

HOW BIGOTS UNDERMINED MASONIC UNIVERSALITY.

BY BRO. JACOB NORTON.

It is now generally known that modern Masonry was designed to undermine the religious bigotry and intolerance which prevailed in 1717, and still prevails, more or less, in what is called Christendom; hence, the first paragraph in Anderson's 1723 Constitution, headed, "Concerning God and Religion, says :

"Though in ancient times Masons were charged in every country to be of the religion of that country or nation, yet 'tis now thought more expedient only to obligate them to that religion in which all men agree, leaving their particular opinions to themselves."

Which means belief in God, and teachings of morality and humanity, but the dogma about which Masons disagreed, they are to keep to themselves, while they are in the Lodge, and he winds up as follows :

"Thereby Masonry becomes the center of^o union and the means of conciliating true friendship among persons that must have remained at a perpetual distance."

In the seventh paragraph Anderson says :

"You may enjoy yourself with innocent mirth, * * * avoiding excess, * * * or doing or saying any thing offensive, * * * for that would blast our harmony and defeat the laudable purpose. Therefore, no private piques or quarrels must be brought to the door of the Lodge, far less quarrels about religion, nations or state policy, we being only Masons of the catholic [or universal] religion above mentioned; we are, also, of all nations, tongues, kingdoms, languages, and are resolved against all politics," etc.

Now, the injunction to exclude politics from Masonic Lodges met with no opposition, and was always strictly obeyed, but the idea of excluding Christian dogmas from the Lodge was altogether too much for Christian bigotry; hence, on one side, the Pope denounced Masonry in Bulls as anti-Catholic, and Protestant priests at once endeavored to convert the Lodge into a Christianizing trap, thus, from a few imperfect fragments of Masonic catechism written before 1730, one of the luminaries made the three great lights to

represent Father, Son and Holy Ghost ; another informed us that the one who was “carried to the pinnacle of the Temple,” was greater than a Mason ; another says that Masons “did first call their Lodge at the holy chapel of St. John ;” * and another, in answer to the question, “Whence came you ?” replied, “From a Lodge of the Holy St. John.” In the second half of the last century, the so-called *Ancients* dedicated their Lodges to one St. John ; and at the end of the last century, the “Parallel Line” was introduced into the ritual, and Lodges were thereafter dedicated to the two Saints John. In 1843 Charles W. Moore, of Boston, printed in his *Trestle Board* the following tradition :

“From the building of the first Temple at Jerusalem to the Babylonish captivity, Freemason’s Lodges were dedicated to King Solomon. From thence, to the coming of the Messiah, they were dedicated to Zerubbabel, the builder of the second Temple ; 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 but few could meet in sufficient number to constitute their legality, and at a general meeting of the Craft at the city of Benjamin, it was observed that the principal reason for the decay of Masonry was the want of a Grand Master to patronize it ; they, therefore, deputed seven brethren, their most eminent men, to wait upon St. John the Evangelist, who was at that time Bishop of Ephesus, requesting him to take the office of Grand Master. He returned for answer, that though well stricken in years (being upwards of ninety), yet, having been in the early part of his life initiated into Masonry, he would take upon himself that office ; he thereby completed by his learning what the other St. John completed by his zeal, and thus drew what Masons term the lines parallel ; ever since which, Freemason’s Lodges in all Christian coun-

* The questions and answers in the said catechism are as follows :

Q. Where was the first word given ?

A. At the Tower of Babylon.

Q. Where did they first call their Lodge ?

A. At the holy chapel of St. John.

It seems from the above, that the Masons had a holy chapel of St. John at the building of the Tower of Babel.

tries, have been dedicated to St. John the Baptist and St. John the Evangelist.”

Dr. Oliver printed the same story (almost verbatim) in his Dictionary of Symbolic Masonry; he did not, however, hint that he copied it from Moore's publication, but called it “*York Lectures.*” In his Mirror for Johannite Masons, printed in 1848; in the third letter of said book; Dr. Oliver repeats the same story; but greatly enlarged and improved, thus: he begins the custom of dedicating Lodges, first to Noah, and next Moses, and next Solomon, and during each period, Masons were known by different grand titles or names (as I shall show hereafter in a catechism), and the deputies that were sent to the Evangelist were not sent from the “City of Benjamin,” but from the “City of Jerusalem.” And, in the same letter of the “Mirror” (or Johannite Masons) Oliver gives us the following catechism, which he calls “Old York Lectures,” namely:

Q. “Our Lodges being finished, furnished and decorated with ornaments, furniture and jewels, to whom were they dedicated?

