

A LECTURE ON THE VARIOUS -RITUALS OF FREEMASONRY FROM THE TENTH CENTURY

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BRETHREN,

It is rather late in life for me to appear before a Lodge of intelligent Masons in the capacity of a lecturer; and it is only the respect I entertain for Masonry that could induce me to do so. And even under the influence of that feeling, I should scarcely have ventured to solicit your attendance this evening, if I had not been under an impression that I could tell you something which is not generally known to the Fraternity. Indeed, I am satisfied, from the general tenor of my Masonic correspondence, that there are many Brethren in England who would travel over half the island, and think themselves well paid for their trouble, to acquire the information I am now about to communicate to you; not only on the ancient Rituals, but on various signs, tokens; and observances used by the

Fraternity 'many years ago, and now entirely forgotten.

During the last century, several revisions of the Ritual took place, each being an improvement on its predecessor, and all based on the primitive Masonic Lecture which was drawn up in the tenth century, and attached to the York Constitutions. This Lecture, to which I shall first call your attention, was in doggerel rhyme; a kind of composition which was very popular amongst our Saxon ancestors in the time of Athelstane. About the latter end of the fourteenth century, it was carefully translated from the Saxon for the use of the York Grand Lodge; and the MS. of that date is now in the British Museum. This invaluable document contains copious rules and regulations for the observance of the Craft, and is so curious, that I shall give you a specimen of it, to show the unchangeable character of the Order. It thus describes the duty of the Master:-

The first article of good Masonry

Shows that the Master must surely be

Both steadfast, trusty, and also true

His place he never then shall rue.

He must, neither for love nor dread,

Of neither party to take mede;

Whether he lord or fellow be,

Of him to take no kind of fee;
But as a judge to stand upright,
And then his conduct will be bright.

It speaks thus of an E. A. P.
The Master shall not for any vantage,
Make an apprentice under age.
And, as you may plainly hear,
He must have his limbs both whole and fair,
For to the Craft it were great shame,
To make a half man and a lame;
For a man of tainted blood
Would do the Craft but little good.

This was a primitive observance amongst the Craft, for in the Constitutions of Athelstane the E. A. P. was solemnly enjoined

His Master's counsel to keep close,
Lest he his confidence should lose,
The secrets of Brethren tell to none,
Nor out of the Lodge what there is done.
Whatever you hear the Master say,
Be sure thou never do betray,
Lest it cause in thee much blame,
And bring the Craft to public shame.

Here, also, we find the origin of a clause in our present Master Mason's Obligation.:

It charges thee, upon thy life,
Not to corrupt thy Master's wife
Nor thy Fellow's concubine,

As thou wouldst not have him do by thine

Full mickle care might thus begin.

From such a foul and deadly sin.

The Obligation was thus constructed

The 14th Point is full good law,

To him that would be under awe;

A solemn oath he needs must swear,

To his Master and Fellows (hat be there,

To be both steadfast and true also,

To all these laws wherever he go.,

And to his liege Lord the King

To be true above all other things.

Thus did our ancient Brethren lecture eight hundred years ago, establishing a series of Landmarks which are not yet overthrown.

In the reign of Edward III, A. D. 1357, the decrees of the Order ran in the following form:-

" That, for the future, at the making or admission of a Brother, the ancient Constitutions and Charges shall be read. That when the Master and Wardens preside in a Lodge. the Sheriff, if need be, or the Mayor, or the Alderman, if a Brother, where the Chapter is held, shall be sociate to the Master. That the FellowCrafts shall travel honestly for their pay and love their Fellows as themselves, and that all shall be true to the King, to the realm, and to the Lodge. That if any of the Fraternity should be fractious, mutinous, or disobedient to the Master's orders, and, after proper admonition, should persist in his rebellion, he shall forfeit all claims to the rights, benefits, and privileges of a true and faithful Brother."

These Charges conclude with the words-" So mote It be."

The first catechismal formula was introduced by Grand Master Sir Christopher Wren, about the year 1685, and was called an Examination. It was very concise, and might be gone through in ten minutes or a quarter of an hour. The Obligation was short and simple, and had no penalty; for that which is now used as a penalty formed a portion of the Examination. As thus -,"Which is the point of your entry? I hear and conceal under the penalty of having my throat cutt, or my tongue pulled out of my head." I am inclined to think that Freemasonry at this time had only one degree.

