

the flood. It is not, however, my present purpose to relate this part of the ancient history of the Order.

After the terrible instance of God's punishment by the deluge, and the families of the three sons of Noah having become numerous, it was necessary that they should separate and colonize the different countries appointed by God for their inheritance. The pious Father of the New World having received from his ancestors the principles of religious truth, communicated them to his descendants. It is from this source, then, we must trace the similarity in the religious systems of nations widely different in manners and far distant in habitation. But these pure doctrines soon became corrupted, for Nimrod, the rebellious son of Cush, endeavoured to remain in the land of Shinar instead of going to his appointed place, and there, with his followers, commenced building a tower of great height (intended for either the Zabian worship or for the study of astrology), there to establish an empire. But God frustrated these impious attempts, and caused such confusion in their language, as compelled them to separate and travel on in the world. And, now, without following the movements of any other nations, our concerns will be with the Egyptians, their Masonry, and the state of Masonry amongst the Hebrews.

In Egypt, then, the nearest country to the place of separation, and the country where the arts and sciences first began to flourish, where early traces of that mysterious society in which operative and speculative Masonry were combined. It was probably composed of operative Masons whose talents came into requisition for the building of religious places and edifices, and who, wishing to keep their scientific knowledge secret, used symbols amongst each other, and so sought to gain for themselves honor and admiration. But the Egyptian priesthood, a body of men of the highest rank, and desirous of ruling the people by superstition, were soon led to join the society for the purpose of participating in the scientific information possessed by its members. The principal buildings erected being of a religious character, gave them a just plea for joining the architects; and giving a religious appearance to their order, they connected their philosophy and mythology with the avowed objects of the associate; hence arose that union of science and theology