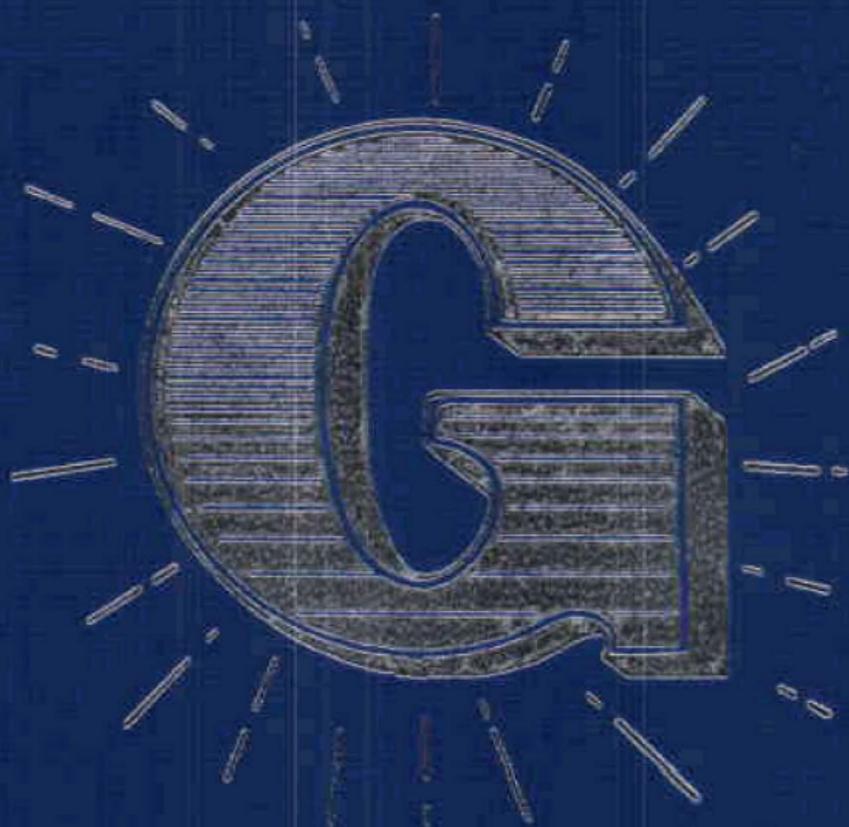


The Masonic Letter



Paul Foster Case

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The Masonic Letter G

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Introduction

Paul Foster Case (1884-1954), author of this treatise, is known to students of occultism as the outstanding authority of Tarot, Qabalah, Alchemy and related subjects of the Western Occult Tradition. His other publications, including *The True and Invisible Rosicrucian Order; Tarot, Key to the Wisdom of the Age; The Great Seal of the United States; The Magical Language; The Book of Tokens*, bear witness to his deep insight and wonderfully readable approach to these subjects.

The present work makes it clear that his knowledge included a

thorough understanding of the Masonic tradition. In it he develops the unmistakable link that exists between the Masonic degrees and rituals and the Qabalistic tradition. He shows that Masonry cannot be fully appreciated or understood without knowledge of the Qabalistic Tree of Life and its insight into the true nature of man and of the Cosmos. One of the outstanding concepts he develops is the relationship between the geometry upon which the building and architectural symbolism of Masonry are based and the Gematria of the Qabalists, which is a system of number correspondences to words and phrases that reveals

the inner meanings behind the numbers, measurements and geometrical proportions prominent in both the Old and New Testaments.

The contributions of Paul Case to students of the spiritual goes beyond the works mentioned above. He founded BUILDERS OF THE ADYTUM, a non-profit religious organization which disseminates a spiritual training system based on his works in graded lesson form through the mail. It is a system that allows sincere aspirants of the present day to receive training that in past ages was available only to the few who could enter a Mystery school and com-

pletely withdraw, at least temporarily, from society and the concerns of the outer world.

Paul Case was charged with the responsibility, by a Master of the Inner School, of preserving, extending and updating the Ancient Wisdom that has existed since the beginning of the World. His outstanding contribution is that he has left us a clear, graded system for spiritual development that enables us to fully retain our relationships and responsibilities in the modern world while gradually but surely unfolding insight into the higher ones.

THE MASONIC LETTER G

An Interpretation

It is difficult to determine when the letter G was introduced into Speculative Masonry as a symbol. Mackey's *Encyclopedia of Freemasonry* says this letter is not derived from the operative masons of the Middle Ages, and formed no part of the architectural decorations of old cathedrals. Whether it entered the symbolism under the influence of those Rosicrucians and Qabalists who joined the order during the last half of the 17th century, or

whether it was introduced at some time subsequent to 1717, when the first Grand Lodge was established at the Apple-tree Tavern in London, seems impossible to decide.

The Masonic meaning of the letter G never has been esoteric. The whole world has been told that the symbol owes its prominence to the fact that "G" is the initial of *geometry*. This makes it a symbolic summary of the entire Masonic system. The heart of Freemasonry is an esoteric doctrine founded on the science of geometry, and expressed by means of geometrical figures and theorems. In the old Masonic constitutions it is specifically stated that Masonry and geometry are one and the same.

Neither is it any secret that the letter G is a symbol for the Deity. It so happens that *God* is the English name of the Grand Architect of the Universe. It does not follow that the fact that G is the first letter of "God" is the *only* connection between the symbol and the Deity.

Several modern writers on Freemasonry seem to think so, and have even gone so far as to say they feel Masonic symbolism has been hurt rather than helped by the adoption of the letter G .

"It is to be regretted," writes Mackey, "that the letter G, as a symbol, was ever admitted into the Masonic system. The use of it, as an initial, would necessarily

confine it to the English language and to modern times. It wants, therefore, as a symbol, the necessary characteristics of both universality and antiquity .”

“It is a singular coincidence,” according to McClenachan, “that the letters composing the English name of Deity should be the initials of the Hebrew words wisdom, strength, and beauty; the three great pillars, or metaphorical supports of Masonry. They seem to present almost the only reason that can reconcile a Mason to the use of the letter ‘G’ in its conspicuous suspension in the East of the Lodge in place of the Delta. The incident seems to be more than accident.”

