

Esoteric Bible Studies

BY CORINNE S. DUNKLEE

THE PARABLE OF THE GREAT SUPPER

INTERPRETATION

16.—Then said he unto him, A certain man made a great supper, and bade many:

17.—And sent his servant at supper time to say to them that were bidden, Come; for all things are now ready.

18.—And they all with one consent began to make excuse. The first said unto him, I have bought a piece of ground, and I must needs go and see it: I pray thee have me excused.

19.—And another said, I have bought five yoke of oxen, and I go to prove them: I pray thee have me excused.

20.—And another said, I have married a wife, and therefore I cannot come.

21.—So that servant came, and shewed his lord these things. Then the master of the house being angry said to his servant, Go out quickly into the streets and lanes of the city, and bring in hither the poor, and the maimed, and the halt, and the blind.

22.—And the servant said, Lord, it is done as thou hast commanded, and yet there is room.

23.—And the lord said unto the servant, Go out into the highways and hedges, and compel them to come in, that my house may be filled.

24.—For I say unto you, That none of those men which were bidden shall taste of my supper.

25.—And there went great multitudes with him: and he turned, and said unto them,

26.—If any man come to me, and hate not his father, and mother, and wife, and children, and brethren, and sisters, yea, and his own life also, he cannot be my disciple.

—*Luke 14:16-26.*

If we carefully and reverently study the life story of the Master, Christ Jesus, as it is given to us by His disciples, Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John, we shall find somewhere in those wonderful pages that He has given us light upon every problem that we as neophytes can ever meet upon the Path which we must follow as we learn to walk in His ways. In those pages we learn to attain that form of consciousness wherein the mind becomes Christed, wherein we no longer see and judge with our finite minds, but lift ourselves through love and adoration above personal likes and dislikes. Then we are able to sense the divinity in everything that lives, to see, in the words of Mrs. Browning, "every bush afire with God." It is only as we approach a study of the Bible in this manner that the veil is lifted and we find the inner meaning of its teachings. "He who lives the life shall know the doctrine."

There is perhaps none of the Master's lessons that makes such a universal appeal as the words of St. Luke's gospel previously quoted for it concerns all that is so pertinent to the daily living of all of us. The inner meaning of these verses takes us back to the first commandment given by Jehovah to Moses upon Mt. Sinai and repeated by the Master to His disciples: "Thou shalt have no other gods before me." This same commandment, which is the most important of them all, is the keynote of this lesson. When this commandment has become the foundation stone of the life of the spiritual aspirant, the living of the spiritual life becomes an easy matter.

The Great Supper represents the opportunities of the spiritual life that have been spread so bountifully before us. The guests bidden represent humanity for whom Christ Jesus made His great sacri-

face, and for whom He has opened the way; "whosoever will" may come.

"And they of one consent began to make excuse." These words are as true of man today as they were on the day that they were written. We find large numbers of people who are eager to read occult books, who willingly attend classes and lectures upon occult subjects, but when the great testing time comes, when they are required to give up worldly pleasures and personal loves, we hear the same voice that has echoed down through the years ever since the Master gave this parable to the people, "I pray thee have me excused." Many who appear most enthusiastic in the beginning turn away from the beautiful school of esoteric Christianity when they are requested to discard furs and give up meat and nicotine. These are only the elementary requisites on the way of spiritual progress, the very beginnings of the Path that leads to the table of the Great Feast.

Verse 21, "Go out quickly . . . and bring . . . the poor, and the maimed, . . . and the blind," refers to the fact that the way of Initiation, namely, the understanding of the inner mysteries of spiritual things, is no longer trod by the priestly caste alone. At the coming of Christ Jesus the veil of Initiation was rent so that all who make themselves worthy may enter into the Holy of Holies.

Verse 26, "If any man come to me, and hate not his father," etc., does not mean literally, of course, that we must hate our family, but it does mean as said in the beginning of this study, that the first commandment is the keynote of the lesson. No one can really progress upon the spiritual path who permits any personality to come between him and his love of the things of the spirit. This is one of the most subtle temptations the neophyte meets. In that wonderful story of Initiation, Parsifal, this place on the path is symbolized by the flower maidens who tempt Parsifal and endeavor to win him away from his pursuit of the Holy Grail. This verse does not

mean that one may shrink any responsibility, any family obligation already incurred, for if he does he is incurring a heavy debt of causation for the future, which may endure perhaps for many lives. He may then hear the words, "None of those men which were bidden shall taste of my supper."

Those of us who have come to fully understand the meaning of the words in verse 26, know that they mean learning to bear the cross. We must learn to be in the world and yet not of it, to bear persecution and insult, to bear doubt, suspicion, and misunderstanding, and give only love in return. Christ's words are very simple and plain: "If any man hate not his own life also, he cannot be my disciple." But after we have suffered and endured, after we have made ourselves worthy to hear His voice when He says, "Come, for all things are now ready," after we have made ourselves worthy to sit at the Great Supper beside Him, (which means to partake of the spiritual joys of the celestial realms), then we shall know that our sorrows and renunciations were but seeming, for His infinite love and wisdom will return to us a thousandfold all that we renounced for His sake.

When I Come Back

BY RUTH SKEEN

When I come back again, dear heart,
I shall not cause you pain;
I shall know better how to love
When I come back again.

When I come back again, kind friend,
I shall more clearly understand,
More deeply sense what friendship
means,
More closely clasp my comrade's hand.

When I come back to tread once more
Life's old familiar starry track,
I shall know better how to work,
And live, and love—when I come back.