

# THE DEEPER SYMBOLISM OF FREEMASONRY

“By Symbols is man guided and commanded, made happy, made wretched. He everywhere finds himself encompassed with symbols recognised as such or not recognised; the Universe is but one vast symbol of God; nay, if thou wilt have its, what is man himself but a symbol of God; is not all that he does symbolical; a revelation to sense of the mystic God-given force that is in him; a Gospel of Freedom, which he, the Messiah of nature, preaches, as he can, by word and act? Not a Hut he builds but is the visible embodiment of a Thought; but bears visible record of invisible things; but is, in the transcendental sense, symbolical as well as real.”

Thomas Carlyle, “Sartor Resartus”.

In the midst of these days of horror through which the peoples of the Earth are passing there is arising from out of the stricken nations an insistent cry for new ideals of life. The old conceptions have been weighed in the balance and found lamentably wanting; hence the eyes of millions are even now looking for something new (perhaps for signs and wonders) that will give them some vital ideal, some new conception of life to guide them during the dispensation which it is becoming obvious must eventually emerge from the present world-chaos. A repetition of the old orthodox conceptions can no longer satisfy, for an ever increasing number are coming to recognise clearly that the only remedy for the present ills is to be found in the recovery of the soul of man, in an uprising of the human spirit to assert the true values of life and to recapture such control of its material aspects as will make them subserve spiritual ends. Indeed, beneath all the perturbation of this present crisis there is the undertone of longing for spiritual deliverance, and thus the cry goes up for “a new heaven and a new earth”, in which righteousness shall dwell.

Now, it is significant that one aspect of the Divine Law is that there can be no longing for the ideal born in the human heart that is not a reflection of a Divine Reality which the soul dimly senses as truth. Whence it follows that there cannot be a soul-cry or a sincere demand for righteousness, peace and harmony, that will not bring its own fulfilment in due season. But, humanity has so much to learn before it can acquire the Divine point of view, and does it so slowly and painfully, that, among the mass, the transformative progress is almost imperceptible. The necessary learning, of course, implies much more than the formulation of intellectual concepts and the enunciation of doctrine concerning Righteousness and the Kingdom of God; it is an education that must so completely possess one's being and actuate one's conduct that to know the laws of the Divine Kingdom and to do them are inseparable. From the Christian revelation the Western world already knows the laws, and has been told something of the nature of the Kingdom of God, but, that its conduct does not keep pace with its available information needs no argument. It prefers to rely upon its own standard - that of its natural reason and judgment; and all the time a contrary, a higher standard, is being offered for its acceptance; a Divine Idea, transcending the primary conceptions we form is ever enticing the human mind away from its own standard towards a loftier one. There are, then, two

standards entirely contrary one to the other - that of the kingdoms of this world and the natural reason which prevails therein, and that of the Kingdom of God and the mystical consciousness, and the present world-war may be summed up as a struggle between alternatives. As the record of human evolution unquestionably demonstrates, each high conception of the natural mind comes, sooner or later, to be undercut and surpassed by a loftier one offered by the Divine law. To illustrate this fact by the use of Masonic imagery, the temple of the human mind is constantly being destroyed that a better one may be reared upon its site, and, as we are assured in the V. of the S.L., the Great Architect declares, "The glory of the latter house shall be greater than of the former" (Haggai 2, verse 9). Who, therefore, can doubt that the crucial nature of the present conflict and crisis is, in its inwardness, a terrific struggle for the supremacy upon this earth of the Divine law over our primary instincts and human reason and the unseen powers that dominate them. Because this is so, the crisis has provoked - as doubtless it was intended to provoke - in numberless minds, a perplexity originating in the very opposition of standards of which we are speaking. As one's private knowledge, the pages of the press, and public utterances indicate, how many consciences are being stirred today to reflect upon the rightness or wrongness of war; upon the problem of personal duty; upon the right attitude of mind towards our national enemies; and upon the proper direction of thought and prayer in regard to victory and the ultimate outcome? Now this perplexity could never arise at all had we made the transition we are called upon to make from the standard of this world to that of the Kingdom of God. Until the latter standard is attained, until it has possession of the personal life as completely as the former now dominates it, we are all "under the law"; we are in bondage to powers beyond our control, and we may well reflect upon the significant words of St. Paul in his Epistle to the Galatians, "But as the one that was born after the flesh persecuted him that was born after the Spirit, even so it is now" (Chapter 4, verse 29). The mystics alone, of whatever time and country, have known and followed the higher law, for only those whose consciousness has grown to mystical stature can truly know and follow it, but, nevertheless there are many members of our Craft who are genuinely preparing for initiation, and these must be up and doing, ready to spread the glad message of cheer and comfort to their Brethren, that is found in a realisation of the Mystic Life.

