

THE INCARNATION

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*Veiled in flesh the Godhead see,
Hail the incarnate Deity!
Pleased as man with man to dwell,
Jesus, our Immanuel.*

Stars are shining! Church bells are ringing! Chimes resound in the city streets! Loudspeakers broadcast carols from crowded shops, and music intermingles with the roar of traffic. Lights glow in dazzling colors! Millions hasten to and fro—the whole world seems to be on the go—dispatching gifts and messages to the ends of the earth. Hearts turn homeward. And all who are free to do so seek the hearthside of family and loved ones.

*To an open house at Christmas
Home shall men come,
To an older place than Eden
And a taller town than Rome...
To the place where God was homeless
And all men are at home.*

How different was the first Christmas! A decree had gone forth that all the world was to be taxed, and a man and a woman had left their home and taken a narrow road that led to Bethlehem. O little town of Bethlehem, “little among the thousands of Judah” (Mic. 5:2)—scene of one of the greatest acts of our great and mighty God. Act of wonder and condescension—the incomprehensible act which we call THE INCARNATION!

Incarnation! God manifest in flesh; God in the form of man! “Without controversy great is the mystery of godliness: God manifest in the flesh, seen of angels...” (1 Tim. 3:16) This has been the inspiration for countless hymns and the theme of innumerable sermons. God manifest in flesh—essential tenet of the Christian faith!

“There is one secret, the greatest of all—a secret which no previous religion dares, even in enigma, to allege fully—which is stated with the utmost distinctness by our Lord and His Church. I mean the doctrine of the Incarnation regarded not only as a historical event which occurred 2,000 years ago, but as an event which is renewed in the body of every believer who is in the way to the fulfillment of his divine destiny.”

—C. Patmore

At this season, almost all of the world pays tribute to Bethlehem. In the midst of its pagan customs and Babylonish ways, it still remembers and recaptures, at least once a year, a little of the wonder and glory of that holy night when the Son of the Most High God lay in the arms of a virgin mother. The world celebrates His birth with joyful song. And even the unbelieving repeat His blessed title in the age-old greeting, “Merry Christmas!”

We, who are devoted to Him, tune out the distractions of the world, and seek to recapture the wonder of His birth. In spirit we exult and sing with the angels, repeating the tidings of great joy. We marvel with the shepherds, who saw the glory of the Lord shining round about them, and we hasten with them to the manger. We stand with Joseph, and experience a little of the joy and satisfaction he must have known after the months of anxious waiting. We feel Mary’s mother-heart of love, and cannot restrain our eyes from tears, as mingled emotions stir within our own hearts. The great hour had come—the hour for which all Israel had waited—and *they knew it not!* But she knew! And we know that this tiny Babe is our God “Whose doings are of old,” the Mighty One of Israel, our Savior, our King! And we fall before Him!

We worship... we wait... and begin to grasp a little of the mystery of the incarnation. We realize that before the creation of the world this plan of incarnation existed in the mind of God. Then God made known His plan to Eve, and gave the promise of its fulfillment. (Gen. 3:15) This

promise was renewed to His people, generation after generation. At length the promise was fulfilled. The incarnation became a historical fact which the Church confesses, and the world acknowledges. But it is more than a historical fact. There is a sense in which it becomes a *present, living reality* to every true believer.

“‘Glorify and bear God in your body.’ (1 Cor. 6:20) The incarnation is a present reality, and the true Church attaches great importance to the preservation of the purity of the body, the temple of God. For the complete satisfaction of God’s desire was not attained in the mere creation of the human body. It is in His union and conjunction with it that God finds His final perfection and felicity.”

—C. Patmore

We know that the purpose of our Lord’s first coming was fully accomplished: that He was “born to raise the sons of earth, born to give them second birth.” And that the consummation of their second birth will be manifest at the time of His second coming, when He shall appear in the many-membered body of the redeemed.

“But we know that when He shall appear, we shall be like Him; for we shall see Him as He is.” (1 John 3:2)

“For the earnest expectation of the creature waiteth for the manifestation of the sons of God.” (Romans 8:19)

In them He will display His grace and power and glory throughout all eternity. This will be the *consummation* of the incarnation!

