

SYMBOLISM OF THE THREE DEGREES

BY

OLIVER DAY STREET



PART THREE
THE MASTER MASON DEGREE

PDF Digital Reprint Published 2007 by PDFClassicBooks.com

WASHINGTON, D. C.
THE AMERICAN MASONIC PRESS, INC.

**COPYRIGHT, 1922, 1924,
BY THE MASONIC SERVICE
ASSOCIATION OF THE UNITED STATES
COPYRIGHT, 1929,
BY THE AMERICAN MASONIC PRESS, INC.**

This Special Edition
printed for
The Grand Lodge, F. & A.M.,
of
New Jersey
Third Large Printing

**SYMBOLISM OF THE THE THREE DEGREES
PRINTED IN THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA**

CONTENTS

	PAGE
THE MASTER MASON DEGREE	1
APPENDIX	57
1—LANDMARKS APPROVED BY THE GRAND LODGE OF NEW JERSEY	59
2—SUGGESTED MASONIC READING	63
3—QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION	67
4—INDEX	73

THE MASTER MASON DEGREE

SYMBOLISM OF THE THREE DEGREES

THE MASTER MASON DEGREE

Many of the lessons of the Third Degree are obvious to the most superficial mind, but others (and these the most important) are grasped only after long and patient study. We shall not attempt anything original, but only lay before you in an imperfect way a few of the reflections and conclusions of some of our most trustworthy Masonic scholars.

We believe, as we have several times observed, that it is susceptible of the clearest proof that Freemasonry, viewed in the aggregate, is an elaborate allegory of human life, that the Three Degrees considered collectively, symbolically epitomise man's existence both here and in the hereafter. Our excuse for recurring to this idea is that Speculative Masonry cannot otherwise adequately be explained. The lodge is emblematical of the world; initiation, of birth; the Entered Apprentice, of the preparatory stage of life, or youth; the Fellow Craft, of the constructive stage, or manhood; the Master Mason, of the reflective stage, or old age, death, the resurrection, and the everlasting life. The explanation of the Three Degrees is briefly given in our lecture on the "Three Steps" delineated on the

2 SYMBOLISM OF THE THREE DEGREES

Master's Carpet. Any symbol or any meaning attributed to a symbol which does not legitimately contribute to this allegory may be discarded as non-Masonic.

THE ANTIQUITY OF MASONIC SYMBOLISM

The age of our symbolism is an important question in this connection, because upon it to a great extent depend the meanings that must be assigned to our symbols. While some of them may be of comparatively modern origin, many of them are older than the oldest written language.

Says Brother Robert Freke Gould, one of the most cautious of our historians:

“The symbolism of Masonry, or at all events a material part of it, is of very great antiquity, and in substance the system of Masonry we now possess, including the Three Degrees of the Craft, has come down to us in all its essentials from times remote to our own.”¹

Another of our historians of the most exacting school, Brother William James Hughan, declares that “symbolism in connection with Freemasonry antedates our oldest records.”

Even this cautious statement would date our symbolism back more than five hundred years,

¹ *A. Q. C.*, Vol. III, p. 10.

and Brother Gould is on record as declaring that, if it can be put back that far, there is practically no limit backward to which its beginning must be assigned.²

Another distinguished Masonic scholar, Brother George William Speth, records his belief that "the greater part of our symbolism (including all essentials) is undoubtedly mediæval at least, and probably centuries older than that."³

Still another, Brother William Simpson, distinguished as an orientalist, says:

"The more important Masonic symbols are ancient and their true meanings can only be found by tracing them back into the past. This will be found to be particularly the case with the Third Degree; its true meaning can only be realised by the study of similar rites which appear to go far back into the history of our race."⁴

These are the opinions of men who, noted for their scholarship, have disregarded our Masonic traditions and studied the question from the purely historical viewpoint.

Following them (and if they cannot be followed there are none who can be), our symbolism has come down to us from ancient times.

² *Ibid.*, p. 24.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 27.

⁴ *A. Q. C.*, Vol. III, p. 26.

4 SYMBOLISM OF THE THREE DEGREES

Of some of these symbols we know a part at least of their meanings, but of some we know nothing at all. We get a hint from Brother Pike that much of our symbolism has been forgotten, and Brother Gould asserts the same and declares that "to a considerable portion of the symbolism of Freemasonry, even at this day, no meaning can be assigned which is entirely satisfactory to the intelligent mind."⁵

Heckethorn, a non-Mason, says that many of the mystical figures and schemes of very ancient times are preserved in Masonry though their meaning is no longer understood by the Fraternity.⁶

It should therefore be obvious that if we are ever to re-acquire this lost knowledge, we must have recourse to the records and institutions of ancient times.

THE ANCIENT MYSTERIES

Do we find any institutions in ancient times similar to our own and employing our symbols for like purposes? We answer at once that we do.

In all periods from the dawn of history till about the fifth century, A.D., there is recorded the existence in nearly every known country of secret societies which, so far as our knowledge of them enables us to judge, were strikingly like Freemasonry in all except name. Our foremost Masonic historian, Brother Gould, says that they taught precisely the same doctrines in precisely the same way. These ancient societies bearing different names in different countries,

⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 23.

⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 24.

yet appearing everywhere to have been the same thing, are generally termed "The Ancient Mysteries."

In Egypt they were known as the Mysteries of Osiris and Isis, and these appear to have been the model for all others. They prevailed in Egypt, India, Persia, Phœnicia, Greece, Rome, Gaul, Britain, and many other countries. The most ancient of these were certainly in existence as early as 3000 B.C., and some of them were still flourishing in Western Europe, in a corrupted state, it is true, as late as the fourth century of the Christian era.

Notwithstanding their differences in name, it does not admit of a doubt that they were all substantially the same; "so much so," it has been said by high Masonic authority, "that we may conclude either that they were all independent copies from a great original or that they were propagated one from another." Brother Gould, than whom no more judicious historian has ever written on any subject, thinks they were only differentiated types of one original form of worship, the object of which was in every instance the God of Light and of Truth and of Beneficence. The Osiris of Egypt, the Brahma of India, the Mithras of Persia, the Bacchus (or Dionysus) of Greece, the Bel (or Baal) of the Chaldeans, the Belenus of Gaul, the Baldur of Scandinavia, the Adonis of Phœnicia, and the Adonai of the Jews were all the same god; each to his own people, was the Supreme One, the Creator, the Enlightener, Lord and Master. All the mysteries taught a more or less pure system of monotheism, though coupled with the idea of a Trinity, or one God in three persons. Their Trinity differed from ours, however, in that they conceived it to be a male,

6 SYMBOLISM OF THE THREE DEGREES

female and offspring, or Father, Mother and Son. They taught also the doctrine of the resurrection of the dead and the immortality of the soul.⁷

Cicero tells us that in the Eleusinian Mysteries they were taught to live virtuously and happily and to die in the hope of a blessed futurity.⁸

“The great doctrine of immortality of the soul,” says Brother Gould, “and the teachings of the two lives, the present and the future, are to be found in the Ancient Mysteries, where precisely the same doctrines were taught in precisely the same way” that they are now taught by the Freemasons.

It seems that among pagan people of ancient times a few superior minds and spirits were found who did not accept the idolatrous notions of the populace as an adequate conception of the Deity and who searched constantly in the great book of nature in the effort to find out and understand Him aright. To have openly proclaimed their beliefs and their rejection of the popular gods and popular religion would have but called down upon themselves contempt and ridicule and doubtless persecutions. They, therefore, chose to drift along with the common herd to all outward appearances, reserving the contemplation and discussion of their cherished beliefs for secret communication with those of kindred mind in societies where they were secure from observation and the interference of the outside world. Such seems to have been the occasion of the origin of these ancient fraternities.

These societies were characterised by fixed forms of

⁷ Gould, *Concise History of Freemasonry*, pp. 24, 25.

⁸ Mackey, *Symbolism of Freemasonry*, p. 36; Mackey, *Encyclopedia of Freemasonry*, p. 515.

initiation, successive steps, or degrees, oaths of secrecy, a symbolical system of teaching, and the possession of emblems and perhaps of grips, signs and words of recognition." Their rites were usually celebrated at night in chambers securely guarded against intrusion and arranged similarly to our lodges, often with the three chief officers seated in the South, West and East. With all of them the East was an object of peculiar veneration as the source of light and knowledge.

Initiation was an allegorical search for light and knowledge and consisted of prescribed physical and moral preparations of the candidate, lustrations, purifications and the administrations of oaths of secrecy; the ushering from darkness to light symbolising a transformation from ignorance to knowledge, from corruption to moral and spiritual purity; the investiture with an emblem of this purity consisting sometimes of a white apron, sometimes of a white sash or robe; the encountering of trials and dangers sometimes mock and sometimes real. In the Mithraic Mysteries the candidate was received into the place of initiation upon the point of a sword piercing his naked left breast. Many of their symbols were identical with those that can now be seen in any Masonic lodge.

To each of the Ancient Mysteries pertained a characteristic legend, which was made the instrumentality of teaching with great impressiveness the doctrines of the resurrection and immortality.

The legend of Osiris, probably the oldest and the model for all the others, was as follows:

* Yarker, *Arcane Schools*, p. 113.

8 SYMBOLISM OF THE THREE DEGREES

Osiris, meaning the soul of the Universe, the Governor of nature, was at once king and god of the Egyptians. The name appears as far back as 3000 B.C. Having taught civilisation, the arts and agriculture to his own people, he magnanimously resolved to spread in person their benign influence throughout the world. Leaving his kingdom in charge of his wife, Isis, he departed upon his beneficent mission. After an absence of three years he returned, but meanwhile his brother Typhon had organised a conspiracy to murder him and seize the throne. At a grand banquet given in honour of his return, Typhon provided a magnificent chest which exactly fitted the body of Osiris. All the other guests being in the conspiracy, they feigned great admiration of the chest and finally Typhon announced that he would give it to the one whose body it would most neatly contain. Osiris, trying the box, was no sooner in it than the lid was clapped down and securely fastened and the whole thrown into the river Nile. It was borne out to sea by the current and in course of time was cast ashore at Byblos, in Phœnicia, at the foot of an acacia tree. The tree grew up rapidly and completely encased the chest containing the body of Osiris.

No sooner had Isis learned of the fate of her husband than, weeping, she set out in search of his body and on her way interrogated every one she met for information concerning its whereabouts. Virgins accompanied her who dressed and combed her hair.

She finally discovered the body in the acacia tree, but the king of that country, struck with the tree's beauty caused it to be cut down and a

column made of it for his palace. Isis thereupon engaged herself to the king as a nurse for his children and asked and received for her pay this column. The column was broken and the body released and at once borne back to Egypt, but before it could be properly interred it was again seized by Typhon and cut into fourteen pieces and these hidden in as many places. After long search Isis succeeded in finding and bringing together all the parts except the phallus, and the body was embalmed and buried in due form. It will be borne in mind that according to ancient Egyptian ideas there could be no resurrection in the absence of the body; hence, the great care with which they embalmed their dead. As soon as the body of Osiris had been recovered and buried it was announced that he had risen from the dead and had resumed his place among the gods.

