

AN INTERPRETATION OF THE MASTER MASON DEGREE WITH A SILENT EXEMPLIFICATION

**M.W. Bro. D. L. Gibson
Past Grand Master
Grand Lodge of Saskatchewan**

INTRODUCTION:

*** Candidate will please be seated in the North.**

It must be remembered that Masonry was not invented; it grew and, likewise, its interpretations grew with the birth of adepts through the centuries. However, Masonry as we know it began in England and this view seems to have been generally adopted. In many respects, however, it is a reconstruction of the Secret Doctrine, a philosophy common to Indians, Egyptians, Chaldeans and Hebrews. Thus we are not entitled to say one interpretation is right and another wrong; both may be right. Hundreds of papers and books have been written on the Third Degree. What is presented here is only a fraction of the information available but it is hoped it will serve to stimulate the brethren to develop their own interpretations.

Those of us who value the inner meaning of Masonry owe a debt to many unknown brethren and part of the duty imposed on us is that we shall not hastily tamper with the ritual just because we do not understand the significance of a phrase or think that by revising it we can make the wording run more smoothly. However, since Masonry is old, it must be remembered that its rituals in the course of years have been revised and continually grafted on to the old stock; just as Christianity has taken over a vast mass of pre-Christian ceremonies and symbols, the student of Masonry is perfectly entitled to consider that the Christian and the pre-Christian interpretations of these symbols are equally deserving of respect.

The persistent questioning of every inquiring mind demands answers to the questions: What am I? Whence came I? and Whither I go? In reply, spiritually developed brethren affirm that they are Sons of God and that they came from the East, the seat of Perfection, and that they are destined to eternity. They regard initiation as consisting of three stages:

- (1) Purification
- (2) Illumination and control of the mental nature
- (3) Perfection by regeneration

These three raise the candidate above common human level to that of a spiritual adept or real Master Mason.

Initiation means a new beginning - a break away from the old life in order to find a new order of life - and the wisest and most advanced of us is perhaps still but an Entered Apprentice in this knowledge. If we do not spiritualize our knowledge we will increasingly materialize it, and thus the royal art of "Know Thyself" will become lost as were the genuine secrets. The candidate sits in the North as does the Master Elect of a Lodge prior to his installation in the East. In both cases is signified the state of underdeveloped divine attributes, since in the north there is a darkness, pregnant with potentialities.

*** Candidate will approach the altar.**

The questions require a separate dissertation but, as they are capable of great expansion, only a very limited exposition will be given here. Hidden Mysteries

The hidden mysteries of nature and science are not physics or chemistry but are much deeper in symbolism. Science is derived from the Latin "scire" -to know -and science is literally knowing or the act of knowing. The act of knowing is the exercise of consciousness. Hence, nature and science mean an intelligent search for God in all His glory and, since nature herself is the great master of silence, she teaches silence and contemplation. Allegorically speaking the hidden mysteries of nature and science may refer to "human nature and the science of self knowledge:"

Wages

The spiritual craftsman not only earns wages proportionately to his work but his own labors automatically supply them. God, as the Mason's employer, has already given them to him in advance and he has only to use them as he becomes justly entitled to them by his own labors. The wages of sin are death but the Fellowcraft is not paid the wages of sin. He accepts his wages without any doubt or hesitation because body and mind have been purified and thus they can be gladly accepted. Ward states that the wages we receive consist of the power to comprehend the nature of God who resides in the temple of every Mason. We receive from God exactly the spiritual wages we have earned -no more, no less.

Specie

Money is the visible sign of universal force in its origin and true action. it belongs to the Divine. Hence, to renounce it is an error, as it leaves the power in the hands of evil forces. The acceptance of specie is correct, since this is to reconquer it for the Divine to whom it belongs and to use it for the Divine life.

Receipt

What is "unbounded confidence"? It is Faith and "Faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things unseen."

Pillars

The pillars speak for themselves, in as much as the candidate has learned that wise activity (Boaz) must be balanced with an equally wise passivity (Jachin), if one is to become established in immortal strength and to stand firm, spiritually consolidated and perfect.

