

An Explanation of the Winding Staircase.

By W. Bro. P.G. Vosser.

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By

W.Bro. P.G. Vosser
And
W.Bro. A. Duff

Past Masters of Mercury Lodge 4581



FELLOWCRAFT LECTURE

My Brethren, the second section of the Fellowcraft's Degree is, to a certain extent, historical, and having reference to the origin of the institution, it views Freemasonry under two denominations; Operative and Speculative. These are separately considered, and the principles upon which both are founded particularly explained. * Their affinity is pointed out by allegorical figures and typical representations. In short, this section contains a store of valuable knowledge, founded upon sacred Masonic records, which is at once entertaining and instructive, and a fund of important information which has, from time immemorial, descended among Masons from one generation to another, by oral tradition. In the explanation of the symbolism of this degree are detailed some interesting features relative to the building of the Temple of Solomon, and the work and usage among our ancient Brethren. In the course of which the mind is drawn to the contemplation of Themes, Science, Industry and Philosophy.

By Operative Masonry we allude to a proper application of the useful rules of Architecture, whereby a structure derives figure, strength, and beauty, whence will result in a due proportion and a just correspondence in all its parts. * It furnishes us with dwellings, and with convenient shelter from the vicissitudes and inclemencies of the seasons; and while it displays the effects of human wisdom, as well in the choice as in the arrangement of the sundry materials of which an edifice is composed, it demonstrates that a fund of Science and Industry is implanted in man for the best, most salutary, and beneficent purposes. *

By speculative masonry we learn to subdue the passions, act upon the square, keep a tongue of good report, maintain secrecy, and practice charity. It is so far interwoven with religion as to lay us under obligation to pay that rational homage to the Deity which at once constitutes our duty and our happiness. It leads the contemplative Mason to view, with reverence and admiration, the glorious works of creation, and inspires him with the most exalted ideas of the perfections of his divine creator. *

We work in Speculative Masonry, but our ancient Brethren worked in both Operative And Speculative Masonry. They laboured at the construction of King Solomon's Temple and many other sacred and Masonic edifices. They worked six days in the week, and rested upon the seventh day. * For in six days, God created Heaven and Earth and rested upon the seventh day. The seventh, therefore, our ancient Brethren consecrated as a day of rest from their labours, thereby enjoying frequent opportunities to contemplate the glorious works of creation, and to adore their great Creator.

At the building of King Solomon's Temple there were employed 80,000 Fellowcraft Masons. On the evening of the sixth day their work was inspected, and all those who had proven themselves worthy by strict fidelity and attention to their labours, were invested with certain mystic words, signs, and tokens that would enable them to gain admission to the middle chamber of the temple, and we, my Brethren, are in possession of those same mystic words, signs, and tokens, as were our ancient Brethren, and we are now about to work our way through an outer porch, between two columns, up a flight of winding stairs consisting of three, five, and seven steps, through an outer and an inner door, to a place representing the middle chamber of King Solomon's Temple. There to receive instructions as to the wages due, the manner of payment, and the precious jewels of a Fellowcraft Mason.

You are now at a place representing the outer porch of King Solomon's Temple. On either hand are large columns or pillars. These represent the famous columns that were set up at the outer porch of King Solomon's Temple. They were eighteen cubits in height, twelve in circumference, and four in diameter.

The column on the left is Boaz, and denotes in strength. The column on the right is Jachin, and denotes to establish. Collectively, they refer to that passage of scripture which says: "In Strength, shall this, my house be Established." They were thus set up at the outer porch of King Solomon's Temple as a constant reminder to the children of Israel of God's promise to

David.*

They were cast of molten brass in the clay grounds on the west bank of the river Jordan, between the cities of Succoth and Zaradatha, where King Solomon ordered that they, as well as all the Holy Vessels of the Temple should be cast. They were cast hollow, that being able to withstand inundation and conflagration, they might prove convenient receptacles for the archives of our ancient Brethren. *

