

One Hundred Symbols in Freemasonry

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Grand Lodges are notorious for not commenting on or defining the symbols of Freemasonry, other than what appears in their "ritual books" [Standard Work and Lectures]. In researching the *Square and Compasses on the Altar*, I came upon the below booklet which, oddly enough, bears the imprimis of the Grand Lodge of New York, albeit via their Board of General Activities, in 1929.

Ref. Compasses on pages 20-21, and Square on page 53.

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THE NEW YORK MASONIC OUTLOOK

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One Hundred Symbols in Freemasonry



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ONE HUNDRED SYMBOLS *and* EMBLEMS IN FREEMASONRY

IN THAT beautiful and profound system of ritualism that, at the center of Freemasonry, looms like some time-mellowed cathedral in the heart of an old-world city, one finds a great wealth of symbols, emblems, allegories, and ceremonies. These are so inextricably bound together, each throwing a light upon the meaning of another, the voice of one merging in the voice of all, that it is often quite impossible to say, This is a symbol and not an emblem, that is an emblem and not an allegory, and that is an allegory and not a ceremony. For this reason the list of symbols and emblems discussed in this booklet is not to be taken as exhaustive, nor will it be supposed that every reader will agree with the author either as to his choice or his explanation. Where distinctions are so difficult to draw no two men will draw quite the same distinctions. Fortunately such differences of opinion cannot detract from the value of a meditation upon the various emblems and symbols of the Craft, which it is the sole purpose of this booklet to recommend.

As to the reader who finds difficulty in understanding symbolism, and who may wonder why our Fraternity uses such a method

of teaching, we may remind him that to the generations before printing was invented symbolism was a natural and inevitable language. The voice of the sign came to those men as a familiar speech, easy to understand because requiring no translation into other habits of thought. Our system is symbolical because we have inherited it from them; and if, because of that fact, some little labor is required of us if we are to understand the ancient messages, the labor counts as nothing in comparison with the value of the messages it conveys to us.

But after all, symbolism continues to be more natural to us even today than perhaps we are wont to suppose—not only because we are ourselves always making use of it (e. g., the cross, the flag, etc.), but also because the very action of our minds is necessarily symbolic, whatever it may be we are thinking about, a fact well known to modern logic and psychology.

If—to use only one of countless possible examples—you see a house by the side of a road you do not stop short with the mere sight of the structure; your mind immediately uses it as a sign of many things you do not see with your physical eye: it is a home, children play in the yard, some man is working and sacrificing to maintain it, it reminds you of the neighborhood in which it stands—in short it is the sign of many meanings not immediately apparent. It is the very essence of symbolism that one thing is found to stand for something else, wherefore the use of it is as native to us as our own minds.

In the interpretation of symbols in Masonry the all-important point is to carry through until you reach the idea itself, and then to grasp this idea in its full meaning for thought and experience. Otherwise one stops in the porch, having only a handful of lore from which life and value derive meaning.

Consider such a case in point as the Apron. What if we learn about the Golden Fleece, the Eagles, and the Star and Garter, and about the difference in meaning between goat and sheep in ancient initiations, and the symbolism of white as a color, if we don't push our way through to the truth all this stands for? And of what value is that truth itself if it remains merely abstract and we do not possess ourselves of its use and meaning in our daily affairs?

All our symbolism, in other words, is form only—doomed to remain empty form and lifeless husk unless we can get it interpreted into those vital truths and ideas that really mean something. Does the plumb stand for uprightness? But what is uprightness? Does the level stand for equality? But what is equality? When this is pressed home to its ultimate meaning our system of symbolism delivers to us a philosophy of life, Masonry's own wisdom, its great contribution to us, its real "secret." This, we may take it, should be the true aim of every effort to interpret Masonic symbols.

Except for a sentence now and then in the Monitor our Fraternity has never given any official interpretation of its symbols and emblems. Each one is a challenge to every Mason

to understand it for himself, a thing he is well able to do if only he keeps in mind the Ritual as a whole while devoting his thought to the task. The present writer has tried to do that throughout the little expositions that follow and there is no need for him to say that these expositions are his own, and binding on nobody; they are his own, that is, except for the material he has gleaned from Masonic literature. The reader who may want to delve deeper into the symbols touched upon will find much to his hand in the following books, all of which a New York State Mason may borrow without fee from our Grand Lodge Library:

"Symbolism of Masonry," by Albert G. Mackey.

"Symbolical Masonry," by H. L. Haywood.

"Short Talks on Masonry," by Joseph Fort Newton.

"Symbolism of the Three Degrees," by Oliver Day Street.

"Lodge and the Craft," by Rollin C. Blackmer.

"New Encyclopaedia of Freemasonry," by A. E. Waite.

ACACIA

The acacia was a thorny evergreen growing in Palestine, botanically known as *Acacia vera*, or *Acacia seyal*. In the Old Testament it is called the Shittah Tree, or Shittim-Wood. Being the best among the few woods in that region it was used in the construction of the Tabernacle and the Ark of the Cove-

nant, for which reason it came to have a sacred significance for the Jews, who often planted a sprig of it at the head of a grave. Because of these uses and also, perhaps, because it was a flowering evergreen, the acacia became in time a symbol of immortality, a meaning it continues to bear in Freemasonry. Since *akakia* in Greek signified innocence and simplicity, it is held by some that it holds this meaning also in Masonry but the indications of such a meaning, if there be any, are not clear.

ALL-SEEING EYE

All the deeper movements of the Ritual make their way finally, along paths now hidden and now open, to a profound conception of God, who, by symbols of a reverent simplicity, is figured for us in many ways. He is the Sovereign Grand Architect of the Universe, Creator and Lord of all; the Grand Geometrician, symbolized by The Letter G; Providence and Savior, as set forth in the Holy Bible; the Father to whom all hearts turn in worship, represented by the Altar; the Source of all truth, represented by Light. In the All-Seeing Eye the same God is represented as omnipresent, present, in his full being and not merely by proxy, everywhere, so that the earth as well as the heavens declare His glory, and "the ground whereon thou standest," whatever ground it may chance to be, "is holy ground." The wisest of all interpretations of this symbol is the verse in the Book of Proverbs: "The eyes of the Lord are in every place, beholding the evil and the good."

ALTAR

The Altar stands in the center of the Lodge to signify the place that worship holds in the Masonic life. Ideally it is in the shape of a perfect cube, the most stable of all material shapes, symbolical of the security of life grounded upon faith in the Eternal. In Solomon's Temple there were two Altars: the Altar of Sacrifice without, the Altar of Incense within, the former for the cleansing from sins, the latter for worship. In Masonry the two are combined, for its Altar calls for the sacrifice of the human in us to the divine in us, which is the true reading of the position of the Great Light upon it, and for prayer and dedication. As such it is more than "the most important article of furniture in a Lodge room," serving merely as a pedestal for the Great Lights, but itself is a symbol, one of the greatest of them all, symbolizing that religion, as the Ancient Constitutions so eloquently describe it, "in which all good men agree." Being what it is the Altar should never be hidden by a flag or by any other covering, lest the brethren forget what it is that holds them united.

ANCHOR AND ARK

This, one of the emblems of the Third Degree, is like the good wine which needs no bush, in that it carries its meaning on its face. Both the Anchor and the Ark came into use as symbols among the early Christians and from them, doubtless, were inherited by our Operative Masons; among those Christians the Anchor was a "symbol of immovable firmness, hope and patience," whereas the

Ark, reminiscent of the Ark used by Noah and not, as is often said, of the Ark of the Covenant, was a picture of the Church making its way across the tempestuous sea of life. The idea of both, therefore, is that of security and, unless we are willing to take the emblem superficially, it is necessary for us to learn what it is that gives to any human being his sense of security in a world where so much is changing. Is it not the discovery by him that his own nature rests in that Eternal Nature which is the same yesterday, today, and forever?

