

Provincial Grand Lodge of Valencia

Grand Lodge of Spain



3.1- TEACHINGS FROM THE MASONIC LECTURES – PART FIVE

**Provincial Education Programme
Fellow Craft Degree**

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THE WAGES: CORN, WINE AND OIL

The wages which our ancient brethren received for their labors in the building of King Solomon's Temple are paid no more. In the lodge we use them as symbols, save in the dedication, constitution and consecration of a new lodge and in the laying of cornerstones, when once again the fruit of the land, the brew of the grape and the essence of the olive are poured to launch a new unit of brotherhood into the fellowship of lodges; or to begin a new structure dedicated to the public use.

Corn, wine and oil have been associated together from the earliest times. In Deuteronomy the "nation of fierce countenance" which is to destroy the people "shall not leave thee either corn, wine or oil." In II Chronicles we read "the children of Israel brought in abundance the first fruits of corn, wine and oil -." Nehemiah tells of "a great chamber where aforetime they laid the meat offerings, the frankincense and the vessels, and the tithes of the corn, the new wine and the oil - " and later "then brought all Judah the tithes of the corn, the new wine and the oil into the treasures." There are other references in the Great Light to these particular forms of taxes, money and tithes for religious purposes; wealth and refreshment. In ancient days the grapes in the vineyard and olives in the grove and the grain of the field were not only wealth but the measure of trade; so many skins of wine, so many cruses of oil, so many bushels of corn were to them as are dollars and cents today. Thus, our ancient brethren received wages in corn, wine and oil as a practical matter; they were paid for their labors in the coin of the realm.

The oil pressed from the olive was as important to the Jews in Palestine as butter and other fats are among occidentals. Because it was so necessary, and hence so valuable, it became an important part of sacrificial rites. There is no point in the sacrifice which is only a form. To be effective it must offer before the Altar something of value; something the giving of which will testify to the love and veneration in which the sacrifice holds the Most High. Oil was also used not only as a food but for lighting purposes; more within the house than in the open air, where torches were more effective. Oil was also an article of the bath; mixed with perfume it was used in the ceremonies of anointment, and in preparation for ceremonial appearances. The "Precious ointment upon the head, which ran down upon the beard, even Aaron's beard, that went down to the skirts of his garment;" as the quotation has it in our entered Apprentice Degree, (and Nevada's Master Mason opening and closing) was doubtless made of olive oil, suitably mixed with such perfumes and spices as myrrh, cinnamon, galbanum and frankincense. Probably oil was also used as a surgical dressing; nomadic peoples, subject to injuries, could hardly avoid knowledge of the value of soothing oil. With so many uses for oil, its production naturally was stimulated. Not only was the production of the olive grove a matter of wealth, but the nourishing and processing of the oil gave employment to many. Oil was obtained from the olive both by pressing - probably by a stone wheel revolving in or on a larger stone, mill or mortar - and also by a gentle pounding. This hand process produced a finer quality of oil. "And thou shalt command the children of Israel that they bring pure olive oil beaten for the light, to cause the lamp to burn always." (Exodus, 27-20.)

The corn of the Bible is not the corn we know today. In many, if not the majority of the uses of the word, a more understandable translation would be simply "grain." The principal grains of the Old Testament days were barley and wheat; corn represents not only both of these, but all the grains which the Jews cultivated. Our modern corn cultivated and cross-bred was, of course, unknown to the ancients, although it might be going too far to say they had no grain similar to the Indian maize from which our great corn crop has grown.

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An ear of grain has been an emblem of plenty since the mists of antiquity which shroud the beginnings of mythology. Ceres, goddess of abundance, survives today in our cereals. The Greeks call her Demeter, a corruption of Gemeter, our mother earth. She wore a garland of grain and carried ears of grain in her hand. The Hebrew Shibboleth means both an ear of corn and a flood of water. Both are symbols of abundance, plenty and wealth. American Masonic use of a sheaf of wheat in place of an ear of wheat - or any other grain such as corn - seems rather without point or authority. As for the substitution occasionally heard, of "water ford" for "water fall," we can only blame the corrupting influence of time and the ignorance of those who have permitted it, since a water "Ford" signifies a paucity, the absence of water, while a water "Fall" carries out both the translation of the word and the meaning of the ear of corn - plenty.

Scarcely less important to our ancient brethren than their corn and oil, was the wine. Vineyards were highly esteemed both as wealth and as a comfort - the pleasant shade of the "vine and fig tree" was a part of ancient hospitality. Vineyards on mountain sides or hills were most carefully tended and protected against washing away by terraces and walls, as even today one may see the hillsides of the Rhine. Thorn hedges kept cattle from helping themselves to the grapes. The vineyardist frequently lived in a watch tower or hut on an elevation to keep sharp look-out that neither predatory man nor beast took his ripening wealth.

The feast of Booths, in the early fall, when the grapes were ripe, was a time of joy and happiness. "New Wine" - that is, the unfermented, just pressed-out juice of the grape - was drunk by all. Fermented wine was made by storing the juice of the grape in skins or bottles. Probably most of the early wine of Old Testament days was red, but later the white grape must have come into esteem - at least, it is the principal grape of production for that portion of the world today.

Corn, wine and oil form important and necessary parts of the ceremonies of the dedication, consecration and constitution of a new lodge.

Lodges were anciently dedicated to King Solomon, but as we all know, our modern lodges are dedicated to the Holy Sts. John. "and since their time there is represented in every regular and well-governed lodge a certain point within a circle, embordered by two parallel perpendicular lines, representing those saints." This symbol of the point within the circle is far older than King Solomon's Temple. The two lines which emborder it, and which we consider represent the Saints, were originally representative of the summer and winter solstices. The Holy Sts. John have their "days" so closely to the summer and winter solstices - (June 24 and December 27 are almost coincident to June 21 and December 21) that there can be little doubt that both lines and dates represented to our "ancient brethren" the highest and lowest points which the sun reached in its travels north and south. They are, most intimately connected with the time of fecundity and harvest, the festivals of the first fruits, the depths of winter and the beginning of the long climb of the sun up from the south towards the days of warmth which that climb promised.

