

"I HAVE EVEN CALLED THEE BY NAME: I HAVE SURNAMED THEE,
THOUGH THOU HAST NOT KNOWN ME.

"I AM THE LORD, AND THERE IS NONE ELSE, THERE IS NO GOD
BESIDE ME: I GIRDED THEE, THOUGH THOU HAST NOT KNOWN ME."

- ISAIAH XLV,4,5

ISAIAH XLV,1-13

JOHN XVIII,28-37

PSALM 30

NEW BOOK OF WORSHIP, PSALM 30, P.50

CYRUS THE PERSIAN IS MENTIONED TWICE IN ISAIAH AND THREE TIMES IN DANIEL. HE WAS NOT AN ISRAELITE, NOT ONE OF THE "CHOSEN" PEOPLE. HE WAS OF THE HEATHEN WORLD, BUT HE WAS ONE OF THE GREAT AND GOOD MEN OF THE AGES. ISAIAH PROPHESED OF HIM EVEN BEFORE HE WAS BORN THAT HE WAS CHOSEN TO BE A SPECIAL SON OF GOD.

EVERY INDIVIDUAL, WHATEVER HIS ORIGIN, MAY BE SUCH A SON OF GOD. GOD HAS A DEFINITE LIFE PLAN FOR EACH INDIVIDUAL, GIRDING HIM VISIBLY OR INVISIBLY FOR SOME EXACT USE WHICH IT WILL BE THE TRUE SIGNIFICANCE AND GLORY OF HIS LIFE TO HAVE ACCOMPLISHED. MAN IS BORN FOR HEAVEN. BUT THE LORD ALONE IS GOD, AND FROM HIM ALONE IS SALVATION. HE SAID OF HIMSELF, "TO THIS END WAS I BORN, AND FOR THIS CAUSE CAME I INTO THE WORLD, THAT I SHOULD BEAR WITNESS UNTO THE TRUTH. EVERY ONE THAT IS OF THE TRUTH HEARETH MY VOICE." ALL WHO ARE IN GOOD WILL LOOK TO THE LORD FOR TRUTH AND WILL RECEIVE HIM.

PEOPLE ARE WONT TO THINK THAT SOME FEW ARE ORDAINED OF GOD TO DO GREAT WORKS AND TO FILL IMPORTANT PLACES, AND THAT FOR THEMSELVES THERE IS NO IMPORTANT POSITION AND SO NO PARTICULAR OBJECT IN THEIR EXISTENCE. YET IN THE WORD WE FIND MANY HOLDING APPARENTLY THE COMMONEST PLACES WHO ARE CALLED TO GREAT TASKS. DAVID WAS A SHEPHERD; ELISHA WAS FOLLOWING THE PLOW; HANNAH COULD SAY OF HERSELF MERELY THAT SHE WAS A WOMAN OF SORROWFUL SPIRIT. YET ALL THESE WERE SPECIFICALLY CALLED OF GOD.

GOD HAS A PLAN FOR THE WORLD AS A WHOLE. THIS COULD NOT BE ACCOMPLISHED, HE COULD NOT GOVERN THE WORLD INTELLIGENTLY IF IT WERE ONLY A JUMBLE OF FORTUITIES WITHOUT COUNSEL, PURPOSE, OR LAW.

TODAY MANY ARE SO PREOCCUPIED WITH THE WORLDLY SIDE OF LIFE THAT THE GODWARD SIDE IS UNHEEDED AND FOR THE MOST PART UNRECOGNIZED. JOB IS SPEAKING OF THIS GODWARD SIDE WHEN HE SAYS, "BUT THERE IS A SPIRIT IN MAN: AND THE INSPIRATION OF THE ALMIGHTY GIVETH THEM UNDERSTANDING." THE WORD SPIRIT MEANS BREATH, AND INSPIRATION MEANS IN-BREATHING. THE WRITERS OF THE SCRIPTURES WERE INSPIRED. IN A MORE GENERAL SENSE BEZALEEL WAS INSPIRED WHEN HE WAS FILLED "WITH THE SPIRIT OF GOD, IN WISDOM, AND IN UNDERSTANDING, AND IN KNOWLEDGE, AND IN ALL MANNER OF WORKMANSHIP, TO DEVISE CUNNING WORKS, TO WORK IN GOLD, IN SILVER, AND IN BRASS, AND IN CUTTING OF STONES, TO SET THEM, AND IN CARVING OF TIMBER" FOR THE CONSTRUCTION AND FURNISHING OF THE TABERNACLE.

INSPIRATION IS LIKE THE WIND THAT "BLOWETH WHERE IT LISTETH, AND THOU HEAREST THE SOUND THEREOF, BUT CANST NOT TELL WHENCE IT COMETH, AND WHITHER IT GOETH." IT IS BECAUSE WE ARE CAPABLE OF INSPIRATION THAT WE ARE RAISED ABOVE ALL OTHER FORMS OF

EXISTENCE. GOD ACTS OMNIPOTENTLY ON ALL CREATED THINGS, YET MAN ALONE CAN CONSCIOUSLY RECEIVE HIM. WE DO NOT SPEAK OF AN INSPIRED MOUNTAIN OR PLANET, OR AN INSPIRED ANIMAL. BECAUSE MAN CAN BE INSPIRED, HE IS SEPARATED FROM AND SET ABOVE ALL OTHER OF GOD'S CREATURES.

