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PRESENCE IN THE FLESH

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NEW YEAR GREETINGS

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PRESENCE IN THE FLESH

By

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THIS INSTRUCTION
IS NOT A METHOD,
BUT A MESSAGE.

PRESENCE IN THE FLESH

We stand in the very midst of the Christmas prayers and their wondrous effectuality this morning, these prayers that announce the magnificent words of the lesson: The Word was made flesh and dwelt amongst us.

This is not stating a past event of history. It is announcing that eternal present taking place now and here, always before the eye. No finite limitations can conceal. We have as authority the prophecy of Simeon pronounced in the blessing upon the Christ Child when Simeon looked at the Infant he had taken into his arms.

Nothing so spectacular; an infant in swaddling clothes that Simeon took in his arms. He said, Mine eyes have beheld the salvation of the world. An infant bound up in swaddling clothes! Where was

this greatness in this smallness? Who is to say what is the greatness of God and the greatness of God's works? When we try to tell of them eloquence fails; there are no words, no language, no songs, no prayers that can possibly express the magnificence of God's works. And, of course, because of the lack of expression even in the greatest eloquence, faith and belief of man falter. We seem to need to express everything outwardly and visibly instead of relying on that innocence of spirit that can express itself without eloquence, without anything. The salvation of the world! A miracle, that this prophet should have held in the form of a child the salvation of the world. Who shall declare His generation? Who shall declare it? It is presumption on the part of any person to attempt to declare it.

And how wonderful it is that this mystery of the Incarnation is concealed from our minds; actually the greatest benediction you can have is that this

act of God is a mental mystery. If you were to try to conceive it in your mind your very mental pictures would hinder, and there would be no room in the inn because of your mental pictures. We do not have to try to build up the truth by mental pictures.

Today we stand at a wonderful place, the effectuality of Christmas prayers, the Word in the flesh. Do you think you have to go out and build yourself up so that you will have some kind of glorified appearance because this Word is in your flesh? You know, it is tragic when you see this vain attempt on the part of human beings to gild the lily, to build themselves up from the outside, to try to convey an appearance of some imagination. If they would but let it shine, this eternal Self, this truth, this truth of very truth, would shine through them by the very nothingness of their own flesh. We speak this way because we are talking about flesh; but you can speak about it in all kinds of

situations--people trying to build themselves up in a vain attempt and a pretense to truth, when truth itself is the innocent revelation of what is.

Today we have two subjects that come together. We have the account of one of the greatest tragedies in history, the massacre of the innocent children. What is this, the massacre of innocent children, to teach the action of truth? We see the same spirit in the world even today. And the mind says, This is all contradictory. So there is a pseudo action that takes place in trying to cover over, to paint over, to fix over the corruption. But the innocence of truth needs no fixing over. Real innocence is not a negative thing, it is a positive stance in the midst of whatever pictures are cast upon the screen of experience. We have the positive revelation of truth in spite of the pictures. We seem to see innocent beings massacred, destroyed before our eyes. And we become most anxious about it. But the innocence of truth cannot be destroyed because it

is the very action of truth itself, not negative.

There is an idea that innocence in the world is something that is devoid of knowledge. But there is an innocence that is axiomatic. It is when the axioms themselves become installed in your flesh and are the inability to conceive of an opposite of truth. No matter what the pictures are, this innocent vision of truth is unchangeably installed in you. You are not blind to things, it is not because you are blind to what goes on, it is not a stupidity; it is the healing vision, it is the salvation that stands in the midst of us in spite of all the seeming criticisms and scandals and stumbling blocks. Even in the midst of what seems to be its massacre, the innocence of truth is the unchangeable permanence of the Lord Himself. There is no innocence apart from truth. Any kind of innocence that stands apart from truth is a sort of ignorance. Any innocence that stands apart from truth, apart from

intelligence, has to go down before that one Presence, the Word of God in the flesh.

