

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

The Corner Stone

The Corner Stone which was laid in that impressive ceremony is described as a double cube, with every side inscribed except the base on which it stood. It is said that the first face of the cube was inscribed by Noah with an instrument of porphyry when the Ark was building, the second by Abraham with the horn of the ram which was substituted for his son on Mt. Moriah, the third by Moses with a porphyry tool, the fourth by Joshua and the fifth by Hiram Abiff before it was deposited in its final bed at the northeast angle of the Temple.

Enoch had placed this Mystical Stone in the ninth stratum of his subterranean vault, where it was discovered by Noah and used by him as an anchor to fix the Ark on Mt. Ararat. It was the altar on which Abraham made ready to offer up his son. It was Jacob's pillar the night he laid his head upon it and in his sleep beheld the angels ascending and descending between Heaven and Earth. Jacob bequeathed the Stone to Joseph in Egypt, and Joseph commanded that it be placed over his grave. Moses took it with him at the time of the great deliverance, and it was upon this stone he stood when the Red Sea was divided and when the Amalekites were defeated. Again, he knelt upon it when he

received the Tables of the Law on Sinai. Moses gave it into the care of Joshua, who built his altar upon it at Mt. Ebal. It was later deposited in the Temple of Shiloh until the erection of the Temple on Zion when Solomon commanded its use as the chief cornerstone. Here it remained undisturbed by either Zerubbabel or Herod, as it was destined to defeat the insane attempt of Julian to rebuild the Temple — a destiny which it accomplished by destroying the workmen through the agency of fire. (In Europe, it reappears once more as the Philosopher's Stone of medieval alchemists.)

Although this Corner Stone is not to be confused with the so-called Foundation Stone concealed in the Holy of Holies of the Third Temple, yet its intrinsic meaning is the same. It is a characteristic of esotericism that many different forms of an identical symbol are used to denote one particular aspect of spiritual truth. Thus the Corner Stone of the Temple had the same symbolic meaning as the Foundation Stone of the world.

Maimonides, in his treatise on the Temple, says that there was a stone in the Holy of Holies, on the west side, and on this the Ark was placed, while before it stood the pot of manna and Aaron's Rod. When Solomon built his Temple he foresaw that it would be destroyed, and therefore constructed a deep and winding vault under ground in

which to conceal the Ark, where it is said later to have been deposited with the Pot of Manna, the Rod of Aaron, and the Oil of Anointing. (Chronicles 35:3)

Small wonder, then, that we find the Christ likened to that most holy and precious of Mystical Stones, and that in some of the early Churches the Altar consisted of nothing more than a large rectangular stone, behind which the priest officiated. All Christian altars are fundamentally a "stone", more or less elaborated.

In the majestic symbolism of Masonry there is none of greater mystic significance than the Foundation Stone, or Corner Stone. This is representative of the spiritual perfection of the true indwelling Self, the Virgin Spirit, which is one with God. The method of attaining to a realization of this perfection is displayed under the allegory of stonecutting, beginning with the rough ashlar of the early degrees which the candidate is admonished to transform into the perfect cube, and continuing throughout the higher degrees under varied aspects until in the Keystone of the Ninth Arch we find the Adept himself who has progressed through the Nine Lesser Mysteries and is now surrounded and sustained by the golden glory of the Cherubim as he prepares to enter the Holy of Holies itself, there to receive a New Name in the Temple Celestial, the final consummation of all earthly incarnational pilgrimages.

There is a tradition to the effect that the Corner Stone of the Temple was taken by Solomon from the Red Sea. This means that the lower nature is lifted up and made the abiding place of Spirit, Mount Zion, where the Lord is visioned. This mount had been consecrated by a surpassing miracle of brotherly love. The story is that two brothers owned the site jointly, the elder possessing great wealth while the younger was poor in worldly goods. Each gave to the other his entire share of the product of the field. The older brother gave his share to the younger "because," said he, "my brother has less than I." The younger gave his portion to the elder because, though wealthy, he had a family to support whereas he himself was alone with no dependents. This legend is a beautiful exemplification of the spiritual fact that the mystic Temple can be built only upon a foundation of loving, self-forgetting service centered in Fellowship.

