

**HISTORICAL ANALYSIS  
OF THE  
HOLY ROYAL ARCH RITUAL**



BY  
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The Most Excellent the Grand Superintendent -  
the Rt. Hon. Lord Cornwallis, C.B.E.,  
Grand Second Principal of the Supreme Grand Chapter;

Ex. Comp. William Frederick Blay,  
Past Grand Standard-Bearer of the Supreme Grand Chapter;  
Grand Second Principal of Kent;  
Ex. Comp. Frank Manwaring Furley, B.A.,  
Third Grand Principal of Kent;

THIS TREATISE ON THE ROYAL ART  
AND ON THE SUPREME ORDER OF THE HOLY ROYAL ARCH  
IS BY PERMISSION

DEDICATED  
BY THE AUTHOR  
AS A MARK OF LOYALTY AND FIDELITY

## PREFACE

THE present book is written as a help to those R.A. Masons who take Freemasonry seriously and who desire to know what lies behind our Ceremonies. It is in the form of a running commentary, but it also tries to throw light on the text by reference to the practices in the old Chapters.

Our own formulary is a revision of one which was arranged by the Rev. Adam Brown, at the instance of the Duke of Sussex, nearly a century ago. The date commonly assigned to it is 1835. The revision carries no authority whatever, but somehow it has supplanted the original. The Duke of Sussex was Grand Master during the years 1831 - 1843.

A recent writer has said of this Ritual that it is " too incongruous to be of any antiquity "; he apparently assumed it to be the original Ritual of our Order, and so from its modernity he inferred that the Royal Arch itself was a newfangled thing. He was not acquainted with the exposure of a Ritual which belongs to the eighteenth century, which, although somewhat inaccurate, reveals the true character of the Royal Arch in earlier times, accounting for many of the things we do and say.

Two significant facts should be noted: first, that the farther back we go, the more comprehensive and elaborate does the R.A. Ritual become; secondly, that London was always inclined to modernist and to curtail. If we want to find any whole-hearted traditionalists two centuries ago we must go from the centre to the circumference, we must leave London and go to the backward American colonies.

In analysing the subject-matter of our Ritual we have compared the present practice with that which obtained in other periods, because we feel that if we want to bring a sense of reality into

the ceremonies, it is indispensable that we elucidate the significance of the various acts. Since the eighteenth century the sense has been obscured because there has been great deterioration and the dramatic element has been much curtailed.

Nowadays the R.A. Ceremonies are frequently performed in a perfunctory fashion, and many Companions regard them as an awesome hocus-pocus which must not be too closely investigated. Anyway, it is a fact that for more than a century, in the Symbolical and Mystical Lectures, both the M.E. and Ex. Comp. H. have been saying things that are not correct, and no one dares to alter them. Considering that those compositions, as now given, are comparatively modern productions, and that the memorising of them involves a tremendous effort, some changes might be made.

Many R.A. Masons of the present day regard the Lectures as a somewhat difficult and heavy burden. That section of the Fraternity known as "the Antients" (a designation used as early as 1726) were great champions of the Royal Arch and showed the keenest appreciation of it, holding it to be the purest form of Freemasonry. But, alas! when at the beginning of the nineteenth century, the Antients combined their forces with the Moderns, although the Royal Arch came then to be generally recognised as "the Supreme Order," the simplification which took place did more harm than could ever have been inflicted by a renegade through an exposure. We may boast of a great expansion in the organisation; we have increased in numbers, but, on the other hand, the prestige of the Order has not risen in the world and its influence has not increased.

We hope that this book will help many readers to realise that there is far more in our Order than the casual rehearsing of our present formulary has led them to think. To counteract the evil we have complained of, we should only exalt men who are capable of appreciating our Ceremonies, and we should be careful to avoid a wooden rehearsal when we have to fill the Chair of M.E.

The purpose of this book is to verify the views put forth in those that have preceded it, viz. Antiquity of the Holy Royal Arch and Origin of the Masonic Degrees. Indeed, we feel that those views have already been abundantly proved. The origin of Freemasonry is something much simpler than we have been given to understand; but many of our scholars, instead of elucidating the problem, have only been mystifying the world.

Although the Royal Arch is the truest or purest form of Freemasonry, until quite recently there has been no serious attempt made to explore our "Supreme Degree," which has been supposed to date from 1738 only!

There are a score or so of "Lodges of Research," so called, but, alas! these Lodges have always confined their activities, almost exclusively, to the study of the substitute which the Grand Lodge of London found for the genuine Freemasonry of earlier ages. Indeed, the Transactions of these Lodges frequently, contain papers dealing with subjects that have not the remotest connection with "Freemasonry" in any form.

When, some years ago, we noticed the Secretary of the Quatuor Coronati Lodge (unquestionably the most efficient of the Lodges of Research) that we had discovered the origin of the Sacred Word, and that we were willing to communicate the information to any R.A. Chapter attending to archeological matters, he replied that there was no such Chapter in existence! Surely there is need of a Chapter of Research, a Chapter that will endeavour to ascertain the Rock from which we were hewn and not treat with indifference matters connected with the past of this "ancient and honourable Institution." As it is, the Freemasons of the present day are putting the cart before the horse.

In conclusion, we would acknowledge our obligation to the Grand Librarian, W. Bro. Gordon Hills, for his unfailing courtesy in

putting at our disposal every volume that was likely to help in such a compilation as we are now able to offer to the Masonic Fraternity.

## HISTORICAL ANALYSIS OF THE HOLY ROYAL ARCH RITUAL

### CHAPTER 1

#### THE ROYAL ARCH DEGREE

THE R.A. Degree has not always assumed the form it does now, and at present it is not the same everywhere. Formerly it was much longer and it comprised other dramatic performances besides that of the rebuilding of K.S.T.

In Ireland it was designed to commemorate the events recorded in 2 Chronicles xxxiv. (parallel to 1 Kings xxii.), about 624 B.C. The "House of the Lord" (Temple of Jehovah) had to be repaired, and in doing so the foundation-deposit was discovered. Verse 14 says:

"And when they brought out the silver (A.V. money) that was brought into the House of Jehovah, Hilkiyah the Priest found the Book of the Law of Jehovah given by Moses."

Accordingly the Irish R.A. Chapter is presided over by the three historic characters: King Josiah, the High Priest Hilkiyah, and the Scribe Shaphan. In it there is a succession of three Degrees, viz. those of Excellent, Super-Excellent, and RosTal Arch. Of course we might with equally good reason say that with us the Royal Arch consists of three Degrees, because each of the three Chairs has peculiar secrets restricted to it, and at each stage each of the Principals is installed into the next Chair in a separate Conclave.

The divergence between the Irish and English Rituals has already been accounted for in the Antiquity of the Holy Royal Arch.

It has been thought that in our Ritual the finding of the Law refers to the same event commemorated in the Irish Royal Arch. But we cannot endorse that opinion, for we believe that at the rebuilding of the Temple under Z., H., and J. there was a rediscovery of the foundation-deposit, and it is this rediscovery that the English Ritual refers to.

Originally our "Holy Ancestors" rehearsed the whole of the sacred history from Adam downwards; and naturally before they came to the episode of the Return from Babylon and the rebuilding, there had to be the Finding of the Law by Hilkiah under King Josiah. In the subdivision of Ceremonies that took place, however, one Ritual, that which survived in Ireland, retained the Finding of the Law by Hilkiah to the exclusion of the later event; whereas in England and Scotland we have lost sight of the Finding of the Law in the reign of King Josiah, and have retained the memory of a similar event under Z., H., and J.

The Excellent and Super-Excellent Degrees refer to the revelation which God vouchsafed to Moses and the commission which he received from Him on that occasion. And when we come to consider the Signs used by R.A. Masons we shall also see that they have been borrowed from the account which the V.S.L. gives us of the experiences of Moses at Mount Horeb. This is due to those Degrees having come into existence by dividing the "Royal Arch," the common parent, which originally comprised the commemoration of the Three Grand Originals.

During the last one hundred years, the printed Rituals are substantially identical in form and matter, differing only in mere details. We believe that in Scotland the "Royal Arch" is worked practically as in England, being limited to the third Grand Original.

In America they follow largely the old Rituals; Pennsylvania is

said to be the State which keeps closest to England. One Ritual, the only American one we could find in the Library of Grand Lodge produced at Wisconsin, U.S.A., in 1892, has the Ceremonies completely remodelled; nevertheless it contains all the essentials of our "Supreme Degree."

At the Library of the Quatuor Coronati Lodge, Bro. Songhurst showed us the Ritual practised by William Finch in 1804, who, being expelled by Grand Lodge founded an independent Masonic organisation at his own dwelling-house in London. It does not materially diverge from the Ritual followed by the Chapter of Hope at Deptford in 1797; it was greatly simplified, but the "Sections" were very elaborate. Whatever is characteristic in Finch's Ritual is probably his own composition, and therefore unimportant. Evidently the R.A. Ritual was never standardised.

Richard Carlile has preserved the Questionnaire or "Sections," as given in 1825. It is a pity that this has been allowed to become obsolete and that we now have nothing like it in the Supreme Degree.

Our R.A. Degree relates to the period when Cyrus, having conquered Babylon, authorised the return of the Jewish people who had been taken into captivity to that land. The more intellectual men among them had broadened and modified their ideas through their association with the Babylonians. Doubtless they remained loyal to the ancient traditions of their race, but now the V.S.L. had acquired a new meaning for them. Henceforth the Jews were to be the most uncompromisingly monotheistic people: Jehovah was no longer regarded as a "God of gods," one out of many, but the only One, T.T.A.L.G.M.H. And they looked forward to the time when that conception of God would prevail throughout the world.

Having returned to Jerusalem, then, the rebuilding of the Temple was now the rallying-point among the idealists of Jewry, who, full of hope and courage, sought to reproduce the splendid



edifice which they had heard their fathers talk about so much; some of them were old enough to have seen it in all its glory. And now those same people gave us the post-exilic prophets, in whom we have the startingpoint of that Apocalyptic literature which was to exercise so far-reaching an influence in the world.

The powers with which King Cyrus had invested the returning exiles produced some collisions with some of the native Jews who had married heathen wives and with Samaritans, the settlers whom they found in Jerusalem, who, of course, had their rights and privileges; but in time every difficulty was overcome and the Temple was rebuilt.

Ezra and Nehemiah, although barely mentioned in the old Rituals, were worthy of honour, as the principal Hebrew Scribes, to whom we are indebted for their records about that period. In the old American Ritual instead of Scribe E. there was a "Secretary," and there was also a "Captain of the Host" (a title taken from Joshua v. 14, 15), who was a sort of Master of Ceremonies; the "R.A. Captain" and the three G.M.'s of the Veils, whose respective duties will presently be described.

In the V.S.L. Haggai and Zechariah appear as the forerunners of a mighty host 42,360 strong; but Zechariah is not once mentioned in any of our formularies. The chief leaders of the Return were Zerubbabel and Joshua (see Zechariah vi. 15; Ezra ii. 64). But Haggai became as conspicuous in that movement as a man of vision, an idealist.

Zechariah (iii. 7) informs us that Joshua being the High Priest had control of the Temple precincts. And we know that Zerubbabel, being a descendant of David, was raised to the Kingly dignity; he was the most outstanding figure among the Jews, as he is now in the Chapter.

In Biblical times there must have been a "Chief Scribe," to whom

all the other scribes were accountable; our Haggai answers to that hypothetical character, and it is remarkable that in ancient times one of the three Principals was described as "the Scribe; now when this is no longer the case we refer to Scribe E. Our Haggai is a prophet.

In the eighteenth century the R.A. Companions believed that after the Temple had been destroyed, a provisional "Tabernacle" was erected on which the worship of Jehovah was carried on. The Chapter was then supposed to be a representation of that improvised Tabernacle, and the "Freemasons" were men who had passed through that Tabernacle and had been purified at the Holy Place. And after this, when they went out they found, behind the Tabernacle, and not far from the ruins of the Temple, a Grand Council consisting of Joshua, Zerubabel, and Haggai, who examined all those who came expressing a desire to be employed in the glorious work of re-erecting the noble edifice, an idea which the Freemasons widened to signify the Temple of a regenerated humanity.

The malice of the Babylonian invader, the neglect for seventy years of everything connected with the Temple, and the action of the weather on the ruins, made it necessary for the builders, before anything else, to attend to the foundations, and accordingly Ezra refers to the laying of "the foundation of the Temple" (v. 16), although presumably most of the old masonry underground was left intact.

When the three "Excellent Masons" (American Ritual ) are said to present themselves and to solicit employment, the Grand Council send them to clear the ground, and they are instructed to begin "at the N.E. corner of the ruins of the old Temple," which gave to the Craft Masons the idea of the E.A. beginning his career at that spot. They find everything in a confused heap, and are warned that if they come across any "specimens of ancient architecture" they are to bring them to the Grand Council for inspection

without showing them to any one else, for the three G.M.'s alone are responsible for the undertaking.

## CHAPTER II

### THE OPENING OF THE CHAPTER

IN the American Ritual of the eighteenth century representing the Ritual which obtained in England at the beginning of the same century, the High Priest, and not the King, was the real President, the M.E. And when the Chapter had to be opened, he asked the "Captain of the Host" (for there was no Inner Guard):

"What was the duty of congregated Masons?"

The answer was:

"To see the Tabernacle duly guarded."

This was effected by "an alarm" of three times three on the door of the Chapter, answered by the "Guard" on the outside.

The High Priest inquired: "How (is it) guarded?" The Captain of the Host replied: "By a Companion of this Degree at the outer avenue with a sword drawn in his hand."

H.P.: "His duty?" C. of the H.: "To observe the approach of all cowans and eavesdroppers, and see that none pass or repass but such as are duly qualified."

After this the H.P. gave the order: "Companions, we will be clothed"; and immediately the furniture of the Chapter was brought out and the Companions proceeded to put on their respective robes, badges, jewels, etc., and they also drew aside the Veils so as to make one single apartment of the Hall where they met.

The opening was very ceremonious. The High Priest asked the Captain of the Host whether he was a R.A. Mason, to which he replied: " I am that I am.

H.P.: " How should I know you to be a R.A. Mason ? "

C. of the H.: "By three times three."

Now the High Priest asked about the respective stations and duties of the various officers: the H.P., the King, the Scribe, the C. of the H., the P.S., the R.A. Captain, the G.M.'s of the Veils, the Treasurer, the Secretary, and the Guard.

When this interrogatory was over, the Companions were ordered to assemble around "the Altar," in order to open a Chapter of R.A. Masons; and they formed a circle around the Altar, leaving an opening for the three Principals, every one kneeling on the right knee. While in that position the Companions crossed their arms and took hold of each other's hand, giving the P.W. Rabboni. The H.P. expressed approval and then all struck their knees with their clasped hands " three times three "; after which they stood up and went through the signs of all the preceding Degrees; this culminating in the formation of squads of three, all sharing and communicating the Sacred Word, called the Grand Omnific R.A. Word. This Ceremony ended with the familiar formula:

"As we three did agree, etc."

In 1825, according to Carlile, whose exposure was first published in a paper entitled The Republican, the Opening Ceremony began by the King asking the Junior Sojourner his "constant care" and "duty"; his answer to the latter was: "To guard the First Veil, etc." He put a similar question to the Senior Sojourner, and he said: "To guard the Second Veil, etc." Then the P.S. was asked his duty, and he replied: "To guard the Third Veil, etc."

In all this there was no mention of the Tabernacle, but the Chapter was set out as a representation of it, and it is evident that the idea still lingered in the minds of all, for “the Veils” mentioned were the Veils of the Tabernacle.

