

candidates to make a suitable proficiency in the preceding degree before being advanced, and it is the Master's duty to see that they make it. If Masonry is not worth studying in the beginning, it is not worth having, and candidates should so understand it. Intellectual drones are as useless in Masonry as physical or constitutional drones are in good society. Show me a drill mason, and I will show you one who never learned the lectures in his advancement nor comprehended the principles of our Order in the days of his manhood. Look to it, Worshipful Masters, that your candidates make the necessary proficiency in their advancement before you oblige your officers to say they have done so.—*Grand Master, Maine.*

WHAT CONSTITUTES FREE-MASONRY.

The tracing of the origin of Freemasonry to the beginning of the world, making its commencement coeval with the creation, is a myth—a myth which is even at this day ignorantly interpreted by some as an historical fact, and the reference to which is still preserved in the date of *anno lucis*, which is affixed to all Masonic documents—is but a philosophical myth, symbolizing the idea which analogically connects the creation of physical light in the universe with the birth of Masonic or spiritual and intellectual light in the candidate.

The one is a type of the other. When, therefore, Preston says that,

"From the commencement of the world we may trace the foundation of Masonry," and when he goes on to assert that

"Ever since symmetry began, and harmony displayed her charms, our Order has had a being,"

It is not to be supposed that Preston intended to teach that a Masonic lodge was held in the Garden of Eden.

Such a supposition would justly subject us to the ridicule of every intelligent person.

The only idea intended to be conveyed is this:—That the principles of Freemasonry, which are entirely independent of any special organization, which it may have as a society, are coeval with the existence of the world; that when God said

"Let there be light," the material light thus produced was an anti-type of that spiritual light that must have burst upon the mind of every candidate when his intellectual world, theretofore, "without form and void," becomes adorned and peopled with the living thoughts and divine principles which constitute the great system of Speculative Masonry, and when the spirit of the institution, brooding over the vast deep of his mental chaos, shall, from intellectual darkness, bring forth intellectual light.

In the legends of the Master's degree and of the Royal Arch degree, there is a commingling of the historical myth and mythical history, which, in many instances, require elaborate study and profound judgment to discriminate them. As, for example, the legend of the Third degree is in some of its details undoubtedly mythical—in others, just as undoubtedly historical. The difficulty, however, of separating the one from the other, and of distinguishing the fact from the fiction, has necessarily produced a difference of opinion on the subject among Masonic writers. Hutchinson, and after him, Oliver, think the whole legend an allegory or philosophical myth. The *Corner Stone* agrees with Anderson and the earlier writers, in supposing it a mythical history.

In the Royal Arch degree, the legend of the re-building of the temple is clearly historical; but there are so many accompanying circumstances, which are uncertified, except by oral tradition, as to give the entire narrative the appearance of a mythical history. The particular legend of the three weary sojourners, is undoubtedly a myth, and perhaps,