

# INNOCENT SUBSISTENCE

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# Innocent Subsistence

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Procession of Doctrine

*by*

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## \* Innocent Subsistence

It has been requested that the instruction given today be on the subject of subsistence. The lesson suggests an innocence, because today is the Feast of the Holy Innocents—a festival in honor of the innocent children who were the first martyrs, and, to the uninnocent mind are considered to be examples of the world's greatest tragedy. But who is to be the judge of failure or success? Certainly not the sophisticated mind.

Today we have an account of an innocence that is truly subsistent, a life-giving, protective, nourishing innocence—an immortal innocence, to be more exact.

Many sermons have been given on this day

\*(Class lecture, December 28, 1955)



by the great teachers who were able to see, in this reversal, a mystery of divine mercy disclosed in instruction on what seems to the ordinary mind an unforgivable tragedy—the slaying of innocent children.

What is the lesson provided by these children? It is this: protection, mercy, peace, and goodness provided for those who cannot use their own wills. These children, too young, history tells us, to have been able to depend on their own wills, God protected with His own will and turned one of the greatest tragedies in history into a benedictive feast of divine mercy.

You will not see this if you persist in judging by appearances, judging surface judgments. But we would like today to be able to provide for you a perspective, an innocent perspective on this event of history, that we may see it in its proper orientation, its proper relation to the art of all living that is a subsistence—the art of true living. There is no art of living in sophistication; on the contrary, sophistication brings down a curse on man although he is

unconscious of its effect. In his sophistication man is told that he must labor for his bread by the sweat of his brow; he labors painfully therefore for every necessity. But there is an innocence in divine action, which is the art of real living, the innocent art of true living. This constitutes being what you are and doing the will of the Father rather than your own will.

Consideration of the Holy Innocents instructs us in what God does in His divine mercy for those who are unable to do for themselves. When you have the proper spiritual perspective, you will discover that this action of mercy is not something that took place in past history, but is a continuous protection for innocence. In this action of divine mercy, God is bringing peace, goodness, and success even at a point where the sophisticated mind sees only failure. Even to those who have no will of their own, or who are, through innocence, unconscious in the use of their will and are as though they were will-less, God's will is their will provided with ability to convert tragedy into glory.



But how is sophistication to be remedied? Forgiveness is God's merciful provision, for it wipes out sophistication, that an innocent will may be uncovered; for subsistence, divine subsistence is provided only for innocence, never for sophistication. That is why, when people enter into a spiritual study with a sophisticated mind, they fail to realize both spiritual and material benefits.

This event in history is not a static one. What God did for these Holy Innocents He does now and forever for all innocence. Wherever one has scraped off his shell of sophistication, the wondrous and benedictive sacrament of regeneration is seen in God's will.

Regeneration is on the basis of innocence, not ignorance. It seems as though man has lost the art of living. The art of living has deteriorated into a struggle. The ground that he tries to cultivate with hard work is resistant, and the results usually are unsatisfactory. Failure and missing the mark seem inevitable. What one needs is the proper sense of spiritual perspective; then he need not say, "Oh, if I could just

reinstate myself in the easy paradisaical garden where everything needed was provided!" He would free himself from the dreamy search for a fanciful Utopia which the world can never know except as failure. True subsistence is divinely practical. The Utopian paradise was most impractical; even the overflowing garden where it seemed as though man had everything he needed, did not satisfy the infinite craving innate in human nature.

We look back from our modern day state of affairs, from our realm of conflict and seemingly increasing turmoil, from all the confusion of unbalanced economic conditions, and wish for the past glories. We look back with a dreamy sense, called forth in cosmic memory, of a paradisaical state in which man lived without effort in a garden of innocence.

This first innocence belonged to an undeveloped consciousness. The ego-consciousness which brings awareness of the fight for living, had not yet been developed. Everything seemed provided to make living easy. Man had, at this point—according to tradition—a sort of

immortality, not of substance or glory, but an immortality determined by justifying grace—that is, as long as man was subject to his Creator, to that very principle of Life Itself, he received life. In this way he was protected from harm. But this state that man lived in, was a negative immunity only. We are told that all conditions contributed to man's harmonious state; he was unconsciously provided for, much as is the embryo in the mother's womb. From its own standpoint, this kind of harmony between man and his environment is meaningless, because the important distinction between the two has not yet become a conscious awareness.

