

## **A Kabbalistic Lithograph in Australia: Rabbi A. B. Davis's Lectures on the Origin of the Rites and Worship of the Hebrews**

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### **Abstract**

Alexander Barnard Davis, the esteemed leader of the Sydney Jewish community between 1862 and 1913, gave a series of lectures on the origin of the rites and worship of the Hebrews. A fascinating story emerges from the history of these lectures: They were given on a large Kabbalistic lithograph. The paper will trace the circuitous route of the artwork, which will shed light on the hitherto unknown affiliation of Davis with Freemasonry, and will elaborate on the content and the socio-cultural context of the lectures delivered for a multi-denominational audience in Sydney and Melbourne.

### **Keywords**

Alexander Barnard Davis, Max Wolff, Julius Bien, David Rosenberg, Kabbalah, Freemasonry, Lithography

### **Introduction**

Alexander Barnard Davis (1828–1913), the renowned religious leader of the Sydney Jewish community for more than four decades was a sought-after orator. Of the many lectures he delivered on various aspects of Judaism, those on the origin of the rites and worship of the Hebrews, at first, would not stand out as something unusual and noteworthy and with a story attached to them that sets them apart from all his other lectures. However, this is exactly the case and this paper is to present the history of these lectures of Davis—delivered between 1863 and 1894 in Sydney and Melbourne—which in fact were addressing a large (960 × 605 mm) Kabbalistic lithograph that started its life in Paris in 1841, embarked on a journey to London and then to the United States, before reaching Jamaica where Davis acquired a copy of it just before moving to Australia in the beginning of the 1860s. Interestingly, the artwork had a Masonic career as well, which played a key role in the story how Davis got acquainted with the print. In what follows, first I will provide a short overview of the Kabbalistic lithograph together with its Masonic reading, and its history in France, England, and the United States until it arrived at Jamaica. Then, I will discuss Davis's early career in London and Kingston, including his involvement in Freemasonry and his encounter with the lithograph. In the rest of the paper, we will turn our attention to the lectures Davis delivered on the artwork in Australia and their multifaceted embeddedness in the social and historical contexts of Jewish history in Sydney in the second half of the nineteenth century.



*Figure 1. Julius Bien and Max Wolff, ORIGIN OF THE RITES AND WORSHIP OF THE HEBREWS. | By M. WOLFF, | NEW YORK 5619.-1859. Stone-engraved lithograph signed 'Engraved & Printed by J. Bien, 60 Fulton Str. N.Y.' and 'Entered according to act of Congress in the year 1859 by M Wolff, in the Clerks office for the southern District of New York.' Courtesy Hebraic Section, African and Middle Eastern Division, Library of Congress, Washington, DC.*

### **The Kabbalistic lithograph**

The lithograph that eventually made its way to Australia started its life in Paris in 1841 under the title *Aperçu de l'origine du culte hébraïque* (Survey of the origin of the Hebrew religion) together with a seventy-page explanatory volume.<sup>1</sup> (For the US edition of the print, see fig. 1.) Its author, Rabbi David Rosenberg (born in Tokaj, Hungary, 1793), was an artist, scribe and Freemason who in the 1830s and 1840s made a number of large Kabbalistic-Masonic lithographs in Paris, complemented by explanatory books and pamphlets. The rabbi, originally from Hungary, was admitted to a Parisian Masonic lodge of aristocrats, and had close ties to London Freemasons too, among them Prince Augustus Frederick (1773–1843), Duke of Sussex, the Grand Master of the United Grand Lodge of England (UGLE). The *Origine* was published in the midst of a fierce debate within the Jewish community about Jewish religious reforms, in which Rosenberg took a conservative stand. The print was to prove, with the help of Kabbalah, that Jewish religious observances have been in place since creation and are so closely tied up with nature and its phenomena that anyone intent on changing them is bound to change nature first.<sup>2</sup>

The iconographic program of the highly detailed and complex lithograph is based on a Kabbalistic understanding of the system of the universe and Judaism.<sup>3</sup> The conceptual framework is the organic worldview: The universal harmony between the macrocosm and the microcosm. The print displays the cosmic harmony of the universe, which is revealed through the number symbolism of Kabbalah that holds the key to occult causality, the living network of correspondences between the divine system and Judaism. The ornately decorated architectural construct is an allegorical representation of the Temple of the Universe. The edifice is broken up by a remarkable array of openings, on various levels, and is full of architectural details. The central opening is framed with texts in a frieze-like row of blocks and medallions, topped by an arch and surrounded by a multitude of recesses containing narrative scenes. The whole composition is populated with figures and Jewish religious items and is replete with Kabbalistic symbols and Hebrew texts.

The centre of the pedestal bears the visual and conceptual foundation of the image, the *Ein Sof*—literally ‘no end’, the Infinite God—surrounded by the *Shem haMephorash*, the seventy-two hidden names of God. In the centre of the lithograph we see a balcony with a view of creation. (See fig. 2.) Below the Kabbalistic tree the terrestrial globe is emerging from the clouds. Above the pediment of the edifice is an arch with the divine names displayed at the centre: The tetragrammaton and the word *Adonai*. They are embraced by an arch, in which the correspondences between the heavenly order in nature and Judaism are summarised. (See fig. 3.) The four concentric semicircles are dedicated to four themes: the letters of the Hebrew alphabet; the elements, planets and the zodiac; the days and the months; and the parts of the human body. An additional semicircle contains the objects of divine worship in the

Temple of Jerusalem. The semicircles are divided into sections which correlate with each other along the numbers three, seven and twelve. These numbers represent the core correlations that hold the divine and the mundane worlds together, as it is revealed in the *Sefer Yetzirah*—the Book of Creation (or Formation), an important esoteric book in Judaism, traditionally ascribed to Abraham—which is placed as a visual connecting element between the universal heavenly order and our created world: It is inscribed into twelve frames on the lintel, linking the central opening and the vault.

The narrative scenes, framing the composition, add further elucidations to the subject: Jacob symbolises the two halves of the year, while his children the twelve months and the signs of the zodiac, the seasons are symbolised by the matriarchs, whereas Abraham and Isaac are symbolic of the vernal and autumnal equinoxes. To the right of the *Shem haMephorash* in the pedestal, the day of rest, the Sabbath, is symbolised (see fig. 4), while on the opposite side the Shabbat Shabbaton (the Shabbat of Shabbats or Yom Kippur). On the extreme bottom right is a scene that symbolises the marriage ceremony, which is balanced on the far left by a depiction of a circumcision ceremony. Next to the creation scene, on the right, the Passover Seder evening is depicted and on the left-hand side the holiday of Sukkot is represented. Above the Seder scene we see the five Megillot, while the scene on the opposite side depicts religious articles: The *tefillin*, the *tallit*, and the *tzitzit*.

### **The Masonic lithograph**

Rosenberg's lithograph had a Masonic reading as well, postulating a direct connection between Judaism and the fraternity. Freemasonry was the largest and most important secular, non-governmental organization in the nineteenth century. One of its central tenets requires its members to adhere to that religion in which all men agree.<sup>4</sup> Furthermore, it is laid down that no quarrel on religion shall be brought into the lodge, the smallest administrative unit of the fraternity. These principles played a decisive role in the ease with which the brotherhood spread to the European continent from its birthplace, England, where the formation of the Grand Lodge of England<sup>5</sup> in 1717 marks the 'official' starting date of Freemasonry. Masonry with its universal and cosmopolitan outlook provided a unique opportunity for Jews to socialize in a non-Jewish milieu, and by its cultural prestige and societal prominence it was the most important platform for social relations for people belonging to different religious denominations and from all walks of life.<sup>6</sup>

The Temple of Solomon occupies a central place in the mythology and symbolism of Freemasonry. The Temple itself, its stones and the working tools of the masons, and the construction all have multifaceted symbolical meanings in Masonry, and symbolical and allegorical references to them are prevalent in the oral and written traditions, the rituals, and the entire material culture of the fraternity: Architecture, lodge furnishings, regalia, visual





Figure 2. Creation scene, Origin (detail).



Figure 3. Arch of Correspondences, Origin (detail).



Figure 4. Shabbat, Origin (detail).

material, etc. Jewish Masons could readily identify with the Solomonic heritage of Freemasonry and it was an important asset in their hands in ideological battles on the religious nature of the brotherhood or when Jewish brethren were excluded from lodges. Rosenberg was relying on this heritage when he published his own Masonic explanations of the Kabbalistic lithograph in a Masonic journal in London.<sup>7</sup> The point of connection between Judaism and Freemasonry, Rosenberg posited, could be found in the laws of nature: Judaism mirrors the celestial order because it is rooted directly in the divine system, and in turn Freemasonry reflects these laws because it originates from the Hebrews.