The Temple Site

We have already seen something of the reasons underlying the selection of the particular site on which Solomon's Temple was to be built. We have shown that the Jerusalem area was prepared for hundreds of years for the descent of the Christ. Mount Moriah, an eastern hill and the highest hill of Jerusalem, was particularly highly charged with spiritual currents, and here the three Temples built according to the Pattern received by Moses on the Mount

were located; first the Temple of Solomon, then the Temple of Zerubbabel and finally the Temple of Herod, which was by far the most magnificent of the three, though having no more esoteric significance for all its beauty. The unique feature of Herod's magnificent structure was the Christ Himself, who glorified it with His presence.

Archaeological authorities are agreed that the site of King Solomon's Temple — one of the most beautiful in all Jerusalem — is the present site of the Mosque of Omar. Under this Mosque there still remains the subterranean cave where the Mysteries of the ancient king were celebrated in rites reminiscent of the sepulchral Mysteries of Egypt and Tyre (also Syria), the object of which was the ultimate conquest of death, our "last enemy."

Dean Stanley writes, "There is no question that the Mosque of Omar has from the time of Solomon and David been regarded as the most sacred ground in Jerusalem. High in the center of the platform rises the most remarkable rock in Jerusalem now covered by the dome of the Sakrah. It is irregular in form and measures sixty feet in one direction and fifty in another. It appears to be the natural surface of Mt. Moriah. In a few places there are marks of chiseling. In the southwest corner there is an excavated chamber to which there is a descent by means of steps and an aperture through the rocky roof. This

chamber, about seven feet high, is capable of holding about fifty persons, The white plaster on the inside for the most part conceals the point of junction with the rocky platform of the mountain, but in the southeast corner the identification of the rocky wall and the rocky floor is visible and decisive. It is believed that within the cave every prayer is answered and that in the wall rests the souls of the departed between the grave and resurrection. The living can hold converse with the dead at this place. It was finally closed because a mother going to speak to her dead son became so agitated at the sound of his voice that she threw herself into the aperture to be united with him."

There is another tradition that within this cavern lies buried the original copy of the Law, and also the Ark of the Covenant, which disappeared with the destruction of Solomon's Temple. Somewhere here also lies the dust of David and the succeeding princes of the House of David who were buried in the same sepulcher.

According to Masonic tradition, Adoniram was the nephew of King Solomon and the successor of Hiram, the widow's son. This name is actually a word meaning Adonis-Hiram, the cypher name for one who was initiated in the Phoenico-Syrian Mysteries of Adonis, the Sun God, who died and was resurrected at the Vernal Equinox. As the term "baal" was not the name of any particular god — for it meant "lord",

and whatever god received the highest honor as tutelary deity of a town or city was the "baal" of that place — so also the name "Melkarth" meant "the king of the city", referring to the tutelary deity, which in this connection may reasonably indicate Adonis. The water supply of Tyre (Hiram's city came from springs on the mainland where even to a recent date there were survivals of an ancient Adonis worship.

In Greece also the worship of Adonis penetrated, in rites similar in many respects to those of Dionysus, the god of vineyard and cornfield as Osiris was in Egypt. Indeed, Herodotus states that Dionysus and Osiris are one and the same. In this trinity of ancient gods (Adonis-Dionysus-Osiris) there is a strange identity of principle and function, and their Mysteries closely resembled one another. The Orphics, in fact did identify Adonis with Dionysus; and we note in this respect that the Essenian Brotherhood of Palestine was very closely similar to the Orphic Brotherhoods of Greece, both in dress, rule and teaching, and the Master Jesus and his holy Father and Mother were all Initiate members of this group. The constellation Cygnus, the Swan, associated with Orpheus, is actually a cross, and in northern latitudes at Christmas time stands upright on the western horizon at about nine P. M.; and Orpheus is quoted as saying, "They have pierced my hands and my feet."

In respect to Dionysus, we read that like the Christ he changed water into wine and his rituals included a mystic marriage. According to Euripides, he was gentle and meek under persecution, and his followers in his name performed miracles such as drawing water from a rock, demonstrating prodigious strength and supernatural powers of knowledge and vision. His grave-shrine occupied, it is said, the inmost portion of the Temple of Apollo at Delphi, and his oracle, like Apollo's own, was famous throughout the ancient world. This Temple of Apollo adhered to the Orphic tradition. Every year at the Winter Solstice, secret nocturnal ceremonies were celebrated at Dionysus' grave-shrine.

Dionysus was already known in Greece in the Homeric age, which corresponds generally to the Solomonic and Davidic eras in Palestine. Orpheus seems to have been a Hierophant of the Mysteries of Dionysus, and it is significant that early Christians depicted Jesus in the likeness of Orpheus in drawings in the catacombs, indicating that they recognized a similarity between them.

