

RITUAL OF
The Super Excellent Master's Degree

AS AUTHORIZED BY

The Grand Council, Royal & Select Masters

OF TEXAS

PRINTED, 1947. DALLAS. TEXAS

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HISTORICAL STATEMENT

This ritual of the Super Excellent Masters degree has been prepared at our request by Very Excellent Companion J. Lee Zumwalt, of Dallas, Texas, a Past Grand High Priest of the Grand Royal Arch Chapter of Texas and is approved and adopted by us for our use in exemplifying the degree.

After the lapse of several years the Councils of Dallas exemplified the degree in Dallas in the year 1933 with Companion Zumwalt as the Director and we are pleased that he has at our request continued to serve as such. The ritual of the General Grand Council was secured and the degree exemplified in accordance with this ritual. It attracted a great deal of attention throughout the State, as well as in Dallas, which is strong evidence of the greatness of the ritual of the General Grand Council. We believe it is very highly regarded throughout the United States.

The ritual of the General Grand Council was enlarged in the year 1934 to include certain additions to it, of which Companion Zumwalt is the author and this enlarged ritual has ever since been used by us. The additions were made after due consideration. We believe the ritual thus amended is a much greater ritual than that of the General Grand Council alone. The interest aroused by the use of the General Grand Council ritual alone was very greatly increased by the use of the changed and enlarged ritual. The attendance at the exemplification of the degree has substantially and materially increased. The last time when the degree was exemplified was on Dec. 16, 1946, and the candidates numbered 1029 and from 400 to 500 could not be admitted because the room was filled to the utmost capacity* We had candidates and visiting companions from Amarillo, Texarkana, Houston, Austin, Beaumont, Tyler, Waco, and many other places throughout the State and from distances of 350 miles or more from Dallas. The degree has been exemplified at intervals of 12 to 15 months.

We are firmly of the opinion that by the use of the enlarged ritual we are not doing any injury to the ritual of the General Grand Council, but are increasing very greatly interest in Cryptic Masonry in particular and the York Rite in general. For the better understanding of the enlarged ritual we have had Companion Zumwalt prepare an explanation of it which appears on page of this printing. We further make this brief statement concerning it. We use the ritual of the General Grand Council in the opening and closing of the Super Excellent Council, and the reception of candidates, also

Act 2—The court of Zedekiah, King of Judah.

Act 3—The court of Nebuchadnezzar, King of Babylon.

Act 4—The Captives in Babylon.

The additions of Companion Zumwalt are as follows:

Act I—The Court of Pharaoh.

Act 4—The prayer and song, "Jerusalem the Golden," which concludes the act.

Act 5—"The Holy City."

All prologues and lectures in the ritual of the General Grand Council have been omitted. In lieu thereof a very brief Prologue of Companion Zumwalt is read immediately before the 1st act. This appears on page 19 of this printing.

We are thankful and grateful to the General Council for their generous and fraternal spirit in permitting us to use their ritual and also to their Grand Master Most Illustrious Companion Chas. E. Inbusch in graciously giving us permission to include it in this printing. It is a real pleasure to make the foregoing acknowledgment of indebtedness and appreciation of the General Grand Council and its Grand Master. May the General Grand Council continue to grow and prosper and may it always have Grand Masters of the ability and fraternal spirit of Companion Inbusch.

Our own Grand Council of Texas has at all times been particularly helpful in graciously granting us authority to use our enlarged ritual. As is to be expected we have at all times given true faith and allegiance to our Grand Council, and their generosity to us is evidence that it is justly due the loyal allegiance of all companions under its jurisdiction. Each time the degree has been exemplified the Grand Master of the Grand Council of Texas has been present, and has expressed approval of our work and for this we are truly thankful. Many of the most distinguished masons of Texas have also been present and expressed approval and commendation of our work for which we express thanks.

We are very proud of the companions who have exemplified the degree. The great ability and fine manner with which they discharged their respective duties are very much appreciated by us and the commendation of all present also testified to their worth and value.

They have brought great distinction and honor to our Councils as well as to themselves. The joining together of all our Councils in exemplifying the degree has been of benefit. The utmost harmony has prevailed and a greater sense of brotherhood and fellowship has resulted much to our mutual benefit. We can truly say, "Behold how good and how pleasant it is for Brethren to dwell together in unity."

Many other companions have rendered valuable service for which we are truly thankful. They did not appear in public, but they, like those who exemplified the degree, served without the hope of fee or reward in a desire to be of benefit and we take pleasure in acknowledging their services and

devotion and in commending them therefor.

