



ST. PAUL VALLEY FOUNDATIONS

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NEWSLETTER

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Rhetoric and Logic

By Frank Spevak 33° I.G.H., Personal Representative and Editor

Rhetoric, as a standalone class, has not been taught in the US for decades. The closest type of class one can usually get is Public Speaking. The number of students taking a public speaking course is estimated to be anywhere from 20-30%. Those taking Debate are even fewer. Combine that with the general fear of speaking in public, no wonder people rarely know when they are hearing persuasive speech whether it be persuading them in the right or wrong direction but most definitely in the speakers direction.

From the Minnesota Masonic Manual, we learn that:

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.

We also learn that:

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.

The earliest education that a Mason gets is a lengthy, but extremely useful discussion in the Fellow Craft degree. The five orders of architecture, the five senses, the seven liberals and sciences. William Preston developed the system of lectures in the 18th Century when a solid education was only available to a select few. Masons were given a taste of advanced learning, with the usual admonition, to study in their leisure hours or converse with other well-versed Masons.

Our national elections are over, but that doesn't stop politicians of all parties from using rhetoric on the public to persuade them to the politicians point of view. For Masons, because of our education in the Fellow Craft Degree, you should have the fundamentals of understanding what is happening when a speech is being delivered and apply logic to the argument to determine if it is a reasonable stance. Then make your decision.

“Let us drink together, fellows, as we did in days of yore.
And still enjoy the golden hours that Fortune has in store;
The absent friends remembered be, in all that's sung or said,
And Love immortal consecrate the memory of the dead.”

— Albert Pike

Robert Burns Night

By Jerry J. Johnson, 33^o G.C.

A Robert Burns Night, sponsored by the St. Paul Scottish Rite Knights of Saint Andrew (KSA), will be held on Friday, January 24, 2025, at the St. Paul Masonic Center. Scottish Rite brothers, Masons and guests are invited which will celebrate the life and the works of Robert Burns.

This event will provide a similar menu to that served at the first Burns gathering held in 1801 which honored the roots of the famous poet. The chefs are preparing the traditional haggis and for those who are not a fan, an alternate main course will be served. Bagpipers will be on hand, and you can expect to hear traditional Irish music.

Poetry will be read and a speech celebrating Burns as a poet and Freemason will be given. Toasts will be made in the memory of Burns, and a cash bar will be available. At the end of the evening everyone will be invited to join in singing Auld Lang Syne.

Watch the Sunday Double Eagle Email Blast for details and how to reserve your spot for this terrific evening.

Upcoming Major Events

January 15 - 18th Degree - Dinner at 5:45, degree at 6:30.

January 24 - Robert Burns Night - Social 5:30, dinner 6:30

February 12 - Stated Meeting - Dinner at 6, meeting at 7.

February 15 - Actual Past Masters Degree - Breakfast at 8, degree at 9.

February 19 - Feast of Council - Social at 5:30, dinner at 6:30

March 14 - Rite Care Gala - Social at 5:30, dinner at 6:30

Visit the St. Paul Scottish Rite website for more events and details.

We are pleased to bring you a this publication dedicated to the education and philanthropies of the Scottish Rite, Southern Jurisdiction, Orient of Minnesota, Valley of St. Paul.

This publication is made possible by the generous support of the Scottish Rite Foundation of St. Paul, a qualified 501(c)3 non-profit organization. The purpose of the Foundation is to provide educational information about the Scottish Rite as well as promote education to others and to promote ourselves amongst the community by hosting events when possible.

We are looking for articles that we can share with our members and the public at large to best show what Scottish Rite Freemasons are all about. If you would like to contribute, please send an email to the editor, Frank Spevak at fspevak@gmail.com.

If you would like to help us continue our mission, please consider making a tax-deductible donation to the Scottish Rite Foundation of St. Paul and put in your memo "Newsletter".

Insurance as a Planned Gift

By Gary Unger 33°, I.G.H., Donor Officer Midwest, Valleys of Omaha NE and St Paul MN

In this newsletter I want to highlight how Scottish Rite members can use life insurance as a planned gift as an impactful way to leave a lasting legacy. Based on an individual's situation there are multiple options to consider. Here are several ways this can work:

1. Designating a Charity as a Beneficiary

How it works: You name a charity as the beneficiary of your life insurance policy. Upon your passing, the charity receives the policy's death benefit or a percentage of the overall benefit. Your estate may qualify for a charitable tax deduction. The process is straightforward and does not require changes to your will. Contact your insurance company and update the beneficiary designation form to include the charity.

