

had described to me, and by its porch at eventide the aged mother gazing toward the setting sun, where faint and fainter fell his last receding steps, as if she deemed the very longing of her heart might call her boy back again! And I said, "Strengthen thy heart now, O, bereaved and desolate one! Thy boy indeed is dead. But though a stranger in that distant land, he found kind friends, whose hearts were faithful to him as a mother's!"

How many times the sun has risen, and set since then! The days have gathered into months, and months have ripened into nearly a score of years! But morn and evening still, on bended knee, one grateful heart sends up the fervent prayer, "Bless, O, God! bless that noble Brotherhood!"

My Brethren, I never arose to respond on an occasion like this, that I did not feel compelled to apologize for the seriousness which is sure to pervade my utterances. But after all, it is just such experiences as I have related, which above all earthly things endear our Masonry to our hearts; and perhaps there is no harm in tempering your festivities with something of time and toil in your service. It is because of just such experiences that there has been no weariness and no surfeiting in those labors; and it is from just such experiences that Freemasonry takes deeper hold of me each day of my life, and that in my heart I kneel at its altars now with the devotion of an Eastern idolater!

You, my brethren of California Lodge, are here to night to commemorate a quarter of a century of existence. Twenty-five years is a large proportion of the span allotted to you as individuals. But in the life of a society which is destined to be perpetual, it is nothing, yet when you reflect that in every day and every hour of those years, you have healed the wounds, dried up the tears, and banished the afflictions of some unfortunate brother—in that reflection you find abundant reason for the joy and pride you experience on this anniversary. You can have no nobler ambition than the ambition to *deserve* in the future the reputation which you have enjoyed in the past!

Our Ancient Craft! Mr. President, I give you back the noble sentiment with which you saluted me. "May its noble principles be preserved unimpaired until the last syllable of recorded time."

Child of the gods—eternal spirits—thou radiant orb in virtue's constellation—shine on, shine on in beauty ever!—*P. G. M. Pratt, of California,*

THE RITUAL OF FREEMASONRY: ITS CHANGES SINCE THE REVIVAL.

By Brother Albert G. Mackey, M. D.

THE word "ritualism" has, in these latter days, become very familiar to non-Masonic as well as to Masonic ears, from the controversy existing in a branch of the Christian church, whose members have been divided into ritualists or non-ritualists, accordingly as they favor in the forms of worship, a plenitude or a scantiness of ceremonies.

No such question could ever be discussed in Masonry. There, all are ritualists, and all maintain, not the propriety only, but the absolute necessity of a ritual, which envelops the spirit of the Institution, just as the body of man incases the soul.

The ritual, then, is an important part of the organization of Freemasonry, and claims, therefore, the closest attention of those who would thoroughly and correctly understand what that organization is.

Let us begin with the definition of the word, for it is a well settled rule of logic that in every discussion, the first thing to be done, is to agree upon the meaning of terms.

Vossius has derived the word *rite* from the Greek *tribos*, by the rejection of one letter and the transposition of others. Now as *tribos* means "a trodden way," and metaphorically, "a long observed custom," the significance is correct, although the etymology is doubtful and fanciful. It is more probable, that the English word *rite* comes from the Anglo-Saxon *riht* which signifies, in its primary use, *right, justice, law*, or as Horne Tooke says, "every thing that is ordered or commanded"; and in a secondary sense, an established or observed ceremony. Hence the definition of Webster, although too constricted, is, so far as it goes, correct, when he says that a rite is "the manner of performing divine or solemn service, as established by law, precept, or custom."

Ritual, derived from *rite*, is defined by ecclesiastical writers to be "a book or manual in which is given the order and forms to be observed in the celebration of divine service, the administration of the sacraments, and, in general, all matters connected with external order in the performance of sacred offices."

But in Freemasonry these words, *rite* and *ritual* have a meaning which differs from that given to them by ecclesiastical writers. In the technical language of Masonry, a *rite* signifies a system or collection of degrees, such, for example, as the York rite or