*** Candidate may now retire with the Deacons.**

The opening of the Lodge is full of symbolism.

The Junior Warden (the mind of man) is tried by the square to guarantee his upright conduct and by the compasses to determine how close he is to the centre of perfection .After this he is asked from where he has come and his answer is from the East, the place of perfection where once before the fall of man all knowledge was centred. However, it is necessary for him to journey to the new world in quest of that stage of perfection, which the world once knew and has been lost due to the depravity of man; and which can be found only at the centre or the regenerated heart of man, the dwelling place of the Most High. The Junior Warden hopes to find the secrets at his own centre, the most sacred shrine on earth, which may provide a temple of peace, purity, power, pity, faith and hope.

The W.M. asks the J.W. if his spiritual nature has evolved sufficiently to control both soul and body. The J.W. suggests he be tried by the emblem of upright conduct (the square) and virtue (the compasses) to prove that together the square and compasses indicate the end of the Science, that is - domination of the material (square) by the spiritual compasses

Truth abides in fullness at the centre of "the point within a circle" of our own nature, from which no man or Mason can err, for it is the Divine Kingdom latent in us all, into which we have as yet failed to enter.

Ball, a profound student of Asiatic literature, states that mysterious names, which were unlawful to utter, have played a great part in influencing the religion of the spirit and the life of man. We may trace the existence of such names from the earliest times of which any record is left us. An early trace of this scruple may be seen in the words of Amos 6: 10 'Then shall he say, hold thy tongue, for we may not make mention of the name of the LORD' A Master Mason's Lodge is said to be opened on the centre, because the brethren present, all being MM's, are equally near and equally distant from that imaginary central point which constitutes Perfection.

The true secrets are lost but we are told that the gateway of "death to self" opens the way to the point within the circle where the longing spirit will find peace in the arms of the father of all.

*** Candidate will step into lodge while preparation is discussed.**

In our Masonic system we acknowledge two opposed positions, that of the Right and that of the Left. In preparing the candidate both sides are prepared since "The Right emblemizes Effort, Activity and so Establishment". The Left symbolizes conscious Faith, Passivity in Action and through it or by it "In Strength". The candidate needs to be "established in strength" to undergo the ceremony of being raised

The arms bared signify power which may be either dynamic or static. The knee is the link with a dual function, (a) to enable movement of the body guided by the Spirit of God and (b) by strength to support this ambulatory temple upright The heel is a sure foundation often symbolized in sacred writings. Both feet are slipshod, symbolizing the ancient act of homage and humility. Naked feet are in many parts of the world today a token of respect and reverence in the presence of Deity. Even Pythagoras stated "Offer sacrifices and worship with thy shoes off" and Moses earlier at the burning bush was instructed to remove his shoes. The breasts are the repository of faith and love and lead directly to the heart of man. In this degree the candidate advances with both breasts open to the world denoting courage and fortitude for the trials to come.

Having passed through the development of our physical and mental degrees we are now prepared for the spiritual revelation. The rite of disalceation now extends to the deepest understanding of our approach to the true union of the spirit with its Maker.

*** Candidate moves into position for reception.**

In the first degree the candidate is received with a warning; in the second with instruction and in the third with an appeal to reflect on matters of a moral and spiritual nature contained within the Points of the Compasses .

*** Brother Jr. Deacon apply the compasses.**

By being received on both points of the compasses we realize this instrument draws a circle by beginning at a point and coming back to where it began. By this emblem we represent the beginning of life and the circle we run to the end, arriving at our eternal destination, thus indicating the completion of our earthly pilgrimage and suggesting the continuity of existence. This portrays the symbol of the Almighty's eternity, the Alpha and the Omega, the first and the last, without beginning and without end.

The lodge is dark, reminding us of the necessity of depending on "the light which is from above" without which our reason would be inadequate for our wants as it is light which banishes ignorance. The darkness of the lodge may be emblematical of the valley of the shadow of death. However, the brother is a candidate for the Kingdom of Light and as such the dead man comes to life in the truest sense.

