

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

Masonry and Esoteric Christianity

The Temples

The lower Degrees of Freemasonry are built around the symbolic meanings of King Solomon's Temple, which is the First Temple; but it is in the rebuilding of the Temple, as described by Ezra and Nehemiah, that we find the basis for the magnificent symbolism incorporated in the higher Degrees. This rebuilt Temple is called the Second Temple, or Zerubbabel's Temple, after the Prince who, with certain prophets, was the moving spirit in the enterprise. When the foundation of this Second Temple was laid in Jerusalem, certain circumstances occurred which gave rise to the Royal Arch Degree.

The decree of Cyrus the Persian which made possible the reconstruction of the Temple was signed just four hundred and ninety years before the beginning of the public ministry of Christ Jesus. Following Cambyses and Smerdis, Darius ascended the Persian Throne.

According to the legend, Zerubbabel, a descendant of the royal line of David, was chosen, as Grand Master of the Temple reconstruction only after he had successfully passed through difficult initiatory tests which were given "by night"

under the direction of King Darius, his close friend and co-laborer in the esoteric work. It was after thus proving his spiritual worth that Darius entrusted him with the sacred vessels which Nebuchadnezzar had taken from Solomon's Temple, in order that these might be returned to their rightful place in Jerusalem. Zerubbabel, together with King Darius, the legend continues, then founded a new order of Temple builders, the Knights of the East. These knights were among the Initiate Workmen who assisted in the construction of the Second Temple.

We have learned how, when Solomon completed his Master work, the building of the First Temple, he entered upon the superphysical experience of the Mystic Marriage, which he commemorated in his beautiful soul chant, the Song of Songs. The Temple on Zion was a house made with hands, but in the spiritual worlds stood its celestial counterpart, a House not made with hands but eternal in the heavens, and in the sanctum sanctorum of this House his holy Marriage with the symbolical Queen of Sheba was consummated.

A similar interpretation is to be read in the symbology of the building of the Second Temple, which is the basis of the higher Masonic Degrees. Here the candidate must find and open the inner doors of the Temple which lead to the middle chamber (the heart), there to receive his "wages," before

he can know the high joys of the Mystic Marriage and sing the Song of Solomon the Wise. This attainment is symbolized in the Thirty-Second Degree of the Scottish Rite, or the Sublime Prince of the Royal Secret. What is the Royal Secret? It is the secret of the Royal Art, Alchemy, the mining of gold, or the making of gold from base metals, which in ancient Egypt was the secret of the Pharaoh; i.e. a state secret. Concurrent with this material aspect, however, was the esoteric Wisdom of Egypt, which entered into and directly affected primitive Christianity by way of the Schools of Alexandria.

In Christian terms, the Thirty-Second Degree, celebrated in "a nine-sided camp," deals with the ideals of the Christ and teaches the process by which man may himself become a Christed or annointed One; (an Osiris, in the Egyptian phrase). This is the supreme ideal of all that we mean by the word civilization, but it is not new, for it is an Archetype, or Pattern, which has always shone in the heavens for those who have had eyes to see.

In this process of Christing, there are certain physiological as well as spiritual changes which must take place in the physical body; this according to the formulae of transmutation taught in all Mystery Schools. The doctrine of the Transubstantiation, which Catholics are in faith bound to accept, is a perverted form of the esoteric doctrine of

Transmutation: the sacred wafer of the Communion, in the holy rites, becomes the veritable body of the Christ, and the wine becomes His veritable blood. But the same is true of the Initiate: by the Rite of Transmutation, his body is the body of Christ, and his blood is the blood of Christ; and this is the true Alchemy.

We have demonstrated how this alchemical mystery is, as we have stated frequently, concealed and revealed, in the books of the Bible. It is also concealed and revealed in the Masonic symbolism, Albert Pike, in his *Morals and Dogma* terms the characteristic Initiate "the Sublime Prince of the Royal Secret," and indicates the meaning of this title in the glyph of the double-headed Eagle.