But in order to convince others we must first prove by experience and expression in our own lives that living the Mystic Life is a practical possibility. For the majority still think that mysticism and practicability are like the opposite ends of a magnet, whereas in reality they form the central point both blend. We must therefore demonstrate to the Brethren of our Order in particular, and to the world in general, that the Mystic Life does bring to the heart and into the life of every devoted follower a new heaven in which dwelleth righteousness, the righteousness of inspiring ideals, noble deeds, great sacrifices and love for all Earth's children, giving the ability to share righteousness with others, thus creating new earth conditions for those who enter into the realisation. In past ages mankind sought retirement from the world in an effort to create the new heaven within himself, but we are not a Monastic Order, and the modern Freemason is taught that to be practical he must seek his heaven in the very midst of the turmoil of life wherever the Great Law has placed him, and bring it forth, not only within himself, but also within his environment so that others may benefit by it; this is the ideal manifestation of the Masonic life.

Since it is perfectly true that the inner urge of the Mystic Life keeps us all striving for its expression in one way or another, this Paper is an effort to explain in terms of the deeper symbolism of Freemasonry, to those Brethren who are willing and ready to listen, just for what they are more or less blindly seeking and how they can attain it; for both the end and the means to its attainment should be known if we are to work effectively and efficiently.

It must be freely admitted that a Candidate proposing to enter Freemasonry today has seldom formed any definite idea of the nature of what he is engaging in, and that even after his admission he usually remains quite at a loss to explain satisfactorily what Freemasonry is and for what purpose the Order exists. He finds, as we know, that it is “a system of morality, veiled in allegory and illustrated by symbols”, but such explanation, whilst undoubtedly correct, is only partial and does not effectively enlighten him. For this reason we find that for many members of the Craft, to be a Freemason implies merely connection with a body which seeks to be something combining the functions of a social club and a benefit society. The majority discover, of course, a certain religious element in it, but as they are warned that religious discussion, which means, be it noted, sectarian religious discussion, is forbidden in the Lodge, they infer that Freemasonry is not a religious institution, and that its teachings are intended to be only secondary and supplemental to any religious tenets they may happen to hold. One sometimes hears it remarked that Freemasonry is “not a religion”, which in a sense is quite true; and sometimes that it is a supplementary religion, which is quite untrue. The actual position is that under the conditions of life imposed by our present imperfect world, Freemasonry fulfils a function which no merely formal system of religion can fulfil; it provides a sanctuary of refuge to which men of many religions may safely retire, there to find a common ground of fellowship, protected by the laws of the Order. For this reason in some Lodges the Candidate makes his first entrance to the Lodge room amid the clash of swords and the sounds of strife, to intimate to him that he is leaving the confusion and jarring of the religious sects of the exterior world, and is passing into a Temple wherein the Brethren dwell together in unity of thought in regard to the basal truths of life, truths which can permit of no difference or schism. To state things briefly; Freemasonry offers us, in dramatic form and by means of a dramatic ceremonial, a philosophy of the spiritual life of man and a chart or diagram of the process of regeneration. This philosophy is not only consistent with the doctrine of every religious system taught outside the ranks of the Order, but it also explains and elucidates the fundamental doctrines common to every religious system in the world, whether past or present. Allied with no external religious system, Freemasonry is yet a synthesis, a concordat for men of every race, of every creed of every sect, and its foundation principles being common to them all, admit of no variation - “As it was in the beginning; so it is now and ever shall be”. Hence every Master of a Lodge is called upon to give his “unqualified assent” to the Regulation which stipulates that, “it is not within the power of any man or body of men to make innovation in the body of Masonry”, since the “body of Masonry” (i.e. its substantial doctrine) already contains a minimum, and yet a sufficiency, of truth which none may add to nor alter, and from which none may take away; and as the Order accords perfect liberty of opinion to all men, the truths it has to offer are entirely “free to” Candidates according to their capacity to assimilate them, whilst those to whom they do not appeal, are equally at liberty to be “free from” them.

