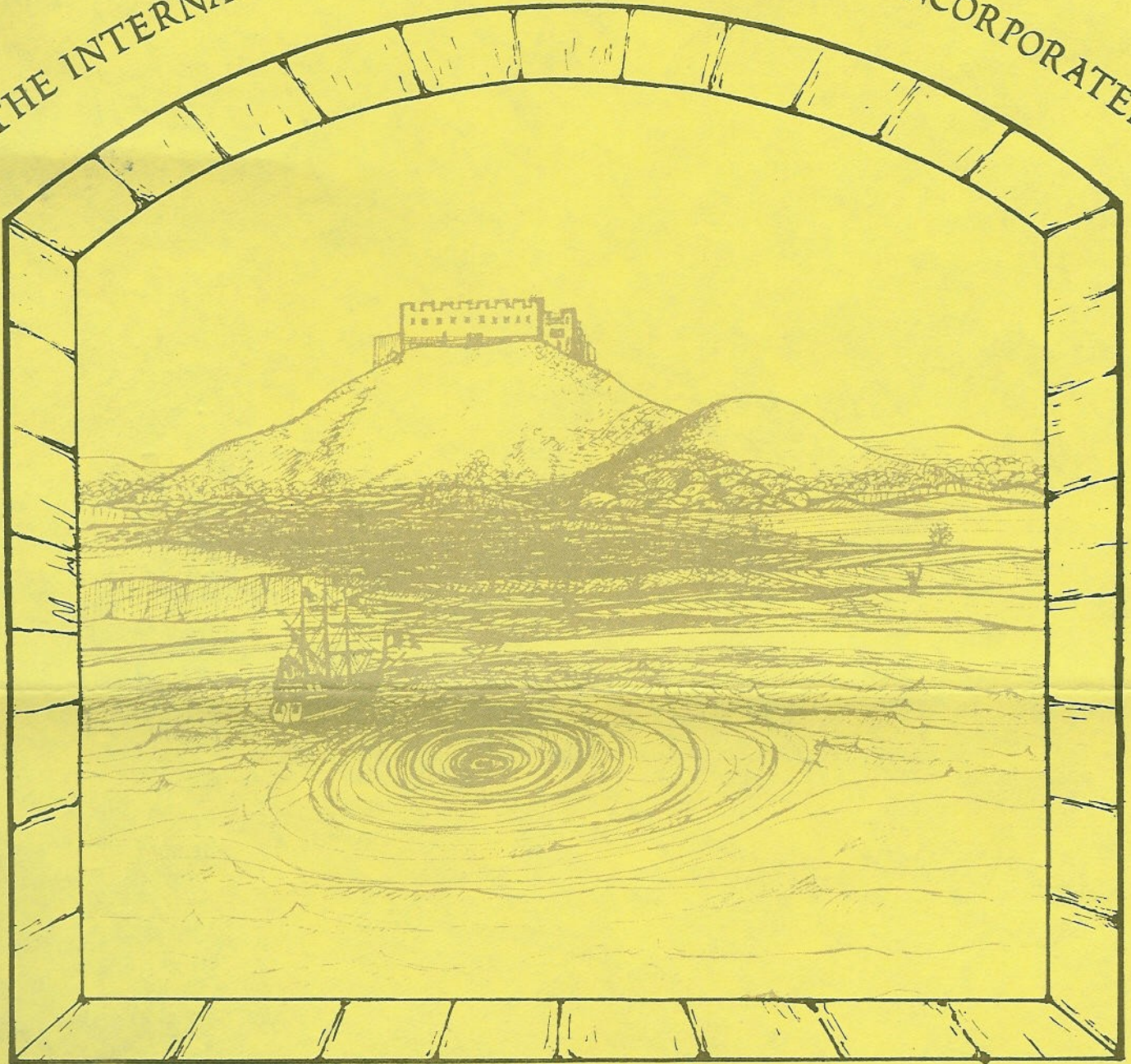


THE INTERNATIONAL COLLEGE OF MARTINISTS INCORPORATED

Worthing - Barbados - West Indies



PLANE III

GRADE: *COMPANION*

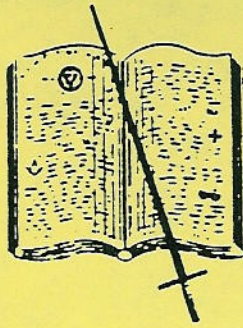
LIBER 54 LIGHTNING!

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DEVOTED TO THE ADVANCEMENT AND MYSTICAL ENLIGHTENMENT OF MAN

THE INTERNATIONAL COLLEGE OF MARTINIST STUDIES



Dear Companion

Again, yet again, we remind and admonish you: do not get lost in the intellectual forest! Do not become a sterile academic. Remember you cannot obtain knowledge from reading!

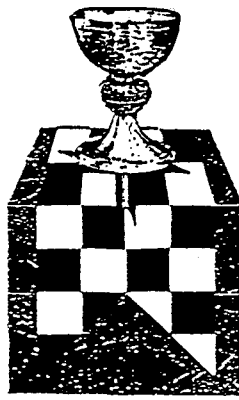
Reading can only provide information. Persist especially with exercise #1 in Liber 1, exercise #2 in Liber 2, exercise #3 in Liber 4, and EXERCISE "X" ... the practice of the presence of God ... constantly dwell on God, constantly dwell on what you consider God to be, constantly dwell on the attributes of God: compassion, love, beauty, truth, justice, forgiveness and on all that is summed up in the phrase "the Good" ... **strive to manifest these qualities in your life, in your relationships, in your attitude, your behaviour, your speech....**

With all good wishes for your continued advancement on the Path

Sincerely

Saccer

L54 I.C.



Beloved Companions and students of the Grail

THE COSMIC CHRIST

The modern mind, especially that of today's youth, is turned off rather than dynamized when the word Christ is mentioned. This is due, no doubt, largely to the failings of the established church, which continues to present the Christ as the meek, emasculated "do-gooder" carpenter of Nazareth, and the teachings he left behind as vague exhortations without obvious practical possibilities for changing people and their lives. Nowadays, all kinds of groups and sects claim that their techniques, if applied regularly, will bring demonstrable results. On the other hand, to most young people church services never seem to achieve anything except to induce yawns and boredom. Established religion does not seem to give them something that can be seen to work or to bring peace and fulfillment in the here and now, whereas other approaches such as the Eastern tradition claim they can do all this and more.

CHRIST & THE BIBLE The Order of the Temple, like other bearers of the Western esoteric spiritual tradition, has always taught a completely different version of what the Christ really is. The church has doubly failed in its duty because at this moment (in the 1980's) the current generation is better placed than at any time in our history to appreciate the esoteric presentation of that great cosmic being -- the Christ. The era of space travel will help in enabling the general public to realize that the saga of life in the Cosmos could not begin and end with the speck of dust which we call Earth. Of course, our bit of cosmic dust is of vital importance to us, and as such has rightly to be cherished and loved. On the other hand, this should not oblige us to place medieval blinders on our mental and spiritual eyes.

