

ROYAL ARCH MASONRY

Brethren,

The articles of Union between the two Grand Lodges of Freemasons of England, confirmed in December 1813 and premised as a declaration in our present Book of Constitutions, declared and pronounced in Article II "that pure and Ancient Masonry consists of three degrees and no more, namely those of the Entered Apprentice, the Fellowcraft and the Master Mason including the Supreme Order of the Holy Royal Arch.

This declaration affirms the adoption of the Royal Arch as the completion of the third degree but it is of historic interest that prior to the Union of the two Grand Lodges, that is to say, the Ancients or Atholl Masons and the Moderns or Regular Masons, the Ancients recognised Royal Arch as the fourth degree and the fourth step in Freemasonry.

Today, as I have observed, the Royal Arch is recognised not as a separate degree but as the completion of the third degree for you will recall that on the untimely death of our Master Hiram Abif, the genuine secrets of a Master Mason were lost, that substituted secrets were adopted, sanctioned and confirmed with the approval of the Worshipful Master and the humble representative of King Solomon and declared that they should designate you and all Master Masons throughout the universe, until time or circumstance shall restore the genuine secrets. These secrets were lost for a period of nearly 500 years.

What do you seek? Still further light in Masonry. Even the Light that sees through the Shadow into the life of things? As an Apprentice you have been taught the morality that purifies youth, and as a Fellowcraft the knowledge that glorifies manhood: learning the wisdom that lives upon the Level, by the Square, within the Compass, in the spirit of Brotherly Love, the practice of Relief in the quest of Truth. In humble awe and longing we seek a Lost Word which murmurs in our ears and trembles on our lips, but eludes our speech and escapes into Silence.

Know, Brethren, the secret which you seek is concealed within yourself; the Lost Word you would hear is not hidden from you, neither is it far off. No, the Word is very near to you, it is in your mouth, and in your hearts that you may do it. Hear this promise: if you are willing and worthy, you may know the truth, that makes all other truth true, and be free indeed.

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Learn this truth: since you are immortal you are immortal you are immortal now - have you the courage and humility and integrity to risk all and make trial of truth ?.

The Holy Royal Arch is truly denominated the essence of Freemasonry, the foundation and keystone of the whole Masonic structure and the climax of the third degree in Freemasonry.

It is so intimately blended with all that is nearest and dearest to us in a future state of existence. It has virtue for its aim and the glory of G. for its object. The eternal welfare of man is considered in every part, point and letter of its mysteries.

It inspires its members with the most exalted ideas of G, leads to the exercise of the purest and most sublime piety and a reverence for the eternal ruler of the Universe.

Brethren, the Holy Royal Arch restores the gemine secrets of a Master Mason.

There is a Royal Arch Chapter under the number of St. Alphege Lodge No.1431 and should any Master Mason of this or any other Lodge desire further information I or the Worshipful Master will be pleased to give it.