

# **ORIGIN OF FREEMASONRY**

A PAPER READ AT THE CELEBRATION OF THE ONE  
HUNDRED AND TWENTY-FIFTH ANNIVERSARY  
OF THE FORMATION OF THE GRAND  
LODGE OF MARYLAND  
A. F. & A. M.

HELD AT THE CITY OF EASTON  
MAY 14th, 1912

PREPARED BY.,-.

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the Grand Lodge and Grand Chapter.

BALTIMORE  
WILLIAMS & WILKINS COMPANY 1912.

GEN. THOMAS J. SHRYOCK,

*Grand Master of Masons in Maryland,*

*Most Worshipful and Dear Brother:* -I was much pleased when I learned that you had determined to hold the Semi-Annual Communication of the Grand Lodge at Easton, where 125 years ago, or to speak more correctly 129 years ago, our Grand Lodge was organized.

As you are aware our Grand Lodge was fully organized July 31, 1783, as the original records in our archives fully attest. In the paper which I had the honor to submit to the Grand Lodge at the re-dedication of our Temple ("Homes of the Grand Lodge") I stated that "The 1783 organization was in every respect regular and legal and would have been so considered by other Grand Lodges." It is a well known and universally recognized principle of Masonry that any Grand Lodge, wheresoever located, may organize Lodges in any country, state or territory where there is no Grand Lodge, that whenever a majority of the Lodges thus organized (provided there be no less than five) may establish a Grand Lodge without asking the consent of anybody, it was under this well known principle that the representatives of five Lodges on the Eastern Shore of Maryland assembled in convention at Talbot Court House July 31st 1783 and resolved to form a Grand Lodge independent of the Grand Lodge at Philadelphia and accordingly regularly elected and installed grand officers, but the Brethren believing that the consent of the Grand Lodge of Pennsylvania was necessary and that Grand body being adverse to the formation of such a Grand Lodge suffered it to fall into abeyance, (it did not become extinct,) until April 17th 1787 when Representatives re-assembled and re-elected and re-installed Grand Officers.

I am clearly and distinctly of the opinion that the Grand Lodge of Maryland may date its organization from July 31st 1783, and that it has the distinction of being *The Third Oldest Independent Grand Lodge in America*. The Grand Lodge of Massachusetts being the first, (March 8th, 1777,) and Virginia being the second (May, 1777) to throw off their allegiance to the Grand Lodge of England.

In my darkened condition I spend much time in re-calling my early reading and studies of Masonry. For some months past my musings have dwelt upon the origin of Freemasonry, upon which subject I perhaps have some peculiar views. I mentioned these to some three or four brethren who have called to see me from time to time, and they urged me to commit my reflections to paper. I finally consented to do so and herewith submit the same to your inspection to make such disposition of it as you may think proper. On the occasion of the proposed celebration I feel more keenly than I do at other times my loss of sight; it would give me the greatest pleasure could I be present with you and visit the old market-house and stand in the loft where probably our Grand Lodge was formed; at least it is known that some of its earlier meetings were held there.

With Fraternal Greetings of probably the oldest Mason in Maryland to you and my Masonic Brethren, I remain,

Yours fraternally,  
E. T. SCHULTZ.

BALTIMORE, MD., May 6, 1912.

MR. E. T. SCHULTZ,  
1740 Park Avenue,

*My Dear Brother Schultz:* Yours to hand and contents noted, as also, the copy of the paper, which you have written on the Origin of Masonry. I have read it very carefully and have been very much interested in it and am glad we are going to have an opportunity to publish it.

With kindest regards,  
Very truly and fraternally yours,  
THOS. J. SHRYOCK.

# ORIGIN OF FREEMASONRY

BY

**EDWARD T. SCHULTZ**

*Past Senior Grand Warden and Masonic Historian of Maryland*

Whence came Freemasonry? Masons and non-Masons alike agree that it is of great antiquity, but where and when did it originate? Everything mundane has a beginning, when then was Masonry's beginning?

The young student of Masonry or the credulous brother may say, "why, these questions were fully answered in a history of our Fraternity written nearly two hundred years ago." Yes, that is true.

