

Our Ritual: A Study In Its Development

by

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It may come as a surprise to many Brethren to learn that our Craft Ritual, in the form in which we know it to-day, does not date farther back than 1835 or thereabouts. That does not mean, of course, that the elements of which it is composed, or at least most of them, do not go back very far indeed, but it does mean that we have no evidence that these elements were combined before that date into the "peculiar system of morality veiled in allegory and illustrated by symbol" with which we are familiar to-day. It will be our present purpose to pass under review some early Masonic records and from them establish historical facts on which the foregoing conclusion is based, and at the same time to present some other considerations that may have a bearing upon the development of our Ritual.

Most craftsmen believe, and believe correctly, that the Freemasonry of to-day is, in a very real sense, the lineal descendant of the old Masons' Guild. In the Middle Ages many trades had their Guilds, but the Masons' Guild differed from all the others in two very important respects. In the first place, most tradesmen carried on their vocations in fixed localities where they were all well known to one another and to their employers. But the masons, because of the nature of their work, were necessarily mobile-settled for a time while engaged on the building of (say) a Cathedral or a Royal Palace, and when their work there was completed travelling, sometimes a considerable distance, to the site of the next building on which they would be employed. They were not so well known to one another or to employers of labour, and when one professing to be a mason presented himself at a building site seeking employment, it was necessary for the employer not only to prove, by a practical test, that the man was capable of skilled work, but also to be satisfied that he had been regularly received into the Guild, a necessary condition of employment in those days. Hence the need for such "test" questions as we find in the catechism part of the Edinburgh Register House MS. (1696): "Some Questions that Masons used to put to those who have the Word before they will acknowledge them."

In the second place, the masons alone had "charges" that were addressed to apprentices when they were indentured to their masters. These are commonly spoken of as "The Old Charges". The two oldest that have been preserved are "The Regius Poem" (it is written in rhyme) believed to date from 1390, and the "Cooke MS."

about 1425. Another in the possession of the Grand Lodge of England is dated 1583, and some others were written in the seventeenth century. Brothers Pick and Knight, in their *Pocket History of Freemasonry* (page 28) say "Although parallels may be found here and there, no other medieval body, whether craft, religious or otherwise; is known to have possessed such documents." They also say (page 166): "It is remarkable that Scotland produced no traditional history such as England had from about 1400 in the Old Charges. The few copies associated with Scotland are obviously copied from England, indeed one or two naively require the Craftsman to be true to the King of England."

A short description of elements that are common to all or most of these Old Charges will be of interest and are relevant to our present purpose. They all open with a prayer which, as is to be expected at that period, is definitely Christian in character, including an invocation of the Holy Trinity. Then follows a "traditional history" of the Craft, which is in many respects fantastic, but which contains some elements that are not unfamiliar to us to-day. They deal with the seven liberal Arts and Sciences-Grammar, Rhetoric, Logic, Arithmetic, Geometry, Music and Astronomy. These Arts and Sciences were written on two pillars of stone-"the one stone was called marble, that cannot burn with fire. The other was called Lateral (Le., brick or tile) that cannot drown with water." That detail, with a slight modification and transposition, will be familiar to many. And there are some students who believe that we have here the original legend of "Two Pillars", a later version of which finds embodiment in other Pillars that are alluded to in the Edinburgh Register House MS., in all the eighteenth century catechisms, and in our present-day Rituals.

At this point several versions of the Old Charges require the Apprentice to take an O.B. on the V.S.L. Then follow the "general" Charges, which relate not only to the craft and its secrets, but also to general conduct. The Apprentice is charged:-

1. To be true to God and Holy Church;
2. To be a true liegeman to the King and his Council;
3. To be true to one another, and to do to others as he would that others should do to him;
4. To keep the secrets of the craft;
5. Not to be a thief;
6. To be loyal to his master and to serve him for his profit and advantage;
7. To call masons fellows or brothers and no foul name, not to take a fellows' wife violently, nor his daughter ungodly, nor his servant in villany;
8. To pay his way honestly, wherever he may go; and
9. To do no villany in any house where he may be entertained.

Then follow some "particular" Charges for Masters and Fellows; but these relate entirely to the operative work of the craft.

