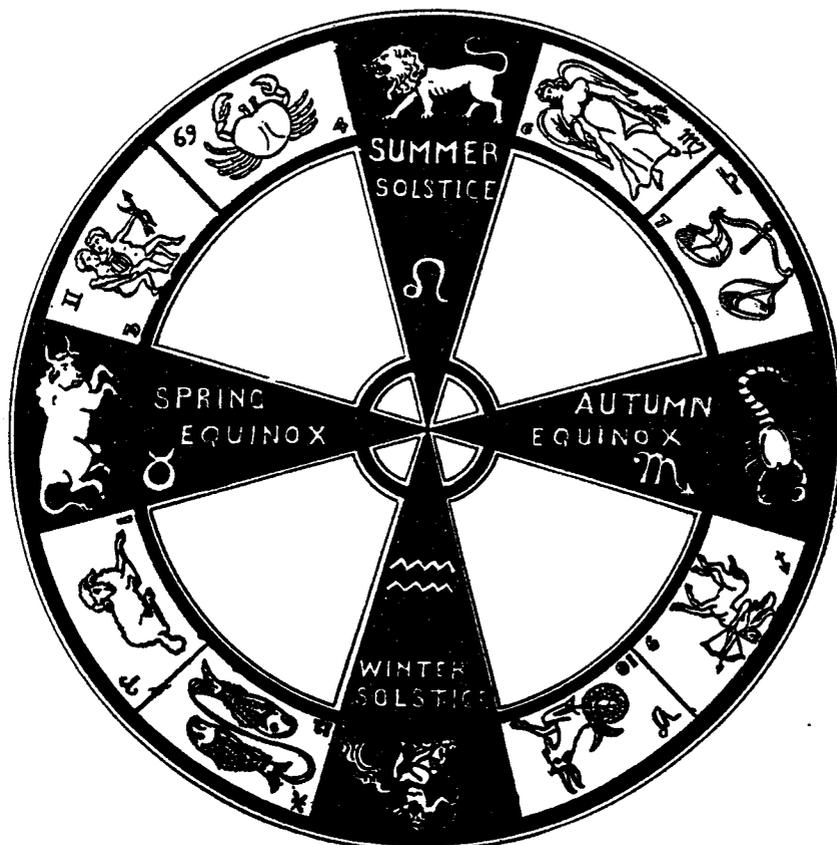


The Beginning of Masonry



THE ancient Cosmic Science, of which Freemasonry is the modern survival, gives the date of its inception, as that at which the above "Cardinal Signs" commenced their reign, viz. 3995 B. C., commonly reckoned as 4000 B. C., which, added to the current year, gives us our Masonic date.

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Avant Propos

This is a very small essay concerning a very big subject. Volumes have been written upon the presumed connection of Freemasonry with that vague *gnosis* of the past, called "the Ancient Mysteries," but concerning the intimate nature of the teaching imparted to initiates, following upon the ceremonies of reception, of which classic writers have given us some notion, nothing remains to us but widely scattered symbols.

It has been the pleasant life-work of the writer to join together, as best he could, the scattered pieces of this stupendous "cut out" puzzle and reconstitute the ancient fabric in such a manner as would stand the test of scientific examination and deserves to live for the benefit of future generations of men and Masons. These papers have been written as an elementary course designed to arouse interest in a far deeper investigation of the whole subject.

Notwithstanding the designedly universal character of the craft, the externals of Freemasonry possess an altogether human tendency to become reflexes of the communities in which they flourish.

The re-nascent Masonic intellectual activity of the past few years, no more splendid example of which can be cited than the foundation and upbuilding of the National Masonic Research Society, throws strongly into relief the fact that our American Masonry, has, until quite recently, exerted little effort on other than social and fraternal lines. The wonderful development of Masonic benevolent institutions throughout the United States, has reflected the brotherhood and liberality of Masonic manhood, but it has been accomplished in the presence of an almost total oblivion of what was *once* the principal reason for the existence of Masonic associations.

This consisted in the enlightenment of those who were found worthy and well qualified to receive deeper insight into the philosophy of existence and hidden historical truths of a nature too disturbing of common acceptances to be spread broadcast among the masses. So, in the absence of fostering interest, American Masonry has been, little by little, so divested of all connection with the pursuit of the deeper Masonic significances, as to have become, on the side of progressive speculation, a pale shadow of the Old World Craft. The true philosophic mission of Masonry, such as was the original intention of the "symbolic" Lodge, no less than the Scottish Rite, could scarcely be better expressed, than in the

following translation from the Spanish, of a lecture intended for the edification of a foreign Lodge.

