

***THE  
SUPREME GRAND ROYAL ARCH CHAPTER OF NEW ZEALAND  
THE HAURAKI DISTRICT***

*and*

***THE RESEARCH CHAPTER  
OF  
NEW ZEALAND No 93***

***A Welcome to the Royal Arch***

*A booklet aimed at the new Royal Arch Mason – to assist him make his  
“daily advancement”*

## INTRODUCTION

At his Installation as First Grand Principal in 2001, Most Excellent Companion Barry McLaggan, made it clear that he favoured five themes things for the “good” of Freemasonry – more particularly Royal Arch Masonry. One of these was Masonic Education.

Earlier in the same year, at a regular meeting of Piako Royal Arch Chapter No 48, two of our newest Royal Arch Masons pleaded for “enlightenment” in the history and philosophy of Freemasonry, both Craft and Royal Arch.

As Grand Superintendent of the Hauraki District I wish to take up the challenge.

This booklet has been prepared by me with the agreement of the Research Chapter of New Zealand No 93.

The intent is that a copy of this booklet should be presented to each new Royal Arch Mason on the night of his Royal Arch degree so that his education might begin at once.

The “papers” chosen are a personal selection from the rich resource of the Masonic Library of St Benedicts Street, Auckland. They are by authors held in the highest regard in Masonic Research in New Zealand.

I trust that these efforts will bring pleasure to the new member and, whilst fulfilling his immediate needs for authoritative “knowledge” will stimulate his desire to make even more “daily advances ...”.

Copies will also be made available to each newly Installed First Principal to assist him in “the due employment of his Companions”.

Fraternally,

Jim Anderson, Grand Superintendent

## THE HISTORY OF THE ROYAL ARCH

### DEGREE

By M Ex Comp NB Spencer 5th November, 1954

As this is the first meeting of a Chapter of Research working under the Supreme Grand Royal Arch Chapter of N.Z., it seems only fitting that I should speak to you of the history of the Royal Arch degree itself, or as it is more correctly called, "The Order of the Holy Royal Arch."

The origin and early history of the Royal Arch, in common with most of our higher degrees, seems to be shrouded in obscurity. Consequently many of the books written on the Order are made up of speculation and conjecture, much of it of a truly fanciful nature. Of late years, however, many of the greatest Masonic historians and scholars have taken an interest in the Royal Arch. Most of them belong to the Authentic or Historical school, who confine themselves strictly to facts and records and the conclusions which can be clearly and logically drawn from them. The first of these was the famous Masonic historian, Bro. Hughan. I will confine myself mainly this evening to the historical records and the conclusions which can be drawn from them regarding the history and origin of the Order.

The main part and most interesting part of our enquiry will be "When? Where? and under what circumstances did the Royal Arch degree or Order as it is now called have its origin?". At first sight a Companion will naturally say that it is a portion of the third degree which has been elaborated into a separate degree. This would put its origin at somewhere between the years 1717 and 1730, during which period our three craft degrees took the basis of their present form. Although this theory is still held by some eminent Masons, facts do not seem to bear it out. For example, we find our third degree in 1730 substantially as it is now and yet we find no trace of the Royal Arch degree until the year 1743. In that year we find in a description in a Dublin newspaper of a procession held by Lodge No. 21 at Youghal, Ireland: "Fourthly, the Royal Arch carried by two Excellent Masons." The next reference is contained in a pamphlet entitled "A Serious and Impartial Enquiry into the cause of the present decay in Freemasonry in the Kingdom of Ireland" dated 1744. The statements contained in this pamphlet, if they are correct, show clearly that in the year 1744 Royal Arch Masonry was worked in London and was known in York and Dublin and also that all members of the Royal Arch had passed the chair.

The oldest minutes in existence actually recording the working of the Royal Arch Ceremony, strangely enough, come from America. The minute book of the old Lodge at Fredericksburg, Virginia, records that on the 22nd December, 1753, three Brethren "were raised to the degree of Royal Arch Mason." The earliest reference to the actual working of the degree in England is contained in a Bristol minute book entitled "A Book of Transactions of Free and Accepted Masons at their Lodge at the Crown in Christmas Street, Bristol, 1758." The degree is mentioned in the minutes of the Grand Lodge of the Antients of a meeting held March 4th, 1752. There is a Chapter in Scotland called "The Stirling Rock Royal Arch Chapter" which the Grand Secretary states has been meeting continuously since the 30th July, 1743. The By-Laws of the Chapter, dated 14th May, 1745, read: "Exalting Excellent and Super Excellent 5/." The Super Excellent is of course the Royal Arch degree as worked in Scotland in those days. From the dates quoted above it will be obvious that the Royal Arch degree in anything like its present form had its origin about the year 1740.

As to where the degree had its origin and the circumstances of its inception the authorities all seem to differ. Gould, the great Masonic historian, maintains that it had its origin in the "Scots degrees" which sprang up in all parts of France about the year 1740. Hughan also inclines to this theory, though he states that it obviously did not have its origin with the French themselves as the Royal Arch degree was introduced to France from America in 1790 but died out after a short while.

A study of the French Tracing Boards and cloths used about this period tend to strengthen the theory of the French origin of the Royal Arch degree. Though it may not have been a portion of the third degree elaborated and expanded, yet the third degree word could have been taken and the Royal Arch built up around it.

The view is very strongly held by Bro. W. J. Chetwode Crawley, the eminent Irish historian, that in the year 1723, the date of the publication of the first Book of Constitutions, the Craft ceremonies as then practised finished with certain secrets communicated during the Ceremony of Installation and that these secrets formed the basis of our present Royal Arch degree. According to the Installation ritual as printed at the end of the 1723 Book of Constitutions, the Master Elect is chosen from among the Fellow Crafts and is seated on the

left of the Grand Master and appointed Master of the Lodge "with some other expressions which are proper and usual on that occasion but not proper to be written." Then later on in the Ceremony the Grand Master "shall instal him by certain significant ceremonies and ancient usages." It is this second lot of ceremonies which Bro. Chetwode Crawley considers formed the basis of our present day Royal Arch ceremony.

A view held by some other historians is that, in Ireland anyway, the Royal Arch is the old Master's part in toto, and that the old Fellow Craft degree is the present third degree and that the old first degree has been split up to form our present first and second degrees. This of course follows out the theory held by some that the substituted secrets were given to Fellows and the genuine secrets to Masters.

In the 18th Century many different degrees were worked in various parts of the country. Many of them died out, but others arose to take their places. The Irish seem to have been very partial to these additional degrees. Bro, Philip Crossle, the librarian of the Grand Lodge of Ireland, gives the following list of the degrees worked in Irish Lodges at the end of the 18th Century. They were divided into four groups:-

- (1) Entered Apprentice, Fellowcraft, Master Mason.
- (2) Past Master, Excellent Mason, Super Excellent Mason, Arch Mason, Royal Arch Mason.
- (3) Ark Mason, Mark Fellow Mason, Mark Master Mason, Link Mason or Wrestle, Babylonian Pass (or Red Cross of Daniel), Jordan Pass Royal Order or Prussian Blue.
- (4) Black Mark, Templar (4 grades), Mediterranean Pass, Malta, Red Cross of Constantine, Knight of Patmos.

In England from the years 1751 to 1813 there were, as you know, two Grand Lodges known as the "Antients" and the "Moderns" founded respectively, in the years 1751 and 1717. When we remember that nearly all the founders of the Grand Lodge of the Antients were Irish Freemasons resident in London we would expect it to encourage the higher degrees. This it did and allowed all of the Lodges under its jurisdiction to work any of the higher degrees under their existing Lodge warrants. It particularly favoured the Royal Arch degree. Laurence Dermott, the Grand Secretary, states in the Ahiman Rezon or Book of Constitutions of the Antients: "The Royal Arch I firmly believe to be the root, heart and marrow of Masonry."

The attitude of the Moderns Grand Lodge can be gauged by the following statement of its Grand Secretary in 1758: "Our Society is neither Arch, Royal Arch or Antient." The fact that the Moderns would not countenance the Royal Arch probably made the Antients push it all the more. It was undoubtedly the rivalry between the two Grand Lodges which led to the spread of Freemasonry during that period. The Royal Arch degree continued to grow in popularity. The working of the degree in the Lodges holding under the Grand Lodge of the Moderns was not recognised and in fact, much discouraged. This led to the formation of a special Chapter on the 12th June, 1765, for the purpose of working the Royal Arch degree. It was known as "the Excellent Grand and Royal Chapter commonly called the Royal Arch." Within a year most of the high officers of the Moderns Grand Lodge, including Lord Blayney, Grand Master, had joined the Chapter. On the 22nd July, 1766, they formed themselves into a

Grand Chapter with Lord Blayney as their head. A Charter of Compact was signed on the same date evidencing the formation of the Grand Chapter. By the end of 1769 it had issued charters to seven daughter chapters.

The Antients still continued to work the Royal Arch in their Craft Lodges. However, in 1772 they formed a Grand Chapter. This was evidently done as a result of the progress being made by the Moderns Grand Chapter all over England and even overseas. The formation of the Grand Chapter by the Antients did not make much difference to their Organisation of the Royal Arch degree. The degree was still worked in the Craft Lodges. The only difference was that they now held a Charter from their new Grand Chapter to do so.

The offices in the Grand Chapter were filled by the holders of the corresponding offices in the Grand Lodge. So that the formation of the Grand Chapter made a difference in name only. No charters seem to have been issued for the working of the Royal Arch degree except to an already existing Craft Lodge. It was not really a Grand Chapter as we understand the term in these days. On the other hand, the Modern Grand Chapter was a genuine Grand Chapter and at the time of the union in 1817 had 156 Chapters working under its jurisdiction. It was entirely independent of the Moderns Grand Lodge and its Chapters were entirely independent of the Craft Lodges.

The union of the two Grand Lodges in 1813 was, in many respects, a compromise, with in most cases the Moderns giving away more than the Antients. The position of the Royal Arch degree was one matter in which there had to be a compromise. Under the Moderns the degree was governed by an entirely independent Grand Chapter and was worked in Royal Arch Chapters. Under the Antients it was governed by a Grand Chapter, which was but the Grand Lodge called by a different name, and the degree was worked in the Craft Lodges.

One of the Articles of Union provided: "That pure Antient Masonry consists of three degrees and no more, viz:-Those of the Entered Apprentice, the Fellow Craft and the Master Mason, including the Supreme Order of the Holy Royal Arch." This provision naturally led to the union of the two Grand Chapters, which took place four years later on the 18th August, 1817. It provided that every Chapter must be attached to a Craft Lodge, whose number and seniority it took. This is the reason that the number of a Chapter under the English Constitution is no guide at all to its age or real seniority.

