

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

## **The Promise In Greece**

*Before Greece everything in human literature and art was a rude and imperfect attempt. Since Greece everything has been a rude and imperfect imitation.*  
— Selected.

*One God there is greatest among gods and men; like to mortals neither in form nor yet in thought. As a whole he sees, as a whole he thinks, and as a whole he hears. Toiling not, he rules all things by the power of his mind.*  
— Xenophaties.

## **The Greeks And Their Gods**

The Greeks are of that Indo-European Race to which Europe owes its civilization. According to Greek tradition the earliest known inhabitants of their land were the Pelasgians, whose existence, writes a historian, "becomes the first unquestionable fact in Greek history." Homer refers to the "noble Pelasgians." Herodotus states that almost the entire Ionian Race was formerly called Pelasgian — a statement of great significance since the Ionians were the most

outstanding exponents of characteristically Greek literature and art.

Egyptian and Phoenician elements entered Greek culture during its early period. The Greeks themselves attributed the Mysteries of Demeter and Persephone of Eleusis to the Egyptians. Herodotus identifies Dionysus, whose cult was superimposed upon the Greater Mysteries at Eleusis, with Osiris as representing the spirit behind Nature. In the sixth century B.C., when the Greeks visited Egypt and were instructed by her priests, the knowledge they gained seemed less a discovery than a rediscovery of ancient truths already familiar to them.

Ocultists speak of the Persian-Greco-Latin branch as the third subdivision of the Fifth Root Race. Yet these three cultures did not reach their ultimate blending until the Latin period, when Mithraism and Gnosticism met in ante-Nicene Christianity. Persia was the bridge between Greece and the Orient, especially India.

It is significant that the Mother Principle predominates in this early heritage: Zeus and Dione of Dodona, Hera of Argos, Athena of Athens, Demeter of Eleusis, Hermes and Artemis of Arcadia, the Cabiri of Thebes. At Delphi it was the Earth Mother Gaea and Phoebus, her inspired one, who were worshipped until Apollo and Dionysus won pre-eminence in that holy shrine. Then Apollo became Phoebus,

the Inspirer. In the person of the Pythoness, however, and in the Rock of the Sibyl which stood within the holy area, a vestige of the ancient Mother Cult survived until the very close of that civilization.

Driven from their homeland by a Dorian invasion, some of the Pelasgians fled to Asia Minor, whence came the first stirrings of scientific and philosophical thought. When they were transplanted back to their homeland, this development led to the Golden Age of Pericles that flowered in a beauty and wisdom for which Athens will be forever remembered and loved.

Similarly, other colonists migrated into other areas including what is now France, and at Marseille developed an activity that grew into a pre-eminently Greek university town. It is said in Christian tradition that Lazarus and Mary Magdalen rested there for a time. And thither came Joseph of Arimathea, bearing the Holy Relics of Christ's Crucifixion.

It may be claimed that the history of civilization is always the history of the God Hermes or, to put it astrologically, the history of the planet Mercury's influence in human affairs. The original Semites were chosen as the Seed of the Fifth Root Race, in which reason was to be developed and brought to its first flowering. This exalted achievement came to ancient Greece. Consequently, Hermes finally stood as the Supreme Hierophant of their Mysteries in the figure

of Hermes Trismegistus, the Thrice Great-beloved of Egypt also but more ancient than Egypt, for he was Heirophant of the Mercurial Mysteries of Atlantis.

The majority of famous Greeks were Initiates in the Mysteries. The fundamentals of their works were acquired by first-hand investigation of Akashic Records. Ceremonials and processional, esoteric dramas and disciplines, were all part of their Atlantean heritage; hence the occultist's assurance that the Hermes Cult was the most ancient of all cults and that it was indigenous to the Greek mind. Other elements of remote Atlantean origin arrived in Greece through other channels, mostly through Egypt, Crete and Phoenicia, though Persia and India contributed their share.