After the age of Zerubbabel, the Light in the East flickered and waned, the workmen deserted their labor, confusion and eventual destruction ensued. The Capstone disappeared and the Corner Stone was torn from the Temple and thrown among the ruins. This chaos which overtook the Second Temple was the exteriorized reflection of the soul conditions of those Hebrews who had returned from the Exile and had promptly fallen into disputes with those of their brethren who had remained at home.

After an interval of disruption, the rebuilding began again, and Zerubbabers Temple at last came to a triumphant conclusion, unity of spirit was restored — but

something was lost. Beneath the earth of the sacred hill, secreted in the vault under the Ninth Arch of Enoch's subterranean Temple, were concealed the Five Sacred Treasures: The Ark of the Covenant, the Pot of Manna, Aaron's Rod, the Book of the Law and the Word of the Master.

However, the sacred Fire which flamed upon the altar was not extinguished, but only concealed. It can really die only when there are no longer any souls upon the Earth who are eager to quest for the Light in the East. Yet for several centuries a narrow, nationalistic spirit prevailed in Palestine, reflected in an ever-increasing materialism. During this time of spiritual darkness the Third Temple was erected by King Herod. Despite the magnificence of the Herodian Temple, its spiritual life was barren. The sacred Treasures remained hidden under the Ninth Arch, and when the Christ came, for whom the Three Temples had been reared as Houses of Initiation for a Princely Hierophant, "His own received him not." Thus was rejected the Grand Master, Christ Jesus, whose mission it was to restore the Mysteries which we today know as esoteric Christianity.

Consequent upon the rejection of Christ, came the destruction of the Herodian Temple in 70 A.D. But the House Not Made With Hands was never destroyed, nor could it be. The Christ taught His disciples the Way to the

Ninth Arch, and that great Temple which penetrates to the very core of the Earth is indestructible; it was indeed unknown to the destroyers. Hence the first Christians were known, not as Christians, but as Followers of the Way.

Says an early Masonic writer: "The mystic Rose of Sharon was sacrificed upon a mountain which is elevated toward the celestial spheres by Three Spheres, Three Circles, and Three Triangles." The Christ is that Rose of Sharon, and Calvary (or Golgotha) is that holy Mountain resting upon its foundation of divine geometry.

Masonry was founded on the secret teachings of Moses, Solomon and Zerubbabel. Down through the ages this work has never been allowed to perish. However low it flickered, the light has never been wholly extinguished, and always with the incoming of cycles propitious to its reawakening, an inspired messenger has appeared to trim the wick and replenish the sacred oil. Not only was this true in ancient Israel; it is also true in the Christian era. It was true in the time of Constantine the Great, the first Christian Emperor, and has continued to be true down to our own time as best exemplified *in the inspired work of Albert Pike.

This knowledge, and the power it confers, should be in the possession of every Thirty-Second Degree Mason, and will be, when the Lodge turns once more from mere Speculative Masonry to genuine Operative Masonry, making

itself worthy to receive wages from a true Master. Then, and then only, will the sublime purpose of Masonry, as dreamed of by Albert Pike and other great Mystic Masons, be accomplished, and Masonry and Religion united become the two handmaids of a Christed people.

In the dawning Age of Air, Jerusalem will again become the site of a new Temple. The inspired biblical seers, Ezekiel and John, have described this glory Temple of the future: true, their description is the Pattern in the Sky, but it will one day cast its lovely luminous shadow upon the Earth, and all men shall behold it and love it. Then once again the Treasures will be discovered under the Holy of Holies, and Mystic Masons from the four corners of the Earth will follow the Light even to its abiding place in the heart of the East.

Crusading Masonry

A word must be given here in regard to Constantine and the Degrees of Crusading Masonry because these Degrees contain the profoundest esoteric Christian significance of any symbolic work now extant upon the earth.

