

Provincial Grand Lodge of Valencia

Grand Lodge of Spain



3.1- THE TRACING BOARD OF THE THIRD DEGREE

**Provincial Education Programme
Master Mason Degree**

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THE TRACING BOARD OF THE THIRD DEGREE

But the Third Degree is the cement of the whole, it is calculated to bind men together by mystic points of fellowship, as in a bond of fraternal affection and brotherly love; it points to the darkness of death and the obscurity of the grave as the forerunner of a more brilliant light, which shall follow at the resurrection of the just, when these mortal bodies which have long been slumbering in the dust shall be awakened, re-united to their kindred spirit, and clothed with immortality. (Third Lecture: First Section.)

The third degree, which is the highest and most seldom attained, opens the whole inner man. It breaks the crust which darkens our spiritual eyes and ears; it reveals the kingdom of spirit, and enables us to see, objectively, metaphysical and transcendental sights; hence all visions are explained fundamentally. (Eckarhausen: "The Cloud upon the Sanctuary.")

FOREWORD

The present Paper completes the trilogy compiled for the purpose of interpreting the meaning of the Tracing Boards of the three Degrees of the Craft system. By way of introduction to this study of the Board which is exhibited when the Lodge is opened in the Third Degree, we must first impress upon students the fact that by our opening of the Lodge to the Third Degree we are presumed to have left entirely the outer world. We have ascended, figuratively speaking, into the solitude and rarefied atmosphere of the mountain summit, where the aspirant is liable to be, and generally finds himself both mentally and emotionally, enveloped in cloud and darkness. It is this psychological condition, described in Masonic terminology as "darkness visible," which is symbolized in the Third Degree by the initial darkening of the Lodge; it is otherwise alluded to in the Volume of the Sacred Law by the cloud that rested on Sinai when Moses went up into the mountain: "And the Lord said unto Moses, Lo, I come unto thee in a thick cloud" (Exodus, chapter 19, verse 9). Accordingly, at a dramatic moment during the Ceremony of Raising, the attention of the candidate is directed to the "gloom which rests upon the prospects of futurity," and he is informed that this is the "mysterious veil which the eye of human reason cannot penetrate, unless assisted by that Light which is from above." Those who are not conversant with the records of mystical experience will need to know that the "gloom" of the Third Degree is often referred to as "the Divine Dark," and represents a state higher than that of reasoning thought. It is, indeed, the "state of darkness" which the mind must enter and pass through before reaching the ultimate Light and glory beyond. Moreover, the supreme Light to which the Third Degree, is designed to lead must always appear to us as darkness because our perceptive faculty is not yet attuned to it, the Light is, however, as the mystics say, only "dark from excess of bright."

We shall be discussing in this Paper a subject which is incapable of simple explanation, but nevertheless every effort will be made to render the interpretation lucid. Let us, then, remind ourselves that the Third Degree is an "emblematical representation" of the awakening of the spirit of man, and the Tracing Board can therefore only be translated intelligibly from the plane and by the enlightenment of the spirit. The word "spirit," however, possesses such a wide range of application that it requires considerable ingenuity to make clear all the properties which are implied. Spirit, it is said, is the principle that stands in opposition to matter, and by this we understand a mode of being which on the highest and most universal level is God. Spirit, in keeping with the original wind definition, is always an active, winged, swift moving being, as well as that which vivifies, stimulates, fires, and inspires. Spirit, to express it in modern terms, is the dynamic principle, constituting for that very reason the classical antithesis of matter, the antithesis, that is, of stasis and inertia; basically, it

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is the contrast between life and death. It is the mission of Freemasonry to serve the spirit by engendering a "general desire for knowledge," and where this mission is successful, Freemasonry does not engender and transmit spirit itself, but spiritual benefits and values, which may be looked upon as emanations of the spirit. Knowledge is not kindled where our desire and preference would have it, but where it is given to us, and those who are concerned merely to interpret the spirit in terms of the strictest formulation, should be reminded that spiritual knowledge is primarily an immediate experience, not of this world: "Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit which is of God; that we might know the things that are freely given to us of God" (1st Corinthians, chapter 2, verse 12)

PRELIMINARY OBSERVATIONS

There are three Tracing Boards used in the Craft, one appropriate to each Degree of Masonic progress, and to a casual glance the Board allocated to the Third Degree seems the simplest. Actually, it is the most cryptic, and is heavily charged with meaning. Before, therefore, we proceed to analyze the Board some preliminary matters of great significance must be mentioned, which will assist us in a brief review of the philosophic basis upon which the Craft system rests. In this Paper it will not be possible to expand the consideration of the impressive Third Degree ceremony, which can be studied more fully from other Transactions of the Circle and elsewhere. We can only indicate here the trend and implications of the doctrine enshrined within what represents the summit of the work of the Craft and point out that our Masonic process of Initiation was designed to train suitable candidates for admission into the "mysteries and privileges" of a kingdom which is not of this world. It proclaims the fact of racial loss and spiritual impoverishment; it declares that the supreme principle of the spirit in man is "smitten" and obscured from him; but it also asserts that there is a way back by stages to the transcendent life from which he "fell"; that there is a means of recovering "that which is lost" which can be found and resurrected in him when "time and circumstances" combine in the restoration. Mastership signifies the attainment of that recovery in the case of a given individual, and the Craft graphically portrays the nature of the disciplines involved, and that "last and greatest trial," by which it is achievable. Upon this recondite subject we may anticipate that students will find statements that will confuse them and raise their doubt. We would advise them to accept provisionally in the first instance and let the mind brood upon the Craft doctrine and symbolism. They may then come to find that what they began by doubting becomes, as it has done with many earnest seekers, the realized fact of personal experience. Like every true method of wisdom teaching, modern Freemasonry does not offer proofs or authorities for what is inculcated; it promulgates Truth and leaves the testimony to ferment in the minds of those who strive to profit by the instruction. Knowledge of this kind can never be imposed from without; it requires "a perfect freedom of inclination on the part of every candidate"; and it must well up into consciousness from within the soul of the aspirant himself: "Where Truth abides in fulness" (Browning: "Paracelsus"). We ultimately find what we seek because it is already present in us awaiting liberation.

The design of the Tracing Board of the Third Degree is a cypher embodying the Traditional History narrated during the ceremony, and in order to decipher the Board it is also necessary that we decode the Craft doctrine. We must likewise recognize that the Craft legend is pure "myth," although by classifying it as a myth does not imply that it is in any sense an irresponsible fiction. The legend is a specialized form of the ancient cosmogonic doctrine which has been transmitted to us, "veiled in allegory, and illustrated by symbols," by every human race since the beginning of time. It is a doctrine explaining the genesis, the fall, and the destiny of man, and accounting for the mystery of evil, sin, and death with which our world is afflicted, by a catastrophe which occurred out of time and space before we and our planet assumed physicalized conditions. This primal tragedy, of which

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the myth of the murder and burial of the Master Builder is the Masonic historical tradition, was taught in appropriate imagery among all the nations of antiquity. We can trace it from one of the oldest systems of the Mysteries, the Samothracian, where the "untimely death" appears in the legend of a god slain by his fellow gods. The equivalent in Egypt was the murder of Osiris by Typhon; in Greece the dismemberment of Dionysus by the Titans; and in Phoenicia the fatal wounding of Adonis. It is repeated in the Norse sagas by the death of Baldur the Beautiful; our native British tradition echoes it in the story of the great King Arthur sorely smitten; while the old Teutonic legend of the murder of Siegfried is another variant of the same root doctrine. In each of these, and in many others besides, the central figure is always that of an eminent or blameless being, divine or semi-divine Master, who is opposed and done away with by rebellious "ruffians" or "villains," and whose loss checks the spiritual advancement of humanity. Connected with each murdered or smitten Master there is a cavern, tomb, or sarcophagus, which is stated to be the place of burial or concealment, and usually there is reference to some object, often a plant, which is placed upon it to mark the site. Homer relates that it was a branch of olive planted at the head of the cavern (Homer: "Odyssey"; Bk. XIII), according to the Egyptian version a tamarisk plant located the grave of Osiris; Ovid informs us that a red anemone showed the place where the blood of Adonis was spilt (Ovid: "Metamorphoses"; X); Virgil describes the discovery of the body of Polydorus by Aeneas accidentally pulling up a loosely planted shrub (Virgil: "Aeneid", Bk. III). The legend of the Craft includes both the location of the grave by the Craftsman who, "to assist his rising, caught hold of a shrub," and the "sprig of acacia" to mark the site, In the Craft central legend, then, under the allegory of a temporal murder and the loss of building plans, we have the repetition of a doctrine of the Cosmic Tragedy by reason of which "the whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together until now" (Romans, chapter 8, verse 22), and human society exists in a state of continuous disorder and confusion. We are concerned in the Third Degree, however, with the recovery of "that which is lost," and for this purpose the Cosmic Mystery of the legend is reduced to a personal mystery.

When we are discussing the ceremony of the Third Degree it is generally overlooked that it is the Master who is slain, but it is the candidate who is raised. This is explained by the fact that the craft conforms to the uniform procedure of Initiation systems, whether ancient or modern, in identifying the candidate with the prototype who is in himself the Exemplar of the means of redemption. Had we been initiated in Egypt we would "have been made to represent" Osiris; if in Greece, the identification would have been with Dionysus or Iacchos; and if in Persia, with Mithra. Our system in the Craft having issued from Kabbalistic sources is expressed in the terms of Hebrew mysticism, and the prototype is the reputed Chief Architect and Master Builder who is appointed to erect a Temple for which King Solomon gives the inspiring idea and Hiram King of Tyre the building materials. For the purpose of the Craft legend these three quasi-historical characters are combined to typify the threefold creative method of the Deity; whose WISDOM (Solomon) contrives creation subjectively and ideally; whose STRENGTH (Hiram King of Tyre), or resources, projects the world of Nature as the material out of which the idea is to take shape in the creature; and whose BEAUTY (Hiram Abiff), or architectonic and geometrical power, finally molds the idea into objective form and perfection. The prototype of the Craft is therefore the personification of the third aspect of the Divine creative energy. He represents the Great Architect, the "Tekton" or "Son of the Carpenter," to use an expression common to both the Hindu Puranas and the Christian Gospels. The name Hiram Abiff, sometimes given as Adoniram, means the representative or messenger from the Lord (Adonai) or Father (Abba); it is the Hebrew equivalent of the Greek name Hermes, who was likewise the son of the All-Father (Zeus), and the messenger; and in the Graeco-Alexandrian scriptures the names Hermes and Thoth (Divine Thought or Creative Mind) are both used, and the prototype appears as the great Initiator and Teacher of hidden knowledge. Hiram Abiff, then, is not a person, but a type; a

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type of the great pivotal exemplars and revealers, like Orpheus, Osiris, and the long line which culminates in the Great Master of our occidental faith, in whom all earlier and foreshadowing types are summed up. Of them all it is taught that, at different epochs, they were manifested to reveal Truth to a fallen world and help on a benighted humanity. They all encountered opposition from envious "ruffians"; were wounded in the house of their compatriots; and slain by the villainy of those they sought to serve. The tragedy of all their lives is accounted for by the fact that in each case they echo the primal spiritual tragedy which ruptured the cosmic harmony; and this remains so notwithstanding that their loss is deeply regretted and commemorated by the human race. Our own Ritual speaks of "sounds of deep lamentation and regret" from the guilty emanating from a certain "cavern" afar the death of the Master. By that "cavern" is meant our present world; and those "sounds of deep lamentation and regret" signify the cries of pain and misery of humanity which once enjoyed the Golden Age and the felicity of Eden, but now lives "in a state of darkness," exiled in a strange land, and unable to hear the "songs of Zion" of which the subconscious memory still lingers in us. Thus by deploring the loss of a blameless Grand Master we are perpetuating in the Craft legend the tradition of the "time immemorial" distress of mankind; Demeter mourning the loss of her child; the grief of the widowed Isis; Niobe, "all tears"; women wailing for Tammuz; Rachel weeping for her children; and the whole noble army of known and unknown martyrs who, in all ages and every race, have demonstrated that they "would rather suffer death than betray the sacred trust reposed in" them.

So, following the method of antiquity, in our modern Third Degree the Cosmic Mystery of the Fall and the Lost Word is brought home to us individually, and thereby becomes the personal mystery of our own salvation. Having shown us in the Craft legend that we are "fallen" beings, the ceremony proceeds to disclose how the mischief of the "fall" may be repaired, and how "that which is lost" may be found. In other words, it reveals the Path of Return, the discipline of the secret of the life eternal, and the "last and greatest trial" involving the total abnegation and dying down of the personal life. The vital lesson of the Third Degree is that whoso is content to lose the illusory self shall find his immortal self-coming to birth in him. It is axiomatic that "Nature abhors a vacuum"; hence the earthly mind, the "old Adam" to quote St. Paul, must first be evacuated; then the quickening spirit, the "new Adam," fills the vacuum; and when this grace is bestowed upon the natural man, it transforms him into a spiritual man. There are many "roads," or techniques, which lead to the "Centre"; every man is free to choose for himself, but one of them he is bound to accept; and even if he elects to be driven by life effortlessly he has chosen, for then, without knowing it, he follows the insidious and artificial, although spontaneous, easy technique of unconsidered enjoyment. Every man, however, is highly pliable; by knowledge and experience, he can discover that life is not a simple biological process, and that the problem of life is not solely related to the means of satisfying elementary physical needs. He will then learn that life is the realization of the process of salvation or redemption, and that the real problem is to find the appointed way of liberation from the natural mode of existence. The solution to this problem of the authenticity of the spiritual life is suggested by the old adage, "whoever is full of himself has no room for God." The normal life is kept within the limits determined by our sensory perceptions and emotions, and as long as it is full of these, it finds it extremely difficult to perceive spiritual forms and things divine. Accordingly, all that which occupies the natural self of man must either be made to disappear or must be transformed in such a manner as to render it transparent for the inner spiritual reality, whose contours will then become perceptible through the customary shell of natural things. There must finally be a voluntary sacrifice of the personal self; the seals "which are impressed upon the soul must be opened" by means of spiritual contemplation; and the natural self, "by the help of God," be raised "into organic conscious union with the Divine Self."

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DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF THE TRACING BOARD

The diagram illustrated on the Tracing Board is a compendium of the work of the Third Degree ceremony, and comprises the following three main features: -

(1) A tomb, which is also a Temple, bearing certain inscriptions. This is in the form of a conventional coffin over which is laid a scroll. Various emblems are shown on the coffin and scroll.

(2) A sprig of acacia at the head of the grave but planted out of true alignment.

(3) Three working tools, or "implements of destruction," placed at the foot of the coffin.

The principal feature of the diagram is the Coffin or Grave, and this depicts not only the traditional sarcophagus used ceremonially for the Third Degree ceremony but is also intended to represent the body or human personality of the candidate himself. During the ceremony it is prescribed that the candidate shall advance "as though stepping over an open grave," signifying thereby that his life is the pilgrimage towards this goal, and with "four bold or marching steps," indicating that "the Lord of Life will enable us to trample the King of Terrors beneath our feet" when we are "finally raised from the tomb of transgression." The progress of the aspirant in many systems cognate to the Craft is often delineated by three definite stages, corresponding with our three Craft Degrees, which are called the Path of Knowledge, the Path of Love, and the Path of Death; yet, ultimately, like our Masonic series, they are shown to be one and the same Path, for Love and Death lead to Knowledge, while Knowledge, in turn, is nothing without Love and Death, which must of necessity complete the sequence. Moreover, the most general aspect characteristic of spiritual experience is that it is seen through the simile of a Path or Road, and our modern word method, which is derived from the Greek "meta" and "hodos" meaning "a way," still faintly reveals its origin in the context of this imagery. The spiritual Path is also envisaged as taking a certain direction; it leads not only onwards, but upwards in the direction of "that Light which is from above," which will perhaps explain why in the Third Degree ceremony we are exhorted to "lift our eyes to that bright Morning Star, whose rising brings peace and salvation to the faithful and obedient of the human race"; even although we know that the eye of the mind is not literally oriented to the starry sky above any more than downwards. It is therefore written for our guidance and edification: "And they that be wise shall shine as the brightness of the firmament; and they that turn many to righteousness as the stars for ever and ever" (Daniel, chapter 12, verse 3).

