

Leicester

The Lodge of Research No. 2429

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W.BRO. HARRY LAKIN WHEATCROFT
P.P.J.G.W., P.G.Std.B. (R.A.)
P.M. 4874
Master

EDITORIAL

A good start to a successful Session was given by the Worshipful Master, who in his inaugural address indicated how important are both vigilance and understanding in the consideration of candidates for Freemasonry within the context of our fast-changing society.

W.Bro. Harry Carr's return visit was an outstanding event in the life of the Lodge. We shall never cease to marvel at the tireless activity of this eminent masonic historian and researcher; and we thank him for sparing the time to be with us. His address to a large and enthusiastic audience was a shortened version of the whole Paper, which we are pleased to include in this issue *to communicate light and instruction* to our readers.

No less important was the Paper read by our esteemed Provincial Grand Chaplain, who spoke with both directness and delicacy on the important and often misunderstood subject of "Religion in Masonry". It is fitting at this point to call attention to the notice, on page 111, of the publication of a collection of Brother Prophet's Masonic Orations, 1965-72. We commend this booklet to our readers as a clear statement *of the nature and principles of the Institution*.

Each year we try to include two or three additional articles, and our regular readers will readily recognise the debt we owe in this respect to W.Bro. L. M. Sherwood, late of Fiji, now living in New South Wales. In his capacity as Official Lecturer under the New South Wales Constitution he travels thousands of miles each year to help Lodges in that widespread territory. We thank him for the thought-provoking essay he wrote for inclusion in this issue.

It may be remembered that W.Bro. Lt. Col. Eric Ward's Prestonian Lecture for 1970, delivered to the Lodge on 22nd March, 1971, evoked some queries from the Brethren, which were embodied in an editorial comment. It seemed right to offer Brother Ward an opportunity to reply, and we are pleased to publish (*page 97 et seq.*) his answers to specific points raised by members of the Lodge and Correspondence Circle.

The Lodge has suffered a sad loss by the untimely death on 15th April, 1972, at the age of 66, of our Treasurer, W.Bro. Clifford Ewart Davey, P.P.S.G.W., P.P.G.Sojr.

Brother Davey was a Mason whose guiding principle was *service*. At various times he occupied the Office of Treasurer, Secretary (Scribe E.), or Director of Ceremonies in the three Lodges and two Royal Arch Chapters of which he was a member. He brought to the exacting duties of Treasurer of the Lodge of Research much more

than the annual collection of a thousand subscriptions and the preparation of balance sheets. During the ten years of his tenure of the Office he engaged in friendly correspondence with members in many parts of the world.

The following extract from among the letters recently received by the Secretary from members of the Correspondence Circle is a fitting epitaph:—

“Although we only met once, I feel that I have lost a real friend and a Brother of whom I had a very high regard”.

Those of us who knew him well recognised Brother Davey as a wonderful Mason and a staunch friend; and we shall long remember him with gratitude.

July, 1972.

O.F.

NOTE

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Lodge of Research No. 2429

1971-72

Worshipful Master

BRO. HARRY LAKIN WHEATCROFT

BRO. CLAUDE E. NEALE (P.M.)	<i>Senior Warden</i>
BRO. KENNETH G. WESTMORELAND (P.M.)	<i>Junior Warden</i>
BRO. Revd. CANON J. R. H. PROPHET, P.A.G.Ch. (P.M.)	<i>Chaplain</i>
BRO. CLIFFORD E. DAVEY* (P.M.)	<i>Treasurer</i>
BRO. CECIL M. R. SMITH, P.A.G.D.C. (P.M.)	<i>Secretary</i>
BRO. VERNON G. BEST (P.M.)	<i>Director of Cers.</i>
BRO. IVOR H. WALKER (P.M.)	<i>Senior Deacon</i>
BRO. RAYMOND G. SMITH (P.M.)	<i>Junior Deacon</i>
BRO. CYRIL WAUGH (P.M.)	<i>Asst. Dir. of Cers.</i>
BRO. DENNIS E. SHARP (P.M.)	<i>Organist</i>
BRO. LESLIE J. KING (P.M.)	<i>Asst. Secretary</i>
BRO. E. MILFORD WARD (P.M.)	<i>Inner Guard</i>
BRO. HUGH W. PECK (P.M.)	<i>Steward</i>
BRO. WILLIAM STEELE (P.M.)	<i>Steward</i>
BRO. T. MERVYN LI. WALTERS (P.M.)	<i>Tyler</i>

* Obit.

Immediate Past Master

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Historical Note

The Lodge of Research, No. 2429, was consecrated on 26th October, 1892; W.Bro. J. T. Thorp, a masonic historian of outstanding note, being installed as the first Master.

The Lodge seeks to exchange opinions with Freemasons throughout the world, and to attract and interest Brethren by means of Papers on the historical and symbolic aspects of Masonry.

(Revised By-Laws, 1962)

Membership

The membership of the Lodge is limited in number. The members will, *as a rule*, be elected from among the members of the Correspondence Circle.

Papers

The writers of Papers are alone responsible for the opinions expressed therein.

CORRESPONDENCE CIRCLE

The members of the Correspondence Circle are entitled

- to have posted to them, as issued, the Summonses convoking the meetings of the Lodge,
- to be supplied, gratis, with the Annual Transactions of the Lodge,
- to attend Meetings of the Lodge,
- to take part in discussions relating to any Papers which may be read, or subjects of general Masonic interest which may be introduced,
- to read Papers and introduce discussions on Masonic subjects (by arrangement).

They are not entitled to vote, hold office, or take part in the management of the Lodge.

A Candidate for Membership of the Correspondence Circle is subject to election by the Members of the Lodge by a show of hands.

The names of Candidates will be submitted to the Permanent Committee at their next Meeting after completed application forms have been received by the Secretary.

No entrance fee is required, and the Annual Subscription is £1.50 payable in advance in the month of July. Any member whose subscription is unpaid for the current year is not entitled to a copy of the Lodge Transactions.

The Lodge reserves to itself the full power to exclude any Member from the Correspondence Circle whom it may deem unworthy of continued membership.

Note.—All Master Masons, in good standing, whether Members of Lodges in this Province or elsewhere, are eligible for Membership of the Correspondence Circle.

The Three-hundred-and-seventy-third Meeting

on

MONDAY, 22ND NOVEMBER, 1971

There were present W.Bro. O Farrant, *Master*, W.Bro. H. L. Wheatcroft, *S.W.*, W.Bro. C. E. Neale, *J.W.*, twenty other officers and members, fifty-nine members of the Correspondence Circle, and ten visiting brethren—a total of ninety-four.

The Provincial Grand Master, R.W.Bro. Brigadier C. B. S. Morley, was received ceremoniously, accompanied by the Assistant Provincial Grand Master, W.Bro. J. E. Foister.

The Provincial Grand Master was saluted and he acknowledged the salutation.

The Master referred sympathetically to the deaths of W.Bro. R. C. Burnell, one of our members, and R.W.Bro. F. W. R. Douglas, Assistant Grand Master, and the Brethren stood in silence to honour their memory.

Thirteen brethren were elected members of the Correspondence Circle.

The Master-elect, W.Bro. H. L. Wheatcroft, was presented by the Director of Ceremonies, W.Bro. D. Timson, installed by W.Bro. O. Farrant, and proclaimed in the Three Degrees.

After the Master had appointed and invested his Officers for the year, he delivered his inaugural address, entitled

“Candidates for Freemasonry” (see page 10).

After the Lodge had been closed, the Brethren retired for refreshment and conversation.

The Three-hundred-and-seventy-fourth Meeting

on

MONDAY, 24TH JANUARY, 1972

There were present W.Bro. H. L. Wheatcroft, *Master*, W.Bro. C. E. Neale, *S.W.*, W.Bro. K. G. Westmoreland, *J.W.*, W.Bro. T. W. Haird, *Acting I.P.M.*, twenty-five other Officers and members of the Lodge, eighty-four members of the Correspondence Circle and seventeen visitors (including the Provincial Grand Master for Nottinghamshire)—a total of one hundred and thirty.

Salutations were given to the Assistant Provincial Grand Master, W.Bro. J. E. Foister, the Provincial Grand Master for Nottinghamshire, R.W.Bro. C. H. V. Elliott, *F.D.*, the other Grand Officers present and the Provincial Grand Wardens.

Sixteen brethren were elected members of the Correspondence Circle.

The following Brethren were elected by ballot—

(1) As Honorary Members—

R.W.Bro. Sir John Corah, Past Provincial Grand Master, Leicestershire and Rutland, and

R.W.Bro. Richard A. Palmer, T.D., Provincial Grand Master for Northamptonshire and Huntingdonshire.

(2) As a Joining Member of the Lodge—

W.Bro. Henry Starmer, P.M. Knighton Lodge, No. 4711.

It was unanimously resolved to donate £100 from the Lodge Funds to the Mark Benevolent Fund on the occasion of the 1975 Festival.

W.Bro. Harry Carr, P.J.G.D., P.M. of Lodge No. 2429, Secretary and Editor of the Quatuor Coronati Lodge, No. 2076 (the Premier Lodge of Masonic Research) then delivered an address, entitled,

“600 years of Craft Ritual” (see page 17).

The Master's expression of thanks to the speaker was received with enthusiastic applause.

After the Lodge had been closed, the Brethren retired for refreshment and conversation.

The Three-hundred-and-seventy-fifth Meeting

on

MONDAY, 27TH MARCH, 1972

There were present W.Bro. H. L. Wheatcroft, *Master*, W.Bro. C. E. Neale, S.W., W.Bro. K. G. Westmoreland, J.W., nineteen other Officers and members of the Lodge, sixty-four members of the Correspondence Circle, and sixteen visiting brethren—a total of one hundred and two.

The Master referred in sympathetic terms to the death of one of our oldest members, W.Bro. George F. Goadby, and the Brethren paid respect to his memory.

Eleven brethren were elected members of the Correspondence Circle.

A ballot for W.Bro. Ernest Vercoe Hazell as a joining member of the Lodge was in favour of the candidate.

The Master then gave the Lodge the unfortunate news that W.Bro. C. E. Davey, owing to his continued ill-health, found it necessary to resign his Office of Treasurer. The Master paid tribute to the work Bro. Davey had done over many years and expressed his own sorrow and that of the Brethren generally at the step he had found it necessary to take.

The annual elections resulted as follows:—

Master-elect: W.Bro. Claude E. Neale.

Treasurer: W.Bro. Ernest V. Hazell.

Auditors: W.Bros. C. E. Neale and V. G. Best.

Lodge Committee: (elected members): W.Bros. S. Brown, D. Timson, R. G. Smith and T. M. Ll. Walters.

A resolution "That a subscribing member of the Lodge be Tyler without emolument" (B. of C. 113) was carried.

W.Bro. Revd. Canon J. H. R. Prophet, B.A., L.Th., P.A.G.Ch., Prov.G.Ch. and Chaplain of the Lodge, then delivered an address, entitled,

"Religion in Masonry" (see page 64).

The Master's expression of thanks to Brother Prophet was endorsed by the Brethren with enthusiasm.

After the Lodge had been closed, the Brethren retired for refreshment and conversation.

CANDIDATES FOR FREEMASONRY

by

W.BRO. H. L. WHEATCROFT, P.P.J.G.W., P.G.Std.B. (R.A.)

Master

Introduction

“In theory there is nothing to hinder our following what we are taught, but in life there are many things to draw us aside.”

Many brethren have written or spoken about the effect of outside influences on the Craft: few will disagree with their conclusion that Freemasonry is built on such firm foundations, and that generations of devoted brethren have raised so magnificent an edifice on those foundations, that whatever storms may have raged without have neither harmed nor destroyed it. Happily too, even exposures from within have not grievously affected it; true, probably, because the organisation, care and control by the higher authorities are praiseworthy in the extreme. What are the external influences on the individual? Do dangers lie ahead? What kind of man seeks admission to the Order now—or will do so in a few years' time? Will he be worthy of acceptance and, if accepted, will he be disappointed—having found a more sufficing philosophy elsewhere, and being a man of honour find it his duty to withdraw from the Order? It is not enough just to ask—“Shall we be able to go on finding in our society men who are fit to join us?”—young men must be seen, known and acknowledged as they are; “It matters not what you are thought to be, but what you are” (*Publius Syrus*). It is for Freemasonry to accept or reject them.

External Influences on the Citizen

The transition from Victorianism, through Edwardianism to a second Elizabethanism. An expansion from subversion, through introversion to extroversion.

Although Plutarch said, “So very difficult a matter is it to trace and find out the truth about anything by history”, it is generally accepted that every great event has its roots in the past, and, stretching out its branches into the future, lets fall its seeds on whatever may come thereafter; so it is with man, generation succeeds generation; affected by the past, each gives of itself to the future. So what of the 20th Century?

During the last seventy years, rapid strides have been taken in the development of the social, health and education services, all of which are calculated to influence the lives, thoughts and actions of the young people who will become elder citizens at the turn of the Century, and from among whom will come a new generation of Freemasons, men quite different from their grandparents, because of changes and advances, general and specific, in public attitudes which have made their impact on the individual.

EDUCATION

“’Tis education forms the common mind: just as the twig is bent,
the tree’s inclined.” (*Pope*)

Although along with the graces and the virtues education begins in the home at birth, gradually responsibility for it has passed to the State, and by common consent Parliament has extended school life, widened University entrance and improved opportunities for adult study, while making grants to individuals from public funds.

School

Nowadays young folk come under the influence of the modern teacher, who was probably trained in a non-denominational College of Education. Quite sincerely this teacher is anxious to use the latest methods of instruction, is keen for pupils to experiment and reason—not just to accept without question—is ready to pass on the thoughts of modern historians, scientists and philosophers as well as those of the earlier and classical times, and is willing to grant to pupils a freedom unknown to earlier generations. The time has come when sixth forms are loaded with intellectual agnostics who have a Christian name relationship with Masters, when many theological colleges are closed for want of suitable entrants. On the other hand, young folk today *do* CARE, therefore earnestly seek to know why, and genuinely strive to solve. Admittedly their methods may seem strange to some, but their aims are sincere.

University

With the expansion of higher education new Universities have sprung up, first the Red Brick, then the monuments of concrete and glass, open and transparent, lacking, many will say, facilities for quiet, peaceful study and introspection, conditions so essential for the serious student. To these seats of learning have been appointed professors and lecturers, many of whom expound a philosophy—humanism—fact before fiction, proof before faith; who propound a belief—student participation, government, revolution. It must be admitted, though, that University and School scenes are livelier than formerly, opportunities greater, approaches and techniques in the arts and sciences wider.

Society

“History is the essence of innumerable biographies.”

In the second half of the Century we have seen a breakdown of old, generally accepted standards of morality and integrity, and their replacement by the ills of a permissive society, worsened, maybe, by Press reports and Radio or Television programmes. So too, have we seen the large cinema come and go, the big theatre, so popular years ago, closed or demolished, the former being replaced by home viewing

and the latter by the experimental theatre, where plays are produced in more intimate surroundings and often revealing the more intimate facts of private life. Fortunately, thanks to the encouragement and development of the Arts in schools, dramatic and musical societies throughout the country flourish, their productions being well attended and greatly appreciated. As parent, guide, exemplar, the adult today bears a heavy responsibility for the present, but looking to the future it is for him to hold the scales, hoping to maintain a fair balance between liberty and the excess.

EFFECTS OF THESE INFLUENCES

The teenager and young man of today have already been involved in and affected by *movements*, especially the cult of YOUTH, with its demands to influence and govern, sometimes its rejection of a belief in God, its tendency to revolt against any form of authority. Certainly the discerning youngster sees around him a permissive world of well being, a society cushioned by a system of social security, one in which dishonesty is practised as a policy or expedient. Assuredly this country has changed—the nineteenth century, with its father cult taught faith in God, encouraged self reliance and demanded respect and honour. Contrariwise the twentieth, with its protective mother cult teaches faith in technology, engenders reliance on others for support, and permits indifference to, and disregard for, the traditional past. However, in spite of all these disruptive influences, and because of the advantage of extended, broadened years of study, experiment and research—practical and theoretical—a majority of young men, suitable candidates for Freemasonry, will have a wide knowledge of fundamental truths, and a deep sense of the greatest of human triumphs—self discipline. Although total knowledge may have increased through the years, individual wisdom will only come slowly through experience, but it is well to remember that the product of the 20th century will be very different from that of the 19th.

THE ROLE OF FREEMASONRY

It might be through laziness, a failure of moral courage, or even unconsciousness that, for the sake of some temporary convenience, for peace and quiet, a great principle might be abandoned. Watch must ever be set to guard against the loss of any of the basic principles on which our Order is founded and which are clearly stated.

Essential Qualities

“The first condition of admission into, and membership of, the Order, is a belief in The Supreme Being. This is essential and admits of no compromise.” (*Aims and Relationships of the Craft*.)

“A MASON is obliged by his tenure to obey the moral law; and if he rightly understands the Art, he will never be a stupid atheist nor an irreligious libertine”. “He is cheerfully to conform to every lawful authority.” (*The Ancient Charges*.)

“Today men tend to take a hard look at things, established or traditional, to see whether some are not dispensable in the interests of changes to suit an increasingly congested society.” (Bro. Revd. Canon J. R. H. Prophet, *P.A.G.Ch.*)

It is to be accepted that many brethren see that changes must come but are reluctant to be committed to them: they remain loyal to the past because they value the continuity and stability which traditional observances give. Nevertheless, remembering that character is moulded by pursuits, that thoughts and beliefs are influenced by social contacts in early life, these questions must be asked—

How will candidates measure up to the standards required of ‘a fit and proper person to be made a Mason’?

How honestly do they and will they answer the question as to their belief in The Supreme Being?

Is the second Great Commandment acknowledged and practised with the first passed over?

Where does Freemasonry stand? Time and again Grand Lodge has stated it will neither change nor swerve from its basic principles. Therefore it would seem essential for an interviewing committee to be most meticulous in its searchings into the qualifications of every applicant. It is not enough for a man to be deep thinking, believing only that there is an over-riding influence in the Universe, but feeling unable to clarify his beliefs: he must affirm to the satisfaction of all present, and without tongue in cheek, his belief in the *Supreme Being*. Are there Brethren who would not state categorically this affirmation? Are there some who would be content with a mere denial of disbelief? It seems highly desirable that an applicant should be officially informed, at the earliest possible moment, of all the responsibilities entailed by membership of the Order; we should realise that not every good man would necessarily make a good Mason.

“Inasmuch as the Craft seeks to make Masons rather than members, great care was taken to see that he (the candidate) was coming with the purpose to take masonry seriously: *to undertake a great matter with the right motive, that is half the victory of achievement*, and all possible means were utilized to see that the learner came with the right spirit.” (Bro. N. L. Haywood).

“We have to be both zealous and jealous for the integrity of the Craft, zealous for its extension by the enrichment of its life, through the admission of men who are upright and true.” (Bro. Revd. Canon J. R. H. Prophet)

Having accepted a man, **BRETHREN MUST DEVELOP A MODERN APPROACH** seeing the young man of today as a fine, broadminded person—

(i) **one who is intelligent and critical**

Having studied deeply, broadly and methodically, having been taught to question, to reason why, to hold theories of his own, he is able to form his own opinions on a firm premise, able also to express them in defence of truth during a process of free discussion. He will therefore welcome opportunities for debate, going deeper perhaps than at rehearsals in a Lodge of Instruction: he will not be easily fobbed off in answers to his questions, and let us never forget, *discussion* is not *destruction*—we need these young men to guard against complacency, and the comfortable illusion that what was good enough years ago will be better for repetition—no longer can he accept “Theirs not to reason why; Theirs but to do or die.”

(ii) **one who is responsible**

Having married early in life, now a parent with commitments, he arranges his priorities and is able and willing to accept responsibility—he will not seek privilege merely because his father may be a Brother, and he will prove to be one whose heart is quick to feel, whose hand is ready to help.

(iii) **one who is involved**

Used to being a member of a group—Youth Service, Cadet or Territorial Service, choral or dramatic society—he is still anxious to serve mankind in general and some section thereof in particular—naturally he will want to be active in his membership, unwilling to be a passive onlooker, senses dulled by a meaningless, thoughtless repetition of ritual.

BRETHREN MUST LOOK OUTWARD, must live in the context of the times: although the young brother will interest himself in the history of the Craft and his Lodge, he is not likely, through backward looking, to accept without question, to repeat parrot wise—a peculiar system of morality, veiled in allegory and illustrated by symbols.

- peculiar — for him it must be particular not eccentric
- morality — is it the new? He has seen it and wants no part in it
- allegory — he will seek a further, modern interpretation for a revelation of God's will
- symbol — an outward sign, not of being a member of an exclusive club, but a sign of constancy.

The Grand Lodge, acknowledging the necessity for competent and intelligent revision, has set an example by modernising administration, by granting permission for certain changes in Ritual and in

masonic clothing. Is it too much to hope that Private Lodges will eventually realise the advancement made in common knowledge by the average citizen, who as never before is widely read, well versed and critically observant.

BRETHREN MUST EDUCATE the young initiate in the deeper meaning and true purpose of Freemasonry's rites and its philosophy. More meetings could and should be used for this purpose, "for expatiating on the Mysteries of the Craft", so that all will come to realise that knowledge alone will not solve grave problems confronting the human race, but that a deeper study of ethics and moral truths—Truth being a Divine attribute and the foundation of every masonic virtue—will show brethren the way and broaden the path. For thoughtful people there is a happy appreciation of our most precious blessing, a unique power within, the source of hope and inspiration which leads to glorious achievement. The stimulation and sure logical direction of this power is *Education*. *The chisel reminds us of the advantages of education*. Who so quickly bored as a man with a lively mind?

BRETHREN MUST BE EXEMPLARS in everyday life, in the world outside the Lodge Room, so that Freemasonry has an appeal to the best of, and in, men, so that the outsider and the newly admitted brother can truly say, "Freemasons' Hall is more than another club." Where does the blame lie if a young man, who has been encouraged to think for himself, comes to the conclusion that Freemasonry, as practised by some he knows, is not worth striving for? Brethren should be living examples of the excellence of the ancient tenets and principles of the Craft.

"It takes something for a man, even as a Mason, to master himself, but he is hardly a true master until he can teach others by word and example."

Brethren must let it be known and seen

- (i) **that we are honest**, that we practise what we teach—and never forget that the social virtues of brotherly love and relief are common to all the world, and by no means the monopoly of Freemasons: *The g. reminds us to keep down all vain and unbecoming thoughts*. How soon, otherwise, would come the charge of selfishness and pride?
- (ii) **that we are sincere in our faith**—that is, not just trust in our fellow men, but that we are willing to accept what is given as a rule and guide, TRUTH, the revelation of man's relation to God and the infinite. *The Sk. points out that straight and undeviating line of conduct laid down for our pursuit in the V.S.L.* Who so quick to detect insincerity as a young man today?

(iii) **that we are morally sound**—a man should *be* upright, not *kept* upright. *The S. teaches morality—the P.R. justness and uprightness of life and actions.* Who so abhorrent of hypocrisy as the young man today?

“Freemasonry has for her

cause — truth, light

principles — equality, fraternity

weapons — persuasion and good example

fruitage — virtue

purpose and aim — perfection and happiness of mankind.”

(“*Rituel de l'apprenti Maçon*”—Ragen.)

CONCLUSION

In answer then to the question with which we began, “What of candidates for Freemasonry?”, happily it can be firmly stated that history teaches that peculiar human characteristics during formative years give way to sanity in maturity. Many men of stature, men of sound judgment, men with strict codes of conduct, intelligent clear-sighted men, many such will want to turn from the world they see and know to look for a settled philosophy of life, where excitement is calmed by tranquility, where doubling barriers are broken by faith, where personal feelings are guided by reason, where challenge is to acknowledge one’s belief in the Supreme Being, where loyalty and devotion are preached and practised. We shall find

“Some in whom persuasion and belief have ripened into faith and faith become a passionate intuition”

Yes, we shall find them and rejoice to receive them, those who in times of seeming darkness will be able to see with their own bright inward light, beyond the present of human history, to the far-off vast eternity.

600 YEARS OF CRAFT RITUAL¹

BY *W.BRO. HARRY CARR, P.J.G.D.*

Introduction

Several important papers have appeared in the *Q.C. Transactions* dealing with the evolution of Masonic Ritual and the earliest stages in its development. It is rather surprising, however, that there has never been a paper read to the Lodge (or printed in the *Transactions*) that attempted to deal with the whole broad pattern of ritual development from its earliest stages up to the time when it was virtually stabilised at the union of the Grand Lodges in 1813 and in the following decades.

There are some obvious difficulties in the preparation of such a paper. An intensive study of the subject would easily fill a large book, and while most of the developments can be traced very clearly, there are still many gaps in the chain of events, so that theory or speculation must take the place of demonstrable proof. The worst obstacle of all lies in the fact that many aspects of modern ritual development and practice simply cannot be discussed in print.

Nevertheless, this is a subject which is usually the first and often of the most lasting interest to our Brethren. My paper is primarily addressed to them. So often in the course of my lecture duties I have met Brethren who believe that the Craft had its origins in Solomon's Temple, and that our whole Masonic ritual has come down to us from those days.

The art of building dates back, indeed, to a period long before Solomon, but Freemasonry, as we understand it today, is a purely English product. It developed in Britain out of the building trades and fraternities, whose history goes back some 600 years in England. The trade itself suffered enormous changes in that long period, and those changes were substantially reflected in the development of the Masonic ritual and ceremonies. Here, with a necessary sketch of the historical background, we shall try to trace how the modern Craft ritual evolved from those dim beginnings.

But in submitting this paper to the *Q.C. Lodge* I have an additional object in view, and that is to open up again some of the important problems in our history, and a few of the many questions which still remain unanswered. The experienced reader will probably notice them quite easily as the argument unfolds, but they are listed at the end of the paper, as a spur to the discussion which, I trust, will ensue.

¹This Paper was originally delivered to Quatuor Coronati Lodge, No. 2076, 24th June, 1968 and published in *A.Q.C.* Vol. 81.

Six Hundred Years

Six hundred years is a nice round figure, easy to remember, and it was not chosen at random. Of course there were masons in England long before, but it was not until the year 1356 that the first signs arose within the craft of some attempt at proper trade organization. In that year, 1356, there was a dispute, in London, between the "mason hewers", the men who cut the stone, and the "mason layers and setters", those who did the actual building. As a result, "twelve of the most skilful men" of the trade came before the Mayor and Aldermen at Guildhall, London, and obtained official permission for the adoption of a simple code of trade regulations, because—as the record says—their trade had never been regulated by men of the trade itself, in such form as other trades were.