In view of this fact, it is not surprising that the early church commemorated our Lord’s first coming by looking forward to His second advent. They adored the Babe of Bethlehem as “the firstborn of many brethren,” and realized that His coming was the culmination of centuries of prophetic utterance and expectation. This “Rod out of the stem of Jesse” (Isa. 11:1) was the glorious Branch, the full flowering of the faith of God’s chosen race. The plan of God came to the hour of promised performance! Our God is a God of performance. Abraham, the father of the faithful, “staggered not at the promise of God through unbelief; but was strong in faith, giving

glory to God and being fully persuaded that what He had promised, He was able also to perform.” (Rom. 4:20-21) Likewise, Elizabeth cried out to Mary, the chosen vessel of grace, “Blessed is she that believed: for there shall be a performance of those things which were told her from the Lord.” (Lk.1:45) Immutable is the law of God: “According to your *faith* be it unto you.” (Matt. 9:29)

As God dealt with His chosen race, so He deals with each of His redeemed. His incarnation in the individual begins with the new birth in Christ and continues on until He has subdued and redeemed the believer—spirit, soul, mind, and body. What a glorious and great salvation is begun in us!

“He that hath begun a good work in you will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ.” (Philippians 1:6)

Each individual vessel of God passes through cycles of experiences somewhat similar to those of His people Israel, and of His chosen vessel, Mary. Following the initial rebirth, there come times of revelation—an illumination about the plan and purpose of God for the individual’s life. Many other cycles follow. These cycles may combine or overlap, and certainly the Lord deals with His chosen vessels in a great variety of ways. But, on the whole, each individual son will experience many different cycles during his years of preparation “until we all come in the unity of faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ.” (Eph. 4:13) We might sum them up in the order in which the Holy Spirit revealed them to me at a time when I was pondering these things in my heart.

REVELATION

EXPECTATION

PREPARATION

PROCLAMATION

SEPARATION

CONFIRMATION

EXALTATION

HUMILIATION

DEPRIVATION

MANIFESTATION

IMMOLATION

GLORIFICATION

UTTERMOST SALVATION

CONSUMMATION

This pattern was carried out in Israel and in the manifestation of God in Jesus Christ. It was wrought in Mary as she carried Him in her own body and gave Him birth. Somewhere in these cycles you will be able to trace your own experiences, if you are in the process of being brought into the “fullness of the stature of Christ.” The new birth is only the beginning. The *Word* must become *flesh* in you and in me, and His very nature must be wrought in us. This explains the years of testing and waiting, the seasons of pain and preparation, the postponed consummation of His fullness and glory, for which we yearn with ever-increasing desire.

God has a great plan for us. He has given unto us “exceedingly great and precious promises whereby we may become partakers of the divine nature.” (2 Pet. 1:4) He has covenanted with us that there shall be a *performance* of these promises, and that we shall be conformed to the image of His Son, and that His Son shall be manifest in us. “O Lord, hasten Thy Word to perform it.”

REVELATION

“Surely the Lord God will do nothing, but He revealeth His secret unto His servants the prophets.” (Amos 3:7)

After a soul is born again, if he continues to seek the will of God and to obey His word, there will come an hour of revelation when the Holy Spirit will begin to unveil God’s plan for the individual’s life. With heavenly light He will shine into the heart and mind, quickening the spirit of man to understand and believe supernatural truths. There will come a consciousness of God-appointed destiny, and a desire to find that perfect will of God. The time comes when the soul

begins to grasp the overwhelming reality of the indwelling Christ. "Christ in you, the hope of Glory." (Col. 1:27)

I am in Christ, and Christ is in me.
O what a wonder, what a mystery!
That I am in Christ and Christ is in me
For time and for eternity.

The revelation of the coming of the Son of God in flesh was given first to Eve. (Gen. 3:15) She was the first to testify of her faith in it. To her, it was a *present reality*. She expected it to be fulfilled in her firstborn. In Genesis 4:1, Eve says, "I have gotten a man from the Lord." And so she had! But the redeeming Son of God was not to be born until centuries later... and of another woman! Enoch testified of the God-man to come.

