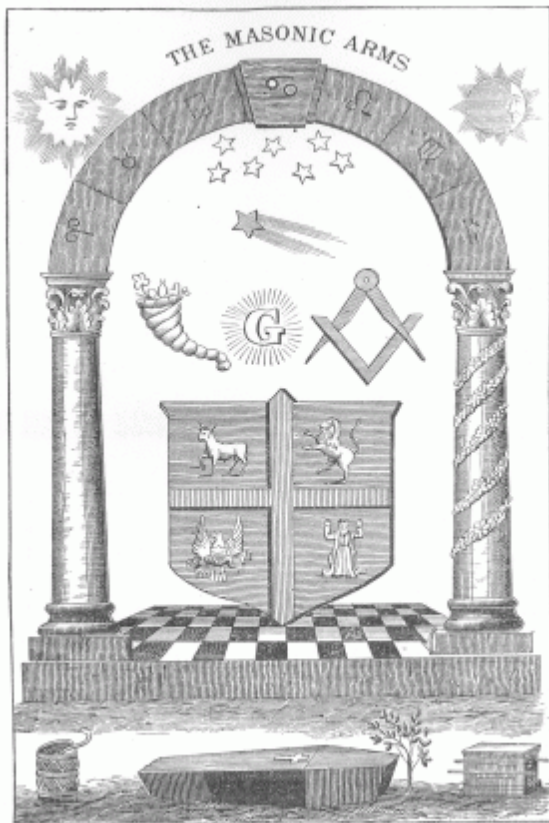

FREEMASONRY AND DRUIDISM.



The rites and ceremonies of Astral worship, under the name of Druidism, were primarily observed in consecrated groves by all peoples; which custom was retained by the Scandinavian and Germanic races, and by the inhabitants of Gaul and the British Islands; while the East Indians, Assyrians, Egyptians, Grecians, Romans, and other adjacent nations, ultimately observed their religious services in temples; and we propose to show that the modern societies of Freemasonry, and ancient order of Druids, are but perpetuations of the grove and temple forms of the ancient astrolatry. In determining the fact that

Freemasonry finds its prototype in the temple worship of ancient Egypt, we have but to study the Masonic arms, as illustrated in Fellows' chart, in which are pictured, as its objects of adoration, the sun and moon, the seven stars, known as Pleiades in the sign of Taurus; the blazing star Sirius, or Dog-star, worshipped by the Egyptians under the name of Anubis, and whose rising forewarned those people of the rising of the Nile River; the seven signs of the Zodiac from Aries to Libra, inclusive, through

which the sun was supposed to pass in making his apparent annual revolution, and which constitutes the Royal arch from which was derived the name of one of its higher degrees; and its armorial bearings, consisting of pictures of the Lion, the Bull, the Waterman, and the Flying Eagle, which representing the signs at the cardinal points, constituted the genii of the seasons. Besides these, we have the checkered flooring or mosiac work, representing the earth and its variegated face, which was introduced when temple worship succeeded its grove form; the two columns representing the imaginary pillars of heaven resting upon the earth at Equinoctial points, and supporting the Royal arch; also the letter "G" standing for Geometry, the knowledge of which was of great importance to the natives of Egypt in establishing the boundaries of their lands removed by the inundations of the Nile, the square and compass, being the instruments through which the old landmarks were restored, and which ultimately became the symbols of justice. The cornucopia, or horn of plenty, denoted the sun in the sign of Capricorn, and indicated the season when the harvest was gathered and provisions laid up for Winter use; the cenotaph or mock coffin with the sign of the cross upon its lid, referred to the sun's crossing of the celestial equator at the Autumnal Equinox, and to the figurative death of the genius of that luminary in the lower hemisphere; whose resurrection at the Vernal Equinox is typified by the sprig of acacia sprouting near the head of the coffin. The serpent, issuing from the small vessel to the left, represented the symbol of the Lord of Evil under whose dominion was placed the seasons of Autumn and Winter; and the figure of a box at the right hand, represented the sacred ark in which, anciently, the symbols of solar worship were deposited; but which is now used by the masons as a receptacle for their papers.