The ceremonies of initiation into the Egyptian Mysteries dramatically represented the death of Osiris, the search for his body, its discovery in the acacia tree, and its burial and resurrection, the murdered god being personated by the candidate.

Pertaining to each of the mysteries was a counterpart of this legend. In Greece, Osiris became Bacchus (not the drunken Bacchus of later ages), who is slain by the Titans and his limbs torn asunder. Isis becomes Rhea, who after long and bitter search finds and interrs his body, and in due course he takes his place among the gods. In the Dionysian Mysteries celebrated in his honor an effigy was stretched upon a couch, as if dead, while his votaries bitterly be-

10 SYMBOLISM OF THE THREE DEGREES

wailed his decease. After a proper time the figure was quickly removed and the announcement made that the god had risen from the dead. Likewise in some of the Mysteries of India the candidate underwent an allegorical death, burial and resurrection. Those celebrated in Phœnicia during the time of Solomon, King of Israel, Hiram, King of Tyre and Hiram Abif were obvious copies of those of Egypt. Adonis and Venus became substitutes in the legend for Osiris and Isis. During the course of these Mysteries, with which our three ancient Grand Masters must have been familiar, an image was laid upon a bier as if it were a dead body. During a momentary darkness the figure was invisibly removed, after which it was announced that the god had risen from the dead. The substantial identity with each other of all these Mysteries and the doctrines they were intended to inculcate are obvious.

It is claimed by students of ancient mythology, that this legend of the Mysteries and the ceremonies based on it were all prophetic of the coming of a Messiah, who should triumph over death and the grave, and thereby demonstrate to mankind for a certainty that there is a life after death. That this was common belief, not merely among the Jews, but the Egyptians, Phœnicians, Assyrians, Babylonians, Persians, Chaldeans, Hindus, Greeks and Romans is now generally conceded.

The teachings of the Mysteries have been thus summarized:

**“They diffused a spirit of unity and humanity;
purified the soul from ignorance and pollution;
secured the peculiar aid of the gods; the means**

of arriving at the perfection of virtue; the serene happiness of a holy life; the hope of a peaceful death and endless felicity in the Elysian fields; whilst those not initiated therein should dwell after death in places of darkness and horror.”

Thus did these ancient societies seek by means of the dramatic presentation of a legend to teach the great Masonic doctrines of the resurrection and the life after death.

There were lectures explanatory of the Mysteries, but the crowning ceremony of initiation was the communication to the candidate of an ineffable name which it was lawful to speak only on certain occasions and in a certain manner. Among the Egyptians, Persians and Hindus, notwithstanding their wide separation, this was the mysterious AUM, pronounced OM. We have purposely mingled things dissimilar with things similar to Freemasonry, but the intelligent Master Mason will be able to detect the points of resemblance.

Brother Robert Freke Gould, whom we have already several times quoted, without venturing to pronounce Freemasonry and the Ancient Mysteries identical, says:

“It is a well-known fact that these Mysteries offer striking analogies with much that is found in Freemasonry; their celebration in grottoes or covered halls, which symbolised the Universe, and which in disposition and decoration presented a distinct counterpart to our lodge; their division into degrees conferred by the initiatory rites wonderfully like our own; their method of

12 SYMBOLISM OF THE THREE DEGREES

teaching through the same astronomic symbolism the highest truths then known in Philosophy and Morals; their mystic bond of secrecy, toleration, equality and brotherly love.”

He intimates strongly his belief that Freemasonry is a development out of the Mysteries of Mithras, which, originating in Persia, spread to Greece, Rome and Western Europe and lingered there until the fourth or fifth century, A.D., and for a long time was a formidable rival of Christianity.

Enough has been said on this point to make it plain that any one who would understand our Masonic symbolism must at least make a study of what these same symbols meant to these ancient societies.

THIRD DEGREE SYMBOLS

We shall not lengthen this chapter and tax your patience by repeating explanations laid down in our Monitors and lectures. We shall for the most part confine ourselves to things that are not explained at all, or that are explained inadequately.

Many of the symbols of the Master Mason Degree are common to the preceding degrees and these we shall touch upon very briefly. There is, however, discoverable in their use, as the degrees progress, an increasing seriousness and depth of meaning.

For instance, in the first two degrees, the lodge symbolises the world, the place where all workmen labour at useful avocations and in the acquisition of human knowledge and virtue. But in the Master's

Degree it represents the *Sanctum Sanctorum*, or Holy of Holies of King Solomon's Temple, which was itself a symbol of Heaven, or the abode of Deity. It was there that nothing earthly or unclean was allowed to enter; it was there that the visible presence of the Deity was said to dwell between the Cherubim. In the Master's lodge, therefore, we are symbolically brought into the awful presence of the Deity. The reference here to death and the future life is obvious and is a further evidence that this degree typifies old age and death.

But there is even a deeper symbolism in the Master's lodge. The allusion is not only to the sacred chamber of Solomon's physical temple, it alludes also to the sacred chamber of that spiritual temple we all are, or should be, namely, a pure heart, and admonishes us to make of it a place fit for Deity himself to dwell.

The likening of the human body to a temple of the Deity is an ancient metaphor. Jesus said, in speaking of the temple of his body, "Destroy this temple and in three days I will raise it up." Again, Paul says, "Know ye not that ye are a temple of God, and that the spirit of God dwelleth in you? If any man destroyeth the temple of God, him shall God destroy; for the temple of God is holy, and such are ye." We quote these passages not as a Christian doctrine, but as a beautiful expression of Jewish thought far older than Christianity. We can with difficulty conceive the extreme sacredness of the Temple in the eyes of the Jew. It far exceeded the veneration with which we now regard our churches and synagogues. This idea once comprehended shows how greatly this

14 SYMBOLISM OF THE THREE DEGREES

figure of speech ennobles the human body. It declares it a fit dwelling place for Deity himself.

In the Entered Apprentice and Fellow Craft Degrees, Light typifies the acquisition of human knowledge and virtue; in the Master Mason Degree it typifies the revelation of divine truth in the life that is to come.

In the first two degrees the Square and Compasses denote the earth and inculcate and impress upon us the desirability of curbing our passion; in the Third Degree the Compasses symbolise what is heavenly, because to our ancient brethren the visible heavens bore the aspect of circles and arches, geometrical figures produced with the Compasses.

In some of the Monitors we are told that "the Compasses are peculiarly consecrated to this degree," but the reasons there given are not satisfying. In ancient symbolism the square signified the earth, while the circle, a figure produced with the Compasses, signified the sun or the heavens. The Square therefore symbolised what is earthly and material while the Compasses signified the heavenly and the spiritual. It is not without significance, therefore, that in the Entered Apprentice Degree, both points of the Compasses are beneath the Square, that in the Fellow Craft Degree one point is above the Square, while in the Master Mason Degree both points are above, signifying that in the true Master, the spiritual has obtained full mastery and control over the earthly and the material.¹⁰

¹⁰ Pike, *Morals and Dogma*, pp. 850, 854.

DISCALCEATION

Discalceation, or the plucking off of one's shoes, was in the Entered Apprentice Degree, as we there learned, a symbol of fidelity to our fellow man. In this degree, however, it alludes to an ancient act of homage paid by man to Deity, namely, the Eastern custom that prevailed among both Jews and Gentiles of entering only barefooted into any sacred place or upon any holy ground. In the one case, this practice was a testimony of man to man; in the other, it is a testimony of man to his Creator.

Pythagoras taught his disciples in these words, "Offer sacrifice and worship with thy shoes off." Adam Clarke includes the universality of this custom among his thirteen proofs that all mankind has descended from common ancestors. A Master Mason's lodge represents, as we have seen, the Holy of Holies of Solomon's Temple into which the High Priest alone entered only once yearly, and then with bare feet. The lodge in some of the old rituals is said to stand on holy ground. God said to Moses at the burning bush: "Put off thy shoes from thy feet, for the place whereon thou standest is holy ground."²¹

Note also the deeper significance of the shock of reception as the degrees progress. In the first, the appeal is to the sense of fear, in other words, purely physical. In the second, appeal is made to the moral sense and inculcates fair dealing with men, but in the third it is not merely to our sense of justice towards our fellow man, but to our brotherly love for him and to those higher reflective elements of

²¹ Mackey, *Symbolism of Freemasonry*, p. 125.

16 SYMBOLISM OF THE THREE DEGREES

our nature whose proverbial seat is the breast.

It is a mistake to limit the "Brotherly Love" of this degree to members of the Masonic Fraternity. If the lodge symbolises the world, as it undoubtedly does, so should its members symbolise all the inhabitants thereof. The love that should prevail among the members of the lodge, therefore typifies the love that should prevail among all mankind. In the highest sense all men are our brothers precisely as we are so strikingly taught in the parable of the Good Samaritan that all men are our neighbours.

CIRCUMAMBULATION

Circumambulation, from the Latin word *circumambulare*, to walk around, is a very ancient rite, one common to all the Ancient Mysteries. The sun, the fructifier and giver of life, in his daily course across the heavens, appears to those living in the Northern Hemisphere, where the ancient world dwelt, to proceed from the East by the way of the South to the West, and thence through the darkness of the night via the North back to the East again. Vegetation was seen to spring up, animal life to be aroused from slumber and take on increased energy, as the King of Day moved with dignity across the heavens. To the untutored mind of primeval man it is not strange that the sun should appear to be the giver of life, the very Creator himself. His apparent course, therefore, from the East through the South to the West and back to the East by way of the North became the "course of life," as the ancients expressed it.

The ancients in their ceremonies when representing life pursued this course, and we Masons follow their

example. To proceed in the reverse direction typified death, and as every Master Mason knows at one important point in our ceremonies we take this reverse course. At the grave of a deceased brother, however, contrary to what might be expected, we still follow the course of life as a token of our belief in the life that follows death."

THE WORKING TOOLS

With us in America the especial working tool of a Master Mason is said to be the Trowel. In England, this symbol is almost obsolete, and there the Skirret, Pencil and Compasses are employed.

Of the Trowel, Dr. George Oliver, a noted but somewhat discredited Masonic authority, says:

"The triangle, now called the Trowel, was an emblem of very extensive application and was much revered by ancient nations as containing the greatest and most abstruse mysteries; that it signified equally Deity, Creation and Fire."

We will learn directly something more of the symbolical signification of the triangle.

The Skirret, the Pencil and the Compasses are not enumerated in America among the working tools of a Master Mason. The Skirret is an instrument working on a centre pin and used by the operative Mason to mark out on the ground the foundation of the intended structure. The Pencil is employed in drafting the plans and the Compasses in determining the limit

²² Oliver, *Signs and Symbols*, p. 10; *Transactions, Lodge of Research, Leicester, 1909-10*, p. 42.

18 SYMBOLISM OF THE THREE DEGREES

and proportions of its several parts. Symbolically they are explained in English (Emulation Working) in the following words:

“The Skirret points out to us that straight and undeviating line of conduct laid down for our guidance in the volume of the sacred law. The Pencil teaches us that all our words and actions are not only observed, but are recorded by the Most High, to whom we must render an account of our conduct through life. The Compasses remind us of his unerring and impartial justice, which, having defined for our instruction the limits of good and evil, will either reward or punish us, as we have obeyed or disregarded His divine commands.”²⁸

We must admit that the Trowel would seem properly to belong to the Fellow Craft, who in operative Masonry puts the stones in place, rather than to the designer and overseer who corresponds to our Master Mason.

