and in its Aaronic "continual" contexts; and, yet, at the same time humanity was present to God (an ascended aspect of God's salvation) as was accomplished by Moses (once and for all) and the Aaronic priesthood (continually). The twofold "God humanward" and "human Godward" aspects of the priestly ministry in the old covenant were accomplished (once and for all) by Moses to regulate and order the (continual) participation in the priestly ministry by the Aaronic priesthood of the old covenant temple. Here again, we see how Moses both ascended up unto the holy mountain shrouded in cloud and divine glory, even as he descended in the midst of the people while radiating the spiritual presence of God in their midst—both once and for all. Forever then under the old covenant, the meaning of salvation is contained in what was accomplished by Moses. But then again, the same twofold priestly actions of Moses were observed continually when it is observed that "Aaron's supreme function as high priest, bearing the iniquity of the people (Exod. 28:38; Lev. 10:17; Num. 18:23) was to ascend into the Holy of Holies once a year on the day of atonement," only then to return from behind the veil to the waiting congregation with the blessed "Peace be unto you" to put the name of God upon them in benediction (Num. 6:22ff.).

As noted by Torrance, "That which took place once and for all in the lawgiving and covenantal atonement is enshrined in the liturgy of the Tabernacle" (*ibid.*).

The above twofold aspects of incarnation and ascension—both "once and for all" and "continually"—expose how God was both the object and subject of old covenant worship. God was the one being worshipped and was by means of his presence in and through the liturgy the one worshipping vicariously on behalf of fallen humanity. Concerning then the two aspects of the priesthood, we find one related to God's salvation toward humanity (incarnation), the other related to God's obedience on behalf of humanity toward God (ascension). All in all, the whole liturgy was regarded by the Old Testament as an ordinance of grace accomplished by God and applied by God. It was God himself who provided the sacrifice, and the whole action is described, therefore, in the form of a divinely appointed response to God's Word (Exod. 25:22; Num. 7:89).

Finally, and here is my point—this whole host of language and focus on the priestly activity of Christ (ascending and descending) as then related to the formation of a temple built on the foundation of the apostles is finally said to be continued by the Holy Spirit BY MEANS OF THE PASTORAL MINISTRY of the church today!!!

11 The gifts he gave were that some would be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, some pastors and teachers,

12 to equip the saints for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ, **13** until all of us come to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to maturity, to the measure of the full stature of Christ. **14** We must no longer be children, tossed to and fro and blown about by every wind of doctrine, by people's trickery, by their craftiness in deceitful scheming. **15** But speaking the truth in love, we must grow up in every way into him who is the head, into Christ, **16** from whom the whole body, joined and knit together by every ligament with which it is equipped, as each part is working properly, promotes the body's growth in building itself up in love.

- **Building up:**

In vs. 22 a kind of "union in Christ" is synonymous with "being built up together spiritually into a *dwelling place* of God." One ought not to pass over this word "together", as it assumes an assembly or "ekklesia." Nor should we miss the significance of the phrase "dwelling place," as it is one and the same word used in the Greek Old Testament for "tabernacle" such as in Psalms 46 vs. 4!

Based upon the apostolic foundation, one can at the very least conclude that the construction of an assembly included instructions in "doctrine, sacraments and pastoral care, all of which was related to the "building of the temple" as executed throughout the ages through the office of bishop-pastor!

Building consist of what? E.g what are the "foundations" handed down from Christ through the apostles as to be executed by pastors today—as related to Christ three-fold office of prophet priest and king—it is a construction of spirituality and lives in an ecclesial context of word, sacrament and pastoral care... This is perfectly illustrated when Paul speaks about the "pattern of sound words" related to his instructions to his young protégé, Timothy "in order that" he might "know how *one ought* to conduct oneself in the household of God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and bulwark of the truth" (1 Timothy 3:14-15). And would it surprise us that Paul's "instructions" to Timothy covered such topics as instructions on ordination (1 Tim 3), worship (1 Tim 2) and doctrine (1 Tim 1) as no doubt being worked out in an assembled context? Surely then, the "whole structure" (doctrine, worship, governed fellowship/pastoral care) is being "joined together" upon the apostolic foundation spoken of in Ephesians included such things! And

as such, the “temple” being spoken of in Ephesians is both “spiritual” as to be animated into Christ by the Holy Spirit AND organized as to take on a definable and even “orthodox” form