"And Enoch also, the seventh from Adam, prophesied of these, saying, Behold, the Lord cometh with ten thousands of His saints..." (Jude 1:14)

Abraham hailed His day from afar and gave living evidence of his faith in the God who raises the dead, by being willing to offer his own firstborn son of promise to God as a living sacrifice. Moses built a tabernacle and put his revelation of Christ into a concrete form, showing His redemption aforetime by means of types. Yes, the holy prophets in whom "the Spirit of the Messiah" testified aforetime, all spoke of Him. And to each, no doubt, He was a present reality, for with God there is no past or future, only the eternal now.

To each of us comes that first great hour of revelation. Time ceases to be and the wonder of Christ incarnate in us becomes a burning, living reality. However, many mistake *revelation* for *manifestation* or even for *consummation*; and fail to realize that many operations of faith and grace must be wrought within us before the promise can be fulfilled.

Revelation is but the preliminary work of the Holy Spirit for the purpose of awakening us, quickening us, and bringing us into the realization of the meaning of His promises, and showing us beforehand things to come. As wonderful as it is, that first hour of revelation must pass. We cannot go on living in it, glorying in it. It must give place to the exercise of faith, obedience, and

suffering. “Though He were a Son, yet learned He obedience by the things which He suffered.” (Heb. 5:8) This is the meaning of the word, “Many are called, but few are chosen.” (Matt. 22:14) Only the “called, chosen and faithful” will be found among the *overcomers*. (Rev. 17:14)

“For we are made partakers of Christ, if we hold the beginning of our confidence steadfast unto the end.” (Hebrews 3:14)

EXPECTATION

The hour of revelation extends into the period of expectation in the believer’s heart. Those who mix the Word with faith find a growing sense of anticipation. This period may last for days, weeks, years, or, as in the case of many, for a lifetime. With Israel, it was prolonged through centuries. We read concerning Abraham, “And so, after he had patiently endured, he obtained the promise.” (Heb. 6:15) Yet, even then, it was not the fullness of the promise; for it was Jesus, not Isaac, through whom the promise was to be completely fulfilled. Let us be “followers of them who through faith and patience inherit the promises.” (Heb. 6:12)

This spirit of expectation was kept alive in Israel by recounting the words of the prophets, and by the revelations which had been given to them at times of heavenly visitation. The hope of the Messiah’s coming survived through centuries of oppression and darkness. The daughters of Eve, and their daughters’ daughters, generation after generation, cherished the hope of becoming the mother of the promised Messiah. But the “fullness of time” did not come for nearly four thousand years.

In like manner, each of us has watched his own bright revelations fade. At times the heavenly vision seems dim and unreal. It is then that faith arises to carry the torch, and the Spirit comes to our aid by reviving hope and expectation within our breasts; we focus our attention again upon the written Word—those portions, in particular, which had been quickened to us on the Mount of Vision. Praise God! We have a hope that is steadfast and sure, and an expectation that shall not be cut off. If we doubt or faint and give up, there is great loss to us and to the kingdom of our God. This prolonged time of waiting, hoping, expecting, is all a part of the great plan of God.

“Unto them that *look for Him* shall He appear the second time, without sin unto salvation.” (Hebrews 9:28)

PREPARATION

We little realize the extent of the preparation which must take place in us before we become able to receive the fulfillment of His promised Presence. Little by little the need for it is made plain, and the Holy Spirit gently leads us in this preparation. Moses caught this vision in the midst of his triumphant song: “...He is my God, and I will prepare Him an habitation.” (Ex. 15:2)

Again and again the cry, “Prepare!” rings out in the Old Testament. And the New Testament gives us much instruction about the preparation we need. Discipline must become a voluntary submission on our part, an acknowledgment of the need for our further refining and subduing and enlarging, so that we might be fit vessels for the King’s use. Every man and woman who has been called and used of God to any extent has passed through a period of discipline and preparation before the great effulgent hour came. And it is certain that this will be true of each of us; that there must be much preparation wrought in us before we come forth in that choice company, “prepared as a bride adorned for her husband.” (Rev. 21:2) This is the day of our preparation.

