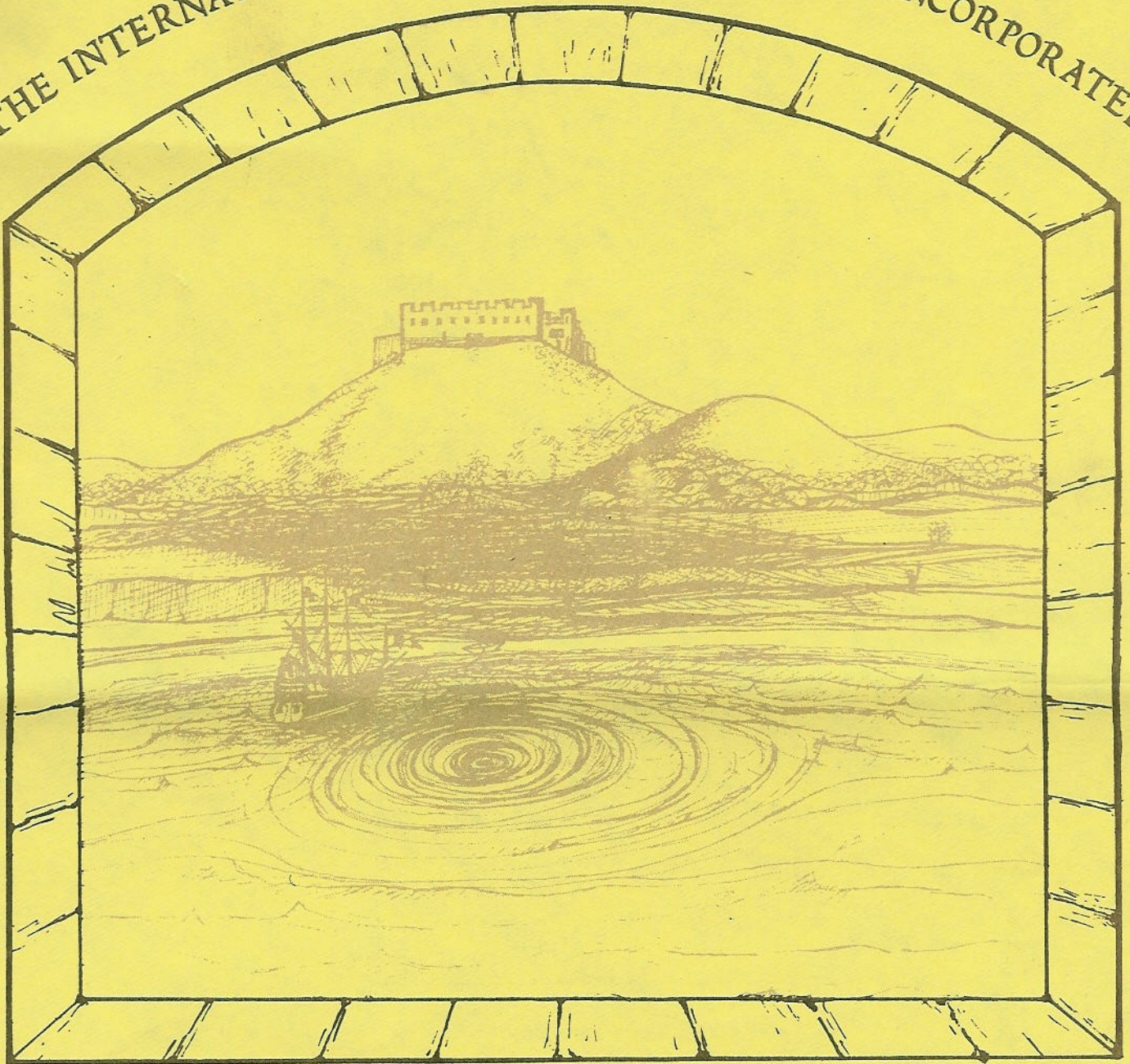


# THE INTERNATIONAL COLLEGE OF MARTINISTS INCORPORATED

Worthing - Barbados - West Indies



PLANE III

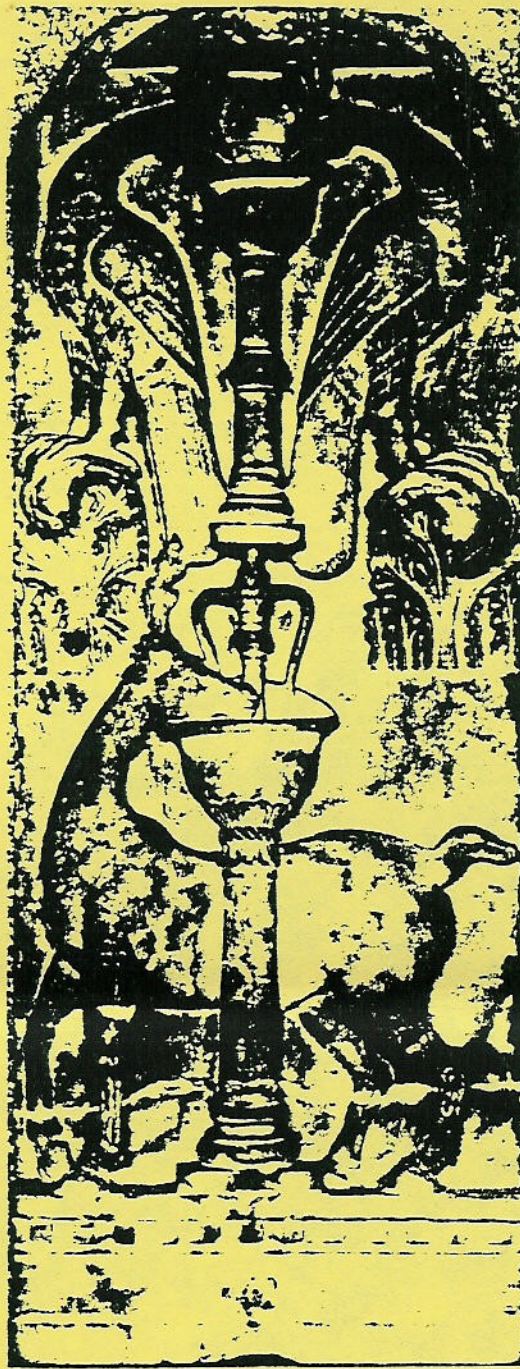
LIBER 55 Enter Peregrinus!

GRADE: *COMPANION*

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DEVOTED TO THE ADVANCEMENT AND MYSTICAL ENLIGHTENMENT OF MAN



The Grail is the spring of life, the vessel containing the promise of immortality. From it drinks the stag, symbol of the soul's thirst for God. A cornucopia, the horn of plenty and of physical renewal, is the link between the longing for immortality and the reconciliation of man's dual nature (symbolized by the two peacocks drinking from the higher spiritual cup) in the resurrection. (Stone relief, Italy 9th or 10th c. AD. Staatliche Museen zu Berlin.)



