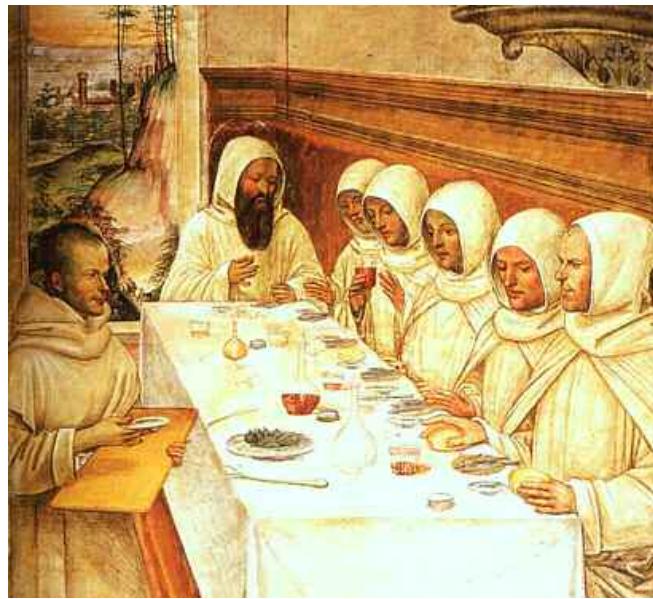


The Mystic Feast and the Wedding Garment

IN MANY apocryphal documents of the Bible, which supplement and often clarify the meaning of abstruse texts of the canonical writings, we find references to "garments" which are laid up in one or another of the heavens awaiting the illumined soul. Orthodoxy has abandoned these apocryphal books, partly because the Church has lost the key to their meaning, and partly because Church hierarchs have consciously and deliberately repudiated Initiation for the masses of the people, despite the saying of the Christ that He had opened the Way for "whomsoever will" to come.

It is hard to envision such suppression of knowledge as being done from innocent motives; yet history shows us that well-intentioned ignorance is often the most powerful instrument available to the black forces. It is comparatively easy to deal with an openly wicked person, but to bring pressure to bear upon a tender-hearted and well-meaning individual who is hopelessly in the wrong but cannot be made to understand that he is—this is truly a formidable task, and one to give pause even to the wisest of men.

Aristotle wrote of a "Wisdom Feast," and this expression is found generally in all mystical and philosophical literature of the entire Greek Period, which of course includes the time of Christ and early Christianity. Latin Christianity repudiated the Greek sages; but the Greek Orthodox Church continued to revere the great Greek philosophers, according them a place comparable with the great Hebrew sages who gave the Bible. Even today it is not uncommon to hear a sermon in a Greek Church



Fresco, Giovanni Antonio Bazzi (Sodoma), 1477-1549, Abbey of Monteoliveto Maggiore, Siena

St. Benedict and His Monks

in which the teachings of Socrates are used as an introduction to a text and lesson from the New Testament.

The Greeks also spoke of an "Eidolon," or Image, which was the "double" or likeness of the man, and which could go forth from the body; and an "Augoeides," a glorious shining body, or garment, which was the clothing of the Real Man, the Spirit-as-Ego, the Human Spirit of the Rosicrucian Philosophy.

Greek was the universal tongue of culture in the early Christian World. In Egypt at that time the Egyptians began to write their ancient language in Greek characters, giving rise to Coptic; and in the far West of that day, which was the coast of Europe, the Druids also began to write their mysteries and secrets in the Greek characters.

The language used by a people is of the utmost significance. Today we find that the tie between England and the United States is far closer than that between the continent of Europe and the United States, despite the fact that the population is certainly more European than English in

descent. But the tie of language, the magic of the word, binds us to England and to English culture and institutions.

So in antiquity, the widespread influence of Greek culture is related to the fact that the Greek language was the universal tongue of communication; and this meant that Greek philosophy was the dominant intellectual power throughout the ancient world, and that Greek science held the eminence then that nuclear physics and astronomy hold today. We see everywhere that priests, ministers, teachers, of every cult and religion, are searching their ancient scriptures to find corroboration of the latest scientific discoveries and are happy when they find them, and plunged in gloom when they do not.

In view of all this, it will be readily understood that Christianity and the problems of its origins cannot be elucidated without knowledge of Greek culture and civilization, and this is especially true of the apocryphal books of the Bible, and of the Gnostic library recently found in Egypt at about the same time that the Essene library was discovered in Palestine near the Dead Sea.

But Greek Philosophy was not merely intellectual, although the school of Aristotle focused the mind in materiality. The Platonic School still had great force, and its influence was metaphysical and mystical, and held to a discipline that was entirely spiritual, as shown in Plato's words: "About the subjects which I seriously study....there does not exist, nor will there ever exist, any treatise of mine dealing therewith. For it does not at all admit of verbal expression like other studies, but, as a result of continued application to the subject itself and communion therewith, it is brought to birth in the soul on a sudden, as light that is kindled by a leaping spark, and thereafter it nourishes itself."

The Greeks themselves acknowledged indebtedness to Egypt for much of their supernal wisdom and the Mysteries in which that wisdom was conveyed.

