

The Vicarious Humanity of Christ, Incarnate, Crucified, Risen and Ascended¹

Introduction. The doctrine of the vicarious humanity of Christ is crucial to our understanding of Christ and of Scripture. It is a large subject and it is impossible to do justice to it in a single paper. I only hope that what I say here will stimulate thought.

The word “vicarious” is Latin, meaning speaking and acting in place of another, on that other’s behalf. That is precisely what Christ has done for us through his life, death, resurrection and ascension.

Liberal theologians do not hold to the vicarious humanity of Christ. Sadly, many evangelical theologians restrict the vicariousness of Christ to his atoning Death. The latter become concerned if we speak of the vicarious life, resurrection and ascension of Christ. They believe that in doing so, we detract from our understanding of Christ's substitutionary, atoning death. This is a misunderstanding of Scripture. Christ's substitutionary atonement embraces his Incarnation, life, death, resurrection, Ascension and Pentecost. Those who restrict the vicariousness of Christ to his atoning death, interpret the atonement purely forensically.

There is a legal or forensic interpretation of justification through the death of Christ, which is correct and helpful. The Epistle of Paul to the Romans leads us to think of a law court where a person is rightly pronounced guilty and sentenced to a heavy fine. When the judge himself pays the fine on behalf of the person who is guilty, the guilty person can then go free. Justice has been done. The person pronounced guilty can legally go free. Because Christ has died for us we are legally before God able to go forth free of the consequences of our sin. God reckons us righteous in Christ. We have been justified by the Grace of God through faith.

If, however, we restrict the vicariousness of Christ to his atoning death, if we hold only to a forensic interpretation of the atonement, and if we fail to recognize the all-embracing nature of the vicarious humanity of Christ, and fail to stress union with Christ, (which enables us to share in the fruits of his salvation), we are being unbiblical. It is worth pondering why this is so.

1. **One**, by restricting Christ’s vicariousness to his death, we are separating the death of Christ from the rest of his ministry. We are failing to recognize the full significance of Christ’s ministry and the importance of the humanity of Christ for our salvation. We are also separating the death of Christ from his resurrection: and his resurrection is all important for our salvation.
2. **Two**, when we lay the emphasis on Christ’s work and what he accomplished, rather than on his Person, we almost inevitably become more interested in the

¹ Address given at a T.F. Torrance theological conference held in November 2010, at Fribush, Loch Tay, University of Edinburgh.

blessings of the Gospel than in Christ himself. Quite subtly we separate the blessings of Christ from Christ, and the work of Christ from his Person - and can even regard the "Incarnation" as just one optional way among others of accounting for the experience of salvation (see James B. Torrance, *Christ in our Place*.²). This is true of Theologians like Rudolph Bultman. It is true of many liberal theologians, but I believe is also true of evangelicals who reject the vicarious humanity of Christ and seek to interpret Christ's atonement as an objective event apart from us and apart from our Union with Christ.

3. **Three**, the restricting of forgiveness and salvation to what Christ has done on the cross, throws us back on ourselves. As my brother James used to say, a doctor will diagnose our illness or disease, give us a prescription and ask us to take the prescription and will leave us in the anticipation that, as we take the prescription, we will be healed! However, God does not act like that! The atonement is not God's prescription, which we are given and asked to accept, even with God's help, in order that we might be saved and inherit the Kingdom! God having acted in Christ does not throw us back on ourselves, making our salvation to some extent dependent on ourselves - dependent on our repenting, our praying, our reading the Bible, our going to Church (however right, good and necessary for the living of the Christian life these things are). Our salvation from first to last is an act of God through Grace. God has accomplished everything for us in Christ. He offers his salvation as a gift. He has given us the freedom to accept or reject his offer of salvation. As we thank him we accept his offer. That is all that we can do! - or, we can turn away and reject Christ and his salvation, in which case we are lost.
4. **Four**, with such a restricted interpretation of Christ's atonement, we receive deliverance from guilt, but not from the power of sin in its lodgement in our lives. For many evangelicals the stress is on deliverance from guilt. Yet, however important that is, the necessary thing is to be delivered from the power of sin, to be given a new life in Christ. Jesus said we must be born again to see and enter the Kingdom of God. Paul said in 2 Corinthians 5 verse 17, "If anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation".
5. **Five**, this takes us back to my first and second points where I said that we cannot separate the death of Christ from the rest of his ministry and we cannot separate the work of Christ from his Person. The vicarious humanity of Christ and union with Christ are twin doctrines, which cannot be separated. As we hold to them, our theology is centered on Christ. Our faith is not in a creed. It is not in a set of doctrines, although these are important, and it is not simply on the work of Christ. Our faith is not dependent simply on the event of Christ's atoning death. Our faith is in the Living Person of Christ, together with all that he said and did. We cannot separate what Christ said and did from his Person. John Calvin loved to say that Christ comes to us "clothed with his life, death and resurrection". Always, our faith is in his Person. Faith is a way of being