You would probably like to hear a few passages from Sir Christopher's Ritual. It commenced thus:

Q. Peace be to all here ...

A. I hope there will.

Q. What o'clock Is it? ...

A. It's going to six, or going to twelve.

Q. Are you very busy? ...

A. No-

Q. Will you give or take? ...

A. Both; or which you please,

Q. How go Squares? ...

A. Straight-

Q. Are you rich or poor? ...

A. Neither-

Q. Change me that? (the sign.) ...

A. I will-

Q. What is a Mason?...

A. A man begot by a man, born of a woman, brother to a king, fellow to a prince-

Q. In the name of the King and Holy Church, are you a Mason? ...

A. I am so received and accepted-

Q. Where were you made a Mason? ...

A. In a just and perfect Lodge-

Q. How many make a Lodge? ...

A. God, and the Square; with five or seven right and perfect Masons ; on the highest mountains or the lowest valleys in the world -

Q. Where is the Master's point? ...

A. At the east window, waiting the rising of the sun to set his men to work-How is the meridian found out? ...

Q. When the sun leaves the south, and breaks in at the west end of the Lodge.

This will be sufficient to show you in what manner the Brethren worked 180 years ago. The Craft at that time had a series of signs to make themselves known to each other as Masons, which are now obsolete; and I introduce them here as a matter of curiosity. When meeting in the street, they saluted each other by raising their hat with the thumb and two fingers only. Sometimes they would strike

the inside of the little finger of the left hand three times with the forefinger of the right; or rub their right eye three times with two fingers; or they would take up a stone and ask, What it smells of? The correct answer to which was, Neither of brass, iron, or any other metal, but of a Mason.

Q. What is your name? ...

A. E.A.P.: Lewis or Caution;

A. F.C.: Geometry or Square;

A. M.M.: Cassia or Gabaon-

Q. How old are you? ...

A. E.A.P. : Under seven years;

A. M.M. : Above seven years."

When in a mixed company, the token was-to turn down their glass after drinking. And if any one saw a Brother misconduct himself, he exhibited his disgust by placing his open right hand on his upper lip, which served as a check to further indiscretion. The operative Fraternity in these ages had certain private signals which must have been very convenient. For instance, if a Master wanted one of his workmen from the top of a steeple, he would catch his eye, and then touch the calf of his right leg; if from any other part of the church, the left ankle. If from any secular edifice, he put his right hand behind his back. If he wanted a man at the house of rendezvous, he put his left hand behind. There were many others of a similar nature, which are now obsolete. As Masonry increased in popularity, under the patronage of noble and influential Grand Masters during the eighteenth century, many improvements were made on the primitive Ritual at different periods. The reformation was commenced by Brothers Desaguliers and Anderson, about the year 1720; and their Ritual mentions, for the first time, a " Master's Part; there was no Master's Part before 1720; and here also the Obligation is accompanied by the penalty but not a syllable is mentioned about a substituted word; on the contrary, it asserts that the lost word was actually found. I shall give you specimens of this formula in each of the three degrees, merely premising, that in those days the office of Deacon was unknown.

ENTERED APPRENTICES DEGREE.

Q. "Where stands the senior E.A.P.? ...

A, In the south-

Q. What is his business ? ...

A. To hear and receive instructions, and welcome strange Brothers-

Q. Where stands the junior E.A.P.? ...

A. In the north-

Q. What is his business? ...

A. To keep out all cowans and eavesdroppers-

Q. If a cowan or a listener is caught, how is he to be punished? ...

A. To be placed under the eaves of the house in rainy weather, till the water runs in at his shoulders and out at his heels-

Q. What do you learn by being an operative Mason? ...

A. To hew, square, mould stone, lay a level, and raise a perpendicular

Q. What do you learn by being a gentleman Mason?

A. Secrecy, morality, and good-fellowship

Q. Have you seen a Master to-day ? ...

A. I have -

Q. How was he clothed? ...

A. In a yellow jacket and blue pair of breeches.

FELLOWCRAFTS DEGREE.

Q. How high was the door of the middle Chamber? ...

A. So high that a cowan could not reach to stick a pin into it -

Q. When you came to the Middle Chamber, what did you see? ...

A. The resemblance of the letter G-

Q. What did that G denote? ...

A. One that's greater than you.-

Q. Who is greater than I, that am a Free and Accepted Mason, and Master of a Lodge ?...

A. The Grand Architect and Builder of the Universe ; or he that was taken up to the top of the pinnacle of the holy Temple.

MASTER MASON'S DEGREE.