In all likelihood it was the Masonic interpretation of the artwork that helped it to reach the United States. Already in 1842 it entered the library of a respectable Boston Freemason and Rosenberg's Masonic explanation was republished in a Boston Masonic periodical.<sup>8</sup> It was in Boston that the future US publisher of the work, Rev. Max Wolff (1820–1868), a Jewish minister, acquired an impression of the lithograph around 1857.<sup>9</sup> In 1859 Wolff republished Rosenberg's work in New York together with the explicatory book in his own translation.<sup>10</sup> The print was re-lithographed by the renowned lithographer and cartographer, Julius Bien (1826–1909). Both the lithograph and the *Explication* were subject to modifications: Bien refashioned the artwork in its every minuscule detail, furthermore he added two new narrative scenes to the print,<sup>11</sup> and the *Explication* came 'With Additional Remarks and Investigations, Notes and Diagrams, by Max Wolff.' In his capacity as a translator, editor and author, Wolff took liberty to correct and amend the text, to insert comments and footnotes, and to add or omit from Rosenberg's translations of Kabbalistic sources. Wolff's authorship is quite substantial when compared to the translated seventy-two pages: His contribution amounts to twenty-seven pages.<sup>12</sup>

The core of Wolff's 'additional remarks and investigations' are appended to the end of the volume in five sections: The 'Twenty-Two Letters of the Hebrew Alphabet' (an Aristotelian account of the correspondences between the celestial and terrestrial domains based on the categories of matter and form), the 'Circumcision on the Eighth Day' (explaining the reason for performing the ritual on that specific day), the 'Book of the Torah, and the Perfect Scale' (which addresses the two most important precepts of the Torah, the 'thou shalt love the Lord thy God' and the 'thou shalt love thy neighbor like thyself'), the 'Five Megilloth' (that draws parallels between the Torah, the Megillot and the periods in human life), and finally the 'Mitsnepheth, Turban, or Head-Covering' (which addresses the custom of covering the head in Judaism).<sup>13</sup>

The US lithograph had a double life just as that of its progenitor in Europe: On the one hand, the work was advertised and received as a Kabbalistic piece of art, on the other hand, it had a Masonic interpretation. As a Kabbalistic work offering a panoramic view of Judaism it drew interest from

a cross-denominational audience.<sup>14</sup> As a Masonic lithograph, it was advertised in Masonic journals, sold in Masonic retail stores and through agents, was put on display in Masonic lodges, and was the subject of Masonic lectures.<sup>15</sup> Wolff embarked upon a year-long promotional tour in the United States, throughout which he was selling his work and delivering lectures on it.

Following the tour, in the first half of 1861, Wolff spent five months in Kingston, Jamaica.<sup>16</sup> There, he continued to promote his work very successfully. Moses Nathan Nathan (1807–1883), former minister of the English and German Congregation at Kingston,<sup>17</sup> held an hour-and-a-half long lecture at the Masonic lodge in front of ‘a large assemblage of the fraternity’ on the subject of ‘Masonry—Tracing its Origin, Symbols, &c., to their Biblical and Ancient Sources.’<sup>18</sup> The lecture ‘elicited bursts of most enthusiastic applause, both during the delivery and at its close’. This lecture ‘in substance embodied the ideas of Rev. Max Wolff...all of which bore the stamp of genius of no common order’ and ‘the Masonic fraternity of Kingston are deeply indebted to him for the new and beautiful light which he has thrown upon Free Masonry’.<sup>19</sup> The audience found the topic highly interesting, and arrangements were made for two additional lectures: By Alexander Barnard Davis and Abraham Haim Delevante (1837–1879). That is, it was in Kingston where Davis encountered the lithograph and (based on the extant sources) through its Masonic interpretation. Therefore, before continuing, let us turn to the early years of Davis’s career, including his involvement in Freemasonry.

### **Davis as Freemason**

Davis was born in London in 1828 and was orphaned around the time of his *bar mitzva*.<sup>20</sup> He was educated in the Jews’ Free School and under Rev. Henry Abraham Henry (1800–1879).<sup>21</sup> Davis was only 19 when he became the headmaster of the Jews’ Free School. In his early twenties he officiated at major services at the Westminster Synagogue and in December 1852 he was elected minister and lecturer of the congregation at Portsmouth<sup>22</sup> where he got married in 1853. The next year he accepted the charge of the English and German Congregation at Kingston, Jamaica, a post he held for seven years.<sup>23</sup>

Davis became involved in Freemasonry when he was only 21 years of age. As attested by documentary evidence from the archive of the United Grand Lodge of England, he was initiated into Masonry in the Wellington Loge No. 805,<sup>24</sup> on 8 April 1850.<sup>25</sup> (See fig. 5.) In the next month he was passed to the degree of Fellow Craft and in June he was raised to Master Mason.<sup>26</sup>

With its growing popularity and prominence, Freemasonry early on spread to the colonies of the British Empire.<sup>27</sup> Masonry arrived at Jamaica in 1739 and Jews took an active part in the fraternity from the beginning. The Friendly Lodge No. 239 at Kingston was constituted in 1797 and while most, if not all,




the lodges on the island had Jewish members, this lodge had the highest percentage of Jewish brethren.<sup>28</sup> For instance, Moses N. Nathan, who delivered the Masonic lecture on the *Origin* in 1861, was the Master of the lodge in 1841.<sup>29</sup> Abraham Haim Delevante, minister of the Spanish and Portuguese Synagogue<sup>30</sup> and an artist<sup>31</sup>—and who, as mentioned above, also delivered an additional lecture on the lithograph—held positions in Masonry at various levels: He was the Master of Friendly Lodge in 1858 and 1859<sup>32</sup> and the Grand Chaplain<sup>33</sup> in the Provincial Grand Lodge from 1860 to 1864.<sup>34</sup>

Wellington Lodge No 805  
W. Alexander Bernard David  
Initiated 8<sup>th</sup> April 1850  
Passed 13<sup>th</sup> May -  
Raised 10<sup>th</sup> June -  
1579  
Maudslayi W.M.

Figure 5. Davis's initiation, passing, and raising in Wellington Lodge No.805, in 1850. Returns 1833–1863; return dated 9 September 1850. Courtesy Library and Museum of Freemasonry, United Grand Lodge of England, London.

Most of the archival material has fallen victim of the fires and earthquakes in Jamaica, hence one must rely on sources survived outside the island. Luckily, such sources preserved reports on an event that shed some light on Davis's Masonic activity at Kingston. This event was the consecration of the new Masonic Hall of the Friendly Lodge on 4 March 1858. A return<sup>35</sup> and an ephemera folded into it provide an account of the ceremony.<sup>36</sup> (See fig. 6.) Furthermore, long reports appeared in the *Freemasons' Magazine* and *The Jewish Chronicle*. The Masonic journal informed its readers that 'Bro. the Rev. A. B. Davis, Grand Chaplain [was] on the left [of the Grand Master, under the dais] attired in full canonicals'.<sup>37</sup> Davis delivered a 'lengthened and brilliant oration' (which is cited in part in the report), at the conclusion of which 'the reverend Brother was loudly cheered, and the R.W. Prov. Grand Master rose and formally proposed a vote



**THE DEDICATION**  
OF THE  
**NEW ROOMS OF THE FRIENDLY LODGE,**  
HANOVER-STREET,  
WILL TAKE PLACE  
**On Thursday, 4th March, 1858.**

The Provincial Grand Lodge of Scotland, and the other Lodges in the Province, will assemble at Sussex Hall, at 4 o'clock, p. m. The Lodge will be opened in form, after which the Procession of the Brethren will proceed up Duke-street, crossing Law's-street, thence to the New Lodge Rooms, Hanover-street.

**PROGRAMME :**

On the Procession reaching the door of the intended Lodge Rooms it halts, and opens right and left. The Worshipful Past Masters, and Master of the Friendly Lodge, with The Lodge, will then enter the new Lodge Rooms, followed by the Provincial Grand Lodge of Scotland, and the other Lodges in the Province, according to seniority.

On the Provincial Grand Master taking his station in the East, and the other Officers of the P. G. Lodge in their places, the Band will then play the National Anthem.

Ladies, and visitors who are not Masons, are admitted.

The Lodge being placed in the centre of the Hall, a Solo will be played on the Melodion, during which the Provincial Grand Lodge will proceed three times round the Hall.

The Pitchers, with corn, wine, and oil, are placed on The Lodge; the Pedestal, with the bible, square and compasses, charter book of constitution and by-laws of the Friendly Lodge, are laid thereon, and placed at the head of The Lodge, in the East.

An Anthem will then be sung by Choristers, after which the Grand Master will address the Brethren.

The Master of the Friendly Lodge addresses the Grand Master, and requests him to Dedicate the Hall, The Grand Master expresses his approbation.

The Consecration Hymn will then be chaunted by Choristers, the Ladies, and visitors who are not Masons, will retire, after which the Consecration Service, in Tyled Lodge, will then be proceeded with, after the performance of which the Ladies, &c., are re-admitted.

A Solo played on the Melodion.  
An Ode is sung.  
An Oration by Chaplain.  
The Master's Address.  
Charity Hymn by Choir.  
Performance by the Band on retiring.

[J. Lawton, Printer.]

Figure 6. "The Dedication of the New Rooms of the Friendly Lodge" No. 291, Kingston, Jamaica, 4 March 1858. Returns 1858–1863, return dated 19 April 1858. Courtesy Library and Museum of Freemasonry, United Grand Lodge of England, London.

of thanks to the Grand Chaplain. The reverend Brother, in brief but suitable terms, acknowledged the ovation, and resumed his seat amidst loud demonstrations of satisfaction'.<sup>38</sup> The Jewish newspaper, also quoting at length from Davis's lecture, noted that 'a considerable number of brethren present were co-religionists'.<sup>39</sup> Although Davis would have, no doubt, become acquainted with the lithograph during Wolff's five-month-long sojourn at Kingston even without being a Mason, his involvement in Freemasonry provides clear evidence of the circumstances. His lecture on the *Origin* was reported by the *Jamaica Guardian*, from which both the *Jewish Chronicle*<sup>40</sup> (London) and the *Jewish Messenger*<sup>41</sup> (New York) abridged the following note:

*The Rev. Mr. Davis lately delivered a lecture on "The origin of the rites and worship of the Hebrews." The room was filled with a highly respectable audience, a large portion of whom were ladies. ...The subject of Mr. Davis's lecture was curious and instructive in no ordinary degree, and the reverend lecturer handled it with great ability and with an impressive eloquence, keeping alive the attention and interest of the company to the very last word he uttered, although the lecture occupied nearly an hour and a-half in its delivery.*

Davis applied successfully for a vacant ministerial post in Sydney in 1861. On his way to Australia, he spent a short period of time in London in 1862. Inducted in September 1862, Davis, who was customarily referred to as Rabbi Davis although he was lacking ordination,<sup>42</sup> held the position for 41 years, until 1903. During his long career he not only contributed significantly to the building of the Great Synagogue, established and headed numerous educational institutions and benevolent societies, but was also very active in all sorts of public philanthropic initiatives.<sup>43</sup> He is credited for the unification of the split Jewish community of Sydney.<sup>44</sup> Being a well-known and respected public figure, and an eloquent speaker, Davis was a sought-after lecturer.