The traditional title of the Ceremony of reception or admission into Freemasonry (i.e. INITIATION), is derived from the Latin "initium" meaning "entrance into" or "a new beginning," and participation in the ceremonial rite signifies that the Candidate is preparing to break away from an old order and method of life and enter upon a new one of larger self-knowledge, deepened understanding and intensified virtue. In other words, the First Degree Ceremony of our Masonic Order is designed for the express purpose of introducing men to the first stage of a system of knowledge and self-discipline which, if faithfully followed up, will necessarily involve a transition from the ordinary natural state and standard of living towards what is known as the regenerate state, with its correspondingly higher standard. Such a transition, as the Ceremony of the Third Degree so dramatically illustrates, implies a turning away from the ideals of the outer world in the conviction that those ideals are fallacies of the senses and are but substitutional images for the Reality that underlies them. Here is the evidence for the Mystical Quest in Freemasonry, for it is in this sense that Master Masons, in possession of only the "substituted secrets", are pledged to the keen and undivertible search for "that which is lost", and by means of the course of self-discipline which the teaching inculcates, facilitate the recovery of the "genuine secrets" that lie buried or hidden at the "centre" or innermost part of the soul. The whole purpose of the Craft instruction is to declare the way by which that "centre" may be found within ourselves, and this teaching is embodied in the disciplines and ordeals delineated in the Third Degrees. Our Masonic doctrine of the Centre or, in alternative terms, the Christian axiom that "the Kingdom of Heaven is within" - is admirably set forth in the words of the poet Browning:-

"Truth is within ourselves, it takes no rise  
From outward things, whate'er you may  
believe, There is an inmost centre in ourselves  
Where truth abides in fullness; and to  
know Rather consists in finding out a way  
Whence the imprisoned splendour may escape  
Than by effecting entrance for a light  
Supposed to be without",

If the attainment of actual Initiation, as distinct from ceremonial advancement and nominal Mastership, is the main object of the Craft, we Freemasons are obviously required to develop special qualifications of mind and intention, for in order to be "properly prepared" Candidates, we must indeed be, as the word "CANDIDUS" itself means, "WHITE MEN", i.e. white within, even as we have been symbolically invested without with the Badge of our Order, a white Lambskin, the ancient emblem of purity and innocence, and also wear white gloves in token of our fidelity. Let us not forget that in addition to the traditional form of our preparation, which took place in "a convenient room adjoining the Lodge," we have each testified that we were "first prepared to be made a Freemason" in our own hearts. This is the true explanation of the reason why as Fellowcraftsmen we greet the Worshipful Master after his Installation with the age-old mystic sign of BREAST, HAND, BADGE, for this salutation, as we learn in the Second Degree, is the "HAILING SIGN", and with it we acclaim one who is representative of a "Master" of the Science, while, in the words of an old Masonic Ode, we pray:-

"May wisdom from on high Bind fast our mystic tie, So mote it be. May we united stand,  
And join throughout the land, With Apron, heart and hand, So mote it be".

Neither should we overlook the fact that the "Hailing Sign" is otherwise described as the "Sign of PERSEVERANCE", because as such it has always been associated with the aspirant for "LIGHT", who, like Joshua, is "fighting the battles of the Lord", and prays

“fervently to the Almighty that He will be pleased to continue the Light of day, until he has completed the overthrow of his enemies”. Perseverance in the work of the Masonic life is the duty of every Brother, for on his admission he is required to “seriously declare upon his honour”, that he will “steadily persevere”, and that, “if admitted, will ever afterwards act and abide by the ancient usages and established customs of the Order”

