

MASONIC
LECTURES.



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MASONIC LECTURES

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EXTRACT FROM THE PREFACE
TO THE FIRST EDITION.

It is but fair to state that the incentive to write the Lecture on "HIRAM ABIF" was received from a perusal of the Hebrew Commentary on Kings and Chronicles, composed by Meir Löb Malbim (born 1809, died 1879), the famous Rabbi of Kempen. He reconciles the apparent contradictions in the passages referring to Hiram by assuming that two Hiram, father and son, were employed in the erection of Solomon's Temple. This idea the author has endeavoured to work out on the lines laid down in this Commentary. This Lecture has already been printed in the Transactions of the Leicester Lodge of Research, 1903-1904.

A Note regarding the two Hiram and the literature dealing with the subject appeared in the Transactions of the Quatuor Coronati Lodge,

Vol. VII, p. 134, from the pen of Bro. John Yarker, P.M. ; and articles quoting briefly the substance of Rabbi Malbim's Commentary were published in "Die Bauhütte," a German Masonic Magazine, Vol. XXXIII, Nos. 39 and 40. Both were entirely unknown to the author until after the Lecture was written—the latter article, indeed, has but lately come to his notice.

M. R.

November, 1904.

NOTE TO THE SECOND EDITION.

It is proposed to devote the proceeds from the sale of this edition to charitable purposes.

M. R.

June, 1909.

HIRAM ABIF :

The Traditional History Illustrated by the
Volume of the Sacred Law.

THE personality of HIRAM ABIF must always be an interesting one to all Master Masons. Our martyred Grand Master is the central figure in the Third Degree which forms the climax of Craft Masonry : he is held up to us, and rightly so, as a glorious example of unshaken fidelity, and we are admonished to be as true to our masonic obligation as he proved to be to his.

The traditional history which relates his untimely end bears a striking resemblance to various legends of ancient classical mythology, and it has been urged by many writers on Masonry that it is nothing but another form of these legends, devoid of all historical truth. Thus, Oliver, in his "Freemason's Treasury," Lecture xlv., asks whether anyone can be simple enough to believe that Dr. Anderson in his "Defence of Freemasonry"* intended to prove a real historical fact when he explained the exhumation of the body of Hiram Abif, and adds, "Why, it is well known that the celebrated artist was living at Tyre many years after the Temple was completed." In Lecture xlvii. he points out certain discrepancies in the traditional history. No one would venture to assert that there are no discrepancies, for it must be remembered that traditions which are transmitted

* "The Defence of Freemasonry," printed in the 1738 Book of Constitutions, was not written by Dr. Anderson, but by Martin Clare, A.M., F.R.S., Junior Grand Warden in 1755.

orally become altered in course of transmission, either by having been misunderstood or by the caprice of those who relate them. But Oliver and others assert that there is no trace of the death of Hiram Abif in the V. of the S. L. Perdiguier in his work "Le Livre du Compagnonage" (vol. ii., p. 80) states: "The Bible, the only book of any real authority concerning the construction of Solomon's Temple, says nothing about Hiram's murder." Ragon (quoted in Oliver, Lecture xlv.) says: "The Holy Scriptures tacitly disprove them [*i.e.*, the masonic traditions regarding his death] for they contain no reference whatever to the circumstances which constitute the legend of initiation." Now, it is with these statements, and with statements such as these, that this Paper is intended to deal, and to sketch, if only briefly, a theory to show that some reference to the death of our illustrious Grand Master does exist in the Holy Scriptures.

The V. of the S. L. contains two accounts of the building of Solomon's Temple: viz., in I. Kings and in II. Chronicles. They apparently differ in many details, and the differences in the paragraphs referring to Hiram may be here pointed out. In Chronicles (chap. ii., verse 14) Hiram is described as being "the son of a woman of the daughters of Dan," whereas in Kings (chap. vii., 14) he is said to be the son of a widow woman of the tribe of Naphtali. Now, a man's mother could not belong to two tribes, Dan and Naphtali. We must therefore conclude that two different men bearing the same name, Hiram, are spoken of—one whose mother was of the daughters of Dan, another, whose mother was of the tribe of Naphtali. This conclusion is strengthened by the fact that, according to the two versions, the Hiram mentioned are engaged in different work. In Chronicles, Hiram is stated to have been a worker "in gold and in silver, in brass, in iron, in stone, and in timber, in purple, in blue, and in fine linen, and in crimson; also able to grave any manner of graving, and to find out every device." In Kings, Hiram is called "a worker in brass; and he was filled with wisdom, and understanding, and

cunning to work all works in brass." One is a brass-smith only. The other is an all-round workman, skilful in every kind of metal work, also in stone and timber—consequently, a builder ; an engraver, and a master of device—an architect. This would also lead us to believe that there are two men bearing the same name.

But there is a further curious fact. According to II. Chronicles, King Solomon before beginning the erection of the Temple sent to Hiram, King of Tyre, asking for a skilful workman, when the all-round man was sent. In I. Kings, chap. v., we are told that King Solomon asked Hiram, King of Tyre, to supply timber, and his request was acceded to ; not a word is said about sending a skilful workman. Chapter vi. describes the building of the frame-work of the Temple, constructed of the cedar-wood that Hiram, King of Tyre, had supplied, and how it was overlaid with gold. The first portion of chap. vii. tells of King Solomon building his own palace, and verse 13 states that " King Solomon sent and fetched Hiram out of Tyre," the son of a widow of the tribe of Naphtali, a worker in brass alone ; and then follows mention of the brass articles which this Hiram made. The all-round, good workman, the designer, was sent by Hiram, King of Tyre, at King Solomon's request, before the work was commenced ; the brass-smith was sent for, and fetched from Tyre by King Solomon after the temple walls and rooms were built, and HE made the brass pillars, the sea (a cistern), and the lavers, all of molten or cast brass. Hence, according to one account, Hiram was sent by the King of Tyre at the beginning of the work, whilst according to the other account he was sent for and fetched by King Solomon in the middle of the work. Consequently, here again there seem to be two Hiram's referred to : a designer, who drew up plans and erected the frame-work of the Temple, and another who, after the frame-work was set up, cast the pillars, the sea, and the lavers. It is worthy of mention that whilst Josephus (*Antiq.* viii., iv.) knew of but one Hiram, he states : " Now " *i.e.*, after the frame-work was erected (*cf.* paragraphs 2 ff.), " Solomon sent for an artificer out of Tyre whose name was Hiram," thus agreeing, in this respect, with the statement in

the Book of Kings. In fact, the two accounts in Chronicles and Kings do not refer to the same incident ; they are not repetitive but supplementary. The attentive reader of Scripture will observe this also in other passages in these two books which deal with the same event : that an incident omitted in one account is recorded in the other.

