

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



**The Mystic Import of Deuteronomy**

*There are eleven days' journey from Horeb, by the way of Mount Seir, unto Kadesh-barnea. — Deuteronomy 1:2*

The Book of Deuteronomy is keyed to eleven (11), the master number of self-conquest and attainment. The attainment to which it points is all-embracing. In the words of Deuteronomy, it is the "eleven days' journey" which the spirit takes after leaving Horeb, "mountain of God," until it reaches Kadesh-barnea, place of "holiness." The passage is by way of Seir, which is "rough," being the inheritance of Esau, the red and hairy man.

In this terse statement, the historical and geographical facts of which are comparatively unimportant, the reader's attention is directed at the outset to humanity's cosmic journey, which carries it from the sphere of the timeless into the world of time, to emerge again into the state of eternal being. The pilgrimage commences on the divine plane of unconditioned spirit, descends into the limitation of concrete existence, thence to extricate itself and regain the freedom of the heaven worlds.

Deuteronomy is the Book of the Higher Law. Between law, as recorded in Exodus and Leviticus, and love, as made manifest in the Gospels, stands Deuteronomy, linking the two. Looking to the past, Israel is exhorted to remember the law that had been delivered for their guidance and to "do it," that all might be well with them and that they might increase mightily in accordance with the Lord's promise — in a land that "floweth with milk and honey." Then, looking

into the future and seeing how law is but a schoolmaster in preparing for a state wherein it will be swallowed up in the transcendent code of love, the keynote of the coming dispensation is sounded with Gospel clarity: "Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God is one Lord; And thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy might." To which is significantly added: "And these words, which I command thee this day, shall be in thine heart."

Not until spiritual precepts given for man's guidance are carefully nursed in his heart will they become sufficiently a part of his life to serve spontaneously from within, thus transferring the direction of his personality from external authority to the indwelling god. Only then does compulsion yield to freedom. The former is the keynote of the Old Dispensation; the latter, of the New. The first stage is obedience to law through fear; the second is conformity through choice. Knowledge and experience finally lead to a love of law, and in that love is the law fulfilled.

Deuteronomy may be said, therefore, to shed light on the purpose of the Books which precede it and to foreshadow a greater light to be revealed in the Books that succeed it. It gives to the Mosaic Age a key wherewith the door to the Christian Dispensation may be opened.

In an introductory note to a recently modernized version of the Bible, Deuteronomy is aptly referred to as "a kind of Rosetta Stone for modern biblical criticism, the discovery of its meaning offering a central clue for unraveling the tangled problem of the Hexateuch and for the proper orientation of the whole work of the prophetic school." In its more inclusive, evolutionary aspect it indicates, as previously stated, the path of unfolding human consciousness, being at once a cosmic prospect and retrospect. In the introductory chapters, i-v inclusive, is traced the pilgrimage of Israel (humanity) through the wilderness (materiality) from the Red Sea (life of senses) to the Jordan, across which lay the land of "milk and honey" (life of the spirit). It concludes with the translation (redemption) of Moses (the regenerated), a type character, on Mount Pisgah (elevated consciousness), from this earthly sphere of human limitation to the celestial state of divine freedom.

*Deuteronomy 1:3*

*And it came to pass in the fortieth year, in the eleventh month, on the first day of the month, that Moses spake unto the children of Israel, according unto all that the Lord had given him in commandment unto them.*

As the cycle of preparation covering the kabbalistic period of forty years drew to a close, Moses had attained to the

initiate powers of eleven (eleventh month), and was qualified to undertake a task not formerly within his reach. This new effort is indicated numerically in the time at which it occurs: "the first day of the month."

During the forty-year period of preparation, purification and renewal, the Red Sea had been left behind for the sacred waters of the Jordan, and Baal-peor had been replaced by the glory heights of Pisgah. The instruction that Moses (the Initiate) was now able to give the Israelites (disciples) was in advance of anything previously delivered. It marked the culmination of his attainment and pertained to the illumination that comes with the last of the four Initiations, Initiation by Earth.

### **The Unveiling of the Higher Law**

Although ascribed to Moses, the Book of Deuteronomy was not always known to the Israelites. It first made its appearance in the reign of King Joshua, 621 B.C., which followed that of Manasseh and Amon. It was during Manasseh's reign that the Assyrian captivity took place, when Israel (the ten tribes) was carried away into captivity at Nineveh. Manasseh was succeeded by his son Amon, whose name suggests a special interest in the religions of Egypt on the part of his father, an interest not in itself evil, but which became evil when it stood in the way of fresh

revelations of Truth and expressed itself in a spirit of persecution and fanaticism.