"Know, Brother, by that which has already been shewn you and may yet come to your knowledge through the enlightening medium of History, that in the days of antiquity, in India, in Persia, in Egypt and in Greece and Rome, the first initiates in the principles, designed in their purity to serve as the foundation of universal Masonry, especially the sacerdotal and other privileged classes, profiting by the knowledge gained and iniquitously turning awry the straight path of progress in understanding, instead of fulfilling a mission of noble civilization, mounted and grasping the reins of inordinate power, especially throughout the Eastern world, tyrannized over the Nations.

"Initiation, during the ages to which I refer, consisted in the communication of certain philosophical truths, of a Natural order, enabling man to profit by the productive periods of Mother Earth, who is prodigal of her fruits at certain epochs but at others displays herself less liberal, also in the imparting of certain liberal Arts, which gave special advantages to those who exercised them, while at the same time uplifting them spiritually.

"These truths, useful practices and elevating arts, at the cost of terrific struggles, sustained century after century, have finally become the patrimony of all mankind, with exception, perhaps, of the relatively few which, through various circumstances remain beyond the grasp of ordinary humanity.

"In the ages of which I speak, that which was most important, was a correct knowledge of the seasons of the year, with especial reference to the productiveness of the earth, and as there were no industries directed to the multiplication, cultivation and preservation of her gifts, this knowledge constituted the bread of the hungry and the daily food of entire peoples.

"Thus it was that astronomical notions were deified and that the Sun, observed as the genius of good and considered the Creator, in perpetual strife with the principles of Evil, residing in the mists and darkness supplied by the terrors of human imagination, became the origin of mythological allegories, more or less poetical in character, according to the varied spirituality of the races of mankind."

The following pages accommodate little more than a series of allusions, but it has been sought to render them sufficiently consecutive, to present a comprehensive picture, to the reader, of the ground over which he must travel in search of true Masonic origins and significances.

FRANK C. HIGGINS.

New York, October, 1916.

The First Books of Masonry

A part of Victor Hugo's famous chapter, "This Will Destroy That," from his "Notre Dame de Paris," in which he elaborates upon the part that architecture had in recording the knowledge of the ancients and moderns down to the 15th century.

From the very beginning of things down to the 15th century, architecture is the great book of the human race, man's chief means of expressing the various stages of his development, whether physical or mental.

When the memory of the primitive races began to be surcharged, when the load of tradition carried about by the human family grew so heavy and disordered that the Word, naked and fleeting, ran danger of being lost by the way, they transcribed it on the ground by the most visible, the most lasting, and at the same time most natural means. They inclosed each tradition in a monument.

The first monuments were simply squares of rock "which had not been touched by iron," as says Moses. Architecture began like all writing. It was first an alphabet. A stone was planted upright, and it was a letter, and each letter was a hieroglyph, and on every hieroglyph rested a group of ideas, like the capital on the column. Thus did the primitive races act at the same moment over the entire face of the globe. One finds the "upright stone" of the Celts in Asiatic Siberia and on the pampas of America.

Presently they constructed words. Stone was laid upon stone, these granite syllables were coupled together, the Word essayed some combinations. The Celtic *dolmen* and *cromlech*, the Etruscan *tumulus*, the Hebrew *gûgal*, are words; some of them, the *tumulus* in particular, are proper names. Occasionally, when there were many stones and a vast expanse of ground, they wrote a sentence. The immense mass of stones at Karnac is already a complete formula.

Last of all they made books. Traditions had ended by bringing forth symbols, under which they disappeared like the trunk of a tree under its foliage. These symbols, in which all humanity believed, continued to grow and multiply, becoming more and more complex.

Of necessity the symbol must expand into the edifice.

Architecture followed the development of human thought; it became a giant with a thousand heads, a thousand arms, and caught and concentrated in one eternal, visible, tangible form all this floating symbolism.

The parent idea, the Word, was contained not only in the foundation of these edifices, but in their structure. Solomon's Temple, for example, was not simply the cover of the sacred book: it was the sacred book itself. On each of its concentric inclosures the priest might read the Word translated and made manifest to the eye, might follow its transformation from sanctuary to sanctuary, till at last he could lay hold upon it in its final tabernacle, under its most concrete form, which yet was architecture,—the Ark. Thus the Word was inclosed in the edifice; but its image was visible on its outer covering, like the human figure depicted on the coffin of a mummy.

