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Fulfilling Presence

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Fulfilling Presence

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Procession of Doctrine

by

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* Fulfilling Presence

Pentecost is the new mode of divine Presence which makes it possible for all of us, within our own hearts and souls, to have pure and perfect identification with Supreme Being.

The question that slithers into the mind and coils itself around our human form of thinking has its answer provided.

Here is the question: What does the Holy Spirit do that the Son, the Word of God, does not do? The Word of God is omnipotent; and yet He said to the people before His Ascension, It is expedient to you that I go. What could His departure do that would be greater than His presence? He also said, I must be lifted up that I may fill all things.

Following the Ascension, in which He is lifted up, the outpouring Spirit fills the whole universe with His presence. To be lifted up that He may fill all things—this is the mystery of Pentecost. The Spirit descends to fill every

*(Class Lecture, June 9, 1957)

thing, even your own heart and mind, that you may have revealed the secret of this mystery.

Pentecost has special meaning as the fulfillment of a figure. Originally it signified the day the divine law of God was promulgated. Now the old law is fulfilled in the new law of liberty; a law no longer written on slabs of stone, no longer visible on the material plane, but spiritual and written in the heart of man. The secret is here, Pentecost, a second and fulfilled Pentecost, after which a third or fourth, or how many more, they are all fulfilled as having first participated in that subsistence of the spiritual Pentecost in which the figure was translated into a reality.

As a direct result of the Ascension, we have Pentecost, a new mode of Presence; the physical presence is removed that spiritual presence may fill all things. Spiritual presence is more real and powerful than visible presence can ever be because spiritual presence fills all places and transubstantiates all existence without any limitations or boundary lines or hidden dark

corners. This new mode of presence fills all things and leaves no emptiness.

What is it that the Spirit, the Holy Spirit, accomplishes that the Son of God, the Word of God, did not accomplish?

The Son of God did not fail in His mission; there is no failure in Him. Actually, His Spirit confirmed what His physical presence had introduced. You must see this action, this spiritual action, not as different from the physical, but as one continuous procession in the cycle from God to God.

This infinite pouring out brings interminable revelations, modes, and expressions in relation to finite experience. The presence is not different, but the continuous, eternal, uninterrupted action on relative human life gives manifold revelations. Actually, the proceeding of presence between Ascension and Pentecost is as it was between the Crucifixion and the Resurrection, without interruption.

These particular modes of presence stand out in the spiritual action for our expediency.

Yet the procession is a continuous flow; but, because of our way of looking at the succession of time, we see the eternal presence in respective modes. Because truth is all there is, it is all one truth, whatever its expression. We seem to let go of one revelation to experience another, and yet the truth experienced is one; only the experience of it is distinct according to the need.

Pentecost is a new mode of Presence, powerful, real, and personal, confirming all presence prior to it. Actually speaking, of course, there is no "before" or "after" in the eternity of truth; yet in your mind, you conceive or perceive relative to succession in time, as one thing unfolds into another. At every point in time is eternity, for eternity is the ground of time. From Ascension to Pentecost is a special unfoldment of spiritual perception, a deepening and fulfilling perception.

The answer to this question of what is accomplished by the Holy Spirit is confirmation

of living presence fulfilling the mission of The Word, the Son of God in each individual.

Pentecost introduces the special mission of the Holy Spirit. And what is accomplished in the mission of the Spirit that has not been granted in the mission of the Son, the Word? Actually one could not be without the other because the Word and the Spirit are one; where the Spirit is, the Word is also; and where the Word (or Son) is, the Spirit is also.

The expediency of the twofold mission is to us, not to God. The expediency is to you and to me and to all mankind. It is an expedient way for us to know the outpouring love of God, present in our lives in such a way that we can participate in it. The answer is in the mission of the Word, is in the very nature of the mission as the Incarnation, the essence of which is mediation; the Incarnate Word is one Mediator, providing at-one-ness between God and man.

What was wrought in that mission of the Word, the incarnation of the Word by the

humanity of Christ, hypostatically united to His divine nature? The miracle was wrought in His human nature because it was hypostatically or personally united to the divine nature. Thus Christ's human nature was the instrumental factor, the personal mediation; and His mission was a visible one. He announced the truth in word and deed. He said to the disciples that they might see and hear and have revealed to their senses that truth is. He said, I am the Truth, the Way, and the Life—visible to the senses, for knowledge begins in the senses. He showed them the truth in Himself, He spoke words of truth to them, He gave them clear revelations of truth. This was the visible mission.

