

# Ashlar Lodge No. 98 Free and Accepted Masons

St. Augustine, FL

Chartered January 18, A.D. 1888, A.L. 5888

904 826-4086



December 2016

## STATED COMMUNICATIONS

Masonic Temple  
105 King Street  
St. Augustine, FL  
1<sup>ST</sup> & 3<sup>RD</sup> Thursdays  
Meal – 6:30 p.m.

## DEGREE WORK AND PRACTICE

2<sup>nd</sup> & 4<sup>th</sup> Thursdays

CHARITY OF THE QUARTER  
MASONIC HOME

First Responders in our prayers over the Holidays. Again thank you and may God Bless you.

Fraternally  
Brother Rick Bailey W.:M.:



## FROM THE WEST

## FROM THE EAST

Greetings Brethren.

It only seems like yesterday that you elected me as Worshipful Master of the Lodge. Now time has come to turn it over to someone else. I want to thank all the Officers and brothers for all their support and hard work not only for me but for the Lodge, it's not just one person but all of us that's makes it a great fraternity. So please continue to support our upcoming Office as we move into the coming year. Elections for the new Officers will be the first Stated Communication in Dec. Once the meeting starts the ballot will be closed. So make sure you turn in your Ballots beforehand to the Br. David. I hope everyone has a great Thanksgiving and get to spend time with your families. Remember to keep our Military and

Brethren, as we approach the end of one Masonic Year and the beginning of a new one, let us give thanks for all that Freemasonry has given us. The oldest existing records of Freemasonry date from 1596 thus giving us long and rich history. We each came to it of our own free will and accord and for the purpose of making ourselves better men, and so we remain. We are a sacred Band of Brothers among whom no contention should ever exist. We leave our personal interests in the parking lot and bring only the best interest of the Craft into the Lodge.

On December 27<sup>th</sup>, we, as Freemasons, celebrate the Feast of St. John the Evangelists which was the traditional marking of mid-winter. The harvest has been completed, the land lays ready for spring planting, the days begin to grow longer, and we celebrate with family and friends the fruits of our labors. In our Lodge, it is the night on which we install

## From The West Continued

officers for the new Masonic year.

Installation at Ashlar No. 98 will begin with a formal meal at 6:00 p.m. on Tuesday, December 27, 2016. The meal will be served by our Rainbow Girls assisted by DeMolay Boys from Jacksonville. It is an **open installation** so family and friends are welcome. After the meal, we will adjourn to the Lodge Room for installation. The Senior Grand Warden for the Grand Lodge of Florida will serve as Installing Officer assisted by M.W. Robert Harry, Jr., as Installing Marshall.

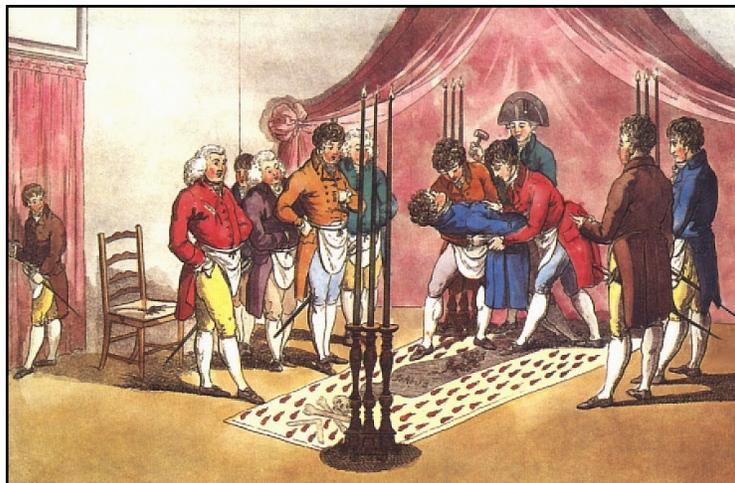
On November 24th, we celebrate Thanksgiving. This is a time for prayer and thanksgiving. It is a time to gather with family, renew old acquaintances, make new one, and as it has been since at 1536, a time to celebrate God's bounty. In the United States, Thanksgiving is generally dated to 1621 when the surviving Pilgrims and their Native American neighbors gathered for a great feast. In 1789, George Washington, first president of the United States and a Freemason designated November 26 of that year as a day of "public thanksgiving and prayer to be observed by acknowledging with grateful hearts the many and signal favors of Almighty God." The holiday is now celebrated on the fourth Thursday of November in the United States and the second Monday of October in Canada.