Thus during the first 6,000 years of the world—from the most immemorial temple of Hindustan to the Cathedral at Cologne—architecture has been the great manuscript of the human race. And this is true to such a degree that not only every religious symbol, but every human thought, has its page and its memorial in that vast book.

The reign of many masters succeeding the reign of one, is written in architecture. For—and this point we must emphasize—it must not be supposed that it is capable only of building temples, of expressing only the sacerdotal myth and symbolism, of transcribing in hieroglyphics on its stone pages the mysterious Tables of the Law. Were this the case, then—seeing that in every human society there comes a moment when the sacred symbol is worn out, and is obliterated by the free thought, when the man breaks away from the priest, when the growth of philosophies and systems eats away the face of religion—architecture would be unable to reproduce this new phase of the human mind: its leaves, written upon the right side, would be blank on the reverse; its work would be cut short; its book incomplete. But that is not the case.

This was the only form, however, in which free thought was possible, and therefore it found full expression only in those books called edifices. Under that form it might have looked on at its own burning at the hands of the common hangman had it been so imprudent as to venture into manuscript; the thought embodied in the church door would have assisted at the death agony of the thought expressed in the book. Therefore, having but this one outlet, it rushed toward it from all parts; and hence the countless mass of cathedrals spread over all Europe, a number so prodigious that it seems incredible, even after verifying it with one's own eyes. All the material, all the intellectual forces of society, converged to that one point,—architecture. In this way, under the pretext of building churches to the glory of God, the art developed to magnificent proportions.

Thus, till Gutenberg's time, architecture is the chief, the universal,

form of writing; in this stone book, begun by the East, continued by Ancient Grece and Rome, the Middle Ages have written the last page. For the rest, this phenomenon of an architecture belonging to the people, succeeding an architecture belonging to a caste, which we have observed in the Middle Ages, occurs in precisely analogous stages in human intelligence at other great epochs of history. Thus—to sum up here in a few lines a law which would call for volumes to do it justice—in the Far East, the cradle of primitive history, after Hindu architecture comes the Phenician, that fruitful mother of Arabian architecture; in antiquity, Egyptian architecture, of which the Etruscan style and the Cyclopean monuments are but a variety, is succeeded by the Greek, of which the Roman is merely a prolongation burdened with the Carthaginian dome; in modern times, after Romanesque architecture comes the Gothic. And if we separate each of these three divisions, we shall find that the three elder sisters, Hindu, Egyptian, and Roman architecture, stand for the same idea,—namely, theocracy, caste, unity, dogma, God,—and that the three younger sisters, Phenician, Greek, Gothic, whatever the diversity of expression inherent in their nature, have also the same significance,—liberty, the people, humanity.

Call him Brahmin, Magi, or Pope, according as you speak of Hindu, Egyptian, or Roman buildings, it is always the priest, and nothing but the priest. Very different are the architectures of the people: they are more opulent and less saintly. In the Phenician you see the merchant, in the Greek the republican, in the Gothic the burgess.

The general characteristics of all theocratic architectures are immutability, horror of progress, strict adherence to traditional lines, the consecration of primitive types, the adaptation of every aspect of man and nature to the incomprehensible whims of symbolism. Dark and mysterious book, which only the initiated can decipher! Furthermore, every form, every deformity even, in them has a meaning which renders it inviolable.

On the other hand, the main characteristics of the popular architectures are diversity, progress, originality, richness of design, perpetual change. They are already sufficiently detached from religion to take thought for their beauty, to tend it, to alter and improve without ceasing their garniture of statues and arabesques. They go with their times. They have something human in them which they continue to express themselves. Here you get edifices accessible to every spirit, every intelligence, every imagination; symbolic still, but as easily understood as the signs of Nature. Between this style of architecture and the theocratic there is the same difference as between the sacred and the vulgar tongue, between hieroglyphics and art, between Solomon and Phidias.

In fact, if we sum up what we have just roughly pointed out, dis-

regarding a thousand details of proof and also exceptions to the rule, it comes briefly to this: that down to the 15th century architecture was the chief recorder of the human race; that during that space no single thought that went beyond the absolutely fundamental but was embodied in some edifice; that every popular idea, like every religious law, has had its monuments; finally, that the human race has never conceived an important thought that it has not written down in stone. And why? Because every thought, whether religious or philosophic, is anxious to be perpetuated; because the idea that has stirred one generation longs to stir others, and to leave some lasting trace.