Hence corn, wine and oil - the produce of the land - are natural accompaniments to the dedication of a lodge which it is hoped will prosper, reap in abundance of the first fruits of Masonic cultivation and a rich harvest of ripe character from the seeds it plants. Corn, wine and oil poured upon the symbolic lodge at the ceremony which creates it, are essential to "erection" or "consecration." All lodges are "erected to God and Consecrated to the services of the Most High." From earliest times consecration has been accompanied by sacrifice, a free-will offering of something of real value to those who thus worship. Hence the sacrifice of corn, wine and oil - the wealth of the land, the

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strength of the tribe, the come-fort and well-being of the individual - at the consecration of any place of worship or service of God.

Like so much else in our ceremonies, the idea today is wholly symbolic. The Grand Master orders his Deputy (or whatever other officer is customary) to pour the Corn, the Senior Grand Warden to pour the Wine and the Junior Grand Warden to pour the oil upon the "lodge" - usually a covered structure representing the original Ark of the Covenant. The corn is poured as an emblem of nourishment; the wine as an emblem of refreshment and the oil as an emblem of joy and happiness.

The sacrifice we thus make is not actual, any more than Masonic work is physical labor. The ceremony should mean to those who take part in it, to those who form the new lodge, that the symbolic sacrifice will be made real by the donation of the necessary time, effort, thought and brotherly affection which will truly make the new lodge an effective instrument in the hands of the builders. When the Grand Master constitutes the new lodge, he brings it legally into existence. A man and a woman may be married in a civil ceremony of consecration. But as the joining of a man and woman in matrimony is by most considered as a sacrament, to be solemnized with the blessing of the Most High, so is the creation of a new lodge, but the consecration is also its spirit.

In the laying of a corner stone the Grand Master also pours, or causes to be poured, the corn, wine and oil, symbolizing health, prosperity and peace. The fruits of the land are poured upon the cornerstone to signify that it will form part of a building which shall grow, be used for purposes of proper refreshment, and become useful and valuable to men. The ceremonies differ in different Jurisdictions - indeed, so do those of the dedication, consecration and constitution of a lodge - but the essential idea is the same everywhere. regardless of the way in which they are applied in the ritualistic ceremonies.

It probably matters very little what varieties of grain, of oil and juice of the grape are used in these ceremonies. The symbolism will be the same, since the brethren assembled will not know the actual character of the fruits of the earth being used. The main theme is that "Fruits of the Earth" are being used, no matter which fruits they are! To be quite correct though, barley or wheat should be used for the corn, olive oil for the oil, and sacramental wine, such as is permitted by the Volstead Act (during the days of the prohibition!) for religious purposes for the wine. It may be noted, however, that "new wine" or unfermented grape juice was used by the children of Israel as a sacrificial wine, the ordinary grape juice in no way destroys the symbolism. Mineral oil, of course is oil, and is a "fruit of the earth" in the sense that it comes from the "clay which is constantly being employed for man's use." The oil of Biblical days, however, was wholly vegetable, whether it was the olive oil of commerce, or the oil of cedar as was used in burials. Corn, wine and oil were the wages paid our ancient brethren. They were the "Master's Wages" of the days of King Solomon. Masons of this day receive no material wages for their labors; the work done in a lodge is paid for only in the coin of the heart. But those wages are no less real. They may sprout as does the grain, strengthen as does the wine, nourish as does the oil. How much we receive and what we do with our wages depends entirely on our Masonic work. A brother obtains from his lodge and from his Order only what he puts into it. Our ancient brethren were paid for their physical labors. Whether their wages were paid for work performed upon the mountain and in the quarries, or whether they received corn, wine and oil because they labored in the fields or vineyards, it was true then, and it is true now, that only "in the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread." To receive the equivalent of corn, wine and oil, a brother must labor. He must till the fields of his own heart or build the temple of his own "house not made with hands. "He must labor to his neighbor or carry stones for his brother's temple.

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If he stands, waits, watches and wonders he will not be able to ascend into the Middle Chamber where our ancient brethren received their wages. If he works for the joy of working, does his part in his lodge work, takes his place among the laborers of Freemasonry, he will receive corn, wine and oil in measures pressed down and running over, and know a Fraternal Joy as substantial in fact as it is ethereal in quality; as real in his heart as it is intangible to the profane of the world.

For all of us then corn, then wine and then oil are symbols of sacrifice, of the fruits of labor, of wages earned.

WITHOUT SCRUPLES OR DIFFIDENCE

All Masons are aware, of course, that Fellowcrafts received their wages without scruples or diffidence. Very few of them have any idea whatsoever what this might mean. Indeed the usage of these two words is now so far lost that the only way that we can come to an understanding of these words is through the responses we learn in the Fellowcraft catechism.

"Scruples" are doubts or objections to a proposed action on the grounds of morality. We might refuse to join in a scheme to defraud someone on the grounds that it would be immoral; an "unscrupulous" person would have no hesitation in joining. When the Fellowcrafts received their wages "without scruple" does this mean that they were unscrupulous?

The answer shows us that it's the opposite, actually. They had no scruples because they knew that they had justly earned their wages and that no moral objection could be raised to their receiving them. Just think about that for a moment. How many employees, as they are getting their paycheques, ask themselves, "Did I really earn this money? Or did I slack off or do shoddy work or pretend to be sick when I really wasn't or do anything else that would make my accepting this money morally tainted?"? Isn't it much more common to hear employees insist not only on their wage but on extensive fringe benefits while at the same time complaining that their employers want them to do their jobs properly?

The concept of diffidence is even more difficult. It is defined as "self-distrust, lack of confidence, modesty, shyness". "Without diffidence" means "confidently, boldly". When I think of someone receiving wages diffidently I think of a teenage babysitter on the job for the first time. She is so shy about the payment end of the transaction that she will not even mention it if you forget to pay her altogether. She will certainly not raise the question of the amount of her pay. The experienced babysitter receives her wages without diffidence; she knows what she is entitled to and is not afraid to insist.

