

SPECULATIVE
FREEMASONRY.
A HISTORICAL LECTURE

UPON

THE ORIGIN OF CRAFT AND HIGH
GRADE FREEMASONRY

AND

SHOWING THE GREAT ANTIQUITY
OF THE COMBINED SYSTEM,

*Delivered before the Brethren of the Palatine and Jerusalem Chapter,
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Primitive Rite of Masonry in and for the United Kingdom of Great
Britain and Ireland, in assembly at their place of meeting, the
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33°, 90°, 96°, F.S.Sc, &c., &c., &c.

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The present edition was key-entered from scans of a 1988 reprint issued by Sure Fire Press / J.D. Holmes in Wisconsin. The cover design has been slightly modified (e.g. by omission of Yarker's list of Masonic titles and substitution of publisher's name) and the back cover advertisement from the print edition, promoting the Kneph (journal of the A. & P. Rite), the Constitutions, Public Ceremonials and History of the Rite, Lectures of a Chapter, Senate and Council and Yarker's 1872 Notes on the Scientific and Religious Mysteries of Antiquity (which latter, by the way, is the work on "Speculative Freemasonry" mentioned in the present lecture; this was the short title on that book's cover board) is completely omitted.]

MY DEAR BRETHREN.—

The expert Mason cannot fail but look with regret upon the sad want of authentic knowledge which exists amongst Masonic brethren of all ranks and degrees: it is this deficiency which, in a great measure, leads to the schisms prevailing, and to that want of brotherly-love which we find so general in the rival systems. With greater knowledge, Masons would be more tolerant and more just to each other. It was in some measure to remedy this that the Antient and Primitive Rite was organised in this and other countries, and in holding out a fraternal hand to all other Rites it aimed at promoting good feeling amongst Masons of all degrees. Hitherto it has had to fight its way against the great and organised opposition of another less tolerant system of 33 degrees solely by its own merits, and only requires to be known to be fully appreciated by the Craft. The sole condition for reception among us is moral worth, probity, and honour. The one great obstacle to its rapid success is, therefore, the apathy and indifference to learning which is so prevalent amongst Craft Masons, who because they belong to a rich and influential society have no better wants. If you speak to the youngest Master Mason about our most learned of all Rites, he may very likely reply to you in the words of one of these: "Oh! you are not recognised! you cannot expect a society founded by King Solomon to acknowledge the Modern High Degrees." Why, my Brethren, if in Masonry there is one thing more certain than another it is that these so-called Higher Mysteries—which a Craft Grand Lodge has no knowledge of, and cannot therefore be requested to patronise by recognition—have a better and more authentic history than Craft Masonry.

In the brief exposition which I am about to give you I will endeavour to be as concise as possible and avoid all unnecessary matters, though I fear that will render me somewhat dry and tedious. I will indicate to you, first, the history of Operative Masonry, and deal tenderly with it; second, the descent of the High Grades, and show their immense antiquity; third, the cause of the amalgamation of the two systems and the period of its occurrence: constituting in effect the derivation and descent of Freemasonry as we now have it. Lastly, I will give you some information in regard to the origin of our own Rite, with other particulars in reference to it and to Freemasonry generally.

(I.) It is admitted, almost universally, by those very Masonic antiquaries who decry the High Grades, that Craft Masonry as a ceremonial system had no existence before the year 1722, and that it is practising certain Mysteries on the erroneous assumption that they are very ancient. I do not entirely hold with those good brethren who express this opinion, but I do assert that our existing Craft and High Grade Mysteries, as a matter of antiquity, must stand or fall together, and it is actually the superior Mysteries which have at various times during the last 5,000 years given off and organised numerous Craft Associations. By this term I indicate various operative brotherhoods, embracing workmen who laboured as masons, joiners, plasterers, slaters, smiths, and painters; for the Operative Guilds embraced members of these confederated trades. The comparatively recent comminatory action of the Papal Church is adduced as a proof that our present Solomonic Masonry had no existence until recent times. But it *is* proveable that the old Masons had guilds and assemblies, with trade secrets protected by oaths, grips, and words, and that their somewhat symbolical ceremonies, although differing in detail amongst themselves, had much in common with each other and existing trade unions. These workmen have such an organisation at this day, independently of our Freemasonry, which is a strong argument in favour of the views which have been put forward by those esteemed Masons who deny 200 years of antiquity to our Masonic Craft. These old guild ceremonies, without doubt, varied according to the High Grade Rite which constituted them, and, passing through unlearned hands, were badly preserved, for the scant nature of their ceremonies is proved by the well-preserved minutes of the old Operative Lodges of Scotland, extending far beyond 1717. The nature of the ancient Craft Ceremonies is clearly indicated in the ancient Craft Constitutions, and the old Minutes of the Scottish Operative Lodges—both of which series of documents show strict identity, and extend from the 16th to the 17th century. The ceremonial consisted in reading over certain rules applicable to the guidance of an ordinary stonemason's apprentice, upon which he was sworn to obey them, and received a grip and word. When he had faithfully served his seven years, he became a Fellow of Craft, or Journeyman Mason, was re-sworn and received a higher grip and word.