But it is one thing to hear the words of truth and even to see the miracles performed, and another to be yourself possessed of truth. Many people see the action of truth and hear its message—that is, experience its visible revelation—without being actually possessed by its spirit. It is one thing to hold to the theory of

truth and to try to maintain its metaphysics, try to keep the mental standard equipment tuned to reality, and another to have the Spirit of Truth lay hold of this standard equipment of your perceptive faculties. Truth having been presented to the senses, it is now more real and more powerful to be yourself so confirmed by truth that you cannot conceive of an opposite.

Let me remind you of the rational steps of this Instruction. The Axioms provide us with an inability to conceive of an opposite of truth. While this remains theory, we struggle to maintain our rational perception of truth's allness; we walk a sort of tight rope of rational balance in which we try to keep our minds from wavering and our hearts from wandering. But the more we try to hold our minds back from an ability to conceive of truth's opposite, the more the mind conceives of what is not to be conceived of. But the Spirit confirms the Axioms in us.

This new mode of presence lays hold within us, and we find ourselves literally and ab-

solutely possessed by truth itself; so that we do not struggle to maintain our balance, but balance maintains us in the very spirit of truth itself. The new law of liberty is written securely in your heart, the seat of volition; so that the inability to conceive of an opposite of truth is your complete emancipation from error.

It is one thing not to be able to err, but a greater freedom to be unable to falsify. This is your law of divine liberty. Pentecost accomplishes this miracle for us, a new mode of presence. It is an invisible action, but an action more powerful and more real than the limitation of visible presence.

Why is invisible presence more real than the visible presence? Visible presence rests in the senses, but senses seem to deflect oneness. Invisible presence has already transcended the senses and is experienced in the substance of the soul.

The real significance of Pentecost is what it means to you. You have heard the words over and over. We have tried to learn these

words by heart and to recollect them in memory; but the true miracle is when we ourselves are assimilated into the spiritual action.

We are told that the Lord was lifted up; that is, that He ascended in order that He might fill all things, all creation; that He might pour Himself into all of creation, that He might hear every voice, know every heart in order that His omniscience and omnipresence may be participated in by all creation. He has filled all that there is to fill. And this fulfilling is filling full of spiritual presence; this is Pentecost.

The whole face of the earth is regenerated with Spirit—not because the earth needs to be made over; truth does not alter the being of things, but it reveals what is, and this seems to our minds like a renewal when we have been blind to reality.

The term “transubstantiation” offers the most valid name for what happens to the soul at Pentecost. You have heard this term, and perhaps you believe that you understand it.

But you cannot really know the meaning until you yourself have experienced it.

Even as the Lord ascended, He promised that He would be with us always. His spiritual presence is the fulfillment of His promise that He would not leave us orphans but would be with us always, and in all ways, as long as there are any ways to fill. He had already, with His own words and hands, fashioned the form of the ritual known as the Sacrament of transubstantiation, a miracle of recognition of true substance. The altar upon which this Sacrament is personally experienced is in your own heart. The mystery of this transubstantiation is that it confirms in you the impossibility of your conceiving of an opposite of truth.

The whole mystery of the transformed life unfolds on your heart-altar. Its action is not restricted to any church altar, nor is it contained in any ritualistic form, for its reality is a spiritual participation in presence which fulfills your life.

What happens in this miracle? Change of

substance we are told. A change from matter to spirit, even as the bread and wine give place to Jesus Christ. This miracle was accomplished after the Ascension because the change of substance is not visible to our senses limited to finite pictures. No material altar nor formal ritual limits this universal action. It is invisible to us but none the less real and powerful. It is an action of the Spirit and therefore most fulfilling.

How is transubstantiation possible without destroying the world? In the same way that the bread and wine does not disappear when the Lord occupies the place. Truth does not destroy what it fills; it insures whatever it occupies. A real spiritual action takes place, transmitting reality to the symbol. Symbols are not eliminated by transubstantiation; instead, they are illuminated and fulfilled.