This Hermetic temperament reached its zenith in the Greeks and resulted in a civilization wherein sacerdotal privilege was at its minimum. Instead of a priestly caste by hereditary succession, such as was common to most Asiatic religions, the principal exponents of Grecian religion were the poets, artists, philosophers, many of whom were Initiates in the Mysteries.

Religion was centered in the home, where the father was literally a priest. Anyone who knew the rites of a god might ask to be appointed as priest or priestess in his particular Temple. The Pythoness of Delphi had to be a freewoman of Delphi; her election was based on her clairvoyant powers,

not on any rules of hereditary succession. Unlike Judaism, the Greek religion never succeeded in taking over the supreme power in the State. It could not have happened in Greece that a high priest of the Church was also supreme ruler of the State, as occurred in post-Exilic Jerusalem. There was never a theocracy in pre-Christian Greece. Such a condition would have been intolerable to the Greek spirit.

The most distinctive feature of Greek religion was the nature of its gods. Egypt's deities were magnificent and somber. India's gods were impersonal and sublime. The gods of Greece were brilliant, happy and delightfully human.

All early Aryan peoples shared a common Nature worship centered in the Sun God who was personified in attending deities: Heaven, Earth, Fire, Air and Water. But without question there was one Supreme Being from the very first, for even a very primitive mind can understand the need of a governing Power in the universe for which all other Nature deities are messengers — or Angels, as the Hebrews designate them. The gods of the Greeks were the Angels of Hebrews and Christians, as early Christian writers freely confessed. To admit the existence of angelic Hierarchies does not nullify the concept of a Supreme Heavenly Father in the Christian mind. Neither did the admission of a pantheon nullify Zeus in the minds of the Greeks. This is

shown clearly in the words of Megasthenes, an ambassador to India from a Greek monarch after Alexander, who wrote of the Indians:

"In many points their teaching agrees with that of the Greeks — for instance, that the world has a beginning and an end in time, that its shape is spherical; that the Deity, who is its Governor and Maker, interpenetrates the whole. . . . About generation and the soul their teaching shows parallels to the Greek doctrines ... and on many other matters. Like Plato, too, they interweave fables about the immortality of the soul and the judgments inflicted in the other world, and so on."

In the Orphic Mysteries a Risen Savior was worshipped in the person of Dionysus, whose name means Son of God. Thus was prepared all of the rational elements which entered into ante-Nicene Christianity. From these Mysteries came the rationale of esoteric Christianity, as when Clement wrote that "faith must go hand in hand with inquiry," and also the teaching that the Logos mentioned by St. John is the archetype of human reason. To the Greeks reason was sacred and of the essence of the Most High God. Already was forming a doctrine of evolution such as revolutionized the thinking of the nineteenth century. Philo, the Hellenic Jew of Alexandria, declared that the Logos is the Spirit of

the Cosmic Process. Deeply indebted is our Christian religion to "the Glory that was Greece."

In the Theogony of Hesiod (about 800 B.C.) which may aptly be styled the Grecian Book of Genesis, is outlined the origins of things in "the lap of the gods" (i.e., inner places). Chaos was the first creation and from Chaos were born successively Gaea (Earth) and Erebus (Night); then from Erebus came Aether (Day). Earth produced the Heavens (Ouranos), the mountains and the sea. It is important that Earth did not mean our planet alone, but a primordial substance, such as the nebula from which the solar system evolved to its present condition. Gaea and Ouranos were married. Their offspring were twelve, whose mansions are the signs of the Zodiac. Foremost among them were the brilliant Phoebus with his golden coronet and the fair Aphrodite, a pure virgin born from infinite sea spaces. The heart of Greece was poetry and song, so her myths are to be understood as poetic visions of creation and not as abortive attempts at scientific thinking.