In Kingston Davis bought an impression of the lithograph with the *Explication* from Wolff and took them with him to Australia. And while it was through Masonry that he got to know the artwork, he did not seem to have delivered lectures on it in Masonic context in Australia, which is at first somewhat surprising considering that Australian Jewry was well integrated into Freemasonry, including many of the spiritual leaders, some of whom published regularly on Masonic matters.<sup>45</sup> Some of the Masonic periodicals were even founded and/or edited by Jews, for instance the *Freemason's Chronicle* in Sydney.<sup>46</sup> Two well-known 'Jewish lodges' were the Tranquility Lodge No. 42 in Sydney and the Lodge of Australia Felix No. 1 in Melbourne. The *Jewish Herald* observed that 'of all the various lodges, orders, &c.,

established in Sydney the most largely patronised by the Jewish Community—both numerically and socially—is the order of Freemasons. There is a lodge called the Tranquility Lodge, of which half the members are Jews.<sup>47</sup> The membership of the Lodge of Australia Felix No. 1, which was formed in 1839,<sup>48</sup> also included a large number of Jews.

Therefore, we can only speculate about the reasons for Davis's abstainment from the fraternity—perhaps he wanted to dedicate all his time and energy to the tasks and duties incumbent upon his new office. Nevertheless, we learn about this fact thanks to a minor clash with a Masonic dignitary over the correct pronunciation and meaning of the name 'Abif'. Hiram Abif, the eponym of the Hiramic legend, was the architect of Solomon—that is, of the Temple of Jerusalem—whose murder and resurrection are key elements in Masonic mythology and degree work. The spat occurred between Davis and Rev. Wazir Beg (1827–1885), a Presbyterian minister, who was the Grand Chaplain of the Grand Lodge of New South Wales and for a period of time the editor and proprietor of the journal *Freemason*.<sup>49</sup> Beg published a short piece on the etymology of the name Abif in the *Australian Freemason's Magazine*<sup>50</sup> in January 1870, to which Davis felt obligated to respond in the following number in order to correct Beg's expounding. From his introductory remark we learn the following:

*Though not taking, at the present time, any active part in Freemasonry, I am yet so ardent an admirer of the excellent lessons it conveys, the beautiful illustrative moral teachings it diffuses, the symbolic grandeur of the subjects which constitute its lecture, the heaven-born charity it so strongly inculcates, and the Scriptural facts it hands down as traditionary links in the evidence of the early revelation, that I cannot permit the article of the Rev. Dr. Beg, on "Masonic Communicable Terms," to pass unnoticed, as it appears to me to "re-produce" an error which was thought to have been long since "set at rest" by those acquainted with the most ancient of the semetic languages.<sup>51</sup>*

The Presbyterian minister, who was born into a Muslim family in India and converted to Christianity, took offence at the criticism and retorted.<sup>52</sup> Beg started his riposte in the next number of the Masonic journal by saying that 'it must be very gratifying to Masons to learn that there are Brethren among us, who—"not taking any active part in Masonry" are ever ready and willing when duty calls, in the interest of Masonry, to act a part, which Masons by their "obligations" are bound to act'.<sup>53</sup> With a biting ridicule, he continued lecturing 'the learned rabbi' on Biblical Hebrew in the April and May numbers, and apparently, the rivalry between them went on for years as



attested by a satirical poem and a caricature of them (see fig. 7) from 1880 over a verbal duel in the Freemason's Hall.<sup>54</sup>

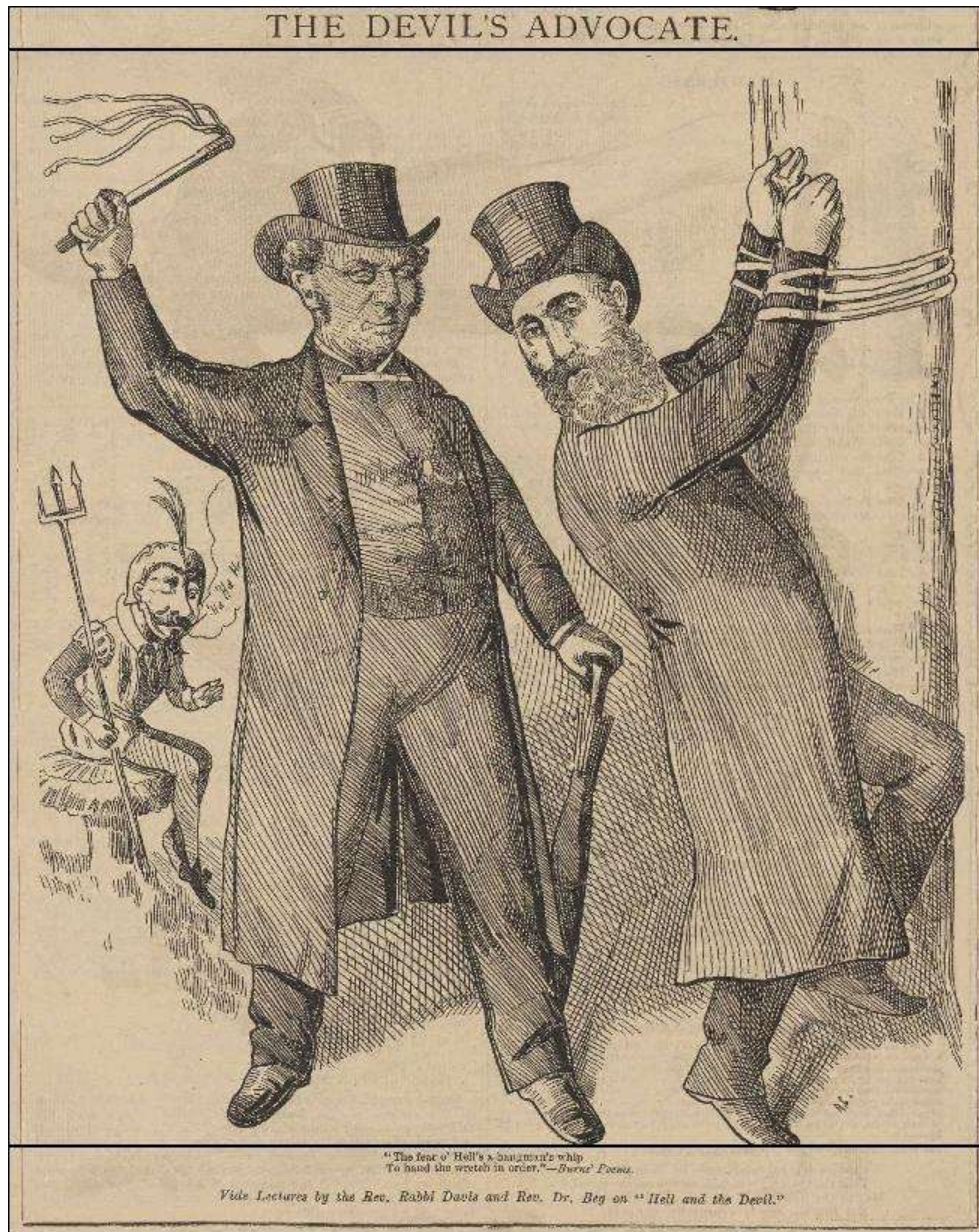


Figure 7. "The Devil's Advocate." Caricature from the *Sydney Punch*, 30 October 1880, 140.

Nonetheless, as evinced also by this quarrel, Davis kept an eye on Masonry and occasionally even paid visits to lodges. For instance, we learn from Sydney, from 1882, that:



*...one of the most eloquent speeches on the beauties of Freemasonry was given by Rev. A. B. Davis, at the Tranquility Lodge's last meeting. The rev. brother showed that in the forms and ceremonies there are ideas worth pursuing, and vast fields for benevolent activity, in which men of all creeds and races may, if they believe in a deity, work side by side in peace and happiness.*<sup>55</sup>

The *Hebrew Standard* reported from Melbourne, in 1898, that 'the Rev. A. B. Davis has returned from his holiday in Melbourne looking much improved in health. During his stay he attended by special request at the Masonic Lodge Australia Felix No. 1, and delivered a very instructive address on Freemasonry, for which he was most felicitously thanked.'<sup>56</sup> The same journal also related that:

*...many of our readers may not be aware of the great interest the Rev. A. B. Davis has taken in Freemasonry in years gone by. It came to our knowledge that the leading Craftsmen of Victoria had almost obtained a promise from the rev. gentleman to give a lecture on his next visit to Melbourne, so we have taken counsel with a well-known Jewish member of the Craft, and hope to shortly announce that arrangements have been completed for a Masonic Service in aid of the Freemasons' Benevolent Society and the Jewish charities, should the Rev. A. B. Davis approve of the scheme.*<sup>57</sup>

### **Lectures on the lithograph in Australia**

So while no account of the content of these speeches has survived, and hence we are left without any reference to the *Origin* in Masonic context, outside of Masonry we are supplied with ample evidence of the fact that Davis kept on delivering lectures on the lithograph in Australia for a period spanning over three decades. Contemporary newspapers documented seven lectures.<sup>58</sup> Only three months after his arrival to Sydney, an advertisement announcing his first lecture appeared in the *Sydney Morning Herald* with the title 'Lecture on the Origin of the Rites and Worship of the Hebrews'.<sup>59</sup> Three consecutive lectures were given in January, February<sup>60</sup> and March<sup>61</sup> 1863 in the School of Arts. The fourth lecture he gave at St. George's Hall in Melbourne in 1866.<sup>62</sup> Davis delivered two lectures at the Hebrew Literary and Debating Society in 1889<sup>63</sup> and 1890,<sup>64</sup> while his last lecture on the *Origin* seems to be the one he gave at the Unitarian Literary and Social Union in 1894.<sup>65</sup>

