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The Lord, The Throne, The Altar, and The Man

by T. Austin-Sparks

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Isaiah 6:1-8.

The Lord in Sole Possession

If you look closely, you will see the outstanding things in these verses are, firstly, the Lord, the Lord Himself high and lifted up, His train filling the Temple; and, beloved, our hearts warm to that with a great consent and affirmation and we say, yes, that's where everything begins. Everything begins there with the Lord Himself high and lifted up, and His train filling the Temple. We can have nothing until that is so, and we must, right at the outset and all the way through, seek to keep that as the main factor in our vision. We must see the Lord Himself first. It has become almost common-place with us now to say, in the terms of a hymn which we all love, "Not joy, nor peace, nor even blessing, but Himself..."

The Lord Himself, and the Lord Himself as high and lifted up and His train filling the Temple. The Lord filling the House of the Lord, where there is no room for anything else but the Lord, the Lord in sole occupation, His train filling the Temple. That is where we begin, and that is where we must end - the Lord Himself, and surely our cry is that in these days above everything else it shall be the Lord Whom we seek, and the Lord Who is high and lifted up, and the Lord being given His place.

WE cannot lift the Lord up, WE cannot set the Lord on high, WE cannot make the Lord's train fill the Temple, but we CAN recognise that that is His place, and in every way in which it is revealed to us, surrender to that and say, "Yes, it shall be" - the Lord given His place and when the Lord is given His place He fills everything, and there is no place for anything else or any one else. And oh! if that is where He gets us really in experience in spiritual life, in life at every point and in every connection

and relationship, in these days, this meditation will be well worth while. There are so many other things, interests, considerations, elements, personalities and what-not obtruding themselves into the place of the Lord and in front of the Lord. There is that pride of heart which shows itself in so many ways which, in essence and in principle, always seeks to exalt itself and occupy the place of the Lord. It was born in the heart of one who said, "I WILL ascend into heaven," ... "I WILL exalt my throne above the clouds" ... "I WILL be equal with the Most High." It is simply the principle of the pride working itself out and pride always gets in front of God and doesn't give Him His place, and the Lord has got to search our hearts just to reveal that something which is not giving Him His place, and that something which is in the way of the Glory of the Lord.

Beloved, it begins and ends there. Shall that be our prayer that the Lord shall have His place? And when we come to see ways in which we never thought, never imagined the Lord was not having His place, He *shall* have it where we are concerned. Oh! this deceitful heart. Our hearts are deceitful, there is no doubt about it, and the very deceitfulness of our hearts is found in this fact that when we think that we have surrendered utterly to the Lord, there is pride in our very surrendering. There is pride and a boast about our humility. How true it has been in so many cases, those who started well, paid a great price; stood firm for the Lord and then have become used of God, that, imperceptibly and unconsciously they have become proud by reason of the blessing of God, and, and, there has slipped out as through a back door real spiritual ministry because they have become "able" in another sense, and yet they would claim that they are just as true as ever, and it does require a mighty revelation of the Lord to keep *us* out of the picture. That is where it leads to. It is only when the Holy Spirit really does present to us in a blaze the Lord high and lifted up and His train filling the Temple that we are saved, and for all the Divine purposes and interests such an unveiling of the Lord is necessary. He must come by the revelation of the Spirit to us, not in words of man, not in great things said about Him - which may be perfectly true as to the doctrine of God - but in that work of the Holy Ghost which makes God live before us, so that we get on our faces. The Lord high and lifted up and His train filling the Temple. That is the first and all-inclusive thing.

The Throne

The second thing associated with it is the Throne. "Seated on the Throne." "I saw the Lord high and lifted up, seated on a Throne" the absolute sovereignty of God in relation to the vocation of His people. I think that is the point here. It is not just the Lord as the Majestic One - we all recognise and acknowledge that - but you see a great vocation is now, here in these words, looming upon the horizon, the work of the Lord is in view.

Here is this man receiving his commission and his vocation in the House of God and he must needs see the Lord high and lifted up and His train filling that whole House, but the Sovereignty of God must come into relation. You see how the sovereignty of that Throne is functioning back of this man's ministry. He begins to tear dominions and kingdoms limb from limb, chapter after chapter of war, war, war, to the nations and the kingdoms. The whole world is brought to judgment and here is the Throne, you see, coming into relation to this ministry. Beloved, we also have got to come into relationship with that Throne, and that Throne has got to come into our life and ministry to make it effective. Principalities and powers and world rulers of darkness have got to feel the impact of that Throne in a new way. May the Lord reveal Himself to us, and then bring us into relationship to the Throne for all His Divine purposes - the Lord Himself, the Throne.