The M.E. then proceeded to ask the duty of the other Officers, “Comp. Ezra . . . Comp. Nehemiah . . . Joshua . . . Haggai”; and when all had answered him, he offered a Prayer which began thus:

“O God, Thou Great and Grand Architect of the Universe, Grand Prince, Causer of all existence, at Thy Word the Pillars of the sky were raised, and its beauteous arches formed etc.”,

In this prayer the M.E. acknowledged God's “power. . . wisdom. . . goodness,” which answered to the names of

“Strength - Wisdom - Benignity”

which the Kabbalists gave to the three Pillars, which they said supported the world - that is to say, the cosmic “Lodge”; and he humbly implored of God that he would “endue us with a competency of Thy most holy spirit, etc.” Then all the Principals joined in reciting the fundamental maxim:

Z. In the beginning was the Word.

H. And the Word was with God.

J. And the Word was God.

And Z. inquired, “What are the great attributes of this mysterious Word?” (These “Attributes” answer to the Sethiroth of the Kabbalists.) The other Principals, H. and J. and Scribe E. replied: “Om . . . t, Om . . . t, Om . . . t;” three words still heard in our Chapters; and then the following interrogatory ensued: -

"Z. Most Ex. H., from whence came you?"

"H. From Babylon."

" Z. Most Ex. J. where are you going ? "

" J. To Jerusalem."

" Z. Most Ex. Chiefs, why leave you Babylon and go to Jerusalem ?  
"

" H. To assist in rebuilding the Second Temple, and to endeavour  
to obtain the Sacred Word."

" Z. Let us celebrate the grand design "; which is done by the  
Companions sharing the Sacred Word, previous to which they use  
the formula:

" As we three did agree, etc."

The Chapter is now open, although there has been no declaration  
to that effect.

We believe that here we have the first germ of the interrogatory  
of the Third Degree; the E. for the M.M. answers to Babylon and  
the W. to Jerusalem.

In a book on The Royal Arch Work, by Kenneth R. H. Mackenzie,  
published in 1884, it is held that only the Installed Principals,  
past and present, should take part in the Opening. And Ex. Comp.  
T. W. A. Neech, the senior Z. of the Lullingstone Chapter, No.  
1837, told us not long ago that when he was exalted in 1878, this  
was the practice in his mother Chapter.

Another book entitled The Perfect Ceremonies of the Royal Arch,

published a year after the preceding (1885), prescribes this same sort of thing; and although we can find no warrant for it in the old Rituals, it is interesting to hear that in a Chapter now in existence in Canterbury this practice still survives, and the Companions do not come to the Chapter at any point during an Installation.

At the Installation only the three Principals, the Principals-elect, and the Past Principals were invited. A long Prayer was offered; the Bible was opened at the book of Isaiah xii., and Zechariah iv. 4-10 was read, which is about the "Headstone" and "the Foundation;" then they all combined in reciting the formula We three, etc., renewing their troth to seek, and when found, to keep, the Sacred Word (that which was lost) of the Speculative Mason.

Afterwards Ex. Comp. H. recited this Invocation:

"To the All-wise, All-present, and All-powerful King, around whose Throne may we hereafter encircle "; epithets which answer to our " O.O.O. "; and there followed the customary Prayer offered by the King, and not as at present by the High Priest.

When at last the Principals had reached the E. in the usual way, the King declared the Chapter duly opened - " In the Name of the great J . . . h."

After this both the books just quoted provide that the general body of the Companions should be admitted and the three Principals should robe.

One Ritual gives " a less orthodox opening," which is public and is stated to be followed " in a few Chapters." This is quite newfangled and has suffered the fate it deserved of becoming obsolete. What has happened is that what was once considered a private ceremony for the Principals is now become one in which

all the Companions take part.

In the "Oxford Ritual," after the opening by the Principals, Scribe N. admits the Companions, receiving the P.W. from each one of them as they enter. In this Ritual in the Opening and Closing Ceremonies there are some interrogatories based on the leading idea of the Royal Arch.

Now, turning to modern practice, we find that the Opening Ceremony has been greatly simplified, though its relation to the old Ritual can still be detected.

The Principals begin at the W. and eventually find their way to the E.

The group consists of a King (red), a Prophet, who is the Chief Scribe (purple), and a High Priest (blue), whom we identify with Z., H., and J.

When they begin, all the Companions are expected to stand to order as R.A. Masons.

The first words uttered are in effect an invocation of the Triune God, conceived as a Being about whose Presence, Wisdom, and Strength we cannot imagine any limits.

This is to express the need we feel of that Light which is from above; we have realised this need from the first, as soon as the M.E. called out: "Companions, assist, etc."

Ex. Comps. Z., H., and J. renew their troth to keep the secret Word, "agreeing" in their determination never to divulge anything of what they have discovered, especially "the Word" which is the central secret. The formula employed for making this declaration is very old.



The WORD is connected with the Volume they hold in their hands and with the very significant posture in which they give and receive it. It is not found in the V.S.L., but yet the three particles of which it consists are there as separate words. This has been explained in the Antiquity of the Holy Royal Arch.

The declaration " We three, etc." is a convention entered into not only by the Three but by all those present, and as such an absolute condition for the lawful constitution of a Chapter. The validity of everything done depends upon it.

The first word of the Prayer which follows - "Almighty " - means that God wields infinite " Strength." He also " knows " all things - that is, IS omniscient; and it is expected that when we come into His presence we shall cleanse our thoughts by perfect love and devotion to " His Holy Name."

This Prayer is extremely ancient; it is found in the old Sarum Missal of 1085. But some Chapters have substituted it by another prayer.

" So mote it be " is simply the usual Anglo-Saxon rendering of the Hebrew word "Amen," used at the end of every prayer.

Now Ex. Comps. Z;., H., and J. leave the W. and direct their steps to the E., the place of Light, where indeed they find Light, but they do not all go the same way; two follow the Northern route and one follows the Southern, but all halt and bow at certain intervals.

At the E. they stand in front of - " facing " - the Altar, " in due order," and they share the Sacred Word - that is, the true " Mason Word," which in the seventeenth century was considered of so high importance.

When they have finished, they advance to the Chairs " in due

order “; they take up their S . . . s in the manner prescribed, and when they are seated the M.E. announces that the Chapter must now be considered open.

After this declaration H. and J. unveil the Altar, and the Outer Guard - the Jan. - is informed by the corresponding K.'s.

We imagine that many Craftsmen and other people try at times to find out the secrets of the Supreme Degree by means of our printed Rituals; but it is amazing how little can be discovered in that way; the essential word is always abbreviated; most tantalising !

### CHAPTER III THE PREPARATION OF THE CANDIDATE

ACCORDING to the old American Ritual, the three Candidates had to take off their coats, tie a bandage over their eyes, and coil a rope around their bodies seven times, leaving 3 feet of slack rope between each of them; altogether 30 feet of rope were required !

The P.W. was said to be Rothboni, and without it they could not gain admittance into the Chapter. Rabboni means “ My Lord,” and used as a P.W. is highly suggestive, because it has the same initial as the second part of the P.W. now used, which is commonly pronounced as if it were an alliterative. We suggest that originally there were two parts to the P.W. of the Chapter; first, the incoming Candidate through the P.S. exclaiming, My Lord and then the divine voice through the C. of the H. responding, My people, etc. If this was so, the words would accord beautifully with the purpose and character of the Royal Arch, and it would mean not that there had been a change but that the P.W. had been mutilated or cut short, the Candidate's response only having endured.

In the Ritual of the Chapter of Hope, Deptford at the close of the eighteenth century, according to a MS. copy in the handwriting of William Banks, P.Z., now in the Library of Grand Lodge, the following was the mode of procedure at the time: -

“ To this Sublime Degree none are to be admitted but men of fair character and reputation; of some learning and good natural capacity: of open, generous, and liberal sentiment, totally divested of Bigotry or Enthusiasm, who have a desire of knowledge, and are real philanthropists; must be at least 23 years of age (the old establishment 31 years) and have pass'd thro the several Degrees of the Craft, unless the Initiate's Father be a Companion, or that he himself has been 2 years of the Masters Degree and then with the above qualifications he may be Initiated at 21: but always to be recommended, Balloted for and approved: the Recommendation to be some time previous to the Ballot, that necessary Information may be had. He is to be prepared in a proper apartment (the preparation to be s . . . d, k . . . s bare, the C.T. round his body and closely h . . . w . . . d, and that done in a decent manner) without the least appearance of trifling or levity, and when prepared to be left alone, and notice given to the Chapter, when one of the Scribes or P.Mrs step out and give him some short exhortation, adapted to the purpose: with a caution not to desire Initiation unless fully resolved to go thro it properly and apply himself to the duties of the Chaptr. If he persists they then proceed.”

In the Text Book of Advanced Freemasonry, published in 1879, there are the following instructions: -

[The Candidate having been balloted for and approved, he is prepared thus: He is b . . . f . . . d, his k . . . s are bared, and his feet s . . . s . . . d, with a C.T. round his waist; he is then conducted by the Junior Scribe to the door, etc.]

Nowadays, when the Chapter has been opened, the M.E. requests the

P.S. to go and entrust the Candidate. In some Chapters the P.S. is told to do it " after having ascertained his proficiency in the previous Degrees "; but this is faithfully done in all cases even though the M.E. may not refer to it.

The P.S. is supposed to meet the Candidates in their proper garb as M.M.'s. Their preparation has to take place in " a convenient room adjoining the Chapter "; an expression which has been appropriated by Craft Masons in their work, because the M.M.'s Ceremony is only an introduction to the Royal Arch. The entrusting, therefore, has to be done in that room. Before anything else, however, he will have to make certain demands on them.

1. They have to give him " the convincing proofs" - that is to say, the Signs of the Degrees through which they profess to have passed. This is not merely to prove their allegation that they are M.M.'s, but to ascertain whether they be " proficient" in those Degrees, or, what is the same, whether they be keen Masons.

2. They have to communicate " the substituted Word" of a M.M., for now they have come to obtain the " genuine " in exchange for it.

3. They have to declare on their honour, both as men and as Freemasons, that it is "more than four weeks " since they were " raised." In ancient times no man could be advanced to the genuine secrets until he had been a " Fellow or Master " of a Building Guild; or in later times until he had been a Craft Mason for " twelve months " and had presided in a Craft Lodge. Indeed, this was the usual practice prescribed until somewhat late; the condition of having been raised more than " twelve months " since persisted down to the end of the nineteenth century, for a copy of the Ritual printed in 1890 by the well-known firm " Bro. John Hogg," now A. Lewis, still read " twelve months." This particular copy may be seen in the Library of Grand Lodge, but its quondam

owner corrected the phrase in the text by substituting "four weeks." The Constitutions of the Supreme Grand Chapter now only demand " the Master Degree," together with the said period of " four weeks," as the necessary prerequisites for admission.

4. Before they can enter, too, the Candidates must give a similar " pledge " that they will hele and conceal what the P.S. is about to impart at this stage " with the same strict caution " as everything they already know of Freemasonry.

Then, if the P.S. is satisfied in respect of all these points, he imparts the P.W.'s A . . . R . . . h (not always pronounced as it should be), and he tells the Candidates the meaning they have in Hebrew.

The words in the V.S.L., " My people having found mercy," embody a reference to the goodness of God in providentially setting the Jews free and bringing them out of captivity and making it possible for them to rebuild the Temple and to restore the worship of Jehovah.

When the Candidates have successfully gone through this preliminary ordeal they are allowed to " prepare " themselves. And the Ritual has a rubric which gives the necessary instructions about that preparation. The J. is expected to see that everything is correctly done, and, of course, those who go out to receive the Candidate will have to vouch that he has been " properly prepared."

Ex. Comps. H. and J. take care that before a Candidate enters the Chapter, the Altar and all its secrets are re-veiled; for, although he is in a state of d . . . s, they must not risk his catching a glimpse of anything until the moment arrives for his illumination.

## CHAPTER IV

### THE RECEPTION IN THE CHAPTER

IN comparing the present Ritual with those of the past, two notable features may be observed:

First, that besides the change just noted in reducing the time of active membership as a M.M. from twelve months to four weeks, in some countries the Candidates have been required to go through the Mark Mason Degree not recognised by the United Grand Lodge of England as pure and ancient Masonry.

At one time in Scotland the Masons viewed the R.A. Degree as part and parcel of Templar Masonry. See " The General Regulations for the Government of the Order of the R.A. Masons in Scotland," 1845

Secondly, that whereas at present we may exalt a single Candidate, formerly the Candidates had to come in groups of three. This was considered to be a point of so much importance that in the old American Ritual the OB. contained this clause:

" I furthermore promise and swear, that I will not be at the exaltation of more or less than three Candidates at one and the same time.'

The same Ritual provided that the Candidates should come in with the P.S. and the C. of the H. on either side, because these two officers were jointly responsible for them.

When the C. of the H. was ordered to see what was " the cause of that alarm," his questions to the Candidates were answered by the P.S.; thus the C. of the H. said:

" Is it of your own free will and accord you make this request ?

" - that is, for " further light " in Masonry. And the P.S. answered for the Candidates,

Next the C. of the H. asked the P.S. whether they were “ truly prepared ? “ Whether they had made “ suitable proficiency in the preceding Degrees ? “ “ By what further light, or benefit, do they expect to gain admission ? “ And it was always the P.S. who replied to these questions. The Candidates do not seem to have known or to “ have had “ the P.W.; for the P.S. said that he had it for them, which was whispered in the ear of the C. of the H., who approved it.

Presently the H.P. authorised their admission but in coming in they had to pass through a “ living arch which was composed of the Companions standing in two files face inwards, each of them taking hold of the hands of the Companion opposite locking the fingers. During this ordeal the P.S. recited certain passages of the V.S.L. and counselled the Candidates to stoop low, “ He that humbleth himself shall be exalted.”

This was followed by a perambulation, and then the Candidates went to the Altar “ to receive the OB.”

In Carlile's time (1825) the entrance of the Candidate was practically as at present, except that Joshua, advancing, ordered him to kneel and offered a beautiful Prayer which is substantially as the one given by Adam Brown.

After this he was led to the Altar, where Haggai received him and apprised him that he stood before a representation of the Grand Sanhedrin, the famous Court of Judicature among the Jews.

But at present we may note some changes in our procedure.

The Jan. explains that the Candidate hopes to obtain the privileges of a member of our Order by three things:

1. The help of T.T.A.L.G.M.H.

2. The united aid of the ^ and O.

3. The “ benefit “ of the P.W.'s.

The meaning of the P.W.'s imply the Candidate's affiliation with ancient Israel and his acknowledgment of the God of the nation.

Scribe N. proceeds to verify the statements of the Jan., asking particularly for the information which he will be expected to supply to the M.E. He then enters the Chapter and reports to the Principals, when the M.E. authorises him to bring in the Candidate.

In challenging the applicant he varies slightly what Adam Brown wrote in his Ritual.

The Jan. says that the Candidate is a “ brother “ who, having been “ initiated “ (in the Craft), “ passed,” and in die Dirge (whatever this may mean) “ raised,” desires to be admitted into our Order.

It is because the P.S. considered him qualified that “ as a test of merit “ he has entrusted him with the P.W.'s; and it is on this ground that he has been “ prepared “ for the Ceremony of Exaltation.

Now the Candidate stands b . . . f . . . d between the P.S. and “ the A.S.” and is asked to salute after the manner of a M.M. The words of the M.E. about his aspiring to “preferment in our Order “ are a late addition.

The fact that the Candidate has come in implies that he possesses the P.W.'s; but the M.E. now desires to make sure of three things:



1. Whether he offers himself as a Candidate quite voluntarily.
  
2. Whether his object is to improve himself for the glory of God and the good of man. (This, too, is an addition to the Ritual of Adam Brown.)
  
3. Whether he is prepared to take a solemn OB to keep inviolate the secrets of the Chapter. Adam Brown had nothing here about the OB., but demanded a declaration on the Candidate's honour that he would “ abide by the ancient usages and customs of the Order.”

If all the answers of the Candidate are satisfactory, J. offers the traditional Prayer, which is substantially as Adam Brown left it. This prayer was originally addressed to “the Almighty and Eternal God,” but the word Eternal has been dropped; it began by describing God as “ He who at the beginning brought the world out of chaos “; and it prayed that He should bless the Convocation, and that the Candidate “ may not proceed lightly, nor recede dishonourably, but pursue the Sacred Mysteries steadfastly.”