Brother McClenachan goes on to say that the Hebrew word for beauty is Gomer, גֹּמֵר , from which he derives the initial G; that in the same language, strength is Oz, עֹז , whence the English O; and that D is the initial of Dabar, דָּבָר , meaning wisdom. Hence, he argues, G.O.D. may be understood Masonically as meaning wisdom, strength and beauty.

This would be interesting, if true. The first objection, however , is that in Masonry the supports of the lodge are always named in the following order: wisdom, strength, beauty. If Brother McClenachan's supposed Hebrew originals of these words be taken in the same

invariable Masonic order, the English equivalents of their initials spell, not God, but *dog!* Were Freemasonry guilty of such a piece of symbolism it would deserve the anathemas pronounced upon it by certain prelates.

As a matter of fact, the Hebrew noun Dabar, דָּבָר , does not mean wisdom. Its true signification is *word, speech, order, command, matter, affair, event*. Neither does Gomer, גֹּמֵר , mean beauty. It is the Hebrew for *to end, to cease to be*, or, in a secondary sense, *to accomplish*. Moreover, while it is certainly true that Oz, עֹז , is one of the Hebrew words signifying *strength*, it is not the word which,

in the ancient Hebrew Qabalah that has left so marked an impress on Masonic terminology, is always employed in combination with wisdom and beauty. That word is *geburah*, גבורה , not Oz, עז .

Thus the three pillars of Brother McClenachan's argument turn out to be pillars of sand. He is left with nothing but his objection to the letter G, for which he would substitute the delta. Here he is at variance with Mackey, who thinks the letter in the East should be a Hebrew *yod*.

Neither *delta* nor *yod* are a whit more universal than G, and they are only a little more ancient. English letters are really Roman,

and Roman letters are simply modified Greek, and both Greek and Hebrew are adaptations of a Semitic original alphabet, probably Phoenician.

Furthermore, the *primary* symbolism of the letter G relates to geometry, of which word it is the initial, while its Greek counterpart, *gamma*, is the initial of the Greek name for the same science. Neither Hebrew *yod* nor Greek *delta* has any direct connection with this science, so that to substitute either of them for the Masonic G would be to deprive the Craft of an important symbolic reference to the very basis of its esoteric system of instruction.

Again, G is the English equivalent of the Hebrew letter ג , *gimel* and in Rabbinical Hebrew, *gimel* is the initial of a word which is a Hebrew adaptation of the Greek noun *geometria*. Thus the letter G is actually the initial of *geometry* in the three languages most important to Freemasonry. For the Hebrew of the Old Testament, the Greek of Euclid, Pythagoras and the New Testament, and the English in which all regular Masonic rituals were cast at the time of the revival of 1717, and from which all regular Masonic instruction in the tongues of other nations has been translated, are certainly the languages

through which the mysteries of the Craft have been transmitted from time immemorial.

When we come to the letter G as a symbol of Deity, there is a surface plausibility to the contention that the Hebrew *yod* would be preferable. For it is true that *yod* is the first letter of the Tetragrammaton יהוה, rendered Jehovah in the English Bible. The argument in favor of *yod* would be more convincing if all Masonic rituals agreed that G is placed in the East because it is the *initial* of the word God. Some modern American lectures do say just this; but an older, and we think better, explanation of the symbol is simply that it *denotes*

the Deity. Just how it does so is not explained, but we hope to make this clear .

Certainly Hebrew *yod*, the initial of **יהוה** , is neither more nor less exclusive than G. The Greek *delta* proposed by Brother McClenachan might stand for the Greek *dios*, the Latin *deus*, or even for the English *deity*, but would have no reference to God in Hebrew.

G, however, is the initial of *God*. Its Greek equivalent is the initial of *Gaia*, the earth mother, eldest born of Chaos, whose name is the root of the noun *geometria*, geometry. *Gimel*, the Hebrew correspondence to G, is the initial **גדל** , *gadol*, majesty, and of **גבור** , *gebur*,

strong, words used to designate the Deity throughout the Hebrew sacred writings. Were nothing else to be said for it, it seems to us these facts would make the letter G a sufficiently universal, as well as sufficiently ancient, symbol of the Grand Architect.

As the equivalent of the Greek *gamma*, moreover, G is not only the initial of *Gaia*, the earth mother, and of *geometria*, the science by which her powers are measured, but it has yet another Masonic allusion. The shape of the letter *gamma* is Γ , obviously neither more nor less than a mason's square.

From the Hebrew equivalent of G, however, we shall discover the

most important meanings of this ancient symbol. When we have considered the esoteric significance of *gimel* we shall find, not only that it is the initial of a Rabbinical term borrowed directly from the Greek noun *geometria*, and not only that it is the initial of two Hebrew words frequently applied to God, but also that the letter *gimel* itself is regarded by the wise men of Israel as being the alphabetical sign of the sacred wisdom which is founded on the science of geometry. We shall find, moreover, that *gimel* is directly connected with the triangular *delta* favored by Brother McClenachan, and that it is also related, in an occult manner, to

