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THE

# JOHANNITE MASONS

AND THE

# STAR IN THE EAST.

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# CONTENTS.


## LETTER I.

INTRODUCTORY.

Flourishing state of Freemasonry—Effects of prejudice—Anomalies—Utility of masonic writings—Novelties—Statement and progression of the Author's views—His original impressions on the subject of Masonry—Position of the Order at that period—Masonic Autobiography—The Author's personal experience as Master of a lodge—His enthusiasm—His determination to submit his own convictions to the judgment of the fraternity—Open questions—Necessity of some authoritative sentence on controverted points—The Author's plan for the extension of masonic principles . . . . . page 3

## LETTER II.

A FEW OBJECTIONS TO THE MASONIC PARALLELISM OF THE TWO ST. JOHNS REFUTED.

Whether Freemasonry is susceptible of interpolation—Utility of a well-arranged code of laws and regulations—Advantages of uniformity—Discrepancies—Opinion of Des Etangs—The Landmarks unalterable—The legend of the third degree—Gates of the temple—Innovations—Omissions—The lodges dedicated to St. John—The old lectures—Lectures of Dr. Hemming—Whence St. John's Masonry was derived—Whether from the battle of Bannockburn, or from Templary—Spurious rituals—Whether it has a reference to the heathen god Janus—Or to St. John the Almsgiver—Deficiency of proof . . . . . 15

## LETTER III.

ENQUIRY WHETHER THE PATRONAGE OF MASONRY WAS ORIGINALLY VESTED IN THE TWO ST. JOHNS DURING THE LAST CENTURY, OR AT ANY EARLIER PERIOD.

Traditions of Masonry—Revival in 1717—The restorers of Masonry eulogised—The first lectures quoted—Patronage of St. John acknowledged at that period—the improved lectures quoted—Extract respecting the St. Johns from the earliest French lectures—Dunc-

kerley's lectures quoted—The Old York lectures quoted—Extract from Hutchinson's lectures—Lodges of St. John—The American lectures quoted—All those authorities mention the St. Johns—Facts, the most decisive evidence—Freemasonry before the St. Johns flourished—How dedicated—Extract from an ancient formula—Noah—Abraham—Moses—Solomon—Zerubabbel—St. John the Baptist—St. John the Evangelist—The parallelism—Historical Landmarks—The Royal Order mentioned—Diversity in the ritual no argument against the fact—Analogies—Freemasonry under the Patriarchs, Jews, and Christians—Point within a circle—Symbol of a wheel referred to the St. Johns . . . . . 25

## LETTER IV.

### REASONS WHY ST. JOHN THE BAPTIST IS ESTEEMED A PATRON OF MASONRY.

The charter of Colne—Whether it be genuine—Argument drawn from it in favour of the patronage of St. John—The Baptist spoken of as the forerunner of Christ—His dignity—Superstitions derived from it—Represents the prophet Elijah—His dress and character—Opinions of the masonic Theosophists of the last century on this point—St. John the reputed originator of ascetic or exclusive societies—A burning and a shining light—A member of the Essenian institution—His annual festival—How observed—John the Baptist remarkable for his sincerity—Energy of his character—His followers—His intrepidity—Announces the Lamb of God . . . . . 39

## LETTER V.

### REASONS WHY ST. JOHN THE EVANGELIST IS ESTEEMED A PATRON OF MASONRY.

The Revelation of St. John called "the Process of Spiritual Masonry"—Its machinery described—Resembles certain ceremonies of Masonry—White raiment—The celestial lodge—Admission of a candidate—The golden candlestick of the Apocalypse—The symbolism of light—Book with seven seals—Several remarkable emblems explained—The mark—Expulsion of unclean spirits—New name—St. John the Evangelist taught the chief doctrine of Masonry—Brotherly love—Unknown amongst the heathen—Lex talionis—The masonic chain . . . . . 51

## LETTER VI.

THE PARALLELISM EXPLAINED.

The two St. Johns were Essenian Masons—John the Baptist began the ministry of the Gospel—The two parallels—Likened to the pillar of fire and cloud—And the two columns of Solomon's porch—Called pillars of Christianity—St. John the Evangelist completed the ministry of the Gospel—The two festivals at the summer and winter solstices explained—Masonic customs in reference to them—Ancient usages of the fraternity—Substitution of the St. Johns for Moses and Solomon accounted for—Its antiquity—Opinions of our transatlantic Brethren on this point—Evidence from an ancient painting . . . . . 63

## LETTER VII.

ENQUIRY WHETHER THE PATRONAGE OF MASONRY IN THE HANDS OF THESE TWO CHRISTIAN SAINTS BE STRICTLY CONFORMABLE WITH THE CONSTRUCTION AND CHARACTER OF THE ORDER.

Importance of the enquiry—The parallelism enjoined by the first Grand Lodge—The universality of Masonry untouched by the practice—The two St. Johns always considered as the legitimate patrons of Christian Masonry—Deficiency of written evidence no proof of the non-existence of the custom—The question of universality considered—The ancient charges—Origin of the Johannite Masonry—Whether the interference of the authorities be needed—Discrepancies ought to be reconciled—The ancient illustrations of symbolical Masonry explained—Uniformity the grand principle of the Order—Recommended—Signs and tokens inferior to science and morals . . . . . 73

## LETTER VIII.

RECAPITULATION.

Triumphant career of Freemasonry—Its benevolent character—Conflicting opinions reconciled—The Author's apology—Continental innovations—The reunion in 1813—Accusations refuted—Mr. Soane's hypothesis examined and disproved—Whether Freemasonry had any connection with the working guilds of Masons, or with Rosicrucianism, or was known before the seventeenth century—Proved to be anterior to them all—The universality of Masonry—The ancient lectures—Why the St. Johns were considered the patrons of Masonry—Brotherly love a great characteristic of the Order—The parallelism considered—Concluding remarks . 83

# LETTER I.

## INTRODUCTORY.

" Your worth is known—you are inwardly endowed with an excellent spirit, able to discern evil from good, shadows from substance. To you, therefore, do I fly; stand but you in the gap, and defend what I have written, I ask no more, and desire no less."—KELLETT.

" From the time of Chaucer to that of Byron, the most popular authors have been the most prolific. Even the aristarch Johnson allowed that the quality of readiness and profusion had a merit in itself, independent of the intrinsic value of the composition."—SIR WALTER SCOTT.

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# LETTER I.

My Lord,

I am highly gratified with your Lordship's permission to address this small work to you, because your name will be a letter of introduction to certain classes in the *élite* of the Craft, whom I am anxious to impress with a favourable opinion of those improvements which I have meditated for the purpose of increasing its popularity and usefulness. Freemasonry has now taken its stand as a practical Institution, which promises to convey benefits to society at large, at least in an equal proportion with any other beneficent establishment, by which the present enlightened era is distinguished. If it does not occupy the first place on the list, it is second to none in my humble opinion, not even to the Royal or Antiquarian Societies; and from its position, or its more general application and usefulness, it is not without a claim to convey public honours to those eminent members who have attained masonic rank by intellectual services or mental superiority; nor is the period far distant when its honours will become public property, and entitle the bearer to use them as the acknowledged marks of distinction.

The time has been when such a claim would not have excited attention, even amongst the fraternity themselves, but would have been regarded with symptoms of distrust; because all publicity in matters relating to the Order was carefully eschewed, and it was believed that the worst consequences would result from notoriety of any kind. To discuss the principles of Masonry in a public document was thought sufficient to endanger the existence of the Institution; and to publish its transac-

tions constituted an offence which subjected the erring Brother to the severest punishment the Order has in its power to inflict. But time and experience have proved that this was a false position; for an unlimited accession to its ranks of the wise and good, the talented, the noble, and the wealthy, has resulted from a free explanation of its philosophy, and a general promulgation of the benevolent objects of the association. The limits of prejudice are diminishing every day; its broad basis is becoming hourly of smaller dimensions, and at no very distant period it will terminate in a point, and utterly vanish and disappear.

Prejudice is the bane of all improvement. The introduction of some of our greatest blessings has been obstructed by its operation. The innovations, as they were termed, of steam and gas, were met by the most unreserved opposition; agricultural improvements have had to encounter much public obloquy; and I myself can well remember the pertinacity which was used to prevent the introduction of the threshing machine, which is now in universal and beneficial operation; and the history of science displays many similar accounts of the distaste which was excited by any decided improvements in mechanical powers.

But no institution has been called on to encounter such a tedious war with prejudice as Freemasonry, because its improvements are of a less obvious nature. Its whole career has been a scene of contention with the vindictive feelings of mankind, which have arrayed against it a catalogue of charges, all of which may be traced to the operation of prejudice. The exclusion of females formed a never-failing accusation which enlisted the sympathies of the softer sex, and through their powerful influence, a wide circle in every locality was arrayed against the Order. In like manner the practice of secrecy was interpreted into a vehicle to cover plots and conspiracies against the altar and the throne; the alleged solemnity of the Mason-oath was considered a mockery of sacred things; and many other matters, which need not be particularized here, were converted, from the mere effects of prejudice, into defects which were considered inconsistent with an institution that boasts of its purity and benevolence.

The prejudices against making the philosophy of Masonry a subject of open discussion, ran at one time very high, and operated with effect upon a large portion of the fraternity. Not only were valuable manuscripts destroyed to save them from being desecrated by the profane eye of an uninitiated person, but a veto was occasionally imposed from authority for the purpose of silencing talent. Captain Smith, although he was the Junior Grand Warden when he had announced his "Use and Abuse," which was little more than a transcript of Calcott's "Candid Disquisition," that had been published under the sanction of the Duke of Beaufort, the Grand Master, was publicly decried by Brother Hesletine, the Grand Secretary, and he had interest enough to prevent the Grand Lodge from affording their patronage to the book, although it was admitted to contain "nothing objectionable." Preston was opposed by Noorthouck, from the jealousy of a rival author; and other instances might easily be adduced where essential benefits have been recklessly abandoned, rather than accept them at the hand of an individual Brother against whom any hostile feeling may exist amongst those whose influence is powerful enough to operate to his disadvantage.

Again, it was once firmly believed that the establishment of a third charity would injure, if not dissolve the other two. But instead of that, a fourth has sprung up, and all flourish abundantly, and produce many beneficent fruits. I am old enough to remember the time when many well disposed, but timid Brethren, entertained considerable fears lest the Institution should be injured by the worthless publications of Finch. But behold, the day of his imposture passed away innocuously, and he is now forgotten, and his works have descended quietly to oblivion.

It cannot be denied that there are a few unimportant errors in the system of Freemasonry, which have been suffered to remain in abeyance, because the fraternity were afraid to enter on their investigation, lest, in the process, they should incautiously betray secrets which have become consecrated by their antiquity and sterling worth. Uncertainty on such minor points was deemed preferable to the risk attending the withdrawal of the veil; and hence arises the professed ignorance of the best

informed Masons on the connection between Freemasonry and Templary; the true application of the legend of the third degree, the origin of the Royal Arch, the position of the two St. Johns.in connection with the Order; and many other subjects which might be mentioned, but are of no importance to the present inquiry.

I have devoted some time and attention, my Lord, to several of these points; not that their settlement would materially affect the working of our glorious Institution, but because it would extinguish the charge that the system is replete with anomalies, and leave the mind of the curious inquirer at liberty to study the Order as a complete science, every step of which should be plainly indicated by landmarks which are not open to doubt or objection. My opinions on some of these subjects are already before the public; and it is my intention, if I should be favoured with life and health to pursue the investigations necessary to complete the undertaking, to deal with them all *seriatim* from such evidences as may be placed at my disposal.

It may be suggested that I appear too frequently before the fraternity as a masonic writer, and that modesty should dictate a more deliberate mode of proceeding. I am not insensible, my lord, to the effect which this suggestion might produce on unreflecting minds; but it is at least doubtful, whether such observations are warranted in my particular case. I have been received with much favour by my Brethren of the mystic tie, and it appears to me that I shall display my gratitude more effectually by continued endeavours to promote their amusement and information, than by retiring from the field, and withholding the results of my researches in behalf of our common *alma mater*. Besides, at my time of life, delay might operate to extinguish the Light, and would be little better than actual desertion; and there is something within which urges me forward with irresistible force. There appears to be less danger to my literary reputation in advancing than in retreat; and I receive so much intellectual enjoyment in these discussions, that no dry argument would be able to prevail with me to discontinue them. The encroachments of age, which, in the common affairs of life, tend to sober down the exuberance of youthful enthusiasm, have served

rather to confirm the predilections of my early years in favour of divine Masonry, and to implant in my heart an increased interest in its permanent prosperity.

Sir Walter Scott, in his introduction to Ivanhoe, says, "if the author, who finds himself limited to a particular class of subjects, endeavours to sustain his reputation by striving to add a novelty of attraction to themes of the same character which have been frequently successful under his management, there are manifest reasons why, after a certain point, he is likely to fail. If the mine be not wrought out, the strength and capacity of the miner become necessarily exhausted. If he closely imitates the narratives which he has before rendered successful, he is doomed to wonder that they please no more. If he struggle to take a different view of the same class of subjects, he speedily discovers that what is obvious, graceful, and natural, has been exhausted; and, in order to obtain the indispensable charm of novelty, he is forced upon caricature, and, to avoid being trite, must become extravagant."

These observations well describe the situation in which I find myself placed with regard to the science of Freemasonry; and, therefore, leaving the beaten path of masonic investigation, I have extended my researches to those subjects of enquiry, which, though of some importance to the system, have received little attention from the generality of masonic writers. And it may not be uninteresting to describe the process by which I have been conducted to this point in the literature of the Order. I well remember the time, although many painful years have passed over in the interval, when the true beauties of the Order gradually expanded themselves to my youthful view. And the retrospect is truly delightful; cheering many an anxious moment, and shedding a bright halo of light amidst cares and disappointments which would otherwise have been extremely heavy to bear This was at the period when I occupied the chair Master of the Apollo Lodge at Grimsby. It was a noble Lodge-room, appropriated to the sole purpose of Masonry. I had a private key, and many an hour have I spent in solitary enjoyment, when no one knew that the building contained an inmate. Here my first aspirations to contribute to the benefit of the Order were imbibed

Here vast projects were formed, with none present but my Almighty Father and myself, which have not yet been fully developed. Here, surrounded by the implements of Masonry, I became impressed with sublime ideas of its superlative blessedness, and universal application to science and morals; and determined to work out principles which were then so feebly scattered as to give rise, amongst the uninitiated, to fantastic notions and absurd opinions respecting the design and end of the Institution, that derogated from the virtue and holiness of this sacred handmaiden of religion.

I found Masonry assailed by the caustic wit of the unbeliever in its mysteries, and the cold sneer of the indifferent spectator of its progress. Both were pregnant with bitter and destructive fruits; and were to be combated, if the hope of success were entertained, with unflinching zeal and undaunted perseverance. And the contest was to be almost single-handed. It appeared a hopeless attempt, and sufficient to repel the most sanguine enthusiast. The chances of success were doubtful, and the pecuniary sacrifice certain. The scoffers were potent; and, alas! many of the Brethren were too much attached to the convivialities of the Order, to exchange them for the pursuit of science and morals, and what they would term the visionary emulation of a perfectability which is too pure for the depraved nature of man, although decorated with the ornaments of Brotherly Love, Relief, and Truth; virtue, honour, and mercy, which are of more value than rubies and precious stones. With these formidable obstacles before me, I had no hope of personal advantage in the devotion of time and labour—and, shall I add talent?—to the accomplishment of this object; and the benefits to our noble Institution were at least doubtful.

The prospect was forbidding, but enthusiasm ran high; and though I had to encounter many difficulties, I entered on the task with the ardent spirit of one who was commencing an honourable career; and, after a few years, I met with a coadjutor in the "Freemasons' Quarterly Review," which lightened my labours, by dividing the weight and the responsibility. But even with this important aid, it would have exceeded my powers to complete so great an undertaking, if I had not been

favoured with the indulgence of the fraternity, whose kindness and sympathy have been very powerful stimulants, and operated as an incentive to perseverance at times when other objects of individual interest started up as rivals to masonic fame. My subsequent labours will show that I did not shrink from the task, being encouraged by the words of the Roman poet—

> Doctrina sed vim promovet insitam,
> Rectique cultus pectora roborant;
> Utcunque defecere mores,
> Dedecorant bene nata culpæ.

Having thus hinted at a few circumstances which appeared calculated to render the success of such an undertaking doubtful, it ought also to be remarked that the general state of Masonry at that period was favourable to the design. The recent union between the two great sections of the Order had established a firmness and consistency which gave a new impulse to the exertions of the fraternity. Ancient feuds were healed; the obnoxious appellations of *ancient* and *modern* were extinguished, and the Brethren of each class had no object of rivalry but that holy one of exceeding each other in the unalloyed pleasure of extending the essential benefits of the system, by acts of benevolence and charity, and the uniform practice of brotherly love. The resources of the lodges were augmented by an accession of new members; the popularity of the Order was gradually increasing from year to year; and a decided taste for a more extensive knowledge of its science and philosophy had begun to display itself amongst the Brethren.

Still, masonic *readers* were very thinly scattered, at that period, over the surface of the fraternity. And when I first communicated my plan to some intelligent friends, they used many feasible arguments to dissuade me from the undertaking. They told me that I had better furbish an old suit of armour, and with a rusty sword in one hand, and a lance in the other, to mount Rosinante, and sally forth in quest of adventures. The scheme, they said, was equally Quixotic, and was certain to be a decided failure. And after I had fairly embarked in the attempt, they frequently asked me how my combat with the windmills was likely to terminate. This was

very discouraging; but I persisted, even in the face of all these unfavourable predictions; and although every member of my own lodge subscribed to all my earliest productions, I cannot "lay the flattering unction to my soul" that a tithe of them, popular as I was, ever read the books.

But, my Lord, you will think that I have said rather too much about myself. How I have accomplished my original design can scarcely yet be determined; for though I have explained the system in detail, my plan is not yet completed. I have still before me the task of setting at rest those questions on which there exists a diversity of opinions. The origin and design of the Royal Arch was one of these questions, and this I have disposed of. Then follows the subject of the work before us; and it is hoped that the arguments used in these pages will determine how far the two St. Johns are, or ought to be, legitimately connected with the Order.

There are some other disputed points in Masonry which remain in abeyance, but as they are unconnected with the present enquiry, it will not be necessary to record my judgment upon them here.

It was an assertion of the celebrated author of the Ecclesiastical Polity, that "there will be no end to contention without the submission of all parties unto some definite sentence;" and he enforces the proposition by this argument:—"Of this we are right sure, that Nature, Scripture, and experience it selfe, have all taught the world to seeke for the ending of contentions, by submitting it selfe unto some judiciall and definitive sentence, whereunto neither part that contendeth may vnder any pretence or colour refuse to stand. This must needs bee effectuall and strong. As for other meanes without this, they seldom prevaile. I would therefore know whether for the ending of these irksome strifes, yee be content to referre your cause to any other higher judgment then your owne; or else intend to persist and proceed as yee have begun, till your selves can bee perswaded to condemne your selves. If your determination be this, we can be but sorry that ye should deserve to be reckoned with such, of whom God himselfe pronounceth, the way of peace they have not knowne."

These observations will equally apply to the discre-

pancies of Freemasonry, although they are not of such vital importance as the subjects to which Hooker refers in the above passage; but they are sufficient, if not to destroy the peace of the masonic Order, at least to disturb its unity; and, therefore, it would be well if they could be finally settled by authority, after a full and deliberate investigation, and arranged in such a manner as to constitute landmarks which it would be penal to alter. How far my own opinions on these controverted subjects may be esteemed orthodox, must be left to the fraternity to determine; and I trust they will not judge me with severity, considering the scanty materials which I have had to work upon. I have faithfully recorded my own convictions, and the decision on their merits will be pronounced by posterity. The antiquities of symbolical Masonry, its signs and symbols, its initiations, the Christian reference of its lectures, its philosophy and science, and its historical landmarks, together with the origin and insignia of the English Royal Arch, and the history and tendency of the sublime degrees, have, in their turn, occupied my attention. In the "Golden Remains," I have treated on the literature, social position, usages and customs, tests, and cyphers of the Order; and in the "Freemasons' Quarterly Review," copious dissertations on the spurious and operative Freemasonry, have periodically appeared.

In the present work I have stated all the arguments for and against the connection of the two St. Johns with symbolical Masonry; and it is my intention—if the Almighty should be graciously pleased to grant me health and strength—to follow it up with dissertations on the building, furnishing, and decoration of a lodge-room according to the usages of antiquity; on the symbolism of the chief officers; on the cosmopolite character of the Order, &c., &c.; together with an ample explanation of the comprehensive symbol on page 19 of the last edition of the "Signs and Symbols," which is called by an Arabian cabalistical writer, "THE SECRET OF SECRETS; THE BEGINNING AND RETURN OF EVERYTHING; THE SECRET OF THE NATURE OF THE WORLD;" and has excited the curiosity of many scientific Brethren. These —if I should be fortunate enough to complete the plan which is formed in my own mind—will appear at con-

venient intervals; and will contain opinions and arguments on many points both of discipline and doctrine, about which the fraternity are at present by no means agreed.

The utility of such a proceeding, in the present flourishing state of Masonry, will be evident to the most casual observer; and I do not entertain the slightest doubt but it will be received with favour by every real lover of its philosophy and science, amongst which number your Lordship occupies a distinguished station; and it is for this reason that I am proud to have the honour of publishing the present work under the sanction of your name.

> Complures alios, doctos ego quos et amicos
> Prudens prætereo; quibus hæc, sint qualiacumque,
> Arridere velim; doliturus, si placeant spe
> Deterius nostra. HOR.

I have the honour to be,
My Lord,
With great respect,
Your Lordship's most obedient
Servant and Brother,
GEO. OLIVER, D. D.

Scopwick Vicarage, Nov. 5, 1847.

## LETTER II.

### A FEW OBJECTIONS TO THE MASONIC PARALLELISM OF THE TWO ST. JOHNS REFUTED.

"Meanwhile, the house new swept,
And from uncleanness kept;
If all things shine with grace,
And nothing's out of place,
Then do we praise the household maid,
And fourfold surely she's repaid."—MASONIC SONG.

"When we instruct others, we should not think it enough to deliver positive truths; but we should also take good care, as near as we can, to leave them clear, and, by prevention, to stop the mouths of such as love to pick quarrels at the truth, and to bark against the light."—BISHOP SANDERSON.

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## LETTER II.

My Lord,

It is a standing rule of the Masonic Society, that the landmarks of the Order are incapable of alteration. Every law is based on this fundamental principle, and it is embodied in the constitutions, charges, lectures, and regulations of the Craft in every country where Freemasonry flourishes. The soundness of this rule is borne out by analogy and reason; for if the landmarks were variable, the nature of the Institution would be liable to continual changes, and in one century it would bear a different character from what it sustained in another; and, consequently, its claims to antiquity would soon rest on a very slender foundation.

If the essential doctrines of the Gospel were changed by successive innovations, and others substituted in their place, it would no longer be the vehicle of Christianity, "the power of God and the wisdom of God," but a stumbling block to the faithful, and a meteor to mislead the inconsiderate and the unwary. In like manner, if the legality of periodical changes in Freemasonry were admitted by its constitutions, and it were consequently lawful for every lodge to prescribe its own ceremonies, not only would the beautiful principle of uniformity be lost, but the Freemasonry of each individual province would become an indeterminate and patchwork system, which its best friends would be unable to recognize as the pure and sublime Order into which they had been initiated elsewhere. Innumerable evils would attend such a loose and latitudinarian proceeding, and Freemasonry would degenerate into a mere local institution, without dgnity in its practice, or benefit in its effect.

There needs, my Lord, no extended argument to prove that such versatility would be attended with great disadvantages; and not only deprive the Order of its most beneficial properties, but would inevitably conduce to its final dissolution. The great and exclusive boast of Freemasonry is, that "it is the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever;" that its attributes have been in all ages of its existence unvaried, its leading features immutable, and its principle, unity; to depart from which would destroy its efficacy and endanger its existence.

At the revival of Masonry, it was resolved in Grand Lodge, that "it is not in the power of any man or body of men to make any alteration or innovation in the body of Masonry."[1] But this rule, like all others formed by the imperfection of human reason, is not without exceptions. Trifling alterations have been incautiously admitted, which, though unable individually to affect the established landmarks of the Order, have introduced discrepancies that, by long standing, assume the immunity attached to prescription, although of very recent origin.

Des Etangs goes much further than this: he says, "all things degenerate by time, and Masonry suffers with the rest. It differs from what it was as much as the manners of Jews and Christians vary from each other. There exist six thousand religious sects, and seven hundred species of Masonry, or associations which resemble it." Of course we are to understand this of the continental innovations of the last century. He then goes on to say, that "it requires the concurrence of all good Masons to restore the true and ancient regimen;" and professes to show the injury which time has inflicted on it, and the means of its restoration. This would be a laudable attempt, if Masonry had really degenerated as he asserts; but I am persuaded that this writer has taken too unfavourable a view of the above-mentioned innovations. They have not injured genuine Masonry at all; and instead of being split into seven hundred sections, it remains essentially the same as it was in the most ancient times.

It was for the especial purpose of preventing an

[1] Anderson. Const., June 24, 1723.

alteration of landmarks, that the primitive Grand Lodge appears to have been so anxious to guard against the admission of any, even the slightest deviation, from primitive observances, as they were transmitted by the masonic worthies of ancient times to those who collected and preserved the scattered documents of antiquity at the beginning of the eighteenth century. Nothing is too small or too insignificant to be the author of important changes either physical or moral. A single drop of water is but a feeble instrument to effect any great desigr; and yet, by constant repetition it will wear away a block of marble. How trifling soever each single innovation in Masonry may have been, the aggregate amount will, in process of time, become important, if these minute changes by frequently repeated. Thus the son of Sirach says, "he that contemneth small things, shall fall by little and little."[2]

But, my Lord, it will not be difficult to show that some of these alterations are neither trifling nor unimportant, although not sufficient to change the character of Masonry. The third degree, for instance, has undergone some changes since the revival in 1717, which have created an unnecessary confusion respecting the doors in Solomon's Temple. The first notice I find of them in Masonry places them in the east, west, and south; but they are now, with greater propriety, said to be north, south, and east; our transatlantic Brethren use the south, west and east; while in Scotland, the order is east, south, and west. On the continent, at least in France, with more regard to the primitive design of the legend, they are altogether silent about these traditional doors; and I am persuaded they are right; for, by the mention of any particular situation, we reject the means of proving whether they are typical or real. Their relative position was not mentioned in England till after 1725; the words then used were simply, "the three entrances to the Temple." And this is the reason why the French rituals do not mention them; for they were all founded on the lectures furnished to the First Lodge at Paris by the Grand Lodge of England, and forwarded along with the warrant. It does not appear difficult to

[2] Eccles. xix., 1.

understand why the lectures on this point were altered. The impression was, that the *real* gates of the Temple were to be understood, and their position is mentioned in a note to one of the two first degrees of the Maçonnerie Adonhiramite, published by M. St. Victor about the year 1783. The real gates of the Temple, as every one knows, were north, south, and east; and hence Hemming, and those who drew up the reformed lectures and rituals, rejecting the symbolic tendency of the legend, adopted the true position of the doors. But, as your Lordship knows, the word *doors*, when they are open, or untiled, as these are supposed to have been, is not masonic.

We find similar complaints in other countries respecting slight alterations and innovations in the legitimate work of Masonry. The Grand Master of Tennessee, in his annual address to the Grand Lodge in 1842, thus refers to the subject:—he says, "I am informed that there is a great want of uniformity in the mode of conferring the different degrees; and that errors have crept into the administration of our rites, which impair the beauty and harmony of the system. These errors require to be corrected, and the sooner the correction is made the better. If they are permitted to go on, they will, in time to come, be considered as a part of the system, and take such hold, that they will be difficult to eradicate. These errors, and this want of uniformity, may be attributed to the cloud which for so many years has hung over the Order; to the withdrawal of the older members from the active duties of the lodges, leaving them to the guidance and control of the younger and more inexperienced Brethren, who are too frequently led astray by what is novel and striking." And then this worthy dignitary proceeds to point out the remedy, and to propound new laws for the correction of the abuses, which he expresses his full determination rigidly to enforce.

But my principal business in these Letters will be rather with omissions than interpolations. In 1717, as we have every reason to believe, the landmarks were pure and unchanged, as they had been delivered by the Dionysiacs, who travelled over the world for employment after the completion of Solomon's Temple, to their successors, and transmitted through the Roman Collegiæ

Fabrorum, and the Freemasons of the middle ages, down to the revival of Masonry in that year. This we are bound to take for granted, because no evidences exist to disprove the facts. If, then, it be strictly true, as we have no reason to doubt, it is also true that the lodges had always been dedicated TO GOD AND HOLY ST. JOHN from the very beginning of the Christian era, because that formula was introduced into the first known lectures, which were compiled by Grand Masters Payne, Desaguliers, Anderson, and others, from ancient documents which they had collected with great labour and research, out of the legitimate archives of Masonry, and other accessible sources of equal authenticity.

Your Lordship is doubtless aware, that in the lectures which were drawn up and modified by Dr. Hemming and his coadjutors for the general use of the lodges, after the re-union in 1813, the references to the two St. Johns, both as patrons and parallels of Masonry, are discontinued; and the use of these lectures having been very generally adopted, all allusion to the above masonic worthies, who were held in such high estimation amongst our ancient Brethren, is exploded and lost. The authority for such a deviation from time-honoured custom is involved in mystery. Be it, therefore, our business to inquire, whether such an alteration of the old landmarks is or is not justifiable, in accordance with the genius of the Order, by an appeal to ancient observances, transmitted unimpaired down to the year 1813. I think it is not, and proceed to give the reasons which have induced me to embrace that opinion.

But we will first clear the way by an examination of the several objections to the theory, which have been adduced at various times, and in different countries. Some of our Brethren, who reject all traditions about the parallelism of the two St. Johns, are ready to admit that blue Masonry is rightly denominated St. John's Masonry; but they refer it to a very different cause than the Grand Mastership of either the Baptist or the Evangelist. They contend that the battle of Bannockburn having been fought on St. John's day, and Freemasonry having been revived by Robert Bruce immediately after the victory, it was thence called St. John's Masonry; and that the church of Kelso, the first that

was built in Scotland by the actual Freemasons, was dedicated to that saint. This suggestion can scarcely be tenable, when we consider that Freemasonry had the name of St. John attached to it in countries where Scottish transactions would not be of sufficient authority to influence the fraternity in the adoption of a patron or a name for the Institution.

Others say, with quite as little reason, that the introduction of the legend of St. John into Masonry was the work of the Templars, or other crusaders, who fought the infidels in the Holy Land, and adopted this saint as their patron. The Chevalier Ramsay asserted that his system of Masonry arose during the crusades; and that there was either an order of chivalry, whose business it was to rebuild the Christian churches which had been destroyed by the Saracens, or that a fraternity of Masons were thus employed in the East, under the protection of the Knights of St. John of Jerusalem; and that the appellation of St. John's Masonry was derived from thence, and ever after retained.

In answer to this supposition, it would not be difficult to prove, notwithstanding the confident assertions of Barruel and others, that the Templars, who were engaged in the crusades, were perfectly ignorant of symbolical Masonry, and never so much as dreamt that such a system existed; and, I am persuaded that every sensible Mason will agree with me that there is no evidence whatever to substantiate a contrary belief. The above idea, however, which was unknown a century and a half ago, was embraced by the notorious Finch; and to give it weight and authenticity, he introduced the following passage into one of his spiritual rituals, and it was adopted inconsiderately by a few lodges, which were worked according to his plans:—"What is the chief reason why our lodges are dedicated to St. John? Because, in the time of the crusades, the Masons having united themselves with the Knights of St. John of Jerusalem to fight against the infidels, they adopted that saint as their tutelary protector; and, being victorious in their conflicts with the Saracens, they unanimously agreed that all masonic lodges should in future be dedicated to him." This gave currency to the fiction; for Finch made the most of it by introducing it on all occa-

sions, accompanied by much unmeaning verbiage; and it contributed to give popularity to his system, by the attractive colouring which he imparted to the details, and so far promoted his views of pecuniary emolument at the expense of truth.

Others, again, who favour an astronomical construction of our rites and ceremonies, embracing the hypothesis that Freemasonry was transmitted through Pythagoras and the Romans, think they have discovered a simple solution of the mystery in the god Janus, of which they suppose John to be a corruption, and that his two faces were symbolical of the two St. Johns. And as Janus looked two ways at once, *i. e.*, to the old and new year, or to the sun *above* and *below* the equinoctial, so the festivals of the two St. Johns are celebrated at the summer and winter solstices. Dr. Warburton says, in his commentary on Shakespeare,[3] with equal probability, that the heads of Janus represented Pan and Bacchus, or Saturn and Apollo. It will, however, be needless to say that this fanciful theory is wholly unfounded. The infidels of the last century fabled that our blessed Saviour was no other than Hercules; and that his death and resurrection, by which we are redeemed from sin, was no other than a new version of the last labour of Hercules, whose conquest of the Lernean serpent was likened to Christ's victory over the devil in the wilderness; that his descent into the lower regions to conquer Cerberus was a symbol of his death, and his emerging thence, after remaining three days and nights in Tartarus, a type of his resurrection. Now I submit, my Lord, that Janus is no more applicable to the St. Johns than Hercules is to Christ.

The Masons on the continent of Europe have embraced a very different opinion. They admit the connection of St. John with Masonry, but give the honour to St. John the Almsgiver, who was patriarch of Alexandria in the sixth century, but took up his residence at Jerusalem, that he might assist the Christians who had made a pilgrimage to the holy shrine; and instituted a fraternity to attend upon the sick, and to afford pecuniary aid to the needy. He died in the odour of sanctity, and was

[3] Merchant of Venice act i. scene 1.

canonized, for his abundant virtues, under the name of St. John the Almsgiver of Jerusalem, and is acknowledged as the patron of all societies which are instituted for the relief of the sick and destitute. The error of appropriating the patronage of Masonry to this patriarch is manifest from our particular days of festival, which are June 24 and December 27, while those of St. John the Almsgiver are January 23 and November 11.

But all this is little to the purpose. Conjecture is well, where authentic evidence is not to be had; but proof is better, when it is based on rational and well-grounded argument. And if in every accessible document which treats on Freemasonry down to the re-union above mentioned, the two St. Johns are named as its patrons, it must appear clear to every unprejudiced person, that the record can have no other reference than to the two cotemporaries of our Saviour, as real persons, and in their real characters; and that it possesses a just and reasonable claim to be considered one of those unalterable landmarks which it is a violation of the true principles of Masonry to reject.

I have the honour to be,
My Lord,
Your Lordship's obedient
Servant and Brother,
GEO. OLIVER, D. D.

Scopwick Vicarage, Nov. 8, 1847.

## LETTER III.

ENQUIRY WHETHER THE PATRONAGE OF MASONRY WAS ORIGINALLY VESTED IN THE TWO ST. JOHNS DURING THE LAST CENTURY, OR AT ANY EARLIER PERIOD.

"Peter saith unto Jesus, 'Lord, what shall this man do? Jesus saith unto him, If I will that he tarry until I come, what is that to thee. Follow thou me. Then went this saying abroad among the brethren, that this disciple should not die.' Now the apprehension hereof hath been received either grossly or in the general, that is not distinguishing the manner or particular way of this continuation, in which sense probably the grosser and undiscerning party received it. On more distinctly apprehending the manner of his immortality; that is, that John should never properly die, but be translated into Paradise, there to remain with Enoch and Elias until about the coming of Christ; and should be slain with them under antichrist, according to that of the Apocalypse."—BROWNE.

## LETTER III.

My Lord,

In entering on this enquiry, I am not unconscious that the freedom of discussion will be considerably restricted by a deficiency of authentic evidence; and I shall therefore be obliged to accommodate circumstances to the traditions of Masonry; as these will be our only guides through the impervious atmosphere of a distant period, which affords scarcely a glimmering ray to direct our path or guide us in our search after the truth. What Dr. Kitto says of chronology, may be justly applied to the subject before us:—"After an anxious survey of the thick clouds which hang over this period, for some ray of light which might guide us through its utter darkness, we turn away as disappointed as all our predecessors. Nothing, therefore, remains for us but to make such accommodations, and so to balance the various difficulties, as to obtain the result, which, without being certain of the truth, seems the best and the most probable under all the circumstances."

In every estimate that I have been able to form of Freemasonry, the foundation on which I invariably build is, the system as it was promulgated at the revival in 1717. This is a rock which will firmly sustain any edifice that may be placed upon it; for it is the only certain standard of truth established by authority. No authentic records precede it which treat of Masonry as a perfect system. All previous notices of the Order, like the links of a broken chain, are unconnected and detached; and though extremely valuable as parts of a whole, are defective and useless, because the connecting links are wanting, for they were burnt to ashes, and cast forth to the winds of heaven, by jealous and fastidious Brethren, who were ignorant of the real tendency of the Craft, and

misinterpreted the measures which were successfully adopted to promote its best and most enduring interests. The scattered rays of light were, fortunately, still accessible, and nobly did the conservators of Masonry toil to search them out, and bring them into efficient operation. Those worthy Masons whose names ought to be had in honour throughout all time, Anthony Sayer, Elliott, Lamball, Payne, Desaguliers, Gofton, Morrice, Calvert, De Noyer, and a few others, used the most strenuous exertions to put the system into a form consistent with ancient observances. According to their own account, they "perused old manuscripts, digested ancient consti tutions, collected the old Gothic charges, and consulted intelligent brethren," about those secret rites and ordinances, and doctrines, which "were never divulged in manuscript," and embodied every hint which had the unequivocal sanction of ancient usage in its favour. The labours of these eminent men have placed Freemasonry on a basis that cannot be shaken; and the ceremonies and doctrines which were used by them I will defend to the death, as containing the true and unalterable principles of the Craft. Let us, then, enquire whether any reference to St. John may be found in the ritual which was propounded at that period by the revived Grand Lodge.

In the earliest lectures that were used under its sanction, St. John was alluded to in the following manner:— "Q. From whence came you? A. From the holy lodge of St. John. Q. What recommendation do you bring from thence? A. A recommendation from the brothers and fellows of that right worshipful and holy lodge of St. John, from whence I came, who greet you thrice heartily."

This I take to be a plain admission, by the first Grand Lodge under the revived system, after using every possible means of ascertaining the true belief of antiquity on all points connected with the Order, which they had undertaken to rescue from the oblivion into which it was falling, in consequence of "the age and infirmities of Sir Christopher Wren, the Grand Master,"—that the St. Johns were considered the legitimate patrons of Christian Masonry. But to prevent the *universality* of the Order from being affected by such a doctrine, the old charges dis-

tinctly provided, that although "*in ancient times the Christian Masons were charged to comply with the Christian usages of each country where they travelled, or worked*, yet Masonry being found in all nations, even of divers religions, they are now only charged to adhere to that religion in which all men agree, leaving each brother to his own particular opinions, that is, to be good men and true, men of honour and honesty, by whatever names, religions, or persuasions they may be distinguished; for they all agree in the three great articles of Noah, enough to preserve the cement of the lodge."