#208

Beloved and Respected Companions

We resume our study of the Knights Templar, continuing from lecture #204.

### THE EXOTERIC AND ESOTERIC MISSION OF THE TEMPLARS

The mission of the Templars was two-fold. Firstly, to inject a certain spiritual idealism into the world of their time through a number of concrete actions. Secondly, to ensure the continuity of the Spiritual Tradition of the Temple by seeking out the sacred esoteric heritage of mankind wherever it was to be found, to reunite it, and to present to a certain spiritual elite a synthesis of the Tradition adapted to the Western mentality of the Middle Ages.

Some of their activities were secret, while others were carried out publicly. Some actions, although done openly, had more profound effects on the contemporary world than were apparent. For example, St. Bernard stimulated public awareness of the Feminine Principle by promoting the adoration of the Mother of Christ in the Church, and by encouraging the Templars to dedicate chapels, cathedrals and churches to the Virgin Mary. In the harsh, cruel and male-dominated world of the Middle Ages, the activation of the feminine archetype was extremely important.

The esoteric tradition to which the Templars had access taught them that the universe was conditioned by the laws of sound, colour, number, weight and measure. They knew how to apply these laws so that symbols could be used to develop a closer relationship between man and spiritual realities.

**NUMBER** According to the Templar tradition, number was the principle of being on three levels of manifestation, i.e. Divine, Man and Nature. Number in this sense was the expression of the cosmic design and an element of the mysterious harmony which exists in the universe. This vision of things can be traced back to the priests of ancient Egypt and was developed by Pythagoras in the fifth century BC. In the Middle Ages, the science of numbers played an important part in the spiritual research carried out by the Christian mystics, the Jewish Kabalists and the Moslem Sufis.

The numbers 3 and 9 had a particular significance for the Templars and these numbers were always present in their buildings and churches. The ancients have always deemed the number 3 to be the most sacred of all numbers. According to Plato it was the perfect symbol of the Creator because it contained the properties of the first two numbers. Aristotle added the reflection that 3 contains in itself a beginning, a middle and an end. Gold had strong symbolic meaning for the Templars: to them it symbolized the radiance of the spirit after purification. They therefore associated gold with the number 3, the symbol of the perfect manifestation of unity.

THE NUMBERS THREE & NINE For the Templars the number 3 also symbolized the mystery of the Trinity. Here we find the symbol of the triangle which is 3 as well. The triangle appears in most of the patterns and designs left behind by the Order. The number 3 was always present in the daily life of the Templars: their rite of reception was repeated 3 times; the aspirant had to present himself ritually 3 times; the aspirant took 3 vows; the Templar ate meat 3 times a week; a Knight had 3 horses; he had to accept to fight against odds of 3 to 1, etc.

The number 3 when multiplied by itself gives 9, the number of completion. The number 9 is the only number which when multiplied by any other number always reproduces itself when the digits of the product are added together. (Try it! i.e.  $9 \times 5 = 45$ ;  $4+5 = 9$ ). Like 3 the number 9 has always been considered a sacred number in esoteric tradition. It is not surprising that the founders of the first Templar Order were 9, that the Templars took vows after a waiting period of 9 years, and that the Order was divided into 9 provinces. During their trials they chose 9 members of the Order to defend them, and 9 of them stood before the Council of Vienne when the Order was abolished. Thus the number 9 was with the Templars at the beginning and with them at the end.

The Templars believed that if certain geometrical forms and mathematical relationships were employed in the construction and design of buildings, these would have important spiritual effects on the people who visited them. Sacred buildings such as chapels, cathedrals and churches were places where man aspired to approach the Divine. It was not surprising that the Templars were particularly interested in church construction and, as we shall see later, this explains their concern for the welfare of the builders and artisans who could erect and decorate buildings according to their specifications. The Templars also made sure that certain symbols were included in the decoration of buildings in order to pass on esoteric knowledge for future generations of initiates. The Templars applied themselves to the business of cathedral building with such industry that over a thousand chapels and churches were constructed with their support in a little under two hundred years.

St. Bernard, the spiritual father of the Order of the Knights Templar, was a passionate believer in the power of specially constructed forms to bring a realization of the Divine to man. He was of course the driving force behind the Templar's monumental building program which even reflected his tastes in architecture. St. Bernard favoured a rather simple and austere style, probably in reaction to the rich and ostentatious one preferred by the Benedictines of Cluny.

**THE TEMPLARS & THE ARABS**                      The Templars had negotiated with the Arabs for permission for their church builders to do construction work in the region of Damascus, Jerusalem, St. Jean d'Acre and Cyprus. The Arabs promised not to molest them so long as they did not bear arms. The builders were placed under the general authority of a Knight named Guy de Lusignan. These builders, known as Compagnons, were men who had spent many years experimenting in order to develop what later became known as Gothic architecture. In their day-to-day tasks the builders owed obedience to de Lusignan but in their spiritual life they owed allegiance to the Templars.

**THE RULE OF HOLY DUTY**                      According to Raoul Vergez, a Frenchman and modern Compagnon, some time around 1145 the Templars and the leaders of the Compagnons formalized the Rule known as the "Saint Devoir" or the Rule of the Holy Duty, which governed the manner and spirit in which the latter practised the art of construction, and established the relationship between Templars and Compagnons. Under this arrangement the Templars committed themselves to protect the Compagnons, while the latter agreed to place their skills at the disposal of the Templars. There was probably also an undertaking by the Compagnons to keep secret such teachings about the esoteric aspects of construction as the Templars would pass on to them.

This was a good arrangement for the Compagnons -- without the protection of the Templars, they would have been obliged to place themselves under vassalage to some ruler who would not particularly respect their customs. (These included the traditional working journey around France which every builder had to perform before he was recognized as a Compagnon). Under the Templars they enjoyed a better status than the serfs and could travel freely under Templar protection.

**THE COMPAGNONS**                      In a way, the Compagnons de Saint Devoir were the first organized movement in the world of the working man. During the period of Templar ascendancy, there were also other craftsmen and artisans who did not belong to the Saint Devoir, but, wishing to escape from the rigid structure of their feudal lords, pledged oaths of vassalage to the Templars.