2. Donating an Existing Policy

How it works: You transfer ownership of an existing life insurance policy to a charity. The charity can either cash in the policy or keep it and receive the death benefit later. You may receive a tax deduction for the policy's cash surrender value at the time of transfer. Annual premium payments (if required) can be considered additional charitable donations. Work with your insurance provider and the charity to facilitate the transfer.

3. Purchasing a New Policy

How it works: You buy a new life insurance policy and name a charity as the owner and beneficiary. The premiums you pay may qualify as a tax-deductible donation. It allows you to make a significant gift for a relatively small outlay. Collaborate with the charity to ensure they are willing to accept the policy.

4. Using Life Insurance for Family and Charity

How it works: Combine charitable giving with providing for loved ones. For example, set up a charitable remainder trust funded with life insurance, where your family receives an income stream for a period, and the remaining funds go to charity. Supports both your family and your philanthropic goals. May offer tax advantages. Consult a financial planner or estate attorney to structure the trust properly.

When considering Life Insurance to fund your charitable giving, consult a tax advisor to understand potential deductions and benefits. Be sure to review how any potential gift fits into your overall financial and estate plans. Planned gifts through life insurance can amplify your impact and ensure your values endure. For additional information, reach out to me at 402-651-9170 or gunger@scottishrite.org.

Altruism in Freemasonry

By Chris Posel 32°, Master of Kadosh

Introduction:

I just finished reading a fascinating book *The Price of Altruism* by Oren Harman. It was about a brilliant individual (and now a personal hero of mine) by the name of George Price.

George Price was a mathematician and evolutionary biologist, who fundamentally reshaped our understanding of altruism by analyzing its evolutionary roots. His "Price Equation" challenged the idea of purely selfless acts, suggesting that altruism could have genetic or self-serving incentives.

The ideas presented in this book really spoke to me, life felt devoid of meaning until I discovered Freemasonry—a philosophy that offered not only community but purpose, closely aligning with Absurdism. In this article, I explore whether altruism, as understood by Price (and his resulting equation), is “dead” within Freemasonry and how the fraternity has helped me find purpose in a world often seen as devoid of meaning.

George Price’s Understanding of Altruism and the “Price Equation”:

The Price Equation is a mathematical formula that models how a trait, like altruism, changes over time within a population. It’s expressed as follows:

$$\Delta z = \text{Cov}(w_i, z_i) + E(w_i \Delta z_i),$$

where:

- Δz represents the change in the average altruistic trait over generations.
- w_i denotes the fitness (success in survival or reproduction) of an individual.
- z_i is the trait value (e.g., altruism) in individual i .
- $\text{Cov}(w_i, z_i)$ measures the correlation between the trait and fitness.
- $E(w_i \Delta z_i)$ represents other factors, such as environmental influences or genetic mutations.

This equation helps explain why altruistic traits might persist in populations if they improve the success of the group, even if they incur individual costs. Price’s work showed that altruism can evolve if the benefit it brings to relatives, or the group outweighs the cost to the individual.

Example 1: Altruism in Flowers

Using the Price Equation, consider a population of flowering plants where some flowers “altruistically” share nutrients through connected roots, helping neighboring flowers grow. Altruistic flowers have slightly lower personal fitness due to sharing resources, but they improve the group’s overall success, aiding pollination and resilience.

Suppose:

Altruistic flowers lose 10% of their own nutrients, decreasing their individual fitness. However, this sharing improves neighboring flowers’ survival by 20%.

Using the Price Equation, we can calculate how this altruistic trait affects the overall population. If the benefit to the group (pollination success) outweighs the individual cost, the trait persists, allowing altruism to evolve even at a personal expense.

Example 2: Altruism and Helping a Neighbor in Crisis

Imagine my neighbor’s house catches fire. As an altruistic individual, I decide to help, incurring risks (personal harm, time loss) but potentially increasing the community’s welfare by protecting a neighbor’s life and property.

In terms of the Price Equation:

I risk a decrease in my own “fitness” by exposing myself to danger.

My intervention, however, raises the survival rate or wellbeing of the neighbor, benefiting the broader community.