Paul explicitly references a “structure” that is being “*joined together*” such as to grow into a holy temple in the Lord,” even that which is “in Christ” being “built together spiritually into a dwelling place for God” (Eph. 2:20ff). That is to say that Christ’s advent in the Holy Spirit acting in the *visible* Church is being realized by means of the organized structure that was joined together according to the apostolic foundation. And then it is observed how this same language of “being joined together” is used again in Ephesians 4:16, this time as related to the descent of Christ in the Holy Spirit as applied to the post apostolic offices!

- The Missional Church: IN, not of, for the world (Eph. 5)

I. Eph. 1 and Trinitarian Missiology

Vs. 3ff: Father sends the Son for us!

Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in Christ with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places,.. hat he freely bestowed on us in the Beloved... he has made known to us the mystery of his will, according to his good pleasure that he set forth in Christ... as a plan for the fullness of time, to gather up all things in him, things in heaven and things on earth

Vs. 11ff: 11 The Son Sends the Holy Spirit

In Christ we have also obtained an inheritance... in him you also, ...were marked with the seal of the promised Holy Spirit; **14** this is the pledge of our inheritance

Vs. 1: 22, Eph 2—The Church as the Mediatorial Body of Christ’s Ascended Ministry by the Holy Spirit—Christ’s presence in the world...

22 And he has put all things under his feet and has made him the head over all things for the church, **23** which is his body, the fullness of him who fills all in all.

17 So he came and proclaimed peace to you who were far off and peace to those who were near; **18** for through him both of us have access in one Spirit to the Father. **19** So then you are no longer strangers and aliens, but you are citizens with the saints and also members of the household of God, **20** built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, with Christ Jesus himself as the cornerstone.

21 In him the whole structure is joined together and grows into a holy temple in the Lord; **22** in whom you also are built together spiritually into a dwelling place for God.

Flavel, Fountain of Life: (commentary and Ascension worth reading)

Sermon 40. The Ascension of Christ illustrated, and variously improved, being the Second Step of his Exaltation.

John 20:17.

Jesus saith unto her, **Touch me not; for I am not yet ascended to my Father: but go to my brethren, and say unto them, I ascend unto my Father, and your Father; and to my God, and your God.**

In all the former sermons, we have been following Christ through his humiliation, from the time that he left the blessed bosom of the Father: and now having finished the whole course of his obedience on earth, and risen again from the dead; we must, in this discourse, follow him back again into heaven, and lodge him in that bosom of ineffable delight and love, which for our sakes, he so freely left. For it was not his end in rising from the dead, to live such a low animal life as this is, but to live a most glorious life, as an enthroned King in heaven: upon which state he was now ready to enter, as he tells Mary in the text, and bids her tell it to the disciples, "Go, tell my brethren, that I ascend to my Father," &c.

In the former verses you find Mary waiting at Christ's sepulchre, in a very pensive frame: exceedingly troubled, because she knew not what was become of Christ, ver. 15. In the next verse, Christ calls her by her name, Mary; she knowing the voice, turned herself, and answered, Rabboni. And as a soul transported with joy, rushes into his arms, as desirous to clasp and embrace him. But Jesus said, "Touch me not," &c.