The newspaper reports reveal that the lithograph was put on display and served to illustrate the discourse—or vice versa: The lecture followed the visual narrative of the artwork. 'By the aid of several well-executed

engravings the lecturer explained the ceremonials observed at the feasts of the Passover, New Moon, Pentecost<sup>66</sup> or ‘by constant reference to the blackboard and a large picture, caused his auditors to follow his remarks by their eyes as well as by their ears’<sup>67</sup> and also ‘with the aid of an engraved chart of symbolical and allegorical representations, round which he carried his hearers on an imaginary trip, the origin of worship was described’.<sup>68</sup> Reference is also made, in no ambiguous terms, to the origin of the artwork: ‘On the platform were exhibited two<sup>69</sup> very beautiful illustrations of the symbols used by the Jews on the festive occasions...with various passages from...sacred writings in the original Hebrew. The lecturer explained that these drawings were taken in Paris and somewhat enlarged.’<sup>70</sup>

Furthermore, explicit references to details of the print are also recorded in the columns of contemporary newspapers. For instance, the *Sydney Morning Herald* wrote that ‘pointing to a diagram, [Davis] explained the figure of the man studying the works of creation, showing, by reference to the figures, that this was best done through the book of superior wisdom; but this book spoke by symbols’.<sup>71</sup> It is easy to identify in this description the central scene of the *Origin* (see fig. 2) and the *Sefer Yetzirah* (see fig. 1). Likewise, the arch of the correspondences (see fig. 3) is referred to in equally clear terms:

*Another portion of the diagram showed letters symbolising the figures 3, 7, and 12. The first was applicable to the beginning, the middle, and end of the Bible, to the three elements of fire, air, and water; the 7 had reference to the days of the week and the senses of man; and the 12 to the signs of the zodiac, the months of the year, and the parts of the body, and each were symbolised in the Temple, and in the articles employed in the service of the Temple.*<sup>72</sup>

A further detail that is unmistakably referred to in one of the reports is the scene in the bottom of the lithograph, next to the *Shem haMephorash*, on the right (see fig. 4): ‘The lecturer then passed on to describe a symbolical picture of the Sabbath—the feast of the world’s birth—as typified by a curtain three-parts drawn, disclosing a lamp of seven lights in the form of the seven *Sephiroth*, or emanations which peculiarly belong to man.’<sup>73</sup>

Davis did not simply use the *Origin* as an illustration or visual aid to deliver lectures on Jewish rituals and customs, but he followed relatively closely Wolff’s (/Rosenberg’s) *Explication* both in its general outline and specific points and arguments therein. (At times, however, he added his own thoughts and explanations, such as the dedication of a new house or the idea of multiple creations—four creations without human beings, while the fifth and final one with humans: our world.<sup>74</sup>)

The central premise of Rosenberg, namely that the Jewish worship and rituals are coeval with nature, is distinctly pronounced by Davis in his lectures and occasionally already in their titles: 'Origin of the Rites and Worship of the Hebrews, and their correspondence with Nature and her Works.'<sup>75</sup> The lectures usually started with the subject of creation for 'the institution of the Sabbath, and other religious observances connected with the Hebrew faith, dated back to the creation of the universe'.<sup>76</sup> 'The Hebrew faith was in strict accordance with nature, its types and symbols being, in a great measure, borrowed from it.'<sup>77</sup> Davis went on to argue, following Rosenberg, that therefore Moses was more 'the restorer of the original faith of man than as the founder of a new religion, for before him Sabbaths, periodical festivals, set forms and observances, had been in use from as far back as the epoch of Adam'.<sup>78</sup>

At these occasions, speaking about the Passover, the Feast of the Weeks, the Day of Atonement, and the Feast of Tabernacles and explaining the meanings of the custom of covering the head and the use of tallit,<sup>79</sup> and elucidating the rite of marriage,<sup>80</sup> the Kabbalistic content was not neglected. The mystical significance of the Shabbat and that of the number seven both in the Jewish religion and in nature were expounded upon. For instance, Davis spoke about the arch of correspondences and the Sefirotic tree was also touched upon in the lectures: 'The Bible spoke of seven heavens, and this had been made applicable to the different sentiments of the human mind: such as crown, wisdom, understanding, mercy, judgment, beauty, honour, foundation, kingdom, &c.'<sup>81</sup>

### **Educating Jews**

No doubt, the appeal of the artwork and the intriguing nature of the subject must have been good enough reasons for Davis to deliver these lectures. Nevertheless, other considerations related to education might have been in play too. As is well-known, the furthering the cause of education was always dear to Davis. Having a background as a headmaster of the Jews' Free School in London, on his arrival at Kingston, in his inauguration speech, he placed religious education, 'the ground-work for the minister',<sup>82</sup> at the top of his agenda. Also attests to his efforts the front free endleaves in his notebooks: 'At the Revd. A.B. Davis's Academy, Synagogue House, Kingston, Jamaica.'<sup>83</sup> (See fig. 8.) Davis was the president of the Hebrew National Institution, the pupils of which were publicly examined.<sup>84</sup>

In Sydney, likewise, Davis was in the forefront of Jewish education.<sup>85</sup> In 1845 the situation was still rather desperate as evinced by a complaint recorded in the Synagogue Report, in which a congregant lamented on the lack of public seminary, Jewish library, and public lectures.<sup>86</sup> Although a Hebrew Grammar School existed in the 1850s, it was not until Davis's arrival that the first serious efforts in Jewish education took place. Already in the beginning of September 1862, still prior to his inauguration, the Sydney

Hebrew School (started in 1859) welcomed Davis and presented an address to him. In his reply, in which he described the school as the ‘stepping-stone to the synagogue’, Davis stated that ‘I hope to do more than utter mere words’.<sup>87</sup> And he did more, indeed: He was instrumental in establishing, in 1863, the Sydney Jewish Sabbath School which became a branch of the London-based Society for the Diffusion of Religious Knowledge.<sup>88</sup> He also set up a lending library and a children’s saving bank.<sup>89</sup> Davis had private students as well<sup>90</sup> and presided over the inauguration of the Jewish Young Men’s Mutual Improvement Association.<sup>91</sup>

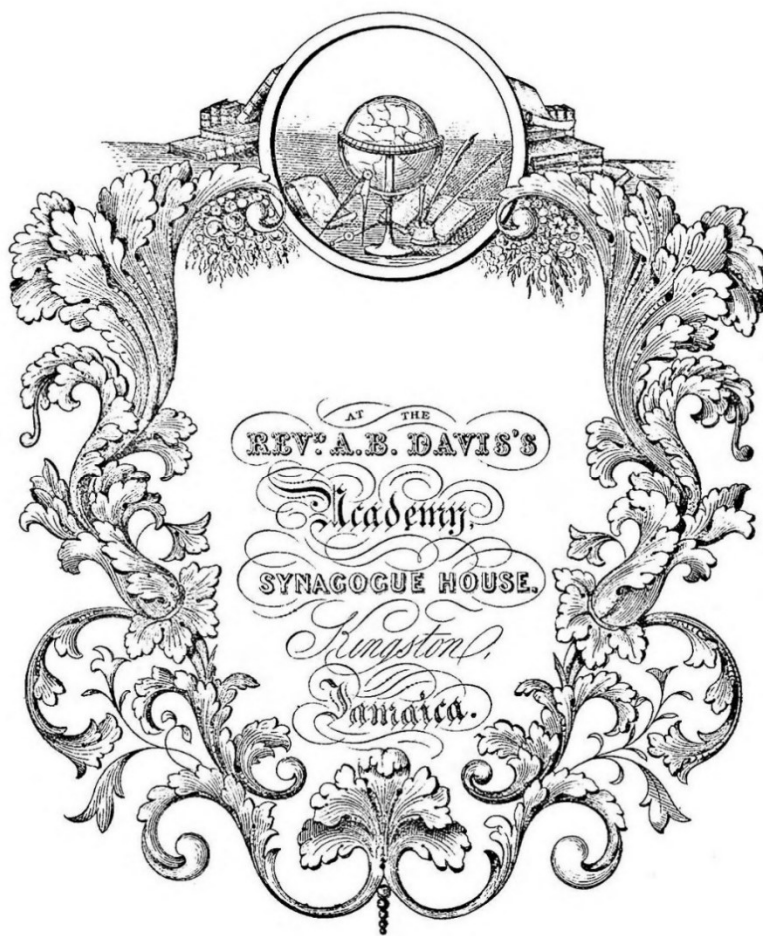


Figure 8. “At the Revd. A.B. Davis’s Academy, Synagogue House, Kingston, Jamaica.” Front free endleaf of A. B. Davis’s Notebook, n.d., AB151, item no. 1.775. Courtesy Australian Jewish Historical Society Archives, Sydney.

The Hebrew Literary and Debating Society was founded in 1887 with Davis as president.<sup>92</sup> In his inaugural address, Davis laid emphasis on the power of knowledge and the special role Jews played in cultivating intellectual endeavours. As indicated above, this was the forum where he gave

two of his *Origin*-lectures. Besides general educational intent, a mitigating effort against the negative trends in communal observance could have been an addition motivation. Decline in synagogue attendance reached all-time lows towards the end of the nineteenth century and laxity in Jewish religious observances was prevalent due, to a large extent, to the liberal social conditions and assimilation.<sup>93</sup> Already in his inaugural speech at the Hebrew Literary and Debating Society when talking about the importance and power of knowledge, Davis stressed that ‘beyond all, [members of the Jewish community] should not lose sight of the fact that knowledge should lead them to keep their hearts with all diligence, to look towards the Divine Being as their best friend, and to His law as their safest counsellor’.<sup>94</sup> In 1896, in an interview, he was complaining: ‘We have now a larger number of highly-educated and intelligent young men. Yet I grant that they will not take the trouble to prepare lectures and papers....Time after time a small (and constantly decreasing) number of our community gather together to listen to papers on non-Jewish subjects, by outsiders.’<sup>95</sup> The late *Origin*-lectures at the Hebrew Literary and Debating Society might have been delivered partly with the aim of counterbalancing this trend.