Amon was assassinated, and the young child Josiah succeeded to the throne at Jerusalem. Josiah early came under the influence of inspired prophets and teachers of Israel. At the age of sixteen "he began to seek after the God of David his father." When he was twenty years old, "he began to purge Judah and Jerusalem from the high places, and the groves, and the carved images . . . and cleansed Judah and Jerusalem." (II Chronicles 34:3,5)

It is evident from this that Josiah was being prepared and guided in a definite direction by those who chiefly influenced his early years, for when he was twenty-six years old he commanded that the House of the Lord should be restored at Jerusalem. In the process of construction, the Roll of the Law, the Book of Deuteronomy, was found. "And when they brought out the money that was brought into the house of the Lord, Hilkiah the priest found a book of the law of the Lord given by Moses. And Hilkiah answered and said to Shaphan the scribe, I have found the book of the law in the house of the Lord. And Hilkiah delivered the book to Shaphan."

From this time forward the ancient Levitical shrines were abolished, and worship was centralized in the Temple on Mount Zion at Jerusalem. Even Shiloh, the holy place in the

tribal district of Ephraim where once the Ark rested, was discountenanced. The Levites henceforth were a branch of the priesthood of Mount Zion. Under the Deuteronomic Code, the Levites shared the honor and prestige of the Aaronites, or priesthood proper; but after the Babylonian captivity they were given a distinctly subordinate position as servants, rather than priests, in the Temple.

The Bible may be thought of as a great tree, having roots extending deep into the earth of the holy religions of antiquity; roots traveling far and wide below the surface of the earth to find the waters of eternal life. It is this which makes it possible to correlate biblical teachings with all the enlightened philosophies of the world, ancient and modern. In the present instance, for example, the root of wisdom penetrates the rich soil of Egypt.

If we turn to the Book of the Dead we find several chapters said to have been discovered in a miraculous manner, much as the Roll of Deuteronomy was found.

Of a short chapter on "Preserving the Heart," from the Papyrus of Amen-hotep, it is said that "this chapter was found in the city of Khemennu (Hermopolis Magna, the city Thoth, or Hermes Trismegistus) under the feet of the statue of this god. It was inscribed upon a slab of iron of the south, in the writing of the god (Thoth) himself, in the time of the majesty of the king of the north and of the south,

Men-kau-ra triumphant, by the royal son Heru-ta-ta-f, who discovered it while he was on his journey to make an inspection of the temple and their estates."

Two fairly long chapters were also found in this manner, and both contain esoteric teachings of great profundity. The one entitled, "On Coming Forth by Day," from the Papyrus of Nebseni, was said to have been discovered "in the foundations of the shrine of the divine Henu boat by the chief mason in the time of the King of the North and of the South, Hesepti, triumphant." It begins with the highly significant words: "I am Yesterday, Today, and Tomorrow, and I have the power to be born a second time" — a reference to the process of Initiation (as well as death) by which the soul comes forth from time and space and enters into the Eternal, where it is born anew in the likeness of the Christ; or, as the Egyptian would have said, in the likeness of Hor-us, the Sun-Child.

And again: "He is I, and I am he, and Ptah (the divine Artificer) hath covered his sky with crystal." "Make thou thy roads glad for me, and make broad for me thy paths when I shall set out from earth for the life in the celestial regions. Send forth thy light upon me, O soul unknown, for I am one of those who are about to enter in." "The garment wherewith I am clothed is complete ... I am made strong, and I come forth like him that forceth a way through the



gate, and the radiance which my heart hath made is enduring." "I rise as the Lord of Life through the beautiful law of this day."

These statements, like a multitude of others in the Book of the Dead, could be incorporated bodily in the Christian Bible without violence either to their content or to Christianity.