On St. John the Baptist's Day, June 24, 1717, an assemblage of Masons was held at the "Goose and Gridiron" tavern in the city of London, in compliance with a resolution adopted by the four old Lodges of London and some other old brethren, to revive Masonry which had fallen into great disorder, to revive the quarterly communications of the officers of Lodges, to hold an annual assemblage and feast and to choose a Grand Master among themselves. A number of adjourned meetings followed, when the ancient charges and regulations were formulated and adopted and thus was organized the Grand Lodge of England, the premier Grand Lodge of the world. A learned Brother, Rev. James Anderson, D.D., a Scotch Presbyterian Minister, was appointed to write a history of the Fraternity from the earliest times.

This he did in his Book of Constitutions, which was published in 1723, embodying the proceedings of the various conventions, ancient charges and regulations.

In this history, Masonry is made co-eval with the creation of the world and throughout geometry and Masonry are treated synonymously. Adam and his sons, Cain and Seth, Noah and his three sons, Japhet, Shem and Ham, as well as Abraham and all the patriarchs, Moses and other prominent personages mentioned in the Bible down to the time of Solomon, are all styled Grand Masters.

Unfortunately, much of this history is regarded as entirely too fabulous in character to be accepted as veritable history. That Anderson did not invent this history or manufacture it from whole cloth is evidenced by the fact that since his time many ancient writings have been brought to light from which it is manifest that the earliest part, at least, of Anderson's history was compiled from them.

There is in the city of London, a Lodge known as the Quatuor Coronati 2076; although it holds a regular charter from the Grand Lodge of England it does not confer any of the degrees, nor does it perform any of the usual functions of a Lodge. Its labors are wholly literary in character. The object of its formation was the collection and preservation of ancient writings and documents, old records, seals, inscriptions on monuments, etc.. Its active membership is limited to forty members, all of whom are learned men and zealous students of Freemasonry. There is attached to the Lodge what is known as the Correspondence Circle, which

is open to students and Master Masons wheresoever dispersed. Grand Master Shryock, Thomas Footer of Cumberland, and myself are, and have been since its organization thirty-five years ago, members of this Circle. Upon the payment of 10 shillings 6 pence we are entitled to all the publications of the Lodge which are issued from time to time.

By the efforts of the active members and others many ancient writings have been collected, among them between sixty and seventy old manuscripts, known as the old Constitutions of Masonry.

Members of the Lodge have been selected to examine these old documents and comment upon the same. In 1884, the first volume of reprints appeared and this was followed by a number of other volumes in which these commentaries, together with the facsimiles of these old writings, in the finest style of the photographer and printer's art, are given, but by many of these brethren they were treated more in the light of literary curios than as history.

I read these discussions as they appeared from time to time with great interest, about which time I found in the library of a friend of mine, whom I was visiting, a very old history of the United States, the name of the author and the date of the publication have slipped my mind. In his introduction the author, after narrating the tradition that America was visited by the Norsemen many years before the advent of Columbus, uses a phrase somewhat as follows: "Tradition does not invent, it may exaggerate." This made a deep impression upon my mind, and since then in the examination of old writings, I have endeavored to see if I could discover any motive for the writer's stating anything that was not true and then to see if there was anything in their statements that was unnatural or impossible to have occurred, and if it stood these tests I was not disposed to wholly reject it.

Martin Luther, the father of Protestantism, was a believer in the dogma of trans-substantiation, or rather he believed in con-substantiation, that is, the Spiritual presence of our Lord in the Eucharist, differing from the Romanist who believes in the real bodily presence; but he was vehemently opposed in this by some of his associates. It is said that upon one occasion, when about to preach upon this subject, he wrote on a placard in large letters "This is my body" and took it with him into the pulpit and placed it prominently before his eyes in order that he might not waiver from his belief.

Imitating the example of the Great Reformer, during my investigations of this subject I have placed prominently before my mind's eye the words I saw in the old history and in the thoughts that I now deliver I have held in view this motto "Tradition does not invent, it may exaggerate."

The earliest of these old manuscripts brought to light is what is known as the Halliwell, or as Brother Gould, I believe, has christened it, the Regius Poem. Unfortunately, it is not dated, but experts in the British Museum, as well as others, place the date of its writing at about A. D. 1390. It is not only the earliest, but the most voluminous, of these old Constitutions and the brethren of the Coronati

believe that the most of the others were directly or indirectly copied from it, itself being a copy of a still earlier one.

The old poem commences in this wise:

"HERE BEGIN THE CONSTITUTIONS OF THE ART OF  
GEOMETRY ACCORDING TO EUCLID.  
Whoso will both well read and look,  
He may find writ in olden book, etc."

