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A few thoughts on the symbolical lecture.

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I had a blank year in the chair of first principal, and therefore had to cast about for something to interest my Chapter. In this manner an opportunity presented itself for studying the second lecture; and when my notes appeared to be sufficiently full, I gave the lecture paragraph by paragraph, pausing after each to comment upon it. This induced my past 2's to ask me to dig deeper and to develop the idea, using the same material. Suitable preparations were made for "next time", but the unexpected presence of our M.E.G. Supt. (Worcs), with proper officers attending, quite upset my reckoning. I had planned to do something entirely new to my own experience. Some comments were going to be made on my own authority; and my opinion was going to differ from the printed ritual (with or without apology). Excommunication was in sight. I asked the M.E.G. Supt. if I might express in his presence those thoughts which had been prepared for the Companions in his absence; and he was so very kind about the whole matter that I forgot to do the honors properly and ask him to open Chapter. He and his officers were kind enough to occupy the chairs when my wandering mind had returned to normal: and as in the following year my position became that of PROV.^{G.} PRIN. SOJ., it was pretty certain that I was forgiven all. This explanation is due to you: but may I add that all my

original notes have been mislaid or lost; and in response to your request it has become necessary to look up everything once more. I am not sorry. More care will be taken to file these notes.

It is very kind of you to invite me to address you. There are many present quite capable of instructing me in all three lectures - and much more. It would be a pleasure to sit at their feet. I do not seek ^{to} instruct you; but merely wish to submit a few thoughts just as these come to me, in the hope that you may find a thread or a fragment of some use to you, if only a negative use in the sense that you do not agree, and your own leaning towards a contrary view is thereby strengthened.

Please receive these few thoughts as uninspired, certainly as non-authoritative, and use these exactly as may suit you.

The opening paragraph of the symbolical lecture is a plain recital that the forms, symbols, ornaments, rites, and ceremonies in use to-day are very ancient, and are as adopted by our predecessors at the building of the second Temple. Perhaps we had better pass that for the moment, and interest ourselves in the details that follow, because fairy stories and parables are very common in masonry.

Certainly the symbols etc. do preserve in our hearts the most exalted lessons of morality, which we are bound to practice. We must of course remember that most fairy stories and parables are inspired, and although sometimes apparently absurd, ridiculous and far-fetched, have a hidden meaning not always easy to grasp, and are generally intended to teach us something for our ultimate good.

I find that the form of the Chapter is not always understood. The ground plan would appear to correspond to a vertical section taken through the centre of the secret vault. Let a straight line representing our W. act as a base line. Upon it, at its two extremities, and at right-angles to it, set up our N. and S. sides by two other straight lines. Then "crown" the two sides in accordance with our E. end, using a catenarian or catenary arch; and then you will have the form or ground plan of our Chapter, and also a vertical section taken through the centre of the vault.

(Here demonstrate the catenarian arch - and load it unequally with clips)

The K.S. and two contiguous A.S.

Having noted the vertical section through the centre of the vault, corresponding to the ground plan of our Chapter as now set out, we can see more clearly the symbolism of the K.S. represented by the M.E.Z., and the two A.S. represented respectively by E.C.H and E.C.J. Our Candidate is made to

wrench forth all the three S. before making his final and important discovery. Likewise, he is subsequently told that each Companion must pass through all three chairs to obtain a perfect knowledge of the degree.

His first discovery is made when still in a state of darkness or ignorance. He is just groping about. During infancy (our natural state of darkness or ignorance) we acquire much that remains with us, although at the time we know very little or nothing about it. We are told to do some things and not to do other things, and presently "Why?" and "Why not?" are added to our vocabulary. It's a long time before we know why we have to do this and to refrain from doing that. Quite gradually, what we may term "the letter of the Word" comes to us. We are too blind to grasp more. There is insufficient light. (You will here recognise the condition of our Candidate when he obtains possession of "something like a scroll of vellum or parchment".) It is when we have ascended from the pit or vault of darkness (ignorance) or semi-light, and when our natural eyes are open - (the light of the natural sun is upon us,) that we have the first impression of the importance of our acquisition during a state of ignorance and almost irresponsibility, (that is when someone held our hand, instructed us, and guided our efforts). We find that we have "the beginning", when the earth was without form and void; and darkness was upon the face of the deep (all this corresponds to the dark, blank mind of the candidate at the time of the discovery). And God said "Let there be light": and there was light.

