

ΕΚΚΛΗΣΙΑ ΑΠΟΣΤΟΛΙΚΟΣ ΠΛΗΡΩΜΑΤΟΣ
Apostolic Church of the Pleroma

*Delivered by Tau Phosphoros
to the Parish of St. Ambelain
on Sunday, March 13, 2016*

YEAR C - FIFTH SUNDAY IN LENT

O God, make speed to save me; O Lord, make haste to help me. Greetings brethren, and welcome. We continue today our on-going discussion of the Hymn of the Soul, also called the Hymn of the Robe of Glory or the Song of the Pearl. Our reading from this work last Sunday ended with our newly awakened traveler being reintroduced to his divine vestures that he had left behind upon embarking on his journey into Egypt, that is to say into the psychic and hylic realms. Today our reading picks up with an examination of these marvelous vestments.

What happens here is rich in Gnostic and esoteric doctrine. Let us look again at the first two lines: "As I gazed on it, suddenly the garment like a mirror reflected me, and I saw myself apart as two entities in one form. The treasurers had brought me one robe, yet in two halves I saw one shape with one kingly seal." What first jumps out to us here is the appearance of "two entities in one form." We may take this as the realization of the human constitution. Our Gnostic doctrine tells us that we are a Soul, enlivened by Spirit, within a Body. That is, two entities (Spirit & Soul) in one form (Body).

Now, some will immediately cry "Dualism!" But this is not exactly the case. Though we acknowledge the pneumatic and psychical natures of man, we nevertheless hold him to be one person. Our origin is in Unity, and our goal is a return to that Unity. But in our current state that unity is fractured. And it does us no good to pretend that it isn't so. One may wax philosophically that there is no such thing as evil; that it is merely an illusion, having no substantial reality. And this may be true in an absolute sense. But try telling that to the poor, the sick, the war-ravaged. The reality of daily life is ample evidence for the real presence of evil.

Ignorance is bliss. In this way the ignorant experience a sort of paradise of unity. But once one has tasted of the fruit of the Tree of Knowledge, what becomes apparent? The knowledge of good & evil. In other words, it becomes evident that the former vision of unity was false, illusionary. Now, this does not mean that we need remain stuck in the world of dualities, but the realization of the fractured Unity is necessary to the process of reintegration. This may be likened to the alchemical process, wherein the Prima materia is separated into its constituent essentials: Sulphur, Mercury, and Salt; that is, Spirit, Soul, and Body, or the Pneumatic, Psychic and Hylic natures. In alchemy, this separation is necessary to the process of refinement. In the alchemical stage of conjunction, the Sulphuric and Mercurial essences are brought into communion, and eventually reunited with the Salt in a perfected form. The process of initiation is the same, and gnosis is the principal catalyst for this change.

In this same reading we discover that the Robe that reveals the "two entities in one form" is in fact, like the fruit of that venerable tree of old, emblematic of the living gnosis. For, it is depicted as "moving with gnosis, in a pulsing knowledge." Nothing could be clearer to us than the images presented here.

For us, Jesus Christ is that very same fruit of the living gnosis. As we draw nearer to the Easter Season, we will be contemplating this more and more. But to taste of this gnosis is not to have everything suddenly made magically better. In fact, with greater gnosis comes a greater insight into just how far we have fallen, and how much work there really is to do to restore that true and primitive unity, both individually and collectively. But let us not lament our woes and become complainers. Rather, let us be thankful for our trials and ordeals, knowing that they bring us closer to perfection.