

place. The groves were planted for that purpose, in the most proper situation and with those trees in which they most delighted, chiefly oak. The groves were surrounded by a ditch to keep off intruders.

The Druids, like the Egyptians, and the several other secret societies had too sets of religious doctrines and opinions which were different from one another. The one of these systems, the *esoteric* they communicated only to the initiated; which they were bound by solemn oaths to keep secret from all the rest of mankind, the other system, the *exoteric*, consisted of those doctrines and opinions which were communicated to the public.

The Druids undoubtedly were a highly intelligent class of men, they not only believed in one supreme God, immense and infinite, but they also believed in the immortality of the soul and that there is another life after the present; hence their name is very appropriate, since the word druid signifies a wise man.

The sun seems to have been both the most ancient and most universal object of idolatrous worship; in so much, that perhaps there never was any nation of idolators which did not pay some homage to this glorious luminary. He was worshipped by the ancient Britons with great devotion, in many places; under the various names of Bel, Belinus, Belotucardas, Apollo, Grannius &c., all which names in their language were expressive of the nature and properties of that visible fountain of light and heat. To this illustrious object of idolatrous worship, those famous circles of stones, of which there are not a few still remaining, seem to have been chiefly dedicated, where the Druids kept the *sacred fire*, the *symbol of this divinity*, and from whence, as being situated on eminences, they had a full view of the heavenly bodies.

Like the ancient Jews and Persians, the Druids had a sacred, inextinguishable fire, which was preserved with the greatest care. At Kildare (Ireland) it was guarded from the most remote antiquity, by an order of Druidesses, who were succeeded in latter times by an order of christian Nuns.

As the moon appeared next in lustre and utility to the sun, there can be no doubt that this radiant queen of heaven obtained a very early and very large share in the idolatrous veneration of mankind. The Gauls and Britons seem to have paid the same kind of worship to the moon as to the sun, and it hath been observed, that the circular temples dedicated to those two luminaries were of the same construction, and commonly contiguous. But a great number of the Gods of Gaul and Britain, as well as of Greece and Rome, had been men, victorious princes, wise legislators, inventors of useful arts. They worshipped also several female divinities or goddesses as Andrasta, who is supposed to have been the same with Venus or Diana; Minerva, Ceres, Proserpine &c.

The secret doctrines of the British Druids were much the same with those of Gymnosophists and Brachmans of India, the Magi of Persia, the Chaldeans of Assyria, the Priests of Egypt and all the other priests of antiquity. The truth is, there is hardly anything more surprising in the history of mankind, than the similitude or rather identity, of the opinions, instructions, and manners of these orders of ancient priests, though they lived under such different climates, and at so great a distance from one another, without intercourse or communication. This amounts to a demonstration, that all these opinions and instructions