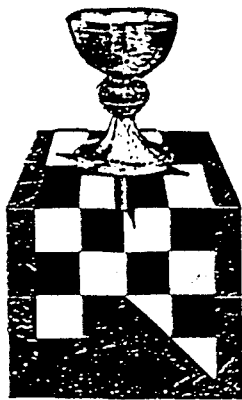
One of the techniques which the Compagnons learned from the Templars was the art of choosing the place where a church should be located. The fathers of the Church had long

suspected that certain earth currents were useful in enabling contact to be made with cosmic currents, and that the junction of these two types of forces created conditions which were propitious to prayer and mystical contemplation. There is a story that this knowledge was acquired by the Church from a man called Stanislas, who had inherited a family gift which enabled him to identify telluric currents. It is said that Stanislas established that sacred buildings should always be placed so that they could benefit from telluric or earth currents which flow from north to south. It seems that it is also helpful to place a church altar above an underground stream.

MASTER BUILDERS                      The Compagnons developed a particular approach to their trade. Their art was dedicated not only to the creation of beautiful buildings, but to the construction of forms which were also functional, by glorifying the Creator and forging a living link with Him. The trade of constructing sacred buildings was initiatic in the sense that the master builders kept secret their art and passed on their secret skills only by word of mouth. Certain instructions, especially those associated with the application of spiritual laws in the craft, were transmitted only after the apprentice had passed certain ordeals to test aspects of his character. It was these master builders, the Compagnons, inspired by their Templar masters, who worked certain hermetic keys into the geometry and forms they created to decorate cathedrals and churches.

The island of Cyprus has important associations with the Compagnons. It was here that the results of their research into building techniques were first tested. In 1195 Guy de Lusignan was recognized as King of Cyprus. It was natural, because of his earlier associations with these master builders of the Saint Devoir, that he became their champion on the island. He actively helped those who had survived expulsion from the Holy Land or could not make a living in France. It was here in Cyprus under the protection of de Lusignan that the followers of the Saint Devoir probably lived their most exciting days in an atmosphere where manual work was elevated by spiritual discipline and Templar ideas of chivalry. Unfortunately, with the exception of a few esoteric circles, the influence of Compagnonage in the spiritual odyssey of Western civilization has virtually disappeared.

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#209

Beloved seekers of the Grail

## THE QUEST OF THE HOLY GRAIL

### Lecture 1 : The beginning

A. E. Waite, a respected writer who wrote extensively, (especially on freemasonry,) remarked that he had received many initiations and could say with confidence that the initiatic tradition held no deeper or more central tradition than that of the Holy Grail. "I affirm", he said, "on the authority of research ... and on that which I have seen of the Mysteries ... that the term of the quest in those secret Secret Orders which are good and just and holy ... is the term of the Grail Quest."

Similarly, our M.M.:

"What is the Initiate's goal?"  
The conquest of the Adventurous Castle.  
What does he hope to find in the Adventurous Castle?  
*The Sacred Vase...*"

Yet the words are obscure and seem to remove one veil only to confront us with another. It would be understandable if you turned away with the thought that here is another example of the esotericist's love of mystification and high-sounding words for their own sake and of the confusion of mist for mysticism. While this would be understandable, it would also be unfortunate and it shall be the intention of these lectures to clarify what can be clarified and to discover what significance the Holy Grail can have for us. At the end of our study I shall hope to have shown that the words of Waite and the M.M. are precisely correct -- and that the Grail represents the goal of the spiritual life not only as one possible symbol among many, but as a unique reality towards which everything else leads. I will try to present this extremely complex material as simply as possible, without distortion, and I shall try to focus on what may be practical and useful in the spiritual life which is our daily quest.

*The Grail is the Chalice of the Last Supper in which, according to some accounts, "the precious blood of our Saviour was gathered on the day when He was crucified to redeem mankind from Hell." (Perlesvaus). "The point at which the*

myth of the Grail begins, holds in its first appearance the most important account of all," writes Charles Williams, a novelist, poet and Christian magus whose words are worth quoting at some length here. "No invention can come near it; no fabulous imagination excel it. All the greatest mythical details are only there to hint at the thing which happens; that which in the knowledge of Christendom is the unifying act, perilous and perpetual, universal and individual. That origin took place in Jerusalem ... Its record is in the Gospels ... 'And as they were eating he (Jesus) took bread, and when he had blessed it, he brake it, and gave it to them and said: Take ye, this is my body, and he took a cup, and when he had given thanks, he gave it to them; and they all drank of it. And he said to them, 'This is my blood of the covenant, which is shed for many. Verily I say unto you, I will drink no more of the fruit of the vine, until that day when I drink it anew in the Kingdom of God.' This is the first mention of that Cup which in its progress through the imagination of Europe was to absorb into itself so many cauldrons ... and vessels of magic."

"Here," as one text reads, "begins the Book of the Holy Grail, Here begin the terrors, Here begin the miracles." Here at the Last Supper. And so an understanding of the Christian Eucharist is necessary at the very start of our quest, and indeed we shall discover that the quest draws us towards the heart of the Eucharist. This should be almost too obvious to require saying, yet there are those who miss it. Just as there were Knights in King Arthur's time who, as we shall see, set out on the quest in the wrong way, so even now there are some who say they are on the quest who really do not believe that the Grail is anything more than a personal dream, an idealization of the self. **And that, then, is all they will find.** But the Grail is real and "no invention can come near it; no fabulous imagination excel it." So what then, is the meaning of the Eucharist, the Last Supper?

In a few words, **which cannot substitute for further study, meditation and above all experience,** God -- in the person of the God-Man Jesus Christ -- gave himself for the life of the world (so fulfilling the mysterious words of the ancient Heraclitus that "gods and men live each other's lives and die each other's deaths"). The whole life of Jesus Christ was a giving to the world of a share in the Divine Life by his experience as God, of human life with all its sorrows and joys and finally its very depth of despair and death ... all of this was experienced by God, in Christ, so that our human life might be united to the Divine Life and we might share, as humans, in the Divinity. He went, as it were all the way down -- to the limit of materiality, of darkness and of death -- to bring us all the way up into the sharing of His Resurrection. The two became one: Divine and Human, Above and Below. The union of humanity with Divinity in shared death and rebirth to eternal life which is symbolically promised in all those old stories of dying and rising gods of Attis and of Osiris, is now made real once and for all on all



levels of all the worlds, in the Cross and Resurrection which are both represented and communicated to us in the Eucharist. Jesus took bread and wine, the basic food and drink which sustain physical life, and made them the vessels of the Divine and supernatural life which is poured out into the world in Sacrifice and gathered up in Resurrection. "Receive ye the Body of Christ, taste ye of the immortal fountain of Life!" as an ancient Eucharistic hymn invites. In the Eucharist the worlds are united, bread and wine to the Life of God, and my (and your) daily life to the life of Eternity. The Grail is the vessel of that union, but so too is the poorest chalice in the smallest church where the Supper is celebrated. We will later try to trace the relation of the individual quest for the Holy Grail with the same individual's experience of the common Eucharist, but for now we start as we must with the Grail at Jerusalem at the table of the Last Supper and with the realization that it unites the worlds.