Collocating these two accounts, the facts appear to be as follows. At King Solomon's request Hiram, King of Tyre, sent a man named Hiram, skilful in all kinds of metal work and in designing, who acted as the architect and under whose supervision the Temple was built. When the work was nearly completed, *i.e.*, when the Temple proper was erected, King Solomon sent on his own initiative and without consultation with his royal friend of Tyre and fetched a man, also named Hiram, out of Tyre, who cast the huge pillars, the sea and the lavers.

Now, we may well ask why a second workman was required for the casting of these articles ;—the first Hiram is described as being skilful to work in brass ; why, therefore, did he not cast the brass pillars, etc. ? Perhaps the solution of the mystery may be found in an apparently insignificant variation in the description of the two Hiram. The second Hiram—he who was sent for by King Solomon during the course of the work on the Temple—is described as being a widow's son (I. Kings, vii., 14), whilst this designation is missing in the description in Chronicles of the first Hiram, the architect of the Temple. The second Hiram was a widow's son at the time when King Solomon sent and fetched him out of Tyre. His father was dead. Who was his father ? He is stated to have been "a man of Tyre." Let us endeavour to discover some further mention of his father in the Scriptures themselves.

Masonry speaks of "HIRAM ABIF." What is this name "ABIF" ? There can be no doubt as to its origin. The Second Book of Chronicles, chap. iv., verse 16, reads as follows : "The pots also, and the shovels, and the fleshhooks, and all their instruments, did HURAM HIS FATHER make to King Solomon for the House of the Lord of bright brass." This phrase, "HIS FATHER," has puzzled the

commentators. It is explained to mean that Hiram is called Solomon's father in the signification of instructor, teacher, advisor. This is possible, for the Hebrew word for "father" is frequently used in this sense. Someone, however, perceiving the strangeness of Hiram being called King Solomon's father, regarded the Hebrew word for "his father" as part of Hiram's name. Now the Hebrew word for "his father," as it occurs in this passage, is "ABIF," and thus, taking this word as forming part of Hiram's name, he called him "HURAM ABIF." This explanation is beyond all doubt. It has been repeatedly given: Anderson gave it in the First Book of Constitutions; Luther also took the word "ABIF" not as designating Hiram, but as part and parcel of his name, and called him "HURAM ABIF."

But what is really the cause of Hiram being styled in this passage "his father," and whose father is meant? For answers to these questions turn to the First Book of Kings. After stating that King Solomon sent and fetched Hiram the second, the brass-smith, out of Tyre, there is given an account in Chapter vii. of all the articles which this Hiram made, viz., the two pillars of brass, cast in the clay ground, the molten sea or cistern, and the ten lavers of brass. Verse 40 reads: "And Hiram made the lavers, and the shovels, and the basons. So Hiram finished doing all the work that he made King Solomon for the house of the Lord." Then again the articles are enumerated as before: the pillars, the sea and the lavers, all, be it noted, of molten or cast brass, and in verse 46 we read where they were cast. But verse 45 breaks in as a parenthesis repeating part of verse 40. "And the pots, and the shovels, and the basons, and all these vessels, which Hiram made to King Solomon for the house of the Lord, were of bright brass." Compare this passage with the parallel passage in Chronicles. After stating that Hiram, King of Tyre, was sending a designer, chapter iii. describes the building of the walls and rooms of the Temple, and concludes by saying that the Temple was finished off by the two pillars which stood at the porch or entrance. Chapter iv. tells of the making of the molten sea and the lavers, and verse 11 of that chapter reads: "And

Huram made the pots, and the shovels, and the basons. And Hiram finished the work that he was to make for King Solomon for the house of God." And then, as in the account in Kings, the articles are enumerated: the molten pillars, the sea and the lavers, verse 17 informing us where they were cast. But verse 16, as in the First Book of Kings, is a parenthesis: "The pots, and the shovels, and the fleshhooks, and all their instruments, did HURAM HIS FATHER make to King Solomon for the house of the Lord of bright brass."

Why this repetition of the name in verse 11: And Hiram made the pots, etc., and Hiram finished the work? Why also this insistence both in Kings and Chronicles upon the fact that Hiram made the pots and the shovels, etc., and that they were of bright or polished brass? The explanation is this. Remember that the second Hiram was a brass-founder and nothing more, and that the first Hiram besides being cunning in design—an architect—is also stated to have been skilful in all kinds of metal work. Now, in the light of this information read again the two passages: Hiram made the pots and the shovels, but Hiram finished the work—the work enumerated in the following verses: viz., the pillars, the sea, and the lavers. It is quite evident that the two different Hiram's are here intended. The first Hiram made the pots, etc., the second Hiram the pillars, etc. And then an explanation is given why the first Hiram made the pots, etc.: "The pots also, and the shovels, and the fleshhooks and all their instruments, did HURAM HIS FATHER make" [for they were] "of bright brass," because he alone possessed skill in this kind of brass work. They were of beaten work, beaten out of the lump, and most highly polished and lacquered. This was a very difficult class of work,* and it required an artificer as skilful as the first Hiram was for this difficult kind of metal work.

Now we come to something of the utmost importance in our investigation: the meaning of the phrase "his father." Note well: The pots and the shovels did HURAM HIS

* There is a Talmudical tradition that Moses confessed his inability to fashion the golden candlestick of the Tabernacle in this fashion.

FATHER make. Whose father? THE FATHER OF THE LAST MENTIONED PERSON, of course. And who is the last mentioned person? HIRAM THE SECOND, who is said in the verses immediately preceding to have carried out the casting of the huge brass articles. THE TWO HIRAMS WERE, in fact, FATHER AND SON. Hiram, the son, made the pillars, etc., but the pots, etc., did Hiram, *his* father, make, (for they were) of bright brass.