And the revivers of Masonry, that they might distinctly announce their opinions on this particular subject, caused it to be still more elaborately enunciated in the formula, as improved by Desaguliers and Anderson a few years later. It is here stated that the lodges were called St. John's lodges, because "he was the baptizer and forerunner of our Saviour; and announced him as the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sins of the world." This corresponds with the French ritual, A.D. 1730, which is equally plain:—"D. Comments' appelle cette Loge? R. La Loge de S. Jean." And the passage was thus explained:—"Il fait toujours repondre ainsi parce *que c'est le nom de toutes les Loges*."

We now come to the consideration of Bro. Dunckerley's lectures, which I am persuaded were identical with those which are attributed to Martin Clare. In this ritual the same asseveration is repeated; and more than this, St. John was now introduced into the style of the O.B., that the great truth might be fully impressed upon every candidate at his first initiation. It ran thus:—"In the presence of God, and this right worshipful and holy lodge, dedicated to God and holy St. John;" and the asseveration corresponded with it—"so help me God and holy St. John. These forms were continued in general use by most of the lodges, till the re-union of the two great sections in 1813.

The next stage of our enquiry improves our view of the case, and the light beams still more effulgently upon us. In a catechism used a little later than the middle of the century, which, by way of eminence, is called "the Old York Lecture," the two St. Johns occupy a prominent situation; and the passage where they are

introduced is so characteristic of a cosmical institution, as well as illustrative of the subject under discussion, that I quote it at length. "Q. Our lodges being finished, furnished, and decorated with ornaments, furniture, and jewels, to whom were they consecrated? A. To God. Q. Thank you, Brother; and can you tell me to whom they were first dedicated? A. To Noah, who was saved in the ark. Q. And by what name were the Masons then known? A. They were called Noachidæ, Sages, or Wise Men. Q. To whom were the lodges dedicated during the Mosaic dispensation? A. To Moses, the chosen of God; and Solomon, the son of David, king of Israel, who was an eminent patron of the Craft. Q. And under what name were the Masons known during that period? A. Under the name of Dionysiacs, Geometricians, or Masters in Israel. Q. But, Brother, as Solomon was a Jew, and died long before the promulgation of Christianity, to whom were they dedicated under the Christian dispensation? A. From Solomon, the patronage of Masonry passed to St. John the Baptist. Q. And under what name were they known after the promulgation of Christianity? A. Under the name of Essenes, Architects, or Freemasons. Q. Why were the lodges dedicated to St. John the Baptist? A. Because he was the forerunner of our Saviour; and by preaching repentance and humiliation, drew the first parallel of the Gospel. Q. Had St. John the Baptist any equal? A. He had; St. John the Evangelist. Q. Why is he said to be equal to the Baptist? A. Because he finished by his learning what the other began by his zeal, and thus drew a second line parallel to the former; ever since which time, Freemasons' lodges, in all Christian countries, have been dedicated to the one or the other, or both of these worthy and worshipful men."

In the ritual practised by the lodges in the north of England, a little later in the century, we find the following passage:—"Our lodges are untruely said to be dedicated to St. John, because the Masons who engaged to conquer the Holy Land chose that saint for their patron. We should be sorry to appropriate the Balsarian sect of Christians to St. John as an explanation of this principle. St. John obtains our dedication as being the proclaimer of that salvation which was at hand by the coming of

Christ; and we, as a set of religious men assembling in the true faith, commemorate the proclamations of the Baptist. In the name of St. John the Evangelist, we acknowledge the testimonies which he gives, and the divine Logos, which he makes manifest." And again—"Our beauty is such as adorns all our actions; is hewn out of the rock, which is Christ; raised upright with the plumb-line of the Gospel; and squared and levelled to the horizontal of God's will in the holy lodge of St. John; and as such becomes the temple whose maker and builder is God."

It appears, my Lord, from the above facts, that the name of St. John was a generic term for all Freemasons' lodges. And this will be further apparent from a perusal of the "Golden Remains of the early Masonic Writers;" for they uniformly speak of the two St. Johns as being universally received as the undoubted patrons of the Craft. It is a fact that was never once called into question, although it must be confessed that the reasons for its adoption slightly vary. Our transatlantic Brethren say—"The dedications are made to these saints, not as Christians, but as eminent Masons; and if we are gratuitous in bestowing such a character upon them, this does not affect the merit of the argument, because the dedication is made under the supposition that this is their character. They are honoured by us, not as saints, but as good and pious men—not as teachers of religion, but as bright examples of all those virtues which Masons are taught to reverence and practice. And if to all this it incidentally happens that they were also Christians, such a circumstance should, with a tolerant Jew, be no objection to the honours paid to them; but with a sincere Christian, a better reason."[1] In this passage, the identity of the persons is preserved—however the reason for their adoption may differ from that which was assigned by our Brethren of the last century.

These are the facts, and they cannot be shaken by any amount of argument. There they stand, and no sophistry can explain them away. In the words of a modern writer, "a truth remains a truth, though all the world agree to call it a lie; and error is not the less error,

[1] Moore's Mag., vol. iii.

though every learned body in Christendom certify to its veracity. Hypotheses and theories may be talked about and fought about as long as we will, and then we shall be as far from a satisfactory conclusion as ever." The above series of facts serve to direct our path; and by their removal we make "shipwreck of our ancient faith." We might as well prostrate trial by jury, and still contend that the British constitution exists in all its primitive perfection. We might as well strike out an asterism from the sky, and still argue that its ancient appearance is unchanged. We might as well expel the St. Johns from the system of Christianity, and exhibit the Redeemer without a proclamation on the one hand, or a recorder of his actions on the other.

But it is contended that, as Freemasonry was in existence many ages before either of the St. Johns flourished, they could not possibly have been its original patrons. Nor is it asserted that they were: and, therefore, the objection may be admitted in its full force without affecting the proposition, that the two St. Johns are the legitimate patrons and parallels of the Order. In fact, it proves nothing; for, in another stage of their progress, the old lecturers distinctly explain the origin of their appropriation in the following words, which are but the extension of a ritual already cited:—"After the flood, the Masons were called Noachidæ, and from the building of the tabernacle, the lodges were dedicated to Moses. From the building of the first temple at Jerusalem to the Babylonish captivity, Freemasons' lodges were dedicated to King Solomon; from thence to the coming of Shilo, they were dedicated to Zerubbabel; and from that time to the final destruction of the temple by Titus, they were dedicated to St. John the Baptist; but owing to the many massacres and disorders which attended that memorable event, Freemasonry sunk very much into decay; many lodges were entirely broken up, and few could meet in sufficient numbers to constitute their legality; and at a general meeting of the Craft held at Jerusalem, it was observed that the principal reason for the decline of Masonry, was the want of a Grand Master to patronize it; they, therefore, deputed seven of their most eminent members to wait upon St. John the Evangelist, who was at that time Bishop of Ephesus,

requesting him to take upon himself the office of Grand Master. He returned for answer, that though well stricken in years, yet having been in the early part of his life initiated into Masonry, he would accept the office;[2] thereby completing by his learning what the other St. John had begun by his zeal; and thus drew what Freemasons term a line parallel; ever since which, Freemasons' lodges, in all Christian countries, have been dedicated both to St. John the Baptist and St. John the Evangelist."

In this formula, the reason for placing the two St. Johns as the parallels of Masonry, is so plainly stated, as to admit of neither doubt nor dispute. If the St. Johns are to be understood symbolically, then Zerubbabel, and Solomon, and Moses, and Noah, must also be symbolical characters, for they are placed on exactly the same basis. This is an hypothesis which the most sceptical Brother will scarcely be willing to admit; because if it were conceded, Freemasonry would become a visionary institution, its landmarks would be doubtful, and its references uninteresting and obscure. If the above personages be allegorical, what will become of the deliverance from Egyptian bondage—Moses and the Tabernacle—Jeptha and the Ephraimites—Solomon and the Temple, &c., &c.? They must all, by the same rule, be considered allegorical, and the very worst charges of Paine, Carlisle, and others, who denied the reality of all these events and persons, will be fathered upon the fraternity; a consummation which would soon sweep it away from

[2] It is an historical fact, that the early Christians sent a deputation to St. John in his old age, requesting him to give them a code of rules for their observance, that the identity of their faith might be perpetuated as an exclusive society. Thus Dr. Kitto says (Annot. on John, i., 1, "The intimations preserved by the early fathers inform us that the aged apostle was induced to write his gospel *at the earnest solicitations of the churches in Asia Minor*, with a view of overturning the errors which were then promulgated by Cerinthus, the Nicolaitans, and others. As these errors were, for the most part, founded on mistaken notions of the real nature, character, and office of Jesus Christ, he selected from the history and discourses of his Lord those passages which bore most strongly upon these subjects; and which tended, by the exhibition of correct views, to overthrow the existing errors, and establish a rule of faith for the future, on those points which had been brought into dispute."

the face of the earth, pursued by the execrations of mankind.

But your Lordship will be at no loss to discover that the diversity in the formulæ constitutes a strong evidence of the truth of the facts, because it proves that in every modification or improvement of the lectures, which took place during the last century, the description of patronage and parallelism never varied; and the legality of dedicating the lodges to St. John was never questioned, but was esteemed as an admitted truth, which none but the most captious cowan ever ventured to controvert.

In the original lectures compiled by Sayer, Payne, and Desaguliers, and improved by Anderson, Desaguliers, and Cowper; in the revisions of Dunckerley and Martin Clare, twice repeated; and in the extended rituals of Hutchinson, Preston, and others, which were in use down to the reunion in 1813, and by some lodges even to the present time, all of which have been cited above, the St. Johns occupy their place as the patrons of Masonry; no link in the chain of evidence is broken; for in no one ritual, whether *ancient* or *modern*, which was in use during the whole century, have they been omitted.

But there is a further proof of greater antiquity than any we have yet noticed, that blue Masonry was dignified with the name of St. John. In a system of Masonry used, as it is confidently affirmed, in the fourteenth century, the following passage occurs in the O. B.:—

> "That you will always keep, guard, and conceal,
> And from this time you never will reveal,
> Either to M. M., F. C., or apprentice,
> Of St. John's Order, what our grand intent is."

Here we have the name of St. John's Masonry particularly assigned to three degrees only; and, if it were a fact universally acknowledged at that period, we may safely conclude that its origin may be dated at a much earlier epoch; and even carried back to the time when the Evangelist flourished. In a word, the Masons of the eighteenth century would have sacrificed every other landmark of the Order, rather than abandon their ancient and legiti-

mate patrons. Paley says—"I know not a more rash or unphilosophical conduct of the understanding, than to reject the substance of a story, by reason of some diversity in the circumstances with which it is related. The usual character of human testimony is substantial truth under circumstantial variety. This is what the daily experience of courts of justice teaches. When accounts of a transaction come from the mouths of different witnesses, it is seldom that it is not possible to pick out apparent or real inconsistencies between them. These inconsistencies are studiously displayed by an adverse pleader, but oftentimes with little impression upon the minds of the judges. On the contrary, a close and minute agreement induces the suspicion of confederacy and fraud. When written histories touch upon the same scenes of action, the comparison almost always affords ground for a like reflection. Numerous, and sometimes important variations present themselves; not seldom also, absolute and final contradictions; yet neither one nor the other are deemed sufficient to shake the credibility of the main fact."[3]

Now this arrangement of changing the grand patrons of Masonry along with the systems of religion by which it is practised, is perfectly consistent with ordinary usage in other important matters. Before the legation of Moses, the patriarchal religion was the true one, and it was dedicated to Noah and Abraham; the former being dignified with the appellation of "a preacher of righteousness,"[4] and the latter of "the father of the faithful."[5] After that event the legitimate system of faith was no longer patriarchal but Jewish, and was accordingly dedicated to Moses and Aaron, as lawgiver and priest; the one being called "Moses prophet," and also "a burning and a shining light," as his successor was afterwards named; and the other "Pharaoh's God."[6] And from the advent of the Messiah, mankind are expected by the Almighty to embrace Christianity as the only efficient means of salvation, and it was dedicated to Christ the Son of God, as "a Light to lighten the Gentiles, and the

[3] Evidences, part iii., c. 1.
[4] 2 Peter ii., 5.
[5] Romans iv., 11.
[6] Deut. vii., 1.

glory of Israel;"[7] of whom St. John the Baptist was the herald, and St. John the Evangelist the beloved disciple.

In imitation of this example, which was prescribed by the Divinity himself, patriarchal Freemasonry had for its grand parallels Noah and Abraham; when it was in the custody of the Jews, the lodges were dedicated to Moses and Solomon; but after the destruction of the Temple at Jerusalem, and the dissolution of the Jewish polity, both civil and ecclesiastical, Masonry fell into the hands of the Christians, and was, by a very natural process, placed under the especial patronage of the herald and the chief disciple of the divine Founder of their religion. Again, under the patriarchs, the Masons were called Noachidæ; by the Jews, Dionysiacs or Geometricians; and by the Christians, Masons or Freemasons; but in all ages they were equally styled "the Brethren" (*οι αδελφοι*).

On this rational interpretation of a very obvious practice, it appears wonderful that Christian Masons of our own country, after the appropriation has remained undisputed for eighteen hundred years, should endeavour to overturn it, and restore the obsolete custom of attributing the patronage of Christian Masonry to Moses and Solomon, which is at variance with the concurrent practice of all time. The above process is the great touchstone by which the legitimacy of any ceremony, or series of ceremonies, can be rationally determined. And I would have it perfectly understood, my Lord, that I am speaking of Masonry as practised by Christians. In Jewish lodges the appropriation of masonic patronage to Moses and Solomon is perfectly just, and in keeping with the above line of argument, *although it is precisely the same violation of the universality of the Order* as the Christians are charged with, who assign their Masonry to the Grand Mastership of the two St. Johns.

My researches have been unsuccessful to determine the exact period when the above parrallelism was introduced into the Order. In the earliest lectures (A. D. 1721), it is mentioned thus:—"God's good greeting be to this our happy meeting. And all right worshipful brothers and fel-

[7] Luke ii., 32.

lows of the right worshipful and holy lodge of St. John Q. Why do you denominate it the holy lodge of St. John? A. Because he was the forerunner of our Saviour, and laid the first parallel line to the Gospel." We are therefore bound to conclude that it was a dogma of great antiquity. In another formula which was introduced a few years later, improved by Bro. Dunckerley, the parallelism is still more intelligibly enunciated.—"In all regularly constituted lodges there is a certain point within a circle; the point representing an individual brother; the circle representing the boundary line of his duty to God and man, beyond which he is never to suffer his passions, prejudices, or interests to betray him on any occasion. *This circle is embordered by two perpendicular parallel lines, representing St. John the Baptist and St. John the Evangelist, who were perfect parallels in Christianity as well as in Masonry;* and upon the vertex rests the book of the Holy Scriptures, which point out the whole duty of man. In going round this circle we necessarily touch upon these two lines, as well as on the Holy Scripture; and whilst a Mason keeps himself thus circumscribed, it is impossible that he should materially err."

A curious illustration of this symbol of a circle and parallel lines, in connection with the two St. Johns, is found in the ancient union of the zodiacal circle with the period when the festival of the two saints was celebrated. In the old Runic Fasti, a wheel or circle was used to denote the festival of Christmas. The learned Gebelin derives Yule, the ancient name of Christmas, from a primitive word, carrying with it the general idea of revolution and a wheel; and it was so called, says Bede, because of the return of the sun's annual course after the winter solstice. This circle is common to both festivities. Thus Durand, speaking of the rites of the feast of St. John the Baptist, informs us of this curious circumstance, that in some places they roll a wheel about, to signify that the sun, then occupying the highest place in the zodiac, is beginning to descend.[8] Here we have a copy of the circle and the two parallel lines; for

[8] See Ant. Vulg., c. xxvii.; and Brand on Midsummer Eve.

the ceremony was used on the days of St. John the Baptist and St. John the Evangelist, from the very first establishment of Christianity. Naogeorgus observes, that the people imagine the rolling of this wheel to be a token of good luck. These are his words:—

"Then doth the joyfull feast of John
The Baptist take his turne,
When bonfiers great, with loftie flame,
In every towne doe burne,
Some get a rotten weele,
All worne and cast aside,
Which, covered round about with strawe
And tow, they closely hide;
And caryed to some mountaines top,
Being all with fire light,
They hurle it downe with violence,
When darke appears the night;
Resembling much the sunne, that from
The heavens down should fal,
A straunge and monstrous sight it seemes,
And fearefull to them all.
But they suppose their mischiefes all
Are likewise throwne to hell;
And that from harmes and daungers now
In safetie here they dwell."[9]

I have the honour to remain,
My Lord,
Your Lordship's obedient
Servant and Brother,
GEO. OLIVER, D. D.

Scopwick Vicarage, Nov. 25, 1847.

[9] Popish Kingdome, fol. 54, b.

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## LETTER IV.

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REASONS WHY ST. JOHN THE BAPTIST IS ESTEEMED A PATRON OF FREEMASONRY.

"I am well aware that the writer who endeavours to separate truth from fiction in ancient history, undertakes a task which is more likely to prove laborious to himself than agreeable to others. There is perhaps a mental pleasure, which though few avow, yet many feel, in contemplating remote events obscurely known, embellished by fancy, and amplified by exaggeration. We scarcely desire to know the truth, where fiction pleases better; nor is it without a pang that we part with our first youthful notions, or that we break those early associations which were formed when the judgment was yet immature, and when the imagination was still the ruling faculty of the mind."—Sir W. Drummond.

# LETTER IV.

My Lord,

In pursuance of the general plan of this enquiry, we will now consider a little in detail the true reasons why the two St. Johns were invested with these masonic honours. And first of the Baptist, who is described as the grand patron of Masonry in the charter of Colne, under date of 1535. This ancient document states that "the Masters of our Order took the name of *Initiated Brothers of St. John*, following the footsteps, and imitating the conduct of St. John the Baptist, the forerunner of the Light, and the first martyr of the enlightened." And again, "the brotherhood or Order of Free and Accepted Masons *dedicated to holy St. John*, is not a branch of the Temple, nor of any other spiritual or temporal order; neither is it united to the one or to the other; neither has it derived its origin from them; nor has it the least communion with them in any shape or manner whatever; but it is much more ancient than all those orders of knighthood, and existed in Palestine and Greece, as well as in both divisions of the Roman Empire, before the crusades and the departure of the above-named knights for Palestine."[1]

Now, although there are reasonable doubts about the genuineness of this charter, yet, if spurious, it was evidently fabricated on principles which were universally believed to be true at the time of its promulgation; because if any new or startling doctrine, which had never before been contemplated, had been attempted to be foisted on the fraternity—such as the expulsion of an ancient patron, and the substitution of another whose

[1] See the entire Charter in the "Freemasons' Quarterly Review," for 1841.

name had never yet been connected with the Institution —the document would not have been suffered to circulate amongst the fraternity as an authentic production. It appears, therefore, clear that at the time of its compilation St. John was universally received as the patron of the Order; and the conclusion will be the same whether the document be really as ancient as the date implies, or whether it be an interpolation or forgery of the last century.

St. John the Baptist was probably selected as the Grand Master of Masons,[2] because he heralded the Christian dispensation, as had been predicted by Malachi four hundred years before his birth;[3] bearing witness to the Light;[4] for in the year 26, he emerged from the wilderness, and announced himself as the harbinger of one mightier than he, who would speedily appear as a deliverer, and whose shoe's latchet he was not worthy to unloose.[5]

[2] In the year 1773, the Brethren at Prague built a large and extensive establishment for poor masonic children, and called it "St. John the Baptist's Hospital." The boys were taught reading, writing, and arithmetic, and the girls spinning, knitting, and every other useful female accomplishment.

[3] Mal. iii., 1.

[4] In an ancient tradition, St. John the Baptist is expected to be an attendant on the Saviour at the day of judgment, when Jesus Christ will descend in clouds above the valley of Jehoshaphat, attended by nine orders of angels—the cross, the crown, and other instruments of the passion, being borne round him; the five wounds shining like rubies, with the Virgin Mary on his right hand, and John the Baptist on his left, as they are represented in the paintings and illuminations of the middle ages, accompanied respectively by the saints of the Old and New Testament; the whole forming a vast amphitheatre of glory. The Book of Life is then to be opened, and the trumpet blown, summoning mankind to judgment, when their eternal destiny will be finally pronounced.

[5] Mark i., 7. The spurious gospel of Nicodemus, which, however, was esteemed canonical by the Anglo-Saxons, and read in their churches, speaking, in the eighteenth chapter, of the descent of Christ into Hades, and of the wonders he performed there, has the following passage:—"The prophet Isaiah, there present, said, this is the Light that proceedeth from the Father, and from the Son, and from the Holy Ghost, of which I prophesied while yet in the flesh, saying, The land of Zebulon and the land of Naphtali, the people sitting in darkness have seen a great light. Then came there forward into the midst of them a stranger, an ascetic from the wilderness, and the patriarchs said unto him, Who art thou? And he said, I am John, the last of the prophets, who have made straight the way of the Son of God, and preached to the people repentance for the remission of sins. And

Hence the Basilidean Christians believed that the spirit of Light entered into John at the baptism of Christ, and that there was consequently some portion of divinity in him, which elevated him above mortality. His great parallel the Evangelist, to vindicate his reputation, repudiated this doctrine, by saying "there was a man sent from God whose name was John. The same came *for a witness*, to bear witness of the Light, that all men through him might believe. *He was not that Light*, but was sent to bear witness of that Light. That was the true Light (meaning Christ) which lighteth every man that cometh into the world."[6] And then he gives an account of the mission sent by the Jews to ascertain who John the Baptist really was, when he confessed and denied not, "I am not the Christ."[7] In the following year, Jesus, who had hitherto abode with his parents in obscurity, presented himself to be baptized by John. The prophet of the wilderness recognized him, and told his disciples, "this is the Lamb of God that taketh away the sins of the world."

In this transaction, John appeared in the character of Elias, having been first announced by the prophet Isaiah as "the voice of one crying in the wilderness, prepare ye the way of JEHOVAH;"[8] which are the exact words used

the Son of God came unto me, and seeing him from afar, I said to the people, Behold the Lamb of God which taketh away the sin of the world. And with my hand I baptized him in the river Jordan, and I beheld the Holy Ghost descending on him as it were a dove, and I heard the voice of God the Father saying, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased. And for this cause hath he sent me also unto you, that I may declare how that the only begotten Son of God is coming hither, that whosoever shall believe in him may be saved, but whosoever believeth not shall be damned. Wherefore I warn you all, that ye worship when you see him, for now is your only time of repentance for your bowing down to idols in the upper world of vanity, and for whatever else wherein you have sinned; for from henceforth this will be impossible."

[6] John i., 6–9.

[7] Ibid. 20.

[8] Isaiah xl., 3. "This Angel-Lord of the covenant," says the learned Faber, (Eight Diss., vol. ii., p. 7,) "is to be preceded by a messenger, who, like the harbinger of a great eastern prince, is to prepare the way before him, by levelling each symbolical mountain, and by filling each symbolical valley. The person thus exhibited under the aspect of a preparatory messenger, is, we are afterwards told, an appearance of the prophet Elijah. For as the messenger is to prepare the way *before Jehovah*, inasmuch as Jehovah is the speaker,

by St. Mark when describing the mission of John.[9] Thus Elijah the prophet re-appeared in the person of the son of Zecharias, according to the testimony of Jesus Christ; and for a similar reason St. John the Evangelist was classed by the early Christians with Enoch, because he and Elijah were the only two persons who had the good fortune to be translated to heaven without tasting the pains of death; and this idea was confirmed by what Christ said to Peter respecting the other great parallel—"If I will that he tarry till I come, what is that to thee;"[10] whence his disciples concluded that he also would not die.

John was thus divinely commissioned through the angel Gabriel, to go before Christ "in the spirit and power of Elias;"[11] not only to prepare his way, but to remove every obstacle that might tend to impede his mission; to reduce "the highest of hills," and to exalt "the lowest of valleys," that he might "make straight the way of Jehovah."[12] In like manner Elias is expected to re-appear, to clear the way before the second coming of Christ to judgment.[13] Hence it was that the Redeemer pronounced respecting John, that "no greater man was ever born;"[14] and for this reason he performed the rite of baptism on the Saviour of mankind, and was favoured with a vision of the Holy Trinity.[15] And more than this, he parted with his life rather than forfeit his integrity.[16]

who says, respecting himself, *before* ME, so is Elijah to be similarly manifested before the coming of the great and terrible day of Jehovah. Now this mystic Elijah, in whom the Jews, adopting the wild speculations of the Gentiles respecting the metempsychosis, seem to have expected a literal re-appearance of the prophet, is, by our Lord himself, expressly identified with John the Baptist; for John came in the spirit and power, though not in the actual person of Elijah. But the office of the Baptist is declared to be that of a precursor to Christ. And the office of the figurative messenger Elijah, is similarly declared to be that of a precursor to the Angel-Lord of the covenant. Hence the identification of Elijah and the Baptist leads, of plain necessity, to the identification of the Angel-Lord and Christ."

[9] Mark i., 3. [10] John xxi., 23. [11] Luke i., 17.
[12] John i., 23. [13] Mal. iv., 5.
[14] Matt. xi., 11, 14. [15] Mark i., 10.
[16] Mark vi., 27. "When John the Baptist came, the Jews were not left to form vague speculations as to the nature of his character and office. His dress and his whole conduct pointed him out to be the mystical Elijah; and his industrious affectation of the wilderness, at the very time (as we learn from pagan testimonies) when all the

The masonic theosophists of the last century thus explained the mission of John the Baptist—"Elias in the spirit of zeal is John the Baptist's antitype, figuring, as did John the Baptist more eminently and immediately, the Father's fiery zeal in the holy first principle; for Elias and John's administration was in the Father's property. The great confluence of all Judea to his baptism, shows the universality of the Father's applications, convictions, and drawings. Thus the groans of penitent souls proceed from the Father's condemning convictions; whereof John the Baptist's ministry and himself is the representation."[17] And it is further remarkable, that Elias and John were alike girded with the masonic apron. Thus when the servants of Ahaziah informed him that they had been reproved by a strange prophet for going to consult the idolatrous oracle of Baalzebub in Ekron, he said unto them, "What manner of man was he which came up to meet you, and told you these words?" And

East expected that person whose appearance had been foretold toward the close of the now rapidly expiring seventy weeks, might well lead them to conclude that he was the predicted harbinger of the Messiah. But whatever doubts they might innocently entertain in the first instance, he himself cut them off from all plea of misapprehending his pretensions. '*I*,' said he, '*am the voice of one crying in the wilderness, &c.; but* HE THAT COMETH AFTER ME *is mightier than I, &c.*' Here he unequivocally tells them that he was himself the predicted herald of that expected Great Prince, for whom he deemed himself unworthy to perform even the most menial offices; just as the mystical Elijah was to be no more than the precursor of the Messenger-Lord of the covenant, when he was about to come suddenly to his own temple. And now they at least could not mistake his claim of character, whether they chose to allow it or not. They must have perceived that he gave himself out to be the forerunner of the Messiah." (Faber ut supra.)

[17] "Few things appear more conspicuously in the gospels than the expectation of the Jews that Elias was to come among them as the harbinger of the Messiah. This expectation was founded on the prophecy of Malachi; which, however, they misunderstood, as they did the prophecies concerning the Messiah himself. Our Saviour explains the sense in which this foretold coming of Elias was to be understood—that is of one who was not Elias personally, but who should come *in the spirit and power of Elias*, or, who should be the antitype of Elias, as the Messiah was of David. We are further told, that this was accomplished in John the Baptist, who in spirit and in power, and even in some personal circumstances resembled Elias, and who came to prepare the way of the Lord, as it had been predicted that Elias should come." (Kitto on Mark ix., 12.)

they answered him, He was an hairy man, and *girt with a girdle of leather about his loins.* And he said, "It is Elijah the Tishbite."[18] Thus also we find that John the Baptist, of whom Elijah was the prototype, was distinguished by wearing *a leathern girdle about his loins.*[19]

Again, the origin of the eremitic life was attributed equally to St. John and Elias; and it will be remembered that St. John the Evangelist was also an ascetic in Patmos. From hence sprang the custom of living in sodalities, and performing all the offices of life under certain prescribed rules. This might contribute in some degree to lend a sanction to the appropriation of St. John as the head and patron of the Order of Freemasonry, because in its construction, it bears some resemblance to those institutions. Antony, the first Christian hermit, like St. John, penetrated into the deserts lying between the Nile and the Red Sea, and soon found himself the leader or superior of a vast society of devotees, who lived according to the rules which he imposed. The example was followed throughout all Christendom; and the Carmelite monks still acknowledge Elijah, the prototype of St. John, as their patron and head.

Another reason why St. John the Baptist might be considered as the patron of Masonry by our ancient Brethren, was because he performed the rite of baptism on the Redeemer of mankind at the passage of the river Jordan, where the Israelites entered the promised land, and where Joshua set up twelve stones of remembrance, that the locality might not be forgotten. And Masonry being a science of light, St. John was pronounced by our Saviour to be "a burning and a shining LIGHT;"[20] whence probably originated the fires which were lighted up on the festival of the saint;[21] although it is not to be

[18] 2 Kings i., 7, 8. [19] Mark i., 6. [20] John v., 35.

[21] There is a curious passage on this subject worth quoting, in the Homily De Festo Sancti Johannis Baptistæ:—"In worshyp of Saynt Johan the people waked at home, and made three maner of fyres: one was clene bones, and noo woode, and that is called a Bone Fyre, another is clene woode and no bones, and that is called a Wode Fyre, for people to sit and wake thereby; the third is made of wode and bones, and it is called Saynt Johannys Fyre. The first fyre, as a great clerk Johan Belletti telleth, he was in certayne countrey, so in the countrey there was soo grea'e hete, the which causid that dragons

denied that similar fires were kindled about midnight at the very moment of the solstice, by the most ancient nations; it was a religious ceremony, and considered to dispel evil, and to promote the prosperity of states and empires. And this, probably, might be one reason why the St. Johns had two days assigned to them at the summer and winter solstices, being the commencement and completion of the ancient and modern year; for Gebelin says that the first of all years, and the most ancient that we know of, began in the month of June; and, in like manner, St. John the Baptist drew the first line of the Gospel, and St. John the Evangelist lived to see it completely established and prosperous in the world, according to the prediction of his Divine Master.[22] And for this reason it was that the early Christians, at the instance of Gregory, Bishop of Neo-Cæsarea, in Pontus, instituted festivals in honour of these saints, as a substitute for the solemnities used by the heathen at the two solstices.

But, my Lord, there is still another reason why St. John the Baptist is said to have been considered the patron of Masonry, which is drawn from the fact that in passing through the Essenes, by whom Freemasonry

to go togyther, in tokenynge that Johan dyed in brennyge love and chartye to God and man, and they that dye in chartye shall have part of all good prayers, and they that do not, shall never be saved. Then as these dragons flewe in th' ayre they shed doun to that water froth of ther kynde, and so envenymed the waters, and caused moche people for to take theyr deth therby, and many dyverse sykenesse. Wyse clerks knoweth well that dragons hate nothing more than the stenche of brennynge bones, and therefore they gaderyed as many as they mighte fynde, and brent them; and so with the stenche thereof they drove away the dragons, and so they were brought out of greete dysease. The seconde fyre was made of woode. for that wyl benne lyght, and wyll be seen farre. For it is the chef of fyre to be seen farre, and betokennynge that Saynt Johan was a lanterne of light to the people. Also the people made blases of fyre for that they shulde be seene farre, and specyally in the nyght, in token of St. Johan's having been seen from far in the spirit by Jeremiah. The third fyre of bones betokenneth Johan's martyrdome, for hys bones here bent, and how ye shall here." The homilist accounts for this by telling us, that after John's disciples had buried his body, it lay till Julian, the Apostate Emperor. came that way, and caused them to be taken up and burnt, "and he caste the ashes in the wynde, hopynge that he should never ryse again to lyfe."

[22] John xxi., 23.

was undoubtedly preserved, (and whether they were Jews, or Christians, or both, does not materially affect the argument,) it was governed by this eminent individual, who was certainly a member of that body, as is evident from these considerations. His father and mother died during his minority, and he was adopted by the Essenes, and lived in the wilderness. The Essenes did not go up to Jerusalem at the feasts; and we have no reason to believe that John was ever there. His diet and manner of living were perfectly conformable to the rules of the Essenes. They lived in the country; so did he. They dwelt near the river Jordan, and baptized their disciples. John did the same, and thus acquired the cognomen of the Baptist. The Essenes fed on dates and other fruit, and in many other respects agreed with the character of John, as we find it in the gospels. And such a celebrated character could not long be a member of that community without arriving at the chief dignity of the Order.

It may be remarked, before I finally conclude my observations on St. John the Baptist, that his festival was observed by other communities besides the Freemasons. Stow, in his survey of London, tells us that, "on the vigil of St. John Baptist, every man's door was shadowed with green birch, long fennel, St. John's wort, orpine, white lilies, and such like, garnished with garlands of beautiful flowers, and also lamps of glass, with oil burning in them all night." He also mentions the custom of lighting fires, which were sometimes called "the blessing fire." The following curious account I extract from Lewis's Life of Bishop Pococke:—"Whanne men of the cuntree uplond bringen into Londoun, on Mydsomer Eve, braunchis of trees from Bischopis Wode, and flouris fro the feld, and bitaken tho to citessins of Londoun, for to therwith her houses gay, into remembraunce of Seint Johan Baptist, and of this, that it was prophesied of him that many schulden joié in his birthe."

"John the Baptist was remarkable for his sincerity or love of truth. It was this which prompted his seclusion in the wilderness from the period of early youth, and his entire devotion, until the close of his life, to his mission, casting utterly behind him and forsaking all the advantages and privileges of his paternal and priestly rank.

Nothing greater has ever been or ever will be accomplished by human efforts, unless commenced and prosecuted in sincerity. Sincerity is in general the talisman of success. I define sincerity to be such a conviction of the truth of a fact as causes an earnest belief in it, and an intense interest in it—so intense, that if anything is to be done in respect to it, the whole powers of the man are at once enlisted in the enterprise. It is the characteristic of the hero, wherever he has been or may be found. Beneath the guiding, inspiring, and life-giving energy of this characteristic, behold the Baptist drawing to his ministry in the desert, forth from out of the luxurious cities of Judea, the proud, cold, and formal Pharisee, the infidel, philosophic, and sneering Sadducee; and forth from Jerusalem and all Judea, and the region round about Jordan, vast multitudes of people. Behold him with only the great fact of the cross erected for the redemption of man before his prophetic vision, in his raiment of camel's hair, and with a leathern girdle about his loins, influencing the great assembly of the learned and unlearned, of the wise and the simple, of the old and the young, that gathered around him, with such eloquence and power, that 'all were baptized of him in Jordan, confessing their sins.' Behold him, 'severe in youthful beauty,' rebuking the Pharisees and Sadducees who had come to his baptism as 'a generation of vipers,' admonishing them 'to bring forth fruits meet for repentance, and not to say within themselves, that we have Abraham for our father, but to regard the truth that the axe was laid unto the root of the tree, and that, therefore, every tree which did not bring forth good fruit should be hewn down and cast into the fire.' Behold him with the same truthful zeal urging the publicans 'to exact no more than that which was appointed them,' and charging the soldiers 'to do violence to no man, neither to accuse any falsely, and to be content with their wages.' In the same all-absorbing love of the truth, behold him steadily repudiating the spiritual honour, amounting almost to deification, which the admiring and wonder-stricken multitude sought to confer on him; and diverting their attention from himself to Him whom he assured them 'though coming after him, was preferred before him, whose shoe-latchet he was not worthy to unloose,' and

who, as the 'Lamb of God taking away the sins of the world,' was the only true object of their religious worship. Behold him at a later period, still the same steadfast and enthusiastic lover of truth, rebuking the illicit connection between Herod and Herodias, and by his martyrdom consecrating this bright and heroic trait of character. The self-denial and love of truth of the Baptist, constitute in him, as in every other finished model, the basis of the superstructure of virtue, which all succeeding generations admire."[23]

I have the honour to be,
My Lord,
Your Lordship's obedient
Servant and Brother,
GEO. OLIVER, D. D.

Scopwick Vicarage, Dec. 6, 1847.

[23] From a Masonic Address delivered by the Hon. Brother Bradford, at South Bend, Indiana.

# LETTER V.

REASONS WHY ST. JOHN THE EVANGELIST IS ESTEEMED A PATRON OF MASONRY.

"The whole machinery of the Apocalypse, from beginning to end, seems to me very plainly to have been borrowed from the machinery of the ancient mysteries, and this, if we consider the nature of the subject, was done with the very strictest attention to poetical decorum. St. John himself is made to personate an aspirant about to be initiated; and accordingly the images presented to his mind's eye closely resemble the pageants of the mysteries, both in their nature and in order of succession."—FABER.

# LETTER V.

My Lord,

I flatter myself that the arguments contained in the preceding letters have satisfactorily proved that the name of St. John the Baptist was connected with speculative Masonry at a very remote period; and that a doubt was never entertained that the parallelism was inappropriate. It is equally true that St. John the Evangelist was considered one of the patrons of Masonry by the universal consent of our Brethren of the last century, and is so denominated in their authorized publications.[1] His pretensions to masonic honours were probably founded on the fact, that the machinery of the vast and important prophecies contained in the Apocalypse, bear a great resemblance to the plan of the third degree of Masonry before the introduction of the Royal Arch. And a masonic writer, under date A. D. 1737, speaks of the Revelation of St. John as "the process of spiritual Masonry."[2] This may appear a startling assertion to those who have never given the subject a momentary consideration. Your Lordship will understand, however, that I am speaking simply of the dramatic construction of the book, without the slightest reference to the interpretation of the prophecies. With this explanation in view, we will examine how far the ceremonies described in the Book of Revelation agree with those which are observed in speculative Masonry.

First, then, we are presented with the representation of a candidate for admission, knocking at a door,[3] and

[1] See Golden Remains, vol. i. [2] Ibid. vol. iv., Serm. 15.
[3] Rev. iii., 20.

waiting patiently till he receives an answer. After some delay, he is invited to enter, by a voice from within saying, "Come up hither." Being thus introduced into the celestial lodge, he beholds a new and very imposing scene; the chief object in which is a person splendidly arrayed, occupying a throne in the east, canopied by a prismatic arch. It is subsequently called, "a great white throne;"[4] *great*, to show its extent from east to west, from north to south, from earth to heaven, and from the surface to the centre;[5] and *white*, as an emblem of purity and innocence, justice and equity.

When he looks round he beholds many other persons seated, and *clothed in white raiment*. The magnificent Temple where this glorious scene was displayed, was lighted by seven lamps, burning with great effulgence.[6] This is an unequivocal representation of the camp of Israel, which was the great prototype of a Mason's Lodge. The G. A. O. T. U. is seated on the throne, as Ezekiel has described him in the Tabernacle or Temple. Near to the tabernacle the priests and Levites were encamped, and next to the throne were four-and-twenty elders sitting, answering to the princes of the four-and-twenty courses of the Jewish priests, clothed in white raiment, as emblems of their purity and sanctity; and they had on their heads crowns of gold.

