

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

The Vision of the Book

Ezekiel 2:9

And when I looked, behold, an hand was sent unto me; and lo, a roll of a book was therein ...

Ezekiel 3:1-3

Moreover, he said unto me, Son of man, eat that thou findest: eat this roll, and go speak unto the house of Israel.

So I opened my mouth, and he caused me to eat that roll.

And he said unto me, Son of man, cause thy belly to eat, and fill thy bowels with this roll that I give thee.

Then did I eat it; and it was in my mouth as honey for sweetness.

The Book of Ezekiel, like that of Daniel, is notable for its use of the term Son of Man, associated in Christian teaching with Jesus the Christ. In the writings of Hebrew Initiates it denotes One who has attained to a Degree of Initiation conferring power of communion with angelic Hierarchies, as is so beautifully evidenced in Ezekiel's visions. The "roll of a book" refers to esoteric instruction. Ezekiel is commanded to "eat the roll" but nothing is said

concerning the nature of its contents, for this is intended for the eyes of an Initiate only.

Inner-plane knowledge is very differently received than is knowledge in this world. When an embodied teacher speaks, his words are heard objectively by vibrations in the air entering at the hearer's ear. But in inner-plane Schools where Teachers speak through living, creative imagination, their words spring up alive in the mind and the soul of a disciple and become part of the latter's very being.

Hence, the prophet "eats the roll." It is assimilated into his soul-consciousness just as bread is transmuted by physiological alchemy into the actual substance of one's body. "And it was in my mouth as honey for sweetness." The pictures described by the prophet are examples of the picture-consciousness that humanity will possess in the next great evolutionary Period, the angelic and Initiate speech with its living pictures and images and their soul-essence or wisdom. Such images are mentioned many places in the Bible.

Spiritual bread is not given to a prophet merely to appease his own soul-hunger. He must share it with his people. Therefore, after his enlightenment Ezekiel is commissioned to become a Teacher. No ecstasy on earth is comparable to that accompanying the reception and dissemination of illuminating spiritual truths. John's

experiences described in Revelation are like those of Ezekiel's ecstatic glory. The latter depicts the exalted preparation for Christ's coming while St. John's vision pertains to His Second Coming.

In order to do the work required of a spiritual Teacher the Will principle — having its focus in the frontal sinus — must be brought to a very high stage of development. Ezekiel is told: "Behold, I have made thy face strong against their faces, and thy forehead strong against their foreheads. As an adamant, harder than flint, have I made thy forehead: fear them not, neither be dismayed at their looks, though they be a rebellious house." (Ezekiel 3:8,9)

Hypnotists in the flesh and among disembodied spirits who seek to obsess a living person exert their power upon this seat of the human will. Psychological pressure on this area should be instantly resisted by a neophyte. Therein the Divine Spirit (the Will principle) has its stronghold, and there it should be all-powerful. No evil spirit, in the flesh or out of it, can ever obsess a neophyte who makes his forehead "harder than flint" against such encroachment.

Ezekiel 3:12,14

Then the spirit took me up, and I heard behind me a voice of a great rushing, saying, Blessed be the glory of the Lord from his place.

So the spirit lifted me up, and took me away, and I went

in bitterness, in the heat of my spirit: but the hand of the Lord was strong upon me.

The great ecstasy or soul satisfaction of an Initiate comes from the fact that he has learned how to work in harmony with cosmic Law. This knowledge was lost with man's "Fall" from the Garden (heaven worlds) and can be regained only as men individually make themselves worthy to receive understanding of the Law, a prerogative of Initiation. Every Initiate sings in his heart, "Blessed be the glory of the Lord (Law) from his place."

Ezekiel states that he "went in bitterness, in the heat of my spirit." It is always difficult to rise above the heavy vibrations of earth conditions, but the power of spiritual Law is strong upon or within everyone who transcends the boundaries of mortal existence and enters into realms celestial.

Ezekiel 3:16-17

Then I came to them of the captivity at Tel-abib, that dwelt by the river of Chebar, and I sat where they sat, and remained there astonished among them seven days.

*And it came to pass at the end of seven days, that the word of the Lord came unto me, saying,
Son of man, I have made thee a watchman unto the*

house of Israel: therefore hear the word at my mouth, and give them warning from me.

