

# GEMS OF PURPOSE

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## A MASONIC NEWSLETTER

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### *The Plumb, Level and Square*



#### Dates to Remember

- November 12 & 13—*Conclusion of The Nashville Valley Scottish Rite Reunion, Grand Lodge Building of Tennessee*
- November 18—*Stated Meeting Bethpage Lodge*
- November 16—*Stated Meeting Bethpage Lodge, Election of Officers*

Order is heaven's first law. Order is the result of the operation of law. Unless the law is followed in all that we think, feel and do, in all our relations to God, our neighbors or ourselves, harmony will not prevail, order will not obtain.

In architecture we find three elemental parts, the right, or lawful, use of which are the only essentials in the erection of buildings. These are the post, or upright; the lintel, or horizontal; and the arch, or segment of a circle; which, in their several extensions may be made to serve every use in building.

The post extended becomes the wall; the lintel extended becomes the floor; the arch, extended or modified, becomes the roof, or covering to protect. But the architect must use these elements lawfully, rightly, as nature intended them to be used, or he cannot erect a building that will be straight, level and true; and, unless the building be so erected it will not stand.

So the plumb is used to erect the post, or the wall, so that it will stand straight and upright; the level is used to lay the lintel, or the floor, so that it will be horizontal, or at right angles to the post, or the wall; and if proof of the accuracy of the plumb and level is wanted, the square is applied at the juncture. Plumb and level are useful; but they must be proved by the square to insure perfection.

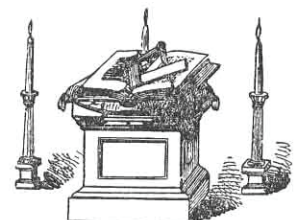
As in architecture, so in Masonry, the elemental parts are few, simple, easy to apprehend; but they must be learned in order, according to natural law, or they will not be clearly apprehended, the relations will not be understood, the effects will not be rational and right.

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Every Man is an individual, a separate and distinct entity, free, independent, with powers of self-enlightenment (Conscience), self-direction (Reason), and self-propulsion (Will); and has within himself all the essentials, given him by his Creator for right use, to become upright, erect, a symbol of Integrity, an exemplar of Liberty in harmony with Natural Law.

As every Man is an individual, with all of the powers indicated, it follows that, every Man is equally endowed by his Creator with all of the rights and privileges of every other. This being recognized by the upright, erect, symbol of Integrity, he must in all of his relations with all other men become, also, faithful to every other, or a symbol of Fidelity, an exemplar of Equality in harmony with Natural Law.



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## *The Plumb, Level and Square*

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The Plumb teaches Integrity; Liberty.

The Level teaches Fidelity; Equality.

The Square teaches Sincerity; Fraternity.



The Test of our Integrity and Fidelity is our conduct in our relations to God, our neighbors, and ourselves. If we are not Fraternal (Square), in our relations we are lacking in Integrity, or Fidelity, or both.

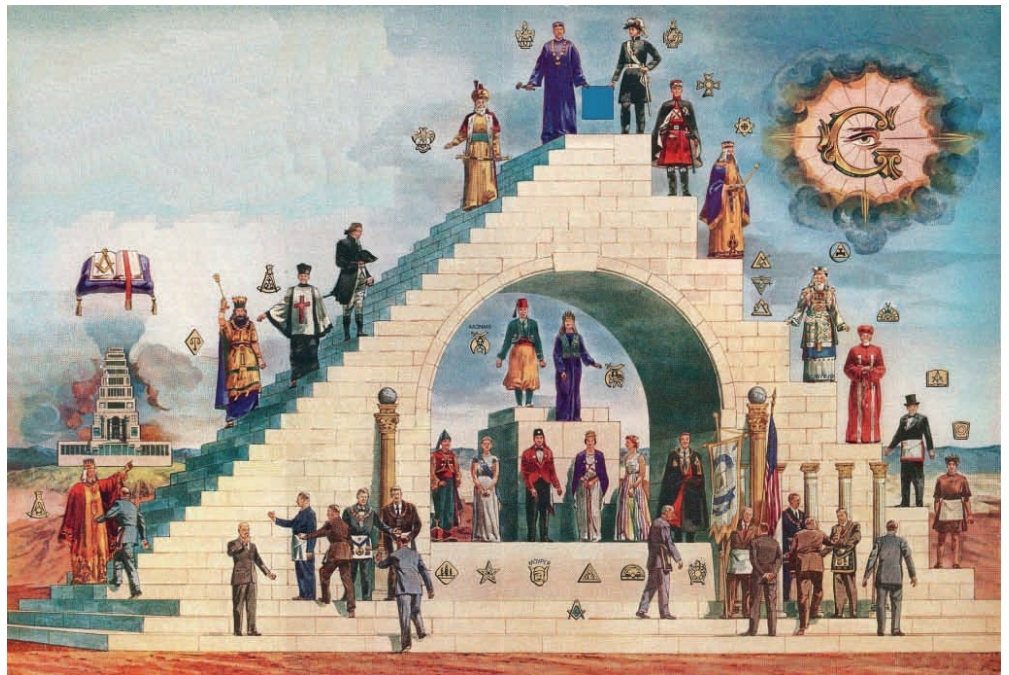
### **Thoughts on the Second Degree.**

In the First Degree of Masonry every Mason learns the lesson of Personal Liberty and the necessity for Individual Effort, upon his part, to subdue his evil propensities.