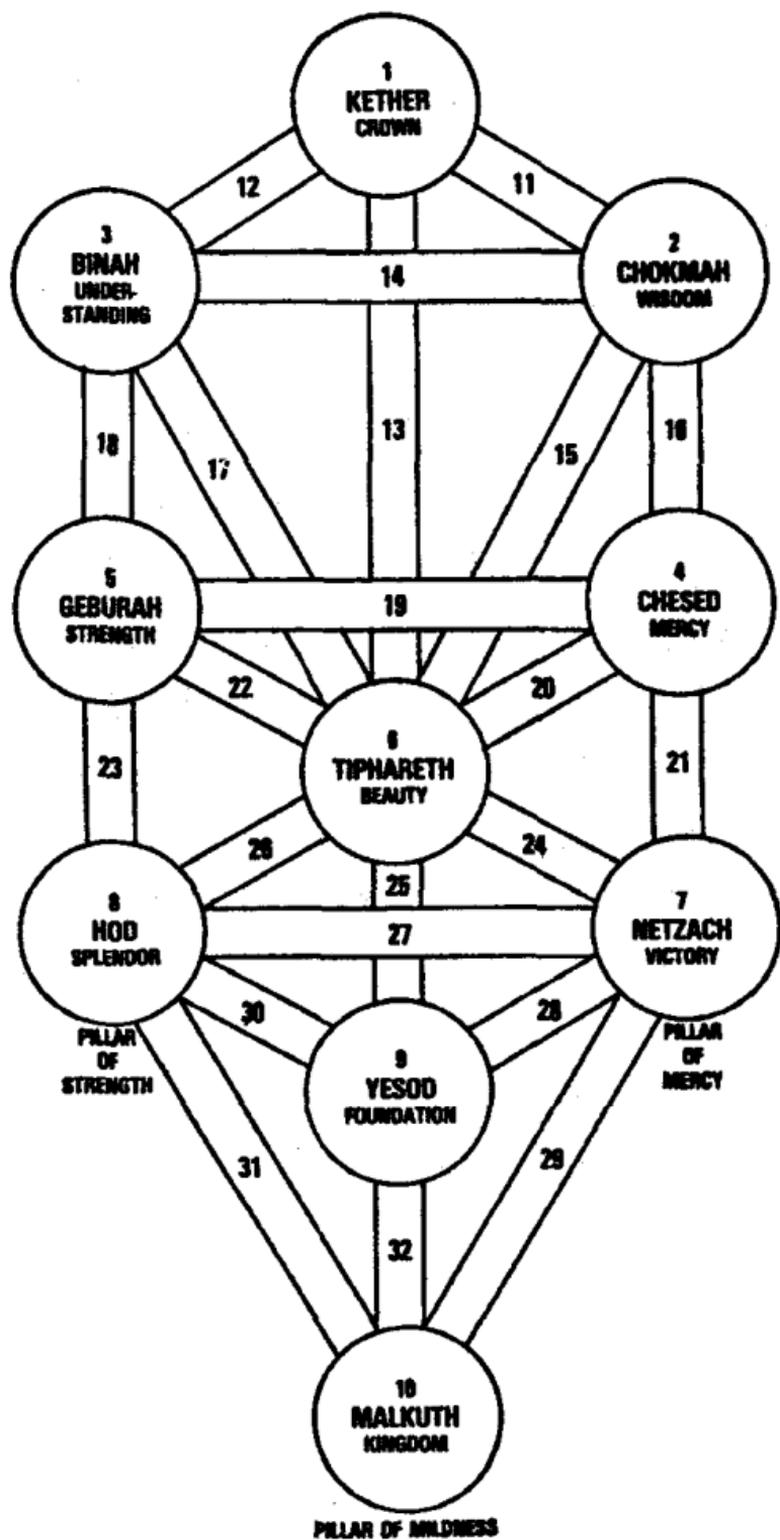
the letter *yod* preferred by Brother Mackey.

In order to make this clear, we must remind our readers that, throughout its rituals and lectures, Freemasonry bears the marks of having been developed in its present form by persons having some acquaintance with the Hebrew system of occult philosophy known as the Qabalah. Thus Mackey tells us that the names of the three pillars which support the lodge (wisdom, strength and beauty), and the Masonic attribution of the third of these pillars to the Junior Warden and to Hiram Abif, are probably derived from the Qabalah.

These pillars, and their names, are taken directly from a Qabalistic diagram known as the Tree of Life. The diagram consists of ten circles, connected by twenty-two lines. The circles represent ten aspects or phases of the Divine Emanation. They are numbered from 1 to 10, and are called Sephiroth, or Numerations. The twenty-two lines which link these ten circles to one another are said to represent the letters of the Hebrew alphabet, and the forces corresponding to those letters. The whole Tree, with its ten numbers and twenty-two letters, represents the thirty-two paths of wisdom. Qabalists regard it as being of such

importance that they declare it to be the Key to All things.

Qabalists say this Tree contains three pillars. That on the observer's right, consisting of the Sephiroth numbered 2, 4 and 7, is named the pillar of mercy, after the fourth Sephirah, **חסד**, *chesed*, mercy. The pillar on the left side of the Tree is called the pillar of strength, after the fifth Sephirah, **גבורה**, *geburah*, the Hebrew noun most often used for strength. This pillar consists of the three Sephiroth numbered 3, 5 and 8. The third pillar is midway between the other two, and is composed of the Sephiroth number 1, 6, 9 and 10. Qabalists call it the



pillar of mildness, because it is said to be the balancing influence between the other two.

These three Qabalistic pillars are obviously the supports of the Masonic lodge. But Masonry names the pillar on the right after the Sephirah numbered 2, and named **חכמה**, *chokmah*, wisdom. For the pillar on the left it retains the Qabalistic name, strength. To the Qabalistic middle pillar, which is also the middle pillar in the lodge, it applies the name beauty, taken from the title of the Sephirah numbered 6, **תפארת**, *tiphareth*, beauty. All this will be better understood after the reader has inspected the accompanying diagram of the Tree of Life.

From the Qabalah, Freemasonry has also borrowed the method of using letters to represent numbers, and numbers to represent words. Mackey says this device was frequently employed by the inventors of the higher degrees, such as those now included in the Scottish Rite. He might have added that it is one of the most important clues to the real secrets of the first three degrees, constituting the Blue Lodge, everywhere conceded to be the foundation of the whole Masonic structure. Nothing can be much farther from the truth than the supposition that the so-called "higher degrees" confer any essen-

tial secret that is withheld from Blue Lodge Masons. All the mysteries of Freemasonry are synthesized in the three primary degrees. The "higher degrees" are no more than the elaboration and exemplification of what is communicated to the Entered Apprentice, the Fellow Craft, and the Master Mason. And the number-letter system of the Qabalah is the key that unlocks this essential mystery.

The same device provides us also with the only clue to the real meaning of many obscure passages in the Bible. It solves the enigmas of the Old Testament, and elucidates the dark sayings of the New.

For it was utilized by the writers of both sections of that library of wisdom which lies open on Masonic altars.

