

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

The Law of Holiness

Ye shall be holy; for I the Lord your God am holy.
— *Leviticus 19:2*

These words from the beginning of the nineteenth chapter of Leviticus sound its keynote; they also open the following eight chapters which conclude the code of Leviticus. The Law of Holiness has aptly been fixed upon as a suitable superscription for this section of the Book of the Law.

Taken in its entirety, this concluding section has marked characteristics of its own. It builds on the legislation that has already been given to the Covenant People as an aid in keeping them in the ways of righteousness worthy of a nation elected to be a "kingdom of priests" among the peoples of the world. The Law of Holiness is not so much concerned with prescribing specific action and fixed ceremonials as it is in arousing the consciousness of man to a recognition of, and obedience to, principles that govern the higher life. It has less of the letter and more of the spirit of the law than do preceding chapters of either Leviticus or Exodus which deal with the subject. It looks forward to Deuteronomy and lays a foundation for the Sermon on the Mount wherein Christ Jesus enunciates the

highest law of the spiritual life yet given to man. This is another instance of the old preparing for the new and the new rising on the old. It illustrates the growth of religion as the consciousness of progressing humanity expands. Differences between past and present need not be contradictions, but merely varying degrees of understanding and development. It is so in the inspired word of the Old and the New Testaments. The keynote of the one is law; of the other, love. But, in a poet's words, "God is love yet God is law." The path of obedience to the divine will leads from outer compulsion to inner freedom.

The nineteenth chapter in part repeats and elaborates upon the Ten Commandments: "Fear every man his mother, and his father, and keep my sabbaths; turn not to idols: ye shall not steal nor deal falsely: . . . neither lie to another; . . . and ye shall not swear by my name falsely; neither shalt thou profane the name of thy God."

The commandment against adultery is enlarged upon in chapter immediately preceding and succeeding it. An inclusive prohibition against misuse of the creative force is given in Leviticus 18:21: "Thou shalt not let any of thy seed pass through the fire to Molech." To the fires of Molech, or Moloch, human beings were sacrificed; he was the god of lust, by whose fiery passions life itself is consumed.

Therefore the injunction: "Let not thy seed pass through the fire to Molech."

The subject is treated further in the twentieth chapter. This warning against offering life to Molech, together with numerous specific prohibitions related thereto, was given to the masses as the first step toward conservation of the life force in man's body. Directions for the few who were able to carry the process further, and to commence the work of consciously sublimating physical passion into spiritual illumination, are stated in the language of symbolism in Leviticus 19:23-25:

And when ye shall come into the land, and shall have planted a manner of trees for food, then ye shall count the fruit thereof a uncircumcised: three years shall it be as uncircumcised unto you it shall not be eaten of.

But in the fourth year all the fruit thereof shall be holy, to praise the Lord withal.

And in the fifth year shall ye eat of the fruit thereof: that it may yield unto you the increase thereof, I am the Lord your God.

A tree symbolizes regeneration. Its sap ascends from root to tip and on its upper branches its fruits are presented to the Sun, source and center of life. It is so in regenerated man. The life forces rise to the higher bodily centers where

they bear fruits of unfolded spiritual powers acceptable to the Lord of Light and Life.

The three years during which the fruit of the trees was not to be eaten indicates the period of preparation preceding definite attainment on the initiatory Path. This is reached in the fourth year when "all the fruit thereof shall be holy, to praise the Lord." In the fifth year the Great White Work reaches its culmination and the fruit of the trees can be eaten. Accumulated spiritual powers are then at a stage where they become active faculties expressing a higher octave of divine life.

A garden or orchard typifies a state of consciousness. During physical life man cultivates this ground, planting all manner of experiences therein. These are "for food"; they are the pabulum on which the spirit nourishes itself as it grows in stature and power. The significance of the passage under consideration is embodied in its numbers, namely, three, four and five. Three is the first numerical power under which a state of completeness is developed. With this stage a higher degree of attainment begins. When twelve is reached — which completes a cycle of progression — its two numerals (one and two) reduce to three, the first perfect number.

Four opens a new doorway. In Mystery Schools the Fourth Degree is concerned with development of fourth-

dimensional consciousness. The supreme work of the powers of four is transmutation. Since this involves a cleansing process, it is the number of ripe fate; karmic debts are liquidated and the fruits of life become "holy withal." This is also the significance of the number forty — four raised to a higher power—used so frequently throughout the Bible, it signifies preparation leading to transformation.

In its highest significance, five marks the awakening of the God within. In a series of nine, four numbers precede it and four follow. It is in a central position, culminating what may be termed the human series of numbers and beginning the divine series. It is the number of resurrected powers. The Ego now enters upon enjoyment of the fruits of past endeavors; and by a continued cultivation of the fruit-bearing trees in the garden of the spirit, there will be an ample "increase thereof" until all divine potentialities shall have been unfolded at the end of the numerical series of nine and a state of unity with God attained in ten, the original unit raised to a higher power. Chapter nineteen contains various ethical precepts, some of which reappear in more positive form, in teachings of Christ Jesus. The Israelites are enjoined not to defraud neighbors or rob them; not to take vengeance or bear grudge; to leave fruits in the corners of fields and gleanings to the poor; to employ just weights and measures; to give hospitality to strangers, and to "rise up before the hoary head." In terms

understandable to the race, it was giving instruction to do unto others as they would have others do unto them. And in the commandment "Love thy neighbor as thyself," the Old Dispensation sounded the love note of the New. Consistent effort through the ages on the part of those who further the divine plan for humanity has been to dispel the illusion of separateness under which man still lives, and to awaken in him a realization of his membership in an all-embracing fellowship.

— ***Corinne Heline***