The whole mystery of the Pentecostal action is expressed for us in the transubstantiation. Even the ritual suggests the secret. But the form must be fulfilled by the reality, which

amounts to this: realizing, recognizing, and remembering the oneness of creation with the Creator. It is simply: Remember your Creator in the midst of your creation. A spiritual action is a genuine remembering that there is nothing at all but God. If there is nothing at all but God, no thing can occupy His place. Your transubstantiation takes place in your act of remembering that there is only your Creator in everything. Being possessed by this divine recollection, there is no duality in spite of the multiplicity which seems to confront you. There is nothing at all but God. Hence in all expressions, manifold modes of expression, nothing at all can be expressed but truth.

As you emerge from mere theory to actual experience, *y o u r* transubstantiation becomes apparent. From outward, visible, sense contact—such as, listening to instruction, hearing the word spoken, or seeing the miracles performed—you begin to participate in reality. Yet, actually, it is not seeing the miracles or making sense contact with truth that brings about the

transubstantiation; it is the absolute reality of being truth that makes outward contact possible. It is not the theory of truth that delivers reality to experience; it is truth that gives reality to the theory and enables theory to transmit reality to daily life. Spiritual life is more than theory. It is the indwelling Spirit poured into your heart, filling you with living presence more real and more powerful than any mere outward manifestation of it.

Actually, the within and the without are the miracle of the one substance. This, experienced in you, is transubstantiation. In your mind, the inside sense of outsideness seems different. You look upon the outside and the inside as somehow separated. But the action of Spirit is as a fire of truth that burns up differences and provides the miracle of one substance. Outer life and inner life are seen as one indivisible whole.

If you can possess the theory of truth in your understanding, the reality of this theory lays hold to express itself in life. He Who is

Understanding, Who is Wisdom, Who is Knowledge, Who is all the gifts He bestows, lives in you so completely that you cannot help but keep the word of truth and maintain the presence that has laid hold of you.

When a person is really laid hold of by truth, there isn't much he can do about it. He cannot decide whether he shall practise truth or not; he simply has no choice in the matter; he is possessed by an infallibleness. For example, when a person is possessed by love, there is no obstacle that can stand in the way of his expression of love. Nothing is too great, too big, or too difficult to thwart his spirit. It is this spirit which enables you to say, I can do all things in Him Who strengtheneth me. There is no opposition between your thinking and your doing, for the spirit which is your strength does all in you. When the spirit of truth fills you, boundaries are mutual and in complete contact with each other. There is no space nor place between. But how can dimension be at-

tributed to Spirit? Dimensions pertain to us. But when our dimensional life is fulfilled by Spirit, as in the action of Pentecost, the welding together is so completely sealed that the miracle is a divino-human experience transcending all other experiences.

Let me provide you with the secret of this secret from the Gospel of Saint John:

*Jesus said to His disciples, If any one love Me, he will keep My word, . . .

Jesus, as the Christ, had given the disciples God's Word; He had taught them Himself the Word of truth, He had spoken this Word outwardly, He had revealed it inwardly by touching them with the power of this Word in Himself. He had also explained to them that actually between Himself and themselves there was no barrier of difference. Those who had seen Him had seen the Father, and those who loved Him were also loved—all because

*St. John 14

of a Oneness. He had taught this to His disciples; He had even given Himself to them as an example that they might know, even with their senses, the miracle of the Word. But because this Word was theoretical with them, they were weak in experience and failed to cope with the drastic situations. They wanted to be faithful; their inner spirit was willing, but their flesh was weak. They had a great desire to stand firm in the Word; but as yet their love was weak, and they could not keep the Word when trouble confronted them. They had not yet discovered the secret that if one truly loves God, if the love of God is fully in him, he cannot do otherwise than keep the Word. The indwelling action of the Spirit makes you unable to go contrary to truth.

Our Lord told this to His disciples—that if they really loved Him, if they had His love in their hearts, if they were possessed by this love, they could not help but keep His Word. They would keep this Word, not by their

standard equipment of mind or will, but by that Spirit in them which is one with the Word.

. . . and My Father will love him, and We will come to him and will make Our abode in him: he that loveth Me not keepeth not My words.

Mere words are slippery. We try to hold to a word of truth in meditation; but before we know it, the word has slipped away into abstraction. Trying to possess ourselves of God's power and glory in words maintained in our mental standard equipment is theoretical, but the spiritual action is for the Word to possess us and transubstantiate us by the fulfilling presence.

