

## STUDY OUTLINE No. 15

"And the Gileadites took the passages of Jordan before the Ephriamites: and it was so, that when those Ephriamites which were escaped said, Let me go over; that the men of Gilead said unto him, Art thou an Ephriamite? If he said nay; Then said they unto him, Say now Shibboleth: and he said Sibboleth: for he could not frame to pronounce it right. Then they took him, and slew him at the passages of Jordan: and there fell at that time of the Ephriamites forty and two thousand."—(Judges 12:5:6:)

The word which the Gileadites used as a test has two meanings in Hebrew: First, an ear of corn (wheat); and second, a stream of water. Mackey remarks that where it is used as a symbol of plenty, the word water-ford is sometimes used incorrectly, instead of waterfall.

After acquiring a fund of useful knowledge in our journey of life we must meet with tests regarding the use we are making of it before we are entitled to the wages or reward of our efforts. These tests are symbolically supplied at different stations of our journey. Having proven our motives to be worthy we arrive at the middle chamber of life. Here we receive the symbolic wages of Plenty, Health and Peace. What can be more desirable than these? Who does not strive to attain them? Yet, how few receive even a small approximation of them? Plenty will never be the portion of anyone whose idea is a selfish conception of plenty for himself. The Plenty so beautifully symbolized in Freemasonry is that plenty which we desire to share with all our fellow creatures according to the formula of Brotherly Love which we learned as Entered Apprentices. Health in body is very closely allied to a healthy mind, which keeps the appetites and desires in harmony with nature's laws and can only be obtained by right living. Peace profound will be the portion of anyone who diligently applies the moral precepts of the Entered Apprentice degree and ascends the fifteen steps of the winding stairs of broad intellectual attainment.



"As Fellow Crafts we are laboring in the quarries of the world, preparing ourselves as living stones for that Spiritual Temple, that house not made with hands eternal in the heavens. The signs, words and grips with which we are intrusted symbolize the means by which we are known as faithful workmen. They are tokens of that noble character which can only be acquired by faithful service. The reward of such service is a constant acquisition of knowledge and continual growth in character represented by the weekly payment of wages in the Middle Chamber. In the legend of King Solomon's Temple, the unfaithful workman sometimes ascended to the inner door, but as he did not have the mystic signs and tokens intrusted only to the faithful craftsmen, he could not enter to the place of wages. So you, though you have entered our mystic circle and may mount to all the grades of honor we can bestow, may not acquire those celestial signs and tokens by which alone you can pass the inner door of that Spiritual Temple where the wages of the soul are received by the worthy craftsmen. In the journey to the middle chamber we impart to you a fund of valuable information and in your continued progress through the ceremonies of our Order we will instruct you in many Masonic secrets which will enable you to pass our outer door, the door of the material lodge; but the signs and tokens which will take you through the inner door of the spiritual lodge to the Middle Chamber of nourishment, refreshment and joy can only be acquired by daily putting into practice the principles we here teach. If you fail to so acquire them, on you and you alone will rest the responsibility for your failure. You come here to learn the secrets of Masonry, which when properly applied, lead to the inner secrets of the soul."—"The Middle Chamber", C. C. Hunt.) (See Hunt's Papers on Corn—Wine—Oil, Iowa Bulletins, 1927.)

"I scatter this Corn as an emblem of plenty. May the blessing of bounteous Heaven be showered upon us and upon all like patriotic and benevolent undertakings, and inspire the hearts of the people with virtue, wisdom and gratitude.

"I pour this Wine as an emblem of joy and gladness. May the Great Ruler of the Universe bless and prosper our National, State and City governments, preserve the union of States, and may it be a bond of Friendship and Brotherly Love that shall endure through all time.

"I pour this Oil as an emblem of peace. May its blessing abide with us continually, and may the Grand Master of Heaven and Earth shelter and protect the widow and orphan, shield and defend them from the trials and vicissitudes of the world, and so bestow His mercy upon the bereaved, the afflicted and the sorrowing, that they may know sorrow and trouble no more."—(Ceremonies of Laying Foundation Stones—Wis. Monitor.)