In which words we have Christ's inhibition, "Touch me not:" Strange that Christ, who rendered himself so kind and tender to all, that not only admitted, but commanded Thomas to put his finger into his wounds, should forbid Mary to touch him, but this was not for want of love to Mary; for he gives another reason for it presently, "I am not yet ascended;" i.e. say some, the time for embracing will be when we are in heaven. Then and there shall be the place and time, we shall embrace one another for evermore. So Augustin. Or, thou dotest too much upon my present state, as if I had now attained the very "akme", culminating point of my exaltation. When as yet I am not ascended, so Cameron and Calvin expound it. Or lastly, Christ would signify hereby that it was not his will and pleasure in so great a juncture of things as this, to spend time now in expressing (this way) her affections to him; but rather to show it by hastening about his service. Which is

The **second thing observable, viz. his injunction upon Mary, to carry the tidings of his resurrection to the disciples.** In which injunction we have,

First, The persons to whom this message was sent, my brethren, so he calls the disciples. A sweet compellation, and full of love. Much like that of Joseph to his brethren, Gen. 45: 4. save only that there is much more tenderness in this than that; for he twits them in the same breath with what they had done against him: "I am Joseph your brother, whom ye sold;" but in this it is, "Go, tell my brethren," without the least mention of their cowardice or unkindness. And,

Secondly, The message itself; "Tell my brethren, I ascend to my Father, and your Father; to my God, and your God," "anabaino", I ascend. It is put in the **present tense, as if he had been ascending;** though he did not ascend in some weeks after this; but he so expresses it, to show what was the next part of his work, which he was to act in heaven for them; and how much his heart was set upon it, and longed to be about it, "I ascend to my Father, and your Father; to my God, and your God." Not our Father, or God in common; but mine and yours in a different manner. Yours by right of donation, mine in a different manner. Yours by right of dominion, mine (in reference to my human nature) not only by right of creation, though so too; but also by special covenant and confederation. By predestination of my manhood, to the grace of personal union, by designation of me, to the glorious office of Mediator. My Father, as I am God, by eternal generation. As man, by collation of the grace of union. And your Father by spiritual adoption and regeneration. Thus he is my God, and your God; my Father, and your Father. This is the substance of that comfortable message, sent by Mary to the pensive disciples. Hence the observation is,

Doct. That our Lord Jesus Christ, did not only rise from the dead, but also ascended into heaven; there to dispatch all that remained to be done for the completing the salvation of

his people.

i.e. that his resurrection was but one stage in this second great work of Christ in the ascended ministry! Resurrection is penultimate!!

So much the apostle plainly witnesseth, Eph. 4: 10. "He that descended, is the same also that ascended up far above all heavens," i.e. all the aspectable heavens. A full and faithful account whereof the several evangelists have given us, Mark 16: 19. Luke 24: 51. This is sometimes called his going away, as John 16: 7. Sometimes his being exalted, Acts 2: 33. Sometimes his being made higher than the heavens, Heb. 7: 26. And sometimes his entering within the veil, Heb. 6: 19, 20. All which are but so many synonymous phrases, expressing his ascension, in a very pleasant variety.

Now for the opening this act of Christ, we will bind up the whole in the satisfaction of these **six questions. 1. Who ascended? 2. Whence did he ascend? 3. Whither? 4. When? 5. How? 6. and lastly, Why did he ascend? And these will take in what is needful for you to be acquainted with in this point.**

First, Who ascended? This the apostle answers, Eph. 4: 10. "the same that descended," viz. Christ. And himself tells us in the text, "I ascend." "And though the ascension were of Christ's whole person, yet it was but a figurative and improper expression, with respect to his divine nature, but it agrees most properly to the humanity of Christ, which really changed places and conditions by it." **And hence it is that it is said, John 16: 28.** "I came forth from the Father, and am come into the world;" again, I leave the world, and go to my Father." He goes away, and we see him no more. **As God, he is spiritually with us still, even to the end of the world. But as man, "the heavens must contain him till the restitution of all things," Acts 3: 21.**

Secondly, Whence Christ ascended?

I answer, more generally, he is said to ascend from this world, to leave the world. That is the terminus a quo, John 16: 28. but more particularly, it was from Mount Olivet, near unto Jerusalem. The very place where he began his last sorrowful tragedy. There, where his heart began to be sadded, there is it now made glad. O, what a difference was there betwixt the frame Christ was in, in that mount before his passion, and this he is now in, at his ascension! But,

Thirdly, Whither did he ascend?