The purely historical version of what the Christ really was and is must strike anyone who is not literally asleep as being completely inadequate. Given the intellectual development of people in the Palestine of 2000 years ago, how could one have explained television or air travel to them? The Bible relates great spiritual truths, *but it was written in the language and*

concepts of the time. It is up to us to re-examine its teachings within the wider understanding of the general knowledge we have today. We will find that its essential truths are still valid, but looked at from the wider factual perspective of today, its teachings convey to us realizations of vaster significance than they could to the more primitive minds of our forefathers. In the same way, future generations will have a broader concept of the Bible's basic truths than does ours.

The Bible itself clearly states that the Christ was a being whose life span was not limited to a mere thirty-three years. "...Lo I am with you always, even unto the end of the world." (Matt 28:20). Also "...Before Abraham was, I am." (John 8:58). The Bible further intimates that the Christ existed before the creation of our planet: "And now, O Father, glorify Thou me with Thine own self with the glory which I had with Thee before the world was." (John 17:5). And again, "...for Thou lovedst me before the foundation of the world." (John 17:24). **Obviously these words do not refer to a physical person.** *[The problem encountered by the casual reader of the Gospels is that he does not realize that the words & statements recorded there are spoken by Jesus/Christ on two different levels. There are those spoken from the purely physical or human level of consciousness -- and those spoken from the level of Christ consciousness.]*

Today (in the 1980's), it is time to abandon the idea of the crucified Christ, in the way it has been presented by orthodoxy, which has hypnotized men for centuries and kept their minds frozen in the middle ages. The concepts we should associate with the Christ in this modern age are resurrection, life and light -- attributes he brought to this planet. At least some branches of the eastern Orthodox Church have indicated this direction by ending the Divine Liturgy on the joyful affirmation that "Christ is risen." In fact the rites of the Orthodox Church are closer to the source, being happy events and not the sad and sombre affairs which one finds among many denominations. In line with our approach to the Grail, I will limit myself to giving the basic teaching about the Christ as it is taught in the esoteric tradition. I will try to avoid detailed explanations, as once again my purpose is not to stimulate intellectual reflection, but rather to set off a resonance in the hearts and souls of seekers of the true Temple.

All great spiritual traditions teach that the goal of spiritual aspiration is the realization of Unity -- the unity of all things and of all life throughout the entire manifested universe. The state of consciousness in which one realizes the essential unity of all things, while remaining simultaneously aware of the diversity of life, cannot be understood or demonstrated intellectually. It has to be experienced. There is enough documentary evidence available nowadays about people who have temporarily

or permanently realized this state of consciousness to indicate that it is not an invention.

THE COSMIC CHRIST Many people have difficulty in accepting the assertion that the three aspects of the Godhead -- the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit -- are but different manifestations of one and the same reality. If certain human beings have managed to realize their oneness with all things and with the sustainer of all life, we should not find it too difficult to conceive of the great source of life and consciousness as manifesting itself with different qualities, at different levels of energies and life impulses, which operate in ways we can identify as fatherlike, sonlike and motherlike. What is so strange about the idea of the Creator canalizing these qualities and energies through a hierarchy of beings, ranging from those whose consciousness spans a whole galaxy all the way down the scale to ordinary John Brown and Mary Smith ... and lower? The Christ was and is a cosmic being of immense power through whom enormous life forces and impulses are transmitted. Each of us human beings at our microscopic level is a transmitter of cosmic forces which are being stepped down for us by higher beings up the scale.

CHRIST & JESUS As was mentioned in the Bible quotations just now, the Christ was involved with our planet from its very creation. The Cosmic Christ is a highly evolved being who accepted the mission to guide the evolution of the Earth to the level determined by Cosmic Intelligence. The Christ is the sum total of all evolution which has taken place within our solar system. His body could be regarded as consisting of vibrations stepped down from the vast powerhouse of the Father or Universal Consciousness, so that it can be withstood and manifested by lower forms of life (including man) which draw sustenance and life from it. Periodically, whenever a new evolutionary impulse was required on the planet, the Cosmic Christ would ensoul certain individuals to various degrees. Although the influence of the Cosmic Christ can be perceived behind the great avatars of the past, the greatest influx of Light, Life and Energy of the Cosmic Christ to be injected into our planet since its creation came through the Nazarene Jesus. In order to better appreciate the mission of the Cosmic Christ, I will make an attempt to summarize a number of complicated ideas:

The process of manifestation involves the creative impulse descending and expressing itself through various levels of life from the most refined to the most material, and then ascending upwards back to its source, taking with it the essence of the experiences gained. In another creative cycle it issues forth again, the process continuing eternally. Each time the creative impulse descends from Unity into manifestation it can express itself in more complicated and interesting life forms because of past experiences in earlier cycles. [You will recognize this principle symbolized in the Martinist Pentacle.]

Without getting involved in the deep waters of metaphysics, one could say that there is a timetable or Divine Plan for the descent and return of the creative impulse. However, because of the existence of autonomy or free will in man, there could be a risk that without occasional help, the timetable might not be completely respected. One side effect of such a cosmic accident could be the freezing of the development of a given life wave for thousands of years.

Prior to the birth of Jesus, the planet had seen the evolutionary impulse descend to its lowest ebb. According to esoteric tradition, the situation was so critical that drastic action was required. Hitherto, the Cosmic Christ had been radiating his influence in the form of light and energy to our planet without physical contact. He was now obliged to bring to earth the vast energies he represented by physical descent into material life. This involved quite some sacrifice ... if a comparison were to be made, it would be as if you were asked to incarnate as a fly to assist the evolution of that species.

THE OVERSHADOWING OF JESUS According to esoteric teachings, the descent of such a vast cosmic force could not be achieved through normal birth. A fully mature human being had to be found whose physical, emotional, mental and spiritual vehicles were sufficiently pure and strong to sustain such a force. Esoteric tradition teaches that consciousness manifests through co-ordinated forms or vehicles of varying degrees of density. In the case of a human being, the physical body is the vehicle which enables him or her to contact the world of matter, which is the densest level of manifestation on this planet. Man has other vehicles which, when developed, enable him to become aware of more subtle levels of existence.

Jesus of Nazareth and his family were members of the Essene brotherhood, as has been said previously. Jesus was trained from birth by the Essenes to carry out the mission of developing his vehicles so that they could be used to manifest the energies of the Cosmic Christ, and during his baptism by John in the river Jordan, the vehicles of Jesus were taken over by the Christ force. The being who emerged from the water became, by symbiosis, Jesus Christ -- God in man -- the first time this had taken place in the planet's history. The Christ knew that in order for him to carry out his mission he had to experience in his borrowed vehicles all the suffering to which human beings are subjected. *If you will read the New Testament's account of the Betrayal, the Crucifixion and the Resurrection from this perspective, many things will become clear.*

THE SPIRITUALIZATION OF MATTER In the garden of Gethsemane the Christ underwent the terrible ordeal of opening his vehicles to the full impact of all the evil which existed on the planet at that time. This was one of his essential tasks as a saviour of the Divine evolutionary impulse. He had to transmute the

negative energies of our planet so that a balance between the forces of matter or **devolution**, and the positive cosmic forces of spirit or **evolution** could be attained. Evidently, this act of transmutation did not mean that material expression in terms of desire, motivations, et cetera, was eliminated. This was not the aim; matter was needed for the continuation of evolution on our planet. The task of the Christ was to spiritualize matter in order for it to be an instrument and servant of the spirit.

