

## **Ceremonial Explanation of the Second Degree**

### **PROLOG** \_\_\_\_\_

**W.M.** -- The purpose of this presentation is to provide an explanation and description of the flavor of typical ritual work done in a Masonic Lodge to the friends and families of Freemasons, and expose them to some of the philosophy of Masonry. All of the material used in this presentation is constructed from materials which, for more than 150 years, have been considered to be non-secret by the Grand Lodges in the United States, and especially in Minnesota. Much of this material is exactly as it is printed in the Minnesota Masonic Manual, published by the Grand Lodge of Minnesota, and which is officially considered to be a non-secret document.

We have long recognized that informing our families and friends about the non-secret aspects of Masonry is an important part of Masonic education. We have encouraged Masons to share certain publications and video tapes with their families and to invite friends to open-house presentations. However, these instruction methods do not give an awareness of the ceremonial aspects of Masonry, or of the ritualistic experiences that a candidate must encounter during the conferral of the degrees. Nor do they impart a full appreciation of the intellectual, moral, and social philosophy of our Craft.

While we cannot show the Fellow Craft Degree work or discuss its secret parts, this short "Presentation In Ceremonial Form" gives an experience that is similar to what a candidate for Masonry goes through.

**W.M.** -- Brother Lodge Education Officer, please begin the introduction of the degree.

**L.E.O.** - The first degree is well calculated to enforce the duties of morality, and imprint on the memory the noblest principles which can adorn the human mind. It is, therefore, the best introduction to the second degree, which not only extends the same plan, but comprehends a more diffusive system of knowledge. Here practice and theory join together to help the Mason advance in knowledge and in practice.

Masonry as a science is divided into different classes or degrees, for the knowledge it has to pass on to those who petition to advance in Freemasonry. The Second Degree has been called the education degree, because it contains much in the way of explanation of what the Masons sees, and is told about, in the Lodge Room.

Masonry includes within its circle almost every branch of polite learning. Within the allegories of Freemasonry are comprehended a regular system of science, conduct, and morality. Many of its illustrations may at first appear unimportant; but the man more willing to learn and think will recognize them to be useful and interesting.

### **FIRST SECTION**

W.M. - Knowledge of all that is taught in this degree is absolutely necessary for all Freemasons. Because as the ceremonies of this degree have many important parts it is important that every officer and member of a Lodge should be unacquainted with it.

Many duties, which cement in the firmest union of well informed brethren, are illustrated in this section; and an opportunity is given to make such advances in Masonry, as will always distinguish the abilities of those who have arrived at a new stage in life

L.E.O. - When the Lodge is open on the Second Degree of Freemasonry the Holy Bible, The Great Light in Masonry, is open to Amos VII, 7& 8

- Thus he showed me:
- and behold, the Lord stood upon a wall made by a plumb-line,
- with a plumb-line in his hand.
- • And the Lord said unto me, Amos, what seest thou? And I said, a plumb-line.
- • Then said the Lord, Behold, I will set a plumb-line in the midst of my people, Israel:
- • I will not again pass by them any more.

The Plumb, Square, and Level, those noble and useful implements of a Fellow Craft, are here introduced and moralized, and serve as a constant admonition to the practice of virtue and morality.

J.W. - The PLUMB is an instrument made use of by Operative Masons, to raise perpendiculars.

W.M. - The SQUARE, to square their work.

S.W. - And the LEVEL, to lay horizontals; but we, as Free and Accepted Masons, are taught to make use of them for more noble and glorious purposes.

J.W. - The Plumb admonishes us to walk uprightly in our several stations before God and man.

W.M. - Squaring our actions by the Square of virtue. Remembering that we are traveling upon the Level of time, to "that undiscovered country, from whose bourn no traveler returns."

L.E.O. - The second part of the work of this degree has recourse to the origin of the Institution, and views Masonry under two denominations, operative and speculative. These are separately considered, and the principles on which both are founded, particularly explained.

The Second Degree contains a store of valuable knowledge, founded on reason and sacred record, which is both entertaining and instructive. Masonry is considered under two denominations: Operative and Speculative.

