***“What Child Is This?”*** by S. Finlan

At First Church, December 24, 2018

**John 18:37 NRSV**

For this I was born, and for this I came into the world, to testify to the truth.

“What child is this?” Yes, that is the question. This is *really* asking, “what is the purpose of this special birth? When this child grows up, what will be his life’s work?” Basically, it is asking, “What is the purpose of the Incarnation?”

That’s the theological term for what is happening—one of the persons of the Godhead coming to live an earth life! We know that God knows everything, but here, the Son of God would know an earth life from the inside, from within a human body and everything that it could feel. He lived in a family, a culture, and a society, and experienced all the friendship, joy, and sorrow that people experience.

Jesus, in his life, not only revealed God to humankind, but also revealed humankind to God, or at least, what a human being *can* be. He came to bring beauty, goodness, and truth—*living* truth—to the earth, and to bring earth life closer to the heavenly life. He prayed “Your kingdom come, your will be done, on *earth* as it is in *heaven*” (Matt 6:10). It *should* be “as above, so below.” Our world should *not* be so barbaric, but should more closely resemble the heavenly life, where peace and learning and growth are expected and normal.

The Son of God brought heaven to earth, and he is slowly bringing earth to heaven, although it certainly doesn’t seem like it when we encounter human evil, which is severe. But if we cherish the light that is within us, we become like stars shining in the darkness, bringing more light into the world. “On earth, as it is in heaven.” That is our goal. It is what we pray, and it is what we can help *bring about*, even with our small individual lights. Many small lights together are powerful. We can all play a part in the illumination of the world.