Familiar as we are nowadays with industrial disputes in the trade unions, it is interesting to notice that this first attempt at trade control arose, almost certainly, out of a demarcation dispute, and the first rule that was approved that day might have served as a pattern-solution for labour troubles of modern times. It was agreed "that every man of the trade *may work at any work touching the trade*, if he be perfectly skilled and knowing in the same".

Twenty years later, in 1376, the masons, by now one of the recognized trades of the city, were asked to elect four men to serve on the Common Council—the city government. So within these twenty years, 1356-1376, we trace the rise of mason trade organization and the origins of what was later to become the London Masons Company, the first guild of the masons.

Before the end of the century, or to be more precise, in a stream of documents which begin in *c* 1390, we find the earliest evidence on the nature of the Masonic admission ceremonies. At some time between 1356 and 1390 we may date the beginnings of Masonic ritual. Hence the 600 years in the title of this paper.

The 600 year span of recorded Masonic history in England represents the period during which we can trace the evolution, expansion and changes in Masonic ritual and practice. Most of those changes were so gradual that it is impossible to say precisely how or when they occurred; others, such as the rise of the trigradal system, or the great period of the spiritual and interpretational approach to the ritual, can be dated fairly closely within the space of a few years. Certain it is, that by the end of the 1820s the English Craft ritual had become standardized into a form so close to our present day workings that we may safely halt our study at that point.

The Old Charges—The earliest evidence of Ritual and Ceremony

The craft guilds in their earliest form were, in effect, municipally-favoured organizations for the control of the trades within the towns;

but the vast majority of masons had to earn their livelihood at large-scale building-jobs outside and away from the towns. It seems probable that this essential mobility in the mason trade was the principal reason for the rise of the operative lodges. Certainly the earliest documents that point to the beginning of mason *lodge* organization, the *Old Charges* (or *Manuscript Constitutions*), all seem to suggest, mainly by the absence of certain important rules,¹ that they were not designed for use in the towns, where the trade was more-or-less adequately controlled by guild or municipal regulations.

About 130 versions of the Old Charges have survived, beginning in c. 1390 and running right through to the 18th century. Despite differences of detail in most of the texts, they all follow a broad pattern, being made up as follows:—

- (a) An opening prayer.
- (b) A legendary history of the mason craft, tracing its journey from Biblical lands until its establishment in England.
- (c) A code of regulations for Masters, Fellows and Apprentices, mainly trade regulations, but including several of a moral character.
- (d) Arrangements for large-scale 'territorial' assemblies, annually (or triennially), at which attendance was obligatory.
- (e) Arrangements for the trial and punishment of offenders.
- (f) Procedure for the admission or reception of 'new men that were never charged before', including an oath of fidelity.

In the oldest surviving version of the Old Charges, the *Regius MS.* of c. 1390, we find the first reference to the mason's oath, a requirement that appears regularly in every version, showing that it was the essential element of all masonic admission ceremonies since that time:—

A good true oath he must there swear
To his master and fellows that be there.
He must be steadfast and true also,
To all these laws, where'er he go.
And to his liege-lord the King,
To be true to him, above everything.
And all the points hereinbefore,
To all of them he must be sworn,
And all shall swear the same oath
Of the masons, be they willing, be they loth,
To all these points . . .

(*Regius MS.* II 429-439. A paraphrase in modern spelling).

¹ None of them contains regulations relating to the appointment of officers or their duties, quarterage or other fees, fixed dates of meeting, and the annual feast, all rules which would have been characteristic of town-based trade organizations.

The *Regius MS.* is a text in verse, in many respects unique. The next oldest is the *Cooke MS.* of c. 1410 which conforms more to the general pattern, and it has been shown that both are descended from closely related parent texts,¹ implying a date for the original versions, which coincides fairly closely with the 1356 date of the earliest code of Mason regulations.

Later versions of the Old Charges contain instructions, often in Latin, as to how the oath was to be administered:—

“Then one of the Elders holds out a book, and he or they (that are to be sworn) place their hand upon it, and the following precepts shall be read”.

Some texts mention the Bible or Holy scripture; some specify the right hand. The *Buchanan MS.* (c. 1670) has the instruction under a heading “The manner of taking an oath at the making of Freemasons”.

The study of the Old Charges has determined beyond reasonable doubt the form of the early ceremony of admission, which consisted of

- (1) An opening prayer or invocation.
- (2) A reading of the legendary history. This would have been a lengthy business and it may have been abbreviated or omitted.
- (3) The candidate laid his hand on the book.
- (4) The Charges were read over to him.
- (5) The Candidate took his obligation to observe the Charges.

That was the *shape* of the ceremony, but it is not until 1583 (in the *Grand Lodge No. 1 MS.*) that we have some of the actual words that were used; and they give us some idea of the earliest form of the masons' obligation:—

“These Charges that we have now rehearsed unto you all, and all others that belong to Masons, you shall keep, so help you God and your Halydome. And by this book in your hand unto your power. Amen. So be it.” [In modern spelling. H.C.]

The Charges required a mason to love God and Holy Church, to be loyal to the King, and his master and fellows, and to be faithful to the craft and its regulations. The Obligation, at this stage, was a solemn promise; there were no secrets or penalties and there was very little in the way of ceremony.

¹ Knoop, Jones & Hamer. *The Two earliest Masonic MSS.* M'ter Univ. Press, 1938, p. 6.

Two points regarding the Old Charges, are deserving of special emphasis. Firstly, they were designed with a strong bias in favour of the "lords", i.e. the employers. Secondly, the evidence they contain as regards the reading of the Charges and the oath for "new men that were never charged before" indicates no more than one ceremony which was, almost certainly, for the admission of fellows, men who had completed their apprenticeship and were now fully trained craftsmen.

The system of apprenticeship in England was of comparatively late development; indeed the earliest record of apprenticeship, *in any trade*, is dated 1230.¹ Apprentices are mentioned in all the versions of the Old Charges from c. 1390 onwards, but they were the chattels of their masters, and they had no status in their own right. The regulations relating to them in the Old Charges were designed to ensure their proper training and behaviour, but the rules which related to protection were designed for the benefit of the masters, e.g. to prevent enticement, or loss through runaway apprentices.

The Evolution of the Lodge

In the old records of Edinburgh, we find the earliest evidence that points, indirectly, to the rise of the operative lodges. There, in 1475, the masons and wrights combined to form an Incorporation, the Scottish equivalent of a craft guild, embodying in this case two kindred trades.² The Incorporation was the sole organ of the two trades within the town, and it had its representatives on the Town Council, as the masons did in London. With the co-operation of the Town Council and Magistrates, the Incorporation controlled the trades, fixed prices, wages and working hours, and controlled the taking of apprentices and the admission of fellows.³ The earliest regulations of the Incorporation, in 1475, did not even mention the word "lodge", and so far as can be known, there was no mason lodge in existence in Edinburgh at that time.

Each of the two trades appointed two "worthy men" of the craft who were to be sworn overseers of the craftsmen's work, i.e. to protect the employers and the public at large from faulty workmanship and materials.

Men who were guilty of disobedience or creating discord, were to be brought before the Deacon (the chief officer of the Incorporation) and the four "overmen", who had to settle the troubles amongst themselves if possible, with recourse to the Provost and Bailies if need be.

¹*Liber Ordinacionum*, fol. 173. Corporation of London Records Office.

²Such combinations were not uncommon in England too, e.g., the Fletchers and Bowyers in London; the Glovers and Pursers; Armourers, Blacksmiths and Brasiers: there were many similar combinations in all the larger towns.

³Fellows, fellows-of-craft, or fellow-crafts, were fully trained men, qualified (after they had taken their freedom) to set up on their own account as Masters.

Apprentices of both crafts having completed their terms of service, were brought before the four "overmen" and examined by them, to ensure that they were qualified to become "fellow of the craft". If worthy, they acquired that status for a nominal fee, otherwise they had to continue to serve their masters until they were qualified for promotion. This was the situation in 1475.

We turn now to the oldest records of the *Lodge* of Edinburgh whose earliest surviving minutes are dated 1599. At that time it was an operative Lodge, already at the height of its trade-controlling powers. This is substantially confirmed by a document of 1599, the *Schaw Statutes*, drawn up by William Schaw, Master of Works and Warden General to the Crown. That text outlined a broad scheme of territorial government of the craft, in which Edinburgh was to be "as of before" the "first and principal lodge in Scotland", with Kilwinning second, etc.

At this date, 1599, and indeed until the early years of the 18th century, the Lodge of Edinburgh was entering apprentices, passing fellowcrafts, exercising full trade control *within the Lodge*, settling disputes and punishing offenders.

And so we have this extraordinary period in Edinburgh masonic history, landmarked as it were, by two important dates, 1475 and 1599. In 1475, the establishment of the Incorporation, when, all the functions of trade control, *including what were later to become normal lodge functions*, were exercised by the Incorporation. There cannot have been any "masonic" secrets or ceremony at that time, because passing to the status of fellow crafts was conducted by the four "overmen", two of whom were not masons. The Lodge, in any recognizable form, had almost certainly not yet come into existence.

In 1598-9, there were several lodges in different parts of Scotland, and *that of Edinburgh was at the height of its powers, and performing many of the functions which had been discharged originally by the Incorporation*. The Town Council records and the Lodge minutes indicate that there was now a divided control. The Incorporation still governed prices, wages, hours of work and all matters of *external* relationship between the Craft, the employers, and the public at large. But the Lodge was now in control of the entry of apprentices and the passing of fellow crafts; it concerned itself in the exclusion of "foreign" labour from outside the town, it prohibited the employment of "cowans" or unskilled men, and it was responsible for the settlement of all internal matters and disputes between masters, fellows and apprentices.

At some stage during that period of 123 years (1475-1598) the Lodge of Edinburgh had arisen and had taken over some of the functions of the Incorporation. We cannot date the birth of the lodge precisely, because no minutes have survived before 1599. Yet the

mere possibility of territorial grouping of the Scottish lodges, and the explicit statement that Edinburgh was to be the "principal lodge *as of before*", implies that it had been in existence for a considerable time, probably since the early 1500s. In fact, Edinburgh is the only *operative* Lodge whose rise can be traced with a reasonable degree of accuracy.

In England, the absence of early lodge records makes it impossible to know whether there was a similar line of lodge evolution in the towns. It is, however, interesting to observe that within the London Masons Company in the year 1620, there already existed a separate select group called the "Acception", whose function was to "make masons" (hence 'accepted masons'), indicating a development somewhat similar to that in Edinburgh. Whether the "Acception" had any operative functions when it first came into being is simply not known; the earliest surviving minutes, from 1620 onwards, show that if it had ever had any powers of trade control, it had relinquished them by that time.

So far as concerns the evolution of operative lodges in the English towns, the total absence of records makes the subject hypothetical; but it seems probable that, in the larger towns at least, the line of evolution may have followed the Edinburgh pattern.

Another line of development, possibly more fruitful than in the towns, was at the large-scale building works outside the towns, at places where there was no kind of municipal jurisdiction. The building accounts relating to castles, cathedrals and similar long-term undertakings, indicate that whole groups of masons were in continuous employment at such works for years on end. Here the working life of the masons was entirely under the control of their royal, clerical, or noble employers, and the lodge became the place where they took their meals, rested, and settled disputes, a kind of club-room in fact. The Old Charges, indeed, use the word lodge in an indeterminate way, implying something which was hardly an organization, but rather in the sense of a workshop where masons were brought together in the course of their work. But most of the Old Charges contain evidence which shows that in course of time these lodges acquired other characteristics. In particular, there was an injunction, especially in the later versions, that required the lodge to cherish itinerant masons, to give them shelter and work—if work was to be had, or failing that, to refresh them with money to the next lodge.

The lodge had apparently acquired a new dimension; the workshop-"club-room" had also become a hostel and labour bureau, a centre where the travelling mason might be sure of a week or a fortnight's work if it was available, or of brotherly help in getting him to the next lodge, where there might be a better chance of employment.

Not least of the implications of this rule is the evidence that it gives of widespread cooperation and of a degree of permanency among the lodges of this kind.

It seems likely, therefore, that the evolution of the operative lodges in England began among the masons employed at the long-term and large scale building works, *outside* municipal jurisdiction, where the men, for the conduct of their own affairs as distinct from those of their employers, formed themselves into small self-governing lodges. Their earliest type of ceremony, as envisaged in the Old Charges, would have centred on an oath of fidelity, similar in character to the guild oath which was probably the only formula already known to some of them. In those places where there was virtually constant work, the lodges continued; elsewhere, when there was no further employment to be had, the lodges disappeared.

The Beginnings of Masonic Ritual

Against this background, and despite many uncertainties, it becomes a little easier to trace the evolution of Masonic ritual. We have already noted the extremely simple form of the earliest ceremony of admission, at a time when there was, almost certainly only one ceremony, i.e., for the fellow-craft. At that stage, there is no evidence of the adoption or use of any secret modes of recognition. Indeed the whole subject of Masonic secrets seems to be very closely involved with the subsequent expansion of the ritual into degrees, or grades; but this involvement may be purely fortuitous.

In England, all the early versions of the Old Charges tend to confirm that there were no secret modes of recognition, and in a "one-grade" system, where all who were admitted had already completed their training, there would appear to be little necessity for any such secrets. But when apprentices began to be admitted into the lodge in a two-grade system, there arose a practical need for separate "words and signes".

There is a reference to unspecified Masonic "secrets" in the *Grand Lodge No. 2 MS.* of the Old Charges, c. 1650, but the earliest reference to secret "words and signes" appears in a note attached to another version of about the same period, *Harleian MS. No. 2054*. The body of the text was apparently a copy of an earlier version, and the brief Obligation may also have belonged to an earlier date:—

"There is scu'all words & signes of a free Mason to be revailed to y^w w^{ch} as y^w will answ: before God at the Great & terrible day of Judgm^t y^w keep secret & not to revaille the same in the heares of any pson but to the M^rs & fellows of the said Society of free Masons so helpe me God xt:."

The plural "words and signes" may be taken as evidence of something more than a single-grade ceremony, but in England this is virtually the only hint of a broadening of the ceremonies.

The admission of apprentices would seem to imply that the lodges recognized some sort of improvement in their status, but the absence of lodge records makes it impossible to confirm this in English

practice. The only evidence that is available—of an indirect nature indeed—comes from Scotland. Some time after 1475, as we have seen, the Lodge of Edinburgh had taken over from the Incorporation the passing of fellow-crafts. In 1583, there was established a system for the “Booking” of apprentices, in a purely municipal register which recorded their names, the names and trades of their masters, and the number of years for which they were bound. The register, for all trades, was designed to facilitate the right of apprentices to the “freedom”, after they had completed their terms.

With the masons however, *there arose within the lodge* a system which was designed to give a certain status to apprentices, and it became customary to introduce apprentices *into the lodge* after they had served about three years of their apprenticeship, when they were admitted with a very brief ceremony which gave them the rank of “entered-apprentice”. Records have survived of the admission of entered-apprentices at Aitchison’s Haven from 1598 and at Edinburgh from 1599 onwards.

The Scottish Masonic system as a whole was often described, in documents of that period, as the “Mason Word”, in much the same way as we speak of “the Craft”, or “the Mystic Tie”, e.g., the records of the Lodge of Aberdeen (now 1st.) show that apprentices obtained “*the benefit* of the mason word” at their entry to the Lodge, implying that they enjoyed the privileges of membership of the Craft.

The precise date when the system came into being is not known. There is substantial evidence of widespread co-operation and collaboration among Scottish masons in the late 16th and 17th centuries, of a kind which would be a pre-requisite for the introduction of the system of wide-scale recognition which was implicit in the “Mason Word”. Contemporary writings show that the existence of the “Mason Word” was well known even to the general non-masonic public,¹ from 1637 onwards.

Certain it is, that at some time before 1598, the two-grade system of admission into the Scottish lodges was already firmly established, although it is not until 1696 that we find actual details of the words and procedures relating to the ceremonies. They appear in a group of four manuscripts, three complete texts and a fragment, all of Scottish origin, and they form our main foundation for the study of the evolution of early Masonic ritual:—

- (1) The *Edinburgh Register House MS.*, dated 1696.
- (2) The *Chetwode Crawley MS.*, c. 1700.
- (3) The *Kevan MS.*, c. 1714.
- (4) The *Haughfoot* “fragment”, dated 1702.

¹Its purpose however was often sadly misunderstood; masons, in some places, were believed to be gifted with second sight, practising witchcraft and in league with the devil himself. *vide* H. Carr, “A Collection of References to the Mason Word”. *Trans. Leics. L. of Research*, 1950/51.

We refer to them collectively as the "Edinburgh Group" of texts, and although they all stem from a common source, they exhibit differences in the arrangement of their contents, in phraseology and spelling, which shows that they were not copied from each other, and suggests that they represent practices in vogue over a wide area. Of the four, the *E.R.H. MS.* is the most important, because it is dated 1696, which makes it the oldest surviving description of the Masonic ceremonies of its day.

Unlike the later printed versions, these texts were not compiled from motives of profit, or spite; they were copied out laboriously by hand, to serve as *aides-mémoire*, and there is no reason to doubt the respectability of their origins.

There is, nevertheless, a serious difficulty that arises in handling any such materials, and it can be stated in a single sentence. The more they reveal, the less they are to be trusted! The oath of secrecy, which forms the central theme of all Masonic ritual documents, implies that any written revelation of ritual is *prima facie* evidence of the breach of an oath, and that, of necessity, renders all such material suspect. However interesting our four texts might be, their contents must perforce have remained under an insuperable burden of mistrust, unless it were possible, by some extraordinary chance, to produce the evidence which would link them in some way with the actual lodge practice of their time.

That vital evidence was preserved, by a rare fluke, in the minute book of the Lodge at Haughfoot, near Galashiels, which flourished from 1702 to 1763. The Lodge was founded in 1702, by a small group of local lairds and gentry, and after the first meeting one of the founders was ordered to buy a minute book (which still survives). Into its opening pages, he started by copying out what must have been a complete version of the ceremonies as depicted in the "Edinburgh Group" of texts. When he had finished that task, the last 29 words of his text occupied only five lines at the top of a page, leaving the remainder blank. His native Scottish thrift would not let him waste almost a whole page, and so after the five lines, he added a heading, "The same day", and then filled the remainder of the page with the minutes of the first meeting.

At a later date, some zealous busybody, believing no doubt that a ritual document of this kind ought to be destroyed, tore out the opening pages; but he was constrained to leave the last few words behind, because that page contained the earliest minutes of the Lodge. Hence the "Haughfoot fragment", a passage of only 29 words which form the finale to the admission-procedure of the "master or fellow craft" under the two-degree system of that period. On examination, the words correspond almost identically with the relevant passages in

the three complete versions.¹ The "fragment" thus provides the all-important link which shows that the "Edinburgh Group" of documents are what they claim to be, i.e., descriptions of the ritual and admission procedures of their time, 1696 to c. 1714, and almost certainly for fifty or a hundred years before that time.

The three complete texts, now authenticated by the "Haughfoot fragment" also provide a valuable starting point, a kind of basic standard, by which it is possible to assess the reliability of later texts, and to observe the variations and expansions as they occur in a whole stream of later manuscripts and prints.

The texts are divided into two parts, under separate headings:—

- (i) "Some Questiones That Masons Use To Put To Those Who Have Y^e Word Before They Will Acknowledge Them."
- (ii) "The Forme Of Giveing The Mason Word."²

The latter portion is the earliest description of the actual procedure of two ceremonies, for entered-apprentices and "master mason or fellow craft". The E.A. candidate was required to kneel, "and after a great many ceremonies to frighten him" he took up the bible and repeated the oath as follows:—

"By god himself and you shall answer to god when you shall stand nakd before him, at the great day, you shall not reveal any pairt of what you shall hear or see at this time whither by word nor write nor put it in wryle at any tyme nor draw it with the point of a sword, or any other instrument upon the snow or sand, nor shall you speak of it but with an entered mason, so help you god."

Note the earliest version of our "indite, carve, mark, engrave . . ." etc., and the Obligation, incidentally, contained no penalty clause; that appeared at a later stage in the proceedings.

The candidate was then "removed out of the company, with the youngest mason", who after a certain amount of horse-play, instructed him in the "due guard", i.e., the sign, postures and "words of his entrie", which included details of the penalty, with an appropriate sign. After this partial "entrusting", the candidate returned to the lodge-room, made a "ridiculous bow" and the sign, repeated the "words of entrie" and gave the sign again. Then "The Word" was

¹The minute-book survives as a treasured possession of the Lodge of St. John, Selkirk, No. 32 (S.C.). A full-length study of the minutes and the history of the Lodge, by the present author, is in *A.Q.C.*, vols. 63 and 64.

²Quoted from the *Edinburgh Register House MS.* The other two complete texts in this group have similar headings, but they transcribe the two sections in reverse order. All the known English texts up to c. 1740 quoted in this paper, are reproduced in full, in Knoop, Jones and Hamer, *The Early Masonic Catechisms*, 2nd edn., 1963. Published by the Q.C. Lodge.

whispered all round the lodge, from man to man, "beginning at the youngest" until it reached the Master, who then gave the word to the new entered-apprentice; this was the completion of the "entrusting", by a kind of rotational whisper. The sign is actually described in the texts and it was clearly related to a supposed penalty "in case he break his word". Two "words" are mentioned, either directly, or by biblical reference, and it is clear that in those days the E.A. had two pillar words. (There is no mention of a token for the E.A. in any of these documents).

The senior grade, i.e., the "F.C. or Master" ceremony began with the retirement of all E.A.s from the lodge-room. The candidate, on his knees repeated the former oath, and was taken out of the room by the "youngest Master" to learn the words, postures, and "signs of fellowship". On his return, he repeated a modified form of the "words of entrie", and that was followed by the "rotational whisper", (as described for the E.A. above) with the Master of the lodge giving the "word" to the candidate at the end of the procedure. The signs and words are not mentioned, but the posture is described in one of the test questions as five "Points of Fellowship", with details, ". . . hand to hand . . ." etc.

The final portion of the ceremony is apparently comprised under heading (i) above, "Some Questiones That Masons Use . . .". It is a catechism of 15 Questions and Answers for the E.A., with two more for the "master mason or fellow craft". The heading indicates that some of them were test-questions; one of them explicitly provides two answers, one of which was to be given if non-masons were present. But some of the questions probably formed the instructional or educational portion of the ceremony, so that we find questions on the composition of the lodge, its orientation, its situation, the lights, the jewels and the key of the lodge. One question "Where was the first lodge?" brought the answer "In the porch of Solomon's Temple". Only a few of the questions and answers give the first faint hints of Masonic Symbolism, but they are very faint indeed. It would have been impossible for the candidate to learn the answers in the brief time that he was outside the lodge; they were probably dictated to him.

So much for the earliest description of the two-degree system that was being practised in Scotland around 1696. Changes were slow in those days, and our three versions, all textually different and yet all identical in meaning, suggest very strongly that they depict practices that had been current in Scotland during the preceding hundred years or more.

It must be emphasized, however, that the "Edinburgh" group of texts may be taken as evidence of Scottish practice only. The earliest non-Scottish evidence began to appear during the next three decades.

in a period of accelerated changes. It would not be practicable here to examine the relevant texts in detail; it will suffice to note only a few of the items of interest that make their appearance, simply to give some idea of what was happening.

The *Sloane MS.*, c. 1700 describes various "gripes" and signs which had not appeared in the earlier texts and its Obligation contains the phrase "equivocation and mental reservation". It also mentions the earliest known version of the "word" which then accompanied the "Points of Fellowship". In those early days, the "word" was conferred by the Master, half in one ear and half in the other. When the same word was used for test purposes, the examiner would pronounce the first two syllables, and the other would reply "Byn".

The *Dumfries No. 4 MS.*, c. 1710 is a version of the Old Charges that belonged originally to the Old Lodge of Dumfries, which makes it an eminently respectable document. But it also contains a great deal of additional matter including a catechism, partly in traditional style and partly scriptural. There is a Charge that embodies several phrases which survive in the present-day M.M. obligation, and it ends with an injunction:—

" . . . that no lodge or corum of massons shall give the Royal secret to any suddenly but upon great deliberation first let him learn his Questions by heart then his symbals then do as the lodge thinks fit."

This clearly relates to promotion in the lodge, and it contains the first clear reference, in this class of document, to a memorized set of questions and to the use of "symbals". The "Royal secret" remains a problem.

The catechism itself is full of interesting material, including several items from the earliest group of texts. One of the questions runs:—

Q. hou were you brought in

A. shamfully w^t a rope about my neck

Later, an answer in the catechism indicates that the rope was to hang the candidate if he betrayed his trust, and the text mentions other curious penalties of those days, including "head cut off[f] & y^r bodys to be buried in ye sea mark". There are references to Hiram (without hint of a legend), Jacob's Ladder, the "length of your cable", and the meaning of the pillar-names, all evidence of gradual expansions in ritual practice.

Several other manuscripts and prints appeared during the next fifteen years, most of them repeating earlier materials but with incidental additions. But the majority of these new documents were of English—not Scottish—origin. That is perhaps their most valuable

characteristic, because the fact that they contain and accept much of the basic material in the early Scottish texts is the best evidence we have that they represent English practices as well. Indeed, throughout the whole series of texts, from 1696 to the late 1700s, despite very substantial expansions and changes, there runs a thread of basic material—a kind of nucleus of ritual and practice, that was common to England, Scotland and Ireland.

It is extraordinary that such a degree of uniformity could have been achieved before the existence of a Grand Lodge and without the help of any kind of over-all authority. The compulsory mobility of the masons in their search for employment seems to offer the only explanation.

The Advent of the Third Degree

Up to this time, c. 1710, there is no evidence of anything more than a system of two degrees. The mason trade had suffered many changes during the preceding century and, largely because of the growth of the towns, the old operative lodges had gradually lost much of their original character as trade-controlling bodies. From 1620 onwards in the London "Acception", and from 1634 in the Lodge of Edinburgh, there is evidence of the admission of non-operatives, i.e. of men who had no interest in the mason trade, into the lodges, and this process accelerated rapidly towards the end of the 17th century.

The lodges began to acquire the character of social clubs with mildly benevolent aims, still practising the traditional ceremonies, which were apparently modified in some instances for the admission of non-operatives. But conditions varied greatly in different parts of Britain. As an example, the Lodge at Alnwick, Northumberland, was still a normal operative lodge until the 1740s, though there is ample evidence in England of mixed or wholly non-operative lodges long before that time; and similar conditions are to be found in the more plentiful Scottish records.