But how precarious is the immortality of the manuscript! How far more solid, enduring, and resisting a book is the edifice! To destroy the written word there is need only of a torch and a Turk. To destroy the constructed word there is need of a social revolution, a terrestrial upheaval. The barbarians swept over the Coliseum; the deluge, perhaps, over the Pyramids.

In the 15th century all is changed. Human thought discovers a means of perpetuating itself, not only more durable and more resisting than architecture, but also simpler and more easy of achievement. Architecture is dethroned, the stone letters of Orpheus must give way to Gutenberg's letters of lead.



The Beginning of Masonry

The writer is a firm believer in the extreme antiquity of the speculative philosophy now known to the world as Freemasonry. He credits it with a continuous and unbroken existence extending in one form or another over a period of at least 6,000 years. All the groundwork connecting the mid-period history of Freemasonry with the Dionysiac artificers, the *Collegia Romana*, the Comacine architects, the medieval temple and cathedral builders, etc., may be conceded without argument and is probably correct—but none of it goes far enough. Only sentimental reasons have ever been given for these associations of mystic architects and builders, while most writers take it blandly for granted that the average mortar mixer of ancient days was a learned mystic as well. Friendship, morality, and brotherly love have doubtless played great and inspiring parts in cementing such numbers of brethren of the rule and plumb; but they have been the consequences, not the incentives, of such unions. These noble attributes ruled *in* but not *over* them.

Freemasonry has to a certain extent shared the fate and followed the course of all organizations of like weight and character, in completely surviving all recollection of its primal impulse; but we must consider that its founders were dealing with a system of perpetuating truth by means of imperishable symbols, and that they must have originally foreseen that this system would survive without the aid of either written record or graphic key to its mysteries. If we are able to justify this by proving that such a system might be started at this or any other age of the world, we shall make no incredible statement in averring that such was the beginning of our ancient craft. Every phrase of our ritual is fraught with such meaning, every obligation is couched in phraseology that admits of no other construction.

Freemasonry possesses the most stupendous and awe-inspiring secret ever imparted by revelation of Deity to mankind. It is not, however, an unknowable or unknown secret. It is the precious heritage of Freemasonry's greatest existing antagonist, the Church of Rome, of the Sufi of Mohammedanism, the Druse of Syria, the Parsees and Brahmins of India and the Lamas of

Tibet. It was the mystery of the ancient Magi, of the founders of the faiths of Babylonia and Assyria, of Egypt and Phenicia, of Greece and Rome, of the Druids of Gaul, the Mithraics of Persia, the patriarchs of the Jews, and the sponsors of Christianity. Only the modern Masonry of the western world ignores it, intoning over and over again the subtle keywords that should serve to unlock the hidden treasure to every initiate, passing incessantly in review the symbolic secrets that exacted the homage of the builders of the Pyramids and were still known to a select few among the founders of the modern craft in the 18th century, without knowing the occult sense of that which it idly repeats.

No oath nor obligation today hedges about the onetime deepest wisdom that man was able to attain,—a wisdom that even the lapse of ages and majestic strides of modern science have failed to render obsolete; for it is all science in one, the law of harmony that rules the universe. This was the science of "thrice-great" Hermes, of Zoroaster, Moses, Buddha, Pythagoras, and Jesus, proclaimed by each to those who could understand the language in which it was permitted them to reveal and which may, even now, be interpreted to the worthy and well qualified.

If this secret have any message for our time and conditions greater than it has ever borne to humanity, it is the much-needed lesson of the end of all controversy in the Brotherhood of Man under the Fatherhood of God. It is more than a sentiment, more than a chance or a coincidence, this wedding of a pure religious contemplation of an only true and living God to the materials, tools, and implements of architecture, this undeviating adherence to the ritualism of a mishandled race, which of all peoples of the earth, has preserved and handed down the notion of Deity as a Shepherd of Lambs and a Divine Patron of Architecture addressing his holy prophets in the language, sometimes of one and sometimes of the other.

It is in the age-long absence of anything like systematic pursuit of the clues arising from these facts that Freemasonry has become a sort of intellectual no-man's land, open to the assaults of the wildest conjecture and most trivial speculation.

On this latter basis, almost exclusively, has the literature of the craft been built up. It is only within the last few years that have appeared a few well-considered studies of the more salient phases which have not been intended to prop up some improbable theory. The mathematical, geometrical, architectural, astronomical, and other pointed allusions of our ritual

have been well recognized and ably commented upon; but most of them are biblical in origin, and it has not seemed to occur to the commentators that a day was approaching when our Great Light, as well, would reveal still greater truths than were perceived by our forefathers, from literal interpretation of cabalistic texts destroyed by translation into foreign tongues.

