

## Answers to commonly asked questions on Freemasonry

### Hiram Abif--is the story true? When did he live?

If by true is meant "factual", the answer is no. If by "true" is meant "containing a great truth" then the answer is yes; it is true as is the story of Santa Claus which tells a truth to children in words they can understand. The Legend of Hiram as told in the Master Mason degree is one of the oldest legends in the world but Freemasonry's legend is peculiarly her own. The three who encountered Hiram at the gates of the Temple are themselves symbols of error, evil, and sin; and the story as a whole is of the ultimate weakness of such forces against the power of the Great Architect. The word Abif is translated both "his father" and "my father" with "father" used in these senses as a patriarch, a teacher, a source of wisdom, and not as the actual father of a family. "Hiram, my father" is thus a title of honor and respect. (See Quest Book No. 5) [Some say that "avihu," meaning "my father is he," and rendered in Masonic usage as Abif or Abiff, was the Hebrew equivalent of "jr.," meaning that "Hiram Abif" was the son of a man also named Hiram.]

When did Santa Claus start to manufacture Christmas toys? Myth and legend are alike silent on early Masonic dates. As the Temple was begun by Solomon in the fourth year of his reign, legend, if there was such, would have to place the death later. Solomon came to his throne approximately 971 B.C., commenced the Temple 967 B.C. and finished it 960 B.C. If Hiram died during the building, the date would therefore be between 967 and 960 B.C.

### Why is acacia a Masonic symbol?

In putting acacia at the Master's temporary grave, Freemasonry follows beliefs, which go back to the captivity of the Jews in Egypt. Here acacia was supposed to have grown about and protected the chest into which Osiris had been tricked by his jealous brother, Typhon. Searching for her husband, Osiris, Isis discovered the tree in the home of a Phoenician king; for service she rendered the king, he gave her the tree and thus the body of her husband.

Like the evergreens of this country, acacia is hardy. Sprouts come often from beams and columns made of acacia, the shittah wood of the Old Testament. The Jews planted it on graves as a symbol of life, and to mark the resting place of the dead that footsteps profane it not. As myrtle was to the Greeks, mistletoe to the Scandinavians, and lotus to the Egyptians--symbols of immortality--so is acacia to Freemasonry.

### Why cannot a Lodge adjourn and then reconvene?

The adjournment of any meeting is an act following a motion by some member of the group. No Master can give the power of termination of a meeting to any member or to the Lodge as a whole, without sacrifice of his power to control the Lodge. Any Masonic Lodge must be in one of three states: closed, open and at work, or at refreshment. It is universally law that an open Lodge must be closed before the brethren depart, otherwise a "reconvening of an open Lodge" at some future date might work an injustice to some brother interested in Lodge legislation, who could not be present at the "reconvened adjourned" meeting. The fundamental reason for "no adjournment" is found in the fact that the Master's power to control, which means opening and closing his Lodge at his pleasure (but always within the opening time set by the bylaws), cannot be abrogated by a member or by the Lodge as a whole.

### Explain the meaning of the allusions in the 12th chapter of Ecclesiastes

Of the two favorite interpretations of Biblical commentators one makes this dramatic passage a description of old age and senile decay; the other, a reference to the seldom experienced and much feared thunderstorm in Palestine.

- Verses 1, 2: The darkening of light and luminaries refers to coming blindness or extreme nearsightedness; and the clouds which return after the rain to a continuation of poor sight after much weeping.
- Verse 3: The keepers of the house are the hands, which tremble with palsy in old age. The strong men are the legs, which become bowed with the years. The grinders, which cease when they are few, are the teeth, and those that look out of the windows are, poetically, the eyes.
- Verse 4: The doors are the ears, which grow deaf in age and can no longer hear the sound of grinding of grain in the little stone mills, which the women use. To rise up at the voice of a bird may signify either the light sleep of age easily interrupted by any slight sound, or the nervousness, which is so extreme in some old men that they start at any little noise. The daughters of music are the vocal chords which lose their timbre in age; hence the cracked voice of senility.
- Verse 5: The old man fears any height, knowing his brittle bones will stand no fall. He is timid, as he has no strength with which to defend himself. The almond tree blossoms white, like an old man's hair. Any little weight, even a grasshopper, may be too much burden for extreme age to carry. The old have no desires the long home is the grave, in anticipation of which the mourners go about the streets.

- Verse 6: The silver cord is the spinal cord, the golden bowl is the brain, the pitcher broken at the fountain a failing heart, and the wheel broken at the cistern the kidneys, bladder and prostate gland, all of which sometimes give trouble to old men.

Whether or not the writer possessed a sufficient knowledge of anatomy to thus symbolize parts of the body as the "Silver Cord," the "golden bowl," the "pitcher," the "wheel broken at the cistern" is so problematical that much skepticism of this interpretation has been expressed.

The storm interpretation is not open to this objection and certainly it is far more in keeping with the magnificent poetry of the words.

Think of a windy day, the clouds and rain; towards evening it begins to clear, but the heavens turn black again as the "clouds return after the rain." This was a signal for caution, if not for terror, in Palestine. Men and women and children feared the thunderstorm, probably because it came so seldom. Doors were shut in the streets. The strong guards who stood before the houses of the wealthy were afraid, and trembled, for they might not leave their places. The little mills with which the women ground grain at eventide ceased; few would remain at their tasks in the face of the storm. Women in upper rooms drew back into the dark. Those outdoors became nervous; no one sang; the black thunderheads flourished their white tops like the almond tree; everyone feared the lightning and the thunder on high; even a little weight which kept a man from running to shelter was a burden.

Here the admonition is to remember the Creator before the terror of death, which is worse than the terror of the storm. The rich man with his golden water bowl hung from a silver chain must fear it. The poor man with his earthen pitcher who must send his women to the well for water was in terror. Even the man strong and tough as the crude wooden wheel, which drew the skin bucket to the top of the well, shook with fear. Death is the same for all, and it is feared alike by all.

Whichever interpretation of these symbols the reader may prefer, it seems clear that the main lesson to be drawn is that now is the time to remember our Creator rather than at some indefinite future time which for us may never come.

### **How old is Masonry?**

The question is not answerable unless Masonry be defined. Some form of organization of builders, according to the oldest Masonic document, the Regius poem, existed as early as A.D. 926. Freemasonry, as distinguished from any other organization of practical builders, probably began among the Cathedral builders of the middle ages--tenth or eleventh century. The first Grand Lodge came into existence in 1717. Freemasonry in the United States dates definitely from 1730 and probably earlier. (See quest Book No. 2)

### **Did someone discover, design or invent Masonry?**

No one man, any more than any one mar} discovered designed or invented democracy, or philosophy, or science, or any one government. Freemasonry is the result of growth. Many masons had a part in it; it has taken to itself teachings from many religions, philosophies, systems of knowledge, symbols. The most generally accepted orthodox belief as to those who "began" Freemasonry is that the Craft is a descendant of Operative masons. These Operatives inherited from unknown beginnings, of which there may have been several and were probably many, practices and some form of ritual. Speculative Masonry, reaching back through Operative Masonry, touches hands with those who followed unknown religions in which, however, many of the Speculative principles must have been taught by the use of symbols as old as mankind and therefore universal, and not the product of any one people or time. (See Quest Book No. 2)

### **Masonic dates are written "A L." before figures, which never correspond with the number of the year in which we live: why?**

Freemasonry's practice has followed the ancient belief that the world was created four thousand years before Christ; that when God said, "Let there be light", the world began. Therefore Masons date their doings four thousand years plus the current year, "Anno Lucis, " or "In the year of Light."

It is but another of Freemasonry's many ties with a day so old no man may name it.

### **Freemasonry is said to be "a beautiful system of morality, veiled in allegory and illustrated by symbols." What is an allegory?**

Allegory is from two Greek words and means, "story within a story"--the Masonic story is told as a fact, but it presents the doctrine of immortality. Allegory, parable, fable, myth, legend, tradition, are correlative terms. The myth may be founded on fact; the legend and tradition more probably are founded on fact but the allegory, parable, fable, are not. Yet they may be "true" if "true" is not taken to mean factual. "In the night of death, hope sees a star, and love can hear the rustle of a wing" is beautifully true allegory, but not factual. All allegories may contain truth, without being fact.

The allegory of the Master's Degree is not true in any factual sense, except in the historical background from the Biblical account of the building of the Temple That the Hiram's were Grand Masters, that the workmen on the building were Entered Apprentices. Fellow Crafts and Master Masons; that they met in various apartments of the Temple, with different numbers required for various quorums; that the events delineated in the ceremony actually happened, are not factual statements.

Yet the allegory is true in the best sense of the word for the story of Hiram is the story of the dearest hope of mankind. It is a tale told in every religion. It is affirmation, by picture, drama, story, of man's rugged faith that Job's immortal question, "If a man die, shall he live again?" must be answered in the affirmative. It is a Mason's observation that truth, slain by error, will be born again; it is the crucifixion and the resurrection of the Carpenter who died between two thieves. The Masonic allegory is true in the deepest sense of truth.

### **Why do Brethren not pass between the altar and the East when the Lodge is at labor?**

Brethren do not pass between the altar and the East in a Masonic Lodge at labor (except during a degree) because the Master is supposed to have the Great Lights constantly in view. In theory, at least, he draws inspiration from the altar to preside over the Lodge and must not, therefore, be prevented from seeing it at any time.

The custom is but a pretty courtesy, but it is rooted in a fundamental conception of the Craft--that the altar is the center of Masonry, and that from it and from the Great Lights it bears, flow all that there is of Masonic inspiration and truth and light.

English Lodges do not have this problem, since in them a pedestal near the Master is the altar on which lies the Holy Book.

### **Where should the American flag be placed in a Lodge?**

If upon the platform, on a level with the Master, at his right, which is to the left of the brethren in the Lodge. If the flag is displayed in the East with its staff standing on the floor of the Lodge, it should be at the right of the brethren and on the left of the Worshipful Master. The flag is never draped, not even upon the altar; nothing should be beneath the Great Lights but the altar; the flag is only draped when it is lovingly laid upon a casket containing the remains of a member of the armed services. In Lodges near the borders of the United States it is a courtesy to display the flag of the neighboring country when visitors from Canada or Mexico are expected. When two flags are displayed side by side in Lodge, the American flag is nearest the right hand of the Master if displayed on the platform and nearest to the right of the brethren if displayed on the floor of the Lodge.