It was at the end of this era of transition that the first Grand Lodge was founded, in 1717. The initial objectives were very modest and it is extremely doubtful if there was any idea of establishing a Grand Lodge of England. Three Lodges in London and one at Westminster, with "some old Brothers" met at a tavern and "resolv'd to hold the *Annual Assembly and Feast*, and then to chuse a Grand Master from among themselves, till they should have the Honour of a Noble Brother at their Head". The new Grand Lodge appears to have been wholly inactive until 1721, and we have no knowledge of progress during that period. The first *Book of Constitutions* was published in 1723 and the Grand Lodge minutes begin in June 1723. But five months later, in November 1723, the minute book contains a list of fifty adhering lodges in and around London.

It is against this background that we view the next stage in the evolution of the ritual, the advent of the Third Degree. We do not know where the idea germinated. The documentary evidence relating to the subject begins in 1711, *six years before the Grand Lodge was founded* and it appears in a unique text written on one side of a single folio sheet, the *Trinity College, Dublin, MS.*, which bears a dated endorsement, "Free Masonry, Feb: 1711". It was discovered among the collected papers of Sir Thomas Molyneux (1661-1733), a famous Dublin doctor and scientist.

The text is headed by an ill-drawn "Triple Tau" and begins with a catechism of only 11 Questions and Answers, all but one of them related to the *Edinburgh, Sloane, and Dumfries MSS.*, and, by comparison with the "Edinburgh group" of texts, the catechism is incomplete. There follows a narrative description of various so-called signs and words belonging to Master, "fellow craftsman", and "Enter-pretice". The details are not very clear, almost certainly incomplete, and were probably noted down from memory. The text ends with a description of several other modes of recognition, or communication, designed for use outside the lodge. One has the impression that the whole document represents a collection of ill-remembered notes; it is far from being even an attempted account of lodge procedure, and in this respect it is greatly inferior to the "Edinburgh Group" of texts. *But it is* "the earliest known MS to recognize three classes of mason, each with its own secrets."¹

The *Mason's Examination* was the first printed Exposure and it appeared in a London newspaper in 1723.² It begins with an anonymous introductory letter attacking those who deride the Craft, and the exposure which follows is offered as an example of their malice. The exposure itself begins with a narrative description of the supposed ceremony "When a Free-Mason is enter'd . . .". It corresponds roughly with the description of the E.A. ceremony in the Edinburgh texts, but it is obviously wrong in major details. Then, still in the same ceremony, which is presumably the first degree, there are ten lines of rhymed verse, which had never appeared in any earlier text:—

"Then the entered Mason says what follows:
An enter'd Mason I have been,
Boaz and *Jachin* I have seen;
A Fellow I was sworn most rare,
And know the Astler, Diamond, and Square:
I know the Master's Part full well,
As honest *Maughbin* will you tell".

¹*The Early Masonic Catechisms*, by Knoop, Jones & Hamer, 1st Edn., 1943, p. 63. 2nd Edn., 1963, p. 69.

²*ibid.*, pp. 65-9, or 2nd Edn., pp. 71-75. Reproduced from *The Flying-Post or Post-Master*, No. 4712, 11-13 April, 1723.

Then the Master says;

If a Master-Mason you would be,
Observe you well the *Rule of Three*;
And what you want in Masonry,
Thy *Mark* and *Maughbin* makes thee free.”

Three grades, enter'd Mason, Fellow, Master, possibly with separate secrets for each, though the Fellow apparently has no word. Note also the further reference to the Master-Mason and the *Rule of Three*, which may have some bearing on the question. The catechism which follows is largely a repetition of earlier materials, and it adds nothing of value in relation to the Third Degree.

One more unique document must be quoted as evidence from unauthorized sources, the *Graham MS.*, compiled and signed by Thomas Graham in 1726. It begins as a lengthy catechism, headed:—

“The Whole Institutions Of Free Masonry Opened And Proved by The Best Of Tradition And Still Some Referance To Scripture.”

A few of the opening questions had appeared in a contemporary text, but the answers and many of the questions are unlike anything that had appeared before. Most of the answers have a few words of religious interpretation added, so that the text becomes a collection of miniature sermons. There follow long sections of biblical and legendary matter relating to the Babylonians, Noah, Bezalel, Solomon and Hiram etc.

The catechism itself—though fragmentary—is continuous, i.e. it is not divided into separate sections for the different grades, but there is one answer which certainly seems to imply the existence of a three-grade system:—

“. . . if I discover our Secrets without the consent of a Lodge Except [to those]¹ that have obtained a *trible Voice* by being entered passed and raised and Conformed by 3 severall Lodges . . .”

There are, indeed, several references to “a tribble voice” including one which is strongly reminiscent of Royal Arch practice.

While all three texts quoted above seem to give clear evidence of a threefold division of the degrees and modes of recognition, none of them can be accepted as evidence of the trigradal system *in actual practice*. In fact, the earliest evidence of the third degree being worked, comes rather surprisingly, not from a lodge, but from the minutes of a London society of gentlemen who were lovers of music and architecture, the *Philo Musicæ et Architecturæ Societas Apollini*. Their story is an entertaining piece of English Masonic history.

¹Two words are inserted here, to clarify the text. (Italics are mine. H.C.).

The society was founded in February 1725, by eight Freemasons, whose quality may be judged from the fact that each of the founders had his coat of arms emblazoned on one of the opening pages of the minute book. Seven of them were members of a lodge that met at the Queen's Head Tavern, in Hollis St., Strand, and the musical society held its meetings in the same tavern.

One of their rules was "That no Person be admitted as a Visitor unless he be a Free Mason" and although their regulations did not prescribe Freemasonry as a qualification for membership, it was their custom, if an elected candidate was not already a Brother, to initiate him as a Mason, before receiving him into their Society.

A complete analysis of their minutes would be too complex in this brief essay and it will suffice if we follow the career of one of the founders, Charles Cotton Esq. He "was made a Mason by the said Grand Master" [i.e. the W.M. of the Lodge, His Grace the Duke of Richmond] on 22nd December, 1724, about two months before the Society was founded. On the day of its foundation, 18th February 1725, "And before We Founded This Society a Lodge was held consisting of Masters Sufficient for that Purpose In Order to Pass Charles Cotton Esq' . . .". Finally, on 12th May 1725, ". . . Brother Charles Cotton Esq' . . . [and another] . . . were regularly passed Masters . . .". The Initiation was in a regular Lodge; the Passing may have been regular too, but the third stage was at a meeting of the *Philo-Musica*.

There, in a nutshell, is the earliest record of the conferment of the Third Degree; but it must be emphasized that this was not a lodge; it was a musical Society and obviously irregular. It attracted the notice of Grand Lodge in December 1725 and a letter was addressed to the Society charging it with "Irregularities". The letter was ignored, but the records of the Society finished in 1727 and it may be assumed that it disappeared soon afterwards.

Gould, in a detailed analysis of the minutes,¹ agreed that, at face value, they are good evidence of three degrees in practice; but he showed also that they are open to wide interpretation, and eventually he rejected them. My own view is that the minutes of the *Philo-Musica* may be taken as good evidence, not merely because Gould did not fully prove his case, but because less than one year later there is incontrovertible evidence of a three degree system in actual practice. The minutes of the first meeting of Lodge Dumbarton Kilwinning (now No. 18, S.C.) are dated 29th January, 1726:—

" . . . which day being the first Meeting of the Masons there after constitution when there were present—John Hamilton, Grand Master,² accompanied with seven Master Masons, six fellows of Craft and three Entered prentices . . ."

¹ Gould, *Philo-Musica* . . ., A.Q.C. Vol. XVI, pp. 112-128.

²i.e. W.M. The Grand Lodge of Scotland did not come into existence until 1736.

At the next meeting, on March 25th, 1726,

“ . . . Gabrael Porterfield who appeared in the January meeting as a Fellow Craft was unanimously admitted and received a Master of the Fraternity and renewed his oath and gave in his entry money . . .”.

Porterfield had been F.C. at the foundation meeting of his Lodge. At the next meeting he came to the Lodge, and renewed his oath', implying another ceremony; then he was 'received a Master of the Fraternity'. There can be no doubt that this was a genuine third degree.

The opening minutes of Lodge Greenock Kilwinning (No. 12) are more informative:- -

“Greenock, December 27th, 1728.

The persons following, viz., James Gilmor, Mason; Robert Moor, postmaster; Laurence Wedderspoon, Maltman; Robert Moor, Mason; John Anderson, Mason; William Smith, Mason; Daniel White, Mason; All Master Masons; William Turner, gairdner in Greenock; James Snodgrass, Mason; John Parker, all Fellow-Crafts; James McBair, Gavin Montgomery; James Carmichael and Samuel Stewart, All Entered Apprentices, having met in the house of the above Robert Moor, postmaster in Greenock, they, at said Meeting, unanimously made choice of the above James Gilmor to be their Master, Laurence Wedderspoon to be their Warden and the said Robert Moor, postmaster, to be their Box-Master; and agreed to the following regulations, viz., . . .

That each who shall be received Members of this Lodge shall pay into the Box when entered as Apprentices One pound ten shillings Scotts, twelve shillings when passed Fellow-Craft, and twenty shillings Scotts when raised Master Mason, besides paying the expenses of the night's entertainment . . .”.

Here the minutes specify three separate grades and three separate ceremonies with a separate fee for each. It is particularly interesting to observe that at Greenock Kilwinning there were *masons* and men of many other trades among the founders, implying that the ritual was the same for operatives and non-operatives alike.

It may be that we shall never know, with certainty, where the three-degree system began, but the minutes quoted above show that there were seven Master Masons at Dumbarton and eight at Greenock *before* those two Lodges were founded. In the circumstances it seems we may well be justified in taking the *Philo-Musicæ* minutes as a genuine record of the third degree, despite their irregularity.

On the 20th October, 1730 Samuel Prichard published his famous pamphlet *Masonry Dissected*, the first exposure which claimed to

divulge a system of three degrees. It had a remarkable reception and ran through three editions within eleven days.³ It was translated and embodied in a French exposure, *La Réception Mystérieuse*, in 1738, and it became the basis of the catechisms in a whole flood of French exposures that appeared from 1744 onwards. It was also translated into German and Dutch, and it swept across Europe like wildfire. No fewer than twenty editions were published in England in the thirty years from 1730 to 1760 and throughout that period, it was virtually the only English exposure; there was nothing to touch it.

It would not be practicable to examine its contents here in detail, and we need only survey it briefly. The body of the work is in the form of a catechism, divided into three parts. There are 91 Questions and Answers for the *Enter'd Prentice's Degree*; 30 Questions and Answers for the *Fellow Craft's Degree* and 29 Questions and Answers for the *Master's Degree*. A great deal of all this material had already appeared in the "*Edinburgh Group*" of texts and in other documents during the period 1696-1730; but the "*Edinburgh Group*" had given 15 Questions and Answers to the E.A., against Prichard's 91. There were indeed many new questions, and several of the earlier answers had been expanded so that we can recognize the beginnings of symbolical explanation. A few of the answers, which may have seemed inadequate to Prichard, now have an N.B. to elucidate their meaning, e.g., the "Lights of the Lodge", the "Tongue of Good Report", and the E.A.'s "Token". It may also be noted that the E.A. ceremony involved a Two-Pillar theme.

Prichard's exposure contained only one Obligation; there was no mention of an oath for the F.C. or M.M., but the E.A.'s oath was a splendid affair, including *three sets* of penalties. Yet it was not entirely new; a shorter version had appeared only two months before, in a newspaper exposure (*The Daily Journal*, 15th August, 1730), but Prichard's work was incomparably better.

One of the most interesting features of this exposure was Prichard's treatment of his material, all in the form of Q. and A., yet managing them in such a way that the answers also provide useful information on "floor-work" and procedure, e.g.,

Q. How did he [the J.W.] dispose of you?

A. He carried me up to the North-East Part of the Lodge, and brought me back again to the West and deliver'd me to the Senior Warden.

Q. What did the Senior Warden do with you?

A. He presented me, and shew'd me how to walk up (by three Steps) to the Master.

³A pirated edition also appeared on 24th October 1730 in *Read's Weekly Journal*.

Q. What did the Master do with you?

A. He made me a Mason.

Q. How did he make you a Mason?

A. With my bare-bended Knee and Body within the Square, the Compass extended to my naked Left Breast, my naked Right Hand on the Holy Bible; there I took the Obligation (or Oath) of a Mason.

The *Fellow Craft's* Degree was the really weak section of Prichard's material, and that is not surprising perhaps, since it was almost entirely new. It dealt largely with the significance of the "Letter G" [for geometry], a subject of major importance in all the Old Charges. There were questions on the "Winding Stairs", the "Middle Chamber" and the dimensions and decorations of the Pillars. But whereas the E.A. degree had a two-pillar theme, the F.C. had only one of them.

In addition to the 30 Questions and Answers, there were some 28 lines of verse entitled "*The Repeating of the Letter G*" and these were apparently recited by the Examiner and Responder alternately, four lines at a time, in the style of rhymed riddles with their answers. The new F.C. received a Sn., Tn., and Wd., but the ceremony contained no trace of any preparation of the Candidate, or Obligation. It will be remembered that in the "*Edinburgh Group*" the "Master or fellow craft" repeated his former oath. That may have been the case in Prichard's time, but he did not mention it, nor did his catechism supply any details of floor-work etc., for the F.C., as it did for the E.A.

Prichard's third degree had no Obligation and it gave no details of floor-work or procedure. Yet its 29 Questions and Answers contain a very detailed legend of "the Death of our Master *Hiram*", the recovery and the raising, with a great mass of incidental information. But this legend was not a new invention and the third degree was not an entirely new theme, or a new ceremony. It was simply the old second degree (Master or fellow-craft) moved up into third place, and somewhat expanded in the details of the Hiramic legend. This had been achieved by the splitting of the original E.A. ceremony into two degrees, E.A. and F.C., and the addition of new material (Middle Chamber, letter G etc.) to the F.C. portion.

If any part of this new three-degree system is to be called "new", that must apply to the contents of the new *second* degree. The legend of H.A. which had now become the central theme of the Third Degree, has a most interesting background which deserves further study.


The Hiramic legend divides fairly clearly into two parts. The first portion may be summarized in three words, "faithful unto death".

The sequel deals with the secrets lost through the untimely death of H.A. and the attempt to recover them, or to provide a substitute.

There are, of course, numerous parallels to these themes in the folklore, mythology and legend of many nations, but they do not serve our purpose unless they appear in a Masonic context, and that we cannot find. Yet there are good grounds to believe that the medieval masons had their own store of such legends regarding the famous Biblical, historical and mythical characters who appear in the Old Charges. Among them—to name only a few—were Tubal-cain, Noah, Nimrod, Euclid, David, Solomon, and our own H.A. who is nearly always given a pseudonym, a variant of Aymon or Aynon. The Old Charges say that many of these men “loved masons well and gave them their Charges”, but the references are all-too-brief and we find no trace of the rhymes, songs and legends that must have been current in the mason-craft in the 14th century and later. The Old Charges, the Lodge and Grand Lodge records (i.e. all the authentic sources of information) afford no evidence on the contents of the Second Degree in the two-grade system, or of the legend that might have been associated with it. We are therefore, compelled to examine other sources, and when the evidence actually begins to appear, it is so vague that we seem to be clutching at shadows.


It is not until 1696, in the “*Edinburgh Group*” of texts that we find the first indirect hint of a legend in the reference to a “posture” resembling the F.P.O.F. It appeared, unexplained, simply as the position in which a word was communicated; and yet it seems certain that the mere existence of such a “posture” implies that there already was, in 1696, some sort of legend that must have explained its origin and its significance. Three of this group of texts give the “posture” (repeated regularly with minor variations in several of the later documents) and from c. 1700 we have the supposed word(s) which were spoken in that “posture”, again with numerous variations in the later texts. As these repetitions occur in texts both of English and Scottish origin, it is clear that the practice was widespread.

The next faint hint of legend appears in the *Dumfries Kilwinning MS.* of c. 1710. At the end of the text there are eight lines of rhymed verse illustrated with diagrams, but they have no relevance to anything in the body of the text:—


A caput mortuu[m]  ¹ here you see
To mind you of mortality
Behold great || || strength by . . . feil

¹A figure somewhat resembling the capital D is used in the MS., and it is probably intended to represent a skull in profile (caput mortuu[m] = death's head).

but establish . . . in heaven doeth dwe[ll]

Let all your actions  be just and trwe

which after death gives life to you

Keep round within  of your appointed sp[here]

be ready for your latter end d[r]aws near

Here is undoubtedly a reference to what might be called the spiritual lesson of the third degree, but its special importance is that it appears in a Masonic context.

In 1725 *The Whole Institutions of Free-Masons Opened* was published as a printed broadsheet. It was a very imperfect catechism and of no real importance. At the end, under the heading *The Explanation of our Secrets*, it repeats a version of the “words” from the *Sloane MS.*¹:—

“ . . . *Magbo* and *Boe* signifies Marrow in the Bone, so is our Secret to be Concealed . . .”. This phrase, “Marrow in the Bone,” is definitely part of the legend, as we shall soon see.

We return now to the *Graham MS.*, of 1726, already quoted for its several references to “a tribble voice”, with its hints of a trigradal system. The final pages of this extraordinary text are taken up with a collection of legends concerning various characters, mainly biblical, each of them amplified by the writer’s own commentary. They are all extremely interesting, but two, in particular, have a special significance in our study.

The first of these describes how the three sons of a “fameious preacher” went to their father’s grave:—

“ . . . for to try if they could find any thing about him for to Lead them to the vertuable secret which this fameious preacher had. . . . Now these 3 men had allready agreed that if they did not find the very thing it self that the first thing that they found was to be to them as a secret . . .

They endeavoured to raise the corpse (which was by now almost consumed) first by grips at the finger, wrist, and elbow, which all failed; and then by foot to foot, knee to knee, etc., they reared up the dead body.

¹ There are so many versions, so mis-spelt and debased, that it is impossible to say which form was then correct.

“ . . . so one said here is yet marow [sic] in this bone . . . so they agreed for to give it a name as is known to free masonry to this day . . . ”

Here are the elements of a story that bears a truly remarkable resemblance to the Hiramic legend, but the corpse in this case is Noah, not H.A., and this is the earliest version of a raising legend within a Masonic context. The source of the story, like that of H.A., is not known, but I doubt very much if it was Thomas Graham's own invention. It is far more likely to have been part of the ancient store of legend and craft-lore that must have been current in the mason craft since the days of the earliest of the Old Charges. The fact that it has Noah as its central figure does not diminish its importance, because it is a characteristic of legend and folklore that the names of the participants may change according to the needs and circumstances of their environment, while the story with its object-lesson remains.

The second legend concerns Bezalel, who was the chief architect of the Holy Tabernacle, the spiritual ancestor of Hiram Abif. Indeed the description of his accomplishments (in *Exodus* 31, v. 3-5) is curiously reminiscent of that of Solomon's principal architect. The *Graham* story tells how Bezalel instructed two princes (the sons of a legendary and unidentified "King Alboyne"), in the " . . . [t]heorick and practick part of masonry" on condition that "they were not to discover it without another to themselves to make a trible voice . . ." When Bezalel was near to death, he asked to be buried in the 'vale of Johosephate' and that the following inscription should be cut on his tombstone:—

“Here Lys the flowr of masonry superiour of many other
Companion to a King and to two princes a brother
Here Lys the heart all secrets could conceall
Here lys the tongue that never did reveal”

“ . . . now after his death the inhabitance there about did think that the secrets of masonry had been totally Lost because they were no more heard of for none knew the secrets thereof Save these two princes and they were so sworn at their entering not to discover it without another to make a trible voice . . . ”

Here, without a murder, is the theme "faithful unto death" and the "tongue that never did reveal". The note regarding the lost secrets is of great significance, because the two princes "were so sworn at their entering not to discover it without another to make a trible voice", a direct link with our present phrasing, "without the consent and co-operation of the other two . . .".

Enough has been said to show that all the principal elements of Prichard's Third Degree were already in existence before he published his exposure, and that some of the most important of them were contained in the *original* second degree. In addition to this, since he

never claimed to have invented any part of his work, but said that it was "As it is deliver'd in the Constituted Regular Lodges Both in City and Country . . ." it seems likely that, at most, he can only be held responsible for the arrangement of the "Letter G and Middle Chamber" material in what had become the new second degree, and for the curious manner in which the whole of his text was produced in the form of Question and Answer. Wherever he got it, it was certainly the first trigradal text and, in all respects, far the most comprehensive that had ever appeared until that time.

And so we come to the most difficult problem of all, in relation to the trigradal system, "Why did it happen; what were the causes that brought about the change from two degrees to three?" It must be admitted that there is still no definite solution to this major problem in the evolution of the Masonic ritual.

Although there is no evidence of any individual or an organized body "devising a new second degree" out of materials formerly contained in the E.A. ceremony, that, in a nutshell, is what happened. The difficulty is that we do not know who was responsible, or why it happened. When we recall the very strong evidence of a trigradal system contained in the *Trinity College, Dublin, MS.*, of 1711, six years before the first Grand Lodge was founded, it becomes impossible to imagine that the Grand Lodge had anything to do with the invention of the system of three degrees. Apart from an abortive attempt, in 1723, to retain in its own hands the conferment of the then senior grade (i.e., the second degree of "Masters and Fellow-Craft") and a reversal of the "words" in the first and second degrees some years later (a procedure which gave rise to dissension and difficulty for many years afterwards) the Grand Lodge played no part in ritual matters, and it certainly did nothing to propagate the new system; that came from the lodges themselves.

It would not be possible here to present the arguments of the eminent historians who have examined the subject. All are agreed that the evolution of the trigradal system was a more-or-less direct result of the change-over from operative practice, which had functioned satisfactorily with only two degrees. Perhaps the most surprising aspect of the problem is that *with three distinct grades of craftsmen in the trade* the lodges should have been content so long to preserve a two-degree system.

My own view is that this expansion into three degrees was inevitable; the old arrangement which gave *equal status in the lodge* to Fellows and Masters, i.e. to employees and employers, must have given rise sooner or later to a desire for a separate higher-grade ceremony for the latter class. This argument would readily apply, in a declining operative system, which had long practised only a single ceremony for those two grades, as was the case in Scotland at that

time. If we look at the foundation Minutes of Lodge Greenock Kilwinning (*ante* p. 34) we find that the trades of the first nine of the founders are specified. Among the seven senior founders, "All Master Masons", five were operative masons; among the three Fellow-crafts who participated, one was an operative mason. It seems extremely probable that this was a perfect example of a new Lodge coming into existence in the middle of the era of transition and starting from the very beginning with a three-grade system of degrees for its operative members, as well as for the non-operatives.¹ The idea of paying a separate fee for each grade was, of course, inherited from operative practice, so that the Master Masons would not have objected to paying the fee for a degree which, so-to-speak, confirmed their superior status. It should be emphasized, moreover, that the Master Mason founders, at both Dumbarton and Greenock, prove beyond doubt that the three-degree system had been in use for some time in that area, even though it was not widely practised among the majority of Scottish lodges whose records survive.

In England, though we have evidence of a handful of lodges in existence during the 1600s, the loss of their minutes makes it impossible to ascertain precisely what system they were working. Generally, where members' names are available, it seems that they were almost entirely non-operative, which implies that these lodges had already undergone transitional changes in their character by the time they make their appearance in our records.

Although the conditions in the mason trade which led to the transition must have been very similar in both countries, we cannot even be sure that the changes in the English lodges were identical with those in Scotland.

Nevertheless, the theory that "the expansion into three degrees was inevitable" applies equally to the largely non-operative lodges in England, as we find them during the first three decades of the 18th century. In all lodges, operative or non-operative, once they were freed from the bonds which tied them to a two-grade system, so long as the members enjoyed their masonry, expansion must have been a natural and an inevitable process. It was precisely the same process which led, in the 1740s, to the rise of the Royal Arch, which was designed originally as a separate ceremony for Brethren who had "pass'd the Chair" in a Craft lodge.

Whatever the reasons for the changes, the facts are clear beyond doubt. The two-degree system in practice until c. 1725, "Enter'd Apprentice" and "Master or Fellow-Craft" became three, E.A., F.C., Master's Part (or M.M.). The new F.C. ceremony was composed of

¹ We cannot apply the same test to the opening minutes of Lodge Dumbarton Kilwinning—which also had three separate grades among the founders—only because their trades are not specified.

materials formerly part of the E.A. degree but with some contemporary expansions; the Master's Part was the old second degree promoted into third place.

The new three-degree system was slow in gaining a foothold both in England and Scotland. The English exposure of 1730, *The Mystery of Freemasonry*, was probably not far wrong when it said in a cynical footnote: —

“Note. There is not one Mason in an Hundred that will be at the Expence to pass the Master's Part, except it be for Interest”.

But the trigradal system gradually found acceptance and there is little doubt that Prichard's *Masonry Dissected*, with at least 20 editions between 1730 and 1760 was one of the principal factors in the stabilization of the English ritual throughout that period.

The Charge

One further development in English ritual, the “Charge to the Initiate” must be noted here. It appeared in print in 1735 in a little work *The Pocket Companion* published in London by W. Smith. The book was practically a reprint of Anderson's 1723 *Book of Constitutions*, which was out of print at that time, and apart from some new songs it added nothing to Anderson's work, except the Charge, which is certainly the ancestor of our present-day version, containing most of the themes and several important phrases that are in use today. The author of this piece is not known; it is doubtful if Smith wrote it, since practically all his material was borrowed. Indeed, Chetwode Crawley described it as “. . . the only novel section in Bro. W. Smith's compilation (*Caementaria Hibernica*, Fasc. II, “Wm. Smith and the Masonic Manuals”, p. 12).

It certainly attracted a great deal of attention, and when the Dublin edition of the *Pocket Companion* was published in Ireland later in the same year, Smith's Charge had the distinction of receiving the “Solemn Approbation” of the Grand Master, the Dep. G.M., and the Grand Wardens of Ireland, with their recommendation “. . . for the Use of the Brethren”.

One passage in particular, leads one to suspect that it might have been written by Anderson himself.