In the Second Degree he is taught the Principles of Masonry, or Construction, or Building. The man whose eyes have not been opened to the meaning of the symbols used can only see, in this degree, certain fundamental principles of Architecture. AH that is said upon this subject might be published broadcast, put into the hands of both the evil-minded, and the well intentioned, without restriction; and, if the Spiritual Truths behind the Symbols were not apprehended, neither Good nor Evil results would follow.

But, to the Intelligent Freemason, the Plumb, the Level and the Square, the Orders of Architecture, the Principles of Construction, the Symbolic Meanings of all of these things, comes New Light. Herein he discovers, by making the Individual Effort, those Secrets of Nature which are veiled from the eyes of those who sit in Darkness. Herein the Illuminated Mason finds the Key to Individual Progress, and the Interpretations of Designs which the Great Architect of the Universe has drawn upon His Trestle-Board, for the Guidance of the Children of Light.

Happy is the Mason who has learned the lessons of the First Degree so well that he understands. Happier still is he who has apprehended the teachings of the Second Degree so fully that he can apply them intelligently to the Building of his Moral Character. It is important that the evil within us should be brought under Subjection to Reason, but, unless we go further and Build upon a Firm Foundation, using the Plumb, the Level and the Square in our Work, following the Plans on The Trestle-Board of the Great Architect; there can be no advancement made, because Character is only formed by Masonic, or Constructive Endeavor.



Taken from: *Thoughts Inspired by the Ancient and Accepted Scottish Rite Degrees*, Published by Edgar A. Russell Company, 1919

# Scriptures for a Studying Mason

Ezra 3:8&9

**Ezr 3:8** Now in the second year of their coming unto the house of God at Jerusalem, in the second month, began Zerubbabel the son of Shealtiel, and Jeshua the son of Jozadak, and the remnant of their brethren the priests and the Levites, and all they that were come out of the captivity unto Jerusalem; and appointed the Levites, from twenty years old and upward, to set forward the work of the house of the LORD.

**Ezr 3:9** Then stood Jeshua *with* his sons and his brethren, Kadmiel and his sons, the sons of Judah, together, to set forward the workmen in the house of God: the sons of Henadad, *with* their sons and their brethren the Levites.



## A Masonic President The Campaign Of 1896 S. Dennis Phillips, 32°



*The presidential campaign of 1896 clearly illustrates the diversity and high quality of the men who are drawn to Masonry.*

Born in 1860 in Salem, Illinois, William Jennings Bryan (right above) grew up in an active Democratic family. He graduated from Illinois College as valedictorian and delivered his address on character. Bryan proceeded on to Union College of Law and in 1883 and opened his practice in Jacksonville, Illinois. In 1887 he moved his practice to Lincoln, Nebraska, where the outgoing, high-spirited young lawyer joined several organizations including Lincoln Lodge No. 14 on April 15, later affiliating with Temple Lodge No. 247, Miami, Florida. From Lincoln, Bryan began his ascent up the political ladder.

William McKinley (left above) was born in 1843 in Niles, Ohio. Young McKinley attended Allegheny College, but due to illness and his father's financial problems, he was unable to continue his studies. He was clerking in a post office in an effort to raise the money to continue his education when the Civil War broke out.

McKinley enlisted in the twenty-third Ohio and, due to his excellent service, was mustered out as a brevet major in 1865. At the end of the war, McKinley, who was visiting an army hospital, noticed the friendliness with which a Union surgeon treated some wounded Confederates. After some inquiry, McKinley found that the wounded southerners and the surgeon were Freemasons. He soon made known his desire to join a fraternity with such strong bonds of brotherhood. The future President was raised a Master Mason in Hiram Lodge No. 21, Winchester, Virginia, by a Confederate chaplain, J. B. T. Reed, as Worshipful Master.

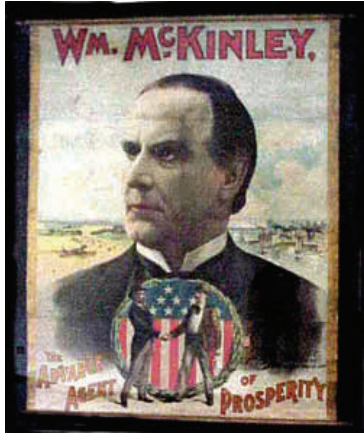
On re-entering civilian life, McKinley entered Albany Law School and, upon passing the bar examination, set up practice in Canton, Ohio. There, like Brother Bryan, he, too, began to ascend the political ladder. In 1896 when the Republicans gathered in St. Louis to nominate their presidential candidate, McKinley, then Governor of Ohio, was the clear favorite and became the Republican presidential nominee standing on a platform anchored by a gold standard plank.