It is experience, of course, that usually helps us overcome youthful shyness and lack of self-confidence. So why does the Work tell us that the ancient Fellowcrafts lacked diffidence because of "the unbounded confidence they placed in the integrity of their employers."? Shyness is so often a fear that if one speaks up one will be treated with ridicule or contempt. But if you are confident in those around you those fears do not arise.

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I imagine the Fellowcraft counting his pay with a puzzled look on his face and then asking the Warden, "Does this include my pay for working last Tuesday?". He knows the Warden will give him a straight answer and in a kindly and courteous manner. How many employers these days would do that?

The payment of wages in Masonry is often a symbol for the benefits we receive from life. God is our paymaster. Our job as human beings are to work not only in the mundane world but also in the spiritual quarries where we are building a temple to His glory. And we receive not only "our daily bread" or the benefits we require for our physical well-being but also spiritual benefits as our wage. How do we receive them?

Do we think that "the world owes us a living"; that we can live the high life without doing our share, that we can cheat our way to the benefits that God offers? No, we receive them without scruple. We would not think of accepting the good things of life without doing our part; therefore, we do our job without stinting and earn our wage.

Nor are we afraid of accepting the gifts God gives us. We accept that God wishes us to have them and to use them to benefit mankind and glorify Him. We are not diffident about accepting those benefits.

Life can be so good. We are neither ashamed or afraid to enjoy it.

THE LETTER "G"

Even a stranger, entering a Masonic Lodge Room, as he may do on a public occasion, must be struck by a mysterious Letter which is displayed over the chair of the Master in the East or hangs from the center of the Lodge. No one need tell him of its meaning; it is a letter of light and tells its own story.

Yet, no stranger can know its full meaning, much less how old it is. Indeed, few Masons are aware of all that it implies, either as a symbol or history. There it shines, a focus of faith and fellowship, the emblem of the Divine Presence in the Lodge, and in the heart of each Brother composing it.

When the Lodge is opened, the mind and heart of each member should also be opened to the meaning of the Great Symbol, to the intent that its light and truth may become the supreme reality in our lives. When the Lodge is closed, the memory of that Divine initial and its august suggestions ought to be the last thought retained in the mind, to be pondered over.

In English Lodges its meaning and use are made clearer. There it shines in the center of the ceiling of the room, and the Lodge is grouped around it, rather than assembled beneath it. Below it is the checkerboard floor, symbol of the vicissitudes of life, over which hangs the whiter light of the divine guidance and blessing, so much needed in our mortal journey.

Also, in the Degrees its use is more impressive. In the First and Second degrees the symbol is visible in the roof, or sky, of the Lodge Room, like a benediction. In the Third Degree it is hidden, but its presence is still manifest - as every Masons knows - since the light of God is inextinguishable even in the darkest hours.

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Thus, in the course of the degrees, the Great Letter has descended from heaven to earth, as if to show us the deep meaning of Masonry. In other words, the purpose of initiation is to bring God and Man together and make them one. God becomes man that man may become God - a truth which lies at the heart of all religion, and most clearly revealed in our own. At the bottom, every form of faith is trying to lay hold of this truth, for which words were never made.

In all the old houses of initiation, as far back as we can go, some one letter of the alphabet stands out as a kind of Divine initial. In the Egyptian Mysteries it was the "Solar Ra," a symbol of the Spiritual Sun shining upon the mortal path. In the Greek Mysteries at Delphi it was the letter "E" - Eta - the fifth letter of the Greek alphabet; five being the symbol of man, as evidenced by the five senses.

Hence also the pentagram, or five-pointed star. In olden times Fellowcraft Masons worked in groups of five, and five Brethren now compose one of their Lodges. Plutarch tells us in the Greek Mysteries. the Letter Eta was made of wood in the First Degree, of bronze in the Second Degree, and of Gold in the Third - showing the advance and refinement of the moral and spiritual nature, as well as the higher value to the truth that was unfolded.

Many meanings and much history are thus gathered into the Great Letter, some of it dim and lost to us now. In our Lodges, and in the thought of the craft today, the Letter "G" stands for Geometry, and also as the initial for our word for God. Now for one, now for the other, but nearly always for both, since all Masonry rests upon Geometry, and in all its lore Geometry is the way of God.

Of the first of these meanings not much needs to be said. In the oldest Charges of the Craft, as in its latest interpretations, it is agreed that Masonry is moral geometry. What was forfeit by philosophers and mystics in ancient times is now revealed to us by the microscope. It is an actual fact that Geometry is the thought- form of God in nature, in the snowflake and in the orbits of the stars.

Since this ancient insight is confirmed by the vision of science, in the most impressive manner the great Letter may stand as the initial of God, not alone by the accident of our language, but also and much more by a faith founded in fact. There is no longer any secret; it cannot be hid, because it is written in the structure of things, in all forms which truth and beauty take.

Nor does Masonry seek to hide the fact that it rests in God, lives in God, and seeks to lead men to God. Everything Masonry has reference to God, every lesson. every lecture; from the first step to the last Degree. Without God it has no meaning, and no mission among men. It would be like the house in the parable, built on the sand which the floor swept away. For Masonry, God is the first truth and the final reality.

Yet, as a fact, Masonry rarely uses the name of God.

It uses, instead, the phrase; "The Great Architect Of The Universe." Of course, such a phrase fits into the symbolism of the Craft, but that is not the only - nor, perhaps the chief - reason why it is used. A deep, fine feeling keeps us from using the name of Deity too often, lest it lose some of its awe in our minds.

It is because Masons believe in God so deeply that they do not repeat His Name frequently, and some of us prefer the Masonic way in the matter. Also, we love the Masonic way of teaching by

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indirection, so to speak; by influence and atmosphere. Masonry, in its symbols and in its spirit, seeks to bring us into the presence of God and detains us there, and that is the wisest way.

In nothing is Masonry more deep-seeing than in the way in which it deals with our attitude toward God, who is both the meaning and the mystery of life. It does not intrude, much less drive, in the intimate and delicate things of the inner life - like a bungler thrusting his hand into our heart-strings.

No, all that Masonry asks is that we confess our faith in a Supreme Being. It does not require that we analyze or define in detail our thought of God. Few men have formulated their profound faith; perhaps no man can do it, satisfactorily. It goes deeper than the intellect, down into the instincts and feelings, and eludes all attempts to put it into words.