These columns are adorned with chapters. The chapters are ornamented with network, lilywork, and chains of pomegranates.* The network, from the intimate connections of all its parts, denotes unity. What of Unity? That as brothers, we are linked together by an indissoluble chain of friendship.* The lily, from the extreme whiteness of its blossom as well as the retired situation of its growth, denotes peace. The emblem of peace teaches us that, here on this broad platform of brotherly love, the high and the low, the rich and the poor, can meet together with one common purpose: the perpetuation of each other's friendship and each other's love.* And the Pomegranate, from the exuberance of its seeds, denotes plenty. What of Plenty? Though it may be given to some to possess more of this world's goods than others, yet the man who has his strength, his health, his ambition, has indeed his plenty.

***These chapters are surmounted** by globes. The globes are two artificial spherical bodies, on the convex surfaces of which are represented the countries, seas, and various parts of the Earth; the face of the heavens, the planetary revolutions, and other particulars. The sphere with the parts of the Earth delineated on its surface is called the Terrestrial Globe, and that with the constellations and other heavenly bodies, the Celestial Globe. Their principal use, besides serving as maps to distinguish the outer parts of the Earth and the situation of the fixed stars, is to illustrate and explain the phenomena arising from the annual revolution of the Earth around the Sun, and the diurnal rotation of the Earth around its own axis They are invaluable instruments for improving the mind and giving it the most distinct idea of any problem or proposition, as well as enabling it to solve the same. *Contemplating these bodies, we are inspired with a due reverence for The Deity and His works, and

the extensiveness which they illustrate denotes the universality of Freemasonry; for in every climate where civilization exists, Freemasonry may be found; and a Mason's charity should be as boundless.

My Brethren, as candidates for the mysteries of Freemasonry, you may well be said to represent individuals just starting out in life's journey, with the great task of self-improvement lying out before you. For the faithful performance of which a reward is offered, which reward comes from a careful development of all your mental and moral faculties, the elevation of your character, and the attainment of knowledge.*

This is most beautifully symbolized by the representation of a flight of winding stairs, at whose base you are now ready to climb the toilsome steep. From whose summit shines that hieroglyphic light which none but craftsmen ever saw. An emblem of divine truth*

Before you are three steps. The three steps refer to the three degrees of Masonry.* The Entered Apprentice, The Fellowcraft, and the Master Mason.* And the three principal officers of the lodge, the Worshipful Master, The Senior Warden, and the Junior Warden.* Also the working tools of the Fellowcraft Mason, the Plumb, Square, and the Level.

The Plumb admonishes us to walk uprightly in our several stations before God and man, squaring our actions by the square of virtue; and the level, to ever remembering that we are travelling upon that level of time, to that undiscovered country from whose bourne no traveller returns.* Too, they remind us of the three stages of human life: youth, manhood, and age,* In youth, as Entered Apprentice Masons, we ought industriously to occupy our minds in the attainment of useful knowledge. In manhood, as Fellowcraft Masons, we should apply our knowledge to the discharge of our respective duties to God, our country, our neighbours, our families, and ourselves; so that, in age, as Master Masons, we may enjoy the happy reflections consequent on a well-spent life,' and die in the hope of a glorious immortality beyond the grave. Though the Earth pass away, the¹ Sun be burned to a cinder, and all Nature don sackcloth and ashes, the soul will live on and on, forever and forever. We take these three

steps.*

Before you are five steps. The five steps refer to the five orders in Architecture. By order in Architecture is meant a system of all the members, proportions, and ornaments of columns and pilasters. Or, it is a regular arrangement of the projecting parts of a building, which, united with those of a column, form a beautiful, perfect, and complete whole. From the first formation of society order in Architecture may be traced. When the rigor of seasons obliged men to contrive shelter 'from the inclemency of the weather, we learn that they first planted trees on end, and then laid others across to support a covering. The bands which connected those trees at top and bottom are said to have given rise to the idea of the base and capital of pillars, and from this simple hint originally proceeded the more improved art of Architecture.

