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Omnipresent Presence

GENEVIEVE BURNELL

Omnipresent Presence

Lecture Chamber
Merry Christmas

689

in the series

Procession *from* Doctrine

by

GENEVIEVE BURNELL

Mr. and Mrs. Alan Grant Keim

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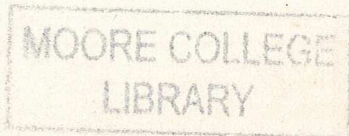
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* Omnipresent Presence

If the Ascension of Jesus Christ was a merely historical event taking place in a geographical spot on the earth some two thousand years ago, and if it marked the end of His activity among men, then it would hold no interest for us beyond that of any item of history. Unless we were historians, we would accept the fact and let it go at that, and go on to things more interesting, entertaining, or vital to our welfare. But it is not so. The Eternal is eternal; it does not dissolve nor come to an end.

The Ascension is more than history, for its value does not end with the event—it is *His Story*—the story of our Lord's final expression of love in giving Himself totally to us—to you—here—now. He even said this very plainly in unmistakable language; in this case, even

(*Class Lecture, May 26, 1957)

the parabolic form of His teaching prior to the Crucifixion was set aside, that He might speak to them plainly: It is expedient for YOU that I go . . . so that I may send the Comforter . . . for Lo, I am with you always.

What do you think these words mean? Do you believe Him? If not, why not? He is saying something that would really transform your life if you could accept it with the simplicity of the words themselves. In fact, the words are so utterly simple that no one should fail to understand the meaning. Actual faith in these words would mean to you the ascension of your life into participation with that way of life He Himself suggested in the Lord's Prayer—on earth as it is in heaven.

Only the prodigal mind, with its sophistications and complexities, could cloud the words. Yet even then, while the mind may obscure the meaning for you—and that quite indefinitely—it can never destroy reality nor subtract from the essential being; it can only form a cloud of obscuration, hindering your clear vision,

until such a moment as you are able to see through that fog.

As we move in our perception toward the day called "The Ascension," we are being prepared for a deeper and greater vision, a vision that is not dependent upon the perceptive organs nor upon the mind of those organs, but, rather, upon vision itself that gives revelation of the miracle of transubstantiation. The Lord is preparing His followers—His Disciples standing immediately before Him and those of us standing farther off in time and space—for this deeper and more complete vision, a purity of perception.

He has announced the fittingness of His departure, which is actually no departure at all except as far as human senses are concerned. He has told us how important it is, how expedient it is for us that He remove Himself materially and physically from our view, and give to us, instead of His finite presence, His omnipresence. He is preparing for His eternal Presence by the ascending of His temporal

presence. In the name of Jesus Christ, He has transubstantiated presence into omnipresence.

The mind, of course, raises objections, because the mind is prone to arguments. It tries to make differences—to divide the finiteness of a thing from infinite reality. The mind says that a name is the property of a thing. So in designating and naming things, our mind seems to give support to this idea of separation and finiteness.

The Ascension of the Lord is not going to remove His actual living presence, but only His presence as a "thing"; so that as we speak the Name of Jesus Christ, we pronounce His presence in a way far greater than the things of this world.

There is a lection delivered by my father, Mr. Burnell, which gives special insight into the subject under consideration. It is called *"Gibraltar." This account describes the validity of the Lord's Name as Presence. "Gibraltar" reveals true security and at the same time

*Chronicle of Reality 68, by George Edwin Burnell

exposes the humiliation of the mind when it is being throttled in its tendency to separate so-called "presence" from "spirit." By skillfully put questions, the mind is discovered to loose the hold it has on us when it makes us believe that substance is material. By using the illustration of the Rock of Gibraltar and the reflection of the same rock in the bubble of water, the mind is tested in regard to its judgment of reality. Which is the more permanent, that which is named "the rock," or the reflection of the same rock? The mind, not truth, sets up ideas of difference. The mind says, If Gibraltar stands in a certain geographical location, and in another location the rock is reflected in something—maybe even in a bubble—which offers the greatest permanence, the best security? To the mind, the very name "bubble" lacks security, while the name "rock" symbolizes to the mind, permanence. Mentality is smug in its evaluation of reflections and bubbles, as against rock. The mind is ever intervening between perception and substance,

heedless of the fact that all our perceptions, no matter how material they seem, are mere reflections. When we separate matter and spirit, we have lost the art of true reflection.