In the Dutch ritual the candidate enters the lodge facing backwards, he moves east but faces west, slowly advancing but looking longingly toward the old life and its fascination. He is symbolically still in worldly possession.

*** The Candidate will kneel.**

The blessing of the Creator of all things is implored to assist the whole lodge. Since the candidate is symbolically to pass through the valley of the shadow of death, representing Hiram Abif, the prayer requests for him a strong heart and keen insight, so that that which is now a symbol may hereafter become a fact, and that from the tomb of transformation he will rise to the stature of a Perfect Man.

*** Candidate will rise and proceed to J.W.'s station and stop.**

The three perambulations around the lodge represent an indefinite period of time in the length of the life of the candidate who, at the conclusion of his first 7 years as an Apprentice, was a moral man. At the end of the next 5 years as a Fellowcraft, he has learned in the art of knowing God through contact with nature and science studies. The circumambulations also show we are squaring the lodge (or ourselves) to prove we have learned to harmonize the varied experiences of our life with a definite ideal.

The testing by the Wardens is symbolic of the testing we experience, not only on the material side of our lives for testings come to us all amid our earthly existence, and are so in order that by our personal sufferings, both physical and mental, we are pulled up as it were to take stock of ourselves. They are a help to us in comprehending the finality of all things, which is reality; whence we come and whither we go.

The keynote of the examination of the J.W. is that we must discover whether by our Fellowcraft studies our mind has been developed to the point where we are ready for advancement.

*** Candidate will move to Senior Warden's Station.**

The Senior Warden, or the soul, further tests to determine whether our education has been built on such a foundation of faith that the qualities now being gained shall never be shaken. If one's faith is proved to be well founded, then the testings will help one to realize that man is a spiritual being, and that mind or soul and body are merely the garments of one's manifestation.

*** Candidate will face the East.**

The first three steps stand for God and with His help we pass over the grave symbolically trampling down our bodily nature under foot. The four steps to the altar denote man; the two added together make seven, to form the perfect union and this is what is required if a Mason is to reach the centre. In his search for Divine Truth or the Lost Word, he reaches the centre.

*** Candidate will proceed to the altar.**

The centre of the Lodge is its most vital and sacred point and where Divine energy is most concentrated. When taking the obligation the candidate kneels in direct alignment with the descending rays from the G, and bears the full stress of the current or electrical charge of the Divine Spirit. The Divine current or spirit floods his heart and expands his mind, enabling him to give the utmost attention to his obligation and thereby obtain a complete understanding of the Fatherhood of God and the Brotherhood of Man.

*** Candidate will kneel.**

The penalty of the obligation is very reminiscent of the way the dead are cremated in India in honor of Shiva. There the corpse is burnt near running water, preferably the Ganges, and the ashes are thrown in the air over the river to the four cardinal points, that the winds may scatter them. It must be remembered that Shiva represents the destructive attribute of Deity and he makes the penal sign of a MM on his statues.

Some believe that the penalties draw attention to occult centres of the body. In this degree the Solar Plexus, the most important occult centre of all, is the object of attraction. The monks of St. Athos near Salonica fix their eye on this part to achieve Beatific vision.

In "Signs and Symbols of Primordial Man" the destruction of Apap, the greatest serpent of evil, is given in these words, "His body shall be cut in pieces and burnt to ashes and those ashes scattered over the face of earth and water by the four winds of Heavens". Thus symbolically the penalty is the destruction of all evil forces in man.