Our Lord ascended out of expediency to us. This seemed to conclude His visible mission. But an end is but a beginning where eternal truth is concerned. From the Ascension came that wondrous real and vital, that inner and deepening experience which is possession by the Spirit of this word. He had spoken truth to them, but the Living Presence of truth

descended upon them and penetrated to their inmost being; their very souls were set afire. The invisible mission of the Holy Spirit takes place, confirming, within and without, living, vital reality of the one substance.

Until a person has experienced this inner presence, he is always trying, hoping, planning to achieve truth but not yet experiencing the living presence. But Pentecost is the wonderful experience in which the fire of truth illumines understanding, in which the presence within has inspired revelation; and these intimacies with truth cannot be lost, because they actually possess us, not we them.

There are people who think they can take up or lay down the Instruction, saying within themselves, "I'll attend for a while and see what I get out of it." Soon they are diverted and take up something else. But such a person has not really taken up the Instruction at all, only an idea of it. A person who really takes up the Instruction experiences the fire of Pentecost in his soul and is in turn taken up by

truth to the extent that, as he fills himself with truth, truth fills him; and the boundaries are mutual. Spiritual transubstantiation has left no place or space where the living, vital, real, powerful presence is not. He actually experiences that the only consciousness there is, the only power there is, the only Presence there is, is Love, is God, the living Spirit Almighty. Filled with this Almighty Presence, no place is left for failure or shortcomings or for delinquency. Your whole experience, your whole creation, your whole universe is full of the power and the glory of God. Every point in experience, within and without, is a genuine realization and revelation and remembering of the oneness of creation with the Creator.

There are those who think that this Spirit of Truth and Light that at Pentecost filled the whole world, is not a real experience—wishful thinking, but not reality.

Such thinking is due to the superficial judgment of the appearance of continued darkness in the world. To be sure, the shadows

continue in outward form for every tree needs shadows to protect the fruit; but such outer darkness is not evil. It is inner darkness that causes the shadows to seem evil. If you are conscious of darkness through light, you know the secret, you have the understanding, the rational understanding; and you will know that the closer you are to light, the darker is the circle of surrounding shadow.

It is offered as a scientific phenomenon that the closer one comes to the sun, the darker and the colder one will be until he is actually enveloped in that light and flame of the sun itself. In the same way, the closer you come to truth, the more you are aware of not-truth until you are actually enveloped by truth and cannot conceive of an opposite of truth. But until this transubstantiation takes place, darkness over the face of the earth seems to prevail.

Our judging, therefore, needs to be, not by outward experiences, but by that illumination within which knows darkness through the transcendental light which transubstantiates

even shadows. This Light, we are told, rises up in darkness, and is the light of the world—a Light that comes to enlighten those who sit in darkness. "But", you say, "I still remain in darkness." You still feel that you and others sit in darkness.

In spite of outward appearances, the Spirit of Light has come and descended upon you, even as tongues of flame, to burn away the obscuration and fill your soul with divine illumination. This fire of the Spirit does not consume but illumines; it burns on the altar of your heart. Every word of truth you have heard, every miracle you have seen gives real meaning to life.

Thus we are laid hold of by truth. No longer do we have to try to practise truth, to maintain this or that perception; because the whole action has turned 'round to possess you, so that you keep the Word of truth as it keeps you.

What is it that disposes us to this possession by the Spirit? What constitutes in us the

proper disposition for spiritual participation? When God sees the disposition, He grants the perfection. But what is the disposition required? In plain terms, it is the kind of love that manifests as oneness, a love free from contention and strife, the kind of "golden rule" recognition that the one and the many are the same, a love that is complete and whole, the perception that in each one is the entire circle of being.

The Spirit does not come to confirm a disposition of selfishness or egotism. It comes to confirm inward and outward unity and the peace and harmony manifested by such unity.

The account that best describes this is the miracle of disposition manifested in the group of disciples gathered in the upper chamber awaiting the fulfillment of the Lord's promise. The complete sense of oneness prevailed, even though the external conditions were such as to predispose toward strife and contention.

The practical message of the account shows that it is not so much the outward situation

that produces strife as the inner disposition of those who are participants in the situation. No matter how diversified the gathering, real charity can and will make them one.

If the heart is right, no amount of outward friction can destroy the harmony. A symphony orchestra is made up of many instruments, but with proper tuning and directing there are no discordant notes in the music produced. Each instrument is assimilated by and in the whole.

It is possible to be of one heart and one mind when charity prevails. Love is the unifying spirit. When real love is your disposition, when love is the indwelling spirit, the Almighty Spirit of Love confirms the circle of perfection.

