

PURPOSE IN CREATION

By A.P. Adams

In creation God gives outwardness, existence, to the archetypal (highest type) thoughts of His mind. Everything in creation expresses a divine thought; the divine thought is its spirit, that is, its real, true meaning in the economy of God, and to apprehend that spirit is to recognize God in His works, and to recognize or know God is life. Thus creation is always consummated in *life*. That is its end. Though it be but the creation of a mass of inanimate clay, the purpose of such creation ever and always, in the last analysis, is life. And since the highest life, or perhaps we can better understand it if we say the highest *living* is that of the Creator himself, hence all creation tends to bring us to the life of the Creator. Thus in an endless but ever-widening circle does God express Himself in creation that man may at the last receive His exact impress. It was only by going out of Himself, so to speak, that God could ever bring man *into* Himself. "That they all may be one" — "perfected in one" — in no other way, except in *one*, could we become perfect in God's image and likeness.

I have said that everything in creation expresses a divine thought, and that this divine thought is its *spirit* or true meaning in God's universe. In other words everything is a revelation of God, which proposition necessarily follows from the great truth we have already learned that God is in everything, or all things are of God. Everything in nature and providence reveals God — every rock, every blade of grass, every plant, the very weeds that grow in our gardens as well as the grander and mightier works of nature. I cannot think that anything is so small or so insignificant that its existence is purposeless. Whatever *is*, *is* for a purpose, and that purpose is God's thought in its creation. And this is true, not only of the works of nature, great and small, but also of the events of God's providence whether they come to us individually or to communities, states, nations, or the world

at large — all reveal God. There is something of God in all things, and that is its spirit.

So, too, all truth and knowledge is of God whether it be the truths of mathematics or of revelation, or whether it be the knowledge of how to tell the age of a horse by looking into his mouth, or the knowledge that fits the saint to "judge angels" as in 1st. Corinthians 6:3. Thus all truth is sacred. He who plies a mechanical trade, or worthily fills a school-teacher's place, or honestly endeavors to alleviate the physical sufferings of his fellows, is engaged in a work as holy as he who preaches the gospel. All of truth in every department should be pursued with the object to "find out God." Job 11:7. When it is thus sought the secular and the sacred will be blended into one and head and heart shall be united.

Pilate asked the question of him who *is* the truth, "What is truth?" But he did not wait for an answer because he was not "of the truth." If I err not, an exhaustive answer to Pilate's question would be *knowledge of God*. All truth, abstract or concrete, is knowledge of God in nature or in providence or in grace, the lowest and simplest truth as well as the highest and most profound. To the one who realizes this everything that comes to him and all things around him are a continual surprise and delight, a perfect transcript (so far as he can understand it) of the divine mind. He walks through the world with sandals removed, as treading on holy ground, everywhere stamped with the footprints of the Creator — and with head uncovered as one who at any turn may meet God.

With many Christians their religion is something entirely external; it is not a life, but is simply a dress or a cloak. To such ones God is far off. He is not available for help and counsel and guidance in ordinary matters. He is a being that they must approach only at stated intervals, and with a solemn face and a particular attitude. The religious life of such a one is exceedingly strained and artificial. There is altogether too much self-consciousness and too much regard for the "proprieties" of the occasion. We have read perhaps how children of some earthly monarch visit their parents at stated times. A certain hour of the day or week is set apart for the ceremony. The royal parents are seated in state. The children, accompanied by their nurses and

attendants and dressed with great precision, appear and, advancing to the king and queen, kneel and kiss their hands, and after a few formal words they retire, all the time preserving an air of great gravity and decorum. In about the same way do very many Christians hold themselves toward their heavenly Father. If their religion does not creep, it struts, and that is worse. Approach to God becomes an unusual and a state occasion. Certain ceremonies and solemnities must always be resorted to, and the whole affair is made a matter of form and conventionality.