ANNUNCIATION

The Annunciation is a scene invested with great beauty and glory by artists, poets and preachers. Human imagination comes into full play in regard to such an event as the appearing of a great archangel to a humble village maiden. How we wish that the Word of God had told us more about this amazing visitation. Tradition has much to say about Mary’s lifelong preparation for this hour. We cannot verify this in Scripture, but we feel certain that God must have carefully prepared His chosen vessel for this transcendent hour and mission.

If John the Baptist, Christ’s forerunner, was “filled with the Holy Ghost from his mother’s womb” (Lk. 1:15), as the Scriptures declare, and if Jeremiah, likewise, was so set apart (Jer. 1:5), we may rest assured that Mary was carefully prepared from her early childhood. At times there

comes to us the consciousness that we, too, have been in a lifelong preparation. As David expressed it, “Thou hast possessed my reins, Thou hast covered me in my mother’s womb.” (Ps. 139:13)

If the Annunciation occurred at the time the formal Church still celebrates it, it was at the vernal equinox—the birth of Spring, the time when all nature awakens from the sleep of death. “...The rain is over and gone; the flowers appear on the earth...” (Song of Sol. 2:11-12). Springtime Lovetime! If, as some authorities contend, it occurred at another season, it was, nevertheless, springtime, lovetime, in Mary’s heart!

We too experience these times of love and favor when heaven stoops to earth, and we feel that “the time of the singing of birds has come.” (Song of Sol. 2:12) For Mary, the bestowal of God’s favor was the greatest and most overwhelming experience which could come to a woman. Countless women had aspired to this high honor of bearing the Messiah. And now, the One for Whom Israel had waited through the centuries was to be incarnated in human flesh and to appear openly as a man among men—IMMANUEL! None other than the archangel Gabriel was dispatched from heaven with the wondrous tidings: “Hail, thou that art highly favored, the Lord is with thee, blessed art thou among women.” (Luke 1:28)

The “set time to favor Zion” had come; Jehovah had made His choice—“a virgin named Mary... of the house and lineage of David.” Her response befitted her high honor, and indicated a heart prepared and filled with grace: “Behold the handmaid of the Lord, be it unto me according to Thy word.” (Lk. 1:38) There was no trace of self-gratification or personal exaltation. At her word of submission, the Most High overshadowed her, and He, Who was the greatest of all the heavenly host, emptied Himself and became the least. He, in Whom all may safely hide, hid Himself away in the secret chamber of a weak earthen vessel.

Let us who desire to follow Him into full sonship realize that the pattern—the WAY into that sonship—is revealed clearly in the second chapter of Philippians. “Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus, who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God, but made Himself of *no reputation*, and took upon Him the form of a *servant*, and was made in the likeness of men; and being found in fashion as a man, He humbled Himself and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross.” (Philippians 2:5-8)

We too must empty, humble ourselves and take the place of a servant—a love-slave—and be willing to enter into self-death, taking up our cross and following Him. We must be willing to lay down our lives literally too, if this be His Will. Our beloved Lord and Forerunner has made the pattern so plain that none need miss the way. No other way will be proffered. Behold the humiliation our Lord demonstrated in becoming the lowly and despised “seed of the woman!”

Has the hour of heavenly annunciation come to you? Have angelic witnesses been sent to declare His favor? Has He made it known that He desires to take up His abode in the earth in you, in an incarnation of His Nature and Name? If so, you are able to understand and to appreciate the wonder of that glorious hour when Gabriel announced the birth of God’s Son. And, if you are fitting into the pattern, you have responded with all your heart, “Be it unto me, according to Thy Word.”