It is therefore obvious that there can be no successful Masonic research that is not also biblical research, reverently and patiently conducted, for the purpose of ascertaining the precise connecting links that have raised up, in addition to innumerable religious bodies, an auxiliary organization counting its votaries by the million which, while disavowing sectarianism, is nevertheless one of the most militant, persistent, and potent factors for the uplift of humanity and the perpetuation of divine worship that the world has ever known.

Theosophy and Masonry

There is an extensive volume of literature based on the assumption by Theosophists that Theosophists are the old original Freemasons, and that their esoteric teachings contain all that is of value in Freemasonry and reach far beyond it. It will suffice merely to quote Dr. J. E. Buck's "Mystic Masonry," Rev. C. H. Vail's "Ancient Mysteries and Modern Masonry," and "The Great Work" by T. K. to supply most entertaining examples of this interesting idea. All of these are painstaking and certainly scholarly attempts to assert a connection between Theosophy and Freemasonry. There are several student bodies of Masonic Theosophists, or Theosophical Masons—whichever sounds more acceptable. Several of the best known and most capable Masonic essayists in this country and in England are ardent Theosophists, whose voluminous writings are always full of allusions to Masonry as a collateral branch of their favorite speculation.

We wish to be entirely respectful to both those who do and those who do not credit a connection between Masonry and Theosophy.

Taking the entire ritual of the three degrees of the Blue Lodge, as we know them, and in addition the Mark Master and Royal Arch degrees, no such things as constitute what avowed Theosophists call "Theosophy" are taught in them. The moment, however, that the analytical mind begins to dwell upon the intricacies of the Masonic ritual and its spirited action in dramatic presentation, it is perceived that every phrase is a

studied allusion to something far deeper than the proffered explanation. This profundity is not an illusion. It is thoroughly genuine; but it is not specifically accounted for in any part of our work beyond the intimation that diligent search will be rewarded with ultimate truth if the seeker persevere to the end. One may speak more plainly of "Theosophy," meaning simply "God-Wisdom" or "God's Truth," which is secret only in so far as the uninstructed are unable to comprehend its abstruse phraseology, the key words of which are largely from the Sanskrit.

The moment that Theosophy becomes dogmatic it departs from the original intention of its modern sponsors and becomes at least a religion in the making. We cannot concern ourselves with the immortal characters or perpetual reincarnation of "Masters," or in the vague stories of secret hoards of wisdom buried in caves among the Himalayas, and the catalepsies and clairvoyances of "adepts," because, unless we be "adepts" ourselves, in which case we should have no need to ask questions, we have no means of discriminating among the genuine, the self-deluded, and the impostor,—the inevitable trinity of all so-called "occult" investigation.

The term "Theosophy" is so elastic that it can be made to embrace every species of speculation in matters guarded under a veil of secrecy, and such is certainly the case so far as most American Theosophists are concerned. The fact that Masonry is ancient, guarded, and in a sense scientific sets up a series of analogies with that which Theosophy claims, rendering it extremely easy for an enthusiast, versed in both systems, to establish a series of parallels of great plausibility. It is only borrowing one of the favorite reasonings of the Theosophists themselves to express an opinion that both are descended by different channels from an identical source.

The Ancient Mysteries

"The Ancient Mysteries" is a modern term invented for the purpose of gathering under a single specific classification all the curious rites, ceremonies, and ritualistic allusions of prechristian ages which are described to us in classic works. None of these documents enlighten us upon other than the externals. They tell us far less of what transpired in the ancient Temples of Initiation than the curious bystander may learn of modern Masonry by mere dint of keeping his ears open.

While analogies without end are discernible between our

own secret work and some of the traditions of ancient initiations, what has been held back for the advancement of science during our present age to reveal, has been the fundamental philosophy of which these ceremonies were merely illustrative.

Up to a few years ago, the dramatic action of the Ancient Mysteries was, so far as any one was able to give a reasonable explanation of it, completely devoid of sense; but the penetration of European savants into the wealth of Oriental sacred and philosophical literature has unlocked a mine of precise information heretofore unimaginable.

No matter who or what constituted the prehistoric population of ancient Europe and Asia Minor, the fact is that it was always inferior to and doomed to disappear or be absorbed by the great Indo-Germanic invasions, which swarmed westward, at intervals, from a central home, somewhere at the foot of the Hindu-Kush Mountains. Extensive invasions of both white and yellow Asiatics were successive and continuous, over many hundred years. The last on record was that of the Huns under Attila, if we except the Turks.