A very curious fact bears out this interpretation. In Chronicles, which tells us that at King Solomon's request Hiram, King of Tyre sent him a skilful workman, Hiram Abif,—Hiram, his father—the name is not really H-*i*-ram, but H-*u*-ram; whilst in Kings which informs us that King Solomon sent and fetched Hiram, the son, out of Tyre, the name is H-*i*-ram. The names are really identical, the interchange of the vowels *i* and *u* being very frequent in Hebrew proper names. In Chronicles, H-*u*-ram, the name of the father, is used throughout, except once, when H-*i*-ram,* the name of the son, as it is given in the book of Kings, is employed. This exception proves almost to a certainty the correctness of the foregoing interpretation, **for it is in that very passage that various other considerations have led us to conclude contains mention of both father and son.** Thus verse 11 reads: And H-*u*-ram—(bear in mind that this is the father's name)—made the pots and the shovels, etc., but H-*i*-ram*—(this is the son's name)—finished all the work which he made for King Solomon, viz., the two pillars, the sea and the lavers. There is a slight change in the names in the parallel passage in Kings which seems to point to two different persons being designated there also. (*Vide* Note at the end of this Lecture.)

Now, why did not Hiram, the father, cast the pillars? Why was the second Hiram, the son, needed at all to finish the work? The father is described as being skilful in all kinds of metal work, and he certainly intended casting them. Something must have prevented him doing so, and neces-

* The Authorised Version of the English Bible has H-*u*-ram both times in the verse, but the Hebrew text is H-*i*-ram on the second mention of the name. See NOTE, p. 14.

sitated another artificer finishing the work. What had happened? The V. of the S. L. is silent upon this point, but Masonry gives us the light. It is unnecessary to remind Master Masons of what our traditional history tells us regarding the untimely end of our illustrious Grand Master, Hiram Abif. But is there nothing at all in the Bible that hints at what our tradition avers prevented Hiram Abif from completing the labours he had begun?

When sad necessity compelled King Solomon to obtain another workman to complete the work of the Temple, he sent and fetched Hiram out of Tyre. Scripture tells us, by implication, **of his father's decease having previously taken place**, by describing this second Hiram as being the son of a **widow** woman. Her husband, father of this second Hiram, was dead at the time when King Solomon sent and fetched him out of Tyre. And as we have gathered from Scripture that "his father" was the Hiram Abif who superintended the erection of the Temple, and as Scripture practically tells us that the father was dead when the son was brought from Tyre during the course of the work on the Temple, **WE HAVE SURE CORROBORATION IN THE V. OF THE S. L. OF THE MASONIC TRADITION THAT HIRAM ABIF DIED WHILST THE TEMPLE WAS BEING ERECTED.**

"King Solomon sent and fetched Hiram out of Tyre." He evidently sent him an escort, fearing that some attack might be made upon him, and the son suffer the same fate as the father. The son of the murdered architect was the natural person to complete the unfinished work, for amongst the ancients sons were trained in the occupations of their fathers, generation after generation.

There is a Jewish tradition that Hiram, King of Tyre, was killed by Nebuchadnezzar, King of Babylon, when the latter destroyed the Temple that King Solomon had built.* This would have given him a life-time of extraordinary duration. There is, however, another Jewish tradition that, in reward for his participation in the erection of the Temple, Hiram, King of Tyre, never tasted death, and, like Enoch and Elijah, entered Paradise alive.† These two traditions are, of

* Jalkut, Ezekiel 367.

† Derech Erez Zutta, i. 9; Jalkut, Genesis, 42; Second Alphabet of Ben Sira (Ed. Venice, 29a) and frequently in Rabbinic literature.

course, contradictory, and there seems to be no doubt but that the legend of Hiram's admission alive into Paradise refers not to Hiram, King of Tyre, but to Hiram the Builder. Indeed, one Jewish version of the story distinctly relates it of Hiram the Builder.* Legends such as these, although not committed to writing till centuries after the events they profess to record took place, were yet the common property of the populace and reflected their opinions and views. Have we not here, then, the popular explanation of the disappearance of Hiram Abif? The legend certainly seems to point to there having been something mysterious connected with the Builder's exit from this world, and to have been invented to account for his sudden withdrawal from the scene of his labours. The Israelites, being unacquainted with the facts of his murder, the knowledge of which was confined to only a few, accounted for his mysterious disappearance by stating that he had been received alive into Paradise. Indeed it is difficult to explain such a rumour except by the assumption that his end was sudden and secret. If this is the origin of this popular legend, it is evident that at the time when it first became current it was common knowledge among the Israelites that Hiram the Builder had come to a mysterious end, and in ignorance of the real cause of his disappearance the rumour went that he had been taken into Paradise without suffering death, because of the assistance he had rendered in the erection of the Temple. This legend, therefore, would seem to prove that there is something more than a slight substratum of truth in the Masonic tradition regarding the death of Hiram Abif.

It may be taken for granted, then, that there are distinct traces in the V. of the S. L. of the so-called Hiramic legend. The death of Hiram Abif was known to but few. Besides King Solomon and Hiram, the son, and the fifteen present at the re-interment, and perhaps also Hiram, King of Tyre, no one else was cognisant of the true circumstances—they were regarded as a Masonic secret. Consequently, the sacred

* See the "Kaftor Va-pherach" of Estori Ha-parchi, of the 13th century, Luncz's Edition, Jerusalem, 1897: chap. xi., p. 241, where, however, it is given on the authority of a much earlier Rabbi.

historians of the Books of Chronicles do not record them, even if they were aware of them. But in describing the building of the Temple and the manufacture of the various brass articles contained therein, they state exactly how the Temple was erected and who made these articles, and in making these statements of fact they cannot avoid giving in the very words and phrases they employ, and probably without knowing that they were doing so, hint upon hint which point to the main fact contained in the traditional history related in our lodge rooms during the conferring of the Third Degree, that the architect of the Temple lost his life during the course of the erection of the sacred edifice. The fact that Hiram Abif did not live to complete the work may not be apparent on the surface of the Scriptural records, but nevertheless it is there : and if we read the accounts of the building of the Temple by the light which Masonic tradition casts upon them, we are enabled to perceive this important fact referred to time after time. And, since the Bible, the unerring guide to truth, and therefore itself true in all respects, does more or less directly inform us of the death of Hiram Abif, we should be convinced that the legend of the Third Degree is something more than a legend : that it is historically true, and that they who assert that the Biblical records are entirely silent upon this point have themselves not yet seen the light.