In apt illustration of this position which I intend to assume in my address to you this evening, I may inform you that the Masonic trade Yogams of the Hindus assert that their

system was established in the morning of time by those very Rishis who constituted the high Yogams of the Brahmins and the Vedas. They are, in point of fact—as recently set forth in a protest to our Government, who claimed to give them a Chief Yoge—the ceremonies of a lower caste (namely, the Sudras, or Artizans), whilst the Brahmins have a high-caste system, analogous to the degrees of our Council. But the Sudra Yogams are able to hold their own, and assert that Visvakarman (or the Great Master Builder) is identical with the Vedaic Brahma, and that the symbolism of their architectural craft is convertible into the Nature Symbols of the order of Brahminical Theosophy. That this was so, also, in Egypt before the Christian era is proved by the recent discovery of Masonic Craft emblems at the base of Cleopatra's Needle, coupled with the symbology of the wonderful architecture of that mysterious land. It is, moreover, admitted by the learned that between ancient Egypt and India there was a convertibility or mutual recognition of Rites. In the European birthplace of Freemasonry we have very little—in reality, nothing tangible—to produce in the way of antiquity. But the great middle-age builders were the Society of Knights Templar, another high-grade secret system of the middle or warrior caste, preserved in the degrees of our Senate. It is not very improbable, on the face of what I shall advance to you, that these, in or about the 12th century, gave off the Craft organisation of the Operative Masonry claiming from Solomon's Temple.* This supposition is strengthened by the fact that the Templars, in A.D. 1118, acquired the site of Solomon's Temple, and that adjacent thereto existed a high-grade Rite of Mahommedan warriors who sought occult knowledge, with an organised system of seven secret degrees, afterwards increased to nine, under the prestige of King Solomon, of whose magical powers they have astonishing legends. I allude to the secret doctrine of the House of Wisdom, which originated the somewhat unenviable Society of Assassins, corresponding in its doctrines to the "Elu" degrees of the Ancient and Accepted Rite, which we have rejected as immoral and unworthy of our own.

At any rate, from this period there came down the stream of centuries such a society as Operative Freemasonry was before the year 1700; but its ceremonies, even in the same country, were not uniform. In France, those trade-unions

* Colonel W. J. B. Macleod Moore, of Laprarie, Canada, holds the the Benedictine monks had certain religious Mysteries of a symbolical nature, and that the Templars and Operative Masons derived those Mysteries from that source; and that each developed them to suit their own professions.

were often at actual war with the Masons of a different legend; and, near 1700, it was charged against some that the Candidate personated Christ. At the present day, the rivals over a legend are either the followers of the assassinated Master Jacques, Father Soubise, or Master Hiram; and these societies claim great antiquity, but give no proof of their legends. In Britain, we have no proof that Craft Masonry had either of those legends before 1723; but the probability is that it had the legend of the Hiram system in a much more meagre and unpolished form that now exists. In other words, the British Operative, or Craft Masons have left no record that they had an esoteric Mystery before the formation of the Grand Lodge at London. So much, for better or worse, is all that can be said for Craft Masonry; and I will now turn me round to those secret associations which, for want of a better word, I shall call High Grade Masons.