(1) THE RELATION OF TOMB AND TEMPLE

The body of mortality is regarded by the Masters of the spiritual life as a living death, and in the dialogues of Plato we find Socrates declaring: "We are walking graves, carrying our tomb about with us" ("Gorgias"). Into that body, however, we are instructed, there has been infused a soul, the psychic principle, which has had the effect of elevating the animal nature to the status of rational man. The soul is represented on the Tracing Board by the "three fives," or by the fifth letter of the Hebrew alphabet thrice repeated, arranged in the form of an inverted triangle. This symbolic arrangement alludes to the downward "fall" of the soul into mortal embodiment and is in direct contrast to the three rosettes displayed on the M.M.'s apron, which are also figured in the form of a triangle, but with the apex upwards. Investiture with the apron in the Third Degree ceremony is intended to "mark the progress" that the soul has made by becoming "raised" from the "fallen" condition, while the rosettes are an apt illustration of the ancient doctrine which teaches that the former "wilderness," the body of mortality, is now blossoming as the rose: "I am the rose of Sharon, and the lily of the valleys" (Song of Solomon, chapter 2, verse 1). The rosettes on the apron, however, represent not only the soul, but certain physiological centers or focal points of whirling energy called "chakras" in the East, which manifest at different parts of the nervous system as

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spiritual vitality increases. Thus, the triangle of rosettes on the white apron is the converse of the triangle, the three "fives," on the black coffin. The four-square white apron typifies the body purified and redeemed from "deadness"; the three rosettes budding from the apron denote the evidence of the soul unfolding powers from within; and the four and the three are in combination arithmetically to make seven, the number of perfections.

The relation of the Tomb with the Temple is delineated in the Tracing Board on the scroll which is shown laid over the coffin. This pictorial design is an overt reminder that the human personality, although mortal, is nevertheless a temple of the Eternal, in which each of us must serve as high priest: "Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you?" (1st Corinthians, chapter 3, verse 16). The chequered floor-work prominent in the picture signifies the perpetual dualism which characterizes natural existence, and the opposites and contrasts inevitable to experience in the flesh, all of which the "high priest" is to "walk upon" in the sense of keeping them under strict control, treating them as of equal value, and finally transcending them. Here is an allusion to the traditional "Middle Path" which mediates between extremes; there is a central neutral point, "a point within the Circle"; and when the aspirant stands balances upon that Point, "from which a Master Mason cannot err", he is free from opposites "with the center." This "Middle Path" is otherwise known as the "line of union," and is symbolized in Freemasonry by the "infallible Plumb-Rule, which, like Jacob's ladder, connects heaven and earth"; it is the unique central "path" in the very midst of our being. "the strict path of virtue," all other paths, "to the right or to the left," consisting of mere side-tracks leading in various directions to particular aims, each of which has an "opposite" or compensating "shadow"; the "Middle Path" alone is the "shadow less Path" that leads "through the valley of the shadow of death," and by means of which the aspirant "may finally rise from the tomb of transgression." Every man's self is a figurative tomb, a living sarcophagus, retarding the full expression of his perfect human nature, and it is to indicate how he can avoid forever remaining in the darkness of that tomb that the work of the Third Degree is to be directed. To achieve this object it becomes necessary, figuratively, to pass through the tomb, a process of transformation, and thereby to change his present form: "Ye must be born again" (St. John, chapter 3, verse 7), that is, a spiritual rebirth after the mystical death of the material self has been truly affected.

At first sight the dormer window of the Temple is an apparently inconspicuous feature in the picture. The pictograph on the Tracing Board shows this unobtrusive window placed high in the roof of the Temple, also that there are no other windows in the building; it is, therefore, the sole means of ingress for light, "the window which gave light" to the interior. But, as we are presumed to know, that Temple is symbolic of the human body, and accordingly the overhead and centrally situated position of the "window" typifies a corresponding interception point of illumination in our physical organism. There is, indeed, a central point at the top of the head at which "that light which is from above" can enter the human brain; the point in question is one to which three major bones composing the cranium converge and come to unity; in an infant these bones are disunited, but soon after birth they close together and ossify into the skull. We lose something vital by being born into this world, for as the poet Wordsworth declares, with our birth, spiritual consciousness "fades into the light of common day" ("Ode to Immortality") and is battened down beneath the "hatches" of physical form. The brain is thereby afforded the necessary protection, but only at the cost of the "dormer" window becoming closed. It therefore follows that in order to recover "that which is lost," spiritual awareness, the closed "window" must be re-opened, and for this purpose we need the guidance and instruction of "a more zealous and expert Brother"; for every real Master, like the Hebrew adept of old, learns to "pay his adoration to the Most High" with "His windows open in his

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chamber toward Jerusalem (Daniel, chapter 6, verse 10). It is also interesting to know that an alternative symbol to the dormer window is the tonsure or shaven patch on the head of members of certain monastic orders, which signifies dedication to the special service of God, and the removal of any obstruction that might intercept the inflow of the supernal Light. Yet there is still something further to be discovered and gained from the "dormer" symbol, something which, when realized, can be both felt and sensed inwardly, later to reflect itself outwardly. This inward power of the: "True Light, which lighted every man that cometh into the world" (St. John, chapter 1. verse 9), can be seen in others by those who see and feel the refulgence of that essence surrounding the body of a soul which is lighted up inwardly; such an one appears to those who can sense it, as a presence which glows like an electric lamp set in alabaster. The attainment or condition here spoken of is otherwise known as the possessing of the "Third Eye." and it is written in this connection: "The light of the body is the eye; if therefore thine eye be single, thy whole body shall be full of light" (St. Matthew, chapter 6, verse 22)

(2) THE SPRIG OF ACACIA

Prominently depicted on the Board we may observe that evergreen sprig of Acacia symbolizing that beyond the body and soul abides the spirit which affiliates man to the Universal and Holy Spirit. In the ritual of the Third Degree this spring is said appropriately to be placed "at the head of the Grave," since it is our supreme life principle, the center from which all our subordinate faculties issue. It is, indeed, "the Centre," the proton around which our personal characteristics move as electrons; it is our Master-light which never goes out. This emblem in antiquity was known under many names, but it is more often referred to as the Golden Bough, or Golden Branch. In the Hebrew Temple it was represented by the Seven-branched Golden Candlestick, which again is a Kabbalistic symbol of the Tree of Life, of which each of us is a branch, sharing a common sap, or life essence. Compare: "I am the vine, ye are the branches" (St. John, chapter 15, verse 5). It will be observed that on the Board the sprig is not centrally aligned but is on one side out of exact alignment and this signifies that in our present imperfect state our personality is not in true alignment with our spiritual principle. In precisely the same way, owing to what is called popularly "the Fall," our planet Earth does not swing to its true pole; its axis has declined from its true center to a false center, the magnetic pole. Truly, as Shakespeare says, "the world is out of joint" ("Hamlet," William Shakespeare); in other words, there is a "displacement factor" which characterizes the whole world, and in sympathy with that axial fault every living creature suffers from the like distortion. Thus mentally, morally and physically, we are all out of alignment "with the Centre"; indeed, every cell in our bodies is similarly out of plumb with our spiritual pole and is therefore subject to disease and death. We have a dramatic allusion to the "displacement factor" in the Third Degree ceremony by the prescribed method communicating the words of the Degree, in uttering which we acknowledge beneath the breath that some "heavy calamity" has befallen us in consequence of which our Master-principle is "smitten," and thereby cut off. The descriptive word used in the Lecture on the Board is a blind. The term used by the Greeks was "Akakia," which is translated "not evil," while the Septuagint uses the word "Aseptos," meaning "nonseptic." These are derived from the Sanskrit word "Akasa," the term for pure immortal substance, as distinct from the corruptible matter of this world.

(3) THE IMPLEMENTS OF DESTRUCTION

The means by which the "displacement factor" has been caused, and by means of which it can likewise be rectified, are indicated on the Board by the Working Tools, and great irony lies in the fact that the very Tools that slew the Master and served to bring about calamity and destruction should nevertheless be appointed to reconstruct and retrieve our misfortune. The difficult lesson is thus communicated to us that evil is but misapplied good, while good is transmuted evil, that it is only by

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our own deviations and errors we eventually learn wisdom; and that our return to grace is achieved by the right use of what involved us in disgrace. The implements depicted on the Board as those "with which our Master was slain" are therefore also the Tools which must be used in order to get ourselves back into alignment with our spiritual "head" they consist of: -

1. THE PLUMB-RULE: Emblem of that "uprightness" which must be applied to all parts of our being, namely the senses, the emotions, and the mind.
2. THE LEVEL: Symbol of the "equality," by means of which those parts must be brought into a condition of harmony and concord.
3. THE HEAVY MAUL: The hieroglyph of a strong and resolute will which nothing can deflect from the end in view.

One of our foremost Masonic interpreters has declared in cryptic terms: "The tools which slew the Master were the three dimensions of space" ("Steps to the Crown." by A.E. Waite). By this he is alluding to the fact that our physical body constitutes the tomb of the spiritual consciousness; each of us is, as it were, a grave wherein the Master is buried, awaiting resurrection in our personal consciousness; and that entombment is sacramentally registered in our physical body by the closing up of the three cranial bones and the inhibition of spiritual awareness. It follows, therefore, that those bones themselves are, mystically, the implements of destruction, since their closing reduces us to the external knowledge of temporal things; and this will explain why, in the Third Degree, it is upon these three bones that every "representative of the Master" is ceremonially smitten. Great, indeed, is the mysterium of our central emblem of mortality, the skull, which has been transmitted to us from antiquity, and is now perpetuated in the modern Craft under veils of allegory.

The implements of destruction depicted on the Board, which are likewise tools of reconstruction, significantly lie on the "squared pavement" which implies that the "black and white squares," denoting the opposites and dualities of our mortal existence, must be converted from "stumbling blocks" into "stepping stones" if we are to gain the summit of the Masonic quest. Why we can aspire to do so is demonstrated to the candidate in the later explanation of the Working Tools of the Third Degree, when he is told that the Skirret marks out "that straight and undeviating line of conduct" which he is expected to pursue in his Way of life. This line drawn by the Skirret is a right angle line from the symbolical Plumb line envisaged as hanging from the Eternal Centre, and just as it is written for our guidance: "Thus he shewed me; and, behold, the Lord stood upon a wall made by a plumb line, with a plumb line in His hand" (Amos, chapter 7, verse 7); so must we, living on that line at a right angle to the vertical line of Truth, react by maintaining a straight and level course. Moreover, in the Compasses and Pencil we have sign posts, the former defining the "limits of both good and evil" which are associated with outer world experience, the latter serving as a reminder that nothing we have done is forgotten: "Be not deceived; God is not mocked, for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap" (Galatians, chapter 6, verse 7). But the Craft is not only insistent upon moral "uprightness," there is likewise the technique of physical rectitude. We instruct the candidate at the very outset of his Masonic career: "You are expected to stand perfectly erect," while the posture to be assumed by all present in the Lodge when standing "to order" is intended to be body erect, every limb taut and angular, every muscle and nerve tense. The reason for this exercise in "squares, levels, and perpendiculars" is because physical tension, emotional control, and mental concentration are valuable aids to the effective "labor" of the Lodge, and slackness in this important matter may render the "work" invalid.

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

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We have endeavored in this and the two previous Papers to interpret the Craft doctrine and disclose the method of teaching by means of "hieroglyphical figures" as illustrated on the Tracing Boards of the Three Degrees of our system. Nevertheless, this disclosure or "unveiling" is only partial. Every real initiate, ancient or modern, has himself personally to experience the supreme ordeal of passage through "the valley of the shadow," the "darkness visible" of the unstable psychic region, before he can hope ultimately to find the Light of light. And so, with us in the Craft, every candidate for the Third Degree enters the darkened Lodge and moves thereafter through a symbolic nebulous underworld, guided only by the "glimmering ray" of his own intuitive spirit. He is ceremonially "raised from a figurative death" and entrusted with "the secrets of the Degree" only to discover, perhaps to his chagrin, that these are but "substituted secrets" which, he is informed, must suffice "until time or circumstances shall restore the genuine ones." How true this cryptic teaching is will be realized by those who have examined the Tracing Boards in an attempt to decipher them; they will recognize, as the result of their "patience and industry," that although the "veil covering the altar" has been partially drawn aside in the Craft ceremonies, yet the compilers of the Ritual have treated the Masonic subject with that profound respect to which it is unquestionably entitled and judiciously left the deepest mysteries still shrouded in a certain obscurity. This has been the wise policy of the seers from "time immemorial"; as St. Paul sagely observes regarding the Sepher of Moses: "But their minds were blinded; for until this day remained the same veil untaken away in the reading of the Old Testament" (2nd Corinthians, chapter 3, verse 14). The reason for this concealment, this veiling, is the intimate and sacred character of divine wisdom. The majority of us are children in the wider sense, and it is unwise, even impossible, to explain many things to young children. We must wait until we have arrived at the years of discretion. So, in regard to the greater mysteries the spiritual parents of our race, the seers and prophets, veil these sacred matters in metaphor, parable and enigma, in order that only those who have faith enough to make the necessary effort needed for the development of the higher faculties of intuition and perception, can penetrate to their intrinsic or essential meaning. It is therefore written: "I have yet many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now" (St. John, chapter 16, verse 12). Thus, veils are drawn to guard against the risk of "profanation of our mysteries," until by our sincere and earnest application we are "properly prepared" to express their teaching wisely in the activities of life. Life itself is a vast Initiation process slowly, with infinite patience, and by law and order, leading an intractable world from "darkness" to Light.

The progress of humanity "from West to East" is marked by a series of catastrophic events, and of these the familiar Biblical story of the "Flood" offers a wide field for commentary. Those races which have preserved the tradition of the deluge, and nearly all have done so, have not neglected to record the name of the legendary mountain upon which the mysterious Thebah came to rest, that Ark which carried the hope of man's ultimate salvation and the germs of a new existence. Nicholas of Damascus, cited by Josephus, calls it Mount Barris, a name which is not far removed from that of Sypris, which Berosus gives to this town of the Sun, in which an Assyrian monarch, preparing to suffer the catastrophe of the deluge, had placed the world's archives. We know also that the Greeks named it Luxoreos, the mountain of Light, the place of Parnassus where Deucalion was stayed. The name, however, which calls for special notice in the elucidation of the context of our Masonic ritual, is Ararat. This word derived from the Hebrew is composed of two roots; the first "AUR" is the word translated "Light" in the first chapter of Genesis; the second is "RTH," which is formed of the Hebrew signs signifying "proper movement" and "resistance." The complete word Ararat, therefore, signifies the "orb or mountain of the reflected course of Light." It is not difficult to perceive what is implied; the orb of luminous effluence, where the supernal Light becomes deflected, is none other than "that Grand Luminary the Sun" of the Craft ritual, the transmuter of intelligible or spiritual Light into

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physical light and energy. We have only to turn to the host of analogous or derivative words for abundant confirmation. The term Arhat in Sanscrit denotes a highly advanced intelligence, a Master. Likewise, the prefix "AR" is found in Arjuna, Arthur, Artemis, Armageddon, Arcana, not to mention many others, in every case signifying spiritual royalty or elevation. The Greek form of Ararat is Armenia. We pass on to another important glyph, Ereb, the raven. The same word occurs in Genesis, chapter 1, verse 5, and in subsequent verses, where it is translated "evening," and in Greek mythology as Erebus, said to be the son of Chaos and Nox. Ereb is freely translated western darkness," the opposite pole, as it were, of "Eastern Light"; but this "darkness" is identical with that of the Lodge in the Third Degree, interior and concealed. The to-and-fro flight of the Raven signifies the prescribing of an expanse, a sphere or circle, and we are reminded of the instruction to the candidate regarding the Compasses: "you are now at liberty to work with both those points in order to render the circle of your Masonic duties complete." It may be noted here that the word Ereb is otherwise rendered "Oreb" and corresponds with Mount Horeb, the mountain of fire, cloud and darkness. The next and complementary glyph is Ionah, the dove. The Hebrew root "ION" denotes infinite being passing from potentiality into activity. Thus, the Raven, symbolically expressed, stands for the circle with the point in the center, and the Dove for the circle bisected. Observe how the root "ION" forms the basis of a number of cryptic names, for example, Jonah, John, Ioannes, Pelion, and many others, all of them "types" and bearers of the creative Word. In our Masonic system the wands borne by the Deacons are appropriately "surmounted by a dove," and with a similar import.