*** The Worshipful Master comes down from the East.**

In the Fellowcraft Degree when one point of the compasses is over one arm of the square, we are deemed fit to learn more of spiritual truth; now that both points are revealed the spirit has triumphed over the material. We are expected to obey the voice of the spirit and discard all earthly desires. The Book of History which dates back to 2,000 B.C. states, "Ye officers of the Government, apply the compasses". Later Mencius, living around 300 B.C., taught that men should apply the square and compasses morally to their lives, and the level and the marking line as well, if they would walk in the straight and even paths of wisdom and keep themselves within the bounds of honor and virtue." In the Volume of the Sacred Law, Prov. 8: 27-30 we read in the Revised Version, "When he established the heavens I was there; when he marked out the foundations of the earth, then was I by him as a master workman". In the King James Version, the compasses are specifically mentioned.

*** Candidate will rise.**

The Master now reviews the system of initiation showing how it is divided into three clear cut stages.

First, turning away from the attractions of the outer world and its allurements of money and metals. The purification and overcoming of the bodily and sensual tendencies. As long as we are "in worldly possessions" we cannot detach ourselves and truly begin the work of self purification, which is our apprenticeship work of seven long years.

Then five more years have been allotted to the analysis, discipline and obtaining control of the mind, thought, as well as the intellectual and psychic faculties. In ancient systems once the candidate had purified the body and mind he was said to be mystically twelve years of age and thus ready for initiation - and from initiation to mastership, which required complete domination over the lower self, took eighteen years: Thus, one who attained this exalted rank was said to be mystically 30 years of age.

The three ruffians symbolically may represent Ignorance, Intolerance and Fanaticism. Ignorance is the night of the mind but a night without moon or star. The true Mason seeks light so ignorance can be removed. Intolerance is the arch enemy of Freemasonry. Masonry teaches equal rights for all mankind, both political and religious. Fanaticism "the frenzy that overbalances the mind" is the Grand Master of assassins and a foe of all humanity. It has mocked religion and is today seeking to undermine and destroy our whole civilization.

The myth of the third degree illustrates a philosophical and religious truth, which is - the doctrine of the immortality of the soul. All we know of Hiram Abif is contained in I Kings 7:13-14 and II Chronicles 2:13-14, stating he was a widow's son. He was a very skilful workman and was sent by Hiram, King of Tyre, to King Solomon to superintend the building of the temple. The account of his death, of the discovery of the body and subsequent burial is all traditional because in I Kings 7:40 it says, "So Hiram made an end of all the work that he made King Solomon for the house of the Lord." Hiram Abif, to Masons, portrays the mythical symbol of man, the dweller and worker in the world. As the operatives built a temple on Mount Moriah in which Jehovah was to dwell visibly by his Shekinah, so speculative Masons construct a temple in their hearts as the dwelling place of God.

Hiram Abif is a personification of the beauty aspect of Divine Creative Energy, figuratively as representing the cosmic builder or Great Architect by whom all things were made.

A version of the allegory of Hiram's death is that of the Jr. Warden (mind), Sr. Warden (soul), and Worshipful Master (spirit). Man's mind may be punished by many blows but this does not kill him; his soul may strike him, and does on several occasions, but he does not succumb. However, when the spirit is broken by an unerring blow, man dies.

Note that all blows were aimed at the head, the seat of the intellect. Thus, the forces of evil, unable to prostitute the secrets and truths of life, attempt directly to accomplish destruction by destroying the intelligence. However, Masons having died to evil need have no fear of physical death. It is not physical death but spiritual death we need to fear.

Wilmshurst says, "Beneath the allegory of the death of the master is expressed the universal truth that mystical death must precede mystical rebirth. "Ye must be born again." It is only thus that all Master Masons can be raised from a figurative (not a physical) death to a regenerated state and to the full stature of human nature." Claudy states that raising

"presents us with eternity in the midst of life". Entering the tomb is not a physical transition; it is a moral awakening. "This, my son, was dead, and is alive again".

The darkness visible in the allegory refers to the model of the ideal lodge and may be traced back to the Seven Stars or our seven emblematic lights. To Milton, evidently, darkness visible, meant a general intuition of the spirit when detached from physical conditions, a mind's penetration into the realms of the ethereal. Pope, a hundred years later (1740), wrote "of darkness visible, so much be lent as half to show, half veil, the deep intent". Since Pope was a Mason, this sums up his illustration of Masonry, some exoteric, but mostly esoteric in content.