Life and love, joy and sorrow, pity and pain and death; the blood in the veins of man, the milk in the breast of woman, the laughter of little children, the coming and goings of days, all the old, sweet, sad human things that make up our mortal life - these are the bases of our faith in God. Older than argument, it is deeper than debate; as old as the home, as tender as infancy and old age, as deep as love and death.

Men lived and died by faith in God long before philosophy was born, ages before theology had learned its letters. Vedic poets and penitential Psalmists were praising God on yonder side of the Pyramids. In Egypt, five thousand years ago, a poet King sang of the unity, purity and beauty of God, celebrating His Presence revealed, yet also concealed, in the order of life.

No man can put such things into words, much less into a hard and fast dogma. Masonry does not ask him to do so. All that it asks is that he tell, simply and humbly, in Whom he puts his trust in life and death, as the source, security and sanction of moral life and spiritual faith; and that is as far as it seeks to go.

One thinks of the talk of the old Mason with the young nobleman who was an atheist, in the Tolstoy story, "War and Peace." When the young count said with a sneer that he did not believe in God, the old Mason smiled, as a mother might smile at the silly saying of a child. Then, in a gentle voice, the old man said:

"Yes, you do not know Him, sir. You do not know Him and that is why you are unhappy. But he is here, He is within me, He is within you, even in these scoffing words you have just uttered. If He is not, we should not be speaking of Him, sir. Whom dost thou deny?" They were silent for a spell, as the train moved on.

Something in the old man touched the count deeply and stirred in him a longing to see what the old man saw, and to know what he knew. His eyes betrayed his longing to know God, and the old man read his face, and answered his unasked question:

"Yes, he exists, but to know him is hard. It is not attained by reason, but by life. The highest truth is like the purest dew. Could I hold in an impure vessel that pure dew, and judge of its purity? Only by inner purification can we know God."

All these things - all this history and hope and yearning which defies analysis - Masonry tells us in a shining Letter which hangs, up in the Lodge. It is the wisest way; its presence is a prophecy, and its

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influence extends beyond our knowing, evoking one knows not what memories and meditations.
Never do we see that Great Letter, and think of what it implies, that we do not feel what Watts felt:

O God, our help in ages past,
Our hope in times to come,
Our shelter from the stormy blast,
And our eternal home.
"SO MOTE IT BE"
will become better

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3.2- THE TRACING BOARD OF THE SECOND DEGREE

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THE TRACING BOARD OF THE SECOND DEGREE

The main teaching of the second degree is contained in the picture of the tracing board, and with regard to at any rate some of the incidents and facts an allegorical meaning is evident.

The first important architectural feature mentioned is a pair of columns stated to have been set up at the porch- way or entrance of the Temple. These pillars seem always to have had a peculiar fascination for our masonic ancestors, and even in the early days of the Comacines we find them setting up Boaz and Jachin in the porch of the medieval church at Wurzburg, but their symbolical history runs back very much further even than the days of King Solomon's Temple. The two pillars Tat and Tattu are found in the early papyri of the Book of the Dead in Egypt and appear to have had the meaning of "In Strength" and "To establish firmly," but even among the primitive initiatory sites of the Yaos in Nyasaland the boys, after various adventures, have to pass between two pillars. The original meaning of these pillars was undoubtedly phallic, and in rites dealing with whence we come are obviously appropriate. The use of the word S. in a ceremony which, like these Yao rites, aims at increasing the procreative powers of the members of the tribe by a magical ritual, is obvious, but at a later date more ethical meanings were naturally grafted on to the basic one. That this original idea was not forgotten when the twin columns were set up by King Solomon is clear from the description of the chapiters. The network, denoting union, combined with the lily work, denoting virginity, and the subsequent reference to the pomegranates with their abundant seeds convey the same lesson, as do certain other adornments of the columns, but already other more evolved ideas had been grafted on to the age old symbols. Thus, the fact that they were formed hollow in order to serve as archives for Freemasonry, for therein were deposited, etc., seems to refer to the doctrine of re-incarnation. The constitutional rolls in this case are the effects of his past lives which are already latent in the child. It is clear at any rate that there must be an allegory here, for the statement if intended to be accepted literally is absurd. No sensible person would really put the constitutional rolls inside a hollow pillar, they would be placed in the muniments room of the Temple.

The reverence paid to pillars or to monolithic stones is well known to every anthropologist, and undoubtedly was Phallic in origin. In the Bible, for example, we find constant denunciations by the prophets against the worship of stocks and stones; the stock being a pillar of wood corresponding to the stone monolith, to which the worshippers were in the habit of addressing prayers containing the phrase "Thou hast begotten me."

The use of the two pillars also reminds us of the gate- way of birth through which we enter physical life, and so by analogy we get the idea that we must enter the mystical temple of Divine Life between similar pillars. From such ideas would naturally evolve the suggestion that of the two pillars one was black, the other white; one of fire, the other of cloud. Thus we get the opposition between light and darkness, day and night, good and evil, male and female. Moreover, we do know that in many of the ancient mysteries, and in the savage initiatory rites of a boy into manhood, it was very usual for the Can. to be obliged to pass between two pillars.

The opposition between light and darkness is also taught by the checkered pavement of our lodges. This pavement is a symbol used in many religions, and the Persian poet Omar Khayyam writes as follows: —

"Life is a checker board of nights and days, Where Destiny with men for pieces plays, Hither and thither moves and mates and slays, And one by one back in the closet lays."