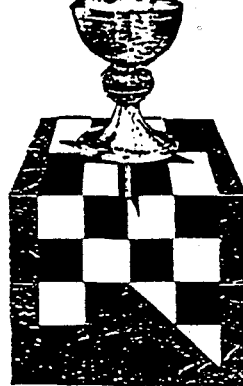
"... and then he knew that everybody, all the people ... gone, living and unborn, stood in some instant of life and death at the place of the Grail ... the possible and the impossible, the real and the aspiration, the depth and the height -- that was what it was, the reconciliation of all these, not in an instant of time but in all time, everywhere and always the action of this reconciliation that was the true work of God and man ... and with that, as he answered 'Amen', a ... golden light broke from the Grail like the rising of the sun." S. A. Laubenthal Excalibur.

If we start with some comprehension of this vision, and of the Eucharist, we will not be confused as we go on to pass, as we must in following the Grail, between history and legend, and between the esoteric and the exoteric, for here is the resolution of these things and of all things.

## Peregrinus

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1. What is the Grail?
2. What do bread & wine symbolize?
3. What is the meaning of the Eucharist, or Last Supper?
4. What is the goal of the Spiritual Quest?



#210

Beloved Companions and Seekers of the Grail!

## THE QUEST OF THE HOLY GRAIL

### Lecture two : Kingdom

In the twelfth century, the story of the Grail began to fascinate the minds of peoples who dwelt around the perimeter of the Mediterranean Sea, especially to the north. We may date it specifically to the appearance of Chretien de Troye's Percival in 1150, and the reign of King Arthur — where all the story tellers focused their interest — which was in the sixth century in Britain. How did they get the Grail from the room of the Last Supper in Jerusalem in the first century ... to England some 500 years later?

The stories are complex and we will summarize, leaving aside a number of points — some of which we will pick up later. The history of the Grail is, in all accounts, first of all linked with Joseph of Arimathea, a wealthy man who became a disciple of Christ and who cared for Jesus' body after the crucifixion, placing it in his own tomb. It is said Joseph caught some of Christ's blood in the chalice of the Last Supper with which he had been entrusted. After the Resurrection, Joseph, being suspected of having stolen the body, is imprisoned for forty-two years during which time he is kept alive and comforted by the Grail which Christ miraculously brings to him. Christ also instructs him, after his release, to establish a "table" of the Grail. This he does and on it his brother-in-law Brons places a fish beside the Chalice and so from that time the Guardians of the Grail have the title of Fisher King. At this table only the righteous can sit and at one seat no one can safely sit, in memory of the seat of Judas, until the son of the son of Brons.

"All who hear him spoken of will call him the Rich Fisher because of the fish he caught ... and just as the world moves ... so too must (the Keeper of the Grail and his people) move to the west." (Robert de Baron). And so Joseph and Brons

and their people went to the west. According to one account they and their descendents established the second table of the Grail at Muntsalvach, Mount Salvation, in Europe where the Grail is guarded by an order of knights. But according to what we may feel is the central line of the tradition, the Grail is brought to Britain. Joseph and his party land there at Glastonbury, and the Grail and the table of the Fisher King are guarded at the mysterious castle of Carbonek. In the time when Arthur ruled Britain from Camelot, it is King Pelles who is Guardian at Carbonek.

This in brief is the story. The first thing we might consider is the kingdom of the Grail King. Of what land is he King? *If Arthur is the ruler of Britain as a whole, then of what is Pelles ruler?*

*The answer is that he is king on a higher and spiritual level where kingship and priesthood are united, lord of an inner land of reality of which the outer world is but a shadow.* So we read in Genesis 14 of the mysterious king Melchisedek who meets Abraham and of whom the Gnostic Apostle Paul writes:

"This Melchisedek, King of Salem, priest of God Most High ... is, as his title denotes, king of justice and also king of Peace; who is without ... origin ... this Melchisedek dwells as priest in perpetuality."

We note also that the priesthood of Melchisedek consisted in the offering of bread and wine.

The idea of a sort of "inner" kingship of the world is developed also esoteric and somewhat eccentric (involving for example a system of tunnels under the oceans), lines by Saint Yves d'Alvreydre in Mission de l'Indie and later by Ferdinand Ossendowski in connection with the imagined city of Agarttha. However, perhaps the clearest explanation of the "inner kingdom" is in the work of Plato, whom all Hermeticists should recognize as master and unequalled teacher, and then in that of the contemporary English writer C. S. Lewis. Plato, having developed his ideal city in the Republic answers the objection:

"I think it can be found nowhere on earth".

"Well, said I, perhaps there is a pattern of it laid up in heaven for him who wishes to contemplate it and by so beholding to constitute himself its citizen."

C. S. Lewis states in his children's story The Last Battle, that "our own world, England and all, is only a shadow or copy of something in the Real World..." and "(there is a) Real England, an England within England ... and in that inner England no good thing is destroyed." He goes on to say that all the "Real lands" are like connected spurs of a central mountain. Again, in That Hideous Strength Lewis writes of the fellowship around a modern Fisher King who is ruler of the "Real" England, or Logres, as opposed to the outer world of factories, newspapers

and so on. Each land contains that which is good, and hence Real and Eternal, and that which is not. Similarly we might speak of an essential, inner, America which has its roots in the Eternal world, and of the outer America. To the "inner kingdom" belongs everything, and every action, which is good and beautiful and just.

Now what we learn from Melchisedek, on the one hand, and the Fisher King of Carbonek, on the other, ... is that every Real Land, which is to say the inner heart of every land, *is nourished and sustained by the Grail* ... which is to say, to go back to our previous work, by the Eucharist in which the worlds are harmonized, for the Grail is a particular presence of the Eucharist. The Real Lands of the Grail King, are those which will remain when the world, as we know it, passes away, and this leads to consideration of the two ways in which the future, and end, of human victory may be conceived from the point of view of the Grail.

The first is by a sort of alchemical process of transformation in which the whole of humanity is transformed as, as a beginning, the Grail Kings were maintained and transformed into more than material life by the Grail and the Blood of Christ. In this vision, the Blood of Christ which falls into the earth by the cross symbolizes -- and indeed is -- the Divine Life which enters into and gradually transforms the world. This view, we note, fits well with, but does not require, a belief in transmigration of souls. It also fits well with, and perhaps requires, a certain optimism about the progress of history, -- of the outer as well as the inner kingdoms -- of Britain as well as of Logres.