Brother John Yarker in his *Arcane Schools* says that the Skirret as a hieroglyphic signifies the origin of things (Pp. 33, 220).

BROACHED THURNEL

In English working, we hear of another working-tool, but the strange part of it is that neither our English brethren nor we know what it is or rather was. We refer to the so-called “Broached Thurnel.” Of it Brother George William Speth, a most learned Mason, says:

²⁸ Akin's *Manual* (1908), p. 80.

“It was never understood by Grand Lodge Masons; the various and contradictory uses ascribed to it at one and the same time prove this. It was dropped in 1814 because probably utterly meaningless to the Masons of those days; they dared not even attempt to explain it, however lamely. Nay, more. There are architects here present. Can any one even describe *what* it was? It was an appliance evidently of use in a Mason’s stone yard or lodge; but what was it?”

When an authority like Speth can not even hazard a guess, it is useless for us to speculate. Maybe the secret will some day be rediscovered.

DEITY AND IMMORTALITY

There are a few who feign that they believe nothing that cannot be experienced through the five senses of the body. Wonderful as are these faculties, we are persuaded that we are possessed of a sixth sense which is higher and finer even than those of the body. By this sense we perceive though we see not; we feel though we touch not; we understand though we hear not; we know though we neither taste nor smell. By it, also, we are aware of all the higher aspirations of the mind and soul; by it alone are we conscious of our own existence. Seeing is not thinking. Nor is hearing, or feeling, or tasting, or smelling. These five senses are but ministers to this sixth sense. The five senses of human nature we were concerned with in a former degree, but we are here concerned with something far superior to them, whatever we call it,

20 SYMBOLISM OF THE THREE DEGREES

whether consciousness, faith, mind, soul, or spirit. Are the testimonies of this sixth sense any less real or any less reliable than those of the five senses of the body? By it mankind has always, in every age and in every condition, felt intuitively that there was a God and that we shall live again. These beliefs are so strong and so ever present with us that we never doubt them until we begin to argue about them.

There is nothing in Masonry so constantly pressed upon our thoughts as these two great doctrines. Signs, symbols, and legends are all repeatedly employed to emphasise them.

In the Master Mason's Degree, the Pot of Incense, the All-Seeing Eye, the Three Grand Masters, the Triangle, and the legends of the Temple and of Hiram Abif are all employed for this purpose, as we shall attempt to show.

A reading of history shows that men in different ages and in different countries have conceived God in different likenesses and with differing attributes, ranging from the most repulsive brute forms and impulses to the highest conceptions of form and attributes of which the human mind has ever been capable. It is, of course, not supposable that they all knew God and that He has thus changed according to time and country. God is necessarily the same to-day that He was, always has been and always will be, eternal and unchanging. Otherwise God is a myth. If man's conceptions of him change, it is because we for the time being know less or more of him.

We read with incredulity that men could ever bow down to and worship idols. Doubtless the thoughtful and intelligent ones have never done so even in pagan

countries. They looked beyond and viewed the idol as merely a symbol.

This thought is thus finely expressed by Albert Pike in one of the Scottish Rite Degrees:

“The Divine light which lighteth every man that cometh into the world has not been altogether wanting to the devout of any creed. The permanent revelation, one and universal, is written in visible nature, is explained by Reason, and completed by the wise analogies of Faith. And there is but one True Religion, but one legitimate doctrine and creed, as there is but one God, one Reason, one Universe. That revelation is obscure for no one, since every person in the world more or less comprehends Truth and Justice. Especially recollect that the Myth of Genesis is an eternal truth; and that God allows none to approach the Tree of Knowledge, except those who are abstinent enough and strong enough not to lust after its fruits. Faith has in all ages been the lever whereby to move the world. Yet faith is but superstition and folly if it has not Reasons for its basis; and we can *suppose* that which we do not know only by analogy with the known. To define what we know not is presumptuous ignorance; to affirm positively what we know not is to lie.”

As the idol among pagan people usually assumed a human form, the Jews, as well as other believers in monotheism of ancient times, forbade the employment of the human effigy as a symbol of Deity. To supply the need so keenly felt by the ancients of a symbol to represent every idea, conventional figures

22 SYMBOLISM OF THE THREE DEGREES

such as squares, circles, triangles, etc., were adopted by the ancient monotheists to symbolise the Deity. Thus perhaps it is that the being which alone is said to have been made in the image of his Creator is nowhere employed in our symbolism to represent the G. A. O. T. U.

THE HIRAMIC LEGEND

The most important series of symbols in Freemasonry is the legend concerning Hiram Abif and the other symbolic allusions connected therewith. For obvious reasons, we do not attempt to narrate the story of this legend. Nor shall we undertake to make any systematic or exhaustive study of it, but only to discuss in a disconnected way those symbols associated with it that are most important or whose meaning is least obvious.

As we have already seen, the Ancient Mysteries employed a legend dramatically presented to teach the great doctrines of the existence of Deity, the resurrection of the body, and the immortality of the soul. Among Freemasons, the legend of Hiram, the builder, is employed in a strikingly similar way to teach the same truths. It is not permissible, even if it were necessary, to enter further into details in order to demonstrate this parallel, but the points of resemblance will be sufficiently obvious to the intelligent Mason.

A few observations upon the name Hiram Abif will not be out of place. Abif is certainly not a surname as our use of it would seem to indicate. It is translated in the English Bibles "Hiram, my father's" and

“Hiram, his father.” This scarcely makes sense; and hence the general consensus of opinion among Masonic scholars is that “Abif” is a Hebrew idiom indicating superiority in his Craft and may therefore, in a general sense, be said to be synonymous with “Master.”¹⁴

The name “Hiram” itself has been supposed by many to bear a symbolic meaning. In Kings it is written “Hiram” but in Chronicles it is written “Hiram.” Brother Albert Pike contends that the proper form is “Khirum” or “Khurum.” The former Khirum is from the Hebrew word “Khi” meaning “living,” and “ram” meaning “was or shall be raised or lifted up.” The other form, Khurum, means nearly the same, “raised up noble or free.” Brother Pike shows this name to be synonymous with the Egyptian Her-ra, and the Phœnician Heracles, the personification of Light and the sun, the Mediator, the Redeemer and the Saviour.¹⁵

But do not be misled into supposing that the reference is here Christian. The idea of a Mediator, Redeemer or Saviour is far older than Christianity and by no means confined to the Jews. It is a concept that seems to have been almost universal in the ancient world.

Again, it is said that Hiram, in its pure and original form, literally meant light or the sun. His murder by the three ruffians is by many scholars believed to have symbolic reference to the declension of the sun towards the South during the three winter months

¹⁴ Mackey, *Encyclopedia of Freemasonry*, p. 3; Pike, *Morals and Dogma*, p. 81.

¹⁵ Pike, *Morals and Dogma*, p. 78.

24 SYMBOLISM OF THE THREE DEGREES

with its accompanying temporary death of many forms of vegetable and animal life; the discovery and raising of his body, to the return of spring with its manifestations of newness of life in its thousands of forms. There is no doubt that this astronomical phenomenon, so typical of both death and a new life, was extensively employed by the ancients to teach the doctrines of resurrection and immortality.

Those who attach an astronomical signification to this legend of Hiram Abif believe the fifteen Fellow Craft to be a faulty symbol; that the true number is twelve, corresponding to the twelve signs of the Zodiac through which the sun apparently passes every year; that the number of those who conspired and the number who recanted have been confused; that nine, typifying those who recanted, fill the spring, summer and autumn with their seasons of planting, growth and harvest, while the three who persisted typify winter, when all nature, if not dead, appears to be dormant. It has been pointed out as corroborating this interpretation of this legend that our two festival seasons, June 24th and December 27th, the birthdays respectively of John the Baptist and John the Evangelist, very nearly coincide respectively with the summer and winter solstices; that is to say, when the sun is at its greatest intensity, and, when in the dead of winter, having reached its furthestmost limit to the South, he begins his fructifying and vivifying journey towards the North again.

We can but touch upon this abstruse symbolism, and invite the serious student of Freemasonry to its study. It cannot be covered in an evening; volumes have

been and may still be written upon the subject without exhausting it.¹⁶

In nearly all the ancient systems of religion, Deity was regarded as a triad, or trinity, by whom, acting conjointly only, could anything be done that was done. Our own doctrine of the Trinity is but a mere spiritualised modification of this ancient trinitarian conception. The secrets known only to our Three Grand Masters typify divine truth known only to this trinitarian Deity, and which is not to be communicated and made known to man, the Fellow Craft, the workman, until he has completed his spiritual temple. Then, according to divine promise, if found worthy, if this temple be nobly and worthily built and made a fit dwelling place for divine truth, these secrets will be communicated to him. He can then travel into that foreign country whither we all are bound and there obtain the wages of the master, that is to say, the reward of a righteous and well spent life. But he who would force or steal this knowledge or obtain it other than by faithful labour and effort to prepare himself for its understanding and enjoyment is no better than a murderer and robber. It is the same allegory as that of Adam eating of the tree of knowledge. For a like offence, stealing the sacred fire of the gods and bestowing it upon man, was Prometheus bound to the rock, his body torn open and his liver fed upon by the vultures of the air.

The age of the Hiram legend in our symbolism is an interesting and important question, but we have not space to deal with it here. Brother Gould says "that we may safely conclude that the distinctive

¹⁶ Pike, *Morals and Dogma*, p. 78.

26 SYMBOLISM OF THE THREE DEGREES

legend of the Campagnonnage concerning Hiram the Builder is of prior date to the introduction of modern Freemasonry in France, that is prior to A.D. 1726 (Gould II, p. 243). If this be true then this legend did not originate in England as some have contended. And this historical question affects vitally its allegorical signification.

THE THREE RUFFIANS

One having the least familiarity with the religions of the East cannot fail to recognise in the names of the three ruffians the names of the gods of Palestine, Phœnicia and Egypt, Jah, Bel and Om, spelled AUM. This will be even more striking to the Royal Arch and the Scottish Rite Mason.^u

The symbolism of the "three ruffians" has been variously explained. They have been declared to represent the three greatest enemies of individual and political liberty, viz., kingcraft, priestcraft and ignorance. The three conspired to destroy liberty; one attempted this by a blow at the throat, the seat of free speech; the second attempted it by a stab at the heart, the seat of freedom of conscience; the third accomplished the foul conspiracy by felling his victim dead with a blow upon the brain, the seat of freedom of thought. The lesson is, suffer freedom of thought, freedom of conscience and freedom of speech to be destroyed by kingcraft, priestcraft or ignorance, or by all combined (for they usually work hand in hand), and individual and political liberty is lost.

^u Pike, *Morals and Dogma*, pp. 80, 82, 448, 488.

