

**Some Deeper Aspects of Masonic Symbolism by A.E. Waite**  
**A SYSTEM OF MORALITY**

It comes about in this manner that Masonry is described elsewhere as "a peculiar system of morality, unveiled in allegory and illustrated by symbols." I want to tell you, among other things which call for consideration, something about the nature of the building, as this is presented to my mind, and about the way in which allegory, symbols and drama all hang together and make for one meaning. It is my design also to show that Craft Masonry- incorporates three less or more distinct elements which have been curiously interlinked under the device of symbolical architecture. That interlinking is to some extent artificial, and yet it arises logically, so far as the relation of ideas is concerned. There is, firstly, the Candidate's own work, wherein he is taught how he should build himself. The method of instruction is practical within its own measures, but as it is so familiar and open, it is not, properly speaking, the subject-matter of a Secret Order. There is, secondly, a building myth, and the manner in which it is put forward involves the Candidate taking part in a dramatic scene, wherein he represents the master-builder of Masonry. There is, thirdly, a Masonic quest, connected with the notion of a Secret Word communicated as an essential part of the Master Degree in building. This is perhaps the most important and strangest of the three elements; but the quest after the Word is not finished in the Third Degree.

**THE FIRST DEGREE**

Let us look for a moment at the Degree of Entered Apprentice, and how things stand with the Candidate when he first comes within the precincts of the Lodge. He comes as one who is "worthy and well recommended," as if he contained within himself certain elements or materials which are adaptable to a specific purpose. He is described by his conductor as a person who is "properly prepared." The fitness implied by the recommendation has reference to something which is within him, but not of necessity obvious or visible on his surface personality. It is not that he is merely a deserving member of society at large. He is this, of course, by the fact that he is admitted; but he is very much more, because Masonry has an object in view respecting his personality-- something that can be accomplished in him as a result of his fellowship in the Brotherhood, and by himself. As a matter of truth, it is by both. The "prepared" state is, however, only external, and all of us know in what precisely it consists.

Now the manner of his preparation for entrance to the Lodge typifies a state which is peculiar to his ward position as a person who has not been initiated. There are other particulars into which I need not enter, but it should be remarked that in respect of his preparation he learns only the meaning of the state of darkness, namely, that he has not yet received the light communicated in Masonry. The significance of those hindrances which place him at a disadvantage, impede his movements, and render him in fact helpless, is much deeper than this. They constitute together an image coming out from some old condition by being unclothed there from - partially at least - and thereafter of entering into a condition that is new and different, in which another kind of light is communicated, and another vesture is to be assumed, and, ultimately, another life entered.

## **THE MEANING OF INITIATION**

In the first Degree the Candidate's eyes are opened into the representation of a new world, for you must know, of course, that the Lodge itself is a symbol of the world, extending to the four corners, having the height heaven above and the great depth beneath. The Candidate may think naturally that light has been taken away from him for the purpose of his initiation, has been thereafter restored automatically, when he has gone through a part of the ceremony, and that hence he is only returned to his previous position. Not so. In reality, the light is restored to him in another place; he has put aside old things, has come into things that are new; and he will never pass out of the Lodge as quite the same man that he entered. There is a very true sense in which the particulars of his initiation are in analogy with the process of birth into the physical world. The imputed darkness of his previous existence, amidst the life of the uninitiated world, and the yoke which is placed about him is unquestionably in correspondence with the umbilical cord. You will remember the point at which he is released there from - in our English ritual, I mean. I do not wish to press this view, because it belongs of right, in the main, to another region of symbolism, and the procedure in the later Degrees confuses an issue which might be called clear otherwise in the Degree of Entered Apprentice. It is preferable to say that a new light--being that of Masonry--illuminates the world of the Lodge in the midst of which the Candidate is placed; he is penetrated by a fresh experience; and he sees things as they have never been presented to him before. When he retires subsequently for a period, this is like his restoration to light; in the literal sense he resumes that which he set aside, as he is restored to the old light; but in the symbolism it is another environment, a new body of motive, experience, and sphere of duty attached thereto. He assumes a new vocation in the world.

