

in the arkite rites which pervaded nearly all the old religions, says :

The initiation into the mysteries scenically represented the mythic descent into Hades, and the return from thence into the light of day ; by which was meant the entrance into the ark and the subsequent liberation from its dark enclosure.

Byrant speaking of the universal prevalence of the ancient reference to Noah under various titles, says :

The person preserved is always mentioned as preserved in an ark. He is described as being in a state of darkness, which is represented allegorically, as a state of death. He then obtains a new life, which is called a second birth, and is said to have his youth renewed.

Now, as the preservation in the ark was considered as typically a preservation from death, and a restoration to immortal life, and as this doctrine of the resurrection always formed an important part of the teachings of Speculative Masonry, it is very easy to understand why the comparatively modern ritualists borrowed from the old religions this legend of Noah, with its symbolic signification, and made it a part of the Masonic system, although it was never referred to nor used by the Operative Masons. But as the third degree supplies another legend, which equally inculcates the doctrine of the resurrection, and as that legend was more ultimately connected with the supposed and, at the time, recognized history of the origin of the Order at the temple of Solomon, the Noachic legend fell gradually into disuse, and finally became obsolete ; not, however, without leaving some slight traces of its former existence.

The legend of Euclid is another one of those old legends which have passed away. Unlike that of Noah, it is, however, a primitive legend, common to the Operative Craft, and is, indeed, found in the oldest of the old records, the Halliwell MS., where it is given in all its details. According to that manuscript, Euclid founded Masonry in Egypt, and the story is repeated, with but little variation, in nearly all the subsequent Constitutions. The legend is substantially told in this way :

In the time of Euclid, the river Nile so far overflowed its banks that many of the dwellings of the people of Egypt were destroyed. Euclid instructed them in the art of making dykes to stay the progress of the water, and measuring out the land by the aid of Geometry, he enabled each man to ascertain the bounds of his own property. Euclid gave to Masonry the name of Geometry, and taught the art to the sons of the nobles, so that Masonry was established in the land.

In all the modern rituals there is not the slightest reference to Euclid, so that the legend is become utterly obsolete. But it has left its influence in the position which the Speculative Masons still give to Geometry, calling that and Masonry "synonymous terms," which they are not, and making the fifth liberal science the foundation of Masonry. In the early years of the eighteenth century, a Speculative or Freemason was called a "Geometrical Mason." Wherever, in fact, Geometry is referred to in Freemasonry, it is always because it is a relic of the old and well-nigh forgotten legend of Euclid, the great geometrician.

There is a legend, now completely obsolete, which accounts for the introduction of Masonry into France. In the Cooke MS., whose date is placed at 1490, we first meet with this legend, the older Halliwell MS. making no allusion to it. It is there said :

Charles the Second, king of France, was a Mason before that he was king. And after he was king he loved Masons and cherished them and gave them charges and manners [customs and usages] at his device, of the which some are yet used in France ; and he ordained that they should have an assembly once in the year for to come and speak together, and for to be ruled by masters and fellows, of things amiss.

All the subsequent manuscript Constitutions, from the Landsdowne in 1560 to the Papworth in 1741, repeat the same story, with the difference that they give the name of the king as Charles Marsel. The writer of the Cooke MS. evidently referred I think, to Charlemagne, who might, perhaps, be designated as Charles the Second, while that title could in no way be applicable to Charles Martel. Besides, the latter was too much engaged in wars with his German neighbors and with the Moors of Spain to have been able to pay much attention to the arts of civilization, while Charlemagne was distinguished for his patronage of the sciences, the arts and literature, and especially of architecture. The legend accepted as it is by Rebold and other French writers, is, however, historically incorrect, for although Operative Masonry was greatly patronized during the reign of Charlemagne, it was not introduced into France by that monarch. The legend has at length become obsolete and effete, and the Masons of the present day know nothing of it except what they find in the Old Records.

The legends that refer to the two Saints John can hardly be called obsolete, for, although the details of some of them have passed away, the symbols and ceremonies which were originally founded on them, still exist. Such are the lines parallel, and the dedication of our lodges. The question really is not, when did these Johannian legends cease to form a part of the legendary history of Freemasonry, but, rather,