### **What is the distinction between "due form" and "ample form?"**

A Lodge is opened and closed by its Master "in due form" meaning according to the ancient usages and customs, the laws and ritual, of its Grand Lodge. When the Grand Master opens and closes a Grand Lodge (or a particular Lodge) he is said to do so in "ample form." In some Jurisdictions the Grand Master will shorten the common ritual, to save time, but his power and authority are "ample" to accomplish his purpose, regardless of the manner in which he does it.

In some Jurisdictions the phrase "due examination" is used in referring to one of the methods of obtaining legal or lawful Masonic information. "due examination" specifies the manner of such an examination; that it be conducted with due caution, and according to all the regulations of the Grand Lodge.

### **What are the Ancient Landmarks?**

An Ancient Landmark is a fundamental law of Masonry, dating from ancient times. Various Grand Lodges have "adopted" various "lists of Ancient Landmarks" and thus have given the tenets in the list the force of law in those Grand Lodges. It is probable that all English speaking Grand Lodges will agree that at least seven Masonic fundamentals are Landmarks. They are:

1. Monotheism, the sole dogma of Freemasonry.
2. Belief in immortality, the ultimate lesson of Masonic philosophy.
3. The volume of the Sacred Law, an indispensable part of the furniture of a Lodge.
4. The legend of the Third Degree.
5. Secrecy.
6. The symbolism of the operative art.
7. A Mason must be a freeborn male adult.

The Landmarks listed in the Masonic Code for Minnesota follow:

1. That belief in the Supreme Being, "The Great Architect of the Universe", who will punish vice and reward virtue, is an indispensable prerequisite to admission to Masonry.
2. That the moral law which inculcates charity and probity, industry and sobriety, and obedience to law and civil government, is the rule and guide of every Mason, to which strict conformity is required.
3. That obedience to Masonic law and authority, being voluntarily assumed, is of perpetual obligation.
4. That the Rites and Ceremonies (which include the unwritten language) of the true system of the Ancient York Rite, and which constitute a part of the Body of Masonry, are immutable, and that it is not within the power of any man to make innovations therein.
5. That contentions and lawsuits between brethren are contrary to the laws and regulations of Masonry.
6. That charity is the right of a Mason, his widow and orphans, when poor and destitute, to demand, and the duty of his prosperous brother to bestow.
7. That Masonic instruction is, like charity, a reciprocal right and duty of Masons.
8. That to visit Masonically is an inherent right of Masons, but no visitor shall be received into Lodge if any member present objects.
9. That a candidate for Masonry must be a man of mature age, free born, of good report, hale and sound, having no maim or defect in his body that may render him incapable of learning the art and physically able to conform substantially to what the several degrees of Masonry respectively require of him. If a candidate is unable to so comply with the physical requirements, he shall nevertheless be eligible to receive the degrees of Masonry, if, after favorable action by the subordinate Lodge, his petition for degrees, accompanied by a detailed report of the nature and extent of his disabilities, is approved by the Grand Master.
10. That the Grand Master may make Masons at sight, and may grant a dispensation to a Lodge for the same purpose, but in all other cases a candidate must be proposed in open Lodge, at a stated meeting, and can only be accepted at a stated meeting following, by the scrutiny of a secret ballot, and a unanimous vote, and must pay a fixed price before admission.
11. That it is the duty of every Mason to be a contributing member of some Lodge.
12. That a Mason who is not a member of a Lodge is still subject to the disciplinary power of Masonry.
13. That the Master and Wardens of every chartered Lodge are of right and inalienably representatives and members of the Grand Lodge.
14. That no one can be elected Master of a chartered Lodge, except at its first election, but a Master Mason who shall have served as a Warden.
15. That every Mason must be tried by his peers; hence the Master cannot be tried by his Lodge.
16. That no appeal to the Lodge can be taken from the decision of the Master, or the Warden occupying the chair in his absence.
17. That Masonic intercourse with a clandestine or expelled Mason is a breach of duty and an offense against Masonic law.
18. That a restoration of the privileges of Masonry by the Grand Lodge does not restore to membership in a subordinate Lodge.
19. That the failure of a Lodge to meet for one year is a cause for the forfeiture of its charter.
20. That it is the duty as well as the right of every chartered Lodge to be represented in the Grand Lodge at its Communications.
21. That a Grand Lodge has supreme and exclusive jurisdiction, within its territorial limits, over all matters of Ancient Craft Masonry.
22. That no appeal lies from the decision of the Grand Master in the chair, or the Deputy Grand Master or Grand Warden, occupying the chair in his absence.
23. That the office of the Grand Master is always elective, and should be filled annually by the Grand Lodge.
24. That a Grand Lodge, composed of its officers and representatives, must meet at least once in each year, to consult and act concerning the interests of the Fraternity in its jurisdiction.
25. That all officers of a Grand Lodge or Subordinate Lodge must be Master Masons.

That no subject of sectarian or political character can be discussed in a Lodge, and any Mason proposing such a subject renders himself liable to the disciplinary action of the Lodge.

### **Why cannot a Brother appeal from a Master's decision in Lodge?**

He can, but not to the Lodge; only to the Grand Master or Grand Lodge. The Master is strictly charged and sworn to uphold and further the peace and harmony of his Lodge. Without complete authority he cannot assume complete responsibility. It is, therefore, the Master's prerogative to begin or terminate debate; to rule on all questions; to control the deliberations of his Lodge within the framework of the bylaws--a Master cannot, for instance, legally open his Lodge before the time set in the bylaws, or conduct business at a special or called communication not set forth in the calls. If any brother could appeal from the Master to the Lodge, the Lodge would control the Master, not the Master the Lodge. The Master is not only a presiding officer (as is the president of a club) but is literally master of all proceedings, discussions and actions of his Lodge, provided what he does is within the framework of Grand Lodge law and the bylaws of his Lodge.

## **Why is an Apprentice "Entered"?**

The word goes back to operative days. The Freemasons of the middle ages were a select group; they were the highest-class artisans of their time. It required sound health, moral character, high intelligence, to be a good operative Freemason, permitted to work on the great Houses of God, which were the Freemasons' work. They were proud of their abilities and of their reputation and strict in their rules.

To become a Freemason a young lad was required to serve a seven year apprenticeship before he might ask to be permitted to make and submit to his superiors his "Master's Piece," and be admitted as a "Fellow of the Craft." Before he could serve his time he had to prove himself; therefore he served a period of time as an Apprentice. If at the end of that period he had shown himself possessed of the necessary qualifications of industry, character, decency and probity, he was "entered" on the books of the Craft and became an "Entered Apprentice."

Originally an Apprentice was not a member of the Masonic Craft, even after being entered on the books of the Lodge; not until he had passed his apprenticeship and been accepted as a Fellow was he a Craftsman. This practice gradually gave way to the modern idea and after 1717; Apprentices initiated in Lodge formed the bulk of the Craft.

Ritual teaches that the Apprentice is a symbol of youth; the Fellow Craft, of manhood; and the Master, of old age; probably this conception is derived from the fact that learners, beginners, are young, experts are men, and the wise and learned the elder group.

## **Why do Masons wear aprons?**

The use of the apron is extremely old, not, as with the operative Masons, as a protector of clothing and body against tools and stone, but as a badge of honor. It was so used by the priests of Israel, by candidates for the mysteries of Mithra in Persia, by the ancient Japanese in religious worship. Ethiopia knew aprons, as did Egypt. In all times and climes, it has been a badge of distinction. It is as such that a Mason wears it.

The material of the Masonic apron--lambskin--is a symbol of innocence, as the lamb has always been.

Color and material are important in its symbolism, but Masonry admits the "symbol of the symbol"--as, for instance, an electric light in place of a candle. Hence a Mason has more than once been "properly clothed" when the lambskin aprons of the Lodge were all in use and he came through the tiled door clad in a white handkerchief!

## **What is the symbolism of the ashlar's?**

In architecture, an ashlar is a squared stone. Masonically, the ashlar's are "rough"--not dressed, squared, or polished--and "perfect"--ready for use in wall or other structure. The information given in most rituals is scanty, and does not include the greater meanings, which symbolists find in these two stones. Students direct attention to the fact that the perfect ashlar is made from the rough ashlar entirely by a process of taking away, or removal of unwanted material. Nothing is added to a rough ashlar to make it perfect. The analogy to the Mason, who is a building stone in the spiritual temple of Masonry, is that the perfect man is within the rough man, and that perfection is to be obtained by a process of taking away the "vices and superfluities of life." Every beautiful statue ever carved from stone was always within that stone, needing only the tool of the artist to take away the material not wanted and leave the statue, which was there since the stone was first formed. Compare Luke VI 1:21: "The kingdom of God is within you."

## **Why do some Grand Lodges forbid Brethren to ask their friends to become Masons?**

One of the fundamental concepts of Freemasonry is that application for membership must be wholly a voluntary act. A man must seek for himself and join "of my own free will and accord." Under no other formula can men unite brethren of a thousand religious and political beliefs. Under no more constricting act could Freemasonry accomplish her only end, the building of character among men. Men who become members of a Masonic Lodge for any other reason than their own desires can neither receive nor give to others the advantages of a wholly voluntary association. Freemasonry is bigger than any man; the man must seek its blessings; it never seeks the man.

## **Why is it un-Masonic to disclose how one has balloted?**

In all Grand Jurisdictions the ballot on candidates is secret and inviolable. It is considered un-Masonic, and in most Grand Jurisdictions is against Masonic law, for any brother to divulge how he has balloted or will ballot on any candidate. Masters are instructed strictly to adhere to this requirement. Peace and harmony are the foundations of all Masonic meetings. For Brother A to learn that Brother B has balloted or will ballot against his friend would disrupt that peace and harmony. The rejection of a candidate is a blow to him who has applied. If everyone knew who had cast the black cube, the rejected man might speedily learn, and cause of friction in the profane world would then have come out of a Masonic Lodge.

A ballot is sometimes immediately retaken, because the appearance of a single black cube may be an error; the cube may have been cast by mistake. If the single black cube appears the second time! Presumably it was intentionally cast.

Ballots differ in different Jurisdictions. In some, a "collective ballot" may be taken on several candidates at once; if a black cube appears, each name is then balloted on separately. In others, a "multiple ballot box" is used, with a compartment for each name, which is printed above it. In still others, each name is balloted on separately from the beginning. In most Grand Jurisdictions, one ballot elects to all three degrees. In some, a separate ballot is taken for each degree, and in one, at least, still another ballot on "moral qualifications." But in all Grand Jurisdictions, ballots are secret, inviolable, and regarded as a cornerstone on which the fraternity is erected.