APPRENTICE

So rife with symbolism is the Lodge and all it contains that many times we find certain of its elements to have a symbolic as well as a practical or official use. Consider some of the cases in point: the Master and his Station is an official and also a symbol, for he represents King Solomon, the wise ruler; the Book of Constitutions is at once our basic law and an emblem in the Third Degree; the Lodge room is at the same time a place where Masons assemble and a symbol of the world; and so on. To these we may add the Apprentice who, in addition to being the candidate in the First Degree, is also a symbol of youth—a youth beginning his career and therefore a learner, as the word itself signifies. As a learner he must continue under direction and be humble enough to sit at the feet of teachers, somewhat after the fashion of the youth in Operative Masonry, who was not raised to the rank of Master Mason until he had served an apprenticeship of seven years of work.

APRON

To speak adequately of the Apron in so short a space is impossible. The Order of the Golden Fleece was founded in 1490 A.D.; the Roman Eagle was the ensign of Imperial Rome; the Apron is more ancient than either because it was long before then used, as it is used by us, in initiations. It is "more honorable than the Star and Garter" because it represents a nobler ideal than the orders of chivalry. Having been inherited by us from Operative Masons, who used leather aprons to protect their clothes while at toil, it is a sign of labor; it means that work is a higher ideal than was any form of the aristocracies that despised it. Its color makes it the emblem of innocence—and innocence means not ignorance of sin and evil, but a disposition to do no hurt to others. Its texture—lambskin—makes it the emblem of sacrifice. And it is the badge of a Mason, the only badge there is, as should be remembered by those who adorn themselves with other emblems. Many have detected a symbolism in its size and shape—the square representing the earthly nature; the triangular flap, the descent of spirit into it—but while this is allowable it is uncertain. A Mason's first duty is to keep his Apron clean; the Craft as a whole must maintain its dignity. From all those fraternities and associations that seek members by any possible means Freemasonry differs fundamentally in this, that its problem is more to keep men out than to get them in because—as its badge signifies—it must keep its threshold high and strive for quality rather than quantity.

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ARCHITECTURE

The very word "Mason," which means "a builder," is itself an indication of the close association, both in history and practice, of architecture and Freemasonry. Traditionally, the Craft originated at the building of King Solomon's Temple, but historically, and according to all the records, it was an outgrowth of the builders' associations that sprang up in the Middle Ages, more particularly among the builders of the Gothic cathedrals. For a long time all Masons were actually engaged in that trade but in England, in the early eighteenth century, the old Craft of builders was transformed into a Fraternity. The historical connection between the two is preserved in the extent to which the Fraternity makes symbolical use of the tools, arts, and practices of builders as a means to inculcate Masonic teachings. Architecture itself, in our system, and under many figures, is a great symbol, signifying the ideal of cooperative constructive endeavor for the good of mankind. Freemasonry is never subversive or destructive, nor do Masons ever make war on anything save the impulses in their own natures toward meanness and dishonor; if a member has in him a destructive, warring spirit, he is a Mason in name, but not one in fact.

ASHLARS

An Ashlar is a building stone. The Rough Ashlar is "a stone, as taken from the quarry, in its rude and natural state;" a Perfect Ashlar is a "stone made ready by the hands of the workmen." Symbolically an Ashlar is the

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nature of the candidate who, for all Masonic purposes, comes in the rough state. When this nature, by the influences and forces represented by the Working Tools, has been dressed into proper shape, it becomes a Perfect Ashlar, ready for its place in the Temple walls.

ATTENTIVE EAR

The Attentive Ear is one of the Jewels of the Fellowcraft. Why a jewel? Because if he possesses it not he will labor in vain to master his lesson. By the Ear is meant, not the mere physical organ by which sounds are perceived, but rather the ability to comprehend what is heard. Such an ability, required as it is in all endeavors to learn, is especially necessary in our system, where all the teachings are presented under the veils of symbol and allegory. For though a man may hear clearly all the words of the Ritual, they can mean nothing to him unless he listens with his mind and himself actively endeavors to discover for himself the hidden meanings.

BEEHIVE

In a Craft to which labor meant so much it is not surprising to find among the Emblems of the Third Degree this symbol *par excellence* of all industriousness. Honey was used in ancient times as a food, as a drink, as a confection, and even as an embalming fluid; and, of course, in myth and folk lore "the little daughters of the sun" figured prominently. At the same time one recalls from the Holy Bible how Canaan was idealized as a land flowing with milk and honey,

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and, again, how one of our Patron Saints is said to have used wild honey as his food. The Christian monks were the first to domesticate bees, at least in Europe, and it is to them we owe the beehive as a symbol of industriousness, adopted by our Operative forebears as a reminder to the Apprentice that if he would master his Craft he must be no drone, but up and at it so long as light lasts.

BIBLE

There is nothing of which we in this Jurisdiction have juster right to feel sincerely proud than the now-established custom, followed by nearly all the Lodges, of presenting a copy of the Holy Bible to each initiate. By this act is sealed in the initiate's mind what is the place of central importance held by the Book in the Fraternity, and by it is expressed how necessary is some understanding of it to every Mason. The Holy Bible is many things to Freemasonry: it is—if we may so speak—the Bible itself, and as such, it is a symbol, one of the Great Lights; it is a part of the furniture of a Lodge, without which no Lodge can make Masons; it is a fundamental requirement for fraternal recognition, for no man is a regular Mason who comes not from a Lodge displaying it on its Altar; it is one of the sources of Masonry itself, essential in its history, the quarry from which so much of the Ritual has been wrought; and it is a Sacred Object, the salutation of which is the culmination of a Mason's vows. As a Bible it lies open, free to every man who is left free to interpret it as he can best understand it; as a symbol it "represents the Book

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of Truth, the Scroll of Faith, the Record of the Will of God as man has learned it in the midst of the years."

BLAZING STAR

About the meaning of this, which Mackey has described as "one of the most important symbols of Freemasonry," there is an immense confusion of theory. It is sometimes confused with the Pentacle (or Pentalfa or Pentagon), or five-pointed star, a device invented by the Pythagoreans to represent perfect health; and with the Hexagon, or double triangle, called the Shield of David. Preston made it one of the Ornaments of the Lodge. As such it should lie in the center of the Mosaic Pavement with its Tesselated Border, but unfortunately the Pavement has so widely fallen into disuse in our Lodges that to most brethren this connection has been destroyed and almost its sole use is to serve as a halo for the Letter G above the Master in the East. This latter use, now so universal, gives a clue to the meaning the Blazing Star has come to have among Masons, namely, as a representation of the outshining Power, Glory, and Providence of God, the Measure of all things. For the sake of that accuracy so essential in the rendering of all symbols it should be kept in mind that the Blazing Star has no points, like the Shield of David, but should be made of wavy rays radiating from a luminous center; it would be still better, infinitely better, if the Mosaic Pavement were restored to use in every Lodge, returned to its central position in the center of the floor.

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BLUE

This is the Masonic color par excellence and as such has given its name to the Three Degrees. Usually it is associated with the blue of the heavens, the all-encompassing universality of which suggests naturally that inclusive good will which is the foundation of fraternity and reaches its perfection in friendship. How blue came to be selected as the Masonic color remains as yet a mystery, but some of the more thorough researches indicate that in early English Speculative Masonry the custom arose in the Lodges of lining their Aprons with thistle blue; once established, this custom continued and the color came therefrom to be identified with the Craft. It is this identification that gives to Blue the meaning it has for us: it represents the whole sweep and scope of Ancient Craft Masonry.

BOOK OF CONSTITUTIONS

One might reasonably narrate here how the Fraternity came to have its Book of Constitution, beginning with the first one of 1723. That, however, would be beside the point in this immediate connection, because as an emblem of the Third Degree the Book of Constitutions, guarded by the Tiler's Sword, possesses a meaning far more comprehensive than any volume of written law. It represents that long-enduring unity of the Craft's own nature which it is the function of laws to define, express, and protect, a unity inherited from the long past which it is the first of our duties as regular Masons to pre-

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serve inviolate. Many have asked why it is that the Ancient Landmarks are nowhere represented by a symbol commensurate with their importance and place. The answer is that they are, and the Book of Constitutions is that symbol. The Tiler's Sword suggests how the Craft's essential nature is best preserved, namely, by all the authorities, laws, forces that are designed to keep out of the Lodges cowans, eavesdroppers, clandestines, and every person unworthy to keep in custody the traditions and good name of the Fraternity.