Ans. To God and his services.

Q. Thank you, brother; and can you tell me to whom they were first dedicated?

Ans. To Noah, who was saved in the ark.

Q. And by what name were the Masons then known?

Ans. They were called Noachidae, Sages, or Wise Men.

Q. To whom were the Lodges dedicated during the Mosaic dispensation?

Ans. To Moses, the chosen of God; Solomon, the son of David, King of Israel, who was an eminent patron of the Craft.

Q. And after what name were the Masons known during that period?

Ans. Under the name of Dionysiaes, 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?

Ans. From Solomon the patronage of Masonry passed to St. John the Baptist. [The Doctor here forgot Zerubbabel.]

Q. And under what name were they known after the promulgation of Christianity?

Ans. Under the name of Essenes, Architects, or Freemasons.

Q. Why were Lodges dedicated to St. John the Baptist ?

Ans. Because he was the forerunner of our Saviour, by teaching repentance and humiliation, drew the first parallel of the Gospel.

Q. Had St. John the Baptist an equal ?

Ans. He had ; St. John the Evangelist.

Q. And why is he said to be equal to the Baptist ?

Ans. Because he finished by his learning what the other began by his zeal, and thus drew the line parallel of the former ; ever since which time Freemasons and Lodges, in all Christian countries, were dedicated to one or the other, or both, of these worthy and worshipful men.”

In my former articles about the Saints John, I have shown that the pre-1717 Masons could not have known that the Saints John were Grand Masters, Masons, or patron saints of the Craft, because the name of Saints or Saint John cannot be found in any pre-1717 manuscript. That Anderson could not have known about the Saints John former connection with Masonry, because he did not mention their names in his pre-1717 list of Masonic Grand Masters, nor did he mention them in the ceremony of constituting a Lodge. I have also shown that all the historians, essayists, orators, writers of Masonic songs, etc., etc., which I have read, from Anderson, in 1723, up to the union of the two Grand Lodges in 1813, furnished no evidence of a connection having existed between the Saints John and the Masonic fraternity. In short, that the said authors did not mention the names of the Saints John at all in their writings or orations. Since my articles about the Saints John were printed in the MASONIC REVIEW, I have read a speech made in 1726, by Bro. Charles Barthust, Grand Master of York, and found that while the orator went into ecstasies when referring to Grand Master Saint Albans, the proto-martyr of England, he never mentioned the name of Saint John in his whole oration, and such would not have been the case if the orator had known that the Saints John were Grand Masters, or Masons, or had ever been in any way connected with Masons.

Of American Masonic writers, I have long since read Theodore Harris' work ; also the writings of Dalcho, and since the publication of my articles on Saints John in this REVIEW, I have read the first edition of Thomas Smith Webb's Monitor, printed in 1797, and

was surprised to find, that up to that date, the name of Saint John was not mentioned in the ceremony of constituting a Lodge, nor when dedicating a Masonic hall. In Webb's *Monitors*, printed in 1802 and 1805, I find that a Lodge was dedicated to St. John, and a Masonic hall was dedicated in the name of St. John, but in his *Monitor* in 1808, I found what is called the "Parallel Lines," and then Lodges in America were dedicated to the two Saints John. But even in 1808 Webb was evidently ignorant of the tradition of the Grand Mastership of the Saints John. And the same may be said of Webb's successor—I mean Jeremy L. Cross, who did not mention the Evangelist Grand Master tradition, in either of his *Monitors*, printed between 1819 and 1846. Albert G. Mackey printed the Evangelist Masonic tradition in his *Lexicon* in 1845, and he introduced it thus :

"With respect to the original cause of this dedication the English Lodges have preserved a tradition which, as a matter of course, may find a place in this work. I am indebted for it to Bro. Moore's excellent *Magazine*, Vol. ii, p. 263." (See article on "Dedication" in Mackey's *Lexicon*.)

