



The Eighteenth Sunday after Trinity.

The Collect.

LORD, we beseech thee, grant thy people grace to withstand the temptations of the world, the flesh, and the devil; and with pure hearts and minds to follow thee, the only God; through Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

19. In that day shall there be an altar to the Lord in the midst of the land of Egypt, and a pillar at the border thereof to the Lord. 20. And it shall be for a sign and for a witness unto the Lord of hosts in the land of Egypt: for they shall cry unto the Lord because of the oppressors, and he shall send them a saviour, and a great one, and he shall deliver them. (Isaiah 19:19-20)

22. The Stone which the builders refused is become the head stone of the corner. 23. This is the Lord's doing; it is marvellous in our eyes. (Psalms 118:22-23)

16. Therefore thus saith the Lord GOD, Behold, I lay in Zion for a foundation a Stone, a tried stone, a precious corner stone, a sure foundation: he that believeth shall not make haste. (Isaiah 28:16)

42. Did ye never read in the scriptures, The stone which the builders rejected, the same is become the head of the corner: this is the Lord's doing, and it is marvellous in our eyes?

43. Therefore say I unto you, The kingdom of God shall be taken from you, and given to a nation bringing forth the fruits thereof. 44. And whosoever shall fall on this stone shall be broken: but on whomsoever it shall fall, it will grind him to powder. (Matthew 21:42)

11. This is the stone which was set at nought of you builders, which is become the head of the corner. (Acts 4:11)

4.To whom coming, as unto a living stone, disallowed indeed of men, but chosen of God, and precious, 5.Ye also, as lively stones, are built up a spiritual house, an holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ. 6.Wherefore also it is contained in the scripture, Behold, I lay in Sion a chief corner stone, elect, precious: and he that believeth on him shall not be confounded. 7.Unto you therefore which believe he is precious: but unto them which be disobedient, the stone which the builders disallowed, the same is made the head of the corner, 8. And a stone of stumbling, and a rock of offence, even to them which stumble at the word, being disobedient: whereunto also they were appointed. (1 Peter 2:4- 8)

The many references, and there are more references than here presented, of the Great Stone which the Builders rejected, may seem to us as dark and mysterious sayings; but the Lord writes nothing in His Book that is not important for us to know and understand. It is certain that all cannot be comprehended by any man at once, but God's perfect will is being revealed over time as the unfolding of the tender pedals of a beautiful rose. Slowly, the blossom takes form and shape – then we comprehend the full nature and beauty – all in its own time. I have read the writings of Sir Piazzzi Smyth, Astronomer Royal of Scotland in the late 19th century, the Rev. Dr. Joseph Seiss, and George Riffert in which they attempt to make an allegorical connection of the Great Pyramid at Giza with that Stone to which Christ compares Himself. Though those writings are intriguing, we are not told enough in Scripture to draw a direct connection; however, there are lessons that may be learned from that great structure that have application to what the Scriptures tell us.

The Great Pyramid at Giza is the largest manmade structure extant. It is comprised of five perfectly symmetrical sides, and it is the only type of structure that requires a CHIEF Cornerstone as its CAPSTONE. It is told by some who study Heraldry that the Great Pyramid is depicted on the obverse side of the Great Seal of the United States. If so, the All-Seeing Eye would represent Christ who is the Chief Cornerstone of the Nation, and of the Kingdom of Heaven. The Great Pyramid at Giza is the only pyramid in Egypt that has **no capstone**. The Body of Christ, too, is incomplete until the Chief Cornerstone is laid at its top. Though we may stumble at Christ in our coming to Him for our salvation, we shall be crushed to dust if we know Him not at His second coming. There is a legend regarding the Great Pyramid, I do not know if true, that the builders stumbled and cursed the Capstone at its base because it was always in their way. When the structure was nearing completion, they suddenly realized that this Stone of Stumbling was the Chief Cornerstone, but too late to heft it to the top. The historian, Josephus, makes a dim reference to the Great Pyramid as a *Pillar of Stone in Egypt*.

In that day shall there be an altar to the Lord in the midst of the land of Egypt, and a pillar at the border thereof to the Lord (Isaiah 19:19) The Lord did not relate this fact without reason. The Great Pyramid uniquely meets both these stipulations of Isaiah. It is literally in the midst of the land of Egypt. If one should construct an arc through the point where the Fertile Crescent empties into the Mediterranean, he will find that the radius of that arc centers precisely on Giza; moreover, the Great Pyramid is located on the border of lower and Upper Egypt at some point below the cataracts of the Nile River. There are far more astonishing mysteries of the Great Pyramid, but such is beyond the scope of this devotion.

Whether symbolized in the Great Pyramid, or solely in reference to the Kingdom of Heaven, Christ is indeed represented as the Chief Cornerstone that the Builders

(Jewish leaders) rejected. He was accounted for no value to them in the building of THEIR building. Christ is always in the way of those who seek to build without Him. Paul stumbled on that Stone. Nicodemus stumbled on that Stone. Many others stumbled upon Christ and suffered the indignity of recognizing their horrid sins, but were saved by the very Stone upon which they stumbled. Others, such as Judas, Caiaphas, Herod, and others are crushed at the Coming of that Great Stone of Offense in the latter days.

The Chief Cornerstone, or Capstone, of a building completes the symmetry and structure of the building at its highest point much like a keystone upholds the walls of the archway. Christ is the completion and perfection of the Body of Christ – the Church. He is the Head, and we are the Body. But a Body without a Head has no life. The life that the Body receives is directed by the Head (the will of God in Christ). We as the subordinate structure find our unity in the Chief Cornerstone. We find that, absent the Chief Cornerstone, the outer walls of the House no longer have a common point of union.

The Chief Cornerstone bears the greatest stress and burden of the structure. It is the first to receive the bolts of lightning of the world, and the stormy blasts of the winters of persecution.

Though the chief and strongest stone of the building, the Chief Cornerstone is also chief in beauty and symmetry. It graces the structure with its own imputed beauty that cascades down upon the lesser stones of the sides thereof. It is the first stone seen from a distance, and the last seen when departing. When others look upon the people of God, the first thing they should witness is Christ as their governing Sovereign. When they depart from us, they should remember the beauty of our countenance imbued by the Lord our God.

In all of these particulars, Christ is like unto a chief cornerstone, but wherein does our Lord differ there from? The chief cornerstones of manmade structures are, like the Great Pyramid, lifeless carvings of stone. They can neither move nor will to do good. Being made by the hands of men, they are subordinate to those hands. But Christ is a Living Stone that imparts life and Will to righteousness in His people whom He makes Lively Stones. We have been granted liberty and authority in Christ as His Lively Stones.

Chief cornerstones of the world may erode, become dislodged, or fall from their high position; but Christ, as our Chief Cornerstone, cannot be shaken or moved. His foundation is planted on High, and His strength of location is unassailable. He is always there, and shall always BE there for us. His depends not upon the support of an earthly foundation, but an heavenly one.

Chief cornerstones of earthly buildings both give and receive strength from other stones of the structure, but Christ only GIVES strength and needs no strength from His lively stones.

Chief cornerstones of buildings on earth rarely are composed of precious diamond, ruby, or sapphire; but our Chief Cornerstone is a Precious Stone of immeasurable value. He is not comprised of our own substance, but is Holy and Divine. Rather than taking our nature upon Himself, He empowers us to take upon ourselves

HIS nature. What a precious Stone indeed! Are you a chip of stone off the Ancient Rock of Christ, or a crumbling stone of clay?