The question of certain things of a metallic kind, the absence of which plays an important part, is a little difficult from any point of view, though several explanations have been given. The better way toward their understanding is to put aside what is conventional and arbitrary--as, for example, the poverty of spirit and the denuded state of those who have not yet been enriched by the secret knowledge of the Royal and Holy Art. It goes deeper than this and represents the ordinary status of the world, when separated from any higher motive--the world-spirit, the extrinsic titles of recognition, the material standards. The Candidate is now to learn that there is another standard of values, and when he comes again into possession of the old tokens, he is to realize that their most important use is in the cause of others. You know under what striking circumstances this point is brought home to him.

### **ENTERED, PASSED, RAISED**

The Candidate is, however, subjected to like personal experience in each of the Craft Degrees, and it calls to be understood thus. In the Entered Apprentice Degree it is because of a new life which he is to lead henceforth. In the Fellowcraft, it is as if the mind were to be renewed, for the prosecution of research into the hidden mysteries of nature, science, and art. But in the sublime Degree of Master Mason it is in order that he may enter fully into the mystery of death and of that which follows thereafter, being the great mystery of the Raising. The three technical and official words corresponding to the successive experiences are Entered, Passed, and Raised, their Craft-equivalents being Apprentice, Craftsman and Master--or he who has undertaken to acquire the symbolical and spiritualized art of building the house of another life; he who has passed therein to a certain point of proficiency, and in fine, he who has attained the whole mystery. If I may use for a moment the imagery of Francis Bacon, Lord Verulam, he has learned how to effectuate in his own personality "a new birth in time," to wear a new body of desire, intention and purpose; he has fitted to that body a new mind, and other objects of research. In fine, he has been taught how to lay it aside, and yet again he has been taught how to take it up after a different manner, in the midst of a very strange symbolism.

### **IMPERFECT SYMBOLISM**

Now, it may be observed that in delineating these intimations of our symbolism, I seem already to have departed from the mystery of building with which I opened the conference; but I have been actually considering various sidelights thereon. It may be understood, further, that I am not claiming to deal with a symbolism that is perfect in all its parts, however honorable it may be otherwise to the builder. In the course of such researches as I have been enabled to make into the Instituted Mysteries of different ages and countries, I have never met with one which was in entire harmony with itself. We must be content with what we have, just as it is necessary to tolerate the peculiar conventions of language under which the Craft Degrees have passed into expression, artificial and sometimes commonplace as they are. Will you observe once again at this stage how it is only in the first Degree that the Candidate is instructed to build upon his own part a superstructure which is somehow himself? This symbolism is lost completely in the ceremony of the Fellowcraft Degree, which, roughly speaking, is something of a Degree of Life; the symbols being more especially those of conduct and purpose, while in the Third Degree, they speak of direct relations between man and his Creator, giving intimation of judgment to come.

### **THE THIRD DEGREE**

I have said, and you know, that the Master Degree is one of death and resurrection of a certain kind, and among its remarkable characteristics there is a return to building symbolism, but this time in the form of a legend. It is no longer an erection of the Candidate's own house--house of the body, house of the mind, and house of the moral law. We are taken to the Temple of Solomon and are told how the Master-Builder suffered martyrdom rather than betray the mysteries which had been placed in his keeping. Manifestly the lesson which is drawn in the Degree is a veil of something much deeper, and about which there is no real intimation. It is assuredly an instruction for the

Candidates that they must keep the secrets of the Masonic Order secretly, but such a covenant has reference only to the official and external side. The bare recitation of the legend would have been sufficient to enforce this; but observe that the Candidate assumes the part of the Master-Builder and suffers within or in him--as a testimony of personal faith and honour in respect to his engagements. But thereafter he rises, and it is this which gives a peculiar characteristic to the descriptive title of the Degree. It is one of raising and of reunion with companions--almost as if he had been released from earthly life and had entered into the true Land of the Living. The keynote is therefore not one of dying but one of resurrection; and yet it is not said in the legend that the Master rose. The point seems to me one of considerable importance, and yet I know not of a single place in our literature wherein it has received consideration. I will leave it, however, for the moment, but with the intention of returning to it.