December brings us both Hanukkah and Christmas. Hanukkah or Feast of Lights celebrates the rededication of the Second Temple in Jerusalem at the time of the Maccabean Revolt. It is observed for eight nights and days starting on the 25<sup>th</sup> of Kislev on the Jewish Calendar. In 2016 Hanukkah begins at sundown on December 24<sup>th</sup>.

Christmas is the major holiday of the modern Christian year and is celebrated on December 25<sup>th</sup>. It marks the birth of Jesus even though it now involves a mix of secular and religious themes. It is traditionally a time for family with the accompanying merriment, feasting, goodwill, and compassion. It is also a time of music, spectacle, and mystery. But it is above all a time for contemplation and remembrance.

Julie and I wish you the most wonderful Thanksgiving and the Most Joyous and Merry Christmas.

Bro. Oscar Patterson  
Senior Warden



# December 2016

Sun                  Mon                  Tue                  Wed                  Thu                  Fri                  Sat

				1 Stated Comm	2	3
4	5	6	7 District Instruction Middleburg <b>Rainbow</b>	8	9	10 Newly Elected Of- ficer Meet- ing 12:00
11	12 OES	13 York Rite chap- ter/council	14	15 Ashlar Is Dark	16	17 Education for WMs and Secretaries at Ashlar 8:30
18	19	20	21 District Association Lake Lodge <b>Rainbow</b>	22 Lodge Practice for Installation	23	24
25 Christmas	26	27 Open Installation of Officer at 6:00pm	28	29	30	31

## Important Reminders

### Election of Officers

Written nominations for elected officers may be submitted to Secretary no later than opening of Stated Communication on Dec. 1. Person making nominations must certify that they have spoken with the nominee and that the nominee has agreed to accept and serve if elected.

### Installation of Officers

When - Tuesday, December 27, 2016

Supper Will Begin At 6:00 pm

After the meal, we will adjourn to the Lodge Room for installation.

This will be an open installation so family and friends are welcome.

# January 2017

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
1	2	3	4 District Instruction Pinelands <b>Rainbow</b>	5 Stated Comm	6	7
8	9 OES	10	11	12	13	14
15	16	17 York Rite chap- ter/council	18 Rainbow	19 Stated Comm	20	21
22	23	24 York Rite Com- mandery	25 District Association Cabul	26 Lodge Practice	27	28
29	30	31				

## Ashlar Lodge Officers

<b>Worshipful Master:</b>	James “Rick” Bailey	386 283-0108
<b>Senior Warden:</b>	Oscar Patterson	904 955-9175
<b>Junior Warden:</b>	Bo Bozard	904 501-4370
<b>Treasurer:</b>	Bob Gagnon P.M.	904 501-7446
<b>Secretary:</b>	David Pierucci	904 460-9477
<b>Senior Deacon:</b>	Matthew Sweeney	904 806-0571
<b>Junior Deacon:</b>	Ken Shaffner	386 864-9162
<b>Senior Steward:</b>	James Carrick	904 501-4348
<b>Junior Steward:</b>	Robert Wilson	386 763-8727
<b>Chaplain:</b>	Jim Davis P.M.	904 392-4565
<b>Marshall:</b>	Brian Iannucci	904 797-8710
<b>Tyler:</b>	Ron DeRoco	904 599-1584
<b>Musician:</b>		
<b>Lodge Instructor:</b>	Oscar Patterson	904 955-9175
<b>Bob Adair Mentor Program</b>	Jim Davis P.M.	904 392-4565