BREAST

This, like the Attentive Ear, is one of the Jewels of the Fellowcraft. The point of it is not, as is frequently said, that a Faithful Breast is the safe repository of a brother's secrets, though perhaps such a reading is justified by a broad construction of the symbolism; it is "the secrets of Freemasonry" that are therein placed in trust. Why are they not committed to the care of the memory? Because the real secrets are not words but ideals and principles of life and it is in the heart and conscience, of which the breast is but a sign, that such things alone can abide. The Fellowcraft who learns such a lesson will never again think of the Ritual as a mere formality, nor of Freemasonry, as expressed in it, as make-believe; he will learn rather that Freemasonry is a way of life; because of it, unless a man walks in it, one can never become a *Master* Mason in any save the most superficial and meaningless sense.

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CABLE TOW

Here is a symbol among symbols! It is supposed that "Cable Tow" as a term meant originally a rope used for towing, or drawing. Be that as it may, our own use is symbolical, although it has been often noted that in our First Degree the Cable Tow is used in almost the literal sense of physical control, or direction. It is a symbol of that cord which unites the unborn babe to its mother; of that vow a Mason takes, pledging himself to all due obediences; of the Mystic Tie by which the great Fraternity is held together; of all law and compulsion, civil or moral, by which a man is held fast to his duties. Its removal signifies that the law, formerly external, has become a principle of the heart, and henceforth enforces itself; the length of the Cable Tow is, as the Baltimore Convention of 1842 defined it, the "scope of a man's reasonable ability" to do and perform that which his Lodge and Brotherly Love requires of him.

CARDINAL POINTS

In strict literalness the Cardinal Points are those salient and master directions by means of which, as a fixed standard, all other directions are obtained; but in our use they are symbolical of those fixed principles (see Cardinal Virtues) according to which a man gives direction to his life, thereby avoiding that purposeless drifting in which all endeavors become a meaningless hodge-podge and a life never "gets anywhere." The idea is that a man should plan his life like a building, or shape it like a work of art, so that at the end

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he will not be haunted by a sense of futility. This interpretation rests on the word "cardinal," which means "hinge"—and the Cardinal Points, therefore, are those fixed principles upon which everything else hinges.

CARDINAL VIRTUES

These are Temperance, Fortitude, Prudence, and Justice. It is not to be supposed that Freemasonry, now or in the past, has ever held that these four, and these alone, are the fundamental virtues on which all others hinge; others are recognized in our system as equally cardinal—the habit of truthfulness, for example. It is the idea that there are root virtues, rather than any particular list of them, that is in point in this symbolism. Some virtues are so fundamental that others depend upon them, so that unless those of a cardinal position are built into the character all the dependent virtues are impossible; courtesy roots in honor, candor in truthfulness, bravery in fortitude, honesty in rectitude, etc. Virtue originally meant valor, a form of strength, and it is a pity that the word has become feminized; it is a yet greater pity where virtue has come to be considered a form of conventionality and men cherish the illusion that they can be strong without that moral valor without which strength is a mere form of brute strength of bone and sinew.

CHALK, CHARCOAL, CLAY

These are virtues binding on the Apprentice, Chalk representing freedom, as meaning that he should not do his work grudgingly,

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like a bondsman; Charcoal representing fervency, suggested perhaps by its use in smelting ores; and Clay representing zeal, which is a steadier kind of fervency. How these substances ever came to possess such meanings nobody has yet been able to discover.

CIRCUMAMBULATION

This term (it means "walking around") refers to a certain journey made by the candidate. While that journey has the use of being a practical means of getting him from one point to another, it stands above this practicality as a symbol in its own right—one of the noblest and most beautiful in the whole train of our Rituals. It is susceptible of many interpretations, each consistent with all the others; a representation of the progress of Masonry itself; the progress of civilization; a drama of life from birth to death; the overcoming of obstacles in the path of existence; keeping step, working in harmony, with oneself and his neighbors; the flight of the soul to God.

COFFIN

The veteran Mason will remember how in the 1870's and 1880's what may be called the funereal aspect of our furniture, emblems, and symbols was very much nearer to the center of attention than now. Men were more given to think about death, and beyond death, whereas now the effort is to keep such matters out of mind. Be that as it may it is certain that the Coffin, an emblem of the Third Degree, attracts less attention than formerly. As to the meaning of this emblem one fact

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is significant; in the Greek the word for "death" and "initiation" was the same in root. The Masonic initiation, like those of the Greeks and other ancient peoples, is a kind of death, for the initiate dies to his old non-Masonic life in order to be born into the world of Masonry. The emblem stands for this. It also stands for the fact of human death; not all kinds of death, for only man buries his dead in a casket and with ceremonies, but the death of human beings. What does Masonry believe about death? That it is itself an initiation into another life.

COLORS

Color symbolism does not strike the attention like an object or a device; it is for this reason doubtful if even the most observant Mason sufficiently notes the prevalence of color symbols throughout the whole of Freemasonry. In the Lodge and its work three of these figure prominently. White, representing innocence and purity, is made conspicuous by the Apron, in the symbolism of which it plays an essential part. Black, appearing as darkness, in the coffin, and grave trappings signifies death, the end of things, tragedy, and despair. Blue, as noted on a previous page, is the Lodge's own color and speaks to us of the universality of brotherhood.

COMPASSES

One is curious to know why the Compasses were not included among the Working Tools, along with the Plumb, Square, Level, Twenty-four Inch Gauge, Common Gavel, and Trowel. Perhaps it was because each of

these is in the strict sense a tool, used directly on the building material, whereas the Compasses are more used in drawing plans. Whether there is anything in this guess, the fact remains that the Compasses figure so prominently among our symbols that they form with the Square that design by which Freemasonry is most frequently represented to the public. As a symbol the Compasses possess two major meanings. First, they remind us of the necessity of self-restraint, without which we become the victims of our own impulses and passions. Second, as a Great Light they represent the heavens, which means the moral and spiritual, and as such teach how necessary it is that the conscience and the intelligence should dominate the physical in a man's life.

CORNER STONE

The Corner Stone is that stone, always so carefully finished and set, which binds the walls together and serves as a figure of the whole foundation on which a structure rests. Without it the whole building—at least this was so before modern methods were used—would collapse, all the toil spent upon it going for nothing. The corner stone of a man is his character, without which his life becomes a ruin. The Corner Stone of the Lodge is that Mason who has used the Working Tools to fit himself to be in truth a Master Mason. The Corner Stone of a nation is the law-abiding citizen. The Corner Stone of a man's existence is a well-grounded trust in God. Of all those meanings the symbolic Corner Stone is a sign and a figure.

COVERING

Since the Lodge itself is a symbol of the whole world, it is fitting that its Covering, or ceiling, should be represented as the "clouded canopy or starry-decked heavens," typifying the sky, thereby signifying that the Masonic life is as wide as creation, and that its ideals have a skyey reach. At the same time this Covering is the symbol of that celestial Lodge to which the human pilgrim, making his way through the shadows of earth life, hopes ultimately to make his way. Also we may be reminded by the same symbol that as a matter of history Lodges in ancient times met outdoors, with no roof between them and the vault of heaven.

CUBE

As a separate symbol the Cube does not have a place in our system, due no doubt to the fact that the Perfect Ashlar is given the same significance it would have. Nevertheless, it appears in other connections and implications. Being the most symmetrical rectangular solid the Cube naturally is a type of perfection, and of that stability which belongs to perfection. Ideally the Altar is a cube in shape, as befits the worship of a Perfect Being; while the Lodge, also ideally, is a Double Cube in shape, suggesting the joint perfections in a well-rounded human life of body and spirit. By perfection is meant completeness, all-round completeness, and as such is—in the genuine sense of the word—an ideal. For while no human being can do more than approximate to it it nevertheless is binding upon him.

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DARKNESS

If the reader will recall all that Light stands for in the Ritual, and then imagine everything that is the exact opposite of it, he will have formed the conception of what Darkness means symbolically. It represents the untaught condition that obtained in the candidate's life before initiation; it is a sign of ignorance, not merely of this or that fact, but of how to live wisely; and it is a representation of death, as is shown by the Third Degree. Black is its color. If the North side of the Lodge room is deemed to lie in darkness it is to represent the profane world into which the enlightenment brought by initiation has never penetrated. The voice of Darkness, where it is the mantle of death, is the twelve strokes of the solemn funeral chimes at Low Twelve, which means that midnight has fallen upon the soul.

