

# Ancient Craft Masonry

As Exemplified in

The York Rite

Of

Ancient Freemasonry

*For the Information of Masons*

*Of All Rites and Degrees*

*Particularly Those Desiring "Further Light"*

A brief sketch of the historical and symbolical background of the system designated as the York Rite of Freemasonry, wherein definitions of the terms "symbols and allegories" are discussed.

*For Further Information*

*Consult the*

*High Priest or Secretary*

*Of the*

*Royal Arch Chapter*

INTRODUCTION

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*To the Most Excellent High Priests, Officers and Companions in Texas:*

Many requests have been presented to me asking for an outline of information proper to be given to those members of the Chapters, and particularly of Blue Lodges, who are interested in obtaining more light on the Capitular degrees and of the York Rite of Freemasonry in general.

After much thoughtful consideration on the subject, I reached the conclusion that a brief sketch of the history of the York Rite; its organization; its several divisions; the titles of the degrees; with a review of its system of imparting its important truths might prove of interest and, perhaps, be helpful to those seeking more information on such subjects.

Volumes have been written on the various topics and there is nothing presented herein which has not been printed heretofore.

However, there is no brief or compact sketch available, bringing together under one cover the subjects or the suggestions presented in this brochure.

In presenting this brief work to the Companions, and to such other Masons as they may believe would be interested in its contents, I have no other object or desire, beyond the hope that it may be the means of contributing toward a renewed interest in Chapter work, and a deeper study of the sublime system embodied in the York rite of Freemasonry.

If it should be deemed by the Craft as possessing any merit, or shall be helpful in stimulating new interest and zeal in the search for "more light," I will not only be very much gratified, but also amply rewarded thereby, for the thought and labor expended in its preparation.

Fraternally yours,

JEWEL P. LIGHTFOOT  
*Grand High Priest*

Fort Worth, Texas  
February 29th, 1940.

#### **THE YORK RITE OF FREEMASONRY**

The oldest and perhaps the purest form of Ancient-Craft Masonry takes its name from the City of York, in the north of England.

It was there in the year A. D. 926 that we find Masonry adopting its first recorded Constitution. It is recorded in many very ancient manuscripts that during the reign of the good King Athelstan he granted a patent to (his nephew) Prince Edwin, under authority of which an assembly of divers lords, dukes, barons, knights, squires, great burgesses of cities, and many more, all Masons, convened in the City of York and adopted a Constitution of fifteen Articles for the future government of the Craft.

An account of this historical incident is fully recorded in the Halliwell Manuscript which dates from the year A. D. 1390. In the Cook Manuscript whose date is placed at A. D. 1490, three hundred and twenty-seven years before the organization of the Grand Lodge of England, the York meeting was again described.

That Masonry existed in England before the reign of good King Athelstan, we find in historical Lansdowne MS. Written in 1560 A. D. from which is quoted the following:

*"Soon after the decease of St. Albans, there came divers warrs into England out of divers nations, so that the good rule of Masons was disturbed and put down until the tyme of King Athelstan. In his tyme he brought this land into good rest and he builded many great works and buildings, therefore he loved Masons well for he had a (nephew) called Edwin, the which loved Masons much, \* \* \* and he was soe practized in Geometry that he delighted so much to come and talke with Masons and to learn of them the Craft, and after, for the love he had to Masons and to the Craft, he was made a Mason at Windsor and got from the King \* \* \* a charter and commission once every year to have assembly within the Realm and to correct within themselves faults and trespasses that were done as touching the craft and he held them an Assembly, and there he made Masons and gave them charges, and taught the Manners and comande the same to be kept ever afterwards."*

Prince Edwin called upon all members old and young to bring in any writings to be found concerning "Masonrie." There were some found in Greek, some in Hebrew and some in English and some in other languages, some of them hundreds of years old, and when they were read "and overseen well, the intent of them was understood to be *all one*," and then he caused a book to be made thereof how this worthy craft of Masonrie was first founded, "*\* \* \** And from that, until this day manners of Masons have kept in this manner and forme."

Based upon the older manuscripts named, Dr. Anderson, in A. D. 1723, published the first edition of the *Book of Constitutions*, in which the history of the fraternity of Free Masons is, he says, "collected from their general records and their faithful traditions of many ages." The history, as narrated herein, is repeated by Dr. Anderson, and subsequently by Preston, author of the first Masonic Monitor.

