THE INVESTIGATOR

(Based on the premise that life is a continuous search for knowledge)

Presented by REC. Norman McEvoy May 2010

Fraternal Greetings Companions:
As I noted in previous editions of "The Investigator" it is proving to be very difficult to locate quality papers dealing with Royal Arch Masonry "as practiced in Canada" to share with you, however, as fortune would have it, I have recently inherited a wonderful little book, titled "Thoughts on Capitular Freemasonry" by V.W. Stewart (undated), and which I am finding very valuable in adding to my own personal growth.
Based on this writer's comments, it is very obvious that he was a Companion in this Jurisdiction, as he makes note of the "Uniqueness" of Columbia No 1 Chapter (Victoria) and the Scottish Ritual which they practice. Should any reader have knowledge as to who V.W. Stewart was, or still is, it would be wonderful to have that information and thereby be able to give him proper credit for his work.

The attached paper is on the **"M.E.M. Degree"** and is extremely interesting from both a Historical & Spiritual perspective. Some minor spelling and grammatical changes have been made by myself, together with the additional of some clarifications made in italics.

An Exposition of the M.E.M. Degree

The **M.E.M. degree** in Capitular Masonry in this Jurisdiction (*BC & Yukon*) has a special reference to that important period when the Temple erected by King Solomon, for the worship of Jehovah, was completed and consecrated in all its glory and beauty.

In several rites of Concordant Masonry, as practiced in several countries, there are degrees bearing the name of **EXCELLENT**; but none of those, now in use, have any resemblance to the **MOST EXCELLENT MASTER'S** degree as practiced in Canada and the United States of America.

The **EXCELLENT** of Ireland has reference to the legation (*a diplomatic mission in a Foreign Country*) of Moses in Egypt.

The **EXCELLENT MASTER** of Scotland is very similar to what is known as "passing the veils" of the H.R.A. Degree of our own jurisdiction, but in this instance, alludes to a preparatory ceremony among the Jewish captives of Babylon previous to their departure to rebuild the Temple at Jerusalem.
Columbia Chapter No 1, of this Jurisdiction, exemplifies this work.

The **SUPER EXCELLENT MASTER** (*Cryptic Rite Masonry*) likewise differs in every country, from the **M.E.M**. Degree.
The latter has been considered by recent writers as purely an American invention, and it is supposed to have been arranged by the Rev. Bro. Jonathan Nye and the Rev. Bro, Geo. Richards, two eminent Masons of the United States of America during the last century.

The **M.E.M. degree** was probably one of those supplementary, or detached degrees which arose during the 18th Century, and in the chaotic state of Masonry in the United States of America about 1790, and was included or incorporated into the regular Capitular system to supply an hiatus in the rituals, which has never been satisfactorily supplied, except in American & Canadian Rites.

The Third Degree left the Temple unfinished, and the **H.R.A**. Degree has noted its destruction.

The Temple's completion and solemn consecration; its gorgeous ceremonial and worship; its use as the central glory of the Israel nation for 400 years are passed over in perfect silence by the rituals of all other rites; therefore to this degree, the **M.E.M**. the Masonic student must turn if he would understand the full import of the complete allegory of Freemasonry.

The Officers are as in the Craft Lodge, and the Chapter Principals and Officers fill these. An anomaly is created by the filling of the office of the Junior Warden, as that station should be vacant for a reason known to all members of the Craft. In the Old Rituals this office was left unfilled.

The symbolic colour of the **M.E.M**. Degree is purple. The apron is white lambskin, edged with purple, and the collar of purple edged with gold. Under our own BC & Yukon Constitution we are permitted to wear the R.A. Regalia.

The Ritual, as exemplified in our Chapters, is very rich in extracts from the Holy Bible, that great Light in Masonry, and it behooves us who have witnessed the scene described in this degree, to heed the striking lesson and for us to never lose sight of the solemn obligations which we have taken upon ourselves of our own free will, and which in the most solemn manner promised that we would never violate.
Take and read that portion of Holy Writ which is opened before us on the Altar, (2nd Chronicles Chapter 7 Verses 1-4,) which should remind us that Jehovah will answer honest prayer and supplication.
During the opening ceremony the 24th Psalm is read. This Psalm is generally thought to have been composed by David upon the solemn occasion of bringing the ARK OF GOD from the house of Obed-Edom into the Tabernacle which has been built for it. (Refer (2nd Samuel Chapter 6; Verses 12-19)

The celebrated commentator, Matthew Poole, adds that David's Psalms were not only used by him upon the first occasion for which he had made them, but they also had a reference prophetically to future events.
What could be more appropriate to the opening ceremonies of this degree, than this sublime Psalm chanted upon he occasions by the Israelites, when removing the Ark of the Covenant into the places solemnly prepared for its reception.