Have you found out now, why it is so expedient for us, this ascension of our Lord? Do you sense what it is that He is giving us by seeming to remove from us an addiction to the finite? Actually, He is giving us, in a personal and dramatic manner, a comparable lesson to that which is taught in axioms of reason. Axiomatic reasoning leads us to the threshold of negation. The mind may, in desperation with itself, wish to stop here. But negation is never a stopping point; rather is it a beginning point for revelation of truth, incomprehensible to a mind restricted by human thinking.

Our Lord entered the sepulcher and from there descended into hell, but He did not stop there; He "rose again from the dead," and "ascended into Heaven;" yet still He does not stop, for He continues with the promise that "from thence He shall come again." Nor does

He wish us to stop at His Ascension in our recognition of truth.

The eternal cycle "from God to God" has no stopping point. Our Lord descending from heaven to this earth and passing through this earth ascends to heaven again, yet does not leave us orphans; for the universal cycle is continued in each individual as the very breath of everlasting life. The inbreathing and the outbreathing are one uninterrupted procession of divine life termed, "from God to God." The "from" and the "to" do not indicate a separation and reunion according to the material understanding, but a spiritual reflection.

The mind longs for some stopping place; in the cycles of its thinking activities, it tries to reach an end. But spiritual action has no end other than God Who is also the beginning; therefore the world of reality, the reflection of eternal essence, is perfect fulfillment.

Notice our Lord's demand for continuance: at the event of Ascension, the disciples stood about looking up into the sky where He seemed

to have gone. But He would not let them stand there. With the words, "Men of Galilee, why stand you looking up?" He sent them into Jerusalem again. The perception of negation—even of Himself—is but the beginning of a new and greater perception.

The perception of negation is not an emptiness, but a reflection of infinite Presence. The transmission is placed in negation by the mind, because the old idea of things has vanished to provide for revelation.

Our Lord's great gift to us is His expedient Ascension out of a particular time and space into the revelation of infinitude, eternity, and omnipresence. As we name the Lord Jesus Christ, it is this that we mean by His Presence.

Seeing is no requirement to presence. Whether we see our Lord or not, the pronouncement of His Name is the transmission of Divine Presence. Pronouncing the name of Omnipresence is omnipresence. Because the divine Name is not a mere signature, but is the authority of being, those who pronounce

this Name recognize its power. To actually pronounce the name of Deity is such a great power that only those who have divine wisdom and goodness are granted the privilege.

God's power is not for exploitation. To exercise this great power of the Name, demands such recognition of Presence that it is virtually the Lord Himself Who pronounces it. An arrangement of letters can be vocalized by a parrot. A mechanical robot can call out a name, but the projection of sound is not an act of intelligence on the part of the robot. It takes the divine Presence in man to speak the Name of the Lord with understanding and meaning.

When the Lord was preparing His followers for His Ascension, He said to them, "Up to this time you have asked nothing in My Name." They had been calling Him "Master," but they had not yet used this Name as it could be used.

A twofold meaning may be discovered in the words: You have asked nothing in My

Name. First, they had not asked anything in His Name because they had not recognized that His Name is power; and, second, what they had asked for was truly nothing because whatever is not truth is nothing. But those who use the Name as it is intended, ask for Reality Itself. The Name of Reality is transmission.

We, as Christians, are baptized in His Name: in the Name of the Father, of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. It is not the mere element of water that delivers transmission; but the Name, moving over the face of the water, generates or regenerates in man a new life. Ask in the Name of Truth and you shall receive truth. Truth of Very Truth has given us the power of praying in His Name, that our prayers may engage omnipotence on earth as it is in heaven.

The expediency of Jesus' Ascension is just this, that power on earth may be as the power in heaven. Without the Ascension, people might readily divide in their minds presence from omnipresence, but to separate "Himself"

as Jesus, from "Himself" as the Christ, is forestalled by the Ascension. Thus by ascension the full power of the Name transmits the power of heaven to earth, and the presence on earth to the heavenly omnipresence. No longer is there any sense of separation between name and reality.

To the average person a name seems merely a handle or designator of a substance. And this is true in material categories. But matter is not a transmitter. However, with spiritual substance, a name or a word is the intelligible species wherewith spiritual substance is identified. In fact, to us, spiritual substance is the word or name of its transmission; for, actually, without a name, the infinite cannot be perceived by a finite mind.