Q. From whence came you? ...

A. From the east-

Q. Where are you going? ...

A. To the west-

Q. What are you going to do there? ...

A. To seek for that which was lost and is now found-

Q. What is that which was lost and is now found? ...

A. THE MASTER MASON'S WORD-

Q. What is the name of a Master Mason? ...

A. Cassia is my name; from a just and perfect Lodge I came; a Master Mason raised most rare, from the diamond Ashlar to the Square." ' '

The next reviser of the Ritual was Martin Clare, a Deputy Grand Master, and he executed his task so much to the satisfaction of the Grand Lodge, that his Lectures were ordered to be used by all the Brethren within the limits of its jurisdiction. In accordance with this command, we find the officers of the Grand Lodge setting an example in the Provinces; and in an old Minute-Book of a Lodge in Lincoln, dated 1734, Of which Sir Cecil Wray, the Deputy Provincial Master, was the Master, there are a series of entries through successive Lodge nights to the following effect :-"that two or more sections (as the case might be) of Martin Clare's Lectures were read; when the Master gave an elegant charge, went through an examination, and the Lodge was closed with songs and decent merriment."

The following extract from these Lectures may be acceptable:-

Q. What is the covering of a Masonic Lodge? ...

A. A celestial canopy of divers colours-

Q. How do we hope to arrive at It? ...

A. By the help of a ladder. -

Q. What Is it called in Scripture? ...

A. Jacob's Ladder. -

Q. How many rounds or staves in that Ladder?...

A. Rounds or staves innumerable, each indicating a moral virtue; but three principal ones, called Faith, Hope, and Charity

Q. Describe them? ...

A. Faith in Christ; Hope. in salvation, and to live in Charity with all mankind-

Q. Where does that Ladder reach to?..

A. To the heavens.-

Q. What does it rest upon? ...

A. The Holy Book

Thirty years after the great schism which split the Society into two divisions, conventionally distinguished as Ancient and Modern-viz., in 1770-Bro. Dunckerley was commissioned by the Grand Lodge to compile an improved Ritual in all the three degrees, which he accomplished to the universal satisfaction of the Fraternity ; for Bro. Dunckerley was a very distinguished Mason. In his version, the three principal steps of the Masonic Ladder were referred to the Christian doctrine of the three states of the soul. First, in its tabernacle the body, as an illustration of Faith; then, after death, in paradise, as the fruits of Hope; and lastly, when reunited to the body in glory about the throne of God, as the sacred seat of universal Charity. The original hint at a circle and parallel lines, as important symbols of the Order, has been ascribed to him. Here, the doctrine of a substituted word was formally announced; for the true word had been transferred to the Royal Arch, which he introduced into the Grand Lodge as a legitimate degree of Masonry.

As a specimen of his Lecture, take the following extract.-

Q. How do Masons know each other in the day?

A. By seeing a Brother and observing the sign. -

Q. How in the night? ...

A. By feeling the token and hearing the word.-

Q. How blows a Mason's wind? ...

A. Favourably; due east and west-

Q. For what purpose?...

A. To cool and refresh the men go, at, and from their labour-

Q. What does it further allude to? ...

A. To those miraculous winds which first blew east and then west, and proved so essential in working the happy deliverance of the children of Israel from their Egyptian bondage, and also the overthrow of Pharaoh and his host in their attempt to follow.-

Q. What time is it?...

A. High time.-

Q. Bro.J. W., what is to be done at high time? ...

A. To call the men from labour to refreshment ; to see that they keep within hail, and come on again in due time, that the Master may have pleasure and profit thereby.

I pass over the Lectures of Calcott and Hutchinson, because they were not adapted to Lodge practice.

The exemplifications of York Masonry were completed by the celebrated Bro. Preston, who constructed a Ritual which contains a satisfactory survey of the system as it was undoubtedly used

by the York Lodges in 1777, when the Lodge of Antiquity, of which Bro. Preston was a Past Master, seceded from the London Grand Lodge, and avowed an alliance with the Grand Lodge at York. Besides which, Preston was initiated in a York Lodge, and therefore became thoroughly master of all the details, as practised by both sections of the Fraternity. His Ritual was very carefully constructed; and, as might reasonably be anticipated from a Bro. of his Masonic learning and research, it contained a lucid exemplification of the ceremonies, doctrines, legends, and symbolical machinery of all the three degrees, and it is to be regretted that some of its most valuable illustrations were omitted by Dr. Hemming and his associates when the Ritual was reconstructed by the Lodge of Reconciliation in 1814. For instance, the Prestonian Lecture gave the following beautiful definition of Masonry, which is now lost to the Craft:-