Isn't this a fine symbolical representation of our state of ignorance, the Word coming to us, first in the simple letter, and then light (which is knowledge) gradually breaking through? You can easily enlarge on this thought for yourselves.

This wonderful discovery spurs the candidate to further effort; and again, with the aid of natural light, increased by the removal of the K.S., the sun, at its greatest altitude, darting its rays with meridian splendour, the Candidate is enabled to complete his work of discovery. This increase of light is clearly symbolical of the increase of knowledge; and the reference to the sun at its meridian seems to indicate the completion of natural knowledge - the highest light - the highest knowledge.

Raising the veil or covering (NOTE - not removing it entirely) the Candidate sees that which he humbly conceives to be etc. etc. Please note that the Candidate only RAISES the veil with reverential awe. He does not remove it. There is still a shadow cast by the veil. If we wish to look at the sun, we must have protection for our eyes. There are intervening atmospheres and clouds, but yet we must use smoked or darkened glasses, and we look for a brief period only. How easy to regard the natural sun as corresponding to or symbolical of the Deity - our spiritual Sun. We cannot look upon Him, and we cannot even pronounce His Name unaided.

Passing through various offices, and through the three chairs, meanwhile studying and pondering over historical, symbolical and mystical teachings, surely our spiritual eyes are opened, and a perfect knowledge of this degree is vouchsafed to

us by "that Light which is from above". Let us remember, however, that the mere knowledge of the letter of the Word only is insufficient. We may be able to repeat each and every one of the ten commandments, backwards and forwards with our eyes blindfolded, but a life lived in accordance with them is what counts.

Yes! I like the symbolism underlying this section of our lecture. It seems to be right that our ^a ~~letter~~ should be veiled and guarded in a vault of the strongest possible form, and that we should have to labor to acquire knowledge of it - or we might profane it. We need careful and lengthy preparation before we are fit or are fitted to act as a king, representative of the King of Kings.

The T.A's, the T.T. and the jewel.

Oh! this terrible collection of T.A's and R.A's! At school, I liked my little bit of geometry, that was said to be an exact science. But why this bewildering collection that frequently makes Ex.C.H. look very unhappy and the average candidate very puzzled? I would rather travel in a circle on my daily round and common task, hoping that by adding to my knowledge at the same time, the circle would also carry me upwards on the lines of the winding stairway of life, than try to memorise all the problems set out in the lecture on the jewel. There must be something at the back of these geometrical problems, all of which work out correctly, as indeed they must. But what is it? We have been taught something already about the circle, the 360° , and about the square, 90° ; but now we have to work on 180° . Why

not set down a simple straight line and have done with it?

At one time, a simple square 360° was used to represent the four forces or operating powers of the Deity. At another time this same square was made to represent the earth, hence, I suppose, the four corners of the earth.

The dual principle is well applied to humans - two sexes, two arms, two legs, two nostrils, two parts of the head etc. etc.

At some date, an equilateral triangle was made to represent fire, which in its best sense corresponds to love - the fire of love. Inverted, this same triangle represents rain; but it was also made to represent the reverse of good, and that is evil. In the two combined we get a symbolical representation of the triumph of good over evil, used since very ancient days, even pre-Jewish, as a charm against sickness and everything else that is evil. It is known popularly to-day as Solomon's Seal.

Simple forms appeal to simple man, and at one time there is no doubt that the simple Delta was sufficient. Evil being the negative ^{on} of good, someone thought to reverse the triangle to represent evil, and then to superimpose the upright triangle of good upon it. Hence two triangles.

Then, possibly, in Egypt, the T or Tau, the latter afterwards a Hebrew letter, was used, partly for practical purposes and partly for mystical purposes. As a mystical sign in Egypt, it represented evil; but by surmounting it with a circle, representing the Deity, and therefore the power of good, they produced the ANKH mark, which is now to be found in conjunction with the name of every king or pharaoh of Egypt. This also was used as a charm like the Delta, the Tau, the circle and later

the cross.

