

ORDINARY GENERAL MEETING.*

CAPTAIN G. P. HEATH, R.N. (RET.), IN THE CHAIR.

The Minutes of the last Meeting were read and confirmed.

A lecture, which was illustrated with diagrams, was delivered by the Rev. A. B. Grimaldi, M.A. (Camb.) on :—

*THE ZODIACAL ARRANGEMENT OF THE STARS:
IN ITS HISTORICAL AND BIBLICAL CON-
NECTIONS.* By Rev. A. B. GRIMALDI, M.A. (Camb.).

A FEW NOTES ON THE LECTURE.

QUINTILIAN says, "It is necessary to understand astronomy if we wish to understand the poets." Of course he alluded to the classical poets; but it is evident that we may read with much interest and with benefit even, within proper limits, the classical poets, with a very minimum amount of astronomical knowledge, taking the word astronomy in the modern sense. He must therefore have referred to the Signs.

Zodiac.—The meaning of the word is not "little animal"—this term cannot be applied to all the signs—the real meaning is "a path."

The lecturer's view is that Seth arranged the stars in the sun's apparent course, during twelve months, into twelve great groups called signs; that Enoch concluded the work by arranging the stars within and without that circle into thirty-six groups called Decans.

It is the only antediluvian work left. It is of world-wide universality. It belongs to the Christian world, it is connected with the whole of humanity. A work to which deep mystery

* Monday, May 7th, 1906.

was attached. A great dividing line was at the Reformation. The Reformation came, and as with the besom of destruction swept away the whole of that series of ideas connected with such matters as the Zodiac, and to this day we have never recovered the lost ground.

Up to the time of the Reformation all our important churches possessed a Zodiac. V. le Duc, the official architect of Napoleon III. has said that in the mediæval days every church in France had its zodiac. There are many uses to which it has been applied. Some have even said it was the very origin of religion. It was extensively used in the Patriarchal Church (the first Church), the Hebrew Church (the second Church), and in the Christian Church (the third and last true Church). This zodiacal arrangement has laid hold with tenacity on these three Churches, and cannot therefore be an insignificant subject, having also been so extensively adopted in the Pagan religion. It is impossible to understand the peculiarities of that Church unless you know something of the Zodiac. If we ask for the Bible of the Christian Church, the answer is the New Testament ; for that of the Hebrew Church, the answer is the Old Testament ; but for that of the Patriarchal Church probably there is no answer. Here is the answer which can be set forth and examined and considered. The Christian Church stands or falls by the Hebrew Church. If you undermine and destroy that Church you undermine the Christian Church itself. The Hebrew Church is the result of the Patriarchal Church. One is the flower of which the other is the bud.

Another point is that the Zodiacal arrangement shows the essential identity of the doctrines of these three Churches, and it is also constantly referred to in the Old Testament. There are passages and texts which cannot be explained without this key ; and so also in the New Testament, but then the types and shadows passed away and there was not the same necessity ; therefore it is comparatively sparsely used.

It is also found in our own churches and cathedrals. Opinions of modern investigators may be quoted.

Sir Wm. Drummond : "There is nothing then impossible in the report of Josephus when he says that the descendants of Seth were successful astronomers, and ascribes to him the invention of the cycle which Cassini brought to perfection—that the invention of the Zodiac ought to be attributed to the antediluvians may appear to some a rash and idle conjecture, but I shall not renounce that conjecture merely because it may startle those who never thought of the subject."

The conclusions set forth by all these writers are amply borne out by numerous extant representations.

Ordinary Zodiacs are unreliable: planispheres are more reliable. They coincide with those used by the Anglo-Saxons of the ninth century.

It is found on a Roman gem, A.D. 100. Going backwards, it is also found on a Babylonian *Matsebah* discovered by Dr. George Smith, which he dates B.C. 1320. On one side is a cuneiform inscription, and on the other side are signs of the Zodiac.

His translation is given, and in it occurs the expression "the emblems of the gods of Assyria are on this stone."

In the 4th chapter of Genesis, last verse, are the words, "Then began men to call upon the name of the Lord." It is impossible to take that literally, that no man called upon the name *Jehovah* before that date, which is the date of the birth of *Enos*. Nor that *Adam* and *Eve* and righteous *Abel* and *Seth* never called upon the name of the Lord before. Turning to authorities, the *LXX*, the *Vulgate*, and *Spurrell* put the pronoun in the singular number,—this man—then altering the name *Lord* to *Jehovah*. The last mentioned man is *Seth*. *Maimonides* says that it refers to stars and religion, so we have: "Then began this man (*Seth*) to call the stars by the name of *Jehovah*." The Hebrew use of the "name of *Jehovah*" really means the attributes, characteristics of justice, holiness, and mercy. Hence with the aid of *Maimonides* we obtain this result: "Then began this man *Seth* to call the stars by the attributes of *Jehovah*." I think there is little difference of opinion between those who have been students of Scripture, that *Jehovah* of the Old Testament is the *Jesus* of the New—the *Messiah*.

In regard to the cherubic forms: the cherubim were composed of, or a composite figure of, man and lion, bull and eagle; four symbols in one. The conclusion is that this is the foundation of the Zodiac. (*Ezekiel* i, 10.) Three of these symbols were placed in three of the cardinal points, while the scorpion took the place of the eagle, which was made a decan.

DISCUSSION.

The SECRETARY.—I wish personally to return thanks on behalf of myself and the Institute to the reverend gentleman who has given us this remarkable lecture, because he acceded at once to

a request which I transferred to him when I was at a loss how to fill this evening with a suitable paper. In turning over documents I found two papers by Mr. Grimaldi, and it occurred to me that the subject of this paper would be of great interest; certainly it is a subject of which we have very little knowledge but which now will be better known to the members. I beg to propose a hearty vote of thanks to the Lecturer.