### **What are the "beasts of the field?"**

Superstition in the middle ages maintained that a man's body must be buried while perfect, if his soul was to go to heaven. Hence, the destroyed (eaten) flesh of a body prevented resurrection. "Beasts of the field" are not the familiar horses and cows, but the wild beasts of Leviticus XXVI: 22, "I will also send wild beasts among you," etc. These are bears, wild bulls, hyenas, jackals, leopards and wolves, all Old Testament animals.

### **Why is a Masonic Lodge called a "Blue Lodge?"**

Schools of thought give different answers. Some authorities think that as blue has from ancient Biblical times been associated with truth, with Deity, with wisdom and hope; that, as Mackey taught, the blue of the Old Testament is a translation of the Hebrew tekelet, which is derived from a root meaning perfection, blue came into Masonry as its color by a natural association. Others believe that as our ancient brethren met on hills and in dales over which the blue vault of heaven is a ceiling; that as Jacob in his vision saw the ladder ascending from earth to heaven; that as the covering of a Lodge is the clouded canopy or starry decked heaven! These allusions seem to connote that blue, the color of the sky, is that of all celestial attributes for which Masons strive.

Man's earliest god was the sun. The sun rose, traveled, and set in a realm of blue; to associate the color with Deity was inevitable. Blue also is the color of the ocean, of mountain streams, of lakes, of good drinking water--that blue should also become emblematic of purity is equally natural.

The Grand Lodge in England in 1731 changed from a previous determination that white was the Masonic color and denominated blue as that hue. A noted English Masonic student, Fred J. W. Crowe wrote:

(1) That the Order of the Garter was the most famous Order of Knighthood in existence; (2) that Freemasons, in adopting the color "Garter blue" attempted to add to their dignity and the growing prestige of Grand Lodge officers; (3) that two Grand Masters prior to the adoption of "Garter blue" were John, Duke of Montague (Grand Master in 1721) and Charles, Duke of Richmond (Grand Master in 1724) both Knights of the Garter; (4) the Duke of St. Albans and the Earl of Chesterfield were both Craftsmen and Knights of the Garter and (5) Bro. John "Antis" (Anstis), member of University Lodge, of which Dr. Desaguliers and other Masonic notables belonged, was Register of the Order of the Garter.

The two theories which find the most believers are (1) the adoption of the color by early operative Freemasons because of an age-old association of blue with those virtues which are peculiarly Masonic, (2) the adoption of the color by the early Grand Lodge in imitation of the nobility, and the fame of the color of the most famous Order of Knighthood in the world.

### **What are the "Old Charges?"**

The first book of Freemasonry, printed in 1723, is known as Anderson's Constitutions. In it appear six "Old Charges" which are a statement of the old laws of operative Freemasonry concerning a Mason and his conduct. These six Old Charges are titled: Of God and Religion, Of the Civil Magistrate Supreme and Subordinate; Of Lodges; Of Masters, Wardens, Fellows and Apprentices; Of the Management of the Craft in Working; Of Behavior. The last, sixth, Old Charge is concerned with behavior: "in the Lodge while constituted; after Lodge is over and the Brethren not gone; when Brethren meet without Strangers, but not in a Lodge; in presence of Strangers not Masons; at Home and in the Neighborhood; towards a strange Brother."

Many "Books of the Law--Constitution, Codes, etc.--of Grand Lodges print these Old Charges. They can also be found in Mackey's Encyclopedia and in the Little Masonic Library. (See Quest Book No. 2)

### **Is it expected that I do business only with a Mason?**

A problem which confronts a newly made Mason is his supposed obligation to give his business to fellow Masons rather than the profane.

Masonry is most emphatically not a back scratching organization, a Board of Trade, a Chamber of Commerce or a mutual admiration society. There is no obligation, actual or implied, which demands that, because you have become a Mason, you must forsake all those with whom you have been doing business who are not? And give your orders to brethren who may? Or may not, be equally satisfactory as tradesmen.

Other things being equal, it is brotherly to give your business where it will help a fellow Mason. But other things must be equal. If the twin born with you sold poor shoes at fancy prices, while your neighbor's son sold good shoes for reasonable prices, you would not buy of your own blood brother. To do so would be to injure yourself and your family, since you would be wasting your money. Exactly the same idea applies to your fraternal brother.

The man who says: "Buy of me because I am a Mason! Is not anxious to serve you but to serve himself. If he is a good businessman, he does not need to depend on mutual membership in any organization, whether Lodge, church or club, for his business. If he is not a good businessman--that is, if he sells poor goods--he has no moral right to attempt to offset poor quality by whining that you both belong to the same Lodge. Similarly he who comes to you and says, "I have come to you because I know you are a Mason; now I expect a discount because we both belong," is also using his Masonry to promote selfish interests and should be discouraged.

### **What are the cedars of Lebanon?**

Lebanon is the name of a mountainous country lying at the east end of the Mediterranean Sea! The "Great Sea" of the Old Testament, and north of Israel. In ancient times it was celebrated for its large and old cedars, valuable building material. There are but few left today. Solomon's Temple used many of them and, as most rituals explain, "the trees (were) felled and prepared in the forests of Lebanon, conveyed by sea on floats to Joppa, thence by land to Jerusalem where they were set up with wooden mauls prepared for that purpose."

### **What is a Lodge Charter, or warrant?**

The document given to brethren who are members of a "Lodge under dispensation"--that is, permitted to meet as a Lodge by a Grand Master--when such a group becomes an actual Lodge, Charters, or Warrants of Constitution, are given only by Grand Lodge, and usually after a Lodge under dispensation has demonstrated its fitness to receive that document. The Charter sets forth the facts, names the first Master and Wardens, authorizes the group to be and to act as a regular Lodge under the Grand Lodge granting the Charter. Subsequently to the granting of the Charter, and before going to work, the new Lodge must be regularly constituted, dedicated and consecrated in a beautiful ceremony performed by Grand Lodge officers concerned in the formation of the new Lodge.

Charters are now a necessity for any regular and recognized Lodge. In an earlier day what are known as "time immemorial Lodges" worked without charters; "The Lodge at Fredericksburg" which initiated, passed and raised George Washington had no charter until several years after these ceremonies.

### **Why do we walk around the altar so much in the degrees?**

Circumambulation is walking around a central point. In Masonic initiations it is always clockwise from East to West by way of South. Like so many symbols, the ritualistic explanation does not explain, except with the most elementary reasons. During this part of a degree, members of a Lodge observe that a candidate is properly prepared, but circumambulation is far older than initiations. To early savages, the sun was God. The sun traveled from East to West by way of the South [in the northern hemisphere, of course]. Hence, early man circled his stone altar on which was his imitation of the sun--fire--from East to West by way of the South, in humble imitation of the god in the sky. Circumambulation is one of the many concealed symbols of a Great Architect.

In those rituals in which in a certain part of the Master's degree the circumambulation is in the reverse direction, Freemasonry imitates the ancient ceremony signifying death

### **When is a Lodge clandestine? What is a clandestine Mason?**

In general, a Lodge or a Mason is clandestine when not legally constituted under generally accepted Masonic laws. But "not lawfully constituted" may not necessarily mean "clandestine." A Fellow Craft receiving the Master Mason degree in a Lodge in which the Charter has been lost is not "lawfully" made and must be re-obligated to be "healed," but such a making is not "clandestine." The clandestine Lodge today is one, which is set up by an unrecognized Grand Lodge, which is spurious, unlawful. Any group of men--even men not Masons--might declare themselves a Lodge and "make Masons," but all these actions, being done outside of the scope of Masonic law, would produce only a clandestine Lodge and clandestine Masons.

Modern scholarship distinguishes between the "clandestine" and the "not recognized." For instance, many Grand Lodges (including the United Grand Lodge of England) consider the Prince Hall Grand Lodges to be "regular" (i.e., legally constituted under Masonic law), but to this time only a small number of Grand Lodges that recognize the United Grand Lodge of England have extended recognition to Prince Hall Grand Lodges. Thus, at this time, most of the Prince Hall Grand Lodges are unrecognized, but they are not clandestine.

### **Why is a Lodge meeting called a "communication?"**

In old English "communication" was "to common"--to share with others. In the church "communion" is the common partaking of a sacrament. In a Masonic Lodge "Communion," "to common," is to gather in a "communication,"

signifying not just a meeting of men to legislate, but a gathering of men with a common purpose, governed by a common idea, believing in a common ideal. It is one of the precious and delightful ways in which Masonry keeps alive an old, old idea in the words of long ago.

### **Why is a Past Master's compass, in his jewel, open at 60 degrees on a quadrant instead of on a square?**

The compass open sixty degrees is in easy position to construct a square. The Master has worn the square while he presided; now, as Past Master, he is supposed to be in possession of the knowledge necessary to make a square, hence the position of the compass and the quadrant.

There are many geometric methods of erecting a square; the Past Master's jewel hints at one of the simplest and most used methods as best for the Past Master to employ in instructing his successor. (For further information, see Short Talk Bulletin Vol XXIII, No. 4, April 1945, "Past Master's Jewel")

### **What is "just and lawfully constituted?"**

A Lodge is "just"--meaning complete, properly organized, legally entitled to conduct Masonic business--when the statutory number of brethren is present, when it has the proper furniture (the Great Lights), when its Charter is present and when it has been opened by the Master, or in his absence, by the proper Warden. A Lodge is "legally constituted" when it has been "constituted, consecrated and dedicated" by a recognized and Masonically legal Grand Lodge; also, when it has been opened after notice to the brethren, if a Special, and according to the bylaws! If a Stated, communication. Some Lodges occasionally are neither just nor legal constituted. Opening without the lawful number of brethren present, opening without a Charter in the room, or with the Great Lights absent, makes a Lodge other than "just." Clandestine Lodges are never legally constituted. That which has no real existence cannot give real existence to its offspring.

### **Sheaf of wheat, ear of corn, Waterford, waterfall--which are correct?**

Either wheat or corn suspended near a Waterford or waterfall denotes plenty and is a symbol of security, since it was at the crossing of the Jordan, where this sign was displayed, that the Ephraimites were defeated by the men of Gilead, being detected by their inability to pronounce the word Shibboleth. Either an ear of corn or a sheaf of wheat at a waterfall or Waterford is correct in the jurisdictions, which either combination is used. The meaning is the same.