(II.) I shall proceed, with the intent of following their history, to inform you that, in all the most ancient nations—Chinese, Babylonian, Egyptian, Indian, Persian—there existed, and still exists, a certain secret School of Wisdom, which in all lands had certain degrees, with obligations of secrecy, and ceremonial rites with tokens and words: they were either of seven or nine degrees, and the members, than and still affiliate with distant Rites. Many modern Craft Freemasons have, like myself, becomes connected with the Oriental Societies. They have many points in common with the secret Cabala of the Jews, which probably derives from the Schools of the Prophets, of which we find mention in the Jewish writings. They sought 10,000 years ago by arduous toil—and found it—the basis of religion, philosophy, and art: their faith was that of the proved religion, in which all the learned men of antiquity agreed. The first, after Moses, to publish their doctrine was the initiated Plato, often called the Divine Platon. A word to he that hath ears will be sufficient. The Egyptian “Book of the Dead,” which in its primitive form is probably 10,000 years old, says: “As the sun died and rose again yesterday, so man dies and rises again.” This (winter) sun was the (dying) son that was assassinated by the Great Serpent of the Heavens, Apophis. Its legend was the Mysterious Myth which the representative neophyte personated during his reception. The name and rites of this slain “Son of the Sun” varied amongst the nations as different languages do vary. In Chaldea it was Ghizdubar; in Egypt, Osiris; in Persia, Mythras; in India, Sita, or Kama; in Greece, Bacchus or Dionysos; in Germany, Baldur; in Syria, Adonis; in Samothrace,

Cadmillus; in Britain, Hu. Damascius and Suidas assert the identity of Osiris and Adonis; Clemens Alexandrinus, that of Dionysos and Atys; and Ausonius, that Bacchus, Osiris, Phanac, Dionysos, Liber and Adonis were one and the same; which Macrobius informs us that Adonis, Atys, Osiris, Horus, and Liber were all equally the Sun. Damascius asserts that in one of the Temple manifestations of this divinity a mass of light appears on the walls of the Temple: at first the fire-cloud appeared to be remote, but, advancing nearer, revealed a face divine and superhuman. In Operative Freemasonry of primitive times, the hero may have been Ur, or Urim—sun or light. In later Manichæism (a secret system of degrees) it was at times Mani; but with those who accepted the new faith, Jesus the Christ. In the Mohammedan associations it was and is Hakim, Ali, &c. In middle-age Rosicrucianism, the Divine Jesus; as also with the Templars. These legends are the same in essentials under whatever name the hero is known, and for the time the neophyte is the prototype. St. Augustine says (after he abandoned, or rather was refused, the esoteric degrees) that some Christian sects cursed all those who were supposed by implication to deny the actuality of Jesus by saying that “Zoroaster, Buddha, Jesus, Mani, and the Sun are one and the same;” and this statement is conclusive proof of that I have informed you. All things repeat themselves in cycles: for the Craft Mason of to-day curses the High Grades when refused admission, and, when we throw them open to all religions, we are accused of irreligion.

The old and learned Sages, or High Grade Masons, have left their history everywhere, and no student need be ignorant of it. The ancient Vedas expressly state that any member of the religious Mystery in the second or third degree who shall reveal the higher Mysteries before the prescribed time to members of the first or second degree shall be put to death and his tongue cut out. Primitively, the first adepts were men profoundly versed in arts, science, and spiritual knowledge, who proceeded to enlarge their numbers by the admission of neophytes from neighbouring tribes. As their members increased, they emigrated far and wide, and established Colleges amongst all nations, which, on the model of the first, went on increasing their numbers. Originally celibates, some of them married and returned to the world, and had progeny, who founded the left-handed system, or sorcery. They were the “sons of God who took to themselves wives of the daughters of men.”* This led to the next step,

* Vide “Book of Enoch.”

in which the true Hierophants established difficult and dangerous proofs before the reception of a neophyte; and the great Temple Mysteries of Egypt, upon which most of the others were modelled, were founded with all their secret and imposing restrictions. Wars, and finally Christian intolerance, did the rest, and scattered the heirs of the Primitive Wisdom amongst all nations. There is a record at Rome which states that the Eleusinian Mysteries of Ceres and Dionysos had been established in Britain. Various communities of monks and fraternities of knights continued the practice of the Mysteries, and even at this day the Madonna of Rome is an exact copy of the much more ancient Isis of Egypt.