It is manifest it was into **the third heavens: the throne of God**, and place of the blessed; where all the saints shall be with him for ever. It is said to be far above all heavens; i.e. the heavens which we see, for they are but the pavement of that stately palace of the great King. He is gone (saith the apostle) within the veil, i.e. into the most holy place. **And into his Father's house, John 14: 2.** And he is also said to go to **the "place where he was before," John 6: 62.** back again to that sweet and glorious bosom of delight and love, from whence at his incarnation he came.

Fourthly, When did Christ ascend? Was it presently as soon as he arose from the dead?

No, not so, for "after his resurrection (saith Luke) he was seen of them forty days, speaking of the things pertaining to the kingdom of God." And truly the care and love of Christ to his people was very manifest in this his stay with them. He had ineffable glory prepared for him in heaven, and awaiting his coming, but he will not go to possess it, till he had settled all things for the good of his church here. For in this time he confirmed the truth of his resurrection, gave charge to the apostles concerning the discipline and order of his house or kingdom: which was but needful, since he intended that their Acts should be rules to future churches. So long it was necessary he should stay. And when he had set all things in order, he would stay no longer, "lest he should seem to affect a terrene life." And besides, he had work of great concernment to do for us in the other world. He desired to be no longer here, than he had work to do for God and souls. A good pattern for the saints.

Fifthly, How did Christ ascend into heaven?

Here it is worthy our observation, that Christ ascended as a public person or forerunner, in our names, and upon our accounts. So it is said expressly, Heb 6: 20 speaking of the most holy place within the veil; whither (saith he) the forerunner is for us entered. His entering into heaven as our forerunner implies both his public capacity and precedence.

First, His public capacity, as one that went upon our business to God. So he himself speaks, John 14: 2. "I go before to prepare a place for you". To take possession of heaven in your names. The forerunner has respect to others that were to come to heaven after him, in their several generations; for whom he has taken up mansions, which are kept for them against their coming.

Secondly, It notes precedence, he is our forerunner, but he himself had no forerunner. Never any entered into heaven before him, but such as entered in his name, and through the virtue of his name. He was the first that ever entered into heaven directly, immediately, in his own name, and upon his own account. But all the fathers who died before him entered in his name. To the holiest of them all, God would have said as Elisha to Jehoram, 2 Kings 3: 14 Were it not that I had respect to the person of my Son, in whose name and right you come, I would not look upon you. You must go back again, heaven were no place for you. No, not for you, Abraham, nor for you, Moses

Secondly, He ascended triumphantly into heaven. To this good expositors refer that which in the type is spoken of David, when he lodged the ark in its own place, with musical instruments and shootings; but to Christ, in the antitype, when he was received up triumphantly into glory, Psal. 47: 5 "God is gone up with a shout, the Lord with the sound of a trumpet; sing praises to God, sing praises; sing praises unto our King, sing praises."

A cloud is prepared, as a royal chariot, to carry up the King of glory to his princely pavilion. "A cloud received him out of their sight," Luke 24: 51. And then a royal guard of mighty angels surrounded the chariot, if not for support, yet for greater state and solemnity of their Lord's ascension. And oh what jubilations of the blessed angels were heard in heaven! How was the whole city of God moved at his coming! For look as when "he brought his first begotten into the world, he said, let all the angels of God worship him," Heb. 1: 6. So at his return thither again, when he had finished redemption-work, there were no less demonstrations given by those blessed creatures of their delight and joy in it. The very heavens echoed and resounded on that account. Yea, the triumph is not ended at this day, nor ever shall.

It is said, Dan. 7: 13, 14. "I saw, (saith the prophet) in the night visions, and behold one like the Son of man came with the clouds of heaven, and came to the Ancient of days, and they brought him near to him. And there was given him dominion, and glory, and a kingdom; that all people, nations and languages should serve him." This vision of Daniel's was accomplished in Christ's ascension, when they, i.e. the angels, brought him to the Ancient of days, i.e. to God the Father, who, to express his welcome to Christ, gave him glory and a kingdom. And so it is, and ought to be expounded. The Father received him with open arms, rejoicing exceedingly to see him again in heaven; therefore God is said to "receive him up into glory," 1 Tim. 3: 16. For that which, with respect to Christ, is called ascension, is, with respect to the Father, called assumption. He went up, and the Father received him. Yea, received so as none ever was received before him, or shall be received after him.