The degrees recognized by the Grand Lodge of England at the revival in 1717 A. D. were as follows;

*"Pure ancient Masonry consists of three degrees, no more; viz: those of the Entered Apprentice, the Fellow Craft, and the Master Mason, including the Supreme Order of the Holy Royal Arch."*

It is therefore seen that the Royal Arch Degree was once a part of the Master's Degree. It was the crowning feature and glorious completion of Ancient-Craft Masonry. The Grand Lodge of England to this day exercises jurisdiction over the "Holy Royal Arch."

In the early days of the Republic of Texas the Grand Lodge of Texas exercised authority over the Capitular Degrees and actually granted dispensations to form several Royal Arch Chapters.

There was a schism in the Grand Lodge of England in 1738 A. D., at which time a rival Grand Lodge was organized by the schismatics. This situation continued for a period of seventy-five years. In 1813 the breach was healed by the reconciliation and union of the two Grand Lodges.

During the rivalry of the two Grand Lodges both granted charters to form Lodges in the American Colonies. The jurisdiction over the Degrees underwent some changes in this country, resulting finally in organizing separate Grand Bodies which took over what we now called the Chapter Degrees. The organization of the General Grand Royal Arch Chapter was begun shortly after the Revolutionary War

and in the year 1806 A. D. was finally completely organized.

Since that time, in the United States, the Capitular Degrees have been governed by it, and by Grand Chapters that are affiliated with it, with a few exceptions hereinafter noted. In 1859 the Grand Chapter of Texas severed relations with the General Grand Chapter, on account of differences growing out of certain amendments made in the Constitution of the General Grand Chapter, unnecessary to be discussed, since they are not pertinent to our theme, and since that time the Grand Royal Arch Chapter of Texas has exercised exclusive sovereignty over the Capitular or Chapter degrees in this state.

While under the system in vogue in the United States, the Capitular degrees are severed from the Blue Lodge, yet they should be regarded as an *integral part*, and necessary to the *completion* of Ancient-Craft Masonry. They are essential to a full understanding of the *system as a whole*.

Thus, you have a brief but authentic historical sketch of Ancient-Craft Masonry extending backward a thousand years. The traditional history extends back much further. Well informed Masons are familiar with the traditions concerning its origin. I will offer some additional evidence hereinafter in support of the sound basis on which rests securely, the verity of these traditions.

## THE YORK RITE SYSTEM IN THE UNITED STATES

The York Rite system of Freemasonry in the United States is composed of four Grand Divisions as follows:

The Degrees of Entered Apprentice, Fellow Craft and Master Mason constitute what is termed the "Blue Lodge degrees." They are conferred in Lodges holding a warrant or charter from the Grand Lodge.

There is a separate Grand Lodge in each state of the Union, and in the District of Columbia. Each exercises exclusive sovereign jurisdiction over the Blue Lodges in its own territory. The Blue Lodge degrees are called "Symbolic Degrees" and the Lodge, while conferring a degree, is termed the "Symbolic Lodge." The reason therefore will be hereafter explained.

### CAPITULAR MASONRY

The second Grand Division of the York Rite system is called "The Capitular Degrees," composed of four degrees, namely: Mark Master, Past Master, Most Excellent Master, and the Royal Arch. These degrees are conferred in what is commonly called the "Royal Arch Chapter."

The subordinate Chapters in Texas receive their charters from the Grand Royal Arch Chapter of Texas, which is the exclusive and highest authority in Texas over the Capitular degrees as hereinbefore pointed out. The Capitular degrees, when taken in connection with the Blue Lodge, or Symbolic degrees, completes what is termed "Ancient-Craft Masonry." The word "Capitular" is derived from the Latin word "*capitulum*," which means "of, or pertaining to a Chapter."

### CRYPTIC DEGREES

The third Grand Division of the York Rite system is called the "Cryptic or Council Degrees." The word "Cryptic" is derived from the Latin word "*Crypta*," and means, literally, "to hide, hidden, secret." The Cryptic Rite is composed of the Degrees of "Royal Master" and "Select Master," with a third degree, conferred on special occasions, called the "Super-Excellent Master." These degrees are conferred in subordinate Councils which hold charters from the Grand Council of Royal and Select Masters of Texas. This Grand Council has never affiliated with the General Grand Council of the U. S. A., which was only organized in 1888.