The immediate successors of the Egyptian and Persian School of Wisdom were the Essenes and Manichees. At the period of the Crusades, Hakim's House of Wisdom; the Cathari, the Templars, and their teachers the Sabians of St. John; the Gnostics and the Cabalists of the Jews and Spanish Moors; with other secret societies of like nature. The so-called Alchemists were of this school, and the midde-age Fire Philosophers.* That our present ceremonies are those of the ancients is proved by the paintings in Egyptian temples and tombs. That the ancient Mysteries had our Rose Croix ceremonies is proved by the language of the Sybils of the Temple, preserved in the Sybilline Oracles; that they passed down to more modern times is indicated in the poetic language of the "Romance of the Rose," and in Dante, Chaucer, Gower, and the Troubadors; and afterwards the same rites can be traced in the mystical writings of their successors, who have been termed Templars, Theosophists, Alchemists, Rosicrucians, and Gnostics, or "Knowing Ones"—a term well known to the Papal Church—not modern, as in the Egyptian "Book of the Dead," 5,000 years ago, an initiate is represented as saying to Osiris: "I am one of the 'Knowing Ones.'" Apuleius relates his reception into the Egyptian Mysteries in Greece, and his admission as a Pastaphori in the College of Priest. His ceremonies closely resemble those still in use. And, moreover, he relates in symbolical fable how the Hierophant fed him upon a diet of *roses*, by which he was drawn from sensual nature and passions. Necessarily, in the course of ages, the ceremonials were changing, but the essential characteristics remained. In all times the Wisdom Society protected itself by a double or symbolical language, and there are many allusions in ancient writings to this fact. Dante expressly states that the

* Hargrave Jennings's "Rosicrucians" has much valuable information.

persecution of the Church had compelled him to change the style, and that therefore he sang in the hidden language of Platonic love: for, as the Church of Rome now bans Freemasonry, so in those days it banned and burned the western professors of our philosophy. They hid themselves from persecution in all costumes, threw themselves amongst the orders of monks and chivalry, and often wrote or sang themselves to the stake.* They were the life and soul of the secret Theosophical brotherhoods of the middle ages, and, as Fludd tells us, organised secret ceremonial Mysteries within the walls of the universities. Those who desire to understand the subject more fully will find the information in my unpretending work on "Speculative Freemasonry." These societies claimed to be, and actually were, the western successors of the ancient eastern Mysteries, and, though they were Christian professors, their faith was not that of Rome, for they expressly proclaimed the Pope as Antichrist, and that it was part of their duty to pull down his triple crown. These Rosicrucians of the 17th century—for such became the exoteric and generic name of the brotherhood in Europe—were justified in asserting their identity with the occult schools of India, which have for ages uninterruptedly practised their seven Mysteries as a Theurgic Rite.

Although there was a great similarity in ceremonies of the Wisdom Mysteries to those of modern Freemasonry (for the reason that the latter have been amended in modern times to imitate the House of Wisdom of seven stories), yet there was, and is, an essential difference between the two which I can only glance at here by saying that, whilst Freemasonry is only a symbol, the House of Wisdom is an actuality—ours is amusement, theirs, labour of the most severe description. The chief existing branches of to-day transmitted from ancient times are the African Mysteries; the Lebanon Druses and Ainsareeh; the Chinese Triad and the Japanese Celestial Brotherhood; the Hindu Temple Mysteries; and the Bektash, and other Dervish Sect Mysteries of Turkey, Persia, and Egypt. To these we may add certain western Freemasons; but it is somewhat dangerous to use the signs thereof, as "unknowing" members, or those who lack the Gnosis, have been assassinated for using the western signs wherewith to penetrate the Mysteries of the Eastern societies.† But the

* Read the works of Paracelsus, Behmen, Fludd, Vaughan, &c. Also Henry Morley's "Life of Cornelius Agrippa." The best single work on the subject is Gabriel Rosetti's "Disquisitions on the Anti-Papal Spirit which Produced the Reformation."

† A public reference to one case of this kind will be found recorded in the "Anacalypsis of Brother Godfrey Higgins.

fact that our signs, secrets, symbols and ceremonies have such a close resemblance to those of the Eastern mystic brotherhoods is the strongest proof you can have of the truth of what I advance.