The Degrees of the Constantian Order are six in number:

1. The Red Cross of Constantine or Knights of the Red Cross
2. The Knights of the Holy Sepulcher
3. The Knights of St. John of Palestine

4. The Perfect Priest-Mason
5. The Perfect Prince-Mason
6. Grand Cross of the Order

Constantine (Rome's first Christian Emperor, A.D. 312-337) was the messenger divinely inspired to open the door of Western civilization to the inflow of Christianity. Generally familiar is the story of his inner-plane experience in which he beheld an angelic band carrying a Cross which bore the words, "In hoc signet vinces." It was in commemoration of this transcendental experience that he later founded his Order of the Red Cross. He and his disciples of the Order always wore its insignia upon their armor, a red cross and sixteen stars.

The first and closest disciple of Constantine was the highly advanced Eusebius, who later became the Bishop of Nicomedia. His writings are fragrant with the perfumes of heaven. This saintly man headed the degree of the Perfect Priest Mason, whose symbol was a lily, while Constantine headed the degree of the Perfect Prince Mason, whose symbol was the rose. Here once more we note the distinguishing lines of mystic and occultist, whose development has constituted the motif of this volume.

The Grand Cross of the Order, the supreme honor which the Order could bestow, marked the blending of these two paths of head and heart, of church and state. This honorary

Degree never included more than fifty members at one time.

In the modern Degrees of Freemasonic symbolism, the 32nd degree represents this same high blending both in man himself and in the body politic (represented by the double-headed Eagle). The honorary 33rd degree should also hold (but does not) the same revered meaning, as the honorary Degree of Constantine's time, and should only be conferred for the same reason.

The Knights of St. John of Palestine was a continuation of the Mysteries founded in Jerusalem by the beloved disciple himself, and their work he has outlined as completely as possible in his Gospel and in the Book of Revelation. The Gospel of St. John was the textbook of this school of true Esoteric Masonry. The words and signs employed were genuine talismans and were so used by the inner group of disciples. Pre-eminent among their symbols were the Pyramid and the Acacia, both representing the powers of eternal life gained through Initiation.

The Knights of the Holy Sepulchre was founded by a woman, Queen Helena, the mother of Constantine, said to be a direct descendant of Joseph of Aramathea. This is that St. Helena, "the Blessed Mother of the Poor," who devoted her power, wealth, and position to the service of her fellowmen. Her life was an embodiment of the early

Christian ideals described in the Book of Acts. The candidates for this Degree were chosen from the most advanced of the Order of the Red Cross. Their "Degree Work" was given at the site of the Holy Sepulcher, a locality highly charged with psychic magnetism, as previously noted, by Wise Ones of many ages, who with their disciples prepared Jerusalem for the earthly "entrance" and "exit" of the Supreme Master, the Christ.

These sacred Orders will someday be revived in Jerusalem, not merely in symbolic ritualism, but as avenues through which the work of the holy men and women of the days of esoteric Christianity will be resumed and the New Jerusalem be veritably brought to earth.

Clement of Alexandria was the leader of the esoteric Christians in that Egyptian city, and so renowned was his school that disciples came from far-distant places to receive instructions of him. In relating something of his experiences as he followed the Quest toward the East in search of Light he states: "I have descended into the bed chamber and was then plunged into the Sleep of Siloam, and remained in this sublime lethargy for a few days." This refers to the fact that in Initiation the body of the released spirit was generally kept during a three-day interval in some Temple crypt or subterranean cave, surrounded and guarded by other Companions who had previously travelled along this Path of

Light. In the Egyptian Initiation the sleeping body was placed in the coffer of the King's Chamber in the Pyramid, and at the time of the sunrising on the third day was taken to the entrance of the gallery; there the first beams of the Sun fell upon him as he was awakened by the wisdom of the high god Osiris.

These Mysteries passed from the Egyptian Temples to the Essenes (Therapeutae) or esoteric Christians who assembled their elect in the "great hall" where the candidate was "violently slain," placed in a coffer, and after three days raised again and lifted into eternal life. The newborn was then become the Cap Stone of the Royal Arch.