### **What is the significance of the northeast corner?**

Cornerstones are laid in the Northeast corner--Entered Apprentices stand in the Northeast corner of the Lodge. The point midway between the darkness of the North and the brilliance of the East was chosen by ancient builders as the point of beginning, a spot to mark a birth, the commencement of a new structure. Obviously, he who stands in the darkness has no light; as obviously, he on whom falls the whole light of the brilliant East and its rising sun is not in darkness the point halfway between! Then, is a symbol of a beginning--the traveler has left the darkness and moved toward the light Those who build have left the "darkness" in which is no building, and progressed far enough towards the "light" to lay a foundation stone--a place which by its position symbolizes movement away from blackness into the day

The symbolism of the Northeast corner in the Entered Apprentice degree is taken from this ancient practice of laying the cornerstone in the Northeast corner. He who stands there in the Lodge, as "a just and upright Mason," is himself a cornerstone of the Lodge, which will be. A Lodge is erected not only by, but upon her sons. The Entered Apprentice of today is the veteran Mason and Lodge member of tomorrow.

### **What is a Cowan? What is an eavesdropper?**

"Cowan" is an old Scotch word, meaning an ignorant mason who puts stones together without mortar, or piles rough stones from the field into a wall without working them square and true. He is a Mason without the Word, the Apprentice who tries to masquerade as a Master.

The eavesdropper in ancient times was that would be thief of secrets who listened under the eaves of houses (there was often a space between wall and roof, for the purpose of ventilation). Because to hear he had to get close to the wall under the eaves, he received the drippings, or droppings, from the roof if it rained--hence. Eavesdropper. In modern times the eavesdropper is that old man who forges a good standing card, or finds one and masquerades as its owner; the man who has read a so-called "expose" of Masonry and tries to get into a Lodge, in order to ask for charity or help. He is very rare, and few tylers have ever met him! The Cowan, however--the Fellow Craft or Entered Apprentice stopped for cause, the one-time member in good standing who is now dropped for one cause or another--these not infrequently try to pass the Tyler.

### **What is a demit?**

Permission given a member to terminate his membership; the paper representing that permission. In nearly all Grand Jurisdictions, obtaining a demit is a formality; a Lodge is obliged to grant a demit to him who asks it! Provided he is in good standing and no charges have been or are about to be preferred against him. The theory is that as he joined his Lodge of his own free will and accord he should have the right to leave it in the same way. In some Grand Jurisdictions a member may receive a demit only to join another Lodge, or to remove from his Grand Jurisdiction to another.

### **Why are discussions of politics and religion forbidden in Lodge?**

The prohibition goes back to the early history of the Fraternity. It is written in the second paragraph of the sixth "Old Charge" (Behavior after the Lodge is over and the Brethren not gone). "No private Piques or Quarrels must be brought within the Door of the Lodge, far less any Quarrels about Religion, or Nations, or State policy, we being only, as Masons, of the Catholic Religion above mentioned; we are also of all Nations, Tongues, Kindred's, and Languages, and are resolved against all Politics as what never yet conducted to the Welfare of the Lodge, nor ever will. This Charge has been always strictly enjoined and observed, but especially since the Reformation in Britain, or the Dissent and Secession of these Nations from the Communion of Rome."

Freemasons today hold that the Old Charge prohibits Lodge discussions of politics in the sense of partisan politics and religion in the sense of sectarian religion.

### **What discussion of Masonry is proper in the presence of those not Masons?**

As little as possible, unless in answer to a direct and respectful question the answer to which is not secret. Such questions as "How may I become a Mason?" or "When does the Masonic Lodge in this town meet?" or "What is the expense of becoming a Mason?" of course are answerable questions. No argument should ever be held with any one regarding Masonry. In the charge of the Entered Apprentice Degree it is stated: "Neither are you to suffer your zeal for the institution to lead you into argument with those who, through ignorance, may ridicule it." Freemasonry needs no defense from anyone. The less Masonic matters are discussed in public, the better for Masonry. "The attentive ear receives the sound from the instructive tongue" (Charge, Fellow Craft Degree) refers to a Masonic ear. "The mysteries of Freemasonry are safely lodged in the repository of faithful breasts," (Charge, Fellow Craft Degree) means what it says.

### **What is a dispensation?**

A permission from the Grand Master to do certain things otherwise forbidden by law. A Grand Master may grant a dispensation to shorten the time between degrees, to admit more than the statutory number of candidates at one communication, to form a new Lodge, etc. In general he cannot give a dispensation which sets aside either the laws of the Grand Lodge or the bylaws of a particular Lodge, except as set forth in the Book of the Law, Constitutions or Code of the Grand Lodge. In some Grand Lodges the Grand Master's power is so great that he can set aside almost any law; there are one or two examples, for instance, of a Grand Master's employment of the dispensation to make a Mason of a blind man, but such use of power is rarely attempted and is usually frowned upon by Grand Lodges

### **Masonically, what are fool, dotage, libertine, profane?**

Masonically, a "fool" is a mature man without good common sense. Legally he is of age; mentally, he is retarded. "Dotage" begins at no special year; it is that time in a man's life when his mental powers deteriorate. The fool never has much mental power; the greatest mentality may decline in dotage to complete lack of responsibility and judgment. Some men enter dotage in early life; others never enter it at all. "Libertine," Masonically, refers to a freethinker, a nonconformist, one who subscribes to no higher authority in his thinking. It does not denote what is meant by the word in modern days--a man who is promiscuous sexually. "Profane," Masonically, means "not a Mason"-it comes from the Latin "pro" meaning before and "fanum," a temple; Masonically, a profane is one "outside the temple," uninitiated. The word has no reference to "profanity" in the modern sense of taking the name of God in vain.

### **Whence comes the due guard?**

It is a symbol of obligation; a reminder by him who uses it to all who see him do so that he remembers his promises. Masonic authorities are not in complete agreement as to the derivation of the words. Although they unite as to what the words signify. Mackey thinks the words mean, "to duly guard against." Lesser authorities are convinced the phrase has a French derivation coming from "Dieu Garde"--God guard (me or you).

It is universally used as a salute to the Master before the altar and to the Wardens during the conferring of a degree.

### **Duly and truly prepared?**

A candidate is said to be duly and truly prepared when he is properly garbed and shod for the particular degree he is entering. But here, as throughout Masonry, to interpret literally is to miss Masonry's message. The phrase refers directly to his outward appearance--he is clad in the manner prescribed for that degree. But this is only a superficial rendering, for here the ritual is saying to us? "This man, after painstaking examination, has been found to be a man of integrity, who has accepted all his responsibilities in a manner befitting one who knocks at our door for admission. He understands and appreciates spiritual values. He has shown his love for God by his regard for his fellow man He is not only duly clad in accord with our customs--he is truly prepared in his heart for fellowship with us."

### **The words "esoteric" and "exoteric" are unusual; what do they mean?**

Esoteric: the unwritten ritualistic work designed for and understood only by the initiated. Exoteric: that part of the work, which can be made known to the general public. It is curious and interesting that what is exoteric in one Grand Lodge may be esoteric in another.

### **Why are Masons of the second degree called Fellow Crafts?**

Probably prior to 1726 all Freemasons except the "King's Master Mason" were either Apprentices or Fellows of the Craft, in imitation of the workers of the operative days, when Apprentices became Fellows after a period of seven years training and the making of a "Master's Piece" to show proficiency in some part of a mason's work. We continue the old names, as preferable to such modernizations as "beginners" and "members." (See Quest Book No. 3)

### **Why are we called "Freemasons?"**

There are many theories: a man was a Freemason because his ancestors were not slaves nor was he a slave; he was so called because he was free within his Guild, or free of the Guild's laws and could thus "travel in foreign countries" and work where he would; he was a Freemason because he worked in freestone, which is any stone which can be cut, smoothed, carved in any direction; he was free when he had passed his apprenticeship and became a Fellow of the Craft; he was free when he had left the status of serf or villein and legally became free. Probably at one time or another masons were called Freemasons for any of these reasons or for all of them. The consensus leans to the theory that the Freemason was such because of his skill, knowledge and abilities which set him free of those conditions, laws, rules and customs which circumscribed masons of lesser abilities in the cathedral building age (See Quest Book No. 2)

### **Explain the letters GAOTU.**

Grand Architect, (Great Architect, Grand or Great Artificer) of the Universe are titles under which Freemasonry refers to deity. A fundamental of Freemasonry is its nonsectarian character; any man of any religion may offer his devotions to the Deity he reveres, no matter what name he may use in his mind, under the Masonic title. Great Architect of the Universe (or any of its variations) is a symbol of Deity as named and worshipped in all religions. (See Grand Architect)

### **What has geometry to do with Masonry?**

It is the principal one of the seven steps by which we ascend the final flight of the stairway. (See Quest Book No. 4)

### **What is the "Masonic goat"?**

Pan is one of the most ancient of mythological gods. Originally he was a gentle, rather whimsical god with a sense of humor, the Arcadian god of the shepherds, chief of the inferior deities, the child of Mercury and Penelope. Pan possessed long ears and horns; the lower half of his body was that of a goat. He invented Pan's Pipes, or syrinx. From him we have the word "panic," the state into which barbarians were thrown on invading ancient Greece and seeing Pan.

When the early Christians drew upon mythology, they modified and changed it; gentle Pan became Satan. To the common mind, Satan, or the devil, was a he-goat. Thus the devil came into possession of horns and a tail and the familiar cloven hoofs. Later, the devil was supposed to appear riding on a goat.

In the early days of Masonry in London, the enemies of the Fraternity employed ridicule; processions of Mock Masons, the Gormogons and other organizations, made fun of the society; they said that Freemasons were accustomed to raise the devil in their Lodges--and of course, he appeared riding on his goat! Gradually the belief came into being that Freemasons "rode the goat." Tales of the Masonic goat carry forward a ridicule of the Order begun more than two hundred years ago. Lodge room goats perpetuate an ignorant superstition and slander the fair fame of the Institution by indicating that its practices are anti-religious, blasphemous.