The leader of the Gods was Zeus, the name coming from a Sanskrit word meaning to shine. Our word divine comes from the same root. In Latin this word becomes Deus and also Jupiter, the Sky-Father. All Aryan peoples placed the Supreme Being not merely in but above the sky, as Rider of all the universe: "Our Father which art in heaven." Zeus

appears to have been one of the most ancient of deities, and his worship was universal throughout all Greece. His cult, as does that of Dionysus in later centuries, shows traits belonging to religions of the Taurean Age, for he is the Divine Bull, the Thunderer.

In Italy the custom prevails of worshipping various Madonnas in different provinces. There was a similar practice in pre-Homeric Greece, each locality having its own patron deities. Dodona, the earliest known Pelasgian shrine, gave allegiance to Zeus and Dione, mother of Aphrodite by Zeus. Zeus was rarely called Dion, this name surviving in Dionysus, son of Zeus. Eros was the beloved of Boetia, Pan and Artemis of Arcadia, Athena of Athens, The most ancient Gods, however, were Gaea (Earth) and Ouranos (Heaven).

As Ouranos personified eternity, Chronos personified the beginning of time, or time itself, in which all earthly evolution proceeds. With the birth of Kronos (time in relation to manifestation) worship was established in cult and ritual. The heaven within was no longer worshipped by the multitude, although the Initiate still knew that heaven was within his own heart, as Confucius observed. Instead, man tended to exalt an external deity by means of ritualistic sacrifices. Looking outside of himself to a god in a canopying heaven, and by mean, of the vestigial clairvoyance still remaining in him, he began to percieve



the God in the Sun. This God he designated successively as Hyperion, Son of Heaven and Earth; Helios, son of Hyperion and Theia; and finally, as Phoebus Apollo, brilliant Son of Zeus, Father of the Universe. Correlating these three solar principles, the three great Beings in the Sun, Helios was the actual orb or disk of the Sun; Phoebus Apollo was its indwelling Divinity in human form, the Christ Archangel; behind Him was Hyperion, The Father, also called "the invisible Father Fire."

In Homeric Hymns which, like the Psalms in relation to the Hebrew Bible, represent the most ancient portion of Greek Scriptures, it is Apollo who first marked out the foundations of Delphi beneath snowy Parnassus. Parnassus, incidentally, was the mountain on which the Greek ark bearing Deucalion and Pyrrha, progenitors of the Greek Race came to rest after the flood sent by Zeus.

According to a beautiful native legend, Apollo was one day in joyous flight through the air when he looked down and beheld a ship sailing along the coast of Greece toward Pylos. The ship was manned by Cretans from Cnossus—a statement giving hint as to the antiquity and origin of this tradition. Apollo decided on the instant that these two should be his ministers in a shrine he would establish at Delphi, and to this end he descended upon their boat in the likeness of a dolphin. As the dolphin is an iridescent fish,

this was probably a reference to the glorious coloring of the Archangelic aura surrounding the God — for it must be understood the God was seen by psychic vision. It would seem that the sailors saw only this brilliant ovoid aura since they described beholding a flash of rainbow hues, as when a dolphin leaps out of the water. This Greek story throws added light upon Cannes, the Chaldean Fish-man, and upon the Indian tradition of a Fish that led Manu to safety during the Deluge.

Apollo raised a storm, blowing the ship past its destination and through the Gulf of Corinth to peaceful Crissa, "the land of vines." On the sea strand the God appeared to them in His divinely human form, declaring his identity and prophesying that they could never return to wooded Cnossus, but must remain there as his ministers — a prophecy they accepted with deep devotion and joy of heart. Thereupon they built an altar and made sacrifice. Then in holy procession, with singing and dancing, they followed the vision of Apollo as he went before them, harp in hand, to Delphi-Homer's "rocky Pytho."

The God had already slain the Python, whose lair was in a dark cavern beneath Parnassus. It was supposed by some Greeks that the narcotic fumes which induced the clairvoyant trance of the Pythia emanated from the disintegrating remains of this dragon. Closing the rocky

opening whence these fumes emanated was a great stone called the Umbilicus. This spot was said to be the center of Greece and of the whole world. Originally this was the shrine of the Earth Mother and her inspired ones, the Pythia. The latter remained but the shrine was given over to Apollo, the Olympian. It was believed that Apollo himself spoke through the Pythia.