It is also provided that the Grand Master of the United Grand Lodge shall be the First Grand Principal of the Grand Chapter if a Royal Arch Mason and the following officers of Grand Lodge shall, if Royal Arch Masons, hold the corresponding rank in Grand Chapter namely:

Pro Grand Master, Deputy Grand Master, Grand Secretary, Grand Treasurer and Grand Registrar. All matters which are not provided for by the Regulations of Grand Chapter shall be decided by the provisions of the Book of Constitutions of the Grand Lodge.

The Companions do not seem to have been very enthusiastic about the union, as it was not finally completed until the Chapter of Promulgation finished its work in November, 1835, eighteen years after the union was agreed on. The official ritual was finally adopted by Grand Chapter at special meetings, held on the 21st and 25th November, 1834. The new ritual, which was a compromise between the Antients and the Moderns, was the cause of a great deal of discontent and trouble in the Chapters, particularly the portion dealing with the Installation of the three Principals. Many Chapters used no ceremony at all for the

Installation of the Principals and so had no past Principals qualified to carry out the Installation under the new Regulation. The new regulations also provided that only Principals and past Principals should be present at the opening of the Chapter. This was the rule until the year 1902, when it was rescinded.

Up until the Union of the two Grand Chapters no brother could become a Royal Arch Mason unless he was a Past Master. As this limited the numbers of Royal Arch Masons very severely, the custom arose of opening a Craft Lodge in the third degree before the Royal Arch Chapter was opened. The Candidates were then installed in the Chair of the Craft Lodge, from which they immediately resigned. This qualified them to be exalted to the Royal Arch degree, but not to rank as Past Masters in the Craft. This regulation was done away with at the time of the union. In the Grand Chapters in the United States at the present time a brother has to take the Past Master's degree before he can become a Royal Arch Mason. The Past Master's degree as practised in America is of course something quite different from the Ceremony worked in our Board of Installed Masters, and does not qualify a brother as a Past Master in the Craft.

From the above it can be seen why Royal Arch Chapters under the English Constitution can only work or recognise the Royal Arch degree and no other. An attempt was made in 1856 to have the Mark degree recognised by the Grand Lodge of England, but it was unsuccessful. The Grand Lodge of Scotland recognises the Mark degree, which is worked in most of its Craft Lodges, but does not recognise the Royal Arch degree or the Excellent. The Grand Lodge of Ireland recognises all three.

The formation of the Grand Lodge of New Zealand in 1890 left several English Chapters in a very awkward situation. The Lodges they were attached to no longer belonged to the English Constitution, consequently the Chapters were liable to lose their Charters. This hurried the formation of the Grand Chapter of New Zealand, which was instituted on the 1st January, 1892 with eight Chapters. It was modelled on the Grand Chapter of Scotland, adopting the degrees and ritual worked under that Grand Chapter as well as its rules and regulations.

With the exception of Officers connected with the passing of the Veils, the Officers of the Chapter and their titles seem to have changed very little since the formation of the first Grand Chapter in 1766. The ceremony of Passing the Veils was dropped out of the English Royal Arch Ceremony at the time of the union, but exists in all other Constitutions which work the Royal Arch degree. It is still continued in several old English Chapters in England, notably in Bristol.

## THE MARK DEGREE

By R. Ex. Comp. N. B. Spencer, 17th March, 1955

The subject on which I am going to speak this evening is "The History of the Mark Degree." I will first, however, say a few words regarding the position of the Mark Degree under the various constitutions. This will make clearer what I have to say later.

Under the English Constitution the Mark Degree is worked in Mark Lodges holding under the Grand Lodge of Mark Masons for England, Wales, etc., and is not in any way recognised by the United Grand Lodge of England of Craft Masons. The United Grand Lodge recognises only

the first three Degrees, including the Order of the Holy Royal Arch, as forming part of pure and Ancient Freemasonry. The English Chapters work only the Royal Arch Degree and are fully recognised by the United Grand Lodge.

In Ireland the Mark Degree is worked in the Chapters as a preliminary to the Royal Arch and is fully recognised by the Craft Grand Lodge. The same applies in New Zealand and in America.

In Scotland the position is different again. Of the Degrees worked by the Chapter the Grand Lodge of Craft Masons recognises only the Mark. The Mark is worked in the Chapters as a preliminary to the Royal Arch, but it is also worked in the Craft Lodges. Thus in Scotland the Degree is under the jurisdiction of both the Grand Lodge and the Grand Chapter. A Scottish Freemason can take his Mark Degree in his Craft Lodge or he can wait until he joins the Chapter and take it as a preliminary to the Royal Arch Degree.

The Mark Degree has had a very checkered career and has at various times come under many different authorities, including at one time in America, a Council of Princes of Jerusalem of the Ancient and Accepted Scottish Rite.

From time to time when working our Mark Degree many of us must have wondered when and where it had its origin, how old it is, and what are the earliest records of its workings?

The custom of a Craftsman marking his work with his own particular mark is one which goes back among operatives for many hundreds of years, one might almost say into antiquity. For example, the Cathedral Church at Aberdeen, which was founded in 1357, has Masons' Marks on it from the foundations upwards.

Among the Steinmetzen of Germany when a Mason attained the rank of Fellow Craft he took a solemn vow that he would not alter or change his distinctive mark. This was known as "pledging his Mark." He was required to engrave his mark on all his work upon completion.

We find the Mark very prominent among Scotch Operative Masons from an early age. In the Regulations signed by Wm. Schaw, "Master of the Work to the King's Majesty," and agreed upon at a conference of Operative Masons held at Holyrood Palace on December 28<sup>th</sup> 1598, we find that "No Master or Fellow Craft is to be received or admitted except in the presence of six Masters and two E.A. The Warden of the Lodge being one of the six, the date thereof being orderly booked and his name and mark inserted in the said book."

Many of the Scotch Lodges have their Mark Books running back to a period of many years before the formation of any Grand Lodges. Examination of these records show that Speculative Members joining these Operative Lodges also had their mark allotted to them. For example, the Mark Book of the Lodge of Aberdeen No. 1 Tris goes back to the year 1670, when it was signed by 42 members, all of whom except two have their marks opposite their names. Among this number, only one-fourth were Operative Masons, the remainder being Gentlemen, Ministers, Doctors and professional men, including such names as the Earl of Findlater, the Earl of Dumfermline, Lord Pitsligo, etc.

The choosing of a mark by each member of a Lodge does not mean, however, that they worked a Mark Degree in any way like we know it now, and it will be interesting to look at the earliest records we have of the actual working of a Degree similar to our Mark Degree of the present day.

The first actual record we have of the working of the Mark Degree is a Minute of the Chapter of Friendship, No. 257, at Portsmouth, dated the 1st September, 1769.

The Degree is said to have been worked many years earlier in other parts of England , but this is the earliest actually existing record which we have of the working of the Mark Degree.

Now, before we go any further, let us learn something of the circumstances of this Chapter, whose Minutes mean so much to Mark Masonry. In England, as you know, between the years 1751 and 1813, there were two Grand Lodges at work, the oldest one founded in 1717 known as "The Moderns Grand Lodge" and the other one founded in 1751 calling itself the "Ancient Grand Lodge." There was very bitter rivalry between these two Grand Lodges until the Union in 1813.

One of the differences between them was that the Ancients encouraged the working of the Royal Arch and other Degrees in the Craft Lodges and under the Craft warrants, while the Moderns discouraged it if not absolutely forbidding it.

The higher Degrees became very popular, and in order to get over the difficulty a number of adherents of the Moderns Grand Lodge in 1766 formed a Grand Chapter for the purpose of warranting private chapters in which these Degrees might be worked.

Among the first Charters granted by this Grand Chapter was that for the Chapter of Friendship, No. 3, dated the 11th August, 1769, to be held at Portsmouth Common, now known as Portsea. The other Chapters warranted at the same time are long ago extinct, so that the Chapter of Friendship is the oldest existing Chapter. It is now numbered 257, as after the Union it was attached to a Craft Lodge as all Chapters had to be, and took its number. The Craft Lodge it was attached to is the Phoenix Lodge, No. 257, which was constituted in 1786.

Down to 1894, when Bro. Howell wrote the history of the Phoenix Lodge, and Chapter of Friendship, it was always thought that the Chapter did not begin to work until June, 1787, as its first Minute Book began on that date. After writing his History he discovered quite by accident that the first page of the Minute Book had been pasted down so as to form part of the front fly leaf. On separating the leaves he found nineteen lines in cypher on the other side of the front leaf. He then recollected that some years before one of the Brethren who took a great interest in the Chapter had given him a book written entirely in cypher. The Brother did not know what it was about as he had never been able to read it. He had picked it up among a lot of rubbish when the Phoenix Lodge rooms had been done up some years before.

Upon comparing the two manuscripts he found that the cypher used in both was identical. For a long time no clue to the cypher could be found. Finally it was suggested that certain characters at the bottom of the page might be the names of the three principals of the Chapter. The names of the Principals were known and fitted in, and so led to the discovery of the key to the cypher and the reading of the page. The book turned out to be the first Minute Book of the Chapter, commencing with a Minute dated 1st September, 1769. It was this Minute which had been copied into the first page of the later Minute Book and then pasted down to the fly leaf. It looked as though someone had started to copy out the original Minute Book into the new one and then thought better of it after transcribing one page. Several pages have been torn out of the book before the commencement of the new Minutes, which are in plain English, so that it is possible that the first Minute Book was copied into the

beginning of the second and then the pages torn out all except the first one, which was pasted down against the fly leaf.

This Minute is the earliest known reference to the actual working of a Mark Degree. The translation of it is as follows:-

"At a Royal Arch Chapter held at the George Tavern in Portsmouth on 1st Sept., 1769 – present Thomas Dunkerley Esq., William Cook Z, Samuel Palmer H, Thomas Scanville J, Henry Dian, Philip Joyes and Thomas Webb - the Provincial. Grand Master Thomas Dunkerley brought the Warrant of the Chapter and having lately received the "Mark" he made the Brothers "Mark Masons" and "Mark Masters" and each chose their mark, viz., W. Cook "Z", S. Palmer "H", T. Scanville "J", H. Dean, Philip Joyes, T. Webb. He also told us of this manner of writing which is to be used in the Degree which we can give to others so they be Fellowcraft for Mark Masons and Master Masons for Mark Masters".

This is the earliest known reference to the Degree having been actually worked, and it is interesting to note that the Degree is in two parts – Mark Mason for which the qualification is The Fellow Craft Degree, and Mark Master, for which the Qualification is the Master Mason Degree.

There are many other references to the Mark Degree in the Minutes of the Chapter of Friendship, and Bro. Howell the historian, is of the opinion that every Companion of the Chapter up to 1844 received his Mark Degree before receiving his Royal Arch.

The Mark Degree at that time probably consisted merely in the choosing of a mark and the communication of various signs and secrets.

