

Ancient Masonry
Degrees of the Cross.

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Issued under the auspices of The Brotherhood of Light.
Serial No. 16. Course IV--K.
Box 1525, Los Angeles, Calif. July 1917 July 1927
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Part XI. Degrees of the Cross.
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I should be deemed negligent, no doubt, if in these lessons I omitted all mention of the origins of Scottish Rite Masonry and York Rite Masonry. I do not wish it implied that I agree in the views of Albert Churchward in other archaeological matters, but as he seems to be quite correct in his opinions as to the origin of these two Masonic Orders, and as he is himself a high degree Mason, I take the liberty of here quoting from him in regard to the Scottish Rite, and in the next lesson of quoting from him in reference to the York Rite. In his "Arcana of Freemasonry" occurs these passages:

"Chevalier Ramsay stated that modern Masonry had its beginning in the Society of Architects founded in Scotland under the protection of King Robert Bruce, and the title of "Ancient and Accepted Masons of the Scottish Rite" may have possibly been formed in Scotland there and then: but if that is so, we must trace the origin of this to the Order of Knights Templar, who fled to Scotland, and through them to the ancient Mysteries practiced in the East. From whence did these Templars receive them? It is well known that one of the charges made against Jacques de Molay and his associates was that "they used sacred rites in their initiation". Their four oaths are well known, but who knew their rites of initiation! The aim of the Society of Architects was to perpetrate the ancient order of the Temple, and they continued to use their initiations of members, symbols, signs and some parts of the initiatory rites, which had been obtained in the East, but they only knew three degrees out of the seven lesser and ten greater. The next question is: From whence did the Templars receive those symbols, and their esoteric meaning, in which we plainly trace the doctrine of the old Egyptians; No doubt from the Christians, who, like the Emperor Julian, the Bishop Sinnesius, Clement of Alexandria, and many other philosophers, had been initiated into some of the mysteries by the Priests of Egypt before being converted to Christianity. In this way we can trace how part of the religious mysteries of Egypt, signs and symbols, etc., came to Scotland."

Speaking further concerning the Egyptians he says: "There were also many who crossed over to Europe from Egypt, and spread from Italy into France, who possessed and clung to the true doctrines, endured torture, and some even death, by the early Roman Priests, who tried to usurp the temporal by destroying the spiritual ideas; and yet these brothers would rather suffer death than give up their secrets and beliefs. Many of these migrations can be traced through Europe and finally to Scotland."

Now before taking up the degrees of the cross let us consider the Three Steps on the Master's Carpet. These symbolize the three stages of the sun's annual journey - its fall from summer into winter over the autumnal cross, its encasement in the

tomb of winter at the southern solstice, and its final resurrection into a new summer by way of the vernal cross. In the cycle of the soul this represents the soul's descent into the mineral realm, its evolution through lower forms of life up to the state of man, and from man by way of the equinox of regeneration evolving into the still higher state of angelhood.

The six degrees from the Heroine of Jericho to the Ineffable degrees, as given in Richardson's Monitor of Freemasonry, are each based upon the Thirteenth Major Arcanum of the Tarot, which pictures the transition from one life to another through death. They correspond to the zodiacal sign Aries. Astrologically this transition taken place yearly in the death of the Sun God on the autumnal equinox, or cross of Libra, and its resurrection is the spring on the vernal cross of Aries. One of the chief characteristics of this sign Aries is a warring disposition, its cross more often being represented by a word, the inversion of the cross of peace. This prepares us, therefore, to find in the ritual symbolizing the transition from one cycle to another through Aries, not only the emblem of the cross, but much military display.

Knights of Three Kings.

It is said that at the dedication of the Temple Solomon invited all the Eastern Royalty to attend and assist in the ceremonies. And it so happened that two of the Kings were at war. These two kings represent the summer and winter halves of the Zodiac, and are spoken of as Eastern because it is the Eastern point of union that is considered. Solomon attempts to reconcile them, but to no avail. Finally he invited them into a small apartment of the Temple, locked the door, and informed them that they would be kept in darkness with nothing to eat but bread and water until they would agree to live in peace. Solomon went to the chamber on two consecutive days without receiving a favorable reply, but on the third day he was informed that they had agreed. He then advanced toward them holding a lighted candle in each hand saying: "if you can agree in the dark you can in the light".

