

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

The Initiate Work of Samuel

Samuel's First Testing

The spiritual preparation for his life work began early for Samuel, as it also did in a later era for the child Jesus.

I Samuel 3:3-4

And ere the lamp of God went out in the temple of the Lord, where the ark of God was, and Samuel was laid down to sleep;

That the Lord called Samuel: and he answered, Here am I.

The Bible narrative continues with an account of how the youthful Samuel was bidden to denounce the house of Eli: "For I have told him that I will judge his house forever for the iniquity which he knoweth. because his sons made themselves vile, and he restrained them not,"

Child though the prophet was, he realized the bitterness his revelation held for the aged Eli, and therefore we are told, "And Samuel lay until the morning, and opened the doors of the house of the Lord. And Samuel feared to show Eli the vision." Thus early came Samuel's first testing on the path; by his response he proved his spiritual fitness for

the performance of certain great works to be entrusted to him.

It was not easy to obey the command of the Voice. It meant for one thing dismissal from the service of the high priest, which in the eyes of his people was a disgrace from which there was no recovery. Moreover, in this Temple work, Samuel enjoyed comparative ease, security and promise of advancement both professional and spiritual. Should he temporize with material power or should he be true to the revelation of the spirit? His command was clear: To pronounce doom upon the house of Eli. It is at such a place as this, the place of the first temptation, that the neophyte must learn to stand alone, and young Samuel, separated from his adoring parents, was obliged to make his decision unaided by aught save the heavenly vision.

Thus with every neophyte: by occult law the time of a spiritual promotion is usually the time of a material reverse-so widely at variance are the ways of material and spiritual progress.

Samuel conquered his fear, and "told him every whit, and hid nothing from him. And he said, It is the Lord: let him do what seemeth him good." Samuel had met his first great test victoriously, whereupon he was blessed with an increase of wisdom. "And Samuel grew and the Lord was with him, and he did let none of his words fall to the

ground. And all Israel from Dan even to Beersheba knew that Samuel was established to be a prophet of the Lord." (I Samuel 3:18-20) And thus he was prepared for the hard tasks that lay ahead.

I Samuel 4:2-4

And the Philistines put themselves in array against Israel: and when they joined battle, Israel was smitten before the Philistines: and they slew of the army in the field about four thousand men.

And when the people were come into the camp, the elders of Israel saith,

Wherefore hath the Lord smitten us today before the Philistines. Let us fetch the ark of the covenant of the Lord out of Shiloh unto us, that when it cometh among us, it may save us out of the hand of our enemies.

So the people sent to Shiloh, that they might bring from thence the ark of the covenant of the Lord of hosts, which dwelleth between the cherubim: and the two sons of Eli, Hophni and Phineas, were there with the ark of the covenant of God.

The Philistines represent man's lower nature, the Israelites the higher, and the Ark of the Covenant the spiritual power which man has evolved within himself.

I Samuel 5:2,3,11

When the Philistines took the ark of God, they brought it

into the house of Dagon, and set it by Dagon.

And when they of Ashdod rose early on the morrow, behold, Dagon was fallen upon his face to the earth before the ark of the Lord. And they took Dagon, and set him in his place again.

So they sent and gathered together all the lords of the Philistines, and said, Send away the ark of the God of Israel, and let it go again to his own place, that it slay us not, and our people: for there was a deadly destruction throughout all the city; and the hand of God was very heavy there.

Where the Ark is, all good abides. The two sons of Eli are slain because they used unworthily the power symbolized by the Ark. The Ark also brought only evil to the Philistines, and to Dagon, their god of false and evil powers. The false cannot stand before the true, the masked beside the real. The way of the flesh is destruction; the way of the spirit, eternal life. The hand of God is the working of retributive Law.

I Samuel 6:19-20

And he smote the men of Bethshemesh, because they had looked into the Ark of the Lord, even he smote of the people fifty thousand and three-score and ten men: and the people lamented, because the Lord had smitten many of the people with a great slaughter.

And the men of Bethshemesh said, Who is able to stand before this holy Lord God? and to whom shall he go up from us?

The Ark was taken to Bethshemesh, the city of the Sun, signifying the way of transmutation or attainment. The Ark contains the Table of the Law (pure living), the golden pot of manna (the conserved life force), and Aaron's Rod that budded (the uplifted spirit fire and awakened spiritual centers). The significance of Bethshemesh pertains no less to the man of today than it did to the people of the time when it was written.

I Samuel 7:11-17

And the men of Israel went out of Mizpeh, and pursued the Philistines, and smote them, until they came under Beth-car.

Then Samuel took a stone, and set it between Mizpeh and Shen, and called the name of Ebenezer, saying, Hitherto hath the Lord helped us.

So the Philistines were subdued, and they came no more into the coast of Israel: and the hand of the Lord was against the Philistines all the days of Samuel.

And the cities which the Philistines had taken from Israel were restored to Israel, from Ekron even unto Gath: and the coasts thereof did Israel deliver out of the hands of the Philistines. And there was peace between Israel and

the Amorites.

And Samuel judged Israel all the days of his life.

And he went from year to year in circuit to Bethel and Gilgal, and Mizpeh, and judged Israel in all those places.

And his return was to Ramah; for there was his house; and there he judged Israel; and there he built an altar unto the Lord.

In these few and apparently simple verses is described the attainment of Samuel, the greatest teacher and prophet since Moses. Beth-car means "the house of the lamb" and represents the new body built through purity and transmutation. Samuel's annual circuit is reminiscent of the annual cycle of the Sun as it progresses through the twelve signs of the Zodiac, which biblically have their reflection in the twelve tribes over which he judged. This is likewise the basis of the alchemical cycle, by which the Great Work was accomplished in medieval Europe. The precious white stone described in verse twelve is that very Philosopher's Stone of which so much is written and so little understood: "Then Samuel took a stone, and set it between Mizpeh and Shen." Mizpeh, a watch tower between man and God, stands for prayer without ceasing, and a state of constant communication between man and the angelic Hierarchies. Shen means "renown," and Ebenezer "the help or power of the Lord (cosmic Law)" One who avails himself of this aid has nought to fear from the Philistines.

The cities taken by the Philistines were returned in every instance to Israel from Ekron (rooting up, eradicating evil) unto Gath (strength, power of spirit). Bethel, or "house", signifies the holy temple of the God Within, and Gilgal (circle) has reference to the spiritual centers active therein which are awakened through the powers of the illumined spirit. Israel, the fruits of the higher life, must be judged by the work done in Bethel, Mizpeh and Gilgal; Ramah, the high place, the home of the Ram, is the holy of holies within; it is the Ark of the Covenant builded within the body of the Initiate. This most holy place is always an altar unto the Lord.

— ***Corinne Heline***