While the Cryptic, or Council, Degrees were not originally, an integral part of Ancient-Craft Masonry, the historical and ethical truths taught therein are deemed complementary and necessary to

a full exposition of them, for the light they throw on certain historical sections of Ancient Craft Masonry. They are deemed of such beauty and importance, that each petitioner for the Capitular degrees is required, by the laws of the Grand Chapter of Texas, to, also, petition for the Council degrees.

#### KNIGHTS TEMPLAR

The Fourth and final division of the York Rite System is composed of the Illustrious Order of the Red Cross, Knights of Malta, and Knights Templar. These orders are conferred in a constituent body called the "Commandery." Commanderies are chartered by the Grand Commandery of the State, which in turn is chartered by the Supreme authority over Templar Masonry called "The Grand Encampment of Knights Templar of the United States of America." The Grand Encampment is the only nation-wide Masonic Grand body which exercises any authority or jurisdiction within the territory of Texas.

Differing from all the previous degrees in the York Rite System, the Order of Knights Templar is an Order composed of Masons professing the Christian faith. It makes no claim to being a part of "Ancient-Craft Masonry," as that term is commonly understood by Masons, although some of the symbolism of the Ancient rite is carried into and impressively exemplified in their beautiful rites.

The probable reason why the Valiant and Magnanimous Order of the Temple has been included in the system of York Rite Masonry, is, perhaps, due to the fact that it requires, as a prerequisite to membership, that each petitioner must be a Mason in good standing in the Blue Lodge and Royal Arch Chapter. In this respect, the Knights Templar require an applicant to possess the full qualifications of "an Ancient-Craft Mason" as well as to be of the Christian faith, in order to be eligible to petition for the Orders of Christian Knighthood.

The Grand Encampment of Knights Templar was organized in this country on June 22, 1816. While, like the Grand Priory of England and Canada, it is comparatively a modern Order, yet, it has for its model and foundation those heroic and valiant Orders of Knighthood founded in the year 1118 A. D., and which, for 200 years, led the Crusades in an effort to expel the Saracens from the Holy Land.

The old Order of Christian Knighthood was suppressed in the year A. D. 1313 by Edicts of a French King, aided and abetted by a Pope of the Roman Church. The suppression was accomplished by the arbitrary use of dictatorial power similar to that exercised by the Dictators of Germany, Russia and Italy in recent times.

There is much historical authority to show that the old Orders of Knighthood perpetuated themselves under other names, in Scotland and other countries, for 400 years until the Revival of Masonry in England in A. D. 1717. The limits of this brochure will not permit us entering further into that field. Suffice it to say that for those Masons of the Christian faith, the beautiful and impressive rites of the Order of the Temple, is, in every respect, worthy to be accorded a place in the Grand system of York Rite Masonry.

#### RITE

The word "Rite" as employed in connection with a system of Masonry, is derived from the Latin word "*ritus*," signifying "an approved usage or custom." It is also traceable to a Greek verb, whence literally it signifies "a trodden path." As a Masonic term, its application is therefore apparent. It signifies a method of conferring Masonic light by a collection of degrees of a long-followed custom.

#### INTERNAL EVIDENCE OF THE ANTIQUITY OF ANCIENT-CRAFT MASONRY

The highest internal evidence we have of the ancient origin and antiquity of Ancient-Craft Masonry, aside from its records, is found in the form of its structure, and the method it employs in imparting to its Initiates the truths embodied on its sublime rites and beautiful ceremonies.

Prior to the Christian era, there were no schools or churches as we know them. The children of

the nobility and the rich received instruction from private tutors, while the children of the poor and lower classes were allowed to grow up in ignorance, without schooling or learning in the arts or sciences. They could neither read nor write and were a prey to all the superstitious fears and idolatry which can be imposed upon the illiterate and ignorant masses.