## **What are the Golden Fleece, Roman Eagle, Star and Garter?**

The Order of the Golden Fleece was founded by Philip, Duke of Burgundy, in 1429. The Roman Eagle was Rome's symbol and ensign of power and might a hundred years before Christ. The Order of the Star was created by John II of France in the middle of the Fourteenth Century. The Order of the Garter was founded by Edward III of England in 1349 for himself and twenty-five Knights of the Garter. That the use of the apron as a badge is more ancient than these is a provable fact. In averring that it is more honorable, the premise "when worthily worn" is understood. The apron is "more honorable than the Star and Garter" when all that it teaches is exemplified in the life of the wearer. See Quest Book No. 3, p. 58

## **"Grand" Lodge? What is grand about it? What is it? How many in the world? Recognized?**

Grand is used in the same sense as in grand total, grandfather, meaning first, principal, most important. It does not mean a lodge, which is "grand" in the sense that it is big, impressive, beautiful, as when the word is used in "a grand spectacle", "a grand performance."

The governing body of Freemasonry within a certain territory--in the United States, the governing body of Masonry in each State in the Union and in the District of Columbia. It is composed of its officers and its "permanent members"--usually past officers, and the Masters, or Masters and Wardens. Or Masters, Wardens and Past Masters, of the several Lodges. Some Grand Lodges authorize also a special Lodge representative. Grand Lodges usually meet once a year, a few meet twice a year, one has three meetings each year and two, five meetings each year. The Grand Lodge has as its presiding officer the Grand Master and the legislation of the Grand Lodge is binding upon all Masons within its territory and upon all Lodges under its jurisdiction.

The 51 Grand Lodges of the United States have different conceptions of "regularity" Thus the Grand Lodge in State A will "recognize"--that is, accept as equal, regular, legitimate Freemasonry--the Grand Lodge of Foreign Country X, while the Grand Lodge of State B is not satisfied that the Grand Lodge of Foreign Country X conforms to all the requirements of the Grand Lodge of State B. Thus a Grand Lodge of a foreign country may be legitimate Masonry to the Grand Lodge of one State, and "clandestine" or "irregular" or "unrecognized" by another State. The Masonic Service Association publishes every July a chart showing what Grand Lodges outside the United States are "recognized" by each of the 51 Grand Lodges of the nation.

Define hele, hail, hale, heal.

The first three words are pronounced alike, but with different meanings. Hele (Anglo-Saxon) is an old word meaning to cover, conceal. Hail is to greet. Hale means hearty, well. Heal means to make well. "Hele and conceal" is one of the many word pairs in ritual which go back to the growth of the English language. When two words were often used to insure that the hearer understood the meaning of at least one.

## **What is the Regius Poem?**

Sometimes called the Halliwell Document, it is, loosely speaking, the oldest of the "Manuscript Constitutions" of Freemasonry. Dated approximately A.D. 1390, it is in old Chaucerian English [Middle English], and is difficult to read without a translation. It is preserved in the British Museum.

It is not, accurately speaking, a "Constitution," although it has within it much that is found in manuscripts. It is more a document about Masonry than for Masons. It is discursive, rambling, wordy, and parts of it are copies of contemporary documents, notably "Urbanitatis" and "Instructions to a Parish Priest." Within the Regius, thirty-eight lines are devoted to "The Four Crowned Martyrs," who are not referred to in any of the manuscript Constitutions.

The book is approximately four by five and one-half inches, the pages fine vellum, the letters in red and what was probably once black but is now a rather drab greenish brown color.

Its most curious feature is that it is written in verse, which is why it is often called the Regius Poem, although it is much more doggerel than poetry.

It is important to Masonic students for many reasons; to the average Mason its most salient feature may be that it ends with what are, so far as is known, the oldest words in the Masonic ritual "So mote it be." (Mote is old English for "may").

## **Why does the Master wear a hat?**

A contemporary relic of the ancient custom whereby the King remained covered under all circumstances, while his subjects were obliged to uncover in his presence. Apparently the custom, which began in English lodges, is now not there common, but in American Lodges a Master wears a hat as a sign and symbol of his authority.

## **What is a hecatomb?**

A hecatomb is 100 head of cattle. Pythagoras is stated (Masonic ritual) to have "sacrificed a hecatomb" upon "discovering" the forty-seventh problem of Euclid.

The ritual is here not factual. Pythagoras was poor and could hardly have possessed a hundred head of cattle. He was a vegetarian and revered animal life; he would not have killed one cow, let alone a hundred, to "celebrate" his discovery. He may have cried "Eureka," but could hardly have been "raised to the Sublime Degree of Master Mason" which did not take even an ancient and simple form until centuries after he died.

["Eureka" is better known as the exclamation of Archimedes upon discovering the principle of displacement of liquids; it may simply be an error on the part of whoever wrote the ritual to associate this word with Pythagoras.]

### **What are the so-called "high degrees" in Masonry?**

In spite of the fact that the expression is in common use, there are no "high degrees." There are only "more degrees" than those of the Symbolic Lodges of Ancient Craft Masonry.

There are degrees which are, numerically, larger than the Third Degree; the Ancient and Accepted Scottish Rite has degrees numbered up to and including thirty-three. But a horizontal line thirty-three feet long is no "higher" than one three feet long; a hole in the ground thirty-three feet deep is no "higher" than one three feet deep. The conception of degrees as notches in a flagstaff, which are three feet and thirty-three feet high respectively, is as false as it is natural.

All degrees of all rites of Masonry are dependent on the three degrees of Symbolic Masonry; no man may receive the light from either the Scottish or the York Rite unless he is a Master Mason.

For this reason no degree is "higher" than that of Master Mason, "and the newly raised Mason should first take time to digest what he has already learned before taking further degrees. His first duty is to his Blue Lodge, and always will be never should he forget this.

### **What are "high twelve" and "low twelve"?**

Noon and midnight. These expressions are but two of Freemasonry's many emphases on time, which thus becomes an important symbol, though one seldom considered by ritualists.

The Entered Apprentice divides his time with the 24-inch gauge; both Apprentice and Fellow Craft wait a certain time before further advancement; geometry enables the astronomer to "fix the durations of time and seasons, years and cycles." Ecclesiastes XII begins with "days of thy youth." Job and the adaptation of his words form the Master's prayer in which is "Man that is born of woman is of few days." His "days are determined"; the "number of his months is with Thee"; "turn from him that he may rest till he shall accomplish his day"; the time of the construction of the Temple of Solomon is taught in the Master Mason degree; the Master's carpet has three steps, which, signifying youth, manhood and old age, are themselves symbols of time. The hourglass and scythe are instruments for the measure of time and the bringing of human life and its time to a close. As in all life, time in Masonry is important. Whether it is a symbol of life, of immortality! Or the unsolved puzzles of the universe let each brother decide for himself.

### **What is the "Lodge of the holy St. John at Jerusalem?"**

Many a Master has been puzzled to answer this simplest and most natural of questions. As there is not now and never was such a Lodge, there is certainly some reason for confusion. Originally, Lodges were dedicated to King Solomon. Later--at least as early as 1598--Masonry connected its name with that of St. John the Evangelist. Dedications to the Sts. John were made by other organizations as early as the third century, when the Church adopted the two pagan celebrations of summer and winter solstices and made them our St John's Day in Summer and St. John's Day in Winter [often called the Feast of St. John to distinguish it from St. John's Day in summer]. It was wholly natural for operative masons, having dedicated their Craft to the Holy Sts. John, to begin to believe that both Johns were themselves Craftsmen. Craftsmen must have a Lodge where should that Lodge be, but in Jerusalem? Hence "The Lodge of the Holy Sts. John of Jerusalem" came into imaginary existence. In Minnesota the singular form is used.

No such Lodge ever existed in fact, and yet is not a fiction--it is an ideal, and without such ideals our life could be dim and drab. The thought back of the question and answer, then, is that we come from an ideal or dream Lodge into this actual workaday world, where our idea's are to be tested. Today, as we use the phrase as the starting point for a Masonic career, Masons mean only that their Craft is dedicated to these holy men, whose precepts and practices, ideas and virtues, teachings and examples, all Freemasons should try to follow.

### **Why are candidates hoodwinked?**

Blindfolding a candidate is symbolical of that state in which he has "long been in darkness and now prays for light."

It is not to keep him from seeing the Lodge room, or the officers, or the brethren, but to make a deep and lasting impression on his mind, that Masonically, he has no, or but partial, light, and that only by the consummation of the ceremonies for which he has asked and which the Lodge has granted, may he receive that Masonic light which will enable him to "travel in foreign countries and receive Master's wages."

That the conclusion of parts of Masonic degrees be accompanied by unexpected sight and sound is a very old and very effective way of making an event memorable.

### **Where is Joppa?**

Joppa, or Jaffa, a city of fifty thousand or more, is a port on the Mediterranean Sea. In ancient times it was the port of nearest access to Jerusalem. Originally it marked the boundary of the Tribe of Dan; after the captivity it became Hebrew territory. It was from this port that Jonah set forth for Tarshish and here St. Peter restored Tabitha to life.

### **Where is the River Jordan?**

The longest and most important river in Palestine. It rises in the Anti-Lebanon Mountains in Syria, is some two hundred thirty miles long, empties into the Dead Sea. The river is mentioned in the Old Testament many times and in the New Testament fifteen times; it was the Jordan in which Jesus was baptized. In the Fellow Craft Degree it is important because of Judges XII: 5-6, descriptive of the Gileadites and the Ephraimites at the "passage of Jordan," in which verses also are the explanations of Shibboleth and Sibboleth. The statement that "; there fell at that time of the Ephraimites forty and two thousand" is considered to mean two thousand and forty, and not forty-two thousand.

### **"Jubelum" is not a Biblical name, yet the character was an Israelitish workman on the Temple. Whence came the name?**

Palestine, Phoenicia and Egypt had gods named Jah, Bel and Om, and India has Aum. To most modernists the apparent similarity between the names of Jubelum and his brothers and these gods is coincidental. Freemasonry has always suffered from a gradual change in words and names; the French for Pythagoras was Pytagore; when the name again crossed the Channel it became Peter Gower, who for years was a puzzle to antiquarians. There are many such corruptions; Nembroch for Nimrod; Euglet for Euclid; Aymon for Hiram! All to be found in ancient manuscripts of the Craft. Originally Ghiblim was a name for stonecutters. It gradually changed: Ghiblim, Giblim, Gibalim, Chibbelum, Jublime, Jibelum, Jabulem, and lastly Jubelum. The names of his brothers are merely changes in letters and carry out the ritualistic idea that the three were blood as well as Masonic brethren.