“The greatest Monarchs in all Ages, as well of *Asia* and *Africa* as of *Europe*, have been Encouragers of the *Royal Art*; and many of them have presided as *Grand-Masters* over the *Masons* in their respective Territories, not thinking it any lessening to their Imperial Dignities to Level themselves with their *Brethren* in *Masonry*, and to act as they did.”

(W. Smith, *A Pocket Companion for Free-Masons*, 1735, p. 43.)

Here, in a single sentence is a splendid summary of a large part of Anderson's "historical" introduction to his 1723 *Book of Constitutions*. The inclusion of the monarchs of Asia, Africa, etc. and even the use of the words "Encouragers" and "Grand Masters", are so clearly in Anderson's style of writing that they might almost serve as his signature to the piece.

Ritual Developments Abroad

From 1730 until 1760 there is no evidence in England of any further developments in the Craft ritual. A great deal must have been happening. A new Grand Lodge had been founded in 1751, the "Antients", whose adherents attached great importance to the Royal Arch, and the earliest hints of Royal Arch practice had begun to appear in the 1740s. Occasional references to "Masters' Lodges" and "Scots Masters" also seem to suggest that Craft ritual practices were developing; yet throughout that whole period of 30 years nothing new appeared except the regular re-issues of Prichard's work. Our main sources of information on ritual and procedural developments during that era are from France where, from 1737 onwards, a whole stream of exposures provide very interesting and rewarding subjects for study.

English "speculative" Freemasonry had been planted in France in c. 1725 at a time when our original two-degree system was in practice. Having no roots in any earlier French operative system, it became accepted—rather lightly perhaps—as a new kind of social entertainment for the nobility and gentry, and it spread very slowly among the merchants and tradesmen during the next twelve years, or so. France was oppressed by a burden of debt and conditions in the country were so bad as to arouse a fear in Court circles that the lodges might be used as centres for the plotting of anti-government measures. In 1737 an interdict was proclaimed at Paris by Hérault, Lieutenant General of Police, against lodge meetings in taverns and restaurants. A few taverns were closed by the police and their owners were condemned to pay substantial fines. Early in 1738 Hérault published an exposure of the Masonic ritual under the title *Réception d'un Frey-Maçon*, in the hope, apparently, that he could better damage the Craft by holding it up to derision than by direct action. This was the first of a long stream of French Masonic exposures.

Hérault is supposed to have obtained the text at second-hand from Mlle. Carton, a dancer at the Paris opera, who was a lady of some notoriety. In the circumstances the total absence of catechism is not surprising. The text is in narrative form and it concentrates more on procedure than on ritual. Its "procedural" details are far more informative than the corresponding portions of the "*Edinburgh Group*" and the following is a very brief summary of its contents:—

"A sponsor for the cand.: preparation of cand.: an hour in the dark room: three knocks: admission, three perambulations:

T.B. on floor with two pillars, I and B; three candles: rosin or gun-powder 'flares' at moment of entry: cand. advanced by three steps and restored to I . . . : Posture for the Ob., with three penalties. Apron presented with two pairs of gloves. Explanation of the I. and B., the E.A. sign, token and one word followed instantly by another token and word. Toast to the cand., and an explanation of 'Firing' procedure. 'Lettering' of two words."

What little ritual there is seems to be a curious mixture of parts of two ceremonies treated as though they all belonged to only one. Despite the faulty and almost non-existent ritual, the procedural details are very interesting because they furnish useful information on the "shape" of the ceremony.¹

The next exposure, *Le Secret des Francs-Maçons* by the Abbé Gabriel Perau, a non-Mason, appeared in 1742. It was also in narrative form, following roughly the pattern of the *Réception*, but it recognized the existence of three degrees. It also contained several new items which prove that the author had other sources of information beyond the *Réception*. A brief summary of Perau's First Degree in *Le Secret* will show how far the details of the ceremony had already developed by this time:—

Candidate proposed by Sponsor and approved by the Lodge.

Candidate taken to Lodge by his Sponsor.

Questioned as to his status.

Deprived, prepared and blindfolded.

Left for one hour in a dark "contemplation chamber".

Three knocks on Lodge door.

Wardens either side to conduct him.

Powder-resin fired to startle the candidate.

Triple-Perambulation (nine in some Lodges).

Advanced by three steps.

Restored to light.

Circle of swords.

Advanced three steps to stool or pedestal.

Orator's "Exhortation".

Posture for the Ob.

Ob.

Investiture of apron, and gloves presented.

Entrusting with "guttural" sign, token, and a word "lettered".

A catechism rehearsed at table, but its contents are not given.

It is clear from the above that Perau's work owed little or nothing at all to Prichard's *Masonry Dissected*, but his Second Degree is not nearly so detailed. There is no mention of special preparation, the oath is not repeated, and the Candidate is entrusted with a "Pectoral sign", a token, and a lettered word.

¹ The *Réception* was reproduced several times in French and within a few days after its first appearance, it was translated into English, appearing in several English journals; but there is no evidence that it made any impact on ritual and procedure practices in England. (There were German and Dutch translations too.)

The Third Degree in *Le Secret* is so vague as to be almost useless. Perau speaks of a fresh drawing on the floor of the Lodge representing the "Tomb of Hiram" and he mentions a kind of embrace reminiscent of the F.P.O.F. But he also adds that the M.M. learns nothing new except an additional sign.

Le Secret also contained a ceremonial closing of the Lodge in the form of a brief catechism to be used when a Brother was to be excluded for some offence; and it gave an excellent description of table procedure, toasting and "firing".

These two texts, the *Réception* and *Le Secret*, may be said to represent the first stage in the further developments that we find in the early continental exposures. Together they yield valuable information, not so much on the spoken words as on procedural matters, and, despite inaccuracies and omissions, they help to provide a more detailed picture of the Freemasonry of their day.

Le Secret was reprinted several times, but was soon superseded by several far more interesting successors.

We ignore two other publications of 1744 which were mere catch-pennies, and the next French text of importance appeared in 1744, entitled *Le Catéchisme des Francs Maçons*, by Louis Travenol.¹ In his introduction, he gave almost unqualified approval to *Le Secret*, correcting only a few minor items. His main criticism of *Le Secret* concerned its lack of information as to the M.M. degree and his arguments led him to the conclusion that Adoniram (not H.K.T. or H.A.), was the legendary hero whom the Masons mourn in that ceremony.

After these introductory pages, the main body of the work is divided into three parts:—

The Traditional History. Adoniram had so many workmen on his pay-roll that he gave secret words and signs to each class so as to distinguish them. Three Fellows, in the hope of obtaining the pay of a Master resolved to extort the "Word" from him, etc., etc., and the story is told in excellent detail.

The Reception of a Master. The cand. is not "prepared" as in the earlier degrees. The Floor-drawing is a coffin on which is a sprig of acacia and the word "Jehova, the 'former' word of a Master". At one end, a skull and cross-bones with a square below it; at the other end a pair of open Compasses. (*Le Catéchisme* contains two excellent "Plans" of the "Floor-drawings", one for the "E.A., F.C. Lodge"; the other for the "Master's Lodge"). There is an opening ceremony, which includes a

¹ He wrote under the pseudonym Leonard Gabanon.

curious sign, hitherto unknown, that begins with the back of the right hand on the side of the forehead, and finishes with the tip of the right thumb in the pit of the stomach. The ceremony itself is described in such detail as to gladden the heart of any Preceptor anxious to stage a demonstration, and it ends with a recital of the Traditional History which explains to the candidate the story of the Masonic hero in whose memory the ceremony is performed.

These two sections, i.e. the Traditional History and the description of the Reception of a Master, represent the first great advance beyond Prichard's version of 1730. That text gave the earliest modern version of the Legend, *but nothing at all regarding the actual ceremony itself*. Travenol, in *Le Catéchisme* supplies an excellent description of the ceremony, the first of its kind, plus the legend, so that the two parts combine to give us a fine description of the M.M. degree of those days.

The Catechism. This contains materials relating to the three grades, but it is "continuous" and there is no clear indication of what belongs to each degree. It is largely based on Prichard's work, with several new Q. & A., but there are some omissions. The Catechism is perhaps the weakest section of Travenol's work but the excellence of his two-part Adoniram-degree is an ample atonement for it.

Another interesting text, *Le Sceau Rompu*, appeared in 1745. Its anonymous author named the *Réception*, *Le Secret*, and *Le Catéchisme* as having saved him from the urge or the necessity to divulge the Masonic secrets, justly giving most credit to the two later texts. The first part of the book consists of seven brief chapters which may be summarized as follows:—

- I The origins of Masonry, from the Crusades, including a note that Lodges were so called to commemorate the way in which the Israelites rebuilt their second Temple "with trowel in one hand and sword in the other". If this is an indirect reference to the R.A., it is the first of its kind outside Britain in an exposure.¹
- II The Objects of Masonry.
- III Its organization, meetings and banquets.
- IV Reception of Apprentices and Fellows; mainly minute corrections of material in *Le Secret*, but it gives the "Orator's address" before the Ob., and a form of the Ob.
- V The Reception of Masters; simply a commendation of the account in *Le Catéchisme* and a just criticism of the catechism in that work.

¹The Chevalier Ramsay, in his famous Oration, had used somewhat similar phrases in 1736/7.

VI Modes of recognition, other than those described in the earlier French texts.

VII The Masonic cypher, with an explanation.

The Catechism that completes the book is divided into three grades, largely based on Prichard's work, but it contains several Q. & A. which indicate the beginnings of a wider symbolism. In this, and in its seven chapters, it supplements and supports *Le Catéchisme* and together the two texts may be said to mark the second stage in the further developments that appeared in the early French exposures.

The third and perhaps the most important stage in the development of European ritual made its appearance in another work, published in 1745, *L'Ordre des Francs-Maçons Trahi et Le Secret des Mopses Révélé*. Of its two-part title, the latter half, which deals with the Mopses, may be dismissed with very few words, as it throws no light on the principal subject of this essay.¹ But the *Trahi*, the first and principal part of the book, was a much more serious affair.

The anonymous author, in his introduction, admitted unashamedly that he had pirated the whole of *Le Secret* and practically the whole of *Le Catéchisme*. Of the latter, he wrote:—

“But there are so many omissions, especially in the actual catechism, that I had to be content to extract the good parts, and to alter and supply the remainder. I have therefore added a number of items which I have discovered during my researches, and from all these parts, hitherto dispersed, I have compiled a complete study of the Masonic Science”.²

In effect the *Trahi* reproduced the best that had hitherto been written on the subject, but its numerous corrections and the addition of several items and notes, to the catechism and elsewhere, relating to matters which had never appeared in any of the earlier works makes the *Trahi* incomparably the most important of all the French exposures.

It would be impractical, in a brief essay, to detail all the *Trahi* “improvements” and only a few of the more interesting items are therefore mentioned here. There is a note at the beginning of the Third degree which says that the candidate had to get himself proposed all over again for that grade. If this is correct, it suggests that the taking of the M.M. degree was a comparatively rare occurrence, and that was certainly the case in England for a number of years after Prichard's publication of 1730.

¹ The Mopses were a mock-Masonic society, open to both sexes, and practising a ceremonial whose principal symbol was the Mopse, i.e. pug-dog. Their whole ritual was an absurdity, in parts disgusting, and interesting only as showing to what lengths apparently sane men and women will go in their search for entertainment and novelty.

² All English quotations from French texts are translations by the author of this paper.

The report for the M.M. degree is "two light blows close together, with a longer interval between the second and third . . .". Before the candidate is admitted, the W.M. has ordered one of the M.M.s to lie down full-length on the "coffin-design", his right hand on his heart and covered by his apron, and his face covered by a blood-stained cloth. After the cand. has made his three perambulations, the W.M. "raises" the man off the "coffin" before proceeding with the ceremony. The "word" which accompanies the F.P.O.F. is given "half in one ear and half in the other". In the recital of the story of Adoniram (i.e. H.A.) there is a new passage which says that, ". . . all the Masters wore aprons and gloves of white skin, to show that their hands were innocent of the blood of their chief". This last detail which had been given with slight variations in Prichard, had been omitted from *Le Catéchisme*, but *Trahi* had brought it back.

These are only a few of the *Trahi* additions to the text of Travenol's *Le Catéchisme*; there are many more in a totally new chapter headed "Signs, Tokens and Words of the Freemasons". But the principal "improvements" in the *Trahi* are to be found in his catechism. Here once again, the main body of the text owes its immediate origin to *Masonry Dissected*, but there is a great deal of entirely new material.

The catechism is "continuous" (as in *Le Catéchisme*) but several of the answers are now marked "R[éponse] du Maître" and these clearly belong to the M.M. degree. Several Questions and Answers of minor interest need not concern us here, but there is a block of five new Questions and Answers that had never appeared in any earlier text.¹

81. Q. When a Mason finds himself in danger, what must he say and do, to call the Brethren to his aid?
- A. He must put his joined hands to his head, the fingers interlaced, and say, "Help, ye children (or sons) of the widow". [The actual words are "*A moi, les Enfants (ou Fils) de la Veuve.*"]
82. Q. What do these words imply?
- A. As the wife of Hiram became a widow when her husband was murdered, the Masons, who regard themselves as the descendants of Hiram, call themselves, "The sons (or children) of the widow".
83. Q. What is the password of an Apprentice?
- A. . . .
84. Q. That of a Fellow Craft?
- A. . . .

¹The questions are numbered here only to show their position in the catechism, but they are not numbered in the original text.

85. Q. And that of a Master?

A. (Of a M.M.) . . .

Trahi Footnote: These passwords are scarcely used, except in France and at Frankfurt-on-Main. They are in the nature of watchwords, which have been introduced to ensure that they are not recognized. (. . . que l'on ne connoit point).

Some maintain that the Masters also demand the Master's word, which is . . . but if that is done, it is an error. On the contrary, they avoid, as far as possible, the utterance of this word, because it is regarded to some extent as sacred. The only times they use the word are, at the Reception of a Master—described above, and when examining a Brother Visitor who has entered the Lodge, claiming the rank of a Master [i.e. M.M.].

Here is a great deal of fresh material including a sign of distress with "interlaced fingers" and three "Passwords", two of which had never appeared as such in a Masonic context, and it is noteworthy that they do not agree with modern English practice. This is perhaps the best moment to utter a word of warning as to the deductions that may be drawn from the appearance of all this new material. In this matter we have to consider two main problems, authenticity and provenance. First, the question as to whether the details given by the *Trahi* (and any other works of this class) are correct.

- (a) They may have been more-or-less accurate descriptions of what had been seen by the author or his Mason friends.
- (b) They may have been pure flights of fancy invented from the writer's own imagination.
- (c) They might equally have been based on known scraps of information and simply expanded and embroidered by the skill of the author.
- (d) Finally, even if they were reasonably accurate, they might well have represented the practices in a particular lodge or locality, but still have been quite unknown elsewhere.

There are two methods only, by which we can test these possibilities. First, by what we know as to the adoption or survival of these practices during the 18th century and later. Here, we are not so much concerned with the tangled web of subsequent French practices, as with their adoption and survival in the English ritual, and for obvious reasons, the subject cannot be pursued in detail. The second test is the degree of acceptance given to the *Trahi* by the Masonic public of its day, and on this point we have a useful check. No fewer than 18 French editions of the *Trahi* were published in the next fifty years after its first appearance; three German editions were published in the first year, 1745. There is no doubt that it exercised measurable influence on the subsequent English exposures of the 1760s and later, and there is little doubt that *Trahi* ultimately filled as important a

part in European Freemasonry as Prichard's work had played in England.

The second problem in relation to all the French exposures, is the question of original provenance. The fact that various practices *make their first appearance in print in French documents*, and that there is no hint of them elsewhere at that time, would seem to suggest that they were purely French inventions, but that is not at all certain. They may have been of English, Irish or Scottish origin; or they may have been imported into France from one of the European countries. This is a problem to which we cannot find a sure and provable answer.

We may now return to the block of five questions reproduced above. The new sign, faintly linked to the Hiramic legend, need not concern us here. The new "Passwords" are far more interesting. The *Trahi* footnotes, if they are to be trusted, indicate that they were newly introduced at Paris and Frankfurt-on-Main as an additional safeguard against impostors or Brethren who were not well known and, as usual, there is no "official" evidence of this in Lodge or Grand Lodge records. We know that certain measures were taken in England between 1730 and 1739 as a defence against exposures and irregularities, and it is possible that something of the same sort happened in France. Certainly there was ample provocation in the spate of exposures that were making their appearance in France, and the writers of these pieces were well aware that they were making life very difficult for the French Masonic authorities.

Perau, in 1742, threatened in his introduction to *Le Secret*:—

"... it will become necessary for you to acquire new signs; it would be of little use merely to add something to the old ones, for you would always be liable to error: and moreover, why be niggardly in a matter which costs you so little?"

"... I leave you the task of informing the wise men of your Order, both in France and England, of all this, so that they may jointly select certain modes of recognition¹ which you will only entrust in future to such fellows as are capable of preserving them faithfully. It will perhaps be as well for you to announce that there is not one word of truth in what I have given here as the "Secret des Francs-Maçons . . ."

In 1744, Travenol in the introduction to *Le Catéchisme* and in a note at the end of his text, wrote:—

"I know that in satisfying your curiosity, [he was addressing the fair sex] I deal a mortal blow at an ancient and numerous society . . ."

¹ The French word here is *signalements* which is normally translated "descriptions". I prefer the free translation given here, which is more in accord with Perau's theme.

“For the rest, all that I have said here need not disturb them very much, since they can always take refuge in denial . . . they will take pains to announce that there is not one word of truth in everything the M. l'Abbé P . . . and I have written . . .”

If these publications were indeed accurate enough to cause the Craft in France some real embarrassment, it is likely that measures were taken on the same lines as the English ones a few years earlier, and this might explain the introduction of “Passwords”, as well as the possibility that they were only known at Paris and Frankfurt at the time when *Trahi* went to press in 1745.

It is interesting to see that they were each conferred as part of the ceremony to which they belonged, i.e. the E.A. received a Password as a further part of the entrusting. It was not conferred as a preliminary to the next degree, and if the *Trahi* note is to be believed, it was given as a kind of additional safeguard *for use outside the Lodge* in testing an unknown Brother or a possible impostor. Thus the M.M. also had a Password, a G word, whose pronunciation was already in some doubt. This “word” was not a new invention; variations of it had already made appearances in *Le Catéchisme* and in several English texts, though its precise place in the ritual is uncertain. Here, as with the other Passwords, it was a part of the degree, not a preliminary to a higher grade. This G word (in a variety of spellings) had made its appearance in some of the early English catechisms some 20 years before the *Trahi*, but those texts give no indication of its place in the ceremonies. By contrast the other two *Trahi* passwords had never appeared anywhere as Masonic passwords.

[**Author's additional note:** Since writing the above, a hitherto unknown document has come to light which has a very important bearing on the subject of Passwords. Bro. Dr. S. Vatcher, author of the paper on John Coustos, which appears as the second paper in *A.Q.C.* vol. 81, has been working on other Masonic trials and proceedings recorded in the Inquisition Archives at Lisbon and has discovered papers relating to the examination of a group of Irish Brethren in a Lisbon Lodge in 1738. On 1st August, 1738 (only three months after the publication of the first Papal Bull, *In Eminenti*) several of the Brethren were examined by the Inquisition authorities.

The testimony of one of them, “Dionizio Hogan, Cavalry Lieutenant in the Alcantara Regiment, native of Newtown, County of Tipperary, Kingdom of Ireland . . .” contains, *inter alia*, his description of the Masonic ceremonies, and he mentions that various signs, grips and *names* form the esoteric material “whereby they are known to each other”. One of those names is recognizable among the *Trahi* Passwords (the other names or words are familiar but they are *not* Passwords). It is important to add that the Lieutenant made no mention of “Passwords”; the name in question was simply one of the then numerous modes of recognition.

The whole subject of these Inquisitorial proceedings now forms another paper by Bro. Dr. Vatcher in *A.Q.C.* vol. 84, pp. 75-109. Meanwhile, it is only necessary to point out that this single "Password" appears a full seven years before the more elaborate set in the *Trahi*, and that its appearance in the evidence of an Irishman only temporarily resident in Lisbon suggests at least the possibility that he may have acquired his knowledge of it in the British Isles.

This new discovery must necessarily affect and modify my comments, above, on the *introduction* of the "Passwords", but I have not attempted to alter my original text. This additional note has been added instead, so as to bring the material up to date. H.C.]

Apart from a few items of minor interest, the remainder of the *Trahi* text represents the portions which were not "borrowed" from previous writers. The chapter headed "Signs, Tokens and Words of the Free Masons" is interesting, but rather confusing occasionally, because its information, on some points, conflicts with earlier portions of the same work.

Trahi also reproduces four "Plans" of the Floor-drawings, the first two being those from *Le Catéchisme* which are now marked "Inexact", and his own two drawings show various corrections. Incidentally he mentions that it is not proper to use ready-made "Floor-Cloths", as the designs must be drawn specially for each grade. These ready-made "Floor-Cloths" were already in use in England, and it is fairly certain that the well-balanced and attractive designs of the *Trahi* must have served to encourage the use of those cloths, which are the immediate ancestors of our own framed Tracing Boards.

It would not be possible in a brief space—and using only a few items selected almost at random—to do justice to a highly detailed work in which every page is crammed full of interesting material. The *Trahi* marks the third stage in the "further developments" of ritual-practice and procedure and none of the French publications that followed could surpass it in detail or in its presentation.

Of course there were accretions and changes during the years that followed, but in so far as the French exposures may have influenced their English successors, we need hardly look beyond the *Trahi*. When the English stream of exposures began to appear from 1760 onwards, the best of them showed the influence of the *Trahi*.¹

The Later English Exposures

The principal English exposures of the mid-18th century were *Three Distinct Knocks*, which appeared in 1760 and *J & B*, in 1762.²

¹ All the French Exposures quoted in this paper (and several others, twelve works in all) have now been produced as a single-volume collected edition, in English translation, fully illustrated, under the title *The Early French Exposures*, published by the Quatuor Coronati Lodge.

² There were several others, which need not be mentioned here except to say that the best of them followed closely the pattern of *TDK* or *J & B*.

Both enjoyed truly remarkable success. *TDK* ran through some 6 editions up to 1800. *J & B*, did far better, with at least 34 up to 1800 and innumerable editions after that.

This popularity is not surprising, because both the premier Grand Lodge (the "Moderns"), and its rival, the "Antients" Grand Lodge which came into existence in 1751, had done virtually nothing to stabilize existing ritual, or to give any guidance on the contents or procedures of the ceremonies. The "Moderns", in 1723, had incorporated a Rule (No. XI) in the *B. of C.* urging all Lodges "to observe the same Usages as much as possible" encouraging inter-Lodge visiting for that purpose. This rule was also adopted by the "Antients" but since there was no official or standard ritual at that time, it is impossible to say whether the Rule was intended to apply to ritual matters or to general Lodge procedures. Apart from this, there had only been one attempt by the premier Grand Lodge, in c. 1730-1739, to tamper with the ritual, when it had prescribed a reversal of certain words in the first and second degrees. It was an ill-advised and unfortunate action which later gave strength to the rival Grand Lodge and helped to encourage a rift in the English Craft that lasted for over 60 years, from 1751 to 1813.

Having no official texts to guide them, the Lodges were almost compelled to rely on *J & B* and similar publications, and so far as concerns the main elements of the ceremonies themselves, and the catechisms, toasts and songs which followed, these texts—though they were completely unauthorized and spurious publications—served the English Craft very widely during the last four decades of the 18th century. Basically these exposures, like Prichard's *Masonry Dissected*, were largely in the form of catechism, but they were now amplified by descriptive passages which enable us to reconstruct the ceremonial procedures, and the questions and answers also help considerably in matters of detail.

They show that a great deal had happened in English Lodge procedure during the period 1730-1760 when no new English exposures had been published, and they certainly reflect some influence from the French exposures. The essential elements of the three degrees were by this time firmly established and the exposures of the 1760s also provide useful information on such matters as Collars, Jewels, Aprons, Furniture, and Equipment. But the ritual itself still remained rather crude; it had not yet acquired those spiritual, symbolical and homiletical qualities which are its principal characteristic today.

The Moralists and Expounders

During the 40 years or so, from 1769 onwards, the English ritual was largely moulded—not by French writers—but by the work of the English moralists and expounders, Calcott, Hutchinson and Preston. In 1769, Wellins Calcott published his *Candid Disquisition*

of the *Principles and Practices of the . . . Free and Accepted Masons* . . . The first part of the book was an uninspiring "defence" of the Craft, in which Calcott examined the utility of Freemasonry, its symbols, allegory and "hieroglyphics". This was followed by several pieces of no great importance, but the work ended with a collection of brief Addresses, Charges, or Lectures, given by various Brethren on Masonic occasions, all under the general heading "The Duties of a Free-Mason". Calcott's work and the sixty pages of Addresses represented a new approach to the Craft, a search for some satisfying explanation of its meaning and purpose.

Skimming the book, we find many familiar-sounding phrases which (so far as we know) were not any part of the ritual in those days:—

" . . . commiserate their afflictions, and relieve their distress".

"Freemasonry is in like manner a progressive science . . .".

"Such is the nature of our constitution . . .".

"What you have seen praiseworthy in others, we doubt not you will imitate . . .".

" . . . ever remembering that period of your life, when you was introduced into Masonry * * * * . . .".

Six years later, in 1775, William Hutchinson published his *Spirit of Masonry*, a far superior work which may well have been sparked off by Calcott's inadequacies. It was described as a collection of Lectures which the author had delivered in the Lodge over which he "presided for several successive years". The work, deeply religious in character, and Christian of course, begins with a study of the "Rites of the Antients" (i.e. the people of Biblical and post-Biblical times). Then there follow some ten chapters on "The Nature of the Lodge, The Furniture . . . Apparel and Jewels, The Temple at Jerusalem, Geometry, The Master Mason's Order, Secrecy, Charity, Brotherly Love", etc.

Hutchinson's approach to all these subjects was religious and homiletical. He did not discuss the Craft ritual, but again we find interesting passages:—

"To walk uprightly before heaven and before men, neither inclining to the right or to the left . . .".

"To steer the bark of life upon the seas of passion . . .", etc.

William Preston

The third, and by far the best Masonic writer of this period was William Preston. Born at Edinburgh in 1742, the son of a successful lawyer, he had already acquired a good education when he came to London in 1760 and took employment as a reader with William Strahan, the King's printer.¹ Details of his career are so well known

¹ He stayed with the same firm throughout his working life and became a partner in 1804.

that we need only discuss his influence on the development of the ritual.