This device came into use among the Hebrews and the Greeks because, when the Bible was composed, neither nation knew anything of the Arabic numerals. They employed the letters of their alphabets to represent numbers. The first nine letters of the Hebrew alphabet are the digits from 1 to 9; the next nine, the tens from 10 to 90; and the last four letters stand for the hundreds from 100 to 400. To five special forms, known as *kaph* final, *mem* final, *nun* final, *peh* final, and *tzaddi* final,

which are always used when any of these letters comes at the end of a Hebrew word, they assigned the hundreds from 500 to 900. Thousands were indicated by writing a letter larger than the others. The Greeks used a similar device, but as their alphabet contains only twenty-four letters, the highest number represented by a single character was 800, corresponding to Omega. The modern Greek alphabet also has no character for the number 6, but the Greeks indicated it by an ancient character known as the *digamma*, or double *gamma*, which had the value of 6 because *gamma* itself is 3, so that a double *gamma* would be twice 3, or 6.

When men used the letters of the alphabet for arithmetical computations, it must often have happened that some numbers formed actual words, such as אב , *Ab*, which is the number 3 in Hebrew, and also means "father. " Once this had been noticed, it would be perfectly natural to adopt special spellings of some words, if for no other reason than as an aid to memory, just as we remember the number of days in a month by means of a bit of doggerel. From this to the adoption of a cryptic mode of writing , in which the real signification of a word or phrase might be discovered from the numeral value, was but a short step.

Fantastic as it may appear to the modern mind, there is abundant evidence that just this is what occurred in the composition of many passages in both the Hebrew of the Old Testament and the Greek of the New. Thus we find that many names of Deity in the Old Testament, including the Ineffable Name **יהוה**, Jehovah, are multiples of the number 13. In the New Testament, and in the Christian Gnostic writings, the number 37 occurs repeatedly as a multiple of the names and epithets of Jesus Christ.

The most familiar example of the use of the number-letter system is in Revelation 13, where we read:

“And he causes all, the little and the great, the rich and the poor, and the freemen and the bondmen, that they should give themselves a mark on their right hand, or on their forehead; so that no one may be able to buy or sell unless he has the mark — the name of the beast, or the number of his name. Here is wisdom. Let him who has understanding compute the number of the beast; for it is a man’s number; and his number is 666.” (*Emphatic Diaglott translation.*)

In this passage the number 666 is written with three characters, the letter **Χ**, *chi*, for 600, the letter **Ξ**, *xi*, for 60, and the *digamma*, **Γ**, for 6. In the opinion of the best

Biblical scholars, says the *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, the primary signification of this number, whatever else it may mean, has to do with the Roman emperor, Nero, whose name was written in the Rabbinical Hebrew of that period as *Neron Kaiser*, נרון קיסר, which adds to 666.

Note that the New Testament writer introduces the number with the words, "Here is wisdom," and then says, "Let him who has understanding compute the number ." Evidently he intended what he wrote to be comprehended by a special class of readers, to whom such computations were familiar .

The Rabbinical name for this method of writing, and for the in-

terpretation of one word or phrase of the Hebrew scriptures by another which has the same numeral value, is גמטריא , *gematria*. This is the very Hebrew noun alluded to in our statement that the letter G is the initial of a Hebrew word derived from the Greek noun *geometria*, geometry.

Is it assuming too much to suppose that the Hebrew Rabbis, when they chose their own name for this cryptic method of writing and of interpreting Scripture, had some definite reason for borrowing the Greek word for geometry, and writing it with Hebrew letters? Is it not reasonable to conclude that in selecting this particular term, they

intended to hint that many of the more important secrets of Holy Writ have to do with the number , measure, proportion, weight, and other space relationships?

In that Bible of the Qabalists, the *Zohar*, there is a long passage explaining the meaning of Genesis 6:8,9, where we read: "Noah found favour in the eyes of God. Perfect was he in his generations." We are not here concerned with the details of the Qabalistic commentary of this passage. What is to the purpose of our present inquiry is that the *Zohar* makes one of those who heard the comment say to the teacher: "Your exposition is certainly the right one, as can also be

deduced from the measurements of the ark. “ (Italics ours.)

This is as much as to say that the various numbers and measures mentioned in the Old Testament are clues to an inner meaning. The Qabalistic method of finding that meaning is to turn the numbers into words and phrases. This is the Qabalistic “geometry,” or *gematria*, which affords us clues to the inner meaning of many details of Freemasonry.

Gematria enabled the writers of both sections of the Bible to conceal geometrical formulas and measurements by means of words and phrases, or to indicate words by what appear to be merely

measurements. Both devices were employed. The one last mentioned is the clue to the real significance of Noah's ark, to what was really symbolized by the tabernacle of Moses and the temple of Solomon and their furniture and appurtenances, to the real meaning of the Holy Oblation and temple described by the prophet Ezekiel, and to many other matters.

As an example of this consider the Holy of Holies, where the ark of the covenant was kept. The descriptions indicate that it was a cubical room. In the tabernacle it measured ten cubits in length, breadth and height. In Solomon's temple it measured twenty cubits in every direction.

Thus the ancient Hebrew structure which assumes so much importance in Masonic tradition, where it is said to have been the meeting-place of the mythical Masters' Lodge composed of King Solomon, Hiram King of Tyre, and Hiram Abif, was in the form of a cube.

For the Hebrews, the *sanctum sanctorum* was the actual dwelling-place of the Divine Presence or Shekinah, which rested on the mercy seat of the ark of the covenant. As the ark was placed in the Holy of Holies, the position of the mercy seat coincided with the interior center of that cubical room. Thus the place of the Divine

Presence was at the center, or in the midst. This reminds us of a passage in the *Sepher Yetzirah*, which says that the place of God is the interior center from which radiate the six boundless lines establishing space, and sealed with the six permutations of the divine name *Yeho*, י ה ו .

A cube is a solid, bounded by six equal faces and twelve equal lines. The lines form *right angles*, *horizontals* and *perpendiculars*, and they meet at eight external points. Thus the numbers required to define a cube are 6, 8 and 12, whose sum is 26, the numeral value of the Ineffable Name , י ה ו ה .

