

A SHORT EXPLANATION OF THE SECOND DEGREE

It is not unusual to find among Master Masons a feeling that the Ceremony of Passing is somewhat less interesting than that which precedes or that which follows it; some brethren even regard it as a sort of breathing space between the two ceremonies.

It is to dispel this illusion that these notes have been prepared, and to encourage the earnest seeker to find beneath the lines of our ritual the real spirit of Freemasonry.

1) Questions

The questions which are put to the candidate are really a test of his appreciation of the lecture on the 1st Tracing Board, which lecture is unfortunately seldom given in open Lodge in these days. Descriptions of the Tracing Boards are, however, given in the Book of Ritual, and these are amplified in the Book of Lectures which every Brother should read.

In asking these questions, it is assumed that the Lecture has been given, hence the invitation to the Brethren to put further questions should they so desire. These "usual questions" each have a special significance to explain which would take up too much time at the present juncture; the last part of the final question, however, often puzzles the candidate and more often than not he assumes on enquiry is sometimes told that it refers to the manner of entering the Lodge. *(How do you demonstrate the proof etc. - P.P. of 2d.)*

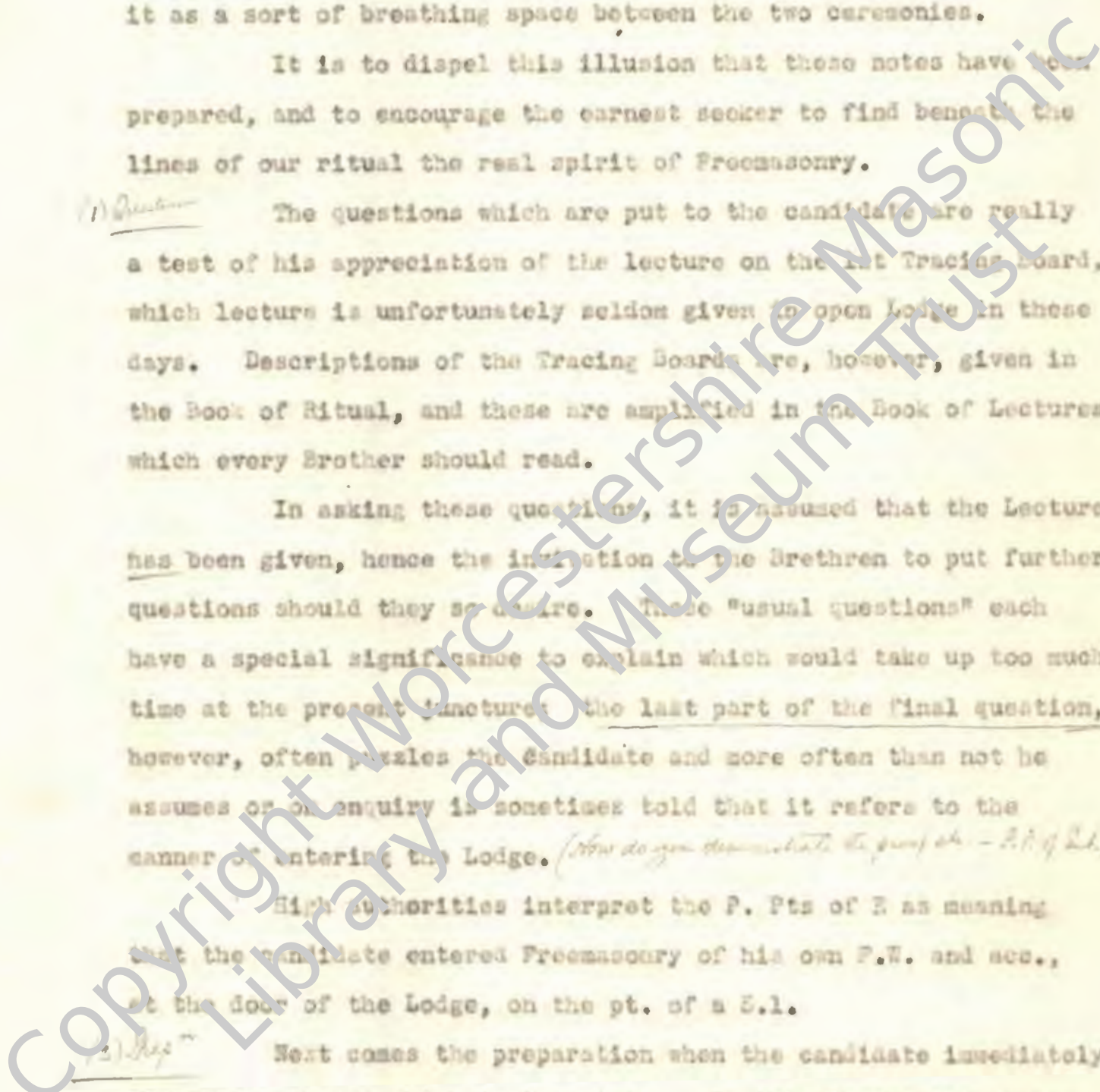
High authorities interpret the P. Pts of E as meaning that the candidate entered Freemasonry of his own P.W. and acc., at the door of the Lodge, on the pt. of a E.I.

