

Contemporary Mystic Christianity **Bible Self-Study Supplement**

The Four Sacred Seasons

The four sacred seasons of the year, namely, the Equinoxes and the Solstices, were times of holy convocations in the Old Dispensation as they are in the New. They mark major turning points in the year when there is a special release of spiritual power. At each of these seasons there is a change in the rhythm of Earth as forces play through one of the four elements. In the Spring it is Fire; in Summer, Water; in Autumn, Air; and in Winter, Earth.

The first feast prescribed in Leviticus was that of the Spring Equinox. It is proclaimed that in the fourteenth day of the first month at even is the Lord's passover. (Leviticus 23:5) This is in commemoration of the Israelites' passage from bondage to freedom, which was in the first month of the year, astrologically reckoned, the month of April (Nisan). The Sun then passes from watery Pisces into fiery Aries.

In all pre-Christian Mystery Schools this season of "new fire" was a time of joyous festivity and elaborate ceremonials. In the New Dispensation it became the glory time of Easter and the Resurrection. As a wave of resurrection sweeps the Earth it is easy for man to "tune in"

with the powers of ascended consciousness and to view the wonders of transcendental realms. Then spirit may truly rise triumphant over matter.

The second festival is that of the Summer Solstice. It occurs in June (Sivon) and is called the Feast of Weeks. (Leviticus 23:15-22) Seven weeks elapse between the second day of the Passion Festival, when a sheaf of barley was offered, and the midsummer observance, when two loaves of the first flower of the wheat harvest were "brought before the Lord." This celebration, which Christians observe as Pentecost, commemorates the giving of the Ten Commandments in annals of the Old Dispensation and the enunciation of the Sermon on the Mount in those of the New. This is the season when the divine alchemy in both nature and man reaches its highest expression. It is the time when the "great white work is brought to its lunar perfection."

The next festival is keyed to the Autumn Equinox and commemorates the journey through the Wilderness. It is observed in October (Tishri), the seventh month in the Old Testament calendar, and is called the Feast of Tabernacles. It is also referred to as the Feast of Booths and correlates to the Crucifixion in the Christian Church. The astronomical "fall" has its esoteric counterpart in the Fall of man. It was this "fall" in mass consciousness which necessitated the

Crucifixion of the Lord Christ. Occult legends say that it was on this date that Eve partook of the forbidden fruit and lost Eden for all humanity.

Symbols of the autumn festival are a palm branch, myrtle, willow and citron. Hence the command: "Ye shall take you . . . branches ... before the Lord your God seven days." (Leviticus 23:40)

In the four symbols mentioned the citron, being yellow, relates to fire; the palm branch, which rustles in the breeze, to air; the myrtle, that clings to the ground, to earth; and the willow that grows by streams, to water. Citron was regarded as a sacred symbol because it had features related to all the four elements. The rind is yellow (fire); the inside is white and damp (air); the pulp is moist (water); and the seed is dry (earth).

In biblical times, during the Feast of Tabernacles, when the congregation had assembled in the Temple, priests stood upon fifteen steps and chanted fifteen Psalms, or Degrees. The festival continued throughout the night.

At a later date Israel added the dedication feasts which lasted for eight days during December (Kisleu), month of the Winter Solstice. This feast began December 25th when one candle, representative of the newborn Sun, was lighted. This was followed by the lighting of an additional

candle each day for seven successive days, indicative of the growing light of the Sun on its return passage northward. The Hebrews still observe this Festival of Lights in commemoration of the re-dedication of the Temple after its recovery by the armies of the Maccabees. In the Christian calendar of feasts it marks the birth of the Light of the World.

The Four Sacred Seasons accentuate major stages in human evolution. They lead from the fall into materiality to re-ascension into realms of spirit. The way to this attainment is stated in the following passage:

Command the children of Israel, that they bring unto thee pure oil olive beaten for the light, to cause the lamps to burn continually.

And thou shalt take fine flour, and bake twelve cakes thereof; two tenth deals shall be in one cake.

And thou shalt put pure frankincense upon each row, that it may be on the bread for a memorial, even an offering made fire unto the Lord.

— Leviticus 24:2,5,7

The light which the Israelites were commanded to keep continually before them to illumine their way is fed with the oil of regenerated life. The twelve cakes represent experiences gathered in the twelve schools of the Zodiac. And the frankincense placed upon each row of cakes is

symbolical of an extract of that experience out of which soul is fashioned.

In accordance with the secret chronologies of the Sod (a conclave of Initiates with which Moses was associated), a sabbatical year consisted of three hundred and sixty solar years, and the "week years" was seven times three hundred and sixty, which gives a total of 2520 years. During this sabbatical period the divine outbreathing and inbreathing of cosmic forces takes place throughout the universe. In the interval of inbreathing, Divinity is said to rest, that is, the forces in evolution become subjective and harmony and order permeate all creation. This is the meaning of the statement in Genesis that on the seventh day God rested from His creative labors.

Leviticus 25:1,2,4

And the Lord spake unto Moses in Mount Sinai, saying, Speak unto the children of Israel, and say unto them When ye come into the land which I give you, then shall the land keep sabbath unto the Lord.