The Christ then proceeded to set the seal on the act of transformation he had performed on the emotional, mental and spiritual levels of the planet in Gethsemane. He now had to extend this process to the physical itself. He did this by giving up his life on the cross in such a way that his blood, the carrier of his cosmic energies, actually penetrated the physical earth. The fact that his side was pierced by the spear of a Roman soldier was no mere accident. No wonder legend has it that henceforth that particular spear became a spear of power. There are stories that during the Second World War, Nazi leaders tried to find this spear, which they believed to have found its way to Europe. Hitler's followers of course believed that the energy picked up by the spear could be used for their own purposes by those who knew how.

CHRIST'S SUFFERING Giving up his life and blood was not enough for the Christ to accomplish the cosmic mission. After all, men before and after him had sacrificed their lives for spiritual ideals. The Christ had brought more energy to the planet than any other being before him, but for his sacrifice to be really meaningful to Man he had to suffer as a man. Thus, while suspended on the cross, he had to give up the consciousness and divine powers of a solar being and suffer as a man with all the terrible limitations which this implied. He had to endure the suffering of the crucifixion in his very flesh without the reassuring perspective of cosmic consciousness. He also had to undergo the sorrow of being pilloried in matter, helpless and cut off from his links with the Father. The anguish of this state of helplessness is recorded in the eternal words "Eli, Eli lama sabachthani," translated as "My God, my God, why hast Thou forsaken me?" It is certain that the suffering from being cut off from his links with the heavenly world was more painful to the Christ than the physical crucifixion itself.

WAY OF REDEMPTION ESTABLISHED The way of redemption was thus established for all men, because a Cosmic and Divine Spirit had suffered as a man, and had shown through the resurrection that Man would be able to meet suffering face to face and like the Christ also conquer death. In spite of all this, the sacrifice of the Christ was still not complete. In Matthew 28:20 the Christ declared "...lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world...." The energy of the Christ is still implanted in our planet. The force and consciousness which the Christ had injected into the very particles of our Earth has

now been liberated by Man through the spiritualization of matter. Thus this cosmic energy, enriched by experience in physical manifestation, will return to its source when matter is mastered and transcended by Man through living the life taught by the Christ.

All human beings, especially those born to respond to the call of the Temple, have a duty to participate actively in this work of redemption. Every effort by each of us to live a Christ-like life is an easing of the ties which bind this great entity to matter. (Hopefully the I.C.O.M.S., which is the educational wing of an esoteric order, is helping to achieve this.) Esoteric tradition does not claim that every individual unit will have to reach the level of Christ consciousness for the planet to be redeemed. What is required is a certain concentration of "redeemed consciousness" which will pull upwards those additional units which will allow themselves to be raised. This concentration can be arrived at by large numbers of people reaching a certain level or by a smaller number reaching a very high level. There is today in the 1980's a great acceleration of pollution, both of the planet and of men's minds. Unless a sufficient number of people reach the required level quickly, we risk periods of great upheavals, physical, geological, social, and other wise. In other words, the energies of the Christ must be permitted to continue their work of redemption without being unduly hindered by the abnormal density of the current material and mental environment of our planet.

THE SECOND COMING The achievement of the desired level of spiritual integration and consequent redemption of the planet will lead to what the Bible describes as the Second Coming of Christ. This does not mean of course that he will return in a physical body. His Second Coming will be the coming together once again of the energies and consciousness he brought to our planet, and which are at work in all living things. This coming together will be the conscious realization of cosmic consciousness or unity by the required number of individuals.

Each of the important events which marked the life of the Christ is significant on several levels. For example, let us consider the Last Supper. The ceremony of sharing bread & wine had been practiced since the times of Abraham, but since the Christ participated in the Last Supper, a new dimension was brought into the rite. Henceforth, whenever the Eucharist is performed by a priest worthy of the name, the officiant is directly linked to the cosmic force of the Christ. An automatic act of spiritual alchemy then takes place by which a certain degree of Christ force will be manifested, stimulating into activity the Christ potential present in those participating in the rite. If a Mass is performed with awareness by priests and devotees, the effect on the participants of this transmission of Christ energy can sometimes be quite powerful. Certain sensitive people have been known to be moved to the point of tears or even to faint

under the impact of this cosmic force. If the Mass were performed today as originally intended, it is likely that many young people would be enabled to touch higher levels of spiritual awareness without having to resort to drugs. From this point of view, it could be said that the drug problem today is partly a reflection of the failure of traditional religion to exercise its real function of putting the faithful in touch with transcendental reality. Many who use drugs to reach "highs", or altered states of consciousness are seeking **unconsciously** to placate the nostalgia and desire of their souls for Unity with the Divine.

ALCHEMICAL SYMBLOISM The ancients used the word alchemy to describe a particular system of spiritual discipline. In alchemy different constituents of the human psyche or different levels of consciousness were symbolized by certain properties such as mercury, salt, sulphur and lead. The alchemical tradition states that by manipulating the mixture of these substances in certain ways, purification will occur, permitting the realization of cosmic unity (symbolized by gold). In order for the process to work, heat must be applied at a certain stage. To the true alchemist, heat symbolizes effort, sacrifice and suffering. To raise consciousness there has to be effort and sacrifice, and when this reaches a certain level or "temperature," the gold of illumination brought about by the alchemical marriage between our lower and our spiritual selves is obtained.

TAKING ILLEGAL DRUGS The aim of this digression into alchemy is an attempt to underline the spiritual law that there can be no lasting progress without the heat of effort. Those who try to cheat this law by taking drugs frequently end up blowing a fuse, or rapidly burn up whatever spiritual capital they might have accumulated. Unless the drug taker allows time for his psychic organism to cool down and recharge itself, the desired "high" can only be recaptured by bigger and bigger doses with the risk of breakdown and death. Much pain and suffering could have been avoided by drug victims and their families if the church had been able to demonstrate to people that there are natural and more satisfying ways of fulfilling those powerful drives which push many to take drugs, ways which leave no place for the boredom, frustration and feelings of hopelessness which lead so many to search for "kicks." Thousands of adolescents could thus have been saved from psychic, moral and physical bankruptcy, and helped instead to discover fulfillment, knowledge and high adventure.

THE PRICE OF PROGRESS From what I have said concerning the alchemical process, it should now be clearer why instead of banishing evil from the world during the agony of Gethsemane, the Christ limited himself to restoring the balance between the positive forces of evolution we have come to call good, and the negative, devolutionary and limiting forces of matter which we call evil. Without opposition and without struggle there is no evolution. It is certain that if the subject of suffering and the

importance of effort were understood -- not just intellectually, but realized and accepted -- our sorrows, heartbreaks, physical pain and momentary despair would take on a new perspective, bringing something positive to our lives. Without effort and sacrifice our lives would have no meaning. Imagine for a moment that you needed only to think about anything you wanted or desired to find it there in front of you in a matter of seconds. What a bore life would be. All those who have achieved great things -- artists, musicians, athletes -- come to know the meaning of effort, discipline, sacrifice and suffering. It can be physical suffering for the athlete whose muscles hurt from the effort he has exerted to push himself beyond what he thought were his limits. If he aims at being a champion, his suffering can be psychological as well. He will have to undergo deprivations of all kinds, self-doubt, disappointments and setbacks, sometimes even being abandoned by those he loves because he is not always available. Like an Olympic champion, the spiritual athlete will need among other things to apply dedication, discipline, will, patience, courage, perseverance and acceptance.