Thirdly, Christ ascended munificently, shedding forth, abundantly, inestimable gifts upon his church at his ascension. As in the Roman triumphs they did spargere missilia, bestow their largesses upon the people: so did our Lord when he ascended; "wherefore he saith, when he ascended up on high, he led captivity captive; and gave gifts unto men." The place to which the apostle refers, is **Psal. 68: 17, 18. where you have both the triumph and munificence with which Christ went up excellently set forth together.**

"The chariots of God, (saith the Psalmist) are twenty thousand, even thousands of angels; the Lord is among them, as in Sinai, in the holy place. Thou hast ascended on high, thou hast led captivity captive, thou hast received gifts for men; yea, for the rebellious also, that God might dwell among them." Which words, in their literal sense, are a celebration of that famous victory and triumph of David over the enemies of God, recorded 2 Sam. 8. These conquered enemies bring him several sorts of presents, all which he dedicated to the Lord. The spiritual sense is, that just so our Lord Jesus Christ, when he had overcome by his death on the cross, and now triumphed in his ascension, he takes the parts and gifts of his enemies, and gives them, by their conversion to the church, for its use and service: thus he received gifts, even for the rebellious, i.e. sanctifies the natural gifts and faculties of such as hated his people before, dedicating them to the Lord, in his people's service. Thus, (as one observes) Tertullian, Origin, Austin, and Jerome, came into

Canaan, laden with Egyptian gold. Meaning they came into the church richly laden with natural learning and abilities. Austin was a Manichee, Cyprian a magician, learned Bradwardine a scornful, proud naturalist, who once said, when he read Paul's epistles, Dedignar esse parvulus; he scorned such childish things, but afterwards became a very useful man in the church of God. And even Paul himself was as fierce an enemy to the church as breathed on earth, till Christ gave him into his bosom by conversion, and then no mere man ever did the Lord and his people greater service than he. Men of all sorts, greater and smaller lights, have been given to the church. Officers of all sorts were given it by Christ. Extraordinary and temporary, as prophets, apostles, evangelists; ordinary and standing, as pastors, and teachers, which remain to this day, Eph. 4: 8, 9. And those stars are fixed in the church heaven by a most firm establishment, 1 Cor. 12: 28. Thousands now in heaven, and thousands on earth also, are blessing Christ at this day for these his ascension-gifts.

Fourthly, Our Lord Jesus Christ ascended most comfortably, for whilst he was blessing his people, he was parted from them, Luke 24: 50, 51. Therein making good to them what is said by him, John 13: 1. "Having loved his own, he loved them to the end." There was a great deal of love manifested by Christ in this very last act of his in this world. The last sight they had of him in this world was a most sweet and encouraging one. They heard nothing from his lips but love, they saw nothing in his face but love, till he mounted his triumphant chariot, and was taken out of their sight. Surely these blessings at parting were sweet and rich ones. For the matter of them, they were the mercies which his blood had so lately purchased for them. And for their extent, they were not only intended for them who had the happiness to be upon the place with him from whence he ascended; but they reach us as well as them; and will reach the last saint that shall be upon the earth till he come again. For they were but representatives of the future churches, Matt. 28: 20. And in blessing them, he blessed us also. And by this we may be satisfied that Christ carried an heart full of love to his people away with him to heaven; since his love so abounded in the last act that ever he did in this world: and left such a demonstration of his tenderness with them at parting.

Fifthly, He ascended, as well as rose again by his own power. He was not merely passive in his ascension, but it was his own act. He went to heaven. Therefore it is said, Acts 1: 10. He went up, viz. by his own divine power. And this plainly evinceth him to be God, for no mere creature ever mounted itself from earth, far above all heavens, as Christ did.