As the shrine of Jehovah, the Holy of Holies was the essential

part of the tabernacle and of Solomon's temple. On this account the Bible says invariably that the temple was erected to *the name* of Jehovah, that is, in accordance with the *number* of that name, which is the sum of the values of two Hebrew words indicating the essential quality of the nature of Deity.

One of these words is אַחַד , *achad*, "One," designating the fundamental notion of Deity emphasized throughout the Old Testament. The unity of God is the great contribution of Judaism to the religious philosophy of mankind, and to this day the Children of Israel use, אַחַד , *achad*, as a divine name.

The second Hebrew word adding up to 13 is **אהבה** , *ahebah*, "Love." We may well suppose it to have been in the mind of the Masonic patron, St. John, who was also the traditional author of the Revelation, from which we took our reference to the number of the beast. The Gospel of St. John bears internal evidence that it was written by a person familiar with the Hellenic Logos doctrine, developed by PhiloJudaeus. This was a doctrine of the Pythagoreans and Platonists, and it has its roots in their mathematical philosophy. Thus it is not unreasonable to suppose that St. John was acquainted with this number philosophy, and

had it in mind when he wrote. "God is love." For since "love" and "one" are words of the same value, 13, to say "God is love" is Qabalistically equivalent to the fundamental doctrine of Judaism, **יְהוָה אֶחָד**, *Jehovah achad*, "God is one."

As an example of Masonic use of gematria, we may take the reference, in the Entered Apprentice degree, to the substances chalk, charcoal and clay. Mackey's *Encyclopedia*, and the official monitors, give an extended explanation of these three substances as meaning freedom, fervency and zeal. The Hebrew names for these substances are **גִּיר פַּחַם רִטִּיט** *gheer*, *pecham*, *ve-teet*. The total value of

the words is 375 , the numeration of שלמה , Shelomoh, the Hebrew spelling of Solomon .

Taken by itself, this may seem to be no more than an interesting coincidence. When we remember that Solomon is the Masonic type of wisdom, it becomes more impressive. For it is as much as to say that these three symbols of the qualifications of an Entered Apprentice are, as it were, the raw materials which make a Solomon, the fundamentals whose proper combination results in true wisdom.

This example of the use of gematria in Masonry, and its consequences as an aid to the inter-

pretation of symbolism, is but one of many that might be cited from the work of the Blue Lodge. We have given it to show that gematria is by no means the silly juggling with numbers and letters which some hostile critics assert it to be.

It must be admitted that gematria can be, and has been, misused by fanatics and tricksters. Many modern Jews regard the Qabalah with aversion, and consider it to be a mass of superstition and imposture. On the other hand, this number-letter system was used in interpreting the Old Testament by Rabbis who were neither Qabalists nor occultists. The books of the early Christian writers also contain

a number of examples of the same sort of Biblical interpretation. And we have already said that there is evidence that the text of both Testaments contain passages deliberately composed so as to conceal numbers by words, or suggest words by numbers.

It is also a matter of record that persons influential in the development of Masonry in its present form were familiar with gematria. Glance through the pages of any good reference work on Freemasonry, and it becomes evident that in the eighteenth century, when most of the "higher degrees" were composed and worked, the persons who were most interested in

Speculative Masonry and its significance were men who believed that in the Hebrew Qabalah were to be found clues to the deeper meaning of the traditions and symbolism of the Craft.

Another reason for believing that Masonic "geometry" may be supposed to include the number-letter system of writing and Scriptural interpretation is afforded by the fact that in [early Speculative] Freemasonry the Bible is called the trestleboard. Thus Mackey writes:

"In the Masonic ritual, the Speculative Mason is reminded that, as the Operative artist erects his temporal building in accordance with the rules and designs

laid down on the trestleboard by the master workman, so should he erect that spiritual building, of which the material is a type, in obedience to the rules and designs, the precepts and commands, laid down by the Grand Architect of the Universe in those great books of nature and revelation which constitute the spiritual trestleboard of every Freemason.”

The same writer says, in speaking of the Operative Mason's trestleboard: “The trestle is a framework for a table—in Scotch *trest*; the *trestleboard* is a board placed for convenience of drawing on that frame. It contains nothing but a few diagrams, usually geometrical figures.”

In short, the trestleboard shows the plans of an architect. Such plans are based on the principles of geometry. To be able to read the plans and interpret them correctly, one must understand the science that governs their formation. Hence, by the plain implications of Masonic doctrine, the “geometry” of Speculative Masonry is to be understood as being a key to the correct understanding of the words of the Bible. This is precisely what Qabalists mean by gematria, which we shall use in order to make clear the esoteric significance of the Hebrew letter *gimel*, corresponding to English G .

Hebrew letters are distinguished from those of other alphabets by

having *names*, most of which represent familiar natural objects. When a Jewish boy learns his alphabet, he does not commit to memory a meaningless series of conventional sounds. He learns a list of actual things. When he says *aleph, beth, gimel, daleth*, he is reciting the Hebrew words for *ox, house, camel, door*.

As Hebrew words, these letter-names have values of their own, distinct from the numbers represented by the single characters. Thus the name גמל, *gimel*, has the value 73, the sum of the numbers of its three characters. The number represented by the single letter ג, to which this name is given, is simply 3.

The name *gimel* means "camel." Hebrew lexicons tell us it is due to a fancied resemblance between the character ג and a crude picture of the head and neck of a camel.

If one asks himself, "What is the fundamental idea brought to mind by the picture of a camel?" he will not be long in concluding that camels, to ancient Hebrews, represented just what automobiles suggest to the modern mind, namely, travel, journeying to places far off, and the like. Thus the camel is a symbol of that mark of the Master Mason, the ability to "travel in foreign countries."

The whole work of the Craft, in fact, may be summed up in this

one word "travel," of which the camel is a symbol. Masons speak of themselves as traveling East, in search of light. Their quest is thus indicated as being a search for origins and causes. For the West is the place of sunset, the close of the day. Thus it represents the end of a cycle of work or manifestation. And the end of such a cycle is the product of that cycle, the thing or form produced by the day's work. Hence West is the direction symbolizing the things and forms produced by the Grand Architect's work in the universe. To travel from West to East is therefore to pass from these forms and appearances to their hidden causes,

and from those causes back to the First Cause, the master principle whose symbolic location is in the East.