Another educational effort in which the *Origin* played a part is Davis’s textbook, the *Jewish Rites Explained: Together with Reference Texts to the Thirteen Articles of Jewish Faith and Prayers for Children on Different Occasions*.<sup>96</sup> It was published in 1869 and with some modifications it had a second and a third edition in 1879 and 1901. ‘No manual of Faith suitable to our requirements is as yet published’ complained Rev. Solomon Phillips—the Vice-President of the Committee formed for the purpose of establishing the Sabbath school—in his letter sent to the Hon. Secretary of Jewish Association for the Diffusion of Religious Knowledge in 1864.<sup>97</sup> Davis was to remedy the problem with preparing a modern textbook that was to relinquish the by then outdated catechism form and which would contain ‘an explanation of the Rites and Ceremonies of [the Jewish] worship together with an explanation of the Articles of Jewish belief and various prayers’.<sup>98</sup> Authoring educational materials was part and parcel of Davis’s educative efforts from early on. While heading the Jews’ Free School in London, he published a textbook in 1852, advertised as: ‘בכורי הלמוד’ being a Hebrew Primer and Progressive Reading Book.<sup>99</sup> The first work he published in Sydney, in 1866, was the *Questions upon the Principles and Duties of the Jewish Religion together with Form of Declaration of Faith, to be Used at the Confirmation Service of Young Ladies of the Sydney Synagogue, York-St.*<sup>100</sup> This work formed basis of his *Jewish Rites Explained*, but what is of particular interest to us is that occasionally Davis relied on the *Explication* in writing his textbook. Beyond the proximity of its title to that of the *Explication*, the part that most evidently borrowed its content from Wolff is the one on the head covering. Wolff explains that while the covering of head is an Oriental custom and a mark of respect, it is first and foremost a positive



commandment: God commanded Aaron through Moses to perform the divine service with his head covered.<sup>101</sup> Davis treats the subject in a very similar manner<sup>102</sup> and this is also a recurring theme in many of his *Origin*-lectures. Other points that show varying degrees of similarity include the preface,<sup>103</sup> the chapters on the *tzitzit*<sup>104</sup> and the Hoshana Rabbah.<sup>105</sup>

### **Educating non-Jews**

His last lecture on the *Origin*, as has been noted, Davis delivered at the Unitarian Literary and Social Union in 1894.<sup>106</sup> This fact should not surprise us for two reasons. First, the Jewish community, in the main, was well-integrated into the majority society, with little antisemitism, but significant philosemitism.<sup>107</sup> Second, Davis had a name for good relations with other denominations. His reputation to this regard was noted in the *Jewish Chronicle* upon his arrival at Sydney: ‘As Mr. Davis had always been called upon to take part in all proceedings having for their object the public good, either as relating to education, charity, or improvement generally, his departure from [Kingston] will be much felt.’<sup>108</sup> As examples for his active involvement in philanthropy and his sense of initiative, mention should be made of a relief fund in Kingston—opened on the initiative of Davis, Delevante, and wardens of the two Jewish congregations—to help the Christian population of Syria<sup>109</sup> and of the fact that in Melbourne the proceeds of his *Origin*-lecture were given to local charities.<sup>110</sup>

The good neighbourly relations are reflected in the denominationally mixed audiences at his lectures as well. For example, in the report on Davis’s lecture in Sydney, March 1963, we read that ‘the majority of the ladies and gentlemen present were of the Jewish persuasion, but several Christians were also present, amongst whom were four clergymen’.<sup>111</sup> The situation was similar in Melbourne, where the Jews had agreeable relations with the Gentile majority:<sup>112</sup> ‘At the conclusion of the lecture a warm vote of thanks was awarded to Mr Davis on the motion of the Rev. C. T. Perks’,<sup>113</sup> ‘seconded by the Rev. J. G. Millard’.<sup>114</sup> Rev. Canon Perks (1825–1894) was the canon of the Anglican Church of Victoria and incumbent of St. Stephen’s in Richmond. Born in England and educated at King’s College, London, he was one of the early church pioneers of the colony.<sup>115</sup> Rev. John G. Millard (1825–1894), a native of New South Wales, was a Methodist minister at various locations.<sup>116</sup>

It seems that of the various Christian denominations it was the Universalist Church with which the Jewish community had the closest relations. Its tenets being predicated on the liberal and tolerant outlook of the Universalist theology and worldview and the shared strictly monotheist belief, it is not surprising though. The Unitarian focus on ethics manifested itself, among other things, in their emphasis on the religious tolerance and the Biblical precept of ‘love thy neighbour’.<sup>117</sup> Unitarianism came to Australia in the 1850s with the first three congregations in Sydney, Melbourne and

Adelaide.<sup>118</sup> Although Unitarians were overwhelmingly from the United States, clergymen had close connections to England and Ireland. One of the most influential Unitarian ministers, who served both in Melbourne and Sydney, was George Walters (1853–1926).<sup>119</sup> The liberal Walters, who had a deep interest in the Theosophical Society, Spiritualism,<sup>120</sup> and Buddhism, also aimed to reconcile religion and reason.<sup>121</sup> Partly this wide-ranging interest and his active involvement in the literary scene prompted him to establish in 1884 the Unitarian Literary and Social Union in Sydney.<sup>122</sup> This was the society that gave home to Davis's last *Origin*-lecture in 1894 with a 'large attendance of members of the union'.<sup>123</sup> The natural world played a central role in Walters's beliefs and the transcendental qualities therein as reflected in the following quotation from the *Modern Thought*, a journal that he started in 1885: 'Everything in nature is symbolic of something higher and more spiritual.'<sup>124</sup> This worldview must have resonated well with the Kabbalistic reading of the correspondences between the macrocosm and the microcosm in Davis's lecture which 'seemed to afford the liveliest gratification to the audience, who frequently greeted Mr. Davis with demonstrative applause, a cordial vote of thanks to him being carried by acclamation, and the hope was expressed that he would favour the union with yet another lecture'.<sup>125</sup>

This was neither a unique event, nor a one-sided relationship; in fact, they seem to have often reciprocated the invitations. For instance, in a lecture given by Walters on 'Modern Unitarianism; its relation to Judaism and Christianity'<sup>126</sup> at the Hebrew Literary and Debating Society, where Davis occupied the chair, the minister enumerated at length those beliefs of Unitarianism that are shared by Judaism: The rejection of the Trinity, the deity of Jesus, the atonement by the sacrifice on calvary, and the eternity of torment in hell. 'Every one of these doctrines would be rejected by the sincere and faithful Jews, whilst, strictly speaking, he was a Unitarian.'<sup>127</sup> The doctrinal proximity must have been a key element in the friendly relations as it is conspicuously pronounced in Walters's address on the occasion of Davis's resignation in 1903:

*For myself, as the professor and teacher, for nearly thirty years, of a Unitarian form of religion, there is peculiar pleasure in referring to your work, and to the long record of a worthy life.... Whatever may divide us from the Hebrew community, whatever differences there may be, whatever latent prejudice may exist upon either side—still nothing can alter the fact that, in the religious world, we uphold the one sublime doctrine of the "Divine Unity;" and that is no small matter.*<sup>128</sup>

Davis delivered a lecture under the auspices of the Unitarian Literary and Social Union in 1893 on the topic of hell and the devil<sup>129</sup> and Walters on ‘The Three Devils’ in the Hebrew Literary and Debating Society in 1894.<sup>130</sup> The mutual inter-denominational visits did not confine to the person of the speaker only. Following a lecture on the ‘Evolution of the English Jew’ by M. A. Cohen in the Hebrew Literary and Debating Society, the Unitarian Mr. E. N. Downing from the audience commented: ‘More than fifty years ago...almost his first impulses towards higher study and intellectual development were given him by an old, poor, weary and sorely necessitous Jew. His early years had been largely spent with Jews, and he had the highest possible idea of their virtues and intelligence.’<sup>131</sup> And if too few attended the lecture from the other denomination, it was lamented over: With regard to a sermon Walters delivered at the Unitarian Church on the ‘Gospel of Judaism’, the report noted that ‘perhaps because Jews know all about their faith, there were but two present on the occasion, though a well-advertised address by a popular preacher should have evoked more interest among our co-religionists’.<sup>132</sup>

Finally, there is an aspect of the *Origin*-lectures that is related to both audiences, Jewish and non-Jewish alike. This is the Jewish pride over the narrative which enumerated the Jewish contributions to civilization.<sup>133</sup> This view relied heavily on the Jewish self-image of the Reform movement, which set as its universal mission the spreading of the moral tenets of Judaism. A notable example for this is a monthly periodical started in New York in 1871 with the telling title: *The New Era: A Monthly Periodical Devoted to the Interest of Religion and Humanity, and to the Diffusion of Knowledge on Judaism and Jewish Literature*. In its salutatory in the first number it reads:

*That system of religion...which recognizes in every human being a child of God, and seeks to promote the weal of all alike, notwithstanding those individual conceptions of the Deity and of the duties resultant therefrom, which may exist among men, tends most to the glorification of God, and merits most the attention of intelligent minds. Such a system of religion is Judaism alone.*<sup>134</sup>

A typical article from this periodical is one by Rabbi Marcus Jastrow (1829–1903) with the title ‘The Jews as Missionaries of Civilization’.<sup>135</sup> Its relevance to our topic lies in the fact that it was republished in *The Australian Israelite* in three parts in 1872.<sup>136</sup>