The candidate is represented as turning to see who it was that spoke to him; for he had said, "I am Alpha and Omega, the first and the last." And being turned, he saw "seven golden candlesticks, and in the midst of them one like the Son of man, clothed with a garment down to his feet, and girt about with a golden girdle."[7] Commentators are agreed that this was a representation of the seven branched candlestick of the Tabernacle and Temple, which was formerly used to illuminate our Lodges, but was transferred to the Royal Arch about the middle of the last century. If this be correct, and the authorities for it are unexceptionable, then it will be easy to imagine, that as each of these branches turned about on hinges, for the convenience of keeping in order, a person in the act of bringing them forward to trim

[4] Rev. xx., 11 [5] Ibid. xx., 8. [6] Ibid. iv., 1–5.
[7] Ibid. i., 11–13.

their wicks, would appear to a spectator to be strictly *in the middle* among these lamps. It is probable, too, that this very situation is further implied, and expressed, in the following particulars:—"He had in his right hand seven stars;" *i. e.*, his arm being extended to trim the wicks of the lamps, in order to improve their splendour, they seemed by that operation to be brightened into so many stars, while, by their position, they appeared to be held in his right hand, thus put forth among them, and which they surrounded.

Now light is the emblem of excellence, discerned, acknowledged, and admired *by the world.* A material lamp is an instrument formed to yield an artificial light, which being sustained by oil, the pabulum of light is really nothing but oil kindled into a flame. When a lamp is taken for the emblem of spiritual and intellectual excellence, Truth must be its oil; which, in reality, is nothing else than truth displayed, and showing itself to the world. Accordingly the oil, which is the food of the symbolical lamp set before us in this part of the vision, is truth, divine, moral, religious, or saving truth. When the truth is received by any man, he has then the mystic oil in himself; and when that oil is kindled into a flame, not only is he internally enlightened, but he conducts himself accordingly, and becomes truly wise and good.[8]

The fraternity will be able to judge, without any further commentary, how far the above dignified representation of the opening ceremonies of the Apocalypse agrees with the preliminary rites of the Masonic Institution.

A sacred book is then produced, which is sealed with *seven seals*, every one of which must be broken before the secrets can be disclosed; and St. John wept because no man was found worthy to open them, it being a task reserved for the G. A. O. T. U. alone. He is then passed through a series of interesting ceremonies, attended by his angel-guide, as the process of unsealing the book advances. Several symbols are displayed before him; amongst which he particularly observed a *bow*, a *white horse*, and a *crown*, as emblems of victory, triumph and royalty;[9]

[8] Taylor's Calmet. [9] Rev. vi., 2.

and also a *balance*[10] and a *chœnix*,[11] emblems of justice and hospitality; and at length he is shown the representation of a blazing star, and *three* monsters, or *assassins*, who destroyed *one man out of every three*,[12] by inflicting a deadly wound in the forehead.[13] The candidate, having been at length regenerated, is clothed in white,[14] and receives the sacred book, open, the seals being all removed. This book he is desired to swallow,[15] or, in other words, to digest the contents as an attestation when the O. B. is sealed upon the open volume. The uncontaminated twelve, figured by the twelve thousand of each of the twelve tribes, that had received the divine *mark* on their foreheads, are described as entering the Holy Temple in solemn procession, and presenting themselves before the throne of the Grand Master, bearing *sprigs of the palm tree* as tokens of their innocence.[16] Then follow the mourning of the witnesses,[17] the healing of the wounded forehead, and the raising of the dead.[18]

After these ceremonies had been solemnly performed, light is introduced; the heavens are opened:[19] the great red dragon, with his agents and emissaries, represented by unclean beasts like frogs, are expelled by the influence of light. "Wickedness being restrained, the reign of righteousness succeeds, and the administration of justice and judgment is given to the saints of the Most High. And the martyrs and confessors of Jesus, not only those who were beheaded, or suffered any kind of death under the heathen emperors, but also those who refused to

[10] This was a Pythagorean symbol, and was explained as an emblem of justice, equality, and mediocrity. "Justice," said they, "is the most perfect virtue, and without which all other virtues will profit nothing; neither must we know it superficially only, but by theorems and scientific demonstration. This knowledge is the work of no art or science, but only of philosophy." (Iambl. Protrept., cap. ult.)

[11] Χοινιξ (Rev. vi., 6.) This was also a Pythagorean symbol, and is explained by Iamblichus thus:—"As food ought not to be measured by the chœnix alone, but by corporiety and animality, so man ought not to lead his life without being initiated into the mysteries of philosophy; but applying himself thereto, he will learn how to take care of that which is the most divine, *i. e.*, the soul, whose food is not measured by the chœnix, but by contemplation and discipline."

[12] Rev. ix., 18.
[13] Ibid. xiii., 3.
[14] Ibid. iii., 5; vi., 11.
[15] Ibid. x., 10.
[16] Ibid. vii., 9.
[17] Ibid. xi.
[18] Ibid. xx., 4.
[19] Ibid. xix., 11,

comply with the idolatrous worship of the beast and of his image, are *raised from the dead*, and have a principal share in the felicities of Christ's kingdom upon earth."[20]

The regenerated candidate, having overcome, and by keeping his faith uncontaminated, and his fortitude unshaken by probation, escapes the "depths of Satan,"[21] and is presented with a *white stone*, in which a new name is written, that no man knoweth saving he that receiveth it;[22] which is no other than the SACRED NAME *which had been lost but now was found;*[23] the destroyers are apprehended, and subjected to condign punishment.[24] The empire of Light in the New Jerusalem is established, and it requires neither the sun nor the moon to shine in it; for the glory of God doth lighten it, and the Lamb is the light thereof.[25] The proceedings are closed with the formula of admission and exclusion. "I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end, the first and the last. Blessed are they that do his commandments, that they may have right to the tree of life, and may enter in through the gates into the city; for without are dogs (cowans, κυνες), and sorcerers, and whoremongers, and murderers, and idolaters, and whosoever loveth and maketh a lie."[26]

The above theory may be imaginary; but it cannot be denied that its leading features bear a marked resemblance to certain interesting ceremonies, of which, it is presumed, St. John was not ignorant. And it affords an indirect proof that the rites of speculative Masonry were not unknown in his day, and that he considered their preservation of sufficient importance to merit a place in these august and comprehensive prophecies.

There is another reason assigned for the claims of St.

[20] Newton on the Apocalypse, chap. xx.

[21] These were the mysteries of the Nicolaitans, who concealed their errors under deep abstruseness, and spoke of certain intelligences which created the world in opposition to God the Creator. They taught a profound knowledge of the nature of angels; but these were communicated only in the recesses of their midnight conclaves. They had also secret books written in a mysterious manner, which were called "the Depths of Satan."

[22] Rev. ii., 17.

[23] Compare Rev. xix., 12, with verse 16.

[24] Rev. xx. 3.

[25] Ibid. xxi., 23.

[26] Ibid. xxii., 13, 14, 15.

John the Evangelist to be received as the patron of the Craft, derived from the assimilation of the doctrines which he taught to those of Freemasonry—BROTHERLY LOVE, being the great design of both. It was, indeed, peculiarly a Christian virtue. Neither the Jewish nor the heathen laws inculcated this divine quality, by which Freemasonry is particularly distinguished. The former recommended strict retaliation for injuries received. Thus it was enacted "Thou shalt give life for life, eye for eye, tooth for tooth, hand for hand, foot for foot, burning for burning, wound for wound, stripe for stripe."[27] These laws, which are extensively enunciated in the Jewish code, appear to have had the effect of legalizing and tolerating revenge; for the Jews sought, on all occasions, to avenge themselves, as a proceeding perfectly just and honourable; because the doctrine of forgiveness of injuries was not inculcated in the Mosaic law. Hence it was that Jesus Christ was so eloquent on the divine quality of brotherly love. "Ye have heard that it hath been said, an eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth; but I say unto you, that ye resist not evil; but whosoever shall smite thee on thy right cheek, turn to him the other also. For if ye love them only which love you, what reward have ye?"[28] Thus teaching them a benevolent doctrine, which was so foreign to their usual practice, that it constituted a principal reason why he was rejected by the Jews.

Neither did the heathen possess any just notion of the duties springing from brotherly love. In the Roman law of the twelve tables, it was provided, "*Si membrum ruperit, talio est.*" And in practice, revenge was considered one of the virtues; and to forgive an injury, the height of pusillanimity. The precepts of heathen philosophy were addressed to the reason; and however that might be convinced, the heart remained untouched. Hence the vilest of human passions prevailed; blood was shed in torrents, under the plea of glory; private animosity was indulged, and coloured by the sacred name of justice; and thousands of murders produced a hero, who was received with the loudest acclamations by the

[27] Exod. xxi., 23, 24, 25.
[28] Matthew v., 38, 39, 46.

the people, and honoured by the state with a public triumph.[29]

St. John the Evangelist, in imitation of the doctrine of his divine Master, gave mankind a very different view of the mutual obligations which ought to subsist between man and man, under the Christian scheme. Thus he said, "Whosoever doeth not righteousness, is not of God; neither he that loveth not his brother. For this is the message that ye have heard from the beginning, that ye should love one another. He that loveth not his brother abideth in death. Hereby perceive we the love of God, because he laid down his life for us; and we ought to lay down our lives for the Brethren. But whoso hath this world's good, and seeth his brother have need, and shutteth up his bowels of compassion from him, how dwelleth the love of God in him?"[30] And so thoroughly

[29] Des Etangs has used a very extraordinary method of proving the catholicity of the Order. He has absolutely put Christian precepts into the mouths of heathen philosophers. He makes Pythagoras say, "Love your neighbours, succour them, and pardon their offences;" and ascribes to Confucius the maxims, "love your neighbour as yourself; do unto others as you would have them do to you; forgive your enemies and pray for them." (Lien des peuples.)

[30] 1 John iii., 10–17. "I know not how it is," says a talented American W. M., "but never, during the ministrations of the station I have been so long honoured with among you, have I been called upon to give a charge to my Brethren in Masonry, without a lively appreciation of the loveliness of his character who was permitted to lean upon his Master's breast; and, perhaps, to catch a double portion of the benignity of the Master's spirit. You all know to whom I allude,—HIM of the Apocalypse—the patron saint of our Order. While sojourning amidst the magnificent scenery of the celestial city, and holding commune with the masterful beings who thronged its golden streets; listening to the uninterrupted tide of adoration that swelled up around the rainbow throne, like the sound of 'many waters,'—there passed upon him the same infusion of spirit and heavenly unction that animate the blessed intelligences who swept across the mystical panorama of his lofty vision; and hence his sweet epistles breathe the sentiments, while they speak the dialect, of the 'Upper Sanctuary.' Surely no more enduring eulogy could be written for our Institution, than the simple statement, that upon the burden of his every discourse there is personified the embodiment, and poured out the very soul of Masonry. We emblazon his name, and record his actions, upon the proudest page of our associated history,—we are accustomed to set apart a solemn festival to commemorate his anniversary; and we plant our altars and dedicate our lodge-rooms to the memory of the 'HOLY ST. JOHN.' We are all of us, therefore, most imperatively bound to respect and revere his opinions. Will you, then,

was he impressed with this truly masonic dogma, that he extended it to refreshment after labour; and Thomas Aquinas has recorded of him, that when some of his disciples, seeing him amuse himself with a childish game, thought he was doing wrong, he bade one of them draw a bow to its utmost extent, and shoot away the arrow, and after that another, and another, asking him if he could do so continually. He answered that he could not, because if the bow was continually bent, it would break. "So," said he, "would the mind of man be broken if it should never have intermission from serious study; *si nunquam ab intentione sua relaxaretur.*" And it is also told of him, that after his return from Patmos, being upwards of ninety years of age, he became so infirm, that he could scarcely go to the assembly of the church without being carried by his disciples. Being now unable to make long discourses, his custom was to say, in all assemblies, to the people—"My dear children, love one another." At length they grew weary of this concise exhortation, and when he was informed of it, his answer was—"This is what the Lord commands you; and this, if you do it, is sufficient."

Brotherly love is the true masonic chain, indefinitely extended, of which every individual Mason forms a link; and it is practically illustrated at the close of the E.A.P. song. It is a chain of indissoluble affection, cemented by St. John the Evangelist, who hence acquires an indefeasible right to have his name attached to the Institution, and the practice of this virtue cannot fail to distinguish us amongst those who are unacquainted with the beauties and requirements of our moral and religious principles.

permit me, in addition to what I have so imperfectly but affectionately advised, to invoke his honoured presence among you, and thus to catch, as it were, from his own lips, his own most beautiful teachings? And I would to heaven, my companions, that the noble lessons were graven upon our gates and upon our door-posts,—that they were bound as a sign upon our hands, and as frontlets between our eyes; and so to be taught diligently to our children for ever. Hear him, then:—'Brethren, I write no *new* commandment unto you, but an *old* commandment, which ye have had from the beginning:—*that ye love one another.* He that loveth his brother abideth in the *light*, but he that hateth his brother walketh in *darkness.* GOD IS LOVE; and he that dwelleth in love dwelleth in God, and God in him!'" (Moore's Mag., vol. iv.)

Such was the teaching of St. John, and hence his memory has been justly exalted by the fraternity; for the language of Freemasonry embodies the same sentiments as he taught his disciples, according to the uniform evidence of the writers of the last century. Thus a distinguished Mason said—"Those who are possessed of this amiable, this godlike disposition, (brotherly love,) are shocked at misery under every form. The healing accents that flow from the tongue, not only alleviate the pain of an unhappy sufferer, but make even adversity, in its most dismal state, look gay. When a brother is in want, every heart is prone to ache; when he is hungry, we convey him food; when he is naked, we clothe him; and when he is in trouble, we willingly fly to his relief. Thus we evince the propriety of the title we assume, and demonstrate to the world that the word BROTHER, among Masons, is not merely a name."[31]

I have the honour to remain,
My Lord,
Your Lordship's obedient
Servant and Brother,
GEO. OLIVER, D. D

Scopwick Vicarage, Dec. 13, 1847.

[31] Preston, ed. 1781.

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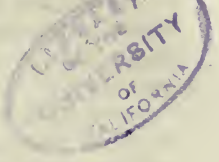
## LETTER VI.

### THE PARALLELISM EXPLAINED.

"It is remarkable that John the Baptist wrought no miracle, therefore the authority, and confirming proof of his mission, rested very much upon the evidences which were exhibited, not by himself, but by the person whose appearance he professed to foretel; and undoubtedly the miracles of our Lord did, by a reflected operation, establish the preaching of John. For if a person in these days should appear, not working any miracle himself, but declaring that another and greater person was soon to follow; and if that other and greater person did accordingly soon follow, and show forth mighty deeds, the authority of the first person's mission would be ratified by the second person's works."—PALEY



## LETTER VI.

My Lord,

The reasons for the parallelism of the two St. Johns are stated in the record already quoted. These two eminent saints were early companions—the one as master, the other as pupil. We have already seen that St. John the Baptist was an Essenian Freemason; and it is asserted on competent authority, that St. John the Evangelist, before the mission of Christ commenced, was his disciple.[1] There must, therefore, have existed between them no ordinary degree of friendship. As a proof of which, it is further said, that when the Baptist was desirous of a positive confirmation of his predictions respecting the identity of Jesus with the promised Messiah, for the purpose of silencing the doubts of his disciples, he deputed St. John the Evangelist, together with another disciple equally favoured, to ascertain the fact, when the extraordinary interview took place which has been recorded by St. Luke in his Gospel,[2] the result of which was, that the Evangelist immediately joined the party, and became the beloved disciple of Christ, as he himself has told us.[3] For it does not appear that Christ actually began his mission till about the time when the Baptist was imprisoned by Herod. Thus Dean Prideaux says—"John the Baptist began the ministry of the Gospel in the fifteenth year of Tiberius, and continued in it for three years and a half; that is, he began it about the time of the paschal feast, and continued it till the feast of tabernacles in the fourth year after. And then, John being cast into prison, Christ appeared to take it on him

[1] See Bishop Percy's Key to the New Testament.
[2] Luke vii., 18–28. [3] John i., 37.

in person, and personally carried it on three years and a half more. So that the whole term of Christ's ministry while he was here on earth, as executed first vicariously by John, his forerunner, and afterwards personally by himself, was exactly seven years; and these seven years constituted the last of the seventy weeks in Daniel's prophecy."[4]

They were equally distinguished by the Redeemer of mankind; the one as "a burning and a shining light;"[5] whence the Gnostics assumed that the Spirit of Light entered into John the Baptist, and therefore that John was in some respects to be preferred to Christ; and the other was called "the beloved disciple,"[6] and "the divine."[7] Thus they formed the personification of GREAT-

[4] Prid. Con., part ii., book 9. The exact chronology is as follows, according to Kitto:—

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| John Baptist was born in the spring, . . . | B. C. | 5 |
| Christ was born in the autumn, . . . . . | | 5 |
| John the Baptist begins his ministry, autumn, | A. D. | 26 |
| Christ baptized, autumn, . . . . . | | 27 |
| John the Baptist imprisoned, . . . . . | | 28 |
| Christ's ministry begins, . . . . . | | 28 |
| John the Baptist beheaded. . . . . | | 29 |

That the birth of Christ is thus given to the autumn of the year 5 *before* Christ, is an apparent anomaly which may require a few words of explanation. The era of the birth of Christ was not in use till A. D. 532, in the time of Justinian, when it was introduced by Dionysius Exiguus, a Scythian by birth, and a Roman abbot; and which only began to prevail in the West about the time of Charles Martel and Pope Gregory II., A. D. 730. It has long been agreed by all chronologers that Dionysius made a mistake in placing the birth of Christ some years too late; but the amount of the difference has been variously estimated at two, three, four, five, or even eight years. The most general conclusion is that which is adopted in our Bibles, and which places the birth of Christ *four* years before the common era, or more probably a few months more, according to the conclusion of Hales, which we have deemed it proper to adopt. The grounds of this conclusion are largely and ably stated in the Analysis, vol. i., pp. 83--93. As to the day,—it appears that the 25th of December was not fixed upon till the time of Constantine, in the fourth century, although there was an early tradition in its favour. It is probable that it really took place about, or at, the feast of tabernacles (say the autumnal equinox) of 5 B. C., or at the passover (say the vernal equinox) of 4 B. C. The former is the opinion of Hales and others, and the latter of Archbishop Usher and our Bibles.

[5] John v., 35. [6] Ibid. xxi., 20.

[7] John is generally surnamed "the divine," from the sublimity of his knowledge, particularly in the beginning of his gospel. He is

NESS and GOODNESS, which were ever the qualities that drew down public respect and applause; and amongst heathen nations, as we learn from Selden, constituted the attributes of the celestial deities, and elevated deceased mortals to the same supernal dignity. For these reasons, the two St. Johns were likened to the pillar of *fire* and *cloud* which attended the Israelites in their escape from Egyptian bondage. The former, because he preached the unquenchable *fire* which is the punishment of sin; and the latter, because he inculcated the subdued virtue of brotherly love, the practice of which, like the operation of the *cloud* to the camp of Israel, when it moderated the heat of the sun in that parched climate, would serve to avert the ever-burning fire of hell. This pillar was a *light* and a *guide* to the Israelites through the wilderness of Sin, that they might attain the promised land in safety; and the two St. Johns—one by announcing the Saviour, and the other by his benevolent doctrines—are a light and a guide to all mankind while toiling through the sinful wilderness of this world, that they may arrive at the heavenly Canaan, and rest for ever from their labours. Besides, St. John the Evangelist was chosen to be a witness to Christ's transfiguration, and was actually enveloped in the cloud on that great occasion.[8]

Again, as the columns of Solomon's porch, called Jachin and Boaz, were typical of this cloudy and fiery pillar, so the early Christians likened them to the two St. Johns, which will appear in the estimation of our ancient Brethren to have made the parallelism complete. Boaz represented strength, and Jachin to establish; and together they referred to the divine promise that God would establish his holy temple in strength. The former referred to the sun, which rejoiceth as a giant to run its course;[9] and the latter to the moon, because, like the pillar of a cloud, its light is mild and beautiful, being only a reflection of the sun's more powerful rays; and hence it was prophesied of Solomon,[10] that his kingdom should remain in peace and righteousness so long as the

painted with a cup, and a serpent issuing out of it, in allusion to a story of poison given to him by some heretics, in a glass, the venom of which he dispelled, under the form of a serpent, by making a sign of the cross over it.

[8] Matthew xvii., 5. [9] Psalm xix., 5. [10] Ibid. lxxii., 7.

moon endureth.[11] The promise to David includes both. "His seed shall endure for ever; and his seat is like as the *sun* before me. He shall stand fast for evermore as the *moon*, and as the faithful witness in heaven."[12] Hence, according to the testimony of Iarchi, Solomon said—"My kingdom being thus permanently established as the sun and moon, its duration shall be marked by the existence of these pillars, for they will remain firm and immoveable so long as my successors shall continue to do the will of God."

In like manner the two St. Johns were esteemed pillars of Christianity; the one representing *strength*, and the other a principal agent to *establish* the permanency of the Christian religion by inculcating brotherly love or charity, which St. Paul affirms to be its chief virtue, and of more value than all the rest.[13] By these instruments the Saviour of mankind established his religion in strength to endure for ever.[14] And at length, when the designs of Omnipotence are completed, the sun and the moon, by unmistakeable tokens, shall declare to the world that their glory is expiring.[15] The sun will turn into darkness, and its light being thus withdrawn, the moon will be obscured;[16] at which period St. John the Baptist, as a righteous man, will shine forth as the sun,[17] and appear in the clouds of heaven standing at the left hand of the Judge; and the pure and holy doctrines of his illustrious parallel will for ever remain as the employment of the saints and angels in the heavenly mansions of the blessed; where there is "no need of the sun, neither of the moon to shine in it, for the glory of God will lighten it, and the Lamb is the light thereof."[18]

Such a series of concurrent testimonies which mark the belief and practice of a very high antiquity, ought

[11] From this appropriation the heathen custom of representing the sun and moon by obelisks or pillars, spoken of by Tertullian, (de Spect., c. 8,) Cassiodorus, (lib. iii., ep. 51,) and others, (Ammian. Marcel., l. xvii.,) probably took its rise, as well as the Manichœan custom of worshipping the sun as the receptacle of the divine *virtue*, and the moon because it contains the divine *wisdom*. (Aug., tom. vi., Cont. Faust. Man., xx., 2.)

[12] Psalm lxxxix., 35, 36.

[13] 1 Cor. xiii.

[14] 1 Peter i., 5.

[15] Luke xxi., 25.

[16] Acts ii., 20.

[17] Matthew xiii., 43.

[18] Rev. xxi., 23.

not to be rejected on light and insufficient grounds, and particularly as the connection of both the St. Johns with Freemasonry was unquestionably acknowledged by the revived Grand Lodge from its very first establishment Tho preliminary grand festival was holden on the day of St. John the Baptist, A. D. 1717; and the subsequent festivals were celebrated sometimes on the one saint's day and sometimes on the other, in pursuance of one of the original laws of the Grand Lodge, agreed to in 1721, which provided that "the Brethren of all the lodges in and about London and Westminster, shall meet at an annual communication in some convenient place, on St. John the Baptist's day, or else on St. John the Evangelist's day,[19] as the Grand Lodge shall think fit, by a new regulation, having hitherto met on St. John the Baptist's day. But whether there shall be a feast for all the Brethren or not, yet the Grand Lodge must meet in some convenient place annually on St. John's day; or if it be Sunday, then on the next day, in order to choose every year a new Grand Master, Deputy, and Wardens."

It is evident that the substitution of the St. Johns for Moses and Solomon, was an article of belief amongst the first Masons who introduced the Craft into this island. The Kilwinning system, which may be traced back to the twelfth century, is called "St. John's Masonry;" and in the present laws of the Grand Lodge of Scotland, this principle is unreservedly maintained (although the annual installation and feast is held on St. Andrew's day), in the provision respecting private lodges, where "all lodges holding of the Grand Lodge of Scotland, are strictly prohibited and discharged from holding any other meetings than those of the three orders of Apprentice, Fellowcraft, and Master Mason, denominated St. John's Masonry."[20]

[19] "*In ancient times*," says Dr. Anderson (Const. 1738, p. 170), "the Master, Wardens, and Fellows, *on St. John's day*, met either in a monastery, or on the top of the highest hill near them, by peep of day. And having there chosen their new grand officers, they descended, walking in due form, to the place of the feast, either a monastery or the house of an eminent Mason, or some large house of entertainment, as they thought best tyled. In France these festivals are celebrated on the same days, but they are called Fêtes Solstitiales; hommage au G. A. D. l'U."

[20] Laws. ix., 1.

Our transatlantic Brethren acknowledge the orthodoxy of the same custom. Thus the Deputy Grand Master of the Grand Lodge of New York, in his address from the throne, June 1, 1842, observes—"There is another deviation from ancient custom into which we have fallen of late years, *to which I desire to see the Grand Lodge immediately return;* it is the celebration of those masonic festivals, the 24th of June, and the 27th of December, *which are observed by the fraternity throughout the world.* From the first organization of this Grand Lodge, the practice of regulating the manner in which the annual festivals should be observed, was strictly attended to at the previous quarterly meetings. And all our lodges were required to meet and open on those days, up to the date when the present regulations of the Grand Lodge came into operation, June, 1832. In recommending a return to the ancient custom of our fathers, I would by no means become the advocate of expensive banquets, or public parades; but I would preserve in this body the right and power to regulate these festivals by keeping them in exercise. Social intercourse amongst the Brethren should be encouraged on all occasions, and none can be more appropriate than these, as is testified by the consent of the whole masonic world." And the Rev. Mason Harris, a very intelligent Brother, Grand Chaplain of the Grand Lodge of Massachusetts, says—"John the Baptist, *the first Christian Mason*, was commissioned to prepare the way of the Lord; to smooth the way, and remove the obstructions to the introduction of his truth."

We have a decisive proof that the days of St. John were used for the festivals of Masonry, long before a Grand Lodge in London was ever thought of; for it is recorded, that Queen Elizabeth sent an armed force to break up the annual Grand Lodge at York, *which was always held on the day of St. John the Evangelist;* when Sir Thomas Sackville, the Grand Master, induced the officers to be initiated; and their report to the queen was so satisfactory, that she gave them no further disturbance.

Bro. Peabody, Grand Master of Massachusetts, thus speaks of this anniversary:—"The flight of time, which, in its course, is rapidly wafting us all to the close of our mortal career, has brought us to the return of another

annual rest; and we are now assembled to organize anew for future operations.

"In compliance with a custom adopted long ages ago, this organization is had on the anniversary of St. John the Evangelist. Tradition informs us, that this mildest of men; this preacher of love and good will to all mankind; this disciple whom Jesus loved—was an eminent patron of our Order. This we may well credit; for the charity and good will, the brotherly kindness, relief and truth, which it is our chief aim to inculcate, formed almost the whole character of our patron saint.

"Tradition also informs us, that soon after his death, this anniversary was selected as the appropriate day for the organization of the lodges, in the hope that the influence of his mild and gentle spirit would be upon them, and enter largely into their labours. No Mason on this day, without forgetting to whom it is dedicated, can cherish unkind and uncharitable feelings towards his Brother. Let us, then, in the mildness of the loving and beloved disciple, address ourselves to the work before us."

Before I conclude this letter, I would direct the attention of the fraternity to a remarkable picture at Bruges, in which these two great parallels are exhibited in connection with each other, attended by some of the circumstances which have been noticed in the preceding pages. It is thus described by Lord Lindsay, in his Sketches of the History of Christian Art:—"The marriage of S. Catherine, painted in 1479, will linger longer in your memory. The Virgin and Child are seated on a rich throne, with S. Barbara on one side and S. Catherine on the other, each on a seat of lower elevation; the infant Saviour puts the ring on the finger of the latter; two little angels hover over the Virgin, supporting her crown, a third holds a book for her to read from, a fourth plays a small organ; *John the Baptist and John the Evangelist stand on either side of the throne;* the composition of this group is as symmetrical as in the old Italian paintings, although quite Flemish in character; the heads of the two St. Johns are admirable; the northern artists generally succeed in the Baptist, but fail in the Evangelist. Here, however, Memling has surpassed his brethren, though representing the beloved disciple as a man, not a

youth. The drapery is very broken. The back ground is a landscape, carried through the central compartment, and two wings; and in this the history of the two saints is represented in different small groups, beginning respectively from the central compartment, and so working off to the opposite extremity, the principal subject of each history occupying the place of honour in its respective compartment. The decollation of the Baptist is thus seen to the left and to the right; the vision of St. John in Patmos; the attitude of the latter is admirable; the head that of matured age and beautiful; he gazes upwards —pausing as he writes, fearless, but in solemn awe and deep feeling, on the vision of God, the Father and the Lamb, the four beasts and the elders; while beyond the sea, and along the receding coast of Asia Minor; the four horses of the Apocalypse; the burning mountain cast into the sea; the shipwrecks; the great hail; the captains and mighty men hiding themselves in the clefts of the rock; the star opening the bottomless pit; and the gigantic angel standing on the sea and the land, and swearing that 'there shall be time no longer,' are depicted in fearful succession."

I have the honour to be,
My Lord,
Your Lordship's obedient
Servant and Brother,
GEO. OLIVER, D. D.

Scopwick Vicarage, Dec. 16, 1847.

## LETTER VII.

ENQUIRY WHETHER THE PATRONAGE OF MASONRY IN THE HANDS OF THE CHRISTIAN SAINTR, BE STRICTLY CONFORMABLE WITH THE CONSTRUCTION AND CHARACTER OF THE ORDER.

"Whereas in this our time, the minds of men are so diverse, that some think it a great matter of conscience to depart from a piece of the least of their ceremonies, they be so addicted to their old customs; and again, on the other side, some be so new fangled, that they would innovate all things, and so despise the old, that nothing can like them, but that is new; it was thought expedient, not so much to have respect how to please and satisfy either of these parties, as how to please God, and profit them both."—BOOK OF COMMON PRAYER. OF CEREMONIES.

"Seeing the law of God doth not prescribe all particular ceremonies which the Church of Christ may use, and in so great variety of them as may be found out, it is not possible that the law of nature and reason should direct all churches unto the same things, each deliberating by itself what is most convenient. The way to establish the same things indifferent throughout them all, must needs be the judgment of some judicial authority drawn into one only sentence, which may be a rule for every particular church to follow."—HOOKER.

UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA

## LETTER VII.

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My Lord,

It is urged by those who advocate the propriety of expunging the two St. Johns from our lectures, that a departure from ancient custom in this respect is a matter of very little consequence. But I am persuaded that if they would take the trouble to consider the circumstance under all its bearings, they would undoubtedly find that the conclusion to which they have arrived is altogether untenable, and that the practice has a direct tendency to cast a doubt over the identity of the system, as well as its antiquity; for it is an admitted axiom in legislation, that "things, of themselves indifferent, do in some sort alter their natures, *when they are either commanded or forbidden by a lawful magistrate*, and as they may not be omitted at every man's pleasure contrary to law, when they be commanded, so neither may they be used when they are prohibited." Now the parallelism of the St. Johns was legally enjoined by the first Grand Lodge under the revised system, and sanctioned by every Grand Lodge up to the present time; for the United Grand Lodge has never yet, to my knowledge, expressed an opinion on the subject; and, therefore, the original law remains in full force at the present day.

Nor does it compromise the universality of Masonry, as some are inclined to think, because the very reason which our Brethren of the last century assigned for giving the patronage of Christian Masonry to the two St. Johns, proclaims, at the same time, its undoubted cosmopolite character, legitimately open for the admission of Jews,[1] Mahometans, and all others who acknow

[1] An admission was tacitly made to this fact, by a very curious coincidence, recorded in Moore's Magazine, (vol. iv.,) that in a

ledge an Omnipresent Deity, and are "good men and true—men of honour and honesty—by whatever names, religions, or persuasions, they may be distinguished."[2] And for this very reason—Nicolai, in his account of German Rosicrucianism, asserted that the object of English Freemasonry was "religious toleration."

I have displayed in the preceding pages the evidences which appear to demonstrate that our Brethren of the last century, from the revival of the Grand Lodge in 1717, considered the two St. Johns to be the legitimate patrons and parallels of Christian Masonry. Before that period the records of our Order are so scanty, and the testimony on all points so very defective, that nothing certain can be pronounced respecting its rites or ceremonies, discipline or doctrine, on any given subject beyond the naked outline. A few casual hints prove its continued existence in all ages; and this is almost all we have to rest our arguments upon. Whether the names of the St. Johns were used throughout all time from the very beginning of the Christian era, I will not venture positively to assert. The Colne Charter is decisive on this point, if it be authentic; but as the fact is doubtful, no conclusive reasoning can be founded upon it.

It may be right, however, to express my own conviction that the custom is of great antiquity, although the proofs of its existence may appear meagre, owing to the

masonic procession at Calcutta, in 1844, to celebrate St. John's day, *an Oriental Jew, in full Hebraic costume, carried the banner of St. John the Evangelist;* and other Brethren of the same nation concurred in its propriety by walking in the procession. No true Mason will deny the propriety of admitting Jews, Mahometans, &c., to the privileges of Masonry. In England, this question has been fully set at rest in a document issued by our Grand Lodge in 1846, and forwarded to the Grand Lodge at Berlin. "The Grand Lodge of England, by the earliest history and tradition, has always declared and observed the universality of Freemasons, making no distinction or exclusion on the score of religious faith—a matter in which she never enquires, beyond the point in which all men agree. It is for this reason that she does not sanction or recognize meetings which in some places are holden—assemblies of particular religionists. With these the Grand Lodge of England does not interfere; but she strictly guards, by her laws and her practice, against the introduction into her Lodges of any emblems or decorations which are indicative of particular creeds, deeming them liable to be taken as offensive demonstrations, at variance with the true spirit of Freemasonry."

[2] Anderson, Const., ed. 1738.

dearth of masonic manuscripts; and no indications of it are found either in the manuscripts of the British Museum, in the ancient paper purporting to be in the handwriting of King Henry VI.; or in any other document that has come under my notice, of the same or greater antiquity. If, however, it was, as I am firmly persuaded, a primitive practice amongst the early Christian Masons, the deviation in our modern lectures might easily be amended, should the Grand Lodge think proper to lend its sanction to the restoration of our ancient patrons to their primitive station in the Order. "Those Brethren," says Bro. Mackey,[3] "who contend for their dismissal from the stations which they now hold in our Lodges, on the ground that they were Christian saints, are the real innovators of our ancient universality, and the true advocates for a religious test; while, on the contrary, we best show our adherence to the principles of Masonry, when we deny the right of any man, in approaching the discussion, to advance, either one way or the other, either as an argument for or an argument against them, the religious belief of these long acknowledged patrons of our Order."

There are other irregularities in the Order which form no part of the present enquiry, but they merit the attention of the masonic authorities, because uniformity of practice is the essence of the Institution.[4] I do not mean to infer that the introduction of the St. Johns is essential to the *character* of ancient Masonry, because I am not insensible to the fact, that such a construction might possibly compromise its universal application to every age and nation of the world. But the same argument will apply with much stronger effect to those great masonic worthies, Moses and Solomon. For while the former disposition points to Christianity, which the Almighty has declared shall be the *universal* religion of mankind, and ultimately "cover the whole earth, as the

[3] Freemasons' Mag., U. S., vol. iii

[4] The Grand Master of Tennessee corrected the discrepancies of his Lodges, a few years ago, by the simple process of appointing three expert Brethren to re-arrange, according to the general rules and principles of Masonry, all the points which were suspected to be erroneous; and after their corrections had received the approbation of the Grand Lodge, the same Brethren were authorized to visit all the Lodges, and enforce the use of the revised system, under certain prescribed penalties.

waters cover the sea;"[5] the latter applies Masonry solely to Judaism, a temporary religion which was exclusively confined to one solitary people, who occupied a very small though fruitful portion of the globe. If the patrons of Masonry, in its present state, be not the two St. Johns, they certainly cannot be Moses and Solomon; for the Craft is almost solely in the hands of the Christians, and the few Jewish or Turkish Lodges which may be in existence, bear no proportion to the aggregate amount.

Strictly speaking, under such an interpretation, cosmopolitical Masonry can have no general patron. It is to the Christian branch of it alone that these great parallels can be suitably applied. To this effect it is declared in the very opening of the ancient Charges, as first printed by Dr. Anderson, under the direction of the Grand Lodge, that "in ancient times the Christian Masons were charged to comply with *the Christian usages* of each country where they travelled or worked;" and at that remote period we must look for the origin of the Johannite Masonry; for, as I have already observed, Templary had nothing to do with the appropriation. And it will not be too much to assume from hence, that the two St. Johns were consi-

[5] Isaiah xi., 9. "It is a singular and instructive fact, that Christianity is *the only religion suited to universal man.* Or in other words, no other religion, originating in the East, was ever such as could be observed without alteration by the inhabitants of the north. They have all particular observances and requirements, which are impracticable or difficult in climates very different from that in which they originated. It is from this cause, probably, that the direction which all false religions have taken in their spread, has been the direction of latitude and not of longitude. Thus the religions of Zoroaster and Mohammed, by requiring daily ablutions, and other similar ceremonials, rendered their religion intolerable to the people of cold countries. But what was narrowness of view in the heathen legislators, had a definite object in the law of Moses, in which there is much to confine the religious system which it established, not only to a warm climate, but to the particular country of Palestine. The possession of a separate country, and of *that* country in particular. was essential to the system established by Moses. Hence, the Hebrews could never sing the song of Jehovah in any strange land; and hence, since they had been a people without an altar or a priest, without a country or a state, their system has been altogether different to what the law intended. In fact, the system of Moses has been *extinct* ever since the seed of Abraham were driven from their inheritance, and was much modified even by their temporary expatriation of seventy years." (Kitto's Palestine, book ii., c. 5.)

dered the patrons of the Craft, for ages before the prominent Jewish types of Christ were made a legitimate part of the ordinary Lodge lectures. But while we adopt these types as indications of a masonic origin, I do not see how we are to avoid the consequences, if we reject the illustrious individual who was foretold by the last Jewish prophet, as the forerunner and messenger of the Messiah, and place Christian Masonry under the patronage of the lawgiver of a temporary Church, and the king of a people from whom the sceptre has departed, never to return.

