

1669/CP E4

MARK MASONRY.

A LECTURE,

*Delivered at the Masonic Hall, Bradford, on Tuesday,
the 1st of May 1883,*

BY BRO. T. B. WHYTEHEAD,

(OF YORK),

PAST G. MARK MASTER OVERSEER.

—:O:—

REPRINTED FROM THE FREEMASON'S CHRONICLE.

—:O:—

LONDON:

PRINTED BY W. W. MORGAN,

BELVIDERE WORKS, HERMES HILL, PENTONVILLE, N.

1883.

ON Tuesday evening, the 1st May, there was a gathering of Masons at the Masonic Hall, Bradford, the meeting being called by invitation of the W.M. of the Old York Mark Lodge (T. I.), Bro. James Wright, for the purpose of hearing a lecture by Bro. T. B. Whytthead, of York, Past Grand Mark Master Overseer, on Mark Masonry. There were about eighty brethren present, the bulk of whom were not members of the Mark Degree, and the meeting was held in the banqueting hall. The lecturer was introduced by Bro. J. Wright W.M. in a few appropriate words. Bro. Whytthead then said:—

BRETHREN,—I must confess that I feel in a rather peculiar position to-night in standing up as a Mark Mason to address an assemblage of brethren, many of whom, I understand, have not entered the Order; and under the circumstances it seems desirable that I should in the first instance place myself in a fair position in this matter. I do not come before you in any sense either as the apologist for Mark Masonry or as its proselytising apostle. The Order needs no such adventitious assistance. There may have been a time, but that era in its history has long passed away, when possibly it was desirable to call in artificial assistance to further the cause of its progress; but the position Mark Masonry has now attained in the Masonic world not only would render any such movement or attempt ridiculous in the extreme, but would fairly

subject the agent of such a scheme to the charge of deliberate impertinence. An Order that has a register of over three hundred prosperous Lodges, that has enrolled on its list of Past Grand Masters a Royal Duke and several members of the Peerage, that is now ruled by a Mason so eminent as Baron Henniker, and many of whose Grand and Past Grand Officers are also Officers and Past Officers of the Grand Lodge of England, stands in a position so strong as to afford to smile at carpers and cavillers, and to continue its career of usefulness regardless of the opinions of those who do not care to range themselves under its banners.

At the same time I do not wish you to mistake my meaning. I am one of those who think that absolute freedom is the prerogative of every Mason. I consider that every brother has a perfect right to judge for himself as to what Orders and Degrees based on Masonry he shall join, and what he shall avoid, and so long as any Order is conducted in a Masonic manner and within the usually accepted lines laid down in the Masonic *lex non scripta*, I say that a brother has an equal right to ally himself with it, or to refrain from all connection with it. There do exist Orders and Degrees that I shall not mention, doubtless many of you know to which I allude, which do not possess what may be called a good Masonic standing. They are or have been guilty of un-Masonic practices, they are not in accord with other bodies of Masonic repute, and they are and are likely to remain ostracised by Masons of weight and influence. But of this I shall say no more. I have come here to speak of Mark Masonry, an Order than which none save the Craft takes a better stand, and to which any brother may be glad and proud to belong.

I am here by invitation of your W. Master and of Bro. J. L. Atherton, brethren whom I believe you all know as honest workers in the Craft and genial Masons, and, as I understand them, their desire is that I should say something to you as to the History of Mark Masonry. This, you must understand is quite distinct, in one sense, from the history of Masonic Marks. On the latter subject numbers of archæologists have written. It is of the deepest interest and value, and assists in forming a powerful and valuable aid in the elucidation of architectural problems. Mr. George Godwin, M. Didron, Mr. P. Chalmers, Mr. Fitzgerald, Mr. Papworth, Sir W. Cuseley and many other authors and architects have published papers, and alluded in their works to this subject, and within the last few weeks Bro. R. F. Gould, in the second volume of his magnificent work on Freemasonry, has devoted one of his most interesting chapters to the subject of Masons' Marks, and given numbers of illustrations of their infinite varieties. From the most remote times of antiquity Operative Masons appear to have observed the strict practice of making the selection of a mark a special feature of their organisations. Amongst the most ancient ruins are found the marks of those Craftsmen by whom the edifices were originally erected. Many investigators have argued and striven to prove that these marks possessed more significance than a mere identification of individual work. They have asserted that they bore a mystical meaning, a hidden language, and that much religious symbolism was concealed beneath their deeply indented outlines. Whether this be so or not is, however, quite uncertain, and is likely yet to remain an enigma. Yet the selection of similar marks tends to show that the building sodalities of all ages have

likely supposition, and somewhat coincides with the present legends of the Mark Degree, as well as the experiences of practical builders who have exercised their powers of observation.