Every Masonic Lodge may be accurately described as a place of re-birth, and for this reason it is known to those who have been initiated in it as the “Mother” from whom they received their Masonic life. This fact is intimately related with the ritual instruction that the admission of every member of the Order is, “an emblematical representation of the entrance of all men on this their mortal existence”. Birth and re-birth, what is thereby signified? Let us consider the Masonic teaching and symbolism from the point of view of the “relative dependence of its several parts.” There are three persistent questions which continually present themselves to every thinking mind - WHAT AM I?, WHENCE COME I? WHITHER AM I DIRECTING MY COURSE?, and to these Freemasonry offers emphatic and enlightening answers. Each of us, we are instructed, has come from the mystical “East”, that eternal source of all life and light, and our life here on earth is described as being spent in the “West”, that is, in a world which is the very antipodes of our original home, and under conditions of existence as far removed from those from which we came to and which we are returning, as is West from East in our ordinary computation of space. Hence every Candidate upon his admission is placed, in a state of darkness, in the West of the Lodge. Thereby he is repeating symbolically the incident of his actual birth into this world as a blind and helpless babe, and through which in his early years, not knowing whither he was going, after many stumbling and irregular steps, after many tribulations and adversities incident to human life, he may at length ascend, chastened by experience, to larger life in the eternal East. The Instruction Lectures also embody this teaching in order to amplify the symbolism of the Initiation Ceremony, and accordingly in the First Section of the First Lecture the question is asked, “As a Freemason whence come you?”; the answer in this case coming from an Apprentice (i.e. from the natural man of undeveloped knowledge) is, “From the West”, since such a man supposes that his life has originated in this world, But, on turning to the Master Degree (First Section, Third Lecture), we find that the question is otherwise put, “As a Master Mason whence came you?”, and the answer here is emphatic, “From the East”, for by this time the Candidate has progressed and is deemed to have so enlarged his knowledge as to realise that the primal source of life is not in this world; that existence on this planet is but a transitory journey, spent in search of the “genuine secrets”, the ultimate realities of life, and that he must return from this temporary world of “substituted secrets” to that “East” from which he originally came. And further, as the admission of every Candidate into a Masonic Lodge presupposes his prior existence in the popular world without the Lodge, so the Masonic doctrine presupposes that every soul born into this world has lived in, and has come hither from an anterior state of life. But, upon entering this world, the soul must needs assume material form, and therefore it takes upon itself a physical body to enable it to enter into relations with the physical world. As we should be well aware, in the Craft system, the physical form with which we have been invested by the Creator upon our entrance into this world, and of which we shall divest ourselves when we leave the Lodge of this life, is represented by the Masonic Apron. It is by means of this eloquent symbolism that we are

intended to discern that our body of mortality is the real “badge of innocence” and the common “bond of friendship”, with which the Great Architect has been pleased to invest us all; this, the human body, is the badge which is “more ancient and more honourable than any other Order in existence”; and although it is but a body of humiliation compared with that body of incorruption, which we learn from the V. of the S.L., is the promised inheritance of him “who endures to the end” (see 1 Corinthians, chapter 15, verses 43-58); let us never forget that if we never do anything to disgrace the badge of flesh with which God has endowed us, that badge will never disgrace us. The Masonic Apron is unquestionably one of the most valuable symbols associated with our Speculative Order, and when it is first worn as an Apprentice it is of pure white lambskin; an emblem of that purity which we always connect with the lamb and the newborn child. In the first Degree it is worn with the flap raised, when it is a five-cornered badge, indicating the five senses, by means of which we enter into relations with the physical world around us, and thus constituting our “five points of fellowship” with the material world. But, indicating also by the triangular portion above, in conjunction with the quadrangular portion below, that man’s nature is a combination of soul and body; the three-sided emblem at the top added to the four-sided emblem beneath also making seven, the perfect number, for as declared in the worlds of an ancient Hebrew doctrine with which Freemasonry is closely allied (the Kabbalah), “God blessed and loved the number seven more than all things under His throne”, by which it is meant that man, the seven-fold being, is the most cherished of all the Creator’s works. For the same reason a Masonic Lodge has seven ceremonial Officers, three principal and four subordinate, and a Lodge to be perfect requires the presence of seven Brethren, thereby signifying that the individual man, in virtue of his seven-fold constitution, in HIMSELF constitutes the “perfect Lodge”, if he will but “know himself” and analyse his own nature. Thus while “five” can “hold a Lodge”, i.e. a man can be a man and live his life as a five-fold being, yet he must always remember that this is but a stage of growth, a place of incompleteness, and that he must ultimately prepare and add two more members (principles or powers) to his “Lodge”, ere he can be a true Master.