Strange to say, in spiritual things there is often a great fear in the minds of some people regarding the doctrine of the Name, lest duality may be thus introduced. Yesterday I talked with a teacher of metaphysics who voiced such a fear. I asked her if she gave her students in-

struction in Christian doctrine, and she answered that occasionally she did mention "The Jesus Story," but only to speak of it as a story. She explained that in speaking of Jesus Christ as a reality she felt she was establishing otherness from God. Any divine relationship in the world seemed to her to be contradicting the omnipresence of God. She could grasp the oneness of God, but not God as a Trinity. She could not perceive nothingness as a mirror revealing the divine unity in an eternal procession of Spirit, nor could she accept the transmission point between all and nothing in the incarnate Son of God Who is God manifesting omnipresence in Presence.

I spoke to her of the gifts of God and she answered, "If you speak of the gifts of God, are you not introducing a thought of something other than God in the form of gifts and a receiver of them?" She had never heard that God's gifts ARE Himself, and that within her, God must be the comprehension of Himself;

that God IS Love, and that the Holy Spirit which is God is Himself named "Gift."

When we speak the name of Jesus Christ, we are not only referring to the historical figure in the flesh, we are speaking the Name of eternal transmission. In the science of the Name, "Jesus" is the transmitter, but the transmission is "Christ."

What has all this to do with the reflection of Gibraltar in a bubble? What we are trying to say is that our judgment concerning solid substance and spiritual reflection is too often misled by confusing the all and the nothing. Truth could not be all unless there were nothing besides truth, and nothing could not be nothing unless truth were all. Because nothing is nothing, there is no place where allness is not present.

Omnipresence is infinite presence—all inclusive presence, but only experienced when we have the perception of nothingness of all that is not truth.

Negation of negation removes every hindrance to the action of all transmission. Then we are able to see God everywhere. He who cannot see God everywhere sees Him nowhere.

The metaphysical mind lacks transmission, for it says: Things are illusions, they are mere hypnosis. It cannot see God everywhere, for it sees only negation and not the negation of negation. To see negation is metaphysics, but to see God is devotion. Nothingness can never be an actual perception, but to see the nothingness of nothing reveals essence itself. The Absolute is Absolute; even though perceived in the mirror of nature, the perception cannot cease to be absolute.

The domineering mind sets up its own obstacles, especially the obstacle of clinging to what it believes. That this mind might let go of its beliefs and enter the realm of pure faith, the Lord knew how expedient it was that He return to the Father. This was to show us that His relation as Son was not a duality, but an identification. As He said: The Father and I

are One; he who has seen Me has seen the Father.

The Word, the Son, returns to the Father because He never leaves the Father. In God there is no separation. God never leaves the world because He is omnipresent. As a sign of His Presence, He leaves His Name, for His Name of "God-With-Us" IS His Presence. The divine Name is not something "other" than God, it is not a substitute for Presence, it is the announcement of vital and living Presence.

We say in the world that we have substance in name only; but if we have in name any sense of substitution, it can only be in our own mind. It is our mind that seems so incapable of grasping eternity and infinity, and, to hide its incapacity, sets up substitutes and finitude. As long as the mind continues to hold the belief of "otherness," name and substance seem like a double aspect. But actually, like reality and reflection, this is not duality, but the revelation of non-duality. Otherness is not overcome by fighting it, but by embracing it. The

more we try to resist illusion, the more persistent is our belief in it.

We feel such a resistance to absence, to lack, to privation, to failure, to missing the mark, that we become fully convinced these beliefs are substantial, and need to be overcome. Like Don Quixote fighting windmills, thinking they are giants, we feel most heroic when we have conquered our problems. But privations can not be battled with, because there is no substance there to manipulate. The power of truth is not in fighting otherness, but in remembering divine allness.

The woman who came to listen and stayed to talk, was full of her own experiences in teaching. She told of her physical weariness when she had finished driving home a lesson in metaphysics. Her point was "oneness" combating "otherness." She was trying to push out of her student's mind the idea of unreality and push in reality. Trying to make truth real is as frustrating as trying to make the false unreal. Wasted effort in both cases!

The only thing that trips up a lie is its nothingness, and the only power that establishes reality is its truth. But what battles are fought in the minds of human beings, trying to drive truth home and drive out delusions! Let us try to remember that truth is not a method; it is a message.

The Lord has given us the greatest object lesson of our lives through the perception of negation of negation. Let us not stand looking upon nothing as though it were something; but in the full and complete perception, which is the nothingness of nothing, let us accept the revelation of the miracle of omnipresence focused in the Name—The Name before which every knee shall bow, on earth, above the earth, and under the earth. Let us not think that by bowing to The Name we are worshiping otherness, for under the sign of The Name is the omnipotent power of Presence.