DEATH

In our Ritual, Death itself is used as a symbol, a fact which must be kept in mind lest the whole point of it as it is in Masonry be missed. There was no need for Masonry to exist merely to tell us that each of us must die, a thing every man knows only too well from childhood. No, the point of it is that Masonry helps us to see that there are many kinds of Death, some good and others bad, and that if a man is wise he will learn how to die whenever Death, in any of its forms, becomes a duty. For one may die to an old evil self, or to his ignorance, or to his lusts, or to the ugly habits of ill will; and one may be

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born again, as the Holy Bible teaches, to a new and better life.

DISCALCEATION

The term is a name for the ceremonial act of taking off one or both of the shoes before entering a holy place. As it appears in the First Degree it has the meaning, taken from the Old Testament, of a pledge of fidelity; in the Third Degree it means that the ground on which one approaches Deity is therefore holy, a fact signified by leaving outside the last vestiges of one's contact with unhallowed soil. Orientals, to whom symbolism is so native a speech, continue this custom in every day life.

DUE GUARD

This term continues to be somewhat of a puzzle. Mackey pronounced it "an Americanism," and stated it was not used in England, but Bro. W. J. Soughurst says it is often met with there and hazards the opinion that it derives from *Dieu me garde*, "God protect me." Be that as it may, the symbol is a constant reminder of the Obligations, and serves to impress upon every Mason the need for caution and circumspection concerning all things Masonic.

EAST

Like sunrise from the East so does light dawn upon the mind; and like the dawn itself is the place of the East in our Ritual. It is the Worshipful Master's station; the Letter G hangs there; the candidate seeks it; the Lodge

is oriented toward it; what the center of gravity is to the earth it is to the whole symbolic system, everything moving toward it; in short it signifies that whole effort to seek and find Light, and more Light, which is the mainspring and motive of the mind in Masonic life. The Master's station is called The East, the Grand Master's is the Grand East, and in some countries a Grand Lodge is called a Grand Orient—all for the same reason.

ENTRANCE

Entrance into the precincts of a Lodge is a step having something of the importance and the dignity of birth. Accordingly the candidate is placed in the care of trusty friends who will see that he is duly prepared; and he is given necessary instructions by one of the Officers of the Craft who is careful to ascertain that he comes with no unworthy motive. When he steps inside the door and enters for the first time into a tiled Lodge he is about to participate in a rite, and to stand in the presence of symbols over which hovers the impressiveness of centuries. The badges of rank, the tokens of distinction, the costumery of the world, the manifold ties of the temporal and external order now stand him in no stead, and he is thrown back on the resources of his own essential humanity. The will to do, the mind to know, the heart to love, the imagination to conceive—these and these only can serve as the materials out of which his own Masonic temple can be built.

FAITH, HOPE AND CHARITY

In the Masonic system these are called the Theological Virtues, partly to distinguish them from the Cardinal Virtues (Temperance, Fortitude, Prudence, Justice), partly to bear witness to their source in religion, and partly because they have been so called traditionally. Faith is a persistent trust in the Sovereign Grand Architect of the Universe; Hope is a reasonable trust in the future; Charity is Brotherly Love expressing itself in Masonic relief and kindness.

FELLOW CRAFT

By "fellow" is meant a full-fledged member, enjoying the same privileges and bound to the same obligations as every other member; by "craft" the Fraternity is referred to. In Operative Masonry a Fellow of the Craft was a Mason out of his Apprentice bonds, entitled to all the rights and privileges of the Lodge, therefore a Master Mason. After the organization of the first Grand Lodge, however, the two were divided in the Speculative system, the Fellowcraft being given a status midway between Apprentice and Master. Symbolically the Fellowcraft represents manhood, when the Craftsman is at the meridian, able to bear the heat and burden of the day.

FIVE POINTS OF FELLOWSHIP

This symbol stands near the very center of the mysteries of the Third Degree, and it is doubtful, for reasons every Mason will understand, if the initiate carries away with him a

more impressive memory of any other. The origin of it remains somewhat obscure; some have suggested that in laying out their plans Operative Masons started from a center and worked out to four points, and that in the transition to Speculative Freemasonry this practice became a symbol of spiritual architecture; others believe that each principal part of the body (the hand, ear, foot, etc.) was a symbol of some power or faculty of the soul and that therefore the meaning of the Five Points is to remind us that Freemasonry covers the whole of life. It is universal *within* the Mason just as it is universal throughout the world. The emblematic representation is the Pentalfa, or five-pointed star.

FIVE SENSES

Two hundred years ago what is now called "the faculty psychology" was the accepted picture of the human mind; there was a "faculty" of memory, of imagination, will, reason, etc.; and, by the same token, the body also was "facultyized" into the senses of touch, sight, taste, smell, hearing, each of which was called an "organ." Our Ritual in this section of the Second Degree conforms to that scheme. The point it makes is that if a Mason is to reach the Middle Chamber, representing the fruition of wisdom, he must train his mind in the Liberal Arts and Sciences, and his body by the skilled use of Working Tools. The latter idea must have been a dominant one among the Operative Masons, whose livelihood depended on well trained senses, sureness of eye, deftness of touch, and general bodily skill.

FORTY-SEVENTH PROPOSITION

This is also known as the Forty-Seventh Problem, the Three, Four, Five Triangle, and the Pythagorean Triangle—the last because it is traditionally ascribed to our “Worthy Brother Pythagoras,” though it is certain it was known before his time. If in any triangle the square of the hypotenuse is equal to the combined squares of the base and the perpendicular the angle opposite the hypotenuse is always a right angle. Such is the point of the Proposition, and it is easy to see how useful was such a method of proving right angles to early builders. It was one of the all-important symbols in early Masonry, and was often used as an emblem of all the sciences. It is especially deserving of study in these days to remind us that there is in Freemasonry scientific as well a religious, moral, and architectural traditions.

GAVEL

The Common Gavel is a replica of the stonemason's hammer by which a stone rough-hewn from the quarry received its first rude shaping. One face is hammer-shaped for pounding, the other has a chisel edge for cutting. It is not to be confused with a mallet, which lacks the cutting edge; nor with the Worshipful Master's “gavel”—which is not a gavel at all, but is more properly called the “Hiram.” Since it was the first tool to be used on the Rough Ashlar it is appropriately an Entered Apprentice's Working Tool, the significance of which as a symbol is that before he can fit smoothly into the Brotherhood as a Perfect

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Ashlar he must first rid himself of all “knobs and excrescences”—that is, traits of temper, habits of speech, defects of character that would cause disturbance in assemblies of the Craft or disunion in its fellowship.

GEOMETRY

The place of Geometry in Operative Lodges was so great that Masonry and Geometry were used as synonymous terms. This is not difficult to understand in view of the importance of that science to builders, especially when it is remembered that in the Middle Ages Geometry covered the whole mathematics instead of only one department thereof as now. In Speculative Masonry it is similarly prominent, albeit always in a symbolical sense, for many of our symbols and emblems are derived from it and the spirit of it pervades the Ritual. There is good reason to believe that the Letter G originally signified Geometry, and we all know how in our mysteries the Deity is described often as the Grand Geometrician. Consider also the Level, the Square, the Compasses, the Plumb, Angles, the Oblong Square, etc.

GLOBES

On the top of the Great Pillars that stood on the Porch before King Solomon's Temple were chapters, in shape somewhat like a globular basket, covered with ornamentation, each item of which bore an emblematic meaning. Speculative Masonry substituted for these the Terrestrial and Celestial Globes, the former a representation of the earth; the latter, of the heavens by which the earth is surrounded;

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together they signify the whole universe. The passing of the initiate between them means that the Freemasonry into which he is entering is itself a great world, and reminds him that both the earthly and the heavenly in him must be brought into harmony ere he can become a Master Mason.