Q. What is Masonry?

A. The study of science and the practice of virtue.

Q. What is its object? ...

A. To rectify our conduct by its sublime morality; to render us happy in ourselves and useful to society-

Q. What is the ground or plan of Masonry? ...

A. Instruction.-

Q. Why do you consider it to be such? ...

A. Because men are never too wise to learn. -

Q. What will a wise man do to obtain it? ...

A. He will seek knowledge.-

Q. What will a wise Mason do? ...

A. He will do more, for he will never rest till he finds it.

Q. Where does he expect to find it? ...

A. In the east-

Q. Why does he expect to find it there? ...

A. Because man was there created in the image of his Maker ; there also the holy Gospel originated ; knowledge and learning were promulgated, and arts and sciences flourished.

I now proceed, without further preface, to a categorical examination of the Prestonian Ritual, compared with the Union Lectures now in use; merely premising, that this learned Bro. divided each degree into sections, and subdivided each section into clauses. This arrangement was adopted as a convenient help to memory. According to this plan, a portion of the Lecture was delivered each Lodge night-not always by the Master, but by certain Brethren who under-took the office of Sectionists and Clauseholders which relieved the Chair of much labour without being burdensome

to the Brethren, as it would require a very slight application for any one member to become acquainted with a single clause.

I shall confine myself to the first section of the E. A. P. Lecture; which consists of six comprehensive clauses ; each of which I will not only repeat, but explain. This section, as the Lecture expresses it, is suited to all capacities, and ought to be known by every person who wishes to rank as a Mason. It consists of general heads, which, though they be short and simple, will be found to carry weight with them. They not only serve as marks of distinction, but communicate useful and interesting knowledge when they are duly investigated. They qualify us to try and examine the rights of others to our privileges, while they demonstrate our own claim; and, as they induce us to inquire minutely into other particulars of greater importance, they serve as a proper introduction to subjects which are more amply explained in the following sections.

The FIRST CLAUSE, consisting of three questions and answers only, was thus concisely expressed:

Q. Bro. S. W, where did you and I first meet?

A. On the Level

Q. Where do we hope to part? ...

A. On the square. -

Q. Why so? ...

A. As Masons, we ought always to do so with all mankind, but more particularly with obligated Brethren.

This opening clause requires a passing remark, because many persons have founded upon it a clause against us, to the effect that we are levellers; that Freemasonry, by abolishing all human distinctions, would disorganise society, and reduce it to its primitive elements. But it does no such thing, on the contrary, there is no other existing institution in this country where the grades of rank are better defined and more correctly preserved. For instance, look round the Lodge. The W.M. sits in the East.-as a governor-invested with power, even to despotism, if he should consider it safe to use it. And the Wardens. in the West. and South are his assistants, not his equals. Each has a particular duty assigned to him, and beyond that he has no right to interfere. The next grade are the Deacons. And what is their duty? Not surely to rank in equality with the W. M. and Wardens but to perform the part of inferiors in office, to carry messages and commands. It is their province to attend on the W. M., and to assist the Wardens in the active duties of the Lodge-such as the reception of candidates into the different degrees, and the practice of other important rites and ceremonies. This is the business of the Deacons; and by its punctual discharge, the office becomes a stepping-stone to further preferment; for, as it is incumbent on a Bro. to serve the office of a Warden before he can attain to the chair of a Lodge, so it ought to be incumbent on a Warden. to have passed 'through the grade of a Deacon although It Is not absolutely required by the Constitutions of Masonry. Such are the gradations of rank in a Mason's Lodge; and accordingly, the other officers have their respective duties to perform, and rank to support; while the floor members are bound to obey implicitly the commands of the W.M. What is there in all this which tends to the destruction of order In society? Surely nothing. How, then, are we said to meet on the Level? Why. thus; because our occupations are distinguished by the most perfect brotherly love. When the Lodge is open, the Brethren, as Brethren, whatever be their diversity of external rank, are equal; and in process working the Lodge, each bears the burden assigned to him by the W. M., in the pursuit of that common object, the

acquisition of useful knowledge. But when the Lodge is closed, and the jewels put by. we part on the square, each individual resumes his rank In society and honour is given to whom honour is due.