These details are given here for three reasons: (1) because in them we can recognise much that is in the ethical instruction given in our modern Ritual; (2) because the method of giving such a "Charge" is continued in the Charges that are given to-day at the conclusion of the ceremonies of Entering, Passing and Raising and also in the Charges read to the Master of a Lodge at his installation; and (3) because failure to read these Old Charges was one of the allegations brought by the "Antients" against the "Moderns" which will be dealt with later. Thus it can be clearly seen that any study of the development of our Ritual must begin with the Old Charges and their contents.

In the days when masons followed the work from building site to building site, a "lodge" would be formed at each site. This was probably discontinued gradually as the erection of great buildings such as cathedrals, palaces or castles grew less, and masons became more settled in towns where they were employed in more ordinary building. Then they formed what Brother Douglas Knoop calls "territorial lodges." The Schaw Statutes (1599) make mention of Lodges at Edinburgh; Kilwinning and Stirling-and these three Lodges are still actively working. Knoop and Jones, in *The Genesis of Freemasonry* (page 52) state that "the only independent evidence of the ownership, or the use, of versions of the MS. Constitutions" (i.e., the Old Charges) "by operative masons relates to Lodges at Stirling, Melrose, Kilwinning, Aberdeen, Dumfries, Aitcheson's Haven, Alnwick and Swallowwell." Six of these eight Lodges were in Scotland; but it is interesting to note that the Lodge of Edinburgh is not included. The other two Lodges were in Northumberland, and both had a very close linkage, masonically, with Scotland. (See *The Genesis of Freemasonry*, pages 221 and 222). This list is given here to establish two points: (1) that Lodges at that time were localised or "territorial", and (2) that the Old Charges continued to be used after the Lodges were so localised. Pick and Knight, in their *Pocket History* (page 172) state that in England "the operative Lodge is almost unknown"-(presumably they mean in a "territoria" sense). When Elias Ashmole was admitted to the Lodge at Warrington in 1646, none but non-operative masons were present.

It was no doubt after the settling of Lodges at fixed centres that non-operative members began to be admitted. The earliest record of a non-operative being present at a meeting of an operative Lodge is to be found in the Minutes of the Lodge of Edinburgh for 8th June 1600, which were attested by all present, including James Boswell of Auchinleck, an ancestor of the biographer of Dr Johnson. Three others were admitted to the same Lodge in 1634 - twelve years before the admission of Elias Ashmole to the Lodge at Warrington.

The seventeenth century may be regarded as the period when the transition from "operative" to "speculative" got well under way. Influence in that direction no doubt came from men like Ashmole and Sir Robert Moray, one of the Founders of the Royal Society (who was admitted by the Lodge of Edinburgh at a meeting in Newcastle on 20th May 1641), and possibly, indirectly, from others of similar interests. Space does not permit of enlarging upon this matter; but one brief quotation (which may later be found to have considerable relevance to our present study) may be given from a well-known Masonic historian, Robert Freke Gould. In his *History of Freemasonry* (Vol. II, page 138) he expresses the opinion that "during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, Kabalism and Rosicrucianism profoundly influenced many secret societies in Europe; and Freemasonry received no slight tinge from the Kabalistic pursuits of some of its adherents at that time." Brother Gould, a doughty champion of the principles of the "Authentic School" of Masonic historians, was exceedingly cautious and careful in his scrutiny of evidence, and we may take it that he would not have ventured to make such a categorical statement unless he was satisfied that it was fully justified by the cumulative effect of all the available evidence-no doubt in great measure "circumstantial". Such a statement by such a man is worthy of the most serious consideration.

He is certainly supported in his statement by a still more learned student of Masonic and cognate matters, who, however, approaches the subject from a somewhat different angle, Brother A. E. Waite, who says: "It seems to me quite certain that Kabalism has transmitted elements to our secret societies, and it is not less certain that the men who elaborated our (Masonic) rituals had some personal knowledge of the secret doctrine of the Kabbalah." He was, of course, referring to our modern Rituals.