GLOVES

Time was when candidates were as regularly presented with gloves as with Aprons. But while this old custom survives in the Craft in parts of Europe it has so fallen into disuse in America that it may come with surprise to the reader to learn that if we were more faithful to inherited custom, gloves would be as integral a part of Masonic clothing as the Apron itself. Happily the custom has not altogether died away, because in processions, funeral ceremonies, and other formal occasions gloves continue in use. They are always white, because the symbolism is the same for the most part as that of the Apron. Like the latter they are white, symbolizing purity, but where the Apron signifies a clean heart the gloves symbolize clean hands.

GREAT PILLARS

The Great Pillars, J. and B., are representatives of two similarly named pillars that stood on the Porch before King Solomon's Temple. Since those pillars were not elements of the structure, but stood apart and free from the building, it is evident that their only purpose was symbolical. Scholars believe that one was held sacred to the King, the other to the

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High Priest, thereby suggesting religion and the state, the pillars on which the nation rested. Perhaps a better interpretation is furnished by the names of the two, for together they mean, "In strength God will establish his House," which if applied to our own Great Pillars would mean that Freemasonry is established on the power and wisdom of God. These Pillars also have another meaning. They represent birth, so standing as they do that the initiate must pass between them, thereby indicating that he has been born into the Masonic life.

HIGH HILLS AND LOW VALES

Our ancient Operative Brethren made a custom of taking their candidates for initiation to the top of some hill, or to a spot in some well-protected valley, either of which locations could be easily guarded against eavesdroppers. Laws were early passed in England against such out-door ceremonies, but the custom continued in both Ireland and Scotland until late in the seventeenth century, a striking case of which is described in Miller's history of Aberdeen Lodge. What was once a custom among Operative Masons became a symbol in Speculative Masonry, partly to preserve memory of the ancient usages, partly to remind us of the height, the depth, and the universality of Freemasonry.

HIRAM ABIFF

The weight of evidence indicates that "Abiff" was a title, having the general meaning of "overseer," "superintendent," or, in

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its old sense, "lord." Of course, the legend as it stands in our Third Degree is not history, and never was intended to be. It is an allegorical tragedy, the purpose of which is to exhibit loyalty unto death, the great power of God, the deathlessness of the soul, and the fact that the one bulwark against treachery, crime, and sin is a faithfulness to duty even unto death. Nothing else in the whole system of Masonic Rituals is so profound, or so deserving of much study and thought; nor is it elsewhere so impossible to interpret a symbolism in few words. The meaning in the Legend of H. A. lies too deep for speech and delivers itself only to the understanding heart and spiritual insight.

HOODWINK

The Hoodwink represents the darkness in which the uninitiated stands; the moral obscurity in which human beings exist so long as they have not learned to subdue their passions; the state of the man who has not yet found the Light. For this reason it is removed at the moment of enlightenment. Just as all the truths in Freemasonry existed before the initiate found them, so is it in the world at large: we do not *create* the great things—righteousness, faith, immortality, God—we *find* them; and we find them only when the hoodwinks of ignorance and sin are lifted from our eyes. Of this whole process of ignorance and discovery in human life the Hoodwink is a symbol.

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HOUR GLASS

Among the Masons' Marks used by our Operative forebears the Hour Glass, or some figure representing it, was oftener used than any other. Gould notes that in the same period an Hour Glass was interred with the dead to signify that the sands of time had run out. As an emblem of the Third Degree it doesn't so much represent time as it does the measurement of time, being thereby closely related in meaning to the Twenty-four Inch Gauge which bids us divide our days into three intervals. If time is to be transformed into life it must be carefully measured out and well invested, lest the hours pass and leave nothing behind them.

INDENTED TESSEL

The Indented Tessel, or Tesselated Border, is frequently confused with the black and white geometrical design along the edge of the Mosaic Pavement, but properly refers to the looping cord, with tassels, that surrounds the Pavement. According to the interpretation of Webb it is "emblematic of those blessings and comforts which surround us, and which we hope to obtain by a faithful reliance on Divine Providence."

INSTRUCTIVE TONGUE

Like the Attentive Ear and the Faithful Breast, this is one of the Jewels of the Fellowcraft. Where the Attentive Ear signifies that one must listen with his mind and understanding, and the Faithful Breast means that the secrets of Masonry are vital matters of

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the heart and conscience, the Instructive Tongue symbolizes the teaching function that belongs to membership in the Lodge.

JACOB'S LADDER

Jacob's dream of a ladder reaching from earth to heaven, described in the 28th chapter of Genesis, referred to in the New Testament, is in itself so apt a symbol of man's progress upwards, from the dirt and slime of savagery to the "inaccessible heights" of spiritual enlightenment, that it has been used in one form or another in nearly every religion and every system of initiation. Properly, as used in our First Degree, it should consist of Seven Steps—Temperance, Fortitude, Prudence, Justice, the Cardinal Virtues, and Faith, Hope, and Charity, the Theological Virtues; but since, in the early days of Speculative Masonry it was so frequently represented as consisting of three only, Faith, Hope, and Charity, it came to be called the Theological Ladder.

JOURNEY

The Great Journey taken by the candidate in his search for That Which Was Lost is one of the principal allegories of the Ritual; why it has received so little attention at the hands of students and writers is difficult to explain, seeing what a place it holds and how richly it is freighted with meaning. The great point of it is that—so far as his search is concerned—experience is the great teacher, all other means by which he will be led, guided, and enlightened being secondary to

that. Experience is direct contact with the primal facts and realities of the world. They do not adjust themselves to him; he must adjust himself to them—a fact expressed in the old religious doctrine of obedience to the will of God. By his bumping into them, by the knocks and obstacles on the way, he learns their nature and thereby becomes wise—if he possesses any talent for wisdom at all—in the ways of living.

LETTER G

This is a master symbol. Could it be removed—it and all it signifies—the whole structure of Freemasonry would collapse into chaos, its foundations destroyed, its guiding light eclipsed. In Operative Masonry the G undoubtedly referred to Geometry, and Geometry covered the whole of science as then known; but in after years, and inevitably, the Operative science became in Speculative Masonry a symbol of that Supreme Mind on which all science rests, God, the Sovereign Grand Architect of the Universe, to glorify whom is the final purpose of Freemasonry in all its grades and throughout the whole train of its Rituals.

LEVEL

This Working Tool of the Fellowcraft is, of course, an emblem of equality. But what is equality? The whole history of Europe and America from the eighteenth century to the present shows what a lot of dynamite is packed into this idea, therefore in Freemasonry it behooves us to make sure we know just what the Ritual means by it. Communism

is not meant, nor any leveling up or down politically or socially, nor does it mean that we ignore the inbred and ineradicable differences among men in their physical and intellectual endowment; these are realities, too patent to be swept aside by any sentimental ideal. It means that in the Lodge all are equal, each with the same rights, duties, and privileges as any other and on the same terms; and it means that all are equal before God, who is to each man all He is to every other. This fact is a working tool because without a knowledge and use of it no Fellowcraft can become a Master Mason in truth and reality.

LIBERAL ARTS AND SCIENCES

In the Middle Ages (the period of Operative Masonry) the branches of learning were divided into two groups: the *trivium* ("where three roads meet"), consisting of grammar, rhetoric, and logic; and the *quadrivium* ("where four roads meet"), consisting of arithmetic, music, astronomy, and geometry. Of those who received any schooling at all only a few ever advanced beyond the first group, so that he who had studied both groups was considered to have a complete education. The two groups together were called the Liberal Arts and Sciences, and the term became synonymous with education as a whole. It is in this sense that it became used as a symbol in Freemasonry to signify that he who would become a real Master Mason must have a complete education of the mind as well as of the hands. Ignorance and Masonry cannot live together in the same house.

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LIGHT

In Masonry there are Great Lights and Lesser Lights, a search for Light and More Light, and the motto of it all is "Let there be light." The profane wear the hoodwink; the initiated have had it removed, their eyes opened. What is this Light which thus streams about the Lodge, taking many forms, and working its miracles of revelation? It is knowledge, an understanding of truth, a comprehension of Masonry—but above all it is the vision of God, whom to know aright is to have that wisdom wherein the value and meaning of life consists. What a pity it is that to so many all this flashing symbolism is but mummery and a perfunctory performance!