The SECOND CLAUSE runs thus

Q. From whence come you?

A. From the West-

Q. Whither going?

A. To the East

Q. What Induced you to leave the West and go to the East?

A. In search of a Master, and of him to gain instruction,

Q. Who are you that want instruction? ...

A. A Free and Accepted Mason.

There is something apparently anomalous In this clause, which I shall point out. The Masonic tyro is said to travel from the West to the East in search of instruction. Now, another statement in the same section, as we shall soon see, affirms that he comes from the Holy Lodge of St. John, which Masonic tradition places at Jerusalem, and consequently eastward as regards this country and therefore he would in reality travel from East to West and not from West to East, as is stated in the clause. The fact is, that this passage refers simply to the a candidate at his initiation, advancing from West to East. by twelve irregular steps; irregular from the situation he was then in. being entirely ignorant where he was going; but illuding to twelve regular steps, consisting of eight lines and angles, and morally teaching upright lines and well-squared actions.

The THIRD CLAUSE.-

Q. What kind of man ought a Free and Accepted Mason to be? ...

A. A free man, born of a free woman, brother to kings and companion to princes, if Masons-

Q. Why free? ...

A. That the vicious habits of slavery might not contaminate the true principles on which Masonry is founded-

Q.. A second reason

A. Because the Masons who were chosen to build King Solomon's Temple were declared free, and exempted from all imposts, duties, and taxes. Afterwards, when this temple had been destroyed by Nebuchadnezzar, the good-will of Cyrus gave them permission to erect a second temple; he having set them at liberty for that purpose. It is from this epoch that we bear the name of Free and Accepted Masons-

Q. Why brother to kings and companion to princes? ...

A. A king in the Lodge, is reminded, that although a crown may adorn his head, and a sceptre his hand, the blood in his veins is derived from the common parent of mankind, and is no better than that of the meanest subject. The statesman, the senator and the artist are there taught that, equally with others, they are, by nature, exposed to infirmity and disease; and that an unforeseen misfortune, or a disordered frame, may impair their faculties, and level them with the most ignorant of their species. This cheeks pride, and incites courtesy of behaviour. Men of inferior talents, who are not placed by fortune in such exalted stations, are instructed in the Lodge to regard their superiors with peculiar esteem; when they discover them voluntarily divested of the trappings of external grandeur, and condescending, in the badge of innocence and bond of friendship, to trace Wisdom, and follow virtue, assisted by those who are of a rank beneath them. Virtue is true nobility, and Wisdom is the channel by which Virtue 'is directed and conveyed; Wisdom and Virtue. only, mark distinction among Masons.-

Q. Whence originated the phrase~ born of a free Woman? ...

A. At the grand festival which was given by Abraham at the weaning of his son Isaac. Afterwards, when Sarah, the wife of Abraham, beheld Ishmael, the son of Hagar the Egyptian bondwoman, teasing and perplexing her son, she remonstrated with Abraham, saying, Put away that bondwoman and her son, for such as they cannot inherit with the free-born. She spoke as being endowed with divine inspiration ; well knowing, that if the lads were brought up together, Isaac might imbibe some of Ishmael's slavish principles; It being universally acknowledged that the minds of slaves are much more contaminated than those of the free-born.

Q. Why those equalities amongst Freemasons? ...

A. We are all equal by our creation, but much more so by the strength of our obligation.

This clause, which I consider most Important to Freemasonry, has been entirely suppressed in the last revision of the Lectures. To show its value, I may briefly remark, that It enumerates the requisites which constitute the character of a Mason, records the historical fact which conferred on the Order the honourable title of Free and Accepted;- It illustrates the universal bond of brotherhood, and specifies the principal links in the Masonic chain, including all the grades of rank by which civil society is cemented and held together. Thus evincing, that the true nature of Masonic equality does not arise merely from creation, as the children of a common parent, but more particularly from the strength of the Masonic Obligation. The clause also includes another historical fact of great importance, to demonstrate and explain why it was considered necessary that a candidate for Masonry should be able to declare that he Is the son of a free woman; a privilege to which. as Masons,as subjects of a State whose Institutions are free and beneficent-we may refer with honest pride and perfect satisfaction.

The FOURTH CLAUSE:

Q. From what particular part of the world do you come? ...

A. From the Holy Lodge of St. John of Jerusalem.-

Q. What recommendation have you brought thence? ...

A. A recommendation from the W. M., Officers, and Brethren of that R. W. and Holy Lodge, who greet you thrice heartily." (In the formula used A. D. 1720, we find the passage thus expressed :- "R. W. the M. and Fellows of the H. L. of St. John, from whence I come, greet you, greet you, greet you, thrice welcome Brothers.")