As this old poem is written in the quaint old English it is somewhat hard to read and understand. I have, therefore, made my excerpts from some of the other manuscripts, namely, the Matthew Cooke, Landsdowne, William Watson and the Leland, which are more easily understood.

All these old manuscripts are prefaced by the following, or a similar pious invocation, "The might of the Father of the Heavens the Wisdom of the Glorious Son and the goodness of the Holy Ghost three persons and one God be with us now and ever Amen." From this I think we have a right to infer that the writers of these early manuscripts were conscientious and God-fearing persons and, therefore, would not write any thing that they did not know, or at least believe, to be true. I have therefore incorporated this thought in my sermon.

The manuscripts then open with a dissertation on the seven liberal sciences; then follows an account of the discoveries and inventions of the children of Lamech as mentioned in the Bible, namely, "Gabell found the craft of Geometry; Tuball, Musick; Tubalican, the Smith Craft; the daughter found the craft of Webbing; as wherefore they wrought the Scyenees they had found in 2 Pillers of Stone that they might be found afterwards, and the one Stone was called Marble for that would not burne in the fire and the other Stone was called Latherne and that would not be drowned with water."

Mention is then made of the building of the Tower of Babel when "Nemroth who was a Mason himself sent sixty Masons to the King of Ninevey at the making of the City of Ninevey."

It then speaks of the visit of Abraham and his wife Sarah, to Egypt, where they taught the Egyptians the science of Geometry and "the worthy clerk Euclid was his pupil and learned of him, and he first gave it the name of Geometry; although it was practiced before that time it had not acquired the name of Geometry." "For in his time, the river of Egypt which is called the Nile so overflowed the land that no man could dwell therein. Then the worthy clerk Euclid taught them to make great walls and ditches to keep back the water, and by Geometry he measured the land and parcelled it out into sections and caused every man to enclose his own portion with walls and ditches;" etc.

Euclid, the distinguished geometrician, was born about B. C. 400, nearly 1600 years after the time of Abraham. Brother Mackey referring to the anachronism which makes Euclid contemporary with Abraham says: "Interpreted as all Masonic

legends should be interpreted, as merely intended to convey a Masonic truth in symbolic language, it loses its absurdity, and becomes invested with an importance that we should not otherwise attach to it."

Brother Rob. Morris inclined to the opinion that Euclid is but a substituted name for some great architect of far earlier date.

The writers then continue: "During the time that the children of Israel dwelt in Egypt they learned the craft of Masonry. And after they were driven out of Egypt they came into the promised land, which is now called Jerusalem, and they occupied that land and the charges were observed there."

They tell of the making of the Temple by Solomon, which will be referred to later.

We readily admit that it is hard to imagine or conceive that our Fraternity is descended from the personages so early mentioned in the world's history or that they can in any way be regarded as the founders of our Fraternity; but these old writers say they were and as they are believed to have been truthful and honest they are at least entitled to a respectful hearing.

To understand the full force and import of ancient writings one must take into consideration the time, place and circumstances under which they were written and not judge them by the environment under which we are living. It must be borne in mind that this was many, many centuries before the discovery of the art of printing and even centuries before art of writing was invented. This was not known in Abraham's day and perhaps but little known much before the time of Moses.

It is believed that the first five books of Moses ascribed to his authorship, were written from oral tradition aided by the inspiration of God and, therefore, that the only knowledge that the people had of the past was by tradition, handed down from generation to generation.

All nations of antiquity of whom we have any knowledge, whether barbarian or civilized, had their mysteries which were intimately associated with their religious worship; the Hebrews were no exception, they had their mysteries, or at least, they had secrets known to the few, excluded from the many.

Now it is reasonable to suppose that the discoveries and inventions by Lamech's family were not communicated to the people generally, but were only communicated to the faithful few, orally and esoterically.

There are certain personages prominently mentioned throughout the Bible who seem to be more favored of God than others and to whom He more particularly revealed His nature and attributes, and it is not unreasonable to suppose that this knowledge was withheld from the mass of the people, especially from the idolaters, of whom there were many at that time.

Even Terah, Abraham's father, as well as other members of his household were idolaters. Thus, knowledge and information was communicated from generation to generation down to the time of Solomon.