## **PART II**

There are two ways in which the Master Degree may be thought to lapse from perfection in respect of its symbolism, and I have not taken out a license to represent it as of absolute order in these or in any respects. This has been practically intimated already. Perhaps it is by the necessity of things that it has recourse always to the lesser meaning, for it is this which is more readily understood. On the other hand, much must be credited to its subtlety, here and there, in the best sense of the term. There is something to be said for an allegory which he who runs may read, at least up to a certain point. But those who made the legend and the ritual could not have been unaware of that which the deeper side shows forth; they have left us also the Opening and Closing as of the great of all greatness--so it seems to me, my Brethren --in things of ceremony and ritual. Both are devoid of explanation, and it is for us to understand them as we can.

For myself it is obvious that something distinct from the express motives of Masonry has come to us in this idea of Raising. The Instituted Mysteries of all ages and countries were concerned in the figuration, by means of ritual and symbolism, of New Birth, a new life, a mystic death and resurrection, as so many successive experiences through which the Candidate passed on the way of his inward progress from earthly to spiritual life, or from darkness to light. The Ritual or Book of the Dead is a case in point. It has been for a long period regarded by scholarship as intimating the after-death experiences or adventures of the soul in the halls of judgment, and so forth; but there are traces already of the genesis of a new view, chiefly in the writing of Mr. W. Flinders Petrie, according to which some parts at least of this great text are really a rite of initiation and advancement, through which Candidates pass in this life.

### **THE BOOK OF THE DEAD**

If I am putting this rather strongly as regards one important authority, it is at least true to say that he appears to discern the mystical side of the old Egyptian texts, while there are others, less illustrious than he, who have gone much further in this direction. It is very difficult for one like myself, although unversed in Egyptology, to study such a work as "Osiris and the Egyptian Resurrection," by E. Wallis Budge, without feeling very strongly that there is much to be said for this view, or without hoping that it will be carried further by those who are properly warranted.

So far as it is possible to speak of the Kabiric Mysteries, there was in those an episode of symbolical death, because Kasmillos, a technical name ascribed to the Candidate, was represented as slain by the gods. Some of the rites which prevailed within and around Greece in ancient times are concerned with the idea of a regeneration or new birth. The Mysteries of Bacchus depicted the death of this god and his restoration to light as Rhea. Osiris died and rose, and so also did Adonis. He was first lamented as dead and then his revivification was celebrated with great joy. There is no need, however, to multiply the recurrence of these events in the old Mysteries nor to restrict ourselves within their limits, for all religions have testified to the necessity of regeneration and have administered its imputed processes. That which is most important-- from my point of view--is the testimony belonging to Christian times and the secret tradition therein.

### **THE CHRISTIAN MYSTERIES**

Of course, to speak of this it is necessary to trend on subjects which at the present are excluded, and very properly so, from discussion in a Craft Lodge, when they are presented from a religious and doctrinal angle. I shall not treat them from that standpoint, but rather as a sequence of symbolism in the form of dramatic mystery, alluding slightly, and from a philosophical point of view only, to the fact that in certain schools they are regarded as delineating momentous experiences in the history and life of man's soul. That new birth which conferred upon the Eleusinian mystae the title of Regenerated Children of the Moon--so that each one of them was henceforth symbolically a Son of the Queen of Heaven--born as a man originally and reborn in a divine manner--has its correspondence on a much higher plane of symbolism with the Divine Birth in Bethlehem, according to which a child was "born" and a son "given," who, in hypothesis at least, was the Son of God, but Son also of Mary--one of whose titles, according to Latin theology, is Queen of Heaven.

The hidden life in Egypt and Nazareth corresponds to the life of seclusion led by the mystae during their period of probation between the Lesser and Greater Mysteries. The three years of ministry are in analogy with the Temple-functions of the mystagogues. But lastly, in Egypt and elsewhere, there was the mystic experience of the Pastos, in which the initiate died symbolically, as Jesus died upon the Cross. The Christian "Symbolum" says:--*Descendit ad inferos*: that is, "He descended into hell"; and in the entranced condition of the Pastos, the soul of the Postulant was held or was caused to wander in certain spiritual realms. But in fine, it is said of Christ:--*Tertia die resurrexit*; "the third day he rose again from the dead." So also the Adept of the Greater Mysteries rose from the Pastos in the imputed glory of an inward illumination.