The services of Companion Zurnwalt have been so valuable that we cannot hope to adequately express to him our thanks and appreciation. We believe he has made a real and substantial contribution to our Councils and to the Fraternity. He has made the Super Excellent Masters degree one that will receive most favorable comparison with all the other degrees of Freemasonry. His services have been universally commended by all who have attended the exemplification of the degree. He too, like all the other companions, has served without the hope of fee or reward, imbued only with a sincere desire to promote the interest of the Fraternity. We are proud of his valued membership in Dallas and of association with him.

It is our hope and belief that by the use of this ritual we will inspire greater zeal and devotion to our Councils and to our Grand Council and more brotherly love among our companions.

Sincerely and Fraternally all the Councils in Dallas, Texas.

S.A. Verinder, T.I.M., Dallas Council No. 10.

Ray Mouser, T. I. M., Oak Cliff Council No. 310.

Victor C. Whifield, T. I. M., Z. E. Coombs Council No. 352.

B. B. Williams, T. I. M., John G. Slayter No. 375.

AN EXPLANATION OF THIS RITUAL

The degree of Super Excellent Master according to the ritual of the General Grand Council is very impressive upon the subject with which it deals. It is designed to and does teach with great force a great moral truth and lesson, that of fidelity. It does not, unless incidentally, deal with spiritual truths. It is therefore, in my opinion, defective and unfinished. The degree of Master Mason is a great spiritual and moving drama. In the Royal Arch degree we are in the region of religion and the spiritual realm.

The Super Excellent Masters degree coming after these great spiritual degrees ought, therefore, to be spiritual in the highest sense. The moral lessons of any Masonic degree are only incidental and a preparation for the spiritual truth that follows. Every Masonic degree does impart spiritual truth to some extent and is the only justification for its being. The ritual of the General Grand Council is as I have stated only morality and therefore the addition of the spiritual elements are not only necessary but is justified by the life of Zedekiah as in the Old Testament, and more or less true in the life of every man.

The spiritual basis for the ritual of the General Grand Council will hereafter be indicated and acts two, Three and four are the ritual of the General Grand Council. In acts 2 and 3 it is declared that the Egyptian army marched into Judah to help defeat the army of Babylon, then besieging Jerusalem. This caused the abandonment of the siege until after the defeat of the Egyptian army, when the siege was resumed; resulting in the capture of Jerusalem, the destruction of the city and Temple and the captivity of the Jews and their King Zedekiah in Babylon. Also it depicts the cruelty inflicted upon Zedekiah for violating his oath to Nebuchadnezzar. The General Grand Council ritual does not attempt to account for the Egyptians joining the Jews nor why.

Among the scriptures hereafter to be cited it is distinctly charged against Zedekiah that he sent his Ambassador to Egypt and their resulting aid.

In Act One we undertake to represent the Court of Pharaoh and the reception of Zedekiah's ambassador and the making of the treaty and the dispatch of the Egyptian army to aid Judah. The question why

they did naturally arise and Act One explains this and makes Acts Two and Three more easily understood and clarifies some of the statements made.

Act Four is also the ritual of the General Grand Council showing the Jews lamenting their captivity in Babylon far from their native land. There has been added a prayer which would be natural under the circumstances and would be most appropriate in seeking release from their captivity. Following the prayer a song descriptive of Jerusalem which closes the Act. There can be no doubt that Jerusalem as it was in its former days of glory would be the subject of their fondest hopes and the subject frequently discussed. Therefore the addition is appropriate and gives a climax to the act which serves as an introduction to the Fifth Act.

The scriptural basis for the various acts are hereafter cited except for the Fifth Act which is read during the act.

The character of Zedekiah is a fascinating one as depicted by the books of Ezekiel, Jeremiah and Lamentations and merits further study and attention. By so doing a great spiritual lesson is taught far greater than fidelity. From his entire life there emerges great spiritual lessons of the utmost importance to every man at all times and in all conditions. A brief review of the conditions surrounding him as king will enable a better understanding to be had of his life and character. Zedekiah was the King of Judah, a very small country located between Egypt and Babylon. The control of Judah was of vital importance to each of these large and powerful countries. Each therefore desired and sought such control. Zedekiah's throne therefore rested upon the power of Egypt to keep it independent of Babylon or upon the relinquishment of the national ambition to be a free and independent country and not a mere satellite of Babylon. This is clearly stated in the words of Ezekiel, chapter 17, verses 13 and 14.

The policy thus stated would be to reduce the Jewish state to impotence and at the same time attach it to the King of Babylon by motives of self interest upon the part of Zedekiah and thus control the Jewish state and especially the powerful fortress of Jerusalem. This would be a protection against Egypt and also a point of departure to attack it. The small country of Judah was thus a pawn in the game of these two strong and powerful countries surrounding it. Ezekiel also speaks of Zedekiah in terms of censure as follows in chapter 17, Verses 15-16-17-18-19-20-21.