Even the canonical Scriptures received their final form during the Greek Period, and we are therefore not surprised to find Greek influences in the Old and New Testament texts as well as in the Apocrypha.

Now in all Greek literature—not in Aristotle alone—one discovers mention of the Mystic Marriage of the spirit, or soul, with God, and the Wisdom Feast which is part of the marriage celebration, and the beautiful and radiant garments in which the Bride and Groom, and also their guests, are clad for the occasion. Without the necessary garments no one can attend the Feasts, and so it is that in the apocryphal *Ascension of Isaiah* we read that when Isaiah had been brought by his Angel Teacher to the Gate of a certain high heaven, the Guardian of the Gate at first refused him entry; but the Angel said: "His garments are there," and at once the Gate was opened to the prophet.

What is this Garment which was laid up in the high heavens for Isaiah? Do we not recognize in it the Golden Wedding Garment, or soul body, of the Rosicrucian Teachings, and see here the symbology of the Wedding at Cana, where Christ turned water into wine?

We learn in the Western Wisdom Teachings that each aspect of the Threefold Spirit has a "reflection," or expression, in an aspect of the threefold personality: the Divine Spirit in the physical body (especially the skeleton); the Life Spirit or Christ Principle in the vital body (especially in the two higher ethers, the Light and Reflecting, which are the inmost essence or core of the vital body, as the skeleton is the inmost member of the physical body); and the Human Spirit, which is reflected, or expressed, in the concrete mind and in the desire body, especially the higher levels thereof.

From the work which the Virgin Spirit does in the threefold personality the "essence of experience" is extracted, which, we are told, nourishes to omnipotence the corresponding aspect of Spirit.

The Hebrew Initiate Isaiah possessed a garment in each one of the heavens to which he ascended, and since he had the garment, the Guardian of the Gate was compelled by divine law to allow him to enter.

The Golden Wedding Garment is the first of these garments of the spirit-self, or soul. It consists of the outer golden light, and an inner core of blue or azure Reflecting Ether, which is seldom seen outside the periphery of the dense body. Indeed, only in the greatest of saints does the blue color of

the Reflecting Ether reveal itself beyond the body outline. Note here that this is not to be confused with the Chemical envelope, which is a very dark blue, virtually indigo, and which has sometimes been described as lying "like a glove" upon the hand, for example, or burning like a low, fuzzy gas flame in material substances—along a wall or other surface. In all probability, the blue Chemical Ether is that which science has described and photographed as "free electrons," which seem to show the appearance of blue flames such as are seen by etheric vision. From the free electrons and other sub-atomic particles all material substance is formed.

The Reflecting Ether is not the same as this Chemical Ether, and is described as "vacuous" in appearance, but in its seeming vacuity lie the records of the lowest aspect or phase of the Memory of Nature, and here also certain Nature Forces became visible to etheric vision.

We think of the Golden Wedding Garment, then, as a golden ovoid of radiant light, which may resemble a star, within which is the blue core of the Reflecting Ether. This twofold Garment holds within itself the "soul body," or likeness of the dense body, a luminous transparent body which is born under the blazing Star, and whose birth is attended by Wise Men, now as in ancient times.

The Golden Garment is built by loving service, and by all that feeds and sustains the Christ Principle in the Human Spirit. Positive action is called for, in the line of service to others, but it may sometimes be that simply holding a mental attitude of positive good will, refraining from criticism, and quite definitely "minding one's own business" is also such service as weaves the garment of the Initiate, the golden garment in which he soars aloft into the heavenly places.

Service may include work in the arts and crafts, if the motive is loving and spiritual and the work itself directed toward the upliftment of the human being and the conservation of all that is good in civilization. Service includes the self-sacrifice of the scientist in his laboratory; the caring deeds of the wife and mother in the home; the conscientious and inspired teaching of children in the public schools. All good work serves to build the Golden

CARITAS

Is thy cruse of comfort failing?
Rise and share it with another,
And through all the years of famine
It shall serve thee and thy brother.

Love divine will fill thy storehouse
Or thy handful still renew;
Scanty fare for one will often
Make a royal feast for two.

For the heart grows rich in giving;
All its wealth is living gain;
Seeds which mildew in the garner,
Scattered, fill with gold the plain.

Is thy burden hard and heavy?
Do thy steps drag wearily?
Help to bear thy brother's burden,
God will bear both it and thee.

Numb and weary on the mountains,
Wouldst thou sleep amid the snow?
Chafe that frozen form beside thee,
And together both shall glow.

Art thou stricken in life's battle?
Many wounded round thee moan,
Lavish on their wounds thy balsams,
And that balm shall heal thine own.

Is the heart a well left empty?
None but God its void can fill;
Nothing but a ceaseless Fountain
Can its ceaseless longings still.

Is the heart a living power?
Self-entwined, its strength sinks low;
It can only live in loving,
And by serving love will grow.

—Elizabeth Charles

Wedding Garment, and this Garment is truly a Star which shines forth on the mystic East, as beautiful as the Morning Star, Venus, which heralds the Sun, and, like that Star, is a signifier of cosmic love and beauty. □

—Mary Ford