² James B. Torrance, chapter on *Christ in our Place*, in the Torrance brothers' republication of *A Passion for Christ*, Wipf and Stock, USA 2010, p. 41.

related to the Person of Christ, who lived, died, rose again, ascended and returned at Pentecost.

Twin doctrines. As we hold to the vicarious humanity of Christ and union with Christ, we escape legalism in its many different forms. The Christian faith becomes a dynamic way of life. It is intensely personal. Christ is central. We are continually seeking to “put off the old self with its practices and put on the new self, which is being renewed in knowledge in the image of its Creator” (Col 3:9. See also Ephesians 4:22,23). Our concern is to draw ever closer to Christ, to be clothed with Christ, to be clothed with his righteousness, to have the mind of Christ (1 Cor 2:16. Phil 2:5), that we might see his glory, share in the fellowship of the Son with the Father and live to advance his Kingdom. Hence, the writer of the Epistle to the Hebrews says, “Fix your thoughts on Jesus” (3:1), and again, “Let us fix our eyes on Jesus” (12:2).

The sum of the Gospel. If we were asked to sum up the teaching of the Apostle Paul, we would require to say, that he taught - “Salvation by Grace alone, and union with Christ”.

Likewise, if we were asked to sum up the theology of Calvin (as expressed for example in his Institutes or Commentaries) we would rightly say - “Salvation by Grace alone, and union with Christ”.

‘Union with Christ’ is expressed in the words *‘in Christ’ (en Christo)*.

As Professor William Barclay³ has pointed out, in Paul's Letters the phrase *‘in Christ’* occurs 34 times, *‘in Christ Jesus’*, 48 times, and *‘in the Lord’* 50 times. That is to say, the phrase *‘in Christ’* or its equivalent occurs 132 times. In the gospels it occurs approximately 40 times. This being so, we must take the words *‘in Christ’*, very seriously. Yet, how often have we read an article or even a book on the Atonement of Christ and they are scarcely, or not at all, mentioned? Three years ago I attended a Dogmatics conference in the Free Church College in Edinburgh organised by Rutherford House. Well known evangelical theologians spoke. The Doctrine of “union with Christ” received little attention! Some speakers did not mention it although the subject of the conference was ‘Christ and his Atonement’ (I do not remember the exact title of the conference). It was a very good and stimulating conference. Nonetheless, the failure to stress ‘union with Christ’ (that is, Christ's continuing union with us and our continuing union with him by grace) in my opinion was a grave weakness. We cannot properly understand Christ's atonement and how we share in the fruits of Christ's atonement, without taking seriously the New Testament stress on “union with Christ”. For example, a well known theologian and scholar was led to say (if I understood him correctly) that the righteousness which is conferred on us in Christ, is the righteousness of the law court. In Christ and in virtue of Christ's atonement, God declares us guilty sinners who are repentant, innocent and righteous. But the righteousness, which he confers, is not Christ's own righteousness. It is forensic righteousness! At this, (although I enjoyed the rest

³ W. Barclay, *The Letters to the Philippians, Colossians, and Thessalonians*, Saint Andrew Press, UK, p. 14.

of his lecture) I cringed! To me it was quite unbiblical. All the fullness of God resides in Jesus Christ. By Grace, through union with Christ, the fullness of Christ is imparted to us. Christ imparts to us his own holiness, his own righteousness, his very life, in virtue of which we are united with the Father and made by Grace to share in the fellowship of the Holy Trinity. In the New Testament we are asked to be “clothed with Christ”. Grace is where we deserve absolutely nothing and God bestows on us everything!

The uniqueness and vicarious humanity of Christ. When we stress Salvation by Grace and Union with Christ, we affirm the absolute uniqueness and centrality of Christ, in and through whom alone is there salvation (Acts 4:12). By stressing the ‘vicarious humanity of Christ’ in our salvation we are stressing the uniqueness and centrality of Christ and the bearing of his humanity and work on the whole of our lives. Christ is for us and with us in every area and activity of our lives. Hence Paul says (and he is describing the Christian life to which we are all called), “For to me to live is Christ” (Phil 1:21).

