

THE RIVER

A couple of days ago I was watching the river, as it has swollen some due to the recent heavy rains. This particular day I was awed by what a wilderness river it truly is, surging and raging in the winter and peaceful and calm in the summer. On a warm late summer day one could not imagine how treacherous and awesome this little rivulet could become. Considering that I grew up with this river, I don't often pay attention to it, and forget that many have not seen it as I have. In other words, I take it for granted, as if we all have similar memories and pictures in our minds.

When people do see nature in all of its raw majesty, they stand in awe of it. Not only is it beautiful, but it is frightening. Just spend three days in it without any modern conveniences or human contact and you'll see what I mean. Over the years I recall many people commenting that nature, particularly in spectacular places, makes one aware that only God could have done this, and they stand transfixed. Yet, upon making that observation they mostly go back to their lives as if God was no longer there. And this is the state of mind of most of the world today. Even in the "Christian" community most people conduct their lives as if God wasn't watching, doing religion in order to satisfy a concern, while excluding the presence of God from their everyday existence.

This brings me to a passage in Ezekiel, ***And I shall magnify myself, sanctify myself, and make Myself known in the sight of many nations, and they will know that I am the Lord. (Ez. 38:23)*** This point, that "they will know," was made many times by the prophet, but in this particular case it comes at the end of the pronounced final judgement on the nations of the world. The Lord in this instance has exhausted His attempts to demonstrate His sovereignty over the world and over Israel. But in every case the world has continued in its denial of God, and has also exhausted its efforts to erase the memory and mention of God from the minds of all men. So the world, in this vision, will have been forced to its knees by the overwhelming power of God, and will be forced to witness the restoration of the children of God.

Here's the point. We talk as if we believe in the creative power and presence of God, but we live as if either He is no longer here or never was here. This may not describe you, but the greater chance is that it does. If it does, and you want to change that, memorize the above verse, and make this thought ever present in your mind, "that God created and sustains all that surrounds us, His presence permeates every space between every atom in creation, and that He is constantly listening to our every thought."

Finally, here is a little verse that I dug out of the archives. It somehow seemed suitable.

BEFORE THE THRONE

SOMEWHERE,

On this earth,
on this continent,
in this country,
in this state,
in your city,
down the street,

SOMEONE,

is being pressed down,
is being ignored,
is being judged,
is being chased off,
is being abandoned,
has been exiled.

SOMETIMES,

we fear,
we cower,
we overlook,
we excoriate,
we label,
we've hated.

SOMEDAY,

we'll plead,
we'll explain,
we'll deny,
we'll beg,
we'll accept
we'll be judged.

Bill Zinn