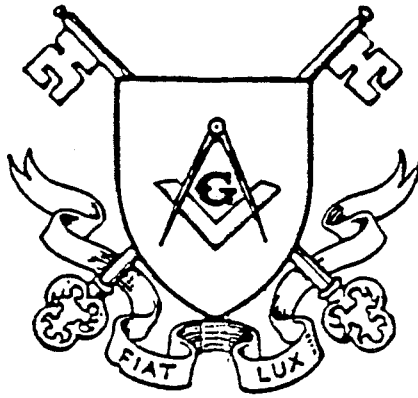
The second view that we might take, looking out from the tower of Carbonek, is of a Real World -- of which we might say the axis runs from Jerusalem to Carbonek -- mysteriously coming to a fullness at which point the apparent, but ultimately unworthy of reality, outer world and history, will fade away and separate into Reality, that which is unreal losing forever its subsistence.

"And the heavens shall be rolled together as a scroll."  
Isaiah 34:4 (similarly Revelation 6:14)

Or T. S. Eliot:

"With a hollow rumble of wings  
with a movement of darkness on darkness  
... the distant panorama  
and the imposing facade are being rolled away."

We may prefer one view to the other, (this speaker inclines to the second,) but this is not the important thing. The important thing is to come to a vision of the "Real Lands", of the lands of the Fisher King, and to a realization of how they, and we, are nourished by the Grail. In our next lecture we will try to enter those Lands a little further.



#211

## CIRCUMAMBULATIONS

*"They shall march every one on his ways, and they shall not break their ranks"*  
—Joel, 2:7.



CIRCUMAMBULATION forms a very considerable and a very important part of Masonic ceremonial. It is not without specific purpose therefore. It demonstrates the ability to move forward in a correct attitude of positivity. It demonstrates the solidity and determined purpose of the progressive career the newly made Mason intends to exhibit. It is also emblematical and symbolic of united purpose of thought and action, generating a vibratory power that can produce phenomenal results, even as Joshua is said to have marched his men seven times around the city of Jericho, following seven

priests blowing seven trumpets of rams' horns.

2 Circumambulation or marching about the boundaries of the Lodge, symbolizes the ancient customs of marching which formed a conspicuous part of the ceremonials of the Samothracians, Dionysians, and Mithraics, as well as of many other notable arcane bodies of antiquity. The symbolic perpetuation of the custom in modern lodge rooms is necessarily limited and serves the purpose of enabling the neofite to be properly identified at the principal points of light in the lodge.

3 The ceremonial marching in the lodge furthermore signifies the esoteric journey the neofite makes in traveling in the proper direction in search of Light masonically.

4 Among the ancients, circumambulation usually took the form of a thrice repeated procession about the altar. It was the *dextroversum* of the Romans and the *Deaseal* of the Druids. It is noteworthy that, among Greeks, Hindus, Druids, and Celts, this circumambulatory journey followed the Path of the Sun, in fact, the neofites were obliged to repeat the formula, "I follow the Path of the Sun" in many rituals, fragments of which have come down to us.

5 In Freemasonry, as explained previously, the neofite does not follow the Path of the Sun in direct order of progression but in the reverse, signifying EVolutionary process on the *Path Back to the Source*. In our modern Work, circumambulation makes it possible for the neofite to be halted at stated points and caused to react to pertinent questions that prove his progress and test his qualifications to make further advances.

6 In all investigations possible, it develops that circumambulation has always been associated with some form of Sun-worship, and even in Free-

masonry, which is, properly, the conservator of many of the Lesser Mysteries of antiquity, it is not entirely dissociated from this ancient significance, for the neofite is journeying back to the Light whence he came and which he had, symbolically and actually, lost. Considering the prominence of the Sun as a symbolism of the Masonic East, it will be seen that circumambulation has, therefore, a direct allusion to the solar orb and the ideals born of its serious meditation.

7 Circumambulation signifies the journey thru life in more ways than one. It would be quite absurd to inform the neofite that he is setting forth upon a symbolic journey if he were not required to leave his seat. The physical action required in the circumambulatory process therefore impresses a definite note of reality upon the neofite at a time when he, psychologically, is receptive and sensitive to lessons illustrated by graphic ceremonial.

8 It is this psychological factor, probably, that makes the modern use of circumambulation effective and valuable in initiatory rites. The neofite feels that, altho the action may be seemingly simple, he can see in it something definite. At least he is making action of a positive character in the pursuance of the goal that is set before him. He is made to feel by such action that he is contributing a personal reception of and participation in the principles that are being inculcated at the time.

9 In the consecration of a church, at the laying of a cornerstone, in the blessing of an altar, circumambulation is an important factor in the ceremonial, taken, no doubt from the words of the Psalmist (*Psal. 26:6*), "I will wash mine hands in innocence: so will I compass thine altar, O Lord:" This custom of circumambulating the altar is an integral part of the Greek and Eastern Church rites today, at the celebration of the Holy Liturgy. The washing of hands continues another ancient custom, that of bodily ablutions before undertaking the ceremonial circumambulation. So we may conclude that the idea of purification has also been and probably is associated with this particular part of the Masonic ceremonies today. It is one of the things that have been lost sight of in the passing of time, but the significance nevertheless remains.

10 The process and custom of circumambulation, both ancient and modern, is conducted under circumstances that make it impossible for any deception to be practised by the neofite, if he were so minded. It is the Man himself who thus appears, in habiliments other than those in which he is accustomed to appear. This makes fraud impossible and also symbolizes to the neofite his comparatively helpless condition, a condition wherein he is at the mercy of his judges and witnesses.

11 The process of circumambulation teaches the neofite two important lessons. When he begins his first circumambulation, he cannot see where he is going. He undertakes it in a state of blindness. This teaches him his blind condition, his groping in the darkness like a traveler lost in his way. He must have confidence in the unseen guide who attends him.

12 Thru life, each human being makes a part of his progress in a similar state of darkness and ignorance. He must have confidence in the superior wisdom of those who are appointed to guide and protect him in his helpless condition. This is the state of infancy, running well into youth. At the time of adolescence, he attains his mental majority and is able to begin some progress not altogether in blindness, but still, the strength of uncontrolled passions and desires is apt to be detrimental, so legal restrictions are imposed until he comes of full age.

13 Similarly, in the ceremonial, after completing part of his journey in blindness, the neofite attains *some* Light and is then in a position to make *some* progress but still with an attendant, to see that he keeps within the proper bounds and does not go astray. Not until he attains the status of a Master Craftsman is he FREE in the full sense of the word. Until then, as apprentice and fellow-craft he is under guidance. So too, in human life, even tho one may have set out early in life, he is still under authority until he has finished his proper instruction and is able to receive Master's wages by attaining an independent position in life and becoming free to work out his own designs upon the Trestle Board of Destiny.

14 In connection with the ceremony of circumambulation, the cable tow forms an important part of the work. Considered by some as merely a symbol to remind the neofite that he can be prevented from further progress up to a certain point should he prove unworthy, the cable tow has a much greater significance. It is a symbol of the umbilicus, which is severed only when the new human being is completely born into the light of day. Masonically, the umbilicus symbolizes the birth of the neofite into the Light of the Order, after he attains certain points of progress in the Craft.