Now at the winter solstice the sun sheds least upon the northern hemisphere of the earth, the home of the Ancient Masons. From the winter solstice to the vernal equinox, through three zodiacal signs, Sol struggles to bring winter and summer together, This is the rainy season of the year during which the earth is in darkness due to obscuring clouds. It is the time when famine pinches hardest; for the food garnered the previous autumn has exhausted during the tedious barren winter. The frugal fare of bread and water refers to this dearth of food and the previous rains, The sign of the degree is to hold out the arms from the body to form a cross, with a candle in each hand. The outstretched arms form the vernal cross and the two candidates represent the sun and moon in opposition as stationed at Easter, or the resurrection; for this only takes place after the full moon after the sun has crossed the vernal equinox. Agreeing in the light refers to the reconciliation of winter and summer and the passing of the sun into the light of the summer signs, when the days become longer than the nights. As the two kings kept each other from the light, so man and woman in antagonism keep each other in spiritual darkness. The watch-word is Agreed.

Knights of the Red Cross.

This degree originally was called The Order of the Knights of the East, signifying the spiritual illumination of those who willingly sacrifice themselves on the cross of expiation. Astrologically it refers to the rising vernal sun. Later it was changed Palestine to Knights of the Red Cross, representing the cross of the physical plane

rather than that spiritual, and such symbolizing the effort to administer to the physical ills of humanity, to alleviate suffering, save life, and protect the weak.

The sword and inverted cross, plays an important role in this degree as do various military maneuvers. The knights count themselves into two equal divisions which stand facing each other to represent the signs of winter and summer, the two halves of the zodiac. In fact, most ancient peoples had years of six months, a custom still followed by the Jews. The Sacred year of the Jews is from the vernal equinox to the autumnal equinox, and their Civil Year is from Libra to Aries. The knights go through sword play to indicate the struggle between the two opposing forces and then communicate the Jewish Pass, which is given with three cuts over an arch of steel. The three cuts represent the three months of struggle as the sun comes forth from the tomb of winter, and is also symbolical of united action on all three planes of life.

The arch of steel is made by crossing the swords at the level of the waist line, of Libra, symbolizing the autumnal equinox. Each brother steps forward with the left foot and with the free hand seizes the opposite brother by the shoulder to signify union, and in this position they alternately pronounce the pass-words. The Jewish pass-words Judah and Benjamin symbolize the two signs in which the sun exerts its greatest power, Leo and Aries. Jacob said of Judah : "Judah is a Lion's whelp, from the prey my son art thou gone up. He stopped down, he crouched as a lion" ,referring in an unmistakable manner to the sign of the Lion. The word equally with the ram is sacred to Aries, denoting its fiercest aspect. Jacob said ; "Benjamin shall rave as a wolf, in the morning he shall devour the prey, and at night divide the spoils". These Jewish pass-words symbolize the home and exaltation of the sun, and are pronounced over the equinoctial cross to indicate the reign of summer and the predominance of masculine forces.

The Persian Pass is given under an arch of steel. The swords are crossed at the level of the head to represent the vernal equinox , Aries being the sign ruling the head. Under this arch the words are given alternately by each. The words are the names of the Persian governors who for a time contended against permitting the Temple to be built. They were Tetnai and Shetharboznai. As alien rulers they represent the sun's detriment and fall, Aquarius and Libra, and the triumph of winter over summer, feminine forces over masculine. They are pronounced below the vernal cross to indicate the sun's weakness when in these signs.

The red Cross Word is communicated by giving three cuts and then drawing the sword back as if to stab the companion of the opposite division to the heart, the word "Veritas" being spoken by one, and the other answering, "Right". The four signs presiding as rulers of the four quadrants of the zodiac symbolize the One Principle, the One Law, the One Agent, and the One Truth that united sum up all possibilities. The Lion or Leo, sign of the heart in which the sun exerts its dominant power symbolizes the One Principle. The opposite sign of the zodiac, Aquarius, representing the perfection of intelligence, symbolizes the One Truth. The red Cross Word, Veritas, means Truth. The red Cross Sign refers to Leo, and both sign and word symbolizes the action of the sun at opposite points in the zodiac--in Leo, the sign of its rulership, and in Aquarius, the sign of its detriment. It emphasizes the truth that man raises to his greatest potency when inspired by his affections. The three cuts typify the three signs of each quarter presided over by each of the emblems, Lion and Man, and to the three planes where truth and affection may be applied.