Consequently we look back upon this negative state longingly and say, "Why have I ever drifted away from such a wondrous paradise of peace?" In retrospect Paradise appears as a period of harmony and unity, because we look back upon it from our present state of conflict.

This primitive state of identification, this psychic harmony through confusion of subject and object, needs to be brought to an end.

Man must obtain an innocence that is positive rather than negative, an innocence such as God gives to the disciples of His Word: "Nothing shall by any means hurt you"—a positive immunity in the midst of negative situations. The distinction between himself and his world must be known, yet without conflict. When he did not know how to distinguish, the sense of unity resulted in a confusion; but in his redeemed innocence, man is able to distinguish in order to unite in a true sense of unity.

The negative paradise, as you know full well, did not satisfy man's insatiable craving; it was not the answer to that longing within his heart for the infinite. He looked for something more than static harmony; he wished to be able to distinguish the lights and shadows of life. But he fell into a trap of distinguishing without the proper balance of perspective.

An infant's innocence is said to be unconscious in the sense that the ego-consciousness is not yet awakened. As his ego begins to assert itself, he finds a growing conflict with his environment, as he develops a personal sense



of "I"-ness. Were he to stay in this adolescent state, he would be unfit to meet life. Some people never progress beyond the point of a conflict with environment and consequently never outgrow adolescence.

The innocence of divine wisdom distinguishes in order to unite by being aware of the true art of living, the great secret of subsistence—spiritual subsistence. The world and oneself distinguished and consequently united in the whole harmony of subsistence. An infant cries for food, and he is provided with milk and is heedless of the source. He opens his mouth with innocent acceptance but without awareness of the source. He has not yet developed powers of discrimination.

Man in his so-called "primitive" state was like this. His environment ministered, like a mother, to his needs. But man is not satisfied to remain an infant psychologically—not, at least, when he begins to recognize his spiritual prerogatives as God's masterpiece.

True, some people, even spiritual students, are willing to settle for the negative. But the

negative is not the answer; it is only the way, the *via negativa* for those who accept the full responsibility of their place in God's creation and are confirmed disciples of His Word. Nothingness is not an end, but only the reflector of all. Thus the art of living in the three-dimensional world is an eternal awareness of the source. This awareness is the art of living and the secret of subsistence.

Lack of perspective is a characteristic of the undeveloped mind as evidenced by children or primitive art. Both draw their pictures flat. The object and the subject are confused. All is surface to them. The surface alone will never satisfy in either art or life. As a child begins to develop his sense of perspective, the lines and the shadows of his pictures begin to portray dimensions even though the canvas is still flat.

Man is a three-dimensional creature, and a flat world lacks subsistence for his three-dimensional life. That is why primitive innocence fails in modern day living. Man is equipped



for real living in a three-dimensional experience, and his substantial subsistence is practical. He needs an immunity that is positive. He needs an immortality such as is provided by the Second Person of the Trinity, Who is Subsistence Himself. Truth, even in the three dimensions, is not negative; truth is positive even as an immunity. Nothing shall hurt you even though your environment is in conflict. The immunity is your inherence of substance in truth that overflows into flesh. This immortality of glory is the miracle of life. It is true substance in three-dimensional life; and it permeates your very flesh, overflowing from God, through the soul, to the very body itself. This overflow of truth into flesh provides the vigor of incorruption, true life, and the art of living the true life.

Who can subsist on shadows? No one! Why is it that such scandal has been brought against the world? Because people have tried to find, in the shadows, the art of living; and they have failed because they have not known how to look through the shadows for the substance.

What good are shadows without a substance? There is no subsistence in the shadows themselves—but only in the substance. When you have found Substance, and when you have offered to this Substance your own nature, then, even though what you have offered is only a shadow, Substance returns it to you in the form of divine subsistence.

There are two especially wonderful Chronicles pertaining to this subject, which I suggest that you read. The message given is a most practical one. Why should spiritual instruction be considered impractical? Why are many people who study spiritual subjects, considered failures in life? Not because their instruction is impractical. One cannot blame his instruction; he fails because he looks upon instruction as a palliative, instead of as an art of living. The transmission of the Word is dissipated in the negative, when it should return to its Source, reflecting subsistence. Substance and subsistence are not yet distinguished in order to unite. Subsistence must always be as the

reality of a human being. The world of shadows demands their substance. How could you have shadows if you did not have substance? When shadows recognize their substance, this is subsistence. But let me remind you again that spiritual subsistence is not provided for sophistication; its very ground is innocence.