Again, and again in this study of the Tracing Board of the Third Degree we return to the basic symbol, Light, which is central to the Craft method of teaching. This supernal Light, the universal symbol of consciousness and illumination, is also the prime object of the cosmogonies of all peoples. Only in the light of consciousness can man know, and this act of cognition, of conscious discrimination, sunders the world into opposites, for experience of the world is not possible except through opposites. The primal opposition between light and darkness has informed the spiritual world of all peoples and molded it into shape, while the world order and the sacred space, precinct or sanctuary, were first "oriented" by this opposition. World building, city building, the layout of temples, the Roman military encampment, and the spatial symbolism of the Churches are all reflections of the original mythology of space, which, beginning with the opposition between light and darkness, classifies and arranges the world in a continuous series of opposites. Through the heroic act of world creation and consequent division of opposites, man steps forth from the magic circle of the blissful paradisaic state of existence, in which life was regulated by an "open" spiritual vision and finds himself in the tragic circumstances of loneliness and discord. We may think of this paradisaic condition in the terms of religion and affirm that everything was controlled by God; or we may formulate it ethically and say that everything was still good, and that evil had not yet come into the world. Traditionally, this was the Golden Age, when nature was bountiful, and toil, suffering and pain did not exist. With the emergence of self-consciousness, the paradisaic situation of man is ended. and the tradition is universal of a "fall" in which expulsion from the "Garden of Paradise" was experienced as guilt, and, moreover, as original guilt. Thus, the age-old symbolism of the "evergreen shrubs," with which the "Sprig of Acacia" is associated, also embodies a deep psychological verity. It is in fact demonstrable that humanity retains in the "archetypal" race memories the knowledge of a primitive peaceful life spent among the fruit bearing trees of some terrestrial paradise. This is the reason for the quiet bliss felt by so many when walking through, and resting in, woods and forests; why we love nothing so much as picking nuts and berries, and the ripe fruits of the trees.

In recent years the phenomena of mystical experience have been classified, and the path of the aspirant has been described, to the profit of many seekers. But of all the guide books at our disposal,

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there is surely none that maps the way with greater accuracy than that ancient mass of hieroglyphy we call the Volume of the Sacred Law. The language of this Book is that of hieroglyphy and not that of the popular press; the terminology used needs a special method of interpretation; and it therefore comes about that its purport is habitually and woefully misconstrued. To it, although, other writings may indeed help to prepare our minds, we turn at last, and there we find, not ancient history which can profit little, but the story of ourselves as we today pursue the path of the great quest. The understanding of these things will be assisted by realizing physical things to be in faithful correspondence with metaphysical, and that, as we advance from the one to the other, we employ in turn the self-blinded eye of sense, the closed eye of faith, and the opened eye of the soul. It is in this manner that at the outset of the quest for "that which is lost," the aspirant is in a "state of darkness," being conscious only of things in the physical order. He is accordingly required to commit himself, with bandaged eyes, signifying the self-blinded eye of sense, to his instinct in the possibility of a great change to be wrought in him, no less than self-transfiguration. But during his "progress in the science" of self-knowledge he comes to know that his salvation is hidden from him only by a passing blindness; at the end of the quest the "hoodwink" is removed; and faith passes into sight. The question remains, however, as to whether, in the process of recovering "that which is lost," it is best to search in the deepest recesses of the mind to discover those elements of lost knowledge which are suggested to us in the Sacred Writings, and which, therefore, form their revelation; or whether they may not be found lying hidden behind the knowledge proper to this world. We must always remember that when we speak of "that which is lost," we do not mean absolutely lost; we know only the surface of things, while that which we are in quest of is certain to lie beneath the surface. The best of intellectual knowledge of this world is superficial in regard to that deeper knowledge which is related to our spiritual nature; and no increase therein is likely to bring us to the discovery of the knowledge of divine things: "But the natural man received not the things of the Spirit of God; for they are foolishness unto him; neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned" (1st Corinthians, chapter 2, verse 14).

We gradually learn by experience that more than half the troubles of life arise from the fact that those we are in contact with fail to make distinction between what does matter and what does not matter; by emphasizing small personal considerations, and letting little petty things worry and perturb them, to the distress of all about them. This is the surface cause of disharmony, but the basal cause is the absence of the inner Light which would show everything as it is; for when we see truly, we are in no doubt or conflict as to the comparative value of things. In the darkness we can imagine what we will; in the Light, nothing but what is there can be accepted. Here we are drawn in contrary directions by this, that and the other whims and preferences. Love of pleasures draws in one direction, fear of consequences draws in the opposite, and when conscience is active, it acts as a contrary impulse to many of the things we are strongly inclined to desire. Now what causes this is the division of the whole man into "parts," namely his true self and his false self; while the latter is itself again split up into what are practically separated properties; the delights of the body and the delights of the mind, the artistic lures of music, poetry, and natural beauty; the love of ease, the love of the results of labor, the love of influence, of money and of comfort. The mark of the true man is centralization, or in our Masonic terminology, "with the center"; and the mark of the temporal, or "false" self, division into "parts." We are to be "perfect" in all our "parts"; alas, it is one thing to know, but quite another to be able to do; nevertheless, knowing, it is essential to keep on striving to do. The temporal world with joys and sorrows are real enough to us, and it takes an act of faith to treat them as unreal, although we know there is no other way of passing from "darkness" to Light. Let us, then, remember that the reality of the things of this world is not inherent in them, but is given to them by our false imagination; and what we give we can also take away. Every man in this

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life is "wrong" only because some side of him suffers through his practical identification of his whole self with one particular property of himself. When the whole man, body, soul and spirit, is in functional alignment "with the center," this never occurs. He recognizes the fact that he belongs to two worlds, the visible and the invisible, and recalls that heaven is his true home and not earth.

The laws of the Universe do not and cannot collide with each other; they interlace and interpenetrate the cosmos, law within law and law above law. The material and the spiritual planes of existence intersect, but even at the point of intersection, they never differ except to agree for their mutual elucidation. In every petition, therefore, what we distinguish as prayer implies a recognition of the inextricable interdependency of God and man and Nature, as an infinite totality. It appeals to the tribunal, and the God to whom every heart speaks, and in petitioning man merely obeys the law of his nature, a habit which he finds formed and inherited. Anterior to speech even, it does not require the vehicle of language, although the most ancient records of language are prayers. Man starts with this craving, the seeking for something or someone else; indeed, if he stood silent and solitary, he would still be a social unit and own the obligation that tends for ever to entice him out of himself to find himself. "Laborare est orare," to work is to pray; all honest, conscientious, industrious work, all sincere service, appeals to something higher, better and other than self. God, however, does not work and bestow His blessings in the ordinary finite acceptance, and in the superficial view of things. Yet spiritual verities essential to our welfare assuredly assume some form of outward and phenomenal expression, otherwise they would fail altogether to enter the province of human and temporal knowledge. By the gradual method of "here a little and there a little" are the Mysteries learned by humanity in the mass; first in the outer courts of the temple, and by means of the letter, the symbolic "simulacrum," and the official doctrine; afterwards in the "adyta," by the spiritual sense and the inward vision, the aspirant becomes aware that the acceleration of his progress consists not in evading obstacles to the spiritual life, but in their conquest and transvaluation; not in avoiding contact with the social life of the world, but in an inward freedom from subjection to illusory ideals, and in a blithe detachment from external things. "Sic itur ad astra"; After this manner is the laborious ascent of the soul to the heights; step by step upwards beneath the unsympathetic criticism and contradicting impulses of the lower nature, and amid demands from without to take the broader, easier path. In a general sense terrestrial life is an initiation, and the trials and tribulations which are inevitably incident to our mortal existence, are reminders and premonitions of the deeper mystery into which, sooner or later, we are all called upon to be initiated in full consciousness.

There are many pitfalls which beset the aspirant in his journey towards the East, the Promised Land: "And ye shall dispossess the inhabitants of the land, and dwell therein; for I have given you the land to possess it" (Numbers, chapter 33, verse 53). God thus presents us with the title. He pronounces the promise, and He endues with the power; we must obey and perform our allotted task. The mind of the aspirant keyed up to this attitude, however, will speedily experience the consequences of antagonizing against the "prince of the air," the magnetic aura which is generated by the illusions of this world. Beyond the confines of our normal conceptions of this material world there exists another world, elusive, intangible as the scent of a flower, an enchanted country, the very evasiveness of which but renders it the more alluring to the mind of man. This is the world of "maya" or "glamour," of which poets and story tellers write. Although in one sense we may speak of the world of glamour as distinct from the material world, and to this extent lying beyond us, in another and doubtless far more accurate sense, we should regard it as the material world itself, seen in a different aspect. We may then describe glamour as a species of spell, under which the world is viewed from a changed standpoint. In any consideration of glamour, we must be on our guard

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against making a judgment of fact or origin alone to test value, as we are often conscious of the effects of glamour apparently altogether incommensurate with their causes. We see, as we come to know in our quest, in part; yet the whole is in us, and it depends upon how we have disposed our minds and formed our capacities, what part of the whole we see. Agonies of apprehension will no doubt seize the follower of the inward way as former ideals, and enchantments, crumble into futility, but equally assuredly will he discern these to be replaced by others for which the former have served as but temporary substitutes. Some veil of obscurity seems lifted which had hitherto baffled him, and the withdrawal of which alone enables him to see familiar things in their true relations and significance. Something not to be fully grasped or understood, but which he nevertheless knows to be at the back of all the beauty his senses discern; which gives them their force and meaning, and is related to them as soul to body, thought to the language in which it finds utterance.

One final word upon this profound subject. Whoso labor at the work of the Third Degree is called a "son of the widow" in allusion to that: "Jerusalem which is above, which is the mother of us all" (Galatians, chapter 4, verse 26). An ancient Hermetic oracle declares that to lift the veil of the Widow spells death; that nothing mortal can look upon her face and live. The death, however, which is meant is the death implied in the Third Degree, the death of all that is vain, unworthy, and unreal. In this study of the Tracing Board of the Third Degree we have been drawing veils aside, the veils of allegory that shroud the teachings of the Craft, but as true Sons of the Widow we must go further than lifting the veil of the allegory and learn to draw aside all veils of darkness clothing ourselves. Only personal labor can verify what is imparted in lectures and books; persistent desire and determination of will are essential in the quest; the Ritual affirms of the prototype that "the perspiration stood in large drops upon his forehead" when he "staggered faint and bleeding"; and we all come to know that realization may cost blood and sweat. We are therefore provided with a sign and a cry with which in dire need to invoke the aid of other "sons of the widow" from behind the veil. Both they and we have one common Mother; she is called a Widow because of the world calamity which has left her in dereliction. At the very least each of us might labor to open his personal "dormer" window towards that "Jerusalem which is above", within those walls are peace and plenteousness of all we now so sorely lack.

She is more precious than rubies; and all the things thou canst desire are not to be compared unto her." (Proverbs, chapter 3, verse 15.)

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3.2- THE ALL-SEEING EYE

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All Seeing Eye

An important symbol of the Supreme Being borrowed by the Freemasons from the nations of antiquity. Both the Hebrews and the Egyptians appear to have derived its use from that natural inclination of figurative minds to select an organ as the symbol of the function which it is intended peculiarly to discharge. Thus, the foot was often adopted as the symbol of swiftness, the arm of strength, and the hand of fidelity.

On the same principle, the open eye was selected as the symbol of watchfulness, and the eye of God as the symbol of Divine watchfulness and care of the universe. The use of the symbol in this sense is repeatedly to be found in the Hebrew writers. Thus, the Psalmist says, Psalm xxxiv, 15: "The eyes of the Lord are upon the righteous, and his ears are open unto their cry," which explains a subsequent passage (Psalm cxxi, 4), in which it is said: "Behold, he that keepeth Israel shall neither slumber nor sleep. "

In the Apocryphal Book of the Conversation of God with Moses on Mount Sinai, translated by the Rev. WT. Cureton from an Arabic manuscript of the fifteenth century, and published by the Philobibion Society of London, the idea of the eternal watchfulness of God is thus beautifully allegorized:

"Then Moses said to the Lord, O Lord, dost thou sleep or not? The Lord said unto Moses, I never sleep: but take a cup and fill it with water. Then Moses took a cup and filled it with water, as the Lord commanded him. Then the Lord cast into the heart of Moses the breath of slumber; so, he slept, and the cup fell from his hand, and the water which was therein was spilled. Then Moses awoke from his sleep.

Then said God to Moses, I declare by my power, and by my glory, that if I were to withdraw my providence from the heavens and the earth, for no longer a space of time than thou hast slept, they would at once fall to ruin and confusion, like as the cup fell from thy hand."

On the same principle, the Egyptians represented Osiris, their chief deity, by the symbol of an open eye, and placed this hieroglyphic of him in all their Temples. His symbolic name, on the monuments, has represented by the eye accompanying a throne, to which was sometimes added an abbreviated figure of the god, and sometimes what has been called a hatchet, but which may as correctly be supposed to be a representation of a square.

The All-Seeing Eye may then be considered as a symbol of God manifested in his omnipresence---his guardian and preserving character---to which Solomon alludes in the Book of Proverbs (xv, 3), where he says: "The eyes of the Lord are in every place, beholding (or, as in the Revised Version, keeping watch upon) the evil and the good." It is a symbol of the Omnipresent Deity.

...

Dr. Mackey interpreted the All-Seeing Eye as a symbol of God's omniscience, and in doing so had at the time (about 1870) the support of the Masonic students of his generation. The soundness of that interpretation need not be questioned in the sense that it represents the logical goal toward which any other possible interpretation may be aimed; but it is doubtful if it can be supported by Masonic

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history. Almost less is known about the symbol (and it is a symbol!) than any other; it did not once come into the purview of the studies on which this Supplement is based, and if any researcher has found anywhere solid data on the origin of the symbol it must be hidden in a book of more than average obscurity. There are a number of considerations based on other known data which throw some sidelights on the question:

During the long formative period of the Ritual from about 1717 to about 1770 Lodges were small, convivial, worked while seated about their dining table; they were serious, reverent, and the great majority of Masons were members of a church, but they were neither theological nor mystical, and they instinctively shrank from anything which bordered too closely upon the province of the Church. It is a sound rule in the interpretation of the symbols on the Tracing Boards used by those Lodges not to begin by assuming a theological meaning, because as a rule they shrank from theology. In Freemasonry before 1717 they shrank from it even more. They were a Brotherhood, a Fraternity, carrying on the traditions of the building craft, and they never had any consciousness of standing in the tradition of religion. Solemnity, seriousness, symbolism, ritualism, these do not betoken theology because they belong to man by nature and are found everywhere. Though the All-Seeing Eye is one of the religious symbols, it does not follow that the early Speculative Masons used it as a religious symbol.

The All-Seeing Eye may have denoted the Divine omniscience. Also, it may have symbolized any one or more of some five or six other truths or ideas. It may have denoted the sun originally, as it came up at dawn - it had been thus used by Shakespeare and many other writers. It may have meant the Grand Master or the worshipful Master and been a reminder of the fact that wherever a man is and in whatever he may be doing he continues to be a Mason, and the eye of the Craft is on him. It may have stood for enlightenment, wisdom, intelligence; and it may have been the Tracing Board representation of the Blazing Star in the Tessellated Pavement, in which case it was again the sun, or day-star, which shines on through day and night. (Note: Until modern astronomy made a number of its difficult facts familiar to everybody the majority of men did not see any necessary connection between daylight and the sun, because the day begins before the sun appears, and remains after it has sunk.) There are many omniscience's in addition to those known to theology and metaphysics - the omniscience of the law, the omniscience of the Government which keeps its eye on every citizen, etc.; if the first Freemasons had a symbol for omniscience it does not follow that it was therefore the Divine Omniscience that was meant.