There were no half-measures with Preston. He had found something in Masonry that appealed to him and he became a zealous student of every aspect of the Craft. At this period (and for the next 50 years or so) a substantial part of the ceremonies were still in "Lecture" form i.e. questions and answers. Preston set himself to amplify and enrich the Lectures, but he was not content, merely to write and publish. By nature and inclination a teacher, he needed to impress his ideas directly upon his pupils. In 1772, he organized a Grand Gala, as a means of submitting his work for the approbation of the Grand Officers and leaders of the Craft. His "Oration" on that occasion was so successful that he printed it in 1772 with a description of the Gala proceedings, etc., as his *Illustrations of Masonry*.

In 1774 he was delivering a regular course of "Lectures" at the Mitre Tavern in Fleet Street, and in 1775 he produced the second edition of his *Illustrations*, virtually a completely new work, which, by the genuine love it displayed for the principles of the Craft and the spirit that pervaded it, made it instantly successful. Twelve editions were published in Preston's lifetime.¹ The 1775 edition began with a "Vindication of Masonry", based on a lecture by Bro. Charles Leslie in 1741 (published in Scotland in 1765). This was followed by "Remarks on Masonry . . ." a collection of prayers, hints on procedure, notes on opening and closing, "Charges" for all three degrees, with a great deal of general explanatory material, e.g. the Five Orders of Architecture, the Five Senses, the Seven Liberal Arts, the Globes. All these pieces were interspersed with a series of synopses of the various sections of his course of Lectures. There followed some brief but useful surveys of the ceremonies of Constitution, Consecration, Installation, the laying of Foundation-Stones, and Funerals. The remainder of the book consisted mainly of a history of Freemasonry and a collection of Odes, and Songs. Preston never claimed that his work was original; he boasted, rather, of the time and effort he had given towards finding the best that had already appeared in every branch of Masonic study. But the whole work was illuminated by the quality of his writing and on almost every page there is a phrase or sentence that has since become a part of our ritual.

His main contribution to the expounding of the ritual was in the Course of Lectures that he compiled and taught. The series of "Courses", begun in 1774, did not remain as a printed and established ritual, because there is ample manuscript evidence in the Grand Lodge library to show variations and expansions in the later versions. He organized the "Courses" rather like a school in which he was the teacher, preparing future teachers of Freemasonry.

¹ It reached its 17th Edn. in England, in 1861. There were also many translations into German and Dutch, and several re-issues in U.S.A.

It is extremely unlikely that any of the Lectures was given *in toto* in a single evening. They were generally over-long, and much more suitable for reading quietly at leisure than for rehearsal in Lodge. The "Lectures" were never printed and published in full, or in clear language. *The Pocket Manuals* covering the first and second degrees¹ were issued in 1790 and 1792 respectively, incorporating questions and answers entirely in cipher. *Syllabus* books were published, probably at a later period, but they were all undated, and we can only guess at their dates of issue from their watermarks.² They contain only the questions, in a kind of shorthand of abbreviated words, but without answers, and they were usually interleaved with blank sheets, so that their owners could write the answers on the pages facing their respective questions. Judging by the rarity of these works, it seems likely that they were only printed in very small numbers, and for a distinctly limited demand. Preston, *in his work on the Lectures*, was not aiming at a nation-wide public, but only those Brethren whom he could reach with his own voice.

Perhaps the best summing up of Preston's influence is in Bro. P. R. James's "Lectures of English Craft Freemasonry".³

"The system of catechetical Lectures evolved by Preston was something more than a mere rehearsal of the ceremonies . . . , couched in a scholarly style and based upon considerable research, they were embellished with symbolical, philosophical and moral discourses so as to 'represent the Art of Masonry in finished and complete form'. They were a vast improvement upon anything of the nature that had preceded them and it is doubtful if they have been equalled since. Yet . . . it is unlikely that Preston's system was adopted by many Lodges other than the Lodge of Antiquity. . . . Restricted as they were in use, . . . they were likewise limited in their influence. To say, as is so generally accepted, that his system was the standard before the Union is simply not true. The turn of the century produced a spate of lecture-writers and if many of them seem to have copied Preston it is probably because there was much that was common in the practice of those times . . . Nevertheless, his name will always be outstanding as that of a pioneer among the authors of the better sort of Masonic literature."

Two other writers may be mentioned in the field of Masonic "expounders". The first was John Browne, whose *Masonic Master-Key through the Three Degrees* was published in cipher in 1798. The

¹ No copy of the 3rd degree has ever come to light.

² The majority of the copies that survive date from c. 1810 and later.

³ *A.Q.C.* Vol. 79, p. 147. Preston's Lectures of the Three Degrees, carefully annotated by Br. P. R. James are in course of publication in the Transactions of the Quatuor Coronati Lodge. The First and Second Lectures have already appeared in *A.Q.C.* Volumes 82 and 83 respectively. The Third Lecture will appear in *A.Q.C.* Volume 85 in November, 1973.

second edition, greatly enlarged, was published in 1802, still mainly in cipher. Substantial passages from his work have survived in the present-day Emulation Lectures.

The next was William Finch, a far more prolific writer, who began a whole series of similar works, with *A Masonic Key* in 1801, in which he borrowed both from Preston and Browne. The second edition, 1802, under the title *A Masonic Treatise* ran through fifteen editions by 1815, and it appears to have been very popular in the West Country especially. The whole range of his work covered 39 degrees in all, but

“There is not much that is original in any of Finch’s Lectures. He was . . . a harvester of other mens’ crops . . .”¹

and it is doubtful if his work had any major influence when the “standardization” of the ritual began, in preparation for the union of the rival Grand Lodges.

It will be noticed that there was a distinct change in objectives between the works of Calcott and Hutchinson, and the later work of Preston, Browne and Finch. The earlier writers were bent on explaining the meaning and purpose of Freemasonry. The later works were designed as catechetical Lectures for ceremonial use in the Lodge.

The Installation Ceremony

Our study hitherto has been concerned only with the Craft Degrees and we turn now to a brief review of the origins of the ceremony which in the course of the last 250 years or so has become the high-light of the year’s work in most of our lodges.

The background to the ceremony is important, because it is quite certain that there was no kind of installation practised in the early operative lodges. The degrees of Craft Masonry all owe their origins directly to operative grades; the Installation, from the moment when we find our earliest evidence of it, was of Speculative creation. That evidence appears in a kind of postscript, which Dr. Anderson added to his first *Book of Constitutions*, 1723, describing

“ . . . the Manner of constituting a NEW LODGE as practis’d by his *Grace* the DUKE of WHARTON . . . ”

Until this period, the idea of *constituting* a lodge was completely unknown. In operative times, any group of masons, thrown together in course of their employment, formed a lodge when they needed to do so and, when their jobs ended, they moved on to other work and the lodge simply disappeared. It was the popularity of Masonry in

¹ P. R. James, *A.Q.C.* Vol. 79, p. 151. I am greatly indebted to Bro. James’s work in his valuable paper for my notes on Preston, Browne, and Finch.

its new "Grand Lodge form" that led to the evolution of new lodges, and the Grand Lodge, to preserve regularity and to hold its adherents, was faced with the necessity for constituting them in a formal manner.

Philip, Duke of Wharton was Grand Master in 1722 and he may have been responsible for the forms ascribed to him. The description of the procedure occupied two full pages in Anderson's work and only a portion of that text relates to the Installation of a Master. Only two degrees were known in England at that time, the senior being the Fellow-Craft's.¹ The ceremony was conducted by the Grand Master (or his Deputy, or the Master of a lodge deputed for that purpose).

The *Candidates*, or the new Master and Wardens, being yet among the *Fellow-Craft*, the GRAND-MASTER shall ask his *Deputy* if he has examin'd them, and finds the *Candidate Master* well skill'd in the *noble Science* and the *royal Art*, and duly instructed in our *Mysteries*, &c.

And the *Deputy* answering in the affirmative, he shall (by the *Grand-Master's Order*) take the *Candidate* from among his *Fellows*, and present him to the *Grand-Master*; saying, *Right worshipful GRAND-MASTER, the Brethren here desire to be form'd into a new Lodge; and I present this my worthy Brother to be their Master, whom I know to be of good Morals and great Skill, true and trusty, and a Lover of the whole Fraternity, wheresoever dispers'd over the Face of the Earth.*

Then the GRAND-MASTER, placing the *Candidate* on his left Hand, having ask'd and obtain'd the unanimous Consent of all the Brethren, shall say; *I constitute and form these good Brethren into a new Lodge, and appoint you the Master of it, not doubting of your Capacity and Care to preserve the Cement of the LODGE, &c.* with some other Expressions that are proper and usual on that Occasion, but not proper to be written.

Upon this the *Deputy* shall rehearse the *Charges* of a Master, and the GRAND-MASTER shall ask the *Candidate*, saying, *Do you submit to these Charges, as Masters have done in all Ages?* And the CANDIDATE signifying his cordial Submission thereunto, the GRAND-MASTER shall, by certain significant Ceremonies and ancient Usages, install him, and present him with the *Constitutions*, the *Lodge-Book*, and the *Instruments* of his Office, not all

¹When we obligate the M. Elect nowadays in the Second Degree, we are preserving a relic of the practice of 1723. A query from the U.S.A. prompts me to add that our English Installation ceremony, which includes an Obligation and the communication of specific modes of recognition, is always conducted in a Tyled Lodge by a Board of Installed Masters. English Brethren may contrast this practice with the *Public Installations* obtaining in some American jurisdictions, which consist of a non-secret ceremony to which family and friends (male and female) are invited; in these cases, the Bible is open, but without the Sq. and C. on it.

together, but one after another; and after each of them, the *Grand-Master*, or his *Deputy*, shall rehearse the short and pithy *Charge* that is suitable to the thing presented.

After this, the Members of this *new Lodge*, bowing all together to the *Grand-Master*, shall return his *Worship* Thanks, and immediately do their *Homage* to their *new Master*, and signify their Promise of Subjection and Obedience to him by the usual *Congratulation*.

The *Deputy* and the *Grand-Wardens*, and any other Brethren present, that are not members of this *new Lodge*, shall next congratulate the *new Master*; and he shall return his becoming Acknowledgements to the GRAND-MASTER first, and to the rest in their Order.

THEN the *Grand-Master* desires the *new Master* to enter immediately upon the Exercise of his Office, in chusing his *Wardens*: . . .

. . . Upon which the NEW MASTER, presenting them with the Instruments of their Office, . . .

A glance at the procedures described here will suffice to show that most of the elements of our Installation ceremony were already embodied in this, the earliest known version; but despite the reference to “. . . Expressions . . . not proper to be written.”, it is extremely doubtful if the ceremony contained an Obligation or any secret signs or words, since the whole ceremony was conducted in the presence of all the F.Cs.

But it should be noted that all this was the procedure for the constitution of a *New Lodge*; it was not yet the accepted practice for the annual installation of Masters of lodges generally.

Indeed, except in a few rare instances, the lodges under the premier Grand Lodge did not practise any ceremony of Installation throughout the 18th century, and this omission seems to have been one of the major complaints of the “Antients” against the premier Grand Lodge.

The “Antients” were established in 1751, and Laurence Dermott became their Grand Secretary soon afterwards. He had acquired his Masonry in Ireland, whose Grand Lodge had its own *Book of Constitutions* which was admittedly a copy of Anderson’s version in all but a few matters of local organization. It seems certain that Ireland was following the *English practice* at the Constitution of New Lodges and that they also followed, on those occasions, the Installation procedure outlined in Anderson’s *B. of C.* It was probably Dermott who, having acquired the ceremony, introduced it into the Antients’ Lodges as a necessary procedure for annual (or bi-annual¹) Installations.

¹The “Antients” usually elected their Masters for 6 months only, holding Installations twice yearly. The “Moderns” usually maintained annual elections, and their Masters often held the Chairs for several years in succession.

The "Antients" minutes for 2nd June 1756, show that many of their Masters were incapable of installing their successors, and Dermott, as G. Sec., was ordered to attend the Lodges and perform the ceremony for them. Whether Dermott adhered rigidly to the (English) Installation that he had acquired from Ireland is not known. When the English exposures began to appear in the 1760s, the best of them contained brief descriptions of an Installation ceremony, which now included an Obligation, with a secret word and grip, but it must be acknowledged that Anderson's version of 1723, though lacking those items, was nearer to our present-day practice than the descriptions in the exposures.

The further development of the ceremony seems to have been largely the work of the "moralists and expounders", notably of Preston, whose 1775 edn. of his *Illustrations* contained a summary of the 'ancient charges' to be read to the Master-Elect, almost identical with those in use today. His 1792 edn. gave the explanations of the Working tools, and the appointment and investiture of Deacons. In 1801 he made the first reference to the Inner Work in a Board of Installed Masters, the M. Elect leaving the Lodge to go into a separate room where the esoteric portion of the ceremony was conducted "in the presence of three installed Masters". This is apparently the earliest indication of the division of the Installation ceremony into two separate parts.

The 1804 edn. showed the presentation of the M. Elect:—

"I present my worthy brother, A.B. to be installed Master of the Lodge. I find him to be of good morals, of great skill, true and trusty, and a lover of the whole fraternity . . .".

The ancient charges, "You agree to be a good man and true, . . ." etc., fifteen in all, and nearly word for word identical with our present code were read to the M. Elect who signified his submission, and retired to an adjacent room for the installation.

On his return, he was invested with the "badge of his office". The Warrant was delivered to him followed by the V.S.L., sq., compasses, constitutions, minute-book, "the rule, line and trowel, the chisel, the mallet, the movable and immovable jewels, and all the insignia of his different Officers, were separately presented to him, *with suitable charges to each*". (The "suitable charges" applicable to nine different tools are all given in a long footnote—and, apart from the trowel, they are all very close to our present explanations.)

The Master was then "chaired" and the Brn. advanced in procession to do him homage, followed "by the usual Salutations in the three Degrees".

The Wardens were then invested and those two speeches are unlike our present working, but immediately afterwards, the Master addressed

them in a short speech which is clearly the ancestor of our Address to the Wardens.¹

The Secretary was invested with his jewel, followed by a brief address. The Deacons were named and invested. Preston, in a footnote, calls them the "acting Deputies of the Wardens" and the text of the investiture-speech shows that the Deacons had columns which were to be raised and lowered, as the Wardens columns are nowadays.² The investiture ends with the appointment of two Stewards and a Tyler, and the Master addressed the lodge:—

"Brethren, Such is the nature of our constitution . . . to please each other, and unite in the great design of communicating happiness . . .".¹

This brief address consists of only one paragraph, but it is essentially the first part of our Address to the Brethren.

It should be noted, however, that Preston's "Installation" was, like Anderson's original version in 1723, designed for use at the Consecration of a New Lodge. The "Moderns" Grand Lodge had not adopted the ceremony for general use, and it was not until 1810, when they were busy with preparations for the union, that the Lodge of Promulgation³ resolved:—

" . . . that the ceremony of Installation is one of the two [? true] Landmarks of the Craft and ought to be observed".

Despite wide variations of practice that must have existed all over England, this recognition of the importance of the Installation ceremony did not lead to any immediate attempt to standardize it. It was not until 1827 that the Grand Master authorized a specially appointed group of Brethren to adopt and demonstrate a "standard" version, and the ceremony in general practice nowadays is that which was approved in 1827. Apart from various expansions and minor re-arrangements, it is virtually the same ceremony as was outlined by Preston in pre-Union days.

The Union

In 1809, after the failure of several tentative moves towards a union of the rival Grand Lodges, the premier Grand Lodge, the "Moderns", took a major step in that direction by ordering its lodges "to revert to

¹ Here, Preston was using Wellins Calcott's material.

² This may have been an error on Preston's part. The "Moderns" lodges did not usually appoint Deacons, and there is evidence from 1760 onwards that the columns belonged to the Wardens in both "Antients" and "Moderns" practice.

³ A Committee of selected Brethren appointed in 1809 to examine the differences of ritual practice between the rival Grand Lodges, and formed into a Lodge for that purpose. See W. B. Hextall, *A.Q.C.* Vol. 23, p. 52.

the Antient Land Marks of the Society". This involved a change in the modes of recognition by a return to pre-1739 practices, and it proved, both by word and deed, that the "Moderns" meant business, and were ready to make substantial adjustments in their ritual procedures for the sake of the much-desired merger. In 1810, the "Antients" Grand Lodge warmly approved the proposed union. The "Moderns" erected a Special Lodge of Promulgation, ". . . for the purpose of ascertaining and promulgating the Ancient Land Marks of the Society and instructing the Craft in all such matters . . ." and after some three years of intensive work on the ritual forms and procedures, the Union was finally achieved on 27th December 1813.

No records were allowed to be taken of the new forms of working that were adopted, but it is believed that there were no major changes in the ritual of the three degrees. Most of the changes seem to have been in procedure rather than ritual, and where changes were involved, it was usually the "Antient" practices that were adopted. The situation of the Wardens was settled. Deacons, almost unknown in "Moderns" practice, were now recognized as "useful and necessary Officers". The forms of opening and closing the Lodges, and of the Obligations in the three degrees were settled satisfactorily. Most important of all perhaps, the Installation ceremony, practically unknown among the "Moderns", was now made one of the "Land Marks of the Craft" and was ordered to be observed.

Broadly, it is fair to say that the basic pattern of our work today follows the ritual and procedures that were approved at the Union. But it seems likely that a great deal of interesting material was discarded at that time. Some of the 18th century Tracing Boards that have survived, depict the Beehive, the Ark, the Hour-glass, the Scythe and other symbols which must have formed part of the symbolical background of their day, and all these have now disappeared from English usage, though they still survive in the practice of numerous U.S.A. jurisdictions, having been acquired from English workings prior to the Union of 1813.

The century-and-a-half that has elapsed since the Union has been a period of stabilization in Craft ritual and practice. Nevertheless, changes are still taking place—even during the past three years—and they will continue to come, gradually. If there is a single lesson, more important than any other, to be learned from all this, it is that the Craft ritual is not an archaeological fossil, but a living thing that flourishes according to its environment and the needs of its time. Today, after six hundred years of evolution and change, our ritual practices and procedures are a model for most of the Grand Lodges all over the world.

Problems for Discussion

- (1) How did the early English operative Lodges arise?

- (2) Is it possible that the London "Acception" started out as an operative lodge, side-by-side with the London Masons Company?
- (3) Most students are agreed that the early operative lodges used a ceremony based on the Old Charges. What were the causes which brought about the change to the "secret words and signes" type of ceremony?
- (4) When did the two-grade system of c. 1696 come into practice?
- (5) Passwords, new signs etc., appear first in French practice, c. 1745 and later, while English practices appear to remain static from 1730 to c. 1760. Where did the novelties originate; did they come from England, Scotland, Ireland or France?
- (6) What were the causes that brought about the change from two degrees to three?

RELIGION IN MASONRY

by

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Our concern in this paper is with Religion in Craft Freemasonry only—the area familiar to all Masons—and in order to rebut the notion that Freemasonry becomes a seriously religious matter only where the Royal Arch and so-called Higher Orders begin. Moreover our object is not so much to enquire into religious interpretations of masonic symbolism but into Religion as it supports those who practise the Art at its basic level.

The Freemason is a Theist

The first requirement of a man on entering a Masonic Lodge is that he should acknowledge that he believes in God and puts his trust in Him. His “admission among Masons in a state of helpless indigence” in a sense refers not only to his having been “emblematically divested of everything valuable previous to entering the Lodge”, but also to his having entered in lowliness of spirit, avowing his dependence upon God in the step he is taking. The Lodge, through its Master, is asking him to affirm theistic belief.

We are compelled to predicate a reasonable conviction in the heart of every Mason that there is a God, for it is impossible for the mind of man to remain in suspense in this regard, wavering between assent and dissent and unable thereby to receive the spiritual aid for which a Mason so constantly calls. A sceptic's progress through the Degrees of Masonry could hardly be an agreeable experience either to himself or to the Order. How can a man “unfold the beauties of true Godliness” if he rejects or neglects the grace which faith in God imparts? But when, like all with whom he seeks to become a brother, he acknowledges his trust in God, he then hears from the Chair the re-assuring answer: “Right glad am I to find your faith so well founded: relying on such sure support you may safely rise and follow your leader with a firm but humble confidence, for where the Name of God is invoked we trust no danger can ensue.”

Masonry and Religion—The Connection and Essentials

Religion is the motive bond between man and his Maker, expressed in terms of worship and moral duty. Masonry is one mode of expressing this relationship in a fraternal Order, maintained by signs and symbols and the principles of “brotherly love, relief and truth.”

Religion and Masonry are thus indivisibly related; Religion being as the ground in which Masonry as a plant is set, requiring the goodness of the ground to sustain it. We say of men who come to be

Masons that they must be "just, upright, and free men, of mature age, sound judgment, and strict morals." No man can be so well qualified who sways from religious convictions and moral principles.

For a key to our contemplation of Religion in Masonry we must refer to two elements or strands of religion which intertwine, the natural and the revealed.

Natural religion is where we sense or perceive the divine in nature or at work in nature. It has sometimes even meant identifying the divine with nature, though this is pantheism and possibly the denial of a personal Deity. Revealed religion looks to a God who is outside as well as inside nature: who is larger than nature, transcendent and yet in control and able to disclose Himself to man, and His Truth to man, in ways which would be impossible for man himself to find out.

We have then knowledge of God for which the mind and reason are adequate. But we have also Religion for which the mind and reason are by no means adequate in that it is light which must break in upon the soul.

We need not suppose that Masonry has never been touched by some of the possible crudities of natural religions or extravagancies of the occult, or that no Mason ever was known to have held curious views of doubtful validity; but we can with assurance testify that Religion in Masonry has for its centre God whom we believe to be both *in* all things and *over* all things.

Allowing that we have a date or two wrong in our masonic temporal reckoning and some 'historical' data which is acknowledgedly legendary, we would still say that our Ritual is shot through with the truth of God's working in the natural order, that we find from this truth godly lessons to learn and that we believe science to-day, far from disproving the existence of a divine hand in nature, to be making belief in it the more reasonable.

But the content of Religion in Masonry is not limited to theism based on finding God in Nature. We seek also that Infinite Wisdom which is supernaturally imparted. In a metaphor, no Mason would boast of being able to measure the Sublime and Eternal with a foot-rule. Way back in ancient Hebrew history, a counsellor of Job said: "Oh that God would speak and show thee the secrets of wisdom, that they are double to that which is! Canst thou by searching find out God? Canst thou find out the Almighty unto perfection? The measure thereof is longer than the earth and broader than the sea."

Admittedly there is much setting forth of religious concepts and moral lessons in Masonry which are deducible from the Divine Glory in the natural sphere, particularly as we use such terms of definition

as G.A.O.T.U. and G.G.O.T.U. But there is equally as much in the Craft's usages which point to the spiritual and omnipotent power of God, as ruling on High, yet stooping to dwell "with him who is of a humble and contrite spirit."

Soul-Sense

As a creature of this physical earth man is subject to mortality; but he also has the sense to feel that mortality is not the last word for him as a whole personality of body, mind and spirit. He has a sense of affinity with immortality: a sense to know of immortal values and to learn, by the virtues of faith, hope and charity, the way to walk in a path of life which leads on from the temporal to the eternal. We could say that in addition to common sense a man has the power of *soul sense*, and that in Freemasonry he is called to exercise that sense.

Think of the charge to the candidate at his raising. Describing the light of a Master Mason as "darkness visible", it points to this as "that mysterious veil" which cannot be penetrated by reason alone, but can be entered with confidence by the exercise of a vital and immortal principle within him, believing that the Lord of Life will lead him to overcome all evil, even that of death itself, and lift his eyes to that "Bright Morning Star, Whose rising brings peace and salvation to the faithful and obedient of the human race."

From outside Freemasonry the phrase or expression "darkness visible" has come in for some attack as a gross understatement of the spiritual illumination possible to the devotee of true religion. But in defence we can say that it is not a denial of the light of Divine Revelation, either as it comes in God's Word or in individual experience. It refers simply to an "immortal principle" which is carried and not extinguished within man's lowly mortal nature. If a Mason feels from his religious experience that he has light from God greater than "darkness visible", his masonic colleagues will rejoice and have no wish to dispute the claim he makes. Masonry, in using these words, is just speaking in plain, practical terms to plain, practical man: to man in his human nature, reminding him that within him resides a spark of spirituality which can be fanned into a burning faith in the light of redemption and into hope of which he need never feel ashamed.

Beginnings of the Connection

In looking for origins of Masonry in Religions of the past we would have to conclude that not all beliefs have contributed to the moral principles of religion which are written into Universal Freemasonry. We only know that a link between the geometric arts and sciences and the practice of religion has always been recognised and maintained. Wherever the operative mason of old plied his professional

trade, the influence of his religion would be near at hand, and the work he did would most likely have had a direct or indirect religious application.

From of old comes the notion that the Almighty requires an earthly house wherein to dwell and receive the oblations of His subjects. Solomon's Temple was not the first nor the largest sacred edifice erected in the east; but, of course, it has always been recognized as of special emblematic importance to Masonry. Its construction was undoubtedly an unique example of corporately inspired and pious effort to make provision for the majesty of God's presence with His people. It set forth the religious virtue of the art and work of the builders, and it speaks of the moral absoluteness of the Supreme Architect.

King David looked into his conscience and said, "See, I dwell in a house of cedar, but the Ark of God dwelleth in curtains." David had consolidated the nation, centralized the government and provided himself with noble living quarters. Then he observed that the holy symbol of God's presence, which had gone before Israel in the desert and into battle, had once been lost and then recovered, was still lying in a fragile tent. So the idea of a Temple, as rich in ornament as the old transportable tabernacle, but now to be established in strength, took shape. Solomon carried out his father's plan with faithful devotion. The construction of the Temple was an exercise of scrupulous dedication, affecting the lives of all from the chief to the lowliest worker.

Of the Temple's connection with Masonry, Anderson's Constitutions say, "However ambitious the Heathen were in cultivating the Royal Art, it was never perpetuated until God condescended to instruct his peculiar people in rearing the stately tent and in building at length the glorious house, fit for the special refulgence of His glory."

In Hebrew history the raising of the Temple indicates the inseparable link which was forged then, if not before, between Masonry and an honourable religious outlook. As for the care which was taken to house the Table of the Holy Law in the highest place within the Temple, we Masons respond by the way we afford that same Sacred Law the place of highest honour in the Lodge, thus indicating, beyond argument, our dependency upon the revealed Word of God.