Sixthly, and lastly, why did Christ ascend? I answer: His ascension was necessary upon many and great accounts. For,

First, If Christ had not ascended, he could not have interceded, as now he does in heaven for us. And do but take away Christ's intercession, and you starve the hope of the saints. For what have we to succour ourselves with, under the daily surprises of sin, but this, "That if any man sin, we have an advocate [with the Father]" mark that, with the Father; a friend upon the place: one that abides there, on purpose to transact all our affairs, and as a surety for the peace betwixt God and us.

Secondly, If Christ had not ascended, you could not have entered into heaven when you die. For he went to "prepare a place for you," John 14: 2. He was, as I said before, the first that entered into heaven directly, and in his own name; and had he not done so, we would not have entered when we die, in his name. The Fore-runner made way for all that are coming on, in their several generations, after him. Nor could your bodies have ascended after their resurrection, but in the virtue of Christ's ascension. For he ascended, as was said before, in the capacity of our head and representative; to his Father and our Father: For us, and himself too.

Thirdly, If Christ had not ascended, he could not have been inaugurated, and installed in the glory he now enjoys in heaven. This world is not the place where perfect felicity and glory dwell. And then, how had the promise of the Father been made good to him? Or our glory, (which consists in being with, and conformed to him), where had it been? "Ought not Christ to suffer, and to enter into his glory?" Luke 24: 25.

Fourthly, If Christ had not ascended, how could we have been satisfied, that his payment on the cross made full satisfaction to God, and that now God has no more bills to bring in against us? How is it that the Spirit convinceth the world of righteousness, John 16: 9, 10. but from Christ's

going to the Father, and returning hither no more? which gives evidence of God's full content and satisfaction, both with his person and work.

Fifthly, How should we have enjoyed the great blessings of the Spirit and ordinances, if Christ had not ascended? And surely, we could not have been without either. If Christ had not gone away, "the Comforter had not come," John 16: 7. he begins where Christ had finished. For he takes of his, and shows it to us, John 16: 14. And therefore it is said, John 17: 39. "The Holy Ghost was not given, because Jesus was not yet glorified." He was then given as a sanctifying spirit, but not given in that measure, as afterwards he was, to furnish and qualify men with gifts for service. And indeed, by Christ's ascension, both his sanctifying, and his ministering gifts were shed forth, more commonly and more abundantly upon men. These fell from him when he ascended, as Elijah's mantle did from him, so that whatsoever good of conversion, edification, support, or comfort you receive from spiritual ordinances, he has shed forth that, which you now see and feel. It is the fruit of Christ's ascension.

Sixthly, and lastly, If Christ had not ascended, how had all the types and prophecies, that prefigured and foretold it, been fulfilled? "And the scriptures cannot be broken," John 10: 35. So that, upon all these accounts, it was expedient that he should go away. It was for his glory, and for our advantage. Though we lost the comfort of his bodily presence by it, yet if "we loved him, we would rejoice he went to the Father," John 14: 28. We ought to have rejoiced in his advancement, though it had been to our loss; but when it is so much for our benefit, as well as his glory, it is a matter of joy on both sides, that he is ascended to his Father, and our Father: to his God, and to our God. From the several blessings flowing to us out of Christ's ascension, it was that he charged his people not to be troubled at his leaving of them, John 14. And hence learn,

Inference 1. Did Christ ascend into heaven? Is our Jesus, our treasure indeed there? Where then should the hearts of believers be, but in heaven, where their ord, their life is? Surely saints, it is not good that your love, and your Lord should be in two several countries, said one that is now with him. Up, and hasten after your lover, that he and you may be together. Christians, you ascended with him, virtually, when he ascended; you shall ascend to him, personally, hereafter; Oh that you would ascend to him, spiritually, in acts of faith, love, and desires daily. **Sursum corda, up with your hearts, was the form used by the ancient church at the sacrament.** How good were it, if we could say with the apostle, **Phil. 3: 20. "Our conversation is in heaven, from whence we look for the Saviour."** An heart ascendant, is the best evidence of your interest in Christ's ascension.

