

THE THREE GRIPS

What is the symbolism of the grips of our three degrees? It has seemed to me that this is a matter passed over with little thought. - J.L.B.

Certainly the raising of a man was not intended merely to inform him that Masonry cherishes a belief in immortality. No man needs to be briefly told that by anybody what he wants is to learn how he may become assured that his soul is not an evanescent breath. Perhaps the symbolism of the grips may be stated in this manner:

Science, assuming that the seat of the soul is the brain proceeds to lay bare the brain, dissects its hemispheres, traces its convolutions and nerves. Then it subjects the brain of a dog to the same tests, and finds that it and the brain of man are alike. Chemistry takes up the task, dissolves analyzes, and by all means at its command reduces both brains to their essential elements. From both it obtains the same elements, found everywhere else. Science, so far from proving the immortality of the soul, lays down its instruments, its acids, confessing that it cannot even prove that there is a soul. Not by that grip can man be raised from a dead level to a living perpendicular. Logic then tries to demonstrate that the soul, in its nature is indivisible, and indestructible, and so must be immortal. Plato, Cicero and the rest formulated this argument but if they convinced others, they did not convince themselves. Doubts returned. Always, at the most critical point upon which the conclusion depended, there was a juggling of words. Not by that grip can man be raised to walk an newness of life. There is left the mighty grasp of faith - the profound, fixed, ineffaceable conviction of the soul itself; the very voice of God speaking within; the Divine Word abiding in the heart. How else has God ever revealed truth to man ? How else could he? Since we know that there is a God, we as surely know that we are not the butts of a cynical and sarcastic omnipotence, but akin to Him - the soul a little brother to Him whom it seeks; and that our convictions, coming from Him, are true and trustworthy. And by this reach and grasp and power of faith we are quickened into eternal life.