An enquiry will naturally arise whether these, and other open questions, are of sufficient importance to disturb the equanimity of the Order, and thereby authorize their settlement by the interference of the Grand Lodge. I think they are; but even should it be said, that no evil is likely to result from the continuance of this loose and unsettled state of things, still it is deserving of notice, and redress also, if a remedy can be satisfactorily applied.[6] And let it not be thought that some of the discrepancies which exist amongst us are trifling; for the unhappy schism of the last century, which divided

[6] An intelligent correspondent of the "Freemasons' Quarterly Review," under the sobriquet of Latomus, expresses the same opinion. Speaking of the Royal Arch, he says that the three degrees terminating in the Royal Arch, contain "most of the science of Masonry which can be considered authentic. But how few are there whose time, inclination, or education, fits them to become perfectly acquainted even with the first degree? Take, for instance, the lectures in which is contained the history of the Order; for many reasons these are little known by the great majority of Master Masons; but go a step farther, and without entering into what may not be written, it may be asked, whether there is not a lapse of nearly six hundred years utterly unaccounted for? The perfect Mason, who has given his attention to the subject, is not ignorant of the events of this long period of six centuries; but the present system of conferring the degree alluded to, would make any unskilled Brother believe that there was not a lapse of twenty years. Now here might, with much advantage, be introduced two supplemental and intermediate grades, by means of which the whole would be rendered more perfect. These are the fifth and sixth of the rite Moderne; they might be given as parts of the previous degree, or as *passes* to the succeeding one, and not as absolutely distinct grades. By this means the twelvemonth would be far better spent than it now is; for the intercalary grades should be given at an interval of four months from the two degrees they come between, and from one another." (F. Q. R., 1838.)

the English Craft for more than seventy years, was suspended on a difference less important than any of them—even on such an insignificant question, as whether a Brother should enter the Lodge with his *right* or *left* foot foremost.

The Lodges are exhorted to uniformity of practice;[7] but how is uniformity to be observed in the absence of any authoritative enactment? The legitimate degrees ought to possess some certain standard, to which the Brethren may refer for information on any point which they may consider to be surrounded with doubt and difficulty.[8] Such a plan, if it were practicable, would confer advantages on the Order which it does not now possess; and, like the decree of Cyrus to the captive Jews, would be hailed by the Craft as a boon, which would at once benefit the Institution, and increase the popularity of the Grand Lodge.

I am far from thinking, my Lord, that these errors are incidental to the system. They have crept in silently, and by slow and almost imperceptible degrees, and have acquired consistency by time and inattention. Some of them did not exist for half a century after the revival of Freemasonry, because the subjects which they embraced had not then been introduced into the Order. The illustrations of symbolical Masonry were very bald and meagre, until Dunckerley, Hutchinson, Preston, and others, enriched it by their salutary labours; and, consequently, it was not merely "caviare to the multitude," but a subject of ridicule to the higher ranks of society.

[7] "All Lodges are particularly bound to observe the same usages and customs; every deviation, therefore, from the established mode of working is highly improper, and cannot be justified or countenanced." (Const. of Private Lodges, 21.) His Royal Highness, the late Grand Master, appears to have extended a great latitude to this rule; for in his address to the Grand Lodge in December, 1819, he said, that "so long as the Master of any Lodge observed the landmarks of the Craft, he was at liberty to give the lectures in the language best suited to the character of the Lodge over which he presided." (Quarterly Communication, Dec., 1819.)

[8] I conceive the Grand Lodge possesses full powers under the following law:—"In the Grand Lodge resides the power of enacting laws and regulations for the government of the Craft, and of altering, repealing, and abrogating them, provided that they continue to observe the ancient landmarks of the Order." (Const. of the Grand Lodge, 10.)

Caricatures and pasquinades were published; mock processions were got up; and it was not only lampooned by the common people, but regarded with suspicion, if not contempt, by the learned. If it be considered how much the Institution has advanced in public opinion during our more fortunate times, and how exempt it now is from open attacks or secret aspersions, surely it would be worth while to make it still more deserving of such general estimation, by endeavouring to remove those stumbling blocks which are a source of contention and dispute, of grief and pain, to many a worthy Brother.

There is another consideration which deserves notice. If the Grand Lodge, as the authorized and acknowledged head of a cosmopolitical institution, that prides itself on the unchangeable nature of its ceremonies, should discover amongst the subordinate lodges a broad and distinctly marked deviation from time-honoured observance; it may not be necessary to enquire how the innovation originated, but it is absolutely essential, in my humble opinion, to the maintainance of its own dignity, as well as of the purity of the Institution, that the anomaly be promptly rescinded, and the ancient practice restored. This is the only way to prevent a disregard of landmarks consecrated by age, and immemorial observance, in future; and to transmit the system to posterity pure and unsullied in its doctrines and discipline, as well as its landmarks and practical ceremonies.

Without uniformity the Order of Freemasonry would be worthless, and neither profit nor pleasure would be the mutual result. And this beautiful principle ought not to be confined to a few inane signs and tokens, which constitute a mere conventional mode of communication, the advantages of which are shared by clubs and convivial meetings of very doubtful character; and even the lowest classes of society have their significant signals, and symbolical language, which are characteristic of their habits and mode of life; but to extend to the higher and more noble walk of ritual observances, science, and morality. These are the points of greatest importance in Freemasonry, because it is by them, tempered and qualified as they ought to be, by judicious regulations emanating from the governing body, that the merits of the Craft will be estimated, and not by arrangements in

which we may be rivalled by the Thugs of India, or the gypsies of our own country.[9] These constitute the great masonic sea, which the conventional tokens of the Order are permitted to navigate at their pleasure, but whose shipwreck would scarcely be marked by a ripple on its glassy surface. Freemasonry would still remain the same beautiful system of morality, veiled in allegory, and illustrated by symbols, if all its minor adjuncts were entirely swept away.

I have the honour to remain,
My Lord,
Your Lordship's obedient
Servant and Brother,
GEO. OLIVER, D. D.

Scopwick Vicarage, Dec. 28, 1847.

[9] What will the Free and Accepted Mason, who prides himself on his perfect knowledge of our signs, tokens, and symbolical language, say to the following extract from a dialogue in the Gypsey language, which I have found in a scarce book, called "A Caueat for common Cvrsetors, vvlgarely called Uagabones, set forth by Thos. Warman, Esquier, M.D.LXVJJ$^{th}$":—"Bene lyghtmans to thy quarromes in what lipken hast thou lipped in this darkemanes: whether in a lybbege or in the strummel?" "I couched a hogeshed in a skypper this darkemanes. I towre the strummel tryne vpon thy nabcher and togman. I saye by the Salomone I wyll lage it of with a gage of bene house then cut to my nose watch," &c., &c. Ohe, jam satis! This beats the symbolical language of Masonry hollow! Let us, then, look up to something of a higher character than signs, tokens, and passwords.

## LETTER VIII.

### RECAPITULATION.

"How far any will be guided by me, I hope I shall always know myself so well as to leave that to their own choice. As to the inutility of my enquiries and also the impartiality of them, here I confess myself to wish (as I think what I wish) they may be a good, not absolutely terminating upon myself, that the reader will consider them with as unbiassed a freedom as I have witten."—SHUCKFORD.

"Oh, for that day, whenever it shall beam,
Which gives us back the coat without a seam!
When from all quarters of this earth combined,
One universal church shall knit mankind.
To build their heavenly Salem then shall rise,
With one consent, the great, the good, the wise;
All sects united in a common band,
Join faith with faith, and mingle hand with hand;
Together lift the sacrifice of prayer,
And the slain Lamb's eternal supper share."

RELIGIO CLERICI.

UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA

## LETTER VIII.

My Lord,

I entreat your Lordship to believe that although I am not one of those bold and unquiet spirits, who would dictate to the Fraternity what they are to believe, and what they are to reject, yet I cannot be persuaded that I am infringing on any privilege, or violating any trust, by collecting facts, and arranging them in a manner which may direct public opinion into a right channel. In my anxiety to purge the Order of everything which may tend to afford even an indirect sanction to the caviller's objections, I have endeavoured to obviate every anomaly which may have the most remote influence in throwing discredit on its triumphant progress. And nothing can afford me more sincere gratification than the prospect of removing any obstacle that may create a hostile feeling, or induce a false view of the pre-eminent beauties of the system. I regard Freemasonry as a grand machine, in the hands of Omnipotence, for promoting the blessings of peace, harmony, and brotherly love amongst all orders and descriptions of men. And I grieve when I find any wayward theorist advancing positions subversive of its benignant principles, for the purpose of obstructing the onward march of an institution which promises to produce a beneficial change in the moral condition of man.

We are all fallible; nor will I go so far as to assert that Masonry is perfect; for how can we expect perfection in any scheme of social happiness which has been struck out by the sole instrumentality of imperfect human reason? And, however our glorious science may be regarded by those who envy its reputation, and are ignorant of its design and end, I must be pardoned if I consider it as a vehicle of human happiness; and, conse-

quently, whatever may be its imperfections, entitled to the approbation of the philanthropist, even when taken on its negative merits as the dispenser of charities and benevolence to the worthy poor, and virtuous distressed.

> The widow's tear—the orphan's cry—
> All wants our ready hands supply.
> As far as power is given.
> The naked clothe—the prisoner free—
> These are thy works, sweet Masonry,
> Revealed to us from heaven.
> In choral numbers Masons join,
> To bless and praise the Light divine.

In this concluding letter, I am desirous of drawing your Lordship's undivided attention to the force of the argument contained in the preceding divisions of the subject; and I flatter myself it will display Freemasonry in a purer and more holy view than is contained in the circumscribed lodge lectures; which, if they had embraced a series of extended disquisitions on all the points connected with the comprehensive system, would have been too unwieldy to occupy the attention of Brethren whose meetings are confined to two or three hours monthly. And this may be one reason why so many wild and visionary notions have been entertained at various times by those who have not had the advantage of initiation into the Order.

To make the arguments in the preceding pages perfectly intelligible, I shall take the liberty of troubling your Lordship with a brief recapitulation of the course which I have thought it necessary to pursue, in the illustration of a subject that is so far doubtful as to have produced some conflicting opinions in different Grand Lodges. While that of Scotland admits no other name for the blue degrees than "St. Johns' Masonry," and those of the United States defend the dedication of our lodges to these two worthy men, our own Grand Secretary, admitting the phrase of "St. Johns' Lodges" to be correct and orthodox, explains from his place in the Grand Lodge, that it is merely "a technical term for our mode of working."[1]

[1] Quarterly Communication, September, 1847. See the Report in Freemasons' Quarterly Review, 1847.

I have long been of opinion that if any brother would take the trouble of disentangling this intricate web, and placing it fairly before the brethren, he would be entitled to the thanks and gratitude of the Fraternity. And, at length, in despair of seeing the matter taken up comprehensively, and feeling the gradual approach of that period when "the silver cord will be loosed, the golden bowl broken, the pitcher broken at the fountain, and the wheel at the cistern,"[2] I determined on devoting a leisure hour to the task myself, and the result is now before your Lordship and the public, who will determine how far I have been successful.

There are many reasons for believing, my Lord, that the anomalies, how unimportant soever they may be, which at present exist in the Order, may be mainly attributed to the continental innovations of the last century. It is quite true, that they received no countenance from our own Grand Lodge; but many English visitors to the foreign lodges, where they were practised, brought home trifling innovations, in doctrine and discipline, which had attracted their attention as improvements in the system, and privately introduced them into their respective lodges; and being thus practised continuously in conjunction with the pure system of symbolical Masonry, in process of time have been received and considered by junior Brethren, who had seen them in practice from their first initiation, as authentic parts of the system; and thus novelties were extended to other lodges by Brethren who had not the most remote idea that they were propagating errors which might operate, at some distant period, to produce an absolute change in the landmarks, which the constitutions pronounce to be unalterable.

That this was actually the case, both in the *ancient* and *modern* lodges, there never existed a doubt in the mind of any intelligent Mason; and it was the apprehension that these anomalies would operate unfavourably for the continued purity and popularity of the Order, which induced our lamented Grand Master, his Royal Highness the Duke of Sussex, to exert himself so strenuously to unite the two sects into one great society,

[2] Eccles. xii., 6.

which, acting under a single Grand Lodge, and an uniform code of laws, might be kept free from error and impurity, and exempt from the innovations of those sanguine, but well-meaning Brethren, who, under the pretext of improvement, might attempt to introduce changes into the system without the authority and sanction of the Grand Lodge.

There are some who affect to believe that continental Masonry and our symbolical system are synonymous, and arguing from these false premises, have revived an old hypothesis, that Freemasonry is an offshoot from the Rosicrucian systems of Paracelsus, and other alchemical worthies of the seventeenth century. The most recent attempt of the kind appears in an insulated chapter of a work just published, which is called "New curiosities of Literature, and Book of the Months. By George Soane, B. A., two vols." I have not seen the book, but the chapter in question was copied in the "Morning Herald" of the 8th November last. The charge is stated in terms which I am almost ashamed to quote, on account of their indecency and vulgarity; but as I intend briefly to enquire into the truth of the theory it cannot be avoided. He says, then—"Belief upon any topic, no matter what it may be, appears to have such charms for the mass of mankind, and to be altogether such a pleasant kind of indulgence, that a writer seldom gets thanks for attempting to disturb an established creed. The reluctance of the old monks to exchange their blundering *mumpsimus* for the correcter *sumpsimus*, has been often quoted in illustration of this disposition: *abuse was the only coin in which they paid their monitors, and better than this I can hardly expect from the Freemasons*, for showing that they are either deceived or deceivers, and that, in fact, *their society sprang out of decayed Rosicrucianism, just as the beetle is engendered from a muck heap.* The doctrine, however, is not new, it has been broached before, both here and upon the continent, but always as if the writers were half afraid, lest, in pulling down the masonic temple, *the rubbish might fall about their ears, and do them a mischief.* In consequence, there is not, as far as I know, anything like a full and clear exposition of this *wide spread juggle*, and if a patient investigation of the subject may entitle me to say so much, my object is to supply that deficiency."

It will be here seen that Mr. Soane has not been very choice of his language, and, feeling that he deserves it, expresses his apprehension lest he should be abused; but so far as my brief notice is concerned, he will find himself disappointed; for a Masons' lodge is not a school of abuse, as this worthy gentleman seems to predicate. The feelings with which he enters on the ungracious enquiry, may be estimated by the epithets which he applies to the subject of his vituperation; such as, "rubbish"— "wide spread juggle"—sprang from a muck heap"—"trash"—"trumpery legends," &c., &c.; and, after some praise of the alchemists (who, by the way, are the only persons with whom he appears to be on gracious terms), after styling Zoroaster a Hindoo Brahmin, and a sly hit at the "well paid" clergy of the church of England, he gives it as his serious opinion, that "Freemasonry belongs not to our times; it was the fiction of a credulous age, when, besides the vulgar religion or popular mythology, the priests and philosophers had a secret system of their own, compelling the people, under severe penalties, to abide in ignorance, while they kept all the light they could collect to themselves. It was not much, to be sure, but what it was they retained and guarded with a barbarous and unrelenting jealousy. Such has been the case in all ages of which we have any record. The priests of Egypt had their hidden and undivulgible wisdom—an inner portion of their temple, to which the multitude could never penetrate. The Jewish hierarchy had their cabala, that knowledge which, as they said, God had granted to them under a solemn command of secrecy, and denied to the rest of their fellow-creatures. The Indian teachers, with Zoroaster at their head, had one code for the multitude, and another for the elect. The Greeks boasted of their Eleusinian mysteries. Even Pythagoras bound his followers to silence. But we repeat it, the day of mysticism has gone by; and though it is only the first dawn of real knowledge that is breaking upon us, yet, even in this early twilight, men for the most part can see too plainly to be *the dupes of such absurd pretensions.* The very attempt, however, to continue them, is an effort *to perpetuate ignorance and error*, and upon this principle, the sooner the Freemasons lay aside their aprons and talk like the rest of the world,

the better." And again—"The Freemasons did, like the Rosicrucians, lay claims to great antiquity; but while some of them modestly dated the origin of their Order from Adam, *I could by no means trace it back farther than the first half of the seventeenth century.*"

If, by Freemasonry being "the fiction of a credulous age," Mr. Soane refers to the dark period before the coming of Christ, what becomes of his assertion, that "it had no existence before the seventeenth century?" But if, on the contrary, as it is reasonable to presume, he alludes to the time when "the fiction" was revived, and purged of its operative tendency, after passing through the hands of Inigo Jones, Archbishop Sheldon, Sir John Denham, Sir Christopher Wren, Webb, Stone, and other celebrated architects, and our present Grand Lodge was established, viz., the beginning of the eighteenth century, he is then involved in the opposite dilemma of condemning its operative character, and branding with the names of "credulous" and "barbarous" an age which produced such a constellation of wise and learned men—Addison and Steele—Dryden and Pope—Johnson and Goldsmith, and their numerous and talented cotemporaries, that it was styled by way of eminence, "the Augustan age of England." At this period it was pronounced by the authority of the Grand Lodge, that "*the privileges of Masonry should no longer be restricted to operative Masons, but extend to men of various professions, provided they were regularly approved and initiated into the Order.*" Yet in the face of this resolution, which stands prominently on the Grand Lodge Books, as one of the first and most important acts after its re-establishment, Mr. Soane is bold enough to assert, that "THE FREEMASONS NEVER BELONGED TO THE WORKING GUILDS."

In Mr. Soane's theory, my Lord, there are some difficulties which he would oblige the fraternity very much by clearing up. If the Freemasons never belonged to the working guilds, how is it to be accounted for that Inigo Jones was appointed to the office of Grand Master of Masons in the above century, viz., 1603, and Sir Christopher in 1685, neither of whom belonged to the association calling themselves Rosicrucians? This is a stumbling block, which he will not find it easy to remove. But we will ascend a little higher. How does it happen,

if Freemasonry was unknown before the seventeenth century, that in 1566, Queen Elizabeth sent an armed force to York, for the purpose of breaking up the Grand Lodge and arresting its members? And how does it happen, that, in 1429, lodges of Freemasons were holden under the patronage of the Archbishop of Canterbury, and the Worshipful Master, the Wardens, fifteen Fellow-crafts, and three Entered Apprentices, are all especially named amongst the members?

It is probable that Mr. Soane, instead of endeavouring to account for these anomalies which are calculated to overthrow his hypothesis, by patient investigation, will boldly cut the Gordian knot, by asserting that we have no evidence of the facts, and that, consequently, they are untrue. But I will tell him, my Lord, that they are not untrue; and that we have the most incontrovertible evidence in the actual minutes of the lodges; which are accessible to any enquirer who will be at the trouble of consulting the MS. register of the Prior of Canterbury under the above date.

It would be easy to multiply the difficulties which surround Mr. Soane's theory, but it is unnecessary; and I shall only adduce one other example to show, that in the seventeenth century there were many Rosicrucians who were not Masons, and many Masons who were unacquainted with the Rosicrucian cabala; whence it will follow that Masonry, at that period, was not considered a branch of the Rosy Cross.

The most celebrated English Rosicrucian of the seventeenth century was Dr. Fludd. He was the preceptor of Ashmole, who was also deeply imbued with the same occult doctrines. But Fludd died in 1637, *without having initiated his pupil into Masonry*, of which, indeed, he is believed to have been perfectly ignorant. Nine years after his death, Ashmole, as he himself informs us, was initiated in an existing lodge at Warrington, by the persons whom he particularly names, *none of whom were Rosicrucians*. Now, if Freemasonry grew out of Rosicrucianism, as this author boldly asserts, and was concocted in the very age when Fludd and Ashmole flourished, it seems equally strange and unaccountable that the former should have been ignorant of it, and the latter have found it necessary to seek initiation in a lodge which might

have been in existence half a century or more, and none of its members were Rosicrucians.

But the most remarkable circumstance in this enquiry is, that Ashmole himself, who was a profound antiquary, and acquainted with all the secrets of the Rosy Cross, *ascribes the origin of Masonry to a very different source.* In his manuscripts in the Museum at Oxford, there are many valuable collections relating to the history of Freemasons, as may be gathered from the letters of Dr. Knipe, of Christ Church, to the publishers of Ashmole's Life; the following extracts from which will show the origin of Masonry, according to the opinion of Ashmole:—

"As to the ancient society of Freemasons, concerning whom you are desirous of knowing what may be known with certainty, I shall only tell you, that if our worthy Brother, E. Ashmole, Esq., had executed his intended design, our Fraternity had been as much obliged to him as the Brethren of the most noble order of the garter. I would not have you surprised at this expression, or think it at all too assuming. The sovereigns of that order have not disdained our fellowship, and there have been times when emperors were also Freemasons. What from Mr. Ashmole's collection I could gather was, that the report of our society taking rise from a bull granted by the Pope, in the reign of Henry VI., to some Italian architects, to travel over all Europe to erect chapels, was ill founded. Such a bull there was, *and those architects were Masons;* but this bull, in the opinion of the learned Mr. Ashmole, was confirmative only, and *did not by any means create our fraternity, or even establish it in this kingdom.* But as to the time and manner of that establishment, something I shall relate from the same collections. *St. Alban, the proto-martyr, established Masonry here,* and from this time it flourished, more or less, according as the world went, down to the days of King Athelstane, who, for the sake of his brother Edwin, granted the Masons a charter. Under our Norman princes they frequently received extraordinary marks of royal favour."[3]

Now, my Lord, I would simply ask, is it possible to

[3] The reader will find this account continued in Oliver's edition of Preston (Leonard's Reprint), pp. 132, 133, *note*

believe that Elias Ashmole, the learned antiquary, the enlightened philosopher, and the true Christian, would have endeavoured so far to mislead posterity, as to have assigned an origin to Masonry in this kingdom which he knew to be false; or to have promulgated an error which would have for ever blasted his reputation as an honest man? If Freemasonry was a scion of Rosicrucianism, invented during his own times, *he must have been acquainted with the fact.* Is it, then, reasonable to suppose, that knowing it to have been a fabrication of the society of which he was a distinguished member, he would have falsified his knowledge, and risked his credit for veracity, by tracing its existence to a different source, and a more remote period of time?

Mr. Soane adopted a course equally unwise and unpopular, when he determined, thus gratuitously, to attack a harmless and inoffensive institution; and, for the purpose of embarrassing its charitable operations, plunged himself into a mass of absurdity, which the reviewer in the "Morning Herald" still pronounces to be "the best part of the book, and the only attempt worth noticing throughout the whole two volumes;" and he has totally failed in his object. As Bishop Watson said to Gibbon, in his celebrated "Apology for Christianity"—"A display of ingenuity or erudition upon such subjects is much displaced; since it excites almost in every person an unavoidable suspicion of the purity of the source itself, from which such polluted streams have been derived."

This gentleman claims for himself the merit of originality (at least in this country), for he denominates his attempt, "A *New* Curiosity of Literature;" not knowing, perhaps, that there is a much cleverer article, on the very same subject, in the "London Magazine" for 1824, by the English Opium Eater (De Quincy), who had been misled by the dreams of certain visionary philosophers in Germany, that most superstitious of all the countries of Europe, viz., Buhle, Meiners, Gatterer, Dornden, Semler, and other mystics of the eighteenth century who endeavoured to keep themselves in countenance by holding up Freemasonry as a branch of their own cabala; and their opinion was countenanced by the injudicious practices of Fustier, Peuvret, Pyron, and other continental innovators, who actually introduced the Rosicrucian fancies

into their respective systems of sublime Masonry. But the imposition was soon detected, and they quietly sank into oblivion.

I have called your Lordship's attention to the subject, without any design of again formally encountering an hypothesis which I have already disposed of more than once in former publications. Indeed, in the present case, it is unnecessary; for Mr. Soane has proclaimed his ignorance of the sublime principles of Masonry in the following words:—"I feel not the least hesitation in saying, that the Freemasons have no secret beyond *a few trumpery legends*, and the attaching of certain religious and moral meanings to a set of emblems, principally borrowed from the mechanic art of the builder. I affirm, too, that all such symbols, with their interpretations, are of Rosicrucian origin, and that *the Freemasons never belonged to the working guilds*, their objects being totally different. The proofs are at hand. Let the reader exercise his own unbiassed judgment upon them, taking nothing upon trust from either party, and I have little doubt of his coming to the same conclusion. As, according to the theory that I wish to establish, *Freemasonry grew out of Rosicrucianism*, it is essential that we should, in the first instance, thoroughly understand the origin and nature of the latter."

He then enters on a long and rambling account of the origin and progress of Rosicrucianism, extracted from the "Fama Fraternitatis" of John Valentine Andrea, with which I shall not trouble your Lordship, because no one, who knows anything about Freemasonry, would have attempted to identify the one with the other; and concludes with this brief view of their principles, which he would have his readers believe are the true principles of the masonic Order,—"They respect all established governments, they are true Lutherans, and as to their philosophy it is nothing new, but such as it was received by Adam after the fall, and practised both by Moses and Solomon. They deprecate the general passion for gold-making, yet allow that they are possessed of the art, though they look upon it as a parergy, and one of the least of their many valuable secrets. They then point out the manner in which the aspirants for Rosicrucian mysteries may communicate with them, viz., by means

of printed pamphlets; for though, at the present time, they say, we name neither ourselves nor our places of meeting, yet in whatever language they write, full surely will it come to our knowledge. Nor shall any one, who gives his name, fail either of a meeting with some of us, or a written reply. This, too, we say for certain, whoever means well and fairly by us, shall have the benefit of it both in soul and body. But he who is false of heart, or who is only looking after gold, he shall do no harm to us, but shall bring assured destruction upon himself. As to our house of the holy spirit, though thousands may have seen it, yet shall it ever remain unvisited and undisturbed, and to the godless world a mystery."

Now, if some of the Rosicrucians were Freemasons, and *vice versa*, which we readily admit, it does not follow that the two institutions had anything in common. Our system was called St. John's Masonry for the express purpose of distinguishing it from all other imitative institutions, because it is purely a system of light and love, the avowed characteristics of these two holy men. Suffice it, then, to say, for the information of Mr. Soane, instead of the abuse which he seems to expect, and for his future guidance, if he should feel inclined to persist in his hypothesis, that, as he appears to have been misled by the fact, although a degree of sublime Masonry is actually called the Rose +, it has no reference whatever to his Rosicrucians, but was intended to symbolize the great atonement, the rose being an emblem of the Redeemer; and the degree, in the order of H. R. D. M. was established by Robert Bruce after the battle of Bannockburn, which was fought on St. John's day in the year 1314.

And here a question arises which I would recommend to the serious consideration of our opponents; what is the object of these invidious attacks? what do they want? To extinguish Freemasonry, they say. And wherefore? Masonry does not obstruct their views; she interferes with no other society, but pursues her accustomed walk of benevolence and charity quietly and unostentatiously, without courting either the praise or the censure of her cotemporaries. She cheers the heart of the disconsolate and forsaken widow; she relieves and succours the worthy aged and distressed; she administers assistance to the

unfortunate; she feeds, and clothes, and educates both male and female orphans, and sends them forth into society to act their allotted part on the great theatre of the world; and in all cases they have done it with equal credit and success. And why our opponents should be desirous of closing the sources of those extensive charities which are dispensed by the masonic society, it would puzzle a sophister to explain. What advantage would accrue to them individually? What would society gain by it, that they take such pains to dissolve the bonds of love by which we are united together? And what would be their feelings as Christians, if they possess the common humanity of our species, were they to consider seriously that every line they write for the purpose of accelerating such a consummation, may prove a dagger to stab a destitute widow to the heart, by extinguishing the charities which contribute to her support, and thus withholding the bread by which her life's blood is sustained. Is the nineteenth century a time for benevolence to be counteracted, or charity stifled in the bud? for the best feelings of the heart to be crushed, or sacrificed on the altar of an insane and stupid bigotry? Forbid it, every sacred principle of that divine virtue which is more acceptable to the Deity than all mysteries and knowledge, than prophecy or faith, or giving the body to be burned![4] *Ohe jam satis!* I pass on to other matters.

In my second letter I have endeavoured to obviate some of the objections which have been urged in modern times, against the appropriation of the two St. Johns as patrons of Masonry. And, as a preliminary step, I have established the fact, that Masonry, to be entitled to the favourable consideration of mankind, ought to be invariably the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever. It was intended by its founders to be a permanent institution, and was therefore established on cosmopolite principles, that, like our holy religion, it might be adapted to every change in the manners and customs of men, and to that universal system of religion which is ordained, at the period pointed out by divine prophecy, to cover the whole earth as the waters cover the sea. For this purpose a series of landmarks were appointed, as unerring

[4] See 1 Cor. xiii.

standards of the faith of the Institution, which should neither need nor sustain alteration.

These landmarks, therefore, are guides which cannot mislead us. Like St. John the Baptist, they are burning and shining lights, which marshal us in our masonic course, and prevent us from deviating into the paths of insubordination and error. Were we to follow the false lights which were exhibited by Bahrdt, Weishaupt, Knigge, and their associates, we should be led astray, and be induced to exchange divine Masonry for infidelity and rebellion. But the landmarks interpose their salutary influence to prevent such a falling away from the truth, and lead us by insensible steps to the haven of Christian peace, where wisdom presides, strength supports, and beauty adorns, and brotherly love is cemented by the practice of every moral and social virtue.

Thus we arrive at the conclusion, that Freemasonry is an institution calculated for the observance of every nation and people in all ages of the world, however they may be distinguished by a dissimilarity of manners, customs, education, or climate.

The objections to the introduction of the two St. Johns into symbolical Masonry, have not been very confidently expressed; although there are doubts in the minds of many judicious and well-informed Brethren, whether such an appropriation be not sectarian, and consequently an infraction of the universality of the Order. But the patronage of Moses and Solomon is liable to a much more serious objection on the self-same principle, because the Jewish system of religion, as we have just seen, was only intended to be a temporary dispensation, and restricted to a very narrow corner of the earth, while Christianity is pronounced in scripture to be universal, and the time is predicted when it shall be practised by all mankind, and the whole globe be converted into a great fold under one shepherd, Jesus Christ the Lord.

Thus the Redeemer, having in view the universality of his religion, said,—"Other sheep I have which are not of this fold, them also I must bring, and they shall hear my voice;"[5] meaning, that His everlasting kingdom will be open to all mankind without exception, on the condition

[5] John x., 16.

of embracing his universal religion. The Jewish dispensation was strictly exclusive, for it taught that the favour of God was confined to their nation only; and that all blessings and promises were to be enjoyed by them alone. Christianity has no such selfish principle; and when Christ used the above remarkable words, he concluded by saying, that ultimately "there shall be only one fold and one shepherd;" or, in other words, that all mankind should embrace his Gospel, and that all other systems of religion should be utterly abolished.

From these considerations it will appear, that the assumption of Moses and Solomon as the patrons of Masonry in the nineteenth century, savours more of sectarianism than that of the two St. Johns, who were the herald and evangelist of that universal religion which shall, in due time, prevail over the whole face of the earth. Besides, if it be true that such a choice of patrons has a sectarian bias (which I greatly doubt), its force is increased tenfold by the substitution of the two Jewish worthies (for whose memory, as primitive patrons of the Order, no one can entertain a higher respect than myself), not only for the reasons just mentioned, but also because it would be subversive of an institution which is democratic in its nature, and cosmopolite in its extent. Now it is clear, that neither the civil nor ecclesiastical polity under Moses or Solomon was either democratic or cosmopolitical. In the former case Moses was the prime minister under Jehovah the King of Israel; and Solomon was monarch of the same people, and almost absolute. And the like reasoning will apply to the cosmopolitism of Freemasonry, which cannot, therefore, be correctly represented by those distinguished Masons.

Having thus cleared the way by a disposal of the several theories which ingenious Brethren have brought to bear upon the subject, I have proceeded, in my third letter, to a consideration of the period when the names of these two saints and holy men were first introduced into the system of Freemasonry. In the course of this enquiry considerable difficulties have been encountered. Our ancient Brethren were so fastidious, that they guarded with especial care their masonic manuscripts, and ultimately destroyed them by fire, lest they should find their way into unauthorized hands; and Dr. Anderson laments,

under date of 1679, that "many of the fraternity's records of this and former reigns were lost in the next *and at the revolution;* and many of them were too hastily burned in our time, from a fear of making discoveries; so that we have not so ample an account as could be wished of the Grand Lodge."[6] And when he compiled his Book of Constitutions, by command of the Grand Lodge in 1720, he adds: "the Freemasons had always a book in manuscript, called the Book of Constitutions (of which they have several very ancient copies remaining), containing not only their charges and regulations, but also the history of architecture from the beginning of time, in order to show the antiquity and excellence of the Craft; but they had no Book of Constitutions in print, till his grace the present Duke of Montague, when Grand Master, ordered me to peruse the old manuscripts, and digest the constitutions with a just chronology."[7]

These were great discouragements in an undertaking like the present, and, therefore, I have been obliged to limit my enquiry to the documents which were in existence at that period, authenticated by the old manuscripts submitted to the inspection of Anderson, Desaguliers, Gofton, Clare, and others, who were constituted his associates in drawing up a series of lectures for the use of the lodges. These were widely disseminated, and constitute an authentic digest of the pure and legitimate doctrines of Masonry, which it would be idle to controvert. These lectures formed the basis of all succeeding ones; and throughout the whole series, the St. Johns are named as the patrons of the Order, and the authorized sponsors of the Mason-lodge. They accompanied all the warrants which were sent to foreign parts; and accordingly we find that at that early period, in every country of Europe, where Masonry was planted under the authority of the Grand Lodge of England, the lodges were called by the name of St. John—*que c'est le nom de toutes les loges.*[8]

Your Lordship will have observed, that in a subsequent revision of the lectures, this prominent truth was fully exemplified, by a copious explanation of all the precedent

[6] Anderson's Constitutions, ed. 1738.
[7] Ibid. Introduction to the table of contents.
[8] From the French Lectures, A. D. 1740.

steps by which the system had been distinguished from the earliest times; as if our ancient Brethren had foreseen a period when this great principle would be brought into question, and were determined to provide against any misapprehension, by a clear and unmistakeable enunciation of the doctrine. And, accordingly, the two St. Johns were firmly incorporated into the Order, by constituting a part of the invocation—"So help me God, and holy St. John." It thus became legitimately recognized by the Grand Lodge, and ought not to have been discontinued by the private lodges without an express injunction from the same authority.

Far be it from me, my Lord, to impugn any measure which Dr. Hemming and his associates thought it right to adopt, when they remodelled the lectures in 1814, because it is impossible, at this period of time, to know the true grounds on which their conclusions were founded. But, as there are two distinct opinions on the subject at the present day, both parties may feel gratified by having the evidences placed within their reach, and being spared the trouble of making the necessary researches in confirmation of their respective theories.

In my fourth letter I have endeavoured to give an outline of the reasons why St. John the Baptist was esteemed the patron of Masonry. It appears quite clear, from conclusive evidence, that he was a distinguished member, if not the Grand Master of the Essenian society, which was considered to be the conservator of Masonry, when, in common with the true religion, it was under a cloud, during its transition state preceding the advent of Christ, when "men loved *darkness* rather than *light*, because their deeds were evil." At that period the Dayspring from on high was manifested to destroy the works of darkness, and reveal to mankind the true design of the Most High in the creation of man. The Baptist was termed "a burning and a shining light;" and the Evangelist bears witness that "the light shone in darkness, but the darkness comprehended it not." St. John, like the prophet Elijah, whose light was enunciated by being translated to Heaven in a chariot of fire, was the forerunner of Christ, who was destined to baptize with the Holy Ghost, and with fire. He made the path of salvation straight, by levelling "the highest of hills," and exalting

"the lowest of vallies," that "*all flesh might see the salvation of God;*"[9] thus heralding and announcing the appearance of an universal religion, which should embrace the whole human species in one fold, under one shepherd, that there might be, in future, no distinction of birth, climate, country, or language; but that all mankind, Jew, Greek, or barbarian, bond or free, who would consent to be initiated into the great mystery by the rite of baptism, might be included in the universal bond of brotherhood, and be received into that glorious institution of which the G. A. O. T. U. is the federal head, and admitted into that general Grand Lodge, where peace, order, and harmony eternally preside.

Here, as in a Masons' lodge, all mysteries will be revealed, and the redeemed actually see that great and supernal Being in his native majesty. Darkness will no longer prevail, but a burning and a shining light will irradiate the soul, and make it understand all mysteries and all knowledge; and, as John the Baptist predicted, "all flesh shall see the salvation of God." It was for this reason that St. John was considered the patron of Masonry, because he was the chief or leading member of a society which has ever been deemed the preserver of that pure institution, which had been handed down from ancient times as an exclusive system of light and truth amidst the darkness of a benighted world, and was subsequently known and acknowledged under the name of Masonry.

One great characteristic of this noble Order is, that it is a system of LOVE—brotherly, saintly, divine love; a doctrine which was peculiarly set forth by St. John the Evangelist. He called it a new commandment; and it was, indeed, according to the opinions of our best divines,[10] so much enlarged at this period as to its object, beyond what either the Jews or heathens understood it to be, extending to all mankind, and even to our greatest enemies; so greatly advanced and heightened as to its degree, even to the laying down of our lives for one another; so effectually taught, so mightily encouraged, so very much urged and insisted upon, that it may be very well

[9] Luke iii., 5, 6.
[10] See Mant's Bible, in a note under John xiii., 34.

deemed a new commandment; because it was generally neglected in the practice of mankind, and because it was, for the most part, omitted in the lessons of moral teachers of that age; but the novelty of it consisted more particularly in this, that the disciples were required to love one another in the same degree in which Christ loved them.

This doctrine was more fully displayed by this Evangelist than by any other apostle of Christ; for which reason he might be considered the patron of an order which is founded on the same divine principle; and St. John, being the personal friend and companion of Christ, is properly the protector of a society, whose members profess a peculiar friendship for each other. The construction of the Apocalypse has been mentioned as another evidence of the same fact. It appears to have been written during the severe persecution of Domitian, when the Christians were obliged to hold their meetings in valleys, and caverns of the earth; and secreted themselves from observation in crypts and inaccessible places, that they might practice in security the rites of their church.

During this persecution the Evangelist was banished to the island of Patmos, after having, as it is asserted by Tertullian, been plunged into a caldron of boiling oil, and escaped unhurt; and here, amidst solitude and the romantic scenery of unsophisticated Nature, he composed this celebrated mystery; which, like the system of symbolical Masonry, he divided into *three* periods or degrees, which were intended, in the opinion of Bishop Halifax, to represent in an uninterrupted train of symbols, a view of the constitution and fates of the Christian Church, through its several periods of propagation, corruption, and amendment, from its beginning to its consummation in glory; and gave the mechanism of the book a turn somewhat similar to that of Freemasonry in its most primitive and simple form.

Like his great parallel, St. John the Evangelist appears to have belonged to the Essenian society; and, probably, although we have no evidence of the fact, succeeded him as its Grand Master. Their customs resembled, in a great degree, those which are attributed to the primitive Masons. Now, if it could be proved that St. John the Evangelist was Grand Master of this secret society, there

would appear a great probability in the masonic tradition, that, during the decadence of the latter institution, the attention of the fraternity should be drawn to him, on his return from Patmos to Ephesus, as their legitimate patron and head. The former Grand Master, who drew the first line of the Gospel, having been put to death by Herod, and the Brethren destitute of a chief, nothing could be more natural than that they should fix on his namesake the Evangelist, who "finished by his learning what the other began by his zeal," to succeed him in this important office. And if the Freemasons be identified with the Essenes, as appears to be the case by the concurrent testimony of many eminent masonic writers, it does not seem at all improbable that St. John, even in his old age, should be willing to renew his connection with his former associates, and resume that office which he is supposed to have held before his banishment.