The legend regarding Solomon is as follows:

"And after the decease of King David, then Reigned Solomon that was King David's Sonne and he performed out The Temple that his father had begun and he sent after masons into Diverse Countreys and into Diverse Lands and he gathered them together so that he had 24000 Workers of Stone and were all named Masons and he Chosed out of them 3000 and were all ordained to be Master Rulers and Governors of his Worke, and then was there a King of another Region which men called Iram and he loved well King Solloman and gave him Timber to his Work and he had a Sonne that was called a Man that was Master of Geometry, and was chiefe Master of all his Masonrie and of all his Graving Carving and all other Masonry that belonged to the Temple, this is Witnessed in the holy Bible (in Libra Regium quarto et Tertio) and this same Solloman Confirmed both the Charges and the Manners which his father had given."

And here I pause to say that I am a firm believer in the Solomonic origin of Masonry, or at least, I believe that the discoveries and inventions of these earlier people mentioned, especially of the art of building, were in the time of Solomon reduced to a system.

In the year of the world 3000 was begun that magnificent structure known as Solomon's Temple at Jerusalem, nearly seven years were consumed in its construction and when finished it was dedicated with imposing ceremonies in the presence of the whole people.

In the eloquent dedication prayer of Solomon he says: "Now it was in the heart of David my father to build a house for the name of the Lord God of Israel. But the Lord said to David my father, Forasmuch as it was in thine heart to build a house for my name, thou didst well in that it was in thine heart: Notwithstanding thou shalt not build the house; but thy son which shall come forth out of thy loins, he shall build the house for my name."

The plans and specifications to the most minute detail as well as those for the making of the holy vessels to be used in worship were delivered by God to Solomon.

Hiram, King of Tyre, took great interest in this noble work and rendered Solomon great assistance. He sent him men to hew cedar, fir and algum trees out of Lebanon, he also sent him a man named Hiram "The son of a woman of the daughters of Dan, and his father was a man of Tyre, skillful to work 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 to grave any manner of graving, and to find out every device



which shall be put to him, with thy cunning man, and with the cunning men of my lord David thy father."

This Hiram or Hiram, was the chief architect and general superintendent of the building. The important parts of the work were performed by him, namely the two famous pillars that were in the porch in the front of the Temple, and the pots and the shovels and the basins and other holy vessels, other parts of the work being performed by others instructed by him, as detailed in our ceremonial. Our legends as to the number of the people engaged in the construction of this building correspond with that given in the Scriptures namely: 70,000 to be bearers of burdens, 80,000 to be hewers in the mountains, and 3600 to be overseers. Now is it not reasonable to suppose that in so vast a number of operatives some system was introduced to prevent confusion and that the classes might be distinguished one from the other, and tokens adopted by which members of each class might be known to each other?

I am, at least I used to be, pretty familiar with the legends and traditions as well as the ritual and ceremonies of all the degrees known as ancient Masonry and I cannot recall any legend on which any one of the degrees is founded that could not have been an actuality.

If I were permitted I could make this perfectly clear, but if any brother will do as I have done, rehearse in his mind one by one our legends and then ask himself what is there in this that is unnatural or unreal, or that could not have transpired, he will find as I have done, that there is not a legend mentioned that could not have actually occurred. He will find that many of the details are perhaps exaggerated, introduced to round out and to make pointed the moral which they were intended to inculcate.

The Royal Arch degree is founded upon incidents and events transpiring immediately preceding the building of the second or Zerubbabel's Temple, 470 years after the destruction of Solomon's Temple. If the Royal Arch Mason will recall the incidents occurring to the Sojourners on their pilgrimage to Jerusalem and what occurred upon their arrival there he will see that there is nothing in them that could not have actually taken place.

Some of the other degrees of the Chapter as well as the beautiful degrees known as Cryptic Masonry are founded upon incidents occurring at the building of the first Temple. These are confirmed by passages that we find recorded in the Scriptures many centuries after the building of the Temple, as for instance: "The Stone which the builders refused is become the Head Stone of the Corner" and "To him that overcometh I will give to eat of the hidden manna and I will give him a white stone and in the stone a name written which no man knoweth saving he that receiveth it," and other degrees have confirmation in the fact of "Masons Marks" being found on foundation stones in many different parts of the world, facsimiles of many hundreds of which have been published in the Quatuor Coronati transactions.

The Leland manuscript thus refers to Pythagoras: "How comede ytt (Freemasonry) yn Englonde?"