The sign, grip, and word of a Red Cross Knight are given by first clashing the

swords together to denote a struggle between opposing forces, between life and death. Then the thumb and forefinger of the left hand are placed to the lips in the attitude of one blowing a blast on a horn, signifying the trumpet of resurrection sounding the triumph over death, Finally three cuts are made to signify the three signs through which the sun passes from its tomb of winter to the cross of spring, and the fingers of the free hands are interlaced to indicate that it is through union that the position, with the swords crossed level with the head, or Aries, the word Libertes is pronounced and the opposing brother acknowledges it to be right. Libertas mean liberty. Resurrection is the freeing of the soul from earthly bondage. The powers of the sun are freed by the moon on Easter after passing the vernal cross. Man's occult powers are liberated by women, their mutual efforts lifting them out of the winter of materialism.

The Chamber of the Order of the Red Cross is divided into two apartments by a veil. The apartments represent the two halves of the zodiac and the veil symbolizes the equinoctial colure. The council being opened, the companions sit in a semi-circle to represent the signs of one half of the zodiac. They each take their hats and toes them on the floor to symbolize union to be lacking, the positive and negative forces separated. They represent the sun. They place their elbows on their knees and bow forward with their heads resting on and supported by their right hands, this dejected attitude being meant to typify the weakness of the sun in the winter sings and the weakness of man to resist the forces of evil when apart from woman. The Prelate then reads at length how after the death of Cyrus, King of Persia, the Children of Israel were interrupted in the building of the Temple by their adversaries on the other side of the river. The river, or dividing line, represents the equinoctial colure and the adversaries represent the force of winter. A new king, Darius, having ascended to the throne of Persia, that is the sun having another, winter sign, Zerubbabel decides to make a journey to the new king and remind him of his promises to send back to Jerusalem all the holy vessels remaining in Babylon. These holy vessels are the planets remaining in the winter signs of the zodiac, and in man represent his divine potentialities which are hidden and hampered by his material inclinations.

The candidate now personates Zerubbabel and takes his obligations kneeling at the altar on his left knee, his right hand grasping the hilt of his sword and his left hand resting on the Bible, square and compass, on which are two swords crossed at right angles. His attitude signifies not only his willingness to abide by the higher and lower laws represented by compass, square, and Bible, but denotes by the crossed swords his determination to conduct an actual warfare against the forces of evil and death. Then the candidate in his travels comes to a bridge which he is told separates the Jewish from the Persian nation. It is the equinox, which he passes by giving three cuts and the Jewish Press, indicating the fall of the sun from the summer solstice through the sign of its greatest strength across the autumnal equinox of Libra through the three first winter signs. Its entry into Capricorn is symbolized by the Persian Guards taking him captive, making of him a slave in fetters, and putting sackcloth over his head. This is the furthest point of winter; the point in the cycle of the soul where it has evolved to the lowest state of matter and is ready for evolution back to spirit. As a slave he is led to an audience with Darius, who represents the Man of the heavens, Aquarius, presiding over the last quarter of the zodiac.

The candidate is freed by Darius, the king of the zodiacal quarter symbolizing Truth, and invited to a banquet where it is the custom to propound and answer questions. The question is asked which is of greatest strength, wine, the king, or women. After

a long discussion of the relative strength of each it is decided that Truth is stronger than any of the others. The candidate is commended for this answer and is reinvested with his weapons and insignia which were taken from him when he was made prisoner. The royal sign of the zodiac. Leo is meant by the king, the bibulous sign Scorpio is signified by wine, and the sign of Venus, Taurus, which is also the Moon's exaltation is referred to as woman. Truth is symbolized by Aquarius. The Man of the zodiac is the product of the influence of all other signs and represents the climax of material evolution. Truth is the highest possible standard, and man through his apprehension of truth is made Free and Immortal. The particular emblem of the Knight of the Red Cross is seven-point star in the center of which is a red cross surrounded by a circle in which are the words; "Magna est Veritas et Praevalebit". The red cross is emblematical of the world of physical suffering. The seven-point star represents the seven active principles in nature. The circle is the zodiac. The words mean that Truth is Mighty and Will Prevail. The whole symbolizes the fact One Indomitable Truth pervades alike the zodiac, the spheres of planetary angels, and the world of mundane suffering, and that man's individual progress depends upon his ability to comprehend that Truth and conform his efforts to it.