## **OPERATIVE MASONRY**

J.W. - By OPERATIVE MASONRY we allude to a proper application of the useful rules of architecture, whence a structure will derive figure, strength and beauty, and whence will result a due proportion, and a just correspondence in all its parts. It furnishes us with dwellings and convenient shelter from the vicissitudes and inclemency's of the seasons; and while it displays the effects of human wisdom, as well in the choice, as in the arrangement of the sundry materials of which an edifice is composed, it demonstrates that a fund of science and industry is implanted in man for the best, most salutary and beneficent purposes.

### ***SPECULATIVE MASONRY***

S.W. - By SPECULATIVE MASONRY, we learn to subdue the passions, act upon the square, keep a tongue of good report, maintain secrecy, and practice charity. It is so far interwoven with religion, as to lay us under obligations to pay that rational homage to the Deity, which at once constitutes our duty and our happiness. It leads the contemplative to view with reverence and admiration the glorious works of the creation, and inspires him with the most exalted ideas of the perfections of his Divine Creator.

### ***OF THE GLOBES***

L.E.O. - You will notice there are two pillars in the Lodge Room which have a globe on their tops. These two pillars are symbolical of the pillars which were erected on the portico of King Solomon's Temple. The explanation of these pillars is found on the books of Kings and Chronicles of the Holy Bible. In the bible we learn that these pillars were named Jachin and Boaz, meaning establishment and strength. These names alluded to the promise of God to David that He would establish his kingdom in strength.

S.D. - An explanation of the terrestrial and celestial globes is an important part of the second degree. These Globes are two artificial spherical bodies on the convex surface of which are represented the countries, seas, and various parts of the earth, the face of the heavens, the planetary revolutions, and other particulars.

The Sphere, with the parts of the earth delineated on its surface, is called the Terrestrial Globe; and that with the constellations, and other heavenly bodies, the Celestial Globe. The principal use of the globes, besides serving as maps to distinguish the outward parts of the earth, and the situation of the fixed stars, is to illustrate and explain the phenomena arising from the annual revolution, and the diurnal rotation, of the earth round its own axis.

They are the noblest instruments for improving the mind, and giving it the most distinct idea of any problem or proposition, as well as enabling it to solve the same. Contemplating these bodies, we are inspired with a due reverence for the Deity and His Works, and are induced to encourage the studies of astronomy, geography, navigation, and the arts dependent on them, by which society has been so much benefited.

## **OF ORDER IN ARCHITECTURE**

L.E.O. - The orders of architecture come under consideration in this degree, and a brief explanation of the five orders and the origins of architecture are interesting and informative.

W.M. - When we say order in architecture we mean a system of all the members, proportions and ornaments of columns, and pilasters; or, it is a regular arrangement of the projecting parts of a building, which, united with those of a column, form a beautiful, perfect and complete whole.

From the first formation of society, order in architecture may be traced. When the rigor of seasons obliged men to contrive shelter from the inclemency of the weather, we learn that they first planted trees on end, and then laid others across, to support a covering. The bands which connected those trees at the top and bottom, are said to have given rise to the idea of the base and capital of pillars; and from this simple hint originally proceeded the more improved art of architecture.

### ***The Five Orders***

J.D. - The five orders are thus classed: The Tuscan, Doric, Ionic, Corinthian, and Composite.

The TUSCAN is the most simple and solid of the five orders. It was invented in Tuscany, whence it derived its name. Its column is seven diameters high; and its capital, base and entablature have but few moldings. The simplicity of the construction of this column renders it eligible where ornament would be superfluous.

S.W. - The DORIC, which is plain and natural, is the most ancient, and was invented by the Greeks. Its column is eight diameters high; and has seldom any ornaments on base or capital, except moldings; though the frieze is distinguished by triglyphs and metopes, and triglyphs compose the ornaments of the frieze. The solid composition of this order gives it a preference in structures where strength and a noble simplicity are chiefly required.

The Doric is the best proportioned of all the orders. The several parts of which it is composed are founded on the natural position of solid bodies. In its first invention it was more simple than in its present state. In after times, when it began to be adorned, it gained the name of Doric; for when it was constructed in its primitive and simple form, the name of Tuscan was conferred on it. Hence the Tuscan precedes the Doric in rank, on account of its resemblance to that pillar in its original state.