Precisely the same thought is expressed in what Masonic lectures tell us concerning geometry . They say that by this science we are enabled to trace Nature through her various windings to her most concealed recesses. Note that this calls up two images: (1) of movement in an *inward* direction, toward an interior center; (2) of winding movement, which, if it be considered as taking one from the surface to the center, must necessarily be *spiral*. It may not be without some significance that the

English letter G is actually a curve taken from a spiral, for it is our experience that when one is considering the meaning of a symbol devised by really wise men, every detail of it has significance. Certainly the Masonic lectures make just this claim, for they say: "There is not an observance in Freemasonry which has not a deep significance; seek diligently and you will find the illustrations of its symbolic teachings almost infinite."

But to return to our letter *gimel*. Its name is from the verb *gawmal*, spelled with the same three characters, but with different vowel points. This verb means: (1) to bring to an end or limit, hence to

ipen; (2) to give according to desert, to reward, to recompense, to benefit. Who can fail to see the direct application of these ideas to Freemasonry? The work of the Craft is designed to bring man from his rude state of ignorance to the highest possible limits of human attainment. It is a spiritual building-process by means of which a man may incorporate into his character qualities which distinguish a ripened, perfected human being.

When this ripening process is actually carried out, one is really *raised* to the sublime degree of Master Mason. Then one is fully competent, not only to travel in

“foreign countries,” but also to receive Master’s wages. The ceremonies of the three degrees are simply dramatic outlines of the stages in this life-process, and what they dramatize must be lived before one really becomes a Master Mason. And mark well the fact that the just reward according to desert, the Master’s wage received by one who has completed his journey from West to East, is designated by a Hebrew word spelled by the same characters as those composing the Hebrew name of the letter G .

The numeral value of ג, the character bearing this name, is 3. This is the most significant of all

he numbers venerated by Freemasons. Mackey says:

“In all the Rites, whatever be the number of superimposed grades, there lie at the basis the three symbolic degrees. There are in all the degrees three principal officers, three supports, three greater and three lesser lights, three movable and three immovable jewels, three principal tenets, three working-tools of a Fellow Craft, three principal orders of architecture, three chief human senses, three Ancient Grand Masters. In fact, everywhere in the system the number three is presented as a prominent symbol. So much is this the case that all the other mystical numbers

depend upon it, for each is a multiple of three, its square, its cube, or derived from them . . . But in nothing is the Masonic signification of the ternary made more interesting than in its connection with the sacred delta, the symbol of Deity .”

This sacred delta is the equilateral triangle, composed of three equal lines and three equal angles. As the same writer says, “There is no symbol more important in its signification, more various in its application, or more generally diffused throughout the whole system of Freemasonry than the triangle. It is, moreover, not only a symbol of Deity, but also of

primary importance in geometry. The first proposition of Euclid, who is venerated as one of the founders of Masonry, concerns the construction of an equilateral triangle by means of the intersection of two circles of equal radius...”

The space enclosed by this intersection is called a *vesica piscis*, and the erudite author of *The Canon* shows that the vesica piscis was the basis of some of the most important geometrical secrets of the ancient operative masons. The underlying proportions of all the wonderful cathedral architecture of the Middle Ages were derived principally from the vesica piscis and the equilateral triangle.

Furthermore, in the construction of the Qabalistic Tree of Life, as may be seen from careful examination of its proportions, the same first proposition of Euclid is employed. Thus the master diagram of the Qabalah, the "Key to All Things," has the same geometrical foundation as the delta, most prominent of all Masonic symbols. That delta is what is denoted by the mystical number 3, and by the Hebrew character ג , corresponding to G .

The three characters composing the letter-name *gimel* are ג , *gimel* (3), מ , *mem* (40), and ל , *lamed* (30), so that the total value of the word is 73. This is also the

numeration of חכמה , *chokmah*, wisdom, the title of the second Sefirah on the Tree of Life . Likewise it is the number of the verb *gawmal*, which refers to the wages of a Master Mason.

That is, for a Qabalist, wisdom itself is the recompense or benefit which constitutes the wages of a Master, since there is identity between the words *gawmal* and *chokmah*. Thus we find our ancient Grand Master, Solomon, saying. "Happy is the man that findeth wisdom, and the man that getteth understanding. For the merchandise of it is better than silver, and the gain thereof than fine gold."

Among Qabalists, King Solomon is reputed to have been the

greatest master of the secret wisdom, next to Moses. In Masonry he represents the power of conception, the power of forming abstract or universal ideas, the ability to grasp fundamental principles. This power is the root of all true mastery, in whatever field, and is precisely what is meant by the Hebrew noun *chokmah*.

With *chokmah* Qabalists associate astronomy, the seventh and highest of the liberal arts. For they say that *chokmah* is חכמה , masloth, a term meaning literally “the highways of the stars,” though it is often rendered “the sphere of the zodiac.” Astronomy is the pinnacle of the Masonic pyramid of instruc-

tion. Nor should we forget that the astronomy of the ancient mystery schools from which Freemasonry claims descent was inseparable from astrology .

Thus wisdom, in the true Masonic sense, is associated with that deep knowledge of cosmic relationships which combines exact measurement of the movements of the heavenly bodies with knowledge of the significance to man, of the influences corresponding to the changing panorama of the heavens. This knowledge is the ripened fruit of ages of human experience. After having been for some decades in almost total eclipse, it is beginning once more to shed its

light on human problems. Astrology today holds the interest of numbers of first-class minds.

This is as it should be. In both its branches, the wisdom of the stars is the only adequate foundation for building the personal temple of God, or for erecting an enduring social structure.

Chokmah, therefore, is entitled אב , *ab*, the *father*, by Qabalists. For they regard this highest wisdom, of which astronomy is the most valuable expression, as having within itself the impregnating force of those sublime abstract generalizations which bear fruit in all the inventions marking the progress of mankind.