In every ancient country were to be found splendid temples erected to the God of their faith, Worship of their Deities was carried on by certain established rites and ceremonies. Admission into these ceremonies was obtained only through "initiation." Only men of known probity and good moral character were initiated into the mysteries of their religion. Moreover, the rites of the ancient temples were organized into three grades or degrees. The Neophyte, after his initiation into the first degree, had to apply himself for several years of mastering the knowledge imparted to him, and in improving his intellectual, moral and spiritual character before he could be advanced. If he proved in every respect trustworthy, and made satisfactory progress, he was advanced. Eventually, after strict trials to test his fidelity, zeal, moral and intellectual attainments, he might be, finally, initiated into the Inner Sanctuary, where full explanations and interpretations of their sacred writings, symbols and allegories were made known to him. These would include all the knowledge possessed concerning moral and spiritual truths; the laws of nature; the phenomena of the celestial world; the true form of the earth; the revolutions and orbits of the planets, the apparent movement of the sun between the tropics; the constellations of the Zodiac; and the known secrets of the liberal arts and sciences, particularly of Grammar, Rhetoric, Logic, Arithmetic, Geometry, Music and Astronomy, as well as other vital knowledge.

All these things were carefully guarded from the profane, or uninitiated. A penalty of death was inflicted for unlawfully revealing the secrets of the sanctuary. To be deemed worthy of the privilege of initiation was the most valued and highly prized honor to which one could aspire.

They taught their truths through the use of signs, symbols and allegories, each of which was carefully chosen by their wisest sages and seers, and had the virtue of being capable of more than one interpretation. For example, the compasses might be used to teach the beginner a moral lesson, illustrated by drawing a circle and instructing him that he should, likewise, circumscribe his appetites and desires, and keep all the passions engendered by the five senses within due bounds, thus obtaining mastery over himself, and thereby to improve his moral nature. The moral interpretation would probably be the extent of the explanation given the beginner. So, if he became remiss in his duty and fealty, or fell by the wayside, or was not deemed worthy of advancement, he would possess no knowledge, which if disclosed to the profane, would betray the profounder secrets of the temple. To the advanced Initiate, other significations of the compasses would be unfolded. It would, perhaps, be exhibited in its relation to the sciences of Geometry and Astronomy. The candidate would be enlightened on all the secrets of science known to the Priests and Sages of their time.

The Supreme light, finally diffused, taught him that the universe was created by the Grand Architect of the Universe; that it is sustained and preserved by Divine laws enacted by Him for its government; that man is more than a mere animal; that he is an immortal soul that will live beyond the change we call death; that his body is a true temple created for the indwelling of the spirit of God which dwelleth in man. St. John revealed one of the great secrets of the sanctuary when he proclaimed, "Know ye not that ye are the Temple of God and that the spirit of God dwelleth in you."

In all the ancient temples, much stress was placed upon obedience to the "Moral Law," because they believed that without it, no man could develop those virtues, whose excellence will befit him to receive the loftier truths of science and of the spirit which they reserved for those who proved themselves by long service and devotion, to be worthy and well qualified to receive, safeguard, and cherish them.

The Sages and Seers of the ancient mysteries were careful to show their highest initiates that every thing in the universe is governed by divine laws. They unfolded the method by which the laws of attraction and repulsion enabled the sun to fix the planets in orbits, and compel them to revolve in

such orbits about it. They demonstrated how these movements brought about changes in seasons, producing our spring, summer, fall and winter. How these seasons affected the vegetable and animal kingdoms. In fact, how all nature, of necessity, must adapt itself to these constant changes, and taught them the natural laws, by which all these changes are accomplished. These carefully guarded secrets of the Sanctuary of the Temples extended into the realm of moral and spiritual laws, which, likewise, govern the physical, intellectual, moral and spiritual growth and development of man himself.

## INITIATION

It will therefore be seen and understood that the word "initiation" had a different significance in ancient times than is commonly accorded it in modern times. "Initiation" in modern times is commonly understood to mean, when applied to receiving degrees, "as the ceremonial progress through the work of the Rite." When that is completed, the charge given, and the candidate is invited to "find a seat among the brethren", he is presumed to be through; a graduate of the system; and believes himself in possession of all the light and knowledge necessary to be obtained.

Laboring under such a delusion, the proud candidate usually blossoms forth the next day with the emblem of the *Master* upon the lapel of his coat, justly and pardonably happy in the feeling that he had reached the summit of his ambition.

It might be helpful if we put ourselves in mind, ever so often, of the real meaning of the word "*initiation*" as it was understood, when applied to the ceremony of reception into the mysteries of the ancient temples. With them it was understood to merely be a beginning and not a completion; the taking of the first step, and not the last one; the starting of something, and not the finish; the first move in a great enterprise, and not its final consummation. It required a lifetime of work, study, meditation, reflection and application to attain the true title of "a Master."