## Military Veterans of Ashlar Lodge No. 98, F. & A. M.

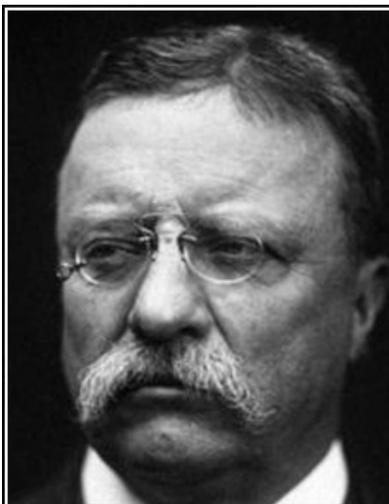
We have begun a project to recognize all **VETERANS** who are now or who have been Members of our Lodge and who are not listed on the World War II memorial hanging on our West Wall. An appropriate plaque is being constructed to display the names, military affiliation, and service of all Brothers who are Veterans.

If you are a Veteran, please complete the form below and return it to Bro. Oscar Patterson, our Senior Warden. If you know of a Brother who is deceased or who does not attend regularly and you can attest to his military service, complete a form for him, as well.

FULL NAME: \_\_\_\_\_ Membership No.: \_\_\_\_\_

BRANCH OF SERVICE: \_\_\_\_\_ PERIOD: \_\_\_\_\_

Examples: Alfred W. Adams, U.S. Coast Guard, Korea  
James J. Smith, U.S. Army, Vietnam  
John Q. Public, U.S. Navy, Gulf War  
Samuel A. Everyman, U.S. Air Force, War on Terrorism  
Jones, U.S. Army, 1955-1958



I regard the Masonic institution as one of the means ordained by the Supreme Architect to enable mankind to work out the problem of destiny; to fight against, and overcome, the weaknesses and imperfections of his nature, and at last to attain to that true life of which death is the herald and the grave the portal.

— Theodore Roosevelt —

**ASHLAR LODGE MILITARY VETERANS IDENTIFIED FOR  
MILITARY VETERANS PLAQUE**

Oscar Patterson III  
U.S. Army  
Vietnam

Ron DeRoco  
U.S. Navy  
Vietnam

Michael S. Warman  
U.S. Navy  
1958-1977

Oscar Patterson Jr.  
U.S. Navy  
World War II

George J. Brenick, Jr.  
U.S. Navy  
World War II

Michael H. Grace III  
U.S. Navy  
Vietnam

E. Raymond Suart  
U.S. Navy  
1948-1978

Glen P. Russell  
U.S. Army  
Vietnam

John Durrett  
U.S. Navy  
Enduring Freedom

William Tatel  
U.S. Army  
World War II

George Milroy  
U.S. Air Force  
Desert Storm/Persian Gulf

Fred L. Baker, Jr.  
U.S. Marine Corps  
Vietnam

William A. Roberts  
U.S. Navy  
Korea & Vietnam

Jay E. Butler  
U.S. Navy  
1956-1975

Robert G. Adair  
U.S. Navy  
Vietnam

Theodore R. Cassford  
U.S. Army  
1957-1960

Dominick A. Perez  
U.S. Army  
Korea

James R. Bailey  
U.S. Army  
Afghanistan

Herbert L. Wiles  
U.S. Navy  
World War II

James S. Davis  
U.S. Army  
Vietnam

Christopher J. Cannan  
U.S. Navy  
Yugoslav Wars, Restore Hope,  
Uphold Democracy