NOTE.

To make the matter quite clear, it will be well to transliterate the Hebrew names.

In Kings, where the name of the son appears, it is Ch-*z*-ram (*ch* guttural as in the Scotch *loch*). In Chronicles, where the name of the father is given, it is Ch-*u*-ram.

Thus, II. Chronicles, chap. iv., verse 11, reads in the Hebrew : And Ch-*u*-ram made the pots, etc., and Ch-*z*-ram finished the work, etc.

In I. Kings, chap. vii., verse 40, the passage in the Hebrew reads : Chirôm made the pots, etc., and Ch-i-ram finished the work. The name Ch-i-rôm is not spelled in Hebrew the same as Ch-i-ram. This is the slight change referred to, and seems to point to two different persons being mentioned. As a matter of fact, there are notes in the margin of the English Bible on I. Kings, chap. vii., verse 40, and in the Hebrew Bible on II. Chronicles, chap. iv., verse 11, calling attention to the changes in the spelling of the proper names.

A SPECULATIVE MASON OF THE YEAR 70 C.E. :

Freemasonry as Mankind's Primitive Religion.

IN the second edition (1738) of the "Book of Constitutions," Anderson gives as the first Charge, "Concerning God and Religion," the following :

"A Mason is obliged by his Tenure to observe the Moral Law, as a true Noachida ; and if he rightly understands the Craft, he will never be a stupid Atheist nor an irreligious libertine, nor act against conscience.

"In ancient times the Christian Masons were charged to comply with the Christian usages of each country where they travell'd or work'd : but 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 to each Brother 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 distinguish'd : For they all agree in the Three great Articles of Noah, enough to preserve the Cement of the Lodge. Thus Masonry is the Center of their Union, and the happy Means of conciliating persons that otherwise must have remained at a perpetual distance."*

In "Brother Euclid's Letter to the Author," printed in this Book of Constitutions, one of the objections urged against Freemasonry is that "Men of all Professions, Religions and

* The First Charge is given in similar terms, with mention of the Noachidae, in Lawrence Dermot's "Ahiman Rezon" (1756).

Denominations" are admitted to a participation in its mysteries; and to this "Brother Euclid" replied that "Masons are true Noachidae and require no other Denominations (all other distinctions being of yesterday) if the new Brother is a good man and true."

The term "Noachidae" may require explanation to some of the brethren. It signifies Sons of Noah, and was applied by the ancient Hebrews to members of other nations who practised the great principles of religion and morality without giving adherence to Jewish doctrine and ceremony. According to the ancient Jewish Rabbis, the G. A. O. T. U. gave to the first man, Adam, six commandments, to be observed by him and his descendants. These were: (1) the prohibition of murder; (2) of sexual immorality—or, the law of strict chastity; (3) of blasphemy; (4) of theft and violence; (5) the due administration of justice by means of the institution of law tribunals, and (6) the belief in a Creator of all things. After the Flood these were repeated to Noah (in Hebrew, *Noach*), with an additional command: (7) the prohibition of cruelty to animals, the avoidance of all savagery that may tend to brutalise man and degrade human character. As the observance of these commands was, after the Flood, incumbent upon the inhabitants of the newly-populated world, who were all descended from Noah and his three sons, they were called the "Seven Commands of the Sons of Noah, and those who practised them were styled Noachidae, or "Sons of Noah."

Every Gentile desiring to reside in Palestine was required to subscribe to these Seven Articles of the Sons of Noah, for, failing their observance, the very foundations of social life are imperilled. They are elementary principles of natural religion and morality, not matters of creed or belief; and, at the present day, many persons who assert that they profess no denominational religion whatsoever will, if asked what constitutes their religion, reply by practically admitting that their religion lies in the observance of these elementary principles of morality.

This, too, is, and has ever been, the religion of Masonry, even as it was mankind's primitive religion. For since

Masonry ante-dates the establishment of Christianity, it is evident that when Dr. Anderson affirms in the First Charge that "in ancient times Christian Masons were charged to comply with the Christian usages, of each country where they travelled or worked," he means by "ancient times" comparatively so, the Middle Ages, and that in *very* ancient times this was not required of Masons. Before this they were required, as we are required, "to adhere to that Religion in which all men agree," viz., the Articles of Noah. The principles of brotherly love and truth are the ideas underlying these seven Articles, together with the acknowledgment of a Supreme God and the recognition of our duties to the animal creation. Hence it is that men professing the most diverse faiths and subscribing to the most opposite religious dogmas and formulæ range themselves beneath the banner of Freemasonry, and unite in the endeavour to build up the universal Temple of Humanity.

The chief purpose of Freemasonry, then, is the practice of the seven Articles of the Sons of Noah. This was the object of the establishment of the Craft: to transmit to those who belonged to it the knowledge of these moral teachings, and to insist upon their adherence to them. How the practice of these duties was inculcated in very ancient times is not recorded. Since operative masonry found an outlet mainly in the erection of stately edifices for the worship of the Most High, it was regarded to have been communicated by God Himself to man. Thus, the V. of the S. L. relates that God Himself instructed Moses in the pattern of the Tabernacle raised for His service in the wilderness, and filled the workmen's hearts with wisdom and understanding to carry out the plans made known to Moses by the Almighty; and Solomon's Temple was but a copy of this Tabernacle on a larger scale. And because practical masonry was held to be of divine origin, the tools employed in building and masonic operations themselves were probably explained to have symbolic reference to the workmen's morals and to typify the teachings of natural religion, much in the same way as we, as speculative Masons, apply the working tools to our morals. If this were so, every tool, every operation in practical masonry, would

have its moral significance, and would serve to make the ancient builders "Good Men and True."

That the ancient builders were Noachidae or Sons of Noah is borne out by the Book of Constitutions, where it is stated (p. 4) that the offspring of Noah and his three sons dwelt together as Noachidae or Sons of Noah. In a note to this assertion Anderson remarks that this was "the First Name of Masons, according to some old traditions." Anderson, who claimed to have had access to ancient masonic documents, seems somewhere to have found mention of the fact that the original name of the ancient Masons was "Sons of Noah," pointing to the notion that the duty of the old Masons was to practise the seven Commands of the Sons of Noah.