Inf. 2. Did Christ go to heaven as a forerunner? What haste should we make to follow him? He ran to heaven: he ran thither before us. Did he run to glory, and shall we linger? did he flee as an eagle towards heaven, and we creep like snails? **Come Christians, "Lay aside every weight, and the sin that so easily besets you, and run with patience the race set before you, looking unto Jesus, Heb. 12: 1, 2.** The Captain of our salvation is entered within the gates of the new Jerusalem, and calls to us out of heaven to hasten to him; proposing the greatest encouragements to them that are following after him, saying, "He that overcomes shall sit with me in my throne, as I also overcame, and am set down with my Father in his throne," Rev. 3: 22. How tedious should it seem to us, to live so long at a distance from our Lord Jesus!

Inf. 3. Did Christ ascend so triumphantly, leading captivity captive? **How little reason then have believers to fear their conquered enemies?** Sin, Satan, and every enemy, were in that day led away in triumph, dragged at Christ's chariot wheels, brought after him as it were in chains. It is a lovely sight to see the necks of those tyrants under the foot of our Joshua. He made at that day, "an open show of them," Col. 2: 15. Their strength is broken for ever. In this he shewed himself more than a conqueror; for he conquered and triumphed too. Satan was then trod under his feet, and he has promised to tread him under our feet also, and that shortly, Rom. 16: 20. some power our enemies yet retain, the serpent may bruise our heel, but Christ has crushed his head.

Inf. 4. Did Christ ascend so munificently, shedding forth so many mercies upon his people? mercies of inestimable value reserved on purpose to adorn that day? O then see that you abuse not those precious ascension-gifts of Christ, but value and improve them as the choicest mercies.

Now, the ascension gifts, as I told you, are either the ordinances and officers of the church, (for he then gave them pastors and teachers,) or the Spirit that furnished the church with all its gifts. Beware you abuse not either of these.

First, Abuse not the ordinances and officers of Christ. This is a sin that no nation is plunged deeper into the guilt of, than this nation, and no age more than this. Surely God has written to us the great things of his law, and we have accounted them small things. We have been loose, wanton, sceptical professors for the most part, that have had nice and coy stomachs, that could not relish plain, wholesome truths, except so and so modified to our humours. For this the Lord has a controversy with the nation, and by a sore judgement, he has begun to rebuke this sin already. And I doubt not, before he make an end, plain truths will down with us, and we shall bless God for them.

Secondly, But in the next place, see that you abuse not the Spirit, whom God sent from heaven at his ascension, to supply his bodily absence among us, and is the great pledge of his care for, and tender love to his people. Now take heed that you do not vex him by your disobedience; nor grieve him by your unkindnesses; nor quench him by your sinful neglects of duty, or abuse of light. O deal kindly with the Spirit, and obey his voice: comply with his designs, and yield up yourselves to his guidance and conduct. Methinks, to be intreated by the love of the Spirit, Rom. 15: 30. should be as great an argument as to be intreated for Christ's sake. Now, to persuade all the saints to be tender of grieving the Spirit by sin, let me urge a few considerations proper to the point under hand.

Consid. 1. First, He was the first and principal mercy that Christ received for you at his first entrance into heaven. It was the first thing he asked of God when he came to heaven. So he speaks, John 14: 16, 17. "I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you." No sooner had he set foot upon the place, but the first thing, the great thing that was upon his heart to ask the Father for us was, that the Spirit might forthwith be dispatched, and sent down to his people. So that the Spirit is the first-born of mercies; and deserves the first place in our hearts and esteem.

Consid. Secondly, The spirit comes not in his own name to us, (though, if so, he deserves a dear welcome for his own sake, and for the benefits we receive by him, which are inestimable,) but he comes to us in the name, and in the love, both of the Father, and the Son. As one authorised and delegated by them; bringing his credentials under both their hands and seals, John 15: 26. "But when the Comforter is come, whom I will send to you from the Father:" Mark, I will send him from the Father; and in John 14: 26. the Father is said to "send him in Christ's name." So that he is the messenger that comes from both these great and holy persons. And if you have any love for the God that made you, any kindness for the Christ that died for you, show it by your obedience to the Spirit that comes from them both and in both their names to us, and who will be both offended and grieved, if you grieve him. O therefore give him an entertainment worthy of one that comes to you in the name of the Lord. In the Father's name, and in the Son's name.

