

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

Translation of the Blessed Virgin

After the Ascension of the Christ, Mary was the acknowledged leader of the esoteric Christian community, despite the fact that in the outer world not she, but John and Peter, were pre-eminent. The condition of the ancient world was such that no woman could with any degree of safety travel about freely; even today women travelling alone are subject to many disabilities because of sex. In Mary's day women everywhere occupied a position much inferior to that of men, and in Greece even the male slaves felt themselves superior to their mistresses who, they said, were less free than themselves.

It is therefore not to be wondered at that the influence, of Mary and other holy women is not so easily discovered as that of the men; for few of the women were so bold as the maiden Thecla who, disdaining vicious gossip, insisted on following Paul about in his travels in the empire. In the apocryphal account of the acts of Paul we read the story of Thecla, and learn that she was empowered by Paul to teach and to carry on the work of the true disciples of Christ. This document has been rejected by orthodox Christianity partly because it does thus confer spiritual authority upon women, as frankly admitted by certain Church Fathers. The Acts of

Paul and Thecla constitute a testament of Christian feminism, for Paul conferred upon Thecla the full authority of an apostle of Christ.

According to the esoteric traditions, Mary's spiritual authority was accepted without question throughout the community of Christians. She was attended at all times by a group of her women disciples, among whom were: a daughter of that Nicodemus who came to Jesus "by night," Neshi, the daughter of Gamaliel who was the teacher of Paul, and Taleitha, who belonged to the family of Nero; and many others, the early legends say, whose names have not been written down.

These faithful women always accompanied Mary, saying, "We will not separate from thee, O Mary, blessed Mother, except through death."

"Mary was accounted by them as a glorious woman," we read, because they saw the signs and wonders which she wrought before them by day and by night." The first of her miracles which they observed was the fragrance like that of the sweetest perfume that emanated from her soul body and literally filled the house wherein she was, like waves of the sea. Then there were the miracles of healing. The sick and diseased came to her to be blessed and were cured of their sicknesses, and they marvelled when seeing "the great glory resting upon her."

One day when Mary was praying, as was her custom, beside the holy tomb on Golgotha, the heavens opened and the Angel Gabriel appeared unto her and said: "Thou art to go forth soon from this fleeting world into the life which is forever."

Mary forthwith summoned the Virgins, her attendants, and said to them: "I am going to Bethlehem, if there be any among you who wisheth to come with me, let her do so." They replied as one voice: "We will all go with thee where thou goest, and will not separate from thee all the days of our life."

The disciples of the Master, after the Descent of the Holy Ghost at Pentecost, were scattered throughout various countries, proclaiming the glad tidings of the new Mysteries. Their spiritual attainment transcended the limitations of time and space. It was their habit often in the mystic midnight hour to journey in their spiritual vehicles to meet Mary at her sanctuary in Bethlehem there to receive further instruction from her. The means of transportation employed in these night journeys of the soul are variously described as "borne in a shining cloud," or "riding in a chariot of light," or again, upon the "wings of a great bird," — all of which are mystical descriptions of soul flights wherein the disciples were clothed in the radiance of their celestial bodies.

Through the dual powers of the Holy Ghost within themselves their ability to unite in communion at will had been perfected, They were instantly responsive to the spirit-call of Mary. This was true as much of those who had laid aside their physical bodies in so-called death as of those who still remained in earthly embodiment. To Initiates of this exalted degree, death is but an interlude, between waking and sleeping, between the outer and the inner, between heaven and earth.

As stated elsewhere in these Bible interpretations, the Holy Land, whence came most of the Christian Scriptures, is an area permeated with spiritual force like none other on earth, and it was prepared by the great Masters of Wisdom for many thousands of years for the coming of Christ Jesus.

It was for this reason that the disciples came to imbibe further wisdom from the blessed Mary in Bethlehem. It was for this reason also that she chose this sacred place for the sublime ceremonial of the Mystic Death.

It was while John was preaching in Ephesus that the spirit informed him that Mary's earthly pilgrimage was drawing to its close: "Arise and go speedily," he was told, "and see her before she goeth out of the world."

Matthew in Judea, Peter in Rome, Thomas in India, James in Jerusalem and Bartholomew in Tiberias, were all made

aware of the impending transition, as were also James, Andrew, Phillip and Simon who had preceded Mary into the heavenly joys of an initiatory translation.

When all of the Apostles had arrived in the mystic "tipper chamber" they saluted their Lady and paid homage to the blessed one. She in turn blessed them as the "chosen ones of the Blessed One," bade them turn all the "peoples of the world into members of the household of Christ."