The first letter of **אב** , *ab*, is *aleph*, the bull. It is a symbol of fertility, and of the vital power of impregnation inherent in wisdom. The second letter is *beth*, the house, a symbol of the consequences of the activity of the vital power denoted by *aleph*. *Beth* also means *family* and *posterity*, as when we say “the house of York,” and likewise signifies all a house implies by its connection with architecture and geometry. Thus the two letters of **אב** , *ab*, stand for life (**א**) and art (**ב**) , in the strictly Masonic sense.

Again, **אב** takes us back to the letter G, for **א** is 1 and **ב** is 2. Thus **אב** is the number 3, symbolized in the Hebrew alphabet by the character **ג** , equivalent to G .

Nor is this all. No man ever becomes a Mason without having expressed his trust in God. Thus the entire curriculum of Masonic instruction may be said to be a development of this initial attitude of trust. Trust is the *seed* of wisdom, and the seed is actually one with the fruit, since both are parts of one continuous process of development. Thus we find that the Hebrew verb **חסה**, *chasah*, meaning "to put trust in," comprises letters whose values are 8, 60 and 5, so that it adds to 73, the number of *chokmah*, wisdom, and of *gimel*, or G.

Masonic readers will have noticed that the digits of 73, 7 and 3,

are prominent throughout the degrees of the Craft. Mention has been made of the many repetitions of 3. The number 7 is almost as widely diffused over the whole Masonic system. In the Blue Lodge its principal significance is in relation to seven steps representing the seven liberal, or liberating, arts and sciences. These seven steps are the final stages of a gradual ascent beginning with three other steps denoting wisdom, strength and beauty, so that the first step of the symbolic Masonic staircase is *wisdom*. The staircase, moreover, is a winding, or spiral, ascent, leading to the *middle* chamber,

where the workmen receive their wages.

If we add together the digits 3 and 7, following a common Qabalistic practice, the sum is 10. This number is not of great importance in Masonry, which derives most of its mystical numbers from 3. Masonic tradition, however, claims Pythagoras as "our ancient brother," and in the Pythagorean system the number 10 was venerated as a symbol of the perfection and consummation of all things. Thus the number 10 may be taken as a symbol of the harmony which is the strength and support of all well-regulated institutions

Here it is interesting to note that by Greek gematria, the noun

αρμονία , harmony, is the number 272. This is also the number of the Hebrew noun **ערב** , *ereb*, meaning evening, or the close of the day. The same noun sometimes designates the direction west. Hence the occult meaning of “harmony ,” by gematria, is directly connected with the station of the Senior Warden, who is the Masonic representative of harmony.

In the Qabalah the number 10 has the same prominence as in the system of Pythagoras. In *The Garden of Pomegranates*, Rabbi Moses Cordovero says: “The number ten is an all-embracing number. Outside of it there exists no other, for what is beyond ten

returns again to units." The Tree of Life, also, represents the ten aspects of the one reality. Hence the *Sepher Yetzirah* says: "Ten Sephiroth out of nothing, ten and not nine, ten and not eleven; understand with wisdom and apprehend with care. ..and restore the Creator to His throne."

Does this mean there are only ten possible aspects of the Deity ? No, for that would be to limit God. What it does mean is that no matter how many different *words* man may adopt to express his notions of the one reality, his mind is so constituted that it can formulate neither more nor less than ten distinct ideas of that reality. The

limit is in the human mind, not in the Divine Being. Just as we have ten fingers and ten toes, so are we limited mentally to ten basic ideas which express all that is intelligible concerning the nature and powers of the Grand Architect. Those ten ideas are represented by the ten Sephiroth.

Philo Judaeus, though not a Qabalist, was familiar with many tenets of Pythagorean philosophy. Concerning the decade, or number 10, he writes:

“Anyone may reasonably admire the decade for the following reason, that it contains within itself a nature which is at the same time devoid of intervals and

capable of containing them. Now that nature which has no connection with intervals is beheld in a point alone; but that which is capable of containing intervals is beheld under three appearances, a line, a superficies, and a solid. For that which is bounded by two points is a line; and that which has two dimensions or intervals is a superficies, the line being extended by the addition of breadth; and that which has three intervals is a solid, length and breadth having taken to themselves the addition of depth. And with these three nature is content; for she has not engendered more intervals or dimensions than these three. And the ar-

chetyral numbers which are the models of these three are, of the point the *unit*, of the line the number *two*, of the superficies the number *three*, and of the solid the number *four*, the combination of which, that is to say of *one*, and *two*, and *three*, and *four*, completes the decade. “

Here Philo tells us that 10 is the arithmetical summary of all that is to be found anywhere in nature. Moreover, he makes his demonstration by means of geometry, using terms that should be familiar to every Mason .

Thus the number 10, as representing what Qabalists call the *essence* of the number 73, which is

the number of **חכמה**, *chokmah*, wisdom, of **חסה**, *chasah*, to trust, and of the letter-name **גמל**, *gimel*, symbolizes the essential nature of the whole Masonic undertaking. It is, moreover, the number of the Hebrew letter, *yod* so that we might say the letter-name *gimel* is but a veil for the *yod* which brother Mackey preferred instead of the letter G.

Yod, moreover, is the initial letter of **יהוה**, Jehovah. (But notice here that in the English language the first syllable of Jehovah is pronounced exactly as we sound the letter G in reciting the alphabet.) As the first letter of the Ineffable Name, *yod* is assigned in the

Qabalah to *chokmah*, probably because *chokmah* is known also as *ab*, the father, a masculine Sephirah. For it is well understood by Qabalists that though the name of the letter *yod* means *hand*, the letter is really an emblem of that divine power of creation in its own image belonging to Deity. Thus *yod* represents what the Greeks called the phallus, the male organ of generation.

To some modern minds this may seem to be indelicate, but even a slight acquaintance with the symbols of the ancient mysteries from which Freemasonry is proud to claim descent will suffice to show that the hierophants of those

days had no false modesty. It was patent to them that all nature declares the value and sacredness of that power which man degrades when he permits himself to become the slave of his senses. Hence Mackey says:

“The phallus, therefore, as the symbol of the male generative principle, was very universally venerated among the ancients, and that too as a religious rite, without the slightest reference to any impure or lascivious application.”

