**THE FUNDAMENTALS: A TESTIMONY TO THE TRUTH**

**VOLUME 3; CHAPTER 25. THE PURPOSES OF THE INCARNATION**

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**FOREWORD.**

The title of this meditation marks its limitation, and indicates its scope.

Here is no attempt at defense of the statement of the New Testament that "the Word was made flesh." That is taken for granted as true

Moreover, here is no attempt to explain the method of the Holy Mystery. That is recognized as Mystery: a fact revealed which is yet beyond human comprehension or explanation.

The scope is that of considering in broad outline the plain teaching of the New Testament as to the purposes of the Incarnation.

Its final limitation is that of its brevity. If, however, it serve to arouse a deeper sense of the wonder of the great central fact of our common Faith, and thus to inspire further meditation, its object will be gained.

**THE INCARNATION.**

The whole teaching of Holy Scripture places the Incarnation at the center of the methods of God with a sinning race. Toward that Incarnation everything moved until its accomplishment, finding therein fulfillment and explantion. The messages of the prophets and seers and the songs of the psalmists trembled with more or less certainty toward the final music which announced the coming of Christ. All the results also of these partial and broken messages of the past led toward the Incarnation.

It is equally true that from that Incarnation all subsequent movements have proceeded, depending upon it for direction and dynamic. The Gospel stories are all concerned with the coming of Christ, with His mission and His message. The letters of the New Testament have all to do with the fact of the Incarnation, and its correlated doctrines and duties. The last book of the Bible is a book, the true title of which is The Unveiling of the Christ.

Not only the actual messages which have been bound up in this one Divine Library, but all the results issuing from them, are finally results issuing from this self-same coming of Christ. It is surely important, therefore, that we should understand its purposes in the economy of God.

There is a fourfold statement of purpose declared in the New Testament: the purpose to reveal the Father; the purpose to put away sin; the purpose to destroy the works of the devil; and the purpose to establish by another advent the Kingdom of God in the world.

Christ was in conflict with all that was contrary to the purposes of God in individual, social, national, and racial life. There is a sense in which when we have said this we have stated the whole meaning of His coming. His revelation of the Father was toward this end; His putting away of sin was part of this very process; and His second advent will be for the complete and final overthrow of all the works of the devil.

**I. TO REVEAL THE FATHER.**

"No man hath seen God at any time; the only begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared him" (John 1:18).

"He that hath seen me hath seen the Father" (John 14:9).

This latter is Christ's own statement of truth in this regard, and is characterized by simplicity and sublimity. Among all the things Jesus said concerning His relationship to the Father, none is more comprehensive, inclusive, exhaustive, than this. The last hours of Jesus with His disciples were passing away. He was talking to them, and four times over they interrupted him. Philip said, "Lord, show us the Father, and it sufficeth us". Philip's interruption was due, in the first place, to a conviction of Christ's relation in some way to the Father. He had been so long with Jesus as to become familiar in some senses with His line of thought. In all probability Philip was asking that there should be repeated to him and the little group of disciples some such wonderful thing as they had read of in the past of their people's history; as when the elders once ascended the mountain and saw God; or when the prophet saw the Lord sitting upon a throne, high and lifted up, and His train filled the temple; or when Ezekiel saw God in fire, and wheels; in majesty and glory.

I cannot read the answer of Jesus to that request without feeling that He divested Himself, of set purpose, of anything that approached stateliness of diction, and dropped into the common speech of friend to friend, as, - looking back into the face of Philip, who was voicing, though he little knew it, the great anguish of the human heart, the great hunger of the human soul, - He said, "Have I been so long time with you, and dost thou not know me, Philip? He that hath seen me hath seen the Father". That claim has been vindicated in the passing of the centuries.

**REVELATION TO THE RACE.**

We will, therefore, consider first, what this revelation of God has meant to the race; and secondly, what it has meant to the individual.

First, then, what conception of God had the race before Christ came? Taking the Hebrew thought of God, let me put the whole truth as I see it into one comprehensive statement. Prior to the Incarnation there had been a growing intellectual apprehension of truth concerning God, accompanied by a diminishing moral result. It is impossible to study the Old Testament without seeing that there gradually broke through the mists a clearer light concerning God. The fact of the unity of God; the fact of the might of God; the fact of the holiness of God; the fact of the beneficence of God; these things men had come to see through the process of the ages.

Yet side by side with this growing intellectual apprehension of God there was diminishing moral result, for it is impossible to read the story of the ancient Hebrew people without seeing how they waxed worse and worse in all matters moral. The moral life of Abraham was far purer than life in the time of the kings. Life in the early time of the kings was far purer than the conditions which the prophets ultimately described In proportion as men grew in their intellectual conception oi God, it seemed increasingly unthinkable that He could be interested in their every-day life. Morality became something not of intimate relationship to Him and therefore something that mattered far less.

