

## THE LETTER "G"

By WBro. K. J. Edney

In most lodges of the New Zealand Constitution, the letter "G" is either suspended from the ceiling in the centre of the lodge, or is displayed in the centre of the tessellated pavement. Occasionally it can be seen on the west wall or above the Master's chair in the east. In the United Kingdom and in Europe, it is displayed in the east over the Master's chair. The Scottish Constitution lodges either display the letter "G" in the east above the Master or suspend it from the centre of the ceiling. In Ireland it appears to be virtually ignored.

Whatever the Constitution, the letter "G" appears to have a dual meaning and is always peculiar to the Fellowcraft Degree.

In ancient philosophy there were seven divisions, often referred to as the "seven liberal arts and sciences". Geometry was one of them.

Pythagoras of Gamos taught us "that God geometrises". Perhaps, it is from this saying that the originators of our masonic ritual took the apparition of the "Grand Geometrician of the Universe" in describing Jehovah and so linked the letter "G" with both geometry and God.

Early masonic records indicate that, primarily, the letter "G" stood for geometry, which was regarded as the "root and foundation of all arts and sciences". In a 1730 ritual it states that a mason is made *a fellowcraft for the sake of the letter G* but, by 1749, a French reference is made to the fact that "**G**" **stands** for **God**. It was also given extra meanings, such as, "**G**lory for **G**od"; "**G**randeur for the Master of the Lodge" and "**G**eometry for the Brethren". From the late 1700's the letter "G" was often portrayed in the centre of a blazing star.

The exact appearance of the letter "G" into masonic usage is not known and, although it's origin is related with geometry, the connection with the Lord God is controversial, attempts having been made to bridge a gap in the English language between Jehovah and God.

However, if we consider that numbers had a much different significance than letters in ancient times and we can appreciate that the magnificent cathedrals could not have been built without the numbers used with geometry, then, if man's creations needed calculations to be built, it seems not unreasonable, in a poetic manner, to state that God created the universe by using numbers.

Plato wrote over the door leading to his academy "Let None Ignorant of Geometry Enter Here". This could be as applicable to freemasons of today as it was to the Ancients. In old documents, masonry is said to be identical with geometry. It is my personal contention that geometry and the Grand Geometrician are as one, that the letter "G" is not exclusive to geometry alone, or to the word "God", but that they are inter-related. There is significance in the letter "G" which should make every freemason contemplate it's meaning on every visit to a lodge.