

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

Esoteric Architecture

Basic Principles

Humanity has two books, two testaments, Masonry and Printing — the Bible of Stone and the Bible of paper.

— Victor Hugo

God geometrizes, and so likewise the mystic architect. Emerson once said that "the pleasure a palace or temple gives the eye is that an order and method has been communicated to stones, so that they speak and geometrize, become tender or sublime with expression."

Esoteric architecture generally had its origins in man's first attempt to express his thoughts and ideals in material form. All initiatory truths which are embraced in Alchemy, Rosicrucianism and Mystic Masonry are to be found in a symbolic study of architecture. The All-Seeing Eye, the two columns with their intricate decorative motif, the Sun and Moon, the Five-Pointed Star, together with many other symbols prominent in Masonry are discussed in this volume.

Of special interest among these familiar symbols are the Winding Stairs. All life ascends in spirals. These are not

always immediately visible to the eye, but the careful observer discerns them, from the spiral path of the thorns upon a rose stalk to the great nebulae of cosmic spaces. And in addition to these which the outer eye discovers, there are interior spirals which only the spiritual eye can see.

Note well also that the Summer Solstice, which to the esotericist is the most propitious of all times for the consummation of the Great White Work, is observed masonically as the Feast of St. John, and in the early days of Mystic Masonry was known as the Rosalia, or Feast of Roses. Prominent among the architectural symbols in many of the medieval cathedrals is the Pentagram in the form of a rose.

The staff which budded is also part of the spiral symbolism, since it obviously represents the stem of a flower, around which the leaves (and thorns also in the case of roses) ascend in spiral design. We need not at this point stress the initiatory secrets of the Fire Mist, which have been so fully discussed elsewhere, but we remind the reader that in the body of the illumined, this Fire Mist also is a "winding stair." There is also a spiral of initiation and of death. When the ego rises from the body in its higher vehicles, these undergo a spiral or gyrating motion. Again,

the awakening of certain vortices of force within the aura, which lead to the higher clairvoyance, is a spiral action.

It is significant that the two columns, Jachin and Boaz, in their physiological correlations represent the ascent of the Fire Mist (Sushumna and Kundalini) from the base of the spine to the head. This ascent awakens the "flower centers" in certain nerve plexuses, which are represented by the decorative motifs of the two columns.

Christian architecture may be said to date from the issuance of Constantine's edict establishing Christianity as the official state religion of the Empire. Immediately the formerly secret religious rites were performed publicly, the sign of the cross came into view everywhere, and there was a demand for skilled artisans and craftsmen to build the churches and religious retreats which sprang up all over Europe.

As the building of churches increased, the skilled workmen formed themselves into "building guilds," and journeyed from place to place wherever their expert services were required. Since most of the buildings they erected were of stone, the workmen were known as bands of travelling masons, and to the select circles was added the word free, this being an adaptation of an ancient Egyptian word Phree, meaning Light. Later the term

Freemason was adopted indiscriminately, but its real significance is "holy men with whom God is first."

That these builders were not looked upon as ordinary workmen is shown from the fact that they were exempted from taxes and such other obligations as were imposed upon the peoples of that time. They in turn regarded their labors as a sacred task by which they were instrumental in advancing the kingdom and glory of God.

Most of the medieval cathedrals of Europe were fashioned under such conditions and still retain much of the aura of soul exaltation with which they were, impregnated during their construction.

A structure so built, and dedicated to the service of man and the glory of God, possesses from the start an aura of holiness that ordinarily requires many years to develop. This auric emanation permeates the building and projects far beyond it in a larger and more beautiful superstructure of light. Immediately upon entering such a building one becomes conscious of "something different" which pervades the atmosphere, and many instantaneous healings have been known to occur within such walls.

The race consciousness of a people flowers into visibility in the architecture of its land. Temples of Initiation were fashioned under the guidance of Master or Initiate Builders,

and were replicas of the heavens and of inner-plane structures wherein Master Workmen received higher instruction from superphysical Beings. Hiram Abiff was an Initiate or Master Builder, and every part of the Temple which he constructed in Jerusalem possessed both a spiritual and symbolic significance.

Of all building materials, wood is most responsive to psychic vibrations, which explains "why Solomon used only the cedars of Lebanon in his Temple. These trees were grown in the atmosphere of holy places, and dedicated from the time of their planting to sanctuary purposes.

In his occult wisdom, Solomon permitted no iron instrument to be employed in the construction of his Temple. Iron is the metal of Mars, and when used in any building impregnates that structure with certain Luciferian vibrations which may result in inharmony, dissension and division.

Astrology and a study of the esoteric side of nature were included in the training of the Masters of esoteric architecture. Josephus states that Hiram had constructed stately temples in Tyre, both to Astarte and to Hercules, with majestic dual columns dedicated to Fire and Air; Venus (Astarte) and the Sun (Hercules) being the two principal deities of worship among the Tyrian peoples.

The universal law of polarity is basic to all esoteric architecture. The upright column and the spire are "masculine," the horizontal and the dome are "feminine." Together the spire and dome represent the aspiration of the ego soaring toward liberation. The interplay of these polarities produce a subtle and intangible beauty not possible of comprehension save by the esotericist. Their interchange of rhythms may be likened to a duet of masculine and feminine voices, and comes close to being an illustration of Madame De Stael's saying that "architecture is frozen music."

The arch is always representative of a distinctly feminine current and is usually ascribed to the Moon, the pre-eminent feminine orb in our solar system.

The three principal forms of architecture enumerated in Masonry — Doric, Ionic and Corinthian — came originally from Greece. The Doric or masculine column is molded in lines of severe simplicity, but it has a beauty which results from the complete harmony of all its proportions. The Ionic, representative of the feminine qualities, is lighter, more airy and graceful in proportions, and sometimes it becomes almost sensuous in its decorative beauty.

Charles Harris Whitaker's recent History of Architecture brings out the distinctive masculine and feminine qualities of these two types. He writes, "The Doric column is the

essence of uprightness and dependability and radiates a feeling of security. The Ionic suggests something more dainty and even slenderly flirtatious."

The Corinthian is formed from uniting the strength and beauty of the Doric and Ionic. It symbolizes the holy Child.

— ***Corinne Heline***