To each of us also from our birth have been given “three lesser lights”, by means of which the lodge within ourselves may be illumined. The “Sun” symbolises our spiritual consciousness (the higher aspirations and emotions of the soul), while the “Moon” betokens our reasoning and intellectual faculties, which in the same manner as the moon reflects the light of the sun in physical nature, should reflect the light coming from the higher spiritual faculty and transmit it into our daily conduct. The “Master of the Lodge” is a symbolical phrase denoting the will-power of man, which should enable him to be master of his own life, and control his actions, even as the stroke of the Master’s gavel controls the Lodge and calls to order the Brethren under his direction. By the assistance of these “lesser lights,” we are enabled to perceive what is, symbolically, called the “form of the Lodge,” i.e. the way in which our human nature has been composed and constituted, the length, breadth, height and depth of our being. By them too, we may perceive how Wisdom, Strength and Beauty have been employed by the Almighty Architect, like three grand supporting pillars, in the structure of our organism. Finally, with the aid of the “lesser lights” we may discover that there is a mystical ladder “of many rounds or staves” or, alternatively, that there are innumerable paths or methods by means of which men are led upwards to the spiritual Light encircling us all, and in which

we live, move and have our being. The three principal ones are Faith, Hope and Charity, the greatest of these being Charity or Love which comprehends them all and brings us nearest to heaven; hence we are instructed that “the Freemason who is in possession of this virtue in its most ample sense may justly be deemed to have attained the summit of his profession”, that summit being God Himself, whose name is LOVE. The Masonic Knights of Kadosh symbolise the Masonic ideals of the relations between God and a man by a double ladder having seven steps of ascent and seven steps of descent; the former are called “Oheb Eloah”, or “Love of God”, while the latter are termed “Oheb Kerobo”, or “Love of thy Neighbour”. These ladders therefore symbolise that to give true brotherly love to your neighbour you must first ascend in love to God. A more familiar form of this symbolism is that known to the Craft as “Jacob’s Ladder”, which is depicted on the T.B. of the First Degree. The emblems displayed on “Jacob’s Ladder” correspond to the stages in the ascent of the soul from Earth to Heaven (i.e. from the material to the spiritual world), and refer to the Three Degrees of Craft Freemasonry. On the lowest rung is the Cross, a variant of the Square, which, as the sign of Earth is appropriately placed at the foot of the ladder; it is a symbol of the active Faith that leads the aspirant to take the first “regular stop”. Midway in the ascent, the “Light from above” begins to dawn upon the Candidate, and a segment of the circle, which is a celestial sign, now appears, and he is inspired by the hope of attaining the goal; the emblem now takes shape of an Anchor, which is the symbol of Hope. But when the summit is at length reached the position of the elements of the emblem is reversed; the sign now assumes the shape of a Cup, the curve of the bowl being supported by the Cross as a handle. This is the loving-cup of Charity, the consummation of all the virtues, the token of loving kindness and tender mercy, whereby earthly power becomes likest God. It is the sacramental Chalice of the Holy Grail.