Now all this simply shows how artificial and unreal their religious life is; or rather it shows that their religion is not life at all, but merely an outside garment to be put on for particular occasions, and, when the occasion is past, to be laid aside entirely until another such occasion. What then is the real life of such ones? You will not find out by calling upon them or by meeting them occasionally in a prayer meeting or a social gathering. On such occasions also they have a conventional garment which completely disguises the real life. But go and live with them every day in the week for a year. In the kitchen, in the nursery, and in all the household cares and duties, or on the street, in the work shop, in the counting room, and amid all the intricacies and perplexities of business life. What for? To discover their faults and failings? Bless you, no. You had better not look for *them*, lest you be put to shame at their superiority over yourself, or lest you be deceived and puffed up with spiritual pride by the idea that you are better than they. All you need to know is *how much they make of God*. What place, if any, does He occupy in their lives? Thus you will perceive at once whether they have the life of God or not. When we look thus into the lives of very many people we find them almost entirely destitute of the divine element. "God is not in all of their thought"; they are practically *god-less*, "without God."

Now how radically and materially different is the life of one who sees God in everything, who refers all things to Him, who receives all things as from him, and who admits no second causes, but recognizes only the first great Cause, like Job, who referred even "the works of the devil" to God, for he says, "Shall we receive good at the hand of God, and shall we not receive evil?" It was Satan who was bringing evil upon Job, but the old patriarch refuses to recognize him, but attributes it all (and rightly, too) to God. So "the man of

God" consciously lives and moves and has his being in Him. He lives in his measure "the life of God"; that is to say, he lives after God's style.

Perhaps the greatest mystery that presents itself to us in this world of mystery is the mystery of life. What is life? What is it in its essence? We do not know. All we know about it is its phenomena, its outward manifestations. What it is in itself is utterly unknown to us. Hence, when we talk about different kinds of life, what we really mean is different kinds of *living*. Of life in itself of any kind we know nothing, but in the *manner* of life we recognize great differences. When we say a sailor's life is a dog's life, we mean that their manner of life is hard and disagreeable. In the same way we say a soldier's life is one of perils and deprivation; of a rich man we say, he lives the life of a prince; of a gay and frivolous woman, her's is a butterfly existence; of a poor man, his is a life of toil and want, etc.

In all such cases of the use of the term life we are not referring to different kinds of *life* considered in its essence, but to different manners or styles of *living*. The Bible uses the word in the same way. For example, Jesus said, "Take heed, and beware of covetousness; for a man's *life* consisteth not in the abundance of the things which he possesses." Again he says "Take no thought for your *life*, what ye shall eat, neither for the body, what ye shall put on; the *life* is more than meat, and the body is more than the raiment." Our Lord is not here speaking of life in itself, bare existence, but of a person's manner or style of living. Now, when I speak of possessing the life of God, I mean that in some slight degree the believer may live after God's style. He may in a measure have His peace; he may avail himself of God's unchangeableness; he may by faith make God's omnipotence his own (Mark 10:27 with 9:23), and, so hiding under the shadow of the Almighty, he may become a child of the Highest (Luke 6:35) in all kindness, mercy, forbearance, and love. In a word he may view all things from God's standpoint, instead of from man's, and so in a measure live the life of God. We may come into such close relationship to Him as that our life in a great measure will run along in harmony with His. We shall live with God. His manner of life will be ours; His standpoint will be ours; His thoughts and feelings will be ours. We may even say His attributes will be ours; His peace, His power, His wisdom, His goodness, *Himself* will be ours. Our life will

blend with His and His life will become ours. "For all things are yours; whether Paul, or Apollos, or Cephas, or the world, or life, or death, or things present, or things to come, *all* are yours; and ye are Christ's, and Christ is God's." All this, of course, is not in its perfection, not in its fullness. It is not "what we shall be". That "doth not yet appear"; and yet it is a real experience, a positive fact, that life of God begun here and now, although in the perfect and fullest sense we are not made alive unto "His coming" (1st Cor. 15:23).