The Pythoness of Delphi represented a type of clairvoyance already obsolescent even in ancient Greece. Because of their growth towards rationalization, which always intends to inhibit negative clairvoyance of the mediumistic type, it was probably more obsolescent among the Greeks than among Asiatics. When a freewoman of Delphi was found who possessed the necessary mediumistic powers to be "the empty mouthpiece of the god," she was taken to the Temple by the priests and subjected to severe and rigorous training. It was said that at a time when the Oracle was empty, Pythagoras trained a Pythoness for her task, no other person being qualified to give such training.

Pilgrims from all parts of the Grecian world sought the aid of the Pythoness at Delphi. After various sacrifices and ceremonials, including sprinkling with holy water, pilgrims cast lots to determine who should be first to have access to the Oracle in the Adytum, the Holy of Holies.

In a cella within the Temple the Pythoness was seated on a tripod above a crevasse in the rock floor, whence issued fumes that induced her holy trance. Some said that the fumes thought to be emitted by the dead dragon really came from the Cassotis, a river flowing below the rock floor. When the Pythoness had become entranced, the voice of Apollo spoke through her lips. Priests wrote down and interpreted messages thus received.

So ancient is trance-divination (still continued in spiritualistic circles today) that it was mentioned in the Iliad and was ancient even then. Further attesting to its antiquity is the record of the legendary Wise Woman about whom Pausanias wrote: "Above the earth rises a rock on which, it is related, the first Sibyl took her position and gave warnings in song." This rock appears also in the enclosure of the Temple of Apollo at Delphi. The Sibyl was the original; the Pythoness a decadent relic. True Mystery Schools never use drugs to induce a trance for gaining spiritual illumination in its higher phases. This practice belongs to degenerate times when Divine Wisdom is all but forgotten.

There was a vast difference between the receptivity of the Sibyl and the drug-induced mediumistic trances of the Pythoness. In all Greco-Latin legends the Sibyl is the spiritual Bride of Apollo, the Sun Spirit. In full waking

consciousness she received from him prophecies or oracles that she expressed in song. Some of the most interesting Christ oracles in all apocryphal literature are to be found in the Hebrew-Christian sibylline oracles, wherein it is declared that the first Sibyl was Noah's daughter, who came to the Western World by way of Erythrae in Ionia. It was not until after the Divine Advent in Palestine that oracles were alienated from the ancient world. The Sibyl has not, however disappeared from history. In the fullness of time she will emerge from her cave to bring Christ oracles to a new heaven and a new earth.

Behind the Temple of Apollo at Delphi stood a still more remote shrine, no less sacred, no less famous than that of Apollo. Here Dionysus (or his relics) was reputedly buried. Each year at the Winter Solstice a nocturnal celebration was held, undoubtedly honoring the birth of the new Sun from the grave of the Old Year, for as Apollo was the Sun of the Summer Solstice, Dionysus was the Invisible or Mystic Midnight Sun of the Winter Solstice. His life and death were portrayed in the Great Mysteries of Orpheus in a manner so similar to the Gospel story that we are justified in calling him the Christ of Ancient Greece. More on this subject will be said in a discussion of the Mysteries.

All learning, all intellectual enlightenment, came from Apollo's nine daughters, the Muses or Rays of the Spiritual

Sun. The Lesser Mysteries corresponded in many respects to a modern university. To some of them women were not admitted, as the Greeks held the intellectuality of woman in low esteem. In these Mystery Schools were taught astronomy, mathematics, music, dancing, the various arts of divination, and all branches of learning presided over by the Muses. The Muses had come down from a matriarchal antiquity inherited from Atlantis where women played a very important role. Femininity was most highly esteemed in those cultures closest to the Atlantean.