The five orders are thus classed: *The Tuscan; *The Doric; *The Ionic; *The Corinthian; *and The Composite. The ancient and original orders of Architecture revered by Masons are no more than three - the Ionic, Doric, and Corinthian, which were invented by the Greeks. To these the Romans have added two; The Tuscan, which they made plainer than the Doric, and the Composite which was more ornamental, if not more beautiful, than the Corinthian. The first three orders alone, however, show invention and particular character, and essentially differ from each other; the two others having nothing but what is borrowed, and differ only accidentally. The Tuscan is the Doric in its earliest state, and the Composite is the Corinthian, enriched with the Ionic. To the Greeks, therefore, and not to the Romans are we indebted for what is great, judicious, and distinct in Architecture.*

They are also emblematic of wisdom, strength, and beauty. The Ionic, from the skill and ingenuity displayed in its construction, is emblematic of the column of Wisdom, which is situated in the East part of the lodge, and is represented by the Worshipful Master; the Doric, from the massive strength of its structure, is emblematic of the column of Strength, which is situated in the West part of the lodge, and is represented by the Senior Warden; and the Corinthian, from the exuberance of its ornaments, is emblematic of the column of Beauty, which is situated in the South part of the lodge, and is represented by

the Junior Warden.*

They also refer to the five senses of human nature; Hearing,* Seeing,* Feeling,* Smelling,* and Tasting. Hearing is that sense by which we distinguish sounds, and are capable of enjoying all the agreeable charms of music. By it we are enabled to enjoy the pleasures of society and reciprocally to communicate to each other our thoughts and intentions, our purposes and desires, while thus our reason is capable of exerting its utmost power and energy.

The wise and beneficent author of nature intended, by the formation of this sense, that we should be social creatures, and receive the greatest and most important part of our knowledge by the information of others. For these purposes we are endowed with hearing, that by a proper exertion of our rational powers, our happiness may be complete. *

Seeing is that sense by which we distinguish objects, and, in an instant of time, without change of place or situation, view armies in battle array, figures of the most stately structure, and all the agreeable variety displayed in the landscape of nature. By this sense we find our way on the pathless ocean, traverse the Globe of the Earth, determine its figure and dimensions, and delineate any region or quarter of it. By it we measure the planetary orbs and make new discoveries in the sphere of the fixed stars. Nay, more; by it we perceive the tempers and dispositions, the passions and affections of our fellow creatures when they wish most to conceal them; so that, though the tongue may be taught to lie and dissemble, the countenance would display the hypocrisy to the discerning eye. In fine, the rays of light which minister to this sense are the most astonishing part of creation, and render the eye a peculiar object of admiration. Of all the faculties, sight is the noblest. The structure of the eye and its appurtenances evince the admirable contrivance of nature for performing all its various external and internal motions, while the variety displayed in the eyes of different animals, suited to their several ways of life, clearly demonstrates this organ to be the masterpiece of Nature's work.*

Feeling is that sense by which we distinguish the different qualities of bodies, such as heat and cold, hardness and softness, roughness and smoothness, figure, solidity, motion, and extension. These three senses have always been deemed peculiarly essential among Masons, because by hearing we hear the word. By seeing, we see the sign; and by feeling we feel the grip or token. We take these five steps.*

Before you are seven steps. The seven steps allude to the seven years in the building of King Solomon's Temple, the seven years of famine and the seven years of plenty.* But they have special reference to the seven liberal arts and sciences; Grammar, Rhetoric, Logic, Arithmetic, Astronomy, Geometry, and Music.*

Grammar teaches us the proper arrangement of words according to the idiom or dialect of any particular people, and that excellency of pronunciation which enables us to speak or write a language with accuracy agreeably to reason and correct usage.*