*** Candidate will take position in the grave.**

The Tomb of Transgression is the Tomb of Transformation and is simply the gate of life, a dark passage opening out into a world of everlasting light.

Dr. Stukeley, FRS, who was initiated in 1721, was convinced that Freemasonry was the remains of the ancient mysteries of the East. In Egypt the candidate portrayed "Osiris"; in the Dyonesian Rites that of Bacchus murdered by the Titans. The Eleusian myth was based on the rape of "the Goddess of Corn" - or certainty of death and eternity or resurrection. Even the Druidic Rites were concerned with the rebirth of the candidate. Death to self is the portal to true life. There is no other way.

Ecclesiastes 12:1-7, "Remember now thy Creator" tells very dramatically in seven verses of life's span of years. This allegorically exquisite prose poem must not be forced into any single line of interpretation whether anatomical or atmospherical. In short -Rejoice in your youth but seek the wisdom of God and obey before the clouds of adversity gather. Time weakens the body, trembling hands, legs spindly, restless nights, faulty hearing, voice failure, poor eyesight and lack of teeth to chew with. Further, exertion of any kind brings fear; the hair turns white and man becomes a burden even to himself. He has no desire to live, and paid mourners carry him to his grave. The actual symbols of dissolution and death are described in four different ways and man returns to the dust. Haywood prefers to see in these verses the metaphors drawn from an Oriental thunderstorm. It is a pity that Verse 8 is not included, "Vanity of vanities, said the preacher, all is vanity". This is a great lesson in humility.

The soul must pass through a state of utter helplessness from which no earthly hands can rescue it, as portrayed by the slips of the Wardens. The J.W., who has only learned moral excellence, cannot raise man from his tomb of transgression. The S.W., using the Fellowcraft grip of intellectual powers with all his arts and scientific background, cannot raise man. The third method, that of the Lions grip of the spirit, with the assistance of the soul and mind of man, raises the candidate from his tomb of transformation. The grip of the 3rd degree is regarded by some as the eagle's claw. The eagle has been recognized as an emblem of Divine Spirit - the Lord and giver of life. Hence, the candidate is rightly raised from his figurative death "to a union with his former companions" by the grip or hand of the Divine Spirit. In Egypt, the lion was the personification of strength and power, but was usually associated with the idea of the regeneration of the sun and, therefore, with resurrection. The method of raising is employed in every rite, whether ancient or primitive.

*** Candidate will now stand and the Emblems of Mortality will be shown to him.**

By contemplating the emblems of mortality the Mason realizes that self knowledge brings about an understanding of all things. Socrates wrote "Know Thyself" to which has been added "and you shall know God," but it must be remembered that such a study requires one's whole energies upon the task. True self knowledge is the unobstructed conscious union of the human spirit with God. The skull is given prominence because it is the seat of consciousness which opens up our intelligence to the Universal mind of God.

The bright morning star has brought consternation to some brethren, as early as 1735, when some Masonic writers stated that this was a reference to the star that guided the Magi of Christian tradition travelling from East to West in their quest for the Great Master. However, "that Bright Morning Star" is far from being an exclusively Christian one. The Greeks called Venus the Light Bringer, Levi regarded the five pointed star as a sign of Man, and among Masons it may be considered as the Universal centre or regenerated mankind. To truly see the star, we must do more than gaze with our bodily eyes; we should lift up our whole nature to Supreme Reality and realize that the Sun of God's Truth has become an inner light that illuminates his interior as it does his outlook; thus providing that "in His light we shall see light".

Those who have passed into the Divine Gloom have been comforted by Isaiah 60:19 - "The sun shall no more be thy light by day, neither the moon by night, but the spirit shall be to thee an everlasting light and thy God thy glory and the days of thy travail shall be ended". As a final example of this time immemorial belief, consider that most ancient prayer still uttered daily by thousands of our fellowmen in the East.