The Man

Then the man! It is almost a daring thing to point him out in the presence of that Throne, he seems to have shrunk, and the contrast is so great that you hardly dare mention the man; and yet he is there in the presence of the revelation and the unveiling of the Lord and in the presence of that Throne, that man is down on his face, undone, undone. And, beloved, note this thing about the man, it is the very essence of a work of grace that the man does not begin to deplore the *things* about which he is at fault, but he begins to recognise that it is himself who is undone. It will not be a sufficient out-working of the revelation of God in these things if we simply come to points and say, yes, I know I have been at fault on this or that thing. The only thing worthy of such a Lord as this is that we are recognising that we in ourselves are undone, that it is the man who is undone. If we really do, from our hearts, ask the Lord for an unveiling from Himself, and if we really seek that Throne fellowship with His sovereignty, let us be just as earnest in our requests that we shall go out of the picture, that this whole thing shall mean that because the Lord comes in *we* are ruled out, we are brought to nothing, that we are quite prepared for the upshot of it all to be "woe is me." It was ever so.

Job! You remember in the presence of God, an unveiling, the great climax of that wonderful drama, said, "For mine eyes have seen the Lord, *wherefore* I abhor myself in dust and ashes."

Peter saw the Lord, and cried "depart from me, O Lord, I am a sinful man."

It is a necessary and essential prelude to any place in the Lord's use and service. Oh! and not that it shall be a momentary thing, a thing of the passing unveiling, but that it shall be registered so deeply that it shall be an abiding thing that we are nothing and He is All. May that be an issue of this message - we are nothing and He is all. We all say that now, don't we? I suppose not one of us here would fail to say that; we all say it from our hearts with a very deep sincerity - we are nothing, He is All.

The Altar

The vision is not complete yet. There is the Cross, the altar, and on that altar two things, there is the Blood for cleansing, and there is the fire, the Fire. Here is the Blood and the Spirit working together. What for? Well, just to put away all the hindrance to the Glory of God. I think you know that that fragment in the third verse is a key to this whole thing. Our translations put it this way "the whole earth is full of His Glory," but that is not just a perfect translation of the Hebrew. The Hebrew more correctly reads thus "the fulness of the whole earth is His Glory." Now I am not going to stay to explain that and to point out the differences, but there I see the key, it is His glory that is in view, His glory is at stake and the whole earth full of His glory, that is the end in view and therefore the Cross, the precious Blood, has to come in to remove all that is in the way of the glory, to remove the thing that cannot glorify God. The Cross is central to the glory of God, the mighty fire not only making the Blood effective in approaching it, but enabling and energising to respond to the Divine Call that leads him to this next thing. You have the Lord Himself; the Throne, the Man, the Cross, the Fire of the Spirit, and then you have:

The Voice.

That is the thing which comes out of this. You notice it is the Voice in the Temple, the Voice in the House of God. God speaks in His House when the Cross and the Blood have done their work of cleansing in the power of the Spirit. When the Lord has His place and His rights, then His Voice can be heard in commission, and that is what we want to be one of the great issues in these days. When the work of the Cross has been applied and the Lord has got His place, then we shall hear the Voice

in the House saying "Who will go for us?" This thing was suspended in mid air; it was not to Isaiah will *you* go? But it was there the Lord wanted a voluntary and unreserved response to His own call, and so He said "Who?"

Let it be settled, beloved, with us that the Lord will never accept our response and say "Go to this people" unless all this other has been settled - the Lord Himself, the Supreme Object, a relationship established with His Throne, an utter brokenness and emptying of man, emptying of all self in confidence and assurance and interest, the emptying of the man, the work of the Cross, and the putting away of all that is in the way of the glory, the work of the Spirit in energising - then, then the Lord can listen to the response which comes to His Call.

Now, that is something to pray about, isn't it? All this is the background of everything, and leads on to a glorious consummation. What we have to do is to daily ask that all this may be true in our case, and that if Cherubim and Seraphim before Him fall on their faces, how much more becoming is it of us.