W.M. - The IONIC bears a kind of mean proportion between the more solid and delicate orders. Its column is nine diameters high; its capital is adorned with volutes, and its

cornice has dentils. There is both delicacy and ingenuity displayed in this pillar, the invention of which is attributed to the Ionians, as the famous temple of Diana, at Ephesus, was of this order.

J.W. - The CORINTHIAN, the richest of the five orders, is deemed a masterpiece of art. Its column is ten diameters high, and its capital is adorned with two rows of leaves, and eight volutes, which sustain the abacus. The frieze is ornamented with curious devices, the cornice with dentils and modillions. This order is used in stately and superb structures.

J.D. - The COMPOSITE is compounded of the other orders, and was contrived by the Romans. Its capital has the two rows of leaves of the Corinthian, and the volutes of the Ionic. Its column has the quarter round as the Tuscan and Doric order, is ten diameters high, and its cornice has dentils or simple modillions. This pillar is generally found in buildings where strength, elegance, and beauty are displayed.

### ***OF THE FIVE SENSES OF HUMAN NATURE***

L.E.O. - An analysis of the human faculties is also given in this degree, in which the five external senses of human nature particularly claim attention. These are Hearing, Seeing, Feeling, Smelling, and Tasting.

S.S. - HEARING is that sense by which we distinguish sounds, and are capable of enjoying all the agreeable charms of music. By it we are enabled to enjoy the pleasures of society, and reciprocally to communicate to each other our thoughts and intentions, our purposes and desires; while thus our reason is capable of exerting its utmost power and energy. The wise and beneficent Author of Nature intended, by the formation of this sense, that we should be social creatures, and receive the greatest and most important part of our knowledge by the information of others. For these purposes we are endowed with hearing, that, by a proper exertion of our natural powers, our happiness may be complete.

J.S. - SEEING is that sense by which we distinguish objects, and in an instant of time, without change of place or situation view armies in battle array, figures of the most stately structures, and all the agreeable variety displayed in the landscape of nature. By this sense we find our way in the pathless ocean, traverse the globe of earth, determine its figure and dimensions, and delineate any region or quarter of it. By it we measure the planetary orbs, and make new discoveries in the sphere of the fixed stars. By it we perceive the tempers and dispositions, the passions and affections, of our fellow creatures, when they wish most to conceal them; so that, though the tongue may be taught to lie and dissemble, the countenance would display hypocrisy to the discerning eye. In fine, the rays of light which administer to this sense, are the most astonishing parts of the animated creation, and render the eye a peculiar object of admiration. Of all the faculties, sight is the noblest. The structure of the eye, and its appurtenances, evinces the admirable contrivance of nature for performing all its various external and internal motions; while the variety displayed in the eyes of different animals suited to

their several ways of life, clearly demonstrates this organ to be the masterpiece of nature's work.

J.D. - FEELING is that sense by which we distinguish the different qualities of bodies; such as heat and cold, hardness and softness, roughness and smoothness, figure, solidity, motion and extension.

S.D. - SMELLING is that sense by which we distinguish odors, the various kinds of which convey different impressions to the mind. Animal and vegetable bodies, and indeed most other bodies, while exposed to the air, continually send forth effluvia of vast subtlety, as well in the state of life and growth as in the state of fermentation and putrefaction. These effluvia, being drawn into the nostrils along with the air, are the means by which all bodies are smelled. Hence it is evident, that there is a manifest appearance of design in the great Creator's having planted the organ of smell in the inside of that canal, through which the air continually passes in respiration.

S.W. - TASTING enables us to make a proper distinction in the choice of our food. The organ of this sense guards the entrance of the alimentary canal as that of smelling guards the entrance of the canal for respiration. From the situation of both these organs, it is plain that they were intended by nature to distinguish wholesome food from that which is nauseous. Everything that enters into the stomach must undergo the scrutiny of tasting; and by it we are capable of discerning the changes which the same body undergoes in the different compositions of art, cookery, chemistry, pharmacy, etc.