Surely the advanced Christian is conscious of such a life begun in him "in the inward man"; and it is "being renewed day by day". It is a secret, a hidden life, "which no man knoweth, saving he that receiveth it". It makes him totally different from the natural man. Everything looks different to him from what it does to the one who is destitute of this life. The interpretation that he would put upon events and the conclusions he would draw therefrom are entirely different, and, in fact, oftentimes directly opposite to the worldly man's interpretations and conclusions. Where the latter sees chance, or wicked men, or perhaps the devil, the former sees only God. Where the latter man feels fretted, perplexed, angry, indignant, rebellious, the former finds reason for praise, gratitude, and thanksgiving. To him "all things are of God"; hence all things are good, and will result in good. There is nothing that can possibly take place in all the wide circle of the universe that shall not in the end redound to God's honor and glory, and the highest welfare of all His creatures.

And now mark! All this is part and parcel of the creative process, bringing the creature to the life of the Creator, which is the end of creation. There is no pleasure in lifeless things or things non-intelligent except as they contribute in some way to the enjoyment and development of *life*. Hence I repeat, *life* or "the life of God" is to the end of creation. We see also in this view how all things contribute to the perfection of creation, and how all things are so needful to that end. Everything gives God occasion and opportunity to reveal himself to man. For this purpose nothing comes amiss. All things to this end can be utilized, the evil as well as the good. The Bible is full of illustrations of this truth, that is, how God reveals Himself to man by means of all things, and, on the natural plane, especially by evil things.

For this purpose He manifested His power and wrath upon Pharaoh and the Egyptians (Ex. 7:5, 17: 14:4, 18), hardening his heart that he should not let the people go, that He might work all His pleasure upon that devoted people, *"to the end* that they might know the Lord". Ex. 8:22. "Even for this same purpose did God raise Pharaoh up, that He might show His power in him, and that His name might be declared throughout all of the earth". And "Who art thou, O man, that repliest against God? Shall the thing formed say to Him that formed it, Why hast Thou made me thus? Hath not the potter power over the clay, of the same lump to make one vessel unto honor, and another unto dishonor?" Romans 9. Here again is a very striking illustration of how "all things are of God". He is the potter; man is the clay in His hands (Isa. 64:8). Also we see how "He worketh all things after the counsel of His own will", and "none can stay His hands or say unto Him, What doest Thou?"

This case also illustrates how God controls and makes use of evil, and for what purpose. Surely this whole matter of Israel's slavery in Egypt was a great evil, and their haughty taskmasters were exceedingly wicked in their cruelty a injustice, and the king endorsed it all, and he and his subjects were justly punished. And yet the whole thing was "of Go< Centuries before God had foretold that His people would down into Egypt and be afflicted for four hundred years. Ge. 15:13. When the time came, God sent them down there. Ge 46:3. It was God also who turned the hearts of the Egyptians: to hate His people and to deal deceitfully with them. Psal 105:25. He it was who hardened Pharaoh's heart that I should not let them go until He had wrought out all H mighty judgments upon them. Eleven times in this account it said that God hardened Pharaoh's heart. Paul makes the statement general in Romans 9. "Therefore hath He mercy on whom He will have mercy, and whom he will He hardeneth." The apparent injustice of this entirely disappears in the light of the plan of the ages. From the standpoint (orthodoxism the account cannot be reconciled with justice equity, and righteousness, but, in the light of the Bible teaching of the redemptive work of the promised seed in the future ages, all may be adjusted and readily explained, as the intelligent and thoughtful reader will doubtless perceive.

And, finally, the purpose of all this was that "all the earth" might *know the Lord*. It was an occasion especially; prepared before hand (for this same purpose was Pharaoh raised up) *to the end* that God might reveal Himself, in certain aspects of His character, to man. If the reader will follow out this thought throughout the Bible (see the concordance on the word *know*), he will be surprised, if he has not studied it before, at the amount of scripture bearing this truth.

Thus God reveals Himself in all things — makes Himself known. And to know God is life, and life is the end (purpose) of creation. Hence all things contribute to the creation of man. All things tend to bring us to God's image and likeness. If all things make God known, as they certainly do, since He is in all things, then all things tend to life, since to know God is life, and this is the consummation of creation. Thus, if I err not, we arrive at the true idea of creation, and are able to perceive its process through the natural as well as the spiritual .