From the unreal, lead me to the Real.
From darkness, lead me to Light.
From the mortal, bring me to Immortality.

The exoteric teaching of the Hiramic legend shows a noble man dying rather than betray a sacred trust. It also points out that everyone should lead a good life in this world in preparation for the next. And finally, Masons are taught to constantly struggle for an ideal, so our lives be triumphant.

Wilmshurst emphasizes that the whole ceremony of the raising does not involve the physical death of the body and its faculties, for to "the companions of his former toils" the purified mind will hereafter be reunited. But now they will be his servants, not his master. The raised Mason will live his allotted span not for himself, but for the uplifting of his fellowmen to his own high degree. His own spiritual evolution is now complete and he now lives to help humanity.

This mystery play conceals far more than it reveals and is worthy of much more elucidation than can be given in this dissertation.

*** Candidate is in North, facing East.**

The password literally translated is - the father of artificers, a skilled worker in brass and iron. It symbolizes "Labor in acquiring truth and denotes worldly possessions." Tubalcain conveys the lesson that worldly possessions in themselves bring death to the soul and prevent spiritual progress. Spiritually minded men are oftentimes hampered by the acquisition of worldly professions, since it is "easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter the Kingdom of God". Knapp says the moderns

substituted Tubalcain in the Third Degree for - tymboxein, "to be entombed". However, Tubalcain may have been derived from Hebrew "Tebel" meaning world; "Ganah" meaning to buy or possess. In Greek, the word means "I prepare my sepulchre" and it is supposed to be spoken by the candidate advancing to the rank of a Master Mason .

In interpreting the signs one must remember that they are allegories of the "fall of man". All five signs will be explained here.

The Sign of Horror expresses dismay at our own personal sin and unworthiness; by giving this sign we suddenly become conscious of and identify ourselves with all the sin and evil in the world.

The Sign of Sympathy is an act of personal sorrow and contrition for that sin.

The Penal Sign only requires a little thought to discover that the bloodthirstiness is superficial and the veil is soon lifted. This sign may be associated with Hebrews 4:12-13, where the mystical sword is spoken of as piercing even dividing asunder the soul and spirit -a discerner of the intents of the heart, a sword so incisive that there is "nothing unmanifest to it". The other symbolical representation goes further in history and may be referred to as dividing the heart and mind from the regenerative principle (Phallic worship).

The Sign of Grief refers again to our sorrow, and is an expression of sadness for the fall of man.

The Sign of Distress, with the words, suggests the anguished soul straining for spiritual rebirth and is a well recognized psychological phenomenon in the higher reaches of the mystic way.

The five points of fellowship are exoteric signs, and mean we will

1. assist a brother in distress
2. support him in all his virtuous undertakings
3. pray for his welfare Lord help me to live from day to day In such a self-forgetful way That even **when I kneel to pray My prayer may be for others**
4. **keep his secrets inviolate, and**
5. sustain his reputation.

Jones states the craft was familiar with the five points long before we have any evidence of the Hiram degree. They are known and used by the Dervish Rite, among West African Negroes, the Red Indians of Central America and apparently also known to the ancient Druids. The Omnic words used at the conclusion of the 5 P.O.F. are considered by some to be a symbol of the power of the Grace of God by which men are raised from death to Salvation. Other writers feel that the two words expressed at the conclusion of the 5 P.O.F. as used in the English constitution may be explained by saying the one was used by the Ancients and the other by the Moderns, and when Union took place in 1813 the two were retained. Palia translates Hiram as "Guru", teacher of supreme knowledge, divine light and wisdom, meant for the perfected man. That knowledge is known by the divine trinity, but every Mason may in due time be able to participate in it. "Hiram is slain" means that the faculty of enlightened wisdom is cut off from us due to the fall of man. The absence of that supreme wisdom has thrown us into utter confusion. The master is smitten and the full blaze of light and perfect knowledge is lost to us - yet by divine providence there remains a faint light in the East.