W.M. - To sum up the whole of this transcendent measure of God's bounty to man, we shall add, that memory, imagination, taste, reasoning, moral perception, and all the active powers of the soul, present a vast and boundless field for philosophical disquisition, which far exceed human inquiry, and are peculiar mysteries, known only to nature, and to nature's God, to whom we are all indebted for creation, preservation and every blessing we enjoy.

### ***OF THE SEVEN LIBERAL ARTS AND SCIENCES***

L.E.O. - The seven liberal Arts and Sciences, Grammar, Rhetoric, Logic, Arithmetic, Geometry, Music and Astronomy, are next illustrated and explained in the degree

S.S. GRAMMAR teaches the proper arrangement of words, according to the idiom or dialect of any particular people; and that excellency of pronunciation, which enables us to speak or write a language with accuracy, agreeably to reason and correct usage.

J.S. - RHETORIC teaches us to speak copiously and fluently on any subject, not merely with propriety alone, but with all the advantages of force and elegance; wisely contriving to captivate the hearer by strength of argument and beauty of expression, whether it be to entreat and exhort, to admonish or applaud.

J.W. - LOGIC teaches us to guide our reason discretionally in the general knowledge of things, and directs our inquiries after truth. It consists of a regular train of argument, whence we infer, deduce, and conclude, according to certain premises laid down, admitted, or granted; and in it are employed the faculties of conceiving, judging, reasoning, and disposing; all of which are naturally led on from one gradation to another, till the point in question is finally determined.

J.D. - ARITHMETIC teaches the powers and properties of numbers, which is variously effected by letters, tables, figures and instruments. By this art, reasons and demonstrations are given, for finding out any certain number, whose relation or affinity to another is already known or discovered.

S.W. - GEOMETRY treats of the powers and properties of magnitudes in general, where length, breadth, and thickness are considered, from a point to a line, from a line to a superficies, and from a superficies to a solid. A point is a dimensionless figure; or an indivisible part of space. A line is a point continued, and a figure of one capacity, namely, length. A superficies is a figure of two dimensions, namely, length and breadth. A solid is a figure of three dimensions, namely length, breadth and thickness. By this science, the architect is enabled to construct his plans, and execute his designs; the general to arrange his soldiers; the engineer to mark out ground for encampments; the geographer to give us the dimensions of the world, and all things therein contained, to delineate the extent of seas, and specify the divisions of empires, kingdoms and provinces. By it, also, the astronomer is enabled to make his observations and to fix the durations of times and seasons, years and cycles. In fine, geometry is the foundation of architecture, and the root of the mathematics.

S.D. - MUSIC teaches the art of forming concords, so as compose delightful harmony, by a mathematical and proportional arrangement of acute, grave and mixed sounds. This art, by a series of experiments, is reduced to a demonstrative science, with respect to tones, and the intervals of sound. It inquires into the nature of concords and discords, and enables us to find out the proportion between them by numbers.

L.E.O. - ASTRONOMY is that divine art, by which we are taught to read the wisdom, strength and beauty of the Almighty Creator, in those sacred pages, the celestial hemisphere. Assisted by astronomy, we can observe the motions, measure the distances, comprehend the magnitudes, and calculate the periods and eclipses, of the heavenly bodies. By it we learn the use of the globes, the system of the world, and the preliminary law of nature. While we are employed in the study of this science, we must perceive unparalleled instances of wisdom and goodness, and, through the whole creation, trace the glorious Author by his works.

W.M. - GEOMETRY, the first and noblest of sciences, is the basis on which the superstructure of Masonry is erected. By geometry, we may curiously trace nature, through her various windings, to her most concealed recesses, by it, we discover the power, the wisdom, and the goodness of the Grand Artificer of the Universe, and view with delight the proportions which connect this vast machine. By it we discover how the

planets move in their different orbits and demonstrate their various revolutions. By it we account for the return of seasons, and the variety of scenes which each season displays to the discerning eye. Numberless worlds are around us, all framed by the same Divine artist, which roll through the vast expanse, and are all conducted by the same unerring law of nature. A survey of nature, and the observations of her beautiful proportions, first determined man to imitate the Divine plan, and study symmetry and order. This gave rise to societies, and birth to every useful art. The architect began to design, and the plans, which he laid down, being improved by experience and time, have produced works which are the admiration of every age.

