

## The Genesis and development of the Masonic Ritual

The series of old M.S.S. generally known as the Old Charges are the Masonic Title Dees from which we derive our authority for holding that Freemasonry as practiced today emanates from the mediaeval craftsmen who built those glorious edifices the Cathedrals and Parish Churches which are the glory and pride of our England today. About 115 of these precious old documents have been traced, they contain a series of regulations concerning Masters, craftsmen, apprentices, wages and other matters relating to the craft or trade of Masonry, prefaced by a legendary and entirely apocryphal account of the history and origin of the Craft and the authority from which the regulations were derived. They probably represent an attempt to reduce to writing the customs and manners of the builders which had gradually grown to be recognised generally in the trade over a long period prior to their composition. The oldest of them is known as the Regius Poem, being the only one in rhyme, and has been dated at approximately 1390. It is interesting to note in passing that this manuscript now in the British Museum but once in the Library of King George III, hence its name, has been attributed by philologists to be written in the dialect of the West Midlands. The second of the O.C. is called the Cooke M.S. and may be dated slightly later. Neither is a copy of the other and both bear traces of being compiled from earlier documents. They are not rituals in any sense of the word and give no hint that there was any such thing in those early days. But such articles as those touching the imperative duty of the mason to attend the Annual Assembly of his division when properly summoned and fixing the length of his cable tow as 50 miles are reminiscent of the phrase in the M.M. obligation binding the candidate to give prompt attention to all signs and summonses sent to him from a M.M. Lodge and plead no excuse etc. They deal at length with the Seven Liberal Arts and Sciences and naturally with Geometry as the foundation of Masonry. They tell us that Tubal Cain was the founder of the smith's craft and of the other crafts of metal. The instruction is given that the mason covet neither wife nor daughter of his Master or fellow. Lastly the use of the word "hele" in the phrase "That he can hele the council of his fellows" and the final words Amen, Amen, so mote it be, wake echoes of long ago in our minds. They contain many moral precepts but no attempt has been made to cast them in the symbolic form so characteristic of our ritual today. The Cooke contains a number of quaint instructions on how to behave at table when dining in the Hall, the mason is told that he must not pick his teeth at table and that when washing his hands before the meal he shall not wipe his nose on the towel and if unfortunately it becomes necessary he shall break and quietly.

We should naturally expect that the older documents would be few and far between and for 150 years the intervening copies are missing until the G.L. M.S. of 1585. They now get more and more frequent until by the end of the 17th century there is quite a flood. They still contain the apocryphal history tracing Masonry back to Adam and claiming almost every builder of the Ancients as a member of the Craft. Noah is a conspicuous figure, Euclid takes a very prominent part as we should expect of the founder of Geometry; the Tower of Babel, Nineveh and Babylon, bring us down to Solomon who is mentioned as just one builder among many and with no emphasis on him as the Founder of Masonry as we should expect from our Legend. From Egypt they spring at a bound to Charlemagne in France and to Athelstan King of England who is claimed as the first founder and author of the Charges handed down in these M.S. By this time the O.C. seem to have taken on the scope and function of not only a ritual but also as a sort of charter or warrant inasmuch as a copy of the O.C. was necessary to the initiation or entering of a mason. In the absence of any central governing body which could issue a warrant this was all that our Brethren considered essential in those days to entitle them to meet as a regular Lodge of Free-masons.

In this what we may call the second edition of the O.C. the

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the Articles and Point suitable of operative masons are continued slightly revised to meet the altered customs of the time . The advice on how to behave at dinner is dropped . But now for the first time we get the germ of a ritual ceremony . In the midst of the Articles we get this phrase in Latin copied from the Wood M.S. of slightly later date viz 1610 because it is in the Porvvincial Library upstairs or rather in the safe downstairs,

Tunc unus ex senioribus teneat librum debeat lege. That is to say then one of the seniors ( one of the P.M.'s) holding the book these laws ought to be read . After a reading of the alleged history , the articles were read while the Candidate had his hand on the book, the Volume of the Sacred Law. It is impossible to conceive of this being done without some form of assent or promise from the Candidate probably including kissing the Book. Here we have the first form of the obligation