Think of the great Gentile world, as it then was, and as it still is, save where the message of the Evangel has reached it. We have had such remarkable teachers as Zoroaster, Buddha Confucius; men speaking many true things, flashing with light, but notwithstanding these things a perpetual failure in morals and a uniform degradation of religion has been universal. The failure has ever been due to a lack of final knowledge concerning God.

At last there came the song of the angels, and the birth of the Son of God, through Whose Incarnation and ministry there came to men a new consciousness of God.

He included in His teaching and manifestation all the essential things which men had learned in the long ages of the past He did not deny the truth of the unity of God: He re-emphasized it. He did not deny the might of God; He declared it and manifested it in many a gentle touch of infinite power, He did not deny the holiness of God; He insisted upon it in teaching and life, and at last by the mystery of dying. He did not deny the beneficence of God; He changed the cold word beneficence into the word throbbing with the infinite heart of Deity - Love. He did more. That which men had imperfectly expressed in song and prophecy He came to state - "He that hath seen me hath seen the Father" - not Elohim, not Jehovah, not Adonai; none of the great names of the past, although all of them are suggestive. In and through Him that truth of the Fatherhood was revealed.

Fatherhood means a great deal more than we sometimes imagine. It is not merely a term of tenderness; it is also a term of law and discipline. But fatherhood means supremely that if the child have wandered away, the father will suffer everything to save and bring it home again. Within the realm of revealed religion this truth emerged, that the one God, mighty, holy, beneficent, is the Father who will sacrifice Himself to save the child. There man found the point of contact, in infinite love which never abandons him, never leaves him. That is the truth which, coming into revealed religion, saved n from being intellectual apprehension, minus moral dynamic, and sent running through all human life rivers of cleansing, renewal, regeneration.

Wherever Christ comes to people who have never had direct revelation, He comes first of all as fulfillment of all that in their thought and scheme is true. He comes, moreover, for the correction of all that in their thought and scheme is false. All the underlying consciousness of humanity concerning God is touched and answered and lifted into the supreme consciousness whenever God is seen in Christ. All the gleams of light which have been flashing across the consciousness of humanity merge into the essential light when He is presented.

Christ comes not to contradict the essential truth of Buddhism, but to fulfill it. He comes not to rob the Chinaman of his regard for parents, as taught by Confucius, but to fulfill it, and to lift him upon that regard into regard for the One great Father, God. He comes always to fulfill. Wherever He has come; wherever He has been presented; wherever men low or high in the intellectual scale, have seen God in Christ, their hands have opened and they have dropped their fetishes, and their idols, and have yielded themselves to Him. If the world has not come to God through Him, it is because the world has not yet seen Him; and if the world has not yet seen Him, the blame is upon the Christian Church.

The wide issues of the manifestation of God in Christ are - the union of intellectual apprehension and moral improvement, and the relation of religion to life. In no system of religion in the world has there come to men the idea of God which unites religion with morals, save in this revelation of God in Jesus Christ.

**REVELATION TO THE INDIVIDUAL.**

Secondly, the effect of the manifestation in relation to the individual. In illustration we cannot do better than by taking Philip, the man to whom Christ spoke. To Philip's request "Show us the Father and it sufficeth us", Jesus said, "Have I been so long time with you, and dost thou not know me, Philip?" The evident sense of the question is, You have seen enough of Me, Philip, if you have really seen Me, to have found what you are asking for - a vision of God.

What then had Philip seen? What revelations of Deity had come to this man who thought he had not seen and did not understand? We will adhere to what Scripture tells of what Philip had seen.

All the story is in John. Philip is referred to by Matthew, Mark, and Luke, as being among the number of the apostles, but in no other way. John tells of four occasions when Philip is seen in union with Christ. Philip was the first man Jesus called to follow Him; not the first man to follow Him. There were other two who preceded Philip, going after Christ in consequence of the teaching of John. But Philip was the first man to whom Christ used that great formula of calling men which has become so precious in the passing of the centuries - "Follow me." What happened? "Philip findeth Nathanael, and saith unto him, We have found him, of whom Moses in the law, and the prophets, wrote." That was the first thing that Philip had seen in Christ according to his own confession: One Who embodied all the ideals of Moses and the prophets.

We find Philip next in the sixth chapter, when the multitudes were about Christ, and they were hungry. Philip, who considered it impossible to feed the hungry multitude, now sees Someone Who in a mysterious way had resource enough to satisfy human hunger. Philip then listened while in matchless discourse Jesus lifted the thought from material hunger to spiritual need and declared, "I am the bread of life". So that the second vision Philip had of Jesus, according to the record, was a vision of Him, full of resource and able to satisfy hunger, both material and spiritual.