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Certainly, this is one of the meanings of the mosaic pavement, although in addition, as Sir John Cockburn has pointed out, the word “mosaic” may be connected with the same root as the word Moses, which means “Saved from the flood.” If this be so the checkered pavement would be derived from the mosaic effect produced by the receding flood of the Nile as it left the land on either side dry after the floods. Let us now consider the names given to these two pillars by the Jews. If we turn to the Hebrew words themselves, we shall find that they had a secret inner meaning among the Kabbalists. These Jewish sages had a special and secret interpretation of the Old Testament, and one part of this secret was to read certain significant names backwards. If this is done in the case of the two words under consideration we find that their conjoint and full signification is “Being fortified” by the practice of every moral virtue we are now “Properly prepared” to undergo that last and greatest trial. The official interpretation given is not without significance, so far as the first word is concerned, for God said that He would establish the House of David forever, but while we can perceive the importance of the ancestor of King Solomon what of the Assistant High Priest? Firstly, it must be recognized that the first column was considered to be the Royal column, and the other was the Priestly, and the explanation may refer to this. In that case we obtain a declaration as to the necessity for Church and State as the foundation for civilization. It is interesting, however, to note that those who look for a Christian interpretation of our rituals are able to point out that while the first name refers to the founder of the House of Jesse, the other name is that of the last male ancestor of Christ, namely, the husband of St. Anne, and the Father of the Virgin Mary. Thus, the names of these two pillars represent the beginning and the end of the House of Jesse, from whom was drawn the body of the Savior of Mankind.

As there is a school of symbologists who consider that the whole of the Craft degrees can be interpreted in the Christian sense, these facts cannot be ignored. If their interpretation is correct the apparently casual reference to Hiram Abiff, the son of a widow, takes on a new significance in association with these pillars. In any case this is the first mention in his progress through masonry that the Can. hears of the famous Architect. Hiram Abiff is regarded as a prototype of the Great Master, and there does certainly seem to be a striking similarity between the chief incidents in the lives of both of them. But this fact will become more evident when the F.C. has taken his M.M. degree.

Before leaving the subject of these two pillars it is of interest to point out that pillars are regarded as emblems of stability among many races, and on a “chop,” or certificate, used by one of the great Chinese secret societies the character KEH, meaning a pillar, is used, which has among the Chinese the further meaning of Stability.

Sir John Cockburn recently pointed to a most pregnant fact. It is well-known that in the course of oral transmission foreign words become so corrupt in form that there comes a time when they cease to be intelligible, and in consequence attempts are made to replace them by a word whose meaning is known, and whose shape is similar to that of the corrupt word. Many masonic students suspect that this has occurred in our ceremonies, and Sir John suggested that the Greek words Iacchus and Boue were the original names attached to these pillars. Iacchus or Bacchus was the God of Youth and of the procreative powers, who in some of the Grecian mysteries was slain and rose again, while Boue means the primeval chaos, the dark womb of time, and so the womb.

This interpretation cannot be rejected lightly. Firstly, the appropriateness of such words to these two degrees is self-evident, but even more striking is the fact that the Supreme Council 33° of France

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gives to its members an esoteric interpretation of all the important words used in Freemasonry, and it interprets J. as the phallus, and B. as the womb. Spiritually interpreted this would mean that the God of Life and Light, Iacchus, descended into the womb of chaos and brought forth Life.

The tracing board having at considerable length, and in great detail, described these pillars, goes on to give a certain amount of information about the men who actually built the Temple, and a very clear distinction is drawn between the reward received for their labors by the E.A.'s and the F.C.'s. The E.A.'s, representing those who as yet are not very spiritually evolved, obtain merely simple maintenance, whereas it is specifically stated that the F.C.'s were paid their wages in specie, which however they could only receive in the Middle Chamber. In other words, their wages were of a spiritual nature suitable to their more evolved spirituality, and that this was so is proved by the fact that they received them in the Middle Chamber, which is an allegory for the secret chamber of the Heart where dwells the Divine Spark. In all mystical language, and all descriptions of mystical experience, this hidden chamber of the Heart is spoken of as the place where dwells the God in man. It is in reality a state of mystical experience, where the soul realizes, and for a brief moment of time becomes one with, the Divine Source of all. That this is so intended is clearly indicated by the statement that, when our ancient Brethren entered the Middle Chamber their attention was peculiarly directed to certain Hebrew characters, usually depicted in our Lodges by the letter G. denoting God, the Grand Geometrician of the Universe. Now the Hebrew characters stood for Yod-He-Vau-He, or Jehovah, the Great Architect of the Universe, but since, as has already been explained, each F.C. in himself stands for "Shin," in combination with himself he finds in the Middle Chamber the name of the Messiah, Yeheshue, (Jesus) Who is the Grand Geometrician of the Universe or God made Flesh, Who dwells among us. Bearing this fact in mind we shall the better understand the ceremony of closing, wherein the J.W., representing the Body, declares that in this degree they have discovered a sacred symbol, representing God. The fact that it is the J.W. who makes this announcement, and not the S.W., is explained by the correct interpretation of the Winding Staircase. This Staircase is our own body, as we shall explain later.

The ancient Brethren were not permitted to ascend this Staircase until they had satisfied the J.W. that they were truly F.C.'s, but he does not ask of them the F.C.'s Word as one might expect, but the Pass Word leading to that degree. This is of course right, for he deals with the simple necessities of life which the E.A. receives, and which to the truly spiritual man, such as the F.C. claims to be, are plenty, whereas the true W., with its priestly meaning, belongs to the S.W. or Soul. The J.W. has no part or lot in that, but it is his task to see that the Body is in good condition, for a diseased body may easily hamper the Soul in its progress. Masonry deprecates those foolish ascetics who torture and illtreat the body, as much as it does gross and luxurious livers, who over indulge the physical and thus hinder the soul's advance.

The explanation of the origin of the Word, although taken from the Bible, no doubt has an inner meaning. In one version we are told that Jephtha, like Joseph, and before him Ishmael, was rejected by his relations, and went out from his father's house to a strange country. When, however, Gilead was threatened by the Ammonites and sent a deputation to him begging him to come to their help and organize armed resistance, he forgave the unkindness he had suffered and saved his native city. Thus, we can see that, like One who came after him, he was "The stone which the Builders rejected which became the headstone of the corner." So here again we get a reference to the Savior of men and to Preservation.

