

SECOND DEGREE

Fellow Craft



Definition: Fellow (of the) Craft

Themes of Degree:

Man's function in Divine Plan: Education and Achievement

Charity

Symbolism of First Theme:

First Section:

1. Preparation
2. Jewels
3. Square
4. Obligation
5. Tools
6. Wages

Second Section:

1. Pillars
2. Winding Stairs
3. Pass
4. Word
5. Letter "G"

Charity: Second Theme:

Definition: 1 Cor. 13

Summary

SECOND DEGREE

MEANING OF FELLOW CRAFT

In operative Masonry, an Apprentice worked seven years under the direction of his Master, at the end of that time, if he could prove his skills, he became a Fellow of the Craft. So, in Speculative Masonry the Fellow Craft begins his search for more light in Masonic philosophy.

Themes of the Degree:

There are two themes in this degree: Man's function in the divine plan, and Charity. Man has been endowed by the Supreme Architect with faculties which it is his duty to use. To put forth effort and achieve, to strive with all one's heart is the destiny of man and the law of life. Development of individuality stimulates originality, which is the main spring of civilization.

The "wages of life" are those blessings which all seek to attain. Indirectly they are sought through wealth, success, fame, popularity, etc. It is the theme of this degree that there is but one way to secure these blessings, namely, by noble exercise of the faculties, that is, by Masonic "work". The workman at the Temple will not receive his wages unless he does the work.

SYMBOLISM OF THE SECOND DEGREE

FIRST SECTION

Preparation:

The use of the right foot and the right hand is complementary to the use of the left in the First Degree. The idea represented is the necessity for balance and dual development, the importance of tempering idealism with knowledge and experience. This is the double-tie by which the candidate is now bound to the fraternity.

Jewels:

Knocking symbolizes asking or inquiry. The true Fellow Craft displays sincere anxiety to learn. He is willing to listen to instruction (Attentive Ear); he strives to master what he studies (Instructive tongue); he is persistent, diligent and earnest (Faithful Breast). He wears these qualities and is adorned by them as one wears and is adorned by jewels.

The Pass:

The Pass is given for the candidate, not by him, because as yet he has not acquired the quality which the Pass represents. He must first climb the Winding Stairs; in other words, he must learn its importance by actual experience. At the door he is merely vouched for as one likely to acquire the ability to give the Pass.

Reception:

The Square symbolizes all the tools of skill; the fashioning workman who constructs as distinguished from the apprentice who merely rough-hews and shapes.

Obligation:

“Will not communicate...”, etc. Development must be attained step by step. It is idle to communicate the philosophy of skill to one who has not first mastered the philosophy of morals.

“Help, aid and assist...”, etc. In middle life the interdependence of men comes home to the individual.

Off or From:

Will you go ahead or stop before you have fully developed yourself?

Working Tools:

These are the fashioning tools. In middle life one is constructing, performing and building.

Corn, Wine and Oil:



The wages of right living are health, plenty and peace. Masonic philosophy holds that there is but one way to attain these wages, by the highest exercise of our faculties in subordination to the rule of Charity. This is a law of the Supreme Architect to which man must conform or pay the penalty.

SECOND SECTION

The second section is an allegory not of reflection, but of experience. Middle age is the time not only for work but also for education – by trials, experiments and errors of practical life as contrasted with that derived from mere schooling.



Two Great Pillars:

According to the Bible (I Kings:7) the two pillars stood before (did not support) the porch of Solomon's Temple. They were 18 cubits high and 12 cubits in circumference. This would make their height about six times their diameter, a shape immediately suggesting strength and stability.

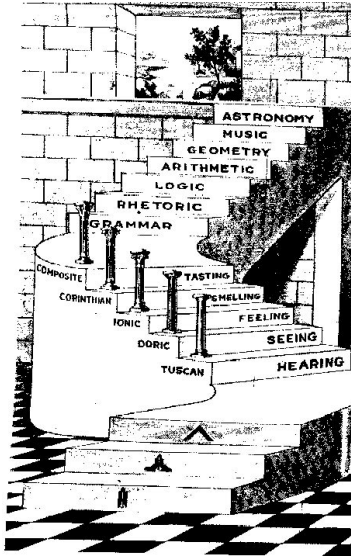
The pillars are surrounded by globes representing the terrestrial world on one hand, the celestial world on the other. The fact that the earth is a globe was of course known to the Hebrews. There is nothing in the bible with respect to the Pillars' being hollow.

Passing between the Pillars symbolizes entrance into the world of active life. The solid construction typifies the sort of development necessary in this world. Such development is to be acquired by skill and knowledge symbolized by the fact that they were cast by a master workman.