The Classical Period and the Mystery Religions

If we ask what Religion in Masonry owes to the ancient religions and religious practices of the Eastern countries and of Greece and Rome, we know that great strides must have been taken in advancing the Mason's Art concurrently with the development of metaphysical and religious thought, based on the mathematical sciences, art, astrology and philosophy; but how far all this might have caused the

working masons of those days to contemplate the symbolical and mystical meaning of their craft we honestly cannot tell. As a coterie, were they ever allowed to be such, they would have been drawn more from the slave level in society than from the free, and mystical interpretations would have been more the province of scholars than of practical craftsmen. Mysteries were a specialist matter and religion for artisans and peasants seems to have been little more than a thin veneer of superstition and fear which could have had but small moral effect upon the roughness of their life, apart from that of keeping them docile and subservient. The high moral tone of some Greek and Roman philosophy doubtless took effect in individual cases of personal piety and temporary phases of social reform, but, for many hundreds of years after Plato and Aristotle, official religion did little for people generally other than make them follow the cults of personalized ethereal divinities and deified kings, conquerors and heroes.

But this was also the era of the Mystery Religions ('mystery' meaning 'secrecy'). A varied number of these religions found a following within the Hellenistic and Roman zones of civilization, but again more among the élite than the generality. They practised crude rites of initiation, or baptism, and featured the hope of immortality; but they also stressed purity of life and, in Mithraism in particular, the virtues of honour, fidelity and fortitude. The Mithraic rites were for males only and were popular with the Roman legionaries. In the west the cult was finally suppressed when Christianity became the protected and official Religion of the dying Roman Empire.

It is simple enough to see, as between Freemasonry and certain aspects of the ancient Mystery Rites, some measure of resemblance, such as secrecy, brotherhood, the reward of merit and so on, but to imagine the working mason of those times being very much involved in them, and to suppose that those, who were, could be described as harbingers of Religion in Masonry to-day, is grounded on pure conjecture.

Monotheism

It was in the midst of the days of Empire and the 'Pax Romana' with its jumble of official and unofficial religious rites, its plethora of deities and semi-deities and its wealth of metaphysical doctrines that Christianity appeared. The origins of this new Faith were semitic, but some of its teachers and missionaries belonged to the 'Diaspora', or Jews living abroad. Dispersed, as they were, over the Greek speaking provinces they would be acquainted with, and possibly influenced by, Hellenistic thought, and this must have had at least some effect upon the developing expression of Christianity. But organically the Faith arose from the strictly guarded soil of Hebrew Monotheism, and even after its severance from Judaism the Church maintained the Hebrew Scriptures, regarding them as canonically necessary to her testimony to Him whom she proclaimed as the

Saviour of the World. Unlike the Jews, however, who proudly, jealously and courageously clung to their exclusive faith against the pagan power to which they were enslaved, the Christians, with equal bravery, exposed their faith to all and sundry, "casting their bread upon the waters", because they saw themselves committed with responsibility for a world-wide religion.

The greatest factor which held the Hebrew and Christian Religions apart from all others was their insistence upon the truth of One God alone. In other words Judaism and Christianity were monotheistic. Christians differed from the Judaists in their trinitarianism; but this was never to be confused with triadic analogies which ran the danger of suggesting that Christians were really worshippers of three gods in unity instead of One God in Trinity. The doctrine of the Holy Trinity is a mystery affirmed by Christians as expressing the totality of the integral attributes and functions of the Divine Essence.

It seems obvious that the Masonic Order owes much more to Hebrew and Christian Monotheism than to classical or pre-classical polytheism. In a talk given by the late W.Bro. G. E. Phipps in this Lodge in 1939, he said: "If there is any single thing in all Masonry which has been part of it as far back as we can prove anything, it is Monotheism."

This in no way rules out the membership of men of other historical Faiths. We accept that men can be obligated as Masons on their own particular holy books, even as we are on the V.S.L., and they are certainly not accepted only as second-class Masons. No man is asked to expound his views of the Deity. All the same, a brief study of the great religious systems of the world would convince us, one would think, that the conception of One Supreme Being over all is pretty well universal.

None of us would wish to deny or disavow the great obligation we must feel we owe to that Faith to which, if we are natives of this Country, we belong. In Masonry we unite, not as leaving our individual beliefs behind us when we come into the Lodge, nor as reducing them down to a common factor, but as bringing the benefit of our own spiritual experience to bear upon our Masonic associations and activity. We can be sure that Masons who adhere to other faiths would not wish that their Christian brothers should drop the excellence of their own faith for an indifferent or, should we say, mongrel religion.

The Religious Ground of Masonry in the British Isles

We must consider the religious ground of our British Masonry now. From what we can gather the masonic idea seems to have been just alive in Saxon times, but its real springtime came with the flowering of architectural zeal and enterprise in post-Norman times, when stone-

masons really came into their own and were deployed for the construction or reconstruction of cathedrals and castles, monasteries and mansions. It was truly a heyday for the operative mason and we do not have to look in vain for evidence of guild-like confederations. One thing that is clear, though, in all this is the arm of the Church. Religion in those days, whatever merits or demerits we may associate with it, was closer to life and all its tasks than it is allowed to be to-day. We tend to polarize the sacred and the secular in a way which our feudal forefathers would not have recognized. Furthermore, not all masons in those times would be in secular occupation. There would be brothers in religious orders devoted to the building and upkeep of their own minsters and community quarters. Then there would be other masons associated in groups and moved from place to place for work on ecclesiastical and baronial projects. Some, indeed, would belong to guilds of the trade established in towns. But whether they were in static or mobile units, Holy Church would always be close at hand, and the esoteric nature of their profession would be redolent with the principles of their religion, and for its glories they would be charged with responsibility. Such fragments of ancient masonic symbolism as they might pick up for their lodge or workshop needs, in initiating apprentices and making fellows, they would probably have collected with the help of their clergy. Glimpses through old MS constitutions and charges are enough to assure us that the Craft, as it was then, was religious through and through. 'With prayer for God's grace the mason was enjoined to love God and Holy Church, to be faithful to the King and his master, to call his fellow 'Brother', to settle disputes amicably and to be on guard against evil from within or without the craft.'

The Aftermath of the Reformation

The severance of the bond of Papal authority in England came during the Tudor period, and what happened then also provided an impetus, it would seem, for the loosening of masonic ties with the Church, but not as yet with the Christian Religion. The period from the so-called Renaissance to the Reformation had been a time when thinking men were turning more and more to the Bible for their authority and less and less to the priesthood. But when the Reformation had resulted in the rise of dissent from the established Church and controversy raged round the authority even of the Scriptures, libertarians began demanding the right of individual conscience as their arbiter in questions of belief and morality. Religion, as representing Divine Authority, was gradually relegated to the side-walks of life while the authority of the human conscience took the centre. Men began to appraise Religion rather than uphold it; to regard it as an obstacle of interference with man's liberty instead of his hope of finding it. It became fashionable to turn from trust in God to trust in man, which amounted to humanism; to turn from faith in Divine Revelation to faith in human reason, or rationalism; to turn from belief in God as ruling in the kingdoms of men to thought of Him as

remote from all things created, and this was deism. The forms of Religion remained but the power thereof was denied. The nation looked like losing its spiritual and moral bearings.

Meanwhile the transition from Operative to Speculative Masons was taking place. 'Gentlemen' Lodges existed in various parts of the country, and Masonic Charges and Prayers still continued to be Trinitarian. To quote G. E. Phipps again, "For a very long time previous to 1717 no one but a Christian and a believer in the Holy Trinity would be accepted as a Mason." But to the Reverend Dr. James Anderson, a Presbyterian Minister and himself a convinced Trinitarian, the task of drawing up a form of Constitutions for Grand Lodge was given. He completed his task in 1723, and new editions appeared in stages during the 18th century. Although these Constitutions are doubtlessly well known to the Brethren, we must quote them, because they proved to be a watershed for Masonry as regards Religion. They state: "Masonry being found in all nations, even of divers religions, (Masons) are now only charged to adhere to that Religion in which all men agree, leaving their particular opinions to themselves, to be good men and true, or Men of Honour and Honesty, by whatever Denominations or Persuasions they might be distinguished. A mason is obliged, by his tenure, to obey the moral law: and if he rightly understand the art, he will never be a stupid atheist or an irreligious libertine Let a man's religion, or mode of worship be what it may, he is not excluded from the Order, provided he believes in the Glorious Architect of heaven and earth, and practise the sacred duties of morality. Masons unite with the virtuous of every persuasion in the firm and pleasing bond of fraternal love: they are taught to view the errors of mankind with compassion, and to strive, by the purity of their own conduct, to demonstrate the supreme excellence of the faith they possess."

So the religious basis of Freemasonry under Grand Lodge was declared to be theistic, but not in the sense of dependency upon the theism of one particular Religion. This naturally broke the essential tie with Christianity; but not in any way with the Freemason as a Christian. The word 'Theism' in connection with Speculative Freemasonry is not intended to be interpreted as representing anything more than basic belief in the Supreme moral Being and Ruler, who is given masonic titles purely to convey the idea of the Divine Sovereignty in relation to the arts and sciences of Masonry and, of course, to the Mason in his study and use of them.

The settlement of the religious question for Freemasonry was not received with open arms by all Masons at once. Independent Lodges and even rival Grand Lodges still existed for a while using prayers couched in Christian terms. In Pennell's Constitutions, published in Dublin in 1730, the Prayer on the making of a Brother asks, "that he may, with the Secrets of Masonry, be able to unfold the Mysteries of

Godliness and Christianity”, and it offers the petition, “In the Name and for the sake of Jesus Christ our Lord and Saviour.”

Nevertheless, from the time that one United Grand Lodge was achieved, the universal basis of Religion in Masonry, as expressed in Anderson’s Constitutions, was re-asserted and has remained fundamentally unaltered ever since.

Significance of the Grand Lodge Settlement

To explain and justify the measure, in regard to Religion, taken by Grand Lodge at its inception, one must take into consideration the state of affairs pertaining to the country as a whole. Spiritual faith was at a low ebb. There were indeed high spots of spirituality, but on the whole churchmanship was formal and seemed more concerned with politics than piety. Sectarianism was rife and licentiousness in high society and impiety in common life were rampant. Nor was there much improvement in conditions during the formative years of Grand Lodge following the union of the four London Lodges in 1717. Seen in this light it might have been thought that the founders of Grand Lodge would have had it in mind to remove the requirement of religion from Freemasonry altogether; yet they insisted upon its retention. On the other hand, if they had fastened upon some particular doctrinal or credal definition of religion, they might have wrecked all prospects of settling Freemasonry on a sure and united footing. But the chief justification for the broad, if vague, religious basis of Freemasonry lies in the fact that the Masonic Order is not a religion and could not even pretend to be a religion in itself.

Masonry must have a broad front and be as free as possible, but it needs the power of living religion to enoble the human situation of the Craft and bring honour to the Name of the Creator. Masonry has to be an example, not the *only* example but *unique* in its way, of the great principle of fraternity based on spiritual foundations; and if this is going to succeed on a universal scale, men of divers religious attitudes, loyalties and interests must be able to come, with the support of their theological and moral beliefs and principles, to a central point upon which the circle of Masonry, standing for goodwill and charity, can revolve. Masonry cannot be a religion, but it must be in the service of the religious ideal of a God-centred brotherhood.

With Religion safeguarded as the greatest, not the least, important Landmark of the Order, Anderson the Presbyterian, Desaguliers the Anglican and their colleagues acted for Masonry with, what must seem to us now, inspired wisdom; making it possible for Masonry to develop along the lines of toleration of religious differences without abandoning Religion in any way, and calling upon all Members of the Craft to be faithful to the light of the Supreme Judge according to their respective ways of acknowledging their belief in Him and their duty towards Him.

We have not the time to consider in detail the struggle to maintain Religion in Masonry since the 18th century. We might think of that century as 'The Formative Years' and of the 19th century as 'The Defensive Years', for that period was by no means without its problems in regard to theistic belief and the Masonic Order. Shall we be able to describe the 20th century as 'The Fruitful Years'? So far, perhaps, yes, but only so long as the import of Religion in Masonry is not misconstrued, either from outside or from inside its membership, and this membership is replenished always by men to whom religion is a reality in their personal life.

Meeting the Critics of Masonry

The full official statement on Religion in Masonry clearly and wisely indicates that the Order is not in being to encourage a man to be religious only so far as his Masonry supplies the need, but that he should be the more diligent in the path of his own religious profession, in order that he may lend sure and maximum spiritual support to the welfare of the Craft.

Only so can Masonry give the lie to adversaries of the Order who, every now and again, pop up with scornful accusations and attempted exposures, comparing Masonry, if they can, to such old heresies as Deism, Pantheism, Gnosticism and what not, which, as they should know, have been elements of trial to all churches and denominations in their constant battle to keep their orthodoxy. (From what some theologians are saying and writing to-day we could gather that we have not done with all heresy yet). But if religious error is laid falsely at the door of Freemasonry, it can only come from sources of ignorance outside the Order or perhaps from lack of discretion on the part of some Masons who in moments of weakness might boast to their non-masonic friends that Masonry has in it all that they want of religion. We need to keep the door of our lips close tiled against such error.

When the "Darkness Visible" attacks were made on Freemasonry in the 1950s, the Board of General Purposes on behalf of Grand Lodge issued a statement which it regarded as of "fundamental importance to the reputation and well being of English Freemasonry", and to avoid misunderstanding from either inside or outside the Craft. These are its words: "It cannot be too strongly asserted that Masonry is neither a religion nor a substitute for religion. Masonry seeks to inculcate in its members a standard of conduct and behaviour which it believes to be acceptable to all creeds, but studiously refrains from intervening in the field of dogma or theology. Masonry, therefore, is not a competitor with religion though in the sphere of human conduct it may be hoped that its teaching will be complementary to that of religion. On the other hand its basic requirement that every Member of the Order shall believe in a Supreme Being and the stress laid upon his duty towards Him should be sufficient evidence to all but the wilfully prejudiced that Masonry is an upholder of religion since it

both requires a man to have some form of religious belief before he can be admitted as a Mason, and expects him when admitted to go on practising his religion.”

Relations with Religious Denominations

The Board then goes on to lay down rules which, if observed generally, should prevent the Order from being associated or contrasted with the usages of specific Denominations of Religion. They state that when Freemasons together attend places of worship as members of their Lodges, or the funeral rites performed for a deceased brother, they should not attend in regalia or expect to have introduced into the ceremonies any specifically Masonic prayers, readings or exhortations; and one very good reason for this is that it would be a big mistake to leave an impression behind that there is a Masonic element in religion which is not covered by any corresponding element in the ceremonies attended. On any such occasion the insertion of Masonic words and phrases, which can only be understood by Masons themselves, could cause disastrous misunderstanding in the non-masonic world and even bring derision upon the name of Masonry. One can remember times when Freemasons, attending the funeral services for deceased brothers in a cemetery chapel, paid their respects by joining together in the refrain, “May we all meet together in that Grand Lodge Above.” It could be very moving, but also rather embarrassing as one wondered whether the mourners and other non-masons present would be thinking that this alluded to a special cell in heaven reserved for Masons only, and, of course, males only.

It is because Freemasonry is so fundamentally religious that there is this big risk of its being mistaken for a religion by those outside the Order who regard it curiously and possibly unsympathetically; but an even greater risk exists where Members of the Order do virtually make it their religion: that is, when they drop all connection with Religion except that to which they think they can nominally adhere by their Masonic attachments.

Why Freemasonry cannot be a Religion

It is perhaps important to keep in mind at least three clear reasons why Freemasonry cannot be a Religion. First, if it were, it would have its own theology; which it has not. The theism on which the Order is based is derivative, and no attempt could ever be made by Grand Lodge to exert religious authority. Masonic titles for the Deity are simply appropriate to our understanding of God in terms of the Art. You will look in vain for any setting forth of systematic Masonic Theology. Every Mason is expected to come with the theological equipment of his own religion, assured that in the fraternity he will find nothing incompatible with his duties therein.

Alongside this it can be said, secondly, that Freemasonry does not depend upon a special or exclusive revelation from God. Our Order

is based on revelation as it has come down to us through the founders, mystics and words of the great religions of mankind. We do not say that God revealed His Word through H.A. or that the words and secrets, which as Master Masons in solemn conclave we seek to find, are intrinsically different from forms of God's grace which are freely available to all men as a reward of diligent faith and seeking.

Thirdly, if Freemasonry were a religion it would seek to propagate its tenets, which it does not. It would be a mission to mankind, which, again, it is not. Advertising Masonry to obtain membership is forbidden. The reputation and, indeed, the growth of Speculative Freemasonry in the world depends entirely upon the natural commendability of its works. It is a closed Order of men in a way that religion in itself should never be. It is available only to men, and not even to men who disregard religion or are careless of propriety in life. It does not say that Masonry is to be sought for special blessings from God and man. If it did, Members of the Order would be revealing a very un-masonic streak of selfishness in allowing themselves to seek advantages and privileges which, supposedly, could not also accrue to their own wives and children.

The more we think about it the less we can accept Masonry as a religion or substitute for religion and the more we see, perhaps, that the greatest risk of confusing Masonry with Religion lies in what we, as Masons, might practise without due discretion rather than in what non-masons may think or say of us.

Our task is to set our religious experience, rich as it can be in grace and moral power, into the framework of our cherished masonic experience, and then to guard for Masonry the things that are masonic and owe to religion that which in Masonry is of religion.

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**CONSECRATION OF
THE LODGE OF SCIENCE AND ART, No. 8429**

at

THE MASONIC HALL, ASHBY SQUARE, LOUGHBOROUGH

on

THURSDAY, 20TH APRIL, 1972

ADDRESS BY THE PROVINCIAL GRAND MASTER

R.W.Bro. Brigadier C. B. S. Morley, C.B.E., T.D., D.L.

Brethren, in the words of Regulation 97 of the Book of Constitutions "Every new Lodge shall be solemnly constituted, according to antient usage, by the Grand Master or some other Grand Officer . . . appointed to act for him". It is to comply with that requirement that we have the happiness of attending here today to bring into existence a new grouping of Freemasons for the sake of a high ideal.

In an age when religion and ordered society of any kind appear to be increasingly under criticism and attack it is very heartening that our Order continues its appeal to men who willingly submit themselves to the discipline and high moral standards which our Craft requires, and, let me say, which it will continue to enforce, whatever the outside pressure to which it may be subjected. You, the Founders, are drawn from many walks of life, representing the academic, scientific, professional, industrial and commercial interests of the community in Loughborough. As you stand on the threshold of what for some of you is a new Masonic experience it is very important to realise the immense responsibility you are taking upon yourselves, and you may well ask what is the precise nature of that responsibility.

It is outlined very clearly as an introduction to the Book of Constitutions under the heading "The Charges of a Free-Mason". and it is regrettable that these Charges are probably one of the least studied parts of the book. Regrettably so because they give guidance, in such unequivocal terms, as to our approach to God and religion; our compliance with the law of the land; our responsibilities to our Lodges; our relations with our Brethren; the work of the Lodge and our personal conduct both within and without Masonic precincts.

This information is made available to every Freemason at his initiation, so that he has at first-hand all the elements which are vital to the success of any new Lodge if he is minded to study them. I commend these Charges to your earnest study, especially by those Founders whose personal and private avocations may have been such, in the past, as to deprive them of the opportunity of regular contact with their Lodges, and so making that daily advancement in Masonic knowledge which we are all bidden to pursue. These six Charges are the foundation on which our Craft is built, and I would like to

express the hope that you may decide to have them read aloud in open Lodge, say two at a time at your first three meetings or in toto at your next meeting, so that all may appreciate the full extent, and the nature, of their duties. Indeed it does none of us any harm to be reminded, from time to time, of exactly what Freemasonry expects from us in return for the benefits we receive from our membership.

There are two special thoughts I would like to lay before you. The first touches on the question of tradition. Not all the Masonic traditions which were readily acceptable when some of us were initiated necessarily find the same degree of favour in the second half of this twentieth century . . . But that certainly does not imply any weakening of our basic principles. Tradition, which has played so vital and important a part in the development of Craft Masonry, is an excellent quality, but we must always remember that the world does not stand still, and if too rigid application of traditions, which might be considered by the generation of today as outmoded, inhibits progress we are not building on a very safe foundation. I urge you, therefore, to ensure that the traditions which you establish are in accord with the spirit of the times in which we live, being both realistic and feasible without relaxing any of our basic teachings.

The second thought concerns your selection of candidates. I hope it is hardly necessary for me to remind you that the introduction of only one disputatious personality could well make for grave disharmony in your Lodge, and that is something which every sensible Freemason should always strive to avoid. But having made your choice, it will then be your duty to ensure that the conduct of your ceremonies is of such a nature as to leave an indelible impression; a memory which will remain with the candidate throughout his Masonic career. That memory will certainly be the more vivid and longer lasting if you make a practice always to close your Lodge in the Degree which you have worked, and I hope that, as many of you belong to Lodges in other Provinces, you will endeavour, also to avoid introducing customs which are not usual in this Province, by making our Guidance Booklets on ceremonial and administration the basis of your study and practice.

I must remind you, also, that the granting of your Warrant implies your unqualified acceptance of the Grand Master's requirement that vocal music be restricted to the opening and closing odes and responses to prayer.

Finally, Brother Founders, I hope you will never allow your Lodge to degenerate into a mere dining club. Your ceremonies should always rank first and foremost in importance, the after-proceedings being attuned to the atmosphere of what has gone before, avoiding extravagance and unseemly hilarity and preserving due modesty in the number and length of speeches. I stress this latter point because the after-dinner volubility of some of our predecessors of old is something which this Province actively seeks to discourage.

I shall look upon this Lodge of Science and Art as a link between town and gown. May that link be forged in durability and maintained in honour as the years go by.

And now let us turn to our task in hand by asking a Blessing on the work.

ORATION BY THE PROVINCIAL GRAND CHAPLAIN

W. Bro. Revd. Canon J. R. H. Prophet, B.A., L.Th., P.A.G.Ch.

Brethren, the name 'Science and Art' given to this Lodge, about to be consecrated, is explicit enough, but implicit, whether it be in this or any other Masonic Lodge, is our belief in God the Divine Architect and Geometrician and our responsibility for the honour of His Name and Holy Will.

Those who have made a study of the historical growth of Freemasonry and its nature from the beginning will know very well that it is constituted on a theistic basis, that "it is founded on the purest principles of piety and virtue", that every Mason, whoever he may be, is called to bend his moral will and weight to the raising of "a super-structure perfect in its parts and honourable to the builder", and to invoke the assistance of the G.A.O.T.U. in all that he undertakes, so that the Order may receive that 'cementing and adorning with every moral and social virtue' which every Freemasons' Lodge requires.

It would be interesting to trace in history the impact of religious thought upon the field of scientific and artistic progress on the one side and upon Masonry as a peculiar branch of art and science with its philosophical connotations on the other. A fairly comprehensive look into Masonic bibliography, of which there is a wealth in the Library of the Province, would reveal some pertinent information on the subject, we may be sure; but here we have no time except to observe that the ebb and flow of the tide of supernaturalism has affected both fields with parallel effect. Both began, and for a long time continued to be, firmly entrenched in religion and yoked to an ecclesiastical authority. Both were also largely employed on ecclesiological subjects and projects. Both eventually shook themselves free, or just found themselves free from this servitude with its sometimes irritating, conventionalism and dogmatic restraints. Henceforth artists and scientists would no longer feel themselves obliged to look at the Universe through the 'lenses' of official religion. Their own gifts of inspiration, discovery and invention would have free rein. But this metaphorical exodus of 'Israel from Egypt' did not signal an essential departure from religious sentiments and moral attitudes as such. Some artists and scientists may indeed have found their philosophical haven in varying shades of humanism, ranging from deistic to atheistic idea, but if this was a trend, it was not the way of all. Many who were top grade artists and scientists remained devoted to the cause of their religion, and some of them became and then remained genuine Masons, faithful to the charges of the Craft.

However, where men looking at the arts and sciences professionally and objectively and Masons speculating upon their subjective meaning might conceivably have drifted apart from their former parallel course was, and still could be, on the question of accepting a religious and

moral definition or interpretation of their respective obligations. The man of the arts and sciences might argue that an atheist or libertine could be just as good a master in his own field of creative effort as a religious man or a saint. On the other hand Masonry as it has been practised in this Country, both before and after the days of its tie with the religious authority, has always recognized the ongoing moral and spiritual lessons to be drawn from the specific art and science with which it has been concerned.

Masons acknowledge that they are subject to the Moral Law which is the divinely revealed Law as set forth in the V.S.L. and that the very purpose and value of their researches into the mysteries of nature, which they respect as of God's handiwork, must be judged by this standard and none other. The Mason applies his knowledge to his morals. He requires the pursuit of knowledge for his moral awareness and his morals for his spiritual alertness.

A Mason is bound to take a theistic view of things. Freemasonry itself is not a religion, but it needs the religion of its membership for its ideals and potency. It can only be open to men who willingly and gratefully own that God is their hope and strength. By such faith as a Mason has in the eternal and omnipotent Ruler of the Universe he remembers his mortality and also the immortal principle within him which links his soul to the Lord of Life, from Whom comes the wisdom and power in man to overcome the evils of his mortal existence and to point him to the realm of true light and life. This, as you will recollect, comes out forcibly in the ritual of the 3rd Degree and would be taken truly to heart by any honest and sincere candidate at his Raising. The promised reward is in faithfulness to the Will of the Supreme Master, not in personal achievement, and the warning is against infidelity which is a greater fault than failure.

Our Provincial Grand Master has referred in his address to the introduction to the Book of Constitutions and, in recommending that the Charges contained therein should be studied, he has alluded to that part which concerns our masonic approach to God and religion. It is, to all intents and purposes, a rescript from the first Book of Constitutions drawn up by Dr. James Anderson for Grand Lodge in its formative years following upon the union of four London Lodges in 1717. It is worth remembering that, in the time of Anderson, Desaguliers and other founders of Grand Lodge, religious indifference, rationalistic thought and moral degeneration were every bit as rife in England as they may be supposed to be to-day, and that, therefore, it would not have been very surprising if the establishment of acceptable Freemasonry under Grand Lodge authority had at that time been marked by the complete withdrawal of the theistic obligation. But, instead, Grand Lodge gave prior place to religion and, as the Declaration puts it, "Masons are charged to that Religion in which all men agree, leaving their particular opinions to themselves, to be good men and true, or Men of Honour and Honesty, by

whatever Denominations or Persuasions they might be distinguished . . . etc.” The retention of a broad but soundly based link with religious belief was insisted upon and all men, from that time, who would aspire to be Masons have been obliged to confess, before they come forward to partake of the secrets and mysteries of Antient Freemasonry, that they profess a humble but sincere confidence in God.