If their symbol signified the Divine Omniscience it does not follow that it would have had for them a depressing meaning, as if that Omniscience were for no other purpose than a final Judgment Day. Omniscience needs not search a man out in order to condemn him for sins he has tried to hide; it may search him out to honor him for virtues he has tried to hide. The Sword Pointing at the Naked Heart is another emblem which a depressing meaning need not have; it should have, rather, a cheerful meaning, because when justice searches out every heart it means that men have security, live in civil order, and therefore can be happy. We could use the All-Seeing Eye as a symbol of the Divine Omniscience we could use it at the same time as a symbol for what ought to be the Fraternity's own omniscience (the word need not be defined so absolutely as many think it should) in the sense that it never loses sight of a man once that man has become a member, not even if he does not attend Lodge, or is confined at home by illness or accident, or has moved away.

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3.3- THE 47TH PROBLEM OF EUCLID

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Master Mason Degree

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THE 47TH PROBLEM OF EUCLID

INTRODUCTION

There are so many symbols, words and phrases in Freemasonry used both as part of its rituals as well as part of its vocabulary, that studying and trying to understand the “meanings” them is a very worthwhile and a rewarding journey. One such prominent symbol and phrase, is the 47th problem of Euclid, which is one of the main symbols introduced in the Third Degree.

In the Blue Lodge, it is considered a great honor to be elected and serve as the Master of a lodge. It shows that the individual has attained maturity, leadership, charisma, and motivation, but above all, knowledge to be able to lead others. It is an initiation by itself, as the position brings with it a completely new set of responsibilities that are often not appreciated when accepting the position. At the end of serving as Master of a Lodge, many Past Masters are presented with a jewel, symbolizing the great appreciation of the Lodge towards their dedication. It also symbolizes something else? that is that the individual has completed his “journey”, through the different positions of the Lodge, to a new plain.

The 47th problem of Euclid features prominently in many Past Master’s jewels. Selecting this symbol out of the thousands used in Freemasonry to represent one of its highest honors must mean that it is a very significant and central symbol of the Craft. Yet, sadly many Freemasons, even many Past Masters, do not know why it is so centrally featured in the Past Master’s jewel. Clearly the 47th problem is based on Geometry, and all Freemasons know that Geometry and Freemasonry are closely linked, but is this the only reason? What does the 47th problem of Euclid symbolize and mean? Of the 465 problems published by Euclid, why is the 47th so important? Why do Freemasons cherish it so?

THE FOUNDATION OF FREEMASONRY?

The 47th problem of Euclid is often mentioned in Masonic publications. In Anderson's “Constitutions” published in 1723, it mentions that “The Greater Pythagoras, provided the Author of the 47th Proposition of Euclid's first Book, which, if duly observed, is the Foundation of all Masonry, sacred, civil, and military...”. Being mentioned in one of the first “official” speculative Masonic publications clearly indicates that the 47th problem of Euclid must be important. It is also mentioned in the Third Degree lecture, where we are taught that the “47TH problem of Euclid..... taught us to be general lovers of the arts and sciences”.

However, it is quite different to be referred to as the “Foundation of all Masonry, sacred, civil and military” that to be referred to as “taught us to be general lovers of the arts and sciences”. Has the importance of the symbolism of the 47th problem declined over time for some reason?

In order to understand whether the symbol has declined in importance or not, we first need to look at the 47th problem of Euclid itself.

THE DISCOVERY OF THE 47TH PROBLEM OF EUCLID

Euclid wrote a set of thirteen books, which were called “Elements”. Each book contained many geometric propositions and explanations, and in total Euclid published 465 problems. The 47th problem was set out in Book 1, which is also known as “The Pythagorean Theorem”. Why is it called

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by both these names? Although Euclid published the proposition, it was Pythagoras who discovered it. We learn from the third degree lecture that:

"This wise philosopher (Pythagoras) enriched his mind abundantly in a general knowledge of things, and more especially in Geometry, or Masonry. On this subject he drew out many problems and theorems, and, among the most distinguished, he erected this, when, in the joy of his heart, he exclaimed Eureka, in the Greek language signifying, "I have found it," and upon the discovery of which he is said to have sacrificed a hecatomb. It teaches Masons to be general lovers of the arts and sciences."

Actually, it was not Pythagoras who directly discovered the rule, as the Egyptians used the same principle for a very long time before Pythagoras, whereby they re-measured their fields after the annual flooding of the Nile washed out their boundary markers. Hence, Pythagoras is probably here referred to as being the one who proved that the process works.

History records that Pythagoras established a society with philosophical, religious and political aims. Shrouded in secrecy, they believed that only by truly understanding the universe could one achieve salvation of the soul, and as Divinity created all things, studying it over a period of several lifetimes, could bring one closer to Divinity itself. As such, it was believed that through study and reason could one start to understand Divinity. Clearly, reason is based on measurable things (such as through numbers and objects) and is easier to understand if expressed in that matter. Hence the society devoted much of its time to the mathematics, including Geometry. This line of thinking was incorporated in Freemasonry, which sets it opposite to the Church, which emphasizes faith over reason. Indeed, Pope Pius IX, in his encyclical, *Qui Pluribus*, dated 9 November 1846, attacked those who "put human reason above faith, and who believe in human progress." Many people consider this to be a reference to Freemasonry.

This is interesting, because in the Book of Wisdom 11:20 we read:

"Even apart from these, men could fall at a single breath
when pursued by justice
and scattered by the breath of thy power.
But thou hast arranged all things by measure
and number and weight."

So, the very "measurement of things" the Church objects to is mentioned in Scripture.

However, let us get back to how the 47th problem fits in Freemasonry.

WHAT DOES THE 47TH SAY?

The proposition states that: "In right angled triangles the square on the side subtending the right angle is equal to the squares on the sides containing the right angle."

What? In other words, $A^2 + B^2 = C^2$.

Many readers will feel like they have been returned to Geometry class. A simple illustration will probably refresh our memories.

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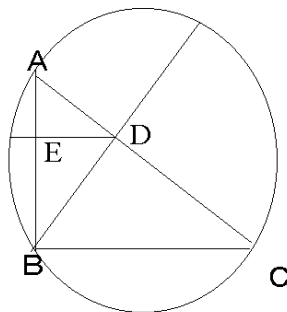
The proposition is especially important in architecture. Builders have since ancient times used the theorem in constructing buildings by a process known as “squaring a room.” As the theorem states that 3 squared + 4 squared = 5 squared, a builder starts by marking a spot and drawing a line, say line A. This line is given the value of 3. The builder then marks another point, say point B and draws a line from it at a right angle to line A, and it is given the value of 4. The distance between line A and B is then measured, and if the distance between A and B is 5, then the room is squared. By inverting the process, a “squared” (or rectangle) room can be obtained.

Engineers who tunnel from both sides through a mountain use the 47th problem to get the two shafts to meet in the center. The surveyor who wants to know how high a mountain may be ascertains the answer through the 47th problem. The astronomer who calculates the distance of the sun, the moon, the planets, and who fixes "the duration of times and seasons, years, and cycles," depends upon the 47th problem for his results. The navigator traveling the trackless seas uses the 47th problem in determining his latitude, his longitude, and his true time. Eclipses are predicted, tides are specified as to height and time of occurrence, land is surveyed, roads run, shafts dug, bridges built, with the 47th problem to show the way.

In some lodges, using this principle, a candidate symbolically “squares the Lodge” by being escorted around the Lodge three times during the Entered Apprentice ritual, four times for a Fellowcraft ritual, and five times for a Master Mason ritual, which completed his journey.

THE 47TH PROBLEM FORMS THE BASIS OF ALL ANCIENT MEASUREMENT UNITS

The 47th problem of Euclid formed the basis of a common set of measurements used by the Egyptians, especially in the building of the Great Pyramids. It gets a little technical, but a simple illustration will help us understand it better.



$$\begin{aligned}
 A-B &= 300 & A-D &= 180 & A-E &= 108 \\
 B-C &= 400 & D-C &= 320 & & \\
 A-C &= 500 & D-E &= 144 & &
 \end{aligned}$$

Please see the illustration above, which is not accurate due to a drawing, but will serve to illustrate the point. If we take a circle and draw in it a triangle (triangle A- B-C) which perpendicular is 300, base is 400, and by the 47th problem, the hypotenuse becomes 500 (any combination such as 3,4,5 will also work? higher numbers are used for ease of explanation). Then if we draw a line from the angle of the perpendicular and the base through the hypotenuse to the circle, this line will be equal to 480. The resulting two parts of the hypotenuse (A-D and D-C) will be equal to 180 and 320 respectively. Then if we draw another line from the point D (the intersector of the hypotenuse) to

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the perpendicular of the shortest side of the triangle (A-B), then line A-E will equal 108 and line D-E will equal 144.

Now we have all the measurements of the ancient world, that is 500, 480, 400, 320, 180, 144 and 108. Why is this important? If we take each unit to be a cubit (an ancient form of measurement), then 500 is the base of the Great Pyramid of Memphis. 400 cubits is the length of an Egyptian stadium (stadium is plural for stadia, and ancient measurement unit, based on a particular number of steps, also called a Khet by the Egyptians). 480 cubits is the length of the Ptolemy stadium, 320 cubits is the length of the Hebrew and Babylonian stadium. Furthermore, 180, which represents the smaller part of the hypotenuse, doubled gives 360 cubits, the Cleomedes stadium. By doubling 144 cubits gives 288 cubits, the Archimedes stadium. Finally, by doubling 108 cubits we obtain 216 cubits, or the lesser Egyptian stadium.

In other words, this simple exercise formed the basis of all the lengths used by the Egyptians, and hence also once again indicates that its principle was well understood by the Egyptians, and hence taught by them to Pythagoras.

CONCLUSION

Clearly, the 47th problem helps us look at the universe, and all that is in it, through a system that we can understand clearly, for it is measurable. The Master's jewel is the square, the base needed for the 47th problem (in many jurisdictions the square has the dimensions of 3:4? the Pythagorean dimensions). As the Master serves his position, he becomes more complete, and therefore the 47th problem of Euclid is dedicated on his jewel when he leaves office.

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3.4- THE THREE GRAND PILLARS

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THE THREE SUPPORTING PILLARS OF A LODGE

Although it is probably true that there is no Mason, be he ever so unskilled in his Art, who is so ill informed that if he were asked, "What are the symbolical Supports of your Blue Lodge?" would not be able to give the information, "The Three Pillars, Wisdom, Strength, and Beauty," it is to be feared that there is many a Mason who, when he has given the information that the Three Pillars are the Supports of his Lodge and has given those Supports their respective names, has told absolutely all he knows concerning the Three Pillars. He knows nothing of their antecedents and their history; nothing of their symbolic significance. This is decidedly not as it should be. It is, then, worth the time and effort of every Mason who would possess even the elements of a proper knowledge of his Art, and especially is it worth the time and effort of every Mason who would call himself a student of his Art, to make an investigation, if only one of the utmost brevity, of the antecedents, the history, and the symbolism, of pillars and, more particularly, of the Three Pillars.

To an investigation, such as suggested, the brief review below can serve as scarcely more than a synopsis. It is no more than a start in the right direction-- merely the sketching in of some of the more important features of a field of investigation which no Mason can afford neglecting to explore.

Probably pillars have been used for commemorative, monumental and symbolistic purposes since the beginnings of civilization in the world. For example, among the Egyptians many extraordinary events, singular or noteworthy transactions, and new inventions were commemorated, and their histories preserved, by records carved upon pillars of stone. According to tradition, Osiris, that Egyptian hero and god of such peculiar and especial interest to the Mason, set up pillars in commemoration of his conquests; the pillars bore hieroglyphical inscriptions recording certain interesting facts and details relative to those conquests. This reputed example of Osiris was followed by the kings of ancient Egypt for many centuries, for those kings had, in many instances, records of their conquests, triumphs, power, and magnificence, engraved on pillars or obelisks. And, if we are to believe the Greek legends having to do with the legendary world--conquering Egyptian king Sesostris who in those legends carries the burdens and the glories of many of the deeds of Rameses II., Rameses II during his military progress through the various nations which he conquered caused pillars to be erected bearing inscriptions and emblematic devices making known to posterity certain features of, and facts relating to, his conquests.

By the biblical people's pillars were used in ways similar to those in which they were used by the Egyptians. Thus, Hiram King of Tyre, upon the forming of his grand junction between Eurichorus and Tyre, dedicated a pillar to Jupiter in commemoration of the event. Enoch erected two pillars--the Pillars of Enoch of which Masonry has its symbolic legend--the one of brass to resist water and the other of stone to resist fire upon which he inscribed information calculated to preserve his knowledge to posterity in the case of the destruction of the world. Jacob's Pillar at Bethel was erected to commemorate his extraordinary vision; his Pillar at Galeed was raised in commemoration of his treaty with his uncle, Laban. Joshua raised a pillar at Gilgal to perpetuate the fact of the miraculous passage of the River Jordan. And Absalom erected a pillar in honor of himself.

Leaving, now, the consideration of pillars as merely individual units and turning to the consideration of grouped pillars, each group consisting of three units, one realizes at the outset that the conception of a symbolic group of three pillars is not by any means one confined exclusively to Masonry; in not a few of the ancient mysteries and religious systems some symbolic meaning was assigned to a group comprised of three pillars.

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The symbolic conception of three grouped pillars was contained in the Druidical Mysteries, indeed, in those mysteries, in some instances, the adytum, or sanctuary, was actually supported on three stones or pillars. In the mythology of India, the conception of three pillars was present, the pillars being considered as located in the East, West, and South and as bearing the names Wisdom, Strength, and Beauty. In also the mysteries of India the three qualities, Wisdom, Strength, and Beauty, were treated of, being there considered as represented by three hierophants, one in the East, one in the West, and one in the South.

The three-pillar-group, in every ancient mystery or religious system where it occurred as such, was the presentation, symbolically, of a triad. Therefore, a consideration of the Three Pillars of the Lodge brings before the student, for his contemplation, the curious fact that nearly every mystery practiced by the ancient peoples of the world contained its reference, and that an important reference, to a triad. In the mysteries of India, the triad was Brahma, Vishnu, Siva; in the Grecian Mysteries the triad was Jupiter, Neptune, Pluto; in the Persian, Ormazd, Mithra, Mithras; in the Gothic, Woden, Friga, Thor; in the Mexican, Tloquenahuaque, Huitzilopochtli, Mictlanteuctli; and so on through the various systems practiced by the ancients.

So, in carrying forward what was best in the conceptions and the teachings of the peoples of antiquity, Masonry, too, has its pillars of peculiar significance; places one in East, one in the West, and one in the South; considers each one symbolically significant as a unit, calling one Wisdom, one Strength, and one Beauty, as did the Hindus; and, finally, Masonry considers those Pillars as a group, unitary in character and in itself a symbol, indeed a symbol of the very highest type, for:--

The Mason is informed that the Three Supporting Pillars of the Lodge are Wisdom, Strength, and Beauty "because it is necessary that there should be wisdom to contrive, strength to support, and beauty to adorn all great and important undertakings": he cannot but gather from the lectures and the work, particularly of the First Degree, that the Lodge is the symbol of the World: therefore, when he combines these two conceptions and draws the necessarily resulting conclusion, he arrives at the same understanding of the ultimate symbolic significance of the Three Pillars as did the ancient Hindus--the Three Supporting Pillars of the Lodge are, considered as a group, the symbol of Him Whose Wisdom contrived the World, Whose Strength supports the World, Whose Beauty adorns the World-- Deity.

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3.5- BEYOND THE CRAFT

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BEYOND THE CRAFT – THE HIGHER DEGREES

The early history of the so-called "Higher Degrees" is even more obscure than that of the Craft, and in consequence a tendency has grown up to regard them as "Manufactured" during the 18th century.