Flight of Winding Stairs:

Education and achievement call for constant effort. The exercise of his faculties requires man to be ever climbing upward step by step. There are three reasons why the stairs are winding:

1. Advancement in knowledge is spiral. In acquiring skill or mastering a problem, one keeps turning the subject in his mind, and as he does he gradually sees it more clearly until he gets above it and looks down upon it, comprehends and grasps it.
2. Very often we achieve what we did not set out to accomplish. Man strives with a particular end in view and finds the result is not at all expected. Many great inventions happened because man sought to find one solution but found something else.
3. Man climbs the stairs but what he believes to be his goal may be only an illusion. The end and purpose of his striving is not for him to decide, but rather for the Supreme Architect. The future is never straight up or straight ahead, but always partially hidden from view. God knows what He would have done. The workman's duty is to work and climb those stairs.



Three, Five and Seven Steps:

1. **Three** represents the Lodge and its officers (the world and society). As we climb the steps of life we are dependent on the assistance of other men, so we should reciprocate by giving them assistance. Our labors should tend to advance society. We are to work for the good of mankind, not for ourselves alone.
2. **Five** represents the faculties we use in climbing the Stairs. The first three are particularly essential because they are those most necessary to our intellectual and moral development. There are in fact more than five senses, but the five mentioned symbolically represent them all.
3. **Seven** represents the grand divisions of knowledge which constitute the application man makes of his faculties. At the time the ritual was written it was supposed that the “seven liberal arts and sciences” constituted universal knowledge. This is not to be taken as a literal statement of what constitutes education. It was stated because in 18th Century England there were no public common schools. The lecture in its present form is much abridged.

The Pass:

The Ephraimites, when called upon to give the Word, could not pronounce it correctly. Their failure was slight; yet it was failure, nevertheless. A workman's prime qualification is accuracy, clearness of comprehension. Although 99% of his work is perfect, if he fails the remaining 1%, his failure may be complete. The true Fellow Craft must not only learn, but he must also learn thoroughly learn. He must not guess, he must know, he must be accurate.

The habit of relying on superficial knowledge is all too common. They have sowed the seeds of their own failure. They are the Ephraimites, they have not the Pass. Climbing the winding stairs, gaining actual experience and understanding will allow the comprehension of the Pass.

The Word:

The Craftsman, in addition to having the Pass, must also have the Word. The Pass is the preliminary qualification (Outer Door); the Word, the final qualification (Inner Door). Persistence of strength, the capacity to endure, to withstand wear and tear, one must possess. The Word is the complement of the Pass. Only he who has both enters the Middle Chamber (becomes a Master Craftsman).

The Letter “G”:

The word Geometry is derived from Greek words *Ge* (earth or world) and *Metrein* (to measure), and literally means the science of measuring and analyzing the universe. Masonically speaking, Geometry comprehends all science, art and philosophy, all skill and learning.



Geometry is said to be the science of harmony in space, presiding over everything. This universal geometry tells us of a Universal Geometrician whose divine compass has measured all things.

Such are the thoughts symbolized Masonically in the double allusion of the Letter “G”. Geometry is placed near the top of the Winding Stairs and is particularly essential to Masons because a study of it leads to the conviction that behind such a universe there must be a Supreme Intelligence, an Architect if you will, who has planned and designed it, for and under whom we work and from whom we receive our Wages.

Also, it is a tenet of Hebrew theology that the name of the Deity never be pronounced, but always be represented by a symbol. The fact that the English letter “G” represents both God and Geometry is merely coincidence, which was advantageously adopted by the creators of the English ritual.

HISTORICAL REFLECTIONS

History shows that virtue and reverence and character alone endure through the ages. Civilizations founded on other qualities have risen only to perish. The life of a nation, as of a man, does not consist in abundance of material wealth. In a society founded on material things, selfishness casts out charity; weakness casts out virility. The Ten Commandments still endure.

CHARITY

The Scripture Lesson for this degree is found in 1 Cor. 13. It is a record of St. Paul's letter to the people in Corinth. In it he states, "Though I speak with tongues of men and angels, and have not charity, I am become as a sounding brass, or tinkling cymbal...And though I bestow all my goods to feed the poor...and have not charity, it profiteth me nothing." As Masons, we should regard Charity as an action of Brotherly Love to our fellowmen. It is an exemplification of one of the tenets of our profession.

Charity is the way we conduct ourselves with others. We need to exercise the virtues of patience, unselfishness, control of emotions to prevent irritability toward others and maintain a high degree of humbleness of character. This degree emphasizes the value of practicing Brotherly Love in our daily lives. Remember not just your brothers are watching how you comport yourself, but always be aware you represent yourself as a Freemason to the outside world.



SUMMARY

The Second Degree emphasizes the dignity and worth of the individual. It represents man as the instrument of the Supreme Architect, a workman whose duty it is to invent, create, and achieve, to express his own individuality and genius. The cornerstone of democracy or free government is its belief in this same idea. The government's ruling principle is to not interfere with an individual's freedom to any greater extent than is necessary to preserve the existence of society in which alone individual freedom can thrive. In absolute or totalitarian governments, on the contrary, it is the fundamental doctrine that the State is everything (and knows best) and the individual is nothing. Consequently, the spirit of Masonry is the spirit of America, and this degree symbolizes this.

