

Orators Report
on the 12th Degree
Master Architect
November 7, 2012



Bremerton Valley of the Scottish Rite

The Legend: After the murderers of the Master Hiram Abif had been discovered, apprehended, tried, and punished, his monument and mausoleum completed, and the matters which concerned the revenue of the realm provided for, King Solomon, to assure uniformity of work and vigor in its prosecution, and to reward the superior and eminent science and skill of Adoniram, appointed him to be chief Architect of the Temple, with the title of Grand Master Architect, and invested him with that office, as the successor of the deceased Master Hiram Abif, and at the same time made him Grand Master of Masons and the Masonic peer of and King Hiram of Tyre.

The degree of Grand Master Architect is alleged to have been established as a school of instruction for the more advanced workmen of the Temple, to assure uniformity in work, vigor in its prosecution, and to reward those more eminent in science and skill.

The Setting: A Chapter of Master Architects laboring with their drafting instruments. Behind the Venerable Master in the East are five columns, each of a different order of Architecture: Tuscan, Doric, Ionic, Corinthian, and Composite.

The Ritual: The degree partakes of a scientific nature, in which the rule of architecture and the connection of the liberal arts with Masonry are dwelt upon, and portions of the Fellow Craft degree are amplified and extensively illustrated. This grade requires of the neophyte that he be thoroughly qualified intellectually and morally, to be admitted, and instructs him that virtue is as necessary as talents to every Grand Master Architect.

The candidate is taught the symbolic meanings of the Master Architects tools: the different compasses, the parallel ruler, the protractor, the plain scale, the sector, and slide-rule.

The candidate is further taught that the five different orders of architecture are emblematic of the five principal divisions of the Ancient and Accepted Scottish Rite:

- 1.—The Tuscan, of the three blue Degrees, or the primitive Masonry.

2.—The Doric, of the ineffable Degrees, from the fourth to the fourteenth, inclusive.

3.—The Ionic, of the fifteenth and sixteenth, or second temple Degrees.

4.—The Corinthian, of the seventeenth and eighteenth Degrees, or those of the new law.

5.—The Composite, of the philosophical and chivalric Degrees intermingled, from the nineteenth to the thirty-second, inclusive.

The Masonic significance of the North Star, Morning Star, and the three Great lights is also taught.

The Lecture:

The ceremonies of this degree are brief but its significance is profound. The most important lesson instructs us to solve the great problems presented by the universe, to know and understand the lofty truths of philosophy and to communicate it freely to others, particularly by our actions. Only the best and wisest in us and among us should rule. For if be any other, the low and the ignoble will presume, and soon prevail.

The political lesson taught in this degree is the value of a wise chief executive such as Adoniram. He who obeys the Masonic law shall find true Masonic Light.

As he advanced, the ancient Freemason ceased to work with the instruments of the laborer the square, the level, the plumb, and the trowel, and assumed those of the Architect and Geometrician. As he advanced, he also passed from that branch of geometry and mathematics which occupies itself with the earth, its surface and the things, that belong to it to the mathematics of the heavens and the spheres. We no longer occupy ourselves with geometry and mathematics as sciences; to us the instruments of the geometrician have a symbolical meaning. By means of the morality of Masonry, we advance toward its philosophy, and every degree is a step in that direction. If you would succeed to the rank held by Adoniram, you must assume the obligation which it imposes.

LESSONS: This degree teaches that wisdom is a gift from God and should be preferred over riches. Wisdom and knowledge bring honor, discretion and understanding. Wisdom teaches the knowledge of God. Wisdom enables immortality.

The five orders of architecture, and the different working tools of the three degrees, have a symbolic meaning, and constitute a complete code of ethics by which the upright Mason must square and regulate his conduct.

In another aspect of this Degree, the Chief of the Architect symbolizes the constitutional executive head or chief of a free government. It teaches us that no republican government can long endure when the people cease to select for their chief magistrates the best and the wisest of their statesmen.

DUTIES

Seek wisdom through knowledge.

FOR REFLECTION

Are you in control of your life?

IMPORTANT SYMBOLS

Architects Tools.

Excerpts from Arturo de Hoyos' Scottish Rite Ritual Monitor and Guide First Edition (2007). Details should be read and can be found here: Symbols: pgs 111-112. Lessons: pgs 223-240.

Adapted from the Spanish version of Rex R. Hutchen's book A Bridge to Light