Order of Knights Templar.

The Encampment of knights Templar is divided by a veil into two compartments to represent the summer and winter halves of the zodiac. In front of the throne is a triangle, representing man's triune nature -- body, soul, and spirit. Above it is a banner with a cross upon it surrounded by rays of light, symbolizing renewed life through death, and light received through union. On either side are sky-blue banners, the color of Saturn, of wisdom gained through earthly experience. The one on the right bears a pascal lamb above which is a maltese cross and the motto: "The Will of God." The lamb is the equinoctial sign Aries, where the sun is rejuvenated in spring. The maltese cross is the emblem of the solstice where the sun crosses from eastern to western or from western to eastern zodiacal signs. Each of its arms represents one quarter of the zodiac. The whole emblem symbolizes the sun sinking to the winter solstice and relinquishing the virile powers conferred by Aries. The Son of Man referred to this waning strength by saying; "Thy Will not mine be done", which is the significance of the motto of the banner. The banner upon the left has upon it the emblems of the order--a sword, a battle axe, trumpet, and shield -- symbolizing by their form the signs ruling the zodiacal quarters--Taurus, Leo Scorpio, and Aquarius. Above these is a crowing cock, representing the triumph of virility over death and the conditions imposed by the stars. It is typical of the sun resurrected into the signs of summer, immortality victorious over mortality. The three banners symbolize the cross of Christ between the two crucified thieves. The cross of Christ is the autumnal equinox, from which the Sun God sinks into the tomb of winter. The maltese cross dominating the lamb is the solstitial cross of winter, symbolizing the unrepentant thief. The crossed emblems on the right of the cross of Christ being surmounted by a crowing cock represents the vernal cross and the repentant thief to whom the Son of Man promised; "Today shalt thou be with me in paradise.

The knights are dressed in black to indicate the inevitableness of death. A black sash trimmed with silver lace hangs from a black rose on the right shoulder across to the left side, having suspended from it a poniard and maltese cross. The sash as worn represents the solstitial colure dividing the zodiac into east and west. The western signs are symbolized by the black sash and the eastern signs by the white of the silver trimming. The black rose symbolizes the extinguishment of life and the

decline of the sun from the autumnal equinox to the winter solstice. The Maltese cross is typical of the solstice, and the poniard represents the vernal equinox; for by its form it is an inversion of the cross of Libra. The particular emblem of the order is worn on the left breast to indicate its dominance over the material motives. This emblem is a nine-point star in the center of which is a golden serpent entwined about a cross and surrounded by a circle in which are the words; "In hoc Signo Vincas". The nine-point star symbolizes the gamut of nine planets under whose influence experience has been transformed into wisdom. The cross represents the cycle of life completed, and the serpent entwined on it represents wisdom gained through experience with good and evil. The words mean that Under This Sign Thou Shalt Conquer. The whole symbolizes wisdom gained through cyclic experience, by which death will be conquered and a new life gained.

The apron worn by a knight is black, of triangular shape, trimmed with silver lace, having on it a serpent entwined about a cross, skull with cross bones, and stars placed in triangular form with a red cross in the center of each. The apron symbolizes by the black trine involution, and by the trine of silver lace, evolution. The serpent entwined on the cross means wisdom gained through experience during involution and evolution. The skull and cross bones are a reminder of the inevitableness of death and the following resurrection. The skull is typical of death and transition; the end of the cycle of life, or zodiac, being ruled by Aries, the commencement of a new cycle. The crossed bones signify the equinox, and being Marrow Bones signify renewed life; for it is thought that blood corpuscles, emblematical of life, are formed in the red marrow of the bones. Because of the red cross in the center, each of the three stars represents one of the kingdoms of physical life--mineral, vegetable, and animal--through which, amid suffering, the monad has evolved before arriving at the estate of man.