Let us now consider at what part of the Mason's career this Ceremony would have taken place . The apprentice was bound from the first for a period of 7 years and it would seem highly improbable that any form of ceremony would have been considered necessary for a boy of 14 , other perhaps than the formal entry of his name in the lodge book, as the apprentice of his Master. It has been pointed out further , that it would hardly be necessary to bind the the apprentice to secrecy as he would naturally never work outside his Master's Lodge and would only gradually be admitted to the secrets of the Craft. They had of course secrets , important , nay essential to the Craftsman, such as the method of making a square with three rods in the proportions of 3,4, and 5 , the points from which to strike the arcs forming a pointed arch, and the method of setting out the ground plan of a building.. These were all purely operative or working secrets . Let us now consider the evidence for the possession of esoteric secrets . First as to the necessity for such secrets . The apprentice having completed his 7 years was a trained man and as such free to work at his trade with any master , but it was important that he should have some means of readily informing the new master that he was what he claimed to be , a competent workman and a regularly made member of the Craft guild or union. This was the more requisite , as from the nature of the craft , the workman travelled from place to place wherever there was a job going. Worcester Cathedral today , some parish church in Staffordshire next summer , and perhaps York Minster the year after. These recognition secrets would therefore be needed after he had completed his apprenticeship , and it is at this point of his career that I suggest the skeleton ceremony we have traced in the O.C. took place. The apprentice had his name entered again in the Lodge Book as having served his articles , and became an entered apprentice . The probability is that after he had taken his obligation something was communicated to him which is described as The Mason Word . This included something more than a mere word, which by the way was ~~probably~~ almost certainly not one of the words we use today in the Craft Ceremonies . The first printed reference to this is is a book published in Edinburgh in 1638 written by one Henry Adamson and describing Perth and its neighbourhood in which this phrase occurs " We have the Mason Word and second sight " . In England the earliest reference is 1672 in Andrew Marvell's book entitled Rehearsal transposed. in which he says " As those that have the Mason's word secretly discern each other " Almost certainly this implies a grip . The entered apprentice then had a word and a grip . What the ceremony might be with which this was communicated we have no trace but obviously it would be the desire and intention of those communicating it to impress on the candidate the importance of the secret and the necessity of haling and concealing it from the cowans of the outer world . This would imply it being done in some formal manner.

The Schaw Statutes of 1598 established laws for the conduct of masons in Scotland. They require that the Entered Apprentice should work as a journeyman for a further period of 7 years before they were received a fellow of the craft and that 6 masters or fellows and 2 entered apprentices should be present at the admission of a fellow . The presence of entered apprentices at this second ceremony would appear to indicate that nothing esoteric was included but does not preclude the possibility as the custom of whispering the word is often mentioned later on. Exactly what took place we do not know but the Entered Apprentice now became a fellow of the craft or master mason then synonymous terms i.e. he was now at liberty to undertake contracts as the master .Here then at the end of the 16th Century we have the germ of two ceremonies

But as we are not all operative but rather free and accepted or speculative masons let us consider the development from operative working masons to speculative gentlemen masons. From the earliest times it is probable that the lord or abbot for whom the work was being done would have taken an interest in the well being of his workmen , When the building reached certain definite specified stages it was the custom that drink or drink money should be provided and it is likely that the lord or master of the work would have entered the workshop and drunk a health to the builders. . Some of these with antiquarian interests may have noticed that the masons had some form of secret ceremony and desired to share in it . Certainly by 1600 we have evidence from Scotland where the written records of lodge minutes have survived from a much earlier period than in England of the admission into an operative lodge of John B. Swell Laird of Auckinleck . Elias Ashmole records in his diary that he was admitted into a lodge at Warrington in Lancashire in 1646. The whole of the members present on that occasion have been traced and they were all speculative or non-working masons. Dr Robert Plot , writing in his Natural History of Staffordshire printed in 1686 records "To these add the customs relating to the ~~customs~~ County of admitting men into the Society of Freemasons that in the moorlands of this County seems to be of greater request than anywhere else though I find the custom spread more or less all over the nation , for here I found persons of the most eminent quality that did not disdain to be of this fellowship. Nor indeed need they , were it of that antiquity and honor that is pretended in a large parchment volum they have amongst them containing the history and Rules of the craft of Masonry..... Into which Society when any are admitted they call a meeting (or lodg as they terme it in some places ) which must consist of at least 5 or 6 of the Ancients of the Order whom the Candidates present with gloves and so likewise to their wives and entertain with a colation according to the custom of the place . This ended they proceed to the admission of them which chiefly consists in the communication of certain secret signes whereby they are known to one another all over the nation .....His opinion of the Historical part of the copy of the Old Charges which he refers to is that nothing I ever met with was more false or incoherent.