That is, these ideas and sentiments were not confined to America or Europe but were the characteristics of a Jewry with ties to Reform Judaism and highly integrated into a non-Jewish majority society. These very ideas reflect in the inaugural address that Davis, the ‘uncompromising champion of his race and [who] is ever ready to take up arms in defence of the tenets of his faith’,<sup>137</sup> delivered at the Hebrew Literary and Debating Society in 1887: ‘The

members of the society could take pride in the reflection that they had sprung from the people who, though kept in the background for centuries, had made their mark upon the pages of intellectual progress.’<sup>138</sup> The *Origin*-lectures seamlessly fit into this narrative: Judaism, the parent religion of Christianity (and perhaps all religions) is the foundation of civilization, it was received from God and is coeval with creation. As Davis pointed out in one of his lectures, among the gifts from Judaism to the world we find ‘the seven Noachial precepts and other different laws which were necessary for the moral government of many, and without which society could not have existed, for the violence of men would, for the want of order, have overthrown or rendered nugatory the finest of all His wondrous works’.<sup>139</sup>

### **Conclusions**

The lectures delivered by Davis on the origin of the rites and worship of the Hebrews reveal a history that is fascinating on many accounts. As it has been shown, these lectures were given on a Kabbalistic lithograph that started its long career in Paris, continued in England and the United States, and reached Jamaica, where Davis acquired an impression of it, which he brought to Australia. This itinerary also shed light on Davis’s Masonic affiliation—a hitherto unknown fact in scholarly literature about the life of the Jewish minister. Furthermore, the extant reports on these lectures, spanning over three decades, from 1862 to 1893, allowed us to get an insight into some of the socio-cultural contexts of these discourses. Within the Jewish community, Davis utilised the artwork chiefly as an educational tool, and he even relied on some parts of the *Explication* for the lithograph in preparing his own textbook, the *Jewish Rites Explained*. Towards the end of the century, the *Origin*-lectures might have been part of a larger effort to counteract the growing laxity in Jewish religious observances and the indifference toward Jewish cultural heritage in general. Outside the Jewish community, beyond the informative and educative aspects and being tokens of good interdenominational relations, the lectures were intended to serve as eulogies to Judaism. In concluding, it can be said that the history of the lithograph and the lectures Davis delivered on it have uncovered a highly intriguing facet of Australian Jewish history.

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### Endnotes

1 David Rosenberg, *Explication du tableau intitulé : Aperçu de l'origine du culte hébraïque, avec l'exposé de quelques usages et leurs significations symboliques* (Paris: L'imprimerie de Crapelet, 5061/1841).

2 Rosenberg, 68.

3 For a detailed analysis of the print and its Masonic interpretation, see Peter Lanchidi, "Between Judaism and Freemasonry: The Dual Interpretation of David Rosenberg's Kabbalistic Lithograph, *Aperçu de l'origine du culte hébraïque* (1841)," *Correspondences* 6, no. 2 (2018): 173–200.

4 For general academic treatment of the history, mythologies, intellectual foundations, characteristics, degree systems, rituals, and organization of Freemasonry see Andreas Önnersfors, *Freemasonry: A Very Short Introduction* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017) and Henrik Bogdan and Jan A.M. Snoek, eds., *Handbook of Freemasonry* (Leiden: Brill, 2014).

5 The grand lodge system provides the basic hierarchical structure of the fraternity, in which the grand lodges are the highest governing bodies within their Masonic jurisdictions with the powers of constituting lodges and other governmental matters, such as determining rituals. (See Arturo de Hoyos, "Masonic Rites and Systems," in *Handbook of Freemasonry*, ed. Henrik Bogdan and Jan A. M. Snoek [Leiden: Brill, 2014], 355–77.) Following the formation of the Grand Lodge of England in 1717, social and ritual differences between English and Irish Masonry led to the formation, in the beginning of the 1750s, of a competing grand lodge in England, the so-called Antients (or Atholl Grand Lodge), while the former came to be called the Moderns (or Premier Grand Lodge). The rivalry ended only in 1813 with the union of the two grand lodges into the United Grand Lodge of England. Ireland and Scotland also formed their own grand lodges, in 1724 and 1736, respectively.

6 See Alexander Piatigorsky, *Freemasonry: The Study of a Phenomenon* (London: Harvill, 1997), 123, 167.

7 David Rosenberg, "Explanation of an Engraving on the Origin of the Jewish Religion, as Connected with the Mysteries of Freemasonry," *The Freemasons' Quarterly Review*, 31 March 1842, 26–29.

8 "Masonic Tableau, an Engraving, Illustrating the Origin of the Jewish Religion, as Connected with the Mysteries of Freemasonry," *The Freemasons' Monthly Magazine*, 1 September 1842, 330–33.

9 For more details on the publication and reception of the work see Peter Lanchidi, "A Kabbalistic Lithograph as a Populariser of Judaism in America: Max Wolff, *Origin of the Rites and Worship of the Hebrews* (New York, 1859)," in *Kabbalah in America—Ancient Lore in the New World*, edited by



Brian Ogren, *Studies in Jewish History and Culture* 64 (Leiden ; Boston: Brill, 2020), 115–37.

10 Max Wolff, *Explication of an Engraving Called the Origin of the Rites and Worship of the Hebrews; Together with Remarks on Creation, and a Brief Account on Some Observances and Their Symbolical Signification. From the Original French of D. Rosenberg, of Paris* (1st and 2nd eds. New York: Office of the Jewish Messenger, 1859; 3rd ed., New York: J. A. H. Hasbrouck & Co. Printers and Stationers, 1861). (References to the work throughout the paper will be made to the 1861 edition.)

11 For a detailed analysis of the transformation of the work, see Peter Lanchidi, “Julius Bien and the Metamorphosis of a Kabbalistic-Masonic Lithograph (New York, 1859),” *Journal of the Printing Historical Society* 31 (Winter 2019): 85–119.

12 In the second and third impressions of the *Explication* which include a “Reference Guide to the Chart and Book” that follows the reference numbers on the lithograph.

13 Wolff, *Explication*, 85–102.

14 Attested by the list of subscribers (unpaginated page before the Hebrew title page, containing a number of Christian clergymen and lay dignitaries) and advertisements in contemporary newspapers. See Lanchidi, “A Kabbalistic Lithograph as a Populariser,” 123–30.

15 For the US Masonic reception of the print see Peter Lanchidi, “The Masonic Career of a Kabbalistic Lithograph: Max Wolff, ‘Origin of the Rites and Worship of the Hebrews’ (New York, 1859),” *Jewish Studies Quarterly* 28, no. 2 (2021): 191–218.

16 “Inquiry,” *The Occident*, January 1862.

17 Jacob A. P. M. Andrade, *A Record of the Jews in Jamaica from the English Conquest to the Present Time* (Kingston: The Jamaica Times, 1941), 60–61.

18 “Kingston, Jamaica.—Masonic Lecture,” *The Occident*, April 1861, 44–45.

19 *Ibid.*

20 For biographical data on Davis see Raymond Apple, *The Great Synagogue: A History of Sydney’s Big Shule* (Sydney: University of New South Wales, 2008), 77–84; Apple, “Alexander Barnard Davis – Colonial Clergyman,” in *Feasts and Fasts: A Festschrift in Honour of Alan David Crown*, ed. Marianne Dacy, Jennifer Dowling, and Suzanne Faigan, *Mandelbaum Studies in Judaica* 11 (Sydney: Mandelbaum Publishing, University of Sydney, 2005), 285–98, and “Personal Portraits. No. 9.—The Rev. Rabbi Davis,” *The Illustrated Sydney News*, 8 July 1893, 13.

21 Henry, himself a Freemason, published a work later on the fraternity with the title *Antiquity of Freemasonry in General* (Cincinnati: German Republican Office, 1850).

22 “Portsmouth,” *The Jewish Chronicle*, 31 December 1852, 103.

23 Davis was inaugurated on 26 May 1854 (“Kingston, Jamaica. Inauguration of the Rev. Mr. Davis, Minister of the English and German Synagogue,” *The Jewish Chronicle*, 7 July 1854, 340) and he discharged his spiritual functions in October 1861 (“Kingston, Jamaica.—Gratifying Resolution,” *The Jewish Chronicle and the Hebrew Observer*, 25 October 1861, 5). Some further biographical data, though not always reliable, are to be found in Andrade, *Record of the Jews in Jamaica*, 61. Andrade gave Davis’s name with various errors as “Abraham Barsed Davis” which was taken over both by Ernest Henriques de Souza (in *Pictorial Featuring Some Aspects of Jamaica’s Jewry and His Community Activities* [Kingston, Jamaica: Stephenson’s Litho Press, 1986], 34) and Marilyn Delevante and Anthony Alberga (in *The Island of One People: An Account of the History of the Jews of Jamaica* [Kingston: Ian Randle Publishers, 2008], 74).

24 The Wellington Lodge was constituted in 1847 and in 1850 it met in the Railway Tavern, Catford Bridge, Lewisham, London. See Lane’s Masonic Records: <https://www.dhi.ac.uk/lane/>, accessed 4 May 2021.

25 Wellington Lodge No. 805, returns 1833–1863; return dated 9 September 1850; Library and Museum of Freemasonry, United Grand Lodge of England.

26 The three basic Masonic degrees, the so-called craft degrees.

27 Jessica L Harland-Jacobs, *Builders of Empire: Freemasons and British Imperialism, 1717–1927* (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 2007).

28 Emmanuel Xavier Leon, *The History of the Friendly Lodge, No. 239, District No. 2, Kingston, Jamaica* (Jamaica: Mortimer C. DeSouza, 1898). It was even occasionally referred to as “the Jewish lodge.” F. W. Seal-Coon, *An Historical Account of Jamaican Freemasonry* (Kingston: Golding Print Service, 1976), 79.

29 Leon, *The History of the Friendly Lodge, No. 239*, 24.

30 Delevante and Alberga, *The Island of One People*, 71, 104.

31 de Souza, *Pictorial*, 50–51.