But in the seventh year shall be a sabbath of rest unto the land, a sabbath for the Lord: thou shalt neither sow thy field, n prune thy vineyard.

There are cycles within cycles. The seven-day week, culminating in a day of rest, is but a reflection of the larger cycle of a "week years"; and this in turn is but a miniature

span of the seven vast Periods comprising a single Scheme of Divine Manifestation. In Coptic, Sabbath (Sabe) means wisdom; in Hebrew (Sabo), rest.

Races and religions that belong more to the past than to the future and are, therefore, tending toward crystallization, observe Saturn day (Saturday) as the Sabbath. Having commenced to retrospect, the day of Saturnian introspectiveness is most suitable as their time for rest and meditation. For similar reasons, races and religions that sound the keynote of the New Age are charged with the life-giving forces of the Sun so have chosen for their rest interval the first day of the week when the impulses from the Sun are strongest and, therefore, most available for inaugurating a new cycle of unfoldment.

The Law of Compensation

The Book of the Law closes with the most fundamental and inclusive of all precepts under which man evolves, namely, the law of compensation. Results which will follow upon taking either of two paths are presented in concrete terms and in a manner calculated to bring them home to even the unthinking multitude. Says the Law:

Leviticus 26:3-9,12,14-22

If ye walk in my statutes, and keep my commandments, and do them;

Then I will give you rain in due season, and the land shall yield her increase, and the trees of the field shall yield their fruit.

And your threshing shall reach unto the vintage, and the vintage shall reach unto the sowing time; and ye shall eat your bread to the full and dwell in your land safely, And I will give peace in the land, and ye shall lie down, and none shall make you afraid; and I will rid evil beasts out of the land, neither shall the sword go through your land.

And ye shall chase your enemies, and they shall fall before you by the sword.

And five of you shall chase an hundred, and an hundred of you shall put ten thousand to fight; and your enemies shall fall before you by the sword

For I will have respect unto you and make you fruitful, and multiply you, and establish my covenant with you. And I will walk among you, and will be your God, and ye shall be my people.

But... if ye will not harken unto me, and will not do all these commandments;

And if ye shall despise my statutes, or if your soul abhor my judgments, so that ye will not do all my commandments, but that ye break my covenant; I also will do this unto you; I will even appoint over you terror, consumption, and the burning ague, that shall consume the eyes, and cause sorrow of heart: and ye shall sow

*your seed in vain, for your enemies shall eat it.
And I will set my face against you, and ye shall be slain
before your enemies; they that hate you shall reign over
you; and ye shall flee when none pursueth you.
And if ye will not yet for all this harken unto me, then I
will punish you seven times more for your sins.
And I will break the pride of your power; And your
strength shall be spent in vain: for your land shall not
yield her increase, neither shall the trees of the land
yield their fruits.
And if ye walk contrary unto me, and will not harken
unto me; I will bring seven times more plagues upon
you according to your sins.
I will also send wild beasts among you, which shall rob
you of your children, and destroy your cattle, and make
you few in number; and your high ways shall be
desolate.*

The law here enunciated is stated clearly and tersely by Paul where he declares that "as ye sow, so shall ye reap." This states the general principle. Leviticus translates the principle into language understandable to a people not yet schooled in abstract thinking. Summarizing the foregoing passage, the Lord (Law) declares in effect to Israel: If you walk in my statutes, I will give you rain, crops, peace and security; but if you will not hearken to me I will chastise you seven times; you shall sow your seed in vain; your

cities will be laid waste and your land desolate; you shall suffer plagues and terrors and exile because you despised my judgments.

It is clear to man that he is free to choose his own course. The Voice has spoken. Its law is impersonal, inviolable and universal. It knows neither favoritism nor vengeance. It does not operate destroy, but to correct. This important truth is impressed upon to people at the close of the declaration of consequences following disobedience, where the Lord (Law) solemnly affirms that though the worst suffering overtake them, yet He will not cast them away, abhor them, or destroy them utterly, because He is "the Lord the God." Law and love on their highest levels are one.

The law of karma enunciated in this chapter of Leviticus also emphasizes the fact that man's thought and action extend to the whole of his environment. They condition the weather and the soil's fecundity. They register in the animal kingdom. The whole is touched by the part because of the universal relationship that exists between all things within the body of an all-inclusive Deity. It is forcefully impressed upon the minds of the racial pioneers that thought is creative, and that it brings externals into conformity with its quality and nature. This is a basic law in life, fundamental to teachings imparted by Moses in early times and equally

fundamental to teachings of modern schools of metaphysics whose chief mission is to stress this truth anew to a generation qualified to make fresh application of the law and, by so doing, to lift the entire race to new levels of conscious creativeness. This is a day when the mind of man can profitably ponder the pronouncements in Leviticus on the blessings and the curses of the law when seeking causes of world tribulation and a remedy for emergence therefrom. The answer of old is the answer for today: "Walk in my statutes, and keep my commandments, and do them; . . . And I will walk among you, and will be your God, and ye shall be my people."

— ***Corinne Heline***