Q. Any other recommendation? ...

A. Hearty good wishes. -

Q. Since you brought no other recommendation, what came you here to do? ...

A. Not my own will and pleasure, but to learn to rule and govern my passions, to be obedient to the Master's will to keep a tongue of good report, to practise secrecy, and make further progress in the study of Freemasonry.

This clause has been introduced to illustrate the subordination necessary to ensure the observance of strict discipline in the Lodge. During the progress of Freemasonry, since the revival in 1717, it has undergone many alterations. In the Examination of Sir Christopher Wren it was thus expressed:-

Q. What Lodge are you of? ...

A. The Lodge of St. John. symbolised by the Triangle and Cross

Q. How does it stand? ...

A. Perfect East and West, as all churches and chapels do. -

Q. How many angles in a St. John's Lodge? ...

A. Four, bordering on squares, each containing 90 degrees."

The Ritual of Desaguliers and Anderson exhibits this variety :-

Q. From whence come you ?

A. From the Holy Lodge of St. John.-

Q. What recommendation brought you from thence? ...

A. The recommendation which I brought from the R.W. and W. Brothers and Fellows of the Holy Lodge of St. John, from whence I came, was, to greet you thrice heartily well-

Q. What do you come here to do? ...

A. Not to do my proper will, but to subdue my passions still; the rules of Masonry in hand to take, and daily progress therein to make. -

Q. Are you a Mason? ...

A. I am so taken and accepted to be amongst Brothers and Fellows." (In the United States it is given thus "Bro. S.W from whence come you as an E.A.P. Mason? ...

A. From a holy Lodge of the Holy St John's at Jerusalem

Q. What came you here to do? ...

A. To learn to subdue my passions, and improve myself in Masonry. -

Q. You are a Mason then, I conclude? ...

A. I am so taken and accepted among Brothers and Fellows-

Q. How do you know you are a Mason? ...

A. By being often tried, and never denied, and ready and willing to be tried again.")

At the present time the passage is considerably abridged. '

Q. 'What mode of introduction have you to recommend yourself to the notice of a Mason? ...

A. A salute of respect to the Master in the chair

Q. Any other recommendation? ...

A. A hearty salute to all under his direction.-

Q. For what purpose came you hither? ...

A. To regulate my conduct, correct my passions, and make a progress in Masonry."

These variations embrace the common object of teaching courtesy and brotherly kindness; which could never be effected if every member of a Lodge were to do that only which is right in his own eyes. Confusion and disorder would undoubtedly follow such a practice. But he has something in view of a higher character than this which indeed is the real secret of Masonry; even the improvement of his mind-the government of his passions-the regulation of his discourse by a tongue of good report-and, in a word, to make due progress in the philosophy and science of the Order.

The FIFTH CLAUSE:-

Q. How do you know yourself to be a Mason? ...

A. By having been examined and approved, well reported of, and regularly initiated into the Order-

Q. How will you convince me that you are a Mason? ...

A. By signs, tokens, and perfect points of entrance-

Q. What are signs?

A. All squares, angles, levels and perpendiculars are good and sufficient signs to know Masons by-

Q. What purpose do they serve? ...

Q. To distinguish a Mason in the light-

Q. What are tokens? ...

A. Certain friendly and brotherly words and grips, which distinguish a Mason in the dark as well as in the light. -

Q. Will you give me the points of entrance? ...

A. Give me the first and I will give you the second. -

Q. I hele.

A. I conceal ...

Q. What do you conceal?-

A. All secrets and mysteries belonging to Free Masons in Masonry, except it be to a true and lawful Brother for his caution :

Q. But as I am the examiner, you may safely reveal to me the points of entrance...

A. Of, at, and on.

q. Of, at, and on what? ...

A. Of my own free-will and accord, at the door of the Lodge, and on the point of a sharp implement.

Q. When were you made a Mason? ...

A. When the sun was at its due meridian.-

Q. How do you account for that, as Masons are generally made in the evening? ...

A. The earth being spherical, the sun is always at its due meridian in one part of the globe or another.-

Q. Where were you made a Mason? ...

A. In a just and perfect Lodge-

Q. What is a. Lodge? ...

A. An assemblage of Brethren well met to expatiate on the mysteries of the Craft, with the Book, Square, and Compasses, the Book of Constitutions, and a Warrant empowering them to act. -

Q. When met, what makes them just?...

A. The Holy Book

Q. What makes a Lodge perfect? ...

A. The number seven

Q. Under what denomination? ...

A. One Master, two Wardens, two Fellowcrafts, and the rest may be Enertered Apprentices

Q. What makes it regular? ...

A. The Charter, the Warrant, and the Constitutions-

Q. Why so? ...

A. The first is the acknowledgment of our meetinss, forms, and ceremonies by the laws of our country; the second is the ancient and legal authority of the Grand Master; and the third is the sanction of the Grand Lodge.