It is believed by many writers on Freemasonry that Anderson drew upon his imagination for some of the statements he makes in his Book of Constitutions; but there is evidence to prove that when he affirmed that the ancient name for Masons was Noachidae he was but recording a tradition current in the craft in the early days of the English Grand Lodge. In the Rawlinson MSS. preserved in the Bodleian Library, there is a copy of a letter of thanks sent in 1733 by Grand Lodge to the Prov. G.M. of Calcutta in acknowledgment of a gift of thirty guineas contributed for the relief of distressed brethren. This copy is the original draft and is subscribed by the Secretary of Grand Lodge. The fourth paragraph reads :

"Providence has fixed your Lodge near those learned Indians who affect to be called Noachidae, the strict observers of his Precepts taught in those Parts by the Disciples of the great Zoroastres, a Grand Master of the Magians, whose Religion is much preserved in India (which we have no concern about), and also many of the Rituals of the ancient Fraternity used in his time, perhaps more than they are sensible of themselves. Now if it was consistent with your other Business, to discover in those parts the remains of Old Masonry and transmit them to us, we shall be very thankful."*

From this letter it is certain that whatever else he did invent, Anderson did not invent the statement that the

* *Vide* Transactions of the Quatuor Coronati Lodge, vol. xi., pp. 4 ff.

original name of the Masons was Noachidae ; for the letter proves conclusively that a few years before 1738, the date of the Second Book of Constitutions, the belief was held even in the official circles of the Grand Lodge, and it was even thought possible that those who had retained this ancient name might also have preserved many of the Rituals and remains of old Masonry.

If the "York Charter" is not spurious, we have another ancient allusion to the first duty of Masons : "Reverence God with sincerity, and submit to the laws of the Noachides, because these are the divine laws to which all the world should submit."

Since these precepts bore reference to no particular religion, Jew and Gentile could alike belong to the fraternity of Masons or Builders amongst whom they were practised. So, at the erection of King Solomon's Temple, Jew and Phœnician worked side by side, and the truths of religion preserved amongst the Jews were thereby spread throughout the heathen world. The feeling that they belonged to a handicraft, the operations of which had a moral significance, was in itself sufficient to unite all builders in a bond of brotherhood. Builders could never have formed a very large guild, and this, again, would make the ties that united them all the stronger. It is, of course, by no means certain that all who belonged to the fellowship of masons professed the Articles of Noah before they joined or on their first joining the Order. The purpose of allegorising the tools and operations of practical masonry was to make those engaged in the art of building good and honourable men, to cause them to acknowledge the existence of a Supreme First Cause. The speculative side of Masonry was a school in which were trained to the practice of morality those hitherto ignorant of it, or in which they who were already acquainted with the truths of natural religion were strengthened in their adherence. Hence some of the traces of Masonry in the Scriptures have reference to heathens—men acknowledging no God, as we understand the acknowledgment of the Deity, but worshipping many gods representing as many natural forces of the Universe.

After the Jews returned from the Babylonian exile a religious revival took place amongst them, and the building of the Temple by Zerubabel and his colleagues must have given a stimulus to Masonry, strengthened its tenets, and extended the sphere of its influence among the Persians, and later among the Greeks and the Romans. Whilst Masonry was serving to make men moral and virtuous by inculcating the practice of all that is good and noble, by insisting upon the avoidance of all that may result in the injury of our neighbour, as exemplified in some of the Articles of Noah, the same good work was being effected by means of the Temple service at Jerusalem, amongst the votaries at which the teachings of pure religion had been preserved. At this service everything had a moral significance and tended to make those present at them pious and God-fearing.

During the century preceding the destruction of the Temple of Jerusalem the heathen world was most powerfully attracted by the practices of Judaism. The ancient pillars of their religion were being shattered: the old gods were mocked at and derided, and the nobler heathens were seeking a new religion as a substitute for that in which they had lost all faith. The simple truths of the Mosaic religion, the moral principles it laid down, appealed to their minds shocked by the superstitious worship of the gods and by the immoralities to which the gods themselves were said to be addicted. Many of the tribes inhabiting the lands neighbouring on Palestine therefore went over to Judaism and practised Jewish customs. Romans and Greeks observed the seventh day of rest, and the Satires of Horace and of Juvenal did not avail to induce them to withdraw from intercourse with the Israelites.

“Above all, the women, whose gentle feelings were offended by the impurity of the mythological stories, seemed attracted towards the child-like and sublime scenes in Biblical history. The greater part of the women in Damascus were converted to Judaism, and it is related that in Asia Minor there were also many female proselytes.”*

* Graetz: Hist. of the Jews, English Translation, Vol. II., p. 217.

Indeed, the entire population of the province of Adiabene, on the banks of the Tigris, was converted to the worship of the true God through the influence of its reigning house. Heathens frequented the Temple at Jerusalem, and a portion of its precincts was specially set aside for them—the Court of the Gentiles.

But what is more noteworthy is this: that their change of religion was attended by a change of conduct. "Philo relates from his own experience that in his native country [Egypt, colonised mainly by Greek settlers] many heathens, when they embraced Judaism, not only changed their faith, but their lives, which were henceforth conspicuous by the practice of the virtues of moderation, gentleness and humanity. 'Those who left the teachings in which they had been educated, because they were replete with lying inventions and vanities, became sincere worshippers of the truth, and gave themselves up to the practice of the purest piety.'"^{*}

The destruction of the Temple by Titus (70 C.E.), who had been left by his father, Vespasian, to prosecute the siege of Jerusalem on the latter's nomination as Emperor of Rome, threatened to check this spread of religion and morality among the heathens. And in this crisis there arose a man who, even before the Temple was burnt, foresaw that with the destruction of Jerusalem and its sacred fane there was a possibility of the non-Jewish world relapsing into the idolatry and its attendant vice and immorality from which they had been brought forth by means of the influence of the solemn and attractive Temple service. The visible bond of their attachment to the principles of morality was the Temple, and this man feared that when it was destroyed by the Romans this bond would be weakened. He therefore resolved to provide another means for bringing the heathens under the influence of religion, and this he found in the genuine tenets of Freemasonry as they had been practised by Jew and Gentile alike from the most ancient times. This man was Johanan, the son of Zakkai, a Jewish Rabbi, who

^{*} Graetz: Hist. of the Jews, English Translation, Vol. II., pp. 216, 217

must himself have been a speculative Mason, and was deeply imbued with the spirit of brotherly love and universal humanity.*

After having been engaged in business for forty years he opened a school or academy at Jerusalem, which became one of the most famous in the capital. He was a disciple of the celebrated Rabbis Hillel and Schammai, who are stated by Anderson to have been Herod's Wardens during the rebuilding of Zerubabel's Temple.† During the revolt against Roman rule he joined the party in favour of peace, and urged the nation to submit to the Romans. His one thought was for the House of God. "Why do you desire to give up the Temple to the flames?" he would say to the leaders of the rebellion.