We next see Philip in the twelfth chapter. The Greeks coming to him said, "Sir, we would see Jesus." Philip found his way with Andrew to Jesus, and asked Him to see the Greeks. Philip saw by what then took place that this Man had intimate relation with the Father, and that there was perfect harmony between them, no conflict, no controversy. He saw, moreover, that upon the basis of that communion with His Father, and that perfect harmony, His voice changed from the tones of sorrow to those of triumph, - "Now is the judgment of this world: now shall the prince of this world be cast out. And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto myself." That was Philip's third vision of Jesus. It was the vision of One acting in perfect accord with God, bending to the sorrow that surged upon His soul, in order that through it He might accomplish human redemption.

We now come back to the last scene. Philip said, "Show us the Father and it sufficeth us". Gathering up all the things of the past, Christ looked into the face of Philip and replied, "Have I been so long time with you, and dost thou not know me, Philip?" No, Philip had not seen these things. They were there to be seen, and by and by, the infinite work of Christ being accomplished, and the glory of Pentecost having dawned upon the world, Philip saw it all; saw the meaning of the things he had seen, and had never seen; the things he had looked upon, and had never understood.

He found that having seen Jesus he had actually seen the Father; that when he looked upon One Who embodied in His own personality all the facts of law and righteousness; Who was able to satisfy all the hunger of humanity; Who in cooperation with God was sent to share the sorrows of humanity in order to draw men to Himself and to save them; he had seen God.

This manifestation wins the submission of the reason; appeals to the love of the heart; demands the surrender of the will. Here is the value of the Incarnation as revelation of God.

Let us recall our thoughts for a moment from the particular application in the case of Philip, and think what this means to us. Is it true that this manifestation wins the submission of our reason, appeals to the love of our heart, asks the surrender of our will?

Then to refuse God in Christ is to violate at some essential point our own humanity. To refuse we must violate reason, which is captured by the revelation; or we must crush the emotion, which springs in our heart in the presence of the revelation; or we must decline to submit our will to the demands which the manifestation makes. God grant that we may rather look into His face and say, "My Lord and my God"! So shall we find our rest, and our hearts will be satisfied. It shall suffice, as we see the Father in Christ.

**II. TO TAKE AWAY SINS.**

"Ye know that he was manifested to take away sins; and in him is no sin" (1 John 3:5).

In this text we get nearer to an understanding of the purpose of the Incarnation as it touches our human need. The simple and all-inclusive theme which it suggests is, first, that the purpose of the Incarnation was the taking away of sins; and secondly, that the process of accomplishment is that of the Incarnation.

**THE PURPOSE.**

First, then, we will take the purpose as declared, "He was manifested to take away sins''. In order to understand this, we must take the terms in all their simplicity, and be very careful to find what they really mean. What is intended by this word "sins"? The sum total of all lawless acts. The thought is incomprehensible as to numbers when we think of the race, but let us remember that in the midst of that which overwhelms us in our thinking are our own actual sins.

"Sins" - missings of the mark, whether wilful missings, or missings through ignorance, does not at present matter. The word includes all those thoughts and words and deeds in which we have missed the mark of the Divine purpose and the Divine ideal; those things which stand between man and God, so that man becomes afraid of God; those things which stand between man and his fellowmen, so that man becomes afraid of his fellowman, knowing that he has wronged him in some direction; those things which stand between man and his own success. Call them failures if you will; call them by any name you please; so that you understand the intention of the word.

The phrase "to take away" is a statement of result, not a declaration of process. The Hebrew equivalent of the word "take away" is found in that familiar story of the scapegoat. It was provided that this animal should be driven away to the wilderness "unto a solitary land". This suggested that sins should be lifted from one and placed upon another, and by that one carried away out of experience, out of consciousness. That is the simple signification of this declaration, "He was manifested to bear sins" - to lift sins. He was manifested in order that He might come into relationship with human life, and passing underneath the load of human sins, lift them, take them away.

Either this is the most glorious Gospel that man has ever heard; or it is the greatest delusion to which man has ever listened. In the heart of every man and woman there is a consciousness of sin. No one of us would be prepared to say, I have never deliberately done the thing I knew I ought not to do. That is consciousness of sin. We may affect to excuse it. We may be ready to argue as to the reason for it, and the issue of it; but if we could, we would undo it. We may profess to have turned our back upon these evangelical truths, and yet we know we have sinned and we wish we had not.

Passing for a moment from that outer fringe of men and women, who are somewhat careless about the matter, to the souls who are in agony concerning it; who know their sin and loathe it; who carry the consciousness of wrongs done in past years as a perpetual burden upon their souls; who hate the memory of their own sins, - to such, a declaration like this is the most cruel word, or the kindest, that can be uttered. Cruel, if it be false; kind indeed, with the kindness of the heart of God, if it be true. If it be true that He was manifested somehow, in some mystery that we shall never perfectly understand, in order to get beneath my sins, my sins, my thought of impurity, my words of bitterness, my unholy deeds, and lift them and bear them away - that is the one Evangel I long for more than all. More valuable to me, a sinner, than anything else that He can do for me, is this.