A third rediscovered treatise is a "Chapter on Knowledge" on the Papyrus of Nu, of which it is said: "This chapter was found in the city of Khemennu (city of Thoth) under the feet of the god during the reign of his majesty, the king of the north and of the south, Men-kau-ra triumphant, by the royal son Heru-ta-ta-f, triumphant; he found it when he was journeying about to make an inspection of the temples. One Nekht was with him who was diligent in making him understand it, and he brought it to the king as a wonderful object when he saw that it was a thing of great mystery, which had never before been seen or looked upon." This is another version of the chapter "On Coming Forth by Day" and begins similarly: "I am Yesterday, and Tomorrow, and I have the power to be born a second time." There are, however, variations in the subject matter of much interest; for example, "Happy, yea, happy, is the funeral couch of the Still-heart; he maketh himself to alight upon the pool, and verily he cometh forth therefrom" — a reference to the

transmutation of the emotions which leads to Initiation by Water. "I have come to see him that dwelleth in his divine Uraeus, face to face, and eye to eye, and I draw to myself the winds which rise when he cometh forth... O Lion-god, Babe! Thou art in me and I am in thee; and thy attributes are my attributes." The reference here is to Initiations by Fire and Water.

We can do little more than introduce these chapters from the Egyptian Mystery Teachings as they bear upon our present subject, but students will find much more which they can correlate with the biblical teachings for their own edification.

Like these ancient books of Egypt, Deuteronomy, which had for a long time been "lost" — lost to an unapprehending people — was uncovered among debris in the Temple, the accretions of useless and discarded practices, opinions and beliefs. The time had come to commence restoration of the Temple and to make public a higher code of the Law.

This event was preceded by a dark period in the spiritual life of Israel. It is when the darkness is deepest and the need greatest that Compassionate Ones reappear to save humanity from utterly losing its way in the shadow world.

The reign of Manasseh was particularly materialistic, sensual, and resistant to spiritual ideals. The lights that flamed before the Altar of Israel had been all but extinguished. The sacred ceremonies in ancient shrines had in many instances degenerated into repulsive rites.

Nor was this all. It was a time when spiritual teaching was widely suppressed and the prophets subjected to persecution. Isaiah was among the spiritual leaders of this period who paid the price of martyrdom for fearlessly protesting against the wickedness that prevailed in places both high and low; and who tried with all the might of his exalted spirit to stay the advances of national corruption. Those who proclaimed the glories of the New Day and truths foreshadowing the coming of the Christ were either imprisoned or put to death in a spirit resembling that which animated opponents of the followers of Christ immediately after His Crucifixion.

In this darkness a new spirit was germinating. It was centered in Josiah. We read: "Josiah was eight years old when he began to reign, and he reigned in Jerusalem one and thirty years. And he did that which was right in the sight of the Lord, and walked in the ways of David his father, and declined neither to the right hand, nor to the left." (Chronicles 34:1,2)

Under this regenerating influence that which had long been concealed could again be revealed. The Book of the Higher Law was "discovered." The eyes of a people were opened to a greater revelation of divine truth. The will of the Lord (the promptings of the spirit) were to become freshly articulate in the Temple — the Temple of humanity. Conditions and circumstances were propitious for the unveiling of Deuteronomy in the reign of the reformer-king, Josiah. It was the appropriate time as viewed by the All-Seeing Eye that never sleeps. It was not made accessible to a generation of rejectors. The wise do not cast pearls before swine. But when the national heart inclined toward receptivity of higher law, it became manifest. "When the pupil is ready, the Master appears." By a law inherent in the very nature of things, the good, the wise and the strong are protected from complete destruction by evil, ignorance and the forces of negation. Conversely, the undeveloped, the impotent, the wayward and the wicked are safeguarded from premature exposure to degrees of goodness, wisdom and power that would mean their annihilation because they could not yet endure them.

Viewed in the light of the five centuries and more between the discovery of Deuteronomy and the advent of the Christ, the tone and content of its message may be seen to have exercised a marked influence in preparing the world for the divine event that ushered the Lord of Love

into human form to dwell with men. While it is true that His own received Him not, His coming would not have been possible had not the preparation been at least partially successful.

Thus Deuteronomy became the most important link between the Ten Words and the Sermon on the Mount. It united the law of Moses to the precepts of Christ, the latter being the older law glorified and illumined by love. The new-found Book became a light to point the way to emancipation through love, which breaks the shackles of law. It prepared the way for the supreme manifestation in Christ Jesus of law in terms of love.

The Master Jesus understood the scope and the purpose of this Book as a presentation of the higher law. While he was yet a boy, legends affirm, he pondered over its pages amid the silence of the Galilean hills. To him they were both a retrospect and a prospect. They summed up the past and pointed to the future, they recounted what had been, and gave promise of what was yet to be. It is, therefore, reasonable to believe traditions which declare that of all the sacred Books, Deuteronomy was for Jesus the most important and the one to which he devoted his most earnest study in preparation for his unprecedented mission.

— ***Corinne Heline***