THE ROAD TO SUCCESS There is an interesting corollary to all this. Everything we do, even the way we brush our teeth, is important spiritually. To the Cosmic Intelligence any movement is part of the progress we call life. Consequently, brushing one's teeth has the same importance as building a skyscraper or writing a philosophical treatise. The important thing is that the gesture of brushing or the act of building is done to the best of one's ability. *There is a perfect way of performing each action in life.* This perfect way exists potentially since in the divine mind the creative impulse has already conceived of how all things should be. If we do things well, we approach the archetype for that action, thus enabling that much more of the divine imprint or creative impulse to be realized, contributing thereby to the evolution of our planet and our species.

If we approached all our problems from this point of view, we would eventually end up being successful at whatever we undertook in life, whether spiritual or material. The reason for this is twofold. Firstly, doing a job well will inevitably bring rewards in the ordinary course of things. Secondly, if we act in the spirit being advocated here, the positive forces of life will be obliged to flow with us. This could not be otherwise. The life principle has but one desire, to find the best moulds, channels or agents which will enable it to manifest itself.

THE REASON FOR 'EVIL' For those who ask the question as to why the Creator should allow evil and suffering in the world, reflection on what has been said should help in finding some answers. At our present level of evolution, without so-called evil there would be no suffering, no need for effort, no movement, no development. We would be eternal children, happy in a kind of semi-conscious dream state. This does not mean

that one should become a masochist to evolve spiritually. Some unbalanced monks seems to have believed this in medieval times and ended up as madmen for their pains. For reasons best known to the Creator, in our world effort seems to be the element which provides the motive power for growth. One might say that this is scant comfort for someone who has just lost his job, or whose spouse or only child has been killed in an accident. The answer to this is that *it is we ourselves who attract suffering because some aspect of our spiritual life needs to grow.* The fascinating thing about this phenomenon is that once we accept the suffering as a necessary thing, the circumstances of our lives must change. One suffers because one refuses to accept a painful situation. This suffering or resistance is the alchemical fire or heat which will burn until the life force, finding no further resistance, purifies the psyche and moves on.

COSMIC LAWS IMPERSONAL There is of course another dimension to the problem which, because of its complexity, I can only touch on here. This is the law of cause & effect, which is one of the fundamental principles of esoteric teaching. According to this law, the Creator does not punish human beings for the sins they commit. An impersonal law operates in human affairs, whereby human beings are born and according to how they live their lives, lessons are learnt, or to put it differently, growth not achieved by the soul, will have to be faced as often as necessary until the message is understood and assimilated by the soul. Under this law each soul is given just the lessons it needs; no more, no less. According to this teaching, there is consequently perfect spiritual justice in the world because no one is given more suffering than he or she is due or can bear. Those who commit suicide, for example, are merely exercising their free will in turning aside from a difficult challenge, one which will have to be faced sooner or later, and probably in an even more challenging form, as the soul continues its journey. In any case, whatever the circumstances of one's suffering, whether it concerns a present or past life, the reason is always the same -- resistance to growth.

LIVING THE CHRIST LIFE Earlier on I mentioned that by living a Christ-like life, we will not only advance the raising of our own consciousness, but by so doing also participate in the spiritualization of matter and of the freeing of the global Christ consciousness from material limitations. Living the Christ life means making a conscious effort every moment of every day towards realizing the unity of all life, living fully every minute and trying to do one's tasks to the maximum of one's ability. In trying to achieve this one will progressively and automatically acquire the so-called virtues which are usually associated with goodness and the spiritual life. Further more, as one approaches the state of unity, one becomes aware of the meaning of the word love.

LOVE Love in the sense referred to here, has nothing to do with that syrupy sentimentalism popularized by the movies and romantic literature. The love we mean is a state of consciousness in which one become intensely aware of the dynamic unity of all life, and of the attractive and magnetic character of all that is. This state of consciousness has two aspects, which are in fact two sides of one and the same coin. First is the awareness of the oneness of all life, and second is the dynamic aspect of this realization which will oblige us to express this unity in an active way.

It is evident that it would be impossible for a person waking up to the level of consciousness we are considering, to perform acts or even to think thoughts which we generally classify as evil. Would one cut off one's own arm because it did not make the tennis shot which was intended, or would one continuously harbour thoughts of hate and violence against one's leg because one tripped and fell? In the same way, how could one even think of doing harm to one's fellow beings, to animal life or to the physical environment of the planet, if one realizes in a very conscious way that all men and all things form part of a single unity? When realization of this unity becomes generalized it will automatically bring about a different relationship between man and Nature. This new relationship will facilitate a more effective operation of another fundamental law -- the law of exchange.

THE LAW OF EXCHANGE One manifestation of the law of exchange is that if you give something from the heart without expecting anything in return, you will receive something that you really need, possibly from an unexpected source. If man gives love and respect to plants, animals and his physical environment, it is absolutely certain that there will be fewer 'natural' disasters, more reliable and better crops, less need for pesticides and antibiotics. By the same token, if this law of exchange were allowed to operate in the conditions we are discussing, the economic problems which currently threaten the very structure of our society would disappear. There would be no need for economists to wrestle with complicated theories for organizing the production of goods and services. Man would automatically discover how to produce and obtain all he really needs for his physical, social and spiritual well-being.

It is the modern seeker of the Grail, especially those born with the seal of the temple in their souls, who will have the major responsibility for ensuring the "return" of the Christ. Such people are born with the spiritual capacity to carry out this task. The modern Knight of the Holy Grail does not really need to read books on philosophy, mysticism or occultism to pursue his quest or to serve the cause of the Temple. To live the Christ life the modern Knight does not even have to belong to anything. On the other hand, it would certainly be easier for him to live this life if he joined others working in the same

direction. Others will have certain qualities or experience he lacks. In the same way he might be able to give them something they lack. Possibilities for exchange of experience and outlook create a tremendous dynamism which pulls all those who have agreed to work together upwards much faster than if they were going it alone. The inspiration and flowering of gifts which such a cooperation can produce has to be experienced to be believed.

A Templar order is but one approach to providing a framework for like-minded individuals to work together and to live the kind of life which the positive forces of evolution so greatly need. A Templar order is more suited to those who have been born, so to speak, with the Temple "in their blood." Such people are marked by destiny or temperament and are the natural pioneers of the coming age.