Two wonderful Chronicles tell the story: \*Chronicle 357 and Chronicle 1430. Chronicle 357 is called "Subsistent Success"; Chronicle 1430 is called "Innocent Subsistence." Subsistent success is not sophistication; it is innocence.

The success of the Holy Innocents is not even known to the sophisticated mind. To such a mind there was only tragedy in their massacre. Who is their judge? From what standpoint are you judging? Only a spiritual perspective can reveal the glory of divine mercy in tragedy. In this event there is one of the greatest examples of an immunity, discovered

\*Chronicle of Reality 357, and Chronicle of Reality 1430, by George Edwin Burnell

only in the perspective of history, yet revealing a subsistent provision in the midst of conflicting environment.

The strongest accent of life today is on subsistence. Yet few know what they are doing to keep alive. The significance of subsistence is always at hand; you are always performing acts in accordance with it—unsuccessful or successful as the way may be. Subsistence demands the attention of us all. Because of the so-called "fallen" state of man, it is by the sweat of his brow that he makes his living. Most people are not spiritually grown up enough yet to have progressed beyond an infantile desire for the "garden" where everything blooms in tropical abundance without care or responsibility. Man longs for trees to bend their branches to him, for streams of fresh water to quench his recurring thirst, for plenty of food to fill his open mouth. He had a tree of life to ward off corruption. But who can be content with warding off all conditions of life? There is need of vital subsistence in oneself, rather than of dependence



on environment only. Being able to distinguish between oneself and one's environment, and to have subsistent immunity, requires a positive innocence which converts every situation into a benediction.

There is no subsistence apart from the perception of the allness of truth. Those who seek for the art of living in a three-dimensional world, find it only in the omnipresence of truth. Instruction, to be practical, must become subsistent in three-dimensional life. To be a dreamer, to live in the clouds, in a hoped-for Utopia, is not practical. Practical instruction translates the abstract knowledge of truth into a subsistent three-dimensional life. And this is possible; for it is the intention of instruction to make you able to live successfully, here and now, in this world. Your success is not dependent on conditions favorable or unfavorable, but rather on the awareness of an inner truth which is itself success. True success is not merely making money, nor establishing a name for yourself, nor is it simply being famous—no! True success is the art of living, living

truth; not by bringing the Lord down to your level of life, but by raising your level to His divine subsistence.

Every person seems born to a certain lot in life. He has a certain name and natural environment. As an infant his parental environment caters to his needs, but later on in life he becomes personally responsible for his well being. The center of subsistence shifts from his environment to himself. This happens to every living creature. The eagle is a classical illustration of the violence sometimes accompanying this shift. If the young eaglet is not ready to leave the nest and fend for itself, the mother bird removes the security of the nest stick by stick. The young eagle suddenly finds himself out on the crag; he has to fly, to use his wings—or else!

A human being follows the same cycle. His sense of security in the familiar environment recedes as he begins to be aware of an environment apart from himself. This is called adult education, which tends to deteriorate into sophistication with the loss of his first innocence.



But innocence must be rediscovered. Hence spiritual instruction. There must be the discerning knowledge which distinguishes person and environment in order to unite them without confusion. A new innocence comes to be—a positive innocence founded on wisdom rather than on ignorance.

True happiness is not a negative state even though it looks like paradise from the modern complex viewpoint. The Nirvana of the Orientals—wonderful as it appears from the aspect of escape from responsibility—does not satisfy that craving in man's soul for God Who is unconditional happiness.

True subsistence depends on divine rather than human innocence. Human innocence clings to the parental environment. In the three-dimensional world it is called immaturity. When an adult persists in it, he lacks responsibility and is a misfit in life. Helplessness is not divine innocence. Divine innocence unites the wisdom of the sages with the flesh of the child. But to unite these, one must first know how to distinguish them. The kind of inno-

cence that does not know life is negative. But divine innocence knows life as God, and subsistence as one's three-dimensional responsibility to God. Divine innocence is that purity within, that full awareness of truth which transcends appearances and environment. This is strength, without fear of life. Why be afraid to face conditions and the mysteries of tomorrow; why be afraid of anything when you carry within you the positive immunity of innocence? The negative situations of your environment are themselves healed by the radiation of your own inner perceptive light. Notice the greater strength when negative immunity in positive situations gives place to positive immunity in the midst of negative situations. Situations no longer disturb you, for your subsistent strength and understanding find no harm in them. Evil is not evil to one who cannot be contaminated or injured by it.