Q. By whom were you made a Mason?...

A. By the W. M., assisted by the Wardens and Brethren.

This is a clause of Landmarks, and very essential to be understood ; although it is differently given at the present time. I must, however, observe, that the prepositions of, at, and on, which Dr. Hemming has retained, are improperly said to include the whole ceremony of initiation, which they certainly do not. I rather prefer a beautiful illustration which was used half a century ago, and ought not to have been omitted in the moderm Ritual, because it actually does include the whole ceremony of initiation. It ran thus :

Q. How many original and perfect points have we in Masonry? ...

A. Twelve-

Q. Name them? ...

A. Opening, Preparing, Reporting, Entering, Prayer, Circumambulation, Advancing, Obligation, Intrusting, Investing, Situation, and Closing.

The twelve original and perfect points in Masonry, in use in the ancient Lectures were

1. Opening - Reuben.
2. Preparing - Simeon
3. Reporting - Levi.
4. Entering - Judah.
5. Prayer - Zebulon.
6. Circumambulation - Issachar.
- 7 Advancing - Dan.
8. Obligation - Gad.
9. Intrusting - Asher.
10. Investing - Naphtali.
11. Situation - Joseph also known as Manasseh or Ephraim.

12. Closing - Benjamin.

Q. Why are they called original and perfect points? ...

A. Because they constitute the basis of the whole system of Masonry, and without which, no one ever was, or ever can be, legally received into the Order. Every person who is made a Mason must go through all these twelve forms and ceremonies, not only in the first degree, but in all subsequent ones.

The explanation of these twelve points of entrance, which formed the creed of our ancient Brethren many years ago, is much more extensive, and too long for introduction towards the close of a lecture. If I were duly authorised to revise the Ritual, I should certainly restore much of the passage, although not perhaps in this introductory portion.

I now proceed to the SIXTH and last CLAUSE of the first section of the E.A. P. Lecture.---

Q. Have Masons any secrets? ...

A. They have; many valuable ones-

Q. Where do they keep them? ...

A. In their hearts. -

Q. To whom do they reveal them? ...

A. To none but Brothers and Fellows, known to be such on due trial, proof, and examination, or in the body of a just and lawful Lodge.-

Q. How do they reveal them? ...

A. By the help of a key

Q. Does that key hang or lie? ...

A. It hangs and does not lie.-

Q. Where does It hang? ...

A. Within an arch of bone-

Q. What does it hang by? ...

A. The thread of life, in the passage of entrance. nine inches or a span long-

Q. Why Is it so nearly connected with the heart? ...

A. The tongue being the index of the mind, it ought to utter nothing but what the heart truly dictates.

-

Q. To solve this Masonic mystery, Can you tell me what manner of metal this key is composed of? ...

A. No metal at all; it is a tongue of good report. which ought always to speak as well of a Brother In his absence as in his presence, and when that cannot be done with honour. justice, or propriety, that adopts the distinguishing virtue of a Mason

Q. What virtue is that? ...

A. Silence or Secrecy

Of all the arts which Masons possess, silence or secrecy is that which particularly recommends them. Taciturnity Is a proof of wisdom, and is allowed to be of the utmost importance in the different transactions of life. The best writers have declared it to be an art of Inestimable value; and that It Is agreeable to the Deity himself may be easily conceived, from the glorious example which he gives in concealing from mankind the secrets of his providence. The wisest of men cannot pry into the arcana of heaven ; nor can they divine to-day what to-morrow may bring forth.

The ancient Rituals exhibit some curious variations of this clause. In the Examination of Sir Christopher Wren, the illustration ran thus

Q. Have you the key of the Lodge? ...

A. Yes, I have-

Q. What Is its virtue? ...

A. To open and shut. and to shut and open.

Q. Where do you keep it? ...

A. In an ivory box, between my tongue and my teeth, or within my heart, where all my secrets are kept-

Q. Have you a chain to the key? ...

A. Yes, I have-

Q. How long Is it? ...

A. From my tongue to my heart.

Desaguliers made a slight alteration, and exemplified it in this manner.