Towards the end of the seventeenth century we come to the Edinburgh Register House MS., which is the first of a series of catechisms which continued to appear until well into the eighteenth century. Three of these-the Edinburgh Register House MS. (1696), the Graham MS. (1726), and *Masonry Dissected* (1730) were dealt with in detail in an article on "The Five Points of Fellowship" in the Grand Lodge of Scotland Year Book for 1959. Here it is proposed only to pick out one or two points that are relevant to our immediate purpose.

These catechisms are not "ritual " as we now understand that word. They consist of questions and answers which, however, refer back in specific terms to some ceremony that had taken place previously. Of these ceremonies themselves we know nothing except what may be inferred from the questions and answers. They were probably very short and simple, restricted to the formal introduction of new Apprentices and Fellows, and the communication of the Word and

other Secrets. That there was possibly no set form for this may be gathered from the narrative portion of the Edinburgh Register House MS. There we read: "Then all the masons present whisper among themselves the word, beginning with the youngest, until it come to the master mason, who gives the word to the entered Apprentice." In this short quotation there are two expressions that call for comment as relevant to our present purpose: "the word" and "entered apprentice."

The earliest known reference to the Mason Word is in "The Muses' Threnodie", a metrical account of Perth and neighbourhood by Henry Adamson, published in Edinburgh in 1638, which contains these lines:

"For we be brethren of the Rosie Crosse,
We have the Mason Word and second sight."

Brother Douglas Knoop, in *The Genesis of Freemasonry* (page 222) says that "there is no evidence to show that the Mason Word was ever used among English operative masons except possibly in the North." These last words would cover such Lodges as those at Alnwick and Swallowwell already mentioned. He also says (page 223) that "various entries in Lodge records in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries refer to the Mason Word; those records, without exception, refer to Scottish Lodges." And, finally, he says (page 224): "The purpose of the Mason Word was to distinguish masons who were members of their trade organisation from others who were not. The need for some secret method of recognition arose from two conditions peculiar to Scotland, viz., the possibility of employment open to cowans, and the existence of an industrial grade without exact parallel in England, that of entered apprentice." Apprentices who were bound to their masters by indenture did not require any special mode of recognition. But when they had completed their indentured service, they became "entered" apprentices - "journeymen" they would be called to-day. The expression "entered apprentices" was not known in England until the publication of the first Book of Constitution in 1723, which was compiled by Rev. James Anderson, D.D. - a Scotsman!

In passing, it may be remarked that "Fellow of Craft" is also distinctively Scottish. It appears in the Schaw Statutes (1599), but in England it was not known until 1723; and there it is generally used without the "of" - i.e., "Fellow Craft."

Let us now revert to the Graham MS. (1726) which is of special importance for a study of the development of our Ritual. This MS. makes very clear reference to King Solomon and Hiram Abiff, and their respective parts in the building of the Temple:

" Four hundred and four score years after the Children of Israel came out of the land of Egypt, in the fourth year of Solomon's reign over Israel, that Solomon began to build the House of the Lord. . . . Now we read in the 13th verse of the 7th chapter of the First Book of Kings that Solomon sent and fetched Hiram out of Tyre, he being a widow's son of the Tribe of Naphtali, and his father was a man of Tyre, a worker in brass. . . . And he came to King Solomon and wrought all his work for him."

This is very familiar to us. But the MS. does not go on to give us the legend of our Third Degree which has Hiram as its central figure. Instead, it does give practically all the ingredients of that legend in a very different setting, with a "traditional history" of which Noah was the central figure-which may be taken as about 1,300 years before the building of King Solomon's Temple.

By the death of Noah some secret knowledge was lost. His three sons, Shem, Ham and Japheth, went to their father's grave "to try if they could find anything about him to lead them to the vertuable secrets which this famous preacher had." But before they went they "had already agreed that if they did not find the very thing itself, the first thing they found was to be to them as a secret . . ." There we have the earliest reference to " substituted secrets ".