LILY-WORK

The edge of the molten sea, the tops of the Great Pillars, and the chapiters were decorated with the lotus, symbolical of purity and peace. Throughout Egypt, among the Jews, and very widely elsewhere in the ancient world this flower was frequently used as an emblem of peace. Centuries later this became confused with the lily (perhaps because of reference to the latter in the New Testament) and this confusion appears in our ritual. Unquestionably it was the lotus, rather than the lily, that King Solomon used.

LION OF JUDAH

Among the twelve tribes of Israel, Judah was the royal tribe, from which the kings sprang; the Lion was its emblem, and the

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kings, Solomon among them, were, each one, often designated the Lion of the Tribe of Judah. As the hope for a coming Messiah, who should spring from Judah, developed, He also came to be denominated in the same way. Symbolically the lion, royal among beasts, became the emblem of life, and life-giving power, a meaning associated with our use of the Lion's Paw in the ceremony of raising.

LODGE

"Lodge" is very variously used in Masonry. It is often employed as a synonym for the Fraternity as a whole; it is the group of men comprising membership; it is the place in which Masons assemble; it is a name given to the drawing on the trestleboard; and it is a symbol. In the last-named capacity it is representative of the world, the heavens for its covering, the cardinal points of space for its walls, the earth and its seas for a floor, and the whole human race for its inhabitants. The point of such a symbolism is obvious: Freemasonry in its scope and intent is as broad as mankind and as a spirit and an ideal permeates the whole life of every Mason, outside the Lodge as well as inside,—a life to be lived, not a perfunctory morality for Lodge night only.

LOST WORD

From the standpoint of art and literature this is the most interesting of all our symbols. According to an old tradition the pronunciation of the name of Deity among the ancient Jews became lost, perhaps at the time of the

Babylonian captivity. From that time on the search for this Lost Word became the inspiration of Jewish theology. The same tradition has since appeared in many quarters and divers forms: a lost sanctuary; the lost chalice (or grail), from which Jesus drank at the Last Supper; the Blue Bird, immortalized by Maeterlinck; the Blue Flower, about which Henry Van Dyke wrote a book; and even in China the legend appears in a story concerning the Lost Empress. Always the essence of it is something precious that has escaped; the search made for it; and the use at last of a substitute. In Freemasonry the Word is the central secret of human wisdom which is nothing other than the knowledge of God, without which man remains confused and in darkness despite whatever knowledge of another kind he may have.

LOW TWELVE

This means twelve o'clock midnight, when the sun is at its lowest beneath the horizon. In ancient times, when so many of the symbols used in Freemasonry had their origin, twelve was the symbol of completeness: the sun completed its upward journey at 12 o'clock noon, and his downward journey at 12 o'clock midnight; the day was completed at that hour; the year was completed in twelve months; there were twelve signs of the Zodiac, twelve Tribes of Israel, Twelve Apostles. To go beyond completeness was to go too far and thereby count disaster, hence the unluckiness of thirteen. By all these tokens Low Twelve (or midnight) appropriately symbolizes the completion, or end, of life.

MASTER MASON

"Master" had originally the same general meaning as "doctor," and was a title to show that a man had completed a careful training in his trade or profession. The Master Mason was one who had completed his term as Apprentice, had learned the fundamentals of the Craft, and as such was entitled to all the rights and privileges of the Lodge. For this reason he was also called a Fellow of the Craft, as was indicated on a previous page. A Master Mason, therefore, in Speculative Masonry is technically one who has learned all the lessons, is a full-fledged member of the Lodge, having completed the work; in a more real sense he is one who has subdued his own passions so as to be master of himself.

MASTER'S HAT

"Why does the Master wear a hat?" is a question almost every Mason has asked himself. The custom harks back to the England of two or three centuries ago, when to remain covered was a mark of high position and authority. As worn by the Worshipful Master the hat is an emblem of his authority over his Lodge. It is apparent that an increasing number of Masters are falling into the custom of not remaining covered; this is unfortunate, because our symbolical system has its landmarks as well as our jurisprudence, and this is one of them, to ignore which is to rob the whole system of just that much significance.

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MASTER'S PIECE

When the Apprentice in a Lodge of Operative Masons had completed the years of his apprenticeship he was given a final test of his proficiency by being ordered to produce some difficult piece of work. This was called his Master's Piece. It would be a wise custom in our own Lodges if every newly-made Mason were given some task to do immediately upon being made a member to test his proficiency and to prove his zeal.

MIDDLE CHAMBER

It was here according to our Ritual (which departs widely from the historical descriptions of Solomon's Temple) that the faithful workmen received their wages. What are the wages of the Fellowcraft? He has toiled up a steep and weary ascent of study and effort, making his way through the thorny paths of the Liberal Arts and Sciences. What does it all avail him at the end? It avails him by bringing him to the Middle Chamber. And what is it? The rich rewards of culture, of education, of intellectual and moral enlightenment.

MOON

"As the moon governs the night!" What poetry this is! One of the Lesser Lights, this beautiful symbol causes us to hark back to ancient days, when life was full of moonlore, and men attached all manner of meanings, many of them fanciful enough, to that great ornament of the night-time heavens. Nearly always the moon was a goddess, as

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the Sun was a god, thereby becoming the emblem of the female, the receptive, the passive, just as the Sun was the emblem of the male, the active, the positive. The Master, or full-orbed and complete man, was a balance of the two, neither too hard nor too gentle, neither too aggressively masculine nor too passively feminine.

MOSAIC PAVEMENT

Roman architects were fond of using in all manner of buildings a decorated floor made by laying down a pattern consisting of small stones or tiles of various colors. They called it *musivium*, whence came the word "mosaic." In our symbol the Mosaic consists of black and white squares to represent two ideas: first, the "eternity of the world," suggested by the fact that the black and white squares represent days and nights which go on forever; second, the checkering of every human life with good and evil, pleasure and pain, joy and sorrow. The candidate walking across such a pavement typifies a man moving through life from birth to death among the vicissitudes of experience; it is not all white, neither is it all black, but a mixture of the two.

NETWORK

A part of the ornamentation of the balls, or bowls, on top of the Great Pillars of King Solomon's Temple consisted of "Net-work," a lattice of criss-cross lines. From the close reticulation of these lines, so that a complexity of many parts was changed into a single

pattern, this was used by the early Masons as a symbol of unity, to remind the brethren that however diverse they might be in talent or experience, or however wide apart their work might keep them, they were nevertheless linked each to the other in a common task and a common brotherhood of effort.

NORTH

As the region lying farthest away from the sun the North is a national symbol for darkness. In Freemasonry it represents the profane world, not as yet visited by the light of initiation, and that darkness which lies upon the ignorant mind. It is to point to this meaning that the north side of the Lodge Room is said to be dark. It is a curious fact that whereas in daily speech south is the opposite of north, and west the opposite of east, in our symbolism north is the opposite of the east because the former is the home of darkness, the latter of light.

NORTHEAST CORNER

From ancient times the corner stone of a building has been, ideally, supposed to lie in the northeast corner; the Entered Apprentice, erect, facing the East, with his Working Tools in his hands, is the corner stone on which the Craft is builded. How could it be otherwise? Death calls the Masters from the stage, one after another; except the youths came in, ready for the long, hard discipline of apprenticeship, there would be none to fill the ranks and passing time would erase the

builders' art from the world. If Entered Apprentice is the corner stone of the Craft, he is, in a larger sense, himself a symbol, reminding us that trained youth is the corner stone of civilization.

OBLONG SQUARE

Originally "square" meant "a right angle"; "a square" was a four-sided figure with all its angles right angles; an "oblong square" was "a square," two sides of which were longer than the other two sides; while a "perfect square" was such a right-angled figure with all its sides equal. The appearance of the "oblong square" in the Second Degree and of the "perfect square" in the Third is an indication of the fact—made so much of a hundred years ago, but now frequently forgotten—that Freemasonry is a progressive science.