After, the promulgation, in the fifth century, of the edict by one of the Emperors of Rome, decreeing the death penalty against all persons discovered practicing any of the rites and ceremonies of the ancient religion, a body of its cultured adherents, determining to observe them secretly, banded themselves together into a society for that purpose. With the view to masking their real object, they took advantage of the

fact that the square and compass, the plumbline, etc., were symbols of speculative masonry in the temple form of Astral worship, they publicly claimed to be only a trades-union for the prosecution of the arts of architecture and operative masonry; but, among themselves, were known as Free and Accepted Masons or Freemasons. In imitation of the ancient mysteries they instituted lower and higher degrees; in the former they taught the Exoteric creed, and in the latter the Esoteric philosophy, as explained in our introduction. Inculcating supreme adoration to the solar divinity the candidates for initiation were made to personate that mythical being and subjected to the ceremonies representing his figurative death and resurrection, were required to take fearful oaths not to reveal the secrets of the order. To enable them to recognize each other, and to render aid to a brother in emergencies, they adopted a system of grips, signs and calls; and to guard against the intrusion of their Christian enemies they stationed watchmen outside of their lodges to give timely warning of their approach. Thus was instituted the original Grand Lodge of Freemasonry, from which charters were issued for the organization of subordinate lodges in all the principal cities throughout the Roman Empire.

Becoming cognizant of the true object of Freemasonry, the Hierarchy of the Church of Rome resolved to suppress the order, and to that end maintained such a strict espionage upon its members that, no longer able to assemble in their lodges, they determined to defend themselves by an appeal to arms, and gathering together in strongholds, for a long time successfully resisted the armies of the church; but ultimately, being almost exterminated, the residue disbanded, and we hear no more of Freemasonry, as a secret order, until the conclusion of the Dark Ages, when the Reformation, making it possible, a form of the order, recognizing Christianity, was revived among the Protestants; but the Church of Rome, true to her traditions, has never ceased to hurl anathemas against it and all other secret societies outside of her own body. Thus, having made it apparent that Freemasonry, as primarily instituted, was but a perpetuation of the temple form of Astral worship, we can readily see that, while some of its symbols are as old as the ancient Egyptian religion, it did not, as a

secret order, take its rise until Christian persecution made it necessary. Hence it cannot justly lay claim to a greater antiquity than the fifth century of the Christian era.

According to Masonic annals a Grand Lodge was organized at York, England, early in the tenth century, but, like the lodges of Southern Europe, was suppressed by the Church of Rome. In 1717 a Grand Lodge was organized at London, England, and soon afterwards the old Grand Lodge at York was revived, and its members took the name of Free and Accepted Ancient York Masons, from which emanated the charter of the Grand Lodge in the United States, which was organized in Boston in 1733. In 1813 the rivalry between the Grand Lodges of York and London was compromised, and the supremacy of the former was conceded.

From church history we learn that in the year 596 of our era Pope Gregory I. dispatched Augustin, and forty other monks of the order of St. Andrew, from Rome to Britain, to convert the natives to Christianity; but, while the Anglo-Saxons embraced the new faith, the Britons rejected it, and, being persecuted by the Christians, retired to the fastnesses of the country known as Wales, where, for a long period, they maintained the observance of the Druidical form of worship; and although that country has long since become Christianized, the society of the Ancient Order of Druids has existed with an uninterrupted succession at Pout-y-prid, where the Arch-Druid resides, and from, whence emanated the charter of the Grand Lodge of the order in this country. In reference to the Druidism on the continent, history records the fact that when one of the reigning kings became a convert to Christianity the whole of his subjects were baptized into the Church of Rome by Imperial decree.