Mr. George Godwin tells us that in the books of the Bricklayers' and Tylers' Company, circa 1580, those who signed the book were in the habit of using a mark the name being written on the side of it, and the marks selected being of a Masonic character.

As a sample of how the same mark occurs at different places and dates, Mr. Godwin tells us that he found the hourglass mark on the stones on the site of Ancient Carthage, Hastings Castle, the Cathedral at Geneva, Lausanne Cathedral, on Turkish ruins in Lycia, Kirkstall, and Roche Abbeys, Furnace Abbey, Gloucester Cathedral, Malmesbury Abbey, Setubal (Portugal), Santarem (Portugal), Lincoln and York Cathedrals, Kenilworth Gateway, Salamanca (Spain), Canterbury Cathedral; and I may add that it is common upon the foundation stones of St. Mary's Abbey, York, and on the Walls of Fountains Abbey.

Again, the Pentalfa, or Solomon's Seal, he found in the Holy Land, Malmesbury and Furness Abbeys, Dunstable Church, Steyning Church, in Suffolk; Geneva and Gloucester Cathedrals, Lincoln Cathedral, and St. Mary's Abbey, York; York Chapter House, Fountains Abbey, Strasburg Cathedral, York and Glasgow Cathedrals, in several Spanish Cathedrals. This mark I have noticed on almost every building where marks remain, and both these marks, the Hourglass and Pentalfa, are now in use amongst the Operative Masons employed on York Cathedral.

In Mr. Street's account of Gothic architecture in Spain

will be found a good deal of information respecting Masons' Marks, and the deductions the author makes respecting the numbers of workmen employed are interesting. In the present day, as in the past, the man who works the stone is not usually the man who places it in the building, and the cutter consequently places his mark on the *inside*, so that it is lost when the stone is cemented into the structure, the builder placing his mark on the outside afterwards. There can be little doubt that the similarity of these signs from the very earliest times points to a continuity of Masonic teaching and guild organisation from age to age. As to the varieties of the marks represented, these ancient builders seem to have laid under contribution many sources. Not only did they select figures representing implements of their trade, natural objects, weapons, and tools conveying lessons of moral teaching, but the alphabets of many languages were also requisitioned to furnish designs for their marks.

Possibly you may say that this is all very well, very true, and very interesting; but what has it to do with the Speculative Mark Masonry of the present day? I reply that it has as much connection with it as the Craft Operative Masonry of the Middle Ages has to do with our Speculative working of the nineteenth century. That Masons' marks were adopted by the earliest speculative Masons of which we have any record, no one will deny who has any pretensions to Masonic knowledge. It is in the old Lodge records of Scotland, at a time when Operative and Speculative Masonry appear to have been in process of merging, that we find the selection of marks to have been an invariable practice amongst those candidates who were admitted into the Order. The Lodge in Aberdeen

working in 1670 kept very careful registers of its members, and in these we find a long series of names of brethren to each of which is appended his mark. These have been extracted by Bro. W. J. Hugban, of Truro, and are given in Gould's History. Amongst them we find noblemen, professional men, tradesmen, and a few Operative Masons; showing that even at that date the Lodges were both Operative and Speculative. In some of the older Lodge records in England we find marks appended to the names of members, and in the records of the Grand Lodge at York the Mark cypher occasionally occurs. The Grand Royal Arch Chapter of Scotland has officially declared that—"In this country, from Time Immemorial, and long before the institution of the Grand Lodge of Scotland (which was in 1736), what is now known as the Mark Master's Degree was wrought by the Operative Lodges of St. John's Masonry."

Mark Masonry, in some form, was worked during the later portion, at any rate, of last century in many Craft Lodges in England. In those days it was a generally accepted doctrine that any degree could be legitimately worked in any Blue Lodge under the authority of the Craft Warrant, and it is quite manifest that at the Union of the Athol and Modern Lodges in 1813 there must have been many sticklers for such license, since the Second Article of Union, after declaring that *pure* Ancient Masonry consists of three degrees and no more, including the Royal Arch, says "this Article is not intended to prevent any Lodge or Chapter from holding a meeting in any of the degrees of the Orders of Chivalry, according to the Constitutions of the said Orders." In many Lodge records we find that Craft Lodges were opened in the second degree

and that brethren were made "Mark Men." Again, we find them opened in the third degree and brethren made "Mark Masters." This was the case in Hull, in London, in Lancashire, Cumberland, and in West Yorkshire.