If my altruistic act inspires reciprocal aid or strengthens community bonds, this could ultimately increase my own survival chances or social capital, justifying the individual cost.

Here, the altruistic trait—risking personal harm to aid others—is preserved because it indirectly benefits me by enhancing community resilience.

Freemasonry's Embrace of Altruism:

Freemasonry does not require “pure” altruism in Price's strict sense. Instead, it encourages acts of charity that bring both personal and social rewards, like fulfillment, community support, and moral growth. Through Freemasonry, I discovered a path to meaning by choosing to participate in altruistic acts that connect me with others while embracing both personal and the collective good.

Absurdism and Finding Meaning in Freemasonry:

I recently finished reading a book on Absurdism, by Albert Camus, that posits that humans search for meaning in a universe that offers none. This existential struggle forms the “absurd.” Before joining Freemasonry, I often felt life lacked intrinsic meaning. Freemasonry, however, provided a framework through which I could confront my emptiness by committing to intentional acts of service and kindness. Freemasonry's approach to altruism allows us as Masons to embrace meaning even if it is not innate, as acts of service create a purpose in the world's seeming indifference.

Example 1: Masonic Charity in Community

Our lodges and valleys frequently support community initiatives, like scholarships or assisting families in need. From Price's perspective, these acts may serve Masons' own interests by fostering personal satisfaction or respect within the community. However, Absurdism views these acts as purposeful choices that bring meaning to Masons' lives by enhancing connection and resilience within the community. Personally, participating in such efforts has shown me that while life's meaning may not be intrinsic, it can be intentionally created or, stated differently, a social construct.

Example 2: Collective Responsibility

Freemasonry builds a sense of collective responsibility, especially in supporting members through personal challenges. From Price's view, supporting others could be seen as a mutually beneficial act that strengthens social bonds. However, Freemasonry's collective responsibility extends beyond reciprocity, cultivating sincere bonds among members. This fellowship provides a sense of purpose that counters the existential void, affirming that while life's meaning may not be inherent, it can be created through intentional relationships and compassion.

Is Altruism “Dead” in Freemasonry?

According to Price's strict definition, Masonic altruism may not qualify as purely selfless, as it provides personal fulfillment. However, Freemasonry doesn't demand purely self-sacrificing altruism. Instead, it supports altruism as a human choice, where members acknowledge the complexity of their motivations. Through Absurdism, Freemasonry frames altruism not as dead but as a defiance against the void, creating a deliberate path to meaning. Freemasonry's dedication to charity, brotherhood, and moral integrity breathes life into altruism, showing that even if life lacks inherent purpose, we can create purpose through deliberate acts of kindness.

Conclusion:

While Price's equation suggests that pure altruism may be biologically improbable, and Absurdism argues that life lacks inherent purpose, Freemasonry offers a philosophy that integrates both ideas. For someone who once struggled to find meaning, Freemasonry became a way to embrace a meaningful life. Through Masonic values, altruism becomes a conscious act that brings meaning to both individuals and society, as a choice that defies biological determinism and the existential void. Freemasonry affirms that altruism is not dead but exists as a powerful force for good, a way to assert purpose, and a source of genuine connection in an otherwise indifferent world.

Robert Burns and John Barleycorn

by Clay Anderson 32° K.C.C.H

"Yea, the Lord will answer and say unto his people, 'Behold, I will send you corn, and wine, and oil, and ye shall be satisfied therewith.'" (Joel 2:19, KJV)

The Second Degree speaks of "The corn of nourishment, the wine of refreshment, and the oil of joy." In the Masonic ritual we are using "Corn" in the sense the King James Bible uses it, a small grain such as barley or wheat, not New World corn or maize.

Shawn Eyers, in an article titled *The Elements of Consecration*, points out that before it is transformed into bread or beer, the corn must be harvested and threshed, and compares it to the process of Masonic initiation:

:"As grain is threshed to separate it from the chaff, the neophyte is distinguished from the cowan by initiation..."

"Another aspect of Masonic mythos involving Corn that is usually overlooked is the importance of the threshing floor legend.

"According to the Volume of the Sacred Law, the location of the Temple of Solomon (which every Lodge represents) was in fact discovered as the result of a tragic incident in the life of King David... This culminated in David's angelophany on Mount Moriah, and the subsequent purchase of the site for the location of the Temple of Solomon. The place where the destroying angel stood was the threshing floor of Araunah -- a place where grain was beaten and tossed in order to separate the wheat from the chaff.