The nature and principles of Freemasonry are such as can only exist and be understood, accepted, illustrated and vindicated in the free and fraternal employment of men who are first sure that God is, and that His observing eye is a reality, secondly sure that God grants His greatest gift of charity to those who draw near to Him in sincerity and truth, thirdly sure that He stands revealed in His Word and commands obedience to His Will and, fourthly, sure that in mutual understanding of Divine Truth, revealed in all God’s wonderful works, the relationship of all who share the privileges and responsibilities of the Order may rest in “peace, love and harmony”.

This is the ideal, but the ideal is attainable if we go forward with faith, fidelity and unity. Let every man who enters and passes through the door of this Lodge be thus minded, for only so can there be, in these morally and socially unstable days, any virtue or goodly masonic consequence to the founding of this Lodge of Science and Art.

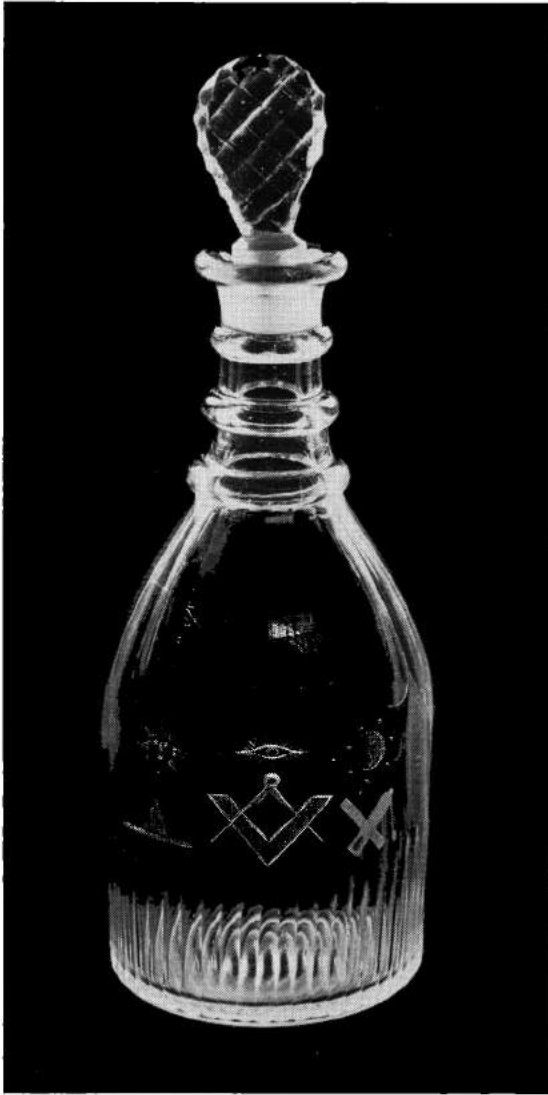
SELECTED EXHIBITS FROM THE PROVINCIAL MUSEUM

Captions by

W. Bro. R. G. Smith, P.P.S.G.D., Hon. Custodian and Librarian.



Two Jelly Glasses of flared form—*Circa 1750*. Engraved with masonic emblems and the number 401. This was the number of King's Head Lodge (founded in 1755) and now named St. John's Lodge, No. 167, meeting at Freemasons' Hall, London. The extensive brim enabled the cook to top the jelly with clotted cream. These glasses, at the time they were made, would cost 2/- per lb., in best glass.



Small Decanter 9 $\frac{1}{4}$ " high—Circa 1800.

This type of decanter was known as a Prussian decanter. It has a circuit of comb fluting round the base, and is engraved with masonic emblems. There is wide fluting on the shoulders below the neck. There is no doubt that the stopper shown in this photograph was not the one designed for this decanter. The original one was, in all probability, horizontal or mushroom shaped, separated from the stopper end and lifted high above the lip by a polished ball knob on a short stem.



A serving Rummer—*Circa 1800*, with bucket bowl, the short thick stem seldom measuring more than two inches in length, these stems being of four types—cylindrical, knopped, cut, and spool shaped. The glass illustrated is extensively engraved with masonic emblems. It was used for the drinking of toddy, this being a hot grog with the addition of sugar, lemon juice and grated nutmeg. The word "rummer" is derived from the German word "*roemer*", applied to glasses designed to contain the straw coloured Rhenish wine. The illustration shown is a master glass, or *Constable*, having a capacity 6 times greater than each of the drinking rummers. The Constable stood unused upon the table, except on ceremonial occasions.

SYMBOLATRY

The Excessive Veneration of Symbols

by

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The paper is divided into six parts:

1. Introduction;
2. The Nature of Symbols and Symbolism in General;
3. The Search for a "profound" Symbolology;
4. The Protest of Learned Brethren;
5. Conclusion;
6. Authorities and Acknowledgments.

1. Introduction

In the course of my reading and study of symbols and symbolism in a Masonic context one aspect has caused bewilderment. This confusion has arisen out of the obscure interpretations given to some of our symbols and by the search for hidden meanings of symbols undertaken by those who seem to honour symbols because they are symbols.

It is this, to me, needless exaltation of Masonic symbols and symbolism that has prompted the preparation of this my third paper on Symbols¹. I have entitled this one 'SYMBOLATRY'—a word that "The Shorter Oxford Dictionary" defines as the worship or excessive veneration of symbols.

2. The Nature of Symbols and Symbolism in General

I believe that an understanding of Masonic symbolism (and consequently symbolatry) requires some prior knowledge of the nature of symbols and symbolism in general. This part of my paper aims to provide that background.

A simple symbol is a tangible object that stands for or represents something else with the purpose of a clearer understanding of and, therefore, the enhancement of the importance of what is symbolized.

As stated in my paper "Symbols" (Transactions Research Lodge of N.S.W. ii, 51-53) seven types of symbols may be recognized. They are all used in Freemasonry and are:

¹ Earlier papers are:

"Symbols": Trans. Research Lodge of New South Wales (1971) ii, 51-63.

"The Pregnant Symbols": Trans. Royal Arch Chapter of Research (N.S.W.), May 1971. 1-13.

1. **INDICATIVE SYMBOL.** Sometimes called arbitrary or conventional symbol; does not resemble, signifies by some accidental or conventional relation. *Examples:* National flag (unity of a people); Letters of the alphabet (sounds); Shaking hands (friendship); Raising hat to a lady (respect); K.S.T. (a moral life built on Masonic initiation); Mathematical, scientific, commercial and industrial symbols (designed arbitrarily to have an agreed-upon-meaning); Communicants' Bread and Wine (suffering and death); etc.
2. **EMBLEM.** Sometimes called intrinsic or natural symbol; suggests through some natural fitness. An emblem resembles. *Examples:* Emblems of mortality (death); Crown (royalty); Whiteness (purity); Dove (peace); Ring (eternity); Communicants' Bread and Wine (body and blood) which shows that one symbol may be of two types and have more than one significance; etc.²
3. **BADGE.** Distinguishes association. *Examples:* Masonic apron (membership of the Craft); Square and Compasses (the Masonic fraternity); Rotarians' lapel badge; etc.
4. **SIGN.** A mark or action by which a thing or condition may be recognized; like an emblem it suggests what it represents. *Examples:* Blush (shame or other emotion); Action suggesting the penalty of an Ob.; An indication of a healthy or morbid physical condition; etc.
5. **TOKEN.** A voluntary expression of an attitude, understanding or intent. *Examples:* Kiss (love); Gift (affection or regard); A Masonic "G" (recognition); A deposit of money indicating intention to purchase; etc.
6. **DEVICE.** A symbolic figure representing to the mind an idea. *Examples:* Coat-of-arms; A drawing, painting or sculpture suggesting something other than what is depicted; Trade-mark; etc.
7. **PARABLE OR ALLEGORY.** Both are spoken symbols and tell a fictional story as if true to illustrate a moral principle which is left to the hearer to discover. A parable is usually brief and shows the moral principle in a familiar setting. (Read Matthew xiii which gives four parables and, unusually, states the moral at the end.) An allegory is often long and elaborate. (A fable differs from an allegory or parable in that it states the moral at the end.)³

² Groups 3, 4, 5 and 6 are types of intrinsic symbols which some authorities classify as sub-divisions of Group 2.

³ Because allegory is a spoken symbol Bro. A. Mackey offered an alternative definition to the usual "peculiar system of morality, veiled in allegory and illustrated by symbols", namely: "a system of morality developed and inculcated by the science of symbolism" ("Mackey's Symbolism of Freemasonry", p.71.)

ATTRIBUTE, SYMPTOM, AUGURY, OMEN, PORTENT, etc. are close kinsmen of Symbols.

For those who love a positive Masonry which means what it says and says what it means perhaps symbols and symbolism have been sufficiently explained, but more insight is necessary for a fuller understanding of the subject.

For example: Encyclopaedia Britannica (1966 p. 159 et seq.) gives a more involved definition, including occult intent, namely:

“Symbolism (is) the art and doctrine of symbols, knowledge of the treatment of symbols or of deciphering the occult intent of signs and symbols—especially in reference to things spiritual, invisible, or unable to be pictured, as an idea or quality.”

The Britannica informs us, too, that “the origin of symbolism is traceable to the hieroglyphics or pictorial writings of the ancient Egyptians and was transmitted from them to other nations by the Jews”. In result the myths of Greece, Rome, Egypt and India all expose a symbolism.

What is genuinely symbolic is bound up with the intuitive (i.e. perceived by the mind without reasoning) and cannot be separated from it. “The human mind is functioning symbolically when some components of its experience elicit consciousness, belief, emotions and usages, respecting other components of experience. The former set of components are ‘the symbols’ and the latter set ‘the meaning’ of the symbols” (A. N. Whitehead: “Symbolism” (1927) p. 7-8).

This simpler symbolism (called “genuine” by the authority quoted above and “referential” by another), as has been explained at the start of this section, was restricted to objects or marks intended to direct special attention to some other object, idea, event, person, etc. In witness thereof take the oldest extant symbol, the swastika, representing the sun-god, pre-dating Sanskrit, found on pre-historic relics as far apart as the Americas, Europe and India: depending upon which way they are bent, the arms of the swastika point either to the westerly orbit of the sun or the earth’s revolution in an easterly direction.

In further evidence of this simplicity we may note that it is symbolism that characterized the art of primitive people. Although the interpretation is not always obvious to modern minds, the objects symbolized were closely related to the life of the people who created them. They were understood by such people and evoked a chain of understandable associations. (This symbolism in primitive art, however, is in no way comparable with the condensation symbolism to be mentioned later.)

But by gradual extensions symbolism has departed from the uncomplicated and now embraces complex systems of reference which often have no meaning in themselves and which can have significance only to those who know how to interpret them. e.g. in terms, perhaps, of the ancient mysteries or, maybe, of Hinduism—a symbolism for the cognoscenti?

Resulting from such widening of the field of interpretation no longer can the ordinary mind derive the meanings of symbols by reference to every-day experience or readily available written record. Reference must now be made to specialist matters that may give rise to the release of emotion. When the production of an excited feeling becomes the object of symbolism then such is called “profound” or “condensation” symbolism.

‘Condensation’ symbolism is a form of substitute behaviour replacing direct expression and yields to the user an exciting significance out of all proportion to the truly insignificant nature of the symbol being presented.

Summarizing: In the “specialist” field of ‘condensation’ symbolism the symbol is dissociated from an ordinary referential context and applies emotional quality to types of behaviour, or situations, or objects apparently far removed from the original symbol.

In the above regard I observe that society is particularly subject to the influence of symbols in such emotionally charged fields as religion and politics; for example: the star and crescent banner in a Moslem Holy War (jihad), the green and orange ribbons in Northern Ireland, the Nazi salute, and the clenched fist of the Black Power Movement.

We are aware, too, of secular iconography which has led to strange visual interpretations not only of classical mythology but also in modern portraiture which presents not a true image of the features of a person but a symbolic representation of the portraitist’s view of the subject’s “inner being”. I have wondered, also, whether the so-called “Jesus Revolution” is not a condensed symbolism of an unchanged message.

There is analogy, moreover, in the literary Symbolists, a group of 19th century French writers and their imitators who attempted to abandon ready-made patterns and rules and to seize upon “purer and more essential” qualities wherein words were used not for their expository qualities but for their under-tones and “deeper” meanings.

These so-called deeper or profound types of symbolism which many find unrealistic have found expression also in our Craft and will be dealt with later.

In the meantime it will be well to observe that whereas symbolism has had a long history (the swastika is more than 4,000 years old) and Masonry has had a history of six centuries (from the Regius Poem of c. 1390 to date) yet symbolism has been a prominent feature of Freemasonry only since comparatively recent times. Knoop & Jones ("The Genesis of Freemasonry" (1949), p. 9) say:

"It was almost certainly not until the second half of the eighteenth century that Freemasonry had become so modified in character that it could justly be defined as a peculiar system of morality, veiled in allegory and illustrated by symbols."

In the next half-century, however, the number of Masonic symbols adopted was manifold. So many in fact that following the Union of 1813 a great number were dropped from English Masonry on the grounds that they were unnecessary or that their significance was not properly understood. Included in those dropped were: Beehive (industry and co-operation); Book of Constitutions guarded by the tiler's sword (silence and circumspection); Broken column (untimely death); Chalk, charcoal and clay (freedom, fervency and zeal); Due guard or Dieu garde (indicative of Ob.); High hills and low vales (requirement of secrecy); Key (tongue and, by implication, discretion in speech); Hour-glass and scythe (life and time); Lion's paw (strength); Pot of incense (pure heart); Trowel (generous heart which alone can spread the cement of Brotherly Love); Broached Thurnel (possibly the predecessor of the perfect ashlar); Bone or Ivory Box (mouth and teeth that holds the tongue that could be loose in utterances); Pyramid (immortality); Clasped hands (fidelity and trust) and many more. Some of them, having proceeded thence pre-Union, are retained currently in America—see A.Q.C. lxxxii, 1945.

3. The Search for a "Profound" Symbology

I believe that Masonic symbols originally were and essentially are intended to teach simple and pure truths. They have a place in Freemasonry because of the age-long custom of conveying moral instruction by symbolical figures. Intellectual apprehension of the abstract, in particular, is aided by exoteric symbols, e.g. a perpendicular line teaches moral rectitude; the circle drawn by compasses, that we should keep our desires within due bounds; the gavel, the need for removing excrescences, i.e. correcting irregularities in conduct; etc., etc.

So useful are these exponents of moral truths and duties that Freemasons generally regard them highly. But some Freemasons, mindful of the antiquity of our teachings, seek to honour the Order by searching for and finding lost or hidden meanings in its tenets. (And if in the process they can evince an existence of our Order far more ancient than history sanctions, so much the better from their point of view.)

Not only has a symbolism been "found" for words and articles that intrinsically are not symbols, but there has been a search for "profound" meanings. In this search many have travelled outside Freemasonry into irrelevant fields such as alchemy, the ancient mysteries, Hinduism, etc. The result has been the development of a mystic, esoteric symbolism, even the 'condensation' symbolism referred to earlier, wherein symbols have become venerated *per se*.

(There are corresponding fanciful notions in regards to our history. One such has been termed in "Mackey's Symbolism of Freemasonry", 1958, p.xiii "that great cobweb of historical fancy which is the Oliver theory of the history of Masonry". The Oliver presumption is that Freemasonry began with *Primitive Masonry* at the Creation; continued into *Spurious Masonry* at the calamity of the Tower of Babel; became *St. John's Masonry* when it was rescued and purified by St. John the Evangelist for subsequent handing down as *Operative Masonry* before it finally descended into our hands as *Speculative Masonry*.)

The apron provides an excellent example of a "found" symbolism. Originally the apron was worn by our operative forbears to protect their clothing. It became the badge of a Speculative Mason first as a large leather garment as depicted in the frontispiece of "Anderson's Constitutions of 1723". Over the years it developed into the more conveniently sized, ornamented piece of lamb-skin that we wear to-day. But "Mackey's Symbolism" (*ibid.* p.135)⁴, after six pages detailing allegedly analogous rituals in ancient orders relating to the "rite of investiture", concludes with:

"The pure, unspotted lamb-skin is, then, in Freemasonry, symbolic of that perfection of body and purity of mind which are essential qualifications in all who would participate in its sacred mysteries. This symbolism . . . indicates the sacred and religious character which its founders sought to impose upon Freemasonry . . ."

To my mind, the symbolism quoted above is merely an unnecessary departure from the simple fact of operative use that led the apron to be accepted as the badge of a Mason. It exemplifies well a case of symbolism being given to something that had no symbolic significance when introduced. (The same applies to the symbolism often given to the apron tassels and rosettes.) In fact it would seem to infer that Freemasonry is comprised of symbols instead of being merely illustrated by them.

Here follows a further example of such unwarranted and unnecessary symbolism:

⁴Though Mackey's opinions are not accepted to-day to the extent to which they were at the end of last century yet, despite amendment of some of them by later editors of his works, his views have been retained extensively in Masonic circles. Therefore, I think examples of his development of a fanciful symbolism may not be omitted from a paper on symbolatry.

We all admit that much of the philosophy of Freemasonry is contained in the words of the tenet: Brotherly Love, Relief and Truth. (Truth here is not the antonym of "false" but relates to "personal quality"; it has the Middle English meaning of "quality of intellectual action" or "moral character that is genuinely and rightly such"; e.g. as in the phrase "I know him to be a man of truth".)

Mackey, however, regards truth as being that which is "opposed to intellectual and religious error" and, therefore, it relates to the nature of God and the human soul. He holds that something so fundamental to Masonic philosophy as "Truth" could not "be left without its particular symbol" (*ibid.* p. 305) consequently he provides one:

"The Word (lost by the death of H.A.B.), therefore, we conceive to be the symbol of divine truth; and all its modifications—the loss, the substitution and the recovery (in the R.A.)—are but component parts of the mythical symbol which represents a search after truth."

Here, I think, is symbolatry that has led to the provision of a symbol for no better reason than for the sake of "consistency" within our institution (*ibid.* p. 305).

Another example of additions to provide a theme upon which to symbolize is the attaching of an anachronistic⁵ "globe" to the top of each of the pillars B. and J.—something to indicate "Masonry universal", as the Third Section of the Second Lecture tells us.

Freemasonry in its various branches uses a number of colours which of course have a significance outside our Craft. They were selected by Freemasons, I suggest, because of their associations or suitability. The additional Masonic symbolism with which they have been invested has been coined subsequent to selection and, I think, has little relevance to our Craft.

The Masonic Study Circle (connected with The Royal Colonial Institute Lodge, No. 3556, which meets in London) was founded in 1921 for the expressed purpose of the study of the Symbolism of Freemasonry on anthropological lines and giving special attention to mystical meanings. It still operates. Some of the ideas that have been

⁵ K.S.T. and its pillars were erected about 1000 B.C. Chambers's Encyclopaedia tells us that the first celestial globe was made probably about 300 B.C. and that the earliest known terrestrial globe was made in 1492 A.D. I have read (A.Q.C. lxxxii, 322) that the Geneva Bible of 1560 depicted an ornamental sphere without a map thereon on top of a column. It was not until about this time that it was accepted generally that the earth was not flat. What Masonry calls "globes" King James's Bible calls "bowls of the chapters" at I Kings vii. 41 and "pommels" (i.e. round balls or knobs) at II Chron. iv. 12 while, in both places, the New English Bible terms them "bowl-shaped capitals".

put forward in the Circle's Transactions are such as would startle a pragmatist. Opening Volume 15 (1937-37) of the Circle's Transactions at random, I find, at page 655, the introduction of a lecture by Bro. Canon W. A. Wigram wherein he says:

"In other papers I have read to this Society I have produced for your studies of Mystery Rites of the 'classic' period of Europe, the Eleusinian, Orphic, Mithraic, and Kabeiric Mysteries. We have seen how in all of them those ideas are expressed which in a later age found their expression in Masonry, and in some of them the number of coincidences is so large as to set one asking whether they can be explained by invoking the aid even of that 'long arm of coincidence' . . .".

He then goes on to deal with ancient Initiation Rites and to show that the same ideas appear in similar Rites of our times.

In complimenting Bro. Wigram the President (Bro. Rev. W. L. Wilmshurst) said, on page 670 *ibid.* :

"We are devoting ourselves to the higher interests of Masonry and its more spiritual understanding and purpose . . .".

In support, Bro. Rev. J. S. M. Ward, at page 672, said:

"The opening words will live in our hearts for the rest of our lives. I am satisfied that the races of man have a high side to their teaching and that it is given only to those who are worthy. The unworthy never seek further than the letter of the ritual. The Secret of Freemasonry lies in the words, which many mouth word-perfectly,—'a point within a circle'."

(In the last connexion the usually "authentic" United Masters' Lodge of New Zealand, Trans. xvi, 120 offers a Kabalistic definition of the symbolism of a point within a circle, implying Masonic acceptability, namely:

"the point is YOD, the creative energy of God irradiating with light the circular space, the Universal Light left vacant wherein to create the worlds by withdrawing His substance of Light back on all sides from one point."

A simple Masonic symbolism would be: God in the centre of the Universe.)

Bro. A. E. Waite ("A New Encyclopaedia of Freemasonry", c. 1920, Vol. II, p. 451) provides an example of a different approach:

"*Symbolism and its Ultimate* . . . Such is the root of things that the Raising of the Masonic Candidate can be understood only in the Resurrection of Easter . . ."

Bro. W. L. Wilmshurst who died in 1939 was probably the most celebrated exponent of the mystical meanings of Freemasonry. His well-known book "The Meaning of Masonry" helped to give him that reputation but to me the book is full of beautiful words and phrases without significance. Here follow, however, a less well-known example of his writings:

"We are to speak (to-day) of the fundamental philosophic secrets concealed within the Masonic system. These . . . (are) to be kept by Masons in their hearts. They are therefore obviously to be distinguished from the merely formal secrets imparted ceremonially, which are kept in the head and are neither many nor of any value, though . . . they are deeply significant."

He continues in somewhat abstruse jargon:

"By these secrets (are meant) the arcane truths inherent in the system itself; truths needing to be extracted from it, like poetry or music from the printed page, by personal effort and that can be recognized as truths only by the inward responsiveness of the soul itself after deeply meditating and assimilating them." (Trans. Masonic Study Circle, iv, 6).

The above examples illustrate what undoubtedly well-meaning Freemasons find when they search for a "profound" symbolism within our Order. Let them, in this free world, exercise their minds in such realms for their own enjoyment but we should be mindful of the pertinent words of Bro. J. R. Rylands, Master of Quatuor Coronati Lodge in 1953:

"Beware of those who found study circles to do research into the deeper meanings . . . and who . . . ask us to accept without question mystic and hidden meanings of Masonic Symbolism that amount to rubbish and nonsense."

4. The Protests of Learned Brethren

Modern Masonic literature provides many other protests concerning imaginative symbolism and exaggerated interpretations of our symbols. Instances of their disapproval follow:

Bro. J. R. Rylands, writing this time in A.Q.C. 1952) lxvi, 5-6, had this to say:

"Freemasonry is unlikely to suffer much harm from the attacks of enemies outside its ranks, but it well may be damaged by the activities of misguided enthusiasts within.

"It is difficult to assess the extent of the harm to the warm fellowship of the Craft which has been done and may in future be done by the activities of what we may call the pseudo-mystical

school . . . yet exist it undoubtedly does, and in its utter rejection of every canon of genuine historical study, and in its contemptuous dismissal of scientific method, in its extravagant facility for invention, in its substitution of individualism for fraternity, the efforts of this school are diametrically opposed to the objects and work of this (i.e. Quatuor Coronati) Lodge. How can a spirit of critical inquiry exist where the Craft is regarded as a pseudo-mystical cult?

“ . . . we acknowledge there is room, in Freemasonry, for all sorts and conditions of philosophy with certain limits . . . but I suggest we must view with alarm the emergence of dogmatism where freedom of interpretation has hitherto prevailed . . . yet it cannot be denied that dogma enters into various ‘explanations’ of Freemasonry which have currency to-day. With much parade of philosophical jargon we are told that Freemasonry is this and that, and we are invited to accept a host of deeper meanings and hidden symbolism.”

Nine years later, F. R. Worts (A.Q.C. lxxiv, 136) gave a warning to Masonic students:

“ . . . a caveat must be given . . . The modern Craft is essentially speculative, and every Mason must necessarily be to some extent speculative in his attitude to its tenets; but there is a wide-spread tendency to extend the limits of true speculative research and to exaggerate symbolic values. This tendency had already developed strongly towards the end of the 18th century, and in modern times it has become both harmful to the Craft and to the proper understanding of its moral demands and teachings.

“Unfortunately, this incredibly exaggerated symbolism has been taught by sincere and famous Freemasons, such as Oliver, Paton, Fort Newton and Wilmhurst, who exercised much influence in their time.

“ . . . such extremes of speculative interpretation are unacceptable . . .

“The symbolical explanations which are virtually standardized in modern rituals are clear, simple and wholly satisfying. It is the unchallenged right of every Mason to seek further afield for the interpretations that will fill his spiritual needs. But he should remember Tennyson’s line on ‘The falsehood of extremes’, and be slow to accept the ‘wider explanations’ until he can do so with full conviction.”

Quite recently, Bro. G. H. Knight, writing in “The Masonic Record” (London) for May 1971, at page 8, referred to the additional piece of ritual in certain workings (but not in Emulation) that tells that the:

"apron is made from the skin of a lamb, and as the lamb has been from time immemorial the universally acknowledged emblem of purity and innocence" etc.

Bro. Knight continued:

" . . . upon this simple foundation has been built a great super-structure of emblematic meanings and explanations and symbolism in general, mainly meaningless and none of them authentic or particularly helpful. They embrace not only the apron itself but also its components, the rosettes and the tassels for which many fanciful interpretations are suggested."

Bro. Eric Ward, in his Prestonian Lecture for 1970 (Leics. Trans. 1970-71, 33-48) set himself firstly "to demonstrate the extraordinary symbolic value we place on words, some of which were never so interpreted by our ancestors and others which were not even to be invented for centuries after the events they depict". Secondly, he admonished "ritual improvers" who had "a perpetual temptation to . . . modernize and tidy up expressions without adequate awareness of the significance of their actions". In this regard he observed that "words being symbols to convey ideas to the human mind, it follows that over long periods of time their meanings change as the subjects which they portray themselves change. In the early days of Freemasonry many words conveyed quite different meanings to our forebears than those which are commonly understood to-day."