**THE PROCESS.**

Secondly, in order that this great purpose of the Incarnation, as declared, may be more powerfully and better understood, let us reverently turn to the indication of the process which we have in this particular text, "He was manifested to take away sins". Who was the Person? It is perfectly evident that John here, as always, has his eye fixed upon the Man of Nazareth; and yet it is equally evident that he is looking through Jesus of Nazareth to God. That is the meaning of his word "manifested" here. He is the Word made flesh. He is flesh, but He is the Word. He is Someone that John had appreciated by the senses, and yet He is Someone Whom John knew pre-eminently by the Spirit.

Notice, that after he makes the affirmation, "He was manifested to take away sins," he adds this great word, "In Him is no sin"; or, "Missing of the mark was not in Him". The One in Whom there was no missing of the mark was manifested for the express purpose of lifting, bearing away, making not to be, the missings of the mark of others.

"He was manifested" - and in the name of God let us not read into the "He" anything small or narrow. If we do, we shall at once be driven into the place of having to deny the declaration that He can take away sins. If He was man as I am man merely, then though He be perfect and sinless, He cannot take away sins. If into the "He" we will read all that John evidently meant according to the testimony of his own writing, we shall begin to see something of the stupendous idea, and something of the possibility at least of believing the declaration that "He was manifested to take away sins."

Consider the manifestation and sins, as to man. The terms of the final promise of the Incarnation were, "Thou shalt call His name JESUS; for it is he that shall save his people from their sins." When the songs to which the shepherds listened were heard, what said they? "There is born to you this day ... a Saviour, who is Christ the Lord." The promise of the Incarnation was that of the coming of One to lift sins.

During His life and ministry the words of Jesus were words revealing the meaning of sin; words calculated to rebuke sin and to bring men away from sin. The works of Jesus - and by works I mean miracles and signs and wonders - were chiefly works overtaking the results of sin. The miracles of Jesus were not supernatural in their effect upon men; they were always restorations of the unnatural to natural positions. When he cured disease it was the restoration of man to the normal physical condition. He was taking away the results of sin.

I come now to the final thing in this manifestation - the process of the death; for in that solemn and lonely and unapproachable hour of the cross is the final fulfilment of the word of the herald on the banks of the Jordan, "Behold the Lamb of God, that taketh away the sin of the world!" That phrase, "The Lamb of God," could have but one significance in the ears of the men who heard it. This was the voice of a Hebrew prophet speaking to Hebrews, and when he spoke of the Lamb taking away sins, they had no alternative other than to think of the long line of symbolical sacrifices which had been offered, and which they had been taught shadowed forth some great mystery of Divine purpose whereby sin might be dealt with. So in the hour of His death we find the ultimate meaning of that great word. Whereas by manifestation, from first to last, He is for evermore dealing with sins and with sin, lifting, correcting, arresting, by gleams of light suggesting to men the deepest meaning of His mission; it is when we come to the hour of His unutterable loneliness, and deep darkness, and passion-baptism, that we have that part of the manifestation in which we see, as nowhere else, and as never before, the meaning of this text, "He was manifested to take away sins".

Reverently let us take one step further. The manifestation and sins, as to God. The manifested One was God. If that be once seen, then we shall for evermore look back upon that Man of Nazareth in His birth, His life, His cross, as but a manifestation. The whole fact cannot be seen, but the whole fact is brought to the point of visibility by the way of Incarnation. If indeed this One be very God manifested, then remember this, the whole measure of humanity is in Him, and infinitely more than the whole measure of humanity. Beyond the utmost bound of creation, God is. All creation, heaven and earth, suns and stars and systems, angels and archangels, principalities and powers, the hierarchies of whom we hear, but cannot perfectly explain their nature or their order, all these are in Him; but He is infinitely beyond them all.

I begin to wonder. In amazement I begin to believe in the possibility of lifting the burden of my sin. The cross, like everything else, was manifestation. In the cross of Jesus there was the working out into visibility of eternal things. Love and light were wrought out into visibility by the cross. Love and light in the presence of the conditions of sin became sorrow - and became joy! In the cross I see the sorrow of God, and in the cross I see the joy of God, for "it pleased the Lord to bruise him." In the cross I see the love of God working out through passion and power for the redemption of man. In the cross I see the light of God refusing to make any terms with iniquity and sin and evil. The cross is the historic revelation of the abiding facts within the heart of God. The measure of the cross is God. If all the measure of humanity is in God and He is more, and the measure of the cross is God, then the measure of the cross wraps humanity about, so that no one individual is outside its meaning and its power. He Who was manifested is God. He can gather into His eternal life all the race as to its sorrow and as to its sin, and bear it.