There were lodges of accepted or speculative Masons at London York Scarborough and Chichester of which we have record before the end of the 16th century and there must have been a considerable number of others of which record has not survived. It is likely that many of them were not regular lodges meeting at stated periods but rather occasional . All this time it has to be remembered that there was no central body or governing authority . Under these circumstances it is quite extraordinary that the ritual should have developed on such similar lines all over England and Scotland.

We have now arrived at that point in our traditional history where definite documentary evidence of the ritual then in use becomes available. About the end of the 17th and very early in the 18th centuries there are a number of M.S., some purporting to show the whole ceremony of making a mason, some purely in the form of catechisms or lectures, and one or two just a series of notes on the Masons customs and methods of recognition. They bear the stamp of genuineness and although no two are absolute copies of each other they all contain similar passages confirming each other. Here is a fragment from the Harleian M.S. 2054. of about the middle of the 17th century giving the form of oath or obligation.

"There is severall words and signes of a free mason to be reveuled to yu wch as yu will answ; before God at the Great and terrible day of Judgmt yu keep secret & not to reveile the same in the heares of any person or to any but the Mrs & fellows of the said Society of freemasons so helpe me God &.

This is the form written in the Harris No. copy of the O.C. about 30 years afetr. see how it is developing.

The form of the Oath.

These charges wch we now rehearse to you, and all other the Charges, Secrets and Mysteries belonging to Free Masonry, you shall faithfully and truly keep together with the Council of this Lodge or Chamber You shall not for any gift, Bribe or Reward, favour or Affection directly or Indirectly for any cause whatsoever divulge or disclose to either Father or Mother Sister or Brother Wife Child friend Relation or Stranger or to any other prson whatsoever. So help you God yo Holy doom and the contents of this Book

.....  
Then let the prson wch is to be made a Mason chuse out of the Lodge any one Mason who is to instruct him in those Secrets wch never must be committed to writing which Mason he must always call his Tutor then let the Tutor take him into another Room and shew him all the whole Mistry that at his return he may Exercise with the rest of his fellow masons.

Again from the Buchanan M.S. of the 2nd half of the 17th century, note the phrase for the first time Moveable or immoveable.

These Charges that you have received you shall well and truly keepe, not disclosing the secrecy of your Lodge to man woman nor Child: sticke nor stone: thing moueable nor unmoveable soe god you helpe and his holy Doome Amen.

We now come to one of the most important documents bearing on our subject, viz. the Edinburgh Register House M.S. This was discovered about 10 years ago was undoubtedly at one time in the possession of a Scots Lodge and may have been compiled by a Scots mason from other documents. As I have already hinted Masonry in Scotland was developed on a rather different line to England. Owing to the circumstances of the country where the Royal Power was much less strongly established than in England personal security very uncertain. The Masons, naturally a much smaller body of men than in the immensely richer and more developed Kingdom to the South, were compelled to live much more in the towns and cities and consequently developed a closer gild organisation. There are records of some 12 to 16 operative lodges in Scotland at the end of the 16th century of which the oldest, Mother Kilwinning dates from the building of the Abbey of Kilwinning in the 14th Century. At least six copies of the O.C. have been traced to Scottish Lodges proving that their customs in operative times were the same as in England. The Edinburgh Register M.S. is in two portions, the first a catechism put to a stranger mason before admitting him and second the form of the Mason Word. I am going to read it to you see how many questions you recognise and note also how the five points of fellowship are attached to the fellow craft, and that they still have only two degrees. The comparative slenderness of the fellow crafts part, still following on what we have seen to be the operative masons practice. For the first time a definite penalty for the breaking of the oath viz. murder by throat cutting.

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The next document is the Trinity College Dublin M.S. dated 1711. The Catechism is much shorter and there is no description of the ceremony but listen to the relation of the signs.