Nor is the practical instruction of the Masonic lodge by any means free from reference to the same ancient idea of the importance of the generative power. The apron

which is the distinguishing badge of a Mason is worn so as to conceal this part of the body, and it is a symbol of *innocence* and *purity*. The compass is used symbolically to circumscribe our desires and keep our passions within due bounds. Furthermore, the obligation of a Master Mason leaves no room for doubt as to just what is meant by this circumscription of the emotions.

Here it might be pointed out that no such obligation is imposed on Entered Apprentices, or upon Fellow Crafts. It seems obvious that when the purport of Freemasonry was better understood than it seems to be now, this

obligation was not administered until the advancing brother had had time to digest and apply the lessons of the earlier degrees. To be fully self-controlled is a mark of mastery, and mastery is the fruit of training .

If we consider what is said to the Entered Apprentice when he is taught how to wear his apron, and look up the Biblical references to “untempered mortar,” we come upon the Hebrew noun תפל , *taphel*, derived from a root meaning “to be viscous, slimy .” Hence this word is used in Job 6,6 to mean “something unsavory ,” in Lamentations 2,14 for “foolish things,” and five times in the

prophecy of Ezekiel, as in Masonry, for “untempered mortar .”

The hidden significance is established by the fact that the number of תפל , *taphel*, is 510, which is also the number of תנין , *taneen*, translated “serpent” in the story of Moses casting down his rod (Exodus 7,9), and “dragon” in other portions of the Old Testament. All over the world the serpent and the dragon are phallic symbols representing that subconscious urge which modern psychology denominates *libido*.

Yet the same serpent symbol is used also to designate wisdom, i.e. , *chokmah*, the very aspect of the One Reality which is represented

by the eastern support of the lodge, and by the Master. This same wisdom is designated by the letter *yod* and the number 10.

For the *libido* which causes so much difficulty and sorrow when it is in the state of “untempered mortar” is actually the driving force of will which is brought under control in the long journey from West to East which ends at the seat of the Master. Thus we find the *Zohar* specifically stating that *yod* is assigned to the path named “The Intelligence of Will.”

That this will force of *yod* is something connected with generation is made clear by *The Book of Concealed Mystery*, which says

(Sec.33) that *yod* is masculine, and refers to the path of foundation. This path is the ninth Sephirah on the Tree of Life. Its name is *yesod*, meaning foundation or basis, and to it are referred the reproductive organs of the Grand Man. Again , in Section 42 of the same work, the letter *yod* is called “the symbol of the member of the covenant,” and the member of the covenant is the phallus.

The ostrich-like false modesty which does not permit some persons to perceive what is going on in their own organisms did not afflict our ancient brethren. They knew perfectly well that the work of perfecting the rude natural man

has a great deal to do with the mastery of the strongest urge in every *normal* human being. Hence they excluded from participation in their mysteries, as does the Masonic lodge today, those who were imperfect in organism, or notoriously lacking in self-discipline.

He who seeks to attain the heights of practical wisdom must needs be a man in possession of his full powers, and no small part of his work consists in learning how to *raise* what modern psychology calls *libido* from the death and dissolution of its gross physical expression to the heights of that wisdom which brings him who at-

tains it into *direct consciousness of immortality*.

In all the mystery schools of antiquity a secret was communicated which assured the initiates of immortality. Not by mere word of mouth. Not by dramatic representations only. They fall short in their estimation of the nature of those mysteries who suppose that explanation of symbols, and solemn spectacles, where all they had to offer. The rites of Eleusis and Samothrace, like those of the temple schools of Egypt, were but the preparation for an *experience*, and he whose conscious mind retained the memory of that experience *knew* himself to be immortal.

The processes whereby a man may so perfect and ripen his own consciousness, may so purify and change his body, that he may have the same direct awareness of his immortal part that was attained by our ancient brethren, are the real secrets of Freemasonry. They are indicated with sufficient detail and clearness in the rites and symbols of the Craft Lodge degrees.

Not for nothing is the highest of these called the *sublime* degree of Master Mason. Not for nothing is the legend of this degree concerned with a dissolution and a raising. For the old forms through which the serpent force expresses itself must be killed out before they may

be raised to a new life. Nor is it without significance that he who dies and is raised is known as a "man of Tyre," or a man of the *rock*, since "rock" is the meaning of the place name, Tyre.

The secret force which is tempered and brought under control is a force triple in aspect. Its nature is thus beautifully symbolized by the officers of the lodge, for this force is actually derived by us directly from the sun. Threefold in its fundamental nature, this force is raised through seven steps or stages of what the old alchemists called sublimation. This very word has been adopted by analytical psychology to describe processes

whereby the destructive manifestations of the *libido* may be lifted up and transformed into beneficent expressions.

Actually the old mystery schools were far in advance of the practical and theoretical knowledge of modern psychology. Long experience had perfected their techniques, and he who has any firsthand knowledge of their procedure knows beyond any peradventure that it is the real secret of Freemasonry.

Even this is hinted at by the letter G, for in Hebrew and Greek, as we have shown, the letters corresponding to G have each the value of 3. But in English, G is the

seventh letter. Thus it represents both the triple force and the seven stages of its sublimation. Hence it corresponds also to the digits of 73, signifying *chokmah*, wisdom, developed from the seed of *chasah*, trust, and constituting *gawmal*, the recompense which is the Master's wage of those who travel East on the camel (*gimel*) of earnest endeavor, As the *only* English letter which can represent both 3 and 7, it combines in itself the two significant numbers whose sum is 10, the value of Hebrew *yod*. Thus it seems to us to be a perfect Masonic symbol.

What think you, brethren? Shall we take down the letter G ? Shall

we be among those who deplore its presence in the lodge as being an ignorant anachronism? Or shall we arouse ourselves, and determine to exemplify in ourselves the power and wisdom for which it is so appropriate a symbol?

The purpose of this brief essay has been to defend an honorable symbol against the aspersions cast upon it by honest but mistaken critics.

We believe in Freemasonry. We believe it has a great work to perform, especially in the United States. But that work can never be done by persons who do not *live* their Masonry, and none may live it who does not really *know* it. Where do *you* stand ?