The Corn of Nourishment, the Wine of Refreshment, and the Oil of Joy have very extended application as rewards for building character, frequently alluded to in the Bible.

The corn used Masonically is usually wheat.

"The original meaning of the word 'corn' was 'a hard particle as of sand, salt, or small hard grain'. This meaning survives in the term 'corned beef', so called because salt, originally called 'corn', is used in preserving it. Later the term 'corn' was confined to small grain and local usage in a particular country often applies the word to the principal grain raised in that country. Thus in the United States the term is applied to maize or Indian corn, in England to wheat, in Scotland and Ireland to oats, etc. In the Bible it usually refers to wheat, but it is also applied



to barley, fitches, lentils, beans, millet, pulse, etc. In other countries, rye, oats, rice, etc., are included. Because of the fact that our Masonic symbolism is so closely associated with the Bible, we use wheat as corn in our ceremonies.

"As these seeds, either directly or indirectly, furnish man with the principal element of his food, corn became the symbol of nourishment and is still so used Masonically.

"Since nourishment is essential to growth, corn sometimes represents growth and progress. This is referred to in Zechariah 9:17: 'For how great is his goodness, and how great is his beauty? Corn shall make the young men grow and new wine the maids.' Masonry is a progressive science, requiring us to advance in knowledge and the grains of corn symbolize the little facts day by day adding to our store of knowledge, which when digested and assimilated become a part of our very life.

"In order to nourish, corn must be consumed and thus it becomes a symbol of sacrifice. The corn gives up its own life that others may live, but by that very act it is transformed into a higher form of life. \* \* \* 'And as the dead came back in the sprouting of the corn, so will the souls of the just arise into newness of life after passing through the experience which we call death.'

"The evergreen is a symbol of immortality, corn of the resurrection. When the cold blasts of winter casts the dark pall of death over the greater part of the vegetable kingdom, the evergreen undergoes no visible change and thus represents everlasting life; but as with the grain of corn, so with man in his physical nature, there comes a time when growth ceases, maturity arrives and then comes death and decay. Yet out of this very death and decay there emerges new life. As there was in the grain of corn a germ of life which could come to fruition only through the death of the old grain, so with man, there is an immortal part which survives the grave and bears the nearest affinity to that Supreme Intelligence which pervades all nature and which can never, never, never die.'

"Thus corn became the symbol of the resurrection and from its personification in the godlike heroes of the olden times has probably evolved the legend of our Third degree. Whether or not there has been such an evolution as many Masonic writers have tried to show, there is at least an analogy that is very close.

"In all these ceremonies, both ancient and modern, we see the same significance which Masonry adopts today in its use of corn as an element of consecration. We scatter the corn as an emblem of plenty; but this carries with it the thought of nourishment, of growth, of well being, and above all of the germ of life which survives all the destructive forces of nature and emerges into newness of life by means of the very forces which seek its annihilation."—("Corn", by C. C. Hunt—Iowa Grand Lodge Bulletin.)

Wine is used Masonically as refreshment and this from a Masonic viewpoint pertains to the refreshing of the higher attributes. It refreshes our thoughts so as to become inspirational; it stimulates our spiritual faculties. As corn furnishes us with the nourishment by which we grow in knowledge, wine symbolically furnishes us with refreshing faith in the possibilities of spiritual development.



Wine, as used in the Bible, may be either fermented or unfermented juice of the grape. The ancients considered it as the blood of the grape.

"Masonically we speak of wine as the symbol of refreshment, but we must remember that refreshment means 'restoration of vigor or liveliness'. As material food and drink restores the wasted tissues of the body so the spiritual life of which the wine is a symbol restores the jaded energies of the soul. As wages it symbolizes continual growth of the soul as we fit ourselves for 'that spiritual building, that house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens.' As an element of consecration at the laying of a cornerstone or the dedication of a Masonic Hall it symbolizes the purpose to which the building is consecrated. It should be remembered, however, that while anciently this purpose was conceived of as a living spirit which thereafter adopted the building as its dwelling place, we, as Masons, consider the wine as a symbol of the spiritual life which should animate us in our use of the building so consecrated."—"Wine", by C. C. Hunt—Iowa Grand Lodge Bulletin.)