*Peter Gower*, a Grecian, journeyed for kunnyng yn Egypte and in Syria, and yn everyche londe whereat the Venetians hadde plauntedde Maconryne, and wynnynge entraunce yn al Lodges of Maconnes, he lerned muche, and retournendde and worked yn Grecia Magna wachsynge and becommynge a myghtye wysacre and gratelyche renounde, and here he framed a grate Lodge at Groton and maked many Maconnes, some whereoffedyd journeye yn Fraunce, and maked manye Maconnes wherefromme, yn process of tyme, the arte passed yn Englonde."

Brother Mackey says that "Locke, the celebrated Antiquary, was puzzled with those strange names, Peter Gower, Groton, and the Venetians, but a little thinking taught him that the were only corruptions of Pythagoras, Crotona and the Phoenicians."

Pythagoras, an eminent geometrician, was born 586 B. C., at Samos. "He traveled through Egypt, Chaldea and Asia Minor and is said to have submitted to the initiations in those countries for the purpose of acquiring knowledge. On his return to Europe he established his celebrated school at Crotona, much resembling that subsequently adopted by the Freemasons. His scholars numbered 300 and were divided into Exoterics and Esoterics. The Exoteric scholars were those who attended public assemblies where general ethical instructions were delivered by the sage, but only the esoterics constituted the true school and these alone, Pythagoras called his companions and friends. Before admission to the privileges of this school, the previous life and character of the candidate were rigidly scrutinized, and in the preparatory initiation secrecy was enjoined by an oath, and he was made to submit to the severest trials of his fortitude and self command. "

"There were three degrees: the First, or Mathematici, being engaged in the study of the exact sciences; and the second, or Theoretici, in the knowledge of God, and the future state of man; but the third, or highest degree, was communicated only to the few whose intellects were capable of grasping the full fruition of the Pythagorean philosophy." This school after existing for 30 years was finally dissolved by the machinations of Kylo, a wealthy inhabitant of Crotona, who, having been refused admission, in revenge excited the citizens against it, when a lawless mob attacked the scholars, set fire to the building and dispersed the disciples, forty of them being burned to death. The school was never resumed; but after the death of the philosopher summaries of his doctrines were made by some of his disciples; still many of his symbols and his esoteric teachings have to this day remained uninterpreted and unexplained.

Pythagoras is regarded as having been the inventor of several problems, the most important of which is that now known as the 47th problem of Euclid; and it is not singular that the old Masons should have called Pythagoras their "ancient friend and brother," and should have dedicated to him one of their geometrical symbols, the 47th problem of Euclid; an epithet and a custom that have, by the force of habit, been retained in all the modern rituals.

There was at Rome during the life time of Pythagoras as well as of Euclid, what was known as the Roman Colleges of Artificers, founded by Numa Pompilius, the second king of Rome, in B. C. 700, the form and regulations of which bear a most striking analogy to that of our Fraternity of today.

"The first regulation, which was an indispensable one, was that no College could consist of less than three members." The Mason will readily see "the identity of this regulation of the Colleges and that of Freemasonry, which with equal rigor requires three Masons to constitute a Lodge."

These Colleges had officers corresponding to those of our Masonic Lodges. Each College was presided over by a chief, called a Magister, which is exactly translated by the English word Master. "The next officers were the Decuriones. They were analogous to the Masonic Wardens, for each Decurio presided over a section or division of the College, just as in the most ancient English and in the present Continental Ritual we find the Lodge divided into two sections or columns over each of which one of the Wardens presides."

There were also officers corresponding to the secretary, treasurer and chaplain of our Masonic Lodges.

Another analogy is found in the distribution of classes; as the Masons have their Master Masons, Fellow Crafts and their Apprentices, so these Colleges had their Seniores or chief men of the trade and their journeymen and apprentices.

"These Colleges held secret meetings, in which the business transacted consisted of the initiation of the neophytes into their Fraternity; and of mystical and esoteric instructions to their apprentices and journeymen. They were, in this respect, secret societies like the Masonic Lodges."

There were many other striking analogies between these Roman Colleges and our Fraternity which time will, not permit me to enlarge upon.

They were invested by the government with extraordinary powers in reference to the control of builders.

These Colleges of Builders accompanied the Roman legions in their conquests of other nations and it was thus in the early part of the Christian era that they invaded and subjugated Britain. They established Roman civilization on the fields of Roman conquest. They ceased to build Pagan Temples. They began to rear Christian churches. They immediately set about the construction of bridges and the founding of towns and cities, the most notable of which was the ancient city of York; and it was thus that Freemasonry was introduced into the British Isles.