The modern version of this prayer contains a petition for “ a double portion of the divine Spirit,” which we have added to it; this expression is taken from the story of Elisha and amounts to asking that the Candidate may be brought out of intellectual chaos by the light which is from above.

About 1797, according to the Ritual of the Chapter of Hope, No. 49, Deptford, the word “Initiation “ was used in the sense of Exaltation; and in that Chapter, when the Candidates were soliciting employment, the M.E. said to them:

“ You are now before the Grand R(oyal ) C(ouncil ); pray therefore inform us what is your request.”

“ Answer, To be honoured by Exaltation to your Sublime Degree.”

In the old MS. copies of the Ritual the "a Sublime Degree " is always the Royal Arch, the " Third Degree " being only an approach to it.

At Deptford, too, at that time, after " drawing forth the 3rd K.S." (keystone), the Ritual said:

("The Initiates [sic] ordered to kneel, if a Christian.") If a Christian, the first chapter of St. John's Gospel was read to him, but -

" If a Jew," -

then the fortieth chapter of Isaiah, " Comfort ye, comfort ye, my people, etc.," was read.

This phraseology is highly suggestive. The genuine Freemasonry was really a Jewish product, but the Christians had adapted it for their own use. The Craft Degrees being mere innovations, the Candidates were still regarded as " Initiates."

After the Prayer which has been offered, the M.E. inquires as to the religious conviction of the Candidate, and the answer he gives shows that since his initiation into Craft Masonry he has undergone no change but continues to put his " faith," or rather trust, in T.T.A.L.G.M.H.; he is a Monotheist, which is all that matters.

At the time of the Act of Union, the Candidate used to answer that he put his trust " In Jehovah."

From this we expect him to deduce that he will be quite safe in following his conductor; the prayer signifies that we all share his trust in divine Providence.

## CHAPTER V THE VEILS

IN the Ritual of Adam Brown, after the three Lectures to the Candidate, we have something which is now almost unknown, viz. the Ceremony of the Passing of the three Veils. For our present Ritual ignores it altogether, although we are told that one Chapter in Bristol is still practising it.

The only reference to the Veils which we have retained is when Ex. Comp. H. describes the Ribbon, saying that it is "composed of the two principal colours with which the Veils of the Temple and the Tabernacle were interwoven." Some may think also of the Veil that protects the secrets of the Altar as one of "the Veils."

In a Ritual printed as late as 1873, the Ceremony is given in embryo as an essential part of the Ritual but with a parenthetical clause in brackets which says:

(This Ceremony is sometimes dispensed with.)

It used to be one of the most picturesque features of the Royal Arch, and calls for some remarks because of its manifest antiquity. It was part of the dramatic portion of the ancient Ritual, having to do with the legation of our G.M. Moses. Later on, however, the scene was transferred to the Tabernacle, though the lessons, W.'s and S.'s, remained the same. The Candidates were supposed to come into the First or Holy Lodge and pass through the three compartments. Originally this occurred at a much earlier part of the Ritual, but when its significance was lost it was misplaced, and finally it was altogether abandoned.

All that Adam Brown left of the Passing of the Veils was the merest outline of the early portion of the performance.

Nowadays at our banquets the M.E. makes some inquiry into the

several original G.L.'s which are commemorated amongst us. That interrogatory between the M.E. and the P.S. is taken from the Sections, which are at least two hundred years old. The Third Section contained the following: -

“Comp. Principal Sojr.: You tell me you come from the Grand and [Royal] Lodge at Jerusalem. Pray, how many Grand Lodges have been held ?

Ansr. Three, Most Ext. Z.

“ Z. Where was the first held?

Ansr. In the Tabernacle in the Wilderness.

“Z;. What was it called? The Holy Lodge. Who were the 3 G.M.'s that presided over it ? Ansr. Moses the meek, Aholiab the quiet, and Bezaleel the architect.”

The rest is practically as we have it now, and by holding the Three in “ pious memory “ we continue the tradition about our G.M. Moses. Ex. Comp. J., in his Lecture too, gives an outline of the history of all the three Grand Originals, although as a matter of fact in the actual Ceremonies all but the story of the last, the G. and R. Lodge, has been suppressed.

In some of the Rituals of a century ago the three Presidents of the First or H. Lodge are given as “ Moses, Aaron, and Eleazar,” due perhaps to an attempt to correct the old text. In any case the name of Moses is constant; and it is satisfactory that the ancient Kabbalistic reading has prevailed, and that we still enumerate the names thus: “ M . . . A . . . b, and B . . . 1.”

The second Grand Original has been transferred to the “ Third Degree,” and it is there that the “ M.M.'s “ commemorate it. Only the third is commemorated in the Royal Arch at present.

The old American Ritual directed that the Candidate should be

conducted around the Chapter, and simultaneously the P.S. was to read Exodus iii. 1-6, about his coming to "the Mountain of God, even Horeb," where God revealed Himself in the Burning Bush.

The perambulation ended at a point where there was a visible representation of the Burning Bush; and there for a moment the P.S. slipped down the bandage from the Candidates that they might see it and reflect. At the same time a Companion who lay hidden called out: "Moses! Moses!" and the P.S. answered for the Candidate: "Here am I." The same voice then said: "Draw not nigh hither; put off thy shoes from off thy feet, for the place whereon thou standest is holy ground."

The Candidates had now to kneel and cover their faces, recalling what is written in the V.S.L.: "And Moses hid his face, etc."

In reconstructing the original Ritual, all these things have great evidential value, for here we see that the Candidate was personating Moses, and that the signs used were suggested by the action of the Lawgiver.

Afterwards the Candidate was made to go through three more perambulations of the hall, and then, some hundreds of years having elapsed, the story of the destruction of Jerusalem was read (2 Chronicles xxxvi. 10 - 20).

As stated before, when the "Master's Part" was formed as a separate Degree, about two hundred years ago, the story of the erection of K.S.T. was transferred to it; and now it is no longer true that we commemorate three G.L.'s.

After a while a "shout of rejoicing" broke out with the exclamation: "Hurrah for the Captives!" The bystanders were supposed to learn that Cyrus had made a proclamation authorising the Jews to rebuild the Temple of Jerusalem. Simultaneously a passage was read which explained how the "three Sojourners"

came from Babylon. To make this all the more realistic, the C. of the H., who is supposed to be still in Babylon, asked of the Captives the question:

“Are you willing to go up to Jerusalem ? “

They answered in the affirmative, but regretted being without a P.W. to make themselves known to their Brethren in Palestine. He, however, read Exodus iii. 13, 14, where God says: “ I am that I am “; and added: “ Companions, you will follow me; our P.W. is, “ I am that I am.” Again they had to pass through a living arch to signify their tribulations, and during that passage Psalm cxli. was read and two Prayers were offered.

What followed coincided with the present Ritual. The Candidates came to the first or outer Veil of the Tabernacle and the G.M. asked who they were and what was their request. Nowadays that question is put by the M.E. at the beginning of the dramatic portion of the Ceremonies; but in the old days this was preceded by the Passing of the Veils.

The P.S. answered the challenge on behalf of the Candidates: “ Three weary Sojourners, etc.” (Now use call them “ Three M.M.'s.)

“ Q. How do you expect to enter this first Veil ?

“ A. By the P.W. I am that I am; which we received in Babylon.”

The “ Master,” or Guardian, of the First Veil then said: “ The P.W. is right “; but to enter the second Veil, a Word, Sign, and Exhortation were needed; the Word was Sh . . . m, H . . . on, and J . . . t, which apparently was an earlier Grand Original now forgotten. In the Antiquity of the Holy Royal Arch we suggested that all the Mysteries of the Mediaeval Kabbalists contained three principal characters. The Sign was the action of Moses when he stooped to pick up the Rod from the ground which had turned

into a serpent. The Exhortation was Exodus iv. 1-10. To enable the Candidates to proceed they were entrusted with these three things.

Next, the G.M. of the Second Veil challenged the callers, and the P. S. repeated the statement: " Three weary Sojourners, etc." They gave the P.W., Sign, and Exhortation, and in exchange they received another P.W., Sign, and Exhortation that would enable them to go on. The P.W. was (here we rectify the enclosure) S . . . n, H. . . on, and Adoniram, meant probably for " H.A." The sign was the action of Moses in thrusting his hand into his bosom. The Exhortation was another passage from the writings of Moses.

The G.M. of the Third Veil asked for those things, and he now said Enter ! But although the three Sojourners had now arrived at the Holy of Holies (Sanctum Sanctorum) they again needed another P.W., etc., because beyond the Tabernacle there was another Veil, one which screened the Grand Council from the ordinary worshippers; and our Candidates would have to appear there. The Word was: " H, J., and Z." The Sign was that of the Vaulted Chamber, still in use. The Exhortation was another passage from the writings of Moses. In addition he gave to the " weary sojourners " the signet of Zerubbabel, which referred them to Haggai ii. 23.

So, then, having passed through the three Compartments of the Tabernacle, they came to the Fourth Veil, which proved to be the First Veil of the second Temple, and here the R.A. Captain subjected them to a similar interrogatory. The P.W., Sign, and Exhortation received at the Sanctum Sanctorum admitted them into the presence of the Grand Council, answering to the " Holy Sanhedrin " in our present version of the Ritual. They were asked for the signet of Zerubbabel, and the H.P. on seeing it made " the sign of G. and D." and exclaimed: " Signet of truth, Holiness to the Lord."

Carlile's version shows that in 1825 the " Passing of the Veils " was already "dispensed with in some Chapters," and his plea for giving it is that -

" It is an original part,'

and he wanted his account of Freemasonry to be " complete."

The three Sojourners, viz. the Junior, Senior, and Principal, acted as Guardians of the "three Veils." The Candidate was admitted to the First Veil by the P.M.'s Word and Sign, while the High Priest read Exodus iii. 1-6.

The P.W.'s for the Second Veil were: " I am that I am." The Candidate was shown a serpent and " Aaron's Rod," which really should be " Moses' Rod," while Joshua read Exodus iv. 1-5. The Sign was the stooping of Moses to pick up that rod.

The P.W.'s for the Third Veil were: " Moses, Aaron, and Eleazar " (instead of the names of the three G.M.'s of the First or Holy Lodge), and there Ex. Comp. Joshua read Exodus iv. 6-9. The Sign " of this veil " was " the Leprous Hand " and the " pouring out of water." The P.W.'s leading to the Sanctum Sanctorum were Holiness to the Lord.

Within the symbolical Sanctum Sanctorum the Candidate was shown the Ark of the Covenant, which was said to contain " the Tables of stone, the pot of manna, the table of shewbread, the burning incense, and the candlestick with seven branches."

A few years after Carlile, Adam Brown revived the Ceremony of the Passing of the Veils in a still more simplified form.

The Candidates, who now used to come singly, were still to retain the garb of a M.M. - that is to say, a Master of the Mason's Craft. A Companion was to lead him to the three Veils, where the



three Sojourners acted as “ Masters,” or “ Guards,” of the Veils.

At the First Veil he was admitted by the Word and Sign of an Installed Master - that is to say, G., which means “ E.M.” No doubt this was the practice at the time for the simple reason that only an Installed Master could then aspire to being exalted. This explains, too, why the Companions were called Excellent Masons. Here Scribe Ezra read Exodus iii. 1-6, 13, 14.

The M.E. then gave the Candidate the P.W. to enable him to enter the Second Veil. The Guard of the Second Veil asked for it, and after that the Candidate was shown “Aaron's Rod,” while Scribe E. read out Exodus iv. 1-5 . Evidently the confusion continued between Aaron's Rod and that which Moses cast on the ground and became a serpent.

Suddenly the fortitude of the Candidate was tested by being asked to take up that Rod, which he did.

The P.W.'s here given for the next Veil were Moses, Aaron, and Eleazar. With these Words he would be enabled to enter the Third Veil, which corresponded to the Sanction Sanctorum of the Tabernacle.

Arriving at the Third Veil, the same formalities were gone through and Scribe Ezra read Exodus iv. 6-9; afterwards the Candidate being given the P.W. and the Sign of the Third Veil, which are said to be “ Leprous Hand “ and “ pouring out water,” which refers to Exodus iv. 6-9; while the P.W.'s for the Sanctum Sanctorum are the familiar motto of the Supreme Degree: H. to the Lord.

In the Sanction Sanctorum he was shown five things: the Ark of the Covenant; the Tables of the Law; the Pot of Manna; the Table of Incense; and the Seven-branched Golden Lampstand.

The mention of the Ark of the Covenant as a receptacle for all the other things is an obvious error. In Hebrews ix. 4, " the golden censor and the Ark of the Covenant " are mentioned as two distinct objects, and then it says about the latter: " Which had (or contained) the golden pot that had manna, and Aaron's Rod that budded, and the Tables of the Covenant."

Richard Carlile added the " Table of Shewbread and the burning incense," this latter meaning presumably " the Altar of Incense." In his time (1825) some Companions must have mentioned all those things, but those two articles added by him had always stood in the " Holy Place," otherwise known as " the Middle Chamber of the Temple," whereas the Ark of the Covenant was to be found in the Sanctum Sanctorum. The symbols of those things were kept inside the Ark only as a matter of convenience, that they might be produced and shown to the Companions at the proper time; but the real Ark of the Covenant was not capacious enough to have contained them. Besides, the only articles which we know for certain to have been deposited in it were the Tables of the Law, the Manna, and Aaron's Rod (Deut. x. 2; Exod. xvi. 32; Numbers xvii. 8).

This allusion to the Ark of the Covenant recalls two references to it that occur in the Lectures. In the Historical Lecture Ex. Comp. J. mentions the Ark of the Covenant as designed by God himself in connection with the Tabernacle, the design being delivered to our G.M. Moses on Mt. Horeb. Then, in the Mystical Lecture Ex. Comp. Z. ends his explanation of the Signs by expressing the hope that the Candidate may

"pass through the Ark of our Redemption into the presence of Him who is the Great I am, etc."

The Ark of the Covenant was, as we shall see, the greatest discovery to be made in the course of the Ceremonies. It belonged exclusively to the Sanctum Sanctorum, where God was supposed to

be present; and the three Veils were conceived as leading to the Sanctum Sanctorum.

## CHAPTER VI THE VAULTED CHAMBER

IN the eighteenth century, after the three Sojourners had made their statement as to what they came for, they said:

“ We are of your own kindred, the descendants of those noble families of Giblymites etc.”

And the High Priest being satisfied as to their identity, ordered them to be “ unbound and brought to light,” with a view to their being employed. Both the King and the Scribe “ concurred” in that decision; but now they had to be examined in the Signs of an E.A. and a F.C. To begin with, all that they could do was to go to the N.E. corner of the ruined Temple to prepare the ground for the erection of a new one, for which purpose they were supplied with the three tools we know of; and the injunction laid on them was practically the same as we now hear in the Chapter.

They marched out of the room in Indian file, and on reaching the spot proceeded to remove the broken debris of the old edifice, among which they found “ a keystone,” and under the keystone a trap door.

Here, therefore, we should observe that the mention of three “ keystones “ at a later date is decidedly wrong; there could only be one Keystone.

We should explain, too, that 150 years ago in America among the qualifications demanded of Candidates for the Royal Arch was that they should be Mark Masons; and in this respect much was made of that keystone. But the Mark Mason Degree was very different from

what it is now.

Now, the Principals expressed a desire to know what success the three Sojourners had met with, and they were, therefore, invited to come in and “ give an account of their labours.” On arrival, therefore, the P. S. made a statement on their behalf, which does not greatly differ from what he now says.

Evidently the Keystone was discovered in its original position, for the report of the P.S. ran thus:

“ Which, with great difficulty, we succeeded in removing from the place.”

The Keystone was then taken to the Grand Council and submitted for inspection. The High Priest suggested that it was the Stone of a Mark Master Mason. If this conclusion be accepted, we shall have a point of contact between the two Degrees, the Royal Arch and that of the Mark Mason; but we shall have to regard the Mark Mason Degree as of Jewish extraction, and not as it is at present an essentially Christian Degree.