It is an undeniable fact, that these two parallels were compared to the pillars of Solomon's porch; and, consequently, to the pillar of a cloud and of fire, which guided the Israelites in the wilderness; for the latter were undoubtedly symbolized by the Jachin and Boaz, or strength and stability of the old Temple, as the visible residence and glory of God on earth. A glimpse of this glory was vouchsafed to the Baptist during his interview with Christ in the river Jordan; and to the Evangelist at the transfiguration; and more clearly in the visions, which are so graphically described by him in the Book of Revelation. These several displays of divine light do not unaptly symbolize the light of Masonry, which still shines in darkness, although the darkness comprehendeth it not.

I would here remind your Lordship, once more, that symbolical Masonry is specifically called by our Scottish Brethren St. John's Masonry; and it is so plainly asserted in their Book of Constitutions, that there can be no mistake about it. In like manner, the Grand Lodges in the United States have uniformly promulgated the doctrine amongst the fraternity, that the two St. Johns are the legitimate patrons of blue Masonry. And it does not alter the state of the question, that they acknowledge them merely in the character of virtuous and good men. Such is the fact. And the authorities on which the

opinion is founded, are precisely the same as those which we adduce, viz., that they were considered to be our patrons at the revival of Masonry in England, which is the grand point to which our peculiar doctrines are to be referred, because it was at that period when the practice of Freemasonry was first pronounced to be exclusively speculative, and its dogmas propounded by authority. And, to perpetuate the names and influence of these two worthy and faithful Brothers, it was also strictly enjoined that the grand festivals should be holden on St. John's day, in continuation of a custom which has existed from time immemorial, as appears from a copy of the old Gothic Constitutions, which was produced at a grand festival on that day, in the year 1663, before Henry Jermyn, Earl of St. Albans, Grand Master.

I am no system maker, my Lord, but am anxious for the discovery of truth. If my arguments be inconclusive, or my authorities untenable, let the inference be rejected. As Jerom said to his critics, so I say to the captious or doubting Brethren—"Let them read it if they please; if not, let them cast it aside; for I do not obtrude my book on the fastidious; but I dedicate it to the studious, if they think it worth their notice." Under any circumstances I shall not be disappointed. I have carefully collected and collated the evidence, and placed them before the fraternity for their consideration. However they may decide, my object is still attained; having, from the first, had nothing in view but the purity and perfection of the Order. I have devoted a life to its accomplishment; and once attained, I should joyfully repeat the password of a high degree of sublime Masonry, and say, "CONSUMMATUM EST!"

I have the honour to be,
My Lord,
Your Lordship's faithful
Servant and Brother,
GEO. OLIVER, D. D.

Scopwick Vicarage, January 14, 1848.

# THE
# STAR IN THE EAST.

THE

# STAR IN THE EAST,

SHEWING

THE ANALOGY WHICH EXISTS

BETWEEN THE

## LECTURES OF FREEMASONRY,

THE

## Mechanism of Initiation into its Mysteries,

AND THE

## CHRISTIAN RELIGION.

---


BY THE

REV. GEO. OLIVER, D.D.,

INCUMBENT OF THE COLLEGIATE CHURCH, WOLVERHAMPTON;
D.P.G.M. FOR LINCOLNSHIRE; DOMESTIC CHAPLAIN TO
THE RIGHT HON. LORD KENSINGTON.


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# CONTENTS.


CHAPTER I.

PAGE

INTRODUCTORY Remarks; showing the absolute and immutable connection between Freemasonry and Religion, . . . . 1

CHAP. II.

Testimonies extracted from Masonic Writers in support of this truth, . . . . . 21

CHAP. III.

Christianity was the true religion from the fall of man to the establishment of the Jewish dispensation. Even the temporary system revealed to Moses was, in every material point, typical of the perfect Church of Jesus Christ; and therefore Speculative Masonry, being early united with Faith in Christ, has, in all ages, retained the benefits which it derived from this dignified alliance, . . . . . 31

CHAP. IV.

Every event alluded to in the HISTORICAL part of the Masonic Lectures, has a direct reference to Jesus Christ, or the Christian religion, . . . . . 43

CHAP. V.

The MORALITY of Masonry is precisely the same as that of Christianity, . . . . . 53

CHAP. VI.

The MECHANISM of Masonry is symbolical of its connection with the Christian religion, . . . . . 69

# PREFACE.

When a publication on a novel subject has issued from the press, the motives of the Author, and the question of expediency, are usually investigated with some degree of eagerness. I know not how far it may be considered necessary to state the numerous and complicated motives which have unitedly contributed to originate the following essay; but I may, perhaps, be permitted to enumerate *three reasons*, each amply sufficient to decide the question of expediency, and to illustrate my design in laying this work before the Public.

And, first, we are informed that Freemasonry has been proscribed in some of the continental nations, as an Institution decidedly hostile to the interests of Christianity; and that a bull of Pope Clement has denounced the harmless professors of a science, which inculcates the chief doctrines and morality of Christianity, and assumes, as an universal axiom, the broad tenet of unrestrained union and brotherly love.

The second reason is derived from the general affecta tion which seems to pervade the uninitiated, of believing that our Institution was established for the purpose of sensual conviviality; and hence it is ranked merely on a

level with the societies of "Odd Fellows," "Ancient Druids," "Royal Foresters," &c.; and that, therefore, our professions of intellectual pursuits are altogether fallacious.

My third reason is of a personal nature. At the conclusion of Chap. vi. of "The Antiquities of Freemasonry," I offered some observations on the intimate and necessary connection which subsists between Masonry and Christianity. These remarks appear to have created a sensation in the minds of certain Brethren, which I did not anticipate. I have received several admonitory letters, whose common object is to impugn this doctrine, which I consider the fairest gem that Masonry can boast. As all my disquisitions were intended to establish this alliance, I have, in the following pages, attempted to place the matter beyond the reach of dispute or contradiction; and I flatter myself I have satisfactorily proved that Freemasonry is not only a vehicle of religion in general, but of Christianity in particular.

To render this little work more generally acceptable, I have interwoven in its pages a considerable portion of our Lectures; distinguishing the several degrees in which each portion is delivered in our Lodges; which will afford an unobjectionable answer to those cavillers who will not be persuaded that any salutary benefits are derivable from the practice of Freemasonry.

It may be necessary to add, that I have here described our science as it is practised in a Lodge which was indebted to my exertions for its origin, and over which I presided during many years. If my information on the

subject be incorrect, it proceeds not from a want of assiduity in the research, for I have bestowed upon it much anxious attention: and I may be allowed to express my own conviction, that those who are persuaded of the non-existence of religion in the science of Freemasonry, have not given the subject that mature consideration which its importance demands. For surely it must be a question of some magnitude to the community at large, whether religion be the basis of an institution which comprehends every description of mankind: which is patronized by crowned heads, and diffuses itself through every rank and station; and I think that a minute comparison between the spirit of religion and the spirit of Masonry, would be sufficient to convince any ingenuous mind of their indissoluble connection. The whole Jewish Ritual was but the perfection of Masonry, exhibited in types and emblems of spiritual things. The sublime *mark* or *token* of Ezekiel,[1] which was impressed on the foreheads of the Jewish Masons to preserve them amidst the threatened destruction, was, doubtless, that significant emblem which we now call the masonic LEVEL. The most sublime ordinances of Christianity are shadowed in our Institution under types and illustrious symbols. In a word, the whole system of ancient religion, whether genuine or spurious, was little else than primitive Masonry under various modifications; and, consequently, it contained everything that was conducive to human happiness both temporal and eternal. For the sake of the Institution generally, and for

[1] Ezek. chap. ix., ver. 4, 6.

the sake of its members in particular, I should grieve to be convicted of error; because if religion be discarded from the illustrations of Freemasonry, it can possess no charms for a rational being. Objections may, perhaps, arise, but none, I trust, of sufficient weight to invalidate the theory. I conclude, however, in the words of Tully, "*refellere sine pertinacia, et, refelli sine iracundia, parati sumus.*"

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# THE STAR IN THE EAST.

## CHAPTER I.

INTRODUCTORY REMARKS; SHEWING THE ABSOLUTE AND IMMUTABLE CONNECTION BETWEEN FREEMASONRY AND RELIGION.

Before we enter on this discussion, it will be proper to determine precisely what religion is, in the common and most correct acceptation of the word. According to Cicero, the ancients believed religion to be "the study and practice of divine worship." The Christian differs from the heathen world in the interpretation of religion. Bishop Wilkins defines religion to be "that general habit of reverence towards the divine nature, whereby we are enabled and inclined to worship and serve God, after such a manner as we conceive most agreeable to His divine will." And Dr. Watts says, that "religion or virtue, in a large sense, includes *duty to God and our neighbour*." Religion, then, is a system of *practical* duties, and thus stands opposed to theology, which is a system of *speculative* truths. The moral duties, which man commits to practice in this probationary state, with a view of pleasing his Creator, are acts of pure religion, which produce a corresponding influence on the mind and manners, and display his nature, as superior to the rest of the creation. They show that man has a rational soul, and from his unrestrained freedom of will, by choosing evil or pursuing good, his personal responsibility is demonstrated; whence, at some distant period, he will be brought to an account for his actions, whether they be good or whether they be evil, and receive an equitable recompense from the even hand of impartial justice.

Freemasonry was revealed by God himself to the first man.[1] But a wise and good being would reveal nothing but what had a tendency to encourage the practice of those precepts which were given to preserve the newly created man in the strict line of moral duty; therefore Masonry must be closely interwoven with the practice of religion. Its operative portion proceeded from the effects of human ingenuity stimulated by human necessity after the fall. It was merely an application of its principles to the benefit of man, as far as was conducive to his comfort and convenience in this life, without any reference to a future state. Hence originated the two great divisions of Masonry: Operative Masonry was of human institution; Speculative Masonry of divine.[2]

Masonry, in the first ages of the world, was therefore a system of pure religion; and when men degenerated into idolatry, and in their migrations carried with them the principles of the Order, it was, in every nation, applied to the same purpose, more or less perverted, in proportion as the inhabitants adhered to, or swerved

[1] This may appear a bold assertion, but I am persuaded it is nevertheless true. Placed in the garden of Eden, Adam would certainly be made acquainted with the nature of his tenure, and taught, with the worship of his Maker, that simple science of morals which is now termed Freemasonry. This constituted his chief employment in Paradise, and his only consolation after his unhappy Fall; for Speculative Masonry is nothing else but the philosophy of mind and morals founded on the belief of a God, the Creator, Preserver, and Redeemer; which instructs mankind in the sublimities of science: inculcates a strict observance of the duties of social life; inspires in the soul a veneration for the Author of its being, and incites to the pure worship of the Great Architect of the Universe.

[2] It is for want of bearing in mind this distinction that so many errors arise respecting the nature and tendency of Freemasonry, even in the minds of some otherwise excellent Brothers. They entertain the opinion that until the beginning of the 18th century, Freemasonry was exclusively Operative; when in fact, Operative Masonry was but an emanation of the Speculative branch, whose vitality it was that produced those sublime structures which are at once the ornament and triumph of science. It was the exercise of Speculative Masonry that raised the edifices consecrated to religion, whether true or false, to a standard which civil architecture could alone never have attained. And hence we find in all nations, ancient as well as modern, that the structures erected in honour of the divinity are always superb and lasting, while those appropriated to domestic or even military purposes, occupied a very inferior station in the works of art.

from, the rites of true worship. In India, Egypt, and other nations, which very early became addicted to Polytheism, it branched out into pompous ceremonial observances, shrouded in mystery and withheld from the profane, but still applied to the national religion, and the worship of those gods which had been erected into objects of adoration, and placed on the foundation which Jehovah himself had laid. Nor is there a single instance on record, in which the mysterious institutions of any ancient nation in any part of the world, having the least resemblance to Freemasonry,[3] excluded religion from a share in their solemn pursuits.[4] On the contrary, religion was the main object of them all. Whether the Orphic or the Eleusinian, the Gothic or the Dionysian; whether the rites of Mithras or Brahma, of Pythagoras or the Druids; the Essenian or the Kasidean; all were instituted in honour of religion, and all enforced the practice of those duties which religion recommends.[5] Shall we, then, be told that Masonry, the very origin and foundation of all these systems, has no connection with religion, and least of all with Christianity, the perfection of religion? It is a fact, which I shall endeavour to prove, that every creditable writer on the subject of Freemasonry has publicly avowed his conviction that the most intimate alliance subsists between the two sister institutions; and has left behind him ample testimonies to repel this novel and very extraordinary opinion.[6]

[3] Initiation was so predominant in the minds of the heathen, that they denominated the sacrament of introduction into Judaism and Christianity—initiation. And they charged the Christians with initiating their converts, de cæde infantis et sanguine (*Min. Fel.*, p. 30.)

[4] The priests were always the conservators of the Spurious Freemasonry; and none but that order were permitted to advance to the superior degrees. This fact alone bears on the question, for it does not vitiate the principle to admit that they abused the power thus reposed in them, Human nature is frail; but if they had not possessed the power, it could not have been perverted to the purposes of superstition.

[5] The spurious Freemasonry was instituted pure, as we are informed by Plutarch, Livy, and many other ancient writers; and the abominations by which it was afterwards defiled, were the result of innovations which successive generations introduced. True religion sank before the triumph of this successful imposture, and it was the deterioration of the latter which brought on an oblivion of the true principles of divine worship.

[6] It is much to be lamented that the casuistry of the present day

Freemasonry, as practised at the present day, commemorates particularly five great events in the history of the world, *each typical of the Messiah.* These are, *the vision of Jacob*, where he beheld the celebrated ladder, reaching from earth to heaven; *the offering of Isaac* upon Mount Moriah, where it pleased the Lord to substitute a more agreeable victim in his stead; *the miraculous deliverance from Egyptian bondage* under the conduct of Moses; *the offering of David* on the threshing-floor of Araunah the Jebusite; and the *building of Solomon's Temple.* Now these extraordinary events, which unequivocally point to our Saviour Jesus Christ, are the principal historical events contained in our lectures.[7] This coincidence could not have been accidental, and must, therefore, have been designed. It follows, then, that Masonry was intended to perpetuate in the mind of man that most important fact, the salvation of his soul through the sacrifice of Christ.[8] To accomplish this design more perfectly, the most prominent types,

should be used to sever the connection between Freemasonry and Religion. It arises out of the mistaken notion that Freemasonry entertains the ambition of superseding religion altogether; which is as wide of the truth as the poles are asunder. Freemasonry supersede religion! Its most enthusiastic defenders never dreamt of such a result. That which Christianity cannot effect, will in vain be attempted by Freemasonry. It is not in itself religion; but the handmaid and assistant to religion. It is a system of morality, inculcated on scientific principles, and morality is not the groundwork, but the result and fruit of religion. Freemasonry recommends the practice of morality to its members, and illustrates the respective duties which they owe to God, their neighbour, and themselves, and these duties constitute an evidence of religion which the adversaries of Freemasonry can neither gainsay nor resist.

[7] In the lectures of Freemasonry there is no direct reference to Christianity; but its types and symbols clearly point to a perfect dispensation which should supersede all the ancient systems of religion and bring all mankind into one fold under one shepherd.

[8] This was the first great fact incorporated into Freemasonry; and it is still preserved in our highest degree. After the unhappy fall of our first parents from a state of innocence and perfection, being "banished from the presence of their Creator, aad impelled by the wants and necessities of their station to constant toil and care, they became sensible of their heinous sin, and with true contrition of heart they implored forgiveness. But fervent prayer restored their peace of mind and healed their wounded conscience. This raised a gleam of hope, and under its genial operation, they pursued their daily task with greater cheerfulness. With minds more calm, their toil seemed

as they arose, were incorporated by wise and pious brethren into the original system, until it contained a perfect chain of evidence, which could neither be effaced nor misunderstood, illustrative of this fact, so essential to the future welfare of mankind.[9]

I presume not to say that Masonry is exclusively Christian, because many are daily initiated into its mysteries whose religious opinions are inimical to Christianity; I only contend, and shall endeavour to prove, that being a system of ethics, and inculcating the morality of every religion under the sun, it is more particularly adapted to the Christian religion, because Christian ethics approach nearest to the standard of absolute perfection; and because the genius of Masonry can assimilate with no other religion so completely as with Christianity.[10] The *historical* part of its lectures bears an undoubted reference to our pure religion: and this coincidence is so remarkably striking, that it would almost convince an unprejudiced mind, that Masonry was formed as an exclusive companion for Christianity. The strength of this testimony is increased by the nature and tendency of its *symbolical instruction*, by the peculiar cast of its *morality*, and by the very extraordinary nature of its *allegorical mechanism;* extraordinary on any other principle than with a reference to Christianity.

Masonry is confessedly a universal system, and teaches

less severe; and cheered by the promise of a Saviour who should bruise the Serpent's head, they clearly saw redemption drawing on." I quote no more of this passage. Enough is said to show its typical reference to our holy religion.

[9] This seems to be the uniform opinion of all the writers on Freemasonry. Hutchinson says, "the true believers, in order to withdraw and distinguish themselves from the rest of mankind, especially the idolaters by whom they were surrounded, *adopted emblems and mystic devices, together with certain distinguishing principles, whereby they should be known to each other;* and also certify that they were servants of that God, in whose hands all creation existed. By these means they also protected themselves from persecution, and their faith from the ridicule of the incredulous vulgar." (*Ed.* 1775, p. 101.)

[10] The types are numerous and significant; and can scarcely be mistaken by any candid enquirer who will take the trouble to apply them. In like manner the spurious Freemasonry is replete with typical allusions to Christianity, although the initiated either could not or would not understand them.

the relative and social duties of man on the broad and extensive basis of general philanthropy.[11] A Jew, a Mahometan, or a Pagan may attend our lodges without fear of hearing his peculiar doctrines or mode of faith called in question, by a comparison with others which are repugnant to his creed, because a permanent and unalterable landmark of Masonry is, the total absence and exclusion of religious or political controversy.[12] Each of these professors practises a system of morality suited to the sanctions of his own religion; which, as it emanated from the primitive system of divine worship, bears some resemblance to it; and consequently he can hear moral precepts inculcated, without imputing a designed reference to any peculiar mode of faith. But can it be concluded from these premises that Masonry contains no religion? The whole compass of the world's experience refutes this bold and unqualified assertion. All our

[11] It is well known that there are three definitions of Masonry, either of which is in itself sufficient to prove the fact which I am endeavouring to illustrate. 1. A peculiar system of morality, veiled in allegory, and illustrated by symbols. 2. The study of science, and the practice of virtue. 3. A science which includes all others, which teaches all human and divine knowledge, and the moral duties which are incumbent upon us as Masons and members of civil society.

[12] In illustration of this principle, I copy a passage from Bro. Stephen Jones's Reply to Le Franc's attack on Freemasonry. He remarks, "In contemplation of the wisdom, goodness, and power of the Great Architect of the Universe, the Turk, (under one name), the Jew and Christian, (under another), can join in adoration; all agreeing in the grand essential and universal principle of religion, the recognition and worship of a Deity, in whose hands are the issues of life and death, though differing in some more minute tenets peculiar to each; and is it necessary that this admirable system of union for the best of purposes should be destroyed by the introduction in a Christian Lodge of the doctrine of redemption, which must offend the Turk; or of the holy name of the Messiah, which offends the prejudices of the Jew; or in a Turkish Lodge of the name of Mahomet, which must offend both Jew and Christian, and thereby defeat the universality of an excellent institution? No! we are brethren. The Godhead has taught us so to call each other—the innate principle persuades us that we are so. Shall, then, this temporary and happy accommodation of sentiment to good purposes, stamp us as deists? Very far from it; when the Lodge is closed, each departs uninfluenced by the other; the Jew to his synagogue, the Turk to his mosque, the Christian to his church; as fully impressed as ever with the rectitude of his faith." In fact, as I have already said, Freemasonry, though it strongly recommends the duties of religion to our practice, is not a peculiar system of religious faith.

charges, all our regulations, assume, as a foundation which cannot be moved, a belief in the being of a God, and a future state of rewards and punishments, and inculcate the necessity of moral purity, as a qualification for future happiness;[13] and this, according to our definitions, forms the sum and substance of religion in its most universal acceptation.

How can any brother considerately urge that Masonry contains no reference to religion, when the very first step which a candidate makes in *advancing* to the floor of the Lodge, is attended with an acknowledgment that he believes in an omnipresent Deity, and that he puts his trust in that great and omnipotent Being to shield him from danger and to remove his apprehensions of evil? What is the ground of his solemn obligations? What is the sacred subject of the first charge delivered to him immediately subsequent to his initiation? Religion, if Watts' definition be correct. What can be the intended effect of our obligations, if they be not grounded on these fundamental truths? The progress of masonic knowledge moves step by step on these universally received principles. The first lesson which Masonry teaches, is to persevere in the constant study of the Holy Bible as the sacred source of our *faith*, and containing the only certain information on a subject the most interesting to a responsible agent in this probationary state; and the next is an admonition to *practise* the three great duties of morality, one of which is the duty to God. As its instructions proceed, we learn that our *groundwork* is sanctified by the efficacy of *Three Religious Offerings*, which are typical of the great sacrifice of atonement by Jesus Christ; and

[13] The first ancient charge preserved on our records, is an admonition "concerning God and Religion," in the following terms: "A Mason is obliged by his tenure to obey the moral law; and if he rightly understands the art, he will never be a stupid atheist, nor an irreligious libertine. But though in ancient times, Masons were charged in every country to be of the religion of that country or nation, whatever it was; yet it is now thought more expedient only to oblige them to that religion in which all men agree, leaving their particular opinions to themselves; that is, to be good men and true, o rmen of honour and honesty, by whatever denominations or persuasions they may be distinguished; whereby Masonry becomes the centre of union, and the means of conciliating true friendship among persons, that must otherwise have remained at a perpetual distance."

that our splendid *canopy*[14] contains a LETTER of the most extensive reference, and the most comprehensive meaning. The *elevation* in the Third Degree refers to the resurrection from the dead; and this is a clear admission of the reality of a future state, because if there be no future state, there can be no resurrection. Our solemn dedications and consecrations speak the same language, and they are irrefragable evidences of the intimate connection which subsists between Masonry and religion. If we proceed another step, the evidence becomes stronger. The Order of the Royal Arch is founded exclusively on religion. The degree is purely religious, and includes little but what is connected with the love and worship of God, and the wise and genial regulations of Divine Providence for the benefit of man. The very tests are founded on the fall of Adam, and the consequent degradation of the human race, enforced by the salutary promise of their future restoration through the intercession of a Mediator.[15] If this be not religion, if this be not Christianity, what is it?

The Military Degrees, though, indeed, they possess only a remote connection with Masonry,[16] will, however, testify

[14] The canopy or covering of a Lodge denotes its extent, for it penetrates to every part of what the ancients called the Summum cælum; and is commensurate with the presence of the Deity. It fills all space, extends through all extent; and points out, in common with the dimensions of the Lodge, the universality of Masonry, and the unbounded influence of its excellent rules and orders. See "A Brief History of the Witham Lodge."

[15] It will be observed that the Creation and the Fall of Man from primitive innocence have not been introduced into the system of Freemasonry simply as matters of history, but to impress upon the mind a deep and lasting sense of the felicity of our great progenitors before they transgressed—the humiliation which their sin produced, and the consequent promise of a Saviour who should atone for their faults—bruise the serpent which had tempted them to forsake the path of rectitude, and restore to mankind the possibility of eternal happiness in another life. This is the Great Truth on which Freemasonry is founded, and which places it foremost in rank amidst human institutions.

[16] How remote soever the connection may be, its existence has been universally admitted. "It would be needless labour," says Laurie, "to enter into any investigation, in order to prove that the Order of the Knights Templars was a branch of Freemasonry. This fact has been invariably acknowledged by Freemasons themselves; and none have been more zealous to establish it than the enemies of the Order. The former have admitted the fact, not because it was credi-

that it is very closely allied to religion. They date their origin from the Crusades, and have Christianity for their basis and support. The whole system is exclusively Christian. Their banner was a RED CROSS, inscribed "IN HOC SIGNO VINCES," which was considered a safeguard and protection against all assailing dangers; for the cross was regarded as a sacred symbol, which alone could convey safety in their holy career. The tests and paraphernalia of these degrees bear the same exclusive reference to Christianity. It is true they were grafted upon Masonry at the above period, and consequently form no part of primitive Lux: but still they bear on the point in question; for every knight was necessarily a Mason, and no one was eligible for the dignity of the golden spur, but he who had been prepared by a previous initiation into the three degrees of Masonry. This is a strong collateral proof of the ancient alliance between Masonry and religion; for these high-minded men, who had nothing in view but the extension of Christianity, evinced their reverence for Masonry, as a religious system, by making it a *sine qua non* with all who aspired to admission into their honourable body. Amidst the enthusiastic spirit and sacred feelings which animated these champions of Christianity,[17] they would scarcely have shewn such a distinguished predilection for any system founded on a basis which excluded religion.

The admission, on the part of certain mistaken brethren, who are surely unacquainted with the true nature of our constitution, that the science we profess does not inculcate the practice of religious duties, has given rise to an opinion amongst the uninitiated, very naturally resulting from the concession of a point of such vast importance,

table to them, but because it was true; and the latter have supported it, because, by the aid of a little sophistry, it might be employed to disgrace their opponents."

[17] The elegant writer already quoted, says:—"As they were animated by a sincere regard for the Catholic religion, and with a decided abhorrence for the infidel possessors of Judea, it was never suspected that they transacted any other business at their secret meetings, but that which concerned the regulation of their Order, the advancement of religion, and the extirpation of their enemies." Nor do I believe that other business was admitted. Individual turpitude might exist, but I am persuaded the Order was pure, and free from the crimes which were afterwards imputed to it,

that we are infidels, if not atheists, and consequently friends to revolution and disorder. I grant that infidelity and atheism are inseparably connected with anarchy and demoralization; but it can by no means be inferred that we are atheists, except the proof be founded on stronger data than the fact of our being Masons, joined with the assumption that Masonry contains no religion. It should be shewn by undeniable reasoning that we have literally renounced our allegiance to God, that we inculcate doctrines which tend to the subversion of religion, and that we are guilty of insubordination and contempt of the laws which are ordained for the preservation of peace and order in society.[18]

But so far from encouraging insubordination, Masonry is a perfect system of obedience to superior governors lawfully constituted. And I am happy to be able to set the plea entirely at rest by a quotation from our statutes: "The rulers and governors, supreme and subordinate, of the lodge, are to be obeyed in their respective stations by all the brethren, according to the old charges and regulations, with all humility, reverence, love, and alacrity."[19] Besides, though political discussions are prohibited in the lodge, our laws unequivocally inculcate loyalty as a primary masonic qualification. "A Mason is a peaceable subject to the civil powers wherever he resides, and is never to be concerned in plots and con-

[18] There is a clause in the first section of the E.A.P. lecture which has been introduced for the purpose of illustrating the subordination necessary to secure the observance of strict discipline in a society where the members meet on the level. They are expected to observe the unity of the spirit in the bond of peace. But how could this be effected if every Brother were to pursue a course which appears right in his own eyes? Confusion and disorder would be the undoubted fruits of such a practice. And this would lead to a speedy dissolution of the Order. But such is not, fortunately, the system of equality which Masons practise and admire. The Mason attends his Lodge, not to do his own will and pleasure, which would fail to be profitable to him, and might produce results which would rather be injurious. He has in view something of a higher character than the mere gratification of curiosity or carnal desires. He aspires to the improvement of his mind in the duties of religion and morality—the exercise of his intellectual faculties—the government of his passions —the regulation of his discourse by a tongue of good report—and, in a word, to make due progress in the philosophy and science of Freemasonry.

[19] Ancient Charges, Sec. 4.

spiracies against the peace and welfare of the nation; nor to behave himself undutifully to the inferior magistrates; for as Masonry has always been injured by war, bloodshed, and confusion, so ancient kings and princes have been much disposed to encourage the craftsmen, *because of their peaceableness and loyalty;* whereby they practically answered the cavils of their adversaries, and promoted the honour of the fraternity, which ever flourished in times of peace."[20]

What were the feelings of our best and wisest brethren when this unfounded accusation was first publicly urged? Each worthy Brother took up his pen in defence of an Order he revered, eager to repel a charge involving our reputation as individuals, and our dearest interests as a public body. One says that "the society of Freemasons model their ceremonies upon this foundation, that there is but one God, who must be worshipped in spirit and in truth."[21] Another says that "Freemasonry is an Order whose institutions arise on the most solemn and sacred principles of religion." "The knowledge of the God of Nature forms the *first* estate of our profession; the worship of the Deity, under the Jewish law, is described in the *second* step of Masonry; and the Christian dispensation is distinguished in the last and highest order."[22]

Another respectable writer on Masonry is still more explicit. He says, "The royal Order of Masonry, however secret from its most early foundation to the present moment, has nothing belonging to it, but what is so far from giving birth or growth to the commission of anything inconsistent with the strictest parts of our holy religion, whether it respects our duty to God or man, that every part of it, if duly followed, has a direct tendency to enforce and to encourage the performance of every one of its most holy precepts:" and, "*The precepts of the Gospel are universally the principles of Masonry.*"[23] But in the ensuing chapter I shall bring forward abundant proofs, from the most celebrated writers on Masonry, that this science has in all ages been considered

[20] Ancient Charges, Sec. 2.
[21] Laurie's Hist. of Masonry.
[22] Hutchinson's Spirit of Masonry.
[23] Inwood's Sermons on Masonry.

to have religion for its basis and support. Those brethren who contend that religion is excluded from Masonry, are admitting for truth a disgraceful imputation, which was founded on the mere gratuitous assertions of strangers to our institution, and who consequently could not be competent judges of the allegations boldly and inconsiderately urged, and which they were altogether unable to prove.

We need only enquire what a system of secrecy, founded on the plan of Masonry, but excluding religion, may effect, to be convinced that our science, as practised under the auspices of the Grand Lodge of England, cannot be that system.[24] Religion being the only restraint on those who set at defiance all human laws, if that be also rejected, and an atheistical creed be substituted in its room—if men can so far succeed in promoting their own infatuation, as to absolve themselves from all apprehensions of retributive justice in a future state, they are prepared for the commission of any crime to which they may be stimulated by the operation of their own passions, or by the artful duplicity of designing men, who have purposes to fulfil which require the expulsion of religion from the heart before they are capable of engaging in conspiracies preliminary to murder and spoliation. The deep-laid plots of Professor Weishaupt, are a striking illustration of the ends to which a secret society may be made subservient, if divested of its connection with religion. The system of which he was the inventor held out to the world a promise of superior light and knowledge; enlisted unsuspecting Christians under its banners, by the plausible and delusive theories of emancipating mankind from the shackles of slavish prejudice, of diffusing human science, and fixing the mind firmly in the pursuit of virtue; and like the serpent at the ear of

[24] It is now nearly twenty years since the present work was written; and my convictions on this point have acquired additional strength by time, and a more extended and deliberate consideration of the evidences on which our institution is founded. And if further proof were necessary, it is furnished in the present flourishing state of the Order. Our noble and learned brethren have extended to it their patronage from a firm conviction of its power over the morals of the community and its influence in the amelioration of the mind and manners. Vide Hist. of Freemasonry from 1829 to 1841.

Eve, led them on by imperceptible degrees, first to doubt, then to cavil, and afterwards to reject; the succeeding degrees of error making them still riper for guilt; and when the demon found his victims prepared for the reception of any doctrine by a renunciation of religion, the latent scheme was fully developed; that horrid scheme, which by its mystic agency and pernicious ramifications struck the whole continent of Europe with terror; which promised unconditional deliverance from the united tyranny of religion and civil government; and which threatened the subversion of all existing moral and religious institutions; to overturn empires, hurl princes from their thrones, level all distinctions, and reduce mankind to an equality on the broad and latitudinarian principle of universal ignorance and impiety; and crush the wretch! (meaning Jesus Christ) was the infernal watch-word to every species of atrocity and crime! I confess I shudder while engaged in this discussion. I tremble at the simple idea of the application which our adversaries in this country may make of the admitted dogma, that Masonry contains no religion.

We will, however, take a closer view of the doctrines and practices of the illuminati, or *Masonry without religion;* for the system of Weishaupt, being a system of secrecy, though not actually of Masonry, (for the Professor had not even received initiation into a single degree of our science when he established it,)[25] was capable of being applied successfully to the very worst as well as

[25] Laurie informs us, that "in 1775, the Order of the Illuminati was formed by Dr. Adam Weishaupt, Professor of Canon Law in the University of Ingolstadt. In this association, speculative opinions were inculcated which were inconsistent with the principles of sound religion, and social order; but that Illuminism originated from Freemasonry—is a circumstance for which the shadow of a proof has not yet been adduced. Dr. Robison, indeed, expressly affirms that Illuminism took its rise among the Freemasons, *but was totally different from Freemasonry;* and by a deceitful anachronism, he represents Weishaupt as an active member of the German Lodges, before he acquaints his readers that he was the founder of the Illuminati, for no other reason than to make them believe that Weishaupt was a Freemason before he planned his new association. Now the case was very different indeed. Barruel himself asserts, that *it is a fact demonstrated beyond a doubt, that Weishaupt became a Mason in* 1777 *only, and that two years before this, when he established Illuminism, he was totally unacquainted with the mysteries of Freemasonry.*"

the best of purposes. Zimmerman says, "Whether this sect be the same with that of the Freemasons, or the Jesuits, both of which suppositions is improbable, is uncertain; but in 1774 or 1775, a society was undoubtedly established in Bavaria, of which a celebrated Professor at Ingolstadt has been regarded as the founder. This society, under pretext of consulting the happiness of the people, and supposing that happiness to be incompatible with every species of religious and civil establishment at present existing, said with one voice, *Let us destroy them all, and raze their very foundations!* The secret Order of the Illuminati included among its mysterious principles, at present exposed to the world, the whole of the doctrine which the Jacobins of Paris have since put in practice, and it has been proved by the most irrefragable documents, that they maintained an intimate correspondence together before the French Revolution.[23] The destruction of the Christian religion, and the subversion of every throne and of all governments, have been their aim ever since the year 1776. It was not understood by the new associates of this order, that the magic words, *the happiness of the people*, were the surest means to recruit

[23] A French author, in a work entitled, "The Veil withdrawn; or the secret of the French Revolution explained by the help of Freemasonry;" thus charges the Freemasons with an abandonment of religion in their secret conclaves. "The horrible and sanguinary oaths which are taken in the several degrees of Masonry; the daggers, cross bones, and death's heads, the imaginary combats with the murderers of Hiram, and other horrid ceremonies they make use of, have a natural tendency to steel the heart; and have, in fact, paved the way for those revolting barbarities which have indeed been transacted by the enthusiastic multitude, but not until they had been coolly planned by their philosophic leaders." He then proceeds to detail certain "rabbinical tales concerning the death and burial of Adoniram;" and pretends to explain the meaning of what he calls "the Master's watchword, Macbenac," together with a catechism used by the masonic Knights of the Sun at their initiation; all which he attempts to shew, are calculated to undermine genuine Christianity, and to establish a Socinian and Deistical system of religion, and a code of morality very different from that of the gospel. See the Gent's Mag., 1794. The Mason will at once see on what a sandy foundation the above charges are founded. The assumptions are one and all groundless, and the conclusions therefore unsound. Some credulous Brethren entertain an idea that both Oliver Cromwell and Buonaparte attained their elevation through the medium of Freemasonry.

their numbers with ease, and by which, in fact, the recruits became so numerous and well disciplined. Young men were chiefly pitched upon, who, not having yet formed a strong attachment to any particular opinion, were the more easily led away to embrace whatever was offered to them, and men of literary talents whom it is important to secure[27] when the propagation of any new opinion is in agitation. When once a person was enlisted, and fully penetrated with the enticing words, *the happiness of the people; let us labour to procure the happiness of the people;*[28] he became impatient to know the obstacles which were in the way of this purpose, and the means to be made use of to remove them; these were, therefore, offered to his view in succession."

"The order has five degrees; in the lower, the mysteries are not unveiled; they are only preparatory, on which the minds of the noviciates are founded and prepared; then, by degrees, those who are found worthy are initiated into the higher ranks."[29] The mechanical part of the order bore some faint resemblance to that of Masonry, but the principles and doctrines of our science were never introduced, even subsequently to the admission of Weishaupt into a masonic Lodge; nor could they, for bearing a character so decidedly hostile to his views, they would have destroyed the very foundation on which

[27] Freemasonry interdicts her members from soliciting any one to join her ranks; and requires a solem declaration to that effect before a candidate is allowed to be proposed for initiation. This is the form:

*To the Worshipful Master, Wardens, Officers, and Members of the Lodge of —— No —.*

I, A. B., being free by birth, and of the full age of 21 years, do declare that, unbiassed by the improper solicitations of friends, and uninfluenced by mercenary or other unworthy motives, I freely and voluntarily offer myself a candidate for the mysteries of Masonry; that I am prompted by a favourable opinion of the institution, and a desire of knowledge; and that I will cheerfully conform to all the ancient usages and established customs of the order.

Witness my hand this — day of ——.

[28] Insubordination is generally defended under the cloak of public benefit. But Freemasonry is not a system of insubordination; and, therefore, it seeks no other justification than its own intrinsic merits, and needs no popular cry to recommend it to public estimation.