“No tyrant or priest can reduce this nation of ours to subjection until our people have been drowned in ignorance. That tyrants and priests have by this method sought to maintain themselves in all ages cannot be denied. The few brilliant exceptions afforded by history do not disprove the rule. It is just as certain that this same effort is going on to-day as that it was ever made. Churches (and you will note we use the plural) and tyrannical kings and so-called emperors would to-day deliberately put bonds of ignorance on their people in order that they might more easily control them.

When we speak of ignorance we do not mean mere want of knowledge; we refer also to that mental state in which men refuse to reason, in which they refuse to recognise their own power, in which from laziness or from fear they refuse to do what they know they can and should do. It is this enlightened knowledge and the God-given power which goes with it that will alone enable liberty-loving men successfully to combat tyrants whether they come in the guise of kings, priests or Bolsheviks.

LOW TWELVE

In ancient symbolism, the number twelve denoted completion. Whether this meaning arose from the fact that twelve months completed the year, or twelve signs the Zodiac, or whether from the fact that what was regarded as the most stable geometrical figure known, the cube, is marked by twelve edges, opinions differ. At any rate, it denoted a thing fulfilled. It was therefore an emblem of human life. Death fol-

28 SYMBOLISM OF THE THREE DEGREES

lowed immediately after life; the number thirteen immediately after twelve; it is for this reason that thirteen has long been regarded as an unlucky number. With us the solemn stroke of twelve marks the completion of human existence in this life.

THE LION OF THE TRIBE OF JUDAH

The lion from most ancient times has been a symbol of might or royalty. It was blazoned upon the standard of the tribe of Judah, because it was the royal tribe. The kings of Judah were, therefore, each called *Lion of the Tribe of Judah*, and such was one of the titles of Solomon. Remembrance of this fact gives appropriateness to an expression employed at one point in our ceremonies which is otherwise obscure, not to say absurd. Such is the literal meaning of this phrase, but it also has a symbolical one.

The Jewish idea of a Messiah was of a mighty temporal king. He was also designated as the *Lion of the Tribe of Judah*; in fact this title was regarded as peculiarly belonging to him. The expression does not, as many Masons suppose, necessarily have reference to Jesus of Nazareth. The Christian Mason is privileged so to interpret it, if he likes, but the Jew has equal right to understand it as meaning his Messiah. Indeed, every great religion of the world has contained the conception in some form of a Mediator between God and man, a Redeemer who would raise mankind from the death of this life and the grave to an everlasting existence with God hereafter. The Mason who is a devotee of one of these religions, say, Buddhism, Brahmanism or Mohammedanism, is like-

wise entitled to construe this expression as referring to his own Mediator.

In an ancient Egyptian picture is depicted a lion seizing by the wrist a man lying in front of an altar, prostrate upon his back as if dead. The lion seems to be raising the man up and to symbolise that power by which the dead are brought to newness of life. Near the altar stands a man with his left arm elevated in the form of a square.¹⁸

FIVE POINTS OF FELLOWSHIP

Ancient builders were accustomed to lay out their buildings from the centre. That is to say, they first located the centre, then by use of the 3, 4, 5, triangle, which was well understood, the four corners of the intended structure were located by measurements from the centre. This gave them five points upon which and with regard to which the building was raised. Symbolising this, as we have so many other of the customs and tools of operative Masons, we speculative Masons say that a Mason is raised on the Five Points of Fellowship.

The Five Points of Fellowship are symbolised by the Pentalfa, or five-pointed star. The connection of this geometrical figure with the art of building is not at once apparent, but recent researches show that it entered extensively into determining the plans of many of the splendid castles and cathedrals of mediæval times. To this fact is probably due its intro-

¹⁸ Pike, *Morals and Dogma*, pp. 79, 254, 461; Portal, *Comparison of Egyptian Symbols with Those of the Hebrews* (Vol. XXX, "Universal Masonic Library"), p. 40.

30 SYMBOLISM OF THE THREE DEGREES

duction or retention among the symbols of our Speculative Craft.¹⁹

This figure has, however, from very ancient times borne a moral signification also. Says a recent writer:

“In the more esoteric philosophy, the symbol is used to designate man, and an examination of the shape of the figure will show that by a stretch of imagination it may be construed into a crude representation of a human figure.”²⁰

In this connection it is interesting to note that there exists in England a secret guild of operative Masons who have a ceremony wherein is represented the mock-assassination of one of its three Grand Masters. His body is said to be raised and borne out of the hall on the *five points of fellowship* in this wise—each of four seizing an arm or foot and a fifth under the middle of the body.

The Pentalfa with one of its points elevated, was a symbol of the pure and the virtuous and a harbinger of good, but with two of its points elevated it became the accursed *Goat of Mendes*, which typified Satan and foreboded evil and misfortune.²¹

In England, the Five Points of Fellowship are h. to h., f. to f., k. to k., b. to b. and h. over b.²² It is well known that in the United States we substituted m. to e. for h. to h.. Mackey thinks this change was

¹⁹ Yarker, *Arcane Schools*, pp. 118, 119.

²⁰ “Tyler Keystone,” Oct. 5, 1909, p. 151.

²¹ *A. Q. C.*, Vol. I, pp. 31, 57; *Ibid.*, Vol. VIII, pp. 90, 105; Ashe, *Masonic Manual*, Argument IX.

²² “Lectures of the Three Degrees,” etc. (Lewis, 1896), pp. 111, 112.

made at the Baltimore Conference of Grand Lecturers in 1843, and we are persuaded that the English working is the ancient and correct one.

The winged foot has for ages been the symbol of swiftness, the arm of strength, and the hand of fidelity. In the centre of the Pantalpha as employed by us is usually seen two hands clasped. This as we learned in the Entered Apprentice Degree is the ancient symbol of the god Fides.²³ It is an appropriate emblem of the fidelity and readiness to aid each other, which should characterise members of the Masonic Fraternity. Let it not be supposed that by assigning symbolical meanings to the persons and incidents of the legend of Hiram Abif, we thereby mean to deny its reality. We see no reason (and such seems to be the opinion of most students of Freemasonry) why this legend may not be based upon a substratum of fact, as probably were those similar legends which characterised the Ancient Mysteries and those which are associated with the erection of other famous buildings. That it has undergone many alterations and been greatly overlaid with fiction is certain, but that it is founded wholly upon fable is not at all probable.

THE LOST WORD

We next come to consider one of the most abstruse conceptions in Freemasonry. The allegory of a search for a Lost Word is not a search for any particular word; in fact it is not even a search for a word at all. The expression "The Word" had sig-

²³ Mackey, *Symbolism of Freemasonry*, p. 190; Pike, *Morals and Dogma*, p. 38.

32 SYMBOLISM OF THE THREE DEGREES

nificance to the Jews and other ancient races which is hard for us to comprehend. While not strictly accurate we shall not be far wrong in saying that to the ancient mind "The Word" signified all truth, particularly divine truth. To us the most striking and familiar passage in literature containing this expression is that in St. John, as follows:

"In the beginning was the Word,
And the Word was with God,
And the Word was God."

John does not here announce any new doctrine, but one that was perfectly familiar to the Jewish thought of his day; only his identification of Jesus of Nazareth with the Word was new. Nor was this expression or this idea by any means confined to the Jews; it belonged to nearly all ancient philosophy. Among the Greeks it was the *Logos*, a term derived from the Greek verb *lego*, to speak; the same root from which comes our word *logic*, the name of that science by which we determine moral truth.

That noble attribute of man, the power of articulate speech, whereby his wisdom and his most abstract thoughts are made known to his fellows, a power so far as we can see possessed by no other animal, must have in all ages greatly impressed the thoughtful mind. The spoken word seemed an instrument worthy to be employed by Deity himself, not only in promulgating divine truth but even in creating all things that were created. According to the ancient idea, Deity was so omnipotent that he had but to speak and the thing was done; he said "Let there

be light" and there was light; and that without "The Word" was not anything made that was made.

Hence "The Word" under the development of philosophy, particularly that of Philo Judæus, a contemporary of Jesus, became synonymous with every manifestation of divine power and truth, so that finally it was regarded as not only co-existent with but metaphorically as identical with Deity himself. This is clearly the meaning of St. John.

The Masonic search for "The Word," therefore, symbolises the search for truth, particularly divine truth. The lesson here to us is to search diligently for the truth, never to permit prejudice, passion or interest to blind us, but to keep our minds always open to the reception of truth from whatever source, or however opposed to our preconceived notions it may be; and having seen it and received it, always to act agreeably to its dictates. Hence Masons everywhere are devoted to the doctrines of freedom of thought, freedom of speech and freedom of action.

But we are also cautioned not vaingloriously to imagine that we ever here achieve all truth. The Master Mason is invested not with the *True Word*, but with a *Substitute Word*, implying that in this life we may know only in part, that we may approach, we may approximate truth, but that we never attain it in its perfection. This search will continue as long as this life lasts, but not until we shall have passed on to a higher state of existence will divine truth be disclosed to us in all its fulness and beauty. We may say here that this final disclosure is symbolised in the Royal Arch Degree.

The preservation of this extremely ancient conception of "The Word" is not without historic value also

34 SYMBOLISM OF THE THREE DEGREES

as indicating the great antiquity of Masonic Symbolism.²⁴

THE MARBLE MONUMENT

Incidental to this legend of Hiram Abif are introduced certain other symbols. For example, the virgin weeping over the broken column, an urn in her left hand and a sprig of evergreen in her right, and an old man behind her dressing her hair. Masons are familiar with the explanation of this group given in our ritual, but we are persuaded that it is very superficial to say the least.

In the Egyptian Mysteries, as we have seen, Isis finds her husband's body encased in a tamarisk or acacia tree, which the King of Byblos converts into a column. This column, still containing the body, is finally carried away and broken by Isis and the body released. We can readily imagine her weeping over this broken column. Apuleius (second century, A.D.) describes her as a "beautiful female, over whose divine neck her long thick hair hung in graceful ringlets, and in a procession depicting her are shown female attendants following who are combing and dressing her hair.

The urn is an ancient sign of mourning. A small urn in which figuratively to catch the tears was worn by the mourners, especially widows. This explanation of the presence of the urn in this emblem, as a symbol of grief, better accords with our tradition as

²⁴ Pike, *Morals and Dogma*, pp. 204, 251, 254, 256, 259, 268, 269, 270, 279, 281; Edersheim, *Life of Jesus*, pp. 46, 56; Mackey, *Symbolism of Freemasonry*, pp. 176, 216, 224, 226, 232, 280, 298, 300.

to the disposal of our Grand Master, as well as with history, than does that given in our Master's lecture. We know that it was a well-nigh universal custom of the Jews as well as the Egyptians to bury and not to cremate their dead. Likewise from ancient times it was common for the mourner to bear in the hand to the place of interment an evergreen sprig and there to deposit it in the grave as an avowal of belief in a life to come. It seems to me that in these ancient traditions and customs is to be found the true origin of our Marble Monument²⁵ and that this emblem signifies that, while we mourn for and cherish the memory of our dead, yet we believe that they shall live and that we shall see them again.