*They were so unanimous and united in charity, that during all these days . . .

(This is speaking of the disciples gathered in the upper chamber five days after the Lord's Ascension)

. . . none of them had any thought, affection, or inclination contrary to those of the rest.

*City of God, Abridged, page 613

They were of one heart and one mind. Concord of external appearances cannot be subsistent unless the spirit of oneness has taken possession. When God sees this disposition, He grants the perfection of the Holy Spirit fulfilling the circle. The inability to conceive of an opposite of truth is sealed on your soul. No inclination, no thought, no opinions, no ideas are contrary to the Divine Presence. Yet this is not monotonous in its oneness; rather it is, like the great symphony, a fuller and richer rendition of life.

They were of one heart and soul in thought and action.

The situation was not one to insure harmony; just the contrary, in fact. An election was about to take place among the disciples, and there were two candidates for the same office. Can you picture this situation in the secular world of politics? There would certainly be the greatest possible dissension among the voters. In other words, it is not the politics that causes the dissensions, but the pride,

egotism, and ambition which invades the heart and mind of the individuals. You do not have to eliminate the elections; rather, the illumination needs to come to those who cast the votes. Selfishness demands healing, that the oneness of mind and heart may seek the supreme good of the whole.

Notice the account, which is very careful to show that it was not from any external situation that this harmony prevailed, but from that disposition within where the spirit of love provided the proper disposition for the perfection of Love, the Almighty Spirit.

Although the election of Saint Mathias had occurred . . .

The Apostolic College consisted of twelve, the whole number. One of these chairs was vacant due to the apostasy of Judas. This chair had to be filled to complete the circle. The Spirit does not conform absences or empty places, so

. . . the election of Saint Mathias had occurred, . . .

There had been two candidates for this office. The election had been made by the casting of lots. The election itself was cast in the lap of the Lord, and Mathias had been selected. The wisdom of this procedure was evident; Mathias was chosen most congruously to take the place of Judas.

Can you imagine the opportunity for smug self-righteousness that this might have given Mathias? But the very nature of the man was not to condemn the errors of others, but to recognize that the ability to conceive of an opposite of truth must be met and conquered in oneself. The license for conceiving of opposites was a matter demanding his own personal discipline.

. . . not the least movement or sign of discord arose among all those first-born children of the [*magisterium*]; yet this was a transaction, which is otherwise apt to arouse differences of opinion in the most excellently disposed . . .

Human integrity provides the disposition; but God gives the perfection of the Spirit, sealing truth on the heart, mind, and soul of

man. Situations do not have to be eliminated when the soul of man is fulfilled by the Spirit of Truth. This was a situation

which otherwise is apt to arouse differences of opinion in the most excellently disposed; since each one is apt to follow his own insight and does not easily yield to the opinion of others. But into this holy congregation no discord found entrance, because they were united in prayer . . .

The prayful mind and heart disposes to spiritual fulfillment. These disciples were

united in prayer, in fasting and in the expectation of the Holy Ghost.

They were looking toward the Spirit with expectant hearts; they could not conceive of an opposite as an answer to their prayers. How true it is that the Holy Spirit

. . . who does not seek repose in discordant and unyielding hearts

is not even expected to preside on secular occasions. Yet the properly disposed heart and mind has a right to expect the Spirit of Truth to fulfill and perfect occasions; all that is of truth.

O God, Who by the light of the Holy Ghost, didst this day instruct the hearts of the faithful, grant that by the same Spirit we may relish what is right and ever rejoice in His consolation.

Here is a prayer for the inward fulfillment; let us yield our hearts and our minds and our dispositions with the divine expectancy of this inward presence.

Send forth Thy Spirit, and they shall be created, and renewed, and Thou shalt renew the face of the earth, by that wonderful, beautiful transubstantiation, that there is nothing at all but the spirit of truth.

Come, O Holy Spirit, fill the hearts of the faithful: and kindle in them the fire of Thy love. Come Holy Spirit, Father of the poor, and the rich alike, light of men's hearts.

O blessed Light fill the depths of the heart of these faithful. Wash away all scoff, all dissension, all discord, all inharmony, water the arid soil of our own soul, heal our wounds and bring to us that wonderful fulfillment which is in use to be possessed by this living presence.

May the grace of the Holy Spirit descend upon us and make our hearts a dwelling for Himself.