They must have begun, however, at least 5,000 to 7,000 years before the Christian era. It was when this Aryan people was still locked in the bosom of central Asia that the mind of man first began to speculate in the higher mathematics and the beginning of science began to supplant mere childish wonder and barbarous fetishism. Mathematics and geometry, joined to an ardent pursuit of astronomy in regions most favorable to observation where only the naked eye was to be depended on, were made the basis of all human speculation upon the nature and attributes of the Infinite. It must be remembered that it was only well within the Christian era that every human consideration was supposed to be so dependent upon planetary influences that the entire science of medicine consisted in the selection of plant, animal, and mineral substances, which because of their planetary affinities would counteract human ills.

For thousands of years nothing could be begun, pursued, or finished without consulting the stars for propitious occasions, and so a vast system of philosophy was gradually built up of those three scientific ingredients.

The Secret Doctrine

This original philosophy is really the foundation of what Theosophists call the "Secret Doctrine," and the initiatory ceremonies by which men were inducted into its enlightening pres-

ence were what we now call the "Ancient Mysteries," many of the symbols of which still survive in the Masonic Lodge.

The advancement of understanding in these "Secret Doctrines" received a setback through hundreds of years on the part of organizations that wished to monopolize all knowledge and practice of the Ancient Mysteries, and it has been only during the last century that the great gulfs that separated Occident and Orient have been successfully bridged by savants who have, piece by piece, reconstructed the whole ancient fabric.

Egypt, Assyria, Babylonia, Persia, and India are every day yielding up long buried secrets, which throw a bright noonday glare upon the real derivations and significances of hitherto cabalistic dogmas; which are not proved untrue, but truer in altered senses than were ever dreamed of. Under the protection of modern toleration, work is being done by excavators on the sites of ancient cities and translators of long buried documentary testimony to the participation of our ancient brethren in all of our most interesting philosophical speculations and how close they approached us in actual mental achievement. The persecution of one Galileo or the holocaust of 100,000 Huguenots would today be insufficient to stem the tide of discovery.

Theosophy is based upon a study of the "Secret Doctrine" derived by modern students from Indian (Hindu) sources direct. Masonry is what is left, after centuries of vicissitude, of its western development. In neither case was the original fund one of deception or charlatanism; but, let us again repeat, it was "the science of the ancient world" expressed, through reverence, in terms of awe-fraught mysticism.

The Hermetic Philosophy

The so-called "Hermetic Philosophy" is much quoted by the older writers on the subject of Masonry, and one encounters references to it in the works of the greatest of them all, the venerable Albert Pike. Bro. Pike says of the reputed founder of the so-called Hermetic School:

"From the bosom of Egypt sprang a man of consummate wisdom, initiated in the secret knowledge of India, of Persia, and of Ethiopia, named Thoth or Phtha by his compatriots, Taaut by the Phenicians and *Hermes Trismegistus* (Thrice Great Hermes) by the Greeks. In Egypt he instituted hieroglyphics; he selected a certain number of persons, whom he judged fitted to be the depositaries of his secrets, of only such as were capable of attaining the throne and the first offices in the mysteries, he

united them in a body, created them *priests of the living God*, instructed them in the sciences and arts, especially astronomy, music (which he is said to have *invented*), arithmetic, and work in metals, etc. Under him, Egypt paid homage to *seven principal deities*" (the seven planets).

This is condensing into very small compass a great mass of material which has come down to us about a legendary mortal, whose every attribute as recorded is little short of miraculous, and whose supposed writings, Bro. Pike shows us, greatly influenced the early Christian fathers, particularly Saint Augustine, who held them in great reverence.

The name "Hermetic" has become synonymous with "concealment" or "mysterious." Our naive forefathers certainly gave little trouble to the mystery mongers; but seemed to exercise their powers of credence like a professional strong man his muscles. They saw little to wonder at in the million and one familiar things that are the marvels of science today; but seemingly laid great value upon a capacity for asserting the impossible. It was the "long suit" of the wise man of once-upon-a-time to affirm "two and two make six, and to prove it I will change this stick into a serpent."

There is no doubt, however, that the "Hermetic Wisdom" merits every eulogy that could possibly be bestowed upon it; for it was



HERMIS TRISMEGISTUS.
Note the Scorpion, sign of his station in the "South." The Ibis hieroglyphic shows his identity with Thoth.

the collective science of the ancient world, so called because attributed by the Magian astronomers—or rather Astrologers; for the stars were studied for omens, not physical facts—to the influence of the planet Mercury.