[29] Vide Preston's Illustrations.

the illuminating scheme was erected. The artful Professor adopted our secrecy to sanction his purposes, by screening him from public observation and legislative scrutiny. He used his utmost endeavours, by every means within his reach—not excepting, probably, his masonic privileges—to extend his doctrines throughout the continental nations; and, as is usual with all innovators, he succeeded in making many proselytes. His lodges were ultimately established all over Europe; they regularly communicated with each other; and their transactions were kept inviolably secret from the rest of the world. Men of all ranks and stations became members of these dark and mysterious assemblies;[30] but their

[30] It may be useful to remark here, that many persons have endeavoured to substantiate their objections to the institution of Freemasonry, from the admitted dogma that its members meet on the level; whence they conclude that the system abolishes all human distinctions, and promises to disorganize society, and reduce it to its primitive elements. But it does no such thing. There is, in fact, no other institution where the grades of rank are better defined and preserved. The W. M. sits in the East. For what purpose is he placed there? Why, *to rule and govern* his Lodge. And he is invested with power even to despotism, should he consider it safe to use it. And the Wardens are his assistants—not his equals. Each has a particular duty assigned to him, and beyond that he has no right to interfere. The next grade are the Deacons. And what is their duty? Not, surely, to rank in equality with the Master and Wardens, but to perform the part of inferiors in office; to carry messages and commands. It is their province to attend on the Master, and to assist the Wardens in the active duties of the Lodge; such as the reception of candidates into the different degrees of Masonry, and the immediate practice of our rites. This is the business of the Deacons; and, by its punctual discharge, the office becomes a stepping-stone to further preferment; for, as it is incumbent on a Brother to serve the office of a Warden before he is eligible for the Chair of a Lodge, so it would be well if the office of a Deacon were preparatory to that of a Warden. The Treasurer, the Secretary, the Stewards, the Inner Guard, and the Tyler, have all their respective duties to perform, and rank to support, while the Brethren are bound to obey the will and pleasure of the W. M. What is there in all this which tends to the destruction of order in society? Surely nothing. How, then, are we said to meet on the level? Because our occupations are distinguished by the most perfect Brotherly love. When the Lodge is open, the Brethren, as Masons, whatever be their diversity of external rank, are equal; and, in the process of working the Lodge, each bears the burden assigned to him by the W. M. in pursuit of that common object, the acquisition of knowledge. And when the Lodge is closed, and the jewels put by, we part on the square; each individual resumes his rank in society, and honour is given to whom it is due,

most active emissaries were in the armies of every continental monarch; they guided the councils, they filled up the ranks, and were equally unknown and unsuspected.[31] The facility with which they succeeded in subverting the religious principles of their votaries, is a problem which it may be difficult to solve; suffice it to say that, whether the real intentions of Weishaupt were indeed what are generally imputed to him, it is certain that the seeds of impiety and insubordination which he scattered throughout Europe, impelled by other powerful incentives, lent their aid to the production of those rank weeds of savage cruelty and revolutionary bigotry, which swept a monarch from his throne, and produced a twenty years' war, which deluged the continent with the best blood of its inhabitants.[32]

[31] "It would exceed our intentions," says a popular writer on this subject, "to give even an outline of the nature and constitution of this extraordinary society; of its secrets and mysteries; of the deep dissimulation, consummate hypocrisy, and shocking impiety of its founder and his associates; of their jesuitical art in concealing their real objects; and their indescribable industry and astonishing exertions in making converts; of the absolute despotism, and complete system of espionage, established throughout the order; of its different degrees of Novices, Minervals, Minor and Major Illuminees; Epopts, or Priests, Regents, Magi, and Mankings, of the Recruitors, or Insinuators, with their various and subtle methods of insinuating into all characters and companies; of the blind obedience exacted of the Novices, and the absolute power of life and death assumed by the Order; of their dictionary, geography, kalendar, and cypher;....of the questions proposed to the candidates for degrees, and the various ceremonies of admission to each; and of the pretended morality, real blasphemy, and absolute atheism of the founder and his tried friends."

[32] On the occasion of presenting an address to the throne from the Grand Lodge, the Prince Regent, then Grand Master, thought proper to allude to those fearful events in the following appropriate language: "When principles were first promulgated in France, which, to our conception, tended to the overthrow of all peace and order in society, we felt ourselves called upon to depart from a rule which had been till then religiously observed in our association. As a veil of secrecy conceals the transactions at our meetings, our fellow subjects have no assurance that there may not be in our association a tendency injurious to their interests, other than the general tenor of our conduct, and a notoriety that the door of Freemasonry is not closed against any class, profession, or sect, provided the individual desiring admission be unstained in moral character. To remove, therefore, as far as possible, any ground for suspicion, it has been, from time immemorial, a fundamental rule, most rigidly maintained, that no political

Such are the ends to which a system of secrecy unguarded by religion, may be made subservient. But, under the sober garb and genial protection of a religious and Christian faith, it is capable of producing much unqualified good. If it makes men more strict in the performance of their moral duties; if it conveys firmness under affliction, and directs them to look beyond the bounds of humanity for relief under the pressure of actual or impending calamity; if it ameliorates the mind, and unites men together in a chain of universal benevolence; if it instructs mankind to rule and govern their passions, to avoid slander and dissimulation, to look upon the Bible as a rule of faith, and to regulate their actions by the precepts it contains; if it does this, and much, much more than this, it may surely be entitled to the praise of conferring benefits on its professors, by enforcing the duties of religion. And this is the business of Masonry.[33] Can it, then, be a system of Atheism? Can it lend a sanction to the perfidious schemes of revolutionary demagogues? or the designs of those infatuated men, who

topic shall, on any pretence, be mentioned in the Lodge. The singular juncture to which we have alluded, seemed to call for some positive declaration, which might distinctly exhibit our opinions; we thence ventured to profess to your Majesty the loyalty with which the Freemasons of England glowed towards your royal person, and their unalterable attachment to the present happy form of government in this country," &c.

[33] The lectures of Masonry display a beautiful system of the purest morality. What, indeed, can be more estimable than the spirit of brotherly love which is here inculcated, equally with the sublime lessons of one of our great parallels in his gospel and epistles? Can anything have a more direct tendency to promote the glory of God, peace on earth, and good will towards men? This is the use and end of Freemasonry. Let us consider a few of the moral duties which it teaches. It instructs us, as Brethren, to dwell together in unity. It teaches us to imitate the innocence, the wisdom of the serpent, the peacefulness of the dove; and to let the hand, the tongue, and the heart be united, as they ought, to promote each other's welfare, and to rejoice in each other's prosperity. It admonishes us to be candid to a brother's faults; and never to condemn, until we are thoroughly convinced of his unworthiness; and, even then, to adopt this golden rule: Always speak well of a Brother, if you speak of him at all,—and if, unfortunately, you cannot, with strict justice, give him your applause—be silent. This, while it affords him an opportunity to repent, and retrieve his reputation, will contribute to our own peace of mind, and we shall thus avoid all that dissension and dispute, which are never creditable, and often dangerous.

would lead us back into the darkest ages of ignorance and infidelity? I answer, without hesitation, No. Masonry is a system of loyalty, which attaches us to the king, our patron, and to the soil which gave us birth. And, though political disquisitions are prohibited in our assemblies, yet an inherent attachment to our native land can never be thus suppressed. If Masonry were a system that possessed the most indirect affinity to rebellion, would it be patronized by the monarch? would it be encouraged by his royal brothers, and the principal nobility of this realm? would it merit or receive the sanction of a deliberate act of legislation? The reign of Solomon was a perfect era in Masonry; and why was it so glorious? Because of the indissoluble union which our Order conveyed to his subjects, and their invincible attachment to his person and government, as king and Grand Master; which causes his reign to be referred to as the most stupendous specimen of peace and happiness under a monarch, feared for his love of justice, beloved for his munificence, and respected for his piety and virtue.

Such is Masonry united with religion; and, in truth, Masonry could not be practised without the aid of this magnificent supporter. No company of men, not altogether confirmed in the principles of Atheism, could so far forget themselves, their duty, and the Supreme Governor of the world, clad in majesty and splendour, as to exclude religion wholly from their minds, particularly the members of an institution professing superior light and knowledge. The Creator cannot be overlooked amidst every incentive to virtue; nor can man so far disregard the voice of nature within him, as to forget by whom he was created, and to whom he is indebted for every blessing he enjoys on this side the grave. Masonry has set forms of prayer adapted to every one of its transactions. The Lodges are opened and closed with prayer; the solemn initiations, passings, raisings, and exaltations, are accompanied by the same devotional exercise; and, if Masonry be not allied to religion, to whom can these prayers be addressed, or what can be their efficacy? For prayer can only be beneficial so far as it includes a belief in the omnipresence of God, and his ability as well as inclination to confer blessings on

his creatures, and to grant his omnipotent aid on all their undertakings. Indeed, the very act of prayer is a full acknowledgment of God's attributes of wisdom, power, and goodness, and thus becomes an unequivocal act of religion. But Masons habitually use prayer in their Lodges; and therefore it clearly follows, that Masons never assemble for any purpose but they perform acts of religion.

## CHAPTER II

### TESTIMONIES EXTRACTED FROM MASONIC WRITERS IN SUPPORT OF THIS TRUTH.

The observations in the preceding chapter may lend their assistance towards opening an inquiry of the greatest importance in a Christian country; no less than to refute an hypothesis which would place a popular and useful institution on a level with Anti-Christian clubs, and revolutionary associations. In this stage of the investigation it may be necessary to exonerate the authors who have professedly treated on Freemasonry before me, from lending any sanction to the destructive charge, that religion is excluded from our assemblies. In doing this, I shall collect a few reputable testimonies, and place them in chronological order, with their dates prefixed, so as to produce an uniform proof of the belief which has prevailed in all ages, that *the great pedestal of Masonry* is religion.

Before the invention of printing these testimonies are not very numerous, as few manuscripts are in existence which were produced antecedent to that period; partly owing to "the losses sustained in the year 1720, when the ignorant zeal of some rash brethren induced them to burn their manuscripts, from a dislike, probably, of having their constitutions printed."[1] Such as remain, however, will serve to convince us that the early Masons little anticipated the appearance of a day, when their art would have to combat the charges of some of its own members, avowedly urged to strip the science of its most brilliant and imperishable ornament.

About the year of our Lord 590, "the Picts and Scots," says the annalist,[2] "continued their depredations with unrestrained vigour, till the arrival of some pious teachers from Wales and Scotland; when many of these

[1] Noorth. Const., Part I., ch. 1. [2] Prest. Illus., Bk. 4, Sec. 2.

savages *being reconciled to Christianity, Masonry got into repute.*"[3]

The ancient constitutions, charges, &c., were framed about the year 926, from manuscripts in Greek, Latin, French, and other languages, which were produced by the brethren who met at York for the purpose of forming a Grand Lodge in that city, pursuant to the summons of Prince Edwin. From these charges I select the following, as bearing an unequivocal relation to the point in question:

"A Mason is to study the moral law as contained in *the sacred code;* to consider it as the unerring standard of truth and justice; and to regulate his life and actions by its divine precepts. He is strictly to observe his duty to God, by never mentioning his name but with that awe and reverence which is due from a creature to his Creator; to esteem him as the chief good, and to implore his aid in all laudable undertakings."—"A Mason is obliged, by his tenure, to obey the moral law; and if he rightly understands the art, he will neither be a stupid atheist nor an irreligious libertine. But though *in ancient times Masons were charged in every country to be of the religion of that country or nation*, whatever it was, yet it is now thought more expedient only *to oblige them to that religion in which all men agree*, leaving their particular opinions to themselves."

We now come to a manuscript in the Bodleian library, written about A.D. 1536, which is a copy of one still older, wrote by King Henry VI., about 1440. This MS. asserts that "Maçonnes techedde mankynde relygyonne."[4] The excellent Preston, in his comment on this

[3] There is a MS. in the British Museum, Harl. Col., Vol. 1942, professing to explain the ancient History and principles of Freemasonry, the original of which is dated in the 10th century, and was written in Saxon, during the reign of Athelstan. It commences as follows: "The Almighty Father of heaven, with the Wisdom of the glorious Son, through the goodness of the Holy Ghost, three persons in one Godhead, be with our beginning, and give us grace so to govern our lives, that we may come to his bliss that never shall have end, Amen. Good Brethren and Fellows, our purpose is to tell you how, and in what manner, this Craft of Masonry was first begun," &c. A copy of this curious document may be found in the Freemasons' Quarterly Review, Vol. iii., p. 288, with ingenious Notes by Bro. H. Phillips, P. M. of the Moira Lodge, No. 109.

[4] Answer 6.

passage says: "It appears to have surprised the learned annotator (Mr. Locke) that religion should be ranked among the arts taught by the fraternity; but it may be observed that religion is the only tie which can bind men; and that WHERE THERE IS NO RELIGION THERE CAN BE NO MASONRY."

In the short reign of King James II., A.D. 1686, a MS. was written, which is now preserved in the Lodge of Antiquity. It contains the following passages:

"Every man that is a Mason take good heed to these charges, we pray; that if a man find himself guilty of any of these charges, that he may amend himself; or principally for dread of God," &c., &c. "*The* FIRST *charge is, that ye shall be true men to God and to the holy church*, and to use no error or heresy by your understanding and by wise men's teaching." And after enumerating more than twenty charges, it concludes thus: "These be all the charges and covenants that ought to be read at the instalment of a master, or making of a Freemason or Freemasons. The Almighty God of Jacob, who ever have you and me in his keeping, bless us now and ever. Amen."

An ancient masonic manuscript, written about the end of the 15th century, and published in the Gentleman's Magazine for June, 1815, commences in the following manner: "The might of the Father of Kings, with the wisdom of his glorious grace, through the grace of the goodness of the Holy Ghost, there bene three persons in one Godheade, be with us at our beginning and give us grace so to governe us here in this mortall life liveing, that we may come to his kingdome that never shall have endinge."[5]

[5] A great similarity will be observed between the above passage, and the Note on p. 22; but it is a different MS.; and it is probable that the ancient written documents of Speculative Masonry might usually commence with a profession of faith. We find another Masonic MS. beginning thus: "God alone is gracious and powerful! Thanks be to our gracious God, Father of heaven and of earth, and of all things that in them is, that he has vouchsafed to give power unto men." An ancient poem on the Constitutions of Freemasonry, just published by James Orchard Halliwell, Esq., F.R.S., is full of similar allusions. It is taken from a duodecimo MS. on vellum, written not later than the 14th century, and preserved in the

We now come to modern times, when testimonies are much more numerous, though perhaps not of greater weight and consequence than the preceding, which shew so clearly the opinion of our ancient brethren many centuries ago, on this important subject.

The Rev. JAMES HART, in a sermon preached at Durham, in the year 1772, says, "Masonry is founded on that sure rock, against which let the waves and billows of temporal persecution never so strongly dash, it will stand erect and secure, because *that rock is Christ.*"

BROTHER WILLIAM HUTCHINSON.

*Edition* 1775.

"In forming this society, which is at once religious and civil, great regard has been given to the first knowledge of the God of nature, and that acceptable service wherewith he is well pleased. This was the first stage on which our originals thought it expedient to place the foundation of Masonry. They had experienced that by religion all civil ties and obligations were compacted, and that thence proceeded all the bonds which could unite mankind in social intercourse; thence it was that

Old Royal Library (Bibl. Reg. 17 A. I. fo. 32). I subjoin a specimen:—

At thys semblè were poyntes y-ordeynt mo,
Of grete lordys and maystrys also,
That whose wol conne thys craft and com to astate,
He most love wel God, and Holy Churche algate.

And again;

Pray to God to sende the hytte;
For Crist hymself, he techet ous.
That holy churche ys Goddes hous,
That ys y-mad for nothynge ellus
But for to pray yn, as the bok tellus,
Ther the pepul schal gedur ynne,
To pray and wepe for here synne.
. . . . . .
And when the Gospel me rede schal,
Fayre thou stonde up fro the wal,
And blesse the fayre, zef that thou conne,
When Gloria Tibi is begonne,
And when the Gospel ys y-donn,
Again thou mygth knele adown.—&c.

LIBRARY OF THE UNIVERSITY

they laid the corner-stone of the edifice on the bosom of religion. It is not to be presumed that we are a set of men professing religious principles contrary to the revelations and doctrines of the Son of God, reverencing a deity by the denomination of the God of nature, and denying that mediation which is graciously offered to all true believers. *The members of our society at this day, in the third stage of Masonry, confess themselves to be* CHRISTIANS; the veil of the temple is rent, the builder is smitten, and we are raised from the tomb of transgression. *The Master Mason represents a man under the Christian doctrine, saved from the grave of iniquity, and raised to the faith of salvation.*"

The Rev. JOHN HODGETTS, who preached a sermon at the consecration of the Harmonic Lodge in Dudley, Worcestershire, 1784, after expatiating on the general truths of Masonry, adds, "But this is not all; the Sacred Writings confirm what I assert; the sublime part of our mystery being there to be found; nor can any Christian brother (let me speak it distinctly) be a good Mason, that does not make the word of God his first and principal study."

BROTHER THE REV. JAMES WRIGHT,

*Maybole, Scotland*, 1786.

"*Piety towards God*, the glorious Master Builder of the universe; *and love to mankind;* are the two grand immovable pillars which support the fabric of Masonry."

BROTHER THOMAS JIEANS, M. D.

*Southampton*, 1792.

"The doctrine of Freemasonry embraces all the natural, moral, and political obligations of society. It directs us to fulfil our duty to God, our king, our neighbours, and ourselves; it inculcates reverence, resignation, and gratitude to Him who made and preserves us," &c.

BROTHER JAMES MACCONOCHIE,

*Liverpool.*

"We venerate and adore the Great First Cause of All, and we endeavour to exalt our views and conceptions of

the invisible Architect, from the contemplation of his glorious works;

To look through nature up to nature's God.'"

BROTHER THE REV. JAMES WATSON,

*Lancaster*, 1794.

"Masonry has the Omnipotent Architect of the Universe for the object of its adoration and imitation; his great and wonderful works for its pattern and prototype: and the wisest and best of men of all ages, nations, and languages, for its patrons and professors. But though Masonry primarily inculcates morals and the religion of nature, it has caught an additional spark from the light of revelation and the SUN OF RIGHTEOUSNESS. And though Masonry continues to burn with subordinate lustre, it lights the human traveller on the same road; it breathes a concordant spirit of universal benevolence and brotherly love; adds one thread more to the silken cord of evangelical charity which binds man to man, and crowns the cardinal virtues with CHRISTIAN graces."

"The three degrees of Masonry seem to have an obvious and apt coincidence with the three progressive stages of mankind, from the creation to the end of time. The first is emblematical of man's state of nature, from his first disobedience to the time of God's covenant with Abraham, and the establishment of the Jewish economy. The second, from that period, to the æra of the last, full, and perfect revelation from heaven to mankind, made by our GREAT REDEEMER. The third, comprehending the glorious interval of the Christian dispensation down to the consummation of all things."

BROTHER WILLIAM PRESTON, 1796.

"Speculative Masonry is so far interwoven with religion, as to lay us under the strongest obligations to pay that rational homage to the Deity, which at once constitutes our duty and happiness. It leads the contemplative to view with reverence and admiration the glorious works of creation, and inspires them with the most exalted ideas of the perfections of the divine Creator. At opening the Lodge, a reverential awe for the Deity is inculcated, and the eye fixed *on that object* from whose

radiant beams LIGHT only can be derived. Hence, in this ceremony we are taught to adore the God of Heaven, and to supplicate his protection on our well meant endeavours. In the diligent pursuit of knowledge great discoveries are made, and the intellectual faculties are employed in promoting the glory of God, and the good of man. SUCH IS THE TENDENCY OF EVERY ILLUSTRATION IN MASONRY. Reverence for the Deity, and gratitude for the blessings of heaven, are inculcated in every degree."

BROTHER STEPHEN JONES, 1796.

"The solemnity of our rites, which, embracing the whole system of morality, cannot fail to include the first principles of religion, from which morality is best derived, necessarily calls our attention to the great Architect of the universe, the Creator of us all. The masonic system exhibits a stupendous and beautiful fabric founded on universal piety. To rule and direct our passions; to have faith and hope in God, and charity towards man, I consider as the objects of what is termed Speculative Masonry."

BROTHER THE REV. JETHRO INWOOD,

*Deptford*, 1799.

"Masonry is truly the sister of religion; for she boasts her efficacy in all its native influence; and is continually the assistant promoter of like principles and of like actions. The central point of all her innumerable lines, squares, and circles, is *the love of God.* And upon this central point she builds her *faith;* from it she derives her *hope* of glory here and hereafter; and by it she squares her conduct in strict justice and universal *charity.* The central point of all true Christianity and of all true Masonry is, the love of God." "*Masonry is dedicated only to the Gospel.* It has nothing in its Institution but what both the law of Moses and of Christ will fully allow and universally sanction. To be masonic is to be truly religious in both its parts; first seeking and cherishing in our hearts the true fear of God, and then from this principle bringing forth all the amiable fruits of righteousness, which are the praise and glory of God."

BROTHER ALEXANDER LAURIE, 1804.

"In all ages it has been the object of Freemasonry, not only to inform the minds of its members, by instructing them in the sciences and useful arts, but to better their hearts by enforcing the precepts of religion and morality. In the course of the ceremonies of initiation, brotherly love, loyalty, and other virtues are inculcated in hieroglyphic symbols, and the candidate is often reminded that there is an eye above which observeth the workings of his heart, and is ever fixed upon the thoughts and actions of men."

The author of an anonymous pamphlet, printed in the year 1804, entitled Masonic Union, says, "Masonry annihilates all parties. conciliates all private opinions, and renders those, who, by their Almighty Father, were made of one blood, to be also of one heart and one mind, brethren bound, firmly bound together by that indissoluble tie, the love of their God, and the love of their kind."

EARL OF MOIRA, 1813.

"You ought to feel the incalculable benefit which the serious objects of Masonry must derive from this public display of the sentiment of royalty towards the Brotherhood; this avowal from so many of those immediately connected with the throne, that they make common cause with your welfare and your affections. Let us carry this thought further. Let us exult in the advantage which may ensue to every class in Britain, from the circumstance, that these elevated individuals could not have been present here, had they not previously received all those solemn inculcations, by which Masonry endeavours to dispose the heart of each of the initiated to promote the comfort of his fellow . . . . They share with us in the glowing confidence that the beneficence of a superintending Father perpetually shields us. They participate with us in that sure hope of the future, which makes our present existence appear but a speck in the immensity of our immortal heritage. They are assimilated to us in all the generous affections of that Charity which tells us, that kindness to all must be the oblation most acceptable to Him who, in creating all, could have no motive but their happiness."

H. R. H. THE DUKE OF SUSSEX, 1813.

"Masonry is one of the most sublime and perfect institutions that ever was formed for the advancement of happiness and general good to mankind; creating in all its varieties, universal benevolence and Brotherly Love. It holds out allurements so captivating, as to inspire the brotherhood with emulation to deeds of glory, such as must command, throughout the world, veneration and applause; and such as must entitle those who perform them to dignity and respect. It teaches us those useful, wise, and instructive doctrines, upon which alone true happiness is founded; and at the same time affords those easy paths, by which we attain the rewards of virtue; it teaches us the duties which we owe to our neighbour, never to injure him in any one situation, but to conduct ourselves with justice and impartiality; it bids us not to divulge the mystery to the public; and it orders us to be true to our trust, to be above all meanness and dissimulation; and, in all our avocations, to perform religiously that which we ought to do."

ENCYCLOPEDIA BRITANNICA, 1814.

"The structure of the Lodge is a pattern of the universe; and the first entry of a Mason represents the first worship of the true God." "The sun and moon are emblems of God's power, eternity, omnipresence, and benevolence. The ethereal mansions of the blessed, for possession of which all men hope, are typified by seven stars."

The mass of evidence here collected, which needs no comment, will be abundantly sufficient to establish the fact, that our best and wisest brethren have been uniformly of opinion, that the true design and end of Masonry is religion. It is, indeed, in vain to look for excellence in any system which is not founded on this basis: because all our hopes and all our fears are enfolded in the belief of a God, and a future state of rewards, to be attained by faith and obedience to his commands, and of punishments to be inflicted for a wilful and habitual violation of his laws.

But the design of this little work embraces a still wider and more comprehensive field of enquiry. I must

show that the system of Freemasonry is more congenial with the spirit of Christianity than with any other religion ever practised amongst mankind. And this will be satisfactorily proved by an attentive consideration of the lectures of Masonry, and the mechanism of initiation.

## CHAPTER III.

### CHRISTIANITY WAS THE TRUE RELIGION FROM THE FALL OF MAN TO THE ESTABLISHMENT OF THE JEWISH DISPENSATION.

Even the temporary system revealed to Moses was, in every material point, typical of the perfected Church of Jesus Christ; and therefore Speculative Masonry, being early united with Faith in Christ, has in all ages retained the benefits which it derived from this dignified alliance.

All religions profess essentially the same system of morality; but every false scheme of divine worship was but a perverted imitation of the true one which preceded it; therefore all the commendable parts of every religion under the sun are but emanations from the original worship of God. Now the first form of divine worship established on the earth after the unhappy fall of man, was the system of Christianity; and consequently the morality of every religion, how imperfect soever, is a remnant of Christian morality.

If, in this discussion, the Holy Scriptures may be appealed to as of undoubted authority, Jesus Christ was the Creator of the world. They tell us that Christ "in the beginning laid the foundations of the world, and the heavens were the works of his hands."[1] And again, "By Him (Christ) were all things created that are in heaven, and that are in earth."[2] "All things were made by him, and without him was not any thing made that was made."[3] These passages, enforced by innumerable others, are sufficient to prove that Jesus Christ was the Creator of the world. It will now be shown that he gave His religion to the newly-formed man.

The conditions being violated by which the tenure of life and happiness was held, the parents of mankind were expelled from Paradise; and the threatened pains and penalties were inflicted by a hand, which, while it

[1] Heb. i., 10, from Psalm cii., 25.
[2] Col. i., 10. [3] John i., 3.

brandished the sword of inexorable justice, held out, at the same time, the golden sceptre of mercy to its fallen creatures. From the recollection of man's original felicity, and to guard the unhappy race against the consequences of Adam's delinquency, the first Masons adopted two significant tokens, which bear a striking reference to the *penitence* of our progenitors, and to the *reverence* and awe with which they beheld the radiant glory of God when summoned into his presence to hear pronounced the fatal sentence of expulsion, misery, and death. Thus banished from the presence of God, into a world accursed for their sin, and depending alone on their own exertions for support, they were reduced to the hard necessity of using manual labour to procure the necessaries of life, and to avert the evil of perishing for want of food; for the earth was now deprived of all its spontaneous productions which contained the aliment essential to the support of human life. This was a calamity almost insupportable to the miserable exiles, whom habit had rendered unfit for such laborious employment, increased, as it was, by piercing reflections on the heinous nature of sin, which had desolated a perfect creation; and the appalling prospect of death, the agonies of which struck them with horror, even in the beasts which were slain for sacrifice. These considerations bowed them down as penitents before the throne of God, and introduced an habitual system of piety, which cheered their labours, and removed the apprehension which the sentence of death had created in their minds. From the fatigue consequent on their daily toil, and the remembrance of the supplicating posture in which they implored forgiveness, have arisen two other tokens, commemorative of these particulars. Commiserating their unhappy situation, God gave the repentant transgressors that soothing promise of redemption which removed the fears of death eternal; and they hailed with joy the means that should exalt them to everlasting life. And hence originated the fifth and last token, expressive of *faith* in the promised Redeemer, and *hope* of sharing the blessings he would convey to mankind.[4]

[4] It will be necessary to point out to the *exalted* Brother the reference which this disquisition bears to the highest Degree of

Here, then, we have the most intimate union between Masonry and Christianity from the very fall of man; and I am not conscious of the occurrence of any event which had a tendency to separate them down to the present time. Enoch, a very assiduous Mason, could not be willing to make this innovation, because he was also, in principle, a Christian,[5] and did not confine his Christianity to the mere indulgence of private speculative opinions on its mysteries; but in his charges and disquisitions of every kind, he actively enforced its doctrines by that most awful of all incentives, the denunciations of heaven against impenitent sinners.[6] His faith in the promise of a mediator was so pleasing to God, that he admitted him to the possession of glory without undergoing the agonies of temporal death.

Noah was the next practical Mason we read of in Scripture, or who is noticed in our lectures. He did not change the principles of Masonry, but rather improved them by adding another degree which bears a direct relation to the Christian faith; for the covenant was renewed with him *for ever;* and the *precepts* which he inculcated were the very same which the Apostles of Jesus Christ enjoined on the converts to Christianity when applied to for a decision respecting ceremonial observances.[7] From this circumstance, the professors of our science were distinguished by the significant appellation of Noachidæ.

I do not follow the posterity of Ham and Japhet in their migrations into distant parts of the world, though they carried with them the knowledge of Masonry which they had acquired from their father, Noah, for this obvious

Freemasonry. Brethren who have been contented with Craft Masonry may deem it irrelevant; but in reality it constitutes the essence and perfection of the system. An eminent and reverend Brother, whose name stands very high in Irish Masonry, writes to me thus, in the course of a lengthened correspondence on the subject: "I fully agree with you as to the direct allusion in all the degrees of Freemasonry to the Religion of Christ. The light on this subject becomes clearer in each succeeding Degree; and is, I think, brought to a full effulgence in the exquisite mysteries of the ——."

[5] "By faith, in Christ, Enoch was translated that he should not see death; and was not found, because God had translated him: for before his translation he had this testimony, that he pleased God." (Heb. xi., 5.)

[6] Jude 5, 14, 15.

[7] Acts xv., 29,

reason, because they renounced the practice of the true religion, and applied our science to purposes unconnected with its original designs,[8] and productive of idolatry and atheism. Their conduct therefore can have nothing to do with this discussion, but as it affords a strong negative proof that Masonry was not disengaged from the sanctions of religion by the race who practised it in primitive purity; and to show the ruinous effects which must necessarily ensue, when temporal schemes are made to supersede the awful concerns of eternity.

We may now safely pass on to the time of Abraham, under whom the union between Masonry and Christianity was rather cemented than broken. He held more than one personal communication with Jesus Christ; and was accepted by faith in the future appearance of that divine personage, rendered perfect by obedience to His commands. To Abraham it was therefore covenanted that the promised seed should arise from his posterity, who should convey eternal blessings to the world; and this seed, says St. Paul, was Jesus Christ.[9] Through faith in these repeated promises it was, that all mankind were saved during the patriarchal ages, because there never existed any other medium of salvation, but only the name of Jesus Christ; "for the passion and resurrection of Christ, through which alone salvation could be had, with the glory that should follow, were articles of the prophets as well as the apostles' creed."[10]

The sovereignty given to the tribe of Judah by Jacob, was pronounced by that patriarch to be only a temporary dominion, which was to expire when the universal expectation of all nations should appear to resume his regal authority over mankind. And even the Mosaic dispensation, ushered in with all the solemnity which an omni-

[8] Bishop Warburton says, (Div. Leg., Bk. 2, s. 4.) that, "the mysteries were instituted pure; and proposed the noblest end, by the worthiest means." Hence Isocrates affirmed that the spurious Freemasonry was of the utmost importance to the welfare of man. And Plutarch, who understood the system perfectly, adds, that it was "an ancient opinion, indelibly established in the spurious Freemasonry, that the universe was created and upheld by a superior and supreme Being."

[9] Gal. iii., 16.

[10] Dr. Ellis's inquiry, Whence cometh knowledge and understanding to man?

potent Being thought proper to bestow upon it,[11] was but intended to separate the Jews from the rest of the world, who were immersed in idolatry, by such a series of distinctive observances as made it impossible, even for their own tribes to be confounded with each other; that the expected Saviour might proceed from a stock uncontaminated with the pollutions of false worship.

This dispensation was, in every particular, typical of the perfected church of Christ; and was given to introduce and restore a permanent religion, which was completed by the sacrifice of its founder; who opened the door of mercy on all mankind, by a full revelation of a future state, and an unequivocal disclosure of the means of salvation.

To prevent the Israelites from returning to the idolatries they had left behind them in Egypt, whose splendid and imposing ceremonies were calculated to captivate the human heart, and lead it astray from the true worship of God, to follow the innovations of men; Moses erected a superb tabernacle in the wilderness; for the Israelites are upbraided with carrying in their wanderings, the portable tabernacle of Moloch, and the image and star of Remphan.[12] To obviate these evils, the

[11] Almost all the circumstances attending the promulgation of the Jewish dispensation have been introduced into Freemasonry; and the particular observances incorporated with its ceremonial. The divine appearance at the burning bush, the shoes, the rod, the serpent, and the *Sacred Name*. are equally embodied in the system. The plagues of Egypt, with the signs which attended the deliverance of the Israelites from captivity, the pillar of a cloud and of fire, the mighty winds, the division of the Red Sea, the salvation of God's people, and the destruction of Pharaoh and his host, the wanderings in the wilderness, the delivery of the law, the building of the tabernacle, and the establishment of the hierarchy, the order observed in the frequent migrations, led by the banners of each tribe, and other important events, all form parts of the complicated system of Freemasonry, and shew its connection with the offices of religion at that remote period.

[12] This circumstance is recorded in the lectures. We are there informed that the prophet Amos thus upbraids the Israelites with their superstitious backslidings: "You have carried about," says he, "during your sojournings in the wilderness, the tabernacle of Moloch, and the Star of Remphan." This custom was derived from the Egyptians, and consequently had been used long before the tabernacle of Moses was erected. It was, therefore, for the purpose of preventing the Israelites from persisting in this idolatrous practice,

tabernacle of the true God was set up; constructed so ingeniously as to serve the purposes of a temple for divine worship, and to be expeditiously removable with every change of situation which they were directed to make. This tabernacle was furnished with an ark, an oracle, an altar, &c., and numerous services were appointed to be performed by the priests on the authority of God himself; which, while they answered every purpose of present devotion, had a reference to a future dispensation, which was to continue to the end of the world. With this people, then, the original connection between Masonry and religion could sustain no deterioration; but an union so genial and beneficial would be more strongly cemented, and even assiduously cultivated by all its professors who steadfastly adhered to the true worship, and with it to primitive Masonry.

But the Jewish religion was only a temporary dispensation, instituted to prevent the true system of divine worship from being lost; and the essential points of that system were preserved continually alive in men's minds by a series of types and references which could not be misunderstood.

And first, *the oblations* which were made by the people towards the erection of this celebrated edifice were so many types of the several graces of Christianity The gold of *Faith*, the silver of *Hope;* the precious stones of *Charity;* the *blue* colour of the silks, &c., denoted the lifting up our hearts to heaven; a privilege conveyed to mankind by the meritorious atonement of Jesus Christ; the *purple*, our warfare and tribulation for the sake of religion; and the *crimson*, or, as the original words *(tolaghath shani)* signify, the double scarlet, the joint love of God and man.

*The tabernacle* itself was a distinct type of the church of Christ, the Son of God; for as the former was his ceremonial, so the latter was his spiritual residence. It was built *due East and West*, and so are all Christian churches, to denote the rise and propagation of the

that they were permitted to make a tabernacle for the worship of the true and living God, and to carry it about in honour of Him, This tabernacle was furnished with an ark, an oracle, an altar, &c., like those of other nations.

gospel, which was first preached in the east, and afterwards spread over the whole population of the western world, where it now flourishes more abundantly than in any other part of the globe. It was also intended to show further, the vast extent of the perfected church, which should reach in length from east to west; in breadth from North to South; and in compass, should ultimately include the whole habitable globe, and extend from earth to heaven. The tabernacle was built rather for the preservation of unity of worship, than as a place of itself intrinsically holy, because God is equally present in all places; and this is also the peculiar design of Christian churches, for every individual member of Christ is a temple in which the Holy Spirit of God resides.

The wisest and best of men amongst the Israelites, united in the most perfect bond of harmony and peace to construct the tabernacle in the wilderness, as Solomon's temple was afterwards built, without the use of axe, hammer, or metal tool; so the spiritual building of Christ's Church should be made perfect, without discord or contentious disputations, for God is not the author of confusion, but peace.

The three divisions of the tabernacle, *viz.*, the *outer court*, which was open to the people; the *sanctuary*, into which the priests were admitted; and the *holy of holies*, to which none had access but the high priest alone, were typicial of the constitution of the Christian church. The whole congregation of the people are denoted by the first; the bishops, priests, and deacons, who perform the sacred offices of Christianity, by the second; and Jesus Christ himself, our eternal high priest, by the third.

At the dedication of the tabernacle, the *glory of the Lord*, in the form of a palpable cloud, filled it within and without, and at length remained stationary over the *sanctum sanctorum*. This was figurative of Christ's universal presence in his church: and the continual protection which he has promised to all his faithful worshippers. A cloud was frequently used as peculiarly indicative of the Divine presence. The token of Noah's covenant was a bow set in a cloud. God brought his

people out of Egypt by a pillar of a cloud. Moses communed with the Lord on Mount Sinai in a cloud. The dedication of the tabernacle and of the temple were sanctified by God in a cloud. Jesus Christ was transfigured in a cloud; ascended up to heaven in a cloud; and shall come in a cloud to judgment.

The *sanctum sanctorum* was a type of heaven, whither Christ has gone as our high priest to intercede before the throne of God in behalf of his people. It was the immediate residence of the Deity, who dwelt between the cherubim of the mercy seat in the form of a bright cloud.

The typical meaning of the *ark* and its appendages is this: the ark itself, made of imperishable materials, was a figure of Christ's body. It was composed of two substances, wood and gold, typical of his two distinct natures, the human and divine. The three consecrated symbols it contained referred to the three sacred offices of Christ; the *tables of the law* pointed out his regal power; the *rod of Aaron* to his priesthood; and the *pot of manna*, with which the children of Israel were fed in the wilderness, to his prophetical office, by which the souls of the faithful are fed, and nourished. The four *rings* which supported the ark, denoted the four gospels; and the buds on Aaron's rod were symbolical of the revival of the body at the final resurrection.

The *mercy seat* had a direct reference to Jesus Christ, who is the true *ἱλαστήριον* or propitiatory, that reconciled mankind to the Father by his meritorious death. The *cherubs*, with their wings extended over the mercy seat, were emblematical of the angels who minister in the church of Christ.[13] This covering of the ark concealed

[13] The symbolical reference of the Cherubim to the four great Jewish prophets—the four Evangelists, and to the Saviour of mankind, is thus applied, in reference to their compound form of a man, a lion, an ox, and an eagle. The man is applied to the prophet Isaiah, because of his prophecy of Christ being born of a Virgin, and taking on himself the form of a man. The lion to Jeremiah, because of his loud and alarming denunciations to his rebellious countrymen. The ox to Ezekiel, because that animal was the symbol of atonement; and it was he who predicted the restoration of the Temple, and altar on which such atonement was made. The eagle

the holy law of God from public view: so Christ protects his people from the effects of the same law, whose letter is eternal death.[14]

The *veil* which separated the holy from the most holy place, was the sacred partition which prevented mankind from prying into the mysteries which were concealed in this temporary dispensation; but at the crucifixion of Christ it was supernaturally rent in sunder from the top to the bottom; thus testifying that the typical worship was no longer necessary, now the end of all the types was come to re-establish the true religion; for the knowledge which was prohibited under the law, was fully revealed in the gospel; and as there was no access to God but through the veil, so there can be none in the Christian dispensation but through the intercession of Christ.

In the middle division of the tabernacle was the *altar*

to Daniel, because he held communion with angelic beings, and was favoured with visions in which events were communicated which extend throughout all time till the end of the world.

Again; the man has been appropriated to Saint Matthew, because he furnishes the genealogy of Christ as a man. The lion to Saint Mark, because his Gospel commences with a voice crying in the wilderness. The ox to Saint Luke, who begins with a narrative of Zacharias, the priest. The eagle to St. John, because in his Gospel he treats of the divinity of Christ; and as an eagle soaring to heaven in the Apocalypse.

The Cherub was also a symbol of the Messiah. The man of his human nature; the lion, as being the lion of the Tribe of Judah; the ox, because he was a priest—that animal being the emblem of sacrifice; and the eagle of his divine nature.

[14] "There I will meet with thee; and I will commune with thee from above the mercy seat, from between the two cherubims which are upon the ark of the testimony, of all things which I will give thee in commandment unto the children of Israel." (Ex. xxv., 22.) On this passage Saint Gregory observes: "The propitiatory signifies the Redeemer of the world; and the two cherubims looking on each other denote that the Old and New Testaments equally agree concerning the one Mediator; the former pointeth out, the latter exhibiteth." Cyril also, in his work on the Incarnation, says, that the mercy seat is a symbol of Christ. And Calvin clearly explains all the symbolic meanings of the cherubim thus: "By the stretching out of their wings is meant, their readiness to do the will of God. By looking towards the mercy seat, they wait to know his will and pleasure. And being joined to the propitiatory, symbolizes that by the advent of Christ, the heavens were opened, and the angels ascend and descend for the benefit of true believers."