Consider. 3 Thirdly, But that is not the only consideration that should cause you to beware of grieving the Spirit, because he is sent in the name of such great and dear persons to you, but he deserves better entertainment than any of the saints give him, for his own sake, and upon his own account, and that upon a double score, viz. of his nature and office.

First, On the account of his nature; for he is God co-equal with the Father and Son in nature and dignity, 2 Sam. 23: 23. "The Spirit of the Lord spake by me, and his word was in my tongue; the God of Israel said; the Rock of Israel spake to me." So that you see he is God. The Rock of Israel. God omnipotent, for he created all things, (Gen. 1: 2; God omnipresent, filling all things, Psal. 139: 7. God omniscient, who knows your hearts, Rom. 9: 1. Beware of him therefore, and grieve him not, for in so doing you grieve God.

Secondly, Upon the account of his office, and the benefits we receive by him. We are obliged, even on the score of gratitude and ingenuity, to obey him; for he is sent in the quality of an advocate to help us to pray; to indite our requests for us; to teach us what and how to ask of God, Rom. 8: 26. He comes to us as a Comforter, John 14: 16. And none like him. His work is to take of Christ's and shew it to us, i.e. to take of his death, resurrection, ascension, yea, of his very present intercession in heaven, and show it to us. He can be with us in a moment, he can, (as one

well observes,) tell you what were the very last thoughts Christ was thinking in heaven about you. It was he that formed the body of Christ in the womb, and so prepared him to be a sacrifice for us. He filled that humanity with his unexampled fulness. So fitting and anointing him for the discharge of his office.

It is he that puts efficacy into the ordinances, and without him they would be a dead letter. It was he that blessed them to your conviction and conversion. For if angels had been the preachers, no conversion had followed without the Spirit. It is he that is the vinculum unionis, bond of union betwixt Christ and your souls, without which you could never have had interest in Christ, or communion with Christ. It was he that so often has helped your infirmities, when you knew not what to say; comforted your hearts when they were overwhelmed within you, and you know not what to do; preserved you many thousand times from sin and ruin, when you have been upon the slippery brink of it in temptations. It is he (in his sanctifying-word) that is the best evidence your souls have for heaven. It were endless to enumerate the mercies you have by him. And now, reader, dost thou not blush to think how unworthy thou hast treated such a friend? For which of all these his offices or benefits dost thou grieve and quench him? O grieve not the Holy Spirit whom Christ sent as soon as ever he went to heaven, in his Father's name, and in his own name, to perform all these offices for you.

Inf. 5. Is Christ ascended to the Father as our fore-runner? Then the door of salvation stands open to all believers, and by virtue of Christ's ascension, they also will ascend after him, far above all visible heavens. O my friends, what place has Christ prepared and taken up for you! what a splendid habitation has he provided for you! "God is not ashamed to be called your God; for he has prepared for you a city," Heb. 11: 16. In that city Christ has provided mansions, and resting-places for your everlasting abode, John 14: 2. and keeps them for you till your coming. O how august and glorious a dwelling is that, where sun, and moon, and stars, shall shine as much below your feet, as they are now above your heads? Yea, such is the love Christ has to the believer, that, as one saith, if thou only hadst been the chosen of God, Christ would have built that house for himself and thee. Now it is for himself, for thee, and for many more, who shall inherit with thee. God send us a joyful meeting within the veil with our Fore-runner, and sweeten our passage into it, with many a foresight and foretaste thereof. And, in the meantime, let the love of a Saviour inflame our hearts, so that whenever we cast a look towards that place, where our Fore-runner is for us entered, our souls may say, with melting affections, Thanks be to God for Jesus Christ; and again, Blessed be God for his unspeakable gift.

(continued in file 41...)

----- file: /pub/resources/text/ipb-e/epl-09: flafn-40.txt .