The Thomas Dunckerley mentioned in the Minute as the Provincial. Grand Master of Hampshire who brought the Charter of the Chapter to the first meeting and showed them the Mark Degree was a very prominent and interesting character in Freemasonry in the 18th Century. Thomas Dunckerley was a natural son of George II of England. He went to sea at the age of 10 and spent 26 years in the Navy without knowing anything about his parentage. His parentage did not come to light until after the death of George II. George III, however, acknowledged him and gave him a pension of 800 pounds per annum and a suite at Hampton Court.

It was at this time that he devoted himself so much to Freemasonry. He was at one time Provincial. Grand Master of nine provinces. He took a great interest in Royal Arch Masonry and was in charge of 11 different provinces at one time. He seems to have spent the whole of his time for many years in the service of Masonry. He founded many Lodges and Chapters, a number of which are still in existence. He also did much in the Organisation of Freemasonry. He was born in 1724 and died in 1795.

The Mark Degree was obviously being worked in other parts of the country prior to its introduction to the Chapter of Friendship by Dunkerley in 1769. It probably had its rise about the same time as the Royal Arch Degree, that is, about the year 1740.

As time goes on fresh records may come to light earlier than those of the Chapter of Friendship which will give us a nearer date for the beginning of the Degree, as it is obvious that it must have been in existence for some time for Dunckerley to have taken it and to have

introduced the cypher to the Chapter of Friendship. The Companions evidently mistook Bro. Dunckerley and used the cypher for all the Chapter Minutes, whether Mark or Royal Arch, until the year 1787.

Until this Minute came to light the earliest known Minute referring to the Mark Degree was that of the Marquis of Grandby Lodge No. 124, Durham, and is dated 1773 as follows:-

"Bro. Barwick was also made a Mark'd Mason and Bro. Jas. MacKinlay raised to the Degree of Master Mason and also made a Mark Mason and paid accordingly."

Then we have a reference in the Minutes of the St. Thomas Lodge, No. 142, London, on August 9th, 1777:

"The Worshipful Master with the following Brethren of this Lodge were made Mark Masons and Mark Masters."

The Mark Degree quickly gained in popularity and was worked in Lodges holding under the Ancient Grand Lodge under their Craft Warrants and also in the Chapters holding under the Grand Chapter of the Moderns.

In the year 1813 the two Grand Lodges were united and through the influence of the Duke of Sussex, who disliked the higher Degrees, one of the Articles of Union provided that "Pure and ancient Freemasonry consisted only of the Degrees of Entered Apprentice, Fellow Craft and Master Mason, including the Order of the Holy Royal Arch." This meant that the Craft Lodges were only allowed to work the three Degrees and no more, and the Chapters under the Supreme Grand Chapter formed in 1817 were only allowed to work the Royal Arch.

Many Craft Lodges, however, continued to work the Mark Degree in spite of the Grand Lodge Regulation. There were also a number of independent Mark Lodges working on their own.

In 1851 six Brethren living in London who had taken the Degree in Bon Accord Chapter Aberdeen, applied to that Chapter for a commission to work in London. This was granted, but the Chapter was afterwards punished by the Grand Chapter of Scotland for ignoring its authority. The Grand Chapter then issued Warrants for Lodges to work the ceremony in England.

The Bon Accord Lodge made rapid progress and led to the formation of other Mark Lodges. Interest in the Degree was so keen that an attempt was made in 1855 to obtain the recognition of the Craft Grand Lodge. The resolution was passed by the Craft Grand Lodge, but at the next meeting the portion of the Minutes containing the resolution was not confirmed.

As they were finally turned down by the Craft Grand Lodge, "The Mark Masons set about forming a Grand Lodge of their own as they did not wish to have to hold Charters from a foreign jurisdiction. This led to a meeting of four Mark Lodges, "The Bon Accord," "The Northumberland and Berwick," "The Royal Cumberland" and "The Old Kent." A meeting was then held in 1857 of representatives of all Mark Lodges and Constitutions were adopted and a Grand Lodge formed, Lord Leigh, the Master of "Bon Accord", being elected the first Grand Master.

All of the Lodges holding under the Grand Chapter of Scotland gave in their allegiance and

gradually all the others came in, the last one in the year 1899. The Grand Lodge has grown rapidly and the Degree has become very popular. There are now over 1100 Lodges on the Register and when the Union Lodge was formed in Auckland there were only 154.

In Scotland the Grand Chapter which was formed in 1817 assumed control of the Mark Degree. Some of the Lodges, however, continued to work it and in 1860 a Glasgow lodge was suspended by the Provincial Grand Master for working the Mark Degree. It appealed to Grand Lodge on the ground that the Mark Degree was part of pure and ancient Freemasonry. The appeal was allowed and ever since then Scottish Lodges are allowed to work the Mark Degree under their Craft Warrants. A Brother joining the Chapter, if he has already taken his Mark Degree in his Craft Lodge, does not need to take it again.

In Ireland the Mark degree as we know it was not worked until 1825, when it was brought over from America at the same time as the Ancient and Accepted Scottish Rite by Bro. Fowler, Grand Inspector 33rd degree.

The Degree was not officially recognised in Ireland until some time in the eighteen-forties. It was subsequently transferred to the Grand Chapter which had been formed in 1829. The Irish Grand Chapter had a very checkered career for many years, many of the Lodges refusing to give up their ancient privileges of working any Degrees they pleased.

In New Zealand, of course, the Mark, Excellent and Royal Arch Degrees are recognised by the Grand Lodge as being part of pure and ancient Freemasonry. The Mark Degree is not known outside of the English-speaking countries. It is unknown in Continental Masonry.

### THE EXCELLENT MASTER DEGREE

By R. E. Comp. Dr. Ross Hepburn, 23rd June, 1955

The History of the Degree of Excellent Master is somewhat obscure. While the Mark and Royal Arch Degrees have a definite history, the Excellent appears to have been formed by detaching the introductory portion of the Royal Arch ceremony – that of Passing the Veils, and considerably elaborating it and making it into a separate Degree. It will be noted that in the version of the Ritual used in Prince of Wales Chapter (though not in the official N.Z. Ritual) it is expressly stated that the Degree being merely introductory to the Royal Arch, there is no investiture but Brethren may if they wish wear a jewel in the form of a five pointed star.

The Excellent Degree is not worked in England except at Bristol but appears to be peculiar to Scottish Royal Arch Masonry, and was adopted by the Grand Chapter of New Zealand which decided to work the system of Degrees as worked in Scotland. The American Degree of Most Excellent Master is quite different, and the Passing of the Veils is worked in the U.S.A. as the First Section of the Royal Arch Degree.

The late R. W. Bro. Cecil Powell, Prov. G.M. of Bristol and Grand Superintendent of the Royal Arch, in a paper read before the Quatuor Coronati Lodge in 1936 entitled "Freemasonry in Bristol", wrote as follows:

"Visitors are greatly interested in the portion of the ceremony called 'Passing the Veils.' This is, I believe, practised nowhere else in England, but is done in Ireland, Scotland and some parts of America. In those countries the Veils are usually, and perhaps always, suspended in the Chapter-room itself, but in Bristol they hang in the adjoining 'Chapel.'

The whole ceremony is highly dramatic. Formerly, and up to about the year 1902, there were no actual Veils in use, but the candidate was informed that this ceremony should be performed in a room having Veils suspended. About the time mentioned, material Veils were purchased, and they have certainly made the proceedings much more picturesque and interesting. No change has been made in the wording used."

Wor. Bro. E. H. Cartwright in a comment on the above paper said:

"His reference to the Veils is liable (I am sure unintentionally on his part) to convey the impression that as now worked in Bristol they are a true survival; but as we learn from a pamphlet published in 1932 by Sir Ernest Cook, although the verbal part of the ceremony appears to have been used in one Bristol Chapter in the later years of the nineteenth century (whether even this was an actual survival is not clear), the Veils themselves, if they ever existed, had entirely dropped out, no record of them remaining, and they were brought into being anew in the early years of the present century through the efforts of Bro. Cook and a few other enthusiasts."

Comp. W. P. Mapowder of Bristol informs me that Passing the Veils is the first part of the Royal Arch Chapter Ceremony of Exaltation in Bristol. The candidate is examined and prepared by the Principal Sojourner before entering the Chapter."

The Excellent Master Degree, unlike the Mark, the Royal Arch and the Side Degrees, has itself, no Chair Degree.

A consideration of the Symbolism of the Excellent Master Degree will naturally be concerned with the ceremony of Passing the Veils and to some extent with the historical background of the Degree – particularly the Tabernacle of Moses and the various signs of the Veils, and the return of Zerubbabel and his companions to Jerusalem to rebuild the second Temple. The actual rebuilding itself is the subject of the Royal Arch Degree.

It should be stated here, that though no doubt some kind of temporary building would be erected, there appears to be no Biblical evidence that Zerubbabel did in fact erect a Tabernacle after the pattern of that of Moses. What he did on his return to Jerusalem was to erect an Altar to the Most High. The Tabernacle disappears from Jewish History after the erection of King Solomon's Temple.

However, as the Tabernacle and the Veils form the principal part of the Symbolism of the Degree some consideration will be given to them as a matter of Masonic interest.

It may further be mentioned that all historical descriptions of the Tabernacle are agreed that there were not four curtains of Veils, but only one Veil consisting of four parts.

Further, the Symbolism of the various colours is, according to the late Wor. Bro. F. J. W. Crowe, a noted English Masonic authority, something in the nature of an afterthought, the colours being first adopted in the Royal Arch Masonry and the Companions subsequently inventing appropriate explanations for them.

The symbolism of various colours used in Masonry is well explained by Wor. Bro. J. H. Baxter in a paper entitled "Symbolism of Colour."

He explains that the primary colours are red, yellow and blue, and by combining these, any other colour can be formed. Next in importance to the primary colours are green and purple,

and in addition to these five, black and white are added, though strictly speaking these are not colours.

Of the colours used in Royal Arch Masonry and in the Excellent Degree in particular red and blue are therefore primary colours, purple is a combination of blue and red, and white is not a colour at all.

We will now consider the colours of the four veils in the order in which we meet them in the ceremony, namely blue, purple, red and white. Wor. Bro. Baxter explains these as follows:

BLUE represents truth, honour and friendship: it is the colour of the heavens symbolising the abode of God.

On several occasions Moses was commanded to wear blue. "Speak unto the children of Israel and bid them that they make them fringes in the borders of their garments throughout their generations, and that they put upon the fringe of the borders a ribband of blue ... "that ye may remember, and do all my Commandments, and be holy unto your God." (Numbers XV 38).

In the Masonic Order, which professes truth, honour and brotherly love, this ribband of blue is used on the borders of regalia symbolically to remind us that truth and virtue are to be prized above rank and fortune.