"The common sign is with your right hand rub yr mouth then cross yr throat and lay it on ye left breast. The Master's sign is backbone : ye word Matchpin. The fellow craftsmens sign is knuckles and sinues ye word Jachquin, The enterprentices sign is sinues the word Boaz or its hollow, Squeeze the master by ye backbone, put your knee between his and say Matchpin. Squeeze the fellow craftsman in knuckles and sinues and say Jachquin, Squeeze the enterprentice in sinues and say Boaz or its hollow. Here for the first time three degrees are mentioned. In Ireland as well the ritual grew on all fours with the other two countries. The Dumfries No4. copy of the O.C. has a catechism of no less than 48 questions and answers. It is very early 18th century, It brings in the first mention of the cable tow. How were you brought in. Ans. Shamfully, with a rope about my neck. What posture were you in when received? ANS. Neither sitting or standing nor running nor going out on my left knee. Q. Why a rope abt yyr neck? Ans. To hang me if I should betray my trust. Another curious question runs some like this. What colour costume does your master wear? Ans. Yellow and blue. This has reference not to any uniform worn by the Master but to the Compasses, the brass upper part being yellow and the steel points blue. This was a sort of test question used outside the lodge and appears in catechisms all through the 18th century.

StxThe Grand Lodge was formed in 1717 by four lodges in London for the better government of the Craft in London and Westminster. Originally it did not even include all the Lodges in London but it very soon spread its influence all over the country and gave such an impetus to Masonry that as one critic of the time said, "It nearly ran itself out of breath." So that by the end of 1724 there were 52 lodges and by 1732 no less than 102 lodges had been formed or given in their allegiance. We have now some general focus or organised body through which to arrive at some standard of ritual. But although it must then have seemed possible to them it never actually happened and probably never will. The first G.L. Regulations lay down that a mason can only take the fellow crafts part in Grand Lodge itself. This not only shows that it was their idea only to rule London but also that they had not adopted the third degree. The lodges revolted and within two years the obnoxious regulation had been rescinded leaving the private lodges to pass and raise their own members. We have seen in the Trinity College M.S. the germ of the third degree but it was far from its final form. What seems to have happened is that owing to a general elaboration of the two ceremonies, through additional explanations added by the master to the skeleton framework we have seen in the Edinburgh Reg M.S. the ceremonies had grown longer. It is possible and even probable that the two ceremonies we have traced were given on the same night in the speculative lodges, though not of course in the operative lodges, with the longer working it became the practice to put off the communication of the F.P.O.F. until another night. Then probably some explanation of these points was required and the meaning and import of the Word and the Hiram legend sprang into the gap. Where it came from is unknown. It does not appear in any of the Jewish traditional writings. It probably arose from the mediæval ~~practices~~ necromantic practices, bordering on witch craft where the endeavour to obtain information from a dead body about the past or the future crops up frequently. Hiram, the man, would be a well known character on whom to hang the legend from his important position at the Building of the Temple. Though the Bible does not describe him so much as a builder as an artificer in metal and in the hangings and embellishments of the Temple. He was responsible for the casting of the two pillars the names of which had long been associated with the ritual.

Having now taken an important part away from the F.C. ceremony, meagre to start with, they proceeded to pad this out by taking a portion of the E.A. degree chiefly from the obligation, and adding this on. This is the explanation of the comparative poverty of the second degree today. Every mason passing through his degrees notices a falling off in interest, it is bare almost to mediocrity and only redeemed, in my opinion, by the beautiful symbolism of the extended working tools. This comparative weakness dates back to operative times when the entered apprentice had worked his sufficient time as a journey man all that was necessary was for him to bind himself to carry out his jobs or contracts for the future with due consideration for his fellows and the master for whom he was executing the work.

The great furore which arose in Masonry about 1780 would not entirely have escaped the notice of the outside world, all meetings then taking place in some tavern. This led to the first of what are now called the Exposures. These are almost entirely different footing to the M.S.S. we have been considering. They purport to set forth the whole secrets of Masonry, but being published purely from a commercial aspect and with a view to sale and profit they have to be examined from a more critical angle. Catch pennies though they were they do provide, by careful collation, evidence of the development of the ritual during this, the most important stage of our subject. The early ones were only in the form of broadsheets, several of them re-printed in the daily journals of the time. They were to be bought for the quite reasonable sum of sixpence.