Before an assembly of brethren, some of whom are not Mark Masons, it will be readily understood that the question of the Mark Ritual is one upon which it would be improper for me to enter, and on this account I am obliged to restrict my observations within much narrower limits than I could have desired. I may, however, say that the rituals of the degree have been almost legion. I possess copies of several of the old workings, some of which are curious and seem to be associated with, or derived from, degrees that are now worked on an entirely separate basis. But in this respect Mark Masonry does not differ from other degrees, or even from the Craft itself. You are doubtless aware that the present usually accepted Craft working is very different to that which prevailed during last century, and during the early part of the XVIIIth century it is extremely doubtful what ritual, if any, existed. It is quite probable that the present German system then usually obtained, i.e., that the Master of the Lodge exemplified the working according to his own ideas and in his own language, keeping within certain due bounds laid down by elementary landmarks.

As late as 1855 the Mark Degree had a narrow escape of being embodied in the working of Craft Masonry by the deliberate action of the Grand Lodge of England. The Grand Chapter of England, becoming aware that the Grand Chapter of Scotland accepted the Mark Degree as part of its system, considered whether or not it should follow the example of its northern neighbour, but upon a

close investigation of the working of the Degree, the Grand Chapter decided that the Mark was in point of fact an integral portion of the Fellow Craft working, and recommended Grand Lodge to accept the responsibility ; and this Grand Lodge actually decided to do. When, however, the matter came up for confirmation, it was resolved not to carry out the resolve, and perhaps wisely, for although I quite think that any unprejudiced person would agree in the original conclusion of Grand Lodge as to the Mark being an integral portion of Craft working and teaching, yet there is such a thing as precedent, and there is another such thing as the thin end of a wedge, and perhaps if the door of change had once been opened, were it ever so little, there might have been some difficulty in keeping it closed against other degrees that might have claimed admission. Those of my hearers who are acquainted with Mark working are well aware that it dovetails into a certain place in Craft working with remarkable exactitude, and forms a most valuable connecting link in the completion of the Masonic Traditional History. Some Masons are of opinion that the Royal Arch originally was, in some form, actual portion of the Master Masons' Degree, and this theory is in some measure justified by certain words and symbols found on tracing boards depicted in the oldest Masonic works extant. In the same way there are those who believe that the Mark Degree was at some period lopped off from the second degree, and it is possible that this may have also been the case, for the Grand Lodge of England declared in 1856 that the Mark Degree was "not positively essential, but a graceful appendage to the Degree of Fellow Craft." This is especially worthy of note, because it is a record of the deliberate opinion of the highest and most

reliable leaders in Craft Masonry of our own day ; not that the verdict is absolutely correct, for it is more correct to say that the degree of Mark Man would be a suitable appendage to the Fellow Craft, and that of Mark Master to the Masters' Degree. But of these details it is rather difficult to speak on the present occasion.

The formation of the present Grand Lodge of Mark Master Masons of England was perfectly Constitutional. No one can now tell how long previous to 1855 or 1856 Mark Lodges had been working in this country, but just as in 1717 it was felt that without some governing body and some central organisation Masonry ran a great risk of being lost altogether or becoming corrupted, so in one of the former years some of the more influential of English Mark Masons made up their minds that something must be done to preserve and consolidate an Order which possessed such good teachings and had so many worthy disciples. It was found that for lack of a supreme authority, members of the Order were applying to Scotland for warrants, and that no control existed over any part of the working or admission of members. There were excellent and sufficient reasons for the formation, under Lord Leigh, of the Grand Mark Lodge of England, and the very fact that most of the influential Lodges gave in their adhesion at once proves how general was the consensus of opinion that the step was wise and necessary. It was unavoidable and to be expected that there should be some dissentients. No one ever heard of any movement, either inside or outside of Masonry, that did not find an opponent. It is true that some strong Lodges did not join the Grand Lodge for several years, and indeed it is within a very brief period indeed that that one old Lodge at Nottingham has

given in its adhesion. But the fact that the Grand Lodge now practically commands the allegiance of the whole of the Mark Lodges and Mark Masons in England, is sufficient to remove the necessity for any further argument as to the legality of its origin. Moreover, it is now recognised, and in friendly relations with every Masonic body of good repute in the world.

