

2380 Monterey Road
San Marino, Cal.
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Care Frater:

Thank you for putting me in touch with Miss Hughes. She has sent me a very interesting and understanding letter, to which I have answered at some length.

I concede the value of your testimony that no harm has come to yourself, or to members of the English Temples you are familiar with, through the use of the Enochian material. Yet I might say that I still believe the Enochian stuff perhaps more subtly harmful than appears even from such experiments. If the Order's method of evoking the elementals were purely Enochian, then I should have nothing to say. But since it is a mixture of the Enochian language and tablets with other, and probably older, materials, it seems not unlikely to me that such success as attends the use of the rituals is due rather to the real effectiveness of the various pentagrams, etc., than to anything else.

At any rate, I have found by experiments carried out now for more than seven years, that the elementals can be invoked precisely as well without the Enochian tablets or names. Instead of the latter, we have used Hebrew divine and angelic names, with unusually good results.

You may be very sure that my objections are not to ceremonial. It is only that I have had so much experience of the subtle dangers of corrupt ceremonial, that I prefer to be what seems to me on the safe side by eliminating from the rituals something that is certainly suspect as coming from a dubious source, by no means clearly connected with "Rosicrucianism." Evidently Miss Hughes has some doubts similar to mine, for she writes me that she would be glad to have some assurance that the "Enochian language" is really a language at all!

Of course, too, I know that one does not swallow the Qabalah whole. My Warsaw edition of the Sepher Yetzirah, with comment by Saadia Gayon and others, is sufficiently full of grotesqueries. Yet it has a kernel of real value, as have even some parts of the works you mention. If I could find anything beyond the subconscious and complex elaboration of a dubious, if not false, premise in the Enochian magical methods, perhaps I would use them too. But after about thirty-three years of research and experiment, I begin to be somewhat wary.

As to Tattvas, it is true enough that the Order work with them is not from "Nature's Finer Forces." I don't know who worked out that scheme, which is rather less effective than some of the Tantrik practices it closely resembles. But what has it to do with Qabalah, or with anything announced in the "Fama" or "Confession" as Rosicrucian philosophy or practice? Again, like the Enochian system, it seems to me to have been lugged in by the heels. And I have had enough experience of the inventiveness of charlatans to find it easier to believe that Mathers invented the Tattva technique, or adapted it from some obscure Hindu treatise, than to suppose it to be something transmitted from the Third Order. Even Spencer Lewis has managed to work out some surprisingly plausible formulas; but the presence of those formulas in

his system does not convince me he is the "only true channel" of Rosicrucian instruction in America.

The Scottish Rite Library in Washington has some interesting early Rosicruciana written by Kenneth Mackenzie. Some years ago, in searching through the material, I got on the track of the hints that led me to believe that our Order rituals must be in some sense an adaptation or expansion of rituals used by some society in the days of Lytton, Levi, Hockley and Spedalieri. More recently, in the library of the Massachusetts Grand Lodge, I came upon a French ritual of the 33 degree, which contains not a little material closely resembling some of the magical work studied by Z.A.M. members.

Roughly, what I think of the G.D., as it developed in the hands of Woodman, Westcott and Mathers, is that it was based on earlier rituals (or outlines of rituals) which were probably dug up somewhere by that indefatigable library-hound, Mathers. I fully believe that the "Tree of Life" outline is workable, and that the Grade scheme must adhere to it. I know that the 0=0 and Vault rituals are magically effective. So are the opening and closing ceremonies of the Grades from 1=10 to 4=7, inclusive (with or without the Enochian additions.)

It has been my experience that whatever the Third Order may be, it sometimes operates in what to us may seem to be very devious ways -- using what tools present themselves, whether or not those tools be ideal. Thus my feeling about the Order as it stands is that it is certainly in the line of the ancient tradition, but that it also is cluttered up with a lot of material which may, some of it, be well enough, but which does not really belong in the Order system.

As for the Knowledge Lectures, they are of various worth. Those on astrology are probably the worst presentation of that abused art that I have ever encountered. I have never yet known anyone to make even respectable progress in astrology from studying the Order lectures. Invariable they have had to use supplementary work; and in more than one place the lectures are positively confusing.

The text on Geomancy is good, but is almost a word for word crib of one in my possession, written about 1830. This never was printed, so far as I know; but I learned all my geomancy from it, years before I heard of the Order.

Yet I concede your point that one who enters the Order prepared to work will find there a lot of material that is not easily found outside. The Order does teach a coherent system in the main, and deserves to be perpetuated on that account. But it does not teach a system which has been restricted to circles of obligated initiates, and in the variant of the G.D. which was active in America under the direction of S.R.M.D. and V.N.R. precisely that claim was not only implied, but was also directly stated. Thus I am glad to find in Miss Hughes' letter not a little evidence that she and her fellow Chiefs put the emphasis rather on the work itself than upon any notion of "apostolic succession" from the "original" Rosicrucian Fraternity.

A special interest in the very things that are the backbone of the Order system had made me unusually familiar with most of the material long

before I entered it. Circumstances enabled me to make a good livelihood by working about three hours daily; and most of my spare time was spent in the excellent libraries of New York and Chicago, where there is a wealth of material for the research worker in this field. Perhaps the fact that I was actually born in a public library (or, at least, in the house where it was located) helped me to get on the track of the essential material comparatively early in life. I am sure, too, that I had direct help from the Third Order, though when that help was received I did not identify where it came from.

At all events, with the exception of some more or less speculative material in the Flying Rolls, the technique of the Tattvas, and the actual ceremonials of consecration of implements, together with the ritual of the Pentagram and Hexagram, I found nothing in the Order texts that had not been long in print. Which is, of course, no criticism of the value of the Order's curriculum, but merely an evidence that in obligating its members, those who were responsible for the obligation permitted it to be assumed that the bulk of the Order's knowledge could be gained nowhere else. And I contend that no good can come of any sort of trading in the probable ignorance of another. Much better would be the frank admission that the curriculum of the Order is an eclectic combination of knowledge and practices which have been found to be valuable. And precisely that admission is what our present variant of the old pattern does make to all its new members.

Believing, then, that the present European form of the G.D., as you know it, is undoubtedly preserving much that is worth while, and that in its higher grades there are those who have established, as we have in America, real contact with the Third Order, I am as strong for "orthodoxy" as any one. But I submit that "orthodoxy" simply means "correct teaching" and that the burden of my criticism is that MacGregor (and nobody else) introduced alien elements into the stream which seems to have come to us through Mackenzie, Levi and their contemporaries. In eliminating the Enochian elements, we in America have lost nothing of practical effectiveness. And from what Miss Hughes says, I believe it likely that there have been some reforms in the grade rituals below 5=6, as you work them.

At any rate, it is good to know that on both sides of the Atlantic there are serious workers who are following out the pattern of the Tree of Life. And I certainly hope we can work out some way in which to co-ordinate our efforts.

Yours fraternally,

Perseverantia