Up to this point we have been dealing with the Advent prayers, clearing the way, making straight the way of truth into the heart. In your axiomatic instruction it is called deductive reasoning, clearing the mind of its belief in anything other than truth, making straight the way. And because the way has been cleared so that there is nothing to interfere, nothing to hinder, no belief in the opposite of truth to get in the way, now we come to more, even than the conception of the Word of truth in the flesh; it is the actual bringing forth of this Word in spiritual activity.

In the light of rationality the Christian prayers take something of a reversed view--the inability, the inability to conceive of the opposite of truth in the flesh. This is true innocence, the inability to conceive of an opposite of truth in the flesh. Where, then, is your sacrifice, your martyrdom? The sense of martyrdom is only conceiving

of something other than truth, as though something other than truth could happen to you. But when these axioms have laid hold of **y**our flesh, have been born in your flesh, how, then, can you conceive of anything other than the experience of truth in the flesh?

People say to me, Oh, how I wish I could experience truth! And they try to experience truth by outward forms. The more they try to force, as it were, this experience, the more convinced they are that they are not experiencing. It must come as innocence, the innocence of being what you are, not thinking about it and not trying to be. It has to leap from the mental concept into the physical revelation that there isn't anything else to experience, there isn't any possibility of any other experience than truth. No matter what the seeming experience is that is going on, actually there isn't any other experience than truth. And if you are experiencing something that you think is not truth and you

let yourself become confused by this, all you are doing is feeding this delusion of your mind by trying to escape something that has no existence.

That is why, when the Lord came into the world, He didn't come at all as the people thought He ought to come. Yet He did come according to the congruity of truth. He did not have to put on a display. He was born in a stable, laid in a manger. And of course it seems as though He should have a palace, as though He should have a queen for a mother. He did have a queen for a mother, but it took those who had the prophetic vision of seeing through things to discover that she was the queen of heaven and earth. The stumbling block, the appearances of things!

And so people think that they ought to build up their outside appearances, ought to paint themselves up, take their youthfulness out of a bottle from the drugstore.

What is this Word of truth in the flesh? It is immortal youth. The vain attempt to try to portray immortal youth on one's countenance becomes a monstrosity.

There is the beauty of this immortal youth that shines through with an innocence of beauty that is the truth itself. And it is won into the soul through that ecstasy of loving truth. It doesn't have to be painted on the surface. The Lord revealed His strength, His omnipotence, in swaddling clothes; He revealed His majesty in a manger.

We do not have to have the outward settings to build up, there is no need of building up truth. It is its own strength; it is what it is. So, let our flesh be that innocence that does not massacre, but becomes the innocent revelation of truth, without trying to. When you begin to try to do these things you are convinced that you are not what you would be. It becomes an innocence, this manifestation of truth. Let us offer ourselves, that any kind of false innocence may be massacred that we may have only that innocence of truth which is installed in the flesh--immortal youth, the flesh of a child, the wisdom of God.

Every person has the eternal Self. He doesn't have to try to paint on the outside a semblance of youthfulness, it comes from the inside. There is within every person this eternal Self; it is always there.

According to Dionysius every person seems to have two aspects. He has that place where he touches the universal, that oneness, superessential being, his universal being. And he also has a side turned toward his created experience. And this is legitimate because it is, as everything in creation, a reflection of the Trinity itself, the Godhead which is One. By our rationality cleared of all sense of duplicity in truth we can penetrate to the fact that God is One. We can reason that; that God is One is according to the very laws of rationality. So, how can we talk about the Trinity, and about "sides" in God? It is these words that seem to trip us up and to be our place of falling; but let us rise again on the mystery itself. The

Trinity--that side of the Godhead turned toward creation, where we have the three Divine Persons. The Second Person of the Trinity, the Word of God, is made flesh for us that we ourselves may have within our own person this ability to be one with the Word. And yet, toward our created experience we are ourselves.