Initiation into the mysteries was held in loftiest esteem by the wisest men of olden times. Plato said that the "object of initiation into the mysteries of the Temple was to re-establish the soul in its primitive purity, and in that state of perfection which it had *lost*." Epictetus said, "whatever is met with therein has been instituted by our Masters, for the instruction of Man, and the corrections of Morals."

St. Clemens of Alexandria, one of the early Bishops of the Christian Church in Egypt, and himself, perhaps, an Initiate, says, "that that was taught in the great Mysteries concerned the universe, and was the completion of all instruction; wherein things were seen as they were, and nature and her works were made known."

"It seems to me," says the great Orator, philosopher and moralist, Cicero, "that Athens, among many excellent inventions, divine and very useful to the human family, has produced none comparable to the mysteries, which for a wild and ferocious life have substituted humanity and urbanity of manners. It is with good reason the use of the term *initiation*; for it is through them that we in reality have learned the first principles of life; and they not only teach us to live in a manner more consoling and agreeable, but they soften the pains of death by the hope of a better life hereafter."

Masonry, the successor of the ancient temple-mysteries, still follows the ancient manner of teaching. The deeper and more important truths of nature, of science, of philosophy, and wisdom are "veiled in allegory and illustrated by symbols." The esoteric lectures and monitorial instruction, beautiful and impressive as they are, are designed to be merely the beginning; the first steps; the starting; the first movement toward "more light" and the "further light" it has so deftly veiled in its beautiful and impressive symbols.

A great Masonic scholar and savant has truly said: "He, who would become an accomplished Mason, must not be content merely to hear, or even to understand, the lectures; he must, aided by them, and they having, as it were, marked out the way for him, study, interpret, and develop these symbols for himself."

Ancient-Craft Masonry does not expound the *inner* meanings of its symbols and allegories. It

merely displays them, with a brief allusion to their *moral* signification, and leaves their other meanings to be *discovered* by the industry, meditation and contemplation of the initiate.

One often hears the questions asked, "How then are we to discover the truth?" "By what method are we to understand the symbolic meaning of our ancient symbols?" "Where do we begin in order to unravel this Mystic Science and Royal Art?" These are legitimate questions and are deserving of an answer that will point a direction, through which others have found a pathway, that inevitably leads toward the light.

Ancient-Craft Masonry has been described as a "beautiful *system* of morality, veiled in allegory and illustrated by symbols." This definition is the most restricted one which can describe it. A more comprehensive definition would be as follows: "Masonry is a beautiful *system* of Moral Philosophy; Divine Science and Royal Art; heavily veiled in Allegories; illuminated and illustrated by significant symbols."

By this expression we learn that "Ancient-Craft Masonry" is a *system* of some sort. It will, perhaps, aid us, if we understand more clearly just what is meant by the word "*system*." The word "*system*" may be defined as "an assemblage of degrees arranged in regular subordination, after some distinct method, usually logical or scientific. A complete exhibition of essential principles or facts, arranged in rational dependence or connection. A regular union of principles or parts forming *one entire thing*. A natural combination, or organization of part to part, conceived as formed by a process of growth, or due to the nature of the objects connected; an organic whole; as a railway system; a system of philosophy; of government; a solar system; a system of morality; a system of natural laws."

Since Ancient-Craft Masonry, as a system, embraces the Blue Lodge and Capitular degrees a knowledge of *all* these degrees is believed to be essential for a through understanding of the system as a *whole*. A knowledge of only a part of the system will not reveal the Divine plan, as a *whole*, as, it is claimed, to be embodied in the completed structure. A visitation to the ground floor and middle chamber of King Solomon's Temple never revealed what was deposited in the Sanctum Sanctorum or Holy of Holies.

If, therefore, Ancient-Craft Masonry is truly a *system* of some kind, which is "veiled in allegory illustrated by symbols," the next logical step will be to consider the nature and functions of *symbols* and *allegories*, and the manner in which they may be employed to conceal, as well as to reveal, divine truth. We must ever bear in mind that symbols were primarily designed to *conceal* rather than to *reveal*.

## SYMBOLS

A symbol differs materially from an allegory. The word "symbol" is derived from a Greek word which signifies "to compare one thing with another"; and hence a symbol is the expression of an idea which is derived from the comparison or contrast of some object with a moral conception or attribute. A symbol is an emblem selected, arbitrarily and by agreement, because by its nature or qualities, it is capable of reflecting some higher truth or idea.