The expression "seven days" does not necessarily mean a period of seven days of twenty-four hours each. It refers to a probationary time well known to all neophytes.

Ezekiel 3:19

Yet if thou warn the wicked, and he turn not from his wickedness, nor from his wicked Way, he shall die in his iniquity: but thou hast delivered thy soul.

"To whom much has been given, of him much shall be required" is an early Temple maxim. After an earnest and sincere attempt to inculcate in them knowledge of spiritual principles, a teacher is not responsible for the use his pupils may make of their knowledge.

The Vision on the Plain

Ezekiel 3:22-24

And the hand of the Lord was there upon me; and he said unto me, Arise, go forth into the plain, and I will there talk with thee.

Then I arose, and went forth into the plain; and, behold, the glory of the Lord stood there, as the glory which I saw by the river Chebar: and I fell on my face.

Then the spirit entered into me, and set me upon my

feet, and spake with me, and said unto me, Go, shut thyself within thy house.

Ezekiel is here given a mystic key for the furtherance of his illuminating visions. To be shut "within thine own house" refers to preparation needed for work to be done in the soul body.

The great cosmic truths revealed through Initiation may be compared to school work. There is a period of study and preparation, then an exposition by the teacher. These are followed by tests and examinations whereby the teacher may determine a pupil's fitness for advancement. Again there is a period of preparation with further instruction (illumination) by the teacher. This work continues until the entire "curriculum" is finished. In a School of Initiation this means the successful passing of the nine Lesser Mysteries and the four Greater, at which time the aspirant "graduates," having attained all the Wisdom to be acquired by mankind at large by the end of our present Earth Period. By virtue of this high attainment such an one has become a superman or God-man. Henceforth he enters into physical embodiment only that he may serve the race as a teacher and benefactor. No longer does he recognize limitations of race; color or creed. God is his Father, every man his brother. He lives in the light of universal Wisdom and says with the Christ, "Before Abraham was, I am."

Although laid upon him in Babylon, Ezekiel's mission was not to the Chaldeans but to his own people, the House of Israel. In his vision on the plain before Babylon he beheld the suffering of Jerusalem; he also understood its cause and object. To this point the vision is that of his Master, Jeremiah. Although worshipping God, the God of all peoples, he knew that his own people had a special task to accomplish, and that if they failed to perform it they would be cast out from the fulfillment of the cosmic Pattern for the New Messianic Age.

Apparently a number of Ezekiel's visions were penned before Jerusalem fell: "An end is come, the end is, come: it watcheth for thee; behold, it is come." (Ezekiel 7:6) Famine and war are the fruits of error: "Son of man, behold, I will break the staff of bread in Jerusalem; and they shall eat bread by weight, and with care; and they shall drink water by measure, with astonishment." (Ezekiel 4:16) Esoterically, bread symbolizes the feminine potency; the feminine Love principle had been broken in Israel, with consequent suffering and tragedy.

The sanctuary having been defiled, even that of Jerusalem's own Temple, karmic retribution was inevitable: "Wherefore, as I live, saith the Lord God; Surely, because thou has defiled my sanctuary with all thy detestable things, and with all thine abominations, therefore will I also

diminish thee; neither shall mine eyes spare, neither will I have any pity. (Ezekiel 5:11) Esoterically, the defilement of the sanctuary refers to misuse of the creative force within the human organism, the sin against the Holy Ghost which brought to mankind famine, evil, pestilence, bloodshed and death. Ignorance of the great law of life excuses no one. Misuse of the life force is the one sin requiring expiation. It cannot be forgiven, but must be worked out from incarnation to incarnation until the force is restored to its original purity of expression. "My face will I turn from them, and they shall pollute my secret place: for the robbers shall enter into it, and defile it." (Ezekiel 7:22)

The God of Ezekiel, like the God of Jeremiah, is a God of Law: "I will do unto them after their way, and according to their deserts will I judge them; and they shall know that I am the Lord." (Ezekiel 7:27) Not yet was the vision clear as to the meaning of the Christ Sacrifice, in which there was no causation due to sin but a voluntary laying down of life for the redemption of the world. By the end of the Exile this vision became clear to the Seers of Israel.