THE SETTING MAUL

The Setting Maul is a wooden instrument used in setting firmly into the wall the polished stone, and is one of those traditionally said to have been used at the building of Solomon's Temple. It would very properly be in the hands of the three Fellow Crafts, who are in the Third Degree reputed to have made a notable use of it just before the completion of the Temple. From that incident it is employed among us as an emblem the meaning of which is known to every Master Mason.

It has, however, in different forms been employed as a symbol of destruction from prehistoric times. In Norse mythology, Thor, the god of Thunder, was represented as a powerful man armed with a mighty

²⁵ Pike, *Morals and Dogma*, pp. 17, 80, 378, 387.

36 SYMBOLISM OF THE THREE DEGREES

hammer, Miolnir (the smasher). Counterparts of this god and his formidable weapon are found in many of the ancient religions and mythologies.

In the Cabiric Mysteries the seven gods who slew the eight were called "Paticii," or wielders of the hammer.

THE ACACIA

It was a custom of the Jews to plant at the head of the grave an acacia sprig for the double purpose of intimating their belief in immortality and of marking its location, as to tread on a grave was by them regarded as extremely unlucky. To them, therefore, the acacia was, as it is to us, an emblem of immortality and of innocence. The true acacia is the thorny tamarisk which abounds in Palestine, and we have seen that strangely enough in the legend of Osiris his dead body was said to have been cast ashore at the foot of a tamarisk or acacia tree, and that this circumstance led to its discovery. This tree, owing to its hard-wood quality, its evergreen nature and its exceeding tenacity of life bore to the Egyptian and Jew the same symbolical significance it does to us. Of its wood was constructed the tabernacle, the table for the shew-bread, the ark of the covenant and the rest of the sacred furniture of the Temple, and of its boughs was woven the crown of thorns that was placed upon the head of Jesus of Nazareth.

Each of the Ancient Mysteries possessed a sacred plant which was employed in their initiations and ceremonies for the same purpose and with the same symbolical significance as the acacia is by us.

Among the Egyptians it was the Lotus and the Erica, among the Greeks the Myrtle, and among the Scandinavians the Mistletoe. That a tree or plant had life-giving properties was an idea familiar to the Jews in the earliest times, as witness the Tree of Life mentioned in Genesis, and by New Testament writers the immortality of man is likened to the recurrence of plant life. (1 Cor. 15; John 12, 24.)²⁶

DEATH

Masonry, especially in the Third Degree, teaches us not to fear Death; in the fulness of time when his approach is due, to welcome the grim tyrant as a kind messenger, or, as that great philosopher and Mason, Albert Pike, expresses it:

“The body is the gross representation, and as it were the temporary envelope of the Soul. The Soul can perceive by itself, and without the intervention of the bodily organs by means of its sensibility and lucidity, the things whether spiritual or corporeal, that exist in the Universe. There is no void in Nature; all is peopled. There is no real death in nature; all is living.”

“What we call death is change. The Supreme Reason being unchangeable is therefore imperishable. Thoughts once uttered are eternal. Is the source or spring from which they flow less immortal than they? Could the Universe, the uttered thought of God, continue still to exist if he no longer were?

²⁶ *A. Q. C.*, Vol. I, p. 57; *Ibid.*, Vol. VI, pp. 9, 14; Mackey, *Encyclopedia of Freemasonry*, p. 7; Mackey, *Lexicon of Freemasonry*, p. 16; “*Masonic Magazine*,” Vol. I, p. 126; Pike *Morals and Dogma*, p. 82; Kenning, *Cyclopedia of Freemasonry*, p. 4.

38 SYMBOLISM OF THE THREE DEGREES

“The last victory any man can gain over death is to overcome the love of life, not through despair but through a loftier hope contained in Faith. To learn to overcome one’s self is to learn to live, and the austerities of Stoicism were not a vain ostentation of liberty. Every man who is prepared to die rather than abjure Truth and Justice truly lives for he is immortal in his soul. The object of all the ancient initiations was to find or form such men; and such is the object of Freemasonry. If thou art or canst become such an one thou wilt be worthy to be called Adept, and Knight of the Sun.

“Death is *not* for the Sage. It is a phantom which ignorance and weakness of the multitude make horrible. The spirit is not disengaged that it may live no longer. Can thought and love die when the basest matter does not? If change should be called death, we die and are born again every day; for every day our forms change. Let us fear then to go out from and rend our garments but let us not dread to lay them aside when the hour for rest comes.”

Nearly a thousand years ago, Omar Khayyám sang:

“Death’s terrors spring from baseless fantasy,
Death yields the tree of immortality.”

William Cullent Bryant voices the usual Masonic view of Death in *Thanatopsis*:

“So live, that when thy summons comes to join
The innumerable caravan which moves

To that mysterious realm where each shall take
 His chamber in the silent halls of death,
 Thou go not like the quarry-slave at night,
 Scourged to his dungeon; but, sustained and soothed
 By an unfaltering trust, approach thy grave
 Like one who wraps the drapery of his couch
 About him, and lies down to pleasant dreams."

THE RESURRECTION

This is a cherished belief among Masons at least in the great majority of countries. Men are still asking, as in the days of Paul, "How are the dead raised up? and with what body do they come?" And men have been attempting an answer ever since, yea, for centuries before the days of Paul. These attempted answers have resulted in the following theories:

1. That all the particles of matter that have ever been in the body are brought together again;
2. Only the particles present at death constitute the resurrection body;
3. That certain more enduring parts are preserved, as an indestructible corporeal germ from which is made by divine power an organ of the soul adapted to its higher condition;
4. That some of the particles of matter once constituting remain and persist in the resurrection body, however few;
5. That there is a "vital germ" which preserves in a way not explained the identity of the two bodies;
6. That a spiritual, ethereal, luminous body is evolved at the moment of death:

40 SYMBOLISM OF THE THREE DEGREES

7. That the plastic, formative principle of life (*anima, psyche*) is continually gathering and casting off the matter it needs for a body wherever it may be; the continuance of the vital principle constitutes identity; however, the particles of matter may change, as in a flowing stream; that in the case of Christ and those living at his second coming, the body then present supplies the material; that in the case of the dead, the *anima* or *psyche* gathers in matter as it needs and makes the psychical body; that the fundamental "form" or principle of bodily organism, which here appropriates earthly materials, shall in the resurrection appropriate higher materials;

8. That identity is in the spirit (*nous*), the rational, immortal principle which shows itself in the body which it occupies and stamps with its own personality; that identity in an inorganic body, as for example a stone, is in its substance and form, while in a person it rests in the consciousness; that the resurrection body is spiritual (*soma pneumatikon*) as opposed to the natural (*soma psychikon*) and that it is glorious, powerful, incorruptible and immortal.

Long before Christ, the Sadducees and the Pharisees were warring over this question. The greatest theologians have differed upon it. Such fathers of Christianity as Origen and Augustine changed their views upon it. Western Christians have tended towards belief in a resurrection of the fleshly body; Eastern Christians towards a spiritual resurrection.²⁷

Masonry allows each individual Mason to form his own opinion on these matters. We catalogue them

²⁷ *Universal Encyclopedia*, "Resurrection."

here merely as a caution against the treacherous ground we encroach upon when we try to define the views of Freemasonry on this subject.

IMMORTALITY

While Masonry does not exact a declaration of a belief in immortality as a prerequisite to admission into the Fraternity, yet undoubtedly it does teach this doctrine by most impressive means. We shall not attempt ourselves to state the bases for this belief but there has recently fallen into our hands such a beautiful and powerful statement of the argument we are constrained to quote the following passage. It is from the pen of Charles Allen Dinsmore, professor of Scriptural Interpretation of Literature in the Yale Divinity School. He says:

“Science can neither affirm nor deny immortality, but she has opened great spaces for this faith to live in. A man trained to our modern world-vision, gazing back over the long, toilsome, costly process from the fire mist up to man, and from primitive man to our present highly organised society, can not readily believe that he is contemplating the haphazard whirl of unintelligent forces, a riot of chance! Rather he detects an increasing purpose running through the ages, working toward man and the development of the race. Surely the unfolding purpose is prophetic of an outcome worthy of the process. If materialism is right, and humanity returns to the dust from whence it came, and the earth is at last only a burnt-out cinder; if the struggle of

42 SYMBOLISM OF THE THREE DEGREES

the ages, the prayers of the holy, the sacrifices of martyrs, the devotion of the brave, ultimate in dust and ashes, then we are put to 'permanent intellectual confusion.' The ages have toiled and brought forth nothing. The Eternal has blown a soap-bubble, and painted it with wondrous colours at awful cost of agony to the iridescent figures, and then allowed it to burst! The wisdom, the power, the sacrificial love, revealed in the long and orderly upward movement create the expectation that the culmination will be worthy of the cost.

"The contrast between science and religion is not a contrast between knowledge and belief, but between two different kinds of knowledge. Religion can use the word 'know' as legitimately as science. When we become aware of ourselves we are aware of a Power not ourselves. By cooperating with this Power we can develop characters of moral strength and spiritual beauty. Virtue and its transforming energies we know as well as we know any scientific fact, even better, for we have the sure test of daily experience. Experience warrants us in affirming that God is the Power, not ourselves, which makes for righteousness. We take a step further. Power is an anthropomorphic term, and so is personal spirit, but the latter is more significant: it represents higher worth. God cannot be inferior to the highest symbol we use in interpreting Him. God cannot be less than personal; He may be infinitely more. By faith, therefore, we think of Him as a living Spirit operating through the electric framework of the world. When we seek Him as the Father of our spirit in whom dwells all that we desire, we put this belief to the searching

test of life. Thus, trusting and obeying, we meet with those responses which change faith into an assurance which often finds even the word 'know' too feeble to express the experience."²⁸

THE POT OF BURNING INCENSE

The Pot of Burning Incense was employed in Solomon's Temple to produce a sweet savour in the Holy of Holies, that is to say, according to the Jewish conceptions, in the actual presence of JHVH. It is not supposable that the intelligent Jew regarded this as other than symbolical of the offer of a pure heart as a sacrifice to the Deity. The bloody sacrifices of bullocks, lambs and goats, as well as the peace and sin offerings, were offered in less sacred precincts of the Temple and probably meant no more than to impress the people that they should be ever generous in dedicating their earthly wealth to the service of God and the hastening of His Kingdom, but the pure, immaterial offering of a delightful incense was to remind them that after all the only sacrifice worthy of Deity himself was the spiritual and immaterial offering of a pure heart.

THE BEEHIVE

To the operative Mason could anything be more important than industry? By it he lives, and by it were reared those dreams of architectural beauty which excite our wonder and please our fancy.

²⁸ *Religious Certitude in an Age of Science.*

44 SYMBOLISM OF THE THREE DEGREES

Is it any less necessary to the Speculative Mason in his work of building human character? Is it not far more so? The temple of human life is incomplete unless every talent and every virtue is brought to the highest possible state. A few years at most suffice to complete and adorn our greatest structures. If the builder die before it is finished, others can carry it on to completion after him. But the time allotted to no man was ever sufficient for the complete development of all the possibilities of his mind and character. If he die before the work is finished, none can take it up and finish it for him. How important, therefore, is it that not a moment of our time, that most precious gift, should be wasted!