Q. What are the secrets of a Mason? ...

A. Signs, tokens and many words.-

Q. Where do you keep these secrets?

A. Under my left breast,

Q. Have you any key to these secrets?

A. Yes

Q. Where do you keep it? ...

A. In a bone box, that neither opens nor shuts but with ivory keys.-

Q. Does it hang or does it lie ?...

A. It hangs. -

Q. What does it hang by? ...

A. A tow-line, nine inches or a span. -

Q. What metal is it of? ...

A. No manner of metal at all. But a tongue of good report is as good behind his back as before his face.

At the present day it is thus given, as you all know

Q. By what means is any further conversation held? ...

A. By means of a key, equally regular in its construction and in its operation.-

Q. Where Is this key found? ...

A. Within an arch of bone-

Q. Where does it lie? ...

A. It does not lie. it is suspended-

Q. Why so? ...

A. That it might be always ready to perform its office, and never to betray its trust through negligence. -

Q. What is it suspended by? ...

A. The thread of life-

Q. Why so nearly connected with the heart? ...

A. To lock its secrets from the unworthy, and to open its treasures to the deserving

Q. Of what is this key composed?...

A. It is not composed of metal, nor formed by any mortal art-

Q. Explain this mystery? ...

A. It is a tongue of good report, ever ready to protect, never to betray-

Q. What are its distinguishing characteristics? ...

Q. To defend the interests of a Brother in his absence, to speak favourably of him, if truth will permit, and when that cannot be done with propriety to adopt the Mason's peculiar virtue, silence.

In the modern Tracing Board this emblem, which constitutes an immovable Landmark, is most unaccountably and improperly omitted. The key is one of the most important symbols of Freemasonry, and ought to be prominently kept in view. To the uninitiated or imperfectly taught Mason, it bears the appearance of an inanimate metal instrument, whose use is obviously confined to the performance of one simple act, and is applied masonically as the insignia of the Treasurer. But the well-instructed Brother views it with a different eye. He beholds in it the member, which, according to its use and application, is the greatest blessing, or the greatest curse, to man.

If improperly used. it is a fire, a world of iniquity, -untamable,-an unruly evil, full of deadly poison, -it defileth the whole body, as an inspired apostle asserts,-it setteth on fire the course of nature, and is set on fire of hell. This mass of evil the consideration of our Masonic key is intrusted to correct; for it represents not a slanderous tongue but a tongue of good report, which will always hang in a Brother's defence, and never lie to his prejudice; or in other words, will speak as well of a Brother in his absence as in his presence; because when present, he is able to defend himself, and if unfortunately, that cannot be done with propriety, to adopt the distinguishing virtue of the science; for where candour cannot commend, then silence will at least avoid reproach.

This section of the E.A.P. Lecture contains a beautiful display of the purest morality. What indeed can be more estimable than the spirit of brotherly love which is here inculcated? Can anything have a more direct tendency to promote the glory of God, peace on earth, and good-will towards men? This is the use and end, the golden rule of Freemasonry. Consider, abstractedly, the moral which it teaches. It instructs you as Brethren to dwell together in unity. It teaches you to imitate the innocence of the lamb, and the peacefulness of the dove ; and to let the head, the tongue, and the heart be united, as they ought, to promote each other's welfare, and to rejoice in each other's prosperity. It admonishes you to be candid to a Brother's faults; and never to condemn, until you are thoroughly convinced of his unworthiness ; and even then to adopt this golden rule-Always speak well of a Brother. if you speak of him at all; but, if you cannot do so with strict justice-say nothing. This, while it gives him an opportunity to repent, and retrieve his reputation, will contribute to your own peace of mind, and you will thus avoid those dissensions and disputes which are never creditable and often dangerous.

Thus I conclude my Lecture, If it has afforded you any information or instruction, I shall feel myself amply repaid for my exertions.

VARIATIONS IN THE RITUAL

In the year 1720, the following questions and answers occur

Q.-Where does the M.M. stand?

A-In the W.

Q-Where does the F.C. ?

A-In the S.

Q.-Why so?

A.-To hele and conceal, give instruction, and welcome strange Brothers.

Q.-Where does the E.A. P. stand?

A.-In the N.

Q.-Why so?

A.-To hele and conceal, to receive Instruction and to strengthen the Lodge.

Q-What is the form of the Lodge?

A. -An oblong square

Q-Why so?

A.-The manner of our great Master Hiram's grave.

N.B.This Is the only mention of Hiram in the Ritual.