The human child, like the primitives, has certain demands and responsibilities put upon him: this demand is for empiric knowledge to be acquired and used properly. There is

the need to meet life and the conditions of life. Life is not fulfilled by being supported through the environment; man is intended to give support to the world rather than to receive support from the world. Is there anything more miserable than to expect support from an environment? No! Such is not the answer to the demand for happiness.

A suckling babe soon outgrows his suckling proclivities and is ready for bigger experiences. This is the nature of God's masterpiece—to grow up unto God Himself. As there comes a time when the eagle needs to spread his own wings and meet the storms—to use the storm to soar higher—so there comes the time and place for every person to face himself and his responsibilities and to use the storm of his responsibilities for greater power of soaring. He may not realize it in his innocence, but he does not face anything alone. There is One Who gives him strength to meet every storm and helps him use what is at hand for better

living. Divine innocence accepts God's Providence, as human innocence accepts the parental provision.

The shift of dependency must always be experienced by innocence. Spiritual instruction is not to be exploited for personal advantage. Sophistication might try to use the power of God in making a living; divine innocence lets God use your power to make an art of living. Emerson says, "He was born a man but died a grocer." My father explains this cross purpose of life—the way life seems to cross us up—in his *Chronicle of Reality* 357. Are we to be born God's masterpiece and die a slave of the world? Demands of livelihood seem to have enslaved the adult human race. And if you run away from the responsibility of making a living, you still have not solved the problem. In either case man's environment is hard and resistant; he plows and plugs along, sweating to provide his daily bread; and what he obtains is barely sufficient to ward off corruption. He is struggling against what seem to him to be very positive situations and conditions. His



struggle in life is constant until he learns the secret of true and subsistent success.

This secret is exposed in the lection just mentioned. First of all it is pointed out that our Lord is Himself the subsistence of truth; as the Second Person of the Trinity, He is divine subsistence. God the Father is the substance, God the Son is the subsistence, and the Holy Ghost is the mutual love between substance and subsistence. Only when there is devotion between what you are and what you do, can there be true success. Hence spiritual instruction offers as the secret of success in living in the three-dimensional world, devotion to the Holy Trinity, the distinction of three Divine Persons in perfect unity. Meditation on the Trinity awakens a likeness in the image, and the spirit of love between what you are and the activity of your life reflects in your own existence. There is no success in life unless love exists between what you are and what you do. The absence of this sense of devotion between being and doing is the curse of the three-dimensional world and the cause of human fail-

ure. Man cannot help but fail when he is always fighting against what he has to do.

The Lord gave us a rule, an example of divine subsistence in three-dimensional life. Do you know what it is? Unless you have already read this report and are forewarned, you probably will not like the rule at all. The rule is service! Our Lord emptied Himself of His divinity that He might be man's servant. He took the form of a servant as only God could, without any loss of divinity. What He is, was never separated at any time, even when He took the form of a servant, from what He did as the Saviour of man.

Because God loved what He was doing, His divine mercy has come into the world through the wondrous sacrament of regeneration and has entered into the life of every person to be the divine subsistence of the Word of truth. Through the Lord, truth enters into your three-dimensional life and becomes your art of living. This is true service!—the service which, technically speaking, is that ability to do what



you do better than your human nature is equipped to do it. This is not an ambitious claim; it is an innocent acceptance of God's help in your affairs, to lift your activities to a higher level of service. The result is not a depreciation of others, but a sense of nothingness in yourself by which the Lord is your life and serves within you to enable you to do whatever you do, no matter what it is, how simple or how menial, in a spirit of love. Perfect service is a service of love.

To be told to love what you do is most practical instruction. Hating what you do or acting from a sense of duty alone deflects success. I hope you will read and digest this lection, that you may make its words of faith your own living devotion, that its truth may enter into your being and become transubstantiated as your art of living. May you love what you are doing now, not merely seek to do what you think you love to do. Do not look for excuses in the words: "If I could only do what I love to do, then I would be happy." Really love to do what you are doing now, and see how your

work flourishes. Love what you are doing! Have a real devotion to your task at hand! If you have a real devotion to what you are doing, you cannot help but be a success.

But the whole rule must be innocent. Only sophistication has an eye on success; and subsistence comes to innocence, not to sophistication. Real success is always innocent. If somebody said to you, "You are a great success at what you are doing," you would be surprised; because your heart is in the joy of what you are doing, not in its success or failure. This is divine innocence. Subsistent success does not come to pride and egotism; it comes to innocence. So devoted are you to what you are doing, that the very substance of truth enters in and the fire of love becomes purifying and regenerating energy, like an alchemy that transforms, whatever your task, into a glorious achievement.