The earliest mention of Masonry in England in these old manuscripts was in the time of St. Alban in the third century, the legend of which is as follows:

"Amphabell came out of France into England and he brought St. Albane into Christendone and made him a Christian man and he brought with him the charges

of Masons as they were in France and other Lands, and in that time the King of the Land was a Panem dwelled there as St. Albans is now and he had many Masons working on the Towne walls, and at that time St. Allane was the Kings Steward pay master and Governor of the Kings worke and loved well Masons and cherished them well and made them good pay for a Mason took but a penny a day and meat and drink, and St. Albone got of the King that every Mason should have XXXd a week and iiii for their non finding and he got them charges and manners as St. Amphabell had taught him, and they do but a little differ from the charges that be used now at this time and soe these charges and manners were used many years, and afterwards they were almost near hand lost *bargarie ware* until the time of King Ethelstone which said King Ethelstone and the same Edwine loved well Geometry and applied himselfe busily in learning that science and also he desired to have the practice thereof wherefore he called unto him of the best Masons that were in the Realme for he knew well that they had the practice of Geometry best of any craft in the Realme and he learned of them Masonry and cherished and loved them well and he took upon him the charges and learned the manners, and afterwards for the love that he had unto the craft, and for the good grounding that it was found in he purchased a free charter of the King his father that they should have such freedom to have correction within themselves and that they might have communication together to correct such things as were amiss within themselves, and they made a great Congregation of Masons to assemble together at Yorke (926) where he was himselfe, and let call the old Masons of the Realme to that congregation, and commanded them to bring to him all the writings of the old books of the craft that they had, out of which books they contrived the charges by the devise of the wisest Masons that there were, and commanded that these charges might be kept and holden and he ordained that such congregation might be called assembly, and he ordained for them good pay that they might live honestly the which charges I will hereafter declare, and this was the craft of Masonry there grounded and considered, In England right worshipful masters and fellows that been of divers Semblies and congregations with the consent of the Lords of this Realme hath ordained and made charges by their best advise that all manner of men that shall be made and allowed Masons, must be sworne upon a booke to keep the same in all that they may to the uttermost of their power, and also, they have ordained that when any fellow shall be received and allowed that these charges might be read unto him, and he to take his charges, and these charges have been seen and perused by our late Sovereigne Lord King Henry the sixth and the Lords of the Honorable Councill, and they have allowed them well and said they were right good and reasonable to be holden and these charges have been drawne and gathered out of divers ancient books both of the old Law and new Law as they were confirmed and made in Egypt by the King and by the great clerk Euclid and at the making of Solomons Temple "by King David and by Salom his son and in France by Charles King of France and in England by St. Albon that was the steward to the King that was at that time, and afterward by King Ethelstone that was king of England, and by his son Edwin that was King after his father as it is rehearsed in many and divers histories and stories and Chapters and ensueth as the charges following particularly and severally."

The account of the convocation and assembly at York in 926 was regarded as authentic history by Anderson, Preston and Oliver and by almost all succeeding writers in England as well as in other countries until about fifty years ago, but in these latter days the iconoclasts have rejected them all as myths, because, forsooth, no mention is made of such an assembly in any contemporary publications.

Should not these persons remember the story of Pliny and the buried cities of Pompeii and Herculaneum?

I believe as firmly, that about the time mentioned, 926, such a general assembly of Masons was held at York, as I do that there was an assembly of Masons held at the "Goose and Gridiron" in London in 1717, that organized the Grand Lodge of England. The motive for both was the same, namely the revival of Masonry and the collection of the old regulations of the Fraternity.

Can anyone conceive of a motive that could have induced these old writers to have invented such a story?

The history in all these early manuscripts ends with an account of the general assembly held at York in 926, with the charges, numbering 23, upon which the ancient charges adopted by the Grand Lodge in 1717 are formulated. That the history ends with this assemblage held at York would lead to the supposition that the original manuscript was compiled about that time and it is possible therefore, that the compiler may have seen the original record of the proceedings of the assembly. The history is continued by Anderson and brought down to the year 1738 in which he published his second *Book of Constitutions*, and this presumably is compiled from authentic records and writings.