Rhetoric teaches us to speak copiously and fluently on any subject, not merely with propriety alone, but with all the advantage of force and elegance, wisely contriving to captivate the hearer by strength of argument and beauty of expression, whether it be to entreat or exhort, to admonish or applaud.*

Logic teaches us to guide our reason discretionally in the general knowledge of things, and directs our inquiries after truth. It consists of a regular train of argument, whence we infer, deduce, and conclude, according to certain premises laid down, admitted or granted; and in it are employed the faculties of conceiving, judging, reasoning, and disposing; all of which are naturally led on from one gradation to another 'til the point in question is finally determined. *

Arithmetic teaches us the powers and properties of numbers which are variously affected by letters, tables, figures, and instruments. By this art, reasons and demonstrations are given, for finding out any certain number

whose relation or affinity to another is already known or discovered. *

Astronomy is that divine art by which we are taught to read the Wisdom, Strength, and Beauty of the Almighty Creator in those sacred pages, the Celestial Hemispheres. Assisted by Astronomy we can observe the magnitudes and calculate the periods and eclipses of the heavenly bodies. By it we learn the use of the globes, the system of the world, and the preliminary laws of nature. While we are employed in the study of this science, we must perceive unparalleled instances of wisdom and goodness; and through the whole creation, trace the glorious Author by his works . *

Geometry teaches us of the powers and properties of magnitudes in general, where length, breadth, and thickness are considered. From a point to a line, from a line to a surface, and from a surface to a solid. A point is a dimensionless figure, or an indivisible part of space. A line is a point continued, and a figure of one capacity, namely length. A surface is a figure of two dimensions, length and breadth, and a solid is a figure of three dimensions, length, breadth, and thickness.

It is the science of the seven liberal arts and sciences which has ever been held in highest esteem and regard among Masons.* By this science the Architect is enabled to construct his plans and execute his designs.* The General, to arrange his troops.* The Engineer to mark out grounds for encampment* By it, also the Astronomer is enabled to make his observations and to fix the duration of the time and seasons and all things therein contained. The Geographer to delineate the extent of the seas, and specify the divisions of the empires, kingdoms, and provinces.* In short, Geometry is the foundation of Architecture, the root of Mathematics, and the basis upon which the superstructure of Freemasonry has been erected.*

Music is the medium that gives the natural world communion with the spiritual.* Who has not felt its charm? Who has not had his soul thrilled with its message? With its caressing tenderness it lulls us to sleep. With its powerful harmony it rouses us to action. It wraps us in melancholy or elevates us in joy.* The glorious notes of the battle hymn float over the red field of

carnage. Thrilled by the soul-inspiring notes, brave men dash forward to the glorious charge and with a cheer that strikes terror to the heart of the foe, regardless of danger, unmindful of death, across the plain incarnadined with the blood of patriots, rush on and on, perhaps to victory, perhaps to death.* But stop! Yonder, the dying soldier raises his head, his life's blood is fast ebbing away, and with eyes already dimming with approaching death, he takes one last look on life, and a smile comes o'er his face as he seems to catch in the distance that plaintive strain "Home Sweet Home." It was our mother's evening hymn and again we kneel at her knee to lisp the evening prayer and again our ears catch her lullaby as she sings to her tired child the soft, low music of our childhood's happy days.

The mellowing tides of old cathedral airs, vibrating through aisles and arches have stilled the ruffled spirit, and sweeping aside the discordant passions of men, have borne them along its resistless current until their united voices have joined in sounding aloud the heaven-born anthem "Peace on Earth, Good Will Toward Men", or with seraphic harmony, music pours forth hymns of gratitude to the Creator of the universe.*

And when at last the soul yearns for those unseen vistas beyond the span of the present hour, for that communion with God which is its highest life, music, the handmaid of heaven, bears the spirit up and gives it a taste of immortality.*

Bro. John Hastie to take candidate to East of JW Pedestal (with Deacons Wand). As PGV says "We take these seven steps."