There is no conflict between the two because the double aspect is not a sign of duality, but is the symbol of non-duality. The mind stumbles around in this cloud of mystery. But how fortunate we are that this is a mystery to the mind, that it may leap over the mind and enter the flesh itself! The most profitable thing to us is that we cannot understand it with our minds. If we could bring it down to comprehension in our minds it would not be what it is, this salvation in the flesh.

Everyone has this eternal Self. When he leaps out of himself--in that sense of a separate ego--leaps out with his ecstasy of heart and passion of love

for truth, he discovers that he is at home, his real home in this universal Presence, the truth itself. This is his divine Self. But do you **think** he has to love that self on the side turned toward creation? He wins it through so that this divine Self, this true Self shines through into his world of time without destroying it, but illuminating this world of time.

But what folly, what foolishness to think that one has to paint up his body to make it reveal this Word. The more paint he puts on it, the more tinsel, the more the truth is obscured, diverted from shining through. The simple innocence is being what you are and letting yourself be what you are. Actually you cannot be anything else but what you are.

This is the secret of the Christmas prayer. We don't have to try to manufacture our demonstrations. The demonstration is in being what you are. And it can stand and does stand, even at

the points in our experience that seem humanly speaking to be the weakest; they become the strongest from a spiritual aspect. When our Lord came into the world He did not feel that He had to build Himself up, He didn't have to show off, He was and is Himself, His truth shines through no matter what the conditions and the predicaments of the world.

Many people are afraid of their predicaments in the world because they think their predicaments are somehow crossing up truth, that if they have these predicaments to contend with they are not demonstrating truth. Oh, you hear this all the time, that a person ought to demonstrate truth without having any predicaments, he ought to be able to avoid all his predicaments.

You do not see the Lord sidestepping any of the predicaments. He made the world and then He came into it, predicaments and all. He did not succumb to these predicaments because He did not forget what manner of man He

was; He remembered. He did not look into the mirror of nature and forget Himself, He never lost track of the recollection of who and what He really was. But He didn't have to be always showing off who and what He really was. There was a long period of hidden life in which He was just the same, the God-man; and yet no outward manifestation seemed to be necessary. He didn't have to prove to Himself all the time that He was the Son of God. At the same point where He was the Son of God He was the son of man. He didn't try to side-step His predicaments anywhere along the line; but in the very midst of these predicaments He triumphed over them. Perhaps it seemed to the world as though He was the supreme victim of circumstances. Are you so deluded by what you see, what you read, what you think, as to think that He was overcome by circumstances? He was not afraid of circumstances, He was not afraid of predicaments, He was not afraid of the swaddling clothes nor the manger. He assumed, he took all of these things

to Himself that He might heal them; because never at any time was that divine Person absent from the flesh, the son of man and the Son of God at the same point.

Let us not think of this as an event in past history; it is an action going on now in every person. You may not realize it because you are lulled to sleep by the snugness and the smugness, perhaps, of your personal life. Sometimes it comes as a shock when you suddenly wake up to the fact that you are at this moment unable to **experience** anything other than truth. Oh, you say, You are stating that negatively. Why? Because it is a mystery to the mind, and you cannot present it positively; if you do the mind makes a negation of it. Therefore we approach it negatively. We seem to have to go through these clearing away processes. Purity of heart, purity of mind, purity of vision, innocence is what it is. Innocence is called purity in heart and life. We have to clear **away** the sense of otherness because the minute we have accepted the sense of otherness we

have lost that wonderful positive purity.

All religious instruction seems to go through a sense of purification, getting rid of the old fashioned ideas of God. Saint John Eudes says that among our renunciations we must renounce the very idea of God. The old fashioned idea of God was God as a magnified man. Following that there was a period in which we became very metaphysical and had an idea of God only as a spirit, immaterial, changeless, and all these attributes that we have made use of in our attempt to approach God. But this is like the shimmering cloud that, as Dionysius says, must also be penetrated; we must penetrate the abstractions.