SEPARATION

“And Mary arose and went into the hill country with haste.” (Lk. 1:39) She fled at once to those whom God had already visited and prepared. According to the word of Gabriel, her cousin Elizabeth was also to bear a child. It was to her house that Mary went. Out of all Israel, Elizabeth and Zecharias were the only ones who were prepared to receive Mary, and to understand the miracle which had taken place within her. They too had received an angelic visitation and had been separated unto God for the manifestation of His power. Heavenly annunciation inevitably leads to separation—sometimes even from those who are close in the Lord. This separation was soon to become a painful thing to Mary’s tender heart. It was the beginning of a lonely life; from thenceforth she was separated from her former associates. This experience of separation is shared, to some extent at least, by all who are set apart for a special manifestation of Christ. There are few to understand or accept that which the Holy Spirit has wrought within them. Each of His chosen will experience a “fleeing” from the world and finding a “hill country” where a few faithful ones, with whom God has already established His covenant, will give them refuge.

CONFIRMATION

“And it came to pass, that, when Elisabeth heard the salutation of Mary, the babe leaped in her womb; and Elisabeth was filled with the Holy Ghost: and she spake out with a loud voice, and said, Blessed art thou among women, and blessed is the fruit of thy womb. And whence is this to me, that the mother of my Lord should come to me? For, lo, as soon as the voice of thy salutation sounded in mine ears, the babe leaped in my womb for joy. And *blessed* is *she* that *believed*: for there shall be a *performance* of those things which were told her from the Lord.” (Luke 1:41-45)

A confirmation! Given by the Spirit of God through mortal lips. A babe leaped! A woman spoke! “In the mouths of two or three witnesses shall every word be established.” How Mary’s heart leaped in response to this reassuring word! Elizabeth was a highly esteemed kinswoman; and her advanced years gave added authority and strength to her word. No doubt Mary had undergone a sore trial of faith after the departure of Gabriel. We may assume this, knowing that whatever God does in any human vessel requires not only submission, but a trial of faith regarding the Word God has spoken.

For each Mary-heart in the earth, God has an Elizabeth somewhere, through whom the Holy Ghost will speak a confirming word at the appointed hour. How beautiful and stirring was the prophetic word uttered by Elizabeth to Mary! A prelude to the Magnificat!

EXALTATION

Not only did Mary’s heart leap—it soared as she magnified God and was lifted to a state of exaltation in Him. “My soul doth magnify the Lord, and my spirit hath rejoiced in God my Savior.” (Luke 1:46,47)

In many ways, Mary’s song (which we call the Magnificat), was the high point of her earthly joy and glory. For a short season she rose into a realm of pure exultation. She knew as she was known! She saw with the eyes of the Living Creatures! She looked forward to the generations to come, and, with amazement, beheld their veneration and tribute. “Behold, from henceforth all generations shall call me blessed.” (Lk. 1:48) Eternity rolled back like a scroll. Fear,

pain and darkness fled away before the brightness of the Eternal One. In this high hour, strength was given to her for the cruel days ahead, and grace to bear her burden of sorrow and shame. Indeed, all generations *have* called her blessed; but *not* the one in which she lived!

Although none of us may know the same degree of exaltation that Mary knew in that hour, yet we too enter into times of spiritual rapport and joy as we praise and magnify the same Lord and God. And we need these glorious times, so that we may be able to bear the inevitable rejection and reproach which is the portion of those who are set apart for God's "peculiar" purposes.

HUMILIATION

Mary abode with Elizabeth about three months, then returned to her own house for the next phase of the cycle, humiliation. How sudden was this plunge into shame, suspicion and anxiety! From high honor to ignominy is a drastic descent. From that hour Mary was never again entirely free from stigma and reproach. Her good was "evil spoken of" not only for a few days or months, but for a lifetime. Hers was one of the most painful crucibles known to woman or man—shame. Stripped of her reputation, her name a byword, there would never again be complete escape from reproach. Her Child, too, would bear this stigma to the grave. Accompanying this humiliation were tormenting fears. Joseph, the dearest on earth to her, might well turn against her, and their love be completely destroyed. Neither was Mary ignorant of the law—a horrible death by stoning could be her fate. (Years later, when a woman taken in adultery was brought to our Lord, we wonder if He thought of His own dear mother and of her narrow escape from such a death.)