Why did the Lord leave us His Name when He ascended? He did not leave His Name as

a substitute for Himself, but as a guarantee of His omnipresence. The truth is that if one cannot see God everywhere, even in His Name, one sees Him nowhere. Names do not take the place of substance; they indicate the immediate presence of substance.

Why did the Commandments say: "Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain"? The answer is that when we speak the name of the Lord our God, He Himself is evoked and acknowledged in the Word.

The Lord Himself, our God, Who is reality and truth, has come into our world to carry through, for us, human behaviors in a divine manner. God so loved the world that He sent His only begotten Son, Who is one with Himself, into this world, that those who believe in Him, those who accept Him, might become the sons of God. And how can they become the sons of God? By accepting the fact that, actually, there is no other father than the one Who is in heaven. They become in name what they are in substance.

How are you going to have transmission in a name? It is only by the truth of the name. The name of truth is truth. The name acts as a principle of reflection. We are told in oriental scriptures of the importance of being able to see the world as a bubble. Why should the term "bubble" be used? Certainly not to establish otherness, but actually to indicate the non-duality of substance. A bubble reflects; it does not separate.

When you look in a mirror, you see yourself, not the piece of glass with a frame hanging on the wall. Let us not be like the man described by Saint James in his Epistle, who, beholding his own countenance in a glass, went his way and presently forgot what manner of man he was. We are not to look at the world as a bubble and then think how insecure everything is. Let us not forget what manner of life we have. The bubble acts as a point of transmission, reversing our perceptions and returning them to truth—returning all to God.

God the Son announces His return to the Father Who sent Him. How can truth return to truth when truth is omnipresent? How can presence return to omnipresence when all the presence there is, is God? Truth does not move about from place to place; truth is unchangeable, truth does not leave God to begin on earth—truth is eternal—nor does truth leave this world to dissolve as a bubble. "Lo," said the Word of God, "I am with you always."

The great secret of reflection is not in establishing otherness, but in revealing presence. The mirror of nothingness is not for you to be caught in, nor to become lost in through the vagaries of illusion, but to enable you to recognize truth. The mirror is but the bubble, because the absolute remains absolute. You are not establishing otherness; you are recognizing that there is none other than He Who is the one God.

To deny that there is other than God, is not a forcible contradiction. There is no violent fighting with windmills in the belief they are

giants. Truth does not have to fight non-existence; the fact that truth is all is the best kind of defense. It is the non-existence of otherness that rules out illusion. It is the allness of truth that is our constant and everlasting disentanglement from mental hypnosis.

Release from delusion follows the perception of the nothingness of nothing. At this same point we discover that all there is, is truth. Therefore at the same point where we recognize nothing, the eternal and unchangeable becomes the one Presence.

Facing otherness as a bubble, the Name of Jesus Christ is pronounced as Presence, the Presence of God in you. In God we live and move and have our being; and God lives and moves and has His being in us. This dwelling and indwelling reveals the presence of love—a love existing between the Father and the Son, a love which is the Spirit of the Father and of the Son.

This Name is our salvation. For when we speak this Name, we are not merely pronounc-

ing letters and sounds of letters, we are speaking the Spirit, a name on fire with love, a living transmission to all.

Neither is there salvation in any other name. No other name under heaven gives to man the reality whereby he is saved. "Jesus" is salvation. "Christ" is the one Truth transmitting salvation under the name of Jesus. Hence, when you pronounce the name "Jesus Christ," you are pronouncing your own salvation.

Let me tell you what salvation means, and hence what this name of Jesus means to you. Salvation means saving or deliverance. But why is the name of Jesus a name of salvation? There are people who try to analyze names and who make a pseudo-science of it. To them, the "J" in the name Jesus presents a hook—maybe a fishhook that catches you, a fish, and makes you a Christian.

The disciples, in spreading the name of Jesus through the world, became fishers of men, not to kill them, but to make them alive. When the name "Jesus" hooks into us, catches

and holds us, there is no escape for us from the Christ Who is the revelation of Divine Presence. Let us be hooked, like a fish from the sea; let us be that kind of a fish that is hooked by The Name. And glory be to the hooking!

Commonly, people associate being "hooked" with something disastrous. But with spiritual things the meanings are reversed; so, when the name of salvation hooks into you, life itself has laid hold, and the presence of truth is within and without.

Salvation means saving. You are saved by the Word in a special way; not *from* evil, but *for* good. Evil does not have to be disposed of as though it were something. It is the nothingness of lies that disposes of illusions and hypnosis. You can have only truth. When giants are recognized as mere windmills, the fight is over.