The King, on examining the Stone, expressed his opinion that this must be the very Stone “ wrought by our G.M., H.A.” But apparently in so saying his meaning was exactly the same as that of the High Priest - that is, they both regard H.A. and the Mark Master as one and the same individual; for immediately after all the three Principals acknowledged the Keystone to be that of a Mark Master Mason and they exclaimed, “Holiness to the Lord,” simultaneously drawing it across their foreheads so as to give the sign known to M.M.'s as that of “ G. and D.”

The P.S. was asked whether the three M.M.'s, or rather the three Sojourners, desired to prosecute their labours and penetrate the secret Vault which they had discovered; and then, on receiving an affirmative reply, the High Priest sent them with the valedictory

formula still used by us:

“ Go, and may the God of your fathers be with you.”

No reference was made to their having cast lots in competing for the honour; apparently there was mutual agreement. The Companion who descended had the rope (in later times they said “ C.T.”) wound around his body seven times.

The first things he discovered were “ three small trying triangles “ - that is to say, three right-angled triangles of the sort that enabled a Mason to adjust rectangular corners of buildings, and when provided with a plumb in the contra they could also help him to find the level. When these triangles were brought to the Principals they again gave the sign of G. and D., and they proclaimed those appliances (which were really what we now call “ Squares “) to be the Jewels of the three G.M.'s who presided over the Second Lodge.

The Sojourners are said to have made a second descent, and now they discovered the Ark of the Covenant, which was also brought to the surface and conveyed to the Grand Council for their inspection. The P.S. explained that the finding of this “ small box or chest “ was due to the Sun being at the time “ at its meridian height “; the light then enabled them to observe that its position was “ on a pedestal, curiously wrought, and overlaid with gold.” The Sojourner now “ involuntarily found his hand raised in this position (Reverential or Hailing Sign) to guard his eyes from the intense light and heat reflected from it.” This seems to be a reference to the Shekinah-glory which attested the presence of God in the Temple.

After the Ark of the Covenant had been taken away, the air became “ exceedingly offensive, and he gave the signal of ascending and was immediately drawn up.”

In our Ritual all reference to this discovery has been dropped; we seem to be content with the mention of “ the Pedestal “; but originally the Ark of the Covenant was the most important thing.

Adam Brown mentioned five things as being in the Sanctum Sanctorum; the first was the Ark of the Covenant; the other four were supposed to have been enclosed in it. In the eighteenth century, when the High Priest opened it, to show the contents to the Candidates, the first thing he brought out was “ a very ancient-looking book.” He read the first words; also the last in the volume, and then a passage which explained why it had been placed in that strange receptacle (Gen. i. 1-3; Deut. xxx. 24-26; Exodus xx. 21), and with these passages before them, the Principals could not have had any doubt as to what that book was; and therefore they simultaneously exclaimed:

“ This is the book of the Law, long lost, but now found; Holiness to the Lord.” In saying this they gave the Penal Sign, which was done by striking off the crown of the skull.

This incident marks the culminating point of the R.A. Ceremonies. The High Priest, therefore, informed the Candidates that the moral to be drawn here was that the world owed the preservation of the V.S.L. to R.A. Masons.

Next the High Priest brought out of the Ark a little pot with manna, Aaron's Rod, and the “Key to the ineffable characters of this Degree “ - that is, certain Hebrew anagrammic alphabets which, by the permutation of characters in the V.S.L., the adepts of the Speculative Science could obtain the hidden meaning of every passage.

After that the High Priest read out four sentences which appeared inscribed on the four sides of the Ark of the Covenant, viz.:

1. “ Deposited in the year 3000.”

2. " By Solomon, King of Israel."

3. " Hiram, King of Tyre and Hiram Abiff."

4. " For the good of Masonry generally, but the Jewish nation in particular."

The last words bear out what was said in the Antiquity of the Holy Royal Arch, that our Supreme Degree was a Jewish product and that its original Ritual was characteristically Jewish, although it was adapted to the Christian mind, in some respects unwisely.

" Deposited in the year 3000 " means, of course, 3000 of our Masonic era Anna Lucis, "Year of Light." It is from this that the M.M.'s obtained their statement as to the date of the slaying of H.A.: " He was slain 3000 years after the creation of the world "; a statement which may be seen reflected on the T.B. of the Third Degree, where the figures are written in the Hebrew style, from right to left, thus, "0003."

## CHAPTER VII

### THE TWO PRELIMINARY DESCENTS

THE two figurative descents of the Sojourners into the Vaulted Chamber is a simplification of what will be done later on, " somewhat in a dramatic manner," having the effect of duplicating the Ceremonies. This may have been brought about by an attempt to shorten the R.A. Ritual; the epitome produced having afterwards been added to the larger performance.

Here we shall only review what every Companion is already familiar with. We have already seen how it came into the old Ritual.

As the Candidate seeks to participate in the Light of our

Mysteries, he is asked to “advance “ towards the Sacred Shrine in which they are “ deposited.” This advancing is only a preliminary; later on there is a more formal way of advancing. It is part of the duplication just mentioned.

The word “ deposited “ is scarcely suitable. In former times certain secrets were literally “deposited,” put inside a chest which lay on the Altar, and then one could not have said anything else We have already said that when that chest was found, the High Priest brought out the contents and exhibited them to the Companions.

The Candidate advances by the prescribed s . . . s, bending and pausing at the odd numbers, 3, 5, 7, so as to express reverence, for with each step taken he comes nearer and nearer to the S. and M. name of T.T.A.L.G.M.H.

That Name is of the greatest significance. We may remember that in the Prayer offered at the opening of the Chapter reference is made to it; and when the M.E. declares the Chapter open he does so also in “ the Name “ of T.T.A.L.G.M.H.

The Candidate obeys the order of the M.E., being preceded by the P.S., who shows him how it should be done. But now he is told, not that he has reached the Sacred Shrine on which the secrets are deposited, but that he stands at the Crown of a vaulted chamber. It is necessary that he should penetrate into this chamber and explore it; and it is for this purpose that he removes two of the “arch-stones,” allowing just enough space to pass his body.

The two men who stand to the right and left help to lower him into the cavity; and when he has reached the bottom he hears the voice of some one (Ex. Comp. J.) who at that moment personates our G.M., K.S., the Regent of the Secret Tradition, reading out some portion of his own writings, the burden of which is that he



should seek Wisdom and Understanding, which are the two principal Sephiroth, or attributes of God, after Crown.

Adam Brown wrote that the Candidates were to remove two “copestones,” but the modern reading is undoubtedly better. And he directed that he should express this, not by the action now prescribed in our Ritual, but by “pulling the cord of life round the body three times for each stone,” which indicates more of an effort.

Before Adam Brown. in a MS. copy of the Ritual of 1797, we find the expression “the 3rd Keystone”; as if there were three keystones; it shows that there had been a great confusion of ideas.

Nowadays, the Candidate is asked to endeavour to find something which, of course, requires searching. Adam Brown made the M.E. to say: “You will now lean forward on your left hand, and search with your right.”

In the surrounding gloom the Candidate grasps an object, but when the M.E. asks what it is he can only say that it feels like a scroll of vellum or parchment. This is the form which books took among the ancient Hebrews; the Craft Masons imitated it by giving the same form to their Warrants.

Questioned further about the object found, the Candidate laments that for want of light he is unable to read its contents or give any details of his find.

This last answer gives the M.E. an occasion to moralist on the subject of Light and Darkness; and the Candidate is reminded that natural man is like a child groping in the twilight, “the darkness of ignorance and error”; and he would have remained in that condition if God in His mercy had not brought us both Light and Immortality by revealing His Holy Will and Word.

In what follows, the Candidate removes another arch-stone by repeating the previous action, but now he represents a later generation of Freemasons. Indeed, nearly 500 years are supposed to have gone by. Again, then, he is lowered into the Vaulted Chamber, when he hears the voice of one (Ex. Comp. H.) who personates the prophet Haggai, reading a portion of his own writings. His book is dated the second year of the reign of Darius - that is, 520 B.C.

The third stone to be removed is the "Keystone." Haggai was one of the three chief men responsible for the rebuilding of the Temple, the other two were " Zerubbabel, son of Shealtiel, Ruler of Judah," and " Joshua, the son of Josedech the High Priest."

He is supposed to have been a member of " the Great Synagogue," which exercised control over the Jewish Community from about 450 to 200 B.C. But the date of his writings militates against this; and as Ezra is stated to have been the first president of the Great Synagogue, it is inconceivable that Haggai would have served under him in an inferior capacity.

The passage read out is a message announcing the great progress that had been made in the great and glorious undertaking of rebuilding the Temple. The address was apparently delivered at the laying of the foundation-stone for the encouragement of the entire community.

Some of those who co-operated in the work had known the former edifice in all its glory; and now they were asked to be diligent, to put their whole heart in their task. Of course, what they all desired was to see the new Temple completed and Jehovah dwelling in their midst as before; indeed, there is the definite promise that: " The glory of this latter House (or Temple) shall be greater than the former."

The Candidate by the experiences he goes through gives proof of his zeal, and therefore he is now considered entitled to take his OB., which is done facing the Tabernacle, and not at the Altar.

After the OB., however, the Ceremony will be interrupted by enacting in a dramatic manner what so far has been done symbolically.

## CHAPTER VIII

### THE OB.

THE old form of OB. which obtained in the Royal Arch two hundred years ago was a lengthy formula comprising no less than sixteen clauses. We shall summarise briefly what the Candidates promised and swore:

1. Not to reveal the secrets.
2. Not to wrong (injure) any Companion.
3. Not to reveal the key to the Ineffable (Hebrew) Characters.
4. Not to speak (pronounce) the Grand Omnific Word, except in the manner in which they receive it.
5. Not to be (assist) at the exaltation of Candidates in a clandestine (irregular) Chapter.
6. Not to be present at the exaltation of anyone who had not received the previous Degrees.
7. Not to be (assist ) at the exaltation of more or less than three Candidates at one and the same time.
8. Not to be at the formation of a Chapter unless there be

present nine regular R.A. Masons. (The officers were nine.)

9. Not to speak evil of a Companion.

10. Always to support the Supreme Grand Chapter.

11. To answer and obey all due signs and summonses.

12. Not to strike a Companion so as to draw blood.

13. All other things being equal, to prefer a R.A. Mason as an applicant for employment.

14. To help a R.A. Mason when in difficulties.

15. To keep the secrets of a Companion when entrusted to them.

16. To assist all R.A. Masons and their dependents.

The “ key “ in Carlile's time (1825) had come to mean the Alphabet of Squares and Angles which the Masons had adopted; but originally it consisted of certain anagrammic alphabets invented by the Kabbalists, as explained in the Antiquity of the Holy Royal Arch. With the aid of these alphabets they effected some permutations of the Hebrew letters which made it impossible for the profane to read their secrets. This was too difficult an art for the Christian Masons, and they naturally tried to Europeanise it with their newfangled alphabets, which were never popular and could never serve the same purpose as the anagrammic alphabets of the Kabbalists.

At Deptford in 1797 there was a proviso about the V.S.L. The Candidates held “ the Bible “ in their hands, which had to be opened either at the Old Testament or the New Testament, “ as may be deem'd most Obligatory from the former principles of the Initiate “ - that is to say, according as to whether he be a

Christian or a Jew. The Jewish practice has prevailed.

One feature of the OB. at Deptford was the stipulation that the Candidate was not to pronounce " the Sacred Name lightly or irreverently, nor the Word itself, but properly divided into syllables as hath been the custom in this Order, time immemorial." This distinction between the Sacred Name and the Word - that is, the Mason Word - should be borne in mind.

In 1825 (according to Carlile) the OB. had been reduced to simply the promise not to reveal the secrets, and little else; the Companions of that time do not appear very scrupulous. The penalty which the Candidate called upon himself " in addition to all my former penalties," relates to " the Crown of my skull."

This, at present, continues, very much condensed.

Of course, the OB. has at all times been an indispensable condition for admission to our mystic rites, and especially to the dramatic performances which follow.

A certain posture is prescribed in taking it. When he has assumed that posture, the V.S.L. - the Scroll which our predecessors found in the Vault - is placed in his left hand, as being nearest his heart, and he covers it with the r ... h ...

Now it is customary to use the Christian Bible, which contains much more than the Torah, the Law of Moses; in it we find the writings of our G.M., K.S., those of the prophets, among whom is Haggai; and also the New Testament.

The OB. is taken as in the presence of T.T.A.L.G.M.H. and of the Companions of the Chapter, which must be duly c . . . d, c . . . d, and c . . . d for the specific purpose of exalting.

It includes the solemn promises:

1. Always to hale and to conceal, and never to divulge any of our secrets.

2. Never to attempt to pronounce the S. and M. name of T.T.A.L.G.M.H., which is now about to be communicated to the Candidate, except in the presence and with the assistance of at least two Companions, or if raised to the position of a First Principal when in the exercise of his functions in the body of a lawfully constituted R.A. Chapter.

In addition to what is now said as to the penalty of our OB., in the eighteenth century the Candidates were made to say: "My brains exposed to the scorching of the meridian sun, etc.," which implies what Carlile reported as the penalty in 1825, "the crown of my skull " being struck off.

As observed elsewhere, the communication of the Word in the Chapter was not done by the Principals alone, but by all those present, so that the Candidates could see many groups of three doing the same thing simultaneously. In a Chapter which meets at Canterbury this practice has been continued up till now.

The "pledge of F.," now consisting of four seatings, is stated to make the OB. binding "for as long as you shall live." Hence it has always been considered that once a Mason, a Mason for life.

Adam Brown and Carlile's version prescribed the sealing of the V.S.L. " five times "; before that it had been customary to seal it " seven times." The modern practice of "four seatings " seems to come from the idea once in vogue among uninstructed Masons that the Royal Arch was an additional - a fourth - Degree, which is an utterly wrong notion, as may be proved by our Book of Constitutions; still it has become the common practice.

After the OB., the P.S. is instructed to " raise " the Candidate

in due form. In the M.M.'s stage, which is a preliminary to the Royal Arch, the Candidate has gone through the real Ceremony of "Raising." But now the Third Degree having been split into two parts, the Raising Ceremony has been left out of what is called "the Supreme Order," and the Candidate has once more to be "raised"; and this is done in the simple manner we know of.

With this explanation one can understand why at the beginning of the nineteenth century it was not the P.S. who performed the "Raising," but the M.E. (as in the M.M.'s Degree the W.M.), and he, linking the two halves of the Third Degree, the actual raising of an exalte and the tradition about H.A., used this solemn adjuration:

"In the name of the Omnipotent Being (Jehovah, in whom the Candidate trusted), arise, and may the remembrance which was found on the grave of him who was truly the most excellent of Masons, and who parted with his life because he would not part with his honour, ever stimulate his successors to imitate his glorious example, etc."

This makes it plain that the "Raising" in our Supreme Degree was originally meant as a commemoratron of the Raising of H.A.

A similar observation might be made as to the restoration of Light. In granting him that blessing, he is formally admitted to "the Light of our Order" but inasmuch as he is a Mason this is the second time he has gone through that ceremony, this being due to the splitting of Degrees and the distribution of the elements. The fact is that the E.A. goes through an ordeal which properly belongs to the Royal Arch, and this necessitates doing again in the Supreme Degree what has already been done in the Craft.

While the Companions stand ranged under their Banners, the M.E. says that by thus admitting the Candidate, he feels both "gratification and confidence." His gratification is obvious; his

confidence is that his future conduct will justify “ our partiality “; we have been partial to him as compared with the many who aspire to the honour of being exalted; in old times it was due to a recognition of “ merit and ability.”

The M.E. also explains to the Candidate that his Supreme Degree is “ the essence of Freemasonry.” His words imply that at the Act of Union the United Grand Lodge of England did not only recognise the Royal Arch as something genuinely Masonic, but that at long last the Moderns had come to realise that all that precedes it was a substitution, and not the real thing, as the Antients had been maintaining for a century.