The third degree clearly foreshadows a subsequent degree, wherein the lost secrets will be finally recovered, in fact without such a degree the whole of the Craft ceremonies would be meaningless. Moreover, as we shall show later, the most important Higher Degrees use Sns. of great antiquity, which have been clearly handed down from ancient days in precisely the same way as have our Craft Sns., of which full evidence has been given in the History Handbook. There is also documentary evidence to show that the legends of some of these degrees were well known by our medieval ancestors, and actually incorporated in the Ancient Charges. As, for example, the two pillars which were set up before the flood, survived that deluge, and were subsequently re-discovered by masons. This legend forms the theme of the 13th degree of the A. and A. Rite which is called the Royal Arch of Enoch.

The earliest printed references to any of the Higher Degrees are to the Royal Arch in 1741, and to the Royal Order of Scotland in 1743, when it was in such a vigorous state of health that it had a Provincial Grand Lodge in London, with at least two Chapters under its control.

The Higher Degrees appear to fall into three main groups: -

- Those that extend the story of the Craft
- Those which purport to restore the lost Secrets
- The Chivalric Degrees

With regard to the first group two tendencies seem to have been at work during the 18th century. The one being to cut out of the Craft various parts of the legend, and the other being to enlarge certain incidents referred to in the Craft stories, add picturesque detail, and evolve out of them a new degree. My own conviction is that the root matter of nearly all the Higher Degrees comes from traditions and legends cherished by our medieval predecessors.

There is no doubt that all our rituals, the Craft included, underwent considerable revision during the 18th century. In the case of the Craft Degrees a considerable amount of excision was necessitated by the alteration of the clause in the constitution which changed Masonry from a Christian to a non-Christian basis. This process of excision of all Christian references was not completed until the time of the Treaty of Union, in 1813, and one example for England will suffice. Dunckley, in the second half of the 18th century, declared that the "Blazing Star" meant the star at Bethlehem which guided the wise men to the infant Christ. In Scotland to this day there still survives a distinct reference to the Christ in the Craft Degrees, for the V.S.L. is opened by the D.C. with a quotation from the opening verse of the gospel of St. John,— "In the beginning was the Word,"—whilst the Lodge is closed with the following quotation from the same source, "And the Word was with God." Now this clearly indicates the existence of a Christian explanation of the lost Secrets which, though no longer countenanced in the Craft Degrees in England, survives in such degrees as the Rose Croix.

We thus see that anything Christian was eliminated from the lower degrees, and this explains the probable origin of some of the Higher Degrees. At the same time, the general style of our Craft

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Rituals has been altered. Apparently in early days the actual part taken by the candidate during the ceremony was comparatively small, and the bulk of the work consisted of lectures, some parts being by question and answer, while other parts contained various legends connected with the Order. Gradually the tendency arose to make the candidate take a more active and dramatic part in the ceremony, and in order to do this legends and incidents which did not immediately connect with the main theme began to be dropped. These parts were prized by the older members, and rather than see them perish they made them into side Degrees, nor are we justified in assuming that they invented the Sns. to go with these degrees. In the Royal Order of Scotland to-day the bulk of the ceremony consists of questions and answers put by the M. to the Wardens, and include the giving of S..ns at certain points in the catechism, which S..ns, however, are not specifically taught to the candidate. No doubt when similar portions were cut out and became Christian degrees the Sns. went with them, and naturally became tests to prove that a Brother had taken this new Side Degree, which was nevertheless in reality very ancient.

A characteristic example of a degree which has been cut out of an existing craft degree is the Mark, which was almost certainly part of the ceremony of a F.C., although no doubt it has been amplified since it started on its independent career. On the other hand, some of the intermediate degrees of the A. and A Rite, such as the Knights Elect of Nine, are merely amplifications of incidents dismissed in a few words in the Craft ceremony. The Knights Elect of Nine relates in dramatic form the apprehension of one of the criminals.

To an entirely different order belong degrees like the Royal Arch, the Royal Order of Scotland, and the Rose Croix. Each of these in its own way claims to be the completing degree, in which the lost Secrets are discovered. The explanation in the case of the last two is Christian, in the case of the R.A. non-Christian, whilst their survival indicates the existence of two diametrically opposed traditions. The Christian Degrees represent the solution put forward in Medieval times, whereas the R.A., though now overlaid with Jewish matter taken from the O.T. in the 18th century, has still within it traces of a tradition which goes right back to pre-Christian times, and clearly comes in part from Egypt, and in part from India.

The third group claim to carry on the teaching of the Chivalric Orders of the Middle Ages and contain evidence of a mystical tradition which was not entirely orthodox. A characteristic example of these degrees is the Knights Templar.

With regard to these Chivalric Degrees, it may at first sight appear difficult to justify the claim of a building guild to be linked in any way with the proudest Order of Chivalry known to exist in the Middle Ages, but those who hastily brush away this tradition ignore certain salient features of the Templar organization. The Templars contained at least three sections, or sub-orders, within their ranks, i.e., the Knights themselves, the Templar Priests, and the so-called Serving Brethren, among whom were many Masons.

When the Order was suppressed thousands of Knights escaped the general persecution, and simply disappeared from history. How did they do it, and what became of them? The most reasonable explanation is that they disguised themselves as Serving Brothers and Lay Brothers of the Temple and were shielded by these humbler members of their own Order, who entirely escaped persecution. I have gone into this question at great length in "Freemasonry and the Ancient Gods," and will therefore content myself by saying here that there was undoubtedly a link between Masonry and the Templars, which is quite sufficient to explain a partial survival of Templar Rites

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among the Masonic Brotherhood. The Templars certainly had a mystical teaching very similar to that enshrined in Freemasonry, and traces of it can still be detected in the present rituals of the Masonic Knights Templar, despite the fact that they have been considerably revised in the last half century.

THE MARK DEGREE

Those of my readers who have already studied the first three Handbooks of this series will realize that the true Secrets of a M.M. are not restored to them. The real Signs which was lost was comprehension of the Nature of God, and our Third Degree quite clearly indicates that, despite popular beliefs, we shall not be able to comprehend God as soon as we are dead. The Craft degrees, in short, take us through birth, life and death, and shadow forth the Creative, Preservative and Destructive sides of the Deity. The majority of the other degrees either deal with what befalls a man after death, or else endeavor to explain, or fill in, certain gaps in that historic narrative which is the allegorical basis of the Craft Degrees.

The Mark degree in part belongs to the latter group and is in reality the completion of the Second Degree. Unquestionably a Brother should receive his Mark when he becomes a F.C., and the degree itself still shows strong operative influence.

It is ruled by Mark Grand Lodge, which meets and has its offices at the Temple in Great Queen Street, next door to the Connaught Rooms. All who love the Higher Degrees owe a debt of gratitude to Mark Grand Lodge, which has acted as Fairy Godmother to many of the Higher Degrees which were left stranded after the Treaty of Union in 1813. Indeed, in many cases it has more or less taken them under its wing, and in consequence we shall have to refer again and again to the fact that the Grand Body which rules a particular degree has its Head Quarters at "Mark Mason's Hall."

The Mark Degree has its own regalia and a special jewel, and perhaps our younger Brethren will be glad of the warning that, with the exception of the R.A., no jewels of the Higher Degree may be worn in a Craft Lodge.

The jewel of the Mark Degree consists of a keystone, made usually of white cornelian, on which are engraved certain mystic letters, the meaning of which are revealed to members of the Degree. It is suspended from a blue and red ribbon. The aprons and collars are also made of blue and red silk.

The teaching of this Degree is largely an amplification of the Second and tells of education and reward for labor. It also contains a dramatic warning against attempting to obtain wages to which we are not justly entitled, and there is a Messianic hint in the fact "That the stone which the builders rejected has become the headstone of the corner." Incidentally the stone is a keystone, hence the origin of the jewel of the degree.

Several facts lead us to suspect that at one time the Degree may have been more pronouncedly Christian than it is to-day. We know that it was flourishing as far back as 1760 in Lodges attached to the Ancients, who were unquestionably strongly pro-Christian.

The legend as now given relates to a period in the building of the Temple previous to the tragedy, although there is abundant evidence to show that as late as the time of the formation of Mark Grand

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Lodge, 1856, many Mark Lodges in the North had a somewhat similar legend to that now used, but associated it with the second Temple instead of with the first.

Mark therefore, is, or should be, really part of our Craft system, and in Scotland Craft Lodges still have the power to confer it, and constantly do so. In that country it is a necessary qualification for the Excellent Master which itself is an essential qualification for the Royal Arch. We shall refer to the Excellent Master more fully when we come to the Royal Arch, but it is desirable to point out that in Scotland Royal Arch Chapters also have the right to confer the Mark Degree, if a candidate has not already taken it in his Craft Lodge.

The Mark, as we have said, is the completion of the Second Degree, and in itself contains what are practically two degrees, namely, Mark Man and Mark Master. There has been much learned controversy as to whether the Mark Master was at one time conferred on a man as soon as he received his Second Degree. Since it is impossible at the moment to decide when the Mark Degrees arose in their present form, all we can say definitely is that so far as documentary evidence goes, i.e., back to 1760, it appears as if there were always the Degrees of Mark Man and Mark Master, and that although at any rate in theory, Mark Man might be conferred on a F.C., Mark Master seems always to have been restricted to Master Masons. In modern times both Mark Degrees are conferred together, and always on a M.M., although the Mark ritual throughout emphasizes the connection with the Second Degree.

THE ARK MARINER

The Mark Degree, or Degrees, also have associated with them, but in a separate "Lodge," the Royal Ark Mariner Degree. This appears to be old "Operative" work, probably built up in the 18th century by genuine operative masons in the North of England, anxious to have some way of distinguishing a real "Working" mason from a "Speculative." The same explanation probably brought into existence the Degree of St. Laurence the Martyr, of which more anon. The Ark Mariner legend relates to the Deluge and is taken direct from the Bible. The most interesting features are the use of a stone, instead of the V.S.L., on which to take the Ob.. The reason for this is explained in the ritual, but it may be that we have here a survival of the old custom of swearing on a stone altar, which was the earliest form of a binding oath. There is also some interesting work with a triangle, but in the main it must be confessed that there is not much really deep teaching in the Degree. It is, however, quite a pretty little Degree, and has many ardent supporters. It is under the direct rule of Mark Grand Lodge.

THE HOLY ROYAL ARCH OF JERUSALEM

The Mark completes the Second Degree, but to the youngest Master Mason it must be obvious that a further degree is needed to complete the Third Degree.

The genuine Secrets were lost; but were they never re-discovered? Moreover, since they were known to three people, why could not the two survivors have appointed a successor and given him the lost Secrets? The Royal Arch sets out to give at any rate one answer to the question—"What were the Gen. Secrets of a M.M.?"

Briefly, it is a lost W., but that W. conveys in symbolism a most interesting and illuminating explanation of the nature of God. Indeed, the teaching of the Craft may be summed up by saying that it teaches a man his duty to his neighbor, whereas the "Arch" instructs him in his duty towards God. What is the nature of God therein depicted? It is a trinity, but not the Christian Trinity; it is

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more like the Hindoo Trinity of Creator, Preserver, and Destroyer. It also clearly indicates the union of Body, Soul, and Spirit, and shows that by that Union we become united with God. Thus, in its very essence the Royal Arch is supremely mystical and teaches of the Beatific Vision.

The legend deals with the "Discovery" of the lost Secrets at the re-building of the Temple after the return from the Captivity. It will thus be seen that the "Setting" of the degree is from the Old Testament, and this fact must be noted, for there is another explanation of the "Lost Word" which is given in some of the other "Higher" degrees, namely, that the "Lost Word" is Christ, the Logos.

But we have not yet obtained an answer to the very natural question, "Why could not the other two, who knew the S., appoint a successor?" The full exoteric explanation, and also how it was that the S.s came to be deposited in a place of security is given in one of the "Cryptic Degrees," to which we shall refer later in this book. Briefly however, three persons were necessary in order to convey it, but in reality, of course, this is symbolism, and implies that Body, Soul and Spirit must be in union before they can fully comprehend the Divine Trinity. While, on the one hand, no living man, trammled by the bonds of the flesh, can really comprehend the nature of God, nor even do so immediately after death, for our souls will not yet be sufficiently evolved, on the other, hand it is clearly taught that our body does not completely perish, but is rather transmuted, even as St. Paul himself says will take place at the day of judgment. This is no doubt a very profound dogma and difficult for us to understand, but if we can realize the fact that matter as well as Spirit is in its original a manifestation of God, and therefore a part of Him, we shall perceive that Matter also is indestructible, although its form may change. This fact is perfectly well recognized by modern science.

In the original form of the Royal Arch, which still survives in Bristol, in Scotland, and in America, the Candidate must pass through four veils, which correspond to various spiritual states of existence which lie beyond the grave, each being a little nearer to the Divine Being than was the previous one. The four Veils are colored respectively Blue, purple, red and white, and at each Veil the Candidate is challenged by a "Guardian of the Veil" who demands of him the W. and Sn. of the previous Veil. This ceremony in Scotland forms a distinct degree known as the Excellent Master, and the Jewel thereof is a pentacle set with brilliants, which jewel, of course, represents, among other things, man and his five senses. The penal S. of this degree is of great antiquity and is made by Vishnu when in the form of the Lion Incarnation. Vishnu descended to earth to overthrow an evil giant which was oppressing the world and slew him by disemboweling him. In Scotland no English Royal Arch Mason can be admitted to a Scotch Chapter unless he previously receives the Degree of Excellent Master, which degree he cannot receive unless he has first taken the Mark.

The Passing of the White Veil is really an integral part of the Arch ceremony, and the Sn. corresponding to the S.s of the other Veils is one well known to English Royal Arch Masons. It is only after having passed this barrier that the candidate is enabled to obtain the real S.s of an M.M., the ceremony being very similar to our own Royal Arch. In other words, it is only when we have passed through various spiritual stages of existence that we shall at length be able to comprehend the nature of God. The deletion of the Veils from our ceremony has tended to obscure this important lesson in the English form of the R.A.

A slightly different lesson has taught us by the fate of our predecessor in the Craft. He could not have revealed the S. even if he had wished to do so, for it was an experience, and therefore could not be communicated by words to any living man. We cannot go into a detailed explanation of this deeply mystical ceremony in a book of this nature, but a brief explanation of a certain vault which

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plays a prominent part therein is essential. Like all symbols in Freemasonry it has several meanings, but the two most important are (a), the underworld, or the grave into which man descends at death, and from which his Soul ultimately ascends to realms of Light. (b) The Mystical interpretation is that it is the M.Ch., that dark recess of the Soul, where dwells the Divine Spark.

The jewel of this degree depicts quite clearly the nature of God. The Double Triangle within the Circle and the Point therein, which is represented by the All-Seeing Eye, is the age-old symbol for God. The triangle within the Circle represents the Spirit within the Circle of Infinity and is peculiarly associated with God the Creator. R.A. Masons will perceive the significance of this fact in connection with the Altar. The Point within a Circle, among the Hindoos, stands for Paramatma, the All-pervading, the Source and End of All. The triangle with the point downwards is the symbol of rain (water) and represents the preservative side of God (Vishnu), while the triangle with the point upward represents fire, whose flames go up to Heaven, and is therefore the emblem of the Destructive, or rather the transformative, side of God (Shiva). This great symbol was sacred to Babylonian, Egyptian and Jew, and had to each the same inner meaning. It is also sacred to the modern Hindoo, and was so to the ancient Mexican, and indeed is one of the most venerated symbols in the world.

It will thus be seen that the jewel of the R.A., far from being a mere ornament, contains in itself a summary of the sublime teachings of that degree; the more so as it also has a triple tau. With regard to the tau cross, we have already shown in our earlier handbooks that in its origin it was a Phallic symbol representing the Creative power. We shall remember also that we make a tau cross every time we receive the S.s in the Craft Degrees. Thus the M.M. has himself made the triple tau. It is also worth reminding our readers that only those who have passed the chair and actually ruled a Lodge are entitled to wear three tau crosses on their aprons.

As a Phallic symbol it became an emblem of the Creator, and also, in time, of our animal passions, which must be trampled underfoot if we are to advance in Spiritual knowledge. By the time we have reached the Arch, symbolically this has been done, and we are reminded of this by the Union of these three taus beneath the triangles, emblems of the spirit. Moreover, though this is essentially a non-Christian degree we cannot forget that there were three Crosses on Calvary.