I hope this brief account of the Cosmic Christ will answer some of the questions which you and modern seekers of the Grail have been asking. You will surely agree that the suggested approach gives a more hopeful, a lighter and a more joyous dimension to spiritual life, or to life as we live it from day to day. Is it not inspiring to realize that conscious performance of day-to-day duties to the best of one's ability -- to the best of YOUR ability -- will bring both spiritual dimensions and success to your lives? Certainly the concept of the Christ as has been outlined must seem more real to you than the rather pious personality we have all been lead to believe he was. *Is it not fantastic to realize that some vibrations of that Being are in our very cells, waiting to be stimulated into activity?* *Is it not comforting to contemplate that if these vibrations within us are activated, we will be directly helping to redeem our beloved Mother Earth?*

QUESTIONS / DISCUSSION

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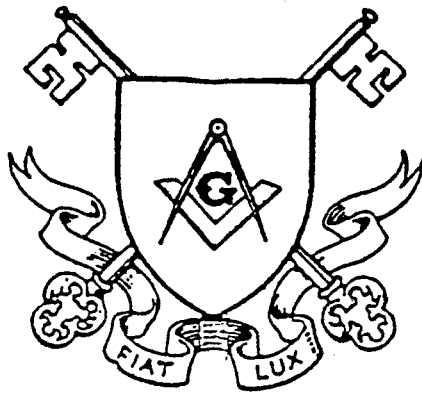
Beloved Companions, we now have sufficient foundational information to take up and properly understand the Quest of the Holy Grail as it was enunciated in the story of King Arthur and the Knights of the Round Table.

With this pursuit we shall commence in our next Liber.

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BECAUSE OF THE 'SPACE SITUATION' WE ARE OBLIGED TO OMIT
THE SECTION ON THE KNIGHTS TEMPLAR.
IT WILL APPEAR IN OUR NEXT LIBER!
OUR APOLOGIES!!!

* * * * *



OBLIGATIONS

The Esoterism of Obligations, Signs, Words, Tokens; Karmic Bonds

"Except ye see signs . . . ye will not believe". John, 4:48.



HIS old world changes very little in some respects. Humanity always bears the true earmarks of its inherent nature, regardless of age or culture. One of those earmarks is the attitude of skepticism that requires some sort of a sign, before accepting someone or something at face value.

2 The attitude of seeking a sign, which is simply synonymous with *Caution*, is not to be discouraged, for practically it is our natural protection against fraud, treachery or a bestowal of our confidence in the wrong direction. The attitude of caution is impressed quite properly upon the Masonic neofite, right at the start of his fraternal career.

3 Freemasonry is composed of several important ethical features or factors, successfully functioning as a unit. The Drama of Freemasonry, about which an important ceremonial is developed, while far deeper in significance than is ordinarily supposed, is still only one of the factors in the Masonic fabric.

4 The Drama, conceivably, may be forgotten, or relegated to the position of a ritualistic accessory in due time. There is one factor that never becomes somnolent however, and that factor is the Masonic Obligation or series of Obligations. While all the other factors operative in the Lodge are essential and fit nicely into their appointed places in the Work, we must remember that it is essentially the Obligation that makes the Mason, even though by "ample form", Dispensation or Grand Master's prerogative, the incidental ceremonial be omitted. The Mason's active Masonic career begins and ends with his Obligation.

5 The phraseology of the Obligation, naturally cannot be given. It is not necessary to our study, for every reader who is entitled to do so knows it already. We are to consider just what we have done in assuming the several Obligations that characterize the various degrees in Masonry. As far as the penalties attached to the Obligations are concerned, we may reasonably ignore them in this lesson, primarily because they deal with the purely physical aspects of punitive measure.

6 We wonder how many of those who have stood before the Altar of Freemasonry and who have then and there assumed the Obligations imposed by the Craft, have had an intelligent understanding of what they were doing? *Millions* have assumed these Obligations since the Masonic

Craft took definite form and became a truly active, tho "speculative" factor in Man's ethical life.

7 At the present time, it is estimated that there are approximately 4,400,000 Masons of legitimate and recognized bodies thruout the world. If some statistician were to estimate the approximate total number of Masons since 1717, we would find a most impressive exhibit of men who have assumed, in all solemnity, Obligations that enlisted them in the Service of Brotherhood, without encroaching upon social, business or religious duties or affiliations.

8 Of those millions who have passed to the Grand Lodge Above, their bodies which stood before the Altar of Freemasonry are dust. The tongues that repeated the words of the Oath are silent. The hands that testified in proper position, the grade and nature of the Obligation, no longer exist. The eyes that saw Light when the Obligation had been assumed, no longer see. Everything that was present at the time the Obligation was given and assumed, has disappeared. The same will be true, in due time, of those now composing our Lodge, and those who shall succeed them when their places require new occupants.

9 Everything that was present when assuming the Obligations has *disappeared*, but everything that was present is not necessarily *gone!* Something *remains*. It is the Man, the Brother, the EGO itself, that remains when all physical vestiges have passed from sight. Freemasonry itself most vigorously proclaims immortality and the sprig of a plant reminds every brother "that there is a spiritual part within us which will survive the grave, and which will never, never die;" therefore we are first to a most important concession, namely, that this spiritual part, that can never, never die, is the part of us that assumes the Obligation.

10 It is not creditable to the intelligence of any Masonic Brother to assume that it is his physical self or body, rather, that assumes the Obligation. No mere mass of blood, bone and tissue has any such discriminative power or intelligence, or the ability to carry it out even should our psychology reveal some hithereto unknown corner or angle of our mental processes to us.

11 The physical part of the Mason will, in due time, disintegrate and be no more seen among men or brethren. Therefore the Obligations do not pertain to the physical. Also, the penalties justly intended to make a markt impression upon the permanent memory of each neofite, have little real value, for they pertain solely to the physical plane, which is transient, ephemeral and illusory.

12 It is the *Ego*, the *Real Man*, who assumes the Obligation of Freemasonry. The Real Man is *eternal*. Therefore, anything that the Real Man assumes thru Oath or Obligations, is binding upon him *thru all eternity*, until and unless he discharges, in the meantime, all the provisions of the Obligations he has assumed. An Oath or Obligation is binding and effective until its provisions have been satisfied to the exact letter and degree implied or specified. Death provides no escape, for by the very teachings of the Fraternity, death is simply the beautiful gateway to a life more abundant and more active, *where vastly more will be expected of us than is expected from us here.*

13 The penalties incurd by wilful or even unintentional disregard or infraction of any real Obligation we may have assumed are not escapt or evaded by death. They simply become more keenly, consciously and poignantly realized. Punishment or discipline is always of the Spirit, not the body. In our ignorant ideas as to what constitutes true punishment, we inflict pain or suffering upon the body, and human history has many black pages made up of the tortures, devised with fiendish ingenuity, to cause suffering to a human body. Analysis will show that torture, in any form, is not prompted so much by true desires to correct, as by a sadistic enjoyment of causing pain as a satisfaction for wrongs real or fancied.

14 The true idea back of all correction, is the chastening of the Spirit of Man which will enable or stimulate him to exercise a greater degree of control over his outward manifestations or physical actions, including speech. Every Mason knows what it means to inflict torture to . . . the body, in order to *remind* the spirit of important truths. And yet—we

can endure far more actual torture in our minds, than we can withstand physically.

15 The penalties relative to our Obligations, assumed before the Craft, are more or less allegorical, for their archaic construction shows them to have been incorporated at a time when concepts of correction had not approximated the spiritual ideals that are permeating our intellectual fabric today. But these penalties *operate in our minds* as they would in our bodies if actually carried into effect.