ORDERS OF ARCHITECTURE

The curious passages in the Ritual which divide all architecture into five styles—Tuscan, Doric, Ionic, Corinthian, and Composite—is a puzzle to modern architects, for they know of no such divisions. The explanation is that these passages are a relic from the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries when the arrangement of architectural style under such heads was commonplace. The real idea behind the Five Orders is to accentuate the place of architecture in the Masonic system and in Masonic history. Except for the Drama of the Third Degree (and even that in its backgrounds) the whole Ritual is built

about architecture, draws its terms, figures, and most of its symbols from that art. Just as the well-trained Operative Mason was familiar with all styles of building the Speculative Mason is supposed to understand all the principles and arts in that moral and spiritual kind of architecture which has the erection of manhood as its aim.

ORIENTATION

The word means "to find, or face, the east." Until modern times nearly all temples were "oriented," if not toward the sun then toward the moon or some star, the idea being to permit light to fall on the altar at a certain time. Masonic Lodges are supposed to face the East, and so with the individual Mason who bows toward the East, or faces it, or goes on a journey toward it, all for the purpose of showing that one of the prime marks of a true Masonic life is to keep one's mind opened to light, ever eager to learn more, to see more, to understand better, to become more enlightened.

PARALLEL LINES

In the Monitor this symbol is interpreted as referring to the two Sts. John, Patron Saints of the Craft. What the symbol originally meant it is difficult to say: some believe it must have been a purely geometrical figure; others hold that it referred to the two solstices in June and December. Be that as it may, for two centuries or so the Sts. John meaning has been established and will now remain so. Why does Freemasonry have Pa-

tron Saints? It is an inheritance from the Middle Ages, when every organization had its own Patron. The custom was so thoroughly rooted that when the Operative Craft underwent its transformation into a Speculative Fraternity the old usage was retained.

PERFECT YOUTH

Owing to the nature of its work an Operative Lodge required of every Apprentice that he be whole and sound in body and limb. This has been preserved in Speculative Masonry in the form of the doctrine of "The Perfect Youth," which requires of every candidate soundness of mind and character and a good reputation, in addition to the necessary physical qualifications. Which is to say that Freemasonry is a body of picked men; neither a charitable nor a reform society, the duties of which call for moral strength and intellectual capacity.

PLUMB

As the emblem of uprightness, of rectitude, the Plumb should be kept in relation to the Level, symbol of equality, to remind us that Freemasonry has height as well as breadth. It is not enough that a man live up to his standards—savages do that; it is also required of him that his standards be high.

POINT WITHIN THE CIRCLE

This is a very ancient symbol which, in diverse times and places, has been given variety of meanings. In our own Monitor it is said to represent the individual surrounded

by the circle of his brethren; it is lawful, however, for a Mason to see in it more than that. It may mean the finite and the infinite in their relationship one to another; or God and the universe; or God in his sacramental relation to men; or it may be considered as an inheritance from alchemy in which it was the sign for gold, and all gold signified—the rarest and finest of all materials. When understood as a brother surrounded by the circle of his brethren it becomes, in a sense, a symbol of the whole of Masonry.

POMEGRANATE

This oriental fruit was used in the decorations about the chapters of the Great Pillars; what its meaning was as thus used is still pretty much of a mystery, but the weight of evidence is in favor of the meaning given in our Ritual, namely, that the pomegranate was a symbol of fertility, of plenty. What, however does this plenty mean in our Ritual? Obviously not what it means in the ordinary sense, but rather in the sense that in Freemasonry is provided everything needed by the Mason in living his Masonic life.

PORCH

The outpost of the Temple proper was a Porch, on which stood the Pillars J and B; it was, as it were, one end of a journey, the other end being the Holy of Holies. In our Ritual an Apprentice is said to be in the Porch and an Entered Apprentice Lodge is

said to be held in the Porch, to signify that, though the Apprentice has been admitted to the precincts of the mysteries of Masonry, he as yet stands at the outpost, his journey to the Sanctum Sanctorum being still before him.

POT OF INCENSE

In such ancient temples as employed animal sacrifices incense was used to conceal the odor arising from the shambles; from this use it evolved gradually into a sacramental or ceremonial rite which, because of its intimate connection with worship, became itself a symbol of worship, especially of prayer, a meaning borne by it as one of the emblems of the Third Degree.

PREPARATION

Before being initiated the candidate is supposed to know nothing of Freemasonry; relative to it he is in darkness, destitute, poor, blind, and helpless, therefore it is necessary that he be prepared. Superficially, this preparation consists of certain bodily conditions, but in a deeper sense the true preparation is made in the heart, where the candidate must develop that condition of spirit and mind which is necessary to his understanding of the Masonic teachings. This preparation is itself a symbol of the place of preparation in all human life; into none of the worlds of life—art, science, the professions, the trades—can a man enter if he be not duly and truly prepared.

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QUARRIES

Operative Masons—the fact is often forgotten—worked in the quarries as well as on buildings and in selecting; hewing out, and rough-dressing the stone exercised as much care as in building walls and spire. In Speculative Masonry the quarries stand for two different ideas: the group of petitioners from which members are selected, whence the custom of speaking of petitioners as “material”; and in the more mystical sense that the raw material of human nature and experience is the stuff out of which a Mason makes his character and builds his Masonic life. In the last analysis the two ideas come to the same thing; and if the responsible leaders of the Craft are asking with increasing concern that the Lodges more carefully inspect their material it is because they know that the temple of tomorrow cannot be any better than the building-stones being quarried today.

RIGHT HAND

In the Five Points of Fellowship, in the Sign of Fidelity, and in the salutation by which the Worshipful Master greets a new brother, the Right Hand holds a conspicuous and important place in our system. Anciently and universally, in greetings, in oaths, in gestures, and in religious ceremonies it has served as a symbol of fidelity; why should it not be, seeing that we are a right-handed race?

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RUFFIANS

Albert Pike reminds us that one of the Three Ruffians struck at the throat, the seat of free speech; one at the heart, the seat of free conscience; and one at the brain, the seat of the free mind. As thus interpreted Pike deemed the Ruffians to be priestcraft, kingcraft, and ignorance. This is suggestive, but one may doubt if the authors of our Ritual had in mind a meaning so specific, and even so narrow. Is not our great Legend of H. A. a drama of the life of the soul? We carry the Ruffians within our own nature—ignorance, apathy, passion, sin, it is such inner enemies as these that slay in a man all that which otherwise would make a master of him.

SALUTATION

Every Mason will remember that rite in which the initiate salutes the W. M. and the Wardens, a ceremony of beauty and significance which is more than a ceremony, for it is a symbol. As such, it signifies that recognition of, and loyalty to, the instituted offices of society in which are vested the power to make, interpret, and enforce the laws. Except a man makes the sign of fidelity to the civil authorities he cannot be a good citizen, and therefore will not be a good Mason.

SCYTHE

If the Hour Glass is the emblem of Time itself, the Scythe, another of the Emblems of the Third Degree, is a picture of Time as the blade which cuts the thread of life. Time has

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many aspects and appears in countless disguises, through all changes, through birth, growth, decay, and death; all these aspects are ignored by this emblem except the last. It bids us remember that all things come to an end, even the stars, and that such a tremendous fact is one every wise man must recognize, and understand, and reckon with.

SETTING MAUL

The Setting Maul was a wooden hammer used in setting the finished stone into its place in the wall; as such it was a natural emblem of the successful completion of difficult work. As used by the Ruffians this tool of victorious accomplishment was transformed into an instrument of destruction. It is, therefore, typical of so much that is good and evil; methods, devices, resources, means neither good nor bad in themselves, become one or the other according to their use, and in harmony with the motives behind their employment.

SHARP INSTRUMENTS

After the candidate has effected his entrance a "certain sharp instrument" is applied in a peculiar manner and a certain hint of the meaning of this is given. This meaning has especial significance to us because it sets forth the only real penalty that a Mason ever suffers for violating his obligation. For here we have symbolized the fact that everywhere confronting us is the worst law that "the wages of sin is death." Truth dies out in the liar, Beauty dies out in the vulgar,

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Goodness dies out in the wicked, and the way of the transgressor is hard. Would ours be a complete moral science if it ignored this Divine law built into the spiritual structure of man?

