

Lectures Royal Arch Section No. 1

Companions, the discovery which has been made is of the greatest importance, and you see that the world is indebted to Masonry for the preservation of the Book of the Sacred Law. Had it not been for the wisdom and precaution of our first Grand Master in constructing under the Temple a secret vault, which remained proof against the devouring flames, and fury of the enemy, this the only remaining copy of the Law, would have been lost at the destruction of the Temple. The characters on the triangle - the meaning of which the Sojourners could not understand - represent, as has been suggested to us by the, learned Sanhedran, the name of God in three different languages; and all indicate, in our opinion, the true and long lost method of pronouncing the Sacred Word inscribed upon the circle; for it is of too essential a nature to be comprehended by human wisdom, or pronounced by the tongue of any individual. Lastly, Masonic tradition informs us, that the ancient Master Mason's word - lost at the building of King Solomon's Temple would, one day be recovered and as the Jewel which Sanhedran discovered bears the mark of Hiram Abif there can be no doubt that the characters on the triangle signify that lost word and the manner of pronouncing it, for we know that it could only be imparted when the three Grand Masters were present, and consented to give it.

In future it shall be adopted as the Grand Word of the Royal Arch degree, and let it never be spoken unless in the manner I shall now proceed to explain. (This is done)

Our ordinary signs are five in number.

The First or P. S. which is given thus (it is demonstrated), and refers to the Soj. guarding his eyes from the intensity of the sun's rays, when their reflection shone so brilliantly on the gold plate found on the pedestal.

The Second is the sign of Salute, called also the Reverential is given so (it is demonstrated), and refers to the second ascent from the vault. Tradition informs us that the Sojourner, on bringing up the Scroll from the vault, bound his two companions to secrecy by the P. s., he himself being obliged to use his left hand, as his right was occupied with the Scroll.

The Third is the Penitential or Supplicatory s., given so (it is demonstrated), in allusion to the thankfulness of the chiefs of the Sanhedrin when they recovered the long lost Book of the Law.

The Fourth is the Monitorial or sign of Suffering, given so (it is demonstrated), in allusion to the descent of the Sojourner into the vault.

The Fifth, called the Fiducial sign is made thus, (it is demonstrated) in allusion to the Sojourner prostrating himself before the pedestal when he discovered what it was.

The Grand sign refers to the opening of the arches by the removal of the three stones, which stones are typified by the three Principals Z. H. and J. The three halts in giving it, and the three arches formed by the three Ps. allude to the three descents of the Sojourners before they discovered the mysterious triangle.

The Rods, we use as emblems of power; as such they have been employed by all nations, but we use them in commemoration of the Rod wherewith Moses wrought so many wonders in the land of Egypt and in the wilderness. You have received explanations of the five ordinary signs deduced from the important discoveries made by the three Sojourners; but these signs may also have been adopted from other considerations.

The P. sign reminds us of the fall of Adam, and the dreadful penalty thereby entailed on his posterity, no less than death. We should therefore bow with resignation before the chastening hand of the living God, engrafting at the same time His law on our hearts; hence the R. s. In this expressive form the father of the human race presented himself before his offended Judge, and listened to the denunciation of his first and terrible judgment, and it was in after times adopted by Moses at the foot of Mount Horeb, where the Lord God appeared to him in the burning bush, to support the dazzling radiance of the Deity, he shielded his eyes from the divine splendour, at the time placing his hand on his heart in token of submission and obedience. The Penitential sign denotes state of heart and mind, without which our prayers and oblations can never be acceptable at the throne of grace, before which how should a frail and erring creature of the dust present himself, but with uplifted hands and bended knees betokening at once his humility and dependence. In this humble posture Adam first presented himself before God, and blessed the author of his being; again did he thus present himself before his offended Judge when he endeavoured to avert His wrath, and conciliate His mercy; and this expressive and contrite form he has handed down to posterity forever.

The M s. reminds us of the weakness of human nature, unable itself to resist the powers of darkness without that help which comes from above. By the action itself we acknowledge our own frailty and feebleness, and confess that we can do no good nor acceptable service but through strengthening power and mercy of the Most High without whose special favour we must ever be found unprofitable servants in His sight. Therefore, according to the manner adopted by our holy ancestors and like practised by the atoning Priests, we show by this, the F.s, the outward form of contrition and humility,

as if would prostrate ourselves with our faces to the earth, and throw ourselves upon the mercies of the living God, looking forward with a becoming confidence to the accomplishment of His gracious promises by which alone we shall be enabled to pass through the ark of our redemption into those mansions of bliss and glory, and into the presence of Him who is the Great I Am, the Alpha and Omega, the First and the Last.