Yet remember this, It was not by the eternal facts that sins were taken away, but by the manifestation of those facts. This text does not affirm, and there is no text that begins to affirm, that He before He was manifested, takes away sins. There is a sense in which that is true; but "He was manifested to take away sins". The passion revealed in the cross was indeed the passion of God, but the passion of God became dynamic in human life when it became manifest through human form, in the perfection of a life, and the mystery of a death.

Man's will is the factor always to be dealt with, and whereas the sin of man was gathered into the consciousness of God, and created the sorrow of God from the very beginning, it is only when that fact of the sorrow of Godhead is wrought out into visibility by manifestation, that the will of man can ever be captured - or ever constrained to the position of trust and obedience which is necessary for his practical and effectual restoration to righteousness. Wherever man thus yields himself, trusting - that is the condition - his sins are taken away, lifted.

If it be declared that God might have wrought this self-same deliverance without suffering, our answer is that the man who says so knows nothing about sin. Sin and suffering are co-existent. The moment there is sin, there is suffering. The moment there is sin and suffering in a human being it is in God multiplied. "The Lamb was slain from the foundation of the world." From the moment when man in his sin became a child of sorrow, the sorrow was most keenly felt in heaven.

The man who is burdened with a sense of sin I would ask to contemplate the Person manifested. There is not one of us of whom it is not true that we live and move and have our being in God. God is infinitely more than I am; infinitely more than the whole human race from its first to its last. If infinitely more, then all my life is in Him. If in the mystery of Incarnation there became manifest the truth that He, God, lifted sin, then I can trust. If that be the cleaving of the rock, then I can pay as never before -

"Rock of Ages, cleft for me,

Let me hide myself in Thee."

He was manifested, and by that manifestation I see wrought out the infinite truth of the passion of God which we speak of as the atonement.

**III. TO DESTROY THE WORKS OF THE DEVIL.**

"To this end was the Son of God manifested, that he might destroy the works of the devil" (1 John 3:8).

There can be no question as to the One to Whom John referred when he said, "the Son of God." In all the writings of John it is evident that his eyes are fixed upon the man Jesus. Occasionally he does not even name Him; does not even refer to Him by a personal pronoun, but indicates Him by a word you can only use when you are looking at an object or a person. For instance, "That which we have seen with our eyes, that which we beheld, and our hands handled". Upon another occasion he said, "He that saith he abideth in him, ought himself also to walk even as he walked." It is always the method of expression of a man who is looking at a Person. For evermore the actual human Person of Christ was present to the mind of John as he wrote of Him.

How intimate he had been with Him we all know. One of the most tender and beautiful things in all the story of the life of Jesus is the story of John's pure human love for Him. The other disciples loved Him, but their love was of a different tone and quality from that of John. John must get close to Him, and lay his head upon His bosom. Yet if I said no more, I would not have uttered half the truth. If John, the mystic, the lover, laid his head upon the human bosom of the Man of Nazareth, he heard the beating of the heart of God. If he laid his hand upon Jesus when he talked to Him, he knew that beneath the warm touch of the human flesh there beat the mystic majesty of Deity. "That which our hands handled, concerning the Word of life." He is perfectly conscious of the flesh, but supremely conscious of the mystic Word veiled in flesh and shining through it. He is perfectly conscious of the human, and thereby finds Deity. So that when John comes to write of this One, he speaks of Him as "the Son of God." He remembers the warmth of His bosom, the gentleness of His touch, the love-lit glory of His eyes, but He is "the Son of God."

The word "manifested" presupposes existence prior to manifestation. In the Man of Nazareth there was manifestation of One Who had existed long before the Man of Nazareth.

The enemy is described here as the devil. We read that he is a murderer, a liar, a betrayer; the fountain-head of sin, the lawless one. The work of the murderer is destruction of life. The work of the liar is the extinguishing of light. The work of the betrayer is the violation of love. The work of the arch-sinner is the breaking of the law. These are the works of the devil.

He is a murderer. This consists fundamentally in the destruction of life on its highest level, which is the spiritual. Alienation from God is the devil's work. It is also death on the level of the mental. Vision which fails to include God is practical blindness. On the physical plane, all disease and all pain are ultimately results of sin, and are among the works of the devil. These things all lie within the realm of his work as murderer, destroyer of human life.

He is more. He is the liar, and to him is due the extinguishing of light, so that men blunder along the way. All ignorance, all despair, all wandering over the trackless deserts of life, are due to extinction of spiritual light in the mind of man. All ignorance is the result of the clouding of man's vision of God.

"This is life eternal," age-abiding life, high life, deep life, broad life, long life, comprehensive life, "that they should know thee the only true God, and him whom thou didst send, even Jesus Christ." The proportion in which man knows God is the proportion in which he sees clearly to the heart of things. By and by, when the redemptive work of Christ has been perfected in man, and in the world, we shall find that all ignorance is banished, and man has found his way into light. But the liar, the one who brings darkness, has made his works far spread o'er all the face of humanity, and all ignorance and resultant despair, and all wandering aimlessly in every realm of life, are due to the work of the one whom Jesus designated a liar from the beginning.

