

The background of the cover is a deep blue with vertical streaks of lighter blue and white, creating a sense of depth and movement. There are several glowing points of light, particularly on the left side, which add to the ethereal and spiritual feel of the design.

The Hope of Glory

David DePra

Even the mystery which hath been hid from ages and from generations, but now is made manifest to his saints: To whom God would make known what is the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles; which is Christ in you, the hope of glory: Whom we preach, warning every man, and teaching every man in all wisdom; that we may present every man perfect in Christ Jesus: Whereunto I also labor, striving according to his working, which worketh in me mightily.

Christianity is, "Christ in you." But you will notice that attached to, "Christ in you," is the phrase, "The hope of glory." The word, "hope," that is translated in the English NT means, "a positive and confident expectation." Thus, it carries no sense of uncertainty as the word often does today. No. "Hope," speaks of an expectation based on

the Truth that I know. Thus, we have, "Christ in you, the expectation of glory."

Can we see that Paul is talking about the present reality of Christ in the believer – but pointing towards a greater realization? In Romans, he defines his usage of this word, "hope." He says, "For we are saved by hope: but hope that is seen is not hope: for if a man sees, why does he yet hope for? But if we hope for that we see not, then do we with patience wait for it." (Rom. 8:24-25) In short, Christ in us during this age is all unto something that will not be fully seen until the next age. That is why Christ in us is our HOPE of glory.

Christ in us NOW is, "the hope of glory." But all through the NT, we are told that this, "hope of glory," is unto, "the REALIZATION of the fullness of His glory." And we are directly involved. In fact, Paul says, "For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with **the glory which**

shall be revealed in us...For the earnest expectation of the creature waits for the manifestation of the sons of God." (Rom. 8:18-19) Note: His glory – not our glory – but HIS glory is to be revealed, not merely TO US, but actually IN US. This is the full manifestation of the sons of God – when Christ, who is NOW the, "hope of glory," will be fully manifested IN HIS PEOPLE as the full, "realization of the God's glory."

This is the purpose towards which God is working through the indwelling of Christ in us NOW. It is the inheritance of God's people – the full realization of Jesus Christ in us – in a resurrected body THEN.

Face to Face

***For now we see through a glass,
darkly; but then face to face:
now I know in part; but then
shall I know even as also I am
known. (I Cor. 13:12)***

Here we see another contrast between the experience of those in

Christ during THIS age, and what will be the case in the NEXT age. "NOW, see through a glass darkly, but THEN face to face." See what? See Jesus Christ. God.

The glass through which we see Jesus Christ now is natural man. Not necessarily sinful man, but natural man. Even though Christ dwells in the believer, and this does equip us with the capacity to grow to see Jesus Christ, in this age, and in this body, we will never be completely free from the natural. In one way or another, we are going to see Christ through -- and even interpret Him through -- what we are in our natural man. Much of the Christian life is a matter of God setting us free from doing so. But in the end, this is why faith is so vital.

But I Cor. 13 we are told about the future. The last phrase in the above verse says it all: "THEN I shall know even as also I am known." During this age, there are times when I cannot see God. There are other times when I do not see Him

clearly. But regardless, God sees me. Right now, I am known by God. We are being told that there will come a point at which all of the natural will be transformed and we will know God and His Son, Jesus Christ, face to face – we will know God as He already knows us.

Little children will often cover their eyes if they are shy – somehow they think that if they cannot see you, that you cannot see them. But note: In their innocent attempt to keep you from seeing them, they block their ability to see you. It is like this with God – if we think we are keeping Him from seeing us we are only blocking our own ability to see Him. This is why coming into the light and confessing our sin and need is vital – if we open ourselves to God it does nothing to help Him see us. But it makes it possible for us to see Him. There will always be limitations in this age. But God wants us to open to Him NOW, for it is His will for us to see Him THEN, face to face.

What is being described here is what it means to have God, and His Son, Jesus Christ fully revealed IN US. If we are joined to the Lord NOW (I Cor. 6:17), we are still encumbered by this natural. But at the resurrection, the natural body will be no more. We will be released from it and be able to fully experience the fullness of Jesus Christ – through the means of a resurrected body. In effect, there will no longer be a dark glass through which to experience the Lord. We will see Him and experience Him face to face.