SOMETIMES WE SPEAK OF THE ACHIEVEMENTS OF MAN, HIS INVENTIONS AND INSTITUTIONS. YET HIS GREATEST GLORY IS THAT HIS MIND CAN BE LIGHTED UP WITHIN BY THE MIND OF GOD SO THAT BY INSPIRATION OF THE ALMIGHTY HE CAN HAVE AN UNDERSTANDING OF THINGS UNSEEN - IN A WORD, CAN HAVE A CONSCIOUSNESS OF GOD. THIS MAKES ALL OTHER ACHIEVEMENTS QUITE INSIGNIFICANT.

AGAIN WE SOMETIMES DWELL ON THE MORAL NATURE IN MAN. BUT MAN'S MORAL NATURE, IN ITS STRICT MEANING, IS FAR BELOW AND INFERIOR TO THE SPIRITUAL. TO BE A MORAL BEING IS TO HAVE A SENSE OF DUTY AND A POWER OF CHOICE WHICH INVOLVES RESPONSIBILITY. IT IS THAT IN US WHICH RECOGNIZES AND ACKNOWLEDGES THE BINDING FORCE OF LAWS AND PRINCIPLES. ANIMALS HAVE A CERTAIN POWER OF INTELLIGENCE WITHOUT ANY TRUE SENSE OF DUTY OR LAW. BUT TO BE RAISED ABOVE THEM BY BEING SIMPLY A MORAL CREATURE IS NO GREAT DISTINCTION. AN ATHEIST CAN HAVE MORAL IDEAS, AND AS A MEMBER OF HUMAN SOCIETY CAN HONOR ITS OBLIGATIONS. BUT TO BE SPIRITUAL, TO HAVE A SPIRITUAL NATURE, IS TO BE CAPABLE NOT OF DUTY ONLY BUT OF RECEIVING AND KNOWING GOD, AND OF BEING FILLED WITH HIS SPIRIT. IN THIS CULMINATE OUR HIGHEST POSSIBILITIES.

IT IS BECAUSE OF THIS RELATION TO GOD THAT REDEMPTION FROM EVIL IS POSSIBLE. WERE THERE NO OTHER WAY BUT FOR US TO ACT ON OURSELVES AND TO BRING OURSELVES OUT OF DISORDER AND CHAOS, OUR CASE WOULD BE UTTERLY HOPELESS.

IN THE ORIGINAL PLAN OF CREATION MAN WAS TO LOOK TO GOD FOR LIGHT AND DIRECTION. THIS IS THE TRUE AND NORMAL STATE OF MAN, A STATE IN WHICH HE WAS CONTINUALLY INSPIRED BY THE PRESENCE OF GOD. THE "FALL" WAS NOT THE RESULT OF DEPARTURE FROM CERTAIN MORAL LAWS, BUT OF MAN'S TURNING AWAY FROM GOD TO SELF AND SO LOSING THAT INSPIRATION AND BECOMING ALIENATED FROM THE LIFE WHICH COMES FROM GOD. AND WHEN HIS PROPER RELATIONSHIP TO GOD IS RESTORED, HIS SPIRIT BECOMES A TEMPLE FOR GOD TO DWELL IN, AS IT WAS ORIGINALLY DESIGNED TO BE. BY THIS NOTHING IS TAKEN FROM HIS PROPER INDIVIDUALITY, BUT TO HIMSELF AND TO OTHERS HE APPEARS TO HAVE RISEN TO A MORE COMPLETE INDIVIDUALITY THAN HE HAD EVER KNOWN BEFORE. IT IS AS IF HE HAD JUST DISCOVERED HIMSELF, AND AWAKENED TO THE CONSCIOUSNESS OF HIS SOVEREIGNTY OVER ALL THINGS AROUND HIM. KNOWING THAT HE RECEIVES ALL HIS POWER FROM GOD AND THAT GOD IS WORKING THROUGH HIM, HE DISCOVERS WHAT IT IS TO BE A MAN.

IN THE SCRIPTURES THIS PROCESS IS PICTURED IN MANY STORIES, AS FOR EXAMPLE IN THE STORY OF JOSEPH. JOSEPH - AS JOSEPH - IS THE FAVORED SON OF HIS FATHER, DISTINGUISHED BY A CERTAIN NATURAL ABILITY AND WEARING A SPECIAL COAT. BUT HE BEGINS TO HAVE DREAMS AND THEN IS GIVEN A POWER TO INTERPRET DREAMS, AND GOD IS WITH HIM LEADING HIM ON TO A GREAT AND SPLENDID FUTURE. LIKewise MOSES PASSES THROUGH THE

PREPARATIONS OF A SCHOLAR, THEN BECOMES A REFUGEE, TENDING SHEEP IN THE WILDERNESS, BUT FINALLY IS CALLED OF GOD AT HOREB, AND GOD EXERCISES HIS POWER THROUGH HIM. THUS MOSES BECOMES A PROPHET, THE LEADER AND LAW-GIVER OF HIS PEOPLE.

