

of Heaven," and air and sea—celestial and infernal—gods, giants, deeves, genii, gnomes and fays, furies and fates, nymphs and graces—in a thousand weird or awful forms they stalked or flew to the disturbed vision of bards and hierophants.

All lands are filled with relics of such worship of material forces, under strange names, and often with curious and revolting ceremonies.

In all forms of such worship, the sun (the Light God) stood supreme; if not the real, yet as the representative object, whether hailed as Brahm, Om, Odin, Osiris, Mithra, Adonis, Jupiter, or Montezuma; and in imitation of the mysterious secrecy of nature and the order of the planetary and terrestrial courses, both science and worship were veiled and hidden in the forms of peculiar and awful ceremonies, or mysteries conferred in secret degrees, or grades, on the selected few.

To the hierophant of the less enlightened of these mysteries, the natural forces and phenomena were realities—actual beings invested with supernal powers; and superstition and cruelty marked the forms of their institutions.

But there never were wanting in the more enlightened portions of the world those whose sagacious and reflective minds penetrated the recesses of nature and reached toward sublime and primary principles, and who somewhat understood and appreciated the real secret and mystery of the universe, and these, in their retreats of initiation, taught a high and ennobling philosophy under the like natural symbols, and this was doubtless the principal secret in the initiations of the more enlightened nations, the instructing of the initiate in the real secrets, moral, intellectual and physical, contained in the received mythology and popular fables of the age.

In all organized mysteries were to be found the same number of degrees, or steps, corresponding to the number of degrees in which all things of the universe exist, which are three.

In all of them the order of the heavens, the courses of the planets, the change and successions of the season, and the vicissitudes of the day, were represented in the forms and appointments of their temples, groves or caverns, as well as in the ceremonies they observed.

In all, as by an instinctive impulse, higher and surer than mere reasoning could attain, the founders acted wiser than they knew; or, by an inspiration few are willing to acknowledge, they caught some insight of the harmony of all things in their order, and traced in the sublime truths of the visible universe the correspondences of the more sublime truths of the human mind; and the most sublime which relate to moral things, and the nature and manifestations of the divine in its infinite character and attributes.

Whether these principles were embodied in any of the mysteries at their beginning, or were developed in the course of ages, we can never know, for the history of the world gives us no beginnings, being itself a thing of yesterday. There are no existing records old enough to explain the monuments and relics of the most ancient past.

This much, however, we may deem assured: that the complete order of the universe, in all its degrees, in the least as well as in the greatest things, which is the secret, and also the key to the whole system of Freemasonry, was to a greater or less extent a part of the religion and philosophy of the principal mysteries and priesthoods of the ancient world.

Besides this, that at some time in remote ages, many of the wisest of those ancient fraternities had set up their temples, or tabernacles, throughout all portions of the habitable globe, and under names which we have never heard or read, and by the laws of Geometry, and by representations drawn from natural things, they symbolized the true theism, the order of life and government, and the landmarks of universal religion.

At whatever time the particular society now called Freemasons was organized as to its peculiar work and landmarks, it seems certain that its principal features have existed in all lands and in all ages, so that nothing more ancient or widely spread is to be found among human institutions existing or extinct.

Whether our institution may be considered as a descendant from any one of the past systems, or has been collected and collated from several of them, or was a contemporary institution which alone has survived the conflicts and changes of the ages, who is able to declare? Yet to each and to all of them it seems to have been somewhat related.

If the sun rising in the East to "open and govern the day" is a significant lesson in the opening of the lodge, we see the same symbolism in the golden emblem blazoned above the high altar in the east of the most holy place; in the temples dedicated to the worship of Montezuma; and in the morning worship of the wise men of the East on the hills of Persia.

If the parallel lines and points within a circle teach in the lodge the course of the sun between the lines of the tropics in his apparent circle in the heavens, and in a higher sense the lines of charity and truth, between which only can we possibly advance,