Obedience to the call of God often brings heartbreak to those whom we love most. But a broken heart is an acceptable sacrifice, and often results in intervention. It was at this point that God broke through the clouds of doubt and suspicion. While Joseph was pondering what steps to take, "...behold, the angel of the Lord appeared unto him in a dream, saying, Joseph, thou son of David, fear not to take unto thee Mary thy wife: for that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Ghost. And she shall bring forth a son, and thou shalt call His Name Jesus; for He shall save His people from their sins." (Matthew 1:20-21)

It is wonderful that Joseph, too, had a believing heart. He chose to share Mary's bittersweet cup, and thus became a partaker not only of her blessing, but also of her shame. He identified himself with her in her humiliation, and carried the reproach of it with him to the grave.

If the Father permits us to taste of the cup of humiliation, let us humble ourselves under His mighty hand. He will be faithful to defend us, and to intervene in our darkest hour when all seems lost. We too shall find fellowship with those who, like Joseph, are willing to share reproach and shame.

"Blessed are ye, when men shall revile you, and persecute you, and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely, for My sake. Rejoice and be exceeding glad, for great is your reward in heaven." (Matthew 5:11,12)

DEPRIVATION

Deprived of the respect and understanding of her friends, appearing to be stripped of righteousness and virtue, how great was Mary's poverty of spirit. "Blessed are the poor in spirit." (Matt. 5:3) Added to this was her actual poverty in material goods. Her lot was cast among the poor. And when her hour of need drew near, she was even deprived of the warmth and protection of her little home which, humble as it was, offered her comforting shelter.

Sometimes it becomes our privilege to share her homeless state, her rough and uncomfortable journey along crowded roads, her lack of the common necessities of life; but few of us appreciate it fully.

A decree had gone forth out of Rome, and God did not spare Mary and Joseph from obeying it, in spite of their high calling. And God, who did not spare Mary, did not spare His Son when His hour came, as we well know! Nor does He spare His called and chosen ones today! They too often experience poverty and suffer loss as they obey the Will of the Father. "The Son of man hath not where to lay His head." (Matt. 8:20) The apostle Paul could boldly say: "My God shall supply all your needs..." (Phil. 4:19) But he also knew what it was to be homeless, shipwrecked, hungry. He actually learned to take pleasure in necessities and the vicissitudes of life. (2 Cor. 12:10) Blessed are they who are not offended in times of testing, when they too have a taste of poverty, homelessness and deprivation.

It is needless to repeat the familiar story of the journey to Bethlehem. There is no evidence of angelic escort, nor of miraculous manifestation of provision. Apparently, Mary was dependent upon the human love and kindness of Joseph to sustain her, and a little beast of burden to carry her. Then, at the journey's end, came the urgent need and there was no room at the inn! So it came to pass that the Son of the Highest was cradled with the lowliest, and began His earthly life in poverty and in humility. He has a way of repeating this pattern, age after age. How often He tabernacles with those who are not only poor in spirit, but also poor in this world's goods.

“Hath not God chosen the poor of this world rich in faith, and heirs of the kingdom which He hath promised to them that love Him?” (James 2:5)

“And Jesus lifted up His eyes on His disciples and said, Blessed be ye poor; for yours is the Kingdom of God.” (Luke 6:20)

“Blessed are the poor in spirit; for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.” (Matthew 5:3)

MANIFESTATION

At last the hour came for His manifestation. Wonderful! Beyond all comprehension! Only by the Holy Spirit are we able to grasp the reality and significance of the incarnation—and then, only in part! This birth was also a death and a wedding! Divinity stooped to wed humanity! For Mary and Joseph, it was an hour of glory which could never be dimmed in their memories. Here He was—Mary's little Son—flesh of her flesh, born of her, in the likeness of man. And He is born in each of us, and appears again and again in our human bodies! Here is a great and awesome mystery—the beginning of the manifestation of the God-race—the sons of God! It would seem that from the hour of His birth the deliverance of Israel would have been manifest. But not so! In spite of this wonderful event—this incarnation of God in flesh—there was no immediate salvation wrought, except in a few believing hearts. Instead, there was a short time of rejoicing and worshipping, then another decree—this time from Herod! There followed a reign of death and terror! A sudden flight to an alien land! And another wait of thirty long years before His open and full manifestation as our Savior and Messiah.