Since ever virtue springs out of the moral law, the symbolic degrees of the Blue Lodge in their first aspects, are chiefly concerned in expounding the moral laws and virtues. They are a necessary prelude and preparation for the unfolding, through symbols and allegories, of its more profound and important scientific and spiritual laws.

In illustrating a virtue some specific emblem or symbol is selected, arbitrarily, which bears in its own nature, some inherent quality or characteristic that is comparable to the nature of the virtue to be illustrated. For illustration: To inculcate the moral quality of "Rectitude," the figure of a Plumb may be exhibited, because it is upright and cannot be employed otherwise. Likewise, "Equality" is illustrated by the level. As an appropriate symbol of "Industry" and orderly government, a Beehive may be used; "immorality" is well illustrated by a sprig of evergreen, etc., etc.

The Plumb thus becomes to the Mason after he has been taught its symbolic meaning, forever



afterwards, the visible representation or expression of the idea of rectitude or uprightness of conduct.

To study and compare these visible emblems—to elicit from them the moral and other ideas which they are intended to express—is to make one's self acquainted with the symbolism of Masonry.

This action will put the feet of the searcher after "more light," upon the path that leads to profounder knowledge and wisdom.

In addition to being a beautiful system of moral laws, Masonry also lays claim to a "Divine Science and a Royal Art." We would, therefore, expect to find among our symbols some that embody the truths of Divine Science. For example: A point within a circle is generally accepted as a fitting symbol of circumscribed desires and habits, necessary to upright and moral conduct. In a deeper sense it is an appropriate symbol of the sun in the center of our solar system, extending its power and influence through the immensity of space, controlling the movements of the planets and of comets, and holding them steadfast in their stupendous orbits.

The scientific fact that the sun, and not the earth, is the center of our solar system was not known to the profane world until proclaimed by Copernicus and Galileo in comparatively modern times.

The point within a circle may also be employed to reflect a still deeper symbolism. It is a fitting symbol of the Great Architect of the Universe in the center of the Cosmos, animating, sustaining and permeating it to the outermost reaches of illimitable space. "The heavens declare the glory of God and the firmament sheweth his handiwork."

#### ALLEGORIES

Since the truths of the Ancient Temples are also said to be "veiled in allegories," it might aid to a clearer understanding of the system to set forth, briefly, an explanation of that term.

An *allegory* is a discourse, narrative or legend, in which there are two or more meanings, one literal and the other figurative. The discourse may have as its subject an historical event, such as the building of the Temple. The narrative may describe, in detail, all the operations, from the laying of the foundation to the final completion of the structure. On its surface the narration may have the appearance, only, of detailing an ordinary historical event connected with the erection of a building. If the historical event is employed as an allegory, it will be detailed in such a manner, and in such language, that a second narrative can be read *between* the lines. The truths veiled in this manner carry the more important information. The unreflecting mind will see only the historical fact detailed, but the more thoughtful and discerning mind may, upon meditation and reflection, discern the *veiled* truths intended to be veiled and preserved, against revelation to idle curiosity, impostors or the profane.

A French poet has given us a very good definition of the word, he says: "Allegory lives in a transparent palace." All the legends of ancient mythologies are generally viewed as allegories. In the twelve labors of Hercules, may be read inner truths not at once apparent in the stories as told.

Bunyan's "Pilgrim's Progress," Spenser's "Fairie Queen," and Dante's "Divine Comedy" are notable examples of allegorical writings.

The story of Sampson and Delilah may well serve to illustrate the point: When Sampson was shorn of his long hair by Delilah, he is said to have lost his strength and languished in weakness and impotence until his hair grew long again, when he was restored to his former invincible strength.

If the story is viewed as an allegory the legend will be seen to *veil* a great law of nature. When the sun sinks far to the south at the feast day of St. John the Evangelist, December 27<sup>th</sup>, its rays lose their strength and power in the northern hemisphere. The cold winds, snows and ice appear. Vegetation is destroyed, trees shed their leaves and all the vegetable kingdom seems to die or become dormant. When the sun begins its return journey northward, its rays, represented by the hair of Sampson, begin to grow in length. The days become longer and longer, the rays gain in strength and power, and by the feast of St. John the Baptist, June 24<sup>th</sup>, they have reached their fullest length,

strength and power. The cold and icy winds have been driven into the Arctic, nature is fully revived and the flowers, fruits and harvest glorify the vegetable kingdom. Thus it may be seen how a historical or Biblical narrative may be utilized to veil a scientific law. In the allegory, Sampson is made to personify the Sun in its apparent movements between two of the great cardinal points.