Douglas L. Wiles  
U.S. Army  
1975-2000

Richard G. Gurell  
U.S. Navy  
1977-1986

**ASHLAR LODGE MILITARY VETERANS IDENTIFIED FOR  
MILITARY VETERANS PLAQUE**

Fred H. Bozard, Jr.  
U.S Navy  
World War II

Robert M. Cunningham  
U.S. Navy  
Vietnam, Gulf Wars, Grenada

Fred H. Bozard III  
U.S. Navy  
Vietnam

Richard T. Gaulding, Jr.  
U.S. Coast Guard  
1962-1966

Stockbridge C. Spence  
U.S.M.C/U.S.C.G  
1949-1969

Michael Grace  
U.S Navy  
1968-1996

Ted A. Magpanty  
U.S. Navy  
Gulf War

Patrick E. McGee  
U.S. Marine Corps  
1996-2004

Frank Benischeck  
U.S. Navy  
1955-1977

Ralph L. Coleman  
U.S. Navy  
1948-1952

John H. King  
U.S. Army  
1957-1964

William D. Lacey  
U.S. Army  
Korea

Robert S. Wilson  
U.S. Army  
1982-2010

# THE LEGEND OF THE WINDING STAIRS

BY

**ALBERT G. MACKEY, M.D.**

Before proceeding to the examination of those more important mythical legends which appropriately belong to the Master's degree, it will not, I think, be unpleasing or uninteresting to consider the only one which is attached to the Fellow Craft's degree—that, namely, which refers to the allegorical ascent of the Winding Stairs to the Middle Chamber, and the symbolic payment of the workmen's wages.

Although the legend of the Winding Stairs forms an important tradition of Ancient Craft Masonry, the only allusion to it in Scripture is to be found in a single verse in the sixth chapter of the First Book of Kings, and is in these words: "The door for the middle chamber was in the right side of the house; and they went up with winding stairs into the middle chamber, and out of the middle into the third." Out of this slender material has been constructed an allegory, which, if properly considered in its symbolical relations, will be found to be of surpassing beauty. But it is only as a symbol that we can regard this whole tradition; for the historical facts and the architectural details alike forbid us for a moment to suppose that the legend, as it is rehearsed in the second degree of Masonry, is anything more than a magnificent philosophical myth.

Let us inquire into the true design of this legend, and learn the lesson of symbolism which it is intended to teach.

In the investigation of the true meaning of every masonic symbol and allegory, we must be governed by the single principle that the whole design of Freemasonry as a speculative science is the investigation of divine truth. To this great object everything is subsidiary. The Mason is, from the moment of his initiation as an Entered Apprentice, to the time at which he receives the full fruition of masonic light, an investigator—a laborer in the quarry and the temple—whose reward is to be Truth. All the ceremonies and traditions of the order tend to this ultimate design. Is there light to be asked for? It is the intellectual light of wisdom and truth. Is there a word to be sought? That word is the symbol of truth. Is there a loss of something that had been promised? That loss is typical of the failure of man, in the infirmity of his nature, to discover divine truth. Is there a substitute to be appointed for that loss? It is an allegory which teaches us that in this world man can only approximate to the full conception of truth.

Hence there is in Speculative Masonry always a progress, symbolized by its peculiar ceremonies of initiation. There is an advancement from a lower to a higher state—from darkness to light—from death to life—from error to truth. The candidate is always ascending; he is never stationary; he never goes back, but each step he takes brings him to some new mental illumination—to the knowledge of some more elevated doctrine. The teaching of the Divine Master is,

in respect to this continual progress, the teaching of Masonry—"No man having put his hand to the plough, and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of heaven." And similar to this is the precept of Pythagoras: "When travelling, turn not back, for if you do the Furies will accompany you."

Now, this principle of Masonic symbolism is apparent in many places in each of the degrees. In that of the Entered Apprentice we find it developed in the theological ladder, which, resting on earth, leans its top upon heaven, thus inculcating the idea of an ascent from a lower to a higher sphere, as the object of Masonic labor. In the Master's degree we find it exhibited in its most religious form, in the restoration from death to life—in the change from the obscurity of the grave to the holy of holies of the Divine Presence. In all the degrees we find it presented in the ceremony of circumambulation, in which there is a gradual inquisition, and a passage from an inferior to a superior officer. And lastly, the same symbolic idea is conveyed in the Fellow Craft's degree in the legend of the Winding Stairs.

In an investigation of the symbolism of the Winding Stairs we shall be directed to the true explanation by a reference to their origin, their number, the objects which they recall, and their termination, but above all by a consideration of the great design which an ascent upon them was intended to accomplish.

The steps of this Winding Staircase commenced, we are informed, at the porch of the temple; that is to say, at its very entrance. But nothing is more undoubted in the science of Masonic symbolism than that the temple was the representative of the world purified by the Shekinah, or the Divine Presence. The world of the profane is without the temple; the world of the initiated is within its sacred walls. Hence to enter the temple, to pass within the porch, to be made a Mason, and to be born into the world of masonic light, are all synonymous and convertible terms. Here, then, the symbolism of the Winding Stairs begins.