The newly admitted Companion now begins his career by reading the Scroll brought out of the Vaulted Chamber, and as he does so he identifies it with the Law of Moses and the “Record of God's Revealed Will and Word “; for what he reads are the first words of the Hebrew Torah (“ Law “), and the M.E. tells him as much, urging him and all the Companions to “ bless, praise, and magnify “ God's Holy Name for the knowledge which has been granted to us, a knowledge which, coming out of the V.S.L., produces “the Light that shines around.”

In the old days, after the OB. there was a perambulation, and then a long Prayer followed which began thus:

“ Supreme Architect of Universal Nature, who by thine Almighty Word didst speak into being the stupendous Arch of Heaven,” etc.

This accounts for the epithet Omnific, “All-creating,” which we give to “ the Word,” or fiat of God; it had been instrumental in bringing the whole Universe into existence. It is from this Prayer that the M.M.'s obtained that part of their Prayer which says:

“ At whose creative fiat all things first were made,” etc.



Now the Candidate and his attendants simply acknowledge the kindness of the Chapter by silently saluting, and they withdraw.

## CHAPTER IX THE PROTAGONISTS OF OUR STORY

As soon as the Candidates have taken their OB. they become members of our Order. But the M.E. realised the importance of what was coming when, as they retired from the Chapter, he said that on their return " the Ceremony " would be proceeded with. The Ceremony comprises everything; and although when they enter there seems to be a break, the play which is performed is only a continuation of what has preceded.

The Candidates still retain their garb as M.M.'s, but now they represent three historical characters - not three historical individuals, but three typical men of a certain class. Formerly they were not described as " M.M.'s," but as " Sojourners " - that is, travellers who had come on a long journey and were remaining for the execution of some errand.

The purpose of the play is to instruct those present concerning the aims of our Order.

After a report has been given, Scribe N. is deputed to inquire the cause, and he finds himself confronted with the three M.M.'s, who have just arrived in Jerusalem from distant Babylon.

They are aware of the fact that an effort is being made to rebuild the ruined Temple. They were officially informed while still in captivity, and, fired with enthusiasm at the thought of re-erecting that noble pile, they have braved the fatigues of the long journey across the Syrian desert, " anxious " to have a share, however humble, " in that great and glorious undertaking."

Being admitted into the august Sanhedrin, they salute after the manner of M.M.'s. The M.E. asks who they are and what is their desire. And the P.S. (as spokesman for the Candidates) repeats the answer previously given by the J. at the door.

They are told that the rebuilding operations are "holy work," requiring men of special qualifications; and, therefore, the Sanhedrin must inquire into the antecedents of all applicants. It is not enough to be a Jew, or an Israelite; Candidates should be members of the tribe of Judah and lineal descendants of David; they had decided to bar all others.

When the city of Jerusalem had been taken and sacked by the Babylonian hordes, and the Holy Temple was turned into a heap of ruins, many Jews were so cowardly that they fled and hid themselves; naturally the Holy Sanhedrin could not allow any such characters to participate in the noble enterprise.

Moreover, the Babylonian commander had left behind many Jewish labourers "for the purpose of tilling the land," and they must consider those menial and uncouth people equally disqualified.

The applicants scorn a comparison with either of the two classes of men referred to. They assure the M.E. that they are nobly born, conscious of their descent from patriarchs and kings, belonging to the princely tribe of Judah and the royal lineage of David. Their fathers were deported to far-off Babylon by Nebuzaradan, the leader of the Babylonian army, a calamity which they regard as a visitation of God because of the sins of the nation and of their king at the time, Jehoiachin.

According to the predictions of Jeremiah, their captivity was to last seventy years, and sure enough now, in the year 538 B.C., Cyrus, King of Persia, having conquered Babylon, moved by a spirit of toleration, had graciously authorised the erection of a

Temple at Jerusalem and ordered the liberation of all those Jewish captives who might desire to return to their homeland and help in that work.

The three M.M.'s, therefore, had availed themselves of the opportunity, and they now solicited permission to assist in rearing the noble edifice and in establishing the House of God there for all time to come in order to bring " peace " (or prosperity) to the whole land.

William Finch, in a supplement to his R.A. Ritual (1804), enumerates the Ark of the Covenant as one of the objects restored by Cyrus to the Jews. Ezra wrote, in chapter i. 7-11, that Cyrus had restored the sacred vessels of the Temple at Jerusalem, but he does not include the Ark of the Covenant among them.

Nebuzaradan, in taking captives, had only carried out the wishes of his Master, the King of Babylon (2 Kings xxv. 8-20). He selected them, bringing away the supporters of Zedekiah, and presented them to Nebuchadnezzar as the best element of the Jewish population.

The ancestry claimed by those men is frankly acknowledged, and they are accredited as " Brethren."

They are asked in what " part " of the work (Adage Brown said " in what department ") they wished to be employed, but they have no particular preference; they will be glad to do anything.

Their humility and deference to the G.M.'s is commended, but as they have made their application after the principal posts have been filled, all that can be done is to send them to clear up the ground as a preliminary for the foundation " of the Most Holy Place " - that is, the Sanctum Sanctorum.

This explains why a Candidate had first to go through the Craft

before he could be admitted as an adept to the Speculative Science; he must be able to handle the pick, the spade, and the crow; or, as our Mediaeval Brethren interpreted it, he had to be a Fellow in a Building Guild before he could be allowed to enter “ the Acception.”

The Principals impose a strict condition on the new workmen, which is, that if, during their labours, they should come across “ any relics of ancient architecture “ (so Adam Brown), or anything which they thought of any importance, not a word should be whispered about it to anyone outside the Holy Sanhedrin, but should be reported to them without delay.

The M.M.'s, or Sojourners, now thank the noble Rulers of Israel. They promise faithfully to discharge their duties; they salute as M.M.'s and retire from the Chapter with the parting blessing from the President of the Assembly.

Carlile's version of this part of the Ritual is substantially the same as we have it now, but contains some phrases that ring truer than our own.

The warning given by the M.E. to the Sojourners when they are commissioned reads thus: “ Should you meet anything belonging to the First Temple, etc.”

The P.S. says that having reached the bottom he “ searched and found the Scroll,” which is vastly more realistic than the words: “You will now endeavour to find something.”

Then he says that at the time of the first descent, “the Sun had just come to the portico of the Eastern door, and darting its beams parallel to the plane of the horizon,” etc. Of course, under such conditions, down in the Vault it was impossible to see things distinctly.

The predictions about the destruction of Jerusalem by Jeremiah “ and other prophets “ “ began to be fulfilled in the fourth year of the reign of Jehoiakin, A.L. 3398.

The descent of those Three Men from the Patriarchs is readily conceded, but what the M.E. desires to be informed about is

“ Your immediate ancestors.”

They scorn being in any way related to “ the lineage of that race of traitors who fell away during the siege and went over to the enemy,” etc.

The men left behind by the Babylonian commander were “ to cultivate the vineyards and for other servile purposes.”

## CHAPTER X

### THE CENTRAL MYTHOS

SOON after the protagonists of our story have been commissioned for their work, they are seen to return because they desire to acquaint the Holy Sanhedrin with the sensational discovery they have made. Here, however, the modern version of the story is much simpler than that which was related one hundred and fifty years ago, according to the old American Ritual.

The present story runs as follows (the speaker is the P.S., after Scribe N. has let in the three M.M.'s): -

“ Early this morning having commenced our labours we came upon two columns exquisitely carved and well-finished. (These columns are, of course, B. and J. In the Craft the E.A. and the F.C. are made to represent them when at the N.E. and S.E.)

“ Presently we came across twelve other columns which stood in

two rows of six, and they were quite as beautiful, all of them symmetrically arranged. From their position it was evident that they were intended to carry the roof of an underground passage, subway, or gallery, leading to that part of the Temple which was known as ' the Holy Place,' or in Hebrew the Hekal, i.e. ' the Middle Chamber.' “

(Compare with these twelve pillars the arrangement of the twelve ensigns in the Chapter, which is very suggestive.

Seeing, too, that at the facade of K.S.T. there used to be ten steps, it is conceivable that there was some such underground passage leading from somewhere on the forepart of the edifice to somewhere under the “ Holy Place,” to some sort of Crypt; the lay of the ground would have made the work of construction easy.)

“ We were all eager to find out whether this was so, but the debris of the former structure acted as an obstruction, and we first had to clear away the stones and rubbish. At length we came upon what seemed to be ' a solid rock ' (so Adam Brown), or 'a compact mass of masonry'; but I (the P.S.), striking it accidentally with my crow, observed a hollow sound. When we had removed the earth we could see plainly, both by the convex form of the mass and also from ' a series of stones in the form of a dome' (Adam Brown) that there must be a secret apartment beneath.

“ Feeling sure that ' the Chief Architect ' of that noble Sanctuary, H.A., would not have constructed that arch without some definite purpose, we resolved to press forward in our investigations, to verify our suspicions and clear up the mystery. Two of the arch-stones were taken out, and then we actually beheld a large vault. All of us three were equally eager to go down, and therefore we decided who should have that honour by casting lots. The speaker had thus the good fortune to make the first descent.”

(In a Ritual of 1797, now in the Grand Lodge Library, the subterranean passage is described as Solomon's " private gallery." This would seem to imply that there was a hidden way for going from the King's Palace to the Temple.)

The P.S. then proceeds:

" I was suitably bound and lowered down. Once at the bottom, reaching forth with my hands I felt a sort of column with some carved symbols on it, but the light was insufficient to make out the exact nature of those things.

" Rope being given, I went all round the vault when I put my hand on a roll of parchment; but again owing to the darkness I could not tell exactly what it was. When I came to the surface, however, I brought with me the scroll and read the first words, Bereshith bara Elohim, etc., and I realised that here I had the long - lost original copy of the Torah ('Law') of Moses, what our Craft Masons invariably call the V.S.L.

" The discovery of this precious heirloom of the Jewish nation gave us courage and we removed the keystone, so as to widen the entrance and to let the light into the place.

(Nothing is said here about the Keystone being taken to the Grand Council for inspection. But according to the American Ritual of the eighteenth century it was done, and undoubtedly it had great evidential value.)

"When I again descended, it was midday, and the sun being at its meridian, its rays fell vertically into the vault and I was thus able to see that the centre of it was occupied by a block of white marble which was in shape a double cube like the Altar of Incense in the Holy Place right overhead.

" On the front of that ornament were the initials of the three

G.M.'s who were responsible for the erection of the First Temple, viz. " etc.

(These initials, if combined and read in the usual way, spell a Hebrew word meaning "to bow down, to worship.")

The P.S. also says that " beneath " these initials were " certain mystic characters "; where by characters he means " symbols," without defining which symbols they were. Adam Brown was more precise, for he said that these symbols had been carved " on the plinth."

The top of that block of marble was covered with a veil; really it was a support for the Ark of the Covenant and the veil covered everything; but about this Ark nothing is said now.

The Sojourner who descended into the Vault, on removing that veil, saw a plate of gold on which had been engraved what he felt to be the S. and M. Name of T.T.A.L.G.M.H. This was enough for him; he replaced the veil with awe and reverence, gave the signal agreed on and was drawn up. They carefully closed again the aperture and came post-haste to report the wonderful discovery they had effected.

From this narrative it is evident that the roll, or scroll, or V. of the S.L., was of the greatest consequence for R.A. Masons; it is all that has been left of the things the three original Sojourners found; it seems to have been found not inside the Ark of the Covenant or covered with the veil, but as if it had been thrown about on the floor; and yentas everything in our Freemasonry.

When the Chapter is first opened, the V.S.L. is also opened; indeed, before it is opened the Principals take it into their hands and swear by it something on which the validity of everything done depends; the same thing happens when the



Candidate takes his OB.; and again when the Chapter is closed.

With our Ancient Brethren, the V.S.L. always meant the Torah, “the Law of Moses,” and nothing else, something unique. They described themselves as “Speculatives,” and their “speculations” were based on the *ipsissima terra*, the actual words, in that volume.

Presumably the “finding” of the V.S.L. meant more than the discovery of a material book; esoterically it meant the finding of the hidden sense of both its ordinances and commandments, which the Kabbalists obtained through “the Key” mentioned in the previous chapter.

## CHAPTER XI HISTORICITY OF THE GREAT TEST

WHEN the Mythos has been enacted the M.E. makes a statement which is a challenge to R.A. Masons; he says:

“Your appearance bears every appearance of truth,” etc.

The Sojourners, however, are told that their story by itself - that is, without corroboration of any sort - is insufficient. In order to convince the Holy Sanhedrin of its veracity, the test he proposes is a simple one: they should say what it was that they saw engraved on the plate of gold.

The Rulers (in Hebrew *Harodixn*) of Israel had already some knowledge of what had been reported, presumably because it had been traditionally handed down from the days of King Solomon. But it was possible that the material facts on which these secret rites were founded had now been brought to light. If so, they ought to know; and they insisted on finding out.

The three Sojourners, however, had to decline this test, because from very ancient times it had been considered unlawful for any man to pronounce the S. and M. Name of T.T.A.L.G.M.H. which they had seen inscribed under the veil.

Among the Jews there was a strong aversion to pronounce the name of Yahweh, but it was not absolutely forbidden. The High Priest of Israel uttered it on the Day of Atonement (in Hebrew Yom Kipper) when he went into the Sanctum Sanctorum and stood before the Ark of the Covenant as the representative Israelite pleading for mercy on behalf of his people. The minor priests, too, uttered it in pronouncing the Blessing.

Still from at least 300 B.C. neither in the Septuagint nor in the New Testament has the Sacred Name been used once.

But the Name referred to by the Sojourners as that of T.T.A.L.G.M.H. is not the Four-lettered Name, or Tetragrammaton, but something which although extra-canonical was most jealously guarded by the Kabbalistic Rabbis, who believed that it embodied an impenetrable mystery.

The scruples of the Sojourners are countered by the M.E. sending two of the chief officers of the Council, Scribes E. and N., to the spot, that they may verify their statement. On their return those men advance to the Altar in due form, compare what they have seen with the symbols of the Chapter, and answer that what has been reported is absolutely correct.

But is there an historic foundation for all this? Let us consider the facts so far as they are stated by authorities.

The Second Temple was practically a new structure. Ezra tells us that the builders began by attending to the " foundations." In chapter iii. 7 he says that " the foundation of the Temple of the Lord was not yet laid." But when the Samaritans wrote to

Artaxerxes they complained that the exiles were “ building the rebellious and bad city, and have set up the walls thereof, and joined the foundations “ (iv 12). And later on we read: “ Then came the same Sheshbazzar (whom Cyrus had made Governor) and laid the foundation of the House of God which is in Jerusalem: and since that time and even until now it hath been in building, and yet it is not finished “ (v. 16). The period of the building operations was 536 to 520 B.C.

The Rev. James King, in his book *Recent Discoveries on the Temple Hill*, speaks of certain subterranean substructures under the Temple and says:

“ The floor of these vaults is about forty feet below the Haram area, and more than a hundred feet above the great foundation-stone. They are called Solomon's Stables by Franks, but the Moslems call the place Al Masjed el Kadim - that is, ' The Old Mosque.' These vaults were used as stables by the Frank Kings and the Knight Templars, and holes on which rings were fastened can still be traced on some of the piers.

“ Since the floor of Solomon's stables is upwards of one hundred feet above the foundation-stone, it seems highly probable that there exists another system of vaults below, for the vast space from the rock upward is not liked to be filled up with solid earth.”

A very old writer, Philostorgius, writing about 364 (that is, more than 1500 years ago) in his *Ecclesiastical History* gave practically the story of the R.A. Ritual. And another early Christian writer, Nicephorus, repeated it. As the tradition which they hand down relates to the Temple of Jerusalem, and they were not Jews, they must have been drawing from the ancient lore of the Kabbalistic Rabbis.

Moreover, recent writers have shown that in the ancient East it

was customary to deposit such things as copies of the fundamental law of the nation and of the God of the land at the foundation of every great Temple. Thus Dr Edouard Neville referred to this custom in a paper on "The Finding of the Law by King Josiah" which he read to the Academie des Inscriptions, and in the course of it he said that the foundation-deposits were often placed in vaults, or under the walls, or at the base of the image of the god (see his work, *Archaeology of the Old Testament*, published in English by Robert Scott).