Having gone through the Advent, clearing away all the materialistic pictures, we come to this point of the Christmas prayer, in which the flesh is again laid hold of. Not to deify the flesh. But because the flesh has already been discovered to be nothing it does not interfere with the presence of truth; the truth can manifest in the flesh without

any change. It is not a change in God, the Word did not change in flesh. Because we have had this clearing away of the Advent prayers we now stand at the point of negation, innocence. This is not a negative in being devoid of anything, but it is that negative, that innocence which reveals the positive expression of truth. And this truth lays hold of the flesh because the flesh of itself is nothing and does not interfere, and cannot stand in the way. No matter what the flesh reveals it cannot stand in the way. Even the flesh of an infant reveals the majesty and the omnipotence and the glory of God, the salvation of the world in a Child.

Can you see what we are trying to bring to your attention today? That the minute you try to build up your flesh to something, to make it look more as you think you ought to look in truth, you are but pretending to something other than truth; as though your flesh could ever look any other way than as the incarnation of the Word. This is the innocence of

seeing and knowing only truth because truth is all there is to know, and not having to try to get rid of interference; but looking right through interferences and experiencing only truth, seeing only truth, seeing God everywhere. For if we cannot see Him everywhere we see Him nowhere. It is in its innocence, a sort of paradox of personality. There is one Person, that universal Person, the Person of the Word. You seem to be always presenting some contradictory personality. But the more we go through this purification the more we come to know what that true Person is that shines through even into the individual personality. We do this in this One Who is the Word Made Flesh. Not because He is someone apart from ourselves, but because in clearing away all the interference we come to discover all this that takes place in Him; it takes place in ourselves, but He assumed human nature, not in an abstraction, but in the individual himself. You awaken to this true Self that shines

through even in the world of time.

Dionysius says that when the Second Person becomes incarnate, the formal and the simple radiance focusses itself upon the complex lens of a human individuality. Or, another way of saying it, Christ's humanity should rather be compared to a prism which breaks the single radiance into the iridescent colors of manifold human nature. Then these streams radiate forth a glory which seeks to kindle in our hearts an answering fire whereby, being wholly consumed by this fire, we may pass beyond our finite being to find within the Superessence, our predetermined home.

The destiny of man is God. A man may go through all the predicaments of experience, but he is predestined for God. And the moment he begins to turn back within himself to find this universal Being, and lets the fire of truth kindle in him a corresponding fire-- which consumes all sense of otherness-- he begins to find himself and know himself in this predetermined home which is the

Superessence. It seems as though he has gone a long journey, but it is the journey of becoming acquainted with what he is.

All things, says Dionysius, have two sides to their existence, one in the Superessence, the other in themselves. There is no contradiction in this; it is not a sign of duality, but the symbol of non-duality, just as the image in the mirror does not establish something other than the presence, but is the reflection of the presence. The symbol of a non-duality. You have made this journey, this liturgical journey of becoming acquainted with yourself, of knowing yourself. And Dionysius says that:

*...having...made this journey
Home, it must still possess
these two sides...

We do not have to eliminate anything when we illuminate everything. Two sides to every existence; this is the incredible paradox of personality. But the more a

*Dionysius the Areopagite, page 29

person is at home in the Superessence, in this eternal Self, the more he is at home and in his right place in his existence in the world. There is no conflict between the two because he has discovered the inability to experience anything other than truth even in experience. This is the principle that underlies all of creation and is a reflection of that superessential nature, divine nature which constantly emanates its glory in everything; and through everything, that everything may know its true Self.

This is the Christmas prayer, no longer in the mind as simply an eloquence, but in the flesh as an experience. The Word was made flesh and dwelt among us,

Almighty and eternal God,
regulate our actions according
to Thy divine will, that in the
name of Thy beloved Son we may
abound in good works.

This is the season when the manifestation of the Word in the flesh is so

effectual. That we may radiate this prayer from this upper chamber, let us pronounce together the benediction of the Instruction, which encircles all those who have cleared the way and have opened their hearts to receive the word of God.

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

*Axioms, by George Edwin Burnell, p 80

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