Mary's Translation took place in cosmic splendor: "The Heavens were shaken, the doors of the firmament were open wide, the Earth reeled, and the hosts of Heaven went forth glorifying the King. Thousands of spiritual beings took their positions like pillars round about the upper chamber, and there came down from above an ark of flame and fire which overshadowed the blessed woman."

Hanna, the mother of Mary, Elizabeth and others of the holy women who had passed into the inner worlds, came also to do homage to this great spirit in her Translation and also came those Initiate seers who had prophesied the advent of the Christ, together with many others unknown to history.

Mary then beheld a light so glorious as to defy description, and heard a Voice which said: "Thy holy soul

shall rest in the kingdom of the heavens, a habitation that is filled with grace and where there is joy and gladness."

Now the Angels began their chant, the Light shone upon the face of Mary, she lifted her hands in blessing upon the disciples, and straightway her soul was separated from her body; after which, "a great light filled the place and there came forth a beautiful fragrance, and a Voice from heaven saying, Blessed art thou, O blessed queen of women." Then "there was a great quietness and the odor of sweet scents breathed from the upper chamber in which Mary was lying." Her final words were identical with those of Christ as this glorious Spirit was freed from the cross of matter: "Father, into Thy hands I commit my spirit."

The disciples wrapped the body in "a mantle of light," so the ancient legend relates, and "they fastened the sides thereof with that which resembled lightning." Above them all, and about the bier of Mary, was spread a white canopy of light. Thousands of Angels surrounded her there, singing hallelujahs.

When the body was taken from the chamber, borne by the disciples, it was attended by multitudes who had come from Jerusalem to pay homage to the blessed Mary. John, the beloved, walked before the bier carrying a palm branch which glittered with a light supernal, and all who touched it were healed of divers ills. (Another legend tells us that it

was Michael the Archangel who announced to Mary the coming of death, for in the apocryphal documents Michael is shown as the guide of souls, who directs the righteous to Paradise. When he came to Mary, it is said, he gave to her a palm branch plucked from a tree in the Garden of Delight, and it may be that this was the glowing branch borne by John.)

On the side of the Mount of Olives was a new cave in which no dead had ever been interred. In this cave they laid the body of Mary. For three days and nights multitudes of Angels hovered over the cave singing joyously and a bright light shone around it which was visible for a great distance. Many sick persons on coming near the holy place were made well and whole again.

At the expiration of the three days the disciples entered the tomb but the body of the blessed Virgin was no longer visible. In its place was a fragrant and luminous mass of roses and lilies which, says the legend, had sprung up through the tomb and all about the entrance — symbolic of the complete and entire transmutation of matter into spirit.

The crowning event of the work of Christ on earth was His demonstration to man that he need not die. We miss the most sublime height of the Master's teaching unless we realize the Resurrection did not apply to Christ alone, but was a manifestation of that to which man himself will

attain. The overcoming of death is achieved in what the mystic Christian refers to as the "Initiation of Earth" wherein man learns to control every physical atom by the power of Spirit. Thus laying down the physical body means the transmutation of its elements into spirit, hence it becomes invisible to mortal eyes. The blessed Virgin was the first and most advanced disciple of Christ. It was fitting therefore that she was the first to demonstrate this high attainment. The mystic Ceremonial of Death through which she passed was the "Initiation of Earth." The legend which tells of the fragrant masses of lilies and roses that filled the grave after the disappearance of the body that had been placed in it is a beautiful symbolic interpretation of this deeper truth.

We are told that "the blessed Mary was fourteen at the time of the Annunciation. She was with Christ Jesus for thirty and three years. She lived five years after the Crucifixion: which years are in all fifty-two."

The Initiate Mary of Bethlehem brought to earth not only the type-pattern of the Aquarian Age in the matter of prenatal preparation for the perfect birth, but she also gave the type-pattern for the translation from earth to heaven in the divine adventure of death. She demonstrated for humankind the New Age realization that death is

Translation, not a rupture of consciousness, fittingly tenned "Spirit in action."

The Assumption of the Blessed Virgin

As has been hitherto intimated, upon the completion of her earth mission, the holy Virgin was lifted out of the human life stream and translated into the angelic evolution. Her entire life had been a preparation for this Translation, and Gabriel, the Prince of the Angels, was her teacher and guide from early infancy, preparing her for her exalted destiny.

Her Translation into the angelic realm is known in the Church as the Assumption, and it is very beautifully described in the Church legends. Its full esoteric significance has, however, been lost since the early days of Christianity.