"The symbolism of this story is deeply significant in context... as the wheat was separated from the chaff at the threshing floor of Araunah, so the darkness is separated from the light on the Floor of the Lodge. and so the Stewards bear the candidate across the threshold from darkness to light, where he is -- in a manner of speaking -- 'harvested' from the profane world. The newly gleaned Mason is being continually refined and sorted."

In the British folk song, *John Barleycorn*, the character of John Barleycorn is a personification of barley and the alcoholic beverages made of it, beer and whiskey. In the song, John Barleycorn is represented as suffering attacks, death and mutilation that correspond to the various stages of barley cultivation and processing, such as reaping and malting. John Barleycorn also returns to life year after year, like the new crops of grain.

The Scottish poet, Brother Robert Burns, reworked the ballad in a 1782 poem that has become the basis for most modern versions. There are parallels in Burn's poem to Masonic ritual, particularly the Third Degree. Burns, great poet that he was, managed to seamlessly weave together a traditional folk song, a harvest ritual, references to Masonic ceremonies, and a drinking song:

There was three kings into the east,
Three kings both great and high,
And they hae sworn a solemn oath
John Barleycorn should die.

They took a plough and plough'd him down,
Put clods upon his head,
And they hae sworn a solemn oath
John Barleycorn was dead.

But the cheerful spring came kindly on,
And show'rs began to fall;
John Barleycorn got up again,
And sore surpris'd them all.

The sultry suns of Summer came,
And he grew thick and strong;
His head weel arm'd wi' pointed spears,
That no one should him wrong.

The sober Autumn enter'd mild,
When he grew wan and pale;
His bending joints and drooping head
Show'd he began to fail.

His colour sicken'd more and more,
He faded into age;
And then his enemies began
To show their deadly rage.

They've taen a weapon, long and sharp,
And cut him by the knee;
Then tied him fast upon a cart,
Like a rogue for forgerie.

They laid him down upon his back,
And cudgell'd him full sore;
They hung him up before the storm,
And turned him o'er and o'er.

They filled up a darksome pit
With water to the brim;
They heaved in John Barleycorn,
There let him sink or swim.

They laid him out upon the floor,
To work him farther woe;
And still, as signs of life appear'd,
They toss'd him to and fro.

They wasted, oe'r a scorching flame,
The marrow of his bones;
But a miller us'd him worst of all,
For he crush'd him between two stones.

And they hae taen his very heart's blood,
And drank it round and round;
And still the more and more they drank,
Their joy did more abound.

John Barleycorn was a hero bold,
Of noble enterprise;
For if you do but taste his blood,
'Twill make your courage rise.

'Twill make a man forget his woe;
'Twill heighten all his joy;
'Twill make the widow's heart to sing,
Tho' the tear were in her eye.

Then let us toast John Barleycorn,
Each man a glass in hand;
And may his great posterity
Ne'er fail in old Scotland

Tobias Churton, in his book *The Mysteries of John the Baptist: His Legacy in Gnosticism, Paganism and Freemasonry*, discusses the relationship between St. John the Baptist as the Patron Saint of Freemasonry, the midsummer festival on June 24, the Feast Day of St. John the Baptist, and Burns' poem, *John Barleycorn*. Churton observes, "The treatment of John has a decidedly ritualistic air to it... The Masonic 'festive board' following the ceremony is perhaps suggested... No Mason could miss that last reference to the 'widow.' Masons have long been known as the 'sons of the widow.'... John is profoundly linked to the idea of resurrection and rebirth. John Barleycorn must die so he may live again, raised in bread and beer."

The Thirteenth Degree

by Clay Anderson, 32°, K.C.C.H.

The Thirteenth Degree, "Royal Arch of Solomon," relates that Solomon, desiring to build a Temple, selected a place near Jerusalem, but finding ruins of a Temple on the site, and supposing them to be the ruins of a heathen temple, chose a site on Mount Moriah for his Temple. In fact, the ruins were those of a temple that had been built by the Patriarch Enoch before the Great Flood. Later, Solomon proposed clearing away the ruins, and selected three Craftsmen, Adoniram, Yehu-aber, and Stolkin (the names vary in different versions of the legend), to survey the ground. They discovered the entrance to a vertical shaft and descended through nine arches to a chamber far underground, where they found a cubical stone, resting on a triangular pedestal. On one side of the cube there was a plate of gold with ancient writing, which they brought up and gave to King Solomon, who recognized that it was the Lost Word, which is the Sacred Name of God. In the Fourteenth Degree, Perfect Elu, Solomon had the plate placed in a vault that he had prepared beneath the Temple, which was entered through a series of nine arches, arranged horizontally.

