

points, inscriptions in Arabic and devices of many kinds, some of them elegant.

The founder of the mysterious society of the Druses was a person named Hamzi, who lived in Syria in the eleventh century. This man taught the doctrine of faith in one God, and forbade his disciples to endeavor to penetrate into the nature of the Divine being and attributes. He gave as the real origin of this new faith, the name of Hakom, who died about the year A. D. 1021, after promising to re-appear in due time, to extend his empire over the earth. Hamzi claimed to be the first minister of this religion, dating his era in the Mohammedan year 408 synonymous with 1020 of the Christian era. It is no part of my plan to pursue the history of this singular imposture, but to give a sketch of the moral and social theory which the Druses inculcate in a manner quite masonic:—

“Be sincere and truthful in all your words,” thus the priests are ordered. “Speak the truth; fear nothing but sinning, and serve only the Holy One, the Eternal.”

“Be towards the faithful a tender father and a kind instructor. Watch over them and help them in public and in secret. True prayer is the attachment of the heart to the unity of God. God wrongs no one, even to the weight of a grain of sand. He knows the secrets of all men.”

No proselyting is permitted among the Druses, and it is affirmed that a convert from any other sect would be positively rejected. The only superiority acknowledged among them is virtue and strictness of morality.

In communicating the peculiar secrets of the Druse system to women, certain forms similar to those practised in Adoptive Masonry are used. Each woman must be accompanied by her husband, son or brother, or some man who has lawful charge of her, and the women are compelled to sit behind a curtain or screen so as not to be seen, while the man who is conducting the ceremony is not even to look toward them. No woman is permitted during these ceremonies to give any expression of assent or dissent, or give way to smiles or tears.

The emblem of the Druse religion is an anagram made by the letters S.D.K., pronounced *sudek*. They represent figures, viz; s, 60; d, 4; k, 100; making 164, the number of the ministers of that faith that is never exceeded.

The Druses teach that the once pure and brilliant soul, having been deprived of its nourishment, which is the light of wisdom, falls back into darkness and error. “Happy is the man” says one of their preachers “who devotes his whole heart and mind to the search of wisdom; happy he who has made wisdom his abode; who regards it as a pearl of great price, the only true good; who treasures it up within himself as a stronghold inaccessible to strangers.”

The doctrine of free-will is taught by the Druses as reconcilable with justice. They argue that unless man is a free agent he is not answerable to reward and punishment. If the Divine orders were absolute and irresistible, none would be unbelievers, and there would be no use for rewards and punishments. So far as the Hebrew Scriptures are concerned, they believe that everything therein contained, which is admitted into the Druse system, is of divine origin, and that the rest is the invention of men.