The Apprentice, having entered within the porch of the temple, has begun his Masonic life. But the first degree in Masonry, like the lesser Mysteries of the ancient systems of initiation, is only a preparation and purification for something higher. The Entered Apprentice is the child in Masonry. The lessons which he receives are simply intended to cleanse the heart and prepare the recipient for that mental illumination which is to be given in the succeeding degrees.

As a Fellow Craft, he has advanced another step, and as the degree is emblematic of youth, so it is here that the intellectual education of the candidate begins. And therefore, here, at the very spot which separates the Porch from the Sanctuary, where childhood ends and manhood begins, he finds stretching out before him a winding stair which invites him, as it were, to ascend, and which, as the symbol of discipline and instruction, teaches him that here must commence his Masonic labor—here he must enter upon those glorious though difficult researches, the end of which is to be the possession of divine truth. The Winding Stairs begin after the candidate has passed within the Porch and between the pillars of Strength and Establishment, as a significant symbol to teach him that as soon as he has passed beyond the years of irrational childhood, and commenced his entrance upon manly life, the laborious task of self-improvement is the first duty that is placed before him. He cannot stand still, if he would be worthy of his vocation; his destiny as an immortal being requires him to ascend, step by step, until he has reached the summit, where the treasures of knowledge await him.

The number of these steps in all the systems has been odd. Vitruvius remarks—and the coinci-

dence is at least curious—that the ancient temples were always ascended by an odd number of steps; and he assigns as the reason, that, commencing with the right foot at the bottom, the worshipper would find the same foot foremost when he entered the temple, which was considered as a fortunate omen. But the fact is, that the symbolism of numbers was borrowed by the Masons from Pythagoras, in whose system of philosophy it plays an important part, and in which odd numbers were considered as more perfect than even ones. Hence, throughout the Masonic system we find a predominance of odd numbers; and while three, five, seven, nine, fifteen, and twenty-seven, are all-important symbols, we seldom find a reference to two, four, six, eight, or ten. The odd number of the stairs was therefore intended to symbolize the idea of perfection, to which it was the object of the aspirant to attain.

As to the particular number of the stairs, this has varied at different periods. Tracing-boards of the last century have been found, in which only *five* steps are delineated, and others in which they amount to *seven*. The Prestonian lectures, used in England in the beginning of this century, gave the whole number as thirty-eight, dividing them into series of one, three, five, seven, nine, and eleven. The error of making an even number, which was a violation of the Pythagorean principle of odd numbers as the symbol of perfection, was corrected in the Hemming lectures, adopted at the union of the two Grand Lodges of England, by striking out the eleven, which was also objectionable as receiving a sectarian explanation. In this country the number was still further reduced to *fifteen*, divided into three series of *three*, *five*, and *seven*. I shall adopt this American division in explaining the symbolism, although, after all, the particular number of the steps, or the peculiar method of their division into series, will not in any way affect the general symbolism of the whole legend.

The candidate, then, in the second degree of Masonry, represents a man starting forth on the journey of life, with the great task before him of self-improvement. For the faithful performance of this task, a reward is promised, which reward consists in the development of all his intellectual faculties, the moral and spiritual elevation of his character, and the acquisition of truth and knowledge. Now, the attainment of this moral and intellectual condition supposes an elevation of character, an ascent from a lower to a higher life, and a passage of toil and difficulty, through rudimentary instruction, to the full fruition of wisdom. This is therefore beautifully symbolized by the Winding Stairs; at whose foot the aspirant stands ready to climb the toilsome steep, while at its top is placed "that hieroglyphic bright which none but Craftsmen ever saw," as the emblem of divine truth. And hence a distinguished writer has said that "these steps, like all the Masonic symbols, are illustrative of discipline and doctrine, as well as of natural, mathematical, and metaphysical science, and open to us an extensive range of moral and speculative inquiry." The candidate, incited by the love of virtue and the desire of knowledge, and withal eager for the reward of truth which is set before him, begins at once the toilsome ascent. At each division he pauses to gather instruction from the symbolism which these divisions present to his attention.