(III.) Having now shown you the nature of and the descent of the Ancient Mysteries, which any one can prove for himself by a diligent study of old tomes, I will proceed to instruct you how Speculative Freemasonry assumed its present form. I do not altogether agree with the iconoclastic school. As various branches of Craft Masons in old times were instituted by various high-caste or professedly Theosophic systems, so they possessed more or less of their One learning. The fact that they used some of the same secret symbols (geometrical and otherwise) without understanding them, and, more or less, the same signs as the Mysteries, is proof that both associations had one and the same derivation. I believe that, owing to certain laws passed against the English operatives in the 15th century, politically to prevent their striking for higher wages by confederating in chapters, their system degenerated by the difficulty of their position; and, moreover, in England, as early as the year 1663, had become nearly extinct as a trade system, and lost its operative character by the admission of Rosicrucians, Geometricians, Alchemists, Theosophists, Knights of Malta, and other learned men and gentlemen of position. These, naturally, in their Lodge attendance brought into the Craft Masonry the various dogmas and ceremonies with which they were acquainted (Rosicrucianism and Templary), out of which—by uniting, adapting, and amending—about the year 1686, sprang the Rite called Ancient Masonry, of seven degrees: virtually, three Craft degrees and three High degrees. At this time the leading spirit both in Craft Masonry and in Rosicrucianism was Elias Ashmole, and he kept a diary, from which we can gather that Father Backhouse was his teacher, and that both societies fell into decay together, and both revived together in 1682.* It is evident, therefore, that the Rosicrucians—who had too freely written upon their instruction, and met with ridicule—found the Operative Guild conveniently ready to hand, and grafted upon it their own Mysteries. Also, from this time, Rosicrucianism disappears, and Freemasonry springs into life with all the possessions of the former. The public name of the brothers, as well as their secret language, has been in constant change; and in the course of time some disruptive

* The Diary of Elias Ashmole has been published.

cause will prostrate the popularity of Freemasonry, and our system will then assume, as the House of Wisdom, a new designation for the profane world.

It was in the year 1717 that the first Grand Lodge was formed at London, and the object of the promoters was to accept as little improvement as possible, and follow the old Operative lines. It can be prove * that there was in existence in 1717 certain Craft Lodges which had no participation in the formation of the Grand Lodge of London, and even the Grand Master was prohibited from visiting these lodges; and in 1738 the two systems—one of which recognised three degrees, called Modern Masonry, and the other seven degrees, called Ancient Masonry—came to wordy quarrels, leading to the establishment of a second London Grand Lodge. The Grand Lodge of All England, at York, took the part of the Ancients, and themselves practised the seven degree system; and there is a printed work of 1744 mentioning this fact. But we have, fortunately, a printed book, written in the year 1721, by Robert Samber, entitled “Long Livers,” and couched entirely in the symbolical language of Alchemy and Rosicrucianism †—much of which our members can understand. In it we find mention of those Higher Mysteries which could only be conferred when the Craft Mason “had learned how to govern his tongue,” and which, by the language used, as evidently (as they existed 50 years later) Arch, Templar, and Templar Priest. It is a symbolical history of Freemasonry from their creation; and it will please our members to learn that there is no Rite which, even at this distance of time, it will so illustrate as our own. In France, there is a system practising our seven degrees, under the designation of Order of the Temple, and, though its charter from Jacques de Molay has been pronounced a forgery, the signature of Philip, Duke of Orleans, in 1705, is pronounced genuine. Moreover, in the year 1743, there existed in London a body claiming to date from time immemorial as a chapter of Heredom—Rosy Cross, or Templar. It had three grades: Arch, or Knight of the East, Rose Cross, and Mystic Point. The same degrees are minuted in 1746 as being practised in Durham. The Chevalier Ramsey, in France, was an active member of the Seven Degree Rite from 1728 to 1738. In 1736, according to Folger, but probably from 1725, the Grand Lodge of France had

* Leon Hyneman’s “Ancient York and London Grand Lodges” (Philadelphia, 1872) treats upon a part of this subject.