Oil was used by the ancients as a food, a medicine and a cosmetic, and its symbolic use as an emblem of joy is probably derived from its pleasure-giving properties. Brother C. C. Hunt suggests that as we apply oil to machinery to overcome the friction and cause it to run smoothly, it suggests the oil of joy symbolizing that joyous spirit which enables us to pass smoothly over the frictions of everyday life.

"Behold, how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity.

"It is like the precious ointment upon the head, that ran down upon the beard, even Aaron's beard, that went down to the skirts of his garments."—(Psalm 133.)

"In comparing the symbolism of corn and wine with that of oil in the minds of primitive people, we find that they made a fine distinction. In eating the corn and drinking the wine they were apt to confound the symbol with the essence and think they had partaken of the very body and blood of their God; but oil was usually applied externally and was considered as the vehicle used by the divine spirit or as the bridge over which he passed into the person or thing anointed."—"Oil", by C. C. Hunt—Iowa Grand Lodge Bulletin.)

NOTE: Only brief extracts from Brother C. C. Hunt's very valuable articles are possible in the present outline. A careful reading of his four articles will amply repay any student who desires a comprehensive survey of the symbolic application of Corn, Wine and Oil.

Robert Burns speaks of "that Hieroglyphic bright, which none but Craftsmen ever saw." It is evident that he meant that none but Craftsmen could see the full Masonic significance of its symbolism.

The letter G supplies a fitting symbol for the mind to ponder over as we conclude the Fellow Craft degree. It brings out the relationship of the morality of the Entered Apprentice degree with its appeal to the heart and emotions



and the intellectual development of the Fellow Craft degree with its appeal to our study of all useful knowledge; but more particularly Geometry.

"In our Lodges, and in the thought of the Craft today, the letter G stands for Geometry and also as the initial of our word God. Now for one, now for the other, but nearly always for both, since all Masonry rests upon Geometry, and in all its lore Geometry is the way to God.

"Of the first of these meanings not much needs be said. In the oldest Charges of the Craft, as in its latest interpretations, it is agreed that Masonry is moral geometry. What was forefelt by philosophers and mystics in ancient times is now revealed by the microscope. It is an actual fact, that Geometry is the thought-form of God in nature, in the snowflake and in the orbits of the stars.

"Since this ancient insight is confirmed by the vision of science, in the most impressive manner the great Letter may stand as the initial of God, not alone by the accident of our language, but also and much more by a faith founded in fact. There is no longer any secret; it cannot be hid, because it is written in the structure of things, in all the forms which truth and beauty take."

"Nor does Masonry seek to hide the fact that it rests on God, lives in God, and seeks to lead men to God. Everything in Masonry has reference to God, every lesson, every lecture, from the first step to the last degree. Without God it has no meaning, and no mission among men. It would be like the house in the parable, built on the sand, which the flood swept away. For Masonry, God is the first truth and the final reality.

"Yet, as a fact, Masonry rarely uses the name of God. It uses, instead, the phrase, the Great Architect of the Universe. Of course, such a phrase fits into the symbolism of the Craft, but that is not the only—nor, perhaps, the chief—reason why it is used. A deep fine feeling keeps us from using the name of Deity too often, lest it lose some of its awe in our minds."—(Short Talk Bulletin, "G".)

"Yes, He exists, but to know Him is hard. It is not attained by reason, but by life. The highest truth is like the purest dew. Could I hold in an impure vessel the pure dew and judge of its purity? Only by inner purification can we know God."—"War and Peace", Tolstoi.)

#### References:

- The Builder, August, 1928.
- Symbolical Masonry (Haywood), chapter 41, The Letter G.
- Symbolism of the Three Degrees (Street), pages 123-124.
- Speculative Masonry (MacBride), page 21, The Quest of the Ideal.
- Symbolism of Freemasonry (Mackey), The Ineffable Name.
- Encyclopedia of Freemasonry (Mackey), articles:

G

Great Architect of the Universe

Geometry

Speculative Masonry