In all nature nothing is more constantly busy than the bee, and from ancient times it has been an emblem of industry. "Busy as a bee" has become an aphorism. A place of great industry we call a hive, and while I do not find it to have been employed in ancient symbolism, no symbol of labour could be more appropriate than a beehive. Strange to say, this symbol is now obsolete in England.

Masonry in every degree, and in none more than the Master Mason Degree, signifies labour. Its very name is synonymous with labour and its every implement reminiscent of labour. Toil is noble, idleness dishonour. Deity himself is recorded as having worked and we see on every hand the Titanic results of his labour. He reared the mountains, He laid down the plains, He made the rivers and the seas; the very smallest of these beyond the capabilities of millions of men. He deposited the rich ore in the bosom of the earth. He stocked the waters with fish

and the land with an infinite variety of vegetation and living animals both great and small. Finally he made man.

It is by a steadfast adherence to the homely virtues, industry, economy, honesty, morality, religion, love of liberty, friends and country, those sheet-anchors of any true civilisation, and its refusal to take up with every wind of doctrine that blows, that has enabled Freemasonry to maintain itself so firmly in the estimation of mankind. Its membership is larger and its influence greater than ever before.

SILENCE

The Book of Constitutions guarded by the Tyler's sword may be as is claimed, a new emblem among us, but the virtue it commemorates, silence, is an old and excellent one. The disciples of many of the ancient philosophers were required to practise absolute silence for long periods of probation, and so important was it deemed in their religious and philosophical systems that to it was allotted a special deity, Harpocrates, who was represented as full of eyes and ears, signifying that many things are to be seen and heard but little to be spoken.²⁹

THE ALL-SEEING EYE

The All-Seeing Eye is a very old symbol of Deity. The Egyptians represented Osiris, their chief god, by an open eye, which they placed in all his temples. The idea was also familiar to the Jews, for we read

²⁹ Lodge of Research "Masonic Reprints," No. 1, p. 42; Pike, *Morals and Dogma*, p. 106; *U. M. L.*, Vol. X, Part I, p. 54.

46 SYMBOLISM OF THE THREE DEGREES

in Psalms (xxxiv, 15) that "The eyes of Jehovah are upon the righteous," and (cxxi, 4) that "he that Akeepeth Israel shall neither sleep nor slumber." In Proverbs (xv, 3) Solomon says "the eyes of Jehovah are in every place watching the evil and the good." This symbol was to the Egyptians and the Jews the same that it is to us, the symbol of Deity manifested in his omnipresence. To us it is a warning that things we would not do before the eyes of men, yet do in secret, are nevertheless beheld by an eye that can explore our innermost thoughts and will witness against us before a tribunal where there are no perjured witnesses nor miscarriages of justice.³⁰

THE ANCHOR AND THE ARK

The Ark as a symbol in the Third Degree has been supposed by some to refer to the Jewish Ark of the Covenant, but others with more reason think it refers to the Ark of Noah. All the Ancient Mysteries seem to have contained allusions more or less clear to the Deluge and Noah's Ark. There being so many other symbols common to Masonry and the Mysteries, it is not surprising to find the Ark also employed as a Masonic symbol. To the pre-Christian ages, the idea of a regeneration, or a new birth, was as familiar as it is to us. In the Ancient Mysteries, as we are best able to judge, the tradition of the Deluge and the Ark, by which the human race was reputed to have been both purified and perpetuated, was in a variety of forms employed to teach this doctrine of regeneration.

³⁰ *A. Q. C.*, Vol. IV, p. 43; Kenning, *Cyclopedia of Freemasonry*, p. 18; Mackey, *Encyclopedia of Freemasonry*, p. 57.

In the Funeral Ritual of the Egyptians, it is by means of the Ark, or boat, that the deceased passed to Aahlu or the place of the blessed in Amenti.³¹ We are all familiar with the Grecian myth which represents Charon as ferrying the shades of the departed over the river Styx. Thus it is seen that the Ark has for ages been the symbol of the passage from this world to the next. We attach it to a very similar meaning; it symbolises to us that power or influence by which we are fitted for and raised to a higher state of existence in the life that is to come.³²

The Anchor does not seem to have belonged to ancient symbolism. Paul appears first to have employed it as an emblem of hope of immortality and bliss after this life (Heb. 1, 19). Kip, in his *Catacombs of Rome*, says that the primitive Christians looked upon life as a stormy voyage and that of their safe arrival in port the anchor was a symbol. Mrs. Jameson says that the anchor is the Christian symbol of immovable firmness, hope and patience. Though apparently of Christian origin as a symbol, there is nothing narrow or sectarian in its significance, and it may with equal propriety be employed by Jew and Gentile, as well as by all others who share in the belief of a peaceful place of abode hereafter for those who have made a proper use of this life.³³

In the symbol of the Anchor and Ark we, therefore, see again pressed upon our attention the doctrines of Deity, the Mediator, regeneration, resurrection and immortality.

³¹ *A. Q. C.*, Vol. II, p. 24.

³² *A. Q. C.*, Vol. I, p. 31; Mackey, *Encyclopedia of Freemasonry*, p. 64.

³³ Mackey, *Encyclopedia of Freemasonry*, p. 64.

48 SYMBOLISM OF THE THREE DEGREES

THE FORTY-SEVENTH PROBLEM OF EUCLID

The Forty-Seventh Problem of Euclid is the earliest Masonic symbol we have on record; it appears as the frontispiece to Anderson's *Book of Constitutions*, published at London in 1723, accompanied by the word *Eureka* in Greek characters. It will be understood that prior to this date only one book on Freemasonry had been printed, and not till three-quarters of a century later did our Monitors contain illustrations of the emblems and symbols. So it happens that the Forty-Seventh Problem is absolutely, so far as is known, the earliest illustration of a Masonic symbol on record.

In the text of the same book it is declared to be "if duly observed, the foundation of all Masonry, sacred, civil and military," (p. 23) and in the second edition of this work (1738), he speaks of it as that "amazing proposition which is the foundation of all Masonry, of whatever materials or dimensions" (p. 26). This figure is known by a variety of names. The Theorem of Pythagoras, the Theorem of the Bride, and the Theorem of the Three Squares. It was also known as the Gnomon, the Greek word for knowledge, and Plato in his *Commonwealth*, denominates it the "Nuptial Figure." To our fathers in their school days, it was an object of dread, as the "Pons Assinorum," or the Bridge of Asses.

The remarkable properties of the right-angled triangle are well known to those who have studied geometry. Astronomers also are acquainted with its value; with it they measure the universe. Its usefulness is understood by architects and builders. Even

those mechanics who are so ignorant that they do not know that a figure whose three sides are to each other as 3, 4 and 5 is a right-angled triangle, yet are aware of its convenience in making corners of a building perfectly square. When they measure three feet along one wall and four feet along the other, if five feet will exactly reach across, they know that the corner is square. These things were well understood by ancient and mediæval operative Masons, and they constituted a part of their trade secrets.

But it is equally certain that to this beautiful triangle they ascribed moral and philosophical (not to say religious) meanings which are now little understood by us.

Of this figure Brother George William Speth says "it is certain that, while our mediæval brethren may have been familiar with its symbolic meaning, we are not."³⁴ We are now merely told in our Monitors that "it teaches Masons to be general lovers of the arts and sciences." Perhaps this is true, but we are given no hint as to why or how it does so. The deeper meanings of this symbol are wholly lost except to those who made it a special study. Much of it we fear is lost beyond the hope of recovery.

GEOMETRICAL FIGURES

It is a curious fact, the psychological reason for which is not known, that dimensions increasing by half (e.g., a rectangle 20 x 30, a solid 20 x 30 x 45), and the ratios of the base, perpendicular and hypot-

³⁴ *A. Q. C.*, Vol. III, p. 27.

50 SYMBOLISM OF THE THREE DEGREES

enuse of a right-angled triangle whose sides are 3, 4, 5, are very pleasing to the eye. The equilateral triangle in ways not now fully understood seems also to enter into the element of proportion in successful architecture.

Odd as it may appear that geometrical figures such as points, lines, superficies and solids, angles, triangles, squares and circles should be invested with such meaning, yet the fact is undoubted. The ancient moral philosophers attached what appears to us an inordinate importance to geometry and geometrical figures.

Plato, the greatest of philosophers, wrote four hundred years before Christ on the porch of his academy, "Let no one who is ignorant of geometry enter my doors." He taught that God was "always geometrising," and that "geometry rightly treated is the knowledge of the Eternal."³⁵ At his time, geometry was the only exact science; hence quite naturally a knowledge of it was deemed indispensable to one in search of philosophical truth. To Pythagoras, all the ancient writers give credit for first having raised geometry to the rank of a science, and Proclus tells us that he "regarded its principles in a purely abstract manner and investigated his theorems from the immaterial and intellectual point of view."³⁶

In short, "from the earliest times, the knowledge of geometry was looked upon not only as the foundation of all knowledge but even by the Greek philosophers as the very essence of their religion, the knowledge of God."³⁷

³⁵ *A. Q. C.*, Vol. X, p. 83.

³⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 83.

³⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 91.

Numerous echoes of this ancient veneration for geometry are preserved in Freemasonry, thus affording further evidence of its great age. But of all geometrical figures the right-angled triangle, or set-square, was most revered by the ancients. It has from extremely remote ages and among extremely remote peoples borne profound moral significations.

Confucius, the great Chinese teacher, tells us (481 B.C.) that not till he was seventy-five years old "could he venture to follow the inclination of his heart without fear of transgressing the limits of the square."³⁸

In a Chinese book written between 500 B.C. and 300 B.C., called *The Great Learning* we are told that a man should not do unto another what he would not should be done to himself; "and this," it is there said, "is called the principle of acting upon the square."³⁹

It is, to say the least, a strange coincidence that the Greek word for square, "gnomon," also means knowledge and that the initial of this word, the Greek letter *gamma* is a perfect set-square. As said by Brother Sidney T. Klein, a distinguished Mason and architect of England, to the ancients "geometry was the foundation of knowledge and *gnomon* was the knowledge of the square."⁴⁰

In the symbolical writings of the Egyptians thousands of years ago, the square or right-angled triangle was the standard and symbol of perfection; it was also the symbol of life.⁴¹

³⁸ *A. Q. C.*, Vol. XIV, p. 30.

⁴⁰ *A. Q. C.*, Vol. X, pp. 84, 92.

³⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 31.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, p. 93.

52 SYMBOLISM OF THE THREE DEGREES

The ancients taught a very peculiar philosophy. According to their ideas, Nature was tripartite, masculine, feminine, and offspring. This conception was applied in an endless variety of ways. The sun was regarded as masculine or active; the moon as feminine or passive; and Mercury as the offspring. So the ancient Egyptian Trinity consisted of Osiris the father, Isis the mother, and Her-ra, or Horus, the son. To represent this conception of Deity they employed a right-angled triangle whose sides were in the proportion of 3, 4 and 5, wherein the shortest side, 3, represented Osiris, 4 represented Isis, and 5, the resulting hypotenuse, represented Her-ra, the son, or the result of the union of the male and the female. This figure, therefore, became an emblem of life.