The Vision of Jerusalem

Ezekiel 8:1-4

And it came to pass in the sixth year, in the sixth month, in the fifth day of the month, as I sat in mine house, and the elders of Judah sat before me, that the

hand of the Lord God fell there upon me.

Then I beheld, and lo a likeness as the appearance of fire: from the appearance of his loins even downward, fire; and from his loins even upward, as the appearance of brightness, as the colour of amber.

And he put forth the form of a hand, and took me by a lock of mine head; and the spirit lifted me up between the earth and heaven, and brought me in the visions of God to Jerusalem, to the door of the inner gate that looketh toward the north; where was the seat of the image of jealousy, which provoketh to jealousy.

And, behold, the glory of the God of Israel was there, according to the vision that I saw in the plain.

Nebuchadnezzar's reign lasted for a year and a half, and his conquest of Jerusalem brought upon that city all the terrors predicted by Isaiah and Jeremiah. Famine and pestilence ravaged the people; parents devoured the bodies of their own starving, dying children. The prophets repudiated these terrible happenings but their warnings went unheeded. "According to their deserts will I judge them," said the Law, and so was it done. The magnificent Temple of Solomon was levelled to the ground. Some of the stones in the building weighed from ten to sixty tons each. The chosen had failed to live up to the high idealism embodied in the structure, so not one stone remained upon

another. The actuality which springs from an ideal cannot endure after the ideal that gave it birth is gone.

Prophets of the Kingdom had brought about far-reaching reforms in the Temple. The Mysteries were purified and grosser elements of popular worship were expunged from all ritual. The Exile brought this process to an abrupt halt. The dominant prophets of reform were, for the most part, carried away as captives. The people remaining behind were leaderless, so immediately returned to their old ways. The Adonis ritual in its most decadent form was again celebrated in the Temple area, in secret chambers, and in restored portions of the structure. This ritual dealt with Ishtar's descent into the underworld to restore the world's Beloved to life, so the eighth chapter of Ezekiel relates esoterically to experiences an Initiate undergoes when he first consciously enters the spiritual world in his soul body.

The "image of jealousy" was set up at the north gate — a pagan idol esoterically representing a demon of the purgatorial regions. In the lower regions of the Desire World, site of orthodox Purgatory, exist all the evil thoughts ever created by human thinking. Like attracts like. The image of jealousy, for example, is a hideous form animated by all the jealousy rampant in the world. It both radiates and attracts this tremendous evil force. Every person who permits jealousy to enter into his aura contributes to the

strength of this evil entity and receives influences from it. It is only necessary to consider how prevalent jealousy is among men, how its influence dominates their lives, to realize how powerful is this baneful "image" and how far-reaching its Effects. Other images of like nature in the purgatorial regions are lust, vengefulness, hatred, vicious or destructive tendencies; they find therein their demoniac representative that powerfully affects the souls of men.

Upon the walls of the chambers where the secret rituals were performed were other pictures of similar import, of which the prophet speaks in his vision:

Ezekiel 8:7-12

And he brought me to the door of the court; and when I looked, behold, a hole in the wall.

Then said he unto me, Son of man, dig now in the wall: and when I had digged in the wall, behold, a door.

And he said unto me, Go in, and behold the wicked abominations that they do here.

So I went in and saw: and behold, every form of creeping things, and abominable beasts, and all the idols of the house of Israel, portrayed upon the wall round about.

And there stood before them seventy men of the ancients of the house of Israel, and in the midst of them stood Jaazaniah the son of Shaphan, with every man his

censer in his hand; and a thick cloud of incense went up.

Then said he unto me, Son of man, hast thou seen what the ancients of the house of Israel do in the dark, every man in the chambers of his imagery? for they say, The Lord seeth us not; the Lord hath forsaken the earth.

Ezekiel here points the disciple toward the Hall of Learning, upon the walls of which may be seen pictured records of whatever subject the Teacher wishes him to investigate — for the prophet was functioning in his soul-body. He saw all that spiritual renegades among his people wished to conceal. Incense of certain kinds favors materialization of spirits of a low order and of sub-human psychical entities called elementals, so it is invariably used in "black" rituals. Even in rites of the Church incense of sandalwood and myrrh, though never conducive to evil materializations, have a potent effect upon the consciousness of the congregation, causing members thereof to be more submissive and pliable to the will of the priest — in a word, rendering them emotional and thus more responsive to suggestion. Certain other types of incense are known to have an aphrodisiac effect upon individuals; these were popular in cults where sensual orgies were part of the ritua — as in the voodoo worship of Africa and other degenerate survivals from the Taurean Age. In Ezekiel's vision the reversion to type was complete.