This brings us to the outer door which we find strongly guarded by the Junior Warden. We will rap and see if we can gain admission. *Bro. J.H. Gives Fellowcraft Sign and then taps wand on the floor* (JW: Who Comes, Who Comes, Who Comes Here?) (SD: A Fellowcraft Freemason, on his way to the Middle Chamber of King Solomon's Temple to receive his wages.) (JW: How does he expect to gain admission?) (SD: By the Password) (JW: I demand it.) (SD: Shibboleth) (JW: How represented?) (SD: By a Sheaf of Wheat or an Ear of Corn Situated at or near a Waterfall) (JW: What does it denote?) (SD: Plenty) (JW: By whom instituted?) (SD: By Jephthah, a Judge of Israel, in a war with the Ephraimites. The Ephraimites had long been a stubborn and rebellious people

whom Jephthah had striven to subdue by mild and lenient measures, but without effect. They were highly incensed at Jephthah for not being called upon to fight and share in the rich spoils of the Ammonitish War, and gathered together a mighty army, crossed the river Jordan, prepared to give Jephthah battle. He, being apprised of their approach, called together the men of Israel, went forth, gave them battle, and put them to flight, and to make his victory more complete, he stationed guards at the different passes along the river and said to them "If you see any strangers pass, demand of them the word (Shibboleth)," but the Ephraimites, being of a different tribe and tongue, called it (Sibboleth), which trifling defect proved them spies and cost them their lives. And there fell that day on the field of battle and at the different passes along the banks of the river, forty and two thousand; after which Jephthah ruled in Israel until the end of his time, in all about six years. **JW: Stands.** (JW: The Password is right and your explanation is satisfactory. You have my permission to pass.) **JH and can moves to SW pedestal.** This brings us to the inner door which we find more strongly guarded by the SW. We will rap and see if we can gain admission. **Bro. J.H. Gives Fellowcraft Sign and then taps wand on the floor** (SW: Who Comes, Who Comes, Who Comes Here?) (SD: A Fellowcraft Freemason on his way to the Middle Chamber of King Solomon's Temple to receive his wages.) (SW: How does he expect to gain admission?) (SD: By a Word and a Token) (SW: I demand them) **SW: Stands** (SD: The W is Jachin and the Token is (gives the grip) (SW: The Word and Token are right and you have my permission to pass to the Middle Chamber of King Solomon's Temple.

Bro J.H and Can return to lecturn and wait..

Craftsmen, you have made a symbolic journey through an outer porch; between two columns; up a flight of winding stairs; through an outer and an inner door; to this place representing the middle chamber of King Solomon's Temple; here to receive instructions as to the wages due, the manner of payment, and the "Precious Jewels" of a Fellowcraft Mason.*

My Brethren, you are now within a place representing the middle chamber of King Solomon's Temple. It was there that our ancient Brethren had their names recorded as faithful workers; it was there also that they received

their wages, consisting of Corn, Wine, and Oil, emblematical of Nourishment, Refreshment, and Joy. The wages of a Fellowcraft, being Corn, Wine, and Oil, was to signify that our ancient Brethren, when passed to this degree, were entitled to a remuneration sufficient to procure not only the necessities and comforts of life, but many of its superfluities.

The "Precious Jewels" of a Fellowcraft Mason are the Attentive Ear, the Instructive Tongue, and the Faithful Breast. The Attentive Ear emblemizing the open and inquiring mind, seeking after truth and light. The Instructive Tongue symbolizing charity and benevolence, cheerfully dispensing the knowledge acquired for the benefit of mankind, and the Faithful Breast typifying honour and fidelity which holds sacred and inviolate the confidence and trust of others, are indeed three "Precious Jewels" to be sought for and possessed by any man.