Let us also reflect that the Jews believed that the Ark of the Covenant had been put away in a secret place. In the Second Temple there was no trace of the Ark of the Covenant; the ordinary worshippers could not see it anywhere and had no evidence of there being any propitiatory at all. This is very strange, but it is a fact; the sacred chest, on the possession of which every Israelite made the prosperity and the safety of the nation to depend, had completely vanished from the National Sanctuary. Where could it be ?

When Ezra enumerates the various objects which had been restored by King Cyrus, he makes no mention of this, the most sacred of all the "sacred vessels" of the Temple. Again, Josephus, in *De Bells Judaica*, asserts that the *Sanctum Sanctorum* in his day contained nothing at all; and this is confirmed by Tacitus when in his *History* he relates the entrance of Pompey into the Temple.

This, surely, is a difficult problem. In the *Apocalypse of Baruch*, written before the Fall of Jerusalem, we read (vi. 7) that the Ark of the Covenant was then in existence, but it lay hidden somewhere; an "Angel" (which might mean anything, any kind of individual) having secreted it some time before the date of writing.

Among the Kabbalists, who were Jews, and some of them Rabbis, there was the legend preserved in *2 Maccabees* ii. 15, which was

to the effect that Jeremiah had hid the Ark of the Covenant and the Altar of Incense in a cave. In the Talmud (Horajoth, 12a) it is stated that it was King Josiah who hid the Ark and other sacred objects, including the golden pot of manna. Possibly the Ark may have been hidden since the days of Josiah, and the "Sojourners," or "Exiles from Babylon," may have discovered it, after which they restored it to its position to ensure its safety.

At any rate the original object of the Royal Arch was to reveal to its adepts the fact that the Ark was in the Vaulted Chamber, not far from the Sanctum Sanctorum, down in a vault and hidden from the profane, so that the All-seeing Eye could still accept the Sacrifices of His people and the Intercessions of His High Priest.

In all the Rituals there are two descents into the Vaulted Chamber; and they are intended to represent two different chronological points: the first is in King Solomon's time, when the Temple is nearly finished and we hear of a Vault where the half-gentile Architect ("the Widow's Son") has been buried, and where the foundation-deposit must also have been laid; the second is in the days of Z., H., and J., when the discovery of this forgotten Vault was made and its contents brought to light.

With such unassailable testimony, then, the Principals decided to reward the three Sojourners for their zeal and perseverance, which had led to the discovery of the Vault and its contents; at once they were exalted to the position which their noble ancestors held long since, and their exemplary conduct was held up to the admiration of future generations.

It is remarkable that the Sojourners almost always speak of H.A. as "the W.'s Son"; but this is in conformity with the V.S.L. (1 Kings vii. 14), which says that his father was a "respectable citizen (Heb., Ish) of Tyre, a worker in brass."

Since that distant date the possession of the ineffable WORD has always been considered the chief, the “ most convincing,” proof of being a R.A. Mason, and no one who did not know it, and who did not know the manner of communicating it, would ever have been accepted as a true Companion.

This S. and M. Name, revealed only in the Supreme Degree, was a secret of our Ancient Brethren which was never betrayed previous to the advent of modern Freemasonry. In their use of it now our people are like children playing with a fossil; they are incapable of realising all that it means. Its origin has been fully explained in the Antiquity of the Holy Royal Arch.

According to Carlile, when the Sojourners came back and made their report of the great discovery, the M.E. said:

“Pray, Sojourners, give us that which you have found, and explain the characters.”

They were presumed to have brought with them the objects they had found, and to be able to read Hebrew. Their answer to that demand was somewhat different from what we are accustomed to in modern Chapters:

“ That, M.E., we should be glad to do, but we confess our ignorance, like wise men. We should deem it too great a presumption to attempt it.”

The M.E., therefore, immediately proceeded to explain what it all meant. He began by saying:

“ These three mysterious Words in a triangular form is the long-lost Sacred Word of a M.M., and is too incomprehensible for individual expression.”

The Candidate was given a triple Word, long known as “ the Mason Word,” not the “substituted Word of a M.M.,” but the real one. And it was so highly significant that no one man was capable of defining its meaning; none the less the Candidate was promised that -

“ You will now be put in possession of a full explanation of this, the Grand Omnific R.A. Word.”

Omnific means “all-creating,” and this gives a clue to its meaning.

Nothing more is said about it. But this is the germ of that long explanation now given in the most irksome part of the Ritual, which seems to have been compiled with the aid of the Sections, but which contains some glaring inaccuracies.

## CHAPTER XII

### THE INVESTITURE

WHEN the three Sojourners have gone through their ordeal, they are divested of the implements they carry for their work as “ Masons,” and their character changes, for now they are admitted members of a Speculative, or Philosophical, Society, which has much to teach about certain things that lie beyond the scope of the Liberal Arts and Sciences.

Two out of the three men are already Companions - that is, as we now work the Royal Arch and only the third is a Candidate; up to this point therefore, those two have been coaching the neophyte, helping him through the Ceremonies. But now, after the Mythos, the third man will become the centre of attraction.

By what has been done, he has been exalted to the position of “ Ruler “ (in Hebrew, Harodion) - that is to say, he has become an

active member of the Holy Sanhedrin, with a seat in that august assembly; and of course, instead of the workman's garb, he must now wear the "robes of innocence," to show that he has returned to the state that man was in before the Fall.

He, therefore, advances to the E. by the proper steps, Scribe N. instructing him how to perform the acts which reverence demands at the three intervals indicated, pausing and bending.

And having come before the M.E. at the symbolic E., he is the recipient of five things:

1. The M.E. invests him and remarks that white is the symbol of that purity of heart and character which should distinguish those who have been raised to the Supreme Degree, which is really the only Degree of genuine Freemasonry, unless we count the three Chairs as being so many "Degrees."

The robe is the real distinguishing badge of a R.A. Mason. The apron is not now expressly mentioned, although it is put on with the robe; this is strange, because Carlile in 1825 makes the M.E. say:

"I have now to invest you with the badges of a R.A. Mason, the apron, sash, and jewel. They are badges of honour and of our Order. The apron and sash are of mixed colours, purple radiated with crimson. The purple implies awe and reverence, and the crimson in rays signifies justice tempered with mercy."

He goes on to say that in those days on the apron was depicted the Triple Tau, which was held to be "the emblem of emblems."

The omission of the Apron seems to be due to Adam Brown, from whom we derive our modern Ritual, for in the one which he compiled there is no mention of the apron, and the Candidates put on "the robes of innocence and truth" before leaving the W. and



before being presented to the M.E. Indeed, in Adam Brown's Ritual the investiture begins with " the Jewel." Can it be that the phrase " Robes of innocence and truth " should be taken as meaning two things, (1) the garment that covers the whole body as an emblem of " innocence," and (2) the apron, which he regarded as a symbol of truth"?

2. The M.E. gives the Candidate a Jewel with a certain device upon it, and he is told to wear it over his heart; it will stamp him, as it were, with the hall-mark of probity; and it will show to all and sundry that he belongs to our Order.

About this Jewel, Ex. Comp. H. has something to say in his Symbolical Lecture.

In Adam Brown's version the M.E. said: " I first present you with this Jewel, the Square," etc. So evidently the Jewel at that time was very different from what we now call "the Jewel." His " square," in this case, was the same as the trying triangles of the old American version, a rightangled triangle or an L-shaped Square.

Adam Brown seems to have simplified things very much. Carlile, at least ten years earlier, wrote: " The Jewel is a double triangle within a circle of gold. The intersecting triangles denote the elements of fire and water. The Sun in the centre with its diverging rays is an emblem of the Deity." Nowadays we have substituted " the Sun in the Centre " for a third triangle, an equilateral one.

3. The M.E. decks the Candidate with a ribbon, which is the insignia of the Order in the two distinctive colours of the Chapter, crimson and blue.

4. He also presents him with a staff of office which he is to carry about unless there be present 72 Rulers (Harodim) of the

Supreme Grand Chapter, when he shall have to take a back seat. The meaning of this act is expressed in the words: " And hereby we constitute you princes and rulers."

The Staff is the counterpart of Moses', or Aaron's, Rod; but by a natural process of differentiation, in the hands of our Principals, it has become a " sceptre." Adam Brown (1835) said that the Staff denoted " power and royalty," and so the Sceptre can mean little more.

The mention of the 72 Elders should remind us that the newly exalted Companion is not yet Master of the Royal Art. Genuine Freemasonry is " a progressive science." There are three Chairs, and the word Speculative suggests that there is much to learn. The 72 Elders are the men who excel in the Science. They are called " Elders " because this is the title by which the Rulers of Israel were known (Numbers xi. 16). The Sanhedrin had 70 such Elders, with a President and a Vice-President.

The M.E. informs the Candidate that if he performs his duties faithfully, he may expect to go up by a regular gradation, step by step, until he obtains "an entire participation of our secrets "; and finally -

5. The M.E. entrusts the Candidate with the Sacred Word, to which so many allusions have been made during the Ceremony of Exaltation. This Sacred Word must be shared and communicated by three R.A. Masons in a particular position and in combination one with the others.

Adam Brown made all the Principals to cooperate in the investiture of the Candidates, thus:

Z. presented him with " this Jewel, the Square, in token of our esteem and approbation," etc.

H. gave him “ this Ribbon, the Badge of our Order,” etc.

J. delivered him “ this Staff, to be borne as a Sceptre, denoting power and royalty,” etc., and he promised “ to ennoble you yet more,” if he was faithful to his OB. This must have been a relic from the days when the High Priest (J.) wielded supreme power in the Chapter, instead of the King (Z.).

The new R.A. Masons having been “ invested, rewarded, decorated (commissioned with a Staff of office), and entrusted,” salute and go their way, resolved to faithfully perform the duties they have undertaken as members of the Order.

## CHAPTER XIII

### ADDRESS TO THE CANDIDATE

WHEN the Ceremony of Exaltation comes to an end, the M.E. congratulates the Candidate heartily for having reached the pinnacle of Freemasonry in the Royal Arch, which is said to be “ at once the foundation and keystone of the whole Masonic structure.

And he goes on to inform him that this Supreme Degree is not a fourth one, as some misinformed people have supposed; the Book of Constitutions of the United Grand Lodge of England is most definite in proclaiming the fact that it is not even a “ Degree,” but an “ Order,” one which is conferred on those who are already M.M.'s, and as such it is part and parcel of the Third Degree.

When a man is raised, he goes through the preliminaries of the Third Degree; and if that be all he can claim, he scarcely has a right to be called a “ M.M.” because he is very far from having mastered anything. He can only be called a “ M.M.” by way of courtesy. The Book of Constitutions can be quoted for this appellation; but in the Third Degree the Ceremonies of the

Mastership have only been begun, not completed; and we know how, after a certain point is reached, the Candidate is left with "certain substituted secrets" and told to wait for the sequel whenever "time or circumstances," etc.

The nature of what remains to be done when that time arrives is not explained or even hinted at; indeed, many Craft Masons are often shocked when they find that they have not yet obtained what they were seeking, and that there is no finality in Craft Masonry. Nevertheless it is true; and the so-called M.M. is only one in a long waiting queue; he has yet to win his laurels as a Speculative Mason. And unless he perseveres and is ambitious, he will never reach the goal.

It is only in the R.A. Chapter that the M.M. finds the secrets which he was told were "lost" through the death of H.A. At present, however, we make it easy for him to proceed; the waiting period need only last four weeks.

In ancient times, the waiting period varied widely, according to circumstances, for it was necessary that he should attain to the rank of Installed Master - that is, he was not permitted to go on unless and until he had presided in a Craft Lodge, and had given proof of his capacity to make a good "Speculative" Mason.

The M.E. says that the genuine secrets were "lost" for nearly 100 years - that is, from the days of King Solomon until the rebuilding of the Temple under Z., H., and J.; and that they were recovered by something that happened very much like what has been rehearsed in the Chapter, "somewhat in a dramatic form." The suggestion, therefore, is that our story is historically true, not fiction; having taken place at Jerusalem at the time stated, when the Temple was being rebuilt.

The statement that the secrets were "lost" calls for discrimination. In the light of the old Ritual, it appears that

what was “ lost “ was the material objects, the position of the Vaulted Chamber, the Ark of the Covenant, the original copy of the Torah, and so forth. The ideas inculcated in the Royal Arch and the traditions of our Order were far from being lost; the Chasidim (alias Assideans), and their successors the Kabbalists, perpetuated those things and set them forth by symbols which for them were very expressive.

The object of our dramatic performances is to fix on the minds of the bystanders and especially of the Candidates (who witness them for the first time) the extraordinary, and, as we believe, providential, events by which the recovery of the lost secrets was effected.

The adoption of “ the substituted secrets “ was probably due to the impossibility of performing the full ceremonies of the Second and Sacred Lodge and the Third or Grand or Royal Lodge on one and the same day. P.W.'s and Signs were needed to “distinguish “ those neophytes who had already gone through the first part; the substituted secrets would only serve ad interior, in the interval that occurred; in the meantime the M.M.'s were to get ready for the rehearsal of the next episode in the scheme of instruction; when the occasion arrived, those P.W.'s and Signs would be an indispensable condition for their admission.

The “ substituted secrets “ thus became the distinguishing marks of those who only know our story of the building of the Temple under S., K. of I. H., K. of Tyre; and H., “the W.'s Son.”

When, at last, the Ceremony of Exaltation is over, the M.M. can claim being a “Companion,” and the Principals proceed to give him a certain amount of new instruction; in so doing they divide the work between them in the following order: -

The High Priest, Ex. Comp. J., delivers the story of the three Grand Original Lodges which the Masons commemorate in one Degree

or another.

The Prophet, or Chief Scribe, Ex. Comp. H., explains the symbols which one may still see displayed in every convocation of R.A. Masons.

The King, Ex. Comp. Z. (the M.E.), expounds the mystical ideas which underlie the Supreme Degree and the work of Speculative Masons generally.

Owing to the relation of the M.M.'s Degree to the Royal Arch, we need not be surprised if it contains many things which properly belong to our Order, and which can only be accounted for by reference to the symbolism of the Chapter. Many of the things we have in mind have already been noted in the two books that have preceded this, the Antiquity of the Holy Royal Arch and Origin of the Masonic Degrees.

In the eighteenth century there was only one Lecture, that about the history of the Grand Originals, which was in effect an historical introduction to the subject of our Order. It was rehearsed by the President - that is, the High Priest. The Chapter was closed after that Lecture exactly in the same way as it had been opened.

In Adam Brown's Ritual the instruction given to the Candidate still took the form of one single Lecture, but in delivering it it was distributed between the three Principals, who relieved one another uninterruptedly without pretending that what they said was three separate Lectures. Of course, since then they have grown longer and more comprehensive.

#### CHAPTER XIV

#### THE HISTORICAL LECTURE

THE history of Freemasonry may be traced back to at least the days of Moses and covers three distinct periods:

1. The First or Holy Lodge.
2. The Second or Secret Lodge.
3. The Third or Grand or Royal Lodge.

1. The Holy Lodge originated soon after the Israelites were liberated after a long period of serfdom in Egypt, being presided over by the three G.M.'s - M., A., and B. (In former days Boone R.X. Masons said Moses, Haron, and Eleagar.) This was at the foot of Mt. Horeb in the wilderness of Sinai, where those people were encamped and were thanking God for the signal and auspicious event. That spot, therefore, is viewed as "consecrated ground."

It was at the same spot that some time before God had favoured Moses with a vision of Himself, when He commissioned him as the representative of the serfs before Pharaoh, whereby he became an ambassador of wrath against the Egyptians and one of salvation for God's chosen people.

And it was there, too, that he acquired the knowledge of the strange forms and prototypes, the Tabernacle and the Ark of the Covenant, in which the Tables of the Law sanctioned by the M.H. were preserved, together with those precepts of moral and religious duty which distinguished the Israelites from all other nations, and which made them "a chosen vessel" for the service of God.