In this degree the Knights are arranged in the form of a trine to represent the union in a harmonious manner of once opposing forces. The candidate is taken to the chamber of reflection, which is a small room with its walls and furniture painted black to represent the tomb. Upon the table in front of him is a Bible, typifying the Law, skull and cross bones to signify his companionship with the dead, a bowl of water for ablution to represent purification before ascending to higher realms even as the Sun God must be baptized by the overflowing urn of Aquarius and pass through the waters of Pisces before the resurrection, and a small tapir symbolizing his consciousness directly after death. Here he must write and sign his name to the answers to three questions. The first is his affirmation never to draw his sword except in the defense of the Christian Religion. It signifies his intent to combat evil only. The second answer affirms he has nothing heavy on his conscience, referring to the expiation of ill deeds in the astral worlds of purification. The third is his avowed intention to abide by the rules of the Encampment, meaning that he will conform his endeavors to whatever laws are necessary for spiritual advancement.

The question being satisfactorily answered he is dressed in pilgrim's weeds and sent on a seven years pilgrimage to represent man's experiences on the material plane. He is provided with sandals, symbolizing the Oral Law, the traditional writings of men; bread, symbolizing material experiences; and water, symbolizing emotions. One after another he passes the guards of the different veils, who each examine his script, give him good advice at some length, replenish his supply of bread and water, and mend him on his way. This represents the sun moving past the summer solstice, past the autumnal equinox and winter solstice, and thus through three quadrants of the heavens. Finally the candidate is admitted to the fourth compartment to represent the sun in the last quarter of the zodiac. This symbolizes

man triumphing over the four elemental kingdoms of earth, fire, water, and air. Having been found worthy his sentence is remitted from seven years to three and he is given a sword and buckler to symbolize the sun passing to a new cycle. It also symbolizes the man arrived at physical adeptship before the allotted span of life has been passed who undergoes voluntary dissolution so that he may better support heavens and combat the hells of the astral region.

The candidate has now become a Pilgrim Warrior sentenced to serve seven years in warfare, and has been given the Pilgrim Warrior's pass--Maher-Shalal-Hashbaz, meaning to spoil. This is given with four cuts under and arch of steel, to represent the necessity of conquering the four kingdoms of the astral world, the arch symbolizing the vernal cross of Aries. He now goes on a Pilgrimage of warfare and again passes the three guards and comes to a halt before the fourth veil guarding the asylum. This asylum, as the region where the step to a new phase of initiation is taken, refers to the sign Pisces which rules imprisonment and places of refuge--the last sign of the zodiac. To indicate the candidate's desire to complete the cycle and pass to higher realms the Senior Warden stamps on the floor three times four, referring to the four zodiacal triplicities. Here he gives assurance that he holds no enmity toward any soul on earth. This symbolizes the end of purification, typified in the zodiac by the urn of Aquarius, He is now required to partake of five libations, signifying the synthesis of the four quarters of the zodiac in the form of the fifth emblem represented by the sphinx. The first four are water mixed with wine, material emotions mixed with those spiritual; but the fifth is of pure wine to represent complete transmutation into spiritual life. The first libation is to Solomon King of Israel or the ego. The second libation is to Hiram King of Tyre, the spiritual body. The third libation is to Hiram Abiff the Widow's son, the divine soul. The candidate is in front of a triangular table around which are ranged twelve burning candles and twelve cups, symbolizing life and love, the positive and negative aspects of the twelve zodiacal signs. In the center of the table is a black coffin, symbolizing the tomb. Above this is the bible, representing the Law that progress is made through death, the latter represented by a skull and cross bones resting on the bible. The Prelate then reads concerning the betrayal of the Christos by one of the twelve, and orders the candidate to extinguish one of the tapers to signify the apostasy of Judas Iscariot, the zodiacal sign of death, Scorpio.