† Reprinted by Brother George Kenning, in the *Freemasons’ Magazine*.

appended to their Craft Warrant, obtained in 1725 from the 1717 Grand Lodge of London, the three grades of H.R.M., R.S.Y.—C.S.S., to which they added others; and Prince Charles Edward Stuart introduced them at Bordeaux in 1744, and gave a charter for the Rosy Cross to Arras in 1747 as Hereditary Grand Master, stating that previous to the misfortunes of his family it had been styled Knight of the Eagle and Pelican—our own badge, and the banner of his father in 1715. The Templar system of Von Marshall and Hunde sprang from them in 1740 and 1743, and at an early period they were introduced into Sweden. In Germany, in 1745, the High Grade system was Rosicrucian, and claimed derivation from the older society. The names of the brethren mentioned as practising these High Grades between 1728 and 1743 are men of high position, who vouched for their antiquity; and, moreover, the circumstances necessitate an origin not later than the year 1686, which was the date traditionally assigned upon certificates as the “year of revival” last century. What I contend for is that in England a High Grade Rite of seven degrees existed prior to the establishment of any Grand Lodge, and that such degrees were derived from the occult Rosicrucian School: that this system, in 1730, was known in England as Templars; in France, as Rosy Cross; in Sweden, as Royal Secret; and in Germany, as Rosicrucians. From this basis sprang numerous Orders, by which each author intended to develop his own special knowledge, and of which I will mention some only that bear upon our Antient and Primitive Masonry—the best of all the Masonic Rites, whether from its universality or its general features and its work. About the middle of the 18th century the Scottish Philosophical Rite, of eighteen degrees, was established at Marseilles; and about the same date Koppin established in Germany a Rite of African Architects, of which the fifth degree was Aletophilote, or Lover of Truth, a degree claiming to date from 1736, and afterwards introduced into the Rite of Perfection under the name of Prussian Noachite. But it is no part of my present purpose to expose the infamies of Lacorne, who, though Bonneville’s Chapter of Clermont (the degrees of which are given as Knight of the Eagle, or Elect Master, Illustrious Knight, and Sublime Knight), established the Order of the East and West of 25 degrees; nor will I dwell on the insane pretensions and forgeries of the Charleston Council, who concocted the new Ancient and Accepted Rite, after 1802.*

* Vide “Folger’s History of the Ancient and Accepted Rite,” republished in 1882, and the most learned and impartial work on the subject.

(IV.) The leading particulars of the High Grade Rites, of which I make no mention here, will be found in the history attached to the Statues of our Antient and Primitive Rite of Masonry. The Rite which of all others most influenced the Masonry of last century was that of Martinez Paschalis, a German, born not later than 1728, who had obtained initiation into the Temple Mysteries of Turkey and Arabia, and who, returning from his travels, established the Rite of Elected Cohens, or Priests. The well-known Chevalier St. Martin took up his system, and Rite of Primitive Philalethes, or Lovers of Truth, was established in 1773, and was identical in its aim with the Primitive Philadelphes, or Lovers of Mankind, which followed at Narbonne in 1779. It is especially to this Primitive Rite that we trace our own, and to the peculiarity of its organisation do we owe our numerous degrees. Writers have often been led into misconception by this peculiarity. The fact is that its *three* series and *seven* classes of defined degrees had the power of accepting and practising all systems. Ragon says that the Rite was formed of three classes of Masons, who received ten degrees of instruction; but that these ten degrees were not specifically fixed, but were the generic names of collections which need only to be developed to the utmost extent of which they were capable in order to evolve an infinite number of grades. Thus, the *first* series comprehended the three blue degrees; the *second* series has nominally three degrees, but the fourth degree rules two others; the fifth degree possessed one, and the sixth degree, Knight of the Sword (our Secret Vault), ruled two others—viz., Knight of the East (our Knight of the Sword), and Prince of Jerusalem (our Knight of Jerusalem). The *third* series of Rose Croix consisted of four chapters, and embraced all Masonic degrees and all Masonic knowledge and occult science.

It is believed that the Ancient Mysteries are yet practised in Egypt by certain Dervishes, and Napoleon the Great and Klebber, who were French Masons, received affiliation to the Egyptian by investiture with a ring by an old Egyptian Sage, at the Great Pyramid of Cheops. Napoleon and the officers of his army, upon this, in 1798, established European Freemasonry with a Grand Lodge at Cairo, and, having initiated a brother named Samuel Honis, he reconveyed the present Rite of Memphis to France. In 1815 that certain travelled initiates, Frenchmen and Egyptians, of this Rite (Gabriel Matthieu Marconis de Negre, Grand Master and Hierophant; the Baron Dumas, the Marquis de Laroque, Samuel Honis, of Cairo, &c.) reconstituted a Grand Orient