Also from earliest times came the lovely Nature spirits. Hidden within the leafy bowers of every tree, the Greeks saw a dryad; and within the waters of every sparkling stream, a naiad. Fairies disported themselves upon the petals of unfolding flowers and far out at sea mermaids sang their songs of enchantment to lure sailors. The life and activities of the visible and the invisible were one. There was no line of demarcation between the material and the physical, for among people living close to the soil the old ancestral clairvoyance persisted. Esotericists know that wherever primitive clairvoyance continues to exist, a belief in the "little people" of field and sky and water lives on, even into modern times. Such belief cannot be separated into historical strata; it is a psychological phenomenon characteristic of all who dwell close to Nature.

During the Taurean Age, when the Mycenaean-Pelasgian culture flourished, the Nature Cult was strongest — as figured in the Supreme Mother. A serpent was her symbol, a hint as to the origin of much of the knowledge she received from a certain angelic Hierarchy. As the Arian Age proceeded on its course materialism won the day and Venus-vision was gradually lost, while at the same time reason (Hermes) took over the reins of government.

The Gods, too, were real entities, not figments of the imagination. The Greeks saw and conversed with them, even as in the Garden of Eden Adam and Eve walked and talked with the Elohim. As repeatedly observed, these early Aryan Races all retained something of the old Atlantean clairvoyance, some more than others, which gave them the ability to comprehend much of natural phenomena which is now entirely lost because of the encroachment of dense materiality. It is essential that this fact be held in mind, otherwise it is impossible to reconcile the difference between these early peoples and our present-day intellectualized civilization.

Polytheistic religions have all had their place in the divine scheme of things. They point always to the divinity of Nature and to the fact that the more closely mankind lives in intimate contact with Nature, the more godlike he becomes. The long and varied tutelage inherent in the

evolutionary path of advancing civilization is preparing humanity for deeper phases of esoteric Christianity relative to the Christ Regency of our planet Earth, for upon a full understanding of that which is embodied in the Christ Advent the whole meaning of spiritual evolution depends.

Among those nations whose spiritual evolution we have studied, only the most advanced were cognizant of the Life and Being of the great Sun Spirit, the Christ. They addressed Him by various names but He was one and the same Being to them all. His descent or downward every civilization, in its turn beheld Him and named Him — many Gods with many names, all having reference to the same White Light, the same glorious Archangelic Christ. When this has been universally accepted it will obliterate expressions now in common use — such as "pagan gods" and "false gods," appellations so mistakenly adopted for describing ancient faiths. What a glad day when mankind finally comprehends the unifying power of Christed Love and the true significance of His sacrifice that binds all world religions into a completed whole!

*(sic: projection was a gradual process that occupied ages, so every nation,)*

It must be said that the momentous Christ Event in Palestine was but the halfway point of God's glorious undertaking on behalf of humanity. Immediately after the



Holy Death on Good Friday and the entrance of the Cosmic Christ Force into the heart of this globe, that Force turned the flow outward, thus enfolding and permeating all that lives upon earth, whether on the inner or the outer planes.

As man attunes himself to this divine out-welling Force, he throbs to its rhythmic pulsations until his innermost self sings in unison with its song of regeneration, called in the Christ Mysteries "the birth of the Christ Within." This is the most advanced evolutionary step to be taken at the present time. Only pioneers of the coming race are being called to this glorious experience, and they thus become the advance guard of the New Day. As those in the vanguard of evolutionary progression were set apart in the last days of Atlantis to become the pioneers of the present Aryan Race, those who know the transcendent Rite of the Mystic Birth are the forerunners, the "Seed" or the "Chosen," of the coming Sixth Root Race.

In the Mystic Birth we behold the culmination of the Christ Event. The divine promise first seen from afar many centuries before the Palestinian Drama will not reach its fulfillment until all humanity, to the very last man, has experienced the birth of the Christ within. Then only does the external Sun Spirit and the internal Mystic Christ become one and indivisible. This is, in the words of the inspired poet:

One far-off divine event,  
To which the whole creation moves.

— ***Corinne Heline***