When they came to the grave they found "nothing but the dead body almost consumed away". Because of its condition their first efforts to raise it failed. But ultimately "they raised up the dead body, setting foot to foot, knee to knee, breast to breast, cheek to cheek, and hand to back". In this old Noah legend the MS. gives several other details that are almost identical with elements in our Hiramic Legend. And also, incidentally, it contains some dramatic details with which our modern Mark Degree has made us familiar. The first record of the Hiramic Legend appears in Samuel Pritchard's *Masonry Dissected* which was published in 1730-four years after the date of the Graham MS. The appearance, at dates so close to one another, of two legends so similar in content but so vastly different in setting and in the periods to which they are assigned by their respective "traditional histories", is very striking indeed. In this connection Brothers Pick and Knight, in their *Pocket History of Freemasonry* (page 70) say: "It is probable that, before the Craft finally settled on the building of King Solomon's Temple, and the loss and recovery of certain Knowledge, other prototypes were tried out, perhaps by small groups of Masons in isolated parts of the country." We may agree, broadly, with what is implied in this conjecture; but it raises two very interesting questions: (1) *who*, at this period, constituted "the Craft" which ultimately decided in favour of the Hiramic version - or, more briefly, *who* made the decision; and (2) did they come to their decision deliberately after a

consideration of the experiments made with various prototypes? We shall have occasion to revert to these questions at a later stage. In 1717 the first Grand Lodge of England had been formed. Its jurisdiction was at first confined to London and Westminster, but it gradually spread throughout England, where many Lodges had long been functioning. There had also been many Lodges actively operating in Ireland and Scotland. The Grand Lodge of Ireland was formed in 1725 and the Grand Lodge of Scotland in 1736. These simple historical facts are stated to introduce the next phase of our study in the development of our Ritual.

According to Bernard Jones in *The Freemason's Guide and Compendium* (page 195) Freemasons from Ireland and Scotland "were drifting into England and bringing with them ideas which had grown up not on English soil, but which, nevertheless, were very precious to those who held them. Grand Lodge was probably very worried, somewhere about 1730, at the number of unaffiliated Masons coming apparently from nowhere and claiming admission to their Lodges." In order to make admission of such men to Lodges more difficult, Grand Lodge issued an order to make certain changes in the methods of "proving" or testing, including the transposition of the words of the First and Second Degrees; but not all Lodges obeyed this order. Many Lodges in England had an appreciable proportion of members of Irish origin, and no doubt many Scottish Masons also had migrated to England; and the influence of these would tend towards the maintenance of the older tradition and practice. In any case, the Lodges that were in opposition to Grand Lodge on this or other grounds—most of which had never come under the jurisdiction of Grand Lodge gradually grew together, and probably as early as 1739 a Committee had been formed to co-ordinate their activities, and the work of that Committee culminated in the formation of a rival Grand Lodge in 1751. Then ensued a long period of bitter rivalry between the two Grand Lodges until their union in 1813. The history of this period is not only intrinsically interesting to Masonic students, but it also provides much material that is relevant to our present study. The new Grand Lodge took the title of "The Most Antient and Honourable Society of Free and Accepted Masons". They claimed that they had adhered to the Antient Landmarks of the Order, from which the others had departed, and on this account they became known as the "Antients", while the older Grand Lodge were dubbed the "Moderns"; and both these designations have been retained ever since.

Among the defections of which the "Antients" accused the "Moderns", the following may be noted as relevant to our present purpose:

1. That they had ceased to read the Old Charges at initiations, thus abandoning a Landmark.

2. That they had de-Christianised Freemasonry. The Old Charges had been, almost without exception, of a positively Christian character; but the first of the Regulations that were embodied in Anderson's Constitutions of 1723 stated that "'tis now thought more expedient only to oblige them (i.e., the Freemasons) to that Religion to which all men agree, leaving their particular opinions to themselves."
3. That they had transposed the modes of recognition of the First and Second Degrees-as already indicated above.
4. That they omitted the Deacons from their Office-bearers.
5. That they had abandoned the esoteric ceremony of Installed Master.
6. That they had curtailed the ceremonies, and in particular had neglected the " Lectures ", or catechisms, attached to each Degree.