At the first pause which he makes he is instructed in the peculiar organization of the order of which he has become a disciple. But the information here given, if taken in its naked, literal sense, is barren, and unworthy of his labor. The rank of the officers who govern, and the names of the degrees which constitute the institution, can give him no knowledge which he has not before possessed. We must look therefore to the symbolic meaning of these allusions for any value which may be attached to this part of the ceremony.

The reference to the organization of the Masonic institution is intended to remind the aspirant of the union of men in society, and the development of the social state out of the state of nature. He is thus reminded, in the very outset of his journey, of the blessings which arise from civilization, and of the fruits of virtue and knowledge which are derived from that condition. Masonry itself is the result of civilization; while, in grateful return, it has been one of the most important means of extending that condition of mankind.

All the monuments of antiquity that the ravages of time have left, combine to prove that man had no sooner emerged from the savage into the social state, than he commenced the organization of religious mysteries, and the separation, by a sort of divine instinct, of the sacred from the profane. Then came the invention of architecture as a means of providing convenient dwellings and necessary shelter from the inclemency's and vicissitudes of the seasons, with all the mechanical arts connected with it; and lastly, geometry, as a necessary science to enable the cultivators of land to measure and designate the limits of their possessions. All these are claimed as peculiar characteristics of Speculative Masonry, which may be considered as the type of civilization, the former bearing the same relation to the profane world as the latter does to the savage state. Hence we at once see the fitness of the symbolism which commences the aspirant's upward progress in the cultivation of knowledge and the search after truth, by recalling to his mind the condition of civilization and the social union of mankind as necessary preparations for the attainment of these objects. In the allusions to the officers of a lodge, and the degrees of Masonry as explanatory of the organization of our own society, we clothe in our symbolic language the history of the organization of society.

Advancing in his progress, the candidate is invited to contemplate another series of instructions. The human senses, as the appropriate channels through which we receive all our ideas of perception, and which, therefore, constitute the most important sources of our knowledge, are here referred to as a symbol of intellectual cultivation. Architecture, as the most important of the arts which conduce to the comfort of mankind, is also alluded to here, not simply because it is so closely connected with the operative institution of Masonry, but also as the type of all the other useful arts. In his second pause, in the ascent of the Winding Stairs, the aspirant is therefore reminded of the necessity of cultivating practical knowledge.

So far, then, the instructions he has received relate to his own condition in society as a member of the great social compact, and to his means of becoming, by a knowledge of the arts of practical life, a necessary and useful member of that society.

But his motto will be, "Excelsior." Still must he go onward and forward. The stair is still before him; its summit is not yet reached, and still further treasures of wisdom are to be sought for, or the reward will not be gained, nor the *middle chamber*, the abiding place of truth, be reached. In his third pause, he therefore arrives at that point in which the whole circle of human science is to be explained. Symbols, we know, are in themselves arbitrary and of conventional signification, and the complete circle of human science might have been as well symbolized by any other sign or series of doctrines as by the seven liberal arts and sciences. But Masonry is an institution of the olden time; and this selection of the liberal arts and sciences as a symbol of the completion of human learning is one of the most pregnant evidences that we have of its antiq-

uity.

In the seventh century, and for a long time afterwards, the circle of instruction to which all the learning of the most eminent schools and most distinguished philosophers was confined, was limited to what were then called the liberal arts and sciences, and consisted of two branches, the *trivium* and the *quadrivium*. The *trivium* included grammar, rhetoric, and logic; the *quadrivium* comprehended arithmetic, geometry, music, and astronomy.

"These seven heads," says Enfield, "were supposed to include universal knowledge. He who was master of these was thought to have no need of a preceptor to explain any books or to solve any questions which lay within the compass of human reason, the knowledge of the *trivium* having furnished him with the key to all language, and that of the *quadrivium* having opened to him the secret laws of nature."