* **The Master returns to the East.**

* **Candidate will proceed to the Senior Warden for investiture.**

It is thought that the colors of Masonic regalia were derived from the colors of the Noble Orders of the Garter and the Bath. The Oxford Blue for Grand Lodge, and Cambridge Blue for private lodge clothing. However, blue universally denotes - immortality, eternity, chastity and fidelity; pale blue in particular represents prudence and goodness. The Bible mentions many liturgical uses of blue. The silver on the M.M. apron represents the moon, and is sometimes alluded to as the soul.

Wilmshurst states that the blue border and rosettes indicate that a higher than natural light permeates the candidate's being and radiates from his person, and that the wildness of man is now blossoming as a rose. On either side of the apron are two columns of light descending from above streaming into the depths of his whole being, terminating in the seven-fold tassels which typify the seven-fold spectrum of supernatural light, and signify that we have the universal number of completeness.

The addition of the 3rd rosette indicates the union of body, soul and spirit; further, the triangle formed by the rosettes denotes fire, the destructive side of the Deity. The spirit or ego, that Divine Principle in man is represented by the triangular flap of the Masonic apron.

* **The Candidate will proceed to the East.**

The Tracing Board is a pictograph illustrating many truths in one and is capable of several interpretations, according to ones spiritual attainment and each of such will be true on its own level. It appears simple but it is heavily charged with meaning, since it summarizes the whole degree and connects it with the others.

The three 5's on some Harris Boards are given in Hebrew, the fifth letter He, which is especially sacred and signifies the out-breathing of the Holy Spirit; thus, the 5's, like the five pointed star, have a mystical significance and repeated three times signify the divine immortal breath that gives life to all on this earth. Esoterically the 5 s may also allude to the 5 higher principles of our attainment, (1) the Spirit, (2) the Soul, (3) the Spiritualized Intellect, (4) the Intelligence and (5) the controlled and dedicated physical body.

The three fellowcraft lodges which went in search represent (1) those who found nothing the physical senses of man, (2) the next company represent the soul, since the soul realizes that death does not end all and (3) the third group represents the power which tell us right from wrong, and ultimately punishes us for our offences, is what we call conscience, and this is the Divine spark within us - the Spirit. The fact that the scoundrels were found in the West, the region of death, teaches us that the just retribution of all our sins whether of body, soul or spirit, will overtake us after death.

Allegorically, many are like the Fellowcraft lodges that went in different directions; many make no important discovery throughout the length of their days - we seek for pleasure and diversions, in intellectual pursuits. Those who seek farthest and deepest are compelled to cry Machabone Macbenah - "They have taken away my Lord and I know not where they have laid him".

The poet, Tennyson, spoke of the acacia as one of the trees of Paradise and it is supposed to be "the tree of knowledge of good and evil" and "the tree of the serpent". Legend says

also, that the burning bush was the acacia. Westcott says it is the symbol of innocence, and to Mackey it is the symbol of initiation, in the sense that initiation itself is symbolic of resurrection. The sprig of acacia is the symbol of immortality and is a gentle reminder that if we die with Him we shall also be raised with Him. Immortality is not a doctrine that can be proved by mathematical science, for it is by faith that men live and faith is a product of the heart, and the Mason who has died to himself and risen to a new experience of fellowship holds dear that sprig of acacia.

It is important to note that the sprig is planted to one side of the head of the grave. Allegorically this misalignment indicates our present imperfect state - our personality is not in true alignment with our spiritual principle.

The implements of destruction (plumb, level and mallet) which have knocked us out of alignment are the same tools which will bring us back into line. For example, the plumb-rule of uprightness applied to all parts of our being senses, emotions and mind; plus the level of equality by which our imbalance is brought into harmony and equilibrium, and the heavy setting maul of a strong and resolute will which nothing shall deflect from the end in view, all combined are able to create again in us perfect alignment.

The loss of the secrets may be compared to many of the age old legends which have several things in common.