Again Ezekiel was taken (in his soul-body) to the "door of the gate of the Lord's house which was toward the north; and behold, there sat women weeping for Tammuz."

Ezekiel 8:15-16

Then said he unto me, Hast thou seen this, O son of man? Turn thee yet again, and thou shalt see greater abominations than these.

And he brought me into the inner court of the Lord's house; and, behold, at the door of the temple of the Lord, between the porch and the altar, were about five and twenty men, with their backs toward the temple of the Lord, and their faces toward the east; and they worshipped the Sun toward the east.

It must be reiterated that in passages such as this the prophets were not inveighing against Solar Mysteries as known to Initiates, but against degenerate practices of popular worship. In their effort to destroy decadent cults, however, the prophets took the extreme measure of destroying everything that they thought might lead the ignorant astray, regardless of how pure and holy the thing in itself might be. Thus, Hezekiah ordered destroyed the Brazen Serpent which had been sacred to the Israelites from the time of Moses, not because he did not reverence its symbolical meaning but because the multitude was worshipping it as an idol. The solar cults had degenerated

from sacred initiatory Rites into sexual orgies of the most revolting nature, and the elemental forces thus generated were turned to vile uses by practitioners of the black arts. Hence, the denunciations by the prophets.

As the Taurean religions degenerated in the course of time, so was the Arian Age religion, pure and undefiled in its origin, destined to decline. Such religious decline is invariably accompanied by over-emphasis upon ritual and ceremonial. Esotericists do not wish to eliminate beauty from the worship of God, but they would discourage the unilluminated from looking upon ceremonial as an end in itself rather than as a symbolical presentation of divine Beauty. The farther a religion travels from its source, the more materialized and perverted it becomes. Having lost itself in form it is bereft of the life of spirit — for religions, like nations and races, have their infancy, youth, maturity, age and decay. In infancy and youth they are manifestations of a pure spiritual revelation; in maturity comes the glory of their ceremonial and influence; in age comes formal ritualism and disintegration, the letter of religion without its spirit.

The prophets of Israel were the "watchmen" of the Lord. They never ceased to work for the New Order in its purity. When they saw continued indulgence in depraved modes of worship they knew that under the Law of Consequence

retribution must come. Such retribution is accomplished through Race Spirits, the tutelary Deities of races and nations, who mete out the collective destiny of a people. Ezekiel describes their working thus:

Ezekiel 9:2-6

And, behold, six men came from the way of the higher gate, which lieth to the north, and every man a slaughter weapon in his hand; and one man among them was clothed with linen, with a writer's inkhorn by his side: and they went in, and stood beside the brazen altar.

And the glory of the God of Israel was gone up from the cherub, whereupon he was, to the threshold of the house: and he called to the man clothed with linen, which had the writer's inkhorn by his side;

And the Lord saith unto him, Go through the midst of the city, through the midst of Jerusalem, and set a mark upon the foreheads of the men that sigh, and that cry, for all the abominations that be done in the midst thereof.

And to the others he said in mine hearing, Go ye after him through the city, and smite; let not your eye spare, neither have ye pity:

Slay utterly old and young, both maids, and little children, and women; but come not near any man upon whom is the mark; and begin at my sanctuary. Then

they began at the ancient men which were before the house.

Race Spirits do not usually manifest in human form to clairvoyant vision, but are seen hovering above their respective countries like a cloud. They aid their charges in liquidating the debts incurred under the Law of Causation. Observe again that the faithful receive a mark upon the forehead which saves them from the destruction that is to overtake the unfaithful. It is stated in later Hebrew kabbalism that the place and nature of every man's soul is revealed by a distinguishing mark which shines upon his forehead and is visible to the vision of a Seer. The Lord specifically commands: "Come not near any man upon whom is the mark."