The lapse of time, the ruthless hand of ignorance, and the devastations of war, have laid waste and destroyed many valuable monuments of antiquity, on which the utmost exertions of human genius have been employed. Even the Temple of Solomon, so spacious and magnificent, and constructed by so many celebrated artists, escaped not the unsparing ravages of barbarous force. Freemasonry, notwithstanding, has still survived. The attentive ear receives the sound from the instructive tongue, and the lessons of Masonry are safely lodged in the repository of faithful breasts. Tools and implements of architecture are selected by the Fraternity, to imprint on the memory wise and serious truths; and thus, through a succession of ages, are transmitted unimpaired, the excellent tenets of our Institution.

## **Summary of the Second Degree**

When a Brother is advanced to the second degree of Masonry he is reminded that it is the internal and not the external qualifications of a man, are what Masonry regards. He is reminded that as we advance in life and gain more knowledge, experience, and assets our obligations in life increase, and that as we move along through life we are expected to discharge our obligations thoroughly and cheerfully. Reminding us that to whom much is given much is expected.

The Fellow Craft is also told that in all our dealings with mankind and our Lodge Brothers we are to judge with candor, admonish with friendship, and reprehend with justice.

The study of the liberal arts, which tends so effectually to polish and adorn the mind, is earnestly recommended to the Fellow Craft Mason. He is told that as a Mason he is expected to conform to the principles of Freemasonry and to persevere in the practice of every commendable virtue, which distinguish us as Masons.

**W.M.** -- Brother Chaplain, please conclude our ceremony with the closing prayer.

**Chaplain** -- Almighty Father, we ask Your blessing upon the proceedings of this communication, and, as we are about to separate, we ask You to keep us under Your protecting care until again we are called together. Enable us, O God, to subdue every discordant passion within us. May the blessing of heaven rest upon us and all regular Masons. May brotherly love prevail, and every moral and social virtue cement us. Amen.

Response: "So mote it be."

This Ceremonial Explanation of the Second Degree was compiled and arranged in May 2004 by Ed Halpaus, Grand Lodge Education Officer.

## **Suggestions for Conducting the Ceremonial Presentation** **Written by our late R.W. Brother Duane E. Anderson**

This presentation can be put on in the Lodge room or in any meeting room. It does not have to be done in a lodge building. Nine Masons, representing the W.M., S.W., J.W., LEO, Chaplain, S.D., S.S., J.S., and a Past Master, should take part in the presentation.

If the presentation is done in the Lodge room, the Lodge should be either at refreshment or closed. The officers should be in their normal stations and places, and the observers and participating ladies will be seated on the side-lines. Instructions for conducting the participating ladies are given in the script.

If the presentation is given in a meeting room there are many possible ways to arrange the seating of the officers and the floor movements of the participants.

If the room is set up as a lodge then follow the instructions in the script.

If the room is set up for a table lodge (head table and two long tables on the sides to form a "U") then the officers can be seated as for the table lodge ceremony and, depending on the amount of space and the number of participants, the ladies can either move from place to place or simply stand at the open end of the "U" and turn to face toward the different speakers.

If the room is set up for a banquet, with a head table and separate tables, a sufficiently large area in front of the head table should be cleared for conducting the participants and the officers can all be seated at the head table during the presentation.

If the room is set up in "auditorium" fashion, with a speaker's podium at the front, then a sufficiently large area at the front of the room should be cleared for the participants and the officers can all be seated in the front row or beside the podium.

Circumambulation is an important symbolic part of the degree work and, for this presentation to have the best effect, it is important to have enough floor space (if at all possible) so that the participants can be conducted conveniently from place to place during the presentation.

As in all ritual work, the best impression is given if the speeches are given from memory. The S.S. and J.S. parts thus should be given to members who know the third section of the Entered Apprentice lecture. The other parts contain portions of the work that all Masons should know, plus explanations and commentary that are not usually memorized. As for any presentation, whether it is a degree, a skit, or a talk, rehearsal always improves the performance. This is also true for any part that you may be reading.