

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

Consecration of Firstlings (Deuteronomy XV)

What is to a neophyte an arbitrary command is to a candidate for Initiation a joyous privilege. The best of his life, the unblemished and perfect work of body, mind and soul, is dedicated to the All-Good. Whatever the "firstling" may be, be it a friend, a temple, a house, a book, or any other treasured object, personal attachment to it is freely surrendered so that his act of sacrifice may be made available to the universal good.

Seasonal Feasts (Deuteronomy XVI)

Three festivals are here mentioned, the most important being the Passover — which Christians observe as the Easter Festival. The Feast of Weeks, which comes in midsummer, is a seven-weeks period beginning at the time a sickle is first put to the standing grain. The esoteric significance of the cycle of seven has been discussed in earlier pages. It is here associated with the harvest festival, the harvest of karma or destiny. Tithing is not here enjoined, but only a freewill offering. The harvester of God is the candidate for Initiation who has reaped a harvest of soul powers and is ready for a larger degree of illumination.

The Feast of Tabernacles is also a cycle of seven, but of seven days instead of weeks. It comes after the season's gathering has been made from "the threshing floor" and the "winepress." Esoterically, this feast represents the autumnal Light which descends into Earth from the Spiritual Sun, and into which a candidate may enter after the soul harvest.

The festival of the Winter Solstice is not mentioned at this point as it was not formally observed among the Israelites until a later period, when it was known as the Feast of Lights. This festival was observed for eight days during the month of Kislev (December), and commemorated the re-dedication of the Temple after its defilement by Antiochus Epiphanes, whose armies were subjugated by the fearless Maccabees in the second century before the Christian Era.

For the Christian world this Feast of Lights proclaims the holy birth of the Light of the World. It is significant to note that it was during the interval between the Dispensation of the Old Testament and that of the New, a time of active and intense preparation for the coming of the Lord of Lords and the King of Kings, that the Feast of Lights, or the Ritual of Dedication, became an integral part of the Temple service.

Secular Laws and Ordinances (Deuteronomy XVII and XIX)

The candidate for Initiation is not above the law of the land which is binding upon his less advanced brethren. In so far as he is active in the outer world, he must order his life according to harmony and justice. That the two are inseparable is indicated by the exaltation of Saturn, the planet of law and order, in Libra, the sign of judgment, balance and harmony. And since the higher and the lower, the inner and the outer, are related, the converse is also true. Just as the spiritual "prince" is not exempt from civil law, neither is the king on an earthly throne free from spiritual law. Hence, Moses commanded that when the king "sitteth upon the throne of his kingdom. . . . he shall write him a copy of this law in a book out of that which is before the priests, the Levites." A ruler who obeys these precepts is more than a mere earthly king; he is a "priest-king" after the order of Melchizedek.

True Prophets (Deuteronomy XVIII)

Warning has been given against being misled by false prophets, however wise, subtle, or apparently illumined they may be. For those who succeed in passing this test there is a further injunction: "I will raise them up a prophet from among their brethren." When the pupil is ready a Teacher is always at hand, prepared to give him exactly the instruction he requires. This is a fundamental law of spirit. No one who is earnestly preparing himself through a clean,

aspiring and selfless life need ever be concerned lest the Great Watchers fail to take note and lend their support. This holds however obscure his station and circumstance may be. An inner shining light signals to the Great Ones the presence of an awakening soul. It is for the coming of such that they patiently labor and wait through years and even centuries, eager to welcome every new arrival to the Garden of Light.

The Teacher who answers the call of the disciple is sometimes referred to in the Bible as a king, and at other times as a prophet. In the early church he was called a saint. The modern term among esoteric Christians is Initiate. All of these names refer to one who has developed a greater spiritual consciousness and power than has the average individual. Of such true prophets the Lord declares, "I . . . will put my words in his mouth." These Teacher-Initiates have ability to contact directly sources of spiritual information which are entirely unknown to and unsuspected by the ordinary man.

War Against Error (Deuteronomy XX)

We have seen that the objective battles of a neophyte are now replaced by the subjective battles of a candidate for Initiation. In this warfare, which takes place in the inner realms, the candidate also carries with him the promise of

the Lord: "Hear, O Israel, ye approach this day unto battle against your enemies: let not your heart faint; and fear not, and do not tremble, neither be ye terrified because of them; For the Lord your God is He that goeth with you, to fight for you against your enemies, to save you." Since Truth is omnipresent and almighty, the candidate who centers his mind in the all-enduring Truth may be certain of the final victory.

A candidate must besiege the city of the lower mind for a long time before it is subdued. There are no sudden measures of spiritual regeneration. The most dangerous enemies are those housed within ourselves, and the greatest battles must always be waged within. This is fundamental in inner work.

Warfare with error is typified, as we have seen, in the many battles and military, stratagems of the Israelites. In these battles Moses commands that "When thou shalt besiege a city . . . thou shalt not destroy the trees thereof . . . for thou mayest eat of them and thou shalt not cut them down (for the tree of the field is man's life) ... Only the trees which thou knowest that they be not trees for meat, thou shalt destroy and cut them down; and thou shalt build bulwarks against the city that maketh war with thee, until it is subdued." (Deuteronomy 20:19,20)

The "field" is that area of consciousness which man develops (cultivates) by his own efforts. The "tree" is aptly described as man's life.

This tree of life must not be cut down; that is, it must not be mutilated or misused, but its essence must be transmuted into a soul pabulum upon which the spirit may feed. Only the lower propensities are cut down to assist in the war against the city. By this process the greatest sinner becomes in time the greatest saint. The method whereby this is effected is given added elucidation in the following:

Deuteronomy 24:20,21

When thou beatest thine olive tree, thou shalt not go over the boughs again; it shall be for the stranger, for the fatherless and for the widow.

When thou gatherest the grapes of thy vineyard, thou shalt not glean it afterward; it shall be for the stranger, for the fatherless and for the widow.

The above passage inculcates the virtue of sharing. It is at the very heart of a Christian life. It is an inevitable expression of the consciousness of universality and brotherhood. When a life of sharing becomes the common practice among men, there will be true knowledge and dissemination of the deeper doctrines. The Higher Law will then be revealed to a civilization which has temporarily lost sight of its spiritual character. The modern world has

reached a crucial point in its own development where it is beginning to realize that it must look to a higher law than goes out from spiritually unilluminated legislative halls if the social order is not to suffer utter failure. When a sufficient number come to this realization, that higher law will be clearly enunciated in our midst, after which will follow an era of greater justice, peace, joy and enlightenment.

In the battle against error many are exempt from military duty, not being duly equipped for the struggle. Such exemption does not imply unworthiness, but unreadiness. Certain qualities remain to be developed, or karmic obligations have yet to be liquidated under other conditions and circumstances before the individuals are free to go into battle. In the work of the candidate the call to live a higher life comes at a time and under conditions best suited to qualify him for Initiation. This may be under circumstances that make it expedient for him to take no overt part in the battle of truth against error. He may be compelled to remain behind to fulfill an economic obligation; to "dedicate" a new house; to "eat the fruit of his vineyard"; to "betroth a wife"; to discharge various personal duties; or to remain in seclusion while certain germinating powers grow into sufficient strength to withstand the adversity of the elements when exposed to action. Finally, he who is afraid is exempt until his strength and confidence are such

that fear is vanquished; he is not ready for frontline action in the battle of truth and error. His day has not yet come.

— ***Corinne Heline***