16 The physical body, returning to the dust whence it was taken, can escape any humanly devised penalties, but the Mind of Man goes on and on forever, with the Spirit that is Man. The Mind of Man, therefore, can never escape any penalties it has incurred, consciously or unconsciously. Freemasonry teaches, first and foremost, the active participation in the erection of a Temple, not made with hands, *eternal* in the heavens. If we are to be the "living stones" in that building, the structure will, therefore, be of just the quality and character as the materials of which it is composed.

17 The bliss of heaven is not to be gained by evading the responsibilities of earth, and this feature is impressed upon us by a study of the esoterism of the Obligations and the penalties that attach to them. When we take our Obligation, we have taken it for eternity. We are never released from it, for it devolves responsibilities upon us toward our brethren, and it does not specify that our brethren must be in the mortal world. If eternity is real, if the Spirit of Man is immortal, if the higher spheres are realms of intensely conscious activity, if the mind and senses are quickened in the spiritual life far beyond their status on the mortal life, then our responsibilities toward our Brethren increase a hundred-fold after death. There is no escape. The Ego assumes the Obligation and the Ego is immortal and as life does not end,, responsibilities of the higher order do not and cannot end.

18 The only release from an Oath or an Obligation is in its fulfillment to the very letter. But some Obligations there are, which can never be entirely fulfilled or discharged, for by their nature they are continuously operative. The Masonic Obligations are on this order. Does this cause depression? Does it convey a feeling that, somehow, one has bound one's self down to something oppressive? My brother, if such a thought occurs, put it aside. Let us be thankful that the Masonic Obligations *are* of this permanent nature, for it means that there is, in the mortal world of human affairs, an institution with moral obligations that extend, not only thru the present, but thru the unending future as well.

19 It is just such permanent, enduring, immutable moral factors, operative in the present which soon becomes the past, and the future which soon becomes the present, eternally, immortally, in the ever-present NOW in cosmic time and space, that are the mainsprings of progress, stimuli to advancing culture, unassailable foes to mental peonage and reactionism and champions of that freedom which is born of truth. The Masonic Obligations are just such permanent factors for continuous progress.

20 Like a beautiful diamond ring, in which the stone is small compared with the massive gold body in which, for protection and background, the gem is set, the essence or diamond value of each Masonic Obligation is contained in relatively few simple lines, protected and given a background of textual embellishment calculated to act as prolog, introduction, argument, finale climax and epilog. The real mental meat is slight. This means that what we actually obligate ourselves to do, is, after all, comparatively simple. Masonry does not require the impossible. It is not a school for archangels. It is a school of discipline for red blooded men, and such men are the only kind that will make any headway in the Craft.

21 Atheists, infidels, irreligious libertines and imbeciles can not take the Masonic Obligations, not that Freemasonry does not concede to all the individual right of belief in religious matters, but that the overwhelming evidence of all Creation about us is eloquent testimony of the Presence of Supreme Law, Supreme Reason, Supreme Intelligence, call it God or by any other name one pleases. Those types of minds who cannot see, yet having eye, nor hear the sublime harmonics of nature tho

gifted with seeming ears, may be moral men but not the type of living stones Masonry seeks to build into its eternal structure. And this is because the structure of Masonry is to be eternal, while the sub, ab, or un-normal type of mind is not eternal. In due time, it will change as light comes to it in spite of itself.

22 We prove our assumption of the Obligations by the possession and demonstration of certain signs, grips or tokens and the proper utterance of specific words. Yet words and tokens are likewise signs of a certain type. The uninitiated sometimes poke fun at their Masonic friends by terming the signs, the "Masonic wig-wag". Well and good. The wig-wag is the common name for the signal system in the navies of the world and it has proved to be tremendously *effective* and *convenient*. Therefore, the Mason take the jibe as a compliment.

23 The individual human body is an animated mass of signs. To the doctor, the position in which a man stands, shows him certain physical defects, it may be. If he leans to the right certain organs or glands are indicated. Leaning to the left, brings other organs into consideration. Closed eyes, erect posture, and then—unconscious swaying right or left, backwards or forwards, shows other physical conditions. Reflexes, reactions of the muscular parts, ability to extend hands and arms in certain ways, each and all, show physical conditions that are revelations of the secret condition of the man before him.

24 Our physical postures show our breeding—or—lack of it. Our physical carriage shows our stamina, character, constitution and pride—or lack of one or all of them. Our speech betrays us; it may be the voice of an angel or the braying of an ass, and sometimes the ass seems to have been a most prolific animal. Angel voices are heard with seeming difficulty, the speech of man shows whether he is manly, vigorous, passive, negative or effeminate, and a blind man can get into the habit and faculty of reading character unerringly from the human voice.

25 Mankind uses his hands, involuntarily, to express, emphasize or accentuate his speech. The aborigines use their hands this way as well as the more excitable Latin races. And all races even to the colder-blooded northerners, use their hands and arms to some extent as accessories of speech.

26 Even the veriest tyro can easily distinguish in the movements of the human hands and arms, between the artificial and the natural. The stagey movements of those who have attended schools of oratory, elocution or acting; the postures of the products of "finishing schools" and the professional effects of members of pulpit, bar and class-room are well known and easily detected. The free, frank, natural and much more graceful movements of the untutored speaker may not have the *finesse*, but they have far more effect in conviction than the cultivated actions that do not always fit the spirit of the speech.

27 Freemasonry, having to do essentially with the natural man, was quick to see in man this embodiment of a series of natural signs. So the Fraternity selected those movements that naturally and without artificiality express the principles of fidelity, honor, integrity, fraternity, witness and attestation before Deity, in the easiest and simplest manner. The signs of a Masons are nothing essentially new. They are not a series of gymnastic exercises evolved for purposes of mystification. Naturally, we cannot describe the signs and it is not necessary to do so, for it is of importance only to call the Mason's attention to the fact that, in his sign language, he is expressing a series of simple nature movements that are as old as his species. What may have prompted them in the far off primeval ages we may never know.

28 In giving the signs of the Craft under the proper circumstances, the Mason is simply repeating and reaffirming in graphic manner the essential provisions of the Obligations he has assumed and the salient points that make him a Mason. But more than that, which every brother will readily understand, he is recapitulating the principal evolutionary process thru which he, and his species, have passed. Has it ever occurred to my Masonic friends, that the sign language of the Mason recapitulates his movements from the arboreal type of his existence to his present status as a "child of light" or a product of increasing and progressive culture? Yet such is the case.

29 In the case of Masonic grips or tokens, a still more intimate principle of fraternal brotherhood is brot forth. It is a feature little realized and probably never consciously practist today, but amongst the ancient arcane bodies of which proto-Masonry was a part, where the esoteric features were kept vitally alive, the contact of the two hands of greeting brethren was for the purpose of establishing a bond of vital union, a belated symbol of the tribal customs of blood brotherhood. Esoterists well know what is meant by the human aura. Finger tips held in close juxtaposition against a dark background will sometimes show even to the untrained, the odic force emanating from the points, as electrical currents are well known to proceed more freely from pointed conductors.