Although the holy Mary has now become one with the angelic hosts, she continues to work with the earth and its humanity. The center from which her work is disseminated is the heavenly Jerusalem, the place of glory envisioned by John in his Revelation. The heavenly Jerusalem, which shines in the heaven worlds above its earthly counterpart, is the home of the true esoteric Church. It is the initiatory Temple of Mystic Christianity. It was into this glorious place

that Mary was inducted by the Master Jesus at the time of the Assumption.

He bade her, Ascend that thou mayest see what is in the heavens." Mary then ascended through the Second and Third Heavens where she saw throngs of Angels and heard them singing, "Holy, holy, holy, God of hosts."

"Above the Third Heaven she passed through the great gate of entrance into the heavenly Jerusalem. There are twelve gates into this four-square city. These twelve gates are decorated with all kinds of precious stones and by the side of each gate stands one of the Apostles, and above each gate the name of the Apostle who sits thereby is written, and beside each gate are multitudes of Angels singing praise."

While much of the foregoing material is drawn from legends that have grown up around the Blessed Lady in the course of the centuries and may therefore lie outside the realm of strict historical fact, they are none the less bearers of spiritual truths and may serve far better in revealing the inner life and the high mission of this exalted soul than mere details pertaining solely to outer events experienced in the daily round of her personal life. But with regard to the inner plane Temple work of which these legends speak we have no mere symbolical rendering of soul states but a literal recital of actual activities that are directly knowable

to all who have so far developed their soul faculties as to be able to function consciously on the inner planes and to bring back the memory of them into their ordinary waking consciousness. It is the living testimony of Seers of our own time which sets the seal of authority on the essential truths embodied in the poetic legends of the early centuries. They are not to be accepted on the basis of documentary evidence for, admittedly, none exists.

Today, as in the day of Mary, the holy seasons of the year are celebrated in the heavenly Jerusalem. These are not "festivals" in the ordinary sense of the word, that is, they are not mere times of feasting. They serve a definite function in the soul world of our planet. The Hierophants in the Mysteries are there, and many souls still in earth life attend in complete waking consciousness, travelling thither in their own "chariots of light" as did the ancient disciples, and participating in the work of transferring, the divine energy from heaven to earth. This heavenly Jerusalem, and the work which goes on within its confines, constitute the prototype of the Castle of the Holy Grail, and the sacred Festivals are the Rites of Initiation whereby the world is continually nourished and revived. Many aspiring and qualified souls who are still in physical life are caught up into the celestial realms during the Holy Seasons to know and to partake of these spiritual glories.

The following account is further descriptive of such inner plane festivities: "When the holy Mary arrived at the Jerusalem which is above, she saw that it was ornamented with all manner of beautiful decorations. She saw that twelve walls went around it and that these walls were built of fine gold and the stones thereof were of pearl and they all shot forth rays of light. As she entered through the outer gate, many of the prophets were there and they bowed in homage before her. In the second gate she was greeted by the Cherubim and in the Third gate by the Seraphim. When she passed through the fourth gate the Powers saluted her and as she walked through the fifth gate, the [spirits of] the thunders and the lightnings bowed before her. When she passed through the sixth gate she saw and heard from all sides the sound of Beings chanting, *Holy, Holy*, and she saw the fortress (sanctuary) which cannot be touched by man (human knowing).

"When she entered through the seventh gate, the [spirits of] fire and flame bowed in worship before her. When she arrived at the eighth gate, the [spirit of] rain and dew paid her homage. When she entered through the ninth gate all the (spirits of) the winds together bowed before her."

This portion of the legend refers to the Initiate's ability to control the four elements of the physical world in their spiritual aspect, which is one of the secrets of creation

known to the gods. The earthly elements are symbolized as Fire, Earth, Air and Water by the ancient Initiates, but we are to understand by these terms the primordial atomic elements which make up our objective universe.

The legend continues:

"When she walked through the tenth gate, the (Angels and Archangels of the) Sun and Moon paid homage to her. When she entered the eleventh gate, the Apostles bowed in worship before her."

In the final glory of the Assumption, the Lord Christ lifted Mary to pass through the gate which none (of humanity) had as yet passed. This led into the Kingdom of God, where she partook of the *religion of the Father* which is the next exalted Degree awaiting those who have learned to know and to live the religion of the Christ.

"And He showed her there the Kingdom of Heaven and the things which are secret," the pleasures which are hidden in the Kingdom, "which can neither be spoken by the mouth nor pronounced by the tongue. She saw the mansions of splendor, the delight of which hath never entered into the heart of man to imagine. And she saw there that which the eye of man cannot look upon and that which man is not able to either describe the like thereof, or to make it manifest."

— ***Corinne Heline***