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The Winding Staircase with its three, five, seven or more steps, must have puzzled many thoughtful Brethren, who have no doubt wondered why it was that those who codified our rituals could not make up their minds concerning the exact number of steps the Staircase had. This very fact warns us that it is an allegory, for the thing disguised under this name can be considered to consist of three parts, five parts, seven parts, and possibly more. The three who rule a Lodge represent the Body, Soul, and Spirit which constitute Man. The five who form a Lodge are the five senses of the physical man. But the physical man has both soul and spirit, each of which has its own peculiar sense, the Soul having psychic faculties, and the spirit the mystical and inspirational. There have been in the past, as the Bible indicates, men who had second sight, and there were the prophets who spoke by Divine inspiration. Although the ordinary man while on earth only functions through the five physical senses, those who are approaching perfection, such as the great master's and religious teachers of the world, function through all seven. The reference to the five noble orders of architecture is certainly an 18th century addition, for our medieval Brethren cared nothing about them, while the reference to the seven liberal arts and sciences is probably a Post-Reformation gloss. They are good enough for an exoteric interpretation, but obviously disguise something more profound.

The five noble orders of architecture when applied to the Temple of King Solomon, are of course an absurd anachronism. Perhaps at this point one should explain that the Temple at Jerusalem, masonically, is an allegory for the Temple of Humanity raised to the glory of God, or, to use a Christian simile, the Church of Christ on earth, into whose fabric every true mason is built, dedicating his body and soul as a perfect ashlar in its construction. This Winding Staircase spiraled round a central column, so that when the Brethren reached the top, they had advanced neither to the East nor to the West but were still revolving around the center. To an Eastern Brother this Winding Staircase will certainly recall the ladder of re-incarnation, by the gradual ascent of which the Soul in time returns to God, from Whom it came, travelling upwards in a spiral.

But to the Western mind this Staircase is our own body, subdued, brought under control, and dedicated to the glory of God. This done we receive our wages, which are knowledge of God in that hidden chamber which is within us. No other man and no external organization can really give us knowledge of God, that is an experience which each must discover for himself, and in himself, as every mystic has taught, no matter to what external religion he conformed. Mysticism is not an organized religion, in rivalry with any of the established faiths, but is the real truth enshrined in every religion, and the force which gives that religion vitality.

Therefore, it is that we find among Mahommedans, Buddhists, Jews, Hindus, and Christians men who, while they often employ different symbols, use them to describe precisely the same spiritual experiences.

Finally, let us note that the last guardian who has to be passed is the Soul, which itself passes the man who is a true F.C. into that hidden Chamber. When he has thus proved himself a true priest in the spiritual sense, the Soul enables him to discover the God Who is within him, and that this Divine Spark is ever linked to the Source of All. It should, however, be clearly understood that this discovery of God within ourselves is not the end of the Mystic Quest, for the evolving Soul has other experiences to go through, some of a most painful spiritual nature, before he achieves final and complete union with the Source of his being. But until he has had this first experience, this first realization of the Divine Spark within him, he cannot start on the real quest; for he is not yet properly prepared. He may, and will, come out from that secret Chamber again and again, to take his part in the ordinary life of the world, but having once glimpsed the splendor of the Divine he will

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realize the glorious heritage to which he is the heir, and will not be content until he has completed his journey. Nevertheless, it may truly be said that these occasional experiences, brief and passing though they be, are the just reward of his labors. This then is the great lesson of the second degree, that by ourselves, and in ourselves, we can discover and realize God, more especially in His Preservative aspect. This discovery means more than an acquiescence in the statement of others that there is such a Being as God, it is the realization by oneself of this stupendous fact, a thing almost impossible to describe in words except to those who have experienced it, while to them it needs no description.

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3.3- FAITH, PROGRESS AND REWARD

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FAITH, PROGRESS AND REWARD

The three basic symbols of the Fellowcraft Lecture are the Brazen Pillars, the Winding Stairs and the Middle Chamber. The Brazen Pillars suggest to my mind the idea of Faith. Every Mason has a right to interpret a Masonic symbol for himself, and to read into or out of it the significance that has the most importance to his own life.

Josephus, the Hebrew historian, says: "Moreover, this Hiram made two hollow pillars, whose outsides were of brass." He then gives a detailed description of their dimensions, including their chapters. He states that there was cast with each their chapters lily work, that stood upon the pillar, round about which there was a network interwoven with small palms made of brass; to this also, were hung two hundred pomegranates in two rows. One of these pillars he set at the entrance of the porch, on the right hand, and the other at the left hand. and gave them names.

It is a poor symbol that has but one meaning; these have been subjected to many different readings.

It has been asserted that the Ancients believing that the earth was flat, and being unacquainted with the law of gravity, supposed it to be supported by two Pillars of God, placed at the Western entrance of the then-known world. These became known as the Pillars of Hercules, and are now called Gibraltar, on one side of the straight, and Ceuta on the other. This may account for the origin of the twin pillars.

However, this may be, the practice of erecting columns at the entrance of an edifice dedicated to the worship prevailed in Egypt and Phoenicia, and at the erection of King Solomon's Temple the Brazen Pillars were placed in the porch thereof.

Some writers have suggested that they represent the masculine and feminine elements in nature. The contention has been made that they stand for the authority of Church and State, because on stated occasions the High Priest stood before one pillar and the King before the other. The opinion has been held that they have an allusion to the two legendary pillars of Enoch, upon which, tradition informs us, all the wisdom of the ancient world was inscribed in order to preserve it from inundations and conflagrations. William Preston supposed that, by them, Solomon had reference to the pillars of cloud and fire which guided the Children of Israel out of bondage and up to the Promised Land. Doctor Hutchinson says a literal translation of their names is: "In Thee is Strength," and, "It Shall be Established," and by natural transposition may be thus expressed: "Oh, Lord, Thou Art Almighty and Thy Power is Established from Everlasting to Everlasting." I cannot escape the conviction that in meaning they are related to religion, and represent the strength and stability, the perpetuity and providence of God; and in Freemasonry are the symbols of a living faith.

Like every subject of universal extent, faith cannot be defined. The factors and faculties of mightiest import cannot be caught up in speech. Life is the primary fact of which we are conscious, and yet there is no language by which it can be fenced in. No chart can be made of a mother's love, because it is deeper than words, and reads in little, common things, a wealth that is more than golden. Paul, one of the deepest thinkers of the ages, called faith "The Substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen." But all attempts at definition have been in vain.