15 The cable tow is however used in each degree. Therefore it must have a significance that extends further than the first birth. It does have such a significance. For in each human being there is an invisible tie, called the silver cord, which, during life, unites the different vehicles that make up the composite creature called Man. It is only at death, when Man is born into the celestial Light that the silver cord is broken (*Eccles. 12:6*). This feature is exemplified Masonically in the neofite's experience and the final release from the cable tow symbolizes his death to worldly matters and his birth in the Spirit, ready to be raised into the Light supernal.

16 As the Masonic initiate looks backward upon his career since his initiation, passing and raising, he can readily recognize the several incidents thru which he has passed that bring home to him most forcibly the salient points in his career in the world at large. In his spiritual progress which should be co-incident with his Masonic progress, he is reminded of the many ties which may have prevented him at times taking steps he afterwards discovered to be inimical to his welfare or that of those dependent upon him for support and protection. When the proper time arrived, he remembers that he was freed from such ties, not always just when he desired or expected it, but inevitably when he had attained a status that justified it.

17 We are reminded of an ancient prayer in the English Prayer Book, archaic in its construction but quite effective when understood. It begins, "Prevent us, O Lord, in all our doings and further us with thy continual help". The word "prevent" seems ambiguous in a prayer, but when we understand it to mean prevent us in all our doings from making untoward mistakes, guarding and guiding us, we become immediately reconciled and would not have it altered. This same idea of prevention is incorporated in the symbolism of the cable tow.

18 This factor of the preventive measure introduced by the cable tow assures us of the intention of Masonry to prevent us as far as possible from making untoward mistakes in our ignorance and blindness and it gives us a sense of security if we keep in mind the prevention that is ever exerted in our behalf by the Great Architect whom the Craft seeks to serve as its Sovereign Grand Master and Ruler.

19 As the neofite progresses in his circumambulation, he is halted at certain points by proper officers who cause him to identify himself and to satisfy them he is in possession of the requisite qualifications to proceed further. Do we not experience the same thing in our life in the world? Are we not halted at times, more or less regularly by those who are in authority to do so, and caused to give them satisfactory evidence of our qualifications to proceed onward in our way? I think that if we are honest with ourselves, we shall find that all thru our life we have had to satisfy such demands. Masonry simply reconstructs in model or miniature, the life we have to lead in the world of affairs. We must prove ourselves, step by step, before we can go onward. We must show evidence of having learned certain lessons satisfactorily before we are entrusted with greater responsibilities. All human life is a process of being initiated into responsibility, which does not decrease but which increases as we develop the wisdom to attend to it.

20 Whenever he is halted, the neofite must show signs that he is in possession of the necessary qualifications to make further progress. In life, whenever we are halted, vexatiously sometimes, we feel that we are being held up unnecessarily, we too must show signs that we are in possession of the necessary qualifications to entitle us to proceed onward. The signs in the lodge room and the signs in the world are singularly alike in many important respects. They consist of the horizontal of perfect squareness and honesty and the perpendiculars of the upright life and upright morality.

21 In the army and navy, men are compelled to walk uprightly in their carriage. This is enforced with such strictness that one can tell army or naval officers years afterward when, even in old age, they are characterized by the commandingly upright posture. In Masonic ceremonial, once in his career, the neofite is stood erect and commanded ever to walk and act in a similar manner and his subsequent Masonic career is marked or should be, by that uprightness that he has once assumed. In his circumambulations, this upright carriage is a factor. No one can sneak thru Freemasonry. All Masonic progress must be made uprightly and in full view of the attending brethren.

22 This is a principle that cannot be stressed too vigorously, for it marks the Masonic character thru life. The true Mason will be found ever acting uprightly, on the square, not for advertising purposes as some mistaken brethren have, at times attempted, but for the sake of the inherent principle involved. Once this becomes stamped indelibly in and upon a brother he cannot well fail to remember it thru life.

23 We are circumambulating thru life, marching before our fellow men. It may not be in parade with a brass band accompaniment. It is usually in a silent, seemingly unseen and unnoticed manner. Yet we *are* seen, and from time to time we are halted by unexpected circumstances and in unexpected ways. If we cannot make the right answers, somehow, we do not seem able to proceed. And if such a dilemma occurs, we have to wait until we are invested with the proper qualifications. This is illustrated in our Masonic journeys or circumambulations. They teach us valuable lessons if we apply them properly. If we see in the circumambulations only a walk around the lodge we have learned very little. If we carry away the memory of that journey and seek to find its application in every day life, we shall have profited by our experience in the lodge and that is just what the lodge is for, to teach us how to walk uprightly.

24 The character of a man may be read in his carriage as he proceeds in his circumambulations. The erect posture, uplifted chin, not in defiance, but in the consciousness of inherent strength, marks the true Mason who may be counted upon to exemplify in his everyday secular life, the best teachings of the Fraternity. The slouch can be expected, with equal confidence, to go thru his Masonry in a slouchy manner, touching only the high spots here and there but never probing deep beneath the surface. The neofite who marches with a weakly smile shows the inevitable signs of weakness that will manifest sooner or later in many ways. The positive forward step of the man keenly alert, predicates the brother who may be expected to make good in the Craft in a progressive way. The carefully walking brother who takes each step with a serious meditating mien, indicates the one who later on, will seek to learn more about the Craft from a philosophical standpoint. He will become a good exemplar of the tenets of the Fraternity.

25 In the circumambulation, a man shows just what he really is. On the street, at home or in social circles where he feels himself to be an accepted fixture, he does not need to make a special effort. In the lodge, the neofite knows instinctively that he is on exhibition, and usually he seeks to put the best foot forward. If he is doing so unnaturally, he quickly betrays himself. If he does so naturally, he shows with equal clearness his qualifications for the work he is assuming.

26 Walking reveals the Real Man in many ways. Physical defects may be pardoned or charitably overlooked by the brethren if the Real Man presented to view is acceptable in a spiritual sense. When a man is before his brethren in a critical manner, the innate tendencies that constitute his spiritual composition soon become evident to any trained observer of human nature. The step of a man is frequently the measure of his energy, character, individuality and temperament. It is something to which he is so accustomed, that he cannot well simulate for the moment, something foreign to his nature. The coward, the sneak, the brute, the scholar, the pedant, the business man, the clerk, the professional men, each have their characteristic gait, and this gait is evident in the circumambulation. Then the hyena, the fox, the pig, the bull, the faithful dog and the wise old owl all show the atavisms that they have bequeathed to Man in a distinctive way.