30 The joining of hands, in a previously agreed upon manner, was a way of effecting actual unity between the brothers. There was a union of the essential force emanating from each. In this union there was no loss, for each gave to the other. Every one of us well knows the sensations we obtain when joining hands with another. We get the effect of strength or weakness, loyalty or treachery, honesty or subtlety, genuineness or falsity. All this comes from the current we receive from the one we are greeting. Many of us form our first impressions of another solely thru his hand shake and seldom is our first impression found, on later analysis, to be inconsistent.

31 Medical men who have kept abreast of their science well know the anesthetic effects of pressure upon certain joints and knuckles of the hand. Local anesthesia in every part of the body can be produced by the proper pressure at the proper joints. This has been tried experimentally to good effect, enuf to prove the premise, and no doubt the future will see this point develop to a useful extent among practitioners. But all this was well known to several ancient arcane bodies. It is a complete system amongst the Priests of Pali today and has been for centuries. So the proper token is not merely a form of handshake; properly understood it has actual physical and even therapeutic effects, and conveys an evidence of initiation into the ancient wisdom to those who can recognize it.

32 The "Words" used in Freemasonry are explained to the neofite at the time they are conferrd or communicated, in a way that makes a moral impression but little more. The words used in the symbolic degrees allude to historical circumstances and have moral, physical and even metaphysical significance but not necessarily an esoteric significance. The Words used in the degrees subsequent to the symbolic lodge, are interesting when interpreted in the light of the Kabbalah. Few, even of these Words have an individual esoterism, and even the "substitute" Word which is now given to neofites is *merely* a substitute.

33 Now, while the Words of Freemasonry cannot be said to have important individual esoteric features that will stand the acid test of critical investigation, they do, *collectively* assume an esoteric value of high importance. For the Words belong properly, to the general group of signs, which are divided into four principal classes, the Guttural, Pectoral, Manual and Pedal. The Words pertain to the Guttural division. The entire four groups or divisions constitute specific points upon which the neofite enters the Craft and to them are allocated the four cardinal virtues, Fortitude, Prudence, Temperance, and Justice.

34 The principal esoterism develop to in the use of the Words, consists in their articulation as an evidence of initiation into the Craft. This is more than appears on the surface. Man functions not only in the physical world, he also functions sub-consciously in the Etheric and Astral worlds. Beyond this, the Mind of Man reaches into greater divisions of the inner spheres of consciousness which are called the Regions of Concrete and Abstract Thought. An idea, inspiration or concept may be develop to as the product of our mental activity in the plane of Abstract Thought, but it is of no practical value until we "objectify" it by a process of concretion or solidification. Then the idea or ideal comes into active manifestation.

35 Those who can reach mentally into the Region of Abstract Thought without ever being able to demonstrate or manifest their ideals or ideas are they whom we term "hopelessly impractical idealists". They cannot demonstrate their ideas themselves nor can they convey them convincingly

to others in a way that brings about their acceptance and practical utilization.

36 The exoteric nature of the Words used in Freemasonry is such, that they express, when used, the neofite's possession of certain salient facts impress upon him at the time he had a given word communicated to him. When he in turn gives the word, for identification, examination or lodge routine, he concretes his knowledge received by the process of articulation. The moment a brother gives a certain word in any degree, that moment the circumstances under which it was given recur to him mentally. As long as he retains the Word, he retains the facts for which the Word stands. When we find confusion in the Craft and a brother without the word, it will usually be found that he has long been a chronic non-attendant at his lodge and that his general knowledge of things Masonic, is, to say the least, hazy in the extreme.

37 A great part of the Masonic Tradition is built around and about a Word of wondrous mystic power, commonly called the Master's Word or the "Creative Word". Much has been written about it, all of it serious, but a great deal that is purely speculative and bordering so clearly upon the impossible as to cause many to doubt if such a Word ever truly existed. Masonry avers that this Word has been lost, and communicates the manner in which it is assumed to have been lost.

38 It is quite possible that between the Three Ancient operative Grand Masters of Masonry there may have been a Word possessed by them collectively, that was lost under circumstances received in the Tradition, but it is hardly probably that any such Word possessed the almost magical properties ascribed to it. It is quite possible that a substitute for this Word may have been formulated and handed down thru arcane bodies and Craft Guilds in the later-ancient, medieval times to the present. But one thing stands in the way of this hypothesis, namely that the so-called substitute Word itself has undergone several changes as can be observed by any student of lexicology. So the Word used as a "Substitute" at present cannot be logically accepted as other than a symbol of the past. Nevertheless, even the Substitute Word has an esoterism that is peculiarly well founded.

39 It is a singular fact that if we take the word "Masonry" itself, we find it conceals a wonderful truth. In spite of its non-sectarian character, Freemasonry was instituted by mystics among whom esoterism was of a decidedly Christian nature. Study the word MASONRY. Divide it—MA (SON) RY and we find revealed "*Mary's Son*" by transliteration, the object of study of the early Founders of the Institution in the modern period and the SUMMUM BONUM of the medieval Brethren who were, exclusively, Christian mystics, of an high order.

40 Many Craftsmen used to believe that a significant part of the Work communicated to them meant "Marrow in the Bone". It is an absurdity that has been utterly rejected by progressive scholarship. In the phrase by which it used to be conveyed, the syllable "*Mah*" is the Hebrew equivalent for "*What*", and this alone, as a clue, shows the fallacy of previous interpretations.

41 Among several ancient peoples, we find words were in use which express a knowledge of nature force—dimly perhaps—which we are just discovering and putting to use in this late day. There was a time when, like little children who seem to have some fleeting remembrance of an ante-birth status, humanity held over some concepts derived at a time when consciousness and reason were first dawning, and the spiritual consciousness had not become subordinate to the physical consciousness. Several etymological vestiges of such a time have been preserved.

42 The Osirian legend, in which Isis sought the lost secret name of Osiris so as to be able to restore lost powers is often advanced by Masonic writers as explanatory of the so-called Master's Word, but this is only, in our opinion, a recourse to mythos to explain what is, at best, a speculative assumption.

43 It seems to the writer that Mackey has come much nearer to the facts in his concept of the Lost Word. He writes "Now, this it is, precisely, that constitutes the myth of the Lost Word and the search for it. No matter what was the word, no matter how it was lost, nor why a substitute was provided, nor when nor where it was recovered. These are

all points of subsidiary importance, necessary, it is true, for knowing the legendary history, but not necessary for understanding the symbolism. The only term of the myth that is to be regarded in the study of its interpretation, is the abstract idea of a word that was lost and afterwards recovered."

44 "The WORD, therefore, I conceive to be the symbol of *Divine Truth*; and all its modifications—the loss, substitution, and the recovery—are but component parts of the mythical symbol which represents a search after Truth. In a general sense, the *Word* itself being then the symbol of *Divine Truth*, the narrative of its loss and the search for its recovery becomes a mythical symbol of the decay and loss of true religion among the ancient nations at and after the dispersion on the plains of Shinar, and of the attempts of the wise men, the philosophers, and priests, to find and retain it in their secret mysteries and initiations.