32 Leon, *The History of the Friendly Lodge, No. 239*, 24.

33 The Chaplain is an officer of the lodge (in some Masonic jurisdictions) to offer prayers or to read Scripture. When being an officer of a grand lodge, he is called Grand Chaplain. Henry Wilson Coil, *Coil’s Masonic Encyclopedia* (New York: Macoy Publishing & Masonic Supply Company, 1961), 123.

34 Andrade, *Record of the Jews in Jamaica*, 61. For an oration that Delevante, as Past Provincial Grand Chaplain, delivered at the ceremony of the Masonic procession at the laying of the foundation stone of the Hebrew Alms House in 1864, see Andrade, 267–69.

35 Returns are reports by lodges sent back on a regular basis to the UGLE.

36 “The Dedication of the New Rooms of the Friendly Lodge,” 4 March 1858; Kingston, Jamaica, Friendly Lodge No. 291, returns 1858–1863, return dated 19 April 1858, Library and Museum of Freemasonry, United Grand Lodge of England.

- 37 “Jamaica. Consecration of a New Masonic Hall,” *The Freemasons’ Magazine and Masonic Mirror*, 28 April 1858, sec. Provincial Grand Lodges, 806.
- 38 Ibid. 807.
- 39 “Kingston, Jamaica,” *The Jewish Chronicle and the Hebrew Observer*, 23 April 1858, 147.
- 40 “Kingston, Jamaica.—A Lecture,” *The Jewish Chronicle and the Hebrew Observer*, 3 May 1861, 4.
- 41 “Kingston, Jamaica.—A Lecture,” *The Jewish Messenger*, 31 May 1861, sec. Foreign Items, 166.
- 42 The Jews’ College, the institution that provided rabbinical training, had not been founded until a year after Davis left for Kingston. See Michael Goulston, “The Status of the Anglo-Jewish Rabbinate, 1840–1914,” *The Jewish Journal of Sociology* 10 (1968): 56.
- 43 As it is recorded by the inscription on the Davis Memorial in the Rookwood Cemetery, he was remembered for striving “unremittingly and successfully for the firm and lasting establishment of the high status to which his earlier efforts had raised New South Wales Jewry, in the spheres of benevolent, educational, social and religious activities.” “Consecration of Rev. A. B. Davis Memorial,” *The Hebrew Standard*, 5 November 1915, 5.
- 44 Suzanne D. Rutland, *Edge of the Diaspora: Two Centuries of Jewish Settlement in Australia*, 2. rev. ed (New York, NY: Holmes & Meier, 2001), 59–60.
- 45 On Jewish involvement in Masonry in Australia (though focusing on the twentieth century), see Raymond Apple, “Masonic Ministers in Australia,” *Australian Jewish Historical Society Journal* XX, no. 4 (June 2012): 566–79. Rabbi Raymond Apple, the Senior Rabbi of the Great Synagogue between 1972 and 2005, is also a prominent Freemason, who publishes extensively on Masonic subjects. See <https://www.oztorah.com/category/freemasonry/>, accessed 4 May 2021. For a nineteenth-century example on a published lecture delivered by a rabbi, see Rev. I. M. Goldreich, *What is Freemasonry? A Lecture Delivered at the Orion Lodge, No. 1153, Sebastopol, Victoria* (Sydney: Frederick White, 1877).
- 46 “Alfred Harris” (obituary), *Australian Jewish Historical Society Journal* II, no. 1 (July 1944): 52.
- 47 “[Of All the Various Lodges],” *The Jewish Herald*, 10 March 1882, sec. Sydney. (From Our Correspondent.), 100. On the Lodge’s website we read that the ‘handwritten charter [from 1875] and two volumes of the Sacred Law, one in English and the other in English and Hebrew are proud and prized possessions of the Lodge today’. N. H. Milston, “One Hundred and Twenty Years’ History of the Lodge of Tranquillity No. 42, 1875 to 1995,” 17 May 1995, <https://tranquillity1.tripod.com/history.htm>, accessed 4 May 2021.

- 48 For the formation and membership of the lodge, see W. J. Ingram, *The First Hundred Years of the Lodge of Australia Felix No. 1, United Grand Lodge of Victoria* (Melbourne: Lodge of Australia Felix No. 1, 1940).
- 49 “The Late Rev. Wazir Beg, LL.D.,” *The Illustrated Sydney News*, 17 January 1885, 3.
- 50 Rev. Wazir Beg, “Masonic ‘Communicable’ Terms. Abif,” *The Australian Freemason’s Magazine*, January 1870, sec. Portfolio, 21–23.
- 51 Alexander Barnard Davis, “Abio,” *The Australian Freemason’s Magazine*, February 1870, sec. Correspondence, 73–74.
- 52 Beg spoke several oriental languages, including Hebrew, which brought him the appointments of Reader in the Oriental Languages and Literature at the University of Sydney and the Oriental Interpreter of the Government. (Rev. Dr. Steel, “The Late Rev. Dr. Wazir Beg,” *The Presbyterian and Australian Witness*, 10 January 1885, 5.) He made commentaries on the Old Testament and “few could excel him in bringing out the meaning of the sacred text.” (Ibid.)
- 53 Rev. Wazir Beg, “Abio,” *The Australian Freemason’s Magazine*, March 1870, sec. Correspondence, 89.
- 54 “The Devil’s Advocate,” *Sydney Punch*, 30 October 1880, 138, 140.
- 55 “[Of All the Various Lodges],” 100–101. No minutes of the lodge meeting survived.
- 56 “The Rev. A. B. Davis,” *The Hebrew Standard*, 2 December 1898, 5.
- 57 “The Rev. A. B. Davis and Freemasonry,” *The Hebrew Standard*, 16 December 1898, 8.
- 58 Jewish journalism did not start until the 1870s (with the exception of the short-lived *Voice of Jacob* in 1842), hence reports on Davis and his lectures in the 1860s can be gathered only from the general press. For the first Jewish newspapers in Australia see Suzanne D. Rutland, *Seventy Five Years: The History of a Jewish Newspaper* (Sydney: Australian Jewish Historical Society, 1970), 1–10.
- 59 “A Lecture on the Origin of the Rites and Worship of the Hebrews,” *The Sydney Morning Herald*, 30 December 1862, 1. The *Empire* also put out an advertisement: “A Lecture on the Origin of the Rites and Worship of the Hebrews,” 5 January 1863, 1.
- 60 E.g. “School of Arts,” *The Sydney Morning Herald*, 18 February 1863, 1.
- 61 E.g. “[On Tuesday Evening],” *The Freeman’s Journal*, 7 March 1863, sec. Weekly Summary, 2.
- 62 “[The Rev. A. B. Davis, of Sydney],” *The Argus*, 10 January 1866, 5.
- 63 “Hebrew Literary and Debating Society,” *The Sydney Morning Herald*, 23 May 1889, sec. Meetings, 1.
- 64 “Sydney,” *The Jewish Herald*, 6 June 1890, sec. From our Own Correspondent, 207.
- 65 “Unitarian Literary Society,” *The Daily Telegraph*, 23 January 1894, sec. Amusements, 2.

- 66 “[A Lecture of a Very Interesting and Instructive Nature],” *The Age*, 11 January 1866, sec. The News of the Day, 5 abridged by the *Leader*, 13 January 1866, sec. The Week, 1.
- 67 “Rites and Worship of the Jews,” *The Sydney Morning Herald*, 1 June 1889, sec. Lectures, 8; “[The Hebrew Literary and Debating Society],” *The Jewish Herald*, 7 June 1889, sec. Sydney. (From Our Own Correspondent.), 188.
- 68 “Hebrew Literary and Debating Society,” *The Evening News*, 7 June 1890, 4.
- 69 This suggests that Davis also had an impression of Rosenberg’s print. In fact, he had a chance to buy one during his sojourn in London in 1862 before sailing off to Sydney in May. Richard Spencer, a prominent English Freemason and a publisher, printer, bookbinder, bookseller, and Masonic regalia seller undertook the agency of Rosenberg’s works. Spencer was active from the 1830s until the 1870s. See Rebecca Coombes, “Fraternal Communications: Masonic Newspapers and Periodicals in the Library and Museum of Freemasonry. Part 1,” *Library and Museum News for Friends of the Library and Museum of Freemasonry*, Issue 10, Spring 2004, 5.
- 70 “Rites and Worship of the Hebrews,” *The Empire*, 4 March 1863, 5.
- 71 “Rites and Worship of the Jews,” *The Sydney Morning Herald*, 8 January 1863, 4.
- 72 “Rites and Worship of the Hebrews,” *The Sydney Morning Herald*, 8 January 1863, 4.
- 73 “Lecture by the Reverend Rabbi Davis,” *The Sydney Morning Herald*, 4 March 1863, 5.
- 74 See e.g. his lectures at the School of Arts or at the Hebrew Literary and Debating Society.
- 75 “Rites and Worship of the Hebrews,” 4 March 1863, 5.
- 76 “[An Interesting Lecture],” *The Australasian*, 13 January 1866, sec. Town News, 6.
- 77 “[A Lecture of a Very Interesting and Instructive Nature],” 11 January 1866, 5.
- 78 “Lecture by the Reverend Rabbi Davis,” 5 cf. Wolff, *Explication*, 8–10.
- 79 Cf. *ibid.*, 64–70, 100–102.
- 80 Cf. *ibid.*, 56–62.
- 81 “Rites and Worship of the Hebrews,” 8 January 1863, 4.
- 82 “Kingston, Jamaica. Inauguration of the Rev. Mr. Davis, Minister of the English and German Synagogue,” 340.
- 83 “A. B. Davis’s Notebook,” n.d., AB151, item nos. 1.775 and 1.776, Australian Jewish Historical Society Archives, Sydney. The large ornamental cartouche (possibly featuring some Masonic symbols) seems to be a cover-design for the paper-bound notebooks, which have been bound up in half leather preserving the original front wrapper. The text and its arrangement within the cartouche are indicative of the intended function of the notebooks.