This is the mystic key which was given to Peter after he had passed through a similar experience. It was Peter's Initiate-Wisdom upon which the Church was founded and not his personality. This inner knowledge the Church, like the Masonic Lodge, has lost with the passing of years.

The Path of Illumination is open to anyone who earnestly and sincerely seeks for enlightenment and is willing to pay the price in self-sacrifice. Seek the Temple door and you will find it. Knock, and you will not be denied entrance. If you seek prayerfully, knock persistently, labor unceasingly, and love increasingly, you cannot fail in time to become the Philosopher's Stone — which is another Name for the full blown White Rose adorning the glorified cross in the

consummation of the Rose Croix Degrees. Such is the Initiate who has Conquered by the Rose.

In the early days when Masonry and esoteric Christianity were one, and both were centered in Initiation, it was the holy privilege of Initiates in this Sublime Rose Croix Degree to meet with and receive instructions from the most holy Master Jesus.

It is His power and His Presence which dominates this inspired ceremonial event to this day. No one can enter seriously into its sublime Mysteries without developing a deeper and more reverent regard for the Christian religion.

The Supreme Master came declaring, "Behold, I make all things new," meaning that he taught a new and higher form of Initiation to supersede the old.

The apocryphal legends concerning the life of Jesus between the years of twelve and thirty state that he visited many of the ancient shrines of wisdom, including those of China, Egypt and India. Still treasured among the legends of these countries is the tale of the coming of the wise young master from Jerusalem. The esoteric Christian knows that these legends are true, for the new, to be permanent, must always be built upon the old. The Christian Initiation is a recapitulation of all that has been given before, the ancient work being climaxed by the Christ Mystery.

The Master Christ Jesus at the age of thirty-three had recapitulated all of the $3 \times 3 = 9$ degrees of Mystic Masonry and had followed the Path of Enoch which leads to the center of the Earth and reveals the secret powers of the Ineffable Name. One who has followed the Master along this Way can declare with Him: "All things are possible in my Name." Both the Grand Masters Hiram Abiff and King Solomon, having traversed this same path, were reborn to receive from Christ, through the strong grip of the Lion's Paw, the first degree of the new Christian Mysteries. The former reappeared as Lazarus and the latter as the Master Jesus.

A. E. Waite sums up the esoteric values of the first three Masonic Degrees most interestingly as follows:

"In the light of this understanding the root-matter of the Craft Grades is the root of a truly figurative mystery, which is that of the new man, and Solomon's Temple built of old in Israel is its universal symbol. Between Jachin and Boaz the Entered Apprentice is brought through a Gate of Birth into the new life of the Mysteries of Being, and his task hereafter is to learn, not by hypothesis, but by Faith of inward experience, that this Order is God revealing Himself to that which can receive revelation, or the noumenal part within us. Here is the First Degree in which the Candidate

passes from the Court of the Temple and stands on the further side, contemplating that which is before him.

"As a Fellow Craft he is called to the leading of such a life as will give the knowledge of Doctrine, the new life which I have defined as that of the Mysteries, and in the experimental realization of the Divine Order he grows in the knowledge of God, illustrating in his own person, by his proper experience, that God does recompense those who seek Him out. Here is the Second Degree.

"That of a Master Mason begins on the hither side of the Veil. of Palms and Pomegranates and ends in the Holy of Holies, when in the state of figurative and mystical death, as in that of the Greater Mysteries, the Candidate, abstracted from the world without in suspension of physical senses and removed from the self-center, beholds in an inmost Sanctuary the abiding Divine Presence as the Holy Shekinah, the Glory of God, manifested between the Cherubim on the Mercy Seat. He knows then of another Centre, and this is God within him. Hereof is the Third Degree.

"And this is Craft Masonry understood at the highest, when that which does not matter to the Real Mysteries has been taken out of the way."

— ***Corinne Heline***