

"GOD MANIFEST IN THE FLESH"

"Great is the mystery of godliness: God was manifest in the flesh, justified in the Spirit, seen of angels." – 1 Timothy 3:16.

GOD, the great Origin, or Fountain, of Life, is pleased to manifest Himself in various creations. And all of His intelligent creations which He recognized as sons were in His likeness. The Logos, the beginning of God's creation, was in the Divine likeness. Not only was He a spirit being (and God is a Spirit), but more than this, He was a spirit being in the character likeness of His Father, His Creator.

Moreover, when the Logos became the active agent of the Father in creating the various orders – angels, cherubim, seraphim – they were all created in the image of the Father. The angel sons of God sang together and shouted for joy as they saw the different creations. When it came time to make a still different order of creatures, an order that had never before existed, namely, human beings, God carried out through the Logos His purpose of creating man in His own image, His own likeness. And God declared Himself well pleased with man.

A description of the first man is given us in the Eighth Psalm: "Thou hast made him a little lower than the angels, and hast crowned him with glory and honor. Thou madest him to have dominion over the works of Thy hands; Thou hast put all things under his feet; all sheep and oxen, yea, and the beasts of the field, the fowl of the air, and the fish of the sea." Adam was the master or king of all these. He represented something that the angels did not represent; for none of them were ever set over anything. God Himself is the Ruler of all, and Adam and the Logos were the only ones who were in any sense of the word *set over* anything.

When God made man, He made him like Himself in this particular – that he had a dominion. When the angels were created, they were God manifest in different orders of beings – cherubim, seraphim and the lower orders of angels. When it came to the creation of *man*, he was made in God's image. God was manifest in *flesh*. But we cannot say that God is manifest in fallen flesh now. The original likeness to God has been obliterated by sin. The reign of Sin and Death has to a considerable extent erased these traces of God's image. And the Scriptures plainly show us that we have lost this image and likeness of the Creator.

Adam was called a son of God because he was in covenant relationship with God; but when he became a sinner, he lost this relationship. None of the Jews were sons of God. Abraham was styled a *friend* of God. Although God had approved of Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, the Prophets and others in Israel, and indicated that a great blessing would be theirs, they could not be treated as *sons*. God said, in substance, when speaking to Abraham, My *friend*, I will make with *you* My Covenant. "In thy Seed shall all the families of the earth be blessed."

GOD MANIFEST IN PERFECT HUMANITY

But everything must wait until that great antitypical Seed of Abraham should come. We have the record of how this One would come who was to be the Deliverer, **[R5291 : page 243]** the Antitypical Seed of Abraham. After reasoning about the Logos – how He was made flesh and dwelt amongst them – St. John declares that Jesus had the glory of the Only Begotten of the Father, full of grace, full of truth. This was the way above all others in which God was manifest in the flesh.

When the lower animals saw Adam, they saw the very best representation of God possible to them. Nothing could be made in the flesh that would be more like God. And when the time came for God to send His Son into the world, He set before Him the great

privilege of being man's Redeemer. And when He was made flesh, all those who beheld Him saw the glory of the Only Begotten of the Father. When any looked upon Him, they saw the Father in the most absolute sense in which it would be possible for them to see Him.

God said to Moses, "No man shall see My face and live." Saul of Tarsus merely had a glimpse of Jesus glorified, and yet the glory was so great that if he had had a full look he would not have lived. Jesus *was* the express image of the Father. Jesus *is* the express image of the Father. And if no man can see God and live, then he cannot see the glorified Jesus and live.

GOD MANIFEST IN THE PRINCES

But God has made a provision that when Christ's Kingdom shall be established amongst men, there will be earthly representatives through whom Messiah will govern and uplift mankind during the thousand years. God has just such a class prepared and ready for this work – Abraham, Isaac and Jacob and the other Ancient Worthies. These are to be counted worthy of an instantaneous awakening to human perfection. These experience no change of nature in their resurrection, because they were not begotten of the Spirit. There was no one begotten of the Spirit until Pentecost, except our Lord at Jordan. "The Holy Spirit was not yet given, because that Jesus **[R5291 : page 244]** was not yet glorified." Therefore those Ancient Worthies had merely the testimony that they pleased God. Because of their loyalty to God and the principles of righteousness, some of these Ancient Worthies "were stoned; some were sawn asunder; some were tempted; some were slain with the sword; they wandered about in sheepskins and goatskins; being destitute, afflicted, tormented; of whom the world was not worthy." – Hebrews 11:37,38.

