

Contemporary Mystic Christianity

Bible Self-Study Supplement

The People Demand a King

I Samuel 8:4-10

Then all the elders of Israel gathered themselves together, and came to Samuel unto Ramah.

And said unto him, Behold, thou art old, and thy sons walk not in thy ways: now make us a king to judge us like all the nations.

But the thing displeased Samuel, when they said, give us a king to judge us. And Samuel prayed unto the Lord. And the Lord said unto Samuel, Hearken unto the voice of the people in all that they say unto thee: for they have not rejected thee, but they have rejected me, that I should not reign over them.

According to all the works which they have done since the day that I brought them up out of Egypt even unto this day, wherewith they have forsaken me, and served other gods, so do they also unto thee.

Now therefore harken unto their voice: howbeit yet protest solemnly unto them, and shew them the manner of the king that shall reign over them.

And Samuel told all the words of the Lord unto the people that asked of him a king.

This passage records a very definite downward step into material evolution for the masses. In the infancy of mankind the dual office of priest-king was occupied by an Initiate-Teacher. From the viewpoint of true spirituality, no one can occupy rightfully the place of priest or king unless he can be an Initiate. Such was Melchizedek, the priest-king of Salem in the days of Abraham. As men descended further into materiality, the offices of religion and statecraft separated. They will be reunited in the New Age now dawning in the realization of the Fatherhood of God and the brotherhood of man. So long as man was guided by divine teachers he had access to the powers of Godhood within himself. Every man did that which was right in his own eyes; but his eye was single to the supernal Light of heavenly guidance. In the days of Samuel, materialism and corruption had taken possession of this new race. They incurred thereby penalties of disobedience. Only a few remained faithful.

The majority returned to the sense life having grown weary of the simple worship of God, as Spirit. They preferred the old sensuous Taurian ceremonies which, though celebrated in beautiful temples, were accompanied by licentious practices and vulgar orgies. Samuel warned them that this reversion to the past meant disaster and ruin; but they paid no heed to him, with the result that they were finally dispersed as a people.

I Samuel 8:11-18

And he said, This will be the manner of the king that shall reign over you: He will take your sons, and appoint them for himself, for his chariots, and to be his horsemen; and some shall run before his chariots.

And he will appoint him captains over thousands, and captains over fifties; and will set them to ear his ground, and to reap his harvest, and to make his instruments of war, and instruments of his chariots.

And he will take your daughters to be confectionaries, and to be cooks, and to be bakers.

And he will take your fields, and your vineyards, and your olive yards, even the best of them, and give them to his servants.

And he will take the tenth of your seed, and of your vineyards, and give to his officers, and to his servants.

And he will take your menservants, and your maidservants, and your goodliest young men, and your asses, and put them to his work.

He will take the tenth of your sheep: and ye shall be his servants.

And ye shall cry out in that day because of your king which ye shall have chosen you; and the Lord will not hear you in that day.

Samuel is here recounting conditions which prevail among men through inequalities of class, caste and wealth.

The people's unanimous demand that a king be appointed proves their inability to govern themselves and their reliance on human means rather than upon divine. Rulers sound the keynote of the people they serve. The righteous leader is possible only for the righteous people. Whether it be a race, a nation or a religious movement, each is closely linked with its controlling power, If this be not a spiritual one, dissensions and inharmonies are inevitable. Samuel warned the people of just such a situation.

I Samuel 8:19-22

Nevertheless they refused to obey the voice of Samuel; and they said,

Nay; but we will have a king over us;

That we also may be like all the nations; and that our king may judge us, and go out before us, and fight our battles.

And Samuel heard all the words of the people, and he rehearsed them in the ears of the Lord.

And the Lord said to Samuel, Hearken unto their voice, and make. them a king. And Samuel said unto the men of Israel, Go ye every man unto his city.

Man possesses free will; his alone is the power to carve out his own individual destiny. Groups are drawn together in races and nations to meet a collective destiny.

Saul: An Aspirant Who Proved Unworthy

The Coming of Saul

The ninth chapter contains a description of the preparatory work of the novitiate.

I Samuel 9:1-2

Now there was a man of Benjamin, whose name was Kish, the son of Abiel, the son of Zeror, the son of Bechorath, the son of Aphiah, a Benjamite, a mighty man of power.

And he had a son whose name was Saul, a choice young man, and a goodly: and there was not among the children of Israel a goodlier person than he: from his shoulders and upward he was higher than any of the people.

Saul was of the tribe of Benjamin (Cancer); David of the tribe of Judah (Leo). The conflicts between the two signify the discord between the principles of Fire and Water. To effect a harmonious blending of the two within himself is the work of every aspirant.

I Samuel 9:20-21

And as for thine asses that were lost three days ago, set not thy mind on them; for they are found. And on whom is all the desire of Israel?

Is it not on thee, and on all thy father's house? And Saul answered and said, Am not I a Benjamite, of the

smallest of the tribes of Israel? and my family the least of all the families of the tribe of Benjamin? wherefore then speakest thou to me?

A valuable drove of asses belonging to Kish strayed away, and Saul was sent in pursuit of them. He came to Ramah after a three days' search, and met Samuel on his way to the high place. Samuel was the Teacher and Saul the neophyte. The asses represent the path of wisdom, the path which has been lost by humanity for a time during its pilgrimage through matter but which is always found again after a three days' search (the kabbalistic time during which the mind, the desires and the body are duly prepared).