They are especially significant to you as a Fellowcraft Mason in that it has been by them that the sublime tenets of Freemasonry have been handed down through the centuries. For through all the darkness, ignorance, and superstition of the ages since our institution was established; through all the tempests and storms of life; through evil as well as good reports; the attentive ear receives the sound from the instructive tongue, and the secrets and principles of Freemasonry have ever been lodged in the repository of the Faithful breast.

You have also been admitted to this place by virtue of the letter "G", the initial letter of Geometry, the first and noblest of the sciences. Yet, my Brethren, while we utilize and apply the principles of Geometry, as did our ancient Brethren, there is a vast difference in the structure upon which you are at labour. You, who are for the first time admitted within the walls of this Middle Chamber, should consider well that, as a Fellowcraft Mason, you are the builder of a temple far more glorious than that of Solomon; a Temple of Honour, of Justice, of Purity, of Knowledge, and of Truth.

The same law of Geometrical proportions that taught our

ancient Brethren to shape and fashion with all their skill, the stones which they so beautified for their appointed places in King Solomon's Temple, has been handed down the ages to inspire you to adorn, with every gift and talent you possess, the priceless days that go into the temple of your life; that there may not be one neglected moment nor wasted opportunity to mar its fair whiteness and beauty, when it shall undergo the final inspection by the Master Architect who directs all.

Freemasonry, my Brethren, is not merely the wearing of a Masonic emblem, nor the boastful parading of an unearned Masonic distinction. Neither is it the mastery of a few secret grips, words, and phrases. It is a course of allegorical instructions, in simple but lofty principles, and the preparation for life's real journey.

Bro. JH and Can move to beneath 'G'.

Yet, my Brethren, as you pursue this, your true Masonic pilgrimage, and press forward into the unknown, mysterious future, always shining on your path, stands the letter "G", an encouraging beacon calling you onward and upward, urging you not to tarry at the outer porch of life's journey, but guided by its inspiring light, to climb, with unfaltering steps, the winding stairway of persistent endeavour to your loftiest ambitions. Then, by the pass of knowledge, and the token of true manhood, you shall gain admission through the outer and inner doors of discouragement and disappointment, and stand at last in the Middle Chamber of final achievement - where your reward as a faithful craftsman will be far more precious than the Corn, Wine, and Oil of your ancient Brethren - in that it will be the joyful realization of your fondest hopes, your loftiest ideals, and your most perfect dreams.

By the aid of this eternal light, may you someday stand in this wondrous Middle Chamber. May you someday know what it means to be a Fellowcraft in the true sense of the word; to have your name recorded as a faithful workman in the Eternal Book of Life, and best of all, receive the wages due from the Great Master, of whom the letter 'G' is but the symbol. The Grand Geometrician of the Universe, the very mention of whose name shall cause every Mason, from the youngest Entered Apprentice who stands in the Northeast

corner of the lodge, to the Worshipful Master, who presides in the East, to humbly, reverently, and devoutly bow.

Brethren please rise with the sign of reverence *ALL STAND.* .(Master gives three raps with the gavel) **Brethren, that sacred name is ***.**

Master raps the gavel, seats the brethren. (Except Team).

Bro.J.H and can move in front of WM pedestal.

SD and Candidate approach the Holy Altar.

SD: "Worshipful Master, may I present to you, and through you to the brethren present, a Fellowcraft Mason, who has made a symbolic journey through an outer porch, between two columns, up a flight of winding stairs, through an outer and an inner door, to a place representing the Middle Chamber of King Solomon's Temple; there to receive instructions as to the wages due the manner of payment, and the precious jewels of a Fellowcraft Mason; and having received such instruction, now awaits your pleasure."

WM: Being passed to the second degree of masonry, we congratulate you on your preferment.

WM requests Bro JH and can to return to their places.

With can sat and Bro JH at lecturn PGV closes with a few words.

Wm, Bro. Wardens and Bethren, that concludes the lecture. SMIB.

Blue. Lecturer 1. W.Bro. PGV

Black. Lecturer 2. Bro. JH.

Green. JW/SW/WM.

Red. Actions.