### **What is the Lion of the Tribe of Judah?**

Judah was symbolized as a lion in his father's deathbed blessing. The lion was upon the standard of the large and powerful tribe of Judah. "Lion of the Tribe of Judah" was one of Solomon's titles. Christian interpretation of the phrase springs from Revelation V; 5: "Behold, the Lion of the Tribe of Judah ("Juda", King James version), the Root of David, hath prevailed to open the book, and to loose the seven seals thereof."

The idea of a resurrection is curiously interwoven with the lion in all ages and was connected with resurrection long before the Man of Galilee walked upon the earth. In ancient Egypt, a lion raised Osiris from a dead level to a living perpendicular by a grip of his paw; Egyptian carvings show a figure standing behind the altar, observing the raising of the dead, with its left arm raised, forming the angle of a square.

The Lion of the Tribe of Judah, considered as signifying a coming redeemer who would spring from the tribe, or meaning the King of Israel who built the Temple, or symbolizing the Christ must not be confused with the Lion's Paw which is a symbol of the Mystic Tie the bond between Masons, the strength which comes from unity.

### **What is a jurisdiction?**

1. Refers to the State. The Jurisdiction of Massachusetts--the Jurisdiction of Oregon--meaning the Grand Lodges and all the individual Lodges of those States.
2. Refers to the power of the Grand Master. He has jurisdiction over all of the Masons in his State whether they be members of his Lodges or sojourning Masons from other Grand Lodges.
3. Refers to the territory over which a Lodge has control as far as applications are concerned. Often in rural districts, jurisdictional lines are tightly drawn, so that no Lodge accepts applications from-men who live within the territorial jurisdiction of another Lodge. In cities, "concurrent jurisdiction" is usual, any man being free to apply to any Lodge within the city limits.
4. Refers to the power a Lodge has over its rejected candidates; the right to give, or withhold, permission for rejected material to apply elsewhere. "Penal jurisdiction," as this is sometimes called, varies in different Grand Lodges. In some, it is perpetual, in others! It lapses after a certain length of time.

### **Why does parliamentary law not apply in a Lodge?**

Parliamentary law, which governs the usual body of men assembled in any organization, cannot govern a Masonic Lodge. A Master may put a motion, which has not been proposed or seconded. He can close debate at his pleasure. He does not have to put a question even after debate if he does not desire to do so. He entertains no motion to "lay on the table" or to "postpone" or "to adjourn." No one can "move the previous question" in a Masonic Lodge, and so on

The reason is found in the responsibility, which is the Master's. The Grand Lodge and the Grand Master hold him responsible for everything that happens in his Lodge. There are certain things he cannot do without Lodge action, such as spend Lodge money. He cannot open before the time stated in the bylaws for a regular communication. But the Lodge cannot dictate to him what can be discussed, and if, in his judgment, something should not be discussed or acted upon, it is for him and only for him to say that it should or should not. Were it otherwise, a Lodge might "run away" with him, and in enthusiasm do that for which the Grand Lodge or Grand Master would censure or punish him. Therefore, the Master has full control of debate, and work, and acts; ordinary parliamentary law, which might interfere with that control, does not apply.

### **What is lawful Masonic information?**

Legal or lawful Masonic information can be obtained in three ways; "legal Masonic information" that Mr. A is a Mason is attained by sitting in Lodge with him; when he is vouched for by some one with whom a brother has sat in Lodge; when he passes an examination before a committee appointed by the Master (or the Grand Master) [some would say that this is "due examination" rather than "lawful information"]. A letter from a friend introducing "Brother A" as a Mason is not legal Masonic information. The real Brother A may have lost the letter and it may be presented by a stranger. No brother is at liberty to accept an avouchment that a man is a Mason by talking over the telephone with one who knows him to be a Mason. Unless in his presence, and that of the man vouched for, no one can know that the Mr. A spoken of over the telephone is the Mr. A in mind. Only by strict adherence to these principles can Masons be sure that no Cowan or eavesdropper sits in their Lodges.

### **Is there further information to be obtained of the working tools of a Fellow Craft than is to be found in the ritual?**

Decidedly so; it is half concealed, half revealed in the association of the level with the Senior Warden, the plumb with the Junior Warden and the square with the Master, particularly in the ceremonies of closing a Lodge. In a Lodge all brethren meet on a level of exact equality, which is not concerned with brains! Or education, or wealth, or position; men are equal in a Lodge in manhood, and in Masonic right and Masonic character. "We meet upon the level" means just what it says; Masons trust each other, believe in each other, help each other because they are, Masonically, level with each other. We "act by the "plumb" in accord with Amos VII--the plumb line God said He would place "in the midst of my people Israel." In other words, they were to be judged by their own plumb line, not another's. Masons are to judge their fellows, if at all, by their fellows' plumb lines, not their own. One brother must not condemn another by his own personal standards; he may inquire into those standards but only when a brother is false to his own standards can he judge him.

To "part upon the square" signifies that while a square points in different directions, and men "part" to go each his own way, it is a known way, not a devious way--a wrong way, a bad way--but a "square" way. The Mason who goes his own way, so it is the square way, is never alone, even if out of sight of his Lodge and his brethren. The square is the fundamental tool of the operative Mason; without its use no building would stand. It is the fundamental tool of the Speculative Mason; without square thoughts and actions, no spiritual building can stand.

### **What is a Lewis?**

In Pennsylvania and England, a symbol of strength. Universally, a symbol of the son of a Mason not yet twenty-one years of age; hence the derivation of "strength" since a man's strength is in his son. Washington was under age when initiated. In North Dakota and Arkansas, a Lewis may apply for membership, but he may not be initiated until he is twenty-one. England initiates a Lewis at eighteen by dispensation; Scotland does it without a dispensation.

### **Where and how may I discover the Lost Word?**

Nowhere and in no way. In other rites you may receive other substitutes but the real Lost Word--never. This is the unanswerable question.

The Lost Word is the most abstruse and most important symbol of the Fraternity; few if any are less understood. The Lost Word is not a syllable, or several syllables; "word" is here used as St. John used it: "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God." The Lost Word is not discovered in Freemasonry; Masons are given a substitute. Of the Lost Word, it has been written (Introduction to Freemasonry): "Never may we find it here. You shall gaze through microscope and telescope and catch no sight of its shadow. You shall travel many lands and far, and see it not. You shall listen to all the words of all the tongues, which all men have ever spoken and will speak--the Lost Word is not heard. Were it but a word, how easy to invent another! But it is not "a" word but "The"

Word, the great secret, the unknowable ness which the Great Architect sets before his children, a will-o'-the-wisp to follow, a pot of gold at the end of a rainbow. Never here is it to be found, but the search for it is the reason for life.

"The Sublime Degree teaches that in another life it may be found. That is why it is the Sublime Degree." (See Quest Book No. 5)

### **Why cannot a maimed man be made a Mason?**

He can. Half the Grand Lodges in the nation now admit men with various degrees of physical disability. Anciently it was forbidden because the fourth of the Old Charges sets forth that "No Master should take an Apprentice, unless he has sufficient Employment for him, and unless he be a perfect Youth, having no Maim or Defect in his Body, that may render him incapable of learning the Art, of serving his Master's Lord, and of being made a Brother. And then a Fellow Craft in due time..."

The "doctrine of the perfect youth" has plagued American Freemasonry for many years; originally all Grand Lodges were very strict; in later years more and more have found an "out" from the Old Charge in the words "that may render him incapable of learning the art," it being obvious that the lack of a finger, or even a hand or a foot, if corrected artificially, does not render a man "incapable of learning the art" of being a Speculative Mason.

[Some sources also say that the prohibition stemmed from a desire to avoid the situation of a newly made Mason immediately becoming a charge upon the Lodge's charity, his handicap preventing him from earning a living.]

### **How is a man made a Mason at sight?**

The Grand Master calls into existence an emergent Lodge under temporary dispensation, which Lodge then confers the three degrees, usually in short form, and usually all three in one consecutive period, upon the man selected for the honor by the Grand Master. Most Grand Lodges admit the right of a Grand Master to do this; a few specifically forbid his doing so; one recognizes the right and frowns upon its use. The objections to the act are two: first, he who seeks Masonry of his own free will and accord honors himself and not the Order by his application; Masonry (traditionally) need seek no candidates: second, the general belief that every Mason should pass the ballot of his fellows and not be picked by authority as beyond and above that requirement. The ceremonies of "making a Mason at sight" are less and less often performed as the years bring a better perspective upon the practice.

### **What is a Masonic monitor?**

The Monitor, or Manual, published by most Grand Lodges in some form, is usually a pocket size volume which contains the exoteric or written word, as distinct from the esoteric, or secret, or "mouth to ear" work or ritual. Some Monitors contain also explanations of various parts of Freemasonry, and a few are comprehensive in their coverage of the subject. A Lodge member who is a Masonic Monitor has been certified by the Board of Custodians as having sufficient knowledge of the work and lectures to qualify him to assist in coaching candidates for the degrees, coaching Lodge officers, and assisting the Board in conducting schools of instruction. There are three grades: those of the first grade are proficient in all three degrees; those of the second grade in any two degrees; and those of the third grade, proficient in any one degree.

### **What Masonic penalties are enforced?**

The only penalties known to Freemasonry are reprimand; definite suspension from membership; indefinite suspension from membership; expulsion from the fraternity. To these must be added that intangible penalty which comes to any one who loses all or any part of his reputation. Other penalties suggested in the ritual are wholly symbolic--are not now and never have been enforced. They were legal punishments in the middle ages, designed with special reference to the religious beliefs of the time that an incomplete body could not "rise from the dead"; that a body buried in unconsecrated ground (as between high and low water mark) could not ascend into heaven. Some Grand Lodges offer an interpretation of the ritualistic penalties, in order to be sure the initiate understands the symbolic character of these otherwise difficult phrases.

### **How should I wear my Masonic ring; with compass pointing towards my fingers or the reverse?**

No Grand Lodge has legislated upon the subject except North Carolina whose law states that a Mason should wear the ring so the tips of the compasses are pointed towards him. But this is suggested, not mandatory. The consensus is that if a Masonic ring is worn to advise those who see it that the wearer is a Master Mason, the tips of the compasses should be pointed toward the tips of the fingers. If the ring is worn to remind the wearer that he is a Master Mason, the ring should be worn with the tips of the compasses pointed toward the wrist.