An article in the November-December issue of the *Scottish Rite Journal*, "The Royal Arch of Solomon and the Perfect Elu: The Divine Spark of the Scottish Rite," by Adrian Castro, points out that the journey in the Thirteenth Degree, a vertical descent into the earth, symbolizes a descent into oneself to examine one's most hidden thoughts. The horizontal journey of the Fourteenth degree symbolizes taking that sacred knowledge back into the world. "In the Thirteenth Degree, the Mason uncovers the divine virtue within himself. In the Fourteenth Degree, he connects this to the temporal world. . . In the accompanying ritual, the Mason is charged with acting virtuously in the world, armed with the knowledge of the Deity. The Mason must not lose sight of this treasure. . . Through finding the most sacred of treasures deep within the crypt of himself, through zeal, strength and courage, and through traversing darkness in search of Light, one comes to true knowledge and the essence of things. One discovers the sacred within the self, thus awakening the divine spark. . . Yet more importantly, one has completed a moral and ethical journey that will render him an example for others to come, to be that perfect cube upon which he then can continue to build his temple, while encouraging other builders to do the same."

The legend of ancient knowledge preserved in a hidden vault, often underground, exists in several variations, both Masonic and non-Masonic. Here are a few:

The Royal Arch degree of the York Rite derives from the same source material as the Thirteenth and Fourteenth Degrees of the Scottish Rite, and tells of the rediscovery of the golden plate, long lost, along with other important items, at the time of the construction of the Second Temple, in the vault prepared by King Solomon. As in the Thirteenth Degree, the vault must be reached by a perilous descent.

The original version of the Twenty-first Degree of the Scottish Rite, Noachite or Prussian Knight, arose in Germany. It was adopted by the Council of Emperors of the East and West and subsequently became a part of the Ancient and Accepted Scottish Rite. It was called Noachite, meaning Disciples of Noah, because it was set in the period shortly after the Great Flood, and urged its members to follow the virtues of Noah. It related that Peleg, the architect of the Tower of Babel, wrote a record describing his pride, his wanderings after the fall of the Tower, his repentance, and his forgiveness by God. Centuries later this record was found deep underground on a pillar next to Peleg's tomb in Prussia, where he had eventually settled. The Supreme Council for the Southern Jurisdiction abandoned the original ritual, and substituted a story about the Vehmgericht, a band of Prussian knights meeting to dispense justice.

Bernard E. Jones, in *Freemasons' Book of the Royal Arch*, gives several stories on the theme of an underground deposit, going back as far as Philostogius [ca. 425 A.D.], who wrote in his *Ecclesiastical History*, "When Julian [Roman Emperor, 361-363 A.D., a time of persecution of Christians] bade the city of Jerusalem to be rebuilt. . . during the preparation of the foundations, one of the stones which was placed at the lowest part of the base,

suddenly started from its place and opened the door of a certain cave hollowed out in the rock. Owing to its depth, it was difficult to see what was within this cave; so persons were appointed to investigate the matter, who, being anxious to find out the truth, let down one of their workmen by means of a rope. On being lowered down he found stagnant water reaching up to his knees and having gone round the place and felt the walls on every side, he found the cave to be a perfect square. Then, in his return, as he stood near about the middle, he struck his foot against a column which stood rising slightly above the water. As soon as he touched the pillar, he found lying upon it a book wrapped up in a very fine and thin linen cloth; and as soon as he had lifted it up just as he had found it, he gave a signal to his companions to draw him up again. As soon as he regained the light, he showed them the book, which struck them all with astonishment, especially because it appeared so new and fresh, considering the place where it had been found. This book which appeared such a mighty prodigy in the eyes of both heathens and Jews, as soon as it was opened showed the following words in large letters: 'In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.' In fact, the volume contained the entire Gospel."