*of incense*, which was symbolical of Christ, through whom mankind offer up their prayers as incense, and the lifting up of their hands as an evening sacrifice. The *crown of gold* was figurative of Christ's regal dignity, and the *horns* were expressive of his power. No incense was offered but upon this altar; and no prayers are efficacious but such as are offered through Christ. The *shew bread* was typical of the disciples of Christ in all ages of the world, who are nourished by his doctrine to their final salvation; for Christ was the true bread of life. The *golden candlestick*[15] denoted the superior illuminations derivable from the operation of God's Holy Spirit under the gospel dispensation; the *light* was typical of the word of God, and the *oil* of the graces and perfections of Christian holiness.

In the outer court was the *altar* for sacrifices, which was also symbolical of our Saviour, whose sacrifice upon the altar of the cross was daily prefigured by the innumerable sacrifices which were here offered for sin. The *laver* symbolized the regeneration of baptism, which is the sacred rite of admission into the Christian church.

The *boards or pillars* which supported the tabernacle were emblematical of all faithful Christians, who are represented in Scripture as pillars in the temple of God; the *bars* referred to the ministers of Christ's church; and Christ himself is the foundation, depicted by the *bars* and *sockets;* and as there were two sockets under every

[15] The golden candlestick, with its burning and shining lights, both in the tabernacle and temple, was an ordinance of the Deity, to keep alive in the minds of his people the various manifestations of his divine person and will in the patriarchal ages. Fire and light were the uniform tokens of his appearance. Sometimes shining with a mild and gentle radiance, like the inferior luminaries of a Mason's lodge, and at others, flaming fiercely amidst clouds and darkness and thunderings and noise. To Adam he manifested himself in the Shekinah, which kept the gates of paradise;—to Abel, and Enoch, and Noah, the Deity appeared in a flame of fire. Nor were the appearances changed when he visited Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. To Moses in the bush, and to the Israelites in the wilderness, fire was his constant symbol. From these precedents, the adherents of a false religion proceeded to pay adoration, and make votive offerings to fire as a deity; and the sun being the largest body of fire in the visible universe, they conceived his divine residence to be in that planet, and made it accordingly the chief object of their worship, as being the majestic original of the sacred element which was kept continually alive in the hallowed recesses of their temples.

pillar, so they were intended to denote the two natures of Christ.

It will be seen, that, in following the arrangement of the Master Mason's (or more properly the Past Master's) lecture, I have been as concise as possible in enumerating the typical applications of the tabernacle and its appendages to Christianity, which was the true religion on which Judaism was engrafted, for wise and inscrutable purposes; and if we examine the services and other component parts of the institution itself, we shall find that they all point equally to the same event, the coming of Shiloh predicted by Jacob while the Israelites were in Egypt; and the full establishment of Christianity, by the total subversion of this temporary and figurative institution.

The *Annual Sacrifices* were typical of the sacrifice of Christ. They cleansed the sinner from all moral as well as ceremonial defilement; but a repetition of them every year was essential, because of the imperfection of a system which necessarily ordained that one man should atone for another; but the one sacrifice of Christ, God as well as man, purifies the conscience for ever from sin. The *burnt offerings* were also typical of the same Divine personage. They were burnt without the camp, and Christ was sacrificed without the city. Their blood was sprinkled on the ark of the covenant to propitiate the Deity who dwelt between the cherubims; and Christ's blood was poured out in the face of heaven as a sacrifice of a sweet-smelling savour, to wash away the sins of men.

The scape goat, the paschal lamb, the cities of refuge, the daily sacrifices, the temple, were equally types of Christ; as the jubilee was of the Gospel, and Mount Zion of the Church. It is, in fact, unnecessary, in a disquisition of this nature, to multiply evidences for the purpose of proving that the entire system of Judaism was typical of Christianity; and consequently that salvation was then, as now, suspended on the indispensable condition of faith in the Mediator. And this was not an obscure doctrine, partially understood by the Jews; for their prophets were continually sounding it in their ears, and there was scarcely a generation from Moses to

Malachi which did not hear it enforced by the awful sanction of rewards and punishments.

Hence as "the glad tidings of salvation to be attained through Christ, were as ancient as the time of man's sin;"[16] and as they were constantly and unequivocally acknowledged by patriarchs and prophets until the actual appearance of Christ upon earth; we may safely pronounce that the one true and unchangeable religion, which extends from the beginning to the end of time, and has hitherto been distinguished by the express approbation of God in every gradation, is that which is now known by the significant appellation of Christianity. But genuine Speculative Masonry has been alone preserved by the race of men who were the conservators of this religion; it follows, therefore, that Speculative Masons, in every age of the world, have been the exclusive professors of the true religion, or Christianity; and hence Masonry and religion have been cemented from the creation to the present time.

[16] Joseph Mede.

## CHAPTER IV.

### EVERY EVENT ALLUDED TO IN THE HISTORICAL PART OF THE MASONIC LECTURES, HAS A DIRECT REFERENCE TO JESUS CHRIST, OR THE CHRISTIAN RELIGION.

THE system which is now practised under the denomination of Freemasonry was originally an intellectual pursuit, which had God and his worship for its sole object of meditation, and consequently was not by any means connected with a mechanical craft. Its name corresponded with its nature, for it was designated by a term signifying LIGHT,[1] purity, or perfection. To trace the origin of its present appellation through all its various ramifications, amidst the gloomy days when ignorance and barbarism had overrun the world, were a forbidding and almost an useless task. We know that those ages abounded in operative architects, who, taking

[1] "The Star," says Hales, (Chron., vol. i., fo. 73.) "seen by the eastern Magi, could not have been an ordinary star or meteor; for when it reappeared on their way to Bethlehem, it conducted them till it came and stood over the house where the young child was. It was probably the same glory of the Lord which, on the night of the nativity, shone round about the pious shepherds near Bethlehem; and might, therefore, have been of a globular form, which ascended into the heavens, along with the celestial choir, and might have been seen in its ascent by the Magi, at the distance of five or six hundred miles, diminished to the size of a star or meteor; and rising from the land of Judea, in the south-west quarter of the horizon; an unusual region, which must have strongly attracted their notice and attention. And if, according to Theophylact, these Magi were the descendants of Balaam, the celebrated Chaldean divine, who prophesied of the Star to rise out of Jacob, and the Sceptre from Israel; and also of the school of Daniel the prophet at Babylon, who was appointed Archimagus by Nebuchadnezzar, and foretold the precise time of the coming of Messiah the Prince; we may naturally account for their journey to Jerusalem;—their inquiry —their excessive joy on the reappearance of the Star; and their adoration of the divine child, who was indeed a 'LIGHT to lighten the Gentiles, and a glory to his people Israel;' the dayspring (*η ανατολη*) from on high; the bright and morning star; the day star which rises in our hearts."

advantage of the inanity of the few speculative Masons who continued to practise our science in its native purity, boldly pronounced *themselves* the sole conservators of Masonry;[2] while the unassuming Essenes were incompetent to unmask the pretenders, or to refute their confident assumption of our peculiar privileges.

The historical part of our lectures has an undoubted reference to something of a higher and more exalted nature than the mere construction of sumptuous edifices;[3] something which embraces the vital part of religion, and points to an exaltation from the grave of sin, and redemption from eternal death. Privileges which were

[2] I extract a passage from an article in the Freemasons' Quarterly Review, by Bro. Goodwyn of Taunton, which bears on this subject. "Grand Masters Alfred and Athelstane induced a number of them (the Freemasons) to come into this country, in order to build their castles, churches and convents, and to re-establish the operations of the craft. The foreign artists who accepted these invitations, were some of those few who had survived the ravages of the barbarous tribes, and who were Christians, and *most of their leaders and directors were Clergymen;* which fact is one of the most substantial proofs that can be offered, that *it was not for their assistance in the Operative art* alone they were invited to England; but also, that the Masters and Warders, being clergymen, and as must be thereby inferred, men of morals and learning, *they might be the more eminently qualified to teach and instruct the Speculative science,* whilst the Operatives were engaged in the erection of those edifices which the propagation of Speculative Masonry, and the establishment of those laws which will ever throw the brightest lustre on the pious and learned Alfred's reign, rendered necessary." (Vol. iii., p. 287.) It will be unnecessary for me to express my opinion that this is a correct view of the case.

[3] Calcott informs us that "in the minority of King Henry VI., a very respectable Lodge was held at Canterbury, and that a coat of arms, much the same as that of the London Company of Freemen Masons, was used by them; whence it is natural to conceive that the said Company is descended from the ancient fraternity; and that in former times, no man was made free of that Company, *until he was initiated in some Lodge of Free and Accepted Masons,* as a necessary qualification. And it not only appears, that, before the troubles which happened in the reign of this unfortunate prince, Freemasons were universally esteemed, but even King Henry himself was made a Mason in the year 1442, and many lords and gentlemen of the court, after his example, solicited and obtained admission into the fraternity. And, by what follows, we find how very intent this prince was to acquire some knowledge of the fundamental principles, history, and traditions of the Royal Art, even before he was initiated; and from whence may also be gathered many of the original principles of the ancient society, on which the institution of Freemasonry was engrafted."

wrought out by the great Author and Finisher of our faith and which consequently refer to him as the object of their illustration and fulfilment.

The first great event to which our lectures refer, (for I shall take them in chronological order, and not as they occur in the illustrations,) is the creation of the world.[4] This work was performed by Jesus Christ, and therefore its reference to the Christian religion need scarcely be insisted on. Like the initiation into the first degree of Masonry, there was nothing before the creation but *darkness*, a void space and undistinguishable confusion. But, from this darkness, at the all powerful word of Christ, sprang a *light* of inconceivable brightness, which illuminated the newly-created universe; like the light which bursts on the aspirant's soul, when the bandages of ignorance are removed, and he beholds the first cheering ray of truth emanate from the shining light of integrity and devotion.

"Abel offered a more acceptable sacrifice than his brother Cain."[5]

The institution of sacrifices, at the fall, was intended to keep alive the great sacrifice of atonement by which Jesus Christ should expiate the consequences of Adam's sin. These sacrifices were, therefore, ordained to be bloody, as more expressly typical of that great event. And this was the sole intention of an ordinance which, abstractedly considered, could possess no efficacy whatever. For what is there in the simple act of killing a beast, and offering certain parts of its body and blood on an altar, that is capable of appeasing the just wrath of an offended God? The sacrifice of Abel derived its merit, principally, from the expression of *faith* in the antitype, and *obedience* to the commands of God. And these, accordingly, have been essential conditions of salvation from the origin of terrestrial things; and will remain so to the end of time. Hence, at the emigrations from Shinar, we find that every tribe which colonized any other part of the globe, preserved the rite of sacrificing pure and uncontaminated with the adulterations of religion; and

[4] F. C. Lect., Sec. 2. Freemasonry would make us acquainted with this important fact, if all existing records were destroyed.

[5] E. A. P. Lect., Sec. 3.

thus with the type an indistinct knowledge of the antitype was preserved in every nation of the world; and the idea of one dying as an expiation to the gods, was not only believed, but practised in every system of religion which prevailed among mankind, whether Jew or Gentile; and the only reason why Abel's sacrifice was approved, and that of Cain rejected, was because the former being bloody, retained the typical reference to the great atonement, and the latter being unbloody, was offered in disobedience to God's commands. But Abel himself was an eminent type of Christ. Abel was a shepherd; Christ styles himself the good shepherd. Righteous Abel was the first martyr for religion, and was offered to God as a pure and holy sacrifice; Christ, too, was offered without spot, as a martyr for the sins of the world. Abel was slain through envy, so was Christ; and as the offering of Abel was acceptable to God, so also was the offering of Christ.

"Noah was a just and upright man, and obtained salvation in the ark, when all the human race perished in the flood, except himself and righteous family."[6]

This event refers to the salvation which arises by virtue of Christ's sacrifice, and the admission to it by the rite of baptism. The punishment which God has threatened to inflict on a guilty world, may be averted by taking refuge under the meritorious atonement of Christ, as Noah avoided the deluge by entering into the ark, which floated on the waters of destruction; while they overwhelmed all the faithless and unbelieving, who rejected the ark of safety which God had provided, under the deceitful expectation that his threatenings would never be executed.

The terrible nature of this judgment has induced the unbelievers of the present day to pronounce it fabulous. But there is no fact better attested, equally from the testimony of sacred and profane writers, and from the deductions of reason. Many heathen authors have recorded the circumstances of that tremendous display of God's power and justice; and St. Peter refers to it as expressly typical of our admission into the Christian covenant.[7] There exists a tradition of it in every nation

[6] E. A. P. Lect., Sec. 3.

[7] 1 Pet. iii., 21

under heaven;[8] and the memory was preserved amongst the ancient idolaters in their mysteries; all of which bore an undoubted reference to this fact.

"At the grand festival which Abraham gave at the weaning of his son Isaac, Sarah detected Ishmael, the son of Hagar, the Egyptian bondwoman, in the act of teasing and perplexing her son. She, therefore, remonstrated with Abraham, saying, 'Cast out this bondwoman and her son, for the son of this bondwoman shall not be heir with my son, even with Isaac.' She spake under the impulse of Divine inspiration; well knowing that from Isaac's loins should issue a mighty people, who should serve the Lord with freedom, fervency, and zeal; and fearing that from too familiar an intercourse with a person of Ishmael's slavish extraction, the pure stock set apart for the preservation of God's true worship might become contaminated with the degenerate vices of slavery."[9]

This transaction is said by St. Paul to be allegorical of the two covenants of Judaism and Christianity. Ishmael was born after the flesh, Isaac after the spirit, by the immediate agency of God himself, which shews the superiority of the Christian over the Jewish, or any

[8] "It will appear from many circumstances in the more ancient writers, that the great patriarch, Noah, was highly reverenced by his posterity. They looked up to him as a person peculiarly favoured by heaven, and honoured him with many titles; each of which had a reference to some particular part of his history. They stiled him Prometheus, Deucalion, Atlas, Theuth, Zuth, Xuthus, Inachus, Osiris. When there began to be a tendency towards idolatry, and the adoration of the sun was introduced by the posterity of Ham, the title of Helius, among others, was conferred upon him. They also called him *Μεν* and *Μαν*, which is the Moon, the secret meaning of which name I shall hereafter shew. When colonies went abroad, many took to themselves the title of Minyadæ and Minyæ from him; just as others were denominated Achæmenidæ, Auritæ, Heliadæ, from the Sun. People of the former name are to be found in Arabia, and in other parts of the world. The natives at Orchomenos were styled Minyæ; as were also some of the inhabitants of Thessaly. It was the ancient name of the Arcadians, interpreted *Σεληνιται*, Lunares; but grew obsolete. Noah was the original Zeus and Dios. He was the planter of the vine, and the inventor of fermented liquors; whence he was denominated Zeuth, which signifies ferment; rendered *Ζευς* by the Greeks. He was also Dionusos, interpreted by the Latins Bacchus, but very improperly. Bacchus was Chus, the grandson of Noah; as Ammon may be in general esteemed Ham, so much reverenced by the Egyptians." (Bryant, Anal., 8vo. ed., vol. iii., p. 7.)

[9] E. A. P. Lect., Sec. 6.

other religion: the latter generate to bondage, and are merely ceremonial; the former is perfectly spiritual, and leads to everlasting life.

"Abraham offered his son Isaac in sacrifice, when it pleased the Lord to substitute a more agreeable victim in his stead."[10]

As Isaac was an express type of Christ, so this event pointed out the great atonement; Isaac was named by a celestial messenger before he was born, so was Christ; Isaac carried the wood on which he was offered, and Christ bare the cross on which he was crucified; Isaac was offered on Mount Moriah; Christ was offered on an adjoining mountain; Isaac was to suffer by his father's hand; and whose sword was it that pierced Christ? Isaac was redeemed from death three days after Abraham was commanded to offer him up; and Christ was raised from the dead three days after his actual crucifixion. And lastly, Isaac became the father of the Jews, as Christ is the universal father of Christians. How can these very extraordinary coincidences be accounted for, on any other principle than type and antitype? And who can sit in a Masons' Lodge and hear them expatiated on, without feeling a conviction that the lectures of Masonry have a clear and indissoluble connection with the sacred truths of religion?

"Jacob was the beloved son of Rebecca, the wife of Isaac, &c., &c. To escape from the fury of his brother Esau, &c., &c., he was sent by his mother into Mesopotamia, &c. Fatigued with his journey he lay down to rest, &c., and dreamed a remarkable dream. A LADDER, whose foot was planted on the earth, and whose top reached to the heavens, was filled with angelic messengers ascending and descending, and surmounted by the majesty of God, &c., &c. In this place the Lord entered into a solemn league and covenant with Jacob, &c., &c., &c."[11]

This ladder, which thus connected heaven and earth, had a plain reference to that religion which conveys to man the privilege of unrestricted communication with God, by means of prayer and meditation; and the ministration of angels, as messengers of heaven, is plainly

[10] E. A. P. Lect., Sec. 3. [11] Ibid.

pointed out. The angels attended our Saviour in every step of his divine mission. His incarnation was announced by an angel; his birth was carolled by choirs of angels; they watched with intense interest every gradation of his great mediatorial undertaking. They were continually *ascending* or *descending*, to convey tidings or to bring consolation; while his heavenly Father, from the summit of the ladder, beheld his conflict with the powers of darkness; saw him lead captivity captive; rejoiced in his transcendent victory over death and hell; and at length received him amidst the triumphant acclamations of the heavenly host.

"Jacob wrestled with an angel, and his successful contention was crowned with a blessing for himself and his posterity."[12]

The perseverance of Jacob in his contest with the *Son of God*,—for the holy personage who appeared to him at Peniel was no other than the second person in the Trinity,—shews the necessity of continual application for mercies by prayer, if we expect to receive an answer to our petitions; for it was to this principle that Jacob was indebted for the blessing of God.

"Moses took off his shoes by the command of God, at the burning bush in Mount Horeb, that he might be ready to offer up his prayers to the Almighty; to thank him for mercies received, crave pardon for past offences, and implore his aid and protection in all future endeavours."[13]

This extract carries with it its own interpretation. Prayer is an act of religion; our lectures recommend prayer; we practise it in every step of our proceedings; and, therefore, it is preposterous to argue that religion is excluded from our institution.

"A great and mighty wind blew, first from the east to facilitate the passage of the Israelites over the Red Sea in their escape from Egyptian bondage; and then from the opposite point of the compass, which overwhelmed Pharaoh and his host in their attempt to follow them."[14]

This deliverance, which was preceded by the sacrifice of the passover, prefigured the deliverance of mankind

[12] E. A. P. Lect., Sec. 3. [13] R. A. Lect., Sec. 2.
[14] E. A. P. Lect., Sec. 1.

from sin by Jesus Christ, denoted by the sacrifice of the immaculate paschal Lamb, of which a bone was forbid to be broken. The passage through the Red Sea refers to baptism; for as the Israelites were obliged to pass through the water before they could receive possession of the promised land, so it is necessary for Christians to be purified with the waters of baptism before they can obtain a title to the kingdom of heaven.

"The pillar of a cloud and of fire are thus represented in a Mason's lodge: * * * * * They were a light and a guide to the Israelites in their escape from the protracted oppression of Egypt; and also preceded Pharaoh and his host to destruction in the Red Sea."[15]

The Israelites, who followed this pillar of a cloud by day, and of fire by night, represent the whole community of Christians following Jesus, the Captain of their salvation; and were they to forsake the path which he has marked out for them, they would soon be left to the uncertain guidance of their own inventions; and, like Pharaoh and his host, would perish in the sea of destruction.

"The Israelites were a rebellious and disobedient people; and were sentenced to wander in the wilderness forty years. Here they were miraculously sustained by the mighty power of God. Bread was given to them from heaven, and water issued from the dry rock at the word of Moses," &c., &c.[16]

The chequered scenes of good and evil to which Christians are subject in this probationary state, are aptly compared to the miseries and fluctuations of the Israelites during their sojournings in the wilderness; and should make us anxious for a better country, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens. The *manna* pointed to Jesus the true bread of life; the *rock* from which water was extracted by the agency of the miraculous *rod* of Moses, had a reference to that fountain of living waters, of which he who drinks shall thirst no more; the stretching out of Moses' arms while the Amalekites were subdued, was an emblem of the conquest of sin and Satan, by the extension of Christ's arms upon the cross; the *brazen serpent* elevated on a pole, that

[15] F. C. Lect., Sec. 2. [16] M. M. Lect., Sec. 5.

the Israelites might look thereon and be healed, was symbolical of Christ's body exposed on the cross for the salvation of sinners; and the blood of the sacrifices signified the blood of Christ, the seal of the covenant, by which our sins and iniquities are purged and done away.

"Moses caused a tabernacle to be erected in the wilderness as a repository for the tables of the law, as well as a place for the solemnization of divine worship," &c., &c.[17]

The erection of the tabernacle, as well as the services of Jewish worship, having already been explained as typical of Christianity, I pass on to the building of the temple by Solomon.

On the spot of ground where this famous edifice was afterwards erected, "King David offered up his prayers to God, who was pleased to put a stop to the pestilence which then raged amongst his people, as a punishment for his own imprudence, in having ordered them to be numbered; and gave him a TOKEN of reconciliation," &c., &c.[18]

This is an undoubted act of genuine religion; and, as it forms *one* fundamental basis of our Lodge's consecration, it holds out something more than an equivocal proof of the existence of religion within our walls; it shews that our illustrations have a tendency to elevate the heart to that sublime object who hath raised us from the grave of sin by the sacred points of Christian fellowship; hath instructed us in the terms of reconciliation; and given us the glorious Gospel, which points out the resurrection from the dead, and everlasting life in the paradise of God.

"There was neither axe, hammer nor metal tool used at the building of King Solomon's temple, so that nothing was heard among the workmen of Zion, save harmony and peace."[19]

This arrangement of the Most High, emblematically pointed out that *peace, harmony, and brotherly love*, were to be characteristic signs of the Gospel dispensation. The temple was built on Mount Moriah, one of the hills of *Zion*, which is the name given to the Christian

[17] E. A P. Lect., Sec. 3. [18] Ibid., Sec. 2.
[19] Ibid.

church; and Christ is the foundation-stone on which it is erected.[20]

"The stones were carved, marked, and numbered in the quarry from whence they were hewn; the timber was prepared and marked in the forest; and, when brought to Jerusalem and put together, each part fitted with such perfect exactness, as made it appear rather the work of the great Architect of the universe, than an exertion of human skill."[21]

Every Christian is a stone in this spiritual edifice, which, when properly modelled and polished by the exercise of religion, and the practice of morality, and fitted for translation to a celestial building, he is cemented with his perfected brethren, by charity, into a beautiful temple prepared on earth, and put together in heaven.

I might notice many other particulars, in this division of the lectures, which point out the intimate connection between Masonry and religion; but enough has been said to prove the truth of the proposition, that the historical part of Masonry consists purely of unmixed religion; and contains a regular series of undoubted references to Christianity.

[20] It is asserted by the Rabbins, that King Solomon received a secret from Asmodeus, an evil spirit, mentioned in the book of Tobit, who had usurped his throne, and afterwards became his prisoner. By the use of this he was enabled to finish the temple without the use of axe, hammer, or metal tool; for the stone *schamir*, which had been presented to him by the dæmon, possessed the property of cutting any other substance as a diamond cuts glass. This, however, is wholly fabulous. Metal tools were used in the forest and the quarry, and it was by a very natural process that the building was constructed without the pollution of these instruments.

[21] E. A. P. Lect., Sec. 2.

## CHAPTER V.

### THE MORALITY OF MASONRY IS PRECISELY THE SAME AS THAT OF CHRISTIANITY.

This division will consist almost solely of the morality exhibited in the lectures of Masonry; for I conjecture that the doctrines will be found so closely allied to religion, that comment will be scarcely necessary. The lectures will be quoted from publications authorized by the Grand Lodge, and can, therefore, be subject to no exception on the ground of authenticity.[1]

The great characteristic of Freemasonry which has excited so many unjust suspicions of its innocence, is the *secrecy*[2] which has been inviolably observed respecting its peculiar mysteries, from the creation of the world to the present time. Our lectures enforce the practice by such arguments as these:—"Of all the arts which Masons possess, the art of secrecy particularly distinguishes them. Taciturnity is a proof of wisdom; and is allowed to be of the utmost importance in the different transactions of life. The best writers have declared it to be an art of inestimable value; and that it is agreeable to the Deity himself may be easily conceived from the glorious exam-

[1] Every quotation brought forward in proof of this proposition will be selected from detached parts of the lectures already published in Preston's "Illustrations," Hutchinson's "Spirit of Masonry," and Inwood's "Sermons," under the sanction or approbation of the Grand Lodge of England, and Webb's "Monitor," published under the express sanction of the Grand Lodge of America.

[2] The system of secrecy embodied in the science of Freemasonry has always been considered by the uninitiated as a great stumbling-block to its progress. But nothing can be more absurd. Even the learned and intelligent Locke, *before he was initiated*, tells Lady Masham, that it was his wish that the secrets of Masonry should be communicated to all mankind, since "there is nothing more true than what the Masons teach; that the better men are the more they love one another; virtue having in itself something so amiable as to charm the hearts of all who behold it."

ple which he gives, in concealing from mankind the secrets of his providence. The wisest of men cannot pry into the arcana of heaven; nor can they divine to-day what to-morrow may bring forth."[3]

The lectures define Freemasonry to be a "science which includes all others; which inculcates human and divine knowledge, and teaches man his duty to God, his neighbour, and himself."[4] Here we have surely a decisive proof, in the very definition of our Order, that it is founded on religion; for nothing but a religious system can inculcate this constellation of grand and important duties.

"From east to west Freemasonry extends; and between the north and south in every clime and nation are Masons to be found. Our institution is said to be supported by wisdom, strength, and beauty; because it is necessary that there should be wisdom to contrive, strength to support, and beauty to adorn all great and important undertakings. Its dimensions are unlimited, and its covering no less than the canopy of heaven. *To this object the Mason's mind is constantly directed, and thither he hopes at last to arrive* by the aid of the theological ladder which Jacob in his vision saw extending from earth to heaven; the three principal rounds of which are faith, hope, and charity; which admonish us to have faith in God, hope in immortality, and charity to all mankind."[5]

Faith, hope, and charity, are virtues connected with religion, if any affinity can be traced between religion and morality. But charity, united with faith and hope, is pure Christianity. Faith imprints a strong sense of duty on the mind, and displays the glorious prospect of an eternal reward. Hope vigorously discharges the duty, under a strong assurance that the reward is attainable. But charity surmounts all difficulties, turns duty into delight, and contributes to a final consummation in glory. Hence arises the most exalted prerogative of charity over all other gifts and perfections. Charity is the distinguishing characteristic of the Deity. All other virtues are mortal; charity alone is immortal. It will beam resplendent rays through all eternity, and, like the CEN-

[3] E. A. P. Lect., Sec. 1, quoted from Preston.
[4] R. A. Lect., Sec. 2, from Webb.
[5] E. A. P. Lect., Sec. 4, from Webb.

TRAL STAR of heaven, shall utterly extinguish all inferior lights by its unfading lustre. "Charity never faileth," says a great Christian teacher; "but whether there be prophecies, they shall fail; whether there be tongues, they shall cease; whether there be knowledge, it shall vanish away."[6] These gifts being adapted solely to the imperfect state of human nature, their utility will cease in a state of absolute perfection. Even the glorious habits of faith and hope, though essential qualifications in this mortal state, will have no part in the heavenly life, because they are but earthly virtues; for charity is the only *step* which penetrates the clouds, even to the throne of God. The time will come when, seeing the things which are now unseen, we shall not need the evidence of faith; possessing the rewards now hoped for, we shall not want the assurance of hope. But when faith and hope shall have had their perfect end and consummation, charity will exist, covered with all its brilliant glories, and overshadowed with a radiance which can suffer no diminution. Hence the true Mason will be transported beyond all bounds, when placed in the immediate presence of the majestic Object of his former faith and hope, and in the actual enjoyment of celestial bliss. The inexpressible excellency of the divine *light* will continually supply him with fresh ardour of affection, with renewed sentiments of adoration. In this Grand Lodge, all will be immutably perfect and happy, under the influence of universal charity. As there will be no wants to relieve, no distress to pity, all in that blessed assembly will enjoy a plenitude of bliss, emanating from the sacred Source of infinite goodness, truth, and mercy. The souls of the just will form but one glorious company with the angels and archangels; possessed of one mind, and with one voice recounting the praises of the spotless LAMB. With thoughts, capacities, and powers having but one tendency, one centre, they will all unite to adore the Great I AM, in peace, harmony, and brotherly love.

"Every well-governed Lodge is *furnished* with the *Holy Bible*, the *Square*, *and the Compass*. The Bible points out the path that leads to happiness, and is dedicated to God; the square teaches to regulate our conduct by the princi-

[6] 1 Cor. c. xiii., v. 8.

ples of morality and virtue, and is dedicated to the master; the compass teaches to limit our desires in every station, and is dedicated to the brethren. The Bible is dedicated to the service of God, because it is the inestimable gift of God to man; the square to the master, because, being the proper masonic emblem of his office, it is constantly to remind him of the duty he owes to the Lodge over which he is appointed to preside; and the compass to the Craft, because, by a due attention to its use, they are taught to regulate their desires and keep their passions within due bounds."[7]

"The *ornamental* parts of a Lodge are, the Mosaic pavement, the indented Tressel, and the blazing Star. The Mosaic pavement is emblematic of human life, chequered with good and evil;[8] the beautiful border by which it is encompassed, those blessings and comforts which surround us, and which we hope to obtain by a faithful reliance on Divine Providence, hieroglyphically represented by the blazing star in the centre. The moveable and immoveable jewels are the square, the level, and the plumb-rule,

[7] E. A. P. Lect., Sect. 5, from Webb.

[8] It is remarkable that this description of tesselated pavement was in use all over the world. The Romans left behind them many beautiful specimens, which have been discovered in modern times, in various parts of our own island, and are still preserved with great care as invaluable relics of the state of the arts in the first ages of Christianity. But we are furnished with records of this kind of work at periods much more remote. In the royal palace of Shushan, when Ahasuerus gave a royal feast to his nobles, the beds, or, in other words, the triclinia, or banquetting couches, were of gold and silver, upon *a pavement of red, and blue, and white, and black marble.* (Esth. i., 6.) The voluptuous Egyptians, who exhausted their ingenuity in the invention of new luxuries to please the taste of a pampered nobility, used, in common with painted walls and ceilings, the mosaic pavement, richly tesselated. In the palace of Cleopatra, these pavements were inlaid with precious stones. And in India, the floors of the most sacred temples, or at least the adyta, were enriched with polished stones disposed in small squares or tessera, which reflected the beams of the sun in a variety of splendid colours. On a similar principle the floor of a Masons' Lodge has been constructed, which is thus in proper keeping with the rest of its decorations; for the design would be imperfect, if a strict regard to uniformity and propriety had not been observed throughout the entire arrangement. This is a striking evidence of the unity of design with which the great plan of Freemasonry was originally constructed. How minutely soever the parts or elements may appear to be disposed, they each and all conduce to the same end—the glory of God and the welfare of man.

the rough and perfect ashler, and the tressel board. These appear to be mere instruments of labour; but the moral to which they respectively point, renders them jewels of inestimable value. The square teaches morality and justice; the level equality, and the plumb-rule integrity. By the rough ashler we are reminded of our rude and imperfect state by nature; by the perfect ashler that state of perfection at which we hope to arrive by a virtuous education, aided by divine grace; and the tressel board reminds us that, as the operative workman erects his temporal building agreeably to the rules and designs laid down by the master on his tressel board, so should we endeavour to erect our spiritual building agreeably to the rules and designs laid down by the Supreme Architect of the universe in the Holy Bible, which is a Mason's spiritual tressel board. *That book, which is never closed in any Lodge*, reveals the duties which the Great Master of all exacts from us; and were we conversant therein and adherent thereto, it would bring us to 'a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens.'"[9]

These are extracts from the abundant stores of morality and religion contained in the masonic Lectures.[10] Can it, then, be contended, with any degree of reason, that they have no reference to religion—nay, to Christianity? But to silence every possible objection, to remove every cavil, I shall penetrate still deeper into this mine of precious stones; assured at every step of meeting with some valuable gem. If there be any truth in a plain symbol, or any dependence on the illustration, the following extract will abundantly prove that no Lodge can be esteemed

[9] E. A. P. Lect., Sec. 5, from Webb.

[10] It will have been observed by our well-instructed brethren, that I have cited the Lectures as they existed before their revision by Dr. Hemming, under the authority, I believe, of the Grand Lodge. Such a revision would depend, in a great measure, on the personal taste of the Brother commissioned to effect the alteration; and, it must be confessed, that many passages have been retained which are comparatively worthless, and others omitted which were highly illustrative and useful. The worthy Doctor, indeed, had a task imposed on him of no common interest. His path was beset with difficulties; and it is to be feared that a slight feeling of prejudice was one of them, arising out of a circumstance then existing, which was extremely unfavourable to his labours. A new arrangement of the Lectures, both of Craft and of R. A. Masonry, is much to be desired.

perfect, which does not contain a visible and self-interpreting emblem of the Christian religion:—

"In all regularly constituted lodges there is represented a certain *point within a circle*, the point representing an individual brother; the circle representing the boundary line of his duty to God and man; beyond which he is never to suffer his passions, prejudices, or interests, to betray him on any occasion. This circle is embordered by two perpendicular parallel lines, representing St. John the Baptist, and St. John the Evangelist, who were perfect parallels in Christianity as well as Masonry;[11] and upon the vertex rests the book of the Holy Scriptures, which point out the whole duty of man. In going round this circle we necessarily touch upon these two lines, as well as on the Holy Scriptures; and whilst a Mason keeps himself thus circumscribed, it is impossible that he should materially err."[12]

To the Holy Scriptures the Lectures frequently refer. The masonic ladder, say they, stands firmly with its foot on the Holy Bible, whilst its summit is lost amidst the clouds of heaven. Can anything be founded on the Bible, and have no connection with religion? Impossible! This ladder, by which we all hope to ascend to the glorious *arch of heaven* at the final consummation of all things, is a direct type of religion; for religion is founded on the Holy Bible, and is studded with innumerable theological virtues, which point the way to everlasting bliss.

We now come to the fifth section of entered Apprentice Masonry, which inculcates the most instructive lessons; it expatiates on brotherly love, relief, and truth, and enforces a strict regard to the four cardinal virtues—temperance, fortitude, prudence, and justice:—

"By the exercise of brotherly love we are taught to regard the whole human race as one family; the high

[11] In Dr. Hemming's revision the two St. Johns have been expunged from the Lectures; although in the provinces, almost every lodge festival is still celebrated, either on the anniversary of St. John the Baptist, in June, or St. John the Evangelist, in December. It is an innovation in the ancient Lectures; and as a Christian Mason, I most earnestly wish to see these two parallels restored; which might easily be done without prejudice to the two more ancient masonic worthies, Moses and Solomon.

[12] E. A. P. Lect., Sec. 5, from Webb.

and low, the rich and poor; who, as children of one Almighty Parent, and inhabitants of the same planet, are to aid, support and protect each other. On this principle Masonry unites men of every country, sect, and opinion, and conciliates true friendship amongst those who might otherwise have remained at a perpetual distance.[13] Relief is the next tenet of our profession. To relieve the distressed is a duty incumbent on all men, par-

[13] The late Marquis of Hastings, in his celebrated Reply to an Address presented to him on his leaving Calcutta, in Dec., 1822, by the fraternity of Freemasons, as the Grand Master of the East, attributes the civilization of man to the operation of this principle. "The veil thrown over Masonry," says he, "renders its operation silent and unobserved; yet the influence of a body spread through all classes of society, pervading every circle, and diffusing (though by its separate members) opinions digested and matured, from remote periods, in the brotherhood, must be powerful in its effect. I think the traces of its useful sway are discoverable, if we cast our eyes on olden times. Reflect on that semi-barbarism which was the condition of all the states of Europe in ages not long past. What apparent cause was there for a sudden and rapidly progressive mitigation of the rude oppressions which characterised the day? If none such can confidently be pointed out, is it not reasonable to recur to an agency which, while it is unobtrusive, must in its very nature be active? The secrecy observed in masonic proceedings, and the rigid scrutiny exercised into the private character of candidates for admission, excited the curiosity of the higher ranks; and at the same time removed every fear of their discrediting themselves by becoming members of the fraternity. Once initiated, *they received lessons which never could have reached them in any other situation.* They were taught that throughout the necessary gradations in a community, and amid the unavoidable distinctions arising from talents or property, *man was still the brother of man.* This primary position once adopted, all corollaries from it were readily embraced. The doctrine imbibed in the lodge became the rule of action for the man of might in his public sphere; and his example disseminated the principles of humanity and justice, to the utmost extent of the circle. Surely this is not a visionary supposition. *Observe the difference of character between the nations of Europe where Masonry has flourished, and those in which it has been proscribed, and let the contrast, so favourable for the former, support my hypothesis.* The proof will be still stronger if you advert to the despotism, the ferocity, the degradation of mankind, in the Asiatic regions, where no casual ray of Masonry has ever pierced the gloom. In Europe, what were once masonic principles are so generally prevalent, that it would now be difficult to make it believed that they were once acknowledged only in a confined society. Yet it is well that the sanctuary for them should still exist. Our forms are only constant inculcations to us of the moral rules which ought to be observed in all times, cases and situations."

ticularly on Masons, who are linked together by an indissoluble chain of sincere affection. To soothe calamity, to alleviate misfortune, to compassionate misery, and to restore peace to the troubled mind, is the grand aim of the true Mason. On this basis he establishes his friendships, and forms his connections. Truth is a divine attribute, and the foundation of every virtue. To be good and true is the first lesson we are taught. On this theme we contemplate, and by its dictates endeavour to regulate our conduct: influenced by this principle. hypocrisy and deceit are unknown; sincerity and plain dealing distinguish us; while the heart and the tongue join in promoting each other's welfare, and rejoicing in each other's prosperity."[14]

"Without the cardinal virtues, of which Prudence is the chief, the name of Mason is an empty title, and but a painted bubble. Phronæsis, the emblem of prudence, is the first and most exalted object that demands our attention in the lodge. It is placed in the centre, ever to be present to the eye of the Mason, that his heart may be attentive to her dictates, and steadfast in her laws: for prudence is the rule of all virtues; prudence is the path that leads to every degree of propriety; prudence is the channel whence self-approbation flows for ever; she leads us forth to worthy actions, and, as a blazing star, enlightens us through the dreary and darksome paths of life. That Fortitude should be the characteristic of a Mason, we need not argue; by which, in the midst of pressing evils, he is enabled always to do that which is agreeable to the dictates of right reason. Temperance, also, must be one of his steadfast principles, and must moderate or restrain his passions, especially in sobriety and chastity. We regard temperance under the various definitions of moralists, as constituting honesty and decency; and in all its potential parts instituting meekness, clemency, and modesty. We profess Justice, as dictating to us to do right to all, and to yield to every man what belongs to him. The cardinal virtues, Temperance, Fortitude, Prudence and Justice, hold in their train the inferior powers of peace, concord, quietness, liberty, safety, honour, felicity, piety and charity;

[14] E. A. P. Lect., Sec 6, from Preston.

with many others, which were adored by the ancients in those ages when they confounded mythology with the worship of the Divinity. Within the starry girdle of prudence, all the virtues are enfolded. We may apply this emblem to a still more religious import: it represents the star which led the wise men to Bethlehem; proclaimed to mankind the nativity of the Son of God; and here, conducting our spiritual progress to the Author of our redemption."[15]

Such are a few detached extracts from the Lectures of the first degree. They proclaim, with a conviction superior to all argument, the intimate union which subsists between Masonry and Religion, between Masonry and Christianity. They shew further, that our pursuits are neither trifling nor insignificant, for they embrace topics of general and unfading interest; topics on which the most celebrated philosophers and moralists of all ages have exercised their ingenuity, to promote equally the welfare of man and the glory of God.