1. The great loss which has befallen humanity by sin, making our race pilgrims ever in search.
2. The intimation that what was lost is still existent in the world although deeply buried.
3. The faith that it will be ultimately found, and vanished glory restored.
4. The substitution of something temporary and less than the best.
5. The feeling that that which was lost is close to the hands of all.

Summing up, we may say "No man knows the Secret Doctrine until it has become the secret of his soul, the reigning reality of his thought, the inspiration of his acts, the form and color and glory of his life. For that which we seek is communion with God, which leads to a life of purity, honor, true piety and humility, combined with the faith that the spirit is as deathless as God, its Father, is deathless.

The lost word is a paradox because, "In the beginning was the Word and the Word was with God and the word was God". Hence, "The Word" which we imagine to be lost is ever with us. However, we also hear, "Thou wouldst not seek me if thou hadst found me", brings us to the grave -from the centre 3 feet between north and south; 3 feet between east and west, and 5 feet or more perpendicular. The grave of Hiram is ourselves and thus the lost world, that vital and immortal principle, is buried deep within ourselves.

The emblems of mortality again remind us to put to death all that is vain, unworthy and unreal in ourselves. Consequently, when we gaze again on the emblems we reflect back upon our former selves - when we were dead in sin and look a little higher to see the working tools and learn that we have a new guide and are able to lead a transformed life.

Allegorically speaking the picture of the entrance to the Sanctum Sanctorum may be described as - "From the porch we learn to open the porch of our hearts to a true belief in the doctrines contained in the Holy Book and thus prepare ourselves to enter Heaven. The Dormer conveys a hope that the obscurity of our minds may be chased away by the light shining into them from the Divine source of all Wisdom and Goodness while the square

pavement teaches us to square our hearts and minds to avoid the stumbling blocks of ignorance and deceit". The temples' chequered floor represents the perpetual dualism of good and evil and is for us "the high priest to walk on". so we may trample the evil under foot. The Dormer mystically speaking, lets in not artificial light but light from above and represents the sun in the midnight sky; this light is for the mind and in that sense it comes from "the Centre" or God.

*** The working tools are presented.**

The tools are free and flexible and afford wide scope for the initiative of the M.M. and for the exercise of his creative and imaginative powers. Each of the tools is associated with the idea of the centre, characteristic of the third degree. The string is flexible and can be laid in any direction according to skill and judgment. The pencil represents the very hypothesis of freedom. The compasses also give freedom in so far as distance is concerned and we are given a will by God to work as close to, or as far from, the centre as we desire. It is worth noting that the pencil at every moment of our lives posts up entries of our thoughts, words and actions. For at the centre of ourselves is the all observant eye; so that we ourselves constitute our own Judgment Book, and each of us formulates our own destiny, even to reading the pages of our past history.

*** Candidate may be seated in the North.**

A note on closing lodge.

The substituted secrets are our five senses (hearing, seeing, feeling, smelling and tasting) and our rational faculties (seven liberal arts and sciences), and it is with these that we must work to find true knowledge of "Know Thyself" and thus find that the genuine secrets are deep within ourselves.

"In gratitude to our Master we bend" is an expression of thankfulness to the Grand Master of all for having never left Himself, or the way of return to Him, without witness in this outer world.

The Sun at its meridian marks the centre of a circle of the earth, which is a symbol of Deity. Therefore, it means to call a halt in the labors of the heart and brain for refreshment at the fountain of the life-giving Spirit of God. This time of silent communion with God enables us to clear away the mist that obscures the mirror of the soul and to see the image of the Divine clearly. This is the correct meaning of refreshment, as Masonry has no connection with refreshment of a physical state.

In closing, I quote from Wilmshurst,

"Brethren lift up your hearts, throw open the shutters of your minds and imagination. Learn to see in Masonry something more than a parochial system enjoining elementary morality, performing perfunctory and meaningless rites, and serving as an agreeable accessory to social life. Look to find a living philosophy, a vital guide, and that its mysteries are those that treat of the spirit and not of the body of man".

*Paper Presented at
The Western (Canada) Conference
Banff, Alberta
1969.*