2. The Second was called "the Sacred Lodge," because it was presided over by the three G.M.'s - S., K. of I.; H., K. of Tyre; and H., the W.'s Son - at the bosom of the Holy Mt. Moriah, on the point which had been determined to be "the very centre of

the ground over which the Sanctuary of the Sacred Sanhedrin was afterwards erected.”

This spot had long since been consecrated by the action of Abraham, when led instinctively by his trust in God, he showed himself ready to sacrifice his own child as a burnt-offering, although we know that God Himself providentially led him to substitute “a more acceptable sacrifice “ instead of a human being.

The same spot at a later age was known as “the threshing-floor of Araunah” (alias Ornan), the Jebusite, and King David erected there an Altar on which a sacrifice was offered that proved an effective means of staying the plague by which no less than 70,000 people had perished (2 Samuel xxiv. 19-25).

And there, too, David saw in a vision the plan of that magnificent Temple which was to be erected by K.S., whom God assured that, as a reward for his piety, strength and stability would be given to his Throne.

3. The Third Lodge was founded at Jerusalem soon after the return of the Israelites from their captivity in Babylon, and was presided over by the popular Ruler Z., the Prophet H., and the High Priest J.

The old Royal House of David was at that time restored to power, and Z. was chosen as King, his descendants continuing to rule more or less effectively down to the destruction of Jerusalem by the Romans A.D. 70. It is, therefore, to perpetuate the memory of that restoration that we still speak of “ the Grand or Royal Lodge.”

Our Chapters by their composition resemble all these Grand Originals, and especially that of Jerusalem. For we always have three Principals, who in the Royal Arch answer to Z., H., and J.,



being actually named after them. We also have two Scribes, E. and N., who were the expounders of the Law and the legal advisers to the Sanhedrin.

The three M.M.'s we saw are Sojourners amongst us who came from Babylon, and having effected the recovery of the lost secrets, have been rewarded with seats among " the Princes and Rulers " (in Hebrew, Harodim) of the people, of whom the whole body of Companions are the representatives.

Adam Brown made this section of the Ritual end with a statement that the Candidate had this day been admitted to

" the real Master Mason's Degree," and to

" the secrets supposed as irrecoverably lost by the death of our M., H.A.,"

which expresses all that we contend for in this book.

## CHAPTER XV THE SYMBOLICAL LECTURE

THE "forms, symbols, and ornaments " brought into requisition in a R.A. Chapter, as also " the Rites and Ceremonies " practised at the present time by the Companions, correspond to those that were adopted by " our predecessors," the men who erected the Second Temple of Jerusalem; and they are designed to perpetuate:

1. In our minds, the memory of the providential events by which our " ancient secrets " were regained; and
2. In our hearts, the high standard of morality which the Companions are expected to maintain and follow.

The ideal Chapter has the form of a catenarian arch, such as the Sojourners found in the Vaulted Chamber - that is, a dome formed with the curves called catenaries. And when the Companions stand in the peculiar position in which they share and communicate the Sacred Word they are imitating that same form.

And from the strength of that architectural style, which is greater than any other, we may learn the need of guarding our Mysteries from profanation by absolute secretiveness.

It may also be taken to typify our staunch adherence to social order and to that spirit of unity which has ever given strength and stability to our Order, which has survived great Empires and defied the ravages of time.

And as in the Catenarian Arch all the curves tend towards the central keystone, connecting and holding together the whole structure, so the Members of a Chapter should close up their ranks and pay due respect to the central authority, whether in civil or Masonic life.

The keystone and the two arch-stones next to it symbolist the three Principals; for as our secrets could only be recovered by wrenching forth those stones, so in order to obtain a full knowledge of the R.A. Order we have to pass the three Chairs.

In the Chapter there are six lights, three lesser and three greater. The lesser represent-

1. The Primordial Light - that is, the Patriarchal age;
2. The Legal, and
3. The Prophetical, Dispensations.

The greater lights are symbolical of the Sacred Word and the

Triune Essence of God, for the S.W. consists of three particles and yet is one word, the three particles standing for the creative, preservative, and annihilative powers of the Deity.

Our six lights are so combined that by joining the lesser ones together with three lines we obtain three triangles on the outside, as well as the central triangle, a total of four, all equilateral and of the same size.

This is practically what we have in the Triple Tau, which has a total of eight right angles formed by its exterior lines, including those at the juncture of the Taus at the contra; for as the three angles of every triangle are equal to two right angles, the four triangles mentioned are also equal to eight right angles.

The subject may be illustrated by the device on the jewel worn by the Companions, the intersections of which may be taken in-five different ways and each time they will be found to equal in geometrical value (as shown in the " Explanation of the Jewel " at the end of the Ritual) the five regular solids described by Plato, viz.:

The four-sided solid, called tetrahedron, or pyramid;

The six-sided solid, called hexahedron, or cube;

The eight-sided solid, called octahedron;

The twelve-sided solid, called dodecahedron; and

The twenty-sided solid, called icosahedron;

which geometrical figures have from ancient times been taken as symbolical representations of the four cosmic elements, Fire, Air, Water, Earth, plus the sphere of the Universe.

Ex. Comp. T. W. A. Neech, exalted in 1878, has lent us a copy of the Ritual followed in his mother Chapter at that time, and there the Symbolical Lecture reads quite differently:

“This (the 3 angles being equal to 2 right angles), being triplified, illustrates the Jewel worn by the Comps. of the Order, the form of which is of the highest antiquity, as it has been recognised in the Temples of Egypt and pictured on the colossal monuments of Thebes; it consists of 3 equilateral triangles inscribed within a circle and which, consequently, though of different dimensions, are necessarily equiangular. Two of these s are equal. The 3rd, placed in the centre, is inferior in size and is contained within the others. These by their mutual intersections form a number of angles which may be taken in 5 different combinations, and which when reduced to their equivalent denominations in right angles, respectively, equal the amount of right angles contained by the 5 regular solid bodies by which the Platonists represented the four elements and the Sphere of the Universe,” etc.

At least 999 out of every 1000 Companions have found that they can be good R.A. Masons without going into these calculations. In 1825 the Ritual simply said:

“The jewel is a double triangle within a circle of gold. The intersecting triangles denote the elements of fire and water. The Sun in the centre with its diverging rays is an emblem of the Deity. The encircling ring is an emblem of eternity, whose centre is everywhere and circumference nowhere, denoting omnipresence and perfection.”

All that appeared on the Jewel then was the Seal and Star of Solomon, the National Emblem of Jewry, with the Sun in the centre; this latter has since been replaced by the third Triangle.

The abstruse geometrical computation may be very old, but it seems to have been added to the Symbolical Lecture by Adam Brown in 1835.

The Ribbon with which the Candidate is decked is also a sacred emblem, suggestive of "Light," for it is composed of the chief colours of the Veils of both the Tabernacle and K.S.T.

The primary colours in all light are Blue, Yellow, and Red.

Josephus must have seen the Veils in Herod's Temple, and he says that the one at the entrance of the Holy Place was "interwoven with blue, scarlet, and purple" (Kele Mikdash, cap. vii.). These three colours are still those of the robes worn by the Principals. The sacredness of the Ribbon is also indicated by its irradiated pattern; and therefore we should esteem it as something regal, an emblem of dignity and power.

The Companions carry ensigns, consisting of staves with pennants on which are depicted certain devices distinctive of the twelve tribes of Israel, indicative of the blessings bequeathed by Jacob (Israel) to his sons respectively on his death-bed (Genesis xlix.).

The four large Ensigns are those corresponding to the leading tribes, fully described in the Book of Numbers, chapter ii. They stand for the four main divisions of the army of Israel. On them we see the designs of a Man, a Lion, an Ox, and an Eagle. The man represents intelligence; the lion, strength; the ox, patient labour; and the eagle, clear vision and promptness to do the Will of the Great Creator.

The Sceptres, too, bear a device at their extremities to suggest the regal, prophetic, and highpriestly offices, which have always been and ought to be conferred with special ceremonies,

each having peculiar secrets restricted to them. From ancient times it has been customary to have certain Hebrew characters on them spelling the motto of the Chapter, viz. Kedesh la Yahweh, “Holiness to the Lord.”

The Bible, S. and C.'s, are emblems distinctive of the three G.M.'s who presided at the building of the First Temple. The Bible denotes K.S.'s Wisdom, the S. signifies K.H.'s Strength; and the C.'s betoken the artistic skill of H.A. These symbols really belong to Craft Masonry; but for the genuine Speculative Master they are emblematic of the perfect criterion of Wisdom, Truth, and Justice of the M.H. Thus the V.S.L., with its record of God's mighty acts and the unfolding of His Will, is for us the chief source of Wisdom; the S. is a symbol of Truth, Solidity, and Completeness; and just as the C.'s enable us to determine the limits of geometrical figures and to prove either their equality or their proportion to a given standard, so the Justice of God, fixing the limits of human conduct with corresponding sanctions of pleasure and pain, may be symbolised by the C.'s.

The S . . . d and T . . . l were adopted by R.A. Masons to remind us of the prowess of the men who built the Second Temple, who, girded with a S. and handling the T., were ever ready to defend the fabric they erected against any aggressor; by which they taught us that our first duty as members of organised society is to obey all lawfully constituted authority and to resist every form of lawless violence.

The Pick, Crow, and Shovel are the first tools used by the three Sojourners in preparing the site before erecting the Second Temple. The Pick was to loosen the ground, the crow to be used as a lever, and the shovel to remove the earth.

Most Rituals have it that the Crow is “to make purchases,” which makes no sense at all. Adam Brown, as printed, has the phrase “to take purchases,” which is equally unintelligible, but what is

meant is: “ to obtain purchase “ - that is to say, leverage.

We spiritualist the said tools thus:

1. The stroke of the Pick suggests God's clarion call to the dead to arise from their graves, when they will stir up from their long sleep.

2. The Crow by its uprightness suggests the human body standing erect before the Tribunal of the awful but merciful Judge.

3. The Shovel teaches that just as that tool is inserted into the ground to lift some of the soil, so, too, we lay the corpse in the ground in hope of a resurrection, when the soul shall inherit immortal life and everlasting bliss.

Adam Brown made this Lecture close with the following invocation:

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“Supreme and Incomprehensible I AM, may the sincerity of our feeble exertions meet with Thy divine approbation, and may our endeavours to disseminate the knowledge and light of Thy Most Holy Word be crowned with success through Thy all-powerful protection.”

## CHAPTER XVI

### THE MYSTICAL LECTURE

IN the eighteenth century the sole Lecture in the Ritual was given by the High Priest and~was very short. It began by calling attention to “ the Three mysterious words on the Ark,” which were arranged in triangular form and covered with the three “ trying triangles “ mentioned elsewhere.

This arrangement of the mysterious words in triangles implies

that they consisted of three letters each, one letter for each side of the triangle, which does not accord with our modern spelling of the last particle of J.B.O. We saw in the Antiquity of the Holy Royal Arch that O. was originally Anu. These words seem to have been written in characters that called for use of the " key."

The Ritual at that date stated that J.B.O. was in three, not four, languages, viz. Chaldee, Hebrew, and Syriac; but no explanation was attempted, and the M.E. merely stated that it now had " become the Grand Omnific R.A. Word." In the Mystical Lecture the subject is dealt with at great length by King Z.

The Mystical Lecture embraces:

1. The forms and explanations of the Signs;
2. The nature and import of the Sacred Word; and
3. The traditional Ceremony in which we share and communicate our secrets.

There are five signs and these answer to the 5 p. of f., in which the Candidate was already instructed when raised as a M.M. But while the 5 p. of f. set forth the duties which M.M.'s have towards each other, our Signs indicate our relation to God; for although we have transgressed His Law we are still regarded as His children.

Here the King goes through the 5 signs, and in his explanation of them he remarks:

1. That the P.S. is the only one in Freemasonry given with the left hand; and
2. That the Reverential or Hailing Sign is the one which is to be



given when entering into, or when withdrawing from, a Chapter, and also when addressing the Principals. (See Chapter XVII.)

At the erection of K.S.T. a vast number of architects were employed, and their marlis might be seen in different parts of the fabric; but the names of the three G.M.'s who presided over them were nowhere to be found until they were discovered by the three Sojourners who prepared the ground for the foundation of the Second Temple nearly 500 years later.

In the centre of the Vaulted Chamber stood a block of white marble of the same shape as the Altar of Incense in the Holy Place directly overhead - that is to say, a Double Cube. On the face of it were the initials of the three G.M.'s, viz. for S., K. of I.; for H., K. of T.; and for H.A.

There was also the Triple Tau, which is a symbol always affixed to the summonses of R.A. Masons when a meeting of more than usual importance is being convened.

The Tau is the name of the last letter of the Hebrew Alphabet, and is the " mark " which the angel seen by the prophet Ezekiel ordered the " man with a writer's inkhorn " (ix. 4) to put on the foreheads of all those inhabitants of Jerusalem who grieved over the idolatries of the Hebrew people, the mark being designed as exempting from the death penalty which was to be inflicted on the culprits.

This same mark was of old set on those who were acquitted at the law-courts, to attest their innocence. And in the army, the commander would sometimes put it on the soldiers who had come unscathed out of a battle, to show that they were still fit for service. The sign, therefore, came to be looked upon as a symbol of " life."

Some of our scholars have imagined the Triple Tau to be a modern

symbol not found before 1825. In the Antiquity of the Holy Royal Arch we showed that a Certificate of membership dating from 1786 had this symbol; and that it was in use at the close of the first century of the Christian era !

Carlile made his exposure of the R.A. Ritual in 1825, and according to him the Companions of that time said:

“The character on the apron is designated the Triple Tau, one of the most ancient of emblems; and as Masonry is the science of sciences, so this emblem may be styled the emblem of emblems.”

We must assume that the Companions of that period meant what they said when calling it “ most ancient.”

In the questionnaire, or “ Sections,” then in vogue, they also said of the Triple Tau:

“ It signifies, in its figurative appearance as T.H., Templum Hierosolyma, ' the Temple of Jerusalem,' and is always used as the R.A. Mason's badge, by which the wearer acknowledges himself the servant of the true God, who had thereby [by K.S.T.] established his worship, and to whose service that glorious Temple was erected. It also signifies Clavis ad Thesaurum, ' a Key to the Treasure.' This is the grand secret of Masonry, which passes by symbols from superstition to science; as ignorance dealing with ancient mysteries and symbols passed from science to superstition.”

Clearly, then, the interpretation of the symbol as meaning Templum Hierosolyma, in which the R.A. Masons of 1825 indulged, was only a bit of fun, mere fancy, done by way of amusement, based on “ its figurative appearance ! “ It looked like T.H., thus . and they referred to it as T.H.; and yet they knew that this was not the real signification of it, although as the symbol was being used by the successors of the men who rebuilt the “

Temple of Jerusalem," they considered its application to that Sanctuary perfectly justified and a felicitous one.

According to our present Ritual, the three Taus are joined together to symbolise the Triune Essence of God, through whose power, " gloomy, horrific, and unshaken Chaos" gave place to orderly arrangement and harmonious relations.

The Altar was made of marble to suggest " the moral cleansings' effected there; on the top was a plate of gold to suggest purity.

On the plate of gold was a circle, which is a symbol of eternity, and as it has neither beginning nor end, it may also be taken as a symbol of God, reminding us of the world to come, where there is no counting of days or of years, where we expect to enjoy immortal life and everlasting bliss.

On the circle is the " great, awful, tremendous, and incomprehensible Name," J . . . h, meaning " I am that I am," the A. and (Alpha and Omega), without beginning or end, which was in the past, is now in the present, and shall be in the future, for ever and ever.

This Name suggests the actual, future, eternal, unchangeable, and all-sufficient God, the only Being subsisting in and from Himself, who sustains the life of every creature, being now what He ever was, having always been what He is, and remaining for ever both what He was and what He is, from eternity to eternity, all creatures depending for their existence on His Will and Power.

On our Altar, too, there should be a plate of pure gold with a Circle and Triangle engraved thereon. These geometrical figures have an allusion to God, or rather to certain " attributes of God," called by the Kabbalists the Sephiroth.