Blue in its highest form symbolises truth, fidelity, friendship and benevolence.

PURPLE is a combination of Red (positive) and Blue (negative) and can be of many shades. It therefore takes on the symbolic meaning of both – that is, the red of love and self-sacrifice and the blue of truth, hence it is symbolic of wisdom and rulership based on sacrifice and honour.

In churches purple altar cloths, book marks, etc. are used as a sign of mourning on Saints' days: martyrs and angels are often shown clad in purple.

RED is the lowest in the spectrum: it is the colour of blood, and denotes life, action, cheerfulness, courage and energy. Red becomes the colour of self-sacrifice and suffering for others. In some churches a red lamp is always kept burning as a sign of deep sacrificial love of God.

Red is the most defined colour. It symbolises fire, courage, progression, power, happiness, sacrifice and suffering.

WHITE is the combination of the colours of the rainbow, and so to us it would appear to symbolise unity, and it is used to represent innocence, purity and joy. In stained windows and pictures, angels, children and young girls are generally clothed in white robes, symbolic of innocence, purity and chastity

"He that overcometh, the same shall be clothed in white raiment," (Rev. iii., 5).

M. E. Comp. G. C. Kingscott, Past First Grand Principal of the Grand Chapter of Victoria (Australia) in a paper "The Symbolism of the Holy Royal Arch Colours" reprinted in the N.Z. Craftsman for March, 1950, quotes Bro. Crowe's theory that the colours of the Grand officers' clothing of the Grand Lodge of England (blue) were adopted from the ribbon of the Order of the Garter, while that of the Grand Stewards (red) were taken from that of the Order

of the Bath. He quotes the 25th Chapter of Exodus where we read that the Israelites were required to bring offerings among other things "blue and purple and scarlet and fine linen," and the following Chapter where we read that the curtains for the Tabernacle were to be made of "fine turned linen and blue and purple and scarlet." Again in the 3rd Chapter of the second Book of Chronicles, we learn that Solomon "made the veil (of the Temple) of blue and purple and crimson and fine linen."

He mentions that in each of the three several investiture of the Principals an explanation is given of the nature and significance of the colour of the robe, and though a correspondence with the colour of the Veil is not pointed out, yet that correspondence, whether accidental or deliberate, is too obvious not to require mention.

Our New Zealand Royal Arch Installation Ritual explains these colours as follows:-

BLUE (Third Principal) Emblem of Universal Benevolence and Friendship.

PURPLE (Second Principal) Emblem of Unity,

SCARLET (First Principal) Emblem of Imperial Dignity,

In the U.S.A. the High Priest (First Principal) wears all the four colours, blue, purple, scarlet and white linen: the King (Second Principal), scarlet, and the Scribe (Third Principal), purple.

In an address before the Grand Chapter of England in 1937, Comp. Lewis Edwards stated that 'What is rendered as 'blue' in both the authorised and revised versions, is probably to be more exactly rendered as purple-blue or violet, and violet is, in fact, given as a marginal alternative in the Book of Esther.

"The dye was obtained from a shellfish found adhering to the rocks in the Mediterranean. . . . Purple is more exactly rendered as purple-red, and this dye was also extracted from a Mediterranean shellfish, of which there were two species. . . . The colour scarlet is sometimes called 'crimson,' both in the Scriptures and in our ritual, the latter word being derived from the Arabic name 'KIRNIVZ' of small insect. This was the Coccus, or Cochineal insect, which is a parasite resembling a berry and is found attached to the leaves and twigs of the Syrian holm-oak."

More than one writer has pointed out that these colours were probably chosen by the Jews, not for any symbolical or mystical meaning, but because, being rare and costly, they were peculiarly fitted for the Sanctuary. But whatever may be the historical position, there are certain associations and a certain later symbolism of which we must take account.

Pomegranates of the three colours were to be about the hem of the High Priest's robes. Blue was the colour of the loops of the curtain, of the robe of the Ephod, and of the priestly ornaments, and was and still is used by the Jews on their prescribed vestments. The Kings of Midian wore purple raiment, and in the Second Book of Maccabees, Andronicus is stripped of it.

Purple rather than scarlet seems among the Jews to have been an emblem of royalty and power, while scarlet represented riches and prosperity.

The Book of Daniel treats scarlet as an emblem of power as we do in the Royal Arch today.

The following is an account of the Tabernacle as given in Hasting's Dictionary of the Bible:

By 'Tabernacle' is usually understood the elaborate portable sanctuary which Moses erected at Sinai, in accordance with Divine instructions, as the place of worship for the Hebrew tribes during and after the wilderness wanderings.

But modern criticism has revealed the fact that this is to be carefully distinguished from the much simpler tent bearing the same name, and likewise associated with Moses.

The ten curtains of the dwelling each 28 cubits by 4 are to be of the finest linen, adorned with inwoven tapestry figures of Cherubim in violet, purple and scarlet, the work of the cunning workman. They are to be sewed together to form two sets of five, which again are to be coupled together so as to form one large surface.

The Divine directions provide for the thorough protection of these delicate artistic curtains by means of three separate coverings. The first consists of eleven curtains of goats' hair for a tent over the dwelling' and the two remaining coverings are to be made respectively of rams' skins dyed red and of the skins of a Red Sea Mammal which was probably the dugong.

This was all supported on an elaborate framework with poles which fitted into sockets.

The fabric of the Tabernacle as described in Exodus 26, 1-30, has been found to consist of three parts, carefully distinguished from each other. These are-

- (1) the artistic linen curtains of the dwelling, the really essential part;
- (2) their supporting framework, the two together enclosing, except at the still open eastern front, a space 30 cubits long and 10 cubits wide from curtain to curtain and 10 cubits in height; and
- (3) the protecting tent (so-called) of coats' hair with the two subsidiary coverings.

The next step is to provide for the division of the dwelling into two parts in the proportion of 2 to 1 by means of a beautiful portiere, termed 'the Veil', of the same material and artistic workmanship as the curtains of the dwelling. The larger of the two divisions is named the holy place, the smaller the holy of holies, or most holy place. The entrance to the Tabernacle is closed by means of a hanging embroidered in colours - a less artistic fabric than the tapestry and it is known as a screen for the door of the tent.

There seems to be considerable doubt whether the elaborate Tabernacle as described above, was actually ever erected. It seems probable that in fact a much plainer and simpler structure was erected and transported in the wilderness, though no doubt Biblical writers of later times believed in good faith that the elaborate Tabernacle actually was erected.

The lecture in the Excellent Master Degree is historically correct so far as it deals with the capture of Jerusalem by Nebuchadnezzar, the captivity in Babylon, the subsequent conquest of Babylon by Cyrus, King of Persia, the liberation of the Jews by Cyrus and their return from Babylon to Jerusalem,

After that it is a mixture of fact and legend. The lecture states that the circumstances of the returned Jews corresponded strikingly with those of their forefathers when released from Egyptian bondage and that for this reason they chose for tests of fidelity those signs which had been communicated by God to Moses at that period.

While there is Biblical authority for these Mosaic signs, the sign of the rod, the sign of the leprous hand and the sign of the pouring of the water, there is no evidence that these signs were, in fact, used by Zerubbabel in the manner described in the ceremony. The fact that they are brought into the ceremony is in line with the introduction of the supposed Tabernacle stated to have been erected by Zerubbabel after the pattern of that of Moses.

The Excellent Degree is beautiful and impressive and its colour symbolism is particularly fine. It is a fitting introduction to the Royal Arch but it is not entirely historically true. Nevertheless, it has many very fine lessons to teach us, amongst the greatest of which, perhaps, is the courage, sacrifice and perseverance of the Jews who returned to their native land from Babylon as the lecture as given in Prince of Wales Chapter states "A long difficult and dangerous journey" filled with a desire to assist Zerubbabel in rebuilding a house to the Lord God of Israel, and prepared to face any dangers in order to attain that end."

The rebuilding of the Temple was no easy task for there was active opposition from the tribes who had taken possession of the surrounding country after the Jews had been deported and these tribes eventually used their influence with a later King of Babylon to have the work of rebuilding stopped for a time, and even in later years long after Zerubbabel, Haggai and Jeshua had passed away we read of Nehemiah rebuilding the walls of Jerusalem with a sword in one hand and a trowel in the other.

## **470 YEARS**

by R. EX. COMP. C. MASON, P.G. Reg. 14th September, 1955

I feel honoured in being the second member of the Chapter to be requested by the V.E. 1st Principal to prepare a paper for the Chapter and I can only hope that he will not be too disappointed with the result of his rashness.

As there is an Irish Royal Arch Chapter (Ara No. 348) working in Auckland, I thought that a paper endeavouring to reconcile the teaching of Irish Royal Arch Masonry with the teaching of the English, Scottish and New Zealand Royal Arch Masonry, might be interesting to companions in Auckland. All Craft Masonry uses the allegory of the building of King Solomon's Temple, in order to teach us to build within ourselves a superstructure perfect in its parts and honourable to the builder.

Royal Arch Masonry is the culmination of Craft Masonry and one would expect that all Royal Arch Masonry would embody the same lessons even under different Constitutions. However, in Irish Royal Arch Masonry the repair or renovation of the Temple under King Josiah is used as the allegory and in the English, Scottish and New Zealand Constitutions, the rebuilding of the Temple under Zerubbabel is used.

After commencing such a paper I thought it was too early in the history of this Chapter to present such speculative ideas when papers founded on fact would or might be more appreciated.

"The Degree of Holy Royal Arch commemorates the return of the Jews from the Babylonian captivity and the building of the Second Temple. Between the dedication of Solomon's Temple and the return was a period of 470 YEARS which the Degree of . . . embraces. King Solomon's Temple stood in all its glory for 33 years after its dedication, but eventually Nebuchadnezzar plundered it and carried away to Babylon many captives,

including the King, his family, the princes, the mighty men of valour and the Craftsmen.”

As this passage is well known to Royal Arch Masons who have taken a certain Degree in the Cryptic series, and as I think a brief account of 400 of those 470 years (i.e. from Solomon to Zedekiah) may be of interest to all Royal Arch Masons, I shall endeavour to give such an account in this paper.

I am unable to say whether or not the facts stated in the paper are accurate, but practically every sentence has been copied from the books referred to at the end of the paper. Quotation marks have not been used simply because there would have been far too many.

There is no consensus of opinion among the authorities as to the dates of the events in the Old Testament, e.g. Ussher gives the date of Rehoboam's accession as 975 B.C., Beecher gives it as 982 B.C., Hastings Bible Dictionary as 939 B.C., Jewish Encyclopaedia as 978 B.C., and Caldecott as 547 B.C. The dates mentioned throughout the paper, as well as the Table in the Appendix, are those given by Caldecott.