The skull. Which symbolizes the soul mate of Hiram, the lost orb of heaven, is called Old Simon in memory of Simon of Cyrene who bore the cross of Christ and shared his misfortunes. The history of the trial and crucifixion being read, the candidate is called upon to drink the fourth libation to Simon of Cyrene. His term of warfare is reduced from seven to three years on account of good behavior and he must now pass a year in penance. He takes the skull in one hand and a lighted taper in the other, symbols of life and death, and travels to the sepulcher of the sun God. He gains entrance to the sepulcher by means of five cuts, a symbol of intelligent dominion of the four zodiacal quarters, and by means of the pass-word Golgotha, which means a skull, and symbolizes the end of life. At this point read the portion of the Bible relating how the angel of heaven rolled the stone away from the tomb of the Sun God. That is, the sun descending from the cross of Libra into the tomb of Capricorn re ascends to summer because the angle of heaven of equinoctial Aries rolls away the stone of winter.

The candidate is now given a black cross, symbolizing the autumnal cross of death. It signifies the stage of the adept's journey representing the second death, the transition of the spiritualized man of the higher astral realms into the realm of pure spirit above the astral. The candidate is shortly admitted to the asylum, or fourth

room, and requested to drink from the skull the fifth libation of pure wine. This fifth libation symbolizes the spiritual body that survives the second death. It also symbolizes the reunion of soul mates, the first libation representing the ego, the second the spiritual body of Hiram, the third the divine soul of Hiram, the fourth the soul mate who shares all spiritual vicissitudes, and the fifth the spiritual body of the soul-mate which blends with Hiram's soul after the second death. In case the candidate refuses to take the fifth libation as ordered he is charged by six knights with drawn swords. He is the seventh, thus indicating that the septenary of existence compels this spiritual reunion if immortality is to be attained.

Having partaken of life from the cup of Aries, the skull, he is appointed to fill the vacancy caused by Judas Iscariot, and so relights extinguished tapir; for Aries, the sign of life, is presided over by the same planet as Scorpio, the sign of death. The due-guard is given by placing the end of the thumb under the chin, the fingers clenched. It denotes the Will to conquer death by passing into the new cycle represented by the chin which is the particular portion of the head where Aries exerts its most pronounced rulership. The cross is given by drawing the hand horizontally across the throat and then darting it up before the face. This is the vernal cross of life. The grand hailing sign of distress is given by placing the right feet over the left, representing the solstitial cross, and extending both arms to signify the autumnal cross, the head inclining to the right in dejection to indicate lack of power. The grip is given by interlacing the fingers of the right and left hands with the opposite brother, and as each crosses his arms pronouncing the word Emanuel. It refers to the reascension through union after transition.

Knights of Malta.

This degree is usually given with the Order of Knights Templar. The sign is made by holding out the hands as if warming them, representing the heat of summer. The lower edge of the left hand is then seized near the middle with the thumb and forefinger of the right hand, representing the painful influence of the sun as it crosses the vernal equinox after being attacked by the claws of the Scorpion, and then the hands are raised in this position to a level with the chin, or Aries, and then disengaged with a quick motion that extends them down at an angle of forty-five degrees, as if the evil influence of death, or Scorpio, has been thrown off. It is said to refer to Paul when shipwrecked on the Island of Melita being bitten by a serpent as he warmed himself at a fire.

The grand word of a Knight of Malta is INRI, said to be the initials of the words, Iesus Nazarenus Rex Iudaeorum, meaning Jesus of Nazareth, King of the Jews. But all well informed occultists know these initials are of the words, Igne Natura Renovatur Integra, meaning, All Nature is Renewed by Fire. This refers to the rejuvenating effect of the creative principle when properly applied and transmuted on the rosy cross of spring.

The grip and word of a Knight of Malta are given by interlacing the fingers of the right hand, placing the forefinger in the other's palm, reaching across with the left hand and pressing the fingers into the other's side at the waist line, or Libra. With the arms thus crossed one pronounces the words, "My Lord", and the other rejoins, "And My God". Their union in this fashion forms a maltese cross and an equinoctial cross, over both of which the sun passes annually. The fingers in the palm refer to Jupiter ruling the sign Sagittarius from which the sun crosses the winter solstice into Capricorn. Jupiter is the greater fortune, the planet of generosity, and this emphasizes the necessity of unselfishness in united effort to gain immortality. The

exclamation "My Lord", means all is under Law; and "My God", refers to the ego overshadowing counterpart souls the final reunion of which results in immortality. This sign is said to refer to Doubting Thomas who must feel the nail prints and The spear wound in the side of the Sun God. Knights of Christian Mark