The earliest, the Mason's Examination of 1723 is rather a jumble of ceremony and catechism, which runs to 20 questions and answers. It relates that the new mason has to give a pair of mens and womens gloves and a leathern apron to all present of the fraternity. This is rather a doubtful point but it does show and aprons and gloves were a part of the clothing at the time. It is rather improbable that the E.A. would be expected to give a new apron to each member of the lodge. What would the recipient do with a succession of aprons. We do not find it too easy to deal with the one or two aprons which are ours today, and what would, say the Preceptor of this Lodge of Instruction do if he had been presented with an apron by every Brother he had seen initiated. A few years later we find the practice reversed and the apron and gloves, both male and female given to the E.A. The print goes on That the Candidate is to hear the ( Blank ) belonging to the Society read by the Master of the lodge. No doubt this refers to the reading of the Articles and Points from the O.C. and possibly the traditional history "then a Warden leads him to the Master & Fellows" There is no trace at this early date of any other officers than a Master and Wardens. "To whom he is to say, I fain would a Freemason be, as all your Worships may plainly see." This would refer to the preparation the Candidate had undergone. "After this he swears to reveal no secrets of the Worshipfull Fraternity on pain of having his throat cut and of having a double portion of Hell and Damnation hereafter." Then he is blindfolded and the ceremony of ( Blank ) performed. From other exposures this seems to have been the practice of the time. It seems all wrong to us, but we have to beware of reading into these old documents portions of our ritual of today. This is at any rate the first mention of the use of the hoodwink. "After which he is to behold a thousand different postures and grimaces, all of which he must exactly imitate or undergo the Discipline till he does." Exactly what this entailed we do not know but probably some form of horse ply is indicated, such as took place in many workshops when a new hand was introduced. One of the first efforts of Grand Lodge was to put down these practices which must have detracted greatly from the impressiveness of the ceremony. The Bye Laws of the Lodge meeting at the Maids Head Norwich under date 1724 No.6. That no ridiculous trick be played with any person when he is admitted. It is recorded that these bye laws were adopted for ye better preserving the Peace and Harmony of the Lodge and

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recommended by our Worshipful Brother Dr. Desaguliers, at that time a past Warden and Deputy Grand Master. Traces of these practices continued for many years, indeed they have not altogether died out today. I remember when I was made that certain friends promised me that they would see the irons were properly heated for the ceremony of my initiation. The tradition that branding of some part of the candidate's anatomy was a part of the ceremony died hard, both inside and outside of the lodges it persisted. There is in the Museum a photograph of an engraving showing the Candidate with his breeches down and the Deacon about to apply a hot iron, with the letters F & M to that portion of his body which my Headmaster once informed me had been provided by Nature for the discipline of the young. In a Lodge Room in Chester hangs on the wall three wooden pokers painted a bright red at their business end, doubtless a reference to the same tradition. I have been told, but I cannot vouch for the accuracy of the tale, that on one occasion a candidate presented himself for initiation at the old lodge rooms in High Street used by 210 and 529 before this Hall was built and turned and fled when he saw a red hot poker in the fire. doubtless put there by the Tyler with the quite innocent intention of inducing him to burn.

The Mason's Examination goes on "After this the word Maughbin is whispered by the youngest Mason to the next and so on till it comes to the Master who whispers it to the entered Mason who must have his Face in due order to receive it. This would appear to refer to the F.P.O.F.. Here the broadsheet would appear to have mixed up the two ceremonies, for it goes on "Then the entered Mason says what follows

An entered mason I have been, B. & J. I have seen,  
A fellow I was sworn most rare, and know the Astler Diamond  
I know the Master's part full well, As honest & Square,  
Maughbin will you tell.

The catechism goes on to state that you must knock three times on the door before entering the lodge.. Six P.O.F are given f to f, K to K, Hand to H., Ear to Ear, Tongue to tongue. it refers to the three lights, the Key of the Lodge. a well hung tongue and concludes with a number of catch questions by which you may know a brother when you meet him out of lodge. and quotes "The gripe is when you take a brother by the R.H. and put your middle finger to his wrist. A clear indication of the lions claw grip by which every master mason should be raised but too often is not. When considering the evidence to be obtained from these old M.S.S. and exposures it has to be remembered that they represent copies from some older document, genuine or otherwise, amended and enlarged to suit the experience and ideas of the copier. There was no set form generally recognised and especially in this period of evolution considerable variation must have occurred. Even when G.L. was well established it never purported to authorise, much less enforce, any precise form of words, merely insisting that the Landmarks of the Craft should be observed, a very uncertain standard. Even today this is the official view, and it was not until the Emulation ceremonies were printed in the 1870's that by common tacit consent the greater part of the body of the Craft decided that the convenience of a printed ritual overweighed the age long obligation never to print write etc.