"THEN I shall know even as also I am known." That is an unbelievable promise. God knows me so thoroughly that to Him, whether I sense it or not, I am as if totally transparent. "Neither is there any creature that is not manifest in his sight: but all things *are* naked and opened unto the eyes of him with whom we have to do." (Heb. 4:13) We are being promised that when these things come to pass, we shall know GOD in this very same way

that He knows us. God is NOW preparing us for such a revelation, indeed, for such a life in Himself.

When He Shall Appear

Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it does not yet appear what we shall be: 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)

The verse could be paraphrased:

It has never yet been made manifest what we shall be, but we know that when what we are in Christ is manifested, that it will be out of His likeness, and that this will enable us to see Him as He is. This is based on the original Greek (per M.R. Vincent).

It is an awesome thought. If you think about this, it means that what will be manifested is the new creature that we are in Christ – Christ FULLY manifested through us -- without the limits of the natural.

This is the same Truth we saw in I Cor. 13:12: "For now we see through a glass, darkly; but then face to face: now I know in part; but then shall I know even as also I am known." And, "Eye has not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him." (I Cor. 2:9)

These are tremendous promises that are spoken of throughout the NT. They speak of God's eternal purposes for the ages yet to come – this is what He is preparing for His saints. Thus, it does behoove us to grasp the Truth about how God is now doing this in Christ.

First, what God is NOT doing. In this day and age, many think that it is God's will to make us, "look like Jesus." But the sense in which people mean this is that we are to become xerox copies of Him. No. Believers are never to merely look like Jesus. Rather, Jesus is to live in them, and thus, through God's working, be manifested THROUGH

them. This is no mere distinction. It is a Truth that is essential to grasp.

One problem with the notion that we are to, "look like Jesus," is the means by which we are made to look like Jesus. Some folks suggest that God, through His Spirit, acts upon us, and does things TO us, that will mold and shape US to look like His Son. Some say that this is how God builds Christian character in His people. We cooperate with God in this process, we are told, by making the right choices of faith, and by obeying the right principles, and over time, we begin to look like Jesus. But most of the time, the people who teach this are unwittingly referring to natural man. We think that God wants to grab hold of our natural man and shape him into the image of Christ. We would not actually say that, but in the end, this is the meaning of Christian growth, sanctification, or Christian character, under the definition of many.

What is missing here? Christ is missing, or, more importantly, the realization of Christ in us. Few of us have ever been told that Christianity is CHRIST IN US. We have never been told that God's great purpose in this age is NOT to form us to look like Jesus, but to form CHRIST IN US. (Gal. 4:19) God does want us to be, "conformed to the image of His Son." (Rom. 8:29) But the Greek means, "to be formed together with Him." In short, we are not to be made to, "look like Jesus." Rather, Christ is to be manifested through us.

So how does God form Christ in us? How does Christ, once formed in us, come to be manifested through us? Not by law-keeping. Not by plugging into a religious system that promises to, "build into us Christian character." Neither will Christ ever be manifested through us if we try to act like Him. No. Think about it. Who alone is able to look like Christ? Christ Himself. Who alone is to BE our life? Christ in us. Therefore, when the Bible speaks of

a saint manifesting Christ, it means exactly that. Paul said it best, "Yet not I, but Christ." (Gal. 2:20)

Paul gives a clear explanation of how Christ comes to be manifested in a saint:

But we have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the excellency of the power may be of God, and not of us. We are troubled on every side, yet not distressed; we are perplexed, but not in despair; Persecuted, but not forsaken; cast down, but not destroyed; 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. For we which live are always delivered unto death for Jesus' sake, that the life also of Jesus might be made manifest in our mortal flesh. (II Cor. 4:7-11)

The only way in which I can come to manifest Jesus is by coming to the Cross DAILY and LOSING myself

to Him. (see Matt. 16:24-25) In other words, instead of trying to make myself look like Jesus, I need to die in Jesus. Only then will my life decrease and His resurrection life increase. It will be, "yet not I, but Christ."

What is sanctification? Is it a matter of me looking more like Jesus? No. It is a matter of me leaving myself alone to Him at the Cross and dying to my own righteousness and to my own self. Then, if I do this by real faith, Christ will be seen – because He is already in me. In short, sanctification is Christ – it is the Christ in me being manifested.