### **THE MYSTICAL FACT**

There was a period not so long ago when these analogies were recognized and applied to place a fabulous construction upon the central doctrines of Christian religion, just as there was a period when the solar mythology was adapted in the same direction. We have no call to consider these aberrations of a partially digested learning; but they had their excuses in their period. The point on which I would insist is that in the symbolism of the old initiations, and in the pageant of the Christian mythos, there is held to be the accurate delineation of a mystical experience, the heads and sections of which correspond to the notions of mystic birth, life, death and resurrection. It is a particular formula which is illustrated frequently in the mystic literature of the western world. Long before symbolical Masonry had emerged above the horizon, several cryptic texts of alchemy, in my understanding, were bearing witness to this symbolism and to something real in experience which lay behind it. In more formal Christian mysticism, it was not until the 16th century and later that it entered into the fullest expression.

Now, that which is formulated as mystic birth is comparable to a dawn of spiritual consciousness. It is the turning of the whole life-motive in the divine direction, so that, at a given time-- which is actually the point of turning--the personality stands symbolically between the East and the North, between the greatest zone of darkness and that zone which is the source of light, looking towards the light-source and realizing that the whole nature has to be renewed therein. Mystic life is a quest of divine knowledge in a world that is within. It is the life led in this light, progressing and developing therein, as if a Brother should read the Mysteries of Nature and Science with new eyes cast upon the record, which record is everywhere, but more especially in his own mind and heart. It is the complete surrender to the working of the divine, so that an hour comes when *proprium meum et tuum* dies in the mystical sense, because it is hidden in God. In this state, by the testimony of many literatures, there supervenes an experience which is described in a thousand ways yet remains ineffable. It has been enshrined in the imperishable books of Plato and Plotinus. It glimmers forth at every turn and corner of the remote roads and pathways of Eastern philosophies. It is in little books of unknown authorship, treasured in monasteries and most of which have not entered into knowledge, except within recent times.

### **THE PLACE OF DARKNESS**

The experience is in a place of darkness, where, in other symbolism, the sun is said to shine at midnight. There is afterwards that further state, in which the soul of man returns into the normal physical estate, bringing the knowledge of another world, the quest ended for the time being at least. This is compared to resurrection, because in the aftermath of his experience the man is, as it were, a new being. I have found in most mythological legends that the period between divine death and resurrection was triadic and is spoken of roughly as three days, though there is an exception in the case of Osiris, whose dismemberment necessitated a long quest before the most important of his organs was left finally lost. The three days are usually foreshortened at both ends; the first is an evening, the second a complete day, while the third ends at sunrise. It is an allusion to the temporal brevity ascribed in all literatures to the culminating mystical experience. It is remarkable, in this connection, that during the mystic death of the Candidate in the Third Degree, the time of his interned condition is marked by three episodes, which are so many attempts to raise him, the last only being successful.

### **OPERATIVE MASONRY**

Two things follow unquestionably from these considerations, so far as they have proceeded. The interest in Operative Masonry and its records, though historically it is of course important, has proceeded from the beginning on a misconception as to the aims and symbolism of Speculative Masonry. It was and it remains natural, and it has not been without its results, but it is a confusion of the chief issues. It should be recognized henceforward that the sole connection between the two Arts and Crafts rests on the fact that the one has undertaken to uplift the other from the material plane to that of morals on the surface and of spirituality in the real intention. Many things led up thereto, and a few of them were at work unconsciously within the limits of Operative Masonry. At a period when there was a tendency to symbolize everything roughly, so that it might receive a tincture of religion--I speak of the Middle Ages--the duty of Apprentice to Master, and of Master to pupil, had analogies with relations subsisting between man and God, and they were not lost sight of in those old Operative documents. Here was a rudiment capable of indefinite extension. The placing of the Lodges and of the Craft at large under notable patronage, and the subsequent custom of admitting persons of influence, offered another and quite distinct opportunity. These facts notwithstanding, my position is that the traces of symbolism which may in a sense be inherent in Operative Masonry did not produce, by a natural development, the Speculative Art and Craft, though they helped undoubtedly to make a possible and partially prepared field for the great adventure and experiment.