During the Ceremony of Initiation, it is after investiture with the Apron that the Candidate is placed in the N.E., corner of the Lodge. Thereby, he is intended to learn that at the moment of his birth into this world the foundation-stone of his spiritual life was duly and truly laid and implanted within himself; he is now charged to develop it, and on that foundation “raise a superstructure, perfect in all its parts”. At this stage, also, as representing the commencement of his active progress, the Candidate is shown two paths which are open to him. One of these is the path of light (leading to the E.), and the other is a path of darkness (signified by the N.), and the N.E. corner is the symbolical dividing place between the two. In symbolical language the N. always represents the place of imperfection and undevelopment, and for this reason the Masonic tradition allots the seats of the junior members of the Craft to the columns in the North. Thus the Initiate placed in the N.E., corner stands literally at the cross-way or parting of the ways, for on the one side of him is the symbolical path that leads to the perpetual light in the East, into which he is encouraged to proceed, and on the other is the path of spiritual obscurity and ignorance, the North, into which it is possible for him to remain or relapse. The Candidate, of course, ceremonially elects to “advance towards the E. by the proper steps,” and each stage or degree is a dramatic and comprehensive portrayal of the special qualifications necessary for the actual attainment of the grade.

The First Degree is the stage of preparation, self-discipline and purification, and it therefore corresponds with that symbolical cleansing accorded in the sacrament of Baptism, for the administration of which Rite two sponsors are necessary; the

Constitutions of our Order likewise require a Proposer and Seconder before a Candidate can be approved for Initiation. After purification come contemplation and enlightenment, and these are the special subjects of the Second Degree. The inward development which the Second Degree symbolises is typified by the lowering of the triangular flap of the Apron, which indicates that the higher nature has descended into and is now permeating the lower, and by the appearance of some elements of blue, the colour symbolical of the soul or the spirituality of man. The Ceremony of Passing is the equivalent to the Rite of Confirmation. It should be noted that the aspirant who is deemed to have attained proficiency in the work of self-perfecting to which the F.C., grade alludes, has now passed away from the N. side of the Lodge, the side of darkness and imperfection, and stands on the S.E., side in the meridian sunlight of moral illumination, but is yet still far removed from that fuller realisation of himself and of the mysteries of his own nature which it is for the spiritual adept or Master Mason to attain. Before that attainment can be reached there remains for him "that last and greatest trial by which means alone" he can enter into the great consolations and make acquaintance with the supreme realities of existence. Now, if the details of the Raising Ceremony are followed closely, it will emerge that although distinct reference to the death of the body is made, yet such death is obviously intended to be merely symbolical of another kind of death, since the Candidate is eventually restored to his former worldly circumstances and material comforts, and his earthly Masonic career is not represented as coming to a close at this stage. All that has happened in the Third Degree is that the Candidate has symbolically passed through a great and striking change, the regeneration of his whole nature, and it is graphically illustrated to him that it is over the grave, not of the dead body, but of the lower self, that the aspirant must walk before he can attain to the heights. What is meant, is that complete self-sacrifice and self-crucifixion, as all religions teach, are essential before the soul can be raised in glory from "a figurative death to a reunion with the companions of its former toils." It is therefore decreed that the soul must voluntarily and consciously pass through a state of utter helplessness from which no earthly hand can rescue it, and indeed a state from which any attempt to raise by means of the succouring human hand will definitely "prove a slip"; until at length Divine Help Itself descends from the Throne above and, with the "lion's grip" of almighty power, raises the faithful and regenerated soul to union with itself in an embrace of reconciliation and at-one-ment. In all the schools of the Mysteries, as well as in all the great religions of the world, the attainment of the spiritual goal enacted in the drama of the Third Degree is taught under the veil of a tragic episode, and in each there is a Master whose death the aspirant is instructed he must imitate in his own person. The Masonic prototype is, of course, "our Master Hiram Abiff", but it must be clearly understood that there is no historical basis whatever for the legendary account of his death; the entire story is symbolical and was purposely invented and adapted for the instruction of our Speculative Order. As evidence of this statement, if the Masonic legend of the "death of the Master" is closely examined it cannot fail to be perceived how obvious is the correspondence between this story and the record of that great pageant of Mastership is contained in the V. of the S.L.; in the one case the Master is represented as being crucified between two thieves, in the other he is done to death between two villains. In the one case appear the penitent and impenitent thief; in the other we have the conspirators who make a voluntary confession of their guilt and are pardoned, and the others who are found guilty and "sentenced to that death which the heinousness of their



