

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

The Betrothal and Marriage of Mary and Joseph

*She saw in your soul's garden
The virgin lilies stand,
And knew God made you worthy
To touch her virgin hand.*

When at last the period of Mary's Temple training was completed, the High Priest again sought guidance in the Sanctuary. Arrayed in the apparel set apart for prayer he entered the Holy of Holies and made supplication concerning Mary: "What shall we do with her?" The reply came that all the men of the House of David connected with the Temple service be assembled, and that Mary be given to the man to whom a certain sign should be shown.

The ancient legend tells us: "It came to pass when they were gathered together, Joseph was found with them, and as they were waiting, behold, a snow white dove went forth from the Sanctuary and alighted upon the top of Joseph's staff (which had sprung into blossom) and then flew upon his head, after which it went back and entered into the Temple and into the Sanctuary. Then all the people cried out saying, *God is righteous in all His ways. For there is no man here who is so closely akin to Mary as Joseph and it is meet that she should belong to him.* And then we find the

significant comment: *"Now they did not know the Mystery which was hidden in the matter."*

According to the occult tradition, both Mary and Joseph were Essenes. The Essenes were, as previously observed, an ascetic sect into whose care were trusted the secret books of Israel which were committed to writing by the great Initiate Ezra (Esdras) in the mystical Field of Ardath at Babylon several hundred years previously. These writings, were at first confided to the care of the Great Synagogue, a School of Initiation founded by Ezra; through various vicissitudes, the bulk of the Mystery books eventually came into the hands of the brotherhood known from Hellenistic times as the Essenes, who included in their number the great founders of Christianity.

The Essenes were divided into two groups, the Householders and the Temple Initiates. The Householders married and set up homes in the villages and cities in the usual way of life where they made practical demonstration of the holy Temple teaching of the Immaculate Conception, preparing themselves through strict spiritual discipline for the sanctity of parenthood, with the object of attracting advanced egos from the heaven world who should further the work of the Order and of humanity generally.

The more esoteric group comprised the Initiates who had taken the vow of perpetual virginity and held themselves

unspotted of the world, living, usually, in isolated monastic communities where they could devote the whole life to the things of Spirit. Some of these, however, might also be found in the towns and cities when a special work was to be done, and some lived in the Temple precincts in Jerusalem itself and performed duties necessary to the Temple worship according to the demands of custom and tradition.

These Initiate brethren were taught the Mysteries of the Fire-Mist in the human body — its nature, its origin and the way of its ascent to the head, there to be used in various kinds of mental-spiritual creative activity and to stimulate the functions of the pineal and pituitary glands whose awakening makes man more than man. The presence of these two spiritual organs in the head was known to ancient Initiates as references to them are still to be found in the writings of the Church Father Hippolytus, who, not being himself a believer in the Mysteries, was always attempting to discredit them. He nevertheless has done the service of preserving an ancient description of the organs in the head which, as he states, were likened to organs of generation, the head itself being likened to a marriage chamber. There in the brain the Serpent Fire has its true home, but descends by way of the medulla oblongata through the spine to the lower organs of physical generation. Modern anatomists know that the pituitary body in particular has an intimate connection with the sex function, and occult

anatomists know that it has an equally intimate connection with regeneration and the fruition of spiritual powers.

Mary and Joseph belonged to the highest initiatory Order, hence the greater was their sacrifice in going out into the world to become affiliated with the lesser Degree of the Householders.

The holy virgin heart of Mary could be wedded only to another holy virgin heart. St. Ambrose writes that theirs was the perfect love-mating as the great saint was betrothed to the "Lily of Israel."

Early legends state that Joseph was a man in the prime of life, and not an old man as generally described. The great age conferred upon him is purely symbolical, having to do with his high wisdom rather than with the number of his years.

In accordance with the ancient legends, Joseph was the son of prosperous parents who lived upon a beautiful estate near Bethlehem. Joseph was entirely different from his more worldly brothers who often made sport of his extreme simplicity and utter humility and were deeply chagrined that he made no effort to "get ahead in the world." For from his early years Joseph had been conscious of angelic communications, his life had been guided by these celestial

beings and he knew no other interest than to strive for spiritual attainment.

At the age of about twelve or thirteen Joseph dedicated himself wholly to a life of chastity, holiness and prayer. When he reached the age of twenty he went to live alone in a small house in Tiberias beside the Lake of Galilee and here worked as a carpenter's assistant. As the years passed he increased in both piety and wisdom and gave himself increasingly day by day unto prayer and ecstatic visions and angelic communications. When in these visions instructions were given to him to proceed to the Temple in Jerusalem, he obeyed the command without question. Joseph was at this time thirty-three years of age, prepossessing in manner, handsome in appearance and radiant with that light which the illumined spirit alone can give.

His contemporaries estimated his high attainment rightly when they declared that no other man was so closely attuned to the Virgin Mary. His entire life had been one of prayer and preparation dedicatory to his sublime mission as the companion of Mary. He is said to have resembled the Angels with whom, like Mary, he held a closer communion than with men.

The mating of these two Initiates of the Essenian Order is truly a love dream rare and beautiful among the dreams of men, incomparably tender and filled with gentleness. An

ancient Greek hymn refers to Joseph as more than a saint, for only such could espouse Mary who was "privileged beyond an Archangel's dream." St. Ambrose writes again, "They were one in mind, heart and spirit, for Joseph had also taken the vow of perpetual virginity."

Jerome, who lived and studied for thirty years in Bethlehem in preparation for his version of the Bible (Latin Vulgate), and who had access to many ancient manuscripts descriptive of the Holy Family, states that there existed a true and virginal marriage between Mary and Joseph, and that this marriage occurred previous to the incarnation of Jesus. This statement of Jerome is substantiated by occult investigation.

Ever after the angelic Annunciation the blessed Virgin was surrounded with and radiated such a glory that she literally walked in the Light. For this reason few were able to stand in her presence. Ambrose says that Joseph left her not because of her unworthiness, but because, pure and holy as he was, even he felt himself unworthy to be near her in this sacred time.

Xavier's *Persian History of Christ*, though somewhat discredited in modern research, contains a number of interesting traditions, among which is the following description of the person of the Blessed Virgin: "Mary was of moderate height and light complexion. Her eyes were

large verging toward blue, her hair auburn, her hands and fingers long and beautiful, her figure symmetrical in every part. Her language was particularly pleasing, her aspect modest and benign. So, much glory and majesty appeared in her person that when the wicked viewed her countenance they reflected and withdrew and were made different persons. All loved and praised and thought much of her for the excellence and sweetness of her manner and for her humility. Largely, her conversation in public and private was such as for goodness and dignity became the Messiah's Mother."

— ***Corinne Heline***