

EPILOGUE.

A diligent and unbiased study of the Ancient Mysteries, Cults and Religions of Mankind must inevitably lead the student to the conclusion that before the days of written history, when the needs and distractions of life were few and time for consideration of the riddle of human existence was abundant, there must have been men with a higher development of intelligence than is generally recognised. By contemplation of the visible universe they propounded a system of morality, veiled in allegory and illustrated by symbols of the stellar bodies. They recognised the unvarying regularity and order of all celestial movement and pre-supposed the existence of an unseen controlling force which they worshipped as God, using as the visible sign the orb of the Sun, that powerful and beneficent force upon which all animated nature depended for its existence. They discovered the sciences of Astronomy, Astrology and Geomancy, and this latter science, when the necessity of permanent location produced the need of more protection against the elements, automatically led to the invention of the art of building. In the course of time the tools or implements used in building to obtain regularity and perfection were adapted as symbols to be applied to similar virtues in human conduct. These symbols were subsequently grafted on to the celestial system of moral instruction which thus became the foundation of what is now known as Freemasonry.

The rapid increase of population in the settled areas together with the accumulation of wealth in the form of property of various kinds produced a revolution in which the pursuit of Science and the practice of moral virtues became subordinated to the lust for power with its attendant wars of conquest. In the struggle for existence the masses were left in ignorance, and the recognition of the Sun as the symbol of God was lost, and the Sun itself was worshipped together with multitudinous other symbols producing the pagan idolatry of early history. In spite of

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ruthless persecution and intolerance, the fundamental truths were preserved by secret associations and it is to these societies or sects that modern Freemasonry owes its symbolism.

The great subject of Masonic Ritual is a development of the building of King Solomon's Temple, which is nothing more than an allegory relating to the mystery of physics generally, and the moral culture of the human mind in particular.

The word temple is derived from the latin "templum" "time"; and, therefore, the ancient structures called temples were in reality intended to be records of time and archives of human knowledge. Such institutions should have been a great benefit to mankind, but the veil of superstition was thrown over them, since it was deemed politic or profitable to the few to deceive the many; that which should have been a record of fact was disguised under an allegory. There arose an esoteric doctrine for those initiated into the secrets of the temple, and a deceptive exoteric doctrine for the multitude; this lamentable change is the key to the Ancient Mysteries, Judaism, Christianity and Freemasonry.

But for planetary motion, there could have been no division of time. The relations of the sun to the planets and fixed stars make up all the natural divisions of time, such as the day, the month, the year and the seasons. The day is marked by the motion of the earth on its own axis. The month by the appearances of the moon, and by the grouping of stars into the twelve divisions of the Zodiac in the successive months. The year is complete when the sun appears to return to the spot from which it is said to start. The polar motions of the earth cause the sun to appear in a state of birth, growth, maturity, decay and death in the course of a year, thus producing the seasons. These appearances have been poetically allegorised and personified; and hence all that has been invented about god or gods being now born, living, dying, descending, resurrecting and ascending.

Our present temples, like those of the ancients, have generally (with few exceptions) been built due east and west in relation to the rising and setting of the sun. The steeples are conical symbols of flame, which is emblematical of the sun. The first temples were dedicated to the sun and the first principles of religion consisted of a scientific record of the sun's annual path through the signs of the Zodiac.

Man's first conception of God was the unseen, unimaginable power dwelling in the heavens. At a later stage this sublime idea was found to be impracticable for the multitude and, as is clearly shown in the history of Assyria, Babylon, Egypt and all other parts of the world, the masses were only able to comprehend God as a being like themselves and so, therefore, required a dwelling place on earth.

In the midst of universal idolatry the Hebrews became the one sect to preserve the original ideal, notwithstanding their constant return to false gods, and Josephus, the Jewish historian, affirms that the Temple of Solomon was allegorical and emblematic of the Universe and of all physical phenomena. The true meaning of the temple allegory in Freemasonry is, therefore, seen to be the grand secret of all religion, the allegorical typification of the solar relations and planetary motions with mental and moral cultivation, hence the injunction to study the liberal arts and sciences and to learn to appreciate the wonderful works of the Almighty.

The first three Degrees and the Royal Arch deal with this aspect of original science, whilst the Higher Degrees (also called Chivalric Degrees) apply to the Christian era. Throughout all, the search is for Light, the light of knowledge and understanding of God.

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