27 The ceremony of circumambulation was associated in many early rites, with the idea of expiation. Curiously enuf, the idea seems first to have developed in connection with punitive measures, for among some eastern peoples we find that prisoners were condemned to march continually for an appointed period, around the central enclosure of the prison. Later, this physical activity was put to good use, in compelling the prisoners to push long handles while walking. These handles fitted a sort of central capstan and was used to operate the grinding stones in milling .

28 Bread has always been associated with practically every religious rite known to man. In a sacramental manner, it has been used as a symbol of life or the sustenance of life, in which the presence of the god was incorporated. So, the production of flour, for the purpose of making the bread, in due time became a sacramental process, and special prayers were offered as the grinding began. The prisoners who performed the task were assumed to acquire considerable merit by being the ones to produce the habitat of the god, and thus, before long, it became a post of honor which was sought by many, to circumambulate the moving mill-stones.

29 A religious rite once instituted, takes a strong grasp on popular opinion and becomes sacrosanct to a remarkable degree. The Christian ritualism, never founded by Christ, is made of Greek, Roman and Asiatic elements, each and all of which have a remote antiquity back of them, and still serve most useful purposes to those whose emotions are reached thru ritual more easily. It is remarkable that, regardless of the particular religion that uses it, a given form or custom seems to perform the same service just as acceptably. It shows that ritualistic rites are quite adapted to serve as carriers or conveyors of spiritual pabulum, once the interpretation with which it may be locally "charged" is made clear to all to whom it shall come.

30 A faint shadow of this expiatory principle may inhere in the Masonic circumambulation, by virtue of the fact that thru it, the neofite is taught that no worthy ideal or goal is attainable without the expenditure of useful labor and physical effort to some degree. The circumambulation does not entail any notable degree of hardship, it is true, but, at a time when the neofite is psychologically sensitive to a more than normal degree, it has its effect mentally and spiritually, and the slight physical effort does cause him to feel that even tho it be merely a part of the ritualism, he is, nevertheless, "earning his degree" which is an eminently proper state of mind.

31 In the Synagogue in the Wilderness and in the more pretentious Temple at Jerusalem, the priests "walkt before God". It was religious custom. They circumambulated the Shekinah. It was a walk of circumspec-tion. When the neofite begins his circumambulation, it is the beginning of a journey, for him, into the unknown. We are told in *Eccle. 2:14*, that the "fool walketh in darkness". The neofite also walks in darkness, to have it imprest upon him that the wisdom of this world is foolishness in the sight of God (*1Cor. 3:19*), but by the Divine Light he can walk thru darkness (*Job, 29:3*). When he has come thru the darkness, his feet delivered from falling, he walks before God in the light of the living (*Psl. 56:13*), and, in clear Light, he learns the truth of (*Prov. 13:20*) the saying, "He that walketh with wise men shall be wise".

32 It is not to be expected that the neofite will understand all these factors to be associated in the esoterism of circumambulation at the time he performs it. Naturally, one cannot be informed on something of which one is ignorant. Initiation compels the candidate to meet a group of circumstances which serve as tests in moments of unpreparedness. But initiation of the right sort confers upon each candidate, a group of principles which it is expected that candidate will afterwards seek to investigate from the new standpoint and vantage ground of privileged information he has attained.

33 Circumambulation teaches the candidate, we may say above all, to go forward, in the quest of that for which he is, presumably, seeking. If the candidate, as unfortunately many do, assumes Masonic ceremonial merely as a stepping stone to social, fraternal or other considerations, he will gain only what he is seeking and probably attains less of that than he expects. He does not deserve more, for he is approaching Freemasonry in direct opposi-

tion to the well defined tenets of the Craft and is, in a way, dishonest with himself and the Fraternity he is entering. He may progress officially in the Craft, but, we have amongst us more than one exalted official whose acquisition of Masonic Light is fully expressed in the personal conclusions that Esotericism or "occultism in Masonry is all bunk." Sometimes their scholastic opinions are not so softly and tactfully expressed.

34 As we walk in the lodge, so does Freemasonry expect its sons to walk in the world outside, for the Mason does not cease to be such when he leaves the lodge room. Once a Mason always a Mason is an old saying, and the true Brother proves himself to be such even more by his normal, natural actions and attitude outside the lodge than he does by his affected attitude within it. If, in Masonry, properly divided, we find "Mary's Son", it means simply that we have a positive, masculine organization, devoted to manly, energetic, progressive unfoldment of the individual, along the lines set forth ages ago by the Son of Mary, not in any sectarian sense, but purely in the individual sense. This means as much to the Jewish members of the Craft as to the Christian, for the Son of Mary was a Jew, born of a Jewish mother, and he has but reflected glory upon the Jewish race even as an historical character devoid of any sectarian note. In Freemasonry Jewish and Christian ethics unite.

35 The last sentence may strike the average Mason as singular. *Is it singular?* Israel means, "A fighter for God". Technically then, all fighters for God are real Israelites. Christ means, broadly interpreted, the "good one" and Christians or Chrestians, as they were anciently called, were "the good ones". The good Jew is therefore just as much a real Christian, as the real Christian is a true Israelite, or "fighter for God". Think this over, brethren, and see what may be accomplished thru the lodge, that has seemed impossible according to the ethics of the outer world. Truly, this may be the application of the Masonic principle of the true Level and Square.

36 In this ceremonial circumambulation, the neofite traverses the three cardinal points of the lodge under symbolic circumstances. West, South and East, he meets specific challenges that require of him adequate proof of his status. Part of the time he has a faithful brother to speak for him. There comes a time when he is required to speak for himself without prompting. To the esoterist, there is a solemnity apparent in this procedure which is not ordinarily felt by others in the lodge. While we normally function in a physical world, nevertheless we are also, but usually unconsciously, functioning in spiritual worlds at the same time, worlds etheric and astral. Whatever we do in the physical world, constructs its counterpart as an imperishable archetype in the inner spiritual worlds.

37 When, therefore, we make a journey thru circumambulation on the physical plane as represented by the lodge, we are, at the same time, making a pilgrimage on the spiritual planes. What is more, altho our physical efforts may, and unfortunately are, usually soon forgotten, the pilgrimage into the spiritual planes remains a concrete fact. We are influenced all thru our lives by acts we have committed, mayhap in the early years of them. Possibly and probably we have forgotten most of them. *But others have not.* We often hear it said of a brother, "He is having a hard time living down his youth". It expresses a salient fact. As we walk in our youth and younger years, so shall we be obliged to walk in our later years to a modified extent.

38 Now, as we walk in the lodge, so shall we be influenced long after we have left the lodge room, if the lessons we have been taught have made any definite impression upon us at all. The impression *has* been made upon our inner or sub-consciousness, even tho it be absent from our normal or walking consciousness, and from this truth arises the struggle we frequently feel between our normal desires and something that seems to pull and tug at us otherwise.