## **THE OLD CHARGES**

The second point is that we must take the highest intention of symbolism in the Third Degree to some extent apart from the setting. You will know that the literary history of our ritual is rather non-existent than obscure, or if this is putting the case a little too strongly, it remains that researches have so far left the matter in a dubious position. The reason is not for our seeking, for the kind of enquiry that is involved is one of exceeding difficulty. If I say that it is my personal aspiration to undertake it one of these days, I speak of what is perhaps a distant hope. That which is needed is a complete codification of all the old copies, in what language soever, which are scattered through the Lodges and libraries of the whole Masonic world, together with an approximate determination of their dates by expert evidence. In my opinion, the codices now in use have their roots in the 18th century, but were edited and re-edited at an even later date.

I have now brought before you in somewhat disjointed manner--as I cannot help feeling--several independent considerations, each of which, taken separately, institutes certain points of correspondence between Masonry and other systems of symbolism, but they do not at present enter into harmony. I will collect them as follows:--

(1) Masonry has for its object, under one aspect, the building of the Candidate as a house or temple of life. Degrees outside the Craft aspire to this building as a living stone in a spiritual temple, meet for God's service.

(2) Masonry presents also a symbolical sequence, but in a somewhat crude manner, of Birth, Life, Death and Resurrection, which other systems indicate as a mystery of experience.

(3) Masonry, in fine, represents the whole body of its Adepts as in search of something that has been lost, and it tells us how and with whom that loss came about.

These are separate and independent lines of symbolism, though, as indicated already, they are interlinked by the fact of their incorporation in Craft Masonry, considered as a unified system. But the truth is that between the spiritual building of the First Degree and the Legend of Solomon's Temple there is so little essential correspondence that the one was never intended to lead up to the other. The symbolism of the Entered Apprentice Degree is of the simplest and most obvious kind; it is also personal and individualistic. That of the Master Degree is complex and remote in its significance; it is, moreover, an universal mythos. I have met with some searchers of the mysteries who seem prepared to call it cosmic, but I must not carry you so far as this speculation would lead us, and I do not hold a brief for its defense. I am satisfied in my own mind that the Third Degree has been grafted on the others and does not belong to them. There has been no real attempt to weld them, but they have been drawn into some kind of working sequence by the Exhortation which the Worshipful Master recites prior to the dramatic scene in the last Master Degree. To these must be added some remarks to the Candidate immediately after the Raising. The Legend is reduced therein to the uttermost extent possible in respect of its meaning, though it is possible that this has been done of set purpose.



## **LIVING STONES**

It will be seen that the three aspects enumerated above/fall under two heads in their final analysis, the first representing a series of practical counsels, thinly allegorised upon in terms of symbolical architecture. The Candidate is instructed to work towards his own perfection under the light of Masonry. There is no mystery, no concealment whatever, and it calls for no research in respect of its source. Its analogies and replicas are everywhere, more especially in religious systems. It is a reflection of the Pauline doctrine that man is or may become a temple of the Holy Spirit. But it should be observed in this connection that there is a rather important-though confusing mixture of images in the address of the Worshipful Master to the Candidate, after the latter has been invested and brought to the East. It is pointed out to him that he represents the cornerstone of a building--as it might be, the whole Masonic edifice but he is immediately counselled to raise a superstructure from the foundation of that corner-stone--thus reversing the image. That of the corner-stone is like an externalization in dramatic form of an old Rosicrucian maxim belonging to the year 1629: - "Be ye transmuted from dead stones into living, philosophical stones."

From my point of view, it is the more important side of the symbolism; it is as if the great Masonic edifice were to be raised on each Candidate; and if every Neophyte shaped his future course both in and out of Masonry, as though this were the case actually, I feel that the Royal Art would be other than it now is and that our individual lives would differ.

## **PART III**

RECURRING to the Legend of the Third Degree, the pivot upon which it revolves is the existence of a building secret, represented as a Master-Word, which the Builder died to preserve. Owing to his untimely death, the Word was lost, and it has always been recognized in Masonry that the Temple, unfinished at the moment of the untoward event, remained with its operations suspended and was completed later on by those who obviously did not possess the Word or key. The tradition has descended to us and, as I have said, we are still on the quest.