The Grand Lodges of Ireland and Scotland had sympathised with those Lodges who had resisted the changes ordered by the original Grand Lodge, and they maintained very close and amicable relations with the new Grand Lodge when it was formed in 1751. It may be of interest to note how close that relationship was at the highest levels. In 1756 a former Grand Master of Ireland, the Earl of Blessington, was elected Grand Master of the "Antients". He was succeeded, in 1760, by the Earl of Kellie, who was Grand Master Mason of Scotland in 1763-65. The third Duke of Atholl was Grand Master of the "Antients" from 1771 to 1774 and Grand Master Mason of Scotland in 1773, so that he held both offices simultaneously for a period. The same is true of the fourth Duke of Atholl, who was Grand Master Mason of Scotland 1778-1779 and was Grand Master of the "Antients" from 1774 till 1781 and again from 1791 till 1813. And in the period between 1781 and 1791 the Grand Master of the Antients was the Marquis of Antrim, who was Grand Master of Ireland in 1773 and again in 1779. It may be of particular interest to Scottish Masons to know that the Antients were known as "Atholl Masons", and even the official Year Book of the United Grand Lodge of England refers to the "Atholl or Antient Grand Lodge ". In 1813 the Duke of Atholl was succeeded by H.R.H. the Duke of Kent, son of George III. Though the rivalry between the two Grand Lodges in England was very acute, there were enlightened Brethren in both bodies who realised the wrongness of this division and worked to find a way towards union. Ultimately, on 26th October 1809, the "Modern" Grand Lodge issued a Charter or Warrant to the "Lodge of Promulgation", so named because it was formed "for the purpose of promulgating the ancient Land Marks of the Society, and instructing the Craft in all matters and forms as may be necessary to be known by them . . . " The work done by this Lodge represents the beginning of a process that culminated, nearly forty years later, in the final formulation of our modern Ritual as we know it to-day. The Lodge of Promulgation, when they had completed the work allotted to them, reported back to the "Moderns" Grand Lodge that they had "a confident persuasion of

having derived the most authentic information from the purest sources . . . as henceforth to render all the Ceremonies of the Craft, in practice simple, in effect impressive, and in all respects conformable to ancient practice." What this amounted to in actual fact was that they accepted practically all the "Antient" practices in matters on which there had been differences between the two bodies with one notable exception, namely, that they tacitly accepted the position reflected in the first Article in the Regulations incorporated in Anderson's Constitutions of 1723, referred to above. The Lodge of Promulgation ceased to function in 1811.

On the side of the "Antients", their Grand Lodge appointed a Committee in 1810 to explore the prospects of achieving union, and their report led to that Grand Lodge deciding "that a Masonic Union, on principles equal and honourable to both Grand Lodges, and preserving the Land Marks of the Antient Craft would, in the opinion of this Grand Lodge, be expedient and advantageous to both." The union of the two Grand Lodges was finally effected and ratified on 1st December 1813. At that time the Duke of Sussex was Grand Master of the "Moderns" and the Duke of Kent Grand Master of the "Antients". They were both brothers of the Prince Regent, afterwards King George IV. On the motion of H.R.H. the Duke of Kent, H.R.H. the Duke of Sussex was elected Grand Master of the United Grand Lodge, and he was installed as such on St John the Evangelist's Day, 27th December, 1813, and he continued to hold that office for thirty years.

On 7th December 1813, six days after the Union had been ratified, the "Lodge of Reconciliation" was warranted. This Lodge was composed of well-known Brethren from each Grand Lodge and its purpose was to "reconcile" the working of previous "Modern" Lodges and previous "Antient" Lodges so as to ensure uniformity of working in all the Lodges throughout England. They built on the foundation that had been laid by the Lodge of Promulgation, and their method of procedure was to give demonstrations at various centres which the Masters of Lodges were invited to attend. They continued to function till 1816 and held twenty-six meetings. There are detailed records of twenty meetings, and from these records, considered in the light of subsequent history, and even though the Minutes make no reference to "Lectures", it can be gathered that their demonstrations were not so much the actual working of the Degrees as a detailed description of the working given in the form of questions asked by the Master for the evening and answered by the Wardens for the evening-different Brethren occupied these chairs at each meeting. At nine of the twenty meetings referred to above the Master's chair was occupied by the Rev. Samuel Hemming, D.D., who later compiled the famous "Hemming Lectures" to which further reference will be made shortly. After the Lodge of Reconciliation ceased to function in 1816 their work was continued

by "Lodges of Instruction", of which the most famous were the "Stability Lodge of Instruction", formed in 1817, and the "Emulation Lodge of Improvement", formed in 1823.