The next exposure on my list is the Grand Mystery Discovered 1825. of which I quote. What is a mason? A man begot of a man, born of a woman, Brother to a King, . What is a fellow? A companion to a prince. How shall I know you are a Mason? By signs tokens and points of my entrie. Again the Key of the Lodge, the Ivory Box, the Lights, the precious Jewels, appear, and the phrase Brotherly Love Relief and Truth" for the first time. The Essex M.S. states that the Pillars B. & J. represent Strength and Stability with Church in all ages. The oath is still more or less in the old form. To serve God, be a true liegeman to the King and to help and assist a Brother as far as your ability will allow. What posture did you pass your path in? I was neither setting going standing lying hinging nor properly kneeling, clothed nor naked, shod nor barefoot but as a Brother knows how.

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And th show that the oath given above had not yet reached its final form , the Q. What other tenours belong to your oath ? Ans. To obey God in all true squares made or sent to me from a Brother , never to put out my hand to steal, nor commit adultery with a Brother's Wife nor design any unjust revenge on him but love and relieve him as far as you can not hurting yourself too far.

Having now considered the evidence I have laid before you to be obtained from the old catechisms and exposures , I think you will see why I attach great importance to the working of the Lectures . They contain indisputably older verbal portions of the ritual than the ceremonies of Init, Passm and Rasng. which themselves only reached an approximately final revision in 1817 . They enshrine traditional workings , some of which are possibly as old as the end of the 16th Century, I know some of you think I am a bit of a crank about this but 70 years ago no Candidate was ever passed to the 2nd Degree in 280 , without having heard the tracing board and at least two sections of the first lecture .

Having given consideration to these Masonic, quasi-masonic and definitely anti-masonic documents , let us turn to the first publication authorised by G.L. The first Book of Constitutions was printed in 1723 , the author and owner of the copyright was Dr. James Anderson, a Scottish Presbyterian Minister in London . He tells us that he was ordered to prepare a digest from the old Gothic Constitutions , i.e. the Old Charges. as a result of this he wrote the Charges of a Free Mason which you will find in the Book of Constitutions given to you at your initiation . They form a splendid exemplification of the moral and ethical content of the Craft and so satisfied was G.L. with them that to this day there have been only the smallest verbal alterations. But the reason that I refer to this Book , is that it contains the first last and only portion of the Ritual printed by the authority of G.L. This is the manner of constituting a new lodge together with the installation of a Master . It is not of course given in full but listen to these extracts . The Candidate or the new Master and Wardens , being yet among the fellow crafts , the Grand Master shall ask his Deputy , if he has examined them and finds the Candidate Master well skilled in the Noble Science and the Royal Art and duly instructed in our Mysteries. And the Deputy , answering in the affirmative shall say 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 dispersed over the face of the Earth. Upon this the Deputy shall rehearse the Charges of a Master and the Grand Master shall ask the Candidate , Do you submit to these charges as Masters have done in all ages . Then the Grand Master shall with certain significant ceremonies and secret usages install him and present him with the Constitutions , the Lodge Book, and the Instruments of his Office . not all together , but one after another and after each of them shall rehearse the short and pithy charge that is suitable to the thing presented. This is the first indication of the practice now known as the Working Tools , The Wardens were then presented and the Deputy rehearsed the Charges of the Wardens ( no doubt corresponding to the modern practice of the Address to the Wardens ) . Upon which the new Master shall present them with the Instruments of their Office and in due form instal them in their proper places . Smiths Pocket Companion for Freemasons , published in London 1734 prints a short Charge to new admitted Brethren .

You are now admitted by the unanimous consent of our Lodge, a Fellow of our most Antient and Honourable Society ; Antient, as having subststed from Times immemorial , and Honourable, as tending in every Particular to render a Man so that will be but conformable to its glorious Precepts. The greatest Monarchs of all Ages , as well as 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 of their Imperial Dignities to level themselves with their Brethren in Masonry, and to act as they did.