Christ's atoning work, his salvation of us, did not happen in a way that was independent of us. Christ forever united himself with us so that what happened to Christ happened to us in a profound way. We are healed, redeemed through our union with Christ. That is perhaps nowhere clearer than in what Paul says in Romans 6. When Christ died we died so that when Christ rose we arose.

In stressing the Biblical emphasis on “union with Christ”, we require, as I have already said, to interpret the atonement not simply in terms of Christ's death (or death and resurrection) but in terms of the whole Christ event, which embraces his incarnation, life, death, resurrection, ascension and Pentecost (which is the last act of atonement).

Christ worked out our salvation in his own Person. As through the Holy Spirit we are united to the person of Christ so we share in his salvation.

The Incarnation. Our salvation commenced with the Incarnation. By becoming man, God both affirmed our humanity and sanctified it.

God, although remaining God of very God, in the incarnation took our flesh and blood and became one with us. He actually became us! He became a man.

In becoming man he was yet God, through whom “all things were created; .. For God was pleased to have all his fullness dwell in him” (Colossians 1:16,17,19). “The Son is the radiance of God's glory, and the exact representation of his being, sustaining all things by his powerful word” (Hebrews 1:3).

In becoming man and living with us on earth, he yet as God, through the Holy Spirit, continued to be with the Father in heaven. As the Early Fathers said, even as a child in the cradle he upheld, by the Word of his power, the heavens and the earth. That is clear from Hebrews 1:3f. John Calvin stressed the presence of the ascended Christ being both in heaven and yet at the same time

present with us (see *Calvin's Institutes*.⁴). In Jesus Christ we have the Presence of the Triune God whether on earth or in heaven active at one and the same time, on our behalf. He is with the Father and yet with us on earth in the flesh.

God, in taking to himself in Jesus our flesh and blood, became not simply a man but Representative Man. He related himself to us all. That is, in Jesus, God once and forever, for all eternity, joined himself in the flesh to the whole of humankind. Men and women, for better or for worse, are united with God in an eternal covenant of Grace through the Holy Spirit, which they cannot break. This means that all that happened to Christ affects our life and being. Christ and all humanity are wrapped together in the same bundle of life for eternity.

Because God became Man, once and forever, in Christ Jesus, God has put his seal on our humanity. The incarnation guarantees our humanity and the safety of all creation. Because of sin, the world was hurtling to destruction. Humankind was destined for death and destruction. God intervened. He entered into this world. He took hold of it making a covenant of Grace and life first through Noah and then through Abraham and his seed, Israel. That covenant of grace and life he fulfilled, confirmed and forever sealed in Jesus Christ who is the Creator Word made flesh, our flesh. God conquered the powers of death and destruction by becoming Man in Jesus Christ.

It is deeply significant for our understanding of Christ's vicarious humanity that the Name, which in the Gospels Jesus most frequently used in reference to himself, was the "Son of Man". It is a name, which occurs some 74 times in the Gospels.

In taking our flesh and blood, Jesus became a particular man and also representative man.

In identifying himself with us as representative man, he did two things:-

- (a) He took all our sins, our sufferings and diseases upon himself. This he did gradually throughout his life. When fully clothed with them he took upon himself his own divine condemnation upon them and took them all away. He bore a condemnation that we deserved and could not possibly have endured and survived.
- (b) At one and the same time, in identifying himself with us he sanctified our humanity. He turned it around, turned our lives around, perfectly obeying the Father on our behalf in his life and death. With his resurrection he offers to us a renewed and righteous life.

As Christians we are called daily to share in Christ's death to our sin and to the world. We are called to take up his cross and follow him.

We are able, through the Holy Spirit, to die with Christ, and therefore rise, because we already have died with Christ when he died! As Paul said (in

⁴ John Calvin, *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, Book 4.17.29

Romans 6:3,4) “Don't you know that all of us who were baptised into Christ Jesus were baptised into his death? We were therefore buried with him through baptism into death in order that just as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, we too might live a new life”.

As Representative Man, Christ's death has affected us all! Death followed as a consequence of sin. With Adam, sin entered the world like a flood. Sin was accompanied by death. When the Son of God took on himself in Jesus the sins of the world, and took on himself the Divine punishment (his own Divine punishment) for the sins of all and died on behalf of all, so all in him are made to die. By his death our death is sealed! We must die! As Paul said (in 2 Corinthians 5:14), “For Christ's love compels us, because we are convinced that one died for all, and therefore all died”.