Paul said this directly:

That no flesh should glory in his presence. But of him are you in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption: That, according as it is written, He that glories, let

***him glory in the Lord. (I Cor.
1:29-31)***

If Christ is in us, then as we begin to, "bear about in our body the dying of the Lord Jesus," then He will be formed in us, and us together with Him – "the life also of the Lord Jesus will be made manifest in our mortal bodies." This is sanctification.

Those who manifest Christ the most in this age are probably those least aware of it. That is because they have lost themselves – have left themselves alone – and are simply abiding in Him by faith. This is what happens when we die to ourselves – we die to our own righteousness and we no longer under any law that supposedly tells us where we stand with God. We aren't forever fussing with ourselves, trying to make our flesh behave so that we can be right with God. This abandonment of our spiritual lives to God never leads to license. It is actually the only way to freedom from sin. We are abiding in Christ

as our life and living from out of Him in faith unto obedience.

Now, what does this have to do with the resurrection? What does it have to do with that day when we will be like Him, because we shall see Him, face to face, just as He is? It has everything to do with it. Indeed, it is for that purpose that all that God is doing through Christ points. God is preparing us NOW – through the revealing of Christ in us – for that day when all will come into fullness. Again -- "It has never yet been made manifest what we shall be, but we know that when what we are in Christ is manifested, that it will be out of His likeness, and that this will enable us to see Him as He is." What we are in Christ is not yet fully seen – because we cannot fully realize Christ. But God is already working to make a home in us for Christ. The groundwork for eternal oneness with God is being laid in this age. But then, in the resurrection, we will see Christ just as He is – and because He is already revealed in

us during this age, we will come into a full realization of Christ, and fully manifest Him through the resurrected body in the next age.

Hopefully, we can see that this is not about our glory. It is about His glory. We don't have any glory – and by the time God is done with us, we will not only realize this, but we won't want any glory. But we are the recipients of all that He is. Then He is able to live through us. We get to know HIM, see HIM face to face, and fully realize HIM. This is the glory – HIS glory – that is to be revealed IN US.

The Body of His Glory

***For our citizenship is in heaven;
from whence also we look for
the Savior, the Lord Jesus
Christ: Who shall change our
vile body, that it may be
fashioned like unto his glorious
body, according to the working
whereby he is able even to
subdue all things unto himself.
(Phil 3:20-21)***

According to Greek scholar M. R. Vincent, this passage is not translated well. It could read, "Who shall fashion our present limited bodies to conform to the body of His glory." The last part of the passage suggests that this fashioning has begun NOW – but that it is all unto the point where, at the resurrection, we will be clothed upon with a body that is able to contain and manifest HIS GLORY. In short, Christianity in this age is, "Christ in you, the HOPE of glory, but then, at the resurrection, there is no more need for hope, so it will be, "Christ in us, the REALIZATION OF HIS GLORY."

There are a number of ways to say the same thing. We might say that today, through the forming of Christ in us, that we are being prepared to fully contain and manifest the fullness of Christ in a resurrected body. By comparison, this is limited in our natural, or, "vile," body – we are joined to the Lord in spirit for this age – and can manifest Him to a certain extent. But it is only then

that our body will one that can fully contain and manifest Him.

It is little wonder why the apostle Paul could barely find the words to express the purpose of God for His people. One place he tried was in Romans 8:

And if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ; if so be that we suffer with him, that we may be also glorified together. For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us. (Rom 8:17-18)

There are a number of expressions in the Bible that seem a little odd to our way of speaking. For example, Paul says we are, "in Christ." He says there is life, "in Christ Jesus." (John 1:4) These seem odd to us because we tend to think of things in physical terms. Paul is speaking spiritually – when he says we are, "in Christ," he is referring to our spiritual oneness with Him. And

when he says that life is, "in Christ Jesus," he is talking about Christ being the living source of all life.