crime so justly merited;” whilst the moral and spiritual lessons deducible from the stories exactly correspond. Further, as every Christian is taught that in his own life he must imitate the life and death of his Master, so every Freemason is instructed that he is “made to represent one of the brightest characters recorded in the annals of Freemasonry”; but in view of the fact that the annals of Freemasonry are contained in the V. of the S.L., and not elsewhere, it is not difficult to discern who the character is to whom the allusion is made. Freemasons will do well to reflect upon those significant words of that great authority and Initiate of the Mysteries, St. Paul, who affirms that we can only attain to the Master’s resurrection by “being made conformable unto his death,” and that it is in virtue of that conformity, in virtue of being made individually to imitate the Grand Master in His death, that we are made worthy of certain “points of fellowship with Him”; for the five points of fellowship” of the Third Degree are the “five wounds” of the Crucifixion. The three years’ Ministry of the Christian Master are shown to end with His death and resurrection, and these are comparable with the Three Degrees of the Craft system, which also end in the mystical death of the Masonic candidate and his subsequent raising or resurrection. It is also important to note that in the fifth chapter of the Revelation of St. John the Divine, the Patron Saint of the Craft, the Christian Master is symbolically called “the Lion of the tribe of Juda,” for it is with the “lion’s grip” that every Candidate in the Third Degree is “raised from the tomb of transgression.” To typify the advance by the Candidate at this stage of his development the Apron now assumes greater elaborateness. It is garnished with a light blue border and rosettes, indicating that a higher than the natural light now permeates his being and radiates from his person, and that the wilderness of the natural man is now blooming as the rose, in the flowers and graces incident to his regenerated nature, whilst upon either side of the Apron are two columns of light descending from above, and terminating in the seven-fold tassels which typify the seven-fold prismatic spectrum of the supernal light. Scriptural Authority for the symbolism of the “blue border” will be found on reference to the V. of the S.L., Book of Numbers, Chapter 15, verse 38, “and that they put upon the fringe of the borders a ribband of blue.” The candidate is now Lord of himself, the true Master Mason, able to govern that Lodge which is within himself; and as he has passed through the three degrees of purifying and self-perfecting, and squared, levelled, and harmonised his triple nature of body, soul and spirit, he is now in possession of “those qualifications which are essential in every candidate for the “Mastert’s Chair”. Hence, on attaining the Mastership of the Lodge, and after receiving “the benefit of Installation”, the Master Mason wears upon his Apron the triple Tau, which comprises the form of a Level, but which is also the Hebrew form of the Cross; the three Crosses upon the Apron of the Installed Master are therefore in correspondence with the three Crosses upon Calvary.

Briefly to sum up the import of the teaching of the three Craft Degrees, it is clear, that from grade to grade the Candidate is being led from an old to an entirely new quality of life. He begins his Masonic career as the natural man “in a state of darkness”, and he ends it by becoming, through its discipline, a regenerated perfected man. In order to attain this transmutation, this metamorphosis of himself, he is first taught to “learn to rule and subdue his passions”; then to purify and develop his mental nature, “to contemplate the intellectual faculties, and to trace them in their development, through the paths of Heavenly science;” and finally, by utter surrender of his old life and by losing his soul to save it, (“endue him with such fortitude that in the hour of trial he fail not, but, passing