It will be relevant to our present purpose to give more details regarding this method of giving instruction by means of the "Lectures". This method corresponds exactly to the eighteenth century Catechisms which embody references back to previous ceremonies, of which we otherwise know nothing, but of the nature of which we can gather something from the questions and answers. Similarly the early nineteenth century Lectures "refer back" to the ceremonies of the three Degrees; and it may be assumed with confidence that as the Lectures were developed by the Lodge of Reconciliation, the actual ceremonies were being developed *pari passu* and gradually took more definite form. By 1816 Brother Hemming had compiled Lectures on all three Degrees, and these comprised 256 questions and answers on the First Degree, 145 on the Second Degree and 78 on the Third Degree. Ten years later a Minute of the Stability Lodge of Instruction, dated 21st April 1826, reads as follows:—"The Rev. Dr Hemming was invited to preside, when the Lecture (First Degree) was ably worked by the Rev. Dr Samuel Hemming assisted by . . ." At the close, the grateful thanks of the Lodge were tendered to Brother Hemming for presiding and "for the advantage they enjoy in the possession of that Lecture which he has arranged with such skill and talent as to stand unparalleled in the Masonic World." According to the Minutes, also, the Lodge seems to have worked only the Lecture on the First Degree until 28th September 1827, when that on the Second Degree is mentioned for the first time; and that on the Third Degree is not mentioned until 7th November 1828.

As already indicated, the Emulation Lodge of Improvement was not formed until six years after the Stability Lodge of Instruction.

Brother C. D. Rotch, in his short treatise on *The Lodge of Reconciliation 1813-1816, and its Influence on Present-Day Ritual*, says: "It is not easy to understand why the Stability and Emulation Lodges of Improvement preferred to work by Lectures only until after 1830." This may be difficult to understand, but we must accept the fact, noting that it applies to Emulation as well as to Stability.

In the early days of the Emulation Lodge of Improvement the dominating figure was Brother Peter Gilkes, who, however, did not join it until two years after its formation. Brother Gilkes was a very significant personality in English Masonic history of this period. Regarding him, Brother Hiram Hallett in his short history of *The Lodges of Promulgation, Reconciliation, Stability and Emulation*, says: "The Emulation Lodge of Improvement bases all its claims for pre-eminence on the assumption that they derive their Ritual from this famous Masonic instructor."

It may be relevant to give the following further quotation from Brother Hallett: "When the method of imparting Masonic Instruction by means of Lectures began it is impossible to say. About 1763 Lectures by William Hutchinson were published; and in 1772 William Preston published his version. The ceremonies in those days were short and simple; the Lectures were long and verbose . . . these Lectures, however, containing all the essentials of the three degrees. It is not now possible to state when the rehearsals of the ceremonies supplanted them." The words "long and verbose" are no doubt true of Hutchinson and Preston, but are scarcely so applicable to the eighteenth-century Catechisms or the nineteenth century "Lectures".

The Emulation Ritual was first published by "A. Lewis" in 1838, but it may be taken for granted that MS. copies were in circulation for some time before that. It may also be taken for granted that the Stability Ritual had been completed about the same time. Brother Rotch states that all the present-day Rituals, except those of Ireland, Scotland and Bristol, may be said to be derived from Stability and Emulation. As regards the Scottish Rituals, all those known to the present writer, with one notable exception in the West of Scotland, show extensive evidence of the influence of Emulation. For example, in the ceremony of opening the Lodge, many Scottish Lodges reproduce questions and answers in the Second Section of the First Degree Lecture; others retain the substance of these but alter the wording; and some introduce questions that are not in the Emulation Ritual but the substance of which is in the Emulation Lectures. Throughout the ceremonies-even in those Lodges where the Third Degree is most "dramatised" there are many passages in which the language of Emulation is exactly or approximately reproduced. In the Obligations the language is very similar to Emulation, though in some rituals additional details are introduced. And even in the "notable exception" referred to above, there are several phrases that are characteristic of Emulation. These details are given here in support of the view that, notwithstanding the variety of workings in Scotland, there is at least a "hard core" in them all that is clearly the result of the "development" which it has been our purpose to outline in this paper.