A period of 470 years is a very long time for the events occurring during such a period to be contained in a short paper. Some idea of such a period can be gathered from, say, a similar period, the accession of Henry VII in 1485 A.D. to the present time. If the name of each monarch is to be mentioned, then very little of the history of England can be dealt with. In such a long period it is easy to see that empires can rise and fall.

One of David's (*well-beloved*) first acts, after becoming King of Judah and Israel, was to secure Jerusalem, which he had seized from the Jebusites, and to fix the royal residence there. During David's reign the religious zeal and fervency of Prince and people was possibly at its zenith. The Ark was removed from its obscurity at Kirjathjearim, with marked solemnity, and conveyed to Mount Ophel in Jerusalem. The incongruity of its resting place, within curtains, in a Tabernacle tent, while he himself dwelt in a palace, so struck David, that he set on foot preparations for the planning and building of a permanent temple. With large wisdom and still larger reverence, it was determined to find in the Tabernacle of Moses the outline and the measurements which were to dominate the Sanctuary of the new Temple. David amassed vast quantities of gold and all materials necessary for the building, and completed the preparations before he died, in 988 B.C.

At some period, it is not known when, David had promised his wife Bathsheba that their son Solomon (*peaceful*) should be his heir, notwithstanding that he had older sons born of heathen mothers. On David's death, Solomon ascended the throne of Judah and Israel. His parental inheritance was remarkably strong in several directions. His father David was in the maturity of his age and his mother Bathsheba was the grand daughter of the wise Ahithopel, whose advice was as if a man had enquired at the oracle of God. He inherited from his mother and councillor Ahithopel, sagacity, quickness of judgment, judicial insight and some measure of sensual weakness from his father, thoughtfulness, literary tastes, the skill of ruling and an interest in religion.

After becoming King he made his throne secure by punishing the heads of the conspiracy against him and during a religious convocation at Gibeon he chose wisdom as the gift of God in preference to wealth or long life. The wisdom asked for and granted was that of an understanding heart to judge the people and to discern between good and evil.

The most important alliances that Solomon made were with Egypt and Tyre. He married the daughter of Pharaoh, King of Egypt, and the alliance with Egypt was valuable both commercially and politically. From Egypt he procured horses and chariots and he secured a goodly share of profit for himself in the commerce between Egypt and the nations of the far East. From the religious point of view it paved the way for at least a tendency to idolatry. The alliance with the King of Tyre came about as a result of that King's friendship with King David and resulted in a treaty of commerce between Tyre and Solomon.

The opening of Joppa as a port created a new coastal trade and the materials from Tyre were conveyed to that city on floats and thence to Jerusalem. In return for these exports the people of Tyre were only too glad to receive the grain and oil of Solomon's territory. The results of the alliance did not end there. Now, for the first time in the history of the Jews, they entered on a career as a commercial people. Still more important was the aid given by the King of Tyre in the building of the Temple.

There is perhaps no building of the ancient world which has excited so much attention since the time of its destruction as the Temple which Solomon built at Jerusalem. The Temple was the approach of a nation to its God. It was the symbol of God's presence among the people. It was the visible means of access to God. His Name dwelt there. Although His Throne was in Heaven, His earthly seat was in the Temple. The Temple bound the nation together. It was the religious centre and capital. Its influence permeated the whole nation.

A description of the building of the Temple, its ornamentation and its contents including those placed in the Holy of Holies is so well known that there is no need to describe them here. However, when the Temple was dedicated, the Ark, containing nothing but two Mosaic Tables of Stone, was placed therein. The instant effect of the transfer of the Ark and the perfection of the Temple was the elevation and purification of the national faith. The Commandment of Moses was studied and followed with scrupulous care.

The first twenty-four years of Solomon's reign of forty years may be taken as a progressive advance for himself and his subjects. During this time he was under the spell of his father's influence and was occupied in carrying out the pledge of his father's wishes. Animated by a noble ideal, the nation and its sovereign toiled to embody, in glowing architecture and ornate ritual, the conceptions of the desert faith and the simple but superb ceremonialism of the Tent of Meeting.

In the latter part of the reign the worship of the people fell away to some extent from the worship of their God and for years and years afterwards, except for occasional spasmodic revivals, it continued to fall further away. This is ascribed to a variety of reasons - all attributed to King Solomon. Notwithstanding that the enormous cost of the Temple was provided for by David's savings and the offerings of the people, Solomon was, in other things, a prodigious spender. Other structures followed rapidly.

The equipment of the Court and the apparel of his servants and everything he did was on the same magnificent scale and it was not possible for any financial system to bear the strain of the King's passion for magnificence. As the treasury became empty, taxes multiplied, and monopolies became irksome. The people, ground down by such oppression, became more despondent and dissatisfied and turned away from the Temple to worship, although not wholly, the heathen God, Moloch, which Solomon worshipped. For Solomon, in his later

days, had followed the various worships of his heathen wives and worshipped Moloch.

One of the main objects of the building of the Temple was to attain a fresh instrument and guarantee of the unification of the Twelve Tribes, the Temple becoming the centre of worship for the whole nation.

Solomon reigned for forty years (987 B.C.-948 B.C.) and, on his death, there was a revolt and only two of the Tribes remained under his son Rehoboam (*the people is enlarged*) as King of Judah, to worship in the Temple. Another King, Jeroboam, reigned over the other ten tribes - Israel.

Five years after Solomon's death, Shishak, King of Egypt, rode into Jerusalem at the head of a strong force and for the first of many times the Temple was partially plundered of its treasures. Rehoboam reigned for 17 years (947 B.C.-931 B.C.) He followed his father's example of oppression and this resulted in ever increasing heathenism in Judah.

Rehoboam was succeeded by his son Abijam (*my father is Jehovah*) and during his reign of three years (930 B.C.-928 B.C.) the downward decline proceeded with accelerated speed. He was followed by Asa (*healer*), who, during his reign of forty-one years (927 B.C.-887 B.C.) endeavoured, with partial success, to stem the tide of ungodliness in Judah. With more effect Jehoshaphat (*Jehovah hath judged*) applied the brake of ethical teaching to the people for twenty-five years (886 B.C.-862 B.C.).

All was in vain because his son Jehoram (*Jehovah is exalted*) began his reign by an act of blood and ferocity in murdering all possible rivals to the throne (his brothers and their children except Joash who was secretly hidden from him) and all those tribal princes of Judah who had been the chief supports of Jehoshaphat in maintaining the worship of Jehovah in its purity. Jehoram's violent reign of eight years (861 B.C.- 854 B.C.) corresponded with its beginning and it closed amid the muttered curses of the People. Deeds of blood, such as had occurred, were the natural sequence of the worship of Moloch. Jehoram was succeeded by Ahaziah, who reigned for one year.

Athaliah, daughter of Jezebel and widow of Jehoram usurped the throne. She was a remorseless Baal worshipper and she erected in Jerusalem a temple for the worship of Baal, plundering the Temple and bestowing the dedicated things of the House of the Lord upon the Baalim. The Ritual of the Temple ceased and its organised worship was a thing of the past. The downfall of Jehovism continued.

A revolution occurred and Athaliah was murdered while Joash (*Jehovah is strong*), who had been hidden for six years in the Temple, was being anointed King at the age of seven. He was fortunate, in that he had the advice, which he followed for twenty-three years, of his foster father, Jehoiada, the High Priest. God's Covenant with Abraham that his descendants should become a mighty nation and possess the land in which he was a stranger, had been confirmed with all the solemnity of a religious ceremony.

This Covenant was renewed four times - first, by Moses in the Plain of Moab, second by Joshua before his death and third by Jehoiada. The first part of the reign of Joash was prosperous, but after the death of Jehoiada Joash fell into the hands of bad advisers and the worship of Baal and Ashtaroth was restored. When rebuked for this by Zechariah, son of Jehoiada he caused Zechariah to be stoned to death, in the very Court of the Lord's House.

That same year, Hazael, King of Syria, came up against Jerusalem and carried off a vast booty from the Temple as the price of his departure.

Joash was murdered after a reign of forty years (852 B.C.-813 B.C.) and was succeeded by his son Amaziah (*Jehovah is strong*) who found a depleted treasury, a despoiled Temple and a discouraged people. When securely settled on the throne he brought to justice the men who had assassinated his father. He used one of the laws of Moses, taken literally from Deut. XXIV, 16, that every man was to die for his sin and that his children were not to be involved in his punishment.

This shows that the laws of this Book were still known at the close of the 9th century and were then recognised as authoritative. He soon forgot obedience to the laws of his forefathers and followed his father's steps in worshipping heathen gods. In a battle against the Northern Kingdom he was defeated and brought as a captive to Jerusalem. Again the Temple was robbed of some of its treasures.

After a reign of twenty-nine years (812 B.C.-784 B.C.) Amaziah was murdered and was succeeded by his sixteen year old son Azariah (*Jehovah my keeper*), who, on ascending the throne changed his name to Uzziah (*Jehovah is strong*). The sixteen years given as his age at his accession is very likely his age when he began his rule as regent, because he acted as regent during the years of his father's captivity.

Warned by the violent deaths of his father and grandfather, he followed a middle course in religion - neither violent Baalite nor fervent Jehovite. The Temple escaped plunder during his reign but it was not enriched by fresh gifts and ornaments. For the greater part of his reign he lived in the love of God and showed himself a wise, active and pious ruler. He raised the kingdom to a condition of prosperity such as it had not known since the death of Solomon.

Many years before his death he insisted, notwithstanding the protests of the Priests, on entering the Holy Place and himself offering incense on the golden Altar that stood before the Veil. He was, in a moment, smitten with leprosy, and never again worshipped in the Temple or took part in the administration of justice. Although Uzziah died in the year 731 B.C. his actual reign was only twenty-five years (783 B.C.-759 B.C.).

Uzziah was succeeded by his son Jotham, who, owing to his father's misfortune, presided over the palace and judged the people as Regent-King (758 B.C.-743 B.C.). Generally, Jotham followed the ecclesiastically neutral policy of his father; sacrifice and the burning of incense being permitted on all the high places of the land. The earlier Chapters of Isaiah, who lived during the reigns of Uzziah and Jotham, give a picture of the condition of Judah during that period. Jotham died at the age of forty one - eleven years before the death of Uzziah,

Ahaz (*he hath grasped*), Jotham's son, ascended the throne at the age of twenty years as regent-king for his grandfather. At the time of his accession, the Kings of Damascus and Israel laid siege to Jerusalem. Encouraged by Isaiah, Ahaz defended his country and the siege failed. He forfeited God's favour by his wickedness, for he had made molten images of the winged Sun discs, called Baalim, for the people to worship and he had dedicated a portion of the Valley of the Sons of Hinnom to the worship of Moloch. Contrary to the advice of Isaiah he purchased help, against further invasions, from the King of Assyria and Judah became a tributary to Assyria.