The presence of the triple tau, after the experience we have had of it in the Craft, shows how carefully each degree leads on to the next, and it also conveys this important lesson. Each degree in the Craft taught the evolution and purification of (1) the body; (2) the soul; (3) the spirit. These three, now in perfect union, rest under the Shadow of the Supreme Being depicted by the Double Triangles. Thus the presence of the tau crosses teaches us that Man will ultimately rest in the Presence of the King of Kings.

In fact the Royal Arch is full of interesting symbolism: the colors of the regalia, red and purple, the shape of the altar, the position of the three Principals, all convey important lessons, but we cannot spare the space in a small Handbook like this to enlarge further on this degree. Nevertheless, one cannot omit pointing out that as in the Craft the W.M. represented the Spirit, the S.W. the Soul, and the J.W. the Body, so do the corresponding officers in the R.A., although here they are no longer separated, but are side by side, and in all cases act as one. The reason for this is that the R.A. depicts that sublime state wherein Body, Soul and Spirit are truly one, and are at Peace in the Presence of God—now properly comprehended.

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Our readers will thus perceive that no Craft Mason can consider he has fulfilled his duty as a Mason, until he has taken the Royal Arch, for he has not recovered those lost Secrets which he has promised to try and find.

The regalia includes apron and a sash of purple and red.

THE CRYPTIC DEGREES

The Cryptic Degrees are four in number and are ruled by a Grand Council of their own which, however, in reality is in close alliance with Mark Grand Lodge, whose Hall is their Head Quarters.

They are "The Most Excellent Master," "The Royal Master," "The Select Master," and "The Super-Excellent Master," and their legends bridge the gap, historically, between the first Temple and its destruction. The "Most Excellent Master" must not be confounded with the "Excellent Master" which is worked in Scotland and is really the "Passing of the Veils" in the Royal Arch, although it is kept separate and given first. Its Legend, therefore, is associated with the Second Temple, while the "Most Excellent Master" on the contrary deals with the completion and dedication of the first temple. The apron, which is seldom worn, is white edged with purple, and there is a purple collar. The color refers to the grief felt by the Brethren for the loss of the third Principal, whose chair is vacant. The most striking feature in the Lodge room is a small replica of the Ark of the Covenant. In theory the qualification for the "Most Excellent Master" is only Mark, but as it is always followed by the "Royal Master," for which the Qualification is Mark and Arch, in practice the Cand. must hold both these degrees.

The Royal Master is a most interesting degree, for it shows how the R.A. Secrets came to be deposited in the place in which they were subsequently found. Though H.A.B.'s chair was vacant in the "Most Excellent Master," in the Royal Master he is the chief character, and his disquisition on the subject of "Death" is one of the most beautiful pieces of ritual in Freemasonry.

The apron in this degree is black, edged with red, but it is seldom worn. The three Principals, however, wear robes similar to those worn by the same officers in the R.A.

The "Select Master," unlike the preceding degrees, has a special jewel of its own, namely a silver trowel within a triangle of the same metal, which is suspended from a black collar edged and lined with red. The apron is white, edged with red and gold, and is of a triangular shape, but in England neither it nor the jewel are usually worn. In Scotland the jewel of the Cryptic Degrees combines the triangle and the trowel, whereas in England we wear the Jewel of the "Super-Excellent Master" to represent all four degrees.

The "Select Master" is supposed to be held in a crypt (hence the name "Cryptic Degrees") which is the same crypt in which the Secrets of the R.A. were at a later date discovered. The legend is similar to that of one of the degrees of the Ancient and Accepted Rite and relates how a well-known mason employed by K.S. accidentally intruded into this crypt when K.S. and H., K. of T., were present. The intruder was subsequently pardoned, but the O.G. who should have prevented his entry, was punished in his place. This is undoubtedly an old legend which crops up again in a third degree, namely, the "Grand Tyler of K.S." one of the Allied Degrees. Its symbolic meaning is that those who push their occult investigation beyond reasonable limits, and without the assistance and protection of more experienced investigators, run serious risks.

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The "Super-Excellent Master" is short and not very interesting, but it brings the story of the first Temple down to the time of its threatened destruction and so bridges the gap between the "Most Excellent Master" and the R.A.. The lesson taught is unswerving loyalty to Jehovah. The colour of this degree is crimson, and a crimson collar should be worn. In practice, however, this is worn only by members of the Grand Council. The Jewel of these degrees is a white enamel triangle with the point downwards, that is, the triangle of the Preserver, and is as a rule the only regalia worn.

The most interesting part of this degree is a carpet on the floor with the following design thereon. Inside a square is a circle, within which is a triangle pointing towards the West, and within the triangle is the C. of the C. on which rests an altar, and on the altar is the ark of the covenant. As the "Floor" design is not adequately explained, the following will be of use.

The triangle pointing West is the symbol of the Preserver and has been adopted as the jewel of all these degrees in England, and it certainly denotes the underlying principle of the series.

The "Most Excellent Master" teaches us that despite the loss of the chief architect God preserved the work of the Temple and it was duly completed.

The "Royal Master" tells us how the R.A. Secrets came to be preserved.

In the "Select Master" the overzealous friend of K.S. was preserved from the dire fate which threatened him.

In the "Super-Excellent Master" we are shown how God preserved a remnant of the people because they preserved their faith in Him.

The triangle within a square denotes the Descent of the Spirit into Matter, while the Circle symbolizes Infinity—whence the Spirit comes. The point links the Infinite with the emblem for the All-Pervading—it also refers to each individual "Ego."

The whole symbol, therefore, means that God the Preserver descended from Eternity, and entering into Matter became flesh, and He is one with the All-Pervading. It is therefore a most sacred emblem, and the fact that the Ark of the Covenant stands on the C. shows that the New Dispensation arises out of the old, and the Prophetic reference to this fact is emphasized by the real g. which should remind us of Him Who died upon the Cross. Thus this degree has a Messianic, esoteric meaning, often overlooked by those who have taken it.

THE ALLIED DEGREES

Under this heading are grouped a number of different degrees having little in common. In theory the Grand Council which meets at Mark Masons' Hall controls a large number of degrees, including five which are endogamous, but in practice they only work six degrees. At Newcastle-on-Tyne, however, the Time Immemorial Council also works one or two others, including the Royal Arch Knight Templar Priest, a highly mystical and beautiful ceremony.

The six degrees worked in London are not restricted to Christians, and the only qualifications are Mark and Arch. This is despite the fact that St. Laurence the Martyr and the Knights of Constantinople are clearly Christian degrees. Most of these degrees are of secondary importance, but the Red Cross of Babylon and the High Priest are old and important. The degrees are as follows: -

St. Laurence the Martyr. The Jewel is a gridiron, and it is quite possible that it is to this fact that we owe the ribald tales current in the outside world as to what befalls a man at his initiation into Freemasonry. The legend of this degree in reality has nothing whatever to do with Freemasonry and

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is well known to every student of Medieval legends of the Saints. The lesson taught is that of fortitude. This degree appears to be a piece of old Operative ritual brought from Lancashire, and originally worked up into a degree in order to enable a genuine "Working mason" to distinguish other Operatives from "These newfangled Speculative."

The Knights of Constantinople is associated with the Emperor Constantine and inculcates the useful lesson of universal equality. The Jewel is a cross surmounted by a crescent moon, hardly a happy choice, for it suggests the triumph of the Crescent over the Cross.

The Secret Monitor is very similar to the first degree of the Secret Monitor as worked by the Grand Conclave and is associated with David and Jonathan. Its presence among the Allied Degrees bears testimony to an unfortunate split which occurred during the early years of the organization of the Grand Conclave of the Secret Monitor. It is the only degree in English Freemasonry which is under the control of two entirely distinct bodies. The Jewel is a "Hackle" suspended from a crown, and on the ribbon above the jewel is a bow.

The Grand Tyler of King Solomon relates the story of the accidental intrusion of a F.C. into the secret vaults where K.S., K.H. of T., and H.A.B. were met in consultation. The legend is very similar to that related in the "Select Master" though there are interesting variations, in particular. "The Period" of the legend being earlier. The Jewel is the triangle of the Preserver, point downwards, with certain Hebrew letters engraved in gilt upon a black enamel background.

All these degrees are interesting, but can hardly be called really important, whereas the next two stand in quite a different category.

The Red Cross of Babylon is undoubtedly old, and the sixteenth degree of the A. and A. Rite also bears on the same theme, while similar incidents likewise occur in the Royal Order of Scotland. The Degree in historical order follows, and is closely associated with, the Royal Arch and the rebuilding of the second Temple, and in Scotland is actually controlled by the Supreme Royal Arch Chapter. It has many interesting details, but its outstanding feature is the crossing of the Bridge. This, although transformed into a physical and historical bridge, undoubtedly symbolizes something quite different. We are here in the region of eschatology and are being told what befalls a man after death. In all the great religions of the world there is a tradition that sooner or later after death the soul must cross a certain "Bridge." Clearly this "Bridge" means the passing from one state of existence in the world beyond the grave to another and indicates a further advancement of the Soul away from earth conditions and towards God. The Japanese, Chinese, Parsees, Mahomedans, and Medieval Christians, all speak of this bridge. For example, the Parsees say that the mourners must rise at dawn on the third day after the death of their friend and pray for him, for at that hour he comes to the bridge which he must cross to reach Paradise. The bridge spans the gulf of Hell, and in the middle of the Bridge the Soul will be met by a female form. If his life has been good this form will be that of a beautiful woman who will lead him into Paradise, but if his life has been evil it will be a hideous hag who will meet him and fling him from the bridge into the bottomless pit.

In England this bridge was called "The Brig of Dread," and is depicted in a twelfth century fresco at Chaldon Church, Surrey, where it is shown as if built like a saw. Among those attempting to cross it is a Mason with his tools in his hand. It is also spoken of in an old Lancashire dirge which relates what befalls the Soul of the dead man immediately after it has left its dead body.

"When thou from hence away art passed
Every night and alle;
To whinny-muir thou comest at last
And Christ receive thy soule."

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"From whinny-muir when thou mayest pass
Every night and alle;
To 'Brig of Dread' thou comest at last
And Christ receive thy soule."

The exoteric lesson of the degree is "Great is Truth," but the hidden reference to the Bridge of Testing which the soul must pass on its journey towards Paradise is the most striking feature. The Jewel is two crossed swords on a dark green background of enamel.

The High Priest, unlike the other degrees, can only be conferred on a mason who has been a 3rd Principal in a R.A. Chapter. It deals with the Priesthood "after the Order of Melchisedic," and the jewel is the triangle with the point upwards, on which is imposed a mitre. Briefly then the Allied Degrees link the Old Testament with the New, and the most important are the Red Cross of Babylon and the High Priest, although the other four are not without interest.

THE ANCIENT AND ACCEPTED RITE

The Rose Croix of Heredom is now regarded as the 18th Degree of the A. and A. Rite, whose total number of degrees is 33, in reference to the 33 years of our Lord's Life. In practice, however, only the 18th, 30th, 31st, 32nd and 33rd are worked in full in England, and the last three are but sparingly conferred.

In America all the intermediate degrees are worked, i.e., 4th to 33rd inclusive, but in England the 4th to the 17th are merely conferred by name. The 18th is worked in full, but the 19th to the 29th inclusive are similarly conferred by name only.

The qualification for the 18th is one year a Master Mason, and for the 30th it has usually been Prelate or M.W.S., the latter being the title of the ruler of a Rose Croix Chapter. The 18th degree is a highly mystical degree and full of the deepest interest, and in England is restricted to professing Christians. In the U.S.A. and on the Continent of Europe, however, it is not usually regarded as Christian, and non-Christians can become members. One school of Masonic research has propounded a theory that the Rose Croix was originally Roman Catholic and invented by the Jacobite's. Personally, I have, after very careful search, been unable to find any evidence in support of this view, and frankly I cannot conceive of any conscientious Roman Catholic taking part in the ceremonies.

It seems more probable that the degree is due to Rosicrucian influence, and the earliest historic evidence we can find of these mystics shows that they were Lutheran, but it is quite probable that they inherited an earlier tradition. There appear to be references to Rosicrucian doctrines in Dante, and the Comacine Masons carved the Rose and Compasses over their Lodge door at Assisi in the opening years of the 15th century. Moreover, the ancient Aztecs who likewise venerated the cross had a very similar Rite with the same Sn..s and many of the same incidents. Finally, we cannot ignore the fact that Henry Adamson, M.A., in *The Muses Threnodie* written in 1636, says: -

"For we are Brethren of the Rosie Cross,
We have the Mason's Word and Second Sight:"

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Now this shows an association of the "Mason's Word" with the Rosie Cross. Personally, I think this refers, not to the present 18th degree, but to the Rosy Cross of the Royal Order of Scotland.

It indicates, however, Rosicrucian influence on Freemasonry long before the rise of the Jacobite movements, and is in a poem describing Protestant Perth.

To revert to the 18th degree as we know it to-day, we find it has four distinct sections. The first consists of the conferring by name of the intermediate degrees, and the other sections form the Rose Croix Degree itself. It is a highly mystical piece of symbolism, and expresses the passage of Man through the Valley of the Shadow of Death accompanied by the Masonic Virtues F.H. and C.. It ends with his final acceptance into the abode of Light, life and Immortality, and with his recovery of the L.W.

The Badge is twofold; on one side it is black, having in its center a red Calvary cross; on the other side it is white, edged with rose color; on the apron itself is embroidered a Pelican feeding its young, while on the flap is a triangle within which are certain Hebrew Characters.

There is a collar which is similarly two faced; on the reverse it is black with three red crosses, and on the front rose pink, richly embroidered. Among the symbols depicted are the crown of thorns and the serpent holding its tail in its mouth, the emblem of Eternity. The jewel which is suspended from the collar is a golden compass extended to an angle of 60 degrees, surmounted by a celestial crown. On the one side is a scarlet cross within the compasses, and beneath it a Pelican feeding its young. On the reverse the cross is silver, with a silver eagle rising towards the heavens, and on both sides at the joint of the compasses is a rose.

Despite its present Christian setting it appears that this degree in its main details is a very ancient ceremony. All its essential features are found in the Bora Ceremony of the Australian Aborigines, one of the most primitive races still living. In India and China, the Sns. of this degree are associated with God the Preserver. In Ancient Egypt certain parts of the Book of the Dead cover the same ground and show the same Sns. in use. The Ancient Aztecs in Mexico appear to have had practically the same ceremony, as already stated, and some of the Sns. which they make have survived among the Red Indians to this day. In Medieval Europe we find constant examples of the use of the two principal Sns. employed, as for example at Coire Cathedral, —in both 12th and 15th century work,— in a fresco at Basle, painted in the opening years of the 16th century, and in a 17th century paneled room now in the Engadine Museum at St. Moritz. Moreover, a certain Sn. associated with the 9th degree of the A. and A. Rite which indicates sorrow is also found side by side with these Rose Croix Sns. in every one of the above mentioned cases in Europe. Facts like these cannot be brushed aside lightly and preclude us from accepting the view that the Rose Croix was invented in the 18th century. Indeed, the Mexican Codices, which practically show the complete ceremony, are at least two and a half centuries earlier than the date at which it has been suggested that this degree was invented.

THE GRAND ELECT KNIGHT KADOSH

The other name for this, the 30th degree, is Knight of the Black and White Eagle. In Latin Countries it is strongly Templar in tone and has acquired a sinister significance because in some of the rituals the duty of avenging the Death of Molay, and the other slaughtered Knights Templars, is taught in a dramatic way. Since the chief culprits responsible for the slaughter of Molay and his Knights were Philip, King of France, and Clement, the Pope, this fact is stated to have been utilized to teach the

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Cands. that King and Church are the oppressors of the People. Probably this inner meaning is by no means so universally applied on the Continent as anti-masonic writers pretend, but in any case the English Ritual has been purged of any such idea, if indeed it ever possessed it.