The time has come to summarise the result of our study so far, and to point to some conclusions that may be drawn therefrom. We have seen that the first complete Ritual was published in 1838. Before that, instruction was imparted by means of "Lectures" in the form of question and answer, and, in the Stability and Emulation Lodges at least, by that means only until 1830 or thereabouts. It may be inferred, therefore, that the Ritual probably received its final form between those dates-say about 1835. The Ritual of 1835, whether Stability, Emulation, or other, is, in respect of scope, structure and "Landmarks", essentially the same as our present-day

rituals, notwithstanding the wide variety of workings that characterise Scottish Freemasonry. In these respects of scope, structure and Landmarks, it may be taken that all our Scottish Rituals derive ultimately from the 1835 Ritual, though in other respects many of them contain features that are indigenous to and characteristic of Scotland. Conversely there are features in the 1835 Ritual that had their original sources in Scotland.

We have also seen that in all our present-day Rituals there are elements that are to be found in very early Masonic MSS. and other writings. Among these are the words B. and J. which we find in the Edinburgh Register House MS. and in practically every eighteenth Catechism. We must also include here the Hiram Legend, which first appears in *Masonry Dissected* in 1730, but which appears to have been decided upon after a "try-out" of the same theme in a very different setting in the Noah legend as set forth in the Graham MS. (1726). But while the Noah legend was rejected for this purpose, there are many other elements in the Graham MS., including the idea of "substituted secrets", that still characterise present-day Masonry. And a perusal of other eighteenth-century Catechisms will reveal quite a number of significant details with which we are all familiar.

But there is also much in the 1835 Ritual that was entirely new. To take but one example-the definition of Freemasonry as "A peculiar system of morality, veiled in allegory and illustrated by symbol" appears in the First Section of the First Degree "Lecture" - for the first time so far as the present writer is aware. And many other similar examples could be given. But by far the most significant, and entirely new, feature of the 1835 Ritual, was the wonderful way in which all the material that had accumulated during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries had been examined, and elements therefrom selectively chosen with insight and discrimination, and built up into a "peculiar system" that is simply amazing in its symmetry, self-consistency and completeness. The men who could compile such a "system" were truly learned and expert Brethren. Let us consider what evidence we can find in any modern Ritual that they were truly learned and expert.

1. They obviously had an intimate knowledge of the Hebrew Scriptures; but
2. in the Hiram Legend they departed, on a very essential point, from the Scriptural record in order to bring the legend into line with the central mythos of the Ancient Mystery cults - such as those of Osiris, Dionysus and others - in which the neophyte is identified with the tutelary hero. So it can be inferred that they had an intimate knowledge of these Ancient Mysteries.
3. It can also be assumed (though this is not explicitly indicated in the Legend itself, but may be inferred from other intimations in the Ritual and from various allusions in the eighteenth-century Catechisms) that they were familiar with the supreme presentation of the same theme in the

identification of the Christian neophyte with Christ in His death and resurrection.

4. They were certainly deeply versed in the Hebrew Kaballah, though this can only be recognised by those who are conversant with the Kaballah. But it may be stated that points that can more reasonably be attributed to Kaballistic origin than to any other source are-the three Pillars on which a Lodge of Freemasons figuratively rests; the Path of the Candidate, in the course of his initiations, between two Pillars, one on the left and the other on the right; and, above all, the point from which a M.M. cannot err, which the present writer regards as the most significant symbol in Freemasonry with the exception of the T.G.L. If the Kaballistic association be adopted tentatively as a working hypothesis, a craftsman versed in the Kaballah would soon recognise not only that the whole framework of our system is Kaballistic, but also that a great many details that otherwise appear to have little or no particular point, acquire a very real significance.
5. A comparison of the T.G.L. as a composite symbol with corresponding symbols in other systems will suggest that these learned Brethren had an intimate knowledge of these other systems, or, more probably, had had a direct personal experience of the spiritual realities that these symbols represent.
6. A final point will be more easily recognised by all. The compilers of our system had an unparalleled knowledge of man's psychological and spiritual nature and needs, and they sought, both by explicit instruction and under a veil of symbolism, to show how these needs could be met.