During the reign of Ahaz both prince and people erred more and more and grew more and more defiant of Jehovah. All that was moveable-the twelve brazen oxen, brass panels, etc. was taken from the Temple and used for idolatrous purposes. He died at the age of thirty-six years (742 BC.-727 B.C.). His only service of permanent value was the sundial.

The darkest hour precedes the dawn. The spiritual gloom of the reign of Ahaz was followed by a gradual brightening of the horizon in the reign of his son Hezekiah (*Jehovah strengtheneth*) who came to the throne of Judah at the age of twenty-five years. He was one of the three most perfect Kings of Judah. His explanation of the disasters that had befallen the nation was that they were the permitted judgments of Jehovah upon a guilty and backsliding people. His remedy was that they should retrace their steps and begin by sanctifying themselves.

This done, they were to purify the Temple and restore the old order of worship. His first act was to purge, repair and reopen the Temple with splendid sacrifices and perfect ceremonial. A purgation of idolatry in all the towns took place. Heathen altars were destroyed, as well as the obelisks and the Asherahs or phallic symbols that had been placed within the Temple Courts.

With superb courage, the brazen serpent that Moses had made in the Wilderness and before which it had become customary to burn pots of incense, was broken up and declared to be without supernatural power. In all this he followed the advice of Isaiah, who had come out of what could be called a public retirement, during the latter part of the reign of Ahaz.

When the Kingdom of Israel had fallen, Hezekiah invited the scattered inhabitants to a peculiar Passover, which was continued for the unprecedented period of fourteen days. At the head of a repentant and united people, Hezekiah assumed the aggressive against the Philistines and in a series of victories not only re won the cities which his father lost but even dispossessed them of their own cities. He also refused to acknowledge Assyria to which Judah had become tributary in the reign of Ahaz.

This brought on the First Campaign against Judah by the Assyrians under Sennacherib, which ended with the imposition of a fine of 300 talents of silver and 30 talents of gold. To meet the fine Hezekiah took off the gold plates which covered the sculptured door of the Temple. Ten years later Sennacherib again advanced on Jerusalem, which was saved by prayer.

Hezekiah leaned on Isaiah, and Isaiah leaned on Jehovah, in never-failing faithful prayer, in which both engaged. A pestilence which destroyed 18,500 of Sennacherib's men broke out. Judah was freed from its tribute. Hezekiah's reign of twenty-nine years (726 B.C.-698 B.C.) had been one of stern and strenuous toil in an attempt to reform the nation.

He was succeeded by his son Manasseh (*making to forget*) who ascended the throne at the age of twelve years. We are not told who acted as regent during the ensuing period. His accession was the signal for an entire change in the religious administration of the kingdom.

The foreign religions of Assyria and Babylon, the Canaanitish Baal and Asherah worship, were blended with the popular religion of Judah. No one form of false faith was given a predominance over the rest, although the Temple remained the centre of worship. Altars were built for the Sun and all the host of Heaven, within two Courts of the Temple. In the

Vacant Chamber was erected a graven image of Asherah. There was a systematic religious persecution, the victims of which were those, who, retaining their fidelity to Jehovah opposed the reactionary measures.

Jerusalem became a heathen capital and the altars for heathen worship, erected by Manasseh, in the two Courts of the House of the Lord, stood there during the reign of his son Amon until they were destroyed in the eighteenth year of the reign of his grandson' Josiah. Manasseh reigned for fifty-five years (697 B.C.-643 B.C.) and this was the period of the Temple's lowest degradation and it was during this period that the Book of the Covenant was lost and forgotten.

Manasseh was taken captive to Babylon for an unknown period and, while in prison there, he bethought himself of his father's teaching, repented, and prayed to his father's God. He returned to Jerusalem an altered man and did his best to re-establish Jehovism as the true religion. But the revival was not a deep or profound spiritual movement. It was such as an humble and sincere man, past the prime of life, could effect against the confirmed reactionary influence of his Court and his people.

Amon (*a master workman*) son of Manasseh, ascended the throne at the age of twenty-two years. He had been brought up by his father in a fanatic belief in all idolatry. The outlook was so dark that he was murdered after a reign of two years (642 B.C.-641 B.C.).

Amon's son, Josiah (*Jehovah supports*) succeeded to the throne at the age of eight years and the first eight years of his reign passed as a regency. Hilkiah, the High Priest, in conjunction with the Queen Mother, Jedidah, and the National Convention of Princes of the people. ruled the land. At the age of 16 years, when Hebrew sovereigns attained their majority, Josiah officially began to seek after the God of David. His early training under Hilkiah coloured the whole of his life. In the twelfth year of his reign he began to destroy all high places, groves, images and all outward signs and relics of idolatry. In the eighteenth year of his reign (i.e. at the age of twenty-six) he began the real reformation of his reign. He began the great work repairing the Temple.

A Committee of three, Shaphan the Scribe, Maaseiah the Governor of Jerusalem, and Joah the Recorder, was entrusted with the oversight of the work of renovation. During the prosecution of the work, it became necessary that the innermost chamber of the Temple should be swept and purified and the Ark replaced there, from which it appears that it had been removed by some predecessor. Into that Chamber only the High Priest might enter. Hilkiah, the High Priest, undertook the work and, in doing so, made a discovery of singular importance.

It was no less than the recovery of an ancient manuscript, called indifferently, "The Book of the Law" and "The Book of the Covenant." "Take this Book of the Law and put it by the side of the Ark" Deut XXXI, 26. It had last been used in the reign of Hezekiah and from then until it was found (nearly a century) total forgetfulness of the Book took place. After the finding of the Book, the Covenant of God with Abraham was renewed for the fourth time by Josiah.

The last years of Josiah's life were given, with sincerity, to the consolidation of the reformation which he had begun but it was a hopeless task. The Temple was 'prepared' in every particular, fabric was renovated, and porters were at every gate to preserve it from profanation; the Temple dues were reinstated, so that Priests and Levites did not need to

depart from their service to seek the means of subsistence, and out of the King's substance the national sacrifices were offered. All was prepared, all was in order. All excepting the heart of the people.

The stiffneckedness of the people can be accounted for only by the fact that a heavy annual subsidy was paid to the King of Babylon, who had succeeded to the claims of Assyria. This impoverished and angered the people and was felt by them as a divinely permitted grinding of the faces of the poor.

When Pharoah-Necho went from Egypt to carry on his war against Assyria he was opposed by Josiah and his army. Josiah's army was heavily defeated and Josiah mortally wounded. His death removed the sole barrier which prevented the outpouring of the Divine displeasure upon the guilty people and was the first step towards the break up of the kingdom. It was the prelude to the extinction of the national life.

Josiah reigned for thirty-one years (640 B.C.-610 B.C.) and was succeeded by his son Jehoahaz (*Jehovah hath grasped*). Pharoah Necho, still at Riblah, from which place he had sent forward his troops to attack Josiah, hearing of the unauthorised elevation of Jehoahaz to the throne, without reference to himself, sent Jehoahaz a prisoner to Egypt. At the same time he levied a fine on Judah of a single talent of gold and 100 talents of silver, showing to what a condition of poverty the once wealthy kingdom of Solomon had been reduced. Jehoahaz reigned for three months (609 B.C.) and Jehoiakim, Josiah's second son, was appointed by Sennacherib as Satrap-king of Judah.

In the fourth year of his reign, Egypt was totally defeated by Nebuchadnezzar, King of Babylon, who then claimed Judah as a subject state, taking from Jehoiakim, as hostages for his good behaviour, many nobles including Daniel, Hananiah, Mishaël and Azariah. In the eleventh year of Jehoiakim's reign, Nebuchadnezzar again appeared with an army before Jerusalem.

The Temple and Palace were plundered of their treasures, it being particularly noticed that the golden vessels which Solomon had made were cut in pieces and taken to Babylon. As this was the fifth occasion on which the Temple had been despoiled, it is singular to find that some of Solomon's gifts to the Temple were still there. The reason may be that as soon as the City was in danger, the choicest pieces of the Temple plate were hidden by the High Priest.

Jehoiakim had reigned for eleven years (608 B.C.-598 B.C.) when he was deposed by Nebuchadnezzar, who appointed Jehoiachin as his viceroy. This young King, eighteen years of age, had reigned for just one hundred days, when some action of his brought Nebuchadnezzar back to lay siege to Jerusalem. The King decided to surrender, was taken prisoner to Babylon together with 10,000 selected captives. Among these were all the mighty men of valour and all the craftsmen and smiths. The Temple and Palace were finally looted of their moveable treasures. Ezekiel, a young priest, was one of the prisoners of war.

Jehoiachin was the last member of the family of Solomon in a direct line. The succession now passed to the family of Nathan, Solomon's brother, because Shealtiel, better known as the father of Zerubbabel, was the next heir-at-law.

Nebuchadnezzar placed Zedekiah, Jehoiachin's uncle, on the throne and retired again from the City. Zedekiah's chief duty was that of tax collector in order that the annual tribute could

be paid to Babylon. This proved such an intolerable burden that in the ninth year of Zedekiah's reign it could not be paid and Nebuchadnezzar, for the fourth time, laid siege to Jerusalem.

The siege lasted for eighteen months, when the King, with a small party, in his effort to escape, was captured. Those captured were put to death in cold blood with the usual Babylonian cruelty. Zedekiah's sons were slain before his eyes which were then put out. He was bound in fetters and placed in prison at Babylon till the day of his death (596 B.C.-586 B.C.). Everything of value was plundered from the Temple. Nothing is said of the Ark of the Covenant. Even the two well-known brass pillars, Jachin and Boaz, were pulled down, broken in pieces and carried to Babylon. The Temple, thus stripped of all its treasures, was set on fire and burned to the ground.

After the Jews had been captive for seventy years, Cyrus, who was then King of Persia, adopted the wise policy of allowing the Jews to return to Jerusalem. He appointed Sheshbazzar, Prince of Judah and legal heir to the throne of David, as Persian Governor in Jerusalem. The general opinion has been that Sheshbazzar was the Babylonian name of Zerubbabel (born at Babel, i.e. Babylon) but later authorities regard Sheshbazzar as the uncle of Zerubbabel.

Be that as it may, Zerubbabel was the grandson of Jehoiachin, the captive King of Judah, the legal successor and heir of his royal estate and the lineal descendant of David. He left Babylon with the body of exiles on their return to Jerusalem, and was the prime mover, in conjunction with the High Priest Jeshua, in the rebuilding of the Temple.

It must be remembered that the Degree of Holy Royal Arch in the English, Scottish and New Zealand Constitutions deals, not with the actual rebuilding of the Temple, but simply with the clearing of the ground so that the Temple could be rebuilt.

## APPENDIX

### **Kings of Judah and Israel:**

David, 1027-988.                      Solomon, 987-948.

### **Kings of Judah:**

Rehoboam, 947-931.              Abijam, 930-928.              Asa, 927-887.