The foregoing scriptures are the basis for Acts 1, 2, 3 and 4 of this ritual. The ritual of the General Grand Council shows Zedekiah was guilty of infidelity and that justice demanded his punishment. When justice was satisfied then mercy should be given him. Ezekiel in one of the above cited statements declares that Zedekiah would be taken a captive to Babylon and there the Lord would plead with him for his transgresses. This furnishes a basis for the Fifth Act.

The character of Zedekiah is depicted by Josephus (Antiquity of the Jews xvii, verse 5) who credits him with gentleness and righteousness. This is evidenced by his dealing with Jeremiah in Act 2. We read of two formal deputations from the king to Jeremiah. In the book of Jeremiah, chapter 21, verse 2, and chapter 37, verse 3.

When state recognition was no longer possible Zedekiah proved the sincerity of his own personal conviction as follows: Chapter 37, verses 11-16, shows Jeremiah in prison. Chapter 38, verse 16, records another secret meeting between them. Jeremiah, chapter 34, verse 5. Josephus says the king of Babylon buried him magnificently. Lam., chapter 4, verse 20. From the foregoing statements it is evident the addition of Act Five is fully justified. In chapter 36 of 2nd Chronicles it is said Zedekiah was 21 years of age when he became king and that he reigned 11 years. In addition to his youth he was confronted with a condition of affairs that could not have been solved had he been older and wiser. The

independence of the country from foreign rule was ardently desired by many. There was a faction who favored Babylon and a faction who favored Egypt. His decision under these circumstances resulted in the capture of Jerusalem and the captivity of himself and people in Babylon and the destruction of the city and Temple, two of the objects of their affection and symbols of their glory. By reason of all this it would naturally be expected that he would be hated by his people for their captivity and resulting sufferings and sorrows.

Instead of this hatred he obtained or regained their admiration, confidence and affection in the highest degree if in fact he ever lost them.

This was due to the sincerity of his life and the grandeur of his moral and spiritual character and his faith and confidence in God. He was their great moral and spiritual leader whose death was lamented and who was enshrined in their affections as an example to be followed, as is shown in some of the scriptural statements above referred to. Such a man after the end of this transitory existence deserved to be received into the Holy City, the new and eternal Jerusalem.

Thus it follows that the lessons of repentance and redemption are of vital importance to all men at all times. In the Fifth and last act we read various portions of the Old Testament descriptive of the creation of the world and of man. The final destruction of the world and then of the New Jerusalem as depicted in the book of Revelation of the New Testament and admittance into it of the redeemed as the final triumph of their faith.

The end sought to be attained in this the Fifth and last act is worthy of earnest endeavor and this I have given to the best of my ability. The statements above made about the ritual of the General Grand Council give my reason for my additions to it. Duty required me to give my reasons and I have tried to be fair and considerate. I hope they will not give offense to any. They represent my sincere convictions but as to their correctness others must determine. No one else is in the slightest responsible for them. Whatever blame or censure there may be should be given me. It was not due to egotism that I undertook the work but it was with the hope of trying to render service to our beloved fraternity. I hope it will meet the approval of my companions and promote the interest of our fraternity.

If my hope be realized even in part I will feel amply repaid for this labor of love.

J. LEE ZUMWALT.

OFFICERS AND CAST OF CHARACTERS

The officers in a Council of Super Excellent Masters are the:

Illustrious Master

Captain of the Guard

Conductor of the Council.

Treasurer

Recorder

Steward

Sentinel

Immediately before raising curtain (Music No. 1)

OPENING OF SUPER EXCELLENT COUNCIL

Arrangement of the Stage

When Obligation is given this v arrangement. Makes a broken triangle. Use Spotlight on stage. After obligation, have all candidates but one to be seated for explanation. After this officers of the 4 councils on the stage are presented, but no speeches. Then curtain.

SECTION 1.

OPENING CEREMONY.

(Candidates are in hall, but seated by themselves. No hoodwinks.)

I. M.:—o—Comp. Captain of the Guard, are all present S. E. Masters?

C. of G.:—I. M., all present are S. E. Masters except the candidates.

I. M.:—Is the Sanctuary securely guarded?

C. of G.:—I will ascertain and report. Companion Steward, see that the Sanctuary is securely guarded. (Steward opens door and says):

St.:—Comp. Sentinel, a Council of S. E. Masters is about to be opened. Take due notice thereof and guard accordingly.

(Closes door, give ooo—ooo—ooo—o; answered by Sent. o o o—o o o—o o o—o. St. o.)

St.:—Comp. C. of G., we are duly guarded and the Sanctuary is secure.

C. of G.:—I. M., the Sanctuary is securely guarded.

I. M.:—What is the hour?

C. of G.:—It is the time of the