The 122nd Psalm, recited during the reception of the candidate, was one written by David for the use of the people when they came up to Jerusalem to the solemn feats, where they acknowledged the mercies and gave thanks unto the name of Jehovah.

How appropriate are the words of this glorious Psalm, which is given as the Candidate is taken on a mythical journey to the Temple, and exemplified by the circumambulations.
How the heart thrills with emotion as we go up to the dedication of our mystic Temple and how touchingly we are reminded that we are not only to dedicate our earthly Temple to Jehovah, but also our own Spiritual Temple.

Dedication is defined to be a religious ceremony for which any person, place or thing is set apart for the service of **GOD**, or to some sacred use. The practice of consecration was very common with the Israelites and was suited to the peculiar dispensation under which they lived. This custom is still retained, in modern times, in the consecration of churches and chapels, and is also practiced among Freemasons in the dedication of their buildings, and the consecration of their Lodges.

It is suggested that you compare 1st Kings Verse 8 with 2nd Chronicles Verses 6 & 7 and compare the Scriptural account of the dedication ceremonies of the Temple of King Solomon.

There is no allusion in the Scriptural account to any ceremony such as the placing of a cope-stone, but as the completion of public edifices is now, and always has been, marked by some very special ceremony,

it is natural to suppose that, such an important event as the completion of the Temple, would not have been allowed to pass without something very special being done to mark the event.

Masonic writers have indulged in much speculation as to what particular stone, in the grand and imposing celebration of the completion of the Temple, is meant.
We find in one ode used during the exemplification of the degree that the words "cope-stone" and "keystone" are used. The words "cap-stone" ; " cope-stone" ; "chief –stone" & "key-stone" have all been used by writers, and we have every reason to believe that they all refer to the same stone.
Now the "principal arch" has been understood, by the ablest of scholars, to have been the arch over the partition between the "holy place" and the "most holy place".
The Sanctum Sanctorum was, as its name imports, the MOST sacred part of the Temple; the very essence, as it where, of the whole structure; the principal thing, to which the rest of the building was only an auxiliary.
Hence the arch over the entrance to this most sacred place is very properly denominated the "Principal Arch of the Temple". In our Degree, we have imitated our ancient companions who assembled on that occasion to participate in the dedication and completion of the Temple, so we assemble here to celebrate, symbolically, the dedication of another "Living Stone" (The Candidate) for inclusion in that Temple not made with hands eternal in the Heavens.

Again we call your attention the Psalm which is recited at the closing of the Degree-- **Psalm 23**—in which David, the great psalmist, expresses his complete confidence in the grace of **GOD.**
The Temple of Solomon has been symbolized in many different ways, and a Mason, who has studied the sublime lessons inculcated in the several degrees, until he has reached the distinguished rank of a Most Excellent Master, cannot fail to discover much valuable truth in the history of the Temple.

In the superb glory of the building, and the gorgeous ceremonies of its dedication, the true craftsman sees the symbols of the Spiritual Temple with its golden streets; and it behooves him to cast off the signs of death and decay which cling to us with an awful tenacity, and to use the eye of Faith to look for that light which
"Shineth more and more unto the Perfect Day"

THE NUMBER SEVEN (*taken from another one of those little books that come into my possession)*
The number 7 has, in many communities, always been considered as a sacred number. WHY is that so??
Here are a few suggestions.

The Sabbath is the Seventh Day
Noah received Seven days notice of the coming of the deluge and was instructed clean beasts & fowls by Seven.
Seven persons accompanied him into the ARK.
The ARK rested on Mount Ararat in the Seventh Month
The intervals between dispatching the doves were Seven days.
The Walls of Jericho were encompassed for Seven days by Seven Priests bearing Seven Ram's Horns.
Solomon was Seven Years in the building of the Temple; it was dedicated in the Seventh month and the festival marking its completion lasted Seven Days.
The Candlestick on the Altar consisted of Seven branches.
The Tower of Babel was said to be Seven stories high.

Comment
I do trust that this offering will add to your knowledge of our Order and be pleasing to you.
Have a wonderful day & God Bless
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