But as it also represented Nature, and as they were wise enough to see that Nature uninterfered with was perfect, this figure became the recognised symbol of perfection.

This implement so useful among operative Masons in testing the perfection of the work was, therefore, appropriately adopted by them as symbolical of that perfection which should mark the temple of human character. This symbolical square is the instrument by which all mental, moral and religious conduct is tested.

THE HOUR GLASS

Rev. A. F. A. Woodford, a distinguished Masonic scholar of England, expressed the opinion that the Hour Glass is not, strictly speaking, a Masonic sym-

bol. This is probably based upon the fact that evidence is wanting of its ancient employment as a symbol. The antiquity of its use as a measure of time is, however, undoubted, and it is a most fit emblem of the flight of time and of wasting away of our lives. If it is a recent acquisition to our ritual, we shall not quarrel with the Monitor maker who introduced it.⁴⁰

THE SCYTHE

In ancient symbolism, the scythe was one of the attributes of Saturn because he was reputed to have taught men agriculture. But Saturn was also the god of Time, and, as by another ancient myth human life was said to be a brittle thread spun by the three Fates, it is natural that this peaceful implement of agriculture should become the symbol of the power that severs the slender thread and puts an end to our existence.⁴¹

THE COFFIN

To us the coffin is an obvious emblem of death, but it has sometimes been claimed that it would not be so to the Jews, who anciently buried their dead in shrouds and winding sheets only. But in the Ancient Mysteries of those peoples surrounding the Jews the candidate was placed in a coffin or chest as a symbolical representation of death. This custom, as well

⁴⁰ Kenning, *Cyclopedia of Freemasonry*, p. 318.

⁴¹ Mackey, *Encyclopedia of Freemasonry*, p. 700.

54 SYMBOLISM OF THE THREE DEGREES

as the use by Egyptians of the coffin for burial, was undoubtedly well known to the Jews whether they practised it or not.

The ancient symbolism of the coffin seems to have been intimately connected with that of the Ark. In fact in Hebrew the word *aron* denoted both. But the subject is too recondite to be entered upon further at this time.⁴⁴

CONCLUSION

Some have questioned whether those engaged in the operative art of building could comprehend such abstruse symbolism as that we have herein attempted to outline. Whether they understood it or not, it is certain that they, at least those of them engaged in temple and church building, employed it. The important structures devoted to purposes of worship, from the most ancient period through mediæval to modern times, abound in symbolism. It is doubtless true that many of these operative workmen did not know the meaning of their own symbols, just as many Speculative Masons do not now know them. But we must bear in mind that operative Masonry in ancient and mediæval times did embrace classes that well may be supposed to have understood them. They were in the closest association with the priestly and monastic orders to whom we are indebted for most of the learning of the ancients which has come down to us. Architecture and its kindred sciences were until comparatively recent times the most honourable of all callings.

⁴⁴ *A. Q. C.*, Vol. I, p. 31; Mackey, *Encyclopedia of Freemasonry*, pp. 64, 171.

Brother Albert Pike claims that "during the splendour of mediæval operative Masonry the art of building stood above all other arts, and made all others subservient to it; that it commanded the services of the most brilliant intellects and of the greatest artists." ⁴⁵

It must be admitted that men like these were capable of appreciating and preserving the most refined symbolism. Brother Pike further declares that they "revelled in symbolism of the most recondite kind; that geometry was the handmaid of symbolism; that it may be said that symbolism is speculative geometry." ⁴⁶

Brother Gould has admitted his belief that the Masons of the fourteenth century, or earlier, were capable of understanding and did understand to a greater extent than ourselves the meaning of a great part of the symbolism which has descended from ancient to Modern Masonry.

In conclusion, permit us to say, that for every statement herein contained there is respectable Masonic authority. It is not claimed, however, that on none of these questions is there difference of opinion. Where this is the case, we have been compelled simply to adopt that view which appeared most reasonable, and did not have time always to state the different views and the reasons for each. This each student must do for himself. Our expectation has not been to accomplish more than to arouse in some, if not all, of you, a curiosity to learn more of our beautiful and instructive symbolism.

⁴⁵ *A. Q. C.*, Vol. III, p. 15.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 16.

Page 56 is blank.

APPENDIX

Page 58 is blank.

LANDMARKS

Grand Lodge of New Jersey, F. & A. M.
Approved March 11, 1903.

GOD

1. Belief in God as the Great Architect and Supreme Ruler of the Universe.

THE GREAT LIGHT IN MASONRY

2. The acceptance of the revealed Word of God as the rule and guide for our faith and practice, and its visible presence in every lodge.

THE GRAND MASTER

3. The Grand Master is elected by the Craft, and holds office until his successor is duly installed. He is the ruler of the Craft and is, of right, the presiding officer of every assemblage of Masons as such. He may, within his jurisdiction, convene a lodge at any time or place and do Masonic work therein; may create lodges by his warrant, and arrest the warrant of any lodge. He may suspend, during his pleasure, the operation of any rule or regulation of Masonry not a "Landmark." He may suspend the installed officers of any lodge and reinstate them at pleasure, and is not answerable for his acts as Grand Master. He may depute any brother to do any act in his absence which he himself might do if present.

THE LODGE

4. A Masonic lodge must have a Master and two Wardens, and when convened for Masonic work must be duly tyled.

THE CANDIDATE

5. No person can be made a Mason unless he be a man free-born, of mature and discreet age, of good character and reputation and having no maim or defect in his body that may render him incapable of learning the art or of being advanced to the several degrees, nor unless he apply for admission without solicitation and take upon himself the Masonic obligations. Nor can he be admitted to membership in a Masonic lodge except upon a secret ballot by the brethren of that lodge.

THE BRETHREN

6. Masons, as such, are equal; possess the right to visit every lodge or assembly of Masons where their presence will not disturb the peace and harmony of the same, and to appeal to the General Assembly of Masons, or its substitute, the Grand Lodge, whenever aggrieved by any act of a lodge.

MASTERS AND WARDENS

7. The Master of a lodge, before his election as such, must have served as a Warden. He and the Wardens are elected by the members of the lodge,

but hold their offices, by virtue of the warrant of the Grand Master, until their successors have qualified. They are his representatives in the lodge, and are not, therefore, responsible to the lodge for their official acts, nor can they be tried or disciplined by the lodge during their term of office.

JURISDICTION

8. Every Mason, for Masonic purposes, is subject to the jurisdiction of the lodge within whose jurisdiction he resides.

SECRECY

9. The legend of the third degree; the means of recognition; the methods of conferring degrees; the obligations of those degrees and the ballot of every brother are and must continue to be inviolably secret.

DEGREES

10. Ancient Craft Masonry includes only the Entered Apprentice, Fellow Craft and Master Mason degrees.

Page 62 is blank.

SUGGESTED MASONIC READING

As Freemasons we are taught that our goal in all fields of activity and endeavor is all of the knowledge it is possible for us to acquire, that our effectiveness may be increased and our usefulness enlarged. For that reason we should learn the Masonic ritual, in which are concealed those sublime truths which bind the world together in a common brotherhood of friends and co-workers.

The laws and regulations, symbolism, landmarks, history and philosophy, which are hidden for the seeker after Truth, have been expounded in a truly delightful way by students of the Art, and the practical applications of the tenets and teachings of the Fraternity have been clearly set forth and defined for novice and Master alike.

One of the functions of The Masonic Service Association of the United States, is to make easy of access to the membership of our Craft the authoritative and educational literature of Freemasonry, which so many of our finest minds of all times have produced as instructive and inspirational addenda to the ritual.

Some of these volumes are listed on the following pages. It is the hope and desire of your lodge and your Grand Lodge that you will acquire and read these and similar works as rapidly as your circumstances will permit. Those here listed have been carefully selected for special recommendation to all newly made Freemasons.

Any or all of them will be promptly mailed to you, at the prices quoted, upon receipt of your orders, by The American Masonic Press, Inc., Washington, D. C.

64 SUGGESTED MASONIC READING

- THE LITTLE MASONIC LIBRARY.** Postpaid and insured \$5.25
20 vols., bound in cloth. A wonderful set of books of untold value, containing a wealth of information on nearly every phase of Freemasonry—a library in itself.
- THE BUILDERS: A Story and Study of Freemasonry—Joseph Fort Newton.** Postpaid and insured \$2.15
The ablest and most inspiring one-volume work in the literature of Freemasonry. Translated into four languages. The fastest selling Masonic book in the world.
- THE MEN'S HOUSE—Joseph Fort Newton.** Postpaid and insured \$2.15
These eloquent essays and addresses deal with almost every aspect of Freemasonry, and by their patriotic and spiritual appeal have much to interest non-Masons as well.
- THE RELIGION OF MASONRY—Joseph Fort Newton.** Postpaid and insured \$1.75
“What is Religion? What is Masonry? What is the relation, if any, between them?” Dr. Newton answers these questions, and many others dealing with the faith, philosophy, and friendship of Masonry, in this book, the like of which is not to be found in Masonic literature. It is beautiful, brilliant, tolerant, and inspiring.
- SHORT TALKS ON MASONRY—Joseph Fort Newton.** Postpaid and insured \$2.15
Thirty-two brief talks on many different phases of interpretative and applied Masonry, written in Dr. Newton's lucid and eloquent style, dealing with Masonry as a builder of spiritual faith, moral culture and practical patriotism.
- FREEMASONRY BEFORE THE EXISTENCE OF GRAND LODGES—Vibert.** Postpaid and insured \$1.90
Very authoritative single volume history of the Craft before the year 1717.
- THE STORY OF THE CRAFT—Vibert.** Postpaid and insured \$1.60
A concise and authentic little story of Freemasonry and an excellent introduction to the larger histories.

A CONCISE HISTORY OF FREEMASONRY

—Gould. Postpaid and insured \$6.20

A revised edition of a popular one-volume history, written by the eminent British historian; essential to every Masonic library.

SPECULATIVE MASONRY: Its Mission, Its Evolution and Its Landmarks—A. S. MacBride.

Postpaid and insured \$2.15

An M.S.A. edition of a brilliant book from across the seas. One of the best studies of Freemasonry, its history and philosophy—sane and reliable.

FOREIGN COUNTRIES—Carl H. Claudy.

Postpaid and insured \$1.40

Some of the symbolical teachings of the Craft, graphically portrayed in a most practical vein.

SYMBOLICAL MASONRY—H. L. Haywood.

Postpaid and insured \$2.15

Interpretation of the work of the Three Degrees. Especially valuable for study clubs, answering the questions of a newly-raised Master Mason, telling him what it is all about. Study Club questions in the appendix.

THE GREAT TEACHINGS OF MASONRY

—H. L. Haywood. Postpaid and insured \$2.15

A companion volume to Symbolical Masonry, giving a practical application of the teachings of the Three Degrees to various relationships of life. An illuminating exposition. Study Club questions in the appendix.

MASONIC JURISPRUDENCE—Mackey.

Postpaid and insured \$3.65

An authoritative and widely used volume by one of America's foremost Masonic scholars.

IN PREPARATION—THE M.S.A. ENCYCLOPEDIA OF FREEMASONRY—Frederick W.