From the remotest times, the mystic names and emblems of God used to be enclosed in triangles. Indeed, in Pythagoras' days the Triangle was reputed the most sacred of all emblems, and in connection with all important matters the oaths were administered on the Triangle, all such oaths being regarded as most binding.

The ancient Egyptians took it to represent the number Three, or the Triad, calling it "the perfect Number." And the Ancients generally prized the Symbol so highly as to turn it into an object of worship.

In ancient times, too, some people conceived Nature as a living thing, and they viewed the whole as bearing the impress of the Symbolic Triangle, the three sides of which corresponded to the animal, vegetable, and mineral kingdoms.

The name Abraxas was also applied to the Triangle, embodying the conception of God as the Soul of Nature. The Ritual of Adam Brown, as printed, gives this word the form of Avocet; neither this, nor our modern substitute is at all intelligible.

We draw the Sacred Triangle (or Delta) on a background of squares and circles to convey the idea of a multitude of vivifying influences, ramifying themselves through all animated nature; and thus the Triangle has come to symbolize the GREAT I AM, the Sum of all Being, and the Summum Bonum, "the Chief Good."

The Word on the Triangle is the S. and M. Name which the Candidates are under obligation never to pronounce unless two or more R.A. Companions are present and co-operate in the act, or when we come to be First Principals and appear in that capacity in a lawfully constituted R.A. Chapter.

The Sacred Word is a compound one, consisting of three parts, viz. J.B.O. They are three Babylonian names, but they were once used in Chaldea, Palestine, Syria, and one at least in Egypt.

Adam Brown did not write in 1835 that J.B.O. is in forr languages, and that one particle was “ Egyptian “ and meant “ Father of all.” The addition in our Rituals “ and Egyptian” is a modern interpolation.

J. was used by the Hebrews as a Name of God, conveying the idea of a Being of infinite majesty. It was also used in Aramaic, or “ Chaldee.” Some people read into it: “ I am and shall be,” so as to express the actual, future, and eternal reality of God.

B., while originally a Babylonian name, was adopted in Palestine and Syria, with the sense of “ the T.ord.” If we took the initial B. as a preposition, “ in, or by,” we might explain it as an oath: “ By the Lord,” as if swearing “ By heaven or the M.H.”; but the initial is not a preposition.

O. designates the chief person in the Babylonian Triad; the real name is Anu, the universal Father, and is the same Being still addressed by Christians when they say: “Our Father which art in heaven.” (This has been fully discussed in the Antiquity of the Holy Royal Arab.)

Adam Brown illustrated the meaning of O. by a truncated quotation of Alexander Pope's Universal Prayer:

“ Father of all, in every age,  
In every clime, adored,  
By savage and by sage,  
[Jehovah, Jove or Lord].”

This is still given in many Chapters to-day.

The ideas conveyed by the Three Names, therefore, might be combined thus: “ I am and shall be - the Lord Most High - Father of all.”

The three Hebrew characters at the angles of the Triangle are particularly worthy of attention, and in reading them as common nouns, it makes no material difference with which one we begin, for in every case we get some allusion to the Deity or some divine attribute. These characters are the A . . . B . . . and L . . . of the Hebrew Alphabet corresponding to the same letters in the Roman.

Take the A and the B and you have the word Ab, which means “ Father “; take the B and the L and you have the first and last letters of a word which conveys the idea of “ Lord “; take the A and the L and they spell El, “ God,” and as a verb “ to invoke God.” Take the L and the B and you form the word Iced, which means “ Heart,” although it is often used to signify the principle of life in man.

Grouping these ideas, therefore, we might form such combinations as these: The Father Lord, the God (invoked by R.S. Masons) Lord; the Heart of the Universe Lord.

Such, then, Companions, is the best construction we can now put on the words and letters found in the R.A. Chapter, all of which suggests that we have reached the climax of Freemasonry, for the Supreme Degree brings us into relation with the Hereafter, where all that is near and dear to us is gathered together. Our present life is interwoven with the world to come in a manner that baffles investigators.

The Royal Arch seeks to promote a virtuous life and the glory of God. In every part, point, and letter of its mysteries the eternal welfare of man is kept in view. It should be enough to say that it is founded on the Sacred Name of God who was from the beginning, is now, and ever shall be one and the same eternally, the Being that subsists in and from Himself, absolutely perfect, from whom everything that exists has derived its being.

Companions, I charge you, should you ever feel inclined to pronounce that Name lightly or irreverently, pause, press your lips between your fingers, and remember the penalty of your OB.

Our Supreme Degree inspires its adepts with the most exalted ideas of God, and calls for the purest and most sublime piety, the veneration of the incomprehensible J . . . h, the eternal Ruler of the Universe, the life that throbs in all its constituent elements, the origin of all cosmic law, the spring and fountain of all power.

## CHAPTER XVII THE ROYAL ARCH SIGNS

RESPECTING the Signs there has been much confusion. The G. and R. Sign, as the name itself implies, should be the principal Sign of the Third Grand Original, instead of which it is now being used by the M.M.'s who have only gone through the preliminaries of the Royal Arch.

And the Sign of G. and D., which we have seen was used in the old days as part and parcel of the Supreme Degree, is likewise prematurely introduced into the M.M.'s Degree, and they have a monopoly of it, for it has no place in the Royal Arch.

We have already seen that in the original R.A. Ritual the Candidate was made to personate our G.M. Moses. And before summarising the statements made about the Signs in the Chapter, we should observe that the first two in the Modern Ritual, the Penal Sign and the Rev. or H. Sign, originated unquestionably with Adam in Paradise, while the other three had their rise in the conduct of Moses at Mount Horeb.

In the Questionnaire used a century ago it was assumed that all

the five had an allusion to Adam and Eve in Paradise. It said:

“1. The first parents of mankind, formed by the G.A. of the U . . . , became disobedient, and theteby obnoxious to sin, misery, and death. To preserve us from which, and as a memento to guard us frons the like error, we adopt the P.S.

“2. Scarcely had our first parents transgressed . . . unable to bear the splendour of God's appearance, in a humble bending posture . . . their right hand at their forehead for support, and their left at their heart . . . ; hence arose the Reverential Sign, or Sign of Salute.

“3. It was the dreadful sentence . . . driven from that happy region . . . to earn their daily food by sweat and labour . . . with true contrition of heart, they, with clasped hands, implored forgiveness; hence arose the Pen. or Sup. Sign, or Sign of Sorrow.

“4. Now fervent prayer . . . , they lay their right hands to the region of their heart, and their left as a support to the side of their head; and thus arose the Monitorial Sign, or Sign of Admonition.

“5. Now their minds being more calm . . . with uplifted hands and hearts, they clearly saw redemption drawing on . . . ; hence arose the Fiducial Sign, or Sign of Faith and Hope.”

In the preceding description we may perceive the change that has taken place not only in our conception of what the Signs mean, but also in the manner of giving them. We shall here take them seriatim and discuss the significance of each one.

I. The P.S. is an allusion to the penalty of our OB. This is literally true, and all the Rituals agree on this statement, but yet there is some diversity in giving the Sign.



We say that the action itself suggests how rebellious man will be “ cut off from the land of the living,” by divine justice, or by “ the sword “ of human justice. But the Hebrews did not conceive divine justice as ordering the beheading of people. “ Cut off,” whether “from Israel,” “from the Assembly,” or “ from the land of the living,” was a Hebrew idiom which had nothing to do with “ cutting up “ the human body. In Europe human justice has long practised decapitation, but this was not the experience of Adam.

What our Ritual says of a “ perfect sign with the left hand “ is a modern invention. We may give it in front or at the back; apparently we are free to do as we like; but it is a thousand pities that there is no uniformity. In India the Companions often apply the hand to the nape of the neck, but modern India has little to teach us about the ancient Masonic Ritual.

The fact is that the P.S. is not intended to particularise as to the manner of death; it is only a conventional sign.

Carlile tells us that in 1825 the P.S. was given with the right hand, drawing the thumb and forefinger around the forehead, which was said to be an allusion to the penalty of the O.B.; and this penalty was said to be “ having the crown of my skull struck off,” and that necessitates a quite different action. Immediately after this, the hand rested in such a position that it used to be said that it alluded to “ the Sojourner's guarding his eyes from the intensity of the sun's rays . . . and to the Fall of man.”

The first part of the Sign was obviously “ the Sign of G. and D.,” which at present has no place in the Royal Arch, but which from at least the eighteenth century had been the P.S. In the M.M.'s Degree we explain this Sign as alluding to H.A. when assaulted, when “ his perspiration was so great,” etc. But if it refers to the sentence pronounced on Adam, passing the hand across the forehead would be for wiping “ the sweat of the brow,”

to which Adam was condemned. The thumb and forefinger being in the form of a S. would signify squaring his troubles. We have seen that the second part of the Sign was explained as alluding to the splendour of God's presence in Paradise.

II. We say that the Rev. and Hailing Sign is designed to show how we may escape from justice - that is, by humility and resignation and by implanting God's Law in our hearts. Adam is supposed to have assumed this posture when he presented himself before God to receive His severe but just sentence. And we add that when our G.M. Moses was granted a vision of God at the Burning Bush at Mount Horeb he did the same thing, shielding his eyes and placing his hand on his heart to express his readiness to obey, an action which afterwards was accounted to him for righteousness.

In the beginning of the nineteenth century this Sign was called "the Reverential Sign, or Sign of Sorrow, or Sign of Salute." (Compare the expression used by the M.E. in the Mystical Lecture, "this salutation.") It was described as given "by laying the right hand on the forehead for support, and the left at the heart in a bowing humble attitude"; in which we see the action of the hands reversed as compared with present practice.

This was said to have originated with our first parents when they "met Jehovah in the Garden of Eden after their transgression." And in this respect it agrees with what we say, that it has been handed down from Adam.

III. The preceding Sign is said to have suggested the third, the Penitential or Supplicatory Sign, which denotes that frame of heart and mind which makes our prayers and praises acceptable to God. And how else, we ask, could an imperfect creature such as man appear before God but as a lowly suppliant, on bended knee and with uplifted hands ?

Adam, we are told, so knelt before God to pay homage to the author of his being, bending in penitence and adoration, that he might appease the wrath of His Judge and secure His mercy; by which conduct he bequeathed to all his descendants this Sign of humility and penitence.

In reality, however, this Sign is simply a variation of what the R.A. Companions of the eighteenth century called the Grand Hailing Sign, to which Moses gave rise in praying for the defeat of Amalek. It really has no connection with the story of Paradise.

Carlile explains it practically as we do now, saying that it is given “ in the attitude of prayer “; but he ascribes it to Adam, not to Moses, reflecting the crude notions of the R.A. Masons of 1825.

IV. The Monitorial Sign is said to remind us of our weakness, for through this Sign we learn how helpless man is to check any evil impulse unless he be constrained or influenced by the light which is from above. In giving this Sign, according to modern practice, we really put ourselves in a defenceless posture, and so it betokens our frailty and our incapacity for any good action apart from Him who is the source of all goodness, and without whose assistance we should be utterly useless to Him.

In reality this Sign arose from the action of Moses in thrusting his hand into his bosom when told to do so, Exodus iv. 6, 7.

In Carlile's time the term Monitorial was interpreted in the sense of “ Sign of Suffering,” assuming of course that all our sufferings on earth are warnings (Monitions) from God. It was also called “ the Sign of Admonition “; being given “ by placing the right hand on the heart and supporting an inclination of the head with the left,” which is quite different from what is done now; still the old practice had the merit of showing the origin

of the Sign, for “ placing the hand on the heart “ comes very near to thrusting it on the side, as Moses did.

V. The last of our Signs, the Fiducial Sign, practised by “ our holy ancestors,” or predecessors, the sacrificing priests of Israel, expressed the idea of dependence by prostrating themselves to the ground, throwing themselves on the mercy of their Creator and Judge, clinging to His promises with humble confidence, which enabled them to hope that in due time they would pass “ through the Ark of their Redemption “ into the mansion of eternal bliss and glory, into the presence of the GREAT I AM, the A and the (Alpha and Omega), the Beginning and the End, the First and the Last.

The statement made here, even after the Ritual has been so transformed as to bear little resemblance to the original, that our predecessors were “ the priests of Israel “ - that is, the Kabbalists or Jewish Rabbis, - is well worthy of attention, and helps to prove what has been said in previous works.

The Fiducial Sign, however, expressed the idea of dependence, not exactly by prostrating ourselves, but by stooping in obedience to the command of God. For it arose from Moses having stooped down when he was bidden to take up his Rod which he had thrown on the ground, when it turned into a serpent That Rod has already been referred to.

Carlile's version of the Ritual describes this Sign as one of “ Faith and Hope,” which is simply a definition of the name, for fiducial comes from fides, “ Faith “; of course, picking up the Serpent would require a great effort of the mind; Moses must have believed that it would not sting, but that once in his hand it would again become an inoffensive Rod or “ Staff.”

Carlile tells us that in his day this Sign used to be given “ by raising the hands above the head, an allusion to the prospect of

redemption from the Fall “; his suggestion being that it arose from something done by Adam, rather than by Moses.

We feel strongly that even if the Supreme Grand Chapter does not restore the old Ceremonies, it should at least standardise the Signs so that they might be given in the same way everywhere.

## CHAPTER XVIII

### THE CLOSING OF THE CHAPTER

NOWADAYS when the time comes for closing the Chapter, the Ceremony is extremely simple.

The M.E. knocks to order, in the usual way and the requisite number of times; and inquires whether any Companion has anything to offer for the benefit of R.A. Masonry or for the particular Chapter he represents. And having disposed of any matter that has come up, the three Principals proceed to close the Chapter.

They share and communicate the Word; from ancient times, in some Chapters, they stood to order, and they repeated the formula We three, but they did not give the S.W.

Then they do something which has been added in recent times: the Companions being ranged under their banners, the Principals arrange their sceptres in a certain way, repeating the well-known triple formula: Glory . . . On earth . . . etc.

Then the M.E. authorises the P.S. to make the usual declaration of dosure, and the I.P.Z. adds his confirmation.

Adam Brown made the Ceremony still simpler; but the old American Ritual prescribed that the Sacred Word was to be shared and communicated by all the Companions present simultaneously with the Principals.

And whereas at present only the Principals “ salute the V.S.L.” (this is the phrase used by Adam Brown and Carlile), until quite recently all the Companions did it. In ancient times the M.E. was the last, not the first, to do so.

The present Ritual requires nothing more, but Adam Brown directed that before the Companions separated the M.E. was to give an Exhortation, which is still found in some of the latest Rituals under the title of “ Dismissal Charge “; it is as follows: -

“ You are about to quit the sacred retreat of peace and friendship, and to mix with the world, amidst all its cares and employments; forget not the sacred duties that have been so frequently inculcated, and so strongly recommended in this supreme convocation, be ye therefore discreet, prudent, and temperate; remember also that around this Altar you have voluntarily and solemnly vowed to befriend and relieve with unhesitating cordiality every Brother that shall need your assistance; that you have promised to remind him in the most gentle manner of his failings, and to aid his reformation - to defend and vindicate his character whenever wrongfully traduced, and to suggest the most candid, the most palliating, and the most favourable circumstances, even when it is justly liable to reprehension and blame, thus shall the world see how dearly Masons love each other.

“ But, my Brethren and Companions, you are to extend those noble and generous sentiments still farther; let me impress on your minds, and let it be instilled into your hearts, that every human being has an undoubted claim to your kind offices; we therefore strictly enjoin you to do good to all, while we more particularly recommend to your care the household of the faithful - that by diligence and fidelity in the duties of your respective vocations, liberal benevolence and diffusive charity; constancy and sincerity in your friendship; uniform, kind, just, amiable,

and virtuous in your deportment, you will prove to the world the happy and beneficent effects of our ancient and honourable Institution.

“ Let it not be said that you laboured in vain and wasted your strength for nought - for your work is before the Lord, and your recompense is with your God. Finally, Brethren and Companions, be all of one mind, live in peace, and may the God of love and mercy delight to dwell amongst you, and bless you for evermore.”