The name "Mercury," or *Mercurius*, was the Latin translation of the Greek *Hermes*. Like almost all astronomical names of both Greece and Rome, it is a corruption of the Syrian *Mar Kurios* ("Son of the Lord"—Sun), which in turn is a literal translation of *ChR-Mes* (Horus-Moses, "the Son of Horus"). The custom of referring all inspirational writings to their spir-

itual source was the cause of the attribution to the celestial Hermes of a stupendous volume of ancient literature. He is called "the Author of 20,000 volumes," just as to Nebo—precisely the same planet Mercury as known 2,000 years before to the Babylonians—were attributed all the sacred writings of their priests.

The British Museum catalogue of Babylonian and Assyrian antiquities states that "Almost every tablet of importance in the Royal Library of Nineveh," most of which have been recovered by the Museum through Prof. Layard and others, "bears upon it the following words: 'The palace of Ashur-Ban-i-Pal, King of Hosts, King of Assyria, who putteth his trust in the gods Ashur and Belit, on whom Nabu and Tashmetu have bestowed ears which hear and eyes which see. I have inscribed upon tablets the noble products of the work of the scribe, which none of the Kings who have gone before me had learned, together with *the Wisdom of Nabu* (Nebo-Hermes) so far as it existeth.'"

As Ashur-Ban-i-Pal reigned in the seventh century B. C., this is a pretty respectable date for Hermetic writings already. Among the tablets enumerated is found the world famous "Creation Tablet."

We quote the following from Rev. Joseph Fort Newton's book, "The Builders": "The cube was a sacred emblem of the Lydian Kubele, known to the Romans in after ages as Ceres or Cybele; hence, as some aver, the derivation of the word 'Cube.' Mercury, Apollo, Neptune, and Hercules were worshiped under the form of a square stone; while a large black stone was the emblem of Buddha among the Hindoos, of Manah Theus-Ceres in Arabia, and of Odin in Scandinavia."

Nebo in ancient Babylonia and Assyria, Thoth (later Serapis) in Egypt, Taaut in Phenicia, Daud in Palestine, Apollo, Hermes, Mercury, among the Greeks and Romans, Odin in Scandinavia, and Buddha in India are *all one and the same planet Mercury*, the planet nearest to and inseparable companion to the Sun, part of the year rising heliacally—that is to say, seen for a few moments at dawn until obscured by the sun's greater light, when it was called "Apollo"—and at another season, at evening, as the Sun's light grows dim, when it was called "Mercury" ("Messenger of the Gods").



Symbols of the Hermetic Philosophy: Sulphur—Mercury—Salt.

Now, in the astrological arrangement by the ancient Chaldeans of the planets in the Mansions or Houses of the Zodiac the Moon and the Sun are placed side by side in Cancer and Leo, respectively. The "Night" house of Mercury* is in Gemini at the left of Cancer, and his "day" house is in Virgo, to the right of Leo. Therefore the center of the zodiacal east is marked by a Triad of Sun, Moon and Mercury; which those read in Alchemistic and Rosicrucian lore will not fail to recognize as the central postulate of both of those famous philosophies. They were the lesser lights of earlier rituals.

Virgo is Demeter or Ceres, and consequently the Kubele and Cybele of the "square stone"; Gemini, the twins, are the youthful Hercules and Apollo ("Strength and Beauty"); while Hermes, in the house of Demeter (Virgo), is the Divine Wisdom—for it must be remembered that to the initiate all these pagan deities were but the attributes, emanations, or perceptible qualities of the "One" God, no matter what the "profane" imagined them to be.

As the secret wisdom of the alchemists, developed from the ancient Hebrew *Kabbalah*, tells us, the combination of "sulphur, salt and mercury" is that which produces the "living Gold," mercury being denoted the "bond" that unites the other two. The alchemical signs for these three elements—or rather four, for under the first, sulphur, was hidden "fire," under the second, "earth," and under (two signs of) Mercury, air and water—were respectively the sun, moon and the planet Mercury. Alchemy was really a secret school of philosophy, teaching the same truths as Masonry once taught, only employing the terminology of the chemist and refiner of metals instead of that of the builder.

By this combination is really meant the threefold nature of man—the "soul," which the ancients held to emanate from the sun; the "body," which came under the special influence of the moon; and "spirit," or mental intelligence, which was the gift of Hermes or Mercury—the "mind," or *manas*, as it was called in Sanskrit, being that which specifically constituted "man."