The Rosicrucian movement began in 1614 with the publication of a document titled *Fama Fraternitatis*. It tells the story of C.R.C. [Christian Rosenkreutz], who was born in 1378, traveled around the Middle East, collecting scientific and occult knowledge. He concluded that the world would be a better place if there were more love and if knowledge were shared freely. He returned to Germany, but the people were not interested in what he had to teach. He gathered together some close friends and founded a fraternity to carry on his work. They had a headquarters called the House of the Holy Spirit. In 1604, while one of the brothers was doing some renovations, he accidentally discovered a hidden door. Behind it was a room with seven sides. The room was illuminated by artificial light, and contained a great store of knowledge, including many books, and various pieces of optical instruments and mechanical devices. In the middle was a round altar covered with a plate of brass with various sayings written on it. When the brothers moved the altar, they found the perfectly preserved body of C.R.C. This was taken by the fraternity as a signal to declare itself publicly and invite the learned people of Europe to join them. The authors claimed to hold the key to secret knowledge that would miraculously transform society and lead to a new era.

Enoch was introduced as a character in the legends of a hidden vault through French Masonic degrees in the 1700s. The fifth chapter of Genesis tells us that Enoch was descended from Seth, the son of Adam, and was the great-grandfather of Noah. The author of Genesis makes the brief statement, "And Enoch walked with God; and he was not; for God took him." (Genesis 5:24). From this short, cryptic comment, the legend arose that Enoch did not die but was physically transported into heaven. In Hebrew, the name Enoch means "to instruct," or by extension "to initiate," and later legends credited him with devising ceremonies of initiation, giving instruction about the celestial bodies, and foretelling the deluge that would come in the time of Noah. In the Masonic version of the story, Enoch's secret knowledge is hidden at the direction of God to preserve it for future generations.

Albert Pike's Masonic Formulas and Rituals, by Arturo de Hoyos, gives a translation of an undated manuscript given to Pike by Albert Mackey, which formed the basis of Pike's version of the Thirteenth Degree. It is worth quoting relevant parts at length:

"Enoch, the son of Jared, was the seventh in descent from Adam. He lived in fear and love of God, who appeared to him in a dream, speaking in the accents of inspiration, and said unto him, 'Enoch, as thou art desirous to know my true name, arise, follow me, and I will make it known to you.' Then it appeared to him that a lofty mountain towered up towards heaven, and he was carried thither, and God showed to him a triangular plate of gold, brilliantly polished, and upon which was engraved the mighty and mysterious name; and gave him strict charge never to pronounce it. Then it seemed to him that he was carried perpendicularly down under the earth, through nine arches, one below the other, in the ninth or deepest of which he saw the same resplendent plate of gold, with the same brilliant light shining around it that he had seen upon the mountain. And so ended his dream.

“Afterwards, filled with the spirit of the Most High God, he built a Temple on the spot where in his dream he descended into the bowels of the earth, consisting of nine arches, one above the other, and which he dedicated to God. Methuselah, his eldest son, was the Architect that erected the Temple, after the model of the arches that Enoch saw in his dream, but without knowing the reason why it was builded in that shape.

“This edifice was erected in the land of Canaan, which was afterwards the promised and then the Holy Land. After it was finished, Enoch made a golden plate, triangular in shape, a cubit by measurement on each side, and encrusted with precious stones and gems. This he inlaid in a large Agate, of the same shape, placed it in the 9th or lowest arch of the Temple, engraved upon it the mysterious and unspeakable Word which God had shown him in his dream, and set the whole upon the summit of a truncated pyramid of white marble...

“Moses was beloved and cherished of God, who spoke to him on Mount Sinai in a burning bush, communicating to him his divine laws...and taught him the true pronunciation of His holy name...In after times the pronunciation of the ineffable word was corrupted, ... [but God] promised him that, in the fullness of time, some of his descendants should find it engraved on a plate of Gold...

“[Solomon], remembering the promise made by God to Moses, that in the fullness of time His holy name should be found, divined by his wisdom that it would not be brought to light until he should have consecrated a Temple to the Infinite God, ...and began to build it in the 4th year of his reign...The workmen, in excavating the earth to lay the foundation, found the ruins of a vast building of unknown antiquity, and much treasure...all of which were carried to King Solomon. That wise king, concluding that, before the deluge, a Temple had been erected there, and fearing that it had been devoted to the worship of some false god, and that the true God would be profaned in that place, resolved to build elsewhere...