The second degree is devoted to the study and illustration of human science: and to trace the greatness and majesty of the Creator, by minutely analyzing his works. The intellectual faculties expand as a desire of knowledge increases; and by the studies attached to this degree, the mind is elevated to a communion with its Maker. What a field for moral investigation and critical research do the liberal sciences afford! The subtleties of grammar, rhetoric, and logic; the wonderful combinations of arithmetic; the universal application of geometry, the delicacy of music, and the sublimity of astronomy, have each a separate charm to win the heart, and point to a Creator. The organization of the human body is another sublime subject to which the attention is particularly directed in this Lecture. It embraces every branch of one of the great divisions of Masonry, its operative part; and hence the disquisitions are rather minute on the five orders of architecture, the use and application of the globes, and other important objects connected with useful science. In the second section, the creation of the world, and the divine appropriation of the seventh day for the purposes of rest and devotion,

[15] E. A. P. Lect Sec. 6, from Hutchinson.

are expatiated on, as was the uniform practice of our ancient brethren many thousand years ago; and the following extract will shew the object they had continually in view: "In six days God created the heavens and the earth, and rested on the seventh day; therefore, our ancient brethren dedicated the seventh day as a period of rest from their labours: thereby enjoying frequent opportunities to contemplate the glorious works of the creation, and to adore the great Creator."

I shall quote but little from this Lecture, because the illustrations are chiefly scientific; but they all have a moral and religious tendency; and the Lecture concludes with that precept, to which every point of discussion had a direct reference. It exhorts us to fear "God, the great Geometrician of the universe; and at all times, and on all occasions, cheerfully to submit to his injunctions, and to obey his precepts, which are holy, just, and good."[16]

The third degree is the cement of the whole: it binds men together by the *mystic points of fellowship*, as in a chain of indissoluble affection, and teaches them to love their neighbour as themselves, as the best means of evidencing that the love of God is shed abroad in their hearts. But it does more than this,—it asserts positively the resurrection of the body, and points to a future state, in which those who have endured sufferings in this world to preserve their virtue and religion from profanation, shall meet a suitable reward: while the wicked shall be cast out as unworthy of a place in the heavenly country, and receive the horrible punishment they have imprecated on themselves.

The first point incites us to brotherly love: that love which renders spontaneous assistance in time of pressing need, without the venal hope of receiving an equivalent, for the reward is from above. The second point inculcates universal benevolence; which must derive its satisfaction from a source distinct from, and independent of, human approbation: I mean the reflection that it will ensure the approbation of God, to which a reward is attached beyond the reach of calumny. This enables the benevolent Mason to pursue his glorious career like

[16] F. C. Lect., Sec. 4.

the sun in the firmament, which, though temporarily intercepted by clouds which obscure his brightness, soon dispels the unsubstantial vapour, resumes his dignity, and bursts upon the world with a brightness more vivifying from the effects of his temporary obscuration. The third point teaches the duty and necessity of prayer to God, without which, as a solemn act of religion, nothing we can be engaged in can reasonably be expected to prosper. The fourth point inculcates secrecy, and points out the consequences of betraying the confidence reposed in us by a friend and brother.[17] For Masonry asks, if you envy the prosperity of a Brother, and wound him in the tenderest part by revealing his secrets: if you believe and propagate the tale of defamation whispered by the slanderer to his prejudice: if you cherish and encourage the evil passions of envy, hatred, and revenge: if you refuse to forgive injuries, and blot them out from your recollection: how shall you establish the reputation either of Masonry or Christianity? The fifth point teaches us to bury in oblivion a Brother's failings, and to *raise* his virtues from the tomb: to speak as well of him in his absence as in his presence: and if, unfortunately, his life be irregular, and his morals tainted with crime, *to say nothing rather than defame;* for Masonry prefers silence to slander, as Masons always pour the healing balm of consolation into the wounds which tyranny or inhumanity may have inflicted; to avert the pressure of calamity, and make the widow's heart to sing for joy

The moral and religious precepts of the third degree arise out of emblems peculiarly adapted to its nature and end.

"The *Pot of Incense* is an emblem of a pure heart, which is always an acceptable sacrifice to the Deity; and

[17] This is an illustration of the masonic Key. In our Tracing Boards this emblem is most unaccountably and improperly omitted. The Key is one of the most important symbols of Freemasonry, and ought to be prominently kept in view. To the uninitiated, or imperfectly taught Mason, it bears the appearance of an inanimate metal instrument, whose use is obviously confined to the performance of one simple act. But the well-instructed Brother views it with a different eye. He beholds in it the symbol which teaches him to keep a tongue of good report; to speak as well of a Brother in his absence as in his presence, and even better; because, when present, he has an opportunity of defending himself.

as this glows with fervent heat, so should our hearts continually glow with gratitude to the great and beneficent Author of our existence, for the manifold blessings and comforts we enjoy."[18]

"The *Bee-hive* is an emblem of industry, and recommends the practice of that virtue to all created beings, from the highest seraph in heaven to the lowest reptile in the dust," &c., &c.[19]

"The *Sword pointing to a naked Heart*, demonstrates that justice will sooner or later overtake us; and although our thoughts, words, and actions may be hidden from the eyes of men, yet that ALL-SEEING EYE which the *sun*, *moon*, *and stars* obey, and under whose watchful care even comets perform their stupendous revolutions, pervades the inmost recesses of the human heart, and will reward or punish us according to our works."[20]

"The *Anchor and Ark* are emblems of a well-grounded hope and a well-spent life. They are emblematical of that divine Ark which safely bears us over this tempestuous sea of troubles; and that Anchor which shall safely moor us in a peaceful harbour, where the 'wicked cease from troubling, and the weary are at rest.'"[21]

"The *Hour-glass* is an emblem of human life. Behold how swiftly the sand runs, and how rapidly our lives are drawing to a close! We cannot without astonishment behold the little particles which are contained in this machine, pass away almost imperceptibly, and yet, to our surprise, in the short space of an hour all are exhausted. Thus wastes human life. At the end of man's short hour, death strikes the blow, and hurries him off the stage to his long and darksome resting-place; for there is no escape from the piercing arrows of death. The thick walls of the palace of a king, with the clay-built cottage of the lowly pauper, are equally pregnable to his darts. Strength or weakness, health or sickness, riches or poverty, all—all, in one undistinguishable level, fall beneath his mighty arm. Wherever he levels his bow, the mark is certain: the victim falls, the silken cord of life is cut in twain, and the mourners weep about the streets; for the re-union of soul and body, when

[18] M. M. Lect. Sec., 7, from Webb.
[19] Ibid. [20] Ibid. [21] Ibid.

once thus separated, exceeds all human power: such hath been man in every age of the world; such is man in his present most exalted moments, and such are each of us. To-day, perhaps, the sun of prosperity and joy shines upon our persons and our families; health and strength invigorate our own persons and those of our beloved friends, and we only feel for the sorrows of another's woes; but to-morrow some friendly heart may sigh over our own breathless corpse, 'Alas! my Brother.'"[22]

"The *Scythe* is an emblem of time, which cuts the brittle thread of life, and launches us into eternity. What havoc does the scythe of Time make among the human race! If by chance we escape the numerous evils incident to childhood and youth, and arrive in perfect health and strength at the years of vigorous manhood, yet decrepit old age will soon follow, and we must be cut down by the all-devouring scythe of Time, and be gathered into the land where our fathers are gone before us."[23]

"The *Coffin with the Skull and Cross Bones* are emblems of mortality, and cry out with a voice almost more than mortal, '*Prepare to meet thy God.*' Infancy or youth, manhood or old age—all must pass to the embrace of corruption. 'How often do we see the tear of sorrow moistening the cheek of venerable age, while hanging over the corpse of a beloved son or daughter, snatched from life in youth and beauty! How often do we see the strong features of manhood distorted or broken by unaffected grief, while hanging over the grave of a beloved wife, or even of an infant child! How often do we drop a tear when we behold the disconsolate widow leading her trembling orphans from the grave of their departed father; and, before she could leave the hallowed ground, turn round to heave the farewell sigh, when her sorrows were too great to weep.'"[24]

"*The three Steps* usually delineated upon a master's carpet, are emblematical of the three principal stages of

[22] M. M. Lect., Sec. 7, from Webb and Inwood.
[23] M. M. Lect., Sec. 7, from Webb.
[24] M. M. Lect., Sec. 7, from Inwood.

human life, youth, manhood, and old age. In youth, as entered Apprentices, we ought industriously to occupy our minds in the attainment of useful knowledge; in manhood, as Fellow Crafts, we should apply our knowledge to the discharge of our respective duties to God, our neighbour and ourselves; that so in old age, as Master Masons, we may enjoy the happy reflections consequent on a well-spent life, and die in the hope of a glorious immortality."[25]

"*The Sprig of Acacia*[26] points to that state of moral obscurity to which the world was reduced previously to the appearance of Christ upon earth: when the reverence and adoration due to the Divinity were *buried in the filth and rubbish* of the world; when religion sat mourning in Israel in sackcloth and ashes, and morality was *scattered to the four winds of heaven*. In order that mankind might be preserved from this deplorable state of darkness and destruction, and as the old law was *dead and become rottenness*, a new doctrine and new precepts were wanting to give the *key* to salvation, in the language of which we might touch the ear of an offended Deity, and bring forth hope for eternity. True religion was fled; those who sought her through the wisdom of the ancients were not able to *raise her; she eluded the grasp, and their polluted hands* were stretched forth in vain for her restoration. Those who sought her by the old law were frustrated, for death had stepped between them, and corruption had defiled the embrace; sin had beset her steps, and the vices of the world had overwhelmed her.

[25] M. M. Lect., Sec. 7, from Webb.

[26] The Acacia is thus described by botanists. The Acacia, or Egyptian Thorn, is a genus, the characters of which are these:— The flower consists only of one leaf of a funnel shape, and contains a great number of stamina. The flowers are commonly collected in clusters, or little heads; the pistil arises from the bottom of the flower, and finally becomes a silliquose fruit divided into several hollows, and containing a number of roundish seeds. Amongst antiquaries, the acacia denotes something resembling a kind of roll or bag, which is seen on medals in the hands of several of the Consuls and Emperors, from the time of Anastasius. According to Du Cange, the *ακακια*, properly so called, was a purple bag, filled with earth, and borne by the prince in his left hand, *to remind him of his frailty and immortality.*

The Great Father of all, commiserating the miseries of the world, sent his only Son, who was innocence (ακακια) itself, to teach the doctrine of salvation: *by whom man was* RAISED *from the death of sin unto a life of righteousness;* from the tomb of corruption, unto the chambers of hope; from the darkness of despair to the celestial beams of faith; and not only working for us this redemption, but making with us the covenant of regeneration, whence we become the children of God and inheritors of the realms of heaven."[27]

Here, then, I shall close my extracts from the Lectures on Masonry. If they do not refer to religion, they have no meaning whatever: and I will submit to the inference which may then be deduced, that Masonry is a trifling and unimportant pursuit. All the general truths of religion, as they are received among Christians, are here brought into a lucid point of view, and their practice enforced from a consideration of the awful doctrine of future retribution.

I decline entering, in this place, on the Royal Arch Degree, for reasons which will be obvious to the considerate Mason. It is so intimately blended with all that is dear to us in another state of existence, and divine and human affairs are interwoven so awfully and minutely in all its disquisitions, that it would be almost impossible to enlarge upon the subject without rending the veil which conceals the most sublime mysteries which can engage the attention of man; suffice it to say, that the degree is founded on the name of JEHOVAH,[28] as Christianity is

[27] M. M. Lect., Sec. 7, from Hutchinson. Many other moral illustrations may be found on reference to the last edition of Preston.

[28] The true pronunciation of the Tetragrammaton is undoubtedly lost. Those who think, say the authors of the Universal History, that Jehovah is the right pronunciation, are far enough from being sure of it. It is plain that the ancients wrote it very differently from them. Sanchoniatho spells it *Jevo*; Diodorus Siculus, Macrobius, Clemens of Alexandria, St. Jerome, and Origen, pronounced it *Jao*. The Samaritans, and after them Epiphanius and Theodoret, call it *Jave* or *Jabe*. Others of the ancients write it *Jahoh*, *Javo*, *Jaon*, *Jaho*, and *Jahoæ*. Among the moderns, Capellus is for pronouncing it *Javo;* Drusius contends for *Jave;* Hottinger for *Jehva;* Mercer will have it *Jehovah;* Castilio says *Jovah;* and Le Clerc *Jaivoh* or *Jowoh*. Something like these the Romans had in their *Jovis*, to which Varro seems to allude when he says, "Deum Judæorum esse *Jovem*," that

founded on the name of Jesus Christ: virtue is its aim, the glory of God its object, and the eternal welfare of man is considered in every point, part, or letter of its ineffable mysteries.

*Jove* was the God of the Jews, as St. Austin alleges out of him. The Moors likewise called God *Juba* or *Jubah;* and the Mahomedans, *Hou*, which, with them, signifies the same as *Jehovah*, i. e., *He who is.*

## CHAPTER VI.

### THE MECHANISM OF MASONRY IS SYMBOLICAL OF ITS CONNECTION WITH THE CHRISTIAN RELIGION.

I ENTER on the subject-matter of this chapter with extreme circumspection, aware that the nature of our peculiar ceremonies cannot be exhibited in a printed form. The meagre outline only of masonic mechanism can be described, and that with the utmost care and delicacy; and therefore, if this division of my subject should fail to produce the same degree of conviction, which I flatter myself must have attended the preceding, it will not be attributable to the inadequacy of its merits, because our mechanism is the sacred fountain whence the stream of its morality flows, but from the contracted limits by which the argument must be necessarily bounded. I shall perhaps, however, be able to show, even from the scanty use of these forbidden materials, that Masonry is a religious institution; for each individual ceremony, how insignificant soever it may appear when standing alone, is still a star which sheds its lustre on religion, and the whole united system is a bright and burning constellation, which blazes amidst the darkness with unfading splendour, and proclaims with the voice of angels, Glory to God, peace on earth, good-will towards men!—So mote it be.

The first important act which takes place at the establishment of a masonic lodge, is the business of dedication and consecration. This act is a solemn appropriation of Masonry to God; as the lodge is, at the same time, inscribed to St. John the Evangelist, who finished by his learning what the Baptist began by his zeal; and these are the two burning and shining Lights on earth, which illuminate our journey as we travel on to attain the third Great Light in heaven.

The ceremonies which are technically termed opening

and closing[1] the lodge, come next to be spoken of. These are solemn rites and derive their excellence from the name of that Being whose blessing is invoked, and whose assistance is humbly supplicated, before we can engage in any of the important business of Masonry with a rational hope of success. After the lodge is closed, the Brethren are dismissed with a prayer of gratitude, as the incense of an evening sacrifice, for the protection afforded by the great Author of Good, not only to the few individuals present, but to the Fraternity at large, wheresoever dispersed under the wide and lofty canopy of heaven.

The Lodge being opened with solemn prayer, and impressed with the conviction that the *All-seeing Eye* above observes and notes our actions, we proceed to the initiation of candidates by progressive steps or degrees. This plan of gradual admission to our privileges is sanctioned by the practice of every system of true religion which has flourished in the world. The patriarchal scheme had its three seperate degrees of perfection. The Jews had their three sorts of proselytes, and three orders of the priesthood; and the early Christians their Rulers, Believers and Catechumens, each corresponding with the three degrees of Masonry.

The admission into the first degree is on a certain text of Scripture, sanctified by a firm reliance on the protection of God. The reception is by prayer; the candidate is bound by solemn obligations to keep faith with his Brethren;[2] and the *illumination* is performed in the name

[1] For a description of these ceremonies, vide Preston's Illustrations, Book 2, Sec. 6.

[2] The oaths of ancient nations differed in their nature and tendency. A most solemn oath was confirmed by an appeal to Jupiter, or any other celestial god: but on ordinary occasions they swore by the living or the dead; by their hands, feet, or head; by the thigh, which was an emblem of Noah's ark; by these members in any other person: and an oath sanctified by an appeal to the head of a king, or a hero, was considered most solemn and binding; for the head being esteemed the seat of reason, it was deemed impious to violate a deliberate appeal to so noble a part of the human frame. Some think the appeal was made to the head because it was the symbol of health. The soldier, the artificer, the husbandman, each swore by an implement of his calling.

These oaths were variously confirmed: by lifting up the hands to heaven, by placing them on the altar, or on a stone, or in the hands of the person administering the oath, &c.; and a most solemn method

of the Divinity. The aspirant, with his face to the East, fancies he beholds, in succession, the place where Adam enjoyed the happiest period of his existence; the place where Christianity was revealed to man; the place where the star proclaimed the birth of Jesus; the place where Christ was crucified; and the place where he ascended into heaven. The East was always accounted holy;[3] and hence, our Saviour was termed ORIENS, from

of confirming an oath was by *placing a drawn sword across the throat* of the person to whom it was administered, and invoking heaven, earth, and sea, to witness the ratification. "It was very usual," says Potter, (*Arch. Græc.*, *c.* 2, *l.* 6,) "to add a solemn imprecation to their oaths, either for the satisfaction of the person by whom the oath was imposed, or to lay a more inviolable obligation on themselves, lest they should at any time repent of their purpose, and take contrary measures to what they then resolved upon." And the same author gives the following examples.

This penalty is taken from Sophocles:

> "Curses attend you if e'er false you prove;
> Your days in bitter sorrows may you live,
> And when Fate calls (but may that lingering come!)
> *May your dead corpse no fit interment find,*" &c.

And this from Homer:

> "While streams of pour'd-out wine dye all the way,
> Thus they address the gods—
> 'Great, Mighty Jove, and all ye Powers divine,
> Whose justice suffers no unpunished sin,
> Bear witness to the solemn vows we make,
> And grant the party which them first shall break,
> Whoe'er it be, as now the ground wine stains,
> May so o'erspread it with their dashed-out brains.'"

The memory of a great and good man was, in ancient times, distinguished with a splendid funeral, and a tumulus of extraordinary magnitude, surmounted by a pillar, on which the name and good qualities of the deceased were usually inscribed; whilst criminals, or perjured persons, were denied the rights of sepulture; and as an eternal mark of disgrace and infamy, their bodies were cast into the ground unburnt, and thus exposed to putrefaction; a calamity more dreaded than death itself, *their bowels being first taken out and burnt, and the ashes scattered to the four winds of heaven.*

[3] The East was considered a fortunate quarter by all the world, because of the light, heat and vigour, which the sun communicates to mankind from that part of the heavens; and the West unfortunate, because of the Sun's departure. The Scholiast upon Sophocles (Ajace. v., l. 84) says that the right hand, or the East, signifies Pru-

an impression of the superior sanctity of his person.[4] A white apron, made of the purest lamb-skin, is presented to him, which, he is told, derives its distinction from the purity of its colour, emblematical of innocence; which is an affection of the mind that all human honours are ineffectual to bestow. But it possesses a still higher and more glorious reference; it is a symbol of the innocence and perfection of the Christian life, which makes *the Lamb without spot*, a model for its imitation, and looks to futurity for a *crown* of glory and a *sceptre* of peace. The early catechumens, when they were admitted to the first degree of Christianity, were invested with a white garment, accompanied by this solemn charge: "Receive the white and undefiled garment, and produce it without spot before the tribunal of our Lord Jesus Christ, that you may obtain eternal life." And this is made a distinguished reward, even to the saints in heaven,[5] for their success in combating the three great earthly powers, the world, the flesh, and the devil.

The candidate is taken by the right hand, as a proof of friendship and faithfulness; for the right hand was always esteemed an eminent symbol of fidelity. In all compacts

dence, and the left hand, or West, Folly. *Αρίστερα οἱ παλαιοὶ τὰ μωρὰ ἐκάλων, δεξια δε τα συνετά.*

All omens were deemed propitious which appeared in the East, and the contrary if exhibited in the West.

"I am told by a learned friend," says Sir John Malcolm, in his History of Persia, (c. 7,) "that the Hebrew term for EAST, means *before;* WEST, *behind;* SOUTH, the *right*, and the NORTH, *obscure* or *concealed*. The three first of these terms denote the position of an adorer of the sun; the last describes the *darkness* with which the first inhabitants of the earth believed the northern part of the globe to be enveloped."

[4] The East or dayspring—Oriens, *Ανατολη*, was a term used to designate the Redeemer of mankind. In the application of this word, some distinctions have been made, *απο ανατολων*, means from the East; by *ανατολαί*, the rising of stars in general is signified; and by *ἡ ανατολη*, the rising of a particular star in the East. *Ανατόλη*, however, with the Cabalists, denoted *the eternal Wisdom of God;* which is, indeed, the same as *the eternal Word of God*, or Christ. And thus the Fathers, when they prayed, turned their eyes towards the East, or in other words, toward the Saviour, who was crucified with his face toward the West. Clemens Alexandrinus says, we pray toward the East, *προς την εωθινην ανατολη αι ευχαι;* and gives as a reason for the custom, that the East is the birth of the day, and the source of light, *γενεθλιον ημερας εικων ἡ ανατολη.*

[5] Rev. c. iii., v. 5.

and agreements it was usual to take each other by the right hand, that being the manner of plighting faith; and this was done, either out of the respect they had to the number ten, as some say, there being ten fingers in the two hands; or because such a conjunction was a token of amity and concord; whence, at all friendly meetings, they joined hands, as a design of the union of their souls; and the right hand seems to have been used rather than the left, because it was more honourable, as being the instrument by which superiors give commands to those below them; whence Crinagoras, in an epigram, saith, it was impossible that all the enemies in the world should ever prevail against Rome,

> "While godlike Cæsar shall a *right hand* have
> Fit for command."[6]

The aspirant is then shown the three *greater* and *lesser* lights of Masonry;[7] the former as rules of faith and practice, and the latter to express the regularity and usefulness of the creatures which God has graciously formed for the use of man.[8] The *form* and *dimensions* of the lodge now engage his attention, while he is taught the invaluable lessons which they inculcate.[9] "When

[6] Potter's Arch. Græc., l. 2, c. 6.

[7] "As the golden candlestick," says Hutchinson, "in the Tabernacle of Moses, was at once emblematical of the Spirit of God, whereby his chosen people were enlightened, and prophetical of the churches; or otherwise, as Josephus says, representative of the planets and the powerful works of God; so our *Three Lights* show to us the three great stages of Masonry, the knowledge and worship of the God of Nature in the purity of Eden, the service under the Mosaic law, when divested of idolatry, and the Christian revelation. Or otherwise, our Lights are typical of the Holy Trinity."

[8] The Sun, the Moon, and the Master of the Lodge. The Sun, as the ruler of the day; the Moon, as the silver queen of night; the regularity of whose appearances, with the uniform course of the Sun, converts them into parts of a triangular type, which is completed by the addition of the W. M., whose stated periods of attendance to discharge the important duties of his office, ought to be formed on the model of those two luminaries, never deviating, but always punctual and correct.

[9] The form of the lodge is an oblong square, or double cube, of extensive dimensions. The double cube was esteemed sacred all over the world, as an expressive emblem of the powers of light and darkness, proceeding from the chaotic egg. The Chinese adored the Divinity under this form; and the inhabitants of Stony Arabia wor-

we look into a Masons' lodge, we behold it *extending from the heavens to the centre of the earth.* High as the heavens, we behold Him who is the manager of all creation, in the exercise of his wisdom and power. Deeper than hell, we see him carrying on redemption, beyond the narrow limits of all human philanthropy, saving not only a part, but the whole: saying unto Death, 'I will be thy plagues;' and unto hell, 'I will be thy destruction;' breaking all its massy doors, and setting its despairing prisoners free. Look we *from the East to the West, from the North to the South,* we see the seasons roll their usual round of uninterrupted variety. First comes smiling Spring in all her tender softness; the fostering sun, the moistening shower, all the pleasing promises of plenty. Next shoots the Summer's sun in full perfection, to bless the ripening year; which Autumn, with her full-fed fatness, showers upon the earth for man's enjoyment; and even when surly Winter blows, we lose its essence of intention, if, even in that inclement moment, we ever lose sight of a *God of Love.*"[10]

There are innumerable ceremonies attached to this degree, which have a similar reference, but I am withheld from introducing them here, for obvious reasons; but it will be plainly perceived that they are calculated to promote the glory of God, as well as the happiness of man, from the specimen already given; for they leave an impression of peculiar solemnity on the candidate's mind, which is seldom effaced to the latest hour of his existence. Our ceremonies embrace such a wide extent of illustration, that their full import cannot be wholly developed within the limits of a single lecture: much appropriation of talent, and much deliberate investigation, must be used by the Mason who would become master of the science, or even elucidate the hidden meaning of all our forms, symbols, and ceremonies. The comprehensive nature of Masonry affords full scope to exercise the abili-

shipped a black cubical stone. The oracle at Delphos recommended doubling the cubical altar of Apollo as a means of stopping a destructive pestilence which raged amongst the people; and even the true religion had its cubical altars, by the express direction of God himself; for the ark and the altar of incense were *double cubes.* (*Exod.* c. xxxvii., v. 1, 25.)

[10] Inwood.

ties of any friend of scientific research; while all its illustrations are accompanied with a warm glow of devotion which will penetrate the most indolent, and make him feel and acknowledge his dependence on the gracious Author of his being.

Masonry, like all other sciences, cannot be attained without assiduous and diligent labour; for the signs and tokens of external communication are but the keys of the cabinet in which all our valuable knowledge is stored up. Without initiation, this knowledge is unattainable; and initiation, without subsequent research, is an acquisition which can scarcely be pronounced desirable; but he who uses the keys of our treasure with *freedom*, *fervency*, *and zeal;* or, in the language of Masonry, he who keeps them highly polished with *chalk*, *charcoal*, *and clay*, will find a precious jewel at every step he takes; and while he presses on with ardour in the pursuit of knowledge and virtue, he may be certain of attaining the rich prize he has in view.

The Fellow Craft, like the entered Apprentice, is admitted in the name of God; and is received and consecrated by prayer. He enters between the two great pillars, which are emblems of the *strength* of mind and *stability* of disposition which he must display in his new character as a Mason; not only to promote his own ultimate benefit, but that the Order in which he has enrolled himself may not be exposed to public censure from the licentiousness of his propensities, or the irregularity of his conduct. Before he can participate in the privileges of this degree, the candidate must ascend a winding staircase, after having safely passed the pillars of strength and stability. This staircase consists of *eleven* steps, and *five* divisions. As he ascends the *first* step he is taught the unity of the Godhead, who created the world by his power and governs it by his wisdom and justice. At the *third* step he is reminded that this one sacred Being comprehends three distinct persons, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost. He is instructed also in the nature of the three dispensations, the Patriarchal, the Jewish and the Christian. At the *fifth* step his progress is again arrested to explain the goodness of Providence in man's behalf, by the distribution of the five external senses; hearing, seeing, feeling, tasting, and smelling; all of

which he has also bestowed on the brutes; but to stamp a decided ascendancy on the lord of the creation, he endowed him with the attribute of reason, that he might be enabled to convert the gifts of Heaven to his own eternal welfare. Hence the necessity of a diligent application of his inestimable present, to the service equally of such human sciences as are placed by the Almighty within the reach of his capacity, and of the study of religion, and the worship of God. To keep the reasoning faculty in exercise, the five noble orders of architecture are proposed as subjects of contemplation and research; and this being a progressive study, if carried to perfection, will fill the mind with lofty and comprehensive ideas of God and his works. Here, too, the candidate is reminded of the five remarkable points in the ever-blessed career of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. A regular series of consequences, affecting our temporal and eternal welfare, are deduced from his birth, his life, his death, his resurrection, and his ascension. Bending in reverence before the awful subject, the candidate proceeds to the *seventh*[11] step, where his instructor points out the seven liberal sciences as objects of his rational ambition; and acquaints him that a perfect knowledge of grammar, rhetoric, logic, arithmetic, geometry, music, and astronomy, will lead him "through Nature up to Nature's God," and elevate his mind to the contemplation

[11] The number SEVEN has been considered, in every age of the world, as possessing extraordinary qualities; and this belief was most probably derived from the creation being completed in seven days. The patriarchal sacrifices were usually offered by sevens; and the number of many things recorded in the Apocalypse are seven. This number, among the Cabalists, denoted universality; and amongst the Pythagoreans it was termed *σεβασμου αξιος, worthy of veneration.* They pronounced it perfect, and most fit for religious purposes. And Bishop Horsley says, "I am persuaded that the choice of the number seven was a solemn and significant appropriation of the offerings of the Supreme God, the Maker of the world." *(Dis. on Proph.)*

On the seventh day of each lunar month in Greece, says Archbishop Potter, was a festival in honour of Apollo, to whom all seventh days were sacred; because one of them was his birthday, whence he was sometimes called *Εβδομαχενης.* The story we have in Hesiod:

. . . . και εβδομη ιερον ημαρ
Τη γαρ Απολλωνα χρυσαορα χεινατο Λητω.
. . . . "the seventh day is sacred,
'Cause Phœbus then was of Latona born."

of heavenly things; preparing him, by gradual approaches to perfection here, for a full display of light and knowledge in a future state. When the candidate has arrived at the summit of the winding staircase, by ascending the *eleventh* step, he is reminded of the miraculous preservation of Joseph, who preceded his eleven brethren into Egypt under the direction of God, that he might be the means of preserving his whole race from the effects of the seven years' famine, which raged with unaccustomed violence throughout all the East. He is further put in mind of the treachery of Judas Iscariot, who betrayed his Master; and being seized with an agonizing remorse of conscience, which rendered life insupportable, he violently terminated his own existence, and reduced the number of Apostles to eleven. The closely-tiled door of the middle chamber then gives way at his *word*, and he enters to behold the superb illumination of that blazing central star, which refers to the God of his creation; and the mystical application of the successive numbers of 3, 5, 7, and 11, is explained to signify the GREAT JEHOVAH, who is so brilliantly represented in the chamber to which that staircase leads; for in the Hebrew notation, I represents 10, the sum of 7+3, A 5, and H 11.

A certain part of the mechanism attached to this degree cannot be exposed; in fact, it requires years and experience, patient industry and laborious toil to become acquainted with all the subjects embraced by this comprehensive step; and he whose various talent shall allow him to conquer all the impediments opposed to his advancement in the knowledge of Fellow-craft Masonry, will be eminently entitled to the honourable distinction of a master of science, and a perfect moralist.

The ceremonies of the third degree are introduced by a prayer expressive of the feeble and inefficient nature of man without the blessing of God's assistance; and the duration of that eternity to which death is the avenue, is depicted by circumambulation. The candidate is burthened with ceremonies, to denote the galling nature of the Jewish dispensation, even when at its highest stage of perfection. The surrounding idolaters, envying privileges which appeared to insure the favour of the Deity, determined to become possessed of these invaluable secrets, or to extirpate the Jewish nation. The Jews,

refusing to abandon their religion to the profanations of idolatry, finally suffered a moral death in the extermination of their polity. The three assassins were the Assyrians, the Chaldeans, and the Romans. The first *blow* which this dispensation received, was inflicted by Shalmanezer, who carried the ten tribes into captivity, from which they never returned. The second *blow* was still more severe. It was inflicted by Nebuchadnezzar, who utterly destroyed their city and temple, and carried the two remaining tribes to Babylon. Weakened, but not destroyed by these attacks, they rebuilt their temple, and assumed the semblance of their former system of worship, though much deteriorated, from the loss of many valuable privileges. At length came the ruffian band, more determined than either of the former, under the command of Herod, who gave the *death blow* to their civil and religious liberties by the conquest of Jerusalem, and the reduction of Judea to the state of a Roman province, over which this tyrant, not of their own regal line, nor even a Jew, was appointed king. The old law was now *dead*, and was become perfect *rottenness; her tomb was in the rubbish and filth cast forth of the temple, and acacia wove its branches over her monument. They attempted to raise her from the dead, but she fell from their grasp, a mass of putrefaction;* until at length the *resurrection* of Jesus cemented the bands of Christian fellowship, and formed an indissoluble chain of connection, of which Christianity was the basis, amongst all mankind who were inclined to comply with the terms of initiation into the covenant of grace.

Here then the perfected Mason feels and acknowledges the power of Religion over the soul, by a full and striking proof of that resurrection from the dead, which is the precursor to a new accession of light and knowledge, that bursts upon him like an ethereal flood, and leaves him astonished at his own acquisitions.

The symbols, the tokens, the landmarks of the Order, are now fully entrusted to his care; but, lest he should be too highly elated by his newly-acquired privileges, a most solemn charge is delivered, reminding him, that though he is now ranked with those distinguished few to whom the appellation of Master-Mason may with propriety be applied, yet he is still, in the sight of God, only

a weak and fallible mortal; that death may in an instant deprive him of that knowledge which it is his province to improve; and that the talent committed to his charge cannot, without danger, be hid in a napkin, but must be profitably and actively employed to the salvation of his soul.

Thus is the mechanism of three degrees of Masonry most admirably constructed to enforce the great truths of morality and Religion; and I see not how it can fail to produce that salutary impression on every mind, except it be distorted by innovations, prostituted by a deviation from the ancient landmarks, and thus converted into the mere shibboleth of a sect or party. But Masonry, in its broad and permanent acceptation, is the handmaid of Religion; and if practised with this fundamental principle in view, may assist us in profitably running our race on earth, that at the final consummation of all things we may receive the reward of our faith, even a joyful exaltation to the blessed mansions of eternal felicity.

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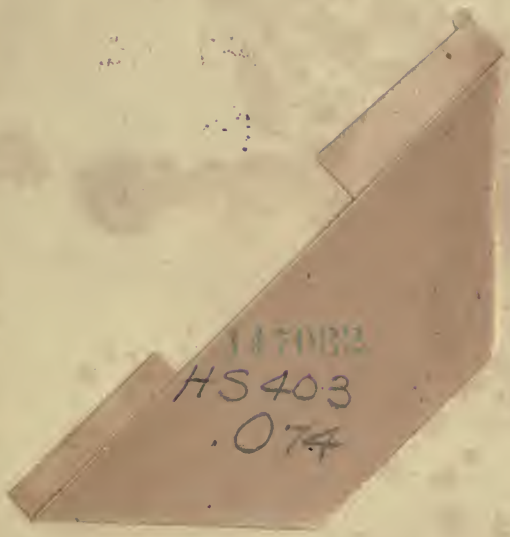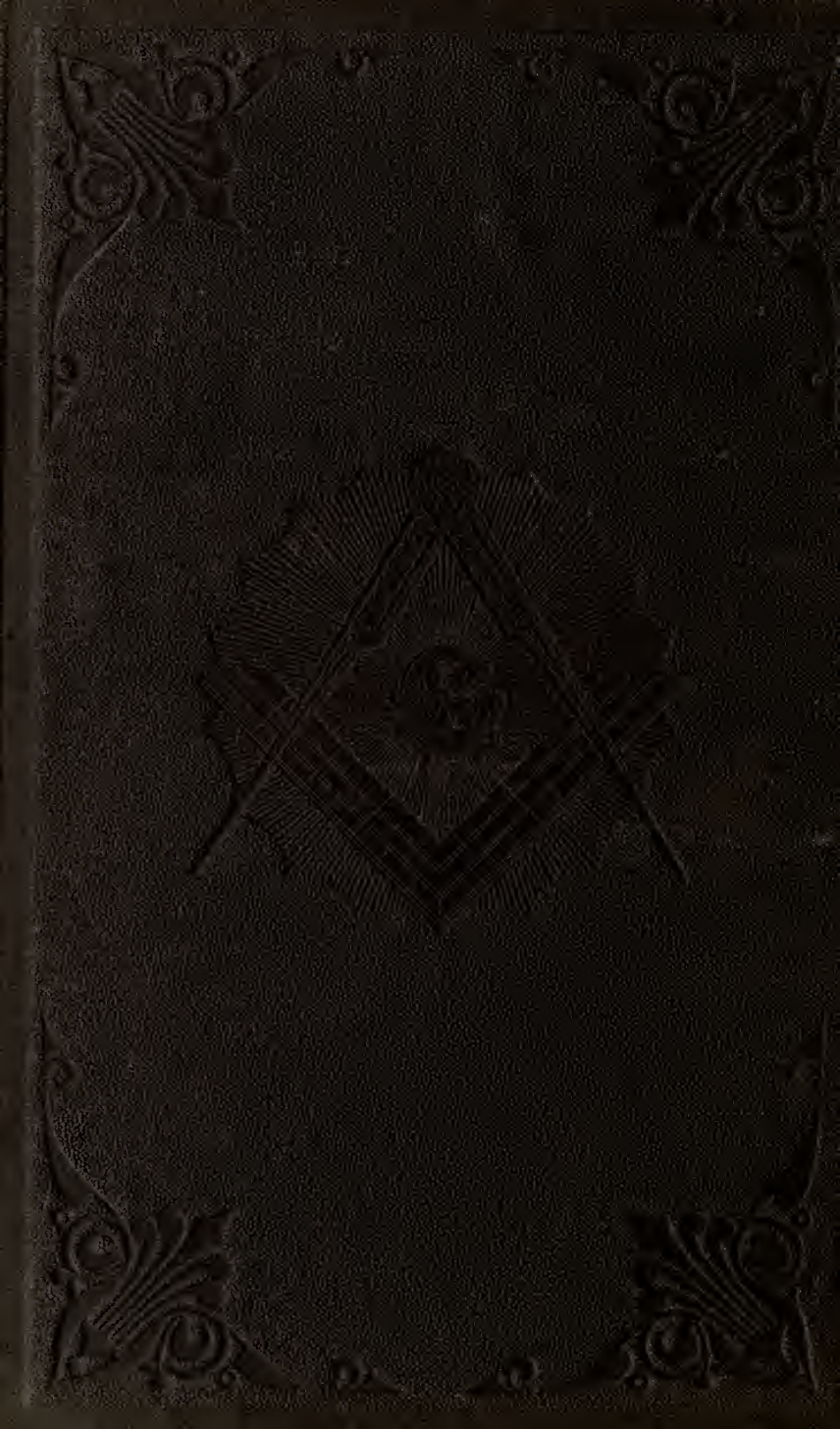
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