Many of the statements made concerning him seem to point to the fact that this Johanan, the son of Zakkai, must have been an ardent Mason in the speculative sense. Indeed, it is difficult to understand some of these statements except by assuming that something Masonic is intended. This may be illustrated by the story of his escape from Jerusalem during its siege.||

Having failed to induce his fellow-citizens to submit to the Romans, he was, by the connivance of his nephew, one of the leaders of the revolt, placed in a coffin; the sentinels at the gate were informed that the famous Rabbi was dead, and his disciples asked permission to bury him outside the city. It was, however, only by the intervention of the nephew that permission was granted; the funeral cortège passed through the gates, and the coffin was placed in a cemetery without the walls. No sooner had the disciples been re-admitted into the city than Johanan stepped forth from his coffin, made his way to the Roman camp, and demanded an interview with Vespasian, the Roman commander. This granted, he saluted Vespasian as Emperor, and when the latter objected that he did not hold this title, the Rabbi replied that in a few days it would rightly be his. By the general's

* See Note, at end, on the sources for the history of Johanan.

† Book of Constitutions, 2nd Edit., p. 40.

|| Midrash, Lamentations, i. 31; Talmud Babli, Gittin, 56a.

orders Johanan was placed in the innermost of seven rooms into which no ray of light penetrated, and was asked, "What time is it?" to which question he gave the correct reply. A few days later whilst Vespasian was bathing he received the news that the Emperor had died at Rome and that he had been acclaimed his successor. He dressed hastily and found himself unable to draw on his shoes. Johanan was sent for, was told that his prediction had been verified, that his life would be spared, and that one request which he might make would be acceded to. He asked to be permitted to open an academy at Jamnia (also called Jabneh), a city not far from Joppa, on the Mediterranean. Vespasian agreed to this, and from this school the principles of humanity were disseminated throughout all the Eastern world when, shortly afterwards, the Temple became a prey to the flames.

It is scarcely conceivable that this account is intended to be taken literally: it is not at all likely that the Romans would have permitted anyone to leave the besieged city in the manner described. Reading it as Masons, we may perceive several allusions to the Craft. In the smuggling of the Rabbi out of the city in a coffin there seems to be a distinct reference to the Third Degree of Craft Masonry, suggesting that it was by means of the Masonic signs and words of that Degree that he was permitted to escape from the city. The sentinels were told "*The Master is dead,*" and acknowledged the propriety of the aid by which they sought to pass. The curious question, "What time is it?" involuntarily reminds us of the ancient Masonic catechisms, and the calling of the brethren from labour to refreshment. The question was frequently put as a test to those claiming to be Masons. It was put to the Rabbi, and he owed his life to his acquaintance with the Masonic ritual which enabled him to give the Masonic reply.

In Vespasian's inability to draw on his shoes there seems to be an allusion to something Masonic. The obligation to assist a brother in distress or danger is taken by the candidate slip-shod or bare-foot. "Vespasian was unable to draw on his shoes": this interpreted Masonically would signify that he was unable to rid himself of the duty imposed upon him

by his obligation, taken barefoot, of being bound to assist a brother in danger. He felt himself compelled to spare Johanan's life, in consequence of his oath as a brother Mason.

The name of the city where the Rabbi set up his school seems to be of Masonic origin. "Jamnia" means *right-hand*, an allusion to the right-hand pillar, "to establish." It is possible that this school was in reality a Mason's lodge, "established" for the purpose of spreading the principles of Freemasonry amongst the heathens as a substitute for the Temple service which Johanan foresaw would soon be discontinued. The other name of the city, "Jabneh," is connected with the Hebrew word "Boneh," a *Builder*.

The names of the nephew who connived at Johanan's escape from Jerusalem appear not to be personal names, but Masonic designations. In one version of the story* he is stated to have been the chief of the sentinels at the gates of the Holy City, and is called "Abba Sicara." This signifies *Wielder of the Dagger*. He would thus have been the Inner or Outer Guard. Another account† calls him "Ben Batiach" which denotes *Faithful man*; an appellation he well deserved by reason of his faithful adherence to his Masonic obligation to aid a brother in need of assistance.

In various other statements made concerning Johanan there are apparently references to Freemasonry. Although it is affirmed that he had thousands of disciples, five only are selected for mention by name.‡ To these five he is said to have communicated all the knowledge he himself possessed, and, in particular, to have initiated them into the "Maaseh Merkabah,"—the esoteric doctrine of the Universe, or the hidden mysteries of nature and science.§ According to a tradition handed down from the second half of the second century of the Christian era, Johanan was the founder of the secret doctrine. Why five are expressly mentioned seems

* Talmud Babli, Gittin 56a.

† Midrash, Lamentations, i. 31.

‡ Mishnah, Aboth ii. 10.

§ Talmud Babli, Sukkah 28a; Chagigah 14a; Talm. Jerus, Chagigah ii. 1.

clear. Five hold a Lodge, in Masonic parlance. He seems never to have instructed them singly. It is related* that once when walking with his favourite disciple, Eleazar the son of Aruch, the latter requested his teacher to instruct him in the Maaseh Merkabah. The Rabbi refused to do so, saying that he had often informed him that instruction in this subject should not be imparted to a single individual: in other words, that two cannot form a Lodge. It is strange that it is just in that degree in which the peculiar objects of research are the hidden mysteries of nature and science, the brother to be passed is informed that it takes five to hold a Lodge.

On another occasion when Johanan heard his disciples discoursing on the Maaseh Merkabah he blessed them and bade them enter the "Palace," and take their seats amongst the "Kat Shelishit"—the *Third* class, or the elect†: perhaps meaning that having displayed proficiency in the work of the Second Degree they were now fitted to be raised to the Third.