In the above passage is another one of those expressions. Paul speaks of glory that will be revealed IN US. What does that mean? Well, as noted, it goes back to the fact that the core of Christianity is, "Christ in us, the HOPE of glory." (Col. 1:27) In other words, Christ already dwells in us – and HE is the hope of the glory spoken of by Paul in Romans 8. How so? If Christ is being FORMED in us (Gal. 4:19), and we are being formed together with Him (Rom. 8:29), then this is setting the stage for the time when, "we may be glorified together," with Him. In other words, He is creating IN US a spiritual union with Himself – much of it through suffering -- that is wonderful now -- although it will be released only to fullness in the eternal ages.

Note that it is not we who are glorified apart from Christ, as Xerox copies of Him, but we are glorified

together with Christ – it is HIS glory revealed in us – it is all HIS body of glory. In short, God is now forming Christ in us – but when we are changed at the resurrection, we will be loosed from this natural body and be able to realize the fullness of His life IN US – and we will manifest His glory through us. This is the great purpose of God in Christ unto the ages yet to come. If you want to know whether you will be able to manifest the fullness of Jesus Christ THEN, ask whether you are doing it NOW.

The Body of Christ

God is working His purpose in individuals so that He can have a purpose through the collective Body of Christ. Never get this backwards – Christ is first in you personally. That is the only reason you are in His Body. You cannot get saved, or right with God, by going first to the Body. No. Christ must be in YOU. Christ is being formed first in individuals. That is the only reason

Christ can then be seen in His greater Body.

Having made known unto us the mystery of his will, according to his good pleasure which he has purposed in himself: that in the dispensation of the fullness of times he might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven, and which are on earth; even in him. (Eph 1:9-10)

This passage is telling us that it is the purpose of God to gather all things in Christ – the meaning of which is to glue them all together by the Person of His Son, in the perfect will of God. Things cannot be gathered or glued within the will of God in any other way. In fact, God will unglue all else.

The Body of Christ is the first fruits of this purpose, now, in this age. God is gathering or forming a body that will hold His fullness: "God has put all things under his feet, and gave him to be the head over all things to the church, which is his

body, the fullness of him that fills all in all." (Eph 1:22-23) But this is all unto an eternal purpose – for the ages yet to come. It is by Christ through His Body in the ages yet to come that God intends to work out the fullness of His Redemption: "For the earnest expectation of the creature waits for the manifestation of the sons of God. (Rom 8:19)

The Body of Christ that is formed in this age is to be an instrument of God's greater redemption in the next: That in the ages to come he might show the exceeding riches of his grace in his kindness toward us through Christ Jesus. (Eph. 2:7) The plan of God is rooted here, in this age, but it has a never-ending, and far-reaching impact in the ages yet to come.

All One In Christ

Who now rejoice in my sufferings for you, and fill up that which is behind of the afflictions of Christ in my flesh for his body's sake, which is the church. (Col. 1:24)

Christ is building His Body. He has been for the last two-thousand years. The Body of Christ consists of all who have been in Christ. It is at the resurrection that all who are in Christ will be gathered together. Until then we are one with Him in Spirit, and one with each other in spirit.

The fact that Christ is using each member to contribute themselves to His greater Body – and that much of this is for the eternal ages – is clear in scripture. For example, there can be suffering in the life of the saint that is not for that saint alone. To the extent that we are allowing God to use our sufferings to form Christ in us, we are benefiting the entire Body of Christ. How? Paul said in II Cor. 4: "For we which live are always delivered unto death for Jesus' sake, that the life also of Jesus might be made manifest in our mortal flesh. So then **death works in us, but life in you.**" (II Cor. 4:11-12) If I carry my personal Cross it will result in LIFE – His life being released, not only in me, but

in His Body as a whole – for we are all one IN CHRIST.

The members of the Body of Christ are, "connected spiritually," with each other ONLY through the Vine. Thus, if Christ is revealed in me, there is an impact upon all others who are abiding in Him. The members cannot edify each other by merely abiding in each other. No. Only if I abide in Christ as my personal Vine, and you abide in Christ as your personal Vine, do we have, "communion," IN CHRIST – and the life that He makes manifest in me can then impact you, and visa versa.

Sufferings for Christ's sake NOW do contribute to the life of the Body NOW. But there is more to His Body than only the saints who are alive NOW. All who have been in Christ down through the ages constitute the Body of Christ. Thus, all the sufferings in them that produced the life of Christ contribute to ALL who are in the Body of Christ – the

Body that God has been building for the eternal ages.