of it at Montauban, called Disciples of Memphis. The Egyptian Rite of Memphis continued to prosper, and when Mehmet Ali Pasha obtained the direction of affairs in Egypt he gave his patronage to the Lodges on Egyptian soil; they continued a correspondence by means of cyphers, yet preserved to us, with their confreres in Europe and the rest of the world. After the death of the great Pasha, the Rite of Memphis sank for a while—perhaps in consequence of their meddling with politics—as it is asserted that in his time Greek and Arab women were members of the Lodges. The son of the first French Grand Hierophant, Jacque Etienne Marconis, a man of great learning and strict morals, and in every way an honour to Masonry, supported by his father, carried our Rite to Brussels in 1838, and to Paris in 1839, where he founded the Grand Lodge of Osiris, whence it spread again to Egypt, Italy, Roumania, and America. The Grand Orient, or Craft Grand Lodge of France, at that time the highest authority on High Grade Masonry in the world, secured the control of it in 1862, and we derive our own origin from them in that year. It is probably the only High Grade Rite which ever had its Charter ratified by a Grand Lodge of Symbolical or Craft Mason, and we can, therefore, ask Craft Masons to admit that we are the most legitimate of all existing Rites. We still, as of old, divide our system into three series and seven classes—representing Operative, Military, and Priestly Masonry—and we continue to give each of our Chapters, Senate, and Council, under their respective warrants, power to confer any of the old Rites up to ninety degrees, as also the less valuable Rite of Mizraim. For the orders thus conferred we issue a separate certificate, and any brother who has not already been inducted into these additional degrees can be so on application, and at a trifling cost. In our system there is nothing to be found that is in any way antagonistic to Craft Masonry, *and we receive those only who have been raised as Master Masons under some constitutional Grand Lodge.* The Grand Lodge of England, at the union of the opposing Grand Lodges, in 1813, shut itself out for ever from recognising any degrees beyond the three first; but undertook, at the same time, to *allow any of its members to practice these Higher Mysteries.* The higher degrees of last century are no longer old English Masonry; the Arch and Templar degrees have been entirely changed, and the seventh degree, or Priest of the Temple of Holy Wisdom, termed the Seventh Pillar of the House, abandoned altogether: thus, pure Ancient Masonry has ceased to prevail under our Grand Lodge of England, and an entirely modern

system has taken its place. Every degree, from the first to the ninetieth, has been the product of some private individual; where there is any choice of antiquity the preference lies with some of the Higher Mysteries: hence, if one is spurious—a common word in the mouth of the ignorant—all are spurious, including the first, second, and third degrees. It follows that the value of each degree of the ninety must be estimated by its beauty, its truth, and its morality, for Craft Ceremonial has no higher antiquity than the High Grades. In this country Craft Masons, as a rule, decry the High Grades, because they are kept out of them until they apply in a constitutional way; nor do they know their value as a system of instruction. But for the brother who travels they are a necessity, as abroad the mere Craft Mason is looked down upon as very low in the scale, and he has often to be requested to withdraw from the lodge—in the same way that a F.C. would be if a lodge of M.M. had to be opened. In a sense, it is possible that Craft Masonry may suffer by the fact that the High Grade Mason almost invariably becomes more attached to its ornate ceremonies than he has been to those of the Craft; but, on the other hand, the Higher Mysteries act as an incentive to retain the M.M. in his allegiance, which, without them, he would have abandoned. In every way, the balance of wisdom is in favour of their zealous practice. They are a necessity for the polished and learned Mason, and it is better for the Craft itself that they should form a part of Freemasonry rather than break away from it and become a rival system, as was frequently the case in France and elsewhere. Essentially, the caste system exists *de facto* as much in this country as in India: the Craft Mason who joins his lodge to push his business, and only thinks of his pecuniary interests, is a natural-born Sudra, and will never be anything else; he who aspires after divine treasure is a born Brahmin of the highest caste, and will knock at the door of our Temple for admission when he knows what we offer him.

I think you will admit that I have fulfilled the promises with which I set out, and have proved these things: first, that our present Craft Ceremonial, according to its best antiquaries, has no great antiquity; second, that the High Grade *culte* is of immense age; third, I have shown the origin of the present system; and, lastly, that the Antient and Primitive Rite of Masonry has special claims upon you.