We see now that Mackey was ignorant of the existence of the Evangelist Masonic tradition in 1843, when it was published in the second volume of Moore's *Magazine*. Very recently I obtained a sight of the second volume of Moore's *Magazine*, where I found that he introduced the Evangelist Masonic tradition, above quoted, as follows :

"The following is one of the many old Masonic traditions which have been orally transmitted through a long series of years, and though it has not been preserved in the Lodges in this country, it is still retained in those of England which have not adopted the Union System of work and Lectures. In that system the Lodges are dedicated to God and his service, and 'the line parallel,' is made to represent Moses and King Solomon. This change was made by the Grand Lodge of England in 1815 [should be 1813], with a view to remove from the ritual every thing which might be construed into sectarianism, or which might tend to mar the universality of the institution. We give the tradition as we have received it from England. Our readers will place such estimate upon it as they may judge it is entitled to."

After reading the above introduction, I became convinced that the so-called *tradition* about the Grand Mastership of St. John the Evangelist, was the fabrication of Charles W. Moore himself, for, in the first place, he didn't say how, or from whom, in England, did he get the said tradition. Second, he did not inform us as to the location of the Lodges which have not adopted the Union work and Lectures. Third, I do not believe that any Lodge in England in 1840 had ever heard of the existence of said tradition. And last, every one who was acquainted with Charles W. Moore will agree with my opinion that whenever it suited C. W. Moore to invent a story, or to pervert a fact, conscience never hindered him from doing so. No one will deny that the so-called Evangelist Masonic tradition *is a down right lie*, and no one will deny that the so-called *tradition* was invented by one who was desirous of turning the Lodge into a Christianizing trap, and as the story cannot be traced further back than to about the year 1840 or 1842, I, therefore, unhesitatingly declare that the *Hub of the Universe* was the birth place of the Evangelist's Masonic legend, and that Charles W. Moore was its parent.

Dr. Oliver claims that the Evangelist Masonic tradition was embodied or formed part of the *York* or *Old York* lectures. But, in the first place, I have already shown that the address of Bro. Chas. Barthust, the first Grand Master of the Grand Lodge of York, is minus of the said tradition, nor did he mention the name of St. John, though the address was delivered on St. John the Evangelist's Day. And second, I must here inform the reader that the Lodge of Antiquity in London, which is the oldest Lodge in England, and of which Lodge William Preston, the author of the *Illustrations of Freemasonry*, was a member, unfortunately got into a dispute with the Grand Lodge of England, in the year 1777, which culminated by the expulsion of Preston, with a majority of the members of the Lodge of Antiquity, in 1779, from all rights and privileges of Masonry. William Preston, with the other expelled members, applied afterwards to the Grand Lodge of York, which Grand Lodge not only authorized Preston and his associates to continue their organization as a Lodge, but it was authorized to be a Grand Lodge also. This state of things lasted till 1789, when Preston and his companions were pardoned by the Grand Lodge of England, and were restored to membership of the Lodge of Antiquity. Now, during the ten years Preston, as a Mason, was un-

der the jurisdiction of the Grand Lodge of York, he published two or more editions of his Illustrations of Masonry. I have here before me, one that was published in 1781, and in comparing the Lectures, and the mode of constituting and consecrating Lodges in the above edition with one published in 1792, I found that they did not differ; that is, the Lectures in the edition of 1781, contained no allusion to the Masonic Grand Mastership of St. John, nor did the part which described the ceremony of constituting or consecrating a Lodge, mention the name of St. John. Now, if the Grand Lodge of York, during that period, had in its lectures the tradition of the Evangelist's Grand Mastership, it must accordingly have dedicated its Lodges to the Saints John, and if such had been the case, Preston would, in 1781, have introduced the tradition into his Lectures, and would have changed the *modus operandi* in the ceremony of constituting new Lodges, by dedicating them to the Saints John, but as Preston did neither one nor the other, we must conclude that the Evangelist Masonic legend did not form part of the York Lectures, nor did the Grand Lodge of York ever dedicate its Lodges to the Saints John or to St. John.

That no Lodges existed in England during the fifth decade of this century which retained a tradition about the Evangelist's Grand Mastership was evidently well known to Dr. Oliver; hence, instead of confessing, as Mackey did, that he got that tradition from Moore's Magazine, he led his readers to suppose that he obtained the said tradition from a ritual "that was used a little later than the middle of the last century, and which, by way of eminence, is called Old York Lectures." Now, that the tradition and the catechism, as given by Oliver, was unknown to the Grand Lodge of York, I have also proved, again and again, that Oliver's statements are unreliable, but as that reason may not be deemed by some sufficient to discard all of Oliver's statements, I have, therefore, written to some well-informed English Masons to inform me whether they could find any evidence that the catechism, quoted by Oliver, was ever used by any English Lodges in the last century, and here is a reply I have received from Bro. Henry Sadler, the Sub-Librarian of the Grand Lodge of England:

FREEMASONS' HALL, LONDON, W.C., June 5, 1894.

