Reaching The MEM Degree

This evening, we have seen the officers/members of the Chapter, through a degree, complete the building of the first temple. We have also seen our new M.E.M.s dedicated, you will also note: that these brethren have had to visit five lodges, before they could see the temple completed and dedicated. . . . in the symbolic lodge, the candidate is "initiated: an EA., ... passed to the degree of a. FC, and raised to the S. D. of a MM. These ceremonies are true initiation, in the MMM degree, the candidate is advanced, again correctly speaking, he is initiated. in this degree the candidate is not initiated or made anything, but is "received and acknowledged as a M.E.M. ..... This is highly consistent with all masonic teachings, for the candidate who has actually made suitable proficiency in the proceeding degrees., has made of himself a M.E.M. ... it remains only for the chapter to receive and acknowledge him as such. This degree contains no ancient veiled symbolical meaning. It is modern and was created for a specific purpose. It performs the function for which it was originated, the only symbolism contained therein is that referring to other degrees and its import is identical with the meaning discovered in the degree from which taken. It has been truly said: that while masonry is not a religion or a church, it is none the less deeply and helpfully religious in its ceremonies and teachings. This degree is said to have been originated in 'Temple Chapter-' Albany New York, about the year 1797. There is some controversy about who was responsible. The sole purpose of creating the M.E.M. degree was to bring to the candidate the story of completing and dedication of the first temple, and its attempt to fill the gap in masonic legend which would otherwise remain between the third degree and Royal Arch. In the third degree, the temple is under construction and near completion, but of the completion and destruction, the Candidate never learns, his attention is abruptly turned from the actual building to the more serious matters, the death of our Grand Master H.AB .... and you are left with a substitute for that what has been lost ...

A portion of the allegorical story of the second section of the third degree is taken from the bible, then the statement is made "masonic tradition informs us" this phrase when used in masonic rituals is always a warning that a departure is about to be made from scriptural readings and the realm of fancy is to be entered for the benefit of "veiling in allegory" .... the M.E.M. degree returns to the biblical account of the completion and dedication of the temple and uses much of the story as related in I kings ch 8 .... only in the setting of the "keystone" does the ritual digress from the biblical narrative, and this brief return to Masonic tradition" is vitally essential to set the stage, so to speak, for the future discovery in the royal arch.... in the recent ceremonies we have seen the brethren assembled for the purpose of completing and dedication of the temple, the ark safely seated and to the service of the most high,, our brethren have been dedicated.. Although much of this story is related to I KINGS CH 8, I would like to direct your attention to the altar, where, the V.O.T.S.L. is opened at Chron ii ch 7.. this deals with the sacrifice and dedication. (When the fire came down and Consumed the burnt offering) you might also wonder why the S.W. & J.W. removed their aprons during the ceremony..? did you note there were no working tools in this degree.

As indicated by the brethren, when they sang the ode, “labour is over, the workmen were greeted as workmen most rare”.. at this point you may recall the new M.E.M.’s were received and acknowledged by the lodge.... finally my brethren, I would like to remind you that there is no principle of living and acting for the good of others, nor loftier sentiments expressed in any degree of fr ... y, than in the charge of the M.E.M. degree... “it is one of your great duties as a M.E.M., to dispense light and truth to the uniformed mason.. and I need not remind you of the responsibility of complying with this obligation, without possessing an accurate acquaintance with the lectures of each degree. If you are not completely conversant with the degrees” heretofore conferred on you, remember, that an indulgence, prompted by the belief that you would apply yourself with double diligence to become so, has induced the brethren to accept you... let it therefore be your unremitting study to acquire such a degree of knowledge and information as shall enable you to discharge with propriety the various duties incumbent upon you...

There is no greater gift man can give his fellow man than knowledge..think for a moment..what a glorious renaissance Freemasonry would experience if each brother who assumes this solemn obligation, accepted to duty which it imposes upon him and heed the charge.. if he faithfully let it be his “unremitting study” to acquire such knowledge

And information as would enable him to actually dispense light and truth to the uniformed mason., that he might in fact be such an excellent master as the Hebrew work “Rabboni” describes

This paper presented at Crescent Chapter no. 24 Calgary, Alberta 18 October 1982 by R. Ex. Comp Vic Ramsbottom of Otuskwan Chapter No 9