2) Signs

Next comes the preparation when the candidate immediately observes a change which is important. In this Degree the manner of the preparation is reversed to indicate that the C. is about to dedicate the passive or preservative side of his nature to the service of T.O.G.O.T.U., this Degree being preservative in character. It also symbolises that we have passed from the infant stage of moral instruction to the adolescent stage of material education. ✱

The Lodge is now opened on the S. as the emblem of moral

*Recall the words - You are now permitted to receive etc*





rectitude, thus indicating that the candidate is to be proved by his moral conduct, in the physical world.

The ks. are also changed to show that whereas in the first Degree the spirit, soul and body were in equal relation, in this Degree the soul and body are working in unison, but the spirit is not yet in control. *(also answer Greek explanation Sakh - (f) Ash - (h) Anash - (a))*

The name of T.O.A.O.T.U. now becomes T.O.G.O.T.U. implying that in this Degree the preservative aspect of the Creator is appealed to instead of the creative, as in the first Degree.

(3) Ceremony The next important change is in the method of advancing to the E. The f - s - ps have reference to the senses which control the physical man, whilst their spiral direction suggests the pt. within a C. from which a Mason cannot part. In other words, we advance spiritually from within, bringing under control the senses, up the W.S. to the Mid. Ch. where dwells the Divine Spark or God.

The reason that the candidate is directed towards the E. instead of to the P.M. as in the previous Degree is that in the

*As in the 1st Degree, in advancing and taking up his position, the candidate symbolically forms the Hebrew word for the Deity. In the 1st Degree it was of four letters (God the Creator), in this Degree it consists of five, Tod He Shim Vau He, (God the Preserver) also known as Yeheshuke or Jesus.*

Having taken the O.S. the candidate must make the G.H.S. This S. is again the tau

*The T.X. symbolises that our natural & animal passions must be brought under control & brought under control to enable us to make spiritual progress.*

underfoot all at spiritual progress. is ob., but

implies obedience to the rules of T.O.G.O.T.U. for we can only hope to be preserved by obedience to these rules.

The H. Sn. or Sn. of P. is also the Sn. of Preservation,

this Degree, as already stated, being preservative in character.

The P.S. is of very ancient origin and may be seen illustrated on many Egyptian monuments, whilst the nature of the P. suggests a close affinity with a ceremony recorded in the Egyptian Book of the Dead. In this book it is recorded that, when the Gods sat in judgment, the sentiments of the heart were weighed in the balance against a feather. If the balance were against the heart, the heart was rejected and the soul was doomed to destruction.

*The Charge* The Charge after passing, invites enquiry on two points. First, the intimation that the candidate may offer his opinion on such subjects, etc. This refers to the lecture on the Trading Board which it is to be regretted is not always given in Lodge to-day. The second point is the specific reference to the science of Geometry. In operative Lodges a knowledge of Geometry is essential in laying out ground plans; as many of the brethren may know ~~the~~ Masons were always employed in the building of sacred buildings, hence the necessity for this knowledge. In the speculative sense the science symbolises the laws of G.G.O.T.U. which cannot be violated without jeopardising our moral and spiritual well being.

A more complete explanation of the ceremony will be found in "The F.C. Handbook" by J.S.M. Ward, from which the foregoing observations have been taken.

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