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While we cannot define, we can recognize the powers of faith. It generates energy. It is the dynamics of elevated characters and noble spirits, the source of all that bears the impress of greatness in the world.

While we cannot define, we can realize its necessity.

Without faith it would be impossible to transact business. "It spans the earth with railroads and cleaves the sea with ships. It gives man wings to fly the air, and fins to swim the deep. It creates the harmony of music and the whirl of factory wheels. It draws man up toward the angels and brings heaven down to earth." By it all human relationship is conditioned. We must have faith in institutions and ideals; faith in friendship, family and fireside; faith in self, faith in man and faith in God.

Freemasonry is the oldest, the largest and the most widely distributed secret society on the face of the earth today by reason of its faith in God.

The Winding Stairway is a symbol of Progress. From a few words contained in the sixth chapter of the First Book of Kings, a fascinating allegory has been fabricated. In his book on the "Symbolism of Freemasonry," Dr. Albert G. Mackey says: Although the Legend of the Winding Stairs forms an important tradition of ancient Craft Masonry, it is only as a symbol that we can regard this old tradition." M.W. Oliver Day street's book on "Symbolism of the Three Degrees" contains a statement to the effect that in the Winding Stairs, an architectural feature of Solomon's Temple, is seized upon to symbolize the journey of life. This symbol teaches that a man's life should never be downward, nor on a dead level; but, no matter how hard or difficult, should always be progressive and ascending. It means, as Dr. Frank Crane says, that "The man who fails is not the man who has no gifts, no chance, but the man who quits or the man who never tries." It is a clarion call to face forward and pull the belt tighter. It means that a Mason can at least try. Edgar A. Guest said:

I'd rather be a failure than the man who's never tried; I'd rather seek the mountain-top than always stand aside. Oh, let me hold some lofty dream and make my desperate fight, and though I fail I still shall know I tried to serve the right.

The longing to climb onward and upward, symbolized by the Winding Stairs, caused Robert Lewis Stevenson, frail and sickly in body but mighty of soul; to write these words:

"To thrill with joy of girded men, to go on forever and fail and go on again, with the half of a broken hope for a pillow at night, to know that somehow the right is the right."

It stands for that spirit of progress which, like a pillar of cloud by day and a pillar of fire by night, has led the race across the wilderness of life, out of the dark night of ignorance and superstition, up to the day-dawn of civilization, of knowledge and science, of intellectual and spiritual power.

Just as the Brazen Pillars are symbols of faith, the Stairway winding upward is a symbol of human progress. As such, it stands for all that gives us better clothes, better food, better music, better schools, better churches, better homes, better heads and better hearts; and for the vision, industry and endurance of those through whom the results are achieved. Robert G. Ingersoll said:

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"The progress of the world depends upon the men who walk in the fresh furrows and through the rustling corn, upon those who sow and reap, upon those whose faces are radiant with the glare of furnace fires, upon delvers in the mines and the workers in the shops, upon those who give to the winter morning the ringing music of the axe, upon those who battle with the boisterous billows and go down to the sea in ships, the brave thinkers, the heroes, the patriots and the martyrs."

This is the meaning of the Winding Stairs. It stands for art and science and song and hope and love and aspirations high. As a symbol of progress, it is a prophecy of the future, that tomorrow will be better than today. It speaks not only of the past and present but of a dim and distant day when the "Old Ghosts of Race Prejudice and Religious Bigotry will cover eyeless sockets with fleshless hands and fade forever from the mind of man, when love will rule the race, casting out fear, and brotherhood will heal the old hurt and heartache of humanity."

Masonry has played a conspicuous part in the onward march of civilization, and so long as Masons transmute this Legend of the Winding Stairs into conscience, courage, character and conduct; it will continue its contribution to the progress of the world. The Middle Chamber is a symbol of Reward. In Speculative Freemasonry it stands for that place in life where a man receives his wages, the reward of his own endeavors.

Let us not misconceive this word "Reward." Some of the wealthiest men on earth today are minus bank accounts. Carlyle said: "The wealth of a man consists in the number of things he loves and blesses and in the number of things he is loved and blessed by."

The word reward is like a two-edged sword, it cuts both ways; it means to give in return, whether good or evil. The shortest Book in the Old Testament is the Vision of Obadiah. It consists of one chapter, at the center of which is this text: "As Thou hast done unto Thy brother it shall be done unto Thee, Thy reward shall return upon Thine own head."

The law of compensation is manifest in every department of nature. The Middle Chamber is the Masonic expression of that principle. "As Thou hast done, it shall be done unto Thee." is like saying that lives have echoes. Out there is a great mountain of humanity; consciously or unconsciously, silent influences issue from each life and, striking against the peaks and summit tops of that mountain, reverberate and echo back upon the life from whence they came. If they go out well and true they echo back in blessings and benedictions; if they go out mean and low they echo back in curses and consternation.

Benedict Arnold is the saddest figure in American history. Just as Judas Iscariot sold his Master for thirty pieces of silver, Benedict Arnold sold his honor and his manhood for thirty thousand dollars in English gold and became a traitor to his homeland and the cause of freedom. The influences that came out of his life were those of treason and treachery; and by the operation of this principle, symbolized by the Middle Chamber, the echo that came back was the contempt of mankind. For all the generations of time the name of Benedict Arnold is inseparably linked to that of Judas Iscariot; together they will go down the ages a byword and a hissing. Some years ago, I read a volume by Dr. Hillis, entitled:

"Great Books as Life Teachers," and in it discovered how this principle operated in the life of one of the greatest men of the last century.

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Lord Shaftsbury was the seventh in the line of Earls. At the age of twenty-five he took his place in the Parliament of England. For more than forty years, when Parliament rose at midnight in the winter, and the other Lords went to their palatial homes or clubs, Shaftsbury would take a lantern and go through snow and sleet to London Bridge, Waterloo Bridge and the other spots in which unfortunates hid themselves and huddled together to keep warm. By the light of his lantern, he led shivering men and boys to shelter houses, where each received a bowl of soup, a loaf of bread and a thick blanket. For the half-clothed street Arabs, he started fifty schools, in which crowded the thousand ragged boys. He established night schools, industrial schools and homes.