Saul could not be appointed until after the asses were found. He in turn shows his worthiness by the beautiful humility of his words. "Blessed is he that humbleth himself for he shall be exalted" are words which the Great Teacher gave as a formula for every neophyte who sets his feet upon the Path.

I Samuel 9:25-27

And when they were come down from the high place into the city, Samuel communed with Saul upon the top of the house.

And they arose early: and it came to pass about the spring of the day, that Samuel called Saul to the top of the house, saying, Up, that I may send thee away. And

Saul arose, and they went out both of them, he and Samuel, abroad.

And as they were going down to the end of the city, Samuel said to Saul, Bid the servant pass on before us, (and he passed on but stand thou still a while, that I may shew thee the word of God.

The communion upon the top of the house represents the preparation through contemplation of high and holy things. The command of Samuel, "Up that I may send thee away," has reference to the soul flights of a disciple. Saul's ability was evinced in the following: "Saul arose and they went out both of them, he and Samuel abroad." The work of the inner planes is referred to in the words: "But stand thou still awhile, that I may show thee the word of God."

On his way home Saul met a company of prophets from a hill-top sanctuary who were in a state of religious exaltation, singing hymns of praise. Saul joined in their singing. The songs they sang were known only to the Initiates in the School of Prophets of which Samuel was the inspired Teacher, and were sung only in a particular rhythm. These were Saul's new brothers in the deeper esoteric work, and their rejoicing was on his account as an addition to their ranks.

All initiatory Temples use certain harmonies or rhythmic music, and before the neophyte gains entrance into the

particular Temple with which his spiritual work associates him, the spiritual centers, or "watchmen" of the body, must vibrate in harmony with this particular Temple music. The School of Prophets, inaugurated by Samuel, was such a School, and it was there that Christian music had its early inception.

I Samuel 10:6-7

And the spirit of the Lord will come upon thee, and thou shalt prophesy with them, and shalt be turned into another man.

And let it be, when these signs are come unto thee, that thou do as occasion serve thee; for God is with thee.

This tells of a new life through a birth into the spiritual realms and the acquirement of first-hand knowledge in those spheres.

Samuel called all the tribes together at Mizpeh and from among them chose Saul of the tribe of Benjamin, but when they sought for Saul he could not be found. He realized something of his responsibility and shrank from it. Those who are unfitted for difficult positions generally rush forward seeking them; the worthy and competent are always unassuming and self-effacing. When he was finally found and brought forward he was acclaimed king by all but the children of Belial (the senses).

I Samuel 10:24-27

And Samuel said to all the people, see ye him whom the Lord hath chosen, that there is none like him among all the people? And all the people shouted, and said, God save the king.

Then Samuel told the people the manner of his kingdom, and wrote, it in a book, and laid it up before the Lord. And Samuel sent all the people away, every man to his house.

And Saul also went home to Gibeah; and there went with him a band of men, whose hearts God had touched. But the children of Belial said, How shall this man save us? And they despised him, and brought him no presents. But he held his peace.

The duties and obligations of a king to his people were recognized, and Samuel wrote them in a book which he laid in the Holy of Holies beside the Ten Commandments. This has been called the first Magna Carta of constitutional government. It also represents the etheric record of the new king's development and his fitness for assuming wider responsibilities.

Being now a king, Saul receives a crown of jewels, which is symbolic of the radiance emanating from the spiritual centers in the head of the truly God-inspired ruler, whether his rule be over "many" or "a few things."

One who makes progress upon the Path must always meet the tests of disbelief and disrespect: "Can any good come out of Nazareth?" Saul held his peace and bided his time when the children of Belial sneered and upbraided him, thus evidencing the self-control of an advanced soul.

An attack upon the Israelites by the king of the Ammonites gave Saul his opportunity. He gained a complete victory over the enemy before dawn and while they were still asleep. This symbolizes the neophyte's victory over self which is oftentimes achieved during his night experiences on the inner planes. Saul's victory over the Ammonites placed him beyond all cavil at the head of the nation. (Those who guide inner plane work see that the opportunity for outer world service is given to those who thus demonstrate their fitness.) Disclaiming personal credit Saul said: "It was not I that won the victory, but Jehovah" — words reminiscent of the Master's, "Not I but the Father, He doeth the works," which sound the keynote of true spiritual worth in every age.

Samuel now commanded Saul to await his coming on Gilgal that they might there offer sacrifices to beseech Jehovah's aid. Already we see signs that Saul was beginning to depend unduly upon his own individual power. This is the most subtle of all tests for spiritual leaders, since it is so easy to forget that their power and influence exist

only in proportion to their receptivity to the divine spiritual inflow and outflow.

In order to test Saul, Samuel delayed his coming beyond the appointed time. Everyone has need to learn to possess his soul in patience. Saul, however, decided not to wait. Secure in his own strength, he would conduct the sacrifices himself. His temptation was severe; his men were deserting in large numbers; the longer he waited, the less, he thought, was the chance of success. The most important as well as the most difficult lesson for the aspirant to learn is not to depend upon external things, to become indifferent to outward circumstances and to place full and complete dependence upon the spirit within. How Saul failed in this test is shown in the following words:

I Samuel 13:13-14

And Samuel said to Saul, Thou hast done foolishly: thou hast not kept the commandment of the Lord thy God, which he commanded thee; for now would the Lord have established thy kingdom upon Israel forever.

But now this kingdom shall not continue; the Lord hath sought him a man after his own heart, and the Lord hath commanded him to be captain over his people, because thou hast not kept that which the Lord commanded thee.

— **Corinne Heline**