As stated all the important personages mentioned by Anderson in his history are styled Grand Masters, which is an interpolation of the old MSS. Undoubtedly, the personages mentioned were chiefs, leaders and instructors of the people among whom they dwelt and therefore, the term Grand Masters, as applied to them by Anderson is not after all so absurd as one might think at first blush.

## DEDUCTIONS AND CONCLUSIONS

In the opening of this paper it was stated that in 1723, a very learned and distinguished brother, Rev. James Anderson, published his *Book of Constitutions* containing what purported to be a full and complete history of the Fraternity from the earliest times, much of which is regarded as too fabulous to be considered as veritable history. It will be observed by the brethren who have done me the honor to follow me in my meditations that my object has been to show that perhaps, there might be some germs of truth, or foundation in fact, for at least some of his statements, and for that purpose I have analysed and quoted from the facsimiles of the original manuscripts and the writings from which evidently the learned brother compiled much of his history, and have given my deductions and conclusions.

It will be noticed that I expressed my belief in the Solomonic origin of Freemasonry and then gave the reason for the faith that is within me. I also dwelt at some length upon the reference made in these old writings to the connection of the distinguished philosophers, Pythagoras and Euclid, with our Fraternity, regarding whom I will add a few reflections.

The second or what is known as Zerubbabel's Temple was begun B. C. 735, at which time Pythagoras was about thirty five years old, and he, as the encyclopedias inform us, was a great traveler as well as a great seeker after knowledge. Now is it a very great stretch of credulity to believe that Pythagoras may have visited Jerusalem during the construction of that Temple and acquired the *esoterics* known to the builders at that time as he did those of Egypt and other countries? This will give reasonable ground for the ancient writers of the manuscripts to connect his name with our Fraternity.

It must be borne in mind that these ancient writers had access to MSS. and writings which are not accessible to us. During the fifteenth century it is said the accumulation of old writings and MSS. was so great that they were used by the bakers in heating their ovens, the possession of which would make clear to us much that is now obscure.

It is quite certain that the Egyptians were familiar with some of our legends. I have seen an old engraving taken from the Egyptian hieroglyphics upon which is delineated three figures. The first represents a man standing on a platform of *three steps*, on his head is an antique *covering*, before him lies the body of a man, beside whom is a lion crouching on his haunches, in his left paw he holds a ball or sphere surmounted by a cross, the emblem of supreme authority, his right paw being extended towards the prostrate man.

We referred to the Colleges of Builders established at Rome, B. C. 715, and it is reasonable to suppose that Pythagoras as well as Euclid, who was also a great seeker after knowledge, was perfectly familiar with the organization, rules and regulations, as well as the *esoterics* practiced by that organization. Men of their calibre would leave no stone unturned to acquaint themselves with the progress and inventions of the age in which they lived.

Reference is then made to the great similarity between the Roman Colleges of Artificers and our Fraternity and here I think, we have reached safe ground upon which all may stand.

Krause, whom Mackey terms one of the most learned and laborious Masons of Germany, in his great history published in 1811, advances the doctrine "that the Fraternity as it now exists is indebted for all its characteristics religious and social, political and professional, its interior organization, its modes of thought and action, and its very design and object, to the Roman Colleges of Artificers, passing with but little characteristic changes through the 'Architectural Gilds' of the Middle Ages up to the English organization of the year 1717;" so that he claims an almost absolute identity between the Roman Colleges of Numa, seven hundred years before Christ,

and the Lodges of the nineteenth century. We need not, according to his view, go any further back in history nor look to any other series of events, nor trouble ourselves with any other influences for the origin and character of Freemasonry.

This view would make our Fraternity 2500 years old; but not to go back any farther than the time of St. Alban or even to Athelstan, our Fraternity would be a thousand years old, which would make it the oldest existing of human institutions. and therefore, worthy of our utmost respect and veneration.

It is greatly to be regretted that there are in this busy, moneymaking age, so few students of Masonry; there surely ought to be among the 15,000 Masons of Maryland some who have the time as well as the means to become students. I can assure them that they will find the subject an inexhaustible one and that its history, its jurisprudence, its laws, regulations, usages and customs are worthy the studious attention of anyone. Although debarred by reason of age and infirmity from being present with my brethren and personally participating in this interesting celebration of the 129th anniversary of our Grand Lodge, I shall be gratified if I have in any way contributed to the interest of this occasion. And if I have succeeded in inducing anyone to give more time and consideration to our ancient and time honored Fraternity, it will be to me one of the proudest memories of my life-long devotion to the interests of the craft.