Again, the violation of love, as a work of the devil, is seen supremely in the way he entered into the heart of Judas, and made him the betrayer. All the avarice you find in the world today, and all the jealousy, and all the cruelty, are the works of the devil.

Finally, he is the supreme sinner. Sin is lawlessness, which does not mean the condition of being without law, but the condition of being against law, breaking law. So that all wrong done to God in His world, all wrong done by man to man, all wrong done by man to himself, are works of the devil.

To summarize then: death, darkness, hatred, find them where you will, are works of the devil.

The Son of God was manifested that He might destroy the works of the devil. If at the beginning we saw Him as a soul in conflict with all these things, remember that was an indication of the program and a prophecy of the purpose. The Incarnation was not merely the birth of a little child in whom we were to learn the secret of childhood, and in whom presently we were to see the glories of manhood. All that is true; but it was the happening in the course of human events, of that one thing through which God Himself is able to destroy the works of the devil.

**WHAT "DESTROY" MEANS.**

"To destroy." It is a word which means to dissolve, to loosen. It is the very same word as is used in the Apocalypse about loosing us from our sins; or if you will be more graphic, it is the word used in the Acts of the Apostles when you read that the ship was broken to pieces; loosed, dissolved, that which had been a consistent whole, was broken up and scattered and wrecked.

The word "destroyed" may be perfectly correct, but let us understand it. He was manifested to do a work in human history the result of which should be that the works of the devil should lose their consistency. The cohesive force that makes them appear stable until this moment, He came to loosen and dissolve. He was manifested to destroy death by the gift of life. He was manifested to destroy darkness by the gift of light. He was manifested to destroy hatred by the gift of love. He was manifested to destroy lawlessness by the gift of law. He was manifested to loosen, to break up, to destroy the negatives which spoil, by the bringing of the positive that remakes and uplifts.

He was manifested to destroy the works of the devil as to death, by the gift of life. This means first spiritual life, which is fellowship with God. It means also mental life, the vision of the open secret. Not yet perfectly do we understand, but already the trusting soul, utterly devoid of education, hears more in the wind at eventide, and sees more in the blossoming of the flowers than any merely scientific man can do.

He who sees has the true intellectual vision which Christ has bestowed in His gift of life. "This is life eternal, that they should know thee the only true God." The gift of life was to destroy death, and the man who has His gift of life laughs in the face of death, laughs triumphantly. I believe that there was laughter in the apostle's tone when he said, "O death, where is thy sting?" As though he had said, what hast thou done with thy victory? I trembled in thy presence once, O rider upon the pale horse; but now I laugh in thy face, for thy paleness has become the glistening white of an angel of light. So He destroys the works of the devil by giving the gift of life which destroys death.

As to darkness. This is intimately associated with the thing already said. The gift of light always comes out of life. If there be death, then there is no vision. If there be life, there is light. Light means knowledge and hope and guidance, so that there is no more wandering aimlessly. By bringing light into human life and into the world He has destroyed the works of the devil.

As to hatred. He destroyed hatred by His gift of love. Benevolence - and I am not using the word idly as we often do; I am using it in all its rich, spacious, gracious meaning - benevolence, well-willing, self-abnegation, kindness in the apostle's sense of the word when writing to the Galatians he gives kindness as one of the qualities of love, the specific doing of small things out of pure love. All these things are things by which the works of the devil are being destroyed. Hatred, avarice, jealousy, selfishness, are destroyed by shedding abroad love which is the warmth of life, as light is its illumination. By these things He destroys the works of the devil.

As to lawlessness. This He destroys by the gift of law; passion for the rights of God, service to our fellowmen; the finding of self in the great abnegation, and the finding of self in the perfect freedom because I have become the bond-slave of the infinite Lord of love.

Nineteen centuries ago the Son of God was manifested, and during those centuries in the lives of hundreds, thousands, He has destroyed the works of the devil, mastered death by the gift of life; cast darkness out by the incoming light; turned the selfishness of avarice and jealousy into love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness. He has taken hold of lawless men and made them into the willing, glad bond-servants of God. So has He destroyed the works of the devil.

**HISTORIC MEANING OF THE INCARNATION.**

Do not forget the meaning of the Incarnation historically. It was the invasion of human history by One Who snatched the scepter from the usurper. It was the intrusion of forces into human history which dissolved the consistency of the works of the devil and caused them to break and fail. "How long, O Lord, how long?" is the cry of the heart of the saint today. Yet let us take heart as we look back and know that the victorious force has operated for nineteen centuries, and always toward consummation. Still, the works of the devil are manifest; the works of the flesh are manifest. Yes, but the fruit of the Spirit of life which has come through the advent of Christ is also manifest. All over the world today on many a branch of the vine of the Father's planting, the rich clusters of fruit are to be found. All, so far, is but preliminary. It is twilight only. High noon has not arrived; but it is twilight, and the noon must come.