45 "But there is a special or individual, as well as a general interpretation, and in this special or individual interpretation the Word, with its accompanying myth of a loss, a substitute, and a recovery, becomes a symbol of the personal progress of a candidate from his first initiation to the completion of his course, when he receives a full development of the mysteries"

46 Brother Mackey comes close to the facts. In every human being, the Three Ancient Operative Grand Masters still work. They are far more ancient than any Grand Masters of the Myth for they trace their origin back to the Supreme Architect Himself. They are, the Ego, the Conscious and the Sub-Conscious Minds. The Ego is an Emanation of the Divine Father. The Mind of Man is a mundane reflection of the Divine Mind. In the Divine Father, Mind is in unity with the Divine Spirit. In Man, Mind is not in unity with the Emanation of Divine Spirit that is Man. There is division, separateness. In the Unity of the Divine Mind the Word,—TRUTH—went crashing thru our part of cosmos and a solar system came into being, that Word incarnate or made flesh—MAN. Now the same power is in Man, but there is not unity in him, so the Divine Element in Man and the Mind of Man are not *at-one*.

47 Where there is unity there is strength. Where there is separateness, there also is weakness. Man uses less than a third of his brain at the present time. Obviously he cannot expect to achieve the same results that he could if he utilized all his cerebral power. He cannot use all his power for that power inheres in the unity of Ego, Conscious and Sub-conscious forces. We cannot direct the beating of our hearts. That organ is governed by the Sub-conscious. Yet our heart also responds to the effect of our conscious mentalism, in the impacts it receives thru sense perception, for instance, things that anger us and increase our pulse. Fear freezes us. Joy overwhelms us. Anticipation stimulates us. But each instance evidences division of labor and most of our emotions are far from being under the complete control of the Ego or Real Man they should be.

48 In the beginning was the Word. The Word was *with* God. We understand and concede both statements. The Word *was* God. That is a bit harder to understand. The same was in the beginning with God. That brings us back a bit nearer to a definite conception. The Word was made flesh. We *believe* it because we have traditionally been *taught to believe* it, but few really understand it. Now the Word was God, and God is LOVE, Real love, not sensuous gratification or sexual urge, is TRUTH, because truth is immutable, creative, constructive, progressive, eternal, and all Love is also immutable, creative, constructive, progressive and eternal. The two words are essentially synonymous.

49 When Man lost the true concept of love in exchange for sense gratification he lost the True Creative Word, for Love is the most creative force in cosmos. Only Divine Love could have brot Man into being. When Man lost true Love, he lost Truth, for he accepted a substitute for love and substitutes are not the true originals, or, in most cases, even true copies of the original.

50 Truth and Love being synonymous and both being creative, when Man recovers Truth he will also have recovered Love and then that which was lost will be found. Man will not recover either truth or love in their real sense until and unless he also attains complete unity or *at-one-ment* with the Divine right within himself.

51 Man will recover unity within himself when he has brot his conscious and sub-conscious powers of mentalism into united co-operation with the domination of the Ego that is his Real Self. Freemasonry teaches Man, step by step, to KNOW Himself, Man will learn how to develop that interior unity that will correlate all his potential forces and energies into one active Personality, expressing the Word that is made flesh, but which outlives the flesh in which it is incarnate.

52 The Freemason who studies all that the Fraternity can give him (if he seeks for it), will learn that working on the invisible spiritual Temple not made with hands is just as much an organic, objective work as tho he were using stone or marble, for the process of attaining the necessary at-one-ment to enable him to recover that which was lost, is also a physiological process. Cell after cell must tumble into line in higher vibratory influence and power and lift Man from his present status to a higher plane of perception and cognizance.

53 Freemasonry carefully explains that the Substitute Word is given only until the wisdom of future generations shall recover it from the rubbish with which the Temple is encumbered. The rubbish referd to is the rubbish of undigested ideas, preconceived concepts, impractical ideals, traditions covered with cobwebs, archaic nations long since obsolete, sectarian attitudes, and, above all, the false ideals of separateness which makes each human being isolate himself from his kind to a degree never intended by nature.

54 "Except ye see signs . . . ye will not believe". Except *we* see signs, *we* will not believe. The Freemason who is living the Masonic life, exemplifying the sublime principles taught by the Craft, will exhibit signs as he progresses that even the non-Mason will readily recognize and understand. It is because of the Obligations he has assumed and the signs he is expected to show, not those of a wig-wag but of a progressive, ethical, moral, constructive life on a broad plane of tolerance with no trace of sectarian bigotry or narrowness, that the world looks concentratedly upon the Freemason, watching to see how well each Brother will reflect honor on the Craft that gives him an exalted position in the community, for the respect for Freemasonry is well nigh universal, even amongst those who may not be members of it.

55 When we meet a brother who unmistakably shows evidence of exhibiting the proper signs of Masonic progress, then we may be quite certain that we are meeting one who is well along on the Path Back to the Source; who is bringing to a focus within himself the triune forces that are essentially creative and wholly truthful in their nature and character; in every sense acquiring a realization of the Word which was Lost but which is being recovered.

56 Freemasonry numbers many sages in its roll of illustrious initiates, not always those whose voices have been heard most vigorously in the Lodge Room, but whose example, whose works and teachings have reflected honor upon the Craft and have quietly led others to the Light they themselves have discovered. To such, tho they have not proclaimed it, as no true initiate would do, may we not with reason ascribe the recovery of at least a fair concept of the Word which was lost? May we not assume that they have entered into a consciousness of Obligations well fulfilled, of signs properly delivered, or words correctly given, that will entitle them to pass the Tyler of the Supreme Grand Lodge, celestial?

57 Freemasonry has had its martyrs to Obligations, who have not faltered at stake or dungeon and who have attested with their lives the moral force and power inherent in the stability and merit of the teachings they have received.



THE DOUBLE-HEADED EAGLE—THE SUPREME SYMBOL.

Here is depicted the Supreme Hierophant, Master of the double Holy Empire of the superior and the inferior universes. The ancient emblem of equilibrium consisted of an androgynous body surmounted by two heads, one male and the other female, wearing a single imperial crown. That being alone is perfect in which all opposites are reconciled, and this state of perfection is appropriately typified by the two heads of equal dignity. Hence the double-headed eagle is reserved as the emblem of completion, for it signifies the Philosopher's Stone, the ultimate soul condition, and that absolute and transcendent perfection which arises only from the fullest unfoldment of the latent potentialities within the individual. Philosophically, the thirty-third degree of the Ancient and Accepted Scottish Rite represents the innermost sanctuaries of Masonic mysticism. If the double-headed eagle, the symbol of that sublime degree, were endowed with the power of speech, it would say:

"Only he may wear me in whom there is no guile; in whom all passion has been transmuted into compassion, all natural ignorance into divine wisdom, all selfishness into selflessness; for I am an ancient and a sacred emblem of all greatness, all perfection, and all truth. I represent a spiritual condition, a mental attitude, a physical state attained only by the elect of earth. I am the symbol of the illumined and transfigured soul which has been born again and has approached the throne of Divinity. I am the symbol of the gatekeeper, for with one face I behold the radiant countenance of my Creator and with the other the expanse of the universe which He has fashioned. Upon my strong pinions of intuition and reason men have ascended to a position betwixt heaven and earth. He in whom I spread my wings is more than a man yet less than a god; therefore he is a god-man. I clutch between my talons the flaming cherubimic sword, the flaming spirit-fire with which the miracle of my existence was wrought. I am the symbol of the Initiator who through the ages carries Ganymedes into the presence of the gods."