It may be recognised that these qualities characterised those learned Brethren who finally formulated the 1835 Ritual from the accumulated mass of material they had at their disposal. But the question naturally arises-did they characterise them only, or also those Brethren who selected and preserved, during the preceding 150 years, the various elements that were incorporated into the 1835 Ritual? We have seen that B. and J. are found in Masonry since at least the end of the seventeenth century; and also that of other details to be found at that time some (such as the F.P.O.F.) were retained but adapted to a different setting. We have seen, too, that the Noah legend appears to have been tried out, found to be inadequate, and rejected, while the Hiramic Legend was adopted some time prior to 1730 and been retained ever since. It seems not unreasonable to assume that the was made deliberately and that the elements "tried out" were retained or rejected according to whether or not they were adequate for an ultimate purpose that the selectors had in view. Can we form any reasonable conjecture as to who these selectors might have been and who preserved and transmitted the "selected" elements?

There is a long-standing tradition that the Rosicrucians had a considerable if not a controlling influence in these matters, but this tradition has been consistently rejected by writers of the "Authentic" school on the grounds that there is no direct documentary evidence

to support it. But it has to be borne in mind that members of the Rosicrucian Fraternity have never at any time publicly acknowledged such membership. This policy was at first adopted because it was a necessary precaution in view of the exigencies of the time; and in practice it has been perpetuated as an established tradition. There are, however, many historical facts which, in their cumulative effect, provide a considerable body of circumstantial evidence that suggests at least the possibility of such a Rosicrucian influence.

1. First there is their original manifesto, the *Fama Fraternitatis R.:C.:*, which was published in Cassel in 1614. This clearly shows that their aims and ideals were consonant with those of Freemasonry, that the Order was essentially Christian, and that the Kaballah had a basic place in their system of philosophy.
2. The *Fama* was widely studied in England and in Scotland during the seventeenth century. A manuscript translation, dated 1633, in the handwriting of Sir David Lindsay, who was created first Earl of Balcarres, is still in the library of the Earl of Crawford and Balcarres; and a small book by Archdeacon J. B. Craven, D.D., on *The Esoteric Studies of Robert Leighton, D. D.*, who was Bishop of Dunblane from 1661 till 1672, states that the libraries of various noble Houses in Scotland also contain books of that period pertaining to such esoteric studies.
3. In 1652 there was published an English translation of the *Fama* by Thomas Vaughan who, though he "denies" that he was a member of the Rosicrucian Brotherhood, was nevertheless steeped in their teachings, as is evidenced by his many other writings. There is, however, no evidence that he was a Freemason, but he is known at least to have met Elias Ashmole.
4. The Order is known to have been active in Europe during the eighteenth century, and there is very good reason to believe that it was then also active in England. Godfrey Higgins, in his *Anacalypsis*, says that a College of the Fraternity was still working in London in 1830. The continuity of the Rosicrucian Brotherhood during that period suggests a possible channel by which the results of successive generations of those concerned in the "selection" of appropriate material could have been preserved and transmitted.

These facts and possible inferences therefrom do not "prove" any direct connection between Rosicrucianism and Freemasonry; but if they are taken all together, and if what is known of Rosicrucian teachings be correlated with what is stated in this paper about the development of our Ritual between 1696 and 1835, it must surely be agreed that such a connection was at least possible, and that Brother R. F. Gould could have had quite adequate grounds for his statement, already quoted, that "during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries Kabalism and Rosicrucianism profoundly influenced many secret societies in Europe; and Freemasonry received no slight tinge from the Kaballistic pursuits of some of its adherents at that time." In any case, one might ask those who

refuse to accept, even as a working hypothesis, the possibility of such a connection, what alternative hypothesis they can offer that could more adequately and reasonably account for the wonderful perfection of our "peculiar system" - the completeness, the self-consistency, the symmetry, not only of the broad framework, but also of all the details that are so skilfully wrought into that framework. In any case, we are surely justified in exclaiming "O, wonderful Masons! All Glory to the Most High!"