(Grenfell & Accles - the Chinese form)
(Accles & Pollock - the Egyptian form)

There came a period when 3's or trinities of powers became a fashion, and additional to the simple Delta, which is a trinity, we get our triple T.

Our large triangle with three big lights, one at each corner, was divided by introducing three lesser lights; but that gave us in all four equilateral triangles, all equal, or say $4 \times 180^\circ = 720^\circ$. Geometrically, this is equal to the sum of the R.A.'s of our triple T, or say $8 \times 90^\circ = 720^\circ$.

We are then told that this serves to illustrate the jewel worn by the Companions, but you will observe that the development of this provides suitable matter for a lengthy lecture all to itself, and I do not propose to express any thoughts upon it now. Possibly the intention was to bring into record and review not only a representation of the Deity but many of his attributes, including also representations of fire, air, earth, water and the sphere of the universe as illustrated by Plato; and there I think that we must leave it. From a simple form comes elaboration, extension, emphasis etc.

NOTE. Our lodges and chapters are full of trines.

The will be our hymn:

*Holy, holy, holy,
Lord, God in might,
The, and
The, and
The, to come.*

THREE chairs. Knocks. Fire. First steps.
great lights.
" lesser "
" working tools in each degree.
" columns - wisdom, strength and beauty.
" movable jewels - S. L. PR.
" immovable " - TB. R and P. Ashlars.

Plato's solids to represent fire, air, earth, water and the sphere of the universe all had faces or facets consisting of triangles. * Was the intention to shew

* I am not quite right here, because the faces of the dodehedron are all equal-sided pentagons.

that the Deity was in and part of everything - omnipresent, as well as omniscient and omnipotent (another trine) ? Is that perhaps why these trines are to be found so freely within our lodges and chapters ?

The ribbon - red and blue - irradiated. Said to denote "light" - an emblem of regal dignity and power.

We use the names of colours to denote states or conditions. Let us look at a few of these in common use. We say

He is green with envy.

" looks black as thunder.

" has a fit of the blues.

She is a blue stocking.

Anger/Love

We see "red" (note the reverse).

He is yellow all through.

" " yellow bellied.

" " white livered (evidently lacking RED blood).

" a white man.

The same colour may denote good or bad, depending upon the method of use. In a fit of the blues we could not be said to be in search of the "blue bird".

A white man would not be said to be white livered.

We speak with delight of green fields - but green is also significant of envy.

The colours red and blue combined produce purple, which is a royal colour.

*Red denotes love (heat)
Blue " truth (light)

*Celestial rosy red, love's proper hue.
Milton's Paradise lost.

Combine the two, purple, love and truth, and we have something

*In schoolboy howler:-
This is the emblem
of hope.
Brides wear it at
their wedding.
The men wear black.*

above all else, regal. Show the two in irradiated form and it spells "activity, use, life". Is there anything higher for us on this earth? It is "royal" purple.

I like this line of reasoning better than that of our ritual.

I do not say that our ritual is wrong, but that it is incomplete - it does not take us far enough.

** originally a snake or serpent -
then an eagle grasping a serpent -
then an eagle alone.
Eagle = natural enemy of a serpent.
Jacob likened Dan to a serpent in his way,
an adder in the path that bit the horse's heels,
so that the rider shall fall backward.*

The 12 signs and the 4 principal banners.

12

All/tribes are shewn by some writers to correspond with certain signs of the Zodiac, and good explanations are given. For our general consideration this evening, and for the purpose of this paper. I propose to deal mainly with the four principal banners, and it will be interesting to observe that these representing

N
a lion,
Judah,

E.
an ox,
Ephraim,

S.
a man,
Reuben,

W.
and an eagle*
Dan

represent or correspond to

fire,

earth,

air,

water.

and are the four fixed signs of the Zodiac. These four are also the same as seen in a vision by Ezekiel.

creatures
These four are also

It was around these four principal banners that the remaining tribes under their respective standards were ordered to assemble, to encamp, and to march, thus surrounding and protecting the tribe of Levi and the ark of the covenant during the journey

from Egypt to Canaan. The positions assigned to the eight tribes in relation to the four are maintained to-day in the Zodiac.