Jehoshaphat, 886-862.              Jehoram, 861-854.              Ahaziah, 853.

Joash, 852-813.              Amaziah, 812-784.              Uzziah, 783-759

(died 731 BC.).

Jotham (regent) 758-743.              Ahaz (regent) 742-727.              Hezekiah, 726-698.

Manasseh, 697-643.              Anion, 642-641.              Josiah, 640-610.

Jehoahaz, 609.              Jehoiakim, 608-598,              Jehoiachin, 597.

Zedekiah, 596-586.

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## THE MEANING OF THE ROYAL ARCH DEGREE

BY V.E. COMP. J. P. GLENIE, 9th July, 1964

Historically the Royal Arch has a secure place among the degrees which comprise 'pure antient masonry'. The United Grand Lodge of England settled the matter once and for all in England when it made its famous declaration that the Supreme Order of the Holy Royal Arch was an essential part of the Freemasonry it recognised. With this declaration the Royal Arch became part of basic Freemasonry and not one of the further, 'higher' or allied degrees. The same principle was adopted in this country in 1890 when the New Zealand system was established, though here the Royal Arch, along with the three Craft degrees, was recognised specifically as a degree, and not as an 'Order' to be included in the Craft degrees.

This difference between England and New Zealand is for the moment unimportant. The essential fact is that the Royal Arch is an integral part of the system, both here and in the Old Land. From this it could well be expected that the Royal Arch would be sought in due time by most of those who join the Craft, as a necessary completion of their Masonic education commenced in the Craft degrees. All Master Masons know of the obviously incomplete nature of the Third and the need of a further degree to supply the lost s . . . s

Yet it is an undeniable fact that many Freemasons appear satisfied with the substituted s . . . s of the Third degree and make no attempt to obtain the genuine s . . . s, or if they do take the Royal Arch degree, fail to appreciate the genuine s . . . s they have received.

In many ways this is not surprising for the Royal Arch is not a simple degree; it requires much thought and understanding and an appreciation of the lessons of the three Craft degrees; let us consider each briefly.

In the First we are symbolically reborn into a state of existence where perfection is the aim and good and wholesome living the means to the end desired; a code of moral rules is presented to us to govern our conduct through life.

The Second degree shows us how to live that life by studying the moral code and by making the best use of our physical and mental faculties, to learn and know the universal laws of nature.

In the Third degree, we are shown the result of our labours in the first two degrees. We learn how the Master Mason must pass through the trials and tribulations of life and, rising as it were from the ashes of his former self, rejoin the companions of his former toil, purified and a better and wiser man.

But still he has proceeded no further than the lessons of life here on earth He has learned to -live by a sound and beautiful moral code and to be true to the trust reposed in him. His

search for an answer to the riddle of life goes unrewarded and only substituted s . . . s are given to his questing spirit. Since man is immensely concerned with thoughts of life hereafter and his own fate beyond the grave, it is strange that so many will leave their Masonic education at this point and accept a substitution, a 'second best'. For, if they would realise it, exploration into the Royal Arch degree would give them all the answers they seek. In it, the ultimate and genuine secrets of life are presented to the searching mind; the progressive system of Masonry is completed and comes to its supreme climax.

How can this be done? How can one short degree give us that ultimate answer, even when assisted in our New Zealand system by the introduction of the Mark and Excellent degrees? A complete answer would require a detailed study of the degree and the resulting explanation would be very lengthy indeed, so rich is it in symbolism and allegory. A very brief explanation can however be given.

### **THE INTERLACED TRIANGLES**

By R.E. COMP. G. L. AUSTIN, G. Lec., 11th June, 1959

The Interlaced Triangles which form the centrepiece of some Royal Arch Jewels and which are placed at the head of New Zealand diplomas, offer a wide field of study.

They form a symbol which is known by many names, among them being Hexalpha, Hexagram, Hexagon, Shield of David, Seal of Solomon, and Magen Dawid; and some Rituals (including the New Zealand) use the term "Intersecting Triangles". Another work uses the phrase "Trying Triangles".

The Jewish Encyclopaedia description of the Magen Dawid is, inter alia:

The hexagram formed by the combination of two equilateral triangles; used as a symbol of Judaism. It is placed on synagogues, sacred vessels and the like. . . . The Jewish view of God, which permitted no images of Him, was and still is opposed to the acceptance of any symbols, and neither the Bible nor the Talmud recognises their existence. It is noteworthy, moreover, that the Shield of David is not mentioned in rabbinical literature. The Magen Dawid, therefore, probably did not originate with Rabbinism, the official and dominant Judaism for more than 2,000 years. Nevertheless, a David's Shield has been noted on a Jewish tombstone in Southern Italy which may date as early as the third century of the common era. The earliest Jewish literary source which mentions it (twelfth century) says: 'Seven names of angels precede the mezuzah - Michael, Gabriel, etc. Tetragrammaton protect thee. And likewise the sign David's Shield is placed beside the name of each Angel'. The Hindus used the hexagram as a means of protection. In the synagogues perhaps it took the place of the mezuzah, and the name Shield of David may have been given it in virtue of its protective powers. The hexagram may have been employed originally also an architectural ornament, as on certain cathedrals. Charles V prescribed for the Jews at Prague, in 1354, a red flag with both David's Shield and Solomon's Seal.

Mackey says that, of all talismans, he knew of none, except perhaps the cross, which was so generally prevalent among the ancients as the Seal of Solomon or Shield of David. He considered the Interlaced Triangles as the greatest Oriental talisman. Later it was adopted by Christians as an emblem of their faith, but with varying interpretations - the two triangles

were said to be symbols of fire and water, sometimes of prayer and remission, sometimes of creation and redemption, of life and death, or of resurrection and judgment; and finally of the two natures of our Lord - divine and human. With this meaning it was at a very early period dispersed all over Europe. The Kabbalistic Hebrews regarded it as a protection against fire.

To a Rosicrucian the Double Interfacing Triangles represent the perfection of the law of duality on both material and spiritual planes. Their book of ancient symbolism, "Behold the Sign," says that all through Nature the law of duality exists, and when opposing polarities are linked a creation results. The same society looks on the six-pointed star (in reality the Interlaced Triangles) as a symbol of the Creator, as a symbol of perfection in the physical universe and perfection in the spiritual world, and as a symbol of the unity of both phases of existence of which man is aware.

"Behold the Sign" illustrates a device of Hindu origin called "Sri Iantra." This consists of a six-pointed star within a circle. There is another circle within the Interlaced Triangles, a Triangle is placed in the second circle, and for religious purposes the image of a god is placed the Royal Arch in exact centre. Sri Iantra closely resembles the jewel. The triangle with apex up is said to represent the positive or male element, the triangle with the point down the female element, and the unity of the two triangles is represented by the inner circle.

In March, 1853, an article entitled "Ancient Masons' Marks" in the Freemasons' Quarterly Magazine (London) claimed that the double equilateral interlaced triangles could lay claim to being an important symbol, whether looked upon as Christian, pagan or Masonic, of high antiquity and almost universal application. The article said the symbol was known to Christians as a figure of the ineffable name of Jehovah, within which were often met the I H S of the Greek Church. Its special significance among Masons of the Third Degree, and its complete development in the Royal Arch, were well known to the initiated. Among the nations of the East, the triangle, both single and double, had from remote antiquity formed the geometrical emblem of the Trinity. The writer quoted a number of examples to show that the figure was common in both the old and new worlds.

According to Comp. W. H. Sweeting (Victoria) 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 also represents the reverse of good - evil. In the two combined we get a symbolic representation of the triumph of good over evil, used since very ancient days, even pre-Jewish, as a charm against sickness and everything that is evil.

Neither Bernard Jones ("Freemasons' 'Book of the Royal Arch") nor Lionel Vibert ("Miscellanea Latomorum," September, 1936) is able to give a definite date for the introduction of the Interlaced Triangle into Royal Arch Masonry. The symbol appears on a Newcastle water-clock made in 1701, but this is about 70 years prior to its first authenticated appearance in connection with the Royal Arch. It is shown on the Kirkwall scroll, belonging to a Scottish Lodge, Kirkwall Kilwinning, No. 382, known to have been working from 1736. The scroll (described and illustrated in A.Q.C., vol. x) may have been designed for use as a floor cloth in the 1836-50 period.

Both Jones and Vibert point out that an early example of the use of the Interlaced Triangles in a Masonic connection is an engraved portrait of a Grand Master of 1761, and the Charter

of Compact (1766) showed in the margin clear representations of the symbol.

The meaning of the Interlaced Triangles in early Royal Arch Masonry, like the date of its introduction, has eluded leading scholars.

Some English rituals include a lengthy explanation of the Jewel, which is mainly composed of mathematical proof of a statement contained in another lecture and conveys no Masonic lesson.

Dr. George Oliver ("Origin of the Royal Arch," 1867) did not hesitate to claim that the Interlaced Triangles were deliberately introduced with the intention of linking the degree with Christian symbolism. but Vibert is satisfied that this cannot have been the case. The latter held the view that what had long been established as the symbol of Judaism would be singularly unsuitable as a device to indicate a Christian association.

It is not without interest (as pointed out by Comp. G. S. Shepherd-Jones in an address to the Surrey First Principals Chapter: a hint of this is included in the notes from Mackey) that the Interlaced Triangles were adopted by early Christians as an emblem for One Who was perfect man and perfect divine. The former Christian nature of the Royal Arch degree is apparent from the great number of threes in the Chapter three principals, three sojourners, three great lights, three lesser lights, three syllables of both words, and others, some of them having reference to the Trinity. It is probably true to say (as did Bro. W. Waples in A.Q.C., vol. lviii) that any triplicated device was a "Trinity" and used as such by medieval people who sought originality.

Our Ritual indicates that the Tetragrammaton, or incommunicable name, was written by the Jews in a triangular form - a form, by the way, well known to all Royal Arch Companions. The charge continues: "This name of God, the Tetragrammaton, could not be more aptly placed than in the symbol, or triangle, itself, and hence the real meaning of the Royal Arch double triangle.

Can this "real meaning" be the linking of the creature with the Creator, in Whom we move, and live, and have our being?

### **CORN, WINE, OIL and SALT**

By R.E. COMP. W. H. V. TAINE, P.G. Lec., P.Z. 22nd March, 1965

The fundamentals of Freemasonry and the principles which govern it are all set out in the First Degree, and are never altered or deviated from. They present an ideal but entirely practical way of living, than which there could be nothing finer. It is put in language so plain that it must be understood by even the most simple Entered Apprentice, as our Duty to God, to our neighbours and to ourselves.