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## A Masonic President

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When the Democrats gathered in Chicago, there was no such clear-cut front runner. The closest there was to a favorite was Richard P. Bland of Missouri. No one seemed to consider William Jennings Bryan a serious candidate. That all changed during debate on a free silver plank when Bryan delivered what is arguably his most famous political speech, which he closed with one of the most famous lines in American history: "You shall not press down upon the brow of labor this crown of thorns, you shall not crucify mankind on a cross of gold." After this speech, it was only a matter of time, and on the fifth ballot Brother Bryan became the presidential nominee of the Democratic Party.



In the campaign that followed, the styles of the two candidates were as different as their political philosophies. McKinley knew that, when it came to oratorical power and stage presence, he was no match for his much younger opponent. He decided that rather than try to match Bryan, he would conduct a front-porch campaign and speak only to those who visited him at his Canton, Ohio, home. In fact, except for two non-political commitments he had made before the convention and a one-week rest break in August, McKinley stayed in Canton throughout the campaign.

Fortunately for McKinley, his campaign manager, Mark Hanna, and the National Republican Party were not so passive. Hanna raised huge sums of money from Wall Street interests terrified of a Bryan presidency, and the Republican National Committee arranged transportation to Canton for thousands of people, all potential or actual contributors, from across the country. On one day alone in September, special trains brought over 20,000 people to Canton to hear and see McKinley.

Bryan, on the other hand, had very little money to work with and had to contend with a national party lacking strong unity. His greatest asset was his own stamina and oratorical brilliance. While his Republican opponent stayed home, Bryan put in 18-hour days, traveled thousands of miles, and made almost three thousand speeches. At one point in Delaware, the strain became too much, and Bryan collapsed but was fully recovered and ready to go the next morning.

On Election Day, McKinley continued the Republican domination of the White House, but by the barest of margins. The Republican candidate won less than 51% of the vote, and Bryan carried five more states than did McKinley. On the other hand, McKinley's Electoral College margin was fairly comfortable.

The two Masons would face each other again in 1900 with McKinley again coming out the winner. Then in 1901, President McKinley was felled by an assassin's bullet. During his tenure in office, McKinley led the country through an era of great change, and, more importantly, he began the process of making the United States into a world power.

Bryan, who many consider the founder of the modern Democratic Party, continued his service to the nation until his death in 1925 at Dayton, Tennessee. In 1908, he was, for the third time, the Democratic nominee for President, served President Woodrow Wilson as Secretary of State from 1913 to 1915, and throughout his life, he remained the dominate figure in the Democratic Party.

Brothers William Jennings Bryan and William McKinley, two men in a line of many Masons who dedicated their lives to their country, and two men of which our Fraternity can be truly proud.

-- *The Scottish Rite Journal*, August 1999



## About Us

### ***Bethpage Lodge No. 521, Free and Accepted Masons***



Accepted Masons of Tennessee on January 27, 1885. It is named for the small community in which the lodge hall sits. Bethpage, Tennessee is an unincorporated town in northern Sumner County, just north of Nashville. In its 125 years, the lodge has flourished and been the Masonic home to many traveling brethren. It is a country lodge with many traditions. It currently has an active membership of around 90 members. Bethpage Lodge meets on the Third Thursday of each month at 7 pm, and its meetings are open to all Master Masons from Masonic Jurisdictions recognized by the Grand Lodge of Tennessee.∞



***Gems of Purpose*** is the electronic trestleboard or newsletter of Bethpage Lodge. Its primary mission is to assist in the spreading of Masonic light to not only the members of Bethpage Lodge but to Masonic brothers wherever this publication might land. It is edited and compiled by Brother David E. Stafford, Past Master. Brother Stafford began publishing *Gems of Purpose* in 2006 as a service to the Lodge and has continued to do so. Although it is an official media of Bethpage Lodge, the views and opinions contained in *Gems of Purpose* do not necessarily reflect those of the lodge, the Grand Lodge of Tennessee, or Freemasonry. If you have questions or comments, please direct those to Brother Stafford via e-mail at [david.stafford@sumnerschools.org](mailto:david.stafford@sumnerschools.org). ∞

***Submission*** - Although *Gems of Purpose* is the official educational voice of Bethpage Lodge, the lodge encourages anyone who has an interest in Masonic Education to submit possible material for inclusion in the newsletter. Items on Masonic history, philosophy, ideology, figures, and symbolism will be considered. Of course due credit will be given to the writer and if the writer is not a member of Bethpage Lodge, his lodge will be identified. *Gems of Purpose* reserves the right to edit all submissions. ∞

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