Every degree of Ancient-Craft Masonry contains important allegories, a knowledge and understanding of which will bring "more light" and "further light" as they are unveiled in their transcendent beauty and glory. The building of the Temple; the Holy place; the most Holy Place; Jacob's Ladder; and the sublime legend of the Second Section of the Master's Degree may also be considered as allegories, which veil the most profound truths of divine science and of moral and spiritual laws, found in the symbolic Lodge.

The same is true of the Capitular and Cryptic Degrees. A full comprehension of the system of Ancient-Craft Masonry and its supernal light, can only be attained with a knowledge and *understanding* of the Capitular and Cryptic degrees. They illustrate the Temple completed in all its parts. The placing of the keystone is necessary to bind the final arch.

Teaching truths by parables or allegories was the favorite method employed by Jesus. The parables of the sower; the talents; the wise and foolish virgins and the Good Samaritan; are each a splendid example of concealing, as well as teaching, great and fundamental truths by allegory.

The foregoing hints should suffice to point the way whereby more light may be attained, and our minds illuminated, by a richer knowledge of the divine wisdom concealed in the symbols and allegories of the system of Ancient Craft-Masonry.

One must study each symbol displayed for all of its possible meanings, and search each allegory of its inner truths, if one is to really advance toward a brighter and more abundant knowledge of the sublime system of this wonderful Institution. When this is accomplished there will be so much light upon the pathway that there will be little or no need for other suggestions to point the way. The question may be asked: "In this day of enlightenment and freedom, where there is such a wide diffusion of knowledge of the laws of nature and of science, of moral, spiritual and intellectual sciences, why is it necessary to delve into the hidden meanings of ancient symbols of vanished temples?"

In answer, one needs only to point to the fact that seven great civilizations have risen, flourished and disappeared since the beginning of written history. Following each of these catastrophes the world, invariably, lapsed into extended eras of darkness, ignorance and brutal savagery. The influence of the ancient wisdom, preserved in faithful breasts by the loyal few, has always been instrumental in leading mankind out of the darkness into the light of a new civilization. The blessings of the enlightened civilization which we enjoy today may be traced to such a system.

In our own day and generation we have witnessed the recurrence of the experiences of history. The rise of dictatorial power in many quarters of the world is being employed to overthrow freedom; is engaged in the destruction of the temples of faith; the grinding of human beings into economic, social, moral and religious serfdom. If the present trend is not checked and its course reversed, another of the world's great civilizations may be destined to crumble into ruins.

If we are conscious of any duty or obligation to the past, a past which safeguarded and transmitted to us the fundamentals of our precious civilization, then, do we not owe a similar debt to posterity, to preserve and transmit to it, unimpaired, the glorious heritage which we receive from the strong minds and devoted hearts of the fathers of ancient days?

When one has received the degrees of the "symbolic" or "Blue Lodge," he has taken the first step over the threshold of Ancient-Craft Masonry. The first step toward the inner sanctuary and heart of the Temple. He is on the path that leads up to the slope of the Mountain of Faith. It depends upon his interest, zeal and industry, whether he will advance or be content to *remain stationary*.

The system of Ancient-Craft Masonry was not designed in a manner so that the full scope of its Divine Science and Royal Art should be expounded, and fully inculcated, in the three symbolic degrees

as now constituted. *Ancient-Craft Masonry* is completed only in the Capitular and Cryptic degrees of the Chapter and Council. It was designed to be that way. Something was left lacking in the symbolic degrees. Something was *lost and never recovered* therein. Mackey, one of our most eminent Masonic scholars, wrote: "Whosoever carefully studies the Master's degree in its *symbolic signification*, will be convinced that it is imperfect and unfinished in its history, and that, terminating abruptly in its symbolism, it leaves the mind still waiting for something that is necessary to its completeness. This deficiency is supplied by the *Royal Arch Degree*."

#### CAPITULAR MASONRY

The degrees of the Royal Arch Chapter, as before stated, are designated as "Capitular Degrees" and its four degrees are named, Mark Master, Past Master, Most Excellent Master and Royal Arch.