Now what does all this mean? We have no concern at the present day, except in archaeology and history, with King Solomon's Temple. What is meant by this Temple and what is the Lost Word? These things have a meaning, or our system is stultified. Well, here are burning questions, and the only direction in which we can look for an answer is that which is their source. As to this, we must remember that the Legend of the Master Degree is a Legend of Israel, under the aegis of the Old Covenant, and though it has no warrants in the Holy Writ which constitutes the Old Testament, it is not antecedently improbable that something to our purpose may be found elsewhere in the literature of Jewry.

## **THE KABALAH**

I do not of course mean that we shall meet with the Legend itself; it would be interesting if we did but not per se helpful, apart from explanation. I believe in my heart that I have found what is much more important, and this is the root-matter of that which is shadowed forth in the Legend, as regards the meaning of the Temple and the search for the Lost Word. There are certain great texts which are known to scholars under the generic name of Kabbalah, a Hebrew word meaning reception, or doctrinal teaching passed on from one to another by verbal communication. According to its own hypothesis, it entered into written records during the Christian era, but hostile criticism has been disposed to represent it as invented at the period when it was written. The question does not signify for our purpose, as the closing of the 13th century is the latest date that the most drastic view-- now generally abandoned-- has proposed for the most important text.

We find therein after what manner, according to mystic Israel, Solomon's Temple was spiritualized; we find deep meanings attached to the two pillars J. and B.; we find how the word was lost and under what circumstances the chosen people were to look for its recovery. It is an expectation for Jewish theosophy, as it is for the Craft Mason. It was lost owing to an untoward event, and although the time and circumstances of its recovery have been calculated in certain texts of the Kabbalah, there has been something wrong with the methods. The keepers of the tradition died with their faces toward Jerusalem, looking for that time; but for Jewry at large the question has passed from the field of view, much as the quest is continued by us in virtue of a ceremonial formula but cannot be said to mean anything for those who undertake and pursue it. It was lost owing to the unworthiness of Israel, and the destruction of the First Temple was one consequence thereof. By the waters of Babylon, in their exile, the Jews are said to have remembered Zion, but the word did not come back into their hearts; and when Divine Providence inspired Cyrus to bring about the building of the Second Temple and the return of Israel into their own land, they went back empty of all recollection in this respect.

## **THE DIVINE NAME**

I am putting things in a summary fashion that are scattered up and down the vast text with which I am dealing--that is to say, Sepher Ha Zohar, The Book of Splendor. The word to which reference is made is the Divine Name out of the consonants of which, He, Vau, He, Yod, we have formed Jehovah, or more accurately Yahve. When Israel fell into a state which is termed impenitence it is said in the Zoharic Symbolism that the Vau and the He final were separated. The name was dismembered, and this is the first sense of loss which is registered concerning it. The second is that it has no proper vowel points, those of the Name Elohim being substituted, or alternatively the Name Adonai. It is said, for example: "My Name is written YHVH and read Adonai." The epoch of restoration and completion is called, almost indifferently, that of resurrection, the world to come, and the advent of the Messiah. In such day the present imperfect separation between the letters will be put an end to, once and forever. If it be asked: What is the connection between the loss and dismemberment which befell the Divine Name Jehovah and the Lost Word in Masonry, I cannot answer too plainly; but every Royal Arch Mason knows that which is communicated to him in that Supreme Degree, and in the light of the present explanation he will see that the "great" and "incomprehensible" thing so imparted comes to him from the Secret Tradition of Israel.

It is also to this Kabalistic source, rather than to the variant accounts in the first book of Kings and in Chronicles, that we must have recourse for the important Masonic Symbolism concerning the Pillars J. and B. There is very little in Holy Scripture which would justify a choice of these objects as particular representatives of our art of building spiritualized. But in later Kabalism, in the texts called "The Garden of Pomegranates" and in "The Gates of Light," there is a very full and complicated explanation of the strength which is attributed to B., the left-hand Pillar, and of that which is established in and by the right-hand Pillar, called J.