Contesting evil makes evil seem real. Resisting unreality perpetuates its delusions. Jesus said: Resist not evil. Why should He say this,

when there is no compromise with privations which effect vital being? Resist not unreality because there is no unreality to resist.

It is the mind's credible tendency to make something of nothing, hence the necessity of negative perceptions. A reversed negative establishes a positive. To try to beat into the mind the statement, "There is no evil," only leads to a sense of "something" other than goodness. But can you or anyone else deny delusion forcefully enough to exterminate it? If evil were a reality, battles against it would be futile; how can one beat down what does not exist? Yet the very act of beating seems to impress our minds with the need of resistance. Our mistake lies in confusing the real with the unreal and in thinking that absence of good is a substantial obstacle to be overcome.

In the Name of the All-Present Lord, devils are cast out. And what are devils but attempts to conceive of an opposite of truth? The devil is the liar and the father of lies; he and his

progeny are trussed up through their own nothingness.

There is no foundation for the *belief* in evil, or for the belief in anything other than truth. But the more we fight our false beliefs, the more resistance there seems to be in them, and the more we become convinced of actual objective situations to overcome. But truth is our positive immunity in all these negative situations. Our problem is not objective, but is within our own minds, where we have let deception run away with us.

Let us turn it all over to the Lord. In His Name we discover our salvation. There is no other Name in which we can discover the salvation of any person or of ourselves. God has given us His Name to guarantee our lives in His truth. His Name is salvation. In Scriptural language "salvation" means the transference from straightened circumstances and other evils into a state of freedom and security. Freedom and security are man's most coveted prizes. God has given us these gifts, so that

even in the pictures of life, a sense of security abides.

But security and freedom do not come from the world bubble. The bubble reflects and thus becomes the transmission point for reality itself. It is only when reality takes charge of your affairs that your state of being is transferred from straightened circumstances to freedom and security. In our straightened circumstances we ask for "things" to relieve our situations, but in so doing we are really asking for nothing; and when we receive nothing, we think our prayers are not answered. Let us learn to ask for reality—for Reality Itself, for nothing but truth—and when we ask in the Name of Him Who is our salvation, we discover in the midst of straightened circumstances, undreamed of freedom and security.

Real security is not formed of defenses, nor is true freedom an indulgence of will. Actually the Divine Name opens the door of salvation and gives us the answer to our prayers.

Today celebrates the event of the Ascension, that point in history where our real spiritual education begins. Presence has been transcended and omnipresence has been granted in the Name of Him Who is Absolute.

Today marks the completion of the cycle from God to God, not only historically, but personally; this cycle of the Christian liturgy is now fulfilled in you, that God may be all in all, without exclusion of reflection. Reflection is a Lordly prerogative whereby He extends His omnipresent presence, "Lo, I Am with you always," said our Lord. To seal this action, He has given us His Name. The omnipresence of His presence pervades our most straightened circumstances and brings us freedom and security.

Let us, looking at the world as a bubble, see the security of Gibraltar, and never let us, looking in the mirror of nothingness, forget what manner of life we live. Delusions, illusions, and hypnosis—these are tripped up by

their own nothingness, leaving only the revelation of divine presence as the true reflection. Reflection is not delivered by a piece of glass hanging on the wall; this is only a mechanical illustration. The true principle of reflection is the fall of light and its return over the same line. The image is never in the mirror, but always in the substance.

Let our prayers be no longer for nothing. Let our prayers be for truth. Let our prayers be for nothing but truth.

Our Lord urges us to ask in His Name, to ask the Father in His Name for everything we need. What is our greatest need? Freedom and security in the Name of our Lord. The world and its provision cannot fulfill this need, but God and His salvation can and does fulfill it.

Ask, and you shall receive. Ask for Presence, and God grants you omnipresence. He has given you His Name that all truth may be extended under this Name, the Name of Reality, the Name of Salvation, the Name of Omnipresence. The transmission has been made even

through the bubble, that there is nothing at all but God and His Eternal Presence.

*All the Presence there is,
All the Power there is,
All the Consciousness there is,
Is *Love*, the *Living Spirit Almighty*.

**O God from Whom all that is good proceeds, Grant that Thy people, by Thy inspiration, may resolve on what is right, may know what is right, and by Thy direction put it into practice; that they may be not only hearers of the Word, but doers of the Word also, and that this God may be in their very behaviors, a living Presence.

GENEVIEVE BURNELL

*AXIOMS: Book of Health
by George Edwin Burnell, page 80
**Cf. St. Andrews' Missal, Collect, p. 669