SILENCE

That Freemasonry has its Secrecy is a fact known to the whole world; but it also has its Silence and that is equally important. The best instructed tongue is the one which can remain still when it has nothing instructive to say. Masonic silence preserves the secrets of the tiled Lodge room; it protects the sanctuary of our mysteries from the profane; it is a standing admonition to every Craftsman to remember that the affairs of Masonry are for Masons only; and it is the cloak which charity throws about the foibles and follies of an erring brother.

"SO MOTE IT BE"

This phrase, which echoes so eloquently through our chambers of Ritual, has been in use by Masons for nobody knows how many centuries. It is found in the Regius MS. of 1390, the Craft's oldest written record, and has been constantly used ever since. *Mote* is from an old Anglo-Saxon word meaning *may*, so that the phrase means, "So may it be." It is therefore the Masonic form of "Amen," which goes back to the Old Testament, the significance of which is that the user thereby expresses his assent to the will of God, his complete resignation to the Providence of God.

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SOLOMON'S TEMPLE

There is no need to tell a Mason how largely Solomon's Temple bulks in our ritualistic system; it is, so to speak, the symbolical house in which our mysteries take place. The whole Masonic teaching is interpreted in terms of it, namely, every man should think of himself as an architect of his own life, and if he be a wise architect his trestleboard will call not for a building only, but a sacred building, with a Holy of Holies at the center of it fit for the dwelling place of the Divine Spirit.

SQUARE

As an emblem of the Worshipful Master the Square signifies that he is the responsible head of a group of builders, the tool being the emblem of architecture *par excellence*. As a Working Tool of the Fellowcraft it signifies that in building his own life a man must adhere to righteousness throughout, else it will fall into ruin. As one of the Great Lights the Square is a symbol of the earth, the earthly, the physical and material, and all the passions and appetites appertaining thereto, which in his progress towards becoming a real Master Mason the initiate must learn to subordinate to the intellectual, the moral, and the spiritual in his nature, typified by the Compasses, another of the Great Lights.

SUN

There is nothing dark about our Ritual; the sun shines throughout it all. It is the source of Light; for its positions in the heavens at

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dawn, noon, and evening the three stations are named; the candidate initiates its movements in circumambulation; and it figures as one of the Three Lesser Lights, where it symbolizes the active, aggressive, masculine power of human nature. As it rules the day so must the W.M. rule his Lodge, with firmness, regularity, and in such a way as to be a constant source of enlightenment to his brethren, especially the younger member.

TOKENS

The "token," as a symbol in Masonry, takes the form of a sign or grip given for the purposes of fraternal recognition. It signifies an outward act as evidencing an inward pledge. When one Mason takes another by the hand it is as if he said, "This physical act is the outward sign, or token, of the union of our minds and hearts." In popular use it has the same meaning, as when we speak of a little gift as "a token of our regard."

THREE, FIVE, SEVEN

Back of the symbolism of the Three, Five and Seven steps lies the profound conception of the Ascent as in itself a worthy and desirable task. Let us glance first at the group of three steps. The most familiar explanation of them is that they represent the Three Degrees, or the three principal officers of the Lodge. In either case the first three steps suggest to the candidate that he is being helped on his way by an organized fraternity, represented by the Degrees or the officers. Does not this have much to tell us? Is not this one of the

prime functions of Masonry? Instead of leaving the individual to climb on alone it surrounds him with its inspiration and its help. If we glance at the next group of five steps we find another teaching, equally valuable. We are told that this group of steps now represents to us (whatever it may have originally meant) the five senses; in other words, our physical body with its organs, functions, and faculties. What does this mean? Is it not this, that the very body itself, when kept in control by thorough discipline and when trained by education, may be a stepping stone toward the highest life? The third group of seven steps is interpreted as referring to the liberal arts and sciences; in other words, we are told that right learning and culture of the mind will lead us up and on. This is a teaching as badly needed now as ever, because so many men tend to make light of knowledge, or to excuse themselves for not having it.

THE TRESTLEBOARD

Before the time of the Reformation, builders did not use plans drawn to scale as architects now do, but laid out their building design on the ground, or even on the floor of the workshop or the Lodge. In early English Lodges this design was often drawn on the floor in chalk by the Master, and the youngest Entered Apprentice would erase it with a mop and water at the end of the ceremony; after a while, to make this labor unnecessary, "the plan of work" was drawn on a permanent board, set on an easel and exhibited during the Degree, as is still done in England.

The tracing board, as it stands in the Lodge, is a constant reminder to the Mason that, as a spiritual builder, he must have a plan or an ideal for his life; and when the Mason does live in loyalty to an ideal he is a man of character; his faculties work in unison, there is no war between his purposes and his behaviour, and he is able to stand among his brethren as a completed temple.

THE TROWEL

The Trowel is the symbol of that which has the power to bind men together. What is this unifying power? We very frequently meet with men who seem to lack unity in their makeup; a spirit of disorganization or anarchy is at work in them so that they seem to live at cross-purposes with themselves. What they know they should do they do not, and many things which they do they do against their own will. They may have personal force, but it is scattered and their lives never come to a focus. Of these men we say that they lack character and we say right. Character comes from a word that meant originally a graving tool; after long use the name of the tool came to be applied to the engraving itself, and thus the term has come to stand for a man whose actions give one an impression of definiteness and clear-cut-ness, like an engraving.

TWENTY-FOUR INCH GAUGE

Our Monitors make the Twenty-four Inch Gauge the symbol of time well systematised. Much of the waste and confusion of human

existence arises from men's failure to measure their work by some standard or rule; they float down the stream like chips, take things as they come and go and suffer themselves to be blown this way and that like a derelict at sea. Their days are as mere heaps of stone to which no quarryman has ever brought his tools. He who has learned how to transform time into life, deals with circumstances as an artist uses his materials; he has ever before him a plan laid out on his mind's tracing-board; he selects his materials and appoints each to its appropriate function, fitting and shaping all according to his design.

WAGES

The Mason is assured in the Middle Chamber, that corn, wine and oil shall constitute his wages. To the ancient operative Mason these substances served literally as wages. But even then they carried emblematical meanings; corn symbolized plenty; wine, health, and oil peace. Which is to say that the Mason is assured not only of those things requisite for his physical, but his inner self as well.

WEEPING VIRGIN

This symbol was unknown to the Ritual in the eighteenth Century; it is not now found in European systems, nor even in some American jurisdictions. According to such slender evidence as we possess it seems to have been invented by Jeremy Cross, the famous New Hampshire ritualist and pupil of Thomas Smith Webb, though some deny

this. Whatever may be the truth of the matter, the symbol is not of such importance as many others. It is an elaborate construction utterly lacking in that quality of naturalness and inevitableness which is found in all the older emblems, so that its very artificiality and complexity invites every man to fashion his own interpretation.

WINDING STAIRS

A vast amount of time and research has centered around the history and interpretation of this symbol. Space available here makes it impossible to go into the endless discussions of the theories involved, but it may be believed that the Stairway was first used simply because it was a necessary part of the symbolic temple of the Second Degree. Here were the pillars standing at the entrance on the porch; yonder was the Middle Chamber, on a higher level; some means of ascent was obviously needed to get the candidate from one to another.

But the difficulties in the way of accounting for the origin of the symbol need not perplex us while searching for an interpretation, for that is plain; the stair as a whole is a symbol of the progress of a man from the low level of natural ignorance toward that high level of spiritual power and insight symbolized by the Middle Chamber.

WORSHIPFUL MASTER

The Sun, Moon and Master of the Lodge, is, according to our best authorities, a Hermetic symbol and must be interpreted accord-

ingly. The sun throws out light from itself, it dispenses energy, and in the physical sense is the creator of life. In view thereof the Hermetists made the sun to signify the active principle of nature, the moon as the symbol of the passive forces of nature. This cleavage between masculine and feminine, active and passive, goes down to the roots of the world; it is a distinction found in all nature's processes and in every man and woman. Work and rest, ruthlessness and pity, hardness and tenderness. And then out of Isis and Osiris comes Horus, the master of life; from the Sun and the Moon comes the Master, even the Master of the Lodge, for the Master of the Lodge, in our symbology, is nothing other than a representation of the Complete Man.