Again, it is related of Dionysus that, like Moses, he possessed a wand which he changed into a serpent at will, and his armies passed dry shod through the Red Sea. In India he saw the Sun shining at night. The Orontes and Hydashes rivers parted their waters to give him passage, and he arrested the course of the Sun and Moon. He also

wrote his laws upon two tables of stone, and (again like Moses) he was anciently represented with a horn or horns (representing light) issuing from his head.

There were four principal feasts of Dionysus in Greece, the Lesser Dionysia celebrated at the time of the Winter Solstice; the Greater Dionysia at about the Vernal Equinox; the Lensea in the last days of January (corresponding to Aquarius, the Water Bearer, and the early Christian feasts of the Baptism); the Oschophoria, celebrated in the late October and early November, corresponding roughly to the Hebrew observance of Atonement and judgment. This autumnal feast of Dionysus was the most ancient of all, and it was originally a Feast of the Dead, like the Christian All Soul's, or Halloween, when the spirits of the dead were released from Hades to roam over the Earth.

The Dionysiac Mysteries were nocturnal. Dionysus was the Light that Shineth in Darkness, the Mystic Midnight Sun, (the Winter Sun). But he was also the Sun of the Vernal Equinox and of the Summer Solstice, like Melkarth (the "King") of Tyre.

The name Dionysus and Adonis are alike represented in the Hebrew God-name Adonai, whose twelve banners are the twelve constellations of the Zodiac (the path of the Sun), or twelve tribes' insignia. The grape vine which

symbolized Israel was sacred to Dionysus among the Greeks; Jesus said, "I am the True Vine."

Each Initiate in the Adonis Mysteries, or the Dionysiac Mysteries, became Adonis or Dionysus, as the Egyptian Initiate became Osiris. The Gnostics taught that every man was, spiritually, in his Higher Self, a Christ, in the same manner.

Therefore, Hiram, the Initiate of Adonis, IS Adonis: he has a new name, that of his God: Adonis-Hiram, or Adoniram.

It is said that Adoniram gave to the Perfect Masters in Jerusalem the Grand Word which Moses had engraved on a triangular plate of gold. The secret of this Name had originally been revealed by God to Enoch, who was transported for this purpose to a high mountain where he beheld a radiant triangle inscribed with the Word (Tetragrammaton). He was then taken to a subterranean place, descending through nine arches, and in the innermost, or ninth, he again beheld the same triangular plate. Here we have an esoteric reference to the Kabbalistic doctrine of the Trinity, which Origen mentions as taught him by his Hebrew master. Again it exemplifies the Hermetic axiom, "as above, so it is below", defined by modern metaphysicians as the Law of Reflection whereby the

Supreme Intelligence is reflected in the Infinite Universe (the Ptolemaic Spheres).

Later, Enoch constructed a Temple with nine arches one below the other in accordance with this vision. Methuselah, his eldest son, had charge of the work which was performed here in the land of Canaan, at Jerusalem, but even Methuselah was not permitted to know the secret which his father concealed under the ninth arch. This was a duplicate of the golden plate inscribed by Enoch, and erected on a pedestal of white marble beneath the lowest of the nine arches. No one can pronounce the sacred Name of God which is inscribed on this golden triangle until full spiritual equilibrium has been established in the higher consciousness. Moses hinted at this divine consummation when he revealed the Name of God as "I AM THAT." This is the Mystic Cry of the Initiate, when, having explored the Nine Outer Arches of the universe and their reflection in the Nine Inner Arches of the self, he at last discovers THE ONE seated above the highest arch to be the selfsame Identity as THE ONE below the lowest Arch; namely, I AM THAT."

Warned of the impending Deluge and fearing that the true knowledge might perish, Enoch built two pillars upon the highest mountain, one of bronze to resist water and one of brick to withstand fire. On the brick pillar he recorded the hieroglyph that a precious treasure had been set beneath

the subterranean arches. On the bronze pillar was inscribed the esoteric truths concealed in Masonry. The brick pillar was destroyed in the Deluge, but the bronze survived. Masonic antiquity dates therefrom.

Enoch here is the same as Hermes Trismegistus, the Hierophant of the Egyptian Mysteries, under the tutelage of Mercury. But the SUBSTANCE of the Mysteries are forever concealed and revealed in TETRAGRAMMATON, THE LOST WORD.