To instruct us in that, and to encourage us to do it in our everyday lives, is the essential Aim and Object of all Freemasonry, and it has no other purpose whatever. The instruction is unique in being based on the usages and customs, and the materials and appliances, of the working craftsmen of long ago, including those employed at the building of the first two Temples at Jerusalem. It is progressive, taking a different form in each Degree, and it reaches its climax in the Royal Arch Degree, the teaching of which, far from taking another line,

follows on from Craft Masonry. It is a High and Sublime Degree, as the Second is higher than the First-that is in presenting a higher conception of our duty.

In constituting and dedicating a Lodge or Chapter the Presiding Officer is actuated by a sincere desire that it shall conform to the ideals of the Craft or of Royal Arch Masonry, and the ancient rites employed express that desire and show how it may be realised. The centre of the ceremony, perhaps the most beautiful we have, is the pedestal covered with a white cloth which is the symbol of the Lodge or Chapter itself, and on it are scattered and poured Corn, Wine, Oil and Salt; they are ancient and highly significant symbols, which have been used in Rites of Consecration for thousands of years and have always had the same meaning.

**Corn, Wine and Oil** represent the Abundance, Prosperity and Happiness which it is hoped will be enjoyed by the new body; as the best of foods they are symbols also of what will produce in it a vigorous and satisfying life. It need hardly be said that Masonic vitality can be produced only by proper Masonic food, that is by understanding, and continuous instruction adjusted to the needs of the individual. All that is required is provided in abundance in the ceremonies and lectures of our rituals, but as with all foods it is necessary that it should first be consumed, then digested. If it is not, the ceremonial is in danger of becoming a series of unmeaning rites, containing little or no spiritual nourishment. It is to be feared that all too many die of Masonic starvation in the midst of plenty; they have never realised that the food is there, nor has anyone told them about it.

The same Elements illustrate something else, of an equally practical nature; in ancient Israel two kinds of sacrifices were made-those of animals, and the so-called **Meat**, which were **Meal** Offerings, of ground Corn mingled with Oil, and Wine and Salt. These were singled out for special mention as being "A Sweet Savour unto the Lord"; figuratively, they were produced by the skill and personal labour of those who offered them, and no doubt it was for that reason that they were particularly appreciated. Like the men of Israel, we ourselves must dig and cultivate, each for himself, if we are to have Masonic food and enjoy Masonic prosperity.

But perhaps the most significant of the four Elements is the **Salt** strewed on the pedestal; as we know it is a symbol of Hospitality and Friendship, but also, one feels, of things much more important-of Honesty and Sincerity.

Israel was commanded that "with all thine offerings thou shalt offer salt"; it is a searching and purifying substance, and was a symbol of the whole-hearted sincerity of the worshippers; lip-service was abhorrent to the Lord God. Salt therefore exactly expresses the spirit in which a sincere and well-instructed Freemason approaches his duty to God, his neighbour, and himself.

In any sphere of life duty is something we must do or take the consequences, but there are two ways of doing it, in servile obedience or in happiness and devotion; men obey uncongenial rulers because they have to, but how differently they serve a beautiful young Queen whom they love.

It is the peculiar virtue of Freemasonry that it presents the highest ideals in a most attractive way, inspiring its adherents with an appreciation and love of what is good and-great; it lifts us from the low plane of merely doing our duty to one of joy and pride in our Ancient and Honourable Institution; we feel we must be worthy of it, and nothing gives us so

much pleasure as following its lead. We know what that lead is, but perhaps it is nowhere indicated with such power and distinction as in what is so rightly called the High and Sublime Degree of the Most Holy Royal Arch.

We must show you, if we can, the Aim and Object of Royal Arch Masonry.

Through all the instruction of our Order runs what may be called a golden thread, illustrated by its greatest symbols – the Blazing Star of the First Degree, the Letter "G" and the All-seeing Eye of the Second, and the Bright Morning Star of the Third. Their purpose is to instruct us in our first duty; if it is accepted in sincerity the performance of the others must follow.

**The Blazing Star** represents the Sun at the Meridian; it is the most powerful and vivid object known to mankind, and has excited its wonder and worship in all ages, as the glory of the Lord. To us it is a symbol only, but of the Great Creator Himself, as the Almighty Father of all and the Supreme Ruler of the Universe, Whose Will and our Duty are expressed in those Three Great Lights in Freemasonry which we first saw when the Sun was at the Meridian; our dependence upon God had been acknowledged, and His proper place in our Order recognised.

**The Letter "G"** reminds us of His Wisdom and Skill as T.G.G.O.T.U, the Divine Architect and Planner of all its beauty and harmony.

**In the All-Seeing Eye** we recognise -His watchfulness and care, and are reminded of the Divine Laws, made for our good and for no other reason.

And to the faithful and obedient **the Bright Morning Star** is a Star of sure Hope in the Divine Promises for the future.

As suggested, it was when the Sun was at the Meridian that we first learned the purpose of our Institution, and it is by the aid of the same Great Light that we see the aim and object of the Royal Arch Degree; we may remember that it was dark in the Vault, and that only when the Sun reached its full power could the sojourners make their greatest discovery, that of the triangle, and the circle of gold upon which was inscribed the Sacred Name.

We should notice that with less light they had previously discovered the Book of the Holy Law, but the Meridian Sun revealed the Name; in other words it brought them to the Divine Writer Himself; it is indicated that duty is superseded by devotion.

In this is exemplified Freemasonry's noblest service; it turns our thoughts always, but here particularly, to Him "Whose breath kindled the Stars, adorned the Moon with silver rays, and gave the Sun its resplendent lustre"-the Divine Source of all Wisdom, Strength and Beauty-the Giver of all Good, spiritual, moral and physical.

The peculiar object of the Royal Arch Degree is to attract us to make an active search for Knowledge of God, in which, as it tells us, is true Wisdom and understanding-

It is a search open to the simplest and humblest of humanity, and brings its own reward in Corn, Wine and Oil of lasting happiness and spiritual prosperity.

## THE ALTAR

Our ritual tells us that the Altar is in the form of a double cube and is so shaped to represent the Altar of Incense which stood in the ancient Temple. In our traditional story, it was set in position when Solomon built his Temple and our Royal Arch degree tells how it was rediscovered when the foundations were laid for Zerubbabel's Temple. It is no surprise therefore to know that it must have on the front, the initials of the three Grand Masters, Solomon, Hiram of Tyre and H.A.B. In the lecture on the Altar we are told that these initials should always be inscribed in Hebrew characters, something which I believe is more honoured in the breach than in the observance in our Chapters.

There must appear also the Triple Tau, the Royal Arch badge, made up of the letters T over H, referring to Templum Hierosolyma, the Temple at Jerusalem.

On the top of the Altar we find the very core and essence of Royal Arch Masonry. On a gold plate is a circle of gold and within the circle, a triangle, also of gold. Around the circle is the Tetragrammaton, the Ineffable Name which is never spoken in full by a Jew and which, from our Craft traditions, we may remember was spoken only once a year by the High Priest, standing before the Ark of the Covenant in the Sanctum Sanctorum. This restriction on speaking the name is very real to a Jew - it is truly the Ineffable Name.

On the triangle is another three syllable word, one which is explained to us as being the name of God in three different languages. Actually four languages are involved. The first syllable is both Chaldee and Hebrew, the second is Syriac and the third Egyptian. Here we run into a difficulty and our Order has for some time been aware that the interpretation in our ritual is both unwise and untrue. It is now recognised that the word J.B.O. is simply a manufactured word and has no reference to heathen gods.

The late Ex. Comp Colin Dyer, one of England's great Masonic scholars, showed that historically it is no more than a Royal Arch word, just as we have a word in each of the three Craft degrees. It is a word, not a name, something which is made clear in the opening and in the closing of the degree and in the Obligation. Thus the recent public outcry and the concern of the Christian Churches is unjustified. We do not make reference to heathen gods as they fear. We are wrong in our ritual in saying it is the name of God and at the present time the Grand Chapter of England has set up a working party to recommend alterations to the ritual which will solve the problem. When this is completed in England I have no doubt our own Grand Chapter will consider making similar alterations and so avoid the same controversy in New Zealand.

The working party in England may also remove the Tetragrammaton from the circle as having no place in the working of the degree. It is of course referred to in our philosophical lecture on the Altar but is not part of the degree in New Zealand.

One other aspect of the top of the Altar is important. At present, following the practice in our Mother Grand Chapters, we show at the points of the triangle, three Hebrew characters, Aleph, Beth and Lamed. In English rituals, explanations of these are given which combine the letters together in several different sequences, all very confusing to a candidate but, more important, appearing to lead him to a god of pagan significance. These characters may well soon disappear from the Altar in England, and in New Zealand we may find the need to follow suit. Since they are given no place in our degree this may not be unreasonable.

But in the meantime these problems in our ritual remain and, until altered, it must be used in its present form. We are now following with great interest the deliberations in England where pressure for change is great. When final decisions are made over there, we will examine them carefully to ensure that our ritual is acceptable in the light of present day thinking. No longer can we think of it as immutable and unchangeable and, in a changing world, our Order will need to adapt.

### **Questions & Answers on the Lecturette**

**Comp Adams** asked if the words on the altar should read anti-clockwise as Hebrew is written right to left.

**Comp Glenie** said that our ritual is not Hebrew but English.

**Comp Hynes** said that there were no masoretic points to the consonants forming the Tetragrammaton so that any vowels added to the words are purely a guess.

**Comp Dicker** asked if changes would be made to the Cryptic ritual consequent to changes to the Royal Arch.

**Comp Glenie** said that the changes would necessarily have to follow into Cryptic.

**Comp Johnston** asked the derivation of the word objected to by the Anglican church.

**Comp Glenie** replied that it is a manufactured word, one syllable of which is being taken as pagan, accidental as far as we are concerned. He outlined how several Christian churches have recently been critical of Masonry.

**Comp Ellison** asked about criticism from churches in New Zealand and whether we should respond.

**Comp Glenie** said that the attitude has been that we do not enter into controversy about Freemasonry and that on the local scene it is best to follow this attitude and let it stand on its own good works. The thinking of different critics varies and it could be unwise to get involved locally other than perhaps stating that the Anglican church in England and Masonry itself are examining the issues raised by the former and some result will ensue.

**Comp Fritschi** (from Queensland) asked if the apex of the triangle should be to the east, or west as sometimes seen; also where should the Hebrew letters be placed.

**Comp Glenie** said the apex should be to the west as the First Principal will see it from the east, also that the letters should be outwards from the centre. It is not laid down exactly how it is arranged but these positions are customary. The aleph is at the west apex, the beth at the right and the lamed at the left points.

**Comp Kelly and Comp Blackwell** each asked how the lights should be arranged.

**Comp Glenie** replied that there should be two equilateral triangles as clearly depicted in the ritual, with the base of the larger in the east, opposite to the English arrangement where it is in the west. The seventh lamp not now used followed Scottish practice and was on the altar itself to light it.