

idea of the changes that it has undergone, and the developments through which it has passed.

Thus, notwithstanding that the ritual prepared by Anderson and Desaguliers is, perhaps, irretrievably lost, so that we have no direct, authentic account of the forms of initiation, or of the symbolism of Masonry at that time, yet we have other materials by which important facts and opinions are suggested, and a web, to all appearance hopelessly entangled, may thus, by careful comparison and by astute critical deductions, be at length successfully unravelled.

This system of deducting knowledge and of establishing facts from a critical collation of contemporary documents, is one very familiar to all archæologists, and one which is constantly resorted to by them in the prosecution of their researches. Thus, when the great Champollion began his study of Egyptian hieroglyphics, being at that time absolutely ignorant of the meaning of any one mark on the monuments, he applied himself to the interpretation of the decree on the Rosetta stone. This was in hieroglyphics and with a literal translation in Greek. Fixing on the known letters in the latter, which spelled the name *PTOLEMY*, he sought for a word which appeared, by its relative position in the hieroglyphic text, to correspond with the Greek name. He was successful, and by this comparison and analysis, obtained a knowledge of seven hieroglyphic signs. Going on from step to step, by laborious comparisons and collations, and, subsequently, by the suggestions which one monumental inscription gave of another, he was at length enabled to master the whole phonetic language of Ancient Egypt, and to compose his immortal work, the "Egyptian Dictionary in the writing of the Hieroglyphics."

We have, if not an abundance, at least a sufficiency of documents which we may use in a similar comparison and analysis of the ritual. Thus we have "The Grand Mystery," published a year after the appearance of the first edition of the Book of Constitutions. Although Dr. Oliver calls this production "a catch-penny," it would be great folly to maintain that it did not contain some shadowing forth of the condition of the ritual at that time. When a few years afterwards Prichard wrote his book, evidently based upon "The Grand Mystery," Anderson attacked it in his pamphlet entitled "A Defence of Masonry." He did not, however, deny directly the truth of Prichard's formulas, but only sought to prove that the ceremonies described by Prichard were neither "absurd nor pernicious." The truth is, that Anderson's "Defence" is a very lucid and interesting explanation of the symbols and ceremonies described by Prichard, and the book might have been written just in the same way, if Anderson had selected the then ritual on which to found his commentaries. Dr. Krause's opinion of both these works was such that he gave them a place as authentic in his great work on "The Three Oldest Documents of the Masonic Brotherhood." For myself, I am disposed to take these and similar works with many grains of allowance, but not altogether to reject them as utterly worthless. From these we may obtain many valuable suggestions, if we judiciously analyze them and carefully separate the wheat from the chaff.

Then again we have the old Manuscript Constitutions, the number of which has been greatly increased by the labors of such antiquarian scholars as *HUGHAN* and *WOODFORD*. *LYON* has given us an invaluable history of the early condition of Masonry in the lodges of Scotland. Finally, in the writings of those Masonic teachers who lived not much later than the middle of the eighteenth century, we shall find much to aid us in an analysis of the ritual as it existed in their time. These, with some other documents scattered here and there, over a field of Masonic literature, are the materials that must and will aid us in our analytical labors.

Let a simple instance be cited, by way of example, of the method to be adopted in the method of analysis, comparison and suggestion, by which the condition of the ritual, in any portion of it, and at any given point of time, may be approximately determined; sometimes, indeed, not approximately, but with absolute certainty.

The *apron* is now universally recognized as a symbol of Speculative Masonry. So much is this a settled principle, that there is no degree in Masonry, from the lowest to the highest, in any country of the world, or under any system or rite, that is not designated by its peculiar apron. At this day, the apron is universally acknowledged to be the most important outward symbol of a Freemason. But how long has this been the case? Was it so when the Grand Lodge was revived in 1717? Did the Masons who were engaged in that revival wear aprons, or were they, at some subsequent period, introduced by a ritual-monger, and, if so, what was the date of their introduction? The word *apron* is not to be found in any of the Old Constitutions, nor even in those of 1723. The first mention of this symbol is in the second edition of Anderson, published in 1738, twenty-one years after the revival. There, under the head of New Regulations, it is said that the Grand Stewards were, in 1731, permitted "to line their white leather aprons with red silk." This expression satisfies us that