Colonel HENDLEY, C.I.E.—I should like to ask the Lecturer whether the coins he saw with signs of the Zodiac were coins of the Mogul Empire, because he referred to the vase alone being represented. In these Mohammedan coins the figure would be, if possible, left out.

Mr. GRIMALDI.—Yes, on these coins it is only the vase. They are gold mohurs of Jehanger, 1627.

Colonel HENDLEY.—You spoke of the Reformation having done away with the influence of the Zodiac, but all through Eastern countries the Zodiac is a most potent influence from an astronomical point of view. No boy can have a name without the Zodiac being referred to, nor can his partner in life be selected for him without it being consulted as to the particular star . . . so that every birth and death of three hundred million people are influenced by the Zodiac.

Mr. GRIMALDI.—I only spoke of countries affected by the Reformation. There is a Zodiac at Ifley, near Oxford, a Norman one. The most curious, I think, in England is in Brookland, on the borders of Kent, but it is not round the doorway, but on the font. This is, I believe, the only Zodiac on a font, that is in England, and it is a very great curiosity of the highest interest. I believe it is Pre-Norman, though it is called Norman.

A MEMBER.—What is the cycle of Seth and Cassini? Is it what Josephus calls the Great Year and states to be equal to six hundred ordinary years, which it was needful for the lives of the antediluvian patriarchs to exceed, as he says, so that they might see the fulfilment of their stellar predictions.*

Mr GRIMALDI.—My lecture has not been based upon a personal scientific knowledge of astronomy. Josephus refers to this extra-

* This is really the summary of Josephus's statement; he does not actually say that the cycle was discovered before the Flood. (*Jos. Ant.*, I, iii, 9.)

ordinary cycle that Cassini, the astronomer, brought to perfection, and proved it to be the most perfect of the astronomical cycles that had then been found.

After some further observations by members :—

The CHAIRMAN said,—I am sorry the Lecturer has not been able to get to a number of interesting points further on. I think there was enough material for another lecture. I am sure you will all wish me to communicate your thanks to the Lecturer.

Mr. GRIMALDI.—I have to thank you ; for, whatever the imperfections of the lecture, I do not think any lecturer could have obtained a more attentive or patient audience. I am glad that I guarded myself at the commencement, in reference to astronomy, by saying that I am not a student of astronomy. The astronomical information given to us is, of course, of very great interest, and in fact of distinct importance. My idea in reference to Cassini is, at the time, the six hundred years cycle was the most perfect then discovered—since then further progress has been made, and very perfect cycles obtained and discovered. In reference to other points, I meant to bring forward some more, and amongst them, that point as to the commencement of the Zodiac which has been very properly referred to—the conjunction of Leo and Virgo. I also had an Egyptian slide to show to the audience on this conjunction.

The Meeting closed with the usual votes of thanks.

COMMUNICATION.

Remarks by Lieut.-Colonel MACKINLAY :—

It is difficult to make remarks on the syllabus of a paper ; however, I venture to send the following :—

The fact that a year contains twelve lunar months and some eleven days naturally suggested the idea of devising some means of dividing the years into twelve *equal* parts ; hence the acceptance of the Zodiacal plan by so many nations.

The effect of the precession of the equinoxes is to cause the sun to be in different signs of the Zodiac at the vernal equinox, after

the lapse of many ages. In remote times the sun was in the sign of Taurus at the vernal equinox; in the time of Hipparchus, when our Zodiac was probably arranged, it was in Aries; while at the present time the sun is in Pisces when the days and nights are of equal length in spring.

Hence, if it is thought to be harmonious to begin the year at the vernal equinox with the sun in Aries, typifying sacrifice, we have a comparison which could have been made in the time of Hipparchus, but which would not have held good in the days of Adam long before, nor in our times long afterwards. Hence we must dismiss the idea that Adam named Aries.

It is by no means easy to ascertain the origin of the signs of the Zodiac which we possess; probably some are due to the seasons corresponding to them in the times of Hipparchus: the sun was then in Leo in July, the time of great heat; in the Scales at the autumnal equinox when the days and nights were of equal length, and in Aquarius in the rainy month of January. Some have thought that Virgo owes its name to the story of Istar seeking for Tammuz. Different nations have different names for the signs of the Zodiac; it is difficult to understand how any one can know that these names which we possess and which we have received through heathen channels, contain Divine teaching any more than do our names for the days of the week.

The Hebrews of old had little need for astronomical knowledge in the regulation of their simple calendar, in which the year consisted of lunar months with an intercalary one inserted when required by observing when the crops were backward during the twelfth month, and when a sheaf of first-fruits, Lev. xxiii, 10, 11, could probably *not* be presented just after the next full moon; in that case the coming month was made an additional one to the old year, instead of the first month of the new year.

In Egypt and Babylonia, on the other hand, the calendar was regulated in a more direct astronomical manner, requiring, of course, considerable knowledge of the movements of the heavenly bodies. In both these countries the study of astronomy became inextricably mixed up with religion, and the worship of sun, moon, and stars and also the superstitions of astrology arose.

There are certainly remains of sun worship to be found in many old churches in different parts of Europe; the fact that representa-

tions of the signs of the Zodiac are also to be met with apparently points to a superstitious veneration for them, inherited most probably from ancient Babylonian or Egyptian sources.

At one time charms engraved with the signs of the Zodiac were not uncommon in England ; the gold finger rings still procurable in India, Egypt, Madeira, and elsewhere, bearing the same signs, may be the remains of this old superstition.