### **What are "a Master's wages?"**

According to the ritual, corn, wine and oil are symbolic of the payment a Freemason earns today by "good work, true work, square work." Master's Wages" may be the same, may be different, for every brother. They are the friendships formed through Freemasonry; the consciousness of unselfish work; taking part in movements and actions for the betterment of the condition of neighbors; inherent in learning and in making it possible for other men to learn that men of widely different beliefs, convictions, circumstances, education, skills and character may live and work, play and love together in peace and happiness. A Master's Wages are intangible, but the more real because any brother may earn as much as he will,

"I worked for menial's wages  
Only to learn, dismayed,  
Any wage I asked of lodge,  
Lodge would have paid."

This reminds us that, as in other walks of life, the only limit to the wages a Master Mason may receive is the limit he himself determines by his deeds.

### **What is a "Moon Lodge?"**

In the early days in this country many Lodges met "on or after full moon," or "on or before full moon" Transportation was poor; roads were rough and difficult, getting from home to Lodge was often a problem. Having the light of the moon made such journeys safer and easier. Many old Lodges refused to change their dates of meeting even when the necessity for lunar meeting times had passed. But many Grand Lodges have legislated the "moon Lodge" out of existence by insisting that their Lodges meet upon definite dates, and others of the old moon Lodges are gradually giving up that distinction in favor of the more practical settled date. Less than five hundred moon Lodges still exist in this country

### **Why do we use "So mote it be" instead of "Amen?"**

"So Mote It Be" are the final words in the Regius Poem. "Mote" is old English for "May." Masons have used the phrase since the beginning of the written history of the Craft. Freemasonry includes many other words, now obsolete, which brings the sanctity of age and the continuity of ritual from ancient days to modern times.

### **Is there a distinction between Masonic oath and Masonic obligation?**

The "oath" is the "So help me, God" at the end of any solemn promise made with hand upon the Book of the Law. The "obligation" is the substance of the preceding promises. "Oath" is thus symbolical of man's fear of God; "obligation" signifies the promises and agreements made preceding the oath.

### **Why is a certain square in Masonry termed an "oblong square?"**

An oblong square has its greatest length from east to west, its breadth from north to south. During the Solomonic era the world was supposed to have that oblong form. On a map of the world inscribe an oblong figure whose boundary lines circumscribe and include that portion known to be inhabited in the days of Solomon; these lines, running a short distance north and south of the Mediterranean Sea, and extending from Spain in the west to Asia Minor in the east, form an oblong square, including the southern shore of Europe, the northern shore of Africa, and the western district of Asia, the length of the parallelogram being about sixty degrees from east to west, and its breadth being about twenty degrees from north to south.

This oblong square enclosing the whole of what was then supposed to be the habitable globe represents what is symbolically said to be the form of the Lodge.

"Oblong Square" has been objected to by purists as a contradiction in terms; they insist that an oblong is a rectangle with unequal sides and perpendiculars while a square is a rectangle with equal sides and perpendiculars. The word "square" did not originally denote a figure with four equal sides, but any figure which had right angles at all four corners. Later, "square" came to mean not only "right angled" but a figure enclosed by four equal length lines an adjoining two of which formed a right angle. "Oblong Square" then, meant anciently what "oblong" (noun) means today.

### **What is an "Occasional Lodge?"**

Any Grand Master may assemble the statutory number of brethren and declare an occasional Lodge at his pleasure, and then dissolve it at the close of the occasion. The occasional Lodge is usually that convened for "making a Mason at sight" but not necessarily so; such a Lodge may be, at the Grand Master's pleasure, convened for any Masonic purpose.

## **Why is a candidate received on the point of a sharp instrument?**

This symbolizes the one real penalty for violation of his obligations--the destructive consequences to a man's own character of an act or word which is unworthy of his obligations to his Lodge or to society.

## **Is Freemasonry a religion or has it a religion?**

No, to both questions. "A" religion connotes some particular religion. Freemasonry is nonsectarian. Before its altar Christian, Jew, Mohammedan, Buddhist, Gentile, Confucian, may kneel together. If the question be phrased "Is Freemasonry religious" then the obvious answer is that an institution "erected to God" which begins its ceremonies and ends its meeting with prayer; which has a Holy Book upon its altar; which preaches the fatherhood of God and the brotherhood of man, of course, has a religious character, although, let it be emphasized again, wholly nonsectarian.

All Grand Lodges require their initiates to express a belief and trust in God. No atheist can be made a Mason. (See Quest Book No. 1)

## **Why does the ritual use so many repetitions, as in "duly and truly", "worthy and well qualified," etc.?**

Several "word-pairs" in Masonic ritual make interesting studies; "duly and truly," "worthy and well-qualified," "free will and accord," "parts and points," "hele and conceal." At first glance it may seem that these are so arranged only for emphasis. In Middle English writing, especially in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, when Freemasonry was in the process of formation, England had two languages. One was Norman-French, the other Anglo-Saxon. To make sure of understanding, word pairs were much in use, a word of similar meaning being taken from each language.

The apparent redundancy of expression in a number of places in Masonic ritual may be traced back to these Middle Ages. The perpetuation of such usage now, when clarity of thought and understanding might be served as well with one word, is one of many proofs that Freemasonry delights to cling to the ancient and venerated because it is venerated and ancient.

## **What is a Rite?**

An approved usage, custom, ceremony, usually to provide instruction and convey rights to a petitioner or initiate. In Freemasonry the "Rite of Ancient Craft Masonry" consists of the three symbolic degrees.

The York Rite of Freemasonry adds to these the degrees of Royal Arch Masonry, and the Order of the Temple, with the Rite of Cryptic Masonry, Royal and Select Masters, as permissible but not mandatory for the completion of the York Rite. The Ancient and Accepted Scottish Rite, according to Mackey, dates from 1758 in Paris, and from 1801 in the United States. It consists of thirty-three degrees (of which the first three are the Symbolic Degrees and not conferred in the bodies of the Rite), which are informative, philosophical, ethical in content and carry the Masonic story further than is possible in a Symbolic Lodge. In the United States there are two Supreme Councils of the Scottish Rite, the Southern (Mother Council of the world) with headquarters in the beautiful "House of the Temple" in Washington, D.C., and the Northern, with headquarters in [near] Boston, Massachusetts. The Southern Supreme Council includes thirty-three [thirty-five plus overseas territories] States and the District of Columbia; the Northern Supreme Council, fifteen States.

## **Why is Masonic ritual regarded as so important?**

Truth may be taught without ritual, but truth taught by ritual is always taught as the original teachers desired and makes a lasting impression upon the mind of the learner. Man has always devised ceremonies of initiation for his organizations; the Men's House of the Indians had them; savage tribes bring their young men officially to manhood by rites which are sometimes rather terrible; ancient religions admitted to the temple only those who could qualify by successfully completing a course of initiation; many modern churches--especially those denominated "high"--have set forms for religious worship; crafts and guilds of all kinds in all ages have had certain preparatory rites.

A ritual, which becomes sacrosanct in human belief tends to stabilize truth and to keep it uncontaminated by "modern" ideas. Many a man has thought he could "improve" the ritual of Freemasonry. None has succeeded in making better that which was already "best," since its content was and is living breathing, sentient truth, conveyed in words, action and symbols which by their very antiquity prove that they are "best" for the purpose.

Dr. Joseph Fort Newton, beloved teacher of the spiritual aspects of Freemasonry, said: "Ritual is the dramatization of belief, hope and spiritual dream. It assists imagination by giving form to what otherwise would remain formless, presenting vivid mental images which lend a reality--feeling to what is often abstract and unreal. It is picture philosophy, truth visualized, at once expressing and confirming the faiths and visions of the mind."

## **Why are Masonic rituals not the same in all states?**

Freemasonry came to the United States from several different sources (England, Ireland, Scotland) and in its spread westward formed Grand Lodges from Lodges, which sprang from the 13 original colonies. These admixtures of rituals

produced variations, which were occasionally increased by actions of Grand Lodges acting on recommendations of Grand Lecturers and Ritual Committees. In the early days of Freemasonry in the United States, many "traveling lecturers" brought their own conceptions of "the true Masonic work" to far areas and taught them. All rituals are "correct?" What a Grand Lodge approves as its ritual is "correct" for its Lodges. No rituals in the United States contradict each other; they vary in words and details, not in essentials.

### **Why do Brethren entering and leaving a Lodge salute the Master?**

Masons entering or leaving a Lodge salute the Master at the altar if the Lodge is at labor--they salute the Junior Warden if the Lodge is at refreshment. This practice assures the Master that the brother knows on what degree the Lodge is open. A brother making a wrong sign can be instructed immediately. It informs the Master that the brother is a Mason of the degree on which the Lodge is open; if he makes an inferior sign, and cannot, on request, give the right one, the Master can then use other means to ascertain that no Entered Apprentice or Fellow Craft is present in a Master Mason Lodge. The salute is a silent assurance to the Master and through him to the brethren: "I remember my obligations."

Brethren salute on retiring to get permission to leave. No one can enter or leave a Lodge room while a Lodge is at labor without permission. If the Master does not wish the brother who salutes to retire, he tells him so, instead of responding to the salute.

At refreshment the Lodge is in charge of the Junior Warden and the same salutes are given him as are usually given the Master, and for the same reasons. In some Grand Jurisdictions, on busy evenings, during a visitation or other Masonic function, the Master will instruct the Tyler to ask the brethren to salute the West, instead of the East, in order to not have his own labors in the East interrupted.

### **Is Masonry a secret society? What can be told and what cannot?**

Masonry is not "a secret society" but "a society with secrets." A secret society is one of which the membership, aims and ideals are unknown. There is no secret about who is, and who is not, a Freemason. Lodges publish their membership rosters. Many Grand Lodges publish the names of their members in annual Proceedings. The world at large knows that the aims and ideals of Freemasonry are religious, charitable, friendly, fraternal.

What is a secret in Freemasonry is well phrased in the Ninth Landmark as adopted by the Grand Lodge of New Jersey.

"The legend of the third degree; the means of recognition; the methods of conferring degrees; the obligations of those degrees and the ballot of every brother are, and must continue to be, inviolably secret." (See Quest Book No. 3)

### **Why is the Masonry of today called "speculative?"**

The word is used in the sense that the Masonry of today is theoretical, not practical building; that it is a pursuit of knowledge, not of the construction of edifices.