The system of ceremonies established in the Symbolic Lodges extends into the Royal Arch Chapter, expanding their scope and unfolding their truths into ever increasing Masonic light and knowledge.

This fact illustrates the intimate connection which has always existed between the Blue Lodges and Chapters from time immemorial.

The fourth Degree in Masonry (the first in the Chapter) is designated the "Mark Master's Degree." Mackey in his *Encyclopedia of Masonry* speaks of it as follows: "The tradition of the degree made it of great historical importance, since by them we are informed that by its influence, each Operative Mason at the building of the Temple was known and distinguished, and the disorder and confusion which might otherwise have attended so immense an undertaking was completely prevented. Not less useful is its *symbolic signification*." A highly important and significant part of the Mark Masters Degree was once a part of the Fellow-Craft Degree. Again Mackey correctly states: "If the Fellow-Craft's Degree is devoted to the inculcation of learning, that of the Mark Master is intended to instruct us how this learning can most usefully and judiciously be employed for our honor and profit of others \* \* \* The true Mark Master is a type of that man mentioned in the sacred parable who received from his master this approving language: "Well done, good and faithful servant; thou has been faithful over few things, I will make thee ruler over many things; enter thou into the joys of thy Lord."

The fifth and sixth degrees of York Rite Masonry are designated "Past Master," and "Most Excellent Master." In these degrees many important truths are illustrated and inculcated.

The seventh degree is the "Royal Arch." It is known as the Chapter, while the Mark Master, Past Master and Most Excellent Masters' degrees are conferred in Lodges of those names within the Chapter.

Of the Royal Arch Degree Mackey says: "If we except the Master's, there is no other degree in Masonry that has been so extensively diffused, or is as important in its *historical and symbolic* import, as the Royal Arch, or, as it has been called, on account of its significance, the 'Holy Royal Arch'."

Dermott calls it "the root, heart and marrow of Masonry." Oliver says that it is indescribably more august, sublime, and important than any which precede it, and is, in fact, the summit and perfection of ancient Masonry."

It is unnecessary that anything be added to the opinions expressed by these eminent Masonic authorities, further than to observe that it requires these additional degrees to amplify and complete the *beautiful system of Ancient-Craft Masonry* and bring the searcher for truth into a situation rendering it possible to obtain the full glory of Masonic *light and knowledge*.

These degrees, supplemented by the Cryptic degrees of the Council, together with a knowledge of their wonderful system of historical, philosophical, scientific, moral and spiritual truths, complete the grand plan devised by the Grand Masters of the Ancient Temples, through which the light will ever continue to shine in effulgent and refulgent splendor, "Seek and ye shall find, knock and it shall be opened unto you."

Albert Pike, one of Masonry's greatest savants, has written: "He who desires to understand the

harmonious and beautiful proportions of Freemasonry must read, study, reflect, digest and discriminate. The true Mason is an ardent seeker after knowledge; and he knows that both books and the antique symbols of Masonry are *vessels* which come down to us full-freighted with the intellectual riches of the past; and that in the lading of these argosies, is much that sheds light on the history of Masonry, and proves its claim to be acknowledged the benefactor of mankind, born in the very cradle of the race."

In conclusion, permit me to observe that the object of Masonry, primarily, is to teach men a better way of life. To instruct him of the most orderly way to develop character, mentality and spirituality, in order that he may prepare himself as a living stone in that mighty spiritual temple which is slowly rising in the earth and shall stand at last eternal in the Heavens. In this respect the grand design is to make men wiser, freer, better and consequently happier men.

But the beautiful system does not end there. It has much more to teach than mere *human behavior*. The divine laws of nature were not at first written in books. They were displayed in the wonderful symbols created by wisdom of God, and displayed by Him in the Heavens; the earth; and beneath the waters of the sea.

Mankind had to discover them by observation, meditation and revelation.

If in the beautiful and significant degrees of Ancient-Craft Masonry we have seen only a series of unmeaning rites; if the spirit of truth has not impressed upon our hearts the moral laws embodied in them; if they have failed to stir within us a desire to search further for its inexhaustible riches; then indeed have we labored in vain and you have spent your strength for naught.

*"Ships floating peacefully at anchor in the harbor are safe, but ships are not built for that purpose."--Sheldon*

THE END