

THE OBLONG SQUARE

I have derived much pleasure and profit from the study of each copy of THE BUILDER as it comes to me. I have tried to learn the real significance of the right and left angle of an oblong square. Upon first thought the term would seem to be misleading and yet there is probably a deeper significance than appears on the surface. A. C. M., Pennsylvania.

Right and left as applied to the oblong square probably refers to the foot which first advances to form one side of the angle of the square. As the left is regarded as the weaker part of man, we are taught that it signifies the entering upon the weaker part or beginning of Masonry. This explanation, however, is only partial. Oliver, Mackey, and the early Monitors and rituals define the oblong square as "a rectangle, having two sides longer than the others." An old catechism of the year 1760 is as follows: "Of what form is your lodge?" "An oblong Square." "How long Brother?" "From East to West." "How wide Brother ? " "Between North and South." "How high, Brother ?" "From the earth to the heavens." "How deep, Brother?" "From the surface of the earth to the center." "Why?" "Because that Masonry is universal."

The oblong square, therefore, represents the world in which we live and in which we are to do our work. It is situated East and West, with the Master, who represents the source of light in the East, the long sides being in the North and the South. "As we face the East to catch the first glimmer of the dawn of a new day, so the E. A. must face the East before he can be brought to light. In this position the north side of the lodge is on his left and the south upon his right. Thus the left angle of the oblong square is the northeast corner of the lodge and the right angle is the southeast. When placed in the northeast corner to lay the corner stone of his Masonic Temple the E. A. must face the South and in this position the left angle is formed as he faces the Master. In some jurisdictions he is placed in the southeast corner in the Second Degree and informed that as in the First Degree he was placed in the northeast corner to show that he was newly admitted and had laid his foundation, he is now placed in the southeast to mark his progress in the science; and as in the First Degree he had an opportunity of making himself acquainted with the principles of moral truth and virtue, he is now permitted to extend his researches into the hidden mysteries of Nature and Science.

There is much which cannot here be revealed, but briefly, we would say that as the left is regarded as the weaker part of man so the left angle represents the weaker part or beginnings of Masonry. It is weaker, however, only in the sense that it is the beginning, less active, and less conspicuous. The child is weaker than the man, but the character developed by the child becomes the foundation of the character of the man. So while the left is regarded as the weaker part we must not forget that it is in the N. E. corner that the foundation stone is laid and that upon the foundation thus laid the Mason is to raise a superstructure perfect in its parts and honorable to the Builder. As the right side of man represents the active working side, so the right angle represents the part of the building which is most used. One is just as important as the other. As the foundation supports the superstructure so the left supports the right and "all the building fitly framed together groweth into a holy temple in the Lord."

C. C. H.

[Charles Clyde Hunt]