At a period, says the same writer, when few were instructed in the *trivium*, and very few studied the *quadrivium*, to be master of both was sufficient to complete the character of a philosopher. The propriety, therefore, of adopting the seven liberal arts and sciences as a symbol of the completion of human learning is apparent. The candidate, having reached this point, is now supposed to have accomplished the task upon which he had entered—he has reached the last step, and is now ready to receive the full fruition of human learning.

So far, then, we are able to comprehend the true symbolism of the Winding Stairs. They represent the progress of an inquiring mind with the toils and labors of intellectual cultivation and study, and the preparatory acquisition of all human science, as a preliminary step to the attainment of divine truth, which it must be remembered is always symbolized in Masonry by the WORD.

Here let me again allude to the symbolism of numbers, which is for the first time presented to the consideration of the Masonic student in the legend of the Winding Stairs. The theory of numbers as the symbols of certain qualities was originally borrowed by the Masons from the school of Pythagoras. It will be impossible, however, to develop this doctrine, in its entire extent, on the present occasion, for the numeral symbolism of Masonry would itself constitute materials for an ample essay. It will be sufficient to advert to the fact that the total number of the steps, amounting in all to *fifteen*, in the American system, is a significant symbol. For *fifteen* was a sacred number among the Orientals, because the letters of the holy name JAH, , יהוה, were, in their numerical value, equivalent to fifteen; and hence a figure in which the nine digits were so disposed as to make fifteen either way when added together perpendicularly, horizontally, or diagonally, constituted one of their most sacred talismans. The fifteen steps in the Winding Stairs are therefore symbolic of the name of God.

But we are not yet done. It will be remembered that a reward was promised for all this toilsome ascent of the Winding Stairs. Now, what are the wages of a Speculative Mason? Not money, nor corn, nor wine, nor oil. All these are but symbols. His wages are TRUTH, or that approximation to it which will be most appropriate to the degree into which he has been initiated. It is one of the most beautiful, but at the same time most abstruse, doctrines of the science of Masonic symbolism, that the Mason is ever to be in search of truth, but is never to find it. This divine truth, the object of all his labors, is symbolized by the WORD, for which we all know he

can only obtain a *substitute*; and this is intended to teach the humiliating but necessary lesson that the knowledge of the nature of God and of man's relation to him, which knowledge constitutes divine truth, can never be acquired in this life. It is only when the portals of the grave open to us, and give us an entrance into a more perfect life, that this knowledge is to be attained.

"Happy is the man," says the father of lyric poetry, "who descends beneath the hollow earth, having beheld these mysteries; he knows the end, he knows the origin of life."

The Middle Chamber is therefore symbolic of this life, where the symbol only of the word can be given, where the truth is to be reached by approximation only, and yet where we are to learn that that truth will consist in a perfect knowledge of the G.A.O.T.U. This is the reward of the inquiring Mason; in this consist the wages of a Fellow Craft; he is directed to the truth, but must travel farther and ascend still higher to attain it.

It is, then, as a symbol, and a symbol only, that we must study this beautiful legend of the Winding Stairs. If we attempt to adopt it as an historical fact, the absurdity of its details stares us in the face, and wise men will wonder at our credulity. Its inventors had no desire thus to impose upon our folly; but offering it to us as a great philosophical myth, they did not for a moment suppose that we would pass over its sublime moral teachings to accept the allegory as an historical narrative, without meaning, and wholly irreconcilable with the records of Scripture, and opposed by all the principles of probability. To suppose that eighty thousand craftsmen were weekly paid in the narrow precincts of the temple chambers, is simply to suppose an absurdity. But to believe that all this pictorial representation of an ascent by a Winding Staircase to the place where the wages of labor were to be received, was an allegory to teach us the ascent of the mind from ignorance, through all the toils of study and the difficulties of obtaining knowledge, receiving here a little and there a little, adding something to the stock of our ideas at each step, until, in the middle chamber of life,—in the full fruition of manhood,—the reward is attained, and the purified and elevated intellect is invested with the reward in the direction how to seek God and God's truth,—to believe this is to believe and to know the true design of Speculative Masonry, the only design which makes it worthy of a good or a wise man's study.

Its historical details are barren, but its symbols and allegories are fertile with instruction.