I cannot call the roll of his manifold labors, but after years of service had accumulated upon his head he gave this testimony: "During a long life I have proved that not one kind word ever spoken, not one kind deed ever done, but sooner or later returns to bless the giver and becomes a chain, binding men with golden hands to the throne of God." Members of the English Royalty and Nobility, many financiers, merchant princes, scholars and statesmen of the British Empire, assembled at his funeral in Westminster Abbey. The Orator of the occasion began his address with this remark: "This man goeth down to the grave amid the benedictions of the poor and the admiring love of the rich."

The influences that came from his life were those of love and unselfish service. By the operation of the principle symbolized by the Middle Chamber in Freemasonry, the echo that came back was a myriad-voiced chorus of love and honor to his memory, and the name of Shaftsbury became one with which to conjure and inspire men forward to noble deeds.

In his "Essay on the Law of Compensation," Emerson asked this question: "Has a man gained anything who has received one hundred favors and rendered none?" The answer is easy; such a man has become a moral bankrupt, the smile has left his face, the song has deserted his heart, to him life has become a selfish and sordid thing.

Emerson says this principle means that "Crime and Punishment grow out of one stem, that curses recoil upon the head of him who imprecates them, that a man cannot do wrong without suffering wrong, that in the last analysis the thief steals from himself and the borrower runs into his own debt," that "The Chief end of nature is benefit, but for every benefit received a tax is levied, the benefit must be rendered again, line for line, deed for deed, cent for cent to somebody," that by the operation of this law "The Martyr can never be dishonored, every lash inflicted is a tongue of fame, every prison house a more illustrious abode, every burned book enlightens the world, every suppressed word reverberates through the earth from side to side; it is the whipper who is whipped and the tyrant who is undone."

The Middle Chamber, as a symbol of reward, means that a man will get out of his Lodge, out of his home, out of his life exactly what he puts into it. It also means that whenever a man pursues a noble quest, whenever he is held in the viselike grip of devotion to a great ideal, the end is sure and the reward beyond all doubt.

Much of the philosophy of the Fellowcraft Degree is contained in these three words; Faith, Progress and Reward. The Pillars stand for faith, the Winding Stairs for progress and the Middle Chamber for reward. There has never been any progress without faith and there is no good reward without progress.

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3.4- PREPARATION FOR THE THIRD DEGREE

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Fellow Craft Degree**

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PREPARATION FOR THE THIRD DEGREE

The First requisite for any Candidate who wishes to be Raised to the Third Degree is to prove proficiency in the former.

During your ceremony of Raising, the WM will direct you some questions related to the Fellow Craft Degree to test if you have indeed learned the necessary lessons of your Second Degree in Masonry.

The following answers are to be memorized so you may respond to the WM when questioned; however, these questions and answers cannot be considered only a memorization exercise, but a test to you, and if you indeed understood the real meaning of the Second Degree.

Anyone can memorize the answers; so, it is expected of you to actually understand their meaning and their impact in your life over the past year or so.

All the topics of the below Q&A were covered during this Education Program. Feel free to revisit previous sections to clarify any doubt you may have.

THE “NECESSARY QUESTIONS”

1. How were you prepared to be passed to the Second Degree?

Answer: In a manner somewhat similar to the former, save that in this degree I was not hood winked, neither had I a cable tow around my neck. My left arm, right breast and knee were made bare, and my left heel slipshod.

2. On what were you admitted?

Answer: The Square.

3. What is a square?

Answer: An implement having an angle of ninety degrees or the fourth part of a circle.

4. What are the peculiar objects of research in this degree?

Answer: The hidden mysteries of nature and science.

5. As it is the hope of reward that sweetens labour, where did our ancient brethren go to receive their wages?

Answer: Into the middle chamber of King Solomon's Temple.

6. How did they receive them?

Answer: Without scruple or diffidence.

7. Why in this peculiar manner?

Answer: Without scruple, well knowing they were justly entitled to them, and without diffidence from the great reliance they placed on the integrity of their employers in those days.

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8. What were the names of the two great pillars which were placed at the porchway or entrance to King Solomon's Temple?

Answer: That on the left was called B - - -, and that on the right J - - - - -.

9. What are their separate and conjoint significations?

Answer: The former denotes in Strength, the latter to establish, and when conjoined stability, for God said: in strength will I establish this mine house to stand firm forever.

THE ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS

(The following questions are not commonly made to Candidates on their Raising, but may be made by the WM or any other brother at their discretion)

10. What are the working tools of the 2nd Degree?

Answer: The square, the level and the plumb rule.

11. What, symbolically, does each working tool teach?

Answer: The square teaches morality, the level equality, and the plumb rule justness and uprightness of life and actions.

12. What do they teach about our destiny?

Answer: That by square conduct, level steps, and upright intentions, we hope to ascend to those heavenly mansions where all goodness emanates.

13. What is the significance of the spherical balls adorning the two great pillars?

Answer: They delineate maps of the celestial and terrestrial globes pointing out masonry universal.

14. Why were these pillars originally erected?

Answer: As a memorial to the Children of Israel of that miraculous pillar of fire and cloud that saved the Israelites from Pharaoh during their escape from their Egyptian bondage.

15. How many steps comprised the winding staircase, and why that number?

Answer: Three, Five, Seven or more. Three rule a lodge, five hold a lodge, and seven or more make it perfect.

16. What is the significance of these numbers?

Answer: The three who rule a lodge are the Master and his two wardens, the five who hold a lodge are the Master, two wardens, and two Fellow Crafts; and the seven who make in perfect are two Entered Apprentices added to the former five.

17. What are the five noble orders of architecture?

Answer: The Tuscan, Doric, Ionic, Corinthian, and Composite.

18. What are the seven liberal arts and sciences?

Answer: Grammar, rhetoric, logic, arithmetic, geometry, music, and astronomy.

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19. Your attention was peculiarly drawn to something in the centre ceiling of the Temple. What was it?

Answer: The letter "G".

20. What does it denote?

Answer: The Grand Geometrician of the Universe, to Whom we must all submit, and Whom we ought humbly to adore.