How clearly this pattern has been followed in many of our lives. We too have known the glorious wonder of His incarnation within us; we have witnessed the manifestation of His deity and glory. We too have hoped that from that hour great salvation and deliverance would be wrought in many. But, unexpectedly, perhaps, there has come a sudden attack by Satan, a warning to flee and to hide in Egypt. We have discovered that not only must He be *incarnate* in us as a *babe*, but also that *He must come to full stature* before He can be openly manifest as a *man-child*.

IMMOLATION

In the midst of the manifestation of His power in us, we must be prepared for the next phase in this God-ward cycle—immolation. His life became a living sacrifice from the moment He wrought His first miracle at Cana of Galilee. And, at the end, He laid down His physical life as well—a complete offering unto God. He was the saving Victim of God, the meal-offering, the drink-offering—all offerings combined in one. There is a sense in which He continues His life on earth in each one who receives Him and yields to Him. And, in a measure, each becomes a living sacrifice unto God.

“I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service.” (Romans 12:1)

“Always bearing about in the body the dying of the Lord Jesus, that the life also of Jesus might be made manifest in our body.” (2 Corinthians 4:10)

“As it is written, for Thy sake we are killed all the day long; we are accounted as sheep for the slaughter.” (Romans 8:36)

Some are called upon to lay down their physical lives also. Zechariah speaks of the “flock of the slaughter”—the finest of the sheep. (Zech. 11:4,7) And this is the same “little flock” to which Jesus promised the kingdom. To ask for His manifestation is to ask for self-immolation.

GLORIFICATION

What a joyous assurance is given to us of the final glorification of those in whom our Lord has taken up His abode.

“For whom He did foreknow, He also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be the firstborn among many brethren. Moreover whom He did predestinate, them He also called: and whom He called, them He also justified: and whom He justified, them He also glorified.” (Romans 8:30)

From time to time He gives us little glimpses and earnestings of the glorified state into which we shall be taken when He has wrought these various phases of incarnation in us. We shall have a body like His own glorious resurrection body! We shall have a nature, perfect and holy as His own! We shall be raised up together with Him! So, “That in the ages to come He might show the exceeding riches of His grace in His kindness toward us through Christ Jesus.” (Ephesians 2:7)

UTTERMOST SALVATION

Between the time of Jesus’ birth and His public manifestation and ministry, there were years of growth and preparation. And it is likely that we shall find it to be the same. *Growth* requires *time*. God does not hurry when He is preparing a chosen vessel of grace. Though Christ be formed in us of a truth, and though we be fully aware of it, yet there is a “hiding of His power” until that great day of uttermost salvation when our God shall appear openly in those who have come to the fullness of the stature of Christ.

“Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who, according to His abundant mercy, hath begotten us again unto a living hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, to an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, *reserved* in heaven for you, who are kept by the power of God through faith unto *salvation* ready to be revealed in the last time.” (1 Peter 1:3-5)

It is then that He will do His greater works. He will gather His great harvest from every nation. He will appear TO His elect ones, then IN them, before the great *Parousia* occurs. (The Greek term *parousia* is often translated “coming,” but it is more correctly translated “presence.”)

CONSUMMATION

We shall be presented unto Him, “A glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish.” (Ephesians 5:27)

And so shall we ever be with the Lord. At home! As one! Joint heirs with Christ in the kingdom of our Father! Manifest sons of God! This, then, is the ultimate purpose of the incarnation.

“To make all men see what is the fellowship of the mystery, which from the beginning of the world hath been hid in God, who created all things by Jesus Christ, to the intent that now unto the principalities and powers in heavenly places might be known by the church the manifold wisdom of God.” (Ephesians 3:9,10)

“Now unto Him that is able to keep you from falling, and to present you faultless before the presence of His glory with exceeding joy, to the only wise God, our Savior, be glory and majesty, dominion and power, both now and ever. Amen.” (Jude 1:24,25)