Hamilton, Editor-in-Chief. This entirely new, up-to-date work will be the last word as a Masonic authority. Dr. Hamilton is one of the most distinguished scholars in the Masonic world. He is being assisted in this important undertaking by an Advisory Board of Editors chosen from among the ablest members of the Craft. Ready about January 1, 1929. Advance orders will have special attention.

THE MASTER MASON

Every Freemason should be a reader of a Masonic periodical of the highest standard. Such a journal is **THE MASTER MASON**, which seeks to interpret the thought and affairs of the Fraternity in a manner at once simple and dignified, accurate and inspiring. It has two great aims; to help the Craft to know more about Freemasonry, and thus to do more for and with Freemasonry.

There is old romance in the Ancient Craft; **THE MASTER MASON** puts it before the reader in illustrated articles of compelling interest. There is a vast and unexplored land of hidden beginnings of Freemasonry; **THE MASTER MASON'S** writers adventure in it, and bring back to you the story of exploration and discovery. There is drama in Freemasonry, the drama of the struggle for independence, of the fight between intolerance and broadmindedness, of the unity of mind of the Craft winning against the diverging trend of different races, different civilisations, different creeds, to form the one common level on which all men may meet; **THE MASTER MASON** vividly portrays this moving drama.

THE MASTER MASON is a magazine of story, of history, of symbolism, of quaint and curious custom, of hidden meanings; in other words, an interpretation of Freemasonry. It is serious, not solemn; informative, not didactic; it is human as well as scholarly, interesting as well as instructive.

This journal was established by The Masonic Service Association of the United States. It may be subscribed for at \$2.50 per annum, payable in advance, at the office of The American Masonic Press, Inc., Washington, D. C.

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

THE MASTER MASON DEGREE

Review the symbolism of the Entered Apprentice, Fellow Craft and Master Mason Degrees as a whole. What is the test of worth of a Masonic symbol? What is the test of worth of meaning given a Masonic symbol?

Antiquity of Masonic Symbolism.—Why is the age of Masonic symbols important? Quote several Masonic authorities. Do we know all the meanings of all Masonic symbols? Why do we study ancient records? What were the “ancient mysteries”? How old is the oldest known? Were they all essentially the same? Name some ancient gods. How did the ancient trinity differ from ours? How may secret worship have begun? Were they similar to Masonry? What, anciently, was initiation? What Masonic similarity is there to the Mithraic Mystery? Did they use legends? What was the legend of Osiris? Has it Masonic similarities? Has it Christian similarities? Tell some similar legends to other lands. Summarise the learning of the ancient mysteries. What is Gould’s conclusion?

Third Degree Symbols.—What does the lodge symbolise in the first two degrees? In the Third Degree? Why is the Master Mason’s Degree especially solemn? Why does it call for especial reverence? What Temple do we all build? What is the foundation for the idea that the body is a Temple? What is light in the Entered Apprentice Degree? Fellow Craft Degree? Master Mason Degree? How does

the symbolism of the square and compasses differ in each of the three degrees? Give another explanation from that of the ritual for their positions in the three degrees.

Discalceation.—How does it differ in the Entered Apprentice and Master Mason Degrees? Give instances of the antiquity of the custom. What is it that we appeal to in each of the three degrees?

Circumambulation.—Is it an ancient symbol? Explain some possible origins. What is the symbolism of its direction? What is the symbolism of its reversal in the Master Mason Degree?

Working Tools.—What are they? In America? In England? From what is the trowel derived?

Broached Thurnel.—Where was it once used? When discarded? Why?

Deity and Immortality.—What is the sixth sense? What does it reveal to us? Do men's ideas of God change from age to age? Why? Is it God or man which changes? Was an idol a god or a symbol? Who feared the use of human effigy for God? Why? What symbols does Masonry use for God?

Hiramic Legend.—Is it similar to ancient mystery legends? Is Abif a surname? How does the Bible translate it? How do we translate it? What does Hiram mean? What is Pike's idea of it? Is it Christian? Has the legend an astronomical significance? What has this to do with the number of the Fellow Craft team? What was the ancient idea of the trinity? The modern idea? How does Masonry use them? Is there a Biblical story similar to the Hiramic legend? What myth is similar? How old is the legend? How do we know?

Three Ruffians.—Have any ancient gods similar names? Of what nation? Give one explanation of the symbolism of the three ruffians.

Low Twelve.—Had the number 12 an ancient meaning? What? What other meaning attaches to twelve? What is thirteen? Why is it “unlucky”?

Lion of the Tribe of Judah.—What is the literal meaning of the words? What is the symbolic meaning? Is it Christian or Jewish or both? What curious Egyptian picture shows a lion symbol? Of what?

Five Points of Fellowship.—Are they connected with ancient architecture? What is a Pentalfa? Was it a humane as well as a builder’s significance? What change is made in the symbol by elevating one point? Two points? What are the English five points? When did our change in them take place? Which do you consider correct? What is the ancient meaning the winged foot? What is the ancient meaning of two clasped hands? Does a symbolic interpretation of the Hiram legend deny its actual truth?

Lost Word.—Is the “lost word” an actual lost syllable, or is it a symbol? What did “the Word” mean to the Jews? How does St. John use this meaning? Was the idea only a Jewish one? Define the Greek word “Logos.” What modern word do we get from it? Is the power of speech a wonder? Why is it? Explain the Masonic Symbolism of the search for “the word.” Why do we receive only the substitute word? Will we ever receive the true word? Has this symbolism any bearing on the age of Masonry?

Marble Monument.—Is the monitorial explanation satisfactory? What Egyptian legend may have given rise to our use of this symbol? What did Apuleius say? When? What is the symbolism of the urn? Is there a better explanation than that given in the Monitor?

Setting Maul.—Of what a symbol? Is it ancient? Give several illustrations.

Acacia.—How did the ancient Jews use it? What is the real acacia? In what Egyptian legend is it used? What famous objects were made of its wood? Do any Mysteries use plants as symbols of immortality? What mysteries? What plants?

Death.—What does Masonry teach of it? What does Pike say of it? Omar? Bryant?

Resurrection.—Give some theories as to the resurrection? Does Masonry teach of them? All of them? What does Masonry teach of a future life?

Immortality.—How does Masonry teach it? Do we exact a belief in it? Why do you believe in it?

Pot of Incense.—How used in Solomon's Temple? What did the Jews mean by it? Why is it a symbol of the best offering to God?

Beehive.—Is hurry important in operative Masonry? Why? In Speculative Masonry? Why is labour held to be honourable? What is the symbolism of the bee? The hive? What makes Masonry live?

Silence.—Is the Book of Constitutions and the Tiler's Sword a new or old symbol? What was the ancient philosophic teaching about silence? Who was Harpocrates? What did he teach?

All-Seeing Eye.—Whence came this symbol? Has it a warning? How do we use it?

Anchor and Ark.—Which ark is meant? Was there a deluge legend before that of the Old Testament? What did it teach? How was the ark used in Egyptian funerals? In the Greek mythology? What do we read in it? Who first used the anchor as a symbol of hope?

Forty-seventh Problem of Euclid.—Who was Euclid? When was the symbol first used Masonically? What other names have we for it? What is it? Do we know all its symbolism? Will we every fully understand it?

Geometrical Figures.—Which ones especially please us? What did Plato teach of geometry? Why was it more important in ancient times than now? Was the square especially significant? To the Chinese? The Greeks? The Egyptians? Explain the relation of the right square to the Egyptian trinity. How did it come to be a symbol of perfection.

Hour Glass.—Is this a real Masonic symbol?

Scythe.—Had it anciently a symbolism? How did it come to its present significance?

Coffin.—Was the chest used in the ancient mysteries? How?

Conclusion.—Did the operative Masons understand these symbols? Did they understand them as we do? Do all Speculative Masons understand them? Do you understand them?

Page 72 is blank.

INDEX

- Acacia, the, 36.
All-seeing eye, 20, 45.
Anchor, the, 46.
Ancient mysteries, the, 4.
Anderson's Book of Con-
stitutions, 48.
Antiquity of Masonic
symbolism, 2.
Ark, the, 46.
Aum, 11.
- Bacchus, 9.
Beehive, the, 43.
Bel, 26.
Broached thurnel, the, 18.
"Brotherly love," 16.
Bryant, William Cullen,
38.
- Cabiric Mysteries, 36.
Cicero, 6.
Circumambulation, 16.
Clarke, Adam, 15.
Coffin, the, 53.
Confucius, 51.
- Death, 37.
Deity, 19.
Dinsmore, Charles Allen,
41.
Discalceation, 15.
- Egypt, mysteries of, 9.
Erica, the, 37.
Euclid, forty-seventh
problem of, 48.
Eureka, the word, 48.
- Fellowship, five points of,
29.
G. A. O. T. U., 22.
Geometrical figures, 49.
Gould, Robert Freke, 2,
11.
Greece, mysteries of, 5.
- Hiramic Legend, 22.
Hour Glass, the, 52.
Hughan, William James,
2.
- Immortality, 41, 19.
Incense, pot of burning,
43.
India, mysteries of, 5.
Isis, 8.
- Jah, 26.
Jameson, Mrs., 47.
Judah, lion of the tribe
of, 28.
- Kip's Catacombs of
Rome, 47.

- Klein, Sidney T., 51.
- Legends of the Temple, 20.
- Lion of the tribe of Judah, 28.
- Lotus, the, 37.
- Lost word, the, 31.
- Low twelve, 27.
- Marble monument, 34.
- Master Mason Degree, 1.
- Maul, the setting, 35.
- Mistletoe, the, 37.
- Mithras, mysteries of, 5.
- Monument, the marble, 34.
- Myrtle, the, 37.
- Mysteries, of Egypt, 5; of Greece, 5; of India, 5; of Mithras, 5; teachings of the, summarised, 10; the ancient, 4; the Cabiric, 36.
- Oliver, Dr. George, 17.
- Om, 11, 26.
- Omar Khayyám, 38.
- Osiris, 8.
- Pencil, the, 17.
- Pentalpha, the, 29.
- Pike, General Albert, 21, 55.
- Plato, 50.
- Pot of Incense, 43.
- Pythagoras, 15.
- Questions for discussion, 67.
- Resurrection, the, 39.
- Rhea, 9.
- Right-angled triangle, the, 50.
- Royal Arch degree, 33.
- Ruffians, the Three, 26.
- Setting maul, the, 35.
- Silence, 45.
- Simpson, William, 3.
- Skirret, the, 17.
- Speth, George William, 49, 3, 19.
- Scythe, the, 53.
- Square, the, 14.
- Temple, legends of the, 20.
- Three degree symbols, 12.
- Three Grand Masters, 20.
- Three Ruffians, the, 26.
- Thurnel, the broached, 18.
- Tools, working, 17.
- Triangle, the, 20.
- Trinity, the, 5.
- Trowel, the, 17.
- Twelve, low, 27.
- Winged foot, the, 31.
- Woodford, Rev. A. F. A., 52.
- Word, the lost, 31.
- Working tools, see "Tools," 17.
- Yarker, John, 18.