

jected for their absurdities. There are systems of *philosophy*, even, that are entitled to undoubted antiquity that have nothing to recommend them to our acceptance in the light of the present century. There are forms of *idolatry*, now in existence, which are older than *Christianity*, older than the *prophecies* of the Old Testament, older than Mohammedanism, which, through all the centuries of their existence have remained unchanged, and now stand before the gaze of the present, passing generation with the frost of age upon them, and yet are only worthy of our contempt, and to be despised for their hideous rites, and degrading systems of worship.

"If all that is claimed by the most enthusiastic Mason, as to the remote and shadowy antiquity of the *origin* of the Order were granted, the *antiquity*, in itself, could add but little, if anything, to the lustre and dignity of an institution that, confessedly, shone with conspicuous splendor in the depth of the deepest darkness of the middle ages, and whose roll of members is adorned with the names of the most illustrious statesmen, the most renowned of military chieftains, the most accomplished authors, the most learned divines, and with men of the highest rank, from nature's nobleman to royalty itself.

"Modern *Speculative* Masonry is the legitimate outgrowth of ancient *operative* Masonry. It is the development and ripened maturity of the old associations of stone masons, architects, and builders, running back, it may be, to the old Roman building corporations or associations, which may possibly connect themselves with other similar institutions of older date, thus linking the moral and Speculative Masonry of our times with the ages beyond the foundation of Rome.

"Operative masons, builders, and architects, first formed associations for mutual assistance, co-operation and support. Among themselves they had signs and tokens of recognition. When scattered abroad on the completion of any great architectural pile, which had occupied many years in its erection, wherever they travelled they had claims upon their brethren whom they chanced to meet, and were received into these associations wherever found, and employment and wages were awarded them on the ground of a brother's claims.

"The *Bauhutten*, and stone mason fraternities of Germany in the middle ages, grew out of these former associations of a similar character to which we have just alluded. Operative Masonry in *organic form*, was known at an early period in English history. The oldest abbeys, monastery buildings, and other church edifices in England, as well as on the continent of Europe, are indissolubly connected with the history of the Masonic Fraternity. It was not, however, until the year 1717, that the first *Grand Lodge* was organized in England, and from that country, by charter and constitution, modern Speculative Freemasonry has been distributed to every part of the civilized world. It has found its way to the continent of Europe, to Asia, Africa, America, and the Islands of the Sea, bearing with it everywhere the same distinctive characteristic features. It speaks the same language under every sun, in every clime, and amid all the babbling dialects of the globe. It everywhere proclaims the same great leading objects and aim: *Brotherly Love, Relief and Truth*. *Speculative* Freemasonry, as based on *Operative* Masonry, comprehends a *grand system of Doctrines, Morals and Duties*. These doctrines, morals, and moral duties are all embodied in the symbols, tokens, hieroglyphics, words, letters, and working tools of the Lodge. To the uninitiated they have no significance; and even to the