“King Solomon having created a subterranean apartment to be built under the Temple, he called it the Secret Vault, and in it set a large column of white marble to support the Sanctum Sanctorum of the Temple...The entrance to this Secret Vault was through a long and narrow passage of nine arches, one succeeding the other, by a communication underground from King Solomon's palace...

“King Solomon sent for three Master Architects, Joabert, Stolkin, and Guibelum, and directed them to repair and make search in those ancient ruins where the treasure had been found, to see if possibly any other valuables could be discovered. They repaired to the spot, in compliance with his orders, and commenced working among the ruins. After a time, Guibelum, working with a pickaxe, came upon a large iron ring, and informed his two companions of it. Then, thinking that it pointed out the entrance into some place of deposit for something extraordinary, labored again with more ardor, until having cleared a considerable space around the ring, they found that it was attached to a large square stone. Lifting that by the ring, after great pains, exertion, and trouble, they found that it covered the opening to a dismal, dark, deep cell or pit. Guibelum proposed to descend into it. To do so, he caused his companions to fasten a rope around his body and lower him into it, directing them to raise him again when he should shake the rope. His companions followed these directions. Being lowered down, he found himself in an arched vault, on the floor of which he found an opening, and descended into a second, and so again into a third... [He eventually reaches the ninth arch, and sees a plate of gold, studded with precious stones. He reports this to his companions, who construct some ladders and descend with him] ...

“When Joabert and Stolkin, with Guibelum, had reached the 9th Arch...they proceeded to examine the plate of gold, and found upon it certain characters, of the meaning whereof they were ignorant. ... They looked upon the plate with great awe, taking these mysterious characters to be the unspeakable name of God, only known to King Solomon, King Hiram, and Hiram Abif, and which they had cause to believe the two kings could not communicate to anyone after the death of the latter...and resolved to take up the cubic stone, and the plate of gold upon it, and convey it to King Solomon. They did so...

“King Solomon...carefully examined the characters engraved on the plate, but refused to

explain them... To reward their fidelity, zeal and constancy, he then created them Knights of the Ninth Arch, because it was through their means that arch had been discovered, and styled the Degree the Royal Arch... King Solomon afterwards explained to them, that the promise of God, made to Noah, Moses and David, that someday His true name, by which he should be invoked, should be discovered engraved upon a plate of gold, was now accomplished."

We have seen that the Thirteenth Degree is one of many variations on a pattern, a legend of knowledge lost and found, often hidden underground and reached through a difficult descent. In his commentary on the Thirteenth Degree in *Morals and Dogma*, Albert Pike tells us, "Whether the legend and history of this Degree are historically true, or but an allegory... you must find out for yourself what it means... [God] was the same, by whatever name he was called... The name was nothing, if not a symbol and representative hieroglyph of his nature and attributes." I am reminded of the alchemical formula V.I.T.R.I.O.L., the initials of *Visita Interiora Terrae Rectificando Inviernes Occultum Lapidem*, often translated as "Visit the Interior of the Earth, and Rectify the Hidden Stone." I like a looser paraphrase, "Go beneath the surface, find the ore hidden there, and refine it." When we go within ourselves, we can find what we thought was lost, the Name of God, but we must learn to read the characters in which it is written, and how to pronounce it as we go about our daily lives. For me, the syllables of the Divine Name are Brotherly Love, Relief, and Truth.



"The freest people, like the freest man, is always in danger of re-lapsing into servitude. Wars are almost always fatal to Republics. They create tyrants, and consolidate their power. They spring, for the most part, from evil counsels. When the small and the base are intrusted with power, legislation and administration become but two parallel series of errors and blunders, ending in war, calamity, and the necessity for a tyrant. When the nation feels its feet sliding backward, as if it walked on the ice, the time has come for a supreme effort. The magnificent tyrants of the past are but the types of those of the future. Men and nations will always sell themselves into slavery, to gratify their passions and obtain revenge. The tyrant's plea, necessity, is always available; and the tyrant once in power, the necessity of providing for his safety makes him savage. Religion is a power, and he must control that. Independent, its sanctuaries might rebel. Then it becomes unlawful for the people to worship God in their own way, and the old spiritual despotisms revive."

— Albert Pike, *Morals and Dogma of the Ancient and Accepted Scottish Rite of Freemasonry*