On his death-bed his disciples came to take farewell of their dying teacher. They addressed him as "Light of Israel, Righthand Pillar, Great Hammer."‡ The first title seems to allude to the fact that he had enlightened his co-religionists, the Israelites, by his moral instruction. The two latter are, I believe, Masonic titles. "Right-hand Pillar" would be the title of Senior Warden. *Right-hand* is in the Hebrew language also the ordinary term for the South. It would appear from engravings of ancient Lodges that the positions of the Wardens were once different from their positions in our Lodges, the Senior Warden having his seat in the south. Hence, the ancient Senior Warden was the southern or right-hand Pillar of the Lodge. In our Lodges the Junior Warden would bear this designation.

"Great Hammer" is certainly one of the titles of the Worshipful Master who wields the Hammer or Gavel, and I am inclined to think that old Masonic traditions bear this

* Talmud Babli, Chagigah 14a.

† Tosefta, Hagiga ii. 1; Talm. Babli, Chag. 14b; Talm. Jer. ii. 77a.

‡ Talmud Babli, Berachoth 28a.

out. Anderson, in the History of Freemasonry prefaced to the Book of Constitutions, claims Judas Maccabæus, the Hebrew general, Charles Martel, King of France, and Edward I. of England as Patrons of Masonry or as Masters of Lodges. "Maccabæus" means *Hammer*; "Martel" means *Hammer*; and Edward I. was styled the *Hammer* of the Scots. Many fanciful explanations have been given as to why these persons bore the title of "The Hammer." I venture to offer another which some may regard as fanciful as those which have already been given: that it is a Masonic title designating that those who bore it had been Masters of Lodges. Johanan's position in Masonry warranted his disciples in addressing him as the "Great Hammer."

In Hebrew literature Johanan is conspicuous amongst other things for his insistence upon the fact that the Seven Articles of the Sons of Noah, to which reference has already been made, are the basis of all morality, of all fair and square dealing between man and man; that they were divinely commanded to Adam, repeated to Noah, and are incumbent not on the Israelites alone but on all mankind, since all are descended from Noah, after whose name they are called. He thus strove to make all men Masons in the ancient sense: true Sons of Noah, observant of those precepts which were commanded to that patriarch of old; and he asserted the principle that all men who practise these commands are worthy of eternal bliss in future life.

His were no narrow-minded teachings; his sympathies were wide and embraced all creatures, as should those of all Masons. When the Temple, the symbol of Masonry, was destroyed, he aimed at making its extinct service of universal application. "As the Temple services atoned for Israel's sins," he taught, "so charity, lovingkindness and humane feeling atoned for the wrong-doing of the heathens.* Now that the Temple service with its sacrificial system is no more, Israel, also, must seek to atone for his sins by kindly actions, benevolence, and brotherly love."†

* Talmud Babli, Baba Bathra, 10b.

† Aboth d'Rabbi Nathan, iv.

The reason why no instrument of iron was employed in the erection of the Temple was, he said, because iron is used in the manufacture of implements of war ; the Temple is the House of Peace, intended to reconcile men with their Heavenly Father. It is not fitting that implements of war should be used in building the Abode of Peace.* This explanation is interesting in view of the fact that the candidate for admission into Freemasonry is divested of all m c s s on his entrance into the Lodge which represents, in some respects, the Temple of Solomon. In fact, Johanan was ever illustrating his moral teachings by reference to matters associated with the Temple ; his Masonry was, as ours is, a system of morality veiled in allegory and illustrated by symbols.

He taught that Freedom is God's most precious gift to man ; therefore the slave who refused to accept his liberty when the law gave it to him was to have his ear bored, that he might be branded as a creature devoid of all manly feeling.† This is truly Masonic : Freemasonry requires that those who seek to be admitted within its portals shall be free by birth. The slave has a slave's thoughts and aspirations and cannot raise himself to the ideals of genuine Masonry.

Johanan once asked his five favourite disciples what possession man should strive most to acquire ; they gave various replies, and the teacher affirmed his agreement with that disciple who claimed that a " Good Heart " was man's noblest possession, since this includes all else.‖ A right Masonic idea !

" *Let thy garments be always white* " : commenting on these words of King Solomon, Johanan said : " The most beautiful garments that adorn men are deeds of love and humanity ; the shunning of every act that may stain one's innocence, and disquieten one's conscience."§ Did Johanan have in mind the " white garment," *the badge of innocence*, with which Masons are invested on their admittance into the Order ?

* Mechilta, Jithro.

‖ Mishna, Aboth ii., 14.

† Jalkut, Mishpatim.

§ Midrash, Quoheleth.

Before his death, his disciples begged of him that he should give them some words of advice and counsel which might serve as a guide to conduct. "Let your fear of God equal your fear of man," he said. In surprise they asked, "Should we not fear God more than we fear man?" "Aye," replied the dying Johanan, "Yet would that your fear of God but equalled your fear of man! For when you are about to sin you look around fearing lest any man should see you; fear God to the same extent, and when you are about to sin bear in mind that His eye perceives you. Thus you will ever be deterred from sinning!"* Need I remind the brethren of the prayer in closing the Lodge in the Second Degree, in which the same teaching is enunciated? "Let us remember that God is always with us and that His all-seeing eye beholds us."

I do not think that there can be any doubt that this Johanan was a speculative Mason, as we understand the term, and that his one endeavour was to spread the teachings of Freemasonry amongst his disciples and amongst the heathens. The statements made concerning him, the facts recorded of his life, the form in which his teachings were couched seem to prove this, when viewed by the light of Masonry.

Now, it is strange that the name of John (or Johanan) has been indissolubly associated with Masonry for very many centuries. The two parallels bounding the circle were, in the ritual of the eighteenth century, referred to John the Baptist and John the Evangelist. We now state that they represent Moses and King Solomon. Brother Linnecar, who was a P.M. of Lodge 238 E.C. (born at Wakefield, 1722, died 1800) seems to have been the first to make mention of the supposed fact that in ancient times all Masonic lodges were dedicated to St. John the Evangelist.† This statement was repeated with variations in Moore's Masonic Magazine, 1842 (Boston, Mass.), whence it was copied into Mackey's Masonic

* Talm. Babli, Berachoth, 28b.

† "Strictures on Freemasonry," in the "Miscellaneous Works of Richard Linnecar, of Wakefield": Leeds, Printed by Thomas Wright (1789); *vide* pp. 253, 254.