DEAR BRO. NORTON—Replying to yours of May 23d, I beg to say that I know of no such catechism as you refer to in Oliver's

Mirror for Johannite Masons. I scarcely ever see Bro. Gould, but when I do, I will ask him, if I think of it. Br. W. H. Rylands knows as much about these matters as any one, but he has no recollection of such catechism in any English ritual, although he thinks he has met with it in a French one. He has said he will look into it and let me know further.

I cannot find the word "dedicated" in Prichard's Rituals, 1737, 1762 and 1774.

"Hiram, or the Grand Master's Key," &c., London, 1766, in each of the three obligations, the Lodge is said to be dedicated to St. John; also, in the following: "Solomon in All his Glory," London, 1778; "Mahabone, or the Grand Lodge Door Opened," London, 1766; "Jachin and Boaz," 1764, 1792, 1800, and 1817: "Three Distinct Knocks," London, 1806.

So far as I can see, Noah or Noahchidae, are not mentioned in the foregoing, and I have no recollection of having seen them anywhere else except in Anderson's Constitutions 1738, page 4; 1756, p. 8. Oliver *may* have seen the Lecture, he refers to, in manuscript, but I must say I have very little faith in many of his statements.

The Catalogue of our Library, in which you found Mackey, 1841, is obsolete and useless, so you may as well burn it. I have sent you the last one printed, but the Library has increased largely since it was published.

Re Martin Clare's Lectures. See Dunckerley, page 114.

I have the Cincinnati REVIEW up to date from the publisher, and have paid for them, so do not trouble to send any, as I shall have them mailed to me in future.

Our Lodges are dedicated "to God and his services, also to the memory of the Royal Solomon." See the printed Lectures, 5th Sect'n, first Lecture.

Since writing the foregoing, I have heard from Rylands; he says he has searched some of his French rituals, but cannot find anything like Oliver's catechism in them. Yours fraternally,

H. SADLER.

P. S.—For Noahchidae (French), see Mackenzie, Royal Cyclopaedia, page 508; Woodford's Cyclopaedia (Kening's). H. S.

We see, now, that two distinguished English Masonic students could find no evidence that Oliver's catechism was used by English Lodges in the last century. I, however, have no doubt that Oliver,

like Mackey, was indebted to Moore's Magazine for his knowledge of the Evangelist's Masonic legend, and that the said tradition was unknown in England before it was read in the second volume of Moore's Magazine, and that the additions thereto, by beginning with dedicating to Noah the very grand names Masons were known by at different periods, as well as the catechism, were unknown before Oliver's Johannite Masonry was printed in 1848.

Having shown that, notwithstanding Anderson's injunction to exclude from the Lodge all religious topics about which Masons disagreed, yet religious fanatics succeeded, more or less, in palming off a number of lies as Masonic tradition. I must here add, that in the United States of America, the Masonic fraternity is still pestered with religious zealots who unscrupulously persist in advocating the retention and perpetuation of pious frauds in the ritual, well-knowing at the same time that they are frauds. For instance: I was informed that, about three years ago, Bro. Nickerson, Grand Secretary of the Grand Lodge of Massachusetts, frankly admitted, in open Grand Lodge, that the Saints John were not Masons; but, notwithstanding the said admission, the Masters, in Massachusetts, continued to instill into the minds of candidates, at their initiation, that the Saints John were Masons, by assuring them, in the most serious and solemn manner, that the Saints were "parallels in Masonry as well as in Christianity." Now, I maintain, that not only are the Worshipful Masters guilty of fraud, well knowing it to be such, but the Grand Lodge of Massachusetts, which sanctions such conduct of the Masters of Lodges within its jurisdiction, is equally guilty of fraud and deception, when well knowing it to be such.

I have shown again that the name of St. John is not mentioned in the English Masonic ritual, and even C. W. Moore, in his introduction to his Evangelist legend says :

"This change [the exclusion of St. John from the English ritual] was made by the Grand Lodge of England in 1813—with a view to remove from the ritual every thing which might be construed into sectarianism, or which might tend to mar the universality of the institution."

And I now ask, why cannot our American Grand Lodges also make Masonry consistent with universality, by imitating or following the example of the Grand Lodge of England of erasing *useless and contemptible pious frauds* from their Masonic Rituals and Constitutions?