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The World's great Architect is our Supreme Master, and the unerring Rule he has given us, is that by which we work.

Religious Disputes are never suffered in the Lodge; for as Masons, we only pursue the universal Religion or the Religion of Nature. This is the Cement which unites Men of the most different Principles in one sacred Band, and brings together those who were the most distant from one another.

There are three general Heads of Duty which Masons ought always to inculcate, vizto God, our Neighbours, and Ourselves. To God, in never mentioning his Name but with that Reverential Awe which becomes a Creature to bear to his Creator, and to look upon him always as the Summum Bonum which we came into the World to enjoy; and according to that view to regulate all our Pursuits.

To our Neighbours, in acting upon the Square, or doing as we would be done by.

To ourselves, in avoiding all Intemperances and Excesses, whereby we may be rendered incapable of following our Work,, or lead into Behaviour unbecoming our laudable Profession, and in always keeping within due Bounds, and free from all Pollution.

In the State, a Mason is to behave as a peaceful and dutiful subject, conforming chearfully to the Government under which he lives.

He is to pay a due Deference to his Superiors, and from his Inferiors he is rather to receive Honour with some Reluctance than to extort it.

He is to be a Man of Benevolence and Charity, not sitting down contented while his Fellow Creatures, but much more his Brethren, are in Want, when it is in his Power ( without prejudicing himself or Family ) to relieve them.

In the Lodge he is to behave with all due Decorum, lest the Beauty and Harmony thereof should be disturbed or broke.

He is to be obedient to the Master and presiding Officers, and to apply himself closely to the Business of Masonry, that he may the sooner become a Proficient therein, both for his own Credit, and for that of the Lodge.

He is not to neglect his own necessary Avocations for the sake of Masonry, nor to involve himself in Quarrels with those who through Ignorance may speak evil of, or ridicule it.

He is to be a lover of the Arts and Sciences, and to take all opportunities of improving himself therein.

If he recommends a Friend to be made a Mason, he must vouch him to be such as he really believes will conform to the aforesaid Duties, lest by his Misconduct at any time the Lodge should pass under some evil Imputations. Nothing can prove more shocking to all faithful Masons, than to see any of their Brethren profane or break through the sacred Rules of their Order, and such as can do it they wish had never been admitted.

I think it was worth giving in full,; there is no indication that this was official, rather was it implied that it is an alternative address. Another example of the rapid development is in the Prayer used at the opening of a Lodge or the making of a Brother, printed in Pennell's Irish Constitutions of 1730. I will first give you the Prayer which appears at the begining of every copy of the O.C. slightly varied from time to time. This is from the Aberdeen M.S. of 1670

The Might of the father of heaven with the wisdom of the glorious son, and the grace and goodnes of the holy ghost thes three persones in one god head, be with ws in our begininge and give us grace to governe our selves that wee may live in that bl bless which shall never have ane ending. Amen.

Pennells Prayer. Most Holy and Glorious LORD GOD, thou great Architect of Heaven and Earth, who art the Giver of all good Gifts and Graces; and hast promis'd that were two or three are gathered together in thy Name, Thou wilt be in the midst of them; in the Name we assemble and meet together, most humbly beseeching Thee to bless us in all our Undertakings, to give us thy Holy Spirit, to enlighten our Minds with Wisdom and Understanding, that we may know, and serve thee aright, that all our Doings may tend to they Glory, and the Salvation of our Souls. ( To be added when any Man is made.) And we beseece Thee, OLORD GOD, to bless this our present Undertaking and

The Genesis and development of the Masonic Ritual. contd.

grant that this, our new Brother, may dedicate his Life to their Service, and be a true and faithful Brother among us, endue him with Divine Wisdom, that he may, with the Secrets of Masonry be able to unfold the Mysteries of Godliness and Christianity. This we humbly beg in the Name and for the sake of Jesus Christ our Lord and Saviour. Amen.