There is every reason to believe that this doctrine underlay the entire fabric of ancient philosophical paganism, and that the reason why it has not descended to us in the classics is just because it was the "Hermetic" or sealed wisdom. Pillars were anciently dedicated to Hermes, and the secret of the "ashlars" is closely connected with the double personality of this same old divinity. Hermes became, in the course of many transforma-

*See Page 100

tions, the archangel Raphael, and has always been the peculiar tutelary genius of "man."

The historical Buddha (Gautama Sakyamouni) must not be confounded with the Aryan *Buddhi* (the Divine Wisdom), still the name of the planet Mercury in India. From India, where it was once *Bo-den*, the Indo-Germanic races carried this divinity, as *Wo-den* or *Odin*, to the farthest confines of Scandinavia. The day of Mercury has always been what is the present Buddhist "sabbath." Wednesday.

Rosicrucianism and Freemasonry

We frequently hear of an alleged connection between Freemasonry and so-called "Rosicrucianism" brotherhoods. In the course of the last couple of centuries there have been many hundred claims set up to the title of "Society" or "Fraternity" of the Rosy Cross. Any brother who feels inclined to dip into the question of extinct Masonic rites and degrees, by a short course of Mackey's Masonic Encyclopedia, will be, if not already informed, astonished to find that all the Masonry we are officially aware of today is but a mere fragment of all that has at one time or other figured as of impressive importance to the craft.

In the archives of the Scottish Rite are preserved evidences of the voluntary abdications of a number of imposing Masonic "rites" that once enjoyed high favor and numerous membership, but which eventually dissolved, under pressure of internal dissensions, and the larger hope embodied in the rise of a body so constituted as to obviate the possibility of unbecoming strife and other weaknesses.

At the present moment the empty dignities and now meaningless powers of obsolete rites are occasionally heard of as passed from hand to hand, for trifling money considerations, wherever a gull can be induced to believe that he is receiving high Masonic degrees, even though the same may be conferred upon him by a single individual "by virtue of powers," etc., in a basement dining room or hall bedroom.

The chief significance that attaches itself to the revival of interest in the Rosicrucians lies in the fact that, according to the strict spirit of the ancient brotherhood, there can be but *one* organization in existence entitled to their name and secrets, and that organization never had nor, it is claimed, never will have any public or exoteric existence. It is not the sort of club or society that has officers, holds public or even private meetings and elects eligible persons to membership.

The true Rosicrucian may never meet another of his mystic order on the physical plane. He is not initiated in a hall or chapter room after having paid a fee; but it is made known to him by occult means that he has been found worthy of admission into this literal band of immortals, and thereafter he is shown how to project his perceptions on to a higher plane upon which it is possible for him to meet, know and commune with all his fellow members, who assemble like witches upon a *sabbat*, in a twinkling of an eye, by merely willing to do so, no matter where their physical bodies may happen to be sojourning.

In fact, the first public gossip concerning the Rosicrucians and their wonderful powers began to be bruited about at the beginning of the seventeenth century. Membership in the fraternity was attributed to various alchemists by the herd, and claimed by numerous charlatans on the other hand. Many tales are told of the discovery of weird underground vaults in otherwise desert places, which upon being opened were found to be brilliantly illuminated by perpetually burning lamps—that is to say, until extinguished by the admission of outer air. These were said to have been the secret meeting places of the Rosicrucians.

From the very nature of Rosicrucianism as described, however, that of tradition must necessarily be spurious, as the mere fact of publicity, upon however private or restricted a scale, is sufficient to stamp it as such. The existence of Rosicrucianism might be claimed, and certain highly endowed scholars and scientists be suspected—nay, openly charged—with being members of its charmed circle; but no genuine record exists of any ancient Rosicrucian Society upon which any theory of continuity might be based by a modern group of students of the occult.

There is quite a successful modern Rosicrucian Society in London, the moving spirit of which was the late Dr. Wynn Westcott, formerly coroner for the County of Middlesex. As a research body, disinterring many interesting legends about the reputed Rosicrucians of the Middle Ages, this latter day society has done good work.

It all sums up in the state of mind of the person most interested. An old Potsdam pensioner once wrote King Frederick the Great in much distress over the suppression of a military decoration, the only one he had ever received. The king smilingly wrote on the margin of the complaint, "Pensioner X has herewith our royal permission to wear all the abolished decorations he likes."

Just as the evolutionary process, through which all organic