PETER, A COMPANION OF CHRIST AND HEARER OF HIS WORD, THOUGHT AT THE CRUCIFIXION THAT CHRIST'S MISSION HAD FAILED. BUT AT PENTECOST, WHEN HIS MIND WAS ENLIGHTENED BY THE ADVENT OF THE SPIRIT, A MARVELOUS CHANGE COMES OVER HIM, AND HE BECOMES ONE THROUGH WHOM GOD IS BUILDING HIS CHURCH. SO ALSO PAUL, GOING TO DAMASCUS FULL OF LEARNING AND PHARISAIC SANCTITY TO PERSECUTE THE CHRISTIANS, BECOMES TRANSFORMED, AND A VOICE WITHIN HIM CALLS HIM TO HIS MISSION. WHEN JOHN, EXILED AT PATMOS, IS IN THE SPIRIT ON THE LORD'S DAY, HEAVEN IS OPENED TO HIM, AND IN SUBLIME IMAGES AND SCENES HE PORTRAYS ALL THE FUTURE AGES OF THE KINGDOM OF GOD.

IT IS BY INSPIRATION THAT THE LORD ENRICHES MEN WITH WISDOM, FILLS THEM WITH SUPERNATURAL CONFIDENCE, OPENS NEW RESOURCES OF CHARACTER. APART FROM GOD THEY ARE WEAK; INSPIRED BY GOD THEY BECOME POWERFUL.

ALL GOOD ANGELS AND ALL GOOD MEN ARE SUCH BY INSPIRATION OF GOD. ALL OF HEAVENLY JOY AND PERFECTION IS FROM THE CAPACITY TO BECOME CONJOINED TO THE LORD, OF WHICH THE FIRST STATE OF MAN IN EDEN WAS THE PROPHECY. THE DOCTRINE OF THE HOLY SPIRIT IS GROUNDED IN THE NATURE OF ALL SPIRITUAL BEINGS. TO BE IN THE SPIRIT IS THEIR NORMAL CONDITION, THEIR LIGHT, THEIR STRENGTH, THEIR GLORY. AND WHEN THROUGH SIN THEY DEPART FROM THE LORD AND COME INTO THE DARKNESS OF MERE SELFHOOD, THERE CAN BE NO RECOVERY UNTIL THEY ARE REBORN OF THE SPIRIT, WHICH MEANS TO BECOME REGENERATED.

"ASK, AND YE SHALL RECEIVE; SEEK, AND YE SHALL FIND." THIS IS THE DOCTRINE OF THE HOLY SPIRIT. IT IS NOT SOME NEW IDEA OF THE GOSPEL, BUT THE CONTINUED EFFORT OF THE DIVINE LOVE TO REACH MEN, TO RECOVER LOST GROUND, AND TO BRING MEN BACK TO THEIR ORIGINAL STATE OF HAPPINESS.

TRUE RELIGION IS NOT A MORTIFICATION, NOR IS IT A WEAKNESS, BUT IT IS THE MEANS TO OUR FULLEST DEVELOPMENT. THOSE WHO REJECT IT SHOULD PONDER THE WORDS OF DANIEL: "AND MANY OF THEM THAT SLEEP IN THE DUST OF THE EARTH SHALL AWAKE, SOME TO EVERLASTING LIFE, AND SOME TO SHAME AND EVERLASTING CONTEMPT."

WE SHOULD BE CAREFUL NOT TO CLAIM FOR OURSELVES THE SAME INSPIRATION GRANTED TO THE WRITERS OF SCRIPTURE. THE LORD HAS A PARTICULAR KIND OF INSPIRATION FOR EACH INDIVIDUAL, ACCORDING TO WHAT HE IS AND TO WHAT USE THE LORD CAN MAKE OF HIM. BEZALEEL PERFORMED ONE USE, MOSES ANOTHER. IT IS NOT FOR US TO SAY WHAT GIFTS GOD WILL BESTOW. IT IS ENOUGH TO KNOW THAT WE ARE IN HIS CARE AND UNDER HIS DIRECTION.

WE ARE LIVING IN THE BEGINNING OF DAYS OF PROMISE, WHEN MEN ARE LONGING FOR AND SEEKING SOMETHING MORE SATISFYING AND ENDURING THAN THE THINGS OF THE WORLD. WE OF THE NEW CHURCH SHOULD LIVE AS WITH GOD, WHATEVER OUR OUTWARD CALLING MAY BE, SO THAT WE MAY HELP OTHERS TO REALIZE THAT THE TABERNACLE OF GOD IS WITH MEN.