Because all, through union with Christ, died, so, through union with Christ, all are made to share in Christ's resurrection. Here however we have the mystery of sin. Even in the resurrection, sin can interpose between a person and Christ. Whereas, all are made to share in his resurrection, not all will rise to the new life of righteousness. As Jesus said, “Those who have done good will rise to live, and those who have done evil will rise to be condemned” (John 5:29). If we thankfully welcome Jesus as our Saviour and accept what he has done for us we will rise to the life of righteousness. If we choose to reject him, we cannot, as it were, disengage ourselves from him in his death and resurrection for us. His death and resurrection are vicarious. We will rise to condemnation.

The Resurrection. Christ rose vicariously as man, on our behalf.

To express the meaning of the resurrection, the New Testament uses the words *'sunzao'*, which means “I live along with” and *'sunegeiro'*, which means, “I rise from the dead”. God, who is rich in mercy, made us alive with Christ, (or, “quickened us together with Christ”, King James Authorized Version)⁵. God raised us in Christ, *'en Christo'*, raised us “in union with Jesus”. When Jesus rose from the dead, we rose with him and in him. Christ's resurrection is the cause and guarantee of our resurrection.

Jesus was physically resurrected as Man. He rose in the body. He had a glorified body. He was able suddenly to appear and to disappear. But, it was a physical body and the same body, although now glorified, which he had on earth. He continues in the resurrection to have the scars of the nails in his hands and feet, and of the sword cut in his side. In the resurrection, he continues to be clothed with our humanity. Jesus said to his disciples, “Look at my hands and feet. It is I myself! Touch me and see; a ghost does not have flesh and bones, as you see I have” (Luke 24:39). At his request, Jesus ate fish with them and had breakfast with them on the lakeshore

The fact that he rose as man on our behalf means that we are made to rise in him.

⁵ King James Authorized Version (A.V.)

The Ascension of Christ.

Jesus ascended vicariously as man on our behalf. Generally, and for far too long, the Church has neglected the doctrine of the Ascension. Many ministers rarely if ever preach on the Ascension. At most, the Ascension is often mentioned only in prayer or through hymns. Yet the doctrine of the Ascension is vitally important! Without the Ascension our salvation would not be accomplished.

Jesus not only rose from the dead, he ascended to the Father and ascended to reign, as Man and yet God. Of course Jesus was always King. He was King on earth, but with his ascension he entered heaven to reign as Man on our behalf, and yet also God.

Jesus ascended clothed with our humanity. He ascended vicariously as Man. He did not lay aside our humanity when he ascended and entered the Presence of the Father, else our salvation (as we said) would not be accomplished!

In his ascension he raised to heaven our humanity, cleansed and renewed through his atoning life and death so that in him we have entered the Presence of the Father. Through Christ's vicarious ascension we are restored to fellowship with the Father. As Paul said, "God raised us up with Christ and seated us with him in the heavenly realms in Christ Jesus" (Ephesians 2:6). "When he ascended on high, he led captives in his train and gave gifts to men" (Ephesians 3:8, which is a quotation from Psalm 68:18). "You have been raised with Christ" (Colossians 3:1).

The ascended Christ continues to be our High Priest. He offered to the Father, his perfect life of obedience, in our name and on our behalf, together with the sacrifice of himself on the cross. Jesus, in his ascension, took the offering of his blood into the true Holy of Holies, which was not on earth but in heaven. He took it into the presence of the Father. His offering and sacrifice, in our stead, was accepted.

Christ in his own person reconciled God and man. He brought peace between God and man and between man and God and between man and man. His continuing presence on the throne continually declares to God and man that we are once and for all and forever redeemed.

It is an amazing fact that in Christ, through union with Christ, we are made to enter the presence of the Father and are made members of his family. When Christ lives within us, when we are clothed with Christ and Christ's life becomes by Grace our life, we are restored, recreated, in the image of God and able to share in the fellowship of the Son with the Father through the Holy Spirit. By Grace we share in the fellowship of the Triune God, are made heirs of the Heavenly Kingdom. In Christ, God the Father treats us as if we are his only Beloved Son. So he says, "Come inherit the Kingdom". Only the Son and Heir inherits the Kingdom. In Christ, the Father treats us as his Son and heir! It is part of our sharing in Christ in the fellowship of the Triune God!