It has been objected by some brethren that the Mark Degree, like others beyond the Three Degrees, involves a waste of Masonic energy, and militates against the Masonic Charities. I am not of that opinion. I have always noticed that it is those who give most to the Masonic Charities who are the best Masonic workers in other degrees beyond the Craft, and that those who say unkind things of the "Fancy Degrees" are not, as a rule, distinguished by their support of any of our Institutions. But the brethren of the Mark have shown their true desire to promote Charity by their foundation of a separate Benevolent Fund of their own, as well as a distinct Educational Fund, both of which have made great progress, and have done very good and practical service, and I am myself well aware that it is no infrequent thing for a Mark Lodge to contribute to the annual collections for the great Craft Charities.

Mark Masonry, like every other branch of the Speculative Art, depends, however, very much upon its rulers and guides. Every one knows the enormous strides made by the Craft within the past few years, and this is no doubt very largely owing to the fact of our future King filling the post of Grand Master. It is of the utmost importance to have men not only of light and leading, but of social weight and influence, to occupy the chief places in any

Masonic Order, if that Order is to advance or become popular; for although our maxim is right—that we prefer honour and virtue above the external advantages of rank and fortune, yet in this country it is happily true that honour and rank, virtue and fortune, may not at all unfrequently be found combined in the person of one individual, and that one a Mason.

In Craft Masonry you, in West Yorkshire, have made, and are making, great progress, but from what I hear this has not been the case in Mark Masonry. This is, I think, much to be regretted, and the matter is to me somewhat unaccountable. It seems strange that a district intimately associated with the degree in its earlier and more obscure days should not appear to look upon it kindly now in its days of fortune. I think that as far as outsiders are concerned their shyness of the degree must arise more from want of knowledge of its value than anything else, and if anything I may have said shall have had the effect of exciting any interest in an Order and a working that for me possesses very great attractions, I shall feel that the little effort made in the preparation of this paper has not been wasted.

Bro. J. S. Cumberland made some interesting remarks upon the customs of the Operative Masons of the present day, and also exhibited a number of curious marks extracted from the old minutes of the Newstead Mark Lodge at Nottingham, and other old documents. Votes of thanks to Bros. Whytehead and Cumberland were moved by Bro. C. J. Banister 33°, and were seconded and carried, and after several leading brethren present had made remarks bearing upon the subject, the meeting separated, with expressions of gratification.

THE FREEMASON'S CHRONICLE,

A Weekly Record of Masonic Intelligence. Sanctioned by the Grand Lodge of England.

Price—13s 6d per annum, post free.

THE FREEMASON'S CHRONICLE will be forwarded direct from the Office, Belvidere Works, Hermes Hill, Pentonville N., on receipt of Post Office Order for the amount. Intending Subscribers should forward their full Addresses to prevent mistakes.

Post Office Orders to be made payable to W. W. MORGAN, at Penton-street Office. Cheques crossed "London and County."

Advertisers will find THE FREEMASON'S CHRONICLE an exceptionally good medium for Advertisements of every class.

SCALE OF CHARGES FOR ADVERTISEMENTS.

Per Page...	...	...	...	..	£8 0 0
Back Page	...	...	...	..	£10 0 0
Births, Marriages and Deaths, 2s per line.					

General Advertisements, Trade Announcements, &c. single column, 5s per inch. Double Column Advertisements 1s per line. Special Terms for a Series of Insertions on application.

Agents, from whom copies can always be had:—

- Messrs. SPENCER and Co., 23A Great Queen-street, W.C.
- Messrs. CURTIS and Co., 12 Catherine-street, Strand.
- Messrs. KENT and Co., Paternoster-row, E.C.
- Mr. RITCHIE, 6 Red Lion Court, E.C.
- Messrs. SIMPSON BROS., Shoe Lane.
- Mr. I. SIMPSON, 7 Red Lion Court, E.C.
- Messrs. SMITH and SONS, 183 Strand.
- Messrs. STEEL and JONES, 4 Spring Gardens, Charing Cross.
- Mr. G. VICKERS, Angel Court, Strand.
- Mr. H. VICKERS, 317 Strand.