

MIDDLE CHAMBER LECTURE

(with monitorial deletions restored in italics)

As you have now witnessed, the Middle Chamber Lecture of the Fellow Craft Degree is delivered by the Senior Deacon. Portions of it are contained in the *Monitor* for this degree which you should have already received from the lodge. The California version of the Middle Chamber Lecture comes from Thomas Smith Webb's *Freemason's Monitor or Illustrations of Masonry*, which was based on William Preston's earlier work, *Illustrations of Masonry*. Our California Middle Chamber Lecture, however, is a shortened version of what Webb published. The omitted monitorial portions from the 1818 edition of the Webb work are restored to our lecture in italics below. You will note that portions of the Middle Chamber Lecture as delivered by the Senior Deacon are not in the work printed below. These omitted portions are considered esoteric and may not therefore be written.

OPERATIVE MASONRY

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 from which will result a due proportion and just correspondence in all its parts. It furnishes us with dwellings and convenient shelters from the vicissitudes and inclemencies of the seasons; and, while it displays the effects of human wisdom, as well in the choice as in the arrangement of the several 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 most beneficent purposes.

SPECULATIVE MASONRY

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 Mason 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.

SEVENTH DAY

In six days, God created the heaven and the earth, and rested on the seventh day. The seventh therefore, our ancient brethren consecrated as a day of rest from their labors; thereby enjoying frequent opportunities to contemplate the glorious works of the Creation, to adore their Great Creator.

THE USE OF GLOBES

The doctrine of the spheres is included in the science of astronomy and particularly considered in this section.

The 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 important 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 sphere.

Their principal use, 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 of the earth around the sun, and its diurnal rotation upon its own axis. They are valuable instruments for improving the mind and giving it the most distinct idea of any problem or proposition, as well as for 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 upon them, by which society has been so much benefited.

ORDER IN ARCHITECTURE

The orders of architecture come under consideration in this section; a brief description of them may therefore not be improper.

By order in architecture is meant 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 first 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 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 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 derives 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 when ornament would be superfluous.

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 a preference in structures where strength and 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 was given the name of Doric; for when it was constructed in its primitive and simple state, 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.

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 dentals. 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. It is said to have been formed after the model of an agreeable young woman, of elegant shape, dressed in her hair - as a contrast to the Doric order, which was formed after that of a strong, robust man.

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 dentals and modillions. This order is used in stately and superb structures. It was invented in Corinth by Callimachus, who is said to have taken the hint of the capital of this pillar from the following remarkable circumstance: Accidentally passing by the tomb of a young lady, he perceived a basket of toys, covered with a tile, placed over an acanthus root, having been left there by her nurse. As the branches grew up they encompassed the basket, till, arriving at the tile, they met with an obstruction and bent downwards. Callimachus, struck with the object, set about imitating the figure; the vase of the capital he made to represent the basket, the abacus the tile, and the volutes the bending leaves.

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 of the Tuscan and Doric order, is ten diameters high, and its cornice has dentals and simple modillions. This pillar is generally found in buildings where strength, elegance and beauty are displayed.

The ancient and original orders of architecture, esteemed by Masons, are no more than three, the Doric, Ionic, and Corinthian, which were invented by the Greeks. To these the Romans added two, the Tuscan, which they made plainer than the Doric, and the Composite, which was more ornamental, if not more beautiful, than the Corinthian. The first three orders alone, however, show invention and particular character, and essentially differ from each other; the two others having nothing but that which is borrowed and differing only accidentally. The Tuscan is the Doric in its earliest state, and the Composite is the Corinthian, enriched with the Ionic. To the Greeks, therefore, and not to the Romans, we are indebted for what is great, judicious, and distinct in architecture.

THE FIVE SENSE OF HUMAN NATURE

An analysis of the human faculties is next given in this section, in which the five external senses particularly claim attention; these are hearing, seeing, feeling, smelling and tasting.

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 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 rational powers, our happiness may be complete.

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. Nay, more, 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 the 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 eye of different animals, suited to their several ways of life, clearly demonstrates this organ to be the masterpiece of nature's work.

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.

These three senses, hearing, seeing and feeling, are deemed particularly essential among Masons.

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 as 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.

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 change which the same body undergoes in the different compositions of art, cookery, chemistry, pharmacy, etc.

Smelling and tasting are inseparably connected; and it is by the unnatural kind of life men commonly lead in society, that these senses are rendered less fit to perform their natural offices.

On the mind all our knowledge must depend: what, therefore, can be a more proper subject for the investigation of Masons? By anatomical dissection and observation, we become acquainted with the body; but it is by the anatomy of the mind alone we discover its powers and principles.

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 exceeds human inquiry, and are peculiar mysteries, known only to nature and to nature's God, to whom we and all are indebted for the creation, preservation, and every blessing we enjoy.

THE SEVEN LIBERAL ARTS AND SCIENCES

The seven liberal arts and sciences are next illustrated in this section. It may not therefore be improper to insert here a short explanation of them.

GRAMMAR

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.

RHETORIC

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.

LOGIC

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.

ARITHMETIC

Arithmetic teaches the powers and properties of numbers, which is variously affected, 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.

GEOMETRY

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 the beginning of all geometrical matter. A line has length, without breadth or thickness. A superficies has length and breadth, without thickness. A solid has 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 grounds for encampments; the geographer, to give us the dimensions of the world and all

things therein contained, to delineate the extent of seas, and to specify the divisions of empires, kingdoms, and provinces. By it, also, the astronomer is enabled to make his observations, and to fix the duration of times and seasons, years and cycles. In fine, Geometry is the foundation of architecture and the root of mathematics.

MUSIC

Music teaches the art of forming concords, so as to 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.

ASTRONOMY

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 globe, 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.