The ascended Christ continues to be the Mediator between God and man. The ascended Christ continues to reveal the Father and himself to us through the Holy Spirit. Equally in his Ascension, he continues to represent us to the Father. I quote from my brother Tom Torrance;

“It is as our Brother, wearing our humanity, that he has ascended, presenting himself eternally before the face of the Father, and presenting us in himself. As such he is not only our word to God but God's Word to us. Toward God he is our Advocate and High Priest, but toward man he is the acceptance of us in himself. The very Spirit through whom he offered himself eternally to the Father he has sent down upon us in his high-Priestly blessing, fulfilling in the life of his Church on earth that which he has fulfilled in the heavenlies” (T.F. Torrance, *Royal Priesthood*.⁶)

Put that in another way! - **The ascended Christ continues to intercede for us.** This is part of his High-priestly, Mediatorial office, which is mentioned in the Epistle to the Hebrews. “Because Jesus lives for ever, he has a permanent priesthood. Therefore he is able to save completely those who come to God through him, because he always lives to intercede for them. Such a high priest meets our need” (Hebrews 7:24-26). The ascended Christ prays for us. On earth, Jesus prayed for his disciples. He prayed for Peter and the others that their faith may not fail (Luke 22:32); that satan should not have them and sift them like wheat. If it comforted them to know that Jesus was praying for them, it should be marvellously comforting for us to know that the ascended Christ continues to pray for us.

It is also part of his High-Priestly ministry that the ascended Christ leads us today in worship through the Holy Spirit; that through the Holy Spirit, at all times in every area and activity of life, he continually gives himself to us; gives us his life of obedience, of Holiness, of Righteousness.

When the Lord says, “Be holy, because I am holy” (Leviticus 11:44,45; 19:2; 20:7; 1 Peter 1:15), the Lord is not casting us back on our ourselves, as if we out of our own resources can make ourselves holy, even with his help! He is not just saying, “Be like me. Follow my example”, because in our sin we can not. He in his own Person, who was and is the Holy One of Israel, is our holiness. It was his Presence in the midst of Israel, which separated Israel from all the other nations. Moses said to God, “If your Presence does not go with us, do not send us up from here. ... What else will distinguish me and your people from all the other people on the face of the earth?” (Exodus 33:15,16). His Holy Presence sanctified Israel and set them apart from the other nations. His presence with us and in us by his Spirit sanctifies us. We are holy, set apart, to the extent that we have Christ within us. He gives himself to us vicariously.

Likewise in demanding that we be righteous, God through Christ's vicarious atonement, confers on us Christ's righteousness. Jesus Christ is the Righteous

⁶ T.F. Torrance, *Royal Priesthood*, Continuum International, UK 1993, p. 14-15.

One. When he lives within us through the Holy Spirit, his life becomes our life and his righteousness our righteousness by Grace.

As Paul said, “It is because of him that you are in Christ Jesus, who has become for us wisdom from God - that is, our righteousness, holiness and redemption” (1 Corinthians 1:30).

When we look back over our lives and ponder how disobedient we have been and continue to be, it is marvellously comforting to know that Christ gives us his life of righteousness and obedience to the Father. It is Christ's righteousness and obedience, which counts. We are saved by his righteousness and obedience not ours.

Prayer. As a student I often wondered why Jesus, being the Son of God and himself God, prayed. Jesus as Man, as representative man, on our behalf prayed. He prayed vicariously. In our sinful state we are not able to pray. Accordingly, Jesus prayed on our behalf. He voiced the prayers that we are unable to pray.

Jesus taught us how to pray. Yet, in ourselves we are weak and we do not know what to pray. It is the Holy Spirit who gives us the power to pray and assists our prayers. Through the Holy Spirit, our prayers are cleansed, united with and incorporated into Christ's prayers and in Christ are presented to the Father. To pray in this way is to pray “in his Name” and all such prayers, as Jesus assured us, are heard and answered (John 14:14; 15:16; 16:23,24).

As Karl Barth rightly said, in true prayer we are never alone. True prayer, like true worship, is where we pray together with Christ and in union with Christ.

Faith. Jesus Christ perfectly trusted God. Jesus trusted God the Father while tempted in the wilderness, as he slept in a boat during a storm at sea, when facing opposition by the religious leaders, in the Garden of Gethsemane. When dying on the cross, he said, “Father, into your hands I commit my spirit” (Luke 23:46). Jesus lived a life of confident, perfect faith in the Father. And he lived that life of faith vicariously for us, so that he might give his life to us. It is through his faith, when we receive it through the Holy Spirit, not through our faith, that we are justified, saved.