Devotion is the secret of subsistent success, and it is only to innocence that true subsistence comes. Innocent subsistence is your name for success in three-dimensional life. This is a

positive innocence, not an ignorance of experience. The innocent art of living makes even failures triumphant successes; because the divine mercy of God's love supplies what is wanting in the action of your personal will, by the sacrament of regeneration. His Will is your will.

Today, in the face of what has seemed to be one of the greatest blots on human history—the massacre of innocent babes—we are called to witness only to truth. They are called martyrs because (let us always remember this) they did witness to truth in spite of appearances.

What is this truth to which they witnessed? Certainly not to anything evil. To quote:

\*We are provided with this perspective which enables us to see how utterly and absolutely un-evil evil is.

Truth provides us with a perception which unravels all mental obscurations in our affairs, in our own situations, and in the history of man in general. It unravels the sense of evil

\*Chronicle of Reality 1430,  
by George Edwin Burnell, page 11

by a miraculous and benedictive forgiveness, restoring innocence. This perception turns ignorance into innocence. Our responsibility as people of truth is to forgive ignorance and witness to innocence. This is our spiritual service. Let us have a devotion to it so complete that the substance of true Being enters our art of living and reveals success in all accomplished.

Subsistence is innocence whether you discover it in spiritual substance or in the necessity of daily life; whatever the way, it must be truly innocent, and it must be an act of devotion.

The golden rule of subsistence must always be an innocent devotion. For the true secret of subsistence is devotion, expressed in a devotional act that springs from innocence. In other words, to employ devotion as a means to success, frustrates the end; but devotion to truth for the sake of truth only, is divine innocence. Let us seek to acknowledge the Lord in all our ways, and He will direct our paths—paths to the art of living. A golden rule of



subsistence must always be to acknowledge the substance of truth in everything. Just how are we to do this? There is only one way, to return all to the Lord—yourself as well as all your affairs. Hold nothing separate, but turn all back to God. He has given you all that you are and have, even the ability to be yourself. Give yourself back to Him, return to Him. As an image does not remain in the mirror but returns to the substance, so you—the image and likeness in the mirror of nature—receive subsistence only in returning to the true substance. But how is the return accomplished? Not by metaphysics, not by devices and methods, but by devotion—devotion which is the mutual love between substance and subsistence. In this alone there is transmission. The Trinity of divine love enters into your life as you—even being what you are—and acts in you through your own responsibilities of service in the world. Here is the golden rule of subsistence:

\*Honor the Lord with thy substance and  
with the firstfruits of all thine increase . . .

\*Proverbs 3:9 (King James' version)

Give all to God; recognize Him, acknowledge Him in everything, honor Him in all, and He will direct your paths. Innocence will be your immunity to conditions, devotion will be your art of living, and in all ways you will witness to truth.

\*And thy barns shall be filled with  
abundance, and thy presses shall run with  
wine.

But the more successful your art of living, the more devotion you have to what you do, and the greater the need of innocence. Therefore one must remember that real success of divine subsistence rests and proceeds on innocence. Innocence is your safeguard. When you receive these—God's gifts to you—your devotion is to God, the Giver of the Gifts. In innocence you receive God's gifts, and in innocence turn yourself and your gifts back to God that He may grant them substance in Himself.

The disciples came back from their missionary trip and were elated because of the wonders they could perform; but Jesus said to them,

\*Proverbs 3:10 (Douay version)



These are as nothing; your real subsistence is that your name is written in the Book of Life. So let us seek the substance of truth with devotion and innocence, and God will grant us the gift of subsistence in our art of living.

\*And now may the Infinite Spirit  
ordain that mutual restoration  
of every pilgrim, in his homeland,  
so that every mind returns to its same  
unity, and the memory is complete,  
and life becomes a success  
because the efficiency of Omnipotence  
and Omnipresence and Omniscience  
take charge.

Therefore even if, as the innocent babes, the world were to destroy us, what we are in God would witness to a subsistent life greater than any history records. Innocent devotion to truth is our divine subsistence.

\*Chronicle of Reality 357,  
by George Edwin Burnell, page 29

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

\*AXIOMS: Book of Health,  
by George Edwin Burnell, page 80

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