The man "clothed in linen," who had an "inkhorn by his side," represents a celestial scribe — that is, an agent of destiny who carries out the Will of God. He returns saying, "I have done as thou hast commanded me." The vision continues:

Ezekiel 10:1-7

Then I looked, and, behold, in the firmament that was above the head of the cherubims there appeared over them as it were a sapphire stone, as the appearance of the likeness of a throne.

And he spoke unto the man clothed with linen, and said,

Go in between the wheels, even under the cherub, and fill thine hand with coals of fire from between the cherubims, and scatter them over the city.

And he went in in my sight.

Now the cherubims stood on the right side of the house, when the man went in; and the cloud filled the inner court.

Then the glory of the Lord went up from the cherub, and stood over the threshold of the house; and the house was filled with the cloud, and the court was full of the brightness of the Lord's glory.

And the sound of the cherubims' wings was heard even to the outer court, as the voice of the Almighty God when he speaketh.

And it came to pass, that when he had commanded the man clothed with linen, saying, Take fire from between the wheels, from between the cherubim; then he went in, and stood beside the wheels.

And one cherub stretched forth his hand from between the cherubims unto the fire that was between the cherubim, and took thereof, and put it into the hands of him that was clothed with linen; who took it, and went out.

During the midsummer months of July and August, while the Sun is passing through the signs Cancer and Leo, life forces of the earth are being replenished. The ninth of the

Lesser Mysteries, concerned with the etherealization. of the earth's body, is observed annually at the season of the Summer Solstice when a new infusion of life force is used in this rarification process. Also, this work has to do with the blending of Fire and Water and is referred to mystically by Ezekiel as coals of fire resting between the Cherubim. The act of handing this fire to man symbolizes these sacred Mysteries which await a time when an Initiate is able to receive the "New Fire" of the Father — esoterically termed the Father Fire.

The prophet describes this vision of the Cherubim and the Glory of the Lord as occurring in the Temple at Jerusalem; then he adds: "This is the living creature, that I saw by the river of Chebar." (Ezekiel 10:15) To make the identification complete, he states: "Then the glory of the Lord departed from off the threshold of the house, and stood over the cherubims. This is the living creature that I saw under the God of Israel by the river of Chebar; and I know that they were the cherubims." (Ezekiel 10:18,20)

The picture is very clear. The sapphire over the cherubim is the throne of the sky itself, where the Divine Spirit dwells. The four Cherubim, or living creatures, are the four Fixed Signs of the Zodiac — or their spiritual counterparts, the Lords of Destiny, who stand guard at the four quarters of the universe and uphold the throne (the sky) of the Lord.

In later writings the Glory of the Lord is called Shekinah, and is identified with the feminine Wisdom principle: "The House was filled with the cloud" — that is, a cloud of Light and "God is light."

The prophet is not describing a local Deity to be worshipped at Jerusalem only but a God of the starry universe who could also be seen and worshipped from the plains of Chaldea, where he himself first saw the vision. He emphasizes the fact that the Glory of the Lord moved, that it left the desecrated Temple's Holy of Holies and stood over the threshold, that it shone above the outer courts and over the gates of the Temple area: "And the sound of the cherubims' wings was heard even in the outer court, as the voice of the Almighty God when he speaketh." He concludes by declaring: "This is the living creature that I saw ... by the river Chebar;" that is, the Cherubim who support the Glory of God, not merely in the darkness and secrecy of the Holy of Holies but everywhere in the universe.

Ezekiel then proceeds to describe how this Glory withdrew itself from the Temple:

Ezekiel 11:22-25

Then did the cherubims lift up their wings, and the wheels beside them; and the glory of the God of Israel was over them above.

And the glory of the Lord went up from the midst of the

city, and stood upon the mountain which is on the east side of the city.

Afterwards the spirit took me up, and brought me in a vision by the Spirit of God into Chaldea, to them of the captivity: so the vision that I had seen went up from me.

Then I spake unto them of the captivity all the things that the Lord had shewed me.

He told them that their God was dwelling in their midst, that He was still their God and that if they proved themselves worthy they might once more return to Jerusalem and rebuild the Lord's Temple. Had the Lord dwelt on Zion? He certainly dwelt on Zion, yet He revealed Himself to the Initiate on the plains of Chaldea, for the whole universe is His Temple.

— ***Corinne Heline***