

## ALLOCATION OF THE GREAT PRIOR.

To understand the Templar system, as connected with Masonry, in the British Dominions, it must be looked at from quite another standpoint than that of "Free and Accepted Masonry" of the present day.

The real and true meaning of "Spiritual,"—or speculative Masonry, is widely different from its commonly accepted definition of the term, and this is of much importance to a proper knowledge of the subject.

The words "Mason" and "Masonry," according to the construction put upon them by the wise and devout of former times, who, looking to its true and sacred signification, never contemplated its being applied or having reference to edifices, building, material, works, or anything of that kind whatever. The words are claimed to be corruptions of other words derived from the compound Greek word "*Mesourance*," the meaning of which is "*Waiters, or Seekers in the Temple*," or those who "waited to hear divine truths proclaimed." The true Mason, then, may be regarded as an aspirant after immortality, and a devout worshipper of the Triune God,—the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit; a lover of pure wisdom and truth, its true mysteries being unfurnished with any type or character but those which anciently related to the worship of the Triune God, or conduced to the great objects of moral instruction. But the Masonry of to-day, called since the revival and revision of 1717, "Free and Accepted," is a *totally* distinct matter, with which the simple and beautiful religious early symbol teaching has nothing to do.\*

\*"If, on examining the subject, we turn to the religious symbol teaching, the mechanical, material portion stares us in the face, and becomes an obstacle in the way; then, if we turn to the material part, and trace it back to its birth-place, we find ourselves left with nothing but the silent, expressive symbols of *religious* truth, and enquire, with solicitude, what have we to do with these if our Institution is a band of mechanics, or what have the simple, beautiful emblems to do with bricks and mortar? It is not until *light* dawns on us

## THE ORDER OF THE BENEDICTINES.

During the whole of the dark ages human learning was confined to the "Monasteries," there being but few who could read or write, and, in the early centuries of Christianity the "Benedictine" Order of Monks was the repository of every branch of science and education. To them it is conceded and well known by all who have examined the subject, that the Order was pure as far as the leading doctrines of Christ were concerned; to them we are indebted for the preservation of the Sacred Mysteries which existed and flourished centuries before the Christian era, and whose symbols and ceremonies taught the doctrines of time, death, immortality, and redemption, containing the knowledge of the undivided personality of the Holy Trinity, the manifestation of the redeemer God-Man, the Atonement, the Resurrection of the Body, and man's responsibility.

It was exclusively the "Benedictines," and later still the "Cistercian" Order of Monks, who employed themselves in architecture, many extensive buildings being erected by the Monks, assisted by the lay brothers and servants. The Abbots designed the plans for the churches, convents and monasteries. Lay brothers who dwelt within the circle of the Monastic Associations, and who assisted the Monks in the erection of the religious houses, in the course of time formed similar Associations among themselves, and from these *latter* sprang the Independent Lodges of German Stone Masons of the twelfth and fourteenth centuries.

On the commencement of the great Christian Reformation the taste for extensive church buildings began to pass away, and the Ecclesiastical Orders to abandon their zeal for architecture.

The architects or builders, origin-

concerning the real meaning and import of these things that we awake to consciousness, verifying the blessed word, "And the light shineth in darkness, but the darkness comprehendeth it not."