These, although they had received God's Promise, received not the things promised them. For instance, God had promised Abraham, "All the land which thou seest will I give unto thee."

Abraham must have a resurrection in order for God's Word to come true. He must get that land. But there was no suggestion to Abraham of glory, honor, and immortality – no suggestion to him of becoming a partaker of the Divine nature and a joint-heir with Jesus. See Acts 7:5; Hebrews 11:8-10,17,39,40.

This began with Jesus. Christ has not only brought to men the knowledge of life and immortality, but also that there is a privilege of gaining this life with Him: "Which salvation began to be spoken by our Lord, and was confirmed unto us by them that heard Him." (Hebrews 2:3.) But the Ancient Worthies had the faith to *believe God*, to *trust His Promise* and to *wait* for the *fulfilment* of that Promise. They merely had the intimation that God would roll away the curse. And Abraham's Seed was to be the glorious channel of God's blessing – "In thee and in thy Seed shall all the families of the earth be blessed." So St. Paul tells us that they received not the things promised them, "God having provided some better thing for us [the Gospel Church], that they without us should not be made perfect." – Hebrews 11:40.

The Ancient Worthies cannot get their blessing before we get ours. The Bride must be glorified, and then the faithful of the past can come in and get their blessing. Then forthwith the Kingdom will be established. And Abraham, Isaac and Jacob and all the other Worthies will be the first children of Christ. Instead of being the fathers, they will be the children, and He will make them princes, rulers in all the earth. (Psalm 45:16.) Being resurrected perfect men, they will be the perfect images of God. In each one of these Ancient Worthies God will be manifest in the flesh. They will be princes at that time and will rule the earth, under Christ's Kingdom.

Jesus corroborated this thought when He said, "Ye shall see Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, and all the Prophets, in the Kingdom of God." (Luke 13:28.) Of Himself He said, "Yet a little while, and the world seeth Me *no more*." (John 14:19.) If we should not be

changed to spirit conditions by the power of our resurrection, we would not see him any more than will others who will continue on the human plane. Those who have died in Christ, and those "who are alive and remain," will, at His manifestation, be made like Him, be "changed, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye." At the moment of our change we shall see not only our Lord, but all the holy angels – all on the spirit plane, who are now invisible to us. They can see humanity, but humanity cannot see them.

God was manifest in the flesh; first, in the case of Adam; secondly, in the case of Jesus; and thirdly, He will be manifest in the flesh of those Ancient Worthies, who will be reckoned deserving of a *better resurrection* than the rest of the world.

OUR LORD'S BEAUTY OF HOLINESS

When in derision the soldiers placed upon the head of our Lord a crown of thorns, and arrayed him in a purple robe, and led Him into the judgment hall, Pilate looked upon Him in admiration, and exclaimed, "Behold the Man!" or (see Strong's Concordance) "Behold the countenance!" I am a Gentile and not of your race, but here you have sent to me for sentence the most glorious Jew on earth! None can have a really beautiful character without the inner beauty being reflected in the face. If a man be a vicious character, he cannot hide it from his features. If he be of a loving disposition, it will show in his face. What, then, shall we think of our Lord! His face must have been one of marvelous beauty! No wonder the people flocked to see Him because of His graciousness of speech and His wonderful beauty – the image of God!

The Psalmist has asked, "What is man, that Thou art mindful of him? and the son of man, that Thou visitest [carest for] him? For Thou hast made him a little lower than the angels, Thou hast crowned him with glory and honor." (Psalm 8:4,5.) But man has fallen into sin, alienation, darkness! The Satanic influence works sin and has brought about man's fall from the image of his Creator. It is

God's great purpose to bring humanity back from sin and imperfection. He will uplift all those who desire to be righteous.

"We see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honor [the perfection of human nature]; that He by the grace [favor] of God should taste death for every man." (Hebrews 2:9.) We see the broad basis of God's Plan laid in the redemptive work at Calvary. We see that it must be the Redeemer's life that would be the price of human redemption. "For since by man came death, by man comes also the resurrection of the dead. For as all in Adam die, even so all in Christ shall be made alive. But every man in his own order; Christ [the Anointed, the Messiah class], the first fruits; afterwards they that are Christ's at His Coming [Greek, during His presence]." (I Corinthians 15:21-23.) Jesus says, "Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the First Resurrection." Such shall be kings and priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with Him a thousand years. – Rev. 20:6.