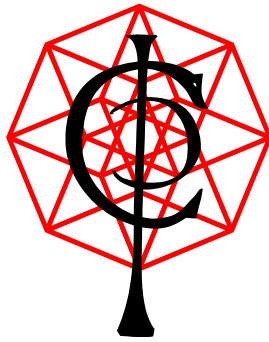
And now, my brethren, before I bring my address to a close, it may be necessary to answer two possible—nay, probable—objections which may be raised when my statements permeate the Masonic family by the aid of that wing

of God, the Press. The fanatical Craft Mason may say, as they have done, that my true history is an attack upon Symbolical Masonry. This is an idle objection. No one has more respect for our "mother" than have we: but the truth before all things: and Craft Masonry holds too high a position before the world to be influenced by points of origin and the value of certain elements which went to its formation—disputes which took place a century and a half ago. The fanatical religionist may say that there can come no good out of a system of High Grade *culte* which originated at the birth of humanity, and admits Masons of all religious opinions. Ah! how little such persons know what true religion is before God and man! St. Augustine, an initiate of the Gnostics, said that Christianity existed from the earliest period, and was in all ages present with the human race before Christ came in the flesh: and this is the Christianity which our Rite teaches. The dogmas of the seven-stories House of Wisdom, in all time, have been that of a pure life and devout practices, with prayer and meditation; and I may inform you that its Mysteries may appertain to the true teachings of Zoroaster, Christna, Buddha, or Jesus: that is, you will understand, it is a system of provable philosophic ethics practised apart from the mere ceremonies of religion—general principles applicable to all faiths spread over the face of the world—Theosophical Masonry.

And now, in conclusion, I say to you, in the words of the Grand Hierophants of Egypt: "Mortals, whose eager lips aspire to suck the teats of Truth, learn that there exists but one sole Architect of this immense Temple called the Universe! . . . Go, spread upon earth, among the children of men, the sublime truths ye come hither to learn! but accord not this favour to the unworthy. Write not upon snow." Seek your proselytes amongst those only who can appreciate what we teach; we need not mere numbers. Bring to our folds those only who can raise their hearts to the divine. Tell them that we interfere neither with their Craft allegiance nor their religion. We come to the brethren guileless. We have no forged charters of great personages—no false history. We bind no one to our Councils with bands of iron, nor prohibit them from belonging to other systems. Freemasons—they come to us free, and they may depart free if they find that we do not satisfy their wants.

But let me emphatically urge you to brotherly firmness. Do not allow our beautiful and instructive Rite to be hindered and defamed by blind leaders of the blind, and by those who are interested in the propagation of pretentiously false

systems, and who practically set brother against brother by pretending to high social position above the aspiration of the average Mason, and by requiring, as they do, certain religious tests and declarations. That is not Masonry. If these pretenders offer us open war or secret intrigue—as they have done, and may yet do again—let us proclaim in all lodges that we have far better right in Masonry, and in the highest offices of its councils, than have they; and call upon the offenders, whatever their boasted social position may be, to depart from a society which they pollute by their presence, and to whose brotherhood they do not merit to belong. Masonry is Truth, Love, Tolerance! Its converse is forgery and lies, unbrotherly acts, social and religious exclusiveness. We hope to represent in all senses the first series: let whoso will accept the latter. We are content to leave it to the Craft Universal to examine our respective claims, and to judge between us. Much as I esteem Craft Masonry, if I thought that it was possible as a society that it could listen to and encourage Masonic traitors, perjurers, and false traducers, I should say that it was the most base and vile of all societies: for it is in reality capable of effecting either great good or great harm, according as it is officered and directed by honourable or dishonourable brethren. Hence, it becomes the bounden duty of every Craft Mason, even if an opponent of the High Grades, to make assurance that the officers of the Craft are men of liberal and enlightened character, and of common honesty of purpose, who would shame to set Masons by the ears with social and religious tests and oaths. We are really fighting the battle of liberty for Craft Masonry at our own cost, and our brethren of the Craft do not require to be told that a false and spurious system of High Grade Masonry even now dominates all the acts of the Grand Lodge of London, to the detriment of all true Masonry, or advancement of the meritorious and modest brother: and hence, by supporting our Rite, the Craft declares itself emphatically for liberty of conscience, as in duty bound. Beyond this, we can have no wish to introduce the question of the High Grades into our Lodges.



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