Further, the Incarnation was the coming of the Stronger than the strong man armed to destroy the works of the devil in my own life. Are the works of the devil - death, darkness, hatred, and rebellion - the master forces of your being? Then I bring you the Evangel. I tell you of One manifested to destroy all such works. I tell you not merely as a theory, but as having the testimony of history attesting the truth of the announcement of this text.

The forces of this Christ have operated, and are operating; and the things that were formerly established are loosened, and are falling to decay. He was manifested to destroy the works of the devil. If you are in the grip of forces of evil; if you realize that in your life His works are the things of strength, then I pray you, turn with full purpose of heart to the One manifested long ago, Who in all the power of His gracious victory, will destroy in you all the works of the devil, and set you free.

**IV. TO PREPARE FOR A SECOND ADVENT.**

"Christ also, having been once offered to bear the sins of many, shall appear a second time, apart from sin, to them that wait for him, unto salvation" (Hebrews 9:28).

We are all conscious that nothing is perfect; that the things which Christ came to do are not yet done; that the works of the devil are not yet finally destroyed; that sins are not yet experimentally taken away; that in the spiritual consciousness of the race, God is not yet perfectly known. "Now we see not yet all things subjected to Him." The victory does not seem to be won. It is impossible to read the story of the Incarnation, and to believe in it, and to follow the history of the centuries that have followed upon that Incarnation without feeling in one's deepest heart that something more is needed, that the Incarnation was preparatory, and that the consummation of its meaning can only be brought about by another coming, as personal, as definite, as positive, as real in human history as was the first.

"Christ ... shall appear a second time." There is no escape, other than by casuistry, from the simple meaning of those words. The first idea conveyed by them is that of an actual personal advent of Jesus yet to be. To spiritualize a statement like this and to attempt to make application of it in any other than the way in which a little child would understand it, is to be driven, one is almost inclined to say, to dishonesty with the simplicity of the scriptural declaration. There may be diversities of interpretations as to how He will come, and when He will come; whether He will come to usher in a millennium or to crown it; but the fact of His actual coming is beyond question.

Paul in all his writings is conscious of this truth of the second advent. In some of them he does not dwell upon it at such great length, or with such clearness as in others, for the simple reason that it is not the specific subject with which he is dealing. In the Thessalonian letters we have most clearly set forth Paul's teaching concerning this matter. In the very center of the first letter we have a passage which declares in unmistakable language that "the Lord himself shall descend from heaven, with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first; then we that are alive, that are left, shall together with them be caught up in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord."

James writing to those who were in affliction said, "Be ye also patient; establish your hearts: for the coming of the Lord is at hand."

Peter with equal clearness said to the early disciples, "Be sober and set your hope perfectly on the grace that is to be brought unto you at the revelation of Jesus Christ."

John, who leaned upon his Master's bosom, and who wrote the most wonderful of all mystic words concerning Him, said, "We know that, if he shall be manifested, we shall be like him; for we shall see him even as he is. And every one that hath this hope set on him purifieth himself, even as he is pure."

Jude said to those to whom he wrote, "Ye, beloved, building up yourselves on your most holy faith, praying in the Holy Spirit, keep yourselves in the love of God, looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life."

Every New Testament writer presents this truth as part of the common Christian faith. Belief in the personal actual second advent of Jesus gave the bloom to primitive Christianity, and constituted the power of the early Christians to laugh in the face of death, and to overcome all forces that were against them. There is nothing more necessary in our day than a new declaration of this vital fact of Christian faith. Think what it would mean if the whole church still lifted her face toward the east and waited for the morning; waited as the Lord would have her wait- - not star-gazing, and almanac examining, but with loins girt for service, and lamps burning; waited as she served. If the whole Christian church were so waiting, she would cast off her worldliness and infidelity, and all other things which hinder her march to conquest.

**MEANING OF THE SECOND ADVENT.**

This text does more than affirm the fact of the second advent. In a somewhat remarkable way, it declares the meaning thereof, "Christ ... shall appear a second time, apart from sin." To rightly understand this, we must look upon it as putting the second advent into contrast with the first. That is what the writer most evidently means, for the context declares that He was manifested in the consummation of the ages to bear sins. He now says that "Christ ... shall appear a second time apart from sin." All the things of the first advent were necessary to the second; but all the things of the second will be different from the things of the first.

By His first advent sin was revealed. His own cross was the place where all the deep hatred of the human heart expressed itself most diabolically in view of heaven and earth and hell.

There was also revelation of darkness as contrary to light. "Men loved the darkness rather than the light," was the supreme wail of the heart of Jesus.