So, then, "God manifest in the flesh" was clearly exhibited in the Man Christ Jesus, in His perfection. But God was specially and more particularly manifest in the flesh of Jesus when He presented Himself to John at Jordan, as He reached the period of thirty years of age, and there gave Himself sacrificially. "Lo, I come (in the volume of the Book it is written of Me) to do Thy will, O God." There He offered Himself without spot, in harmony with God's will. And the Divine acceptance was indicated in the form of a dove coming upon Him – not that the Holy Spirit is like a dove, but that God gave the outward manifestation so that John would have some means of identification of the Messiah, so that he could say, "I *saw* the Spirit descending from Heaven, like a dove, and it abode upon Him."

From the time of Jesus' baptism God dwelt in Him in a peculiar manner; as the Apostle John says of the Church, God dwelleth in us and we in God. (I John 4:16.) The Father took up His abode in Jesus,

and qualified Him to make known the Divine Plan. Our Lord said, "The Spirit of the Lord God is upon Me, because He hath anointed Me to preach the Gospel to the poor; He hath sent Me to heal the broken-hearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised, to preach the acceptable year of the Lord." – Luke 4:16-21; Isaiah 61:1-3.

OUR LORD'S TEMPTATION IN THE WILDERNESS

From the time when Jesus received the Holy Spirit, we read that the Heavenly things were made known unto **[R5292 : page 245]** Him. For as the Apostle says, "The natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God...neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned." When Jesus, therefore, received the begetting of the Holy Spirit, He received spiritual discernment. He came to see how the types of the Old Testament fitted to Himself. He saw that the serpent in the wilderness represented Himself.

When He saw these things, we remember that He was in the wilderness. He had the entire Scriptures in His mind. From childhood He had been in the habit of attending the synagogue; and with His perfect mind, the Scriptures would be thoroughly engraved there. He could quote any Scripture ad libitum. And when Satan quoted the Scriptures, Jesus understood them.

At the end of the forty days, when Jesus was weak from fasting, was the most favorable time for the Adversary to tempt Him. When He had before Him the thought of all the shame and ignominy connected with His sacrificial death, it would be enough to make any one's heart quail! The moment when He realized that He was to be counted as a blasphemer, and contrary to God, was the most opportune moment for Satan. And the Father permitted Him to be tempted – permitted the Adversary to tempt Him at this particular time.

Then Satan addressed himself to the mind of our Lord: I know you very well. We had a long acquaintance in the past, and I know the mission on which you have come. You do not realize, I know, the power that came upon You when You were baptized. I beheld how the power of God came upon You. You have need only to command these stones to be turned into bread. I realize that You can do a great work, and I would like to join with You in the matter. But first of all, You should have something to eat.

Jesus knew Satan – He knew that Satan was Lucifer, who had rebelled against the Divine Government, and who was imprisoned on this planet. When Satan appeared to Jesus, we may be sure that he tried to appear as an angel of light, and to pretend that he wished to be on God's side, and that he now wished to co-operate with God. But Jesus knew that His power was not given Him for the purpose of sustaining His life, and He would not yield to the temptation.

Therefore Satan next took Him to a high mountain – this was in the spirit of their minds – and showed Him how he – Satan – was "the prince of this world" and all the kingdoms thereof. And he said, You see, then, that I have the power to help You. Can You afford to be without such assistance? I am in sympathy with You. You will save mankind and deliver them all from death. Instead of your having to suffer, as God's Plan is, we will work together, and You shall not have to suffer. But first, You must acknowledge *me*. That was the way I started out. I wanted to show what kind of a kingdom I could set up. I said, "I will ascend into Heaven, I will exalt my throne above the stars of God: I will sit also upon the mount of the congregation, in the sides of the north: I will ascend above the heights of the clouds; I will be like the Most High," I will have an empire of my own. I advise You to come in and share with me. I will give You all the glory You could ask. I intend to be the prince of this world. Do You not see that everything is in my hands?

But in these temptations Jesus conquered. And the victory was so complete that Satan thought it not worth while to tempt Him again! He thought that if He could not move Jesus when He was on the verge of starvation, it was of no use to try any further. So he never made another attempt, so far as the record goes.

THE INCARNATION THEORY NOT SCRIPTURAL

After this, as Jesus went about doing good, healing the sick, and preaching to the people, everything was in perfect conformity to the Father's will. If the Father had been there incarnated in a fleshly body, He could not have done His own will more perfectly. But Jesus was not *incarnated*. The incarnation of our Lord is only a theory invented during the Dark Ages. For He humbled Himself to become a *man*, and "became obedient unto death, even the *death of the cross*. Wherefore God also hath highly exalted Him, and given Him a name which is above every name: that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow (both in Heaven and in the earth)...and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father." – Philippians 2:8-11.

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