The ritual of this degree is based upon the resurrection and punishment or reward for deeds done upon earth. After prayer each Knight, one after another, takes the Bible and waves it four time over his head saying, "Rex Regnantium et Dominus Dominantium", (Kings of Kings and Lord of Lords), then kisses the book and passes it to the next, and so on around the circle. It symbolizes the sun's passage through the four quarters of the zodiac, signifies that all is under law, and that the sun is the source of all physical and spiritual life. The sing is given by each knight interlacing the fingers of his left and with those of his brother, and pointing a sword towards his heart, at the same time saying, Tammuz Toulimeth, meaning that life is uncertain and transitory. The sign symbolizes the fall of the sun from Leo, or the soul from spiritual realms, across the equinox where summer and winter, or spirit and matter, join. The candidate is dubbed a knight of the Christian Mark by interlacing his fingers with those of the Invincible Knight and placing his other hand over his heart. The Invincible Knight and the Senior Knight then cross their swords on the back of the candidates neck, to symbolize the equinoctial cross of spring, and give him these words, "Tammuz Toulimeth", an assurance of the certainty of death and the uncertainty of life.

Next, the Senior Knight reads a long passage the purport of which is "For he that overcometh, the same shall be clothed in white raiment, and his name shall be written in the book of life". Six Grand Ministers, representing the six summer signs of the zodiac, come forward with swords and shield and one with an ink-horn. They are told to execute the judgment of the Lord, whereupon the candidate bewails his fate that his lips are unclean. The first Minister takes a live coal from the altar and touches it to the candidate's lips, representing the purification after the resurrection and the sun's passage through Aries after its rebirth. The candidate is then marked on the forehead with a signet leaving the words, King of Kings and Lord of Lords, and is told that the number of the sealed is one-hundred-forty-four-thousand. This refers to an ancient tradition that each volute of every round of humanity produce its harvest of immortal souls. A volute is one precessional cycle of 25,920 years, during which the vernal equinox recedes through the twelve zodiacal signs. during each precessional sign the sun annually circles the zodiac in a direction opposite to the precession and thus each year souls that attain immortality are born under the twelve signs. The twelve signs through which the sun annually passes while the equinox is in each sign, multiplied by the twelve signs that the equinox passes through in the precessional cycle, make up the one hundred --forty-four varieties of souls born during one evolutionary volute of time. These of all the one-hundred-forty-four zodiacal possibilities who find the Law, and abide by it become spiritual kings.

The insignia which is worn ever the heart is a triangular plate of gold, representing body, soul, and ego. On one side is the letter G in a five point star. It symbolizes that intelligent man is the climax of evolution through generation. On the other side are seven eyes, symbolizing the seven states of consciousness attained by the adept.

Order of Knights of the Holy Sepulchre

This degree is said to have been founded by St. Helen, mother of Constantine the

Great in gratitude for her success in finding the true cross. She had made a journey into the Holy Land and found three crosses but was unable to determine which was the right one. Pope Marcellinus a test by taking them to the bedside of a dying woman. Touching the first cross--the autumnal cross of Libra--did not affect her. The second cross--the solstitial cross of Capricorn--produced no beneficial effect. But on touching the third cross--the life giving cross of Aries--she immediately was restored to perfect health. It is this latter cross which in spring revivifies the whole world.

The most significant ritual of this degree represents the candidate taking up arms, Aries fashion to "guard the Holy Sepulchre"--the body and material possessions to "defeat our enemies"--the negative forces of evil of winter--to "unfurl the banner of our cross"--life through union--to "protect the Roman Eagle"--transmute the sex forces into constructive channels--to "return with victory and safety"-- return to spiritual realms consciously victorious over sense and seeming. The candidates first interlace their fingers, cross their arms and say, "de mortuis, all nisi bonum", meaning that nothing should be said but good concerning the dead, as the so-called dead are often conscious of our thoughts and words. The interlaced fingers indicate union in accomplishing their mission to overcome the forces of evil denoted by the autumnal cross.