His presence in the world was, moreover, revelation of spiritual death as contrary to life. In the perpetual attempt of men to materialize His work, the attempt of His own disciples as well as of all the rest, and their absolute failure to appreciate the spiritual teaching He gave, we see what spiritual death really is.

In His first advent He not only revealed sin, but bore it. In the words, "Christ also, having been once offered to bear the sins of many," the reference is not merely to the final movement of the cross. The word "offered" is used in reference to God's action in giving Him. It would be perfectly correct interpretation to supply the word "offered" by the word "gave;" the word which we have in John's Gospel, "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son." Let us put that word here - "Christ also, having been once given to bear the sins of many, shall appear a second time." All through His life He was putting Himself underneath sin in order to take it away. He bore its limitations throughout the whole of His life. In poverty, in sorrow, in loneliness, He lived: and all these things are limitations resulting from sin. When Jesus Christ entered into the flesh, He entered into the limitations which follow upon sin, and He bore sin in His own consciousness through all the years; not poverty only, but sorrow in all forms, and loneliness. All the sorrows of the human heart were upon His heart until He uttered that unspeakable cry, "My God, my God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?"

Having finally dealt with sin, and destroyed it at its very root at His first advent, His second advent is to be that of victory. He will come again; not to poverty, but to wealth. He will come again; not to sorrow, but with all joy. He will come again; not in loneliness, but to gather about Him all trusting souls who have looked and served and waited. All in His first advent of sorrow and loneliness, of poverty and of sin, will be absent from the second. The first advent was for atonement; the second will be for administration. He came, entering into human nature, and taking hold of it, to deal with sin and put it away. He has taken sin away, and He will come again to set up that kingdom, the foundations of which He laid in His first coming.

**"JUDGMENT" - "SALVATION."**

This text declares the purpose of the advent: "It is appointed unto men once to die, and after this cometh judgment; so Christ also, having been once offered to bear the sins of many, shall appear a second time, apart from sin, to them that wait for him, unto salvation." A similarity is suggested. "It is appointed unto men once to die, and after this cometh judgment." Over against that dual appointment stands, "So Christ also, having been once offered to bear the sins of many, shall appear a second time, apart from sin, to them that wait for him, unto salvation."

There is a strange differentiation in the ending of the two declarations. We would expect that it would be written to complete the comparison, thus, it is appointed unto men once to die, and after this cometh judgment; so Christ also, having been once offered to bear the sins of many, shall appear a second time, apart from sin, unto judgment. That would seem to be a balanced comparison, but the writer does not so write. This very difference unfolds the meanings of the first and second advents. It is appointed to men to die, - He was offered to bear the sins of many. After death judgment, - He is coming again unto salvation. As the first advent negatived the death appointed unto men, the second advent will turn the judgment into salvation.

"It is appointed unto men once to die." It is often some what carelessly affirmed that men must die. While admitting the truth of this statement we inquire, why must they die? Science can no more account for death than it can account for life. It has never yet been able to say why men die. How they die, yes; why they die, no! I will tell you why. Death is the wage of sin. Science will admit that death comes by the breaking of certain laws, but Science will use some other word than the word sin. "It is appointed unto men once to die," by the fiat of God Almighty because they are sinners, and no man can escape that fiat.

But He was offered by God to bear the sins of many. That was the answer of the first advent to man's appointment to death.

Beyond death there is another appointment, that of judgment. Who shall appeal against the absolute justice of that appointment?

He "shall appear a second time, apart from sin ... unto salvation." To those who have heard the message of the first advent and have believed it, and trusted in His great work, and have found shelter in the mystery of His manifestation and bearing of sin - to such, salvation takes the place of judgment. But to the man who will not shelter beneath that first advent and its atoning value - judgment abides. All the things begun by His first advent will be consummated by the second.

At His second advent there will be complete salvation for the individual - righteousness, sanctification, redemption. We believed, and were saved. We believe, and are being saved. We believe and we shall be saved. The last movement will come when He comes.

Those who have fallen on sleep are safe with God, and He will bring them with Him when He comes. They are not yet perfected, "God having provided some better thing concerning us, that apart from us they should not be made perfect." They are at rest, and consciously at rest. They are "absent from the body ... at home with the Lord," but they are not yet perfected; they are waiting. We are waiting in the midst of earth's struggle - they in heaven's light and joy, for the second advent. Heaven is waiting for it. Earth is waiting for it. Hell is waiting for it. The universe is waiting for it.

That coming will be to those who wait for Him. Who are those who wait for Him? "Ye turned unto God from idols, to serve a living and true God, and to wait for his Son from heaven." The first thing is the turning from idols. Have we done that? The second thing is serving the living God. Are we doing that? Then because we have turned from idols, and are serving Him, we are waiting. That is the waiting the New Testament enjoins, and to those who wait, His second advent will mean salvation. "Christ shall appear." Glorious Gospel!