After the Captivity in Egypt, the pronunciation of the Name was taught to Moses by God, intimated in "I Am That I Am." He was told of a day when his descendants would discover it engraved on a plate of gold. Meanwhile the pronunciation (or meaning) became corrupted through succeeding generations.

Solomon was of course familiar with this secret teaching and, in the construction of the Temple, the remains of Enoch's subterranean cavern were found by his workmen. After the death of the Grand Master, further examination of the vaults showed the ninth with its marble pedestal and golden plate intact. This was removed into another vault where the three Grand Masters who presided over the Secret Council met in conclave. This vault, which was also in the Earth, is said to have held the Masonic Pillar of

Beauty which supported the Holy of Holies immediately above ground.

If it seems strange that such traditions cling to the site of the Jerusalem Temple, let us turn to a consideration of other ancient sacred localities in other parts of the world for correlative material. We shall find that there are sacred land areas in every country which are known to wise leaders, and these have been used from earliest times as sanctuary or temple sites. Hence the sacredness of the first foundation stone, which becomes the foundation for all subsequent temple building at any particular place.

In ancient Babylon, all temples, no matter how elaborate, were supposed to be built on the foundation of an earlier temple. This is shown by an illustration discovered in the foundation of a temple at "Ur of the Chaldees." Nabonidus (556-538 B.C.), the last Babylonian king, described his search for the old foundation of the first temple erected to the goddess Ishtar. All the kings since Sargon had sought for this ancient foundation but without success. "For three years in the tracks of Nebuchadnezzar I sought right and left, before and behind, but did not find it."

Later, encouraged by a prompting from the Moon god Sin, Nabonidus tried at another time and another place and was this time successful. He found the inscription of King Shagarakti-Burash (1300 B.C.), which stated that he had

laid a new foundation exactly upon the old one of King Zabur (2300 B.C.). So it was that Nabonidus made sure to preserve the exact outline of the shrine. He laid the foundation and restored the ancient temple so that "it did not deviate an inch to the outside or the inside.'

Fourteen centuries before Christ, in China, the Emperor Pan-Kang moved his capital from the north of the Ho river to the south of it, because he discovered that the original foundation of the temple was laid there by his ancestor Than in the Shing dynasty. Added sanctity is given these sacred land areas by the fact that they have been chosen and prepared by the blessings of Heavenly Representatives. Tai Shain, or the Great Mount in the province of Shantung, is referred to in the Shoo King, or Book of Records, as the site of the great Emperor Shun's altar of sacrifice to Heaven in 2254 B.C., approximately three centuries before Abraham. On this holy Mount, as the earliest historic foundation of Chinese worship, "is the great rendezvous of devotees; every sect has there its temples and idols scattered up and down its sides, and the great multitudes come here to worship from great distances."

Kuru-Kshetra, or the Plain of Kuru near Delhi, India, has been deemed holy ground from time immemorial. It is said that the holiness of this site dates from the ancient days of the Rig Veda. The boundaries of this Holy Land are given in

the great Hindu epic, the Mahabharata. There are some three hundred and sixty holy shrines in this area, each of which is erected on a foundation sacred from the times of the very gods themselves.

In early Europe, when for any reason an ancient shrine was removed from its original foundation it was obligatory that a portion of the old foundation and some of the soil from this site be deposited in the new site. (Those who know the tremendous power of the vibrational rhythms playing through such sacred land areas for thousands of years will appreciate the meaning of this.) Thus when Thorolf of Norway, who had charge of the temple of Thor, removed to Iceland in A.D. 833, he took with him the temple posts and furniture and "the very earth on which the altar of the god had been erected."

At Jerusalem, as we have seen, the Temple was built on Mt. Moriah where the Ark of the Covenant rested after its return from Philistia. It was here that David erected an altar to the Lord after the pestilence had been turned from Israel, and here, also, Abraham offered a sacrifice on the altar he had built for the sacrifice of his son. This site is still held sacred today by multitudes of varying faiths, and is known to the occultist as having been set apart and consecrated from the beginning of human life upon this

planet. Later and even more wonderful events are due to transpire here.

So likewise, Mt. Sinai, whereon Moses was instructed by God, and to which he brought the Israelities to worship the true God, was a sacred area for the ancient Egyptians, where for centuries they had worshipped the Moon god, Sin.

— ***Corinne Heline***