I will include this record of remonstrances with the warning given (probably by Bro. Harry Carr) on the fourth page of the Quatuor Coronati Lodge summons dated 19 December, 1969:

"To find your own interpretation of our symbols is the very best kind of Masonic exercise. The only danger is that it may lead you too far from the normally simple explanations that were intended. Many of us have seen extraordinary and far-fetched examples that have no relationship to Freemasonry, and which could never have been in the minds of those who compiled or approved the actual words and procedures that are in use to-day."

5. Conclusion

Does not symbolatry make our symbolism unnecessarily complex and obscure? And bring about a needless departure from the original simple symbolism adopted for the better understanding of moral concepts?

Freemasonry does not define the significance of all its symbols. Therefore, it invites its adherents to speculate upon their meaning. This freedom to interpret is good but when carried to extreme lengths may be profitless, even dangerous to those who are not well educated in the Masonic sense.

Essentially, symbols are for use, for the better understanding of that which is symbolized. But they should not be venerated to the extent that become the play-pieces of those who seek emotional (rather than intellectual) satisfaction from their interpretation as has been illustrated in the third part of this paper.

Down with symbolatry!

Up with the fundamental concepts of Masonic Symbolism!

Authorities and Acknowledgements

Beside the authorities quoted specifically in the text the following have also been consulted:

Chambers's Encyclopaedia (1955)

Encyclopaedia Britannica (1966)

Encyclopaedia of Social Sciences (1967)

Collier's Encyclopaedia (1968)

R. I. Clegg and Others: "Mackey's Symbolism of Freemasonry" (1958)

W. M. Urban: "Symbolism"

A. N. Whitehead: "Symbolism" (1927)

Wm. Hutchinson: "The Spirit of Masonry" (1797)

W. L. Wilmshurst: "The Meaning of Masonry" (1959)

Essex Master: "The Teachings of Freemasonry" (1928)

And others.

To all the authorities consulted I acknowledge my gratitude. I do so as a symbol of the inter-dependence of men in matters of knowledge.

Additionally, I give thanks to R.W.Bros. H. L. Thomas, P.A.G.M. and H. W. Oxford, P.J.G.W., both of The Research Lodge of New South Wales, for their helpful advice after reading the first draft of this paper, not that they agreed with all that I had written.

ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON THE PRESTONIAN LECTURE, 1970

by

W.BRO. ERIC WARD, *Prestonian Lecturer*
(*P.M. Quatuor Coronati Lodge, No. 2076*)

Consequent upon the editorial comment on the Prestonian Lecture, 1970, printed in Transactions, 1970-71, it was agreed that W.Bro. Eric Ward should have the opportunity to reply to specific points raised by the Brethren; and we are pleased to print below the results of this study. Where there was more than one question dealing with the same point, these were concentrated under one head.

We thank the Brethren for the interest they have shown, and Brother Ward for his patience in replying so clearly.

EDITOR.

FOREWORD BY THE AUTHOR

As the object of the Lecture was to stimulate the spirit of enquiry, it is gratifying to receive so many good questions and counter arguments.

From time to time I meet brethren who are apparently affronted by the statement that the speculative craft only began to take shape in the late 17th century and that consequently we delude ourselves and others by quite unnecessary stretching of history.

From the V.S.L. the belief originated and was propounded that man was created in the image of his Creator, from which it follows that we are all brothers, with God as our Father. As Masons we accept this as a fundamental of our creed, but this is not to say that speculative Masonry existed in Biblical times. So it is with other elements which provided the foundations upon which the Institution was constructed. A stately house is made of materials, most of which originated millions of years ago, but its existence is identified with their fashioning into a corporate whole, and only then does its history begin.

ERIC WARD.

I

In the light of the subsequent research into Biblical history and translation which you mention, do you suggest that the Craft and Royal Arch Rituals, agreed *as a result of the Union*, should now be revised and modernised? If this were done, do you think anything would be lost, or gained, by Freemasonry?

ANSWER

Reference was made in the conclusion to the dangers attendant upon the activities of those who see themselves cast in the role of

ritual improvers, and in the discussion within the Lodge I renounced in advance any such dubious honour.

However, the question as posed is hypothetical, there being no such thing as *the* Craft ritual or *the* R.A. ritual. There are many variations, some considerable, and the B. of C. makes clear that ritual proceedings are a matter for determination by the majority of a Lodge. The rituals derived at the time of the Union set a pattern, but they were not obligatory in detail, as indeed they could not be. For they were never printed and no one now has any authority to say what they were or how they should be performed.

From the above it follows that strict uniformity was never expected, and all attempts to obtain it since have fortunately been frustrated in the face of claims of local tradition and time-honoured custom.

It cannot be too strongly emphasised that Masonic ceremonial was not devised but evolved over a long period of time. We all tend to cling tenaciously to customs taught by those who preceded us and do not realise that innovation is frequently the result of unintentional modification.

II

You say you "can see no really valid reason" (for the adoption of St. John the Evangelist as Patron Saint) "other than the first verse of his Gospel, 'In the beginning, etc.'". It seems abundantly clear to me why there could be no other choice than St. John the Evangelist, and to a lesser extent St. John the Baptist. Established Freemasonry was from the earliest times a Christian organisation, and these two saints were predominantly associated with the revelation of the divinity of Jesus Christ.

ANSWER

Perhaps to avoid raising side issues, the third sentence of the question could be phrased differently. If by "established Freemasonry" we can substitute "the Craft operative and speculative", and for "Christian organisation" some words to denote a body of people whose private religion was predominantly Christian, we are then on common ground. The fact that the Craft has never at any time been a religious organisation as such is the reason why I find the suggestion singularly unappealing that Masons had no choice in the selection of their patron saints.

Dr. Chetwode Crawley, writing in 1894, A.Q.C. vol. 8 p. 158, put it this way:—

"The problem of the connection of the Saints John with Freemasonry is fraught with perplexity. There seems to be no doubt that the medieval Fraternity acknowledged their patronage. But why?"

Neither St. John the Baptist nor St. John the Evangelist had anything to do with either the science or the art of architecture. As a matter of hagiology, St. Thomas was the patron saint of the Architects."

Another saint who would have fitted in very well before the Reformation was St. Peter, the rock upon which the Christian church was built.

III

You dwell on the use of words for communication between God and his people. You say "Moses did not see God, for revelation was by voice alone", etc. But it seems to me that to associate "the Word" of St. John's Gospel with this line of thought confuses the issue. I have always understood that "the Word" in St. John 1, 1, is LOGOS, the meaning of which is beyond human language, that is to say signifying WISDOM. In other words, does not "the Word" of the Gospel typify the personified Wisdom of God in Jesus Christ?

I quote from Chapter 2 of "An Introduction to the Bible"—Dr. Stanley Cook, Litt.D. (Cantab), etc. . . . "So in Egypt the God Ptah is the 'heart and tongue' of the Gods; and while in Egypt, too, there are divine personifications of Truth, Intelligence and Speech, centuries later we meet with the conception of a divine WISDOM, and ultimately the Christian Logos, which is not merely WORD or Reason, but ORDER". In chapters 4, 6 and 9 Dr. Cook has more to say on this point; as also do many other authors.

ANSWER

The object was initially to establish the groundwork shewing the importance to developing civilisation of the use of the word as a means of communication and the awe in which the illiterate throughout the ages held those who could employ it successfully. If this was not clear you are right to say that the issue was confused. But coming nearer to our own times, the Bible of the people has "In the beginning was the Word" and not its equivalent in Greek, the final word of which would have been valueless to my argument and the whole expression completely unintelligible to most of our Masonic forbears.

IV

Surely when we read in the Bible, "God said", "God spake", etc., it is clear that the authors, bound to the personification of Deity by human limitations of understanding and expression, were thinking not of words (in whatever language they are supposed to have been spoken) but rather of "*inspiration*". See Numbers XII, 6-8—"Hear now my words: If there be a Prophet among you, I, the Lord, will make myself known to him in a vision, and will speak with him in a dream". Vision - dream - *inspiration*.

ANSWER

Again I am only concerned with the means of communication to ancient peoples so that they understood. By whatever media the authors acquired their wisdom, the most effective results were achieved when they were able to tell the people what they had themselves been told. This information was transmitted by plain words, brought together in what is commonly known as the Word of God.

V

You “discern a parallel between the importance of the Word as defined by St. John and the supreme importance to the Scottish working masons of the Mason Word as a means of protecting their very livelihood.” “It is my view (you say) “. . . that in this we find the real explanation of the connection between Masonry and St. John”.

This seems to me to be a very fanciful idea. How could “the Word (logos) of the Gospel be associated with a word of identification? What was the Scottish Mason Word?

ANSWER

When the Scottish working mason opened his Bible at John 1, he read in his own language “In the beginning was the Word”. This was what the Bible said and it just so happened that his fraternity employed a rather special word highly prized amongst them as a safeguard to their privileges.

It is apparent from consideration of early documents that the workman of former times was not so imbued with religious fervour as in later, particularly Victorian, times, he was customarily portrayed. He had a robust approach to religion, and this attitude, broad-minded without being licentious, was commonplace. Were it otherwise, some of the Gild plays performed in public on feast days, and having themes which in some cases now seem to be bordering upon the blasphemous, would never have been permitted. They loved punning as in the case of the Merchant Taylors which I quoted, who evidently saw no irreverence in fashioning a link between the lamb which provided the wool for their trade and the Lamb which gave spiritual support.

In the year 1240, the Council of Lyons directed the perpetual observance of St. John the E. Day. Walcott (*Sacred Archeology*, 1868) remarks that on the evening of this day the boy bishop was elected, and in France it was called the Feast of SOUSDIACRES, a pun on ‘*souls diaeres*’ (drunken deacons). Evidently this referred to the light-hearted revelry with which the occasion was treated in those days.

Bro. Alex Horne contributed a very useful paper on the Saints John in A.Q.C. 75, and my own comments to this monograph contain some rather illuminating facts about the attitude of the first Grand Lodge in this respect.

VI

Professor C. H. Dodd, the eminent Biblical scholar (quoting the words of Professor H. Wheeler Robinson) says, "God is the Author, not of the Bible but of the life in which the authors of the Bible partake, and of which they tell in such imperfect human words as they could command". Professor Dodd continues, "The Bible has suffered from being regarded too much as a source of information; the critical method has too often resulted in treating it as a collection of information for the antiquary".

In view of what you say in your Lecture, will you please comment on this?

ANSWER

The Bible was compiled and edited by countless generations of writers dedicated to the advancement of theology. Such historical matter as it contains, although very considerable, is therefore incidental and sometimes accidental. But it is the only documentary source we have of the lives and times of some ancient peoples.

In my opinion, the Bible gains esteem in proportion to the understanding of its contents, and this applies whether our interests are theological, antiquarian, etymological or in varying degrees everything.

Nevertheless, we must always remember that every translation available to us is an interpretation and all of them were made by individuals who did not claim divine inspiration. Yet it is their words and their shaping of phrases which we read, countless other interpretations having been made to separate us still further from the original material lost in antiquity.

VII

You mention two instances of the excavation of Phoenician temples (a 13th c. B.C. temple at Hazor, and an 8th c. B.C. temple at Hattina, both of them in Syria which had pillars within the porch, and you deduce from this that the pillars Jachin and Boaz must have been supporters of the porch roof of Solomon's Temple.

On the other hand we find in Hebrew Religion, Ch. 4, p. 42, by W. O. E. Oesterley, Litt.D., D.D., and T. H. Robinson, Litt.D., D.D., ". . . Still more instructive is the evidence afforded by excavations in Palestine. Thus, on the site of ancient Megiddo

a 'high place' was laid bare with its stone altar and two standing pillars. Similar pillars were found on the site of ancient Taanach, among them two which were scooped out for the purpose of offering blood or oil on them".

These authors also state, among other evidence, "In the representation of a Babylonian temple dating from the third millenium B.C., two pillars stand *at the entrance*".

Professor A. R. S. Kennedy (Dictionary of the Bible—Hastings & Selbie) has stated, "It may be regarded that the pillars were structurally independent of the Temple. Such free-standing pillars were a feature of Phoenician and other temples of Western Asia, the statements of Greek writers being confirmed by representations or contemporary coins".

Many other scholars and research students have come to the same conclusion.

Josephus, in his History of the Jews (Book VIII Ch. 3) describes in detail the roof timbers of the various rooms of the Temple, "and for the other parts there was a covered roof common to them all, and built with very long beams that passed through the rest, and through the whole building so that the middle walls, being strengthened by the same beams of timber might thereby be made true". Referring to the two pillars, he says, "The one of these pillars he set at the entrance of the Porch, on the right hand, and called it Jachin, and the other at the left hand and called it Booz".

Jesephus describes the Temple in such detail that do you not think it significant that he makes no mention of the two pillars, J. and B., serving as supports, e.g. for a porch roof? Surely, if this had been so, he would not have failed to mention it.

Do you assert that these authors (and others) who came to conclusions differing from your own, were mistaken?

ANSWER

Being familiar with much of the vast quantity of literature on the subject, for a long time I accepted without question that the Pillars were free standing, but the discovery and excavation within the last 40 years of two temples built to similar ground plans as that of Solomon's gave us for the first time yardsticks of incalculable value as bases for comparison. The fact that they also seem to confirm the location of the Pillars as given in the Septuagint, i.e. the Greek Bible, necessitated new thinking.

Josephus wrote his "Antiquities of the Jews" in A.D. 93, which is nearly 700 years after the original Temple had been destroyed.

Consequently, he had no access to the original building or contemporary documents, but could only quote from the narratives of others who were long since dead. Even so, he does say that the Pillars were "set at the entrance to the porch", which is by no means the same as being outside.

All the notable works by Josephus were written in Greek, in which language there was already available to him the Greek Bible (Septuagint) which was used by the Christian Church from its beginning. The earliest versions of this book are by far the most venerable as well as the most authoritative of all the Bibles which have survived.

VIII

Can we not blame the producers of the Royal Arch Ritual (1834) for misinterpreting the Preliminary Declaration at the Union (1813)?

It seems clear that the Order of the H.R.A. was accepted as the result of compromise between the Antients and the Moderns, not as a 'degree' (a distinction it had formerly held) but as an added 'Order' within the orbit of 'pure ancient Masonry'.

If the United Grand Lodge had intended the H.R.A. to be considered a continuation of the 3rd Degree, it seems certain that there would have been no comma before the final phrase—"Pure Antient Masonry . . . and Master Mason, including the Supreme Order of the Holy Royal Arch". It seems clear that 'including' should be interpreted, therefore, as "and includes". Do you agree?

ANSWER

Perhaps I have been misunderstood here. As an exalteé of an R.A. Chapter originally part of an Antients Lodge, and on this account especially aware of the intensity of feeling towards preservation of the R.A. at the Union, I take the view that the words 'pure Ancient Masonry consists . . . ' were a reluctant compromise conceded by the Moderns as a contribution to harmony. If the word "Ancient" signified the kind of pure masonry which the Antients believed in and practised, with the R.A. as an integral part of the system but not necessarily a continuation of the third degree, the expression at least makes sense. In such case, the "and no more" is there presumably to disqualify side degrees from any claim to be of the true faith.

But whatever the understanding at the Union, as things developed, a cleavage was established between the Craft degrees and the R.A. which was not universally there before. Thus in practice the Moderns' approach to the R.A. seems to have eventually predominated to the extent that nowadays it is no longer an integral part of the family of degrees but an optional extension to them.

However, I do not share the views of those who see the R.A. as a completion of the third degree, nor do I regard that which the Antients practised to be any more pure than that of their rivals.

IX

Since hearing the Worshipful Master's Address on 23rd November in which he quoted from the Regius Manuscript I have now read the poem for the first time (in modernised script of course) and I was interested to find the following:—

“The first of the articles must be
That the Master must surely see
That he no bondman prentice make,
Nor for covetousness him take,
For the lord that he is bound to
May fetch him back wherever he go”.

I believe the same idea of freedom from bonds is found throughout all the known ancient manuscript charges from the 14th century onwards and is continued to the present time. It seems to me that the prefix “free” in freemason or free-mason is more likely to have stemmed from this conception than from the more limited idea of free(stone) mason; and this point of view is adopted by many research students.

You seem to me to be over-dogmatic on the side of freestone-mason.

ANSWER

The requirement that a prospective apprentice must be free, i.e. not already bound to some other employer is as fundamental now as it was when the Regius M.S. and endless other regulations were written. It applies not just to Masons but to every trade and an apprentice who has gone through the legal process of becoming bound is no longer free. There is no such person as a free apprentice mason, carpenter, weaver, etc. They only become free after serving their time, and we only delude ourselves if we think of the mason trade as being unique.

Thus the Regius manuscript, so far from providing evidence of the “free” in freemason gives quite the opposite. If it then be said that free really means accepted as fully skilled by the craft, gild or town, then the question must be faced of how it comes about that whilst abundant (English but not Scottish) manuscript sources speak of freemasons they do not do so of freecarpenters, freeweavers, freetanners, etc. Yet beyond any doubt all trades had their freemen.

In 1955, I set out to solve this problem once and for all, examining literally hundreds of sources. Some of these, together with the

conclusions are given in the paper "The Crisp English Word Freemason" published in A.Q.C. 68, pp. 58-81 and I do not think anyone with an open mind can read this without agreement that the case for the original freemason being a freestone mason is proved beyond reasonable doubt. But what of later times?

Long before the writing of the above paper, I had been struck by the fact that in the Bristol working the word Freemason never appears. No Lodge is ever opened for the purposes of Freemasonry and no one has ever heard of the degrees of E.A. Freemason etc. So making an examination of the first Book of Constitutions (i.e. Anderson's), I counted 10 references to FREE and ACCEPTED MASON, 9 to FREE-MASONS, 126 to MASONS, 4 to ACCEPTED MASONS, 1 to ACCEPTED FREE-MASONS, but not one to FREEMASONS. Now Free and Accepted Mason c. 1723 abbreviated to Free-Mason carries a quite different meaning from freemason = freestone mason. It means free from, i.e. not bound by, the trade rules and disciplines, the way of life of a working mason. It distinguishes the speculative from the operative, especially in Scotland where the trade of freemason did not exist as a native craft.

It took ten years to collect all the data on this subject and consider what everyone else thought, so that to compress the arguments into a short passage was impossible either in the Prestonian Lecture or here. But read A.Q.C. 68.

X

If it could be conclusively proved that 'freemason' is derived from 'freestone mason', should the Grand Lodge be asked to advise the editors of the Oxford English Dictionary, when re-printing, to amend the definition which has for so long appeared in the Dictionary?

ANSWER

The Editors of O.E.D. are continually seeking information about new words which have come into the language and old ones that have taken new meanings. They usually look for the earliest examples of words appearing in print which connote adoption in the vocabulary. In the case of "Freemason" as indicative of the speculative Mason, it is now apparent that a new meaning was given to an old word when the hyphen was dropped from "Free-Mason", and this change by conjunction occurred (quite accidentally in my opinion) sometime after the first G.L. was established. It took a long time to become commonplace and as pointed out above it is still not uniform so far as ritual is concerned. Whether G.L. would consider the matter as worth pursuing with compilers of dictionaries is one that I cannot usefully comment upon.

XI

You say, "We cannot in truth claim to be a continuation of medieval operative masonry because the ground rules are different If our forebears had any intention of developing a system of morality etc. it is difficult to recognise it as such".

While there is an obvious break between operative and speculative masonry, particularly in purpose, surely we must all recognise a strong thread of continuity in the rules with regard to our duties to God, neighbour and self, constituting a certain philosophy of life, not to mention the rules concerning regular assemblies, secrecy, fidelity and obedience, all brought to us from the Operatives in the manuscript Charges, via Anderson's Constitutions right down to the present time? Clearly, in the Charges of a Freemason there is a ready-made code of morality, in the widest sense of the word.

ANSWER

The question overlooks that the full definition covers a system of morality, veiled in allegory and illustrated by symbols.

Of course the operative masons and craftsmen of every other recognised trade had regulations which included a code of morals. But their business was not primarily to propagate a system of morality, and such good behaviour as was necessarily enjoined was essentially open. We have no evidence of working masons being required to moralise upon their working tools in the way that speculatives do. The first duty of the operative mason was to fabricate buildings out of stone, morality being incidental. The first duty of the speculative mason was to fashion moral superstructures out of human material. The distinction is surely fundamental.

Free and Accepted Masonry undoubtedly drew upon some, although certainly not all, of the customs of operative masonry, but that is a very different matter from making the two synonymous.

XII

You speak about the difficulties facing the translators of the Old Testament, the results being "often at the best approximations of literary material of great antiquity". You also speak of "errors of translation".

This is no doubt true, but at the same time you are willing to quote examples from the Revised Standard Version—"The King standing by *the* pillar according to custom", "And the King stood by *the* pillar and made a covenant before the Lord", "The King standing by *the* pillar at the entrance" (to the House of the Lord)—in order to support your argument that Solomon's Temple was

“a dynastic institution . . . a place to be identified for ever with the accession of kings”, “a sort of religious focal point for the tribes which was for the first time in Israelitish history synonymous with the court of a King”. You further say that possibly “J. represented the Southern Kingdom and B. the Northern”.

It seems to me that there has been a great deal of assumption on your part. You appear to impute to David and Solomon a desire to found the Temple merely as a sort of political barrier to “the priestly class, the religious leaders, from themselves becoming heads of State”, and you try to use the fact that David’s line continued for four centuries to prove your contention. This seems to me like “stretching the point” at least. There was historically nothing new in providing a home for Yahweh. During the wanderings the Israelites had provided a tent for this purpose (The Tabernacle). In “Hebrew Religion—Its Origin and Development—W. O. E. Oesterley, Litt.D., D.D. and T. H. Robinson, Litt.D., D.D.”, we find on page 202—

“After his conquest of Jerusalem, and even before his building operations were complete, David brought the ARK to Jerusalem and set it up for worship there

Solomon built the Temple, as a home where the Ark should be placed. It is clear that while the King held other sanctuaries in reverence, that of Jerusalem was intended to be the centre of the worship of Yahweh”.

There is a great deal of evidence to support this point of view, both among critical authors and in the Bible itself. I cannot see what purpose you hope to serve by setting out to destroy it, especially as your arguments are assertive without being conclusive.

ANSWER

Since the ark was considered to be the dwelling place of Yahweh, the Temple became in effect a replacement of it. This was opposed by some conservative Israelites on the grounds that being nomadic people it was proper to maintain the traditional customs of former desert days. Hence the significant passages in 2 Samuel 7 wherein Nathan the prophet bore a message from Yahweh to David to the effect that David will not be building a house for Yahweh but on the other hand Yahweh will establish a house (i.e. dynasty) for David. From the time when the Israelites were delivered out of Egypt, Yahweh (so the prophet indicates) had never had a house and had not asked for one to be made.

The whole evidence supporting the view that Solomon’s Temple was *primarily* a Royal Chapel attached to the palace (as were the

royal temples at Nineveh and Khorsabad) is very considerable. The researches of Alt, Mohlenbrink and Albright, summed up by the latter in his "Archaeology and the Religion of Israel" seem to leave little for argument or doubt.

Two centuries after Solomon, the chief priest of the sanctuary of Yahweh at Bethel said to Amos:—

"But prophesy not again any more at Bethel, for it is the King's chapel, and it is the King's court." (Amos 7.13).

ECCLESIASTES XII, 1-7

(New English Bible)

COMMENT BY O.F.

In many Lodges throughout the world there is a long-established custom to have the first seven verses of the twelfth chapter of Ecclesiastes recited at a point in the Third Degree Ceremony. Although the passage may be considered not entirely appropriate in the context in which it is used, it is certainly an excellent poem, and it teaches the useful lesson that we should remember God in our vigorous days and before the onset of our declining years, with the increasing lack of interest in our surroundings.

A poem needs no paraphrase; and yet, generation after generation, insensitive brethren have delighted in repeating an analysis which was first developed probably a hundred years or more ago, and which has often appeared in print. I quote some of it with considerable distaste—

“ ‘the doors shut in the street’ are the dumb lips or more probably the deaf ears”; “the grinders which ‘cease because they are few’ are the teeth”; “ ‘those that look out of the windows’ are the eyes”; “ ‘the strong men who bow themselves’ are the legs”; “the silver cord is the spinal column”, and so on, and so on, *ad nauseam.*

The paraphrasers have achieved nothing but the destruction of the rich oriental imagery of the poem, and they have certainly detracted from our delight in it.

I now thank our good friend, W. Bro. L. M. Sherwood for bringing me some comfort. Although now living in New South Wales he still takes responsibility for contributing the section “Masonic Miscellany” to the excellent research publication “R.L.O.V. Newsletter”, which is issued by the Rewa Lodge of Viti, No. 2238 (E.C.), Suva, Fiji, and which was established by Brother Sherwood many years ago. In the copy dated 20th May, 1971, he includes the New English Bible version of the Ecclesiastes passage which I had not previously seen. Here it is:—

“Remember your Creator in the days of your youth, before the time of trouble comes and the years draw near when you will say, “I see no purpose in them.” Remember him before the sun and the light of day give place to darkness, before the moon and the stars grow dim, and the clouds return with the rain—when the guardians of the house tremble, and the strong men stoop, when the women grinding the meal cease work because they are few, and those who look through the windows look no longer, when the street-doors are shut, when the noise of the mill is low, when

the chirping of the sparrow grows faint and the song-birds fall silent, when men are afraid of a steep place and the street is full of terrors, when the blossom whitens on the almond-tree and the locust's paunch is swollen and caperbuds have no more zest. For man goes to his everlasting home, and the mourners go about the streets. Remember him before the silver cord is snapped and the golden bowl is broken, before the pitcher is shattered at the spring and the wheel broken at the well, before the dust returns to the earth as it began and the spirit returns to God who gave it."

While preserving the metaphorical excellence of the poem, this translation sheds new light on it; and whichever version may be preferred for use in the ceremonies, it is fervently hoped that the paraphrasers will be heard no more.

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Revised 1972

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*W.Bro. G. H. Fox	1962-63
.. H. Carr	1963-64
V.W.Bro. W. G. Fox	1964-65
*W.Bro. E. Muddimer	1965-66
.. T. W. Haird	1966-68
* .. W. H. Russell	1968-69
.. E. Thomas	1969-70
.. O. Farrant	1970-71

* *Obit.*

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