Instead of a personal ownership statement, the wording of the text sounds more like a corporate one, stating that the book was to be used “At the Revd. A. B. Davis's Academy...” (“academy” being a customary synonym for *yeshiva*) with the possibility of a student writing his name above the text, in the lacuna at the top of the design. In all likelihood these notebooks were produced by a stationer/lithographer for Davis’s *yeshiva*, and apparently he used some of these Academy exercise-books for writing his own sermons, and perhaps had them rebound in quarter leather for this purpose. Delevante could be a candidate for the artist behind the cartouche, however, the deft hand in the design points to a more skilful lithographic draughtsman: Adolphe Duperly (1801–1865), an engraver, lithographer and printer, originally from Paris, who settled at Kingston in the 1830s. I am grateful for Dr Paul W. Nash, the editor of the *Journal of the Printing Historical Society*, for his enlightening comments on Davis’s notebook.

84 “Kingston, Jamaica.—Public Examination,” *The Jewish Chronicle and the Hebrew Observer*, 18 November 1859, 3.

85 For a general overview see Geulah Solomon, “Minority Education in a Free Society: A Community History of Jewish Education in New South Wales and Victoria, 1788–1920” (PhD diss., Melbourne, Monash University, 1972).

86 Israel Porush, *The House of Israel* (Melbourne: The Hawthorn Press, 1977), 22. For Jewish education in general in Australia see the chapter “Religion and Education, 1788–1945” in Hilary L. Rubinstein, *The Jews in Australia: A Thematic History* (Port Melbourne, Vic: William Heinemann, 1991), 289–357.

87 “Sydney Hebrew School,” *The Empire*, 6 September 1862, 5.

88 David J. Benjamin, “Essays in the History of Jewish Education in New South Wales, Part I,” *Australian Jewish Historical Society Journal IV*, no. 2 (July 1955): 29–33.

89 Apple, “Alexander Barnard Davis – Colonial Clergyman,” 292.

90 “Rev. A. B. Davis Will Receive a Few Jewish Young Gentlemen as Resident Pupils,” *The Sydney Morning Herald*, 11 March 1863, 1. At all likelihood this was the continuation of his Academy (*yeshiva*) at Kingston.

91 “[A Lecture in Inauguration of the Jewish Young Men’s Mutual Improvement Association],” *The Sydney Morning Herald*, 21 August 1863, 5.

92 Although it had its antecedents, in the 1860s and ’70s, in the Sydney Jewish Young Men’s Literary Association and Society. See “Jewish Young Men’s Literary Association,” *The Empire*, 14 November 1863, 1 and “Sydney Jewish Young Men’s Literary Society,” *The Australian Israelite*, 14 July 1872, 4. The society was transformed into the Jewish Literary and Debating Society of Sydney in 1901. See M. H. Kellerman, “The Jewish Literary and Debating Society of Sydney, 1901–1912,” *Australian Jewish Historical Society Journal IV*, no. 3 (December 1955): 130–50.

- 93 Porush, *The House of Israel*, 44–45.
- 94 “The Hebrew Literary and Debating Society,” *The Sydney Morning Herald*, 7 May 1887, 13.
- 95 Jacques Sandreich, “A Chat with Rabbi Davis,” *The Australasian Hebrew*, 24 April 1896, 876.
- 96 The first edition was published in Sydney by F. Cunninghame. For an analysis of its content, Davis’s historical and theological approaches, and his language, see Raymond Apple, “A.B. Davis’s Textbook – A 100th Yahrzeit Tribute,” *Australian Jewish Historical Society Journal XXI*, no. 4 (June 2014): 556–72.
- 97 Cited in Benjamin, “Essays in the History of Jewish Education,” 33.
- 98 Minutes of the meeting 19 July 1869, cited *ibid.*, 40.
- 99 “Just Published,” *The Jewish Chronicle*, 2 July 1852.
- 100 Published by J. G. O’Connor. Another work that is regularly but erroneously attributed to Davis is the *Devotions for Children and Private Jewish Families* (Sydney: Joseph Cook & Co., 1867) which is by another Davis: John Michael Davis. See “This Day Is Published,” *The Mercury*, 4 November 1867.
- 101 Wolff, *Explication*, 1861, 100–102.
- 102 Davis, *Jewish Rites Explained*, 11–12.
- 103 Davis states that “the forms and ceremonies of our faith are not generally understood” mainly due to the lack of knowledge of their origin (p. iv). Wolff laments in the editor’s preface on “how little the spirit and profound character of the institutions of Israel are known” (5–6).
- 104 See especially the differences regarding the Portuguese custom of twisting: Davis, 5–6 cf. Wolff, 67–68.
- 105 See the references to the elements fire and water: Davis, 22 cf. Wolff, 55–56.
- 106 “Unitarian Literary and Social Union Cash Book, 1894–1901,” 23 January 1894, MLMSS 3280/Box MLK1715/Item 2, Mitchell Library Manuscripts, State Library of N.S.W.
- 107 See Serge Liberman, “Gentile Champions of Jews in Australia,” in *Jews in the Sixth Continent*, ed. W.D. Rubinstein (Sydney: Allen & Unwin, 1987), 76–100 and Suzanne D. Rutland, “The New South Wales Jewish Community 1880–1914” (B.A. (Hons) Thesis, Sydney, University of Sydney, 1968), 66–73.
- 108 “Sydney, Australia.—The Rev. A. B. Davis,” *The Jewish Chronicle and the Hebrew Observer*, 28 October 1862, 8. For good reasons as, among others, Davis was president of the Hebrew Benevolent Society. See “Eighth Annual Report of the Hebrew Benevolent Society of Kingston, Jamaica,” *The Occident*, 11 October 1859.
- 109 “The Massacre in Syria,” *The Jewish Chronicle and the Hebrew Observer*, 5 October 1860, 6.



- 110 “[A Lecture Will Be Delivered in St. George’s Hall],” *The Age*, 10 January 1866, sec. The News of the Day, 5.
- 111 “Lecture by the Reverend Rabbi Davis,” 5.
- 112 For a somewhat later period, see Frank Fletcher, “The Victorian Jewish Community 1891–1901: Its Interrelationship with the Majority Gentile Community,” *Australian Jewish Historical Society Journal* VIII, Part 5 (1978): 221–70.
- 113 “[A Lecture of a Very Interesting and Instructive Nature],” 11 January 1866, 5.
- 114 “[An Interesting Lecture],” 6.
- 115 “Death of Canon Perks,” *The Weekly Times*, 17 February 1894, 23.
- 116 “Obituary. Rev. J. G. Millard,” *Launceston Examiner*, 17 June 1897, 7.
- 117 See Andrea Greenwood and Mark W. Harris, *An Introduction to the Unitarian and Universalist Traditions* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2011). Hosea Ballou (1771–1852), one of the fathers of American Universalism—which shares many of its tenets with Unitarianism—was a devout Freemason for the fraternity’s ideal of the brotherhood of man was in concord with the Universalist ideal. See Ann Lee Bressler, *The Universalist Movement in America 1770–1880* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), 77–80.
- 118 Phillip Hewett, “A Faith Transplanted: The Unitarian Experience in Canada, Australia and New Zealand,” *Transactions of the Unitarian Historical Society* XXII, no. 1 (April 1999): 1–17.
- 119 “Rev. George Walters. Jubilee Ministry,” *The Sydney Morning Herald*, 27 May 1925, 16.
- 120 Hewett, “A Faith Transplanted,” 10.
- 121 Dorothy Scott, *The Halfway House to Infidelity: A History of the Melbourne Unitarian Church 1853–1973* (Melbourne: The Unitarian Fellowship of Australia and the Melbourne Unitarian Peace Memorial Church, 1980), 29.
- 122 *Ibid.*, 36–37.
- 123 “Jewish Rites and Worship,” *The Evening News*, 24 January 1894, 3.
- 124 George Walters, *Modern Thought*, December 1885, 76, quoted in Scott, *The Halfway House to Infidelity*, 92.
- 125 “[On Tuesday Evening],” *The Jewish Herald*, 9 February 1894, sec. Sydney. (From Our Own Correspondent.), 55.
- 126 “Modern Unitarianism,” *The Australian Star*, 12 December 1892, 2.
- 127 “Modern Unitarianism,” *The Jewish Herald*, 16 December 1892, 11.
- 128 “The Rev. A. B. Davis,” *The Jewish Herald*, 19 June 1903, 222.
- 129 “[On Tuesday Evening],” *The Jewish Herald*, 5 May 1893, sec. Sydney. (From Our Own Correspondent.), 92.
- 130 “The Three Devils,” *The Jewish Herald*, 29 June 1894, 181–82.
- 131 “The Evolution of the English Jew,” *The Jewish Herald*, 26 January 1894, 46.

- 132 “The Gospel of Judaism,” *The Jewish Herald*, 8 March 1895, 100.  
133 In an American context see Louise A. Mayo, *The Ambivalent Image: Nineteenth-Century America’s Perception of the Jew* (Rutherford, NJ: Fairleigh Dickinson University Press, 1988), 114–19.  
134 “Salutatory,” *The New Era*, October 1870, Vol. I, No. 1 edition, 1.  
135 Rev. Dr. M. Jastrow, “The Jews as Missionaries of Civilization,” *The New Era*, February 1872, Vol. II, No. 4 edition, 121–32.  
136 Rev. Dr. Jastrow, “The Jews as Missionaries of Civilization,” *The Australian Israelite*, 28 June 1872, 5–6; 5 July, 6–7; 12 July, 3.  
137 “Anecdotal Photographs. No. 52.—The Rev. A. B. Davis,” *Table Talk*, 28 October 1892, 3.  
138 “The Hebrew Literary and Debating Society,” 13.  
139 “[The Hebrew Literary and Debating Society],” 188.

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