Paul said, “I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live **by the faith of the Son of God**” (Galatians 2:20). That is according to the King James Authorized Version (A.V.). I believe that that is a correct translation of the Greek, which reads “*en pistei zo te tou viou tou theou*” (“by the faith of the Son of God”). The N.I.V.⁷ (and other modern translations), alters the text to make it read, “by faith in the Son of God” - something altogether different! That translation takes away from the vicarious nature of Christ's life of faith. It is by **his faith** (not ours) that we are saved and live!

⁷ New International Version (N.I.V.)

The same occurs twice in verse 16, where the phrase “*dia pisteos Iesou Christou*”, is translated correctly in the A.V. as “by the faith of Jesus Christ”, but in the N.I.V. as “by faith in Jesus Christ”.

In Romans 3:21,22, Paul said, “But now the righteousness of God without the law is manifested ... even the righteousness of God which is by faith of Jesus Christ (“*dia pisteos Iesou Christou*”).

In Mark 11:22, Jesus said, “*echete pistin theou*”, which the A.V. this time translates “Have faith in God”. Yet the Greek says, “Have the faith **of** God”.

In Revelation 2:13, the Greek reads, “*kai ouk erneso ten pistin mou*, you did not deny **my** faith”. The A.V. translates it – “hadst not denied **my** faith”. The N.I.V. translates it – “You did not renounce your faith in me”.

In Revelation 14:12, we have the words, “*ten pistin Jesou*”, which the A.V. translates, “the **faith of Jesus**”, and the N.I.V. translates, “Faithful to Jesus”.

These passages, and there are others, indicate the difficulty which translators found over the reality of the vicarious humanity of Christ. I believe we should be prepared to accept the original text as we find it in Greek and not seek to alter it according to our theological misconceptions!

It is a great relief and marvellously comforting to know that we are saved by Christ's faith, not by ours! (Although we are free to receive or reject Christ's saving faith).

Worship. Not all that we call worship, when we gather together in church, sing hymns, hear a sermon about God or even share in the administration of the sacraments, can rightly be called worship. True worship involves our encountering God, in Christ. It involves our actual meeting with God, our hearing him speak, our receiving a fresh revelation, our seeing his glory. That can only take place in union with Christ.

Moses said, “Now show me your glory” (Exodus 33:18). Jesus prayed for his disciples “that they may see my glory” (John 17:24). Worship can only take place in and through Jesus Christ and through the Holy Spirit. Only in Christ, in union with him, can we see God's glory.

Christ has a dual role in worship. On the one hand he is God, whom we worship. We pray, “Come, Lord Jesus” (Revelation 22:20). On the other hand, he worshipped vicariously on our behalf so that we may in him worship The Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit.

Worship is not simply what we do when we gather together in church on the Lord's Day. It involves the whole of our life. We cannot rightly worship God and go out and deliberately sin. To worship aright our whole life must be in harmony with God. Paul said, “Therefore, I urge you brothers, in view of God's mercy, to offer your bodies as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God, - this is your spiritual worship” (Romans 12:1). Jesus lived a holy life of intimate fellowship

with God, in harmony with God. The Father said, “This is my Son with whom I am pleased”. His perfect life he gives to us through the Holy Spirit, so that with Paul we can say, “It is not we who live but Christ who lives in us”. Clothed with Christ (and his righteous life) we also are made to live in fellowship with God and are able to worship God.

In worship we are altogether dependent on Jesus Christ. Only in union with him can we encounter God, hear him speak and see his glory.

Conclusion. If the ascended Christ did not continue in heaven to have vicariously the human body which he had on earth, he could not today through the Holy Spirit, give himself to us, when he comes to live within us. He could not give to us his human life of obedience to the Father, his life of faith in the Father, his life of prayer to the Father, his life of worship where he takes us by the hand and brings us into the Father's presence. In that case, we would not, could not, be sanctified and be made members of his family and heirs with Christ of the Heavenly Kingdom. It is through the Holy Spirit of Pentecost that Christ as Man lives within us. Clothed with Christ's humanity, through the Holy Spirit, we are made to share in all the fruits of his atoning life, death, resurrection and ascension and are made to live and reign with Christ.

As Man and as God he will welcome us at the end of our journey on this earth, into the Heavenly Kingdom. There, we will see him see him face to face, as Man and yet God.

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