This Truth brings light to another, often confusing, passage:

Else what shall they do which are baptized for the dead, if the dead rise not at all? why are they then baptized for the dead? And why stand we in jeopardy every hour? I protest by your rejoicing which I have in Christ Jesus our Lord, I die daily. If after the manner of men I have fought with beasts at Ephesus, what advantages it me, if the dead rise not? let us eat and drink; for to morrow we die. (I Cor. 15:29-32)

To be, "baptized for the dead," means to be subjected to that which, if we yield, "fills up that which is behind of the afflictions of Christ in my flesh for his body's sake." In other words, I am immersed into the death of Christ – into a spiritual baptism – as a contribution to those who are dead

in Christ. They are part of His Body and they may have done the same for me. This is talking about the fact that, yes, our suffering may be personal, and produce individual results. But any death in me will also be life unto others in the Body. And again, in this passage, we see that the greater purpose is for the ages yet to come.

The Resurrected Body or Soma

So also is the resurrection of the dead. It is sown in corruption; it is raised in incorruption: It is sown in dishonor; it is raised in glory: it is sown in weakness; it is raised in power: It is sown a natural body; it is raised a spiritual body. There is a natural body, and there is a spiritual body. (1 Cor 15:42-44)

There seems to be a common misconception that at the resurrection we are going to have our natural bodies REPLACED with a spiritual body. But the Bible indicates that rather than replace our natural with the spiritual, the

natural will be CHANGED to a spiritual body. In other words, there is a one-on-one correspondence between the natural body and the resurrected body. It is the SAME body.

But we must understand the meaning of BODY. The word for, "body, " in the Greek NT is SOMA. It can mean the physical body, but often is used to denote some of the immaterial dimensions of man's makeup. For example, Paul writes, "If Christ is in you, though the body is dead because of sin, the spirit is life...(Rom. 8:10) Your physical body isn't dead if Christ is in you. Paul also talks of, "the body (SOMA) of sin." (Rom. 6:6) These and other usages suggest that the more complete definition of SOMA, as used in the NT, would be, "the sum of man's earthly nature."

This opens up passages like the one above. It tells us that our entire earthly nature – physical body included – is going to be changed to that which is spiritual. Indeed,

we are told elsewhere, that it is going to be changed so that it can both contain and manifest the fullness of Jesus Christ.

This only makes sense: We are certainly not going to have an earthly nature in any way once we are raised. The corruptible must put on incorruption:

***Behold, I shew you a mystery;
We shall not all sleep, but we
shall all be changed, In a
moment, in the twinkling of an
eye, at the last trump: for the
trumpet shall sound, and the
dead shall be raised
incorruptible, and we shall be
changed. For this corruptible
must put on incorruption, and
this mortal must put on
immortality. So when this
corruptible shall have put on
incorruption, and this mortal
shall have put on immortality,
then shall be brought to pass
the saying that is written, Death
is swallowed up in victory. (I
Cor. 15:51-54)***

From many of these passages, we can see that what will pass through death and be resurrected in Christ at the end of the age is only what is OF CHRIST – indeed, what is able to manifest the fullness of Christ. Read I Corinthians 3. That is the Truth in that passage.

An Eternal Inheritance

In whom also we have obtained an inheritance....in whom also after that you believed, you were sealed with that Holy Spirit of promise...which is the earnest of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession, unto the praise of his glory. (Eph. 1:11-14)

This translation is a bit misleading. According to M.R. Vincent, it should read, "In whom we were made a heritage people." It is only if we are IN Christ that we are MADE a heritage people. Sure. Another way to describe God's plan of inheritance is like this: The Father,

the only begotten Son, and all those who are IN the Son. It is IN HIM – who is THE seed of Abraham – that we are made the seed of Abraham. (see Gal. 3:16, 28-29) All that God has to give to man is wrapped up in Christ. It is only in Him that we can receive anything from God.

The inheritance that God has for us is Christ Himself. Christ in us NOW through the Spirit of God is the earnest – the down payment -- of the full inheritance. As noted, Christ in us is the HOPE of glory. But at the resurrection, the fullness of Jesus Christ will be manifested and experienced IN US – in a resurrected body. It is then that the HOPE of glory will become the REALIZATION of glory for God in His people.