Encyclopædia in 1845, and into Oliver's "Mirror for the Johannite Masons," in the same year. Whether Linnecar invented this statement in order to explain why the Lodges held their annual festivals either on St. John the Evangelist's Day, December 27, or on St. John the Baptist's Day, June 24, or whether he was really recording an old tradition, cannot now be determined. Some writers maintain that the celebration of the Masonic festivals on these dates is a survival of the ancient custom of celebrating mid-summer and mid-winter days, the longest and shortest days in the year—a relic of sun-worship.

It is difficult to discover why the name of John has become associated with the Craft. It is said that John the Baptist was the patron saint of the building fraternities of the Middle Ages, and that when speculative Masonry enjoyed its revival the patron saint of the operative Masons was adopted as that of the speculative Masons. That John the Baptist was the patron of the mediæval Masonic Guilds is beyond all doubt; he is regarded as such in an inscription carved on Melrose Abbey (built 1136), but it is not easy to discover any valid reason why he should have been taken as their patron saint. Neither of the St. Johns had any real connection with architecture; the patron saint of architects was St. Thomas. Bazot (quoted in Mackey's Encyclopædia) surmises that the Byzantine St. John the Almoner of the charitable organisation of St. John of Jerusalem which, there are some slight grounds for believing, had some influence on the Craft, was somehow confused with St. John the Baptist.†

I, however, venture to suggest that in the connection of the name of John with our noble and honourable Order we have the traces of a recollection preserved in the Middle Ages that a certain John had been at some time instrumental in preserving and disseminating the genuine tenets of Freemasonry; that the John intended was Johanan, the son of Zakkai; and that it was through ignorance of his personality that the good Masonic work achieved by him was attributed to his better-

* Cf. Gould, "History of Freemasonry," vol. ii., p. 325.

† Cf. Transactions of the Quatuor Coronati Lodge, viii. pp. 156-158.

known name-sake, John the Baptist, whose name became thereby mistakenly associated with Masonry, both operative and speculative.

I have endeavoured to lead the brethren into one of the by-paths of Masonic history ; to show them what Masonry originally was—Mankind's Primitive Religion ; and to point out one of the channels by which it has been transmitted to us from remote ages—the Jewish Mason, Rabbi Johanan the son of Zakkai. If I am correct in the interpretation I have placed upon the legend related of him and upon some of the statements made regarding him, I shall have proved at the same time that Masonry, as we have it now, is as ancient at least as the beginning of the Christian era, when Johanan lived and taught ; that much of the ritual of our present Lodges was then in use in a similar form since it seems to have been known to Johanan and to have aided him in proving to the Roman general, Vespasian, that he was indeed a Mason. By having done this, I trust that I have strengthened the Masonic faith of the brethren, assuring them that they belong to an honourable fraternity which is indeed as ancient as it claims to be.



NOTE

ON THE SOURCES FOR THE HISTORY OF JOHANAN,
THE SON OF ZAKKAI.

For the information of those unacquainted with Jewish literature, I deem it advisable to append this note as to the age of the works mentioned in the latter portion of this lecture.

The knowledge that the Babylonian Exile was a punishment for neglecting the observance of the laws commanded in the Five Books of Moses caused the Jews, on their return to Palestine, to become most punctilious in the fulfilment of the Pentateuchal precepts. In order to avoid the possibility of transgressing them in the slightest degree these commands were discussed, amplified, and extended to meet all the requirements of life. There thus grew up a mass of Scriptural exposition and of legal decisions on various ritual matters which was not at first committed to writing, but was transmitted orally in the Schools or Academies in which the early Rabbis taught. The first attempt towards bringing some order and system into this chaotic collection of traditions was made by Hillel, president of the Sanhedrin in the time of Herod. His attempt was later resumed by the celebrated Rabbi Akiba, whose distinguished disciple, Rabbi Meir (about 140 C.E.) continued his labours. The authoritative collection was made by Rabbi Judah the Prince who died at the beginning of the third century. It received some additions after his death. This was termed the "Mishna," or *Instruction*.

In its turn, the Mishna became the fruitful subject of discussion in the Schools of Babylon and Palestine; every paragraph in it was examined and commented upon, and thus there again grew up oral traditions relating to the decisions given upon disputed points arising out of the Mishna. These were afterwards arranged in order as a commentary on the text of the Mishna and were called Gemara, or *Completion, Supplement* (i.e., of the Mishna). Mishna and Gemara are together called the "Talmud," *Study or Learning*, although this name is sometimes given to the Gemara alone.

The Talmud exists in two recensions: the Palestinian (or Yerushalmi), and the Babylonian (Babli), the former containing the views of the Palestinian Rabbis, the latter those of the Babylonian, on the Mishna, which, as the text commented upon, is the same in both recensions. The two recensions were made gradually, and assumed their final forms, the Palestinian about the end of the fourth Christian century, the Babylonian about the end of the fifth. The Babylonian Talmud is regarded as being more authoritative than the Palestinian, besides being more voluminous.

Although the Talmud, as we have it, dates, therefore, from about 500 C.E., its elements are considerably older: the first Mishnaic Teacher lived shortly after the return from the Babylonian Exile. The Talmud is a heterogeneous mass, and is best described as the Rabbinical

"Hansard"—the authorised reports of the proceedings at the meetings of the Rabbis at their Schools.

Besides the Talmud, I have frequently quoted from the Midrash (plural, Midrashim). This is mainly "Exposition" of the Sacred Scriptures, *not*, however, in their legal aspect. The exposition is sometimes homiletical, sometimes exegetical, but there are some older Midrashim which combine the legal with the homiletical or exegetical exposition.

Although of comparatively late compilation, the Midrash had its beginnings already shortly after the return from the Babylonian Exile; in the Book of Nehemiah (chap. viii. verse 8), there is mention of the "Exposition" of the Scriptures.

The principal Midrash is that known as the Midrash Rabbah, or the "Great Midrash," which is a running exposition of the Five Books of Moses and the Five "Scrolls" (*viz.*, the Song of Songs, Ruth, Lamentations, Ecclesiastes and Esther). The "Great" Midrash on Lamentations which contains the story of Johanan's escape from Jerusalem, was compiled probably during the fifth century, c.e.

The Jalkut (*Collection or Compilation*), from which quotation is also made, is a much later compilation, but is based upon the older Midrashim and upon the Midrashic elements in the Talmud, and is, as its name implies, merely a compilation from these sources.