Speculative Masonry began with the practice of admitting to membership in operative Lodges men who were not practical builders, stonemasons, architects, etc., but who were interested in the moral, ethical and philosophical teachings of the Fraternity (See Quest Book No. 4)

### **Why are the square and compass more important than other working tools?**

Without a compass no accurate square can be made: without a square no building can be erected. The square and compass are universally the symbol of a Master Mason and of Freemasonry. Symbolists have read many meanings into both these tools of a Mason. Both symbols are much older than Freemasonry; Chinese manuscripts give them a Masonic significance (although there was no Freemasonry in that country two thousand years ago). No symbols in Freemasonry offer so many possible interpretations. But many symbols mean different things to different men; each interprets according to his best light.

In modern Masonic rituals, the compass is "dedicated to the Craft" and is emblematic of the restraint of violent passions. Here "passions" refers to any over-emotional lack of control. It is passions in the larger sense; intemperance, temper, unjust judgment, intolerance, selfishness, that the spiritual compasses circumscribe. The positions of the square and compass in the three degrees are universally symbols of light, further light, more light.

### **Why do the stairs in the Second Degree wind?**

In I Kings VI: 8 appears "The door for the middle chamber was in the right side of the house: and they went up with winding stairs into the middle chamber, and out of the middle into the third." The Fellow Craft climbs the winding stairs to reach the middle chamber where he is paid the wages he has earned, in corn, wine and oil. Symbolists find an especial significance in the "winding" of the stairs, denoting the necessity for a courageous ascent. Stairs which wind do not disclose what is ahead as does a straight stair. He who climbs a winding stair in confidence does so because he is a man grown, no weakling, but one able to face even an unknown future with courage. The Fellow Craft degree as a whole is a symbol of manhood, so it is appropriate to its teachings that winding stairs denote courage. The

Entered Apprentice degree as a whole is a symbol of youth and the Master Mason degree as a whole a symbol of age. (See Quest Book No. 4)

### **How may I know that a stranger is a Mason? How should I make myself known to a stranger as a Mason?**

The answer is Punch's famous advice to those about to marry--"Don't!" Ninety-nine times out of a hundred the man who wears a Masonic pin, or who says that he is a Mason, actually is one. While occasionally impostors seek Masonic aid without a shadow of a right to it, their number is small compared to the millions of men in this country who are Masons in good standing. But it is unwise, and often risky to engage in loose Masonic talk with the stranger who introduces himself as a member of the Craft. Nor is there any excuse whatever for him to ask you to prove yourself a Mason. There is no need for you to know that he is a Mason. Such a necessity would arise when you or he visits a Lodge, but there the responsibility is the Master's, and it is for him to order a committee. Many newly raised brethren think that by giving some Masonic sign they should secretly make themselves known to a supposed brother, but this is a mistake.

Not even when a call for Masonic help comes, is there need for a ritualistic "proof" of mutual membership. If a man is in danger or difficulty, and time is short, there is no more need to find out whether he asked for aid because he is a Mason, than there is to ascertain of the drowning man that he is a respectable citizen before you throw the rope! If the Masonic lesson of charity and help indicates that aid should be given, give it, whether the man be telling the truth or not.

But beware of the man who offers to "prove" himself, and does so by a ready knowledge of Masonry--and sometimes a stolen or forged good standing card--to mulct the innocent. In large cities, refer Masonic request for aid to the Board of Relief which can be reached through the Masonic Temple or Lodge. In general, do not discuss any of the Masonic secrets with strangers and pay no attention to strangers who wish to talk about Masonry's secrets with you. In that course lies safety to yourself and to the Fraternity.

### **How do I apply for the Thirty-Third Degree?**

You do not apply. To ask for that degree is to make sure that you will never receive it. The Thirty-Third and last Degree of the Ancient and Accepted Scottish Rite of Freemasonry, in both the Northern and the Southern Jurisdictions, is an honor given by a Supreme Council for notable services to humanity, country, Masonry, or the Scottish Rite. To receive it, a brother must have obtained the Thirty-Second Degree, but it is given only by sufferance of a Supreme Council and cannot be requested. The same is true of the Military and Ecclesiastical Order of the Red Cross of Constantine, in which membership comes by invitation, never as the result of application.

### **Why has Symbolic Masonry three degrees only, and not four or seven or a larger number, as have other branches of the fraternity?**

Three is the numerical symbol of the equilateral triangle, which is man's earliest symbol for God. It was the "most sacred number" at the dawn of civilization. Masonry emphasizes it: three degrees, three circumambulations, three Great Lights, three Lesser Lights three steps on the Master's Carpet, three Fellows who stood at the gates of the Temple, three who discovered the Master Workman, three principal rounds, three Grand Columns, etc. Evidently the ritual makers of an early age believed that there should be a symbolism of number as well as of object in the teaching of Masonry regarding the fatherhood of God, to instruct that He is present at all times in every ceremony and meeting. (See "High Degrees")

### **Are the Tracing Board and the Trestle Board Masonically the same?**

No. The tracing-board bears upon it representations of the several symbols of one or all the degrees; the trestle board is that drawing board, supported upon a trestle, on which, anciently, the Master Builder drew his designs. In early Lodges, Masonic symbols were drawn upon the earth or floor with charcoal or chalk; these were erased when the meeting was over. Later, such symbols were presented upon a permanent surface and became the "Master's Carpet," and today in many Lodges are to be seen upon oil cloth or canvas, pointed out by a Deacon during the delivery of the lecture. Trestle board appeared at least two hundred years ago, mentioned in Prichard's "Masonry Dissected," an early expose of Masonic ritual. Mackey considers that the Volume of the Sacred Law is the trestle board of modern Masons.

### **Am I allowed to visit in any Lodge anywhere on the globe?**

No. You have agreed to obey the laws of your own Grand Lodge. Those laws provide that you can visit in the Lodges, which are under the jurisdiction of Grand Lodges, which your Grand Lodge recognizes. All United States Grand Lodges are in fraternal relations with each other. If your travels extend beyond this nation, and you wish to visit lodges in foreign countries, ascertain, either from your Proceedings (published yearly by all Grand Lodges), or by

correspondence with your Grand Secretary which foreign Grand Lodges your own Grand Lodge recognizes. If you can prove yourself a Mason by passing an examination, and have a current membership card, you will have no difficulty. But your "right" to visit is limited. Any Master can refuse any visitor permission to visit his Lodge if he believes that the visitor will injure the peace and harmony of his Lodge. Many Lodges do not admit visitors during election or installation communications. As a general rule, all Lodges are glad to receive visitors and to make them welcome. But a Lodge, like a home, is a private institution and need not admit visitors unless the "head of the household" (the Master) so desires.

### **Are the V.S.L. (Volume of Sacred Law) and the Book of the Law the same as the Bible?**

In Christian lands the holy book of the prevailing faith is the Great Light. In American and English Lodges that book is the Holy Bible. A Masonic Lodge cannot exist without the V.S.L., the Book of the Law. But in lands where there are other religions, the sacred book of those religions becomes their Great Light. What is important is that some volume containing divine revelation be a part of the furniture of the Lodge. Inasmuch as Freemasonry is not concerned with doctrine or dogma or sect or denomination, but only with "that natural religion in which all men agree" (Old Charges), it is only necessary that the V.S.L. be sacred to the members of the Lodge the Bible on American altars is not to be considered only as a Christian or a Jewish sacred book; it is a symbol of the revealed will and teachings of the Great Architect of the Universe--a name under which any Freemason can worship that Deity in whom he puts his faith and trust. (See Quest Book No I.)

### **Are there women Freemasons?**

Not that we recognize as such. A female duly elected, properly prepared, initiated and obligated, passed and raised, who signed the bylaws of a regularly constituted Lodge, would not be a Freemason, as all which had been done with her would be illegal, and one illegally initiated is not a Freemason. The third of the Old Charges states emphatically: "The persons admitted members of a Lodge must be good and true Men, freeborn, and of mature and discreet Age, no Bondmen, no Women, no immoral or scandalous Men, but of good Report." There appear to have been at least two historic instances in which a woman was initiated. Prior to the formation of the first Irish Grand Lodge, an Irish Lodge, meeting in the home of Arthur St Ledger First Baron Kilmayden and Viscounte Doneraile, had its privacy invaded accidentally by the Honorable Elizabeth St Ledger, later Mrs. Richard Aldworth. The Lodge members decided the only way to preserve secrecy was to obligate her; she was, therefore, duly obligated both as an Apprentice and as a Fellow Craft. The second instance concerns Helene, Countess Hadik Barkocgy, born 1833, "made a Mason" in Lodge Egyenloseg, warranted by the Grand Orient of Hungary. The last of her family, at her father's death she was permitted by the Hungarian courts to take the place of a son, receiving his full inheritance. In this was an extensive Masonic library in which she became much interested. In 1875 the Lodge mentioned admitted her!

The Grand Orient of Hungary took immediate action on this "breach of Masonic vow, unjustifiably conferring Masonic degrees, doing that which degrades a Freemason and Freemasonry, and for knowingly violating the statutes." The Deputy Master of the Lodge was expelled, the officers of the Lodge had their names struck from its rolls, and the members were suspended for various periods of time. To the honor of the Grand Orient be it said, its final pronouncement--apart from these merited punishments--was unequivocal.

There are a dozen or more stories of other women "made Masons" but none of them withstands critical examination.

There are Lodges, which admit women to their membership, but none of them are under the Grand Lodges that we consider to be "regular."

### **Why is a Master addressed as "Worshipful?"**

Few Masonic matters are less understood by the non-Masonic public than this. The word "worchyppe" or "worchyp" is Old English, and means, "greatly respected." In the Wycliffe Bible "Honor thy father and thy mother" appears as "Worchyp thy fadir and thy modir." English and Canadian mayors are still addressed, "Your Worship." In some of the Old Constitutions of Masonry is the phrase, "Every Mason shall prefer his elder and put him to worship."

"Worshipful," therefore, in modern Masonry, continues an ancient word meaning "greatly respected." A Grand Master is "Most Worshipful", that is, "most greatly respected" (except in Pennsylvania where the Grand Master is "Right Worshipful," as are Pennsylvania's and Texas's Past Grand Masters.)

Text transcribed, & edited by assorted Minnesota Masons. Comments in Brackets added by Masons of Minnesota.