Thus, moreover, we may perceive how certain it is that the original plan of God, which has never been altered or disarranged in the least degree, will be carried out. It is because Christians fail to see that man is not yet created and that everything that is around him is part and parcel of the creative process, that they practically make his salvation depend upon himself. According to the common idea, God started everything all right. It was by the sin of man that everything was made all wrong, and it is a great mercy on the part of God, entirely unmerited by man, that He has made any provision at all whereby even a portion of the race may be saved. If our theology is based upon such an error as this, it is no wonder it is still further vitiated by the idea that man's salvation depends on himself.

But we have seen how false and misleading is this idea. We are God's workmanship. We are God's husbandry, God's building, clay in the hands of the potter, that is, so far as the final accomplishment of the purpose of God is concerned. "I am the first, and I am the last", saith the Lord, and all this is the creative process. If Christians could only see this, they would never think of such a thing as making man's perfection depend on himself, for surely in His creative work God needs no assistance. If man's salvation is a new

creation the consummation of which is life, then surely it must be all of God, and every son and daughter of the race may rest assured that God's purpose in them individually will be ultimately accomplished. I, as God's offspring, (Acts 17:28 compared with Psa. 82:6) may be absolutely sure that my Father and my Creator will sometime bring me into harmony with Himself. For it is impossible to believe that any portion of His creation will be out of harmony or at variance with Him through all eternity. Especially so since He plainly declares that he will ultimately "reconcile all things to Himself".

I take it that God has a definite purpose in the creation of everything — a definite end in view — and that end is certain to be reached soon or later. In other words, every creature ultimately fulfills the purpose of the Creator in its creation. For us to suppose otherwise would be to suppose a failure on the part of the Creator, which is unthinkable. The believer's attitude toward God then might be thus expressed: God has created me for a definite purpose. That purpose I shall ultimately fulfill in His economy. It is a wise and good purpose, one with which I should be perfectly satisfied and contented if I only understood it all. Toward that end I am continually moving. All things tend to advance me in that one direction, and I shall surely arrive. I shall surely fulfill the purpose of my creation, and all I have to do is to leave myself in His hands as clay in the hands of the potter to be fashioned according to His will.

It is a great satisfaction and pleasure to think of our relationship to God in this light. For God has something in His mind to make of me, and I shall surely become that something. And furthermore, since God is wise and good, that something will please and satisfy me perfectly. When I reach the place for which God created me, and for which He has fitted me, then I shall have no regrets that it is not another place. But I shall realize that it is my place and shall be *satisfied*, perfectly satisfied with the accomplishment of the ever blessed and good will of God *in me*.

I am a seed, destined to a certain result ultimately. The seed may pass through many vicissitudes in reaching that result, like the seed in the hand of an Egyptian mummy lying dormant for a thousand years, but still its end is fixed, and that end it will reach, and none other. I may frustrate the *grace* of

God, as in Gal. 2:21, but I cannot frustrate. His *will*. He may say, "Let him alone; he is joined to his idol", but "He will not cast off forever". Sooner or later He will return, and have compassion, and cast all our sins behind our backs". Again, "He turneth man to destruction and saith, Return ye children of men". I may be disappointed many times in failing to be what I would *like* to be, and what I imagine I might have been, and so my experience will correspond to the poet's words — "Of all sad words by tongue or pen, The saddest are these — it might have been." And this experience is a part of my training, and by it I am continually being advanced toward what in the providence of God *I am to be*. And thus —

"Our place is kept, and it will wait,

Ready for us to fill it, soon or late:

No star is ever lost we once have seen;

We always may be what we might have been:

Since good, though only thought, has life and breath.

And evil in its nature is decay,

And any hour may blot it all away."

Let no one say, "This is fatalism". Nay, it is godism — if I may reverently use such an expression. None need fear a fatalism that makes God supreme, absolute, almighty. In the foregoing remarks I am dealing with finalities. God is the first and the last and he has His way ultimately. He is *able* to subdue — that is, to harmonize — all things unto Himself. Himself is love, and love has only one way of subduing — by harmonizing. This glorious consummation will be reached when *all* are gathered together in *one* (Eph. 1:10) and God is all *in* all.

Thus may the trusting child "rest in God" both for himself and for the "whole creation", and with the utmost confidence he may commit all his interests unto Him as unto *a faithful creator*.

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