We have considered the probable course to the evolution of the Third Degree but the first printed exposure giving details of all three degrees is Prichard's Masonry Dissected. of 1730. This is the most important date in our paper tonight. For now we find the Third Degree in all its essentials so well established that it could be printed and published to the World.. It is a much more elaborate production than any previously put forth. It is again cast in the form of a catechism, there being 80 questions in the 1st, and 32 each in the 2nd and 3rd. The measure of its success and therefore of its accuracy may be judged from the furor it caused. In eleven days it went through 3 editions in addition to being printed in 2 newspapers, it continued to find a ready sale for years afterwards and was translated into French German and Dutch. Several editions appeared in Scotland. Grand Lodge itself was so perturbed by this and other exposures that it is recorded in the Minutes of this year that Dr Desaguliers rose and referred to a pamphlet recently published and proposed certain steps to prevent any irregular mason obtaining admission to a lodge, by requiring that a visitor should be vouched for as a regular mason by some member of the lodge. This not proving sufficient, between 1730 and 1739 certain other alterations were introduced to the same end, amongst them the reversal of the words of the 1st and 2nd degrees, J. becoming the word of the 1st and B. of the 2nd.. Thus they hoped to catch the intruder who had only studied Prichard. Possibly also the passwords, originally called watch words, were also introduced for the first time as an additional precaution. They were given in the course of the ceremony right up to the Union in 1813 and not as we do now before the admission of a candidate into a higher degree.

The reason for the extensive sale of this and other exposures is that they were bought by the Brethren of the day, partly, no doubt, in horror at the exposure to sale of the alleged secrets and partly, I believe, they were used as rituals: no doubt amended and annotated to correspond with the working of the individual brother's lodge. This course did not prevent the publication going on, as the more the Brethren bought, the more were printed. It may surprise you to learn that this is still going on today, I have had certain agitated brethren bring me to the Library, copies of Richard Carlyles exposure of a much later date but still being printed today. They had bought them for the same reason, to prevent them getting in the hands of the public. I give you the obligation of an E.A. as printed in Prichard to show the great advance that had been made between the Harleian fragment of 1650 and 1730.

I here by solemnly vow and swear in the presence of Almighty God, and this Right Worshipful Assembly, that I will Hail and Conceal, and never Reveal the secrets or secrecy of Masons or Masonry, that shall be revealed unto me; unless to a true and lawful Brother, after due examination, or in a just and Worshipful Lodge of Brothers and Fellows well met.

I further more promise and vow, that I will not write them, Print them, Mark them, Carve them, or Engrave them, or cause them to be Written, Printed, Marked, Carved or Engraved on Wood or Stone, so as the visible Character or Impression of a Letter may appear, whereby it may be unlawfully obtained.

All this under no less penalty than to have my throat cut, my Tongue taken from the Roof of my Mouth, my Heart plucked from from under my Left Breast, them to be buried in the sands

The Genesis and development of the Masonic Ritual. contd.

of the sea, the Length of a Cable-rope from shore, where the Tide ebbs and flows twice in 24 Hours, my Body to be burnt to ashes, my Ashes to be scattered upon the Face of the Earth, so that there shall be no more Remembrance of me among Masons.

So help me God.

And a part of the Master's Degree .

In the buidning of Solomons Temple he was master Mason, and at high twelve at noon, when the men was gone to refresh themselves, as was his usual custom, he came to survey the works, and when he was entered into the Temple, there were 3 Ruffians, supposed to be the 3 Fellow Crafts, planted 'emselves at the 3 entrances of the temple, and when he came out, one demanded the master's word of him, and he replied he did not receive it in such a manner, but time and a little patience would bring him to it. He not satisfied with that answer, gave him a blow, which made him reel; he went to the other Gate, where being accosted in the same manner, and making the same reply, he received a greater blow, and at the 3rd his Quietus..

We have now all the essentials of the three degrees as worked today but it is still noticeable that there has been no attempt to clothe the bones of the moral duties in the beautiful phraseology, veiled in allegory and illustrated by symbols. Charity to a Brother is enjoined certiant, but it is not made the central and most impressive moment in the 1st Degree. , We are told of the fidelity of our Grand Master to the sacred trust reposed in him but there is no suggestion that the Master Mason should draw a special lesson from this should he be placed in a similar satte of trial. The F.P.O.F. are firmly established but the lesson to be learnt of the beauty and the duty of fellowship has still to be evolved.

Much remained to be done and many generations of Masons to exercise their tools on the Rough Ashlar before our Ritual became the polished and perfect Ashlar on which we are priveleged to work today.

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