39 By our ceremonial circumambulation, we have made a registry upon the inner worlds of being. We have placed ourselves irrevocably on record there and karmic responsibility will hold us to the performance of what we have assumed. Our pilgrimage into the holy of holies, while not apparent to ordinary vision, is none the less real, none the less effective. As we walk, so

shall our advance be. If we walk, crab-like, stilted, cramped, or halting, so will our progress be in equal measure. If we circumambulate vigorously, confidently, courageously and positively, those characteristics will be reflected in our every life in the world outside the lodge, and do not forget, brother, that the lodge symbolizes the world by its conformation.

40 - The answers we have given as, at times, we were halted in our circumambulations, are likewise registered in the spiritual worlds. We have it on the assurance of one of the writers of Scripture that we are encompassed about with a great cloud of witnesses (*Heb. 12:1*), and from this, we may realize that the answers we have given to our earthly brethren are heard and noted by our spiritual brethren, who are able to follow our movements at times when many of them, in fact, most of them, are concealed from the brethren of the lodge visible.

41 If Freemasons would only keep this concept of the lodge visible and the Lodge Invisible, the mortal brethren and the immortal brethren, uppermost in their minds in things Masonic, it would lift the Fraternity even higher above its present exalted status, for materialism, like a canker, can creep into any institution composed exclusively of human beings. We say exclusively advisedly, for it is common practice for us to feel that after the funeral service our brethren are departed. The use of this word departed is a mistake in Masonry. It ought to be expunged from all Masonic literature. Our brethren are *not* departed. They are *with us* more vitally than ever. They are making their individual circumambulations in the spiritual worlds, no longer partially but now wholly, and that brings them even nearer to us.

42 The words of Job (*Job, 22:14*) are most *apropos* here: "Thick clouds are a covering to him, that seeth not; and he walketh in the circuit of heaven". To the brother who goes to the Higher Lodge unprepared, thick clouds *are* a covering to him, that he seeth not, for his ignorance still blinds him, nevertheless, he walketh in the circuit of heaven,—the *circuit* of heaven—the circumambulation of the Celestial Lodge.

43 We cannot esteem this simple ceremonial of circumambulation too highly. Back of it is an antiquity that is vast indeed. Back of it is a mass principle of the highest order of merit, thru which our brethren in ages past have sought to express their deepest convictions of a moral nature. Back of it is an esoterism that reaches deeply into the individual every day life of the Masonic brother wheresoever he may be at the time. Back of the simple procedure is the true expression of the Real Man; the True Mason, which cannot be camouflaged by any affected gait, method or attitude. Back of it lies the deep principle of Masonic Universalism, for the greatest and mightiest of earth have been compelled humbly to walk before their brethren upon entering the Plane of Masonic Equality, and none have found it derogatory to their dignity to do so.

44 In some of the simplest things in life, man expresses his inner nature best. This is true of the simple matter of circumambulation. In it and at the time of it, Man shows himself to be whatsoever he really is. It is one of the times in his life when he stands neither in the barbarism of nudity nor the veneer of conventional garb. His whole appearance is carefully calculated to divest him of everything that could possibly call attention to aught but the man and neofite himself. He feels somewhat lost without that to which he is ordinarily accustomed. Then to be compelled to circumambulate in such a condition reduces any possible false pride to its proper level.

45 As we walk in the lodge, so should we walk in the world. As Mackay calls attention, "On this subject, the Old Charges of 1722 are explicit.—"You shall be cautious in your words and *carriage*, that the most penetrating stranger shall not be able to discover or find out what is not proper to be imitated: and sometimes you shall divert a discourse and manage it prudently for the honor of the Worshipful Fraternity".

46 Among the ancient Greeks, the rite of circumambulation maintained the correct value of the mystic journey. If the reader will refer to Serial Number 99 (the Lights) and note the diagram of expression therein, he will see that the complete journey was from the East to the West, symbolizing INvolution, and from the West back to the East symbolizing EVolution. The Greeks

kept this exact procedure, in the processions about their altars, keeping the right hand always extended towards the altar, thus signifying the round of the Sun both above and below the earth.

47 There is a bit of esoterism in this example of the Greeks. Our right hands are our principal factors of utility. If we mentally and sub-consciously keep our right hands to the Sun, i. e., toward the Light, they will not be apt to perform acts of darkness. It will keep us moving always in the right direction of constructive progress.

48 Circumambulation is a *sign of action*. It is just as truly a specific sign as any given manually or gutturally. It is a pedal sign, in a way, but an important one. This is a feature notably characteristic of every principle of Freemasonry. All are *active* principles. *Action is the kenote*, for Masonry implies actual building operations and these are never passive. The negative type of human being has no real place in Freemasonry, for his nature is diametrically opposed to a cardinal Masonic Principle, that of ACTION speld large.

49 We have pointed out in this instruction only a few of the lessons that may be developpt from the parallels found when applying the ceremony of circumambulation to Man's life in the world at large. It has a distinct and peculiar esoterism of its own and it requires search in earnest to discover it. The ceremony itself is simple, the lessons are simple, but powerful in effect when personally applied. It is to be hoped that, some day, Masonic exegetists will recognize the value of circumambulation and accord it a place in the explanatory lectures that does not seem to exist at present. The neofite has a right to find everything in Masonry explained to him on the most substantial basis, and while neither time nor space permit complete historical exegeses in the lodge room at initiation, passing or raising, of each individual precedure, nevertheless and notwithstanding, this feature of circumambulation that occupies such a prominent place in the ritual, should, we believe, be more definitely imprest upon the candidate.

50 When the neofite enters the lodge, he travels toward the East. When he leaves it, he travels toward the West. So is the Path of Human Life. From the rising of the individual at his birth, to his going down at life's end in the West of life, he physically travels from East to West, but spiritually, in obedience to the law of polarity, he travels from West to East for he is ever seeking Light. Circumambulation is, therefore, esoterically, the symbol of the active completion of a cycle of human life, both on the physical and spiritual planes of consciousness. If we perform it, conscious of its true import, we shall learn valuable lessons that will occur to us at the time. If we accept and perform it mechanically, it will remain in our memories only as a bit of ritual, meaningless to us.

51 Those of us who may have completed our circumambulations years ago, may find in the thoughts herein presented such new Light as may, even at this time, give us a keener sense of the duties that life still makes possible for us to perform and the responsibilities we have yet to fulfil. As long as human life lasts, we can still recover that of which we might have been unaware at the time, if we adjust our minds accordingly and let the truth sink into our inner consciousness that it may manifest in our outward works and activities. In the proper valuation of circumambulation, the Masonic seeker may rise to new and splendid opportunities for true human service.

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