(Genesis - Chap. 49) Allow me to advise you to read in your bible the blessings pronounced by Jacob on his sons and grandsons (Ephraim and Mannaseh were sons of Joseph who was a son of Jacob but who had no tribe of his own). These blessings really express the characteristics of these men, and if we carefully compare our own make-up with that of the sons of Jacob, we shall be surprised to find how much we are like them; what tendencies we possess to the same faults, failings and weaknesses. Of course, this is where our lesson lies, and why the banners and the standards are set before us. We must select for ourselves the best standard, work under it, fight under it, and make of ourselves that which it "stands" for.

Read also as a matter of great interest the formation of the 12 tribes under the leadership of the four principal tribes.

(Numbers - chap. 2.)

Bearings on the sceptres.

Priest. Mitre - (archbishops, bishops, abbots).

Prophet. seer - eye (spiritual) note the radiations (activity)

King. crown.

Bible, sq., Comp's.

Here again, I wish to be brief. There is nothing strikingly new in the references to the three great masonic lights:

and I wish to pass on to the two remaining items, which, to my mind, are placed in the wrong order in our ritual. These shall be taken in reverse order, and I feel quite sure that you will approve.

1. Sword and trowel. p. 57.
2. Pick, crow and shovel. p. 58.

} spiritual.

I suppose that when Ex. Comp. H. gives his lecture he is bound to follow the ritual. Before giving the final paragraph I stated plainly and openly that I did not believe much of it; and it left an unpleasant flavour in my mouth. When I heard it first, I wanted to laugh at the absurdly ridiculous and even impudent paragraph that presumes to "spiritualise" the pick, crow, and shovel. I want denounce it and its compiler more than that.

Let us look first at the natural uses of the three implements.

The pick must be used to loosen hard trodden earth and the like.

The crow comes to use when an obstruction is met with too heavy for the pick.

The shovel is for the removal of the rubbish, the discarded material, after it has been loosened and broken up.

The use of all three implements must precede constructive work. Then we can put to use our trowel and begin to rebuild.

As we are dealing with a symbolical lecture, let us trace the symbolic use of all four implements and of the sword.

We have been told that we are to rebuild our lives, our characters, as masons. The temple of Solomon is our standard, and each one of us is a living temple. From our very entrance into masonry we have been given lesson after lesson based on the straight line of life, square conduct, level steps, upright intentions, rough and perfect ashlers, columns, winding stairways, etc. etc.

Before we can make a new road, and before we can erect a new building, we must prepare our foundations.

Before we can develop good habits, before we can commence to do good, before we can follow the truth, we must acknowledge and do away with our bad habits, our evil ways, and the falsities that possess us.

Briefly - cease to do evil

demolition (pick, crow, shovel)

Learn to do well

construction (trowel)

Having thus prepared our foundations with pick, crow, and shovel, the work of construction can go forward; and this is symbolised by the trowel.

Stones correspond to truths, and these have to be collected, recognised, brought together, built together, by our own personal individual efforts; the cement or mortar corresponding to good works, deeds of charity, which must form part of our

character and of our life. Meanwhile the sword of justice and of truth must be at our side (girded to our loins is probably the phrase) and we must be ready at all times to use it against all attacks of evil, falsity, and error which are never far away. *

* I am not sure that there is a Biblical reference to the re-building of the Temple "with trowel in hand and sword by their side", although possibly that is how the work proceeded.

Have you read Nehemiah, chapter 4, verses 17 and 18? The chapter deals with the re-building and repairing of breaches in the walls, ^{of the city} and the two appropriate verses read thus :-

"They which builded on the wall, and they that bare burdens, with those that laded, every one with one of his hands wrought in the work, and with the other hand held a weapon.

"For the builders every one had his sword girded by his side (Hebrew - on his loins) and so builded. And he that sounded the trumpet was by me".

I hope that after consideration you will prefer and approve this attempt on my part to give you something more reasonable than the final paragraph of the jargon to be found in our ritual.

In point of fact, I have endeavoured to use the pick, crow, and shovel on the paragraph in the ritual, and then to use the trowel for the purpose of re-construction. As to whether or not I shall be called upon to use the sword is a matter that is now in your hands. But remember, the sword was at hand for defensive purposes only, and not for aggression.