safely under Thy protection through the valley of the shadow of death, he may finally rise from the tomb of transgression”), he rises from the dead a Master, a “just, upright and free man” made perfect, with larger consciousness and enhanced faculties, an efficient instrument for use by the Great Architect in His plan for rebuilding the Temple of fallen humanity, and capable of initiating other men to a participation “in the mysterious secrets” of the same great work. Freemasonry is, therefore, by means of a series of dramatic representations, intended to furnish those, who care to discover its purport and take advantage of the hints it throws out in allegorical form, with an example and explicit instructions to accelerate a return to that mystical “East” whence we came. In this connection the message of the Third Degree is emphatic and arresting; it declares that the human soul has fallen from a former high estate, and has become so deeply involuntarised in the limitations of phenomenal existence that it has now lost awareness of its own grandeur, and is suffering grievous inhibition and disorder of its inherent faculties. But, the importance of the Masonic tradition lies in the fact that it proclaims that, “that which is lost” was, within the Divine Providence, destined to be found, to be gradually redeemed from the evil consequences resulting from the “Fall”, and ultimately to be restored to even greater grandeur. The philosophic basis of the Masonic system leads us to recognise clearly that, in the course of our evolutionary re-creation through the ages, we have in some measure recovered from our disorder and loss of faculty, although it is stressed that we still fall far short of perfection and the possession of our full powers. The extent of our recovery is, as the Craft system indicates, to be measured by the present average standard of racial consciousness. This is mainly sensuous, for human knowledge is substantially, dependent upon, and limited by, the evidence brought to the mind by the five senses. For this reason Man, in the present age, and in his present imperfectly developed state, is symbolised in Freemasonry by the number Five and by the five-pointed star. The five senses and their co-ordinating instrument, the natural mind, useful and necessary working tools as they are for temporal purposes and for use in the search for higher Truth, are nevertheless not organs of true knowledge at all. They are, in fact, only temporary substitutions for corresponding transcendental faculties now lost to us, but which, it is promised, “time or circumstances” will restore to us. The time, Brethren, for their restoration is now; those circumstances are present today; they exist whenever an individual is sufficiently prepared to receive the “genuine secrets” of his being in exchange for the “substituted” ones. We must never forget that the real Initiate is one in whom the restitution of those “genuine secrets” has taken place; he is one, who, “by the help of God” and by his own patience and industry, has outstripped the slow evolutionary progress of the race, and has, in the familiar words of the Psalmist, become “anointed with the oil of gladness above his fellows.” Many today desire initiation into the mysteries, but it is decreed that no soul ever passes the Great Initiation in his outer consciousness until he had first found the Mysteries within himself; until he had learned to withdraw his consciousness from reacting to the outer happenings of life, and learned to live in close and intimate contact with the Mystic Life in that inner chamber of the soul, the “Sanctum Sanctorum” where the Master stands with outstretched arms before the altar of the Most High - from which flow the hidden streams of all life - crying, “Come unto me and rest in peace.” Here, in the inner shrine must we seek for the power that shall enable us to manifest the Mystic Life for it is laid down for our instruction in the V. of the S.L., “When thou prayest, enter into thy closet and when thou hast shut thy door

(i.e. shut out all vibrations of the outer life) pray to thy Father which is in secret (the Higher Self); and thy Father which seeth in secret (our inner motives) shall reward thee openly.” That is to say, He will enable us to manifest our inner ideals openly in our outer life. And this is the only reward that the true Freemason should expect, and the greatest boon that can be given to him.

When we are through with the sorrows of war, the cataclysmic changes of the Earth’s surface and the disasters which may be expected to descend upon humanity as the result of the great changes due to the incoming cycle (i.e. under the Sign of Aquarius see Paper, “Freemasonry and the message of Aquaria”), we will begin to realise that there is another and deeper world of consciousness whose changes, although marked and definite, are nevertheless of quite a different character. It is this inner world into which our consciousness has been born that is destined to manifest in the New Era as it never did before, throwing all the happenings of the outer world into their proper perspective. We may therefore predict with confidence that ere long, as men mark time, there will sweep over the consciousness of all who are ready, awakened, and eager to receive it, an outpouring of the graciousness of the love of God toward man. This may not be noticeable at once in the outer world for there will still be many inharmonious conditions to face, but nevertheless it will occur, not only in the inner lives of individuals, but also in the inner mystical lives of the nations. Hence, those of our Craft who earnestly desire to break through the hampering bonds of misconception that separate us from our brotherman, must awaken and pray without ceasing that we may light within our hearts the Lamp of Truth and Wisdom, and be waiting to go forth “to impart light and instruction to the Brethren”, Furthermore, the Masonic Order with its all-inclusive, cosmic philosophy, its devotional exercises and its personal help for each Brother, is especially prepared to gather in from the highways and byways all who will listen to the call, feed their hungry hearts with the Bread of Life, and quench their thirst with the Waters of Life, of which those who eat and drink shall hunger and thirst no more.

“Cheerfully we bear life’s burdens When we stand by one another, And our joys are multiplied If we share them with a brother.”

SO MOTE IT BE.