The degree is an elaborate one, necessitating three chambers and an ante-room when worked in full, and only the Supreme Council itself can confer it. The regalia, which may be worn in Rose Croix Chapters, consists of a broad black sash suspended from the left shoulder, the point fringed with silver bullion, and on it are embroidered the emblems of the degree. These are an eagle soaring towards the sun, holding the Anchor of Hope in his talons; on the extremity is the banner of England and Wales, which is on a red ground three golden lions; this is crossed by the banner of the Supreme Council, and below it is a red cross formed of four tau crosses, usually called the Cross of Jerusalem.

The breast jewel is a cross pattée in red enamel, with the number "30" upon a blue enamel ground in the center. From a collarette of black ribbon with a silver edging is hung a black double spreading-eagle, surmounted by a crown, and holding a sword in its claws.

The word "Kadosh" is Hebrew and means "separated" or "consecrated." The remaining three degrees of the Ancient and Accepted Rite are but sparingly conferred and take the place to a large extent of Grand Rank in other, degrees.

It will be many years before the young mason attains to these exalted heights, and therefore any detailed description even of the regalia is hardly necessary in a Handbook of this nature. As soon, however, as he becomes a Rose Croix mason, he is certain to have an opportunity of seeing from time to time members of these exalted degrees and learning from them as much as he is entitled to know before they are conferred upon him.

The Ancient and Accepted Rite as now organized derives its authority from the charter granted to it in 1845 by the Supreme Council of the Southern Jurisdiction of the U.S.A., but the Rose Croix, Kadosh, the 28th degree, and several other intermediate degrees were fully established and at work in the 18th century, as historic records show, although how much further they date back is still a matter of dispute.

With regard to the intermediate degrees it is a mistake to assume that they are of no value or interest. They vary considerably in merit, but such degrees as the Royal Arch of Enoch, with its clear indication of Rosicrucian influence, and the account of the discovery of one of the Ancient Pillars inscribed with old time learning, (mentioned in the Ancient Charges), is worthy of careful study, and the same is true of several of the other degrees. For this reason, I strongly urge all Rose Croix Masons to attend the annual festival of King Edward VII. Rose Croix Chapter of Improvement, which is held in the Spring each year at Mark Masons' Hall, when two of the intermediate degrees are rehearsed in full.

This then is the Ancient and Accepted Rite; a great Rite undoubtedly, which is full of mystical lore, and sets out to show its members that the quest of the lost word ends, not at the Temple at Jerusalem, but on Mount Calvary.

THE ROYAL ORDER OF SCOTLAND

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This Order rules two degrees, the Harodim and the Rosy Cross. The Harodim is conferred in a body called a Chapter, and so in this Order a Chapter is below a Lodge. In practice, however, these two bodies are the same.

The Royal Order has many peculiar features, and it is impossible to do it justice in one chapter of this book.

Firstly, we may note that the Order is unique in that it has one governing body for the whole world and is the only English Masonic body of which this is true. Grand Lodge must always meet in Scotland.

Qualifications, as laid down by the Grand Lodge in Scotland, is five years a Master Mason, but the Metropolitan Provincial Grand Lodge in practice will only admit members of the 30th degree of the Ancient and Accepted Rite. London Masons, who have not attained to that degree, must therefore go to the Provincial Grand Lodge of the Southern Counties, which meets at Windsor.

These degrees are of great antiquity, and, personally, I consider them the greatest of all our masonic degrees. They are not so dramatic as certain others, such as the Order of the Knights Templar, but they have a unity of purpose and an ancient ritual which is full of the most profound mystical teaching.

It is in curious old Border verse, for the most part, and from internal evidence would appear to ante-date our present form of even the Craft degrees, though it clearly presupposes their existence.

From historical records we know that these "Scotch" degrees were at work in 1743 in London, for there is a record of a Provincial Grand Lodge in London, having at least two Chapters under its control, at that time.

The mere fact that there were at least two Chapters of Harodim at work at this date precludes the possibility of the Order having come into existence in 1743, and the fact that it had to travel from Scotland, and then establish itself and spread in London, justifies us in considering that it can hardly be later in origin than the date of the formation of the Craft Grand Lodge of Scotland itself, which was in 1736. Seven years is, I consider, far too short a time to allow a new degree to spread from Scotland to London and establish itself firmly therein, but if we take this date we shall see that the Royal Order takes precedence in antiquity of any high degree. But, in view of these facts, we cannot dismiss lightly the evidence of Henry Adamson's metrical description of Perth, The Muses Threnody, written in 1638, practically a century earlier, in which he writes: -

"For we are brethren of the Rosie Cross
We have the Mason's Word, etc."

Note. —He uses the phrase "Rosie Cross," the exact title of the 2nd degree of the Royal Order and adds that "We have the Mason's Word."

Now the Royal Order purports to give its members the lost "Mason's Word."

Therefore, if language means anything, it means that the brethren of the Rosie Cross claimed to have the true Mason's Word, a claim still made by the Brethren of the Rosy Cross of the Royal Order.

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My firm conviction is, therefore, that Adamson, who was a M.A. and a clergyman, was a member of the Royal Order of Scotland, and since the style and language of the ritual fits in with this period, or with one even earlier, I consider that the Royal Order goes back to that period at least. In connection with this it is well to remember that the first record of the initiation of a speculative into Freemasonry in England is on the 20th May, 1641, when Robert Moray, "General Quartermaster of the armie of Scotland," was initiated at Newcastle by members of the Lodge of Edinburgh, who were with the Scottish Army, which had entered England in arms against King Charles.

Moreover, Moray, was "Protector" of Vaughan, the famous 17th century Rosicrucian. If therefore beyond the Craft lay a Rosicrucian Masonic Order, which could only be entered by those who had first qualified as Freemasons, then we can see an excellent reason why Moray, who was clearly interested in Mysticism in general, and Rosicrucianism in particular, should trouble to be initiated into a Lodge despite the fact that the Army of which he was Quartermaster-General was actually on a campaign.

Incidentally, these facts go clean counter to the theory still held by a few students that the Royal Order was Jacobite. Indeed, the closer one studies this Order the less grounds can one find for this view.

In such a case one would naturally look for some reference to the Martyr King himself. Be it noted this could have been done with perfect safety, for in the Prayer Book of the Established Church of England there was, during the Eighteenth Century, a special service in memory of Charles, King and Martyr. Thus, the inclusion of reference to the White Rose, or Charles the Martyr, could easily and safely have been worked into this ritual.

Secondly, let us consider the teaching of the degree. Both the Old and the Young Pretender were Roman Catholics; we should therefore expect that either there would be traces of Roman Catholic teaching in the ritual, or at least that care would be taken to avoid anything that would be in direct opposition to the faith of the hero of the Jacobites. Yet, on looking into the ritual, we find certain most significant omissions. There is no mention of the "Holy Catholic" Church, nor of the "Communion of Saints," both relics of medieval days left standing intact in the Episcopal Churches of Scotland and of England, but further, the ritual goes out of its way to declare we shall obtain salvation through Christ only, thus hitting at the doctrine of the Intercession of the Saints, and even says that our salvation is by Faith alone.

Now this is just one of the particular points of cleavage between Protestantism and Catholicism, for the latter always has maintained the necessity of faith being proved by good works. Salvation by faith alone was one of the outstanding tenets of the Presbyterians and shows clearly that the ritual in its present form is Presbyterian, and emphatically so.

Would men who were inventing a degree to foster the Jacobite cause go out of their way to insert phrases which must wound their hero, and many of his loyal supporters?

This aspect is further emphasized by the fact that among all the paraphernalia employed in the degrees there is neither cross nor crucifix, although we find them in other Masonic High Degrees. The omission must be deliberate, for from the nature of the ritual these emblems might well have been employed.

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Against these facts, no word in the ritual of a pro-Jacobite nature can be adduced, and so I can see no reason for claiming these degrees were made up to help the Jacobites.

The degrees themselves are highly mystical, and take the candidate from the Master Mason stage, through the Old Testament, over the "Bridge," onto the second Temple, and finally trace Christ's life and death, and show that He is the L.W. .

There are clear traces of that outlook on life which is called "Rosicrucian," and so they are good argument for those who claim that Rosicrucianism did influence Freemasonry. Keeping strictly to the Royal Order, we find in it the root matter of many of our Higher Degrees, and it is possible that some of these have been elaborated out of incidents passed over briefly in the Royal Order rituals.

As some guide I will indicate references to ideas which were probably subsequently developed further, though it is but fair to add that the alternative also is possible, namely, that these degrees also already existed, and had contributed to the ritual of the Royal Order, instead of having simply evolved from them. These are Royal Arch, Mark, Red Cross of Babylon—the latter very clearly—Templar and Rose Croix. In addition, there are many sections entirely unrepresented elsewhere in Masonry.

The ritual works mainly by question and answer, as in the Craft lectures, but one significant ritual practice deserves particular mention. At certain times the Brn. travel the reverse way of the Sun. This is correct, for they are then supposed to be in the region of the D—d, and popular tradition has always taught that the ghosts of men go reverse of the Sun.

The Tower too is most significant and calls to mind a somewhat similar building described in the Mystical and "Chemical" Marriage of Christian Rosy Cross, translated by W. Bro. Waite.

The Sns. used in this degree are many in number, and everyone is of great antiquity and can be found in various parts of the world associated with Heathen Gods and ancient Rites of Initiation. The actual Sn. of the Harodim is to be seen in the ancient Aztec manuscripts and is shown in a scene on a vase found at Chama, Mexico. This scene clearly depicts a cand. being initiated into a Mexican Rite, and being taught the Sn.. The case is certainly not later than 1500 A.D. and was only dug up a few years ago. In India the Sn. of Harodim is associated with Vishnu the Preserver. In Ancient Egypt it is shown on a fresco from Thebes dated about 1500 B.C., fragments of which are in the British Museum. Numerous examples could be quoted from Medieval work in Europe, for example in the 17th century panelled room known as the "Audience Chamber of the Visconti-Venosta," which is now in the Engadine Museum at St. Moritz, to which we referred in the previous chapter. This room also shows examples of the Sn. attached to the Rosie Cross degree, and, in the corners of it are figures making the Drinking Sn. of the Royal Order of Scotland. These figures are arranged in pairs as if answering each other.

Perhaps, however, the most significant fact of all is that the ritual of the Hung Society in China, known also as the Triad Society, or the Society of Heaven and Earth, is almost precisely the same in its main incidents as the ceremonies of this Scotch Order.

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The regalia of the Order is fairly elaborate. It consists of a Garter, star and two sashes, one red for the Harodim, and one green for the Rosy Cross, and an elaborate apron of white, edged with bands of red and green.

Each candidate receives . . . which is supposed to show his characteristic virtue, and which, as a rule, is spelt without any vowels.

This must suffice for the Royal Order, though it deserves far more space.

THE KNIGHTS TEMPLAR AND KNIGHTS OF MALTA

The Knights Templar carry on the tradition of the Medieval Order and may be regarded as teaching the Christian life in action. How far there is any historical connection between the Masonic Order and their Medieval predecessors is a question on which Masonic students are at variance. The writer considers that a strong probability exists that there is a definite connection and has given his reasons at considerable length in "Freemasonry and the Ancient Gods."

It is not proposed to go fully into this controversy in this book, since its purpose is to indicate, so far as is permissible, the meaning of the Degrees, rather than their history. Certain facts, however, deserve to be placed on record:

That in England, and still more in Scotland, the Order, though nominally suppressed in 1307 et seq., did not suffer the merciless slaughter of its members which fell upon them in France. Moreover, owing to the fact that Scotland was in open revolt against Edward II., who was supposed to rule it, enforcement of the edicts against the Knights was quite impossible.

That certain branches of the Order—e.g., in Spain and Portugal—unquestionably survived, merely adopting a new name.

The Charter of Transmission claims to carry on the succession in France. That Charter now hangs in Mark Masons' Hall, and if it were generally accepted as genuine it would practically settle the matter. The fact that it anathematizes the Scotch Templars, if it is genuine, would indicate a separate organization of the survivors in Scotland, and therefore explain whence Scotch and English Templar derive.

The undoubted fact that not only many Knights, but also the whole of the Templar Priests and lay Brothers, some of whom were Masons, were not even imprisoned, points to another possible line of descent.

Be that as it may, the Ritual worked to-day, though it has been revised several times in recent years, contains many curious features which would indicate considerable antiquity.

At Bristol a man may not take the Rose Croix unless he is a Templar, and this supports the theory of those who believe that originally the Rose Croix was the inner working of the Templars. The Royal Order of Scotland also shows clear indications of a connection with Templar, both in the legend of its foundation and in the use of a certain word common to both Orders, and used in no other Degrees.

In view of the fact that the Royal Order has its Knightly Degree of the "Rosy Cross," these points are of special significance.

The Legend of the foundation of the Royal Order is that Bruce, after Bannockburn, created the Degree of the Rosy Cross so as to reward those Masons who had assisted him in the battle, and conferred on them the honor of Knighthood. Now we know that the Templar Knights, instead of

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surrendering themselves to Edward II. when he sent his commissioners into Scotland to arrest them, joined his enemy, Bruce.

Is it then not probable that Bruce, by the foundation of this new Order, thus rewarded these Templars and restored to them the Knighthood which by the abolition of the old Order had lapsed?

The Ritual as used to-day has undergone drastic revision recently. To give but one example, there appears no doubt that the altar in the East is a modern innovation, beautiful though it is. Formerly there was only a sepulcher, and there are still a few preceptories where the old Ritual is permitted. Even in the modern Ritual members will recollect that they took the O. at the sepulcher, which significantly is in the C., and not at the East.

This is a matter of great importance as we shall see in a moment. In Scotland the Degree is divided into Novice, Esquire, and Knight. In England there are still three points corresponding to these Medieval divisions, though the fact is rather slurred over. If we recollect

The Robe marks the Novice

The Tunic marks the Esquire

It is only the Knight who is invested with the Mantle

we shall perceive that the Ritual still bears witness to these three stages.

The Cup of Remembrance in the U.S.A. is still drunk from an unusual respectable and is emphatically the Cup of Mystical Death.

The Ritual of the Knight Templar, as we know it to-day, has obviously an exoteric and an esoteric meaning. The exoteric lesson, and a very good lesson too, is that the Christian soldier must have ever before his eyes in his struggle with the world the precepts of the Master—Christ. He must be a good soldier of Christ outside the doors of Temple; he must uphold truth and justice, defend the weak, and set a fine example of chivalrous conduct in his daily life. In short, he must not only profess Christianity but really live it.

It will thus be seen that a candidate would need to be a Christian, even if he was not definitely called upon to defend the Christian faith—which he is. But within this sound practical lesson there lies a high mystical message. We are taught of the Lamb who was mystically slain before the beginning of the world. We enter as a pilgrim striving to escape from the worldly spirit. We dedicate ourselves to Christ at the C., that is to say, in the hidden recesses of our souls.

In that hidden place our past life of sin lies dead, even as the earthly body of the Redeemer lay in the tomb. Therefore, on it we dedicate ourselves, finding that over our dead past rises, as it were, the figure of The Crucified.

Armed with the weapons of the Spirit we go forth on our spiritual journey, and after long and painful travels return victorious from our conflict with the spiritual foes of man. Note the symbolical three years, corresponding with the three years of Christ's life of ministry on Earth.

But after action must come penance and meditation, and above all we must meditate, not merely on physical death, but still more on that greater mystery, the mystical death; and being thus prepared, we must offer our sacrifice. Nay, more, we must be marked with the sign of His sacrifice, but in

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Christian mysticism we are taught that the true mystic must spiritually crucify himself, even as the Great Master physically suffered on the Cross, and this is the mystical death. Is that last incident in the life of the mystic forgotten in the Ritual of this great Order? Think it over, Brother Knights.

This is veiled language, and as far as is permissible, I have endeavored to indicate that Masonic Templar has a great mystical lesson. There are countless small points in the Ritual which support this view, but for obvious reasons I have omitted them, e.g., the gradual investiture of the candidate indicates the acquisition by degrees of certain spiritual qualities.