They sally forth, going toward the south, even as the sun after the summer solstice moves south to the struggle with winter after passing the autumnal equinox. They meet a band of Turks, representing the feminine forces of winter, with whom they do battle, seize the crescent and victoriously return north to the Cathedral, the summer signs. They triumphantly place the banner, eagle and crescent before the altar. The Holy Sepulchre is the winter solstice, matter, or when applied to the incarnating soul it is the mother's womb through which it comes into a new life. As applied to incarnate man it is the body in which he is encased awaiting the period when earthly gestation shall be accomplished and he shall be set free from matter. Applied to the departing soul it is the grave. Yet for the righteous death has no sting and the grave has no victory. This is the significance of the Word of the Order, Sepulchrum, meaning sepulchre. The Roman Eagle bears testimony to the thought; for the same sign representing death--the stinging scorpion--through regeneration becomes the soaring eagle of spiritual life. In this regeneration the sun is not alone; for the crescent moon is also given a place before the altar even as man and woman mutually sustain each other.

Order of the Cross

The Provost reads the following in opening this degree: "It is now the first hour of the day, the time when our Lord suffered, and the veil of the temple was rent asunder; when darkness and consternation were spread over the earth; when the confusion of the old covenant was made light in the new, the temple of the cross. It is the third watch, when the implements of Masonry were broken; when the flame, which led the Wise Men of the East, reappeared; when the cubic stone was broken, and the word was given". The first hour when the Lord suffered refers to sunrise on the day of the autumnal equinox, the veil of the temple which was rent being the equinoctial colure which was passed by the sun. Nights then became longer than the days and the covenant of summer gave place to winter. The sun had passed through three signs since the summer solstice, or now the third watch. The virility of the sun--mace and plumb are broken on the cross. The cubic stone is the winter solstice, the dividing line of inertia, which is broken by the reappearance of the sun at Epiphany, the word then being given that heralds the resurrection.

The sign is made by looking a brother full in the face and touching him on the right temple, the phrenological faculty of construction, meaning the use of constructive effort which is quality ruled by Aries. The mark is Baal, Sha-Lisha, Lord of the three, meaning control over the three bodies, physical, astral and spiritual. The candidate must give correctly his name, age, birth place, and residence; the data for erecting his birth-chart. The initial of the mark, HIS, Iesus Homium Salvator-- Jesus Savior of Men--are in Hebrew, Jod-He-Shin, man and woman together attaining adeptship. In Latin they are the initials of words meaning, Son of Man Triumphant.

The Brotherhood of Light
Box 1525, Los Angeles, Calif.
Serial No. 16, Branch Letter -- K
Course IV. Branch of Science -- Ancient Masonry
Part XI. Degrees of the Cross.

Examination Questions

1. Astrologically, what is the symbol of the Maltese Cross?
2. What are represented by the Three Kings of Knights of the Three Kings Degree?
3. What is symbolized astrologically by the trumpet blast and word Libertas?
4. What is symbolized by three cuts over an arch of steel?
5. What symbolical relation has the sword to the cross?
6. What is the esoteric significance of the letters HIS?
7. What is meant by the statement that the number of the sealed are 144 thousand?
8. What is symbolized by drinking the fifth libation from a deaths head?
9. What do sandals symbolize?
10. What is symbolized by a golden serpent entwined about a cross?
11. What is meant astrologically by Truth being stronger than wine, the king, or women?
12. What is symbolized by the Red Cross?
13. What is meant astrologically by the Red Cross Veritas, and by the Red Cross sign of stabbing to the heart?
14. What is signified by the frugal fare for three days and the final agreement in the Three Kings Degree?
15. What is signified by the word Sepulchrum?
16. What is symbolized by placing a live coal to the candidate's lips?
17. What is represented by a black cross?

18. What do the Cross Bones that accompany the skull signify?
19. What is symbolized by a black rose?
20. What is the bridge separating the Jewish from the Persian nation?
21. What significance have the pass-words Judah and Benjamin?
22. Astrologically what are the Holy Vessels remaining in Babylon?
23. What is signified by the letter G within a five-point star?
24. What is the esoteric interpretation of the letters INRI?
25. What is symbolized by bread?
26. What is symbolized by a crowing cock?
27. What is the probable origin of the Order of Scottish Rite Masonry?