

# The Long Sought Word



**T**HIS folder is an invitation to those who desire to improve themselves in Masonry to complete the lesson begun when they first gave three distinct knocks. Its purpose is to give a succinct and connected view of the Light as it is developed in the several degrees of Capitular Masonry. Ritually, historically and wholly essential to a full understanding of ancient Freemasonry, is the fundamental landmark found in the General Laws and Regulations of the United Grand Lodge of England, dated, December 27, 1813:

*“It is declared and pronounced that PURE ANCIENT MASONRY consists of three degrees and no more, viz., those of the Entered Apprentice, the Fellowcraft, and the Master Mason, including the supreme ORDER of the HOLY ROYAL ARCH.”*

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Issued by:

COMMITTEE ON MASONIC EDUCATION AND SERVICE  
GRAND CHAPTER OF ROYAL ARCH MASONS  
IN THE COMMONWEALTH OF VIRGINIA

## THE LONG SOUGHT WORD

It is truly unfortunate that many good and influential men in our Craft Lodges place a period instead of a comma after "Master Mason" and make no mention of the importance of the balance of the quoted Regulation. The feeling of distinction and gratification on being raised to the Sublime Degree of Master Mason is common to all attaining that honor. But, the *WORD* is, in Masonry, the symbol of Truth. We want you to share with us the joy, pleasure and companionship of really completing the Master's Degree by having communicated to you the True Masonic Word in the Royal Arch Degree.

Brother Master Mason — Are you in possession of all the Light, rights and benefits of a Master Mason as understood by our ancient brethren? You are not! Not until exalted to the degree of Holy Royal Arch! The abrupt ending of the Third Degree indicates that if there is a "substitute," there surely must also be a "Real Word." You were also told that you had received all the Light and knowledge that could be communicated to you in a Symbolic or Craft Lodge.

*Will you read further?* We trust that when you shall have concluded your reading of this treatise you will want to join the CHAPTER — complete the petition a Companion may give you. Or, prove your title of Master and go forward in Masonry on your own initiative and ask to become a member. Your *pay* will be in the opportunity to do something for others.

## THE FOUNDATION

The Craft Lodge, sometimes referred to as the Blue Lodge, or the Symbolic Degrees, is the all-enduring foundation of all Masonry. It receives the loyalty, respect and admiration of every Master Mason. The *Entered Apprentice* is taught to subdue his passions and *improve* himself in Masonry. He is taught the depth and breadth of charity — the importance of an upright life. The *Fellowcraft* receives more Light and he is instructed in the kind of wages he is to receive. The *Master Mason* is taught important moral lessons and cautioned to become a better-informed Mason.

*But, Brother!* Interesting, vital, beautiful and valuable as are the first, second and third degrees, much cryptic and unexplained ritual and ceremony still remains. The answers lie in the

*Capitular Degrees* — the *Chapter*. (The Capitular Rite in Virginia consists of the Mark Master, Past Master, Select Master, Royal Master, Most Excellent Master and Royal Arch Degrees).

### DEGREE OF MARK MASTER MASON

"Marks" were employed by operative Masons as early as 978 (Melrose Abbey). Builders of cathedrals placed their *Mark* upon their work. In the York Rite, Mark Master Lodges are part of the Chapter. (The York Rite takes the Master Mason through the Chapter, Council and Commandery bodies of Freemasonry.) Here you receive a degree of considerable antiquity that may be older than the Royal Arch. The Mark Master Degree is the complement of the Fellowcraft degree, stresses the dignity of labor, and entitles its producers to wages. You will be pleased and inspired with "A white stone with a new name written."

### DEGREE OF PAST MASTER

By the ancient regulations no Master Mason could receive the Holy Royal Arch unless he had been *duly elected* and *regularly installed* to *preside over* and *govern* a regular and duly constituted Lodge of Free and Accepted Masons. To increase the number who might benefit by the Royal Arch degree you are now given the privilege of "Passing the Chair." Here man's relationship to authority is enjoined, for to Rule one must first learn to submit and obey. It teaches the great lesson of responsibility. Having received this degree you will be ready for greater Light.

### THE CRYPTIC RITE IN VIRGINIA

In 1841 the Grand Council of Virginia merged with the Grand Chapter, Royal Arch Masons and since that date the Council Degrees have formed an integral part of the Chapter in this jurisdiction, being conferred between the degree of Past Master and that of Most Excellent Master. To conform to their true chronology, and contrary to the practice in States with Grand Councils, Virginia confers the Select Master's degree before that of Royal Master. A council is opened in the bosom of the Royal Arch Chapter, the two degrees are conferred in their proper sequence, the Council is then closed and labor is resumed in the Royal Arch Degree.

## DEGREES OF SELECT MASTER, ROYAL MASTER

The degree of Select Master is intended to complete the legend and to exemplify the manner of preservation of those treasures, which are recovered in the Royal Arch degree. That of Royal Master undertakes to amplify the degree of Master Mason as conferred in the symbolic Lodge. It possesses such dignity and beauty that all candidates are surprised at its sublimity and teachings, thus making it one of the most impressive ceremonies of Ancient Craft Masonry.

### MOST EXCELLENT MASTER

You know of the building of the Temple of King Solomon. In the *Capitular Rite*, the ceremony of the completion and dedication of the First Temple is unquestionably one of the most beautiful, imposing and inspirational degrees in Freemasonry. As the brethren are greeted as *Most Excellent Masters* you will rejoice and be proud of your advance in Masonry as man exclaims "For He is good, His mercy endureth forever."

### ROYAL ARCH DEGREE

You have now arrived at the *summit* of Ancient Craft Masonry — historically and traditionally — mayhap the most important degree. The ritualistic grandeur of this degree with the rebuilding of the Temple and the recovery of the *True Masonic Word* emphasizes that the Royal Arch Degree, as the SUMMIT, indeed, "completes the Master Mason or Third Degree." The Word — its loss, recovery, symbolism — and the relationships, hopes and rewards that can come only with *exaltation* are yours as a Master Mason as soon as you enter the Chapter.

We would that the newly-raised Brother, and he that has delayed, advance and receive the light of the Royal Arch Degree. You will widen your sphere of Masonic friends, as you meet members from several Lodges in one Chapter, and find companionship that can be enjoyed nowhere else as in a Chapter of Royal Arch Masons. Friendliness (but withal with dignity) pervades the Tabernacle.

Brethren in good standing in their respective Lodges may petition for the title of Companion. The Chapter emphasizes that "a stranger is a friend we've never met." Do not remain a stranger.

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