THE KNIGHTS OF MALTA

If we regard the Knights Templar as one Degree, we find that the Order has two, or possibly three Degrees in all. After the K.T. comes the Mediterranean Pass. It is now, practically, merely a passing Degree leading to the Malta, but it has a significance of its own. The sign, to begin with, is undoubtedly old. Major Sanderson found the same sign in use among the Yaos in Central Africa, and it was also known and venerated by the Arabs. In view of the tradition connecting the Mediterranean Pass and the Malta Degrees with the Arabs, this fact is obviously significant. Nor, esoterically, can we ignore the importance of the serpent in connection with a mystical journey, and in like manner "The Sea" is a phrase well known among mystics to imply certain spiritual facts, and is always said to lie beyond the mystical resurrection.

To make myself clear to non-mystical readers, let me add that mystical death and resurrection are well recognized stages in the development of the soul of the man who, while still in the body, is striving to reach spiritual union with God. St. Paul says that he died daily in Christ.

When we reach the Hall in which the degree of Malta is to be worked, we pass certain emblems which we are told indicate birth, life, death, resurrection and ascension. These are a symbolic summary of our whole Masonic career from the time we entered the Craft till the time we are finally made a Knight of Malta. Further, resurrection is a new birth which, in itself, presupposes a new life, and in the mystical world we must, like St. Paul, be prepared to die daily in Christ.

The Malta, then, is a Degree of mystical, not physical resurrection, and the fact is emphasized by the linking up of the symbolical acts with the true history of the old Knights of St. John of Malta. The symbols on the table should be studied with this key, particularly that of the galley which bore the souls to safety though it perished itself. Our body must one day die, but if we have lived aright it will bring our souls in safety to the "Islands of the Blest." This is true whether viewed mystically, or in regard to life in the world of action.

The Sns. used in this Degree are certainly old, and the Pen. most peculiar and significant. It could hardly have been invented in the 18th century. The Sn. in the Templar degree is shown in the room of the Visconti Venosta to which we have already referred, and in the same room are to be seen figures making the Sn. of the Knights of Malta.

The color of the Templar robes are white with a red cross, i.e., the "Blood of the Lamb," in which we have washed and become thereby as white as snow. But those of Malta are black, with a white cross: out of the black night of the Soul, out of the darkness of mystical death, the cross of Salvation rises, no longer a cross of suffering, but one of resplendent glory.

THE REMAINING DEGREES

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There still remains another Order of Christian Chivalry and its outstanding feature is that it is the only Order open to English masons which avowedly sets out to give a Christian interpretation of the Craft and Royal Arch. The degrees which constitute this Order are: -

The Knights of the Red Cross of Constantine.

The Knights of St. John and the Holy Sepulcher.

Like the Knights Templar this Order has its Head Quarters at Mark Masons' Hall.

The Knights of the Red Cross of Constantine teach us the well-known story of how Constantine came to be converted, but the Lecture contains a most interesting reference to the Roman College of Architects, whom I personally regard as the direct ancestors of the Comacine Masons, from whom Freemasonry descends. I must admit, however, that I should require fairly strong evidence to convince me that Constantine himself was a member of one of the Collegia.

But in any case this degree is merely a stepping stone to the really great degree of the Knights of St. John and the Holy Sepulcher. This degree appears to have consisted once of three degrees and even now has at least three "points," in it, though these may be interpreted as corresponding to novice, esquire, and knight. The ceremonies are solemn, dramatic and of deep mystical significance, but their most striking feature is an attempt to explain the Craft and Royal Arch Ceremonies in a Christian sense.

While not prepared to admit that this is the only, or even the original inner meaning of these degrees, I do consider that the interpretation given is of a most interesting and instructive nature, and if we realize that all through the middle ages Freemasonry was avowedly Christian, and demanded of its members belief in the essential doctrines of the Church, we shall see that this interpretation is deserving of very great respect.

Since those desirous of obtaining this interpretation can do so by joining these degrees, no good purpose would be served in disclosing the points interpreted, beyond saying that the Architect of the Temple is identified with Christ, and the various incidents in the history of our hero are similarly interpreted in the light of the Christian story. The outstanding fact, however, is that here we are definitely told that our ceremonies have a secret inner meaning and this is the only degree in English Freemasonry, of which I am aware, which does endeavor to give the meaning of the Craft and Arch.

The degrees enumerated up to this point are all that can be called strictly masonic which are open to the average English Freemason, but there are several quasi-masonic Orders, or Societies as they are usually called, which for all practical purposes are masonic, since they require a masonic qualification, and like other masonic degrees work a ritual with special secrets. These we will now consider.

SIDE-MASONIC DEGREES

The Secret Monitor which works under the Grand Conclave is one of the best known of these Societies, only Master Masons are admitted, and there are two degrees and a Chair degree. Attached to it is the order of the Scarlet Cord, which has no less than seven degrees. The real object of the Secret Monitor is to strengthen the bonds of Brotherhood and enforce the principle that a Brother should, whenever possible, help another Brother. The Conclaves often do possess more warmth than the average London Lodge, but there is not much inner meaning in the ceremonies and no very valuable lessons will be learnt from them.

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Of quite a different type is the Soc. Ros. in Anglia. This, like the Secret Monitor, admits none but Master Masons, and its rulers are eminent members of the Craft. There are nine degrees and the higher ones are said to be conferred only for merit. The Order always has a Lecture at each of its meetings on some abstruse subject. The Soc. Ros., as it is affectionately called by its members, claims to have the same objects as the Medieval Rosicrucian's, and it seems probable that there is some historical connection. It is, however, not the only body which puts forth this claim, even in England, but these are in no sense Masonic.

The Soc. Ros. is also linked with the Illustrious Order of Light which works only at Bradford, at present, and with another Order. It is not so much that these orders are under the control of the Soc. Ros. as that the leading spirits in each are closely associated with the Soc. Ros. and that the members of the Orders are derived only from that Society.

CONCLUSION

Thus, it will be seen that practically all the degrees in Freemasonry have a definite lesson to teach, and an inner meaning to their ceremonies. Some, no doubt, are more important than others, degrees but the man who has never gone beyond the Craft has still much to learn. He has made no real effort to recover that which was lost, and therefore has signally failed to make a daily advancement in Masonic, knowledge. If he has not time to take all the degrees, at least let him try to complete his second degree by taking the Mark, and obtain one answer to the question of what was lost, by taking his Royal Arch.

If he has done this, and has gone no further, let him still avoid saying "I don't think much of the Higher Degrees" Until he has taken them he is in no position to form any kind of opinion, and after he has done so I feel sure that he will no longer speak slightly of some of the greatest mysteries of this or any Age.

Provincial Grand Lodge of Valencia

Grand Lodge of Spain



3.6- FURTHER LIGHT

**Provincial Education Programme
Master Mason Degree**

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Reference Material

The internet is full of unreliable texts and material about Freemasonry.

However, among the thousands of sketchy websites, there are some reliable ones which could serve as a good source of Masonic related Texts and Papers.

Below there is a list of some of them.

<https://www.skirret.com/library.html>

<http://www.freemasons-freemasonry.com/>

<http://www.masonicdictionary.com/>

<http://www.themasonictrowel.com/>

Reading List

As the internet, the book stores are also full of unreliable information and terrible writer and/or researched Masonic books.

Below, you will find an extensive reading list, with several titles ranging from different themes which can help you extending your researches.

BASIC READING

A Dictionary of Freemasonry by Robert Macoy

Here is a remarkable history, encyclopedia and symbolic dictionary of Freemasonry all in one convenient volume and attractively illustrated with 300 nineteenth-century engravings. From Aaron, the Abelites, and the All-Seeing Eye to the Year of Masonry, Zenith, and the Rite of Zinnendorf, this is a remarkable book on a subject that runs through the course of human history.

A Pilgrim's Path: Freemasonry and the Religious Right by John J. Robinson

The author of *Born in Blood: The Lost Secrets of Freemasonry* describes the history and principles of the world's largest secret society, and then takes on those who have condemned it, refuting their fabrications and misstatements. An eye-opening book for those interested in the mysteries of Freemasonry--and disturbed by the rise of the Fundamentalist Right.

Craft and Its Symbols by Allen Roberts

This book has become a runaway Masonic best seller. It covers the symbolism and the story behind the ritual of the Craft degrees. Southern California Research Lodge, and many others presents it to Entered Apprentices. It is a presentation volume and takes the initiate through the ceremonies of initiation to the meaning of the Master Mason degree. It's **MUST** reading. It explains the meanings of the initiation ceremonies the newly raised Master Mason has just gone through. The wife of a

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master mason will gain an understanding of the new avenues opening for a better and fuller life for the entire family. If you are a non-Mason who has heard about Freemasonry, but wants to know more about the Fraternity and its teachings before you petition, this book is must reading. Bound to resemble a Lambskin Apron.

Coil's Masonic Encyclopedia by Henry Wilson Coil, Allen E. Roberts, ed.

Henry Wilson Coil's "Coil's Masonic Encyclopedia" is the most up to date of Masonic Encyclopedias. This second edition, edited in 1996 by the late Allen Roberts, it is a treasure trove of important Masonic information and features over 1750 articles. No serious Masonic student should be without this book.

The History of Freemasonry: The Legendary Origins by Albert G. Mackey

An in-depth study of one of the world's most controversial and select organizations traces the history of Freemasonry, profiles some of its leading members; and discusses its rituals and tenets. Beautifully bound with gold trim. A true coffee table book.

The Lost Keys of Freemasonry by Manly P. Hall, J. Augustus Knapp (Illustrator)

Also known as The Secret of Hiram Abiff, this text was written for the Mason and non-Mason alike. Mr. Hall, himself an honorary 33 Mason, reveals the profounder aspects of this ancient Fraternity which has been a source of inspiration to so many individuals through the centuries. The basic symbolism of the three degrees of the Blue Lodge is explained and a chapter entitled "The Egyptian Initiate" is especially enlightening. Illustrated by J. Augustus Knapp.

Masonic trivia (and facts) by Allen E. Roberts

Within Masonic Trivia (and Facts) is more information than will be found between two covers, with the exception of an encyclopedia. The more than 600 questions and answers covers the story of Freemasonry from its earliest days to the present. Here the reader will meet many world leaders, men who worked and pleaded for men and women to support and love one another. From Aberdeen to the Ziegfeld Follies the answers to hundreds of questions will be found. The "mysteries" of the oldest fraternal organization in the world are uncovered many of them for the first time. Here the reader will find there are actually no secrets in Freemasonry. The comprehensive index will make it easy to find any subject or person quickly.

The Boy Who Cried Wolf: The Book That Breaks Masonic Silence by Richard P. Thorn

As the religious right spreads its influence throughout the U.S., it is inevitable that some of its more provocative speakers should tread on the toes of other groups, both religious and nonreligious. In Thorn's case, the fundamentalists have met their match. Thorn attacks the critics of Masonry, showing where they err in their assumptions and providing some good insights into the nature of the Masons' "secret" society. He also draws on his own fundamentalist background to explain the theology behind the fundamentalist statements. Thorn acknowledges that he may not change anyone's mind, but he feels that Masonry stands at a crucial point and that its future may depend on how it meets the fundamentalist attack. This book is recommended for those interested in the influence and place of religion in the world.

A New Encyclopedia of Freemasonry /2 Vols in 1 by Arthur Edward Waite

Waite provides his view of the history, literature, and myths surrounding Freemasonry. Comprehensive explanations are included of their secret rituals and symbolism, such as alchemy, astrology, Kabbalism, ceremonial magic, and animal magnetism.

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The Builders: A Story and Study of Freemasonry by Joseph F. Newton

An outstanding classic in Masonic literature offering the early history of Freemasonry and an exposition of the faith of Masonry.

The Grand Design by Wallace McLeod

A wealth of knowledge is imparted in this collection of addresses and articles by a master storyteller. They range from the days of scrolls to this computer age. "This is a book that had to be published," wrote Allen E. Roberts in his Foreword. "It brings to life a philosophy that can be found nowhere else." It also brings under one cover invaluable information that should be preserved for the ages. It includes three "how to" chapters: for writers and for researchers. It then tells the reader how to expand on the discoveries of the author. McLeod is well aware that research is a never ending mission. Within these pages one finds an excellent record of the Old Charges, the documents on which the teachings of Freemasonry are based. It will be difficult, if not impossible, to find a more complete account of these tomes from the distant past.

MORE ADVANCE READING

The Secret Teachings of All Ages by Manly P. Hall, J. Augustus Knapp (Illustrator)

Simply put, this is the most beautiful and complete occult book ever published. It represents a lifetime of research into the mythology, symbolism, and magical practices of countless cultures. From the secrets of Isis to the teachings of mystic Christianity, nearly every occult dogma imaginable is represented here. The book is full of giant illustrations, some of which fold out into a magnificent two-page splendor. This is the definitive guide to secret societies, famous figures, and more a must for every personal library.

The Origins of Freemasonry: Scotland's Century, 1590-1710 by David Stevenson

The question of Freemasonry's origins and history prior to the establishment of the Grand Lodge of England in 1717 is such a morass of speculation, supposition, and wishful thinking that professional historians - Stevenson included - feel the need to justify their researches in this subject lest they be tainted by its disrepute among their fellows. Against such a background this book really stands out. Stevenson bases his research on actual records of almost a hundred Scottish Masonic lodges that date from the 1600's, along with municipal records, other guilds' records, diaries, and royal statutes.

Ancient Mystic Rites by Charles Webster Leadbeater

Explores the ancient Egyptian influence upon modern Freemasonry. Discusses the history of the A.A.S.R. and it's predecessor, the Rite of Perfection.

Freemasonry in the 21st Century by Don Bradley, Linda Darger (Illustrator)

An in-depth study of the authors interpretations of practices and rituals necessary to advance through the first three Initiations of Freemasonry. Not a historical piece, but an interesting blow-by-blow of how the rituals are structured and their effects upon the inner bodies of the candidate.

The Concise History of Freemasonry by Robert F. Gould

Contents: Ancient Mysteries, Essenes, Roman Colleges, Cuilders, Vehm-Gerichte, Steinmetzen, French Corps D Etat, Companionage, Rosicrucians; Medieval Operative Masonry; English Laws of the Middle Ages & the Freemasons; Story of the Guild; Legend of the Craft; Early Scottish Craft; Great

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Division in English Masonry; Concise Notice of the Additional Degrees Usually Worked; Freemasonry in Europe; Asia, East India Islands, Far East, Africa, West Indies, Central & South America; USA, Canada & Australasia.

Encyclopedia of Freemasonry by Albert G. Mackey

This book is so absorbing you could sit and read it from cover to cover. It also serves as a handy reference guide for most any Masonic question that may arise.

Mackey's Jurisprudence of Freemasonry by Albert G. Mackey

An excellent quick reference source of the written and unwritten laws, rules and regulations of Freemasonry. Especially important for its treatment of landmarks and Ancient Constitutions. Covers the Law for Lodges, for Candidates, for Individuals and for Grand Lodges.

Freemasonry: A Journey Through Ritual and Symbol by W. Kirk MacNutly

The historical illustrations of Masonic tracing boards are a rare find, and the incorporation of Jungian psychological principles into an explanation of the Blue Lodge degrees made quite fascinating reading. 133 illustrations.

Some Deeper Aspects Of Masonic Symbolism by Stephen Dafoe, Arthur Edward Waite (Editor)

Long out of print, Arthur Edward Waite's "Some Deeper Aspects of Masonic Symbolism" is a must read for those Freemasons interested in a better understanding of the Masonic degrees that make up the Craft Lodge of Masonry. Waite covers such topics as, the meaning of initiation, the Third Degree, the Christian Mysteries, Operative Masonry, The Old Charges and a host of other topics. Also included in this small volume is "An Appreciation of Arthur Edward Waite" by Joseph Fort Newton and an afterward by Stephen Dafoe on the importance of Pythagorean Symbolism in Masonry unique to this volume. Templar Books is pleased to bring this lecture by the late Arthur Edward Waite to the Masonic Fraternity once again

Masonic Symbolism by Charles Clyde Hunt

Fifty-nine informative studies and interpretations of many Masonic symbols. Simple and readable, dependable, thorough, sound in interpretation, inspiring.

There are many more great Masonic books on different themes, ranging from History, Symbolism, Ritual to Philosophy and Esoterism.

If you wish to receive some more book referrals, please get in touch.