## **THE TEMPLE**

As regards the Temple itself, I have explained at length elsewhere after what manner it is spiritualized in various Kabalistic and semi-Kabalistic texts, so that it appears ever as "the proportion of the height, the proportion of the depth, and the lateral proportions" of the created universe, and again as a part of the transcendental mystery of law which is at the root of the secret tradition in Israel. This is outside our subject, not indeed by its nature but owing to limitations of opportunity. I will say only that it offers another aspect of a fatal loss in Israel and the world--which is commented on in the tradition. That which the Temple symbolized above all things was, however, a House of Doctrine, and as on the one hand the Zohar shows us how a loss and substitution were perpetuated through centuries, owing to the idolatry of Israel at the foot of Mount Horeb in the wilderness of Sinai, and illustrated by the breaking of the Tables of Stone on which the Law was inscribed; so does Speculative Masonry intimate that the Holy House, which was planned and begun after one manner, was completed after another and a word of death was substituted for a word of life.

## **THE BUILDER**

I shall not need to tell you that beneath such veils of allegory and amidst such illustrations of symbolism, the Master-Builder signifies a principle and not a person, historical or otherwise. He signifies indeed more than a single principle, for in the world of mystic intimations through which we are now moving, the question, "Who is the Master?" would be answered by many voices. But generically, he is the imputed life of the Secret-Doctrine which lay beyond the letter of the Written Law, which "the stiff-necked and disobedient" of the patriarchal, sacerdotal and prophetic dispensations contrived to destroy. According to the Secret Tradition of Israel, the whole creation was established for the manifestation of this life, which became manifested actually in its dual aspect when the spiritual Eve was drawn from the side of the spiritual Adam and placed over against him, in the condition of face o face. The intent of creation was made void in the event which is called the Fall of Man, though the particular expression is unknown in Scripture. By the hypothesis, the "fatal consequences" which followed would have reached their time on Mount Sinai, but the Israelites, when left to themselves in the wilderness, "sat down to eat and rose up to play." That which is concealed in the evasion of the last words corresponds the state of Eve in Paradise, when she had become affected by the serpent.

To sum up as regards the sources, the Lost Word in Masonry is derived from a Kabalistic thesis of imperfection in the Divine Name Jehovah, by which the true pronunciation--that is to say, the true meaning-- is lost. It was the life of the House of Doctrine, represented by the Temple planned of old in Israel. The Master-Builder is the Spirit, Secret or Life of the Doctrine; and it is the quest of this that every Mason takes upon himself in the ceremony of the Third Degree, so that the House, which in the words of another Masonic Degree, is now, for want of territory, built only in the heart, "a superstructure perfect in its parts and honourable to the builder."

## **CRAFT MASONRY**

But if these are the sources of Craft Masonry, taken at its culmination in the Sublime Degree, what manner of people were those who grafted so strange a speculation and symbolism on the Operative procedure of a building-Guild? The answer is that all about that period which represents what is called the transition, or during the 16th and 17th centuries, the Latin writing scholars were animated with zeal for the exposition of the tradition in Israel, with the result that many memorable and even great books were produced on the subject. Among those scholars were many great names, and they provided the materials ready to the hands of the symbolists. What purpose had the latter in view ? The answer is that in Germany, Italy, France and England, the Zeal for Kabalistic literature among the Latin-writing scholars had not merely a scholastic basis. They believed that the texts of the Secret Tradition showed plainly, out of the mouth of Israel itself, that the Messiah had come. This is the first fact. The second I have mentioned already, namely, that although the central event of the Third Degree is the Candidate's Raising, it is not said in the Legend that the Master-Builder rose, thus suggesting that something remains to come after, which might at once complete the legend and conclude the quest. The third fact is that in a rather early and important High Degree of the philosophical kind, now almost unknown, the Master-Builder of the Third Degree rises as Christ, and so completes the dismembered Divine Name, by insertion of the Hebrew letter Shin, this producing Yeheshua - the restoration of the Lost Word in the Christian Degrees of Masonry.

Of course, I am putting this point only as a question of fact in the development of symbolism. Meanwhile, I trust that, amidst many imperfections, I have done something to indicate a new ground for our consideration, and to show that the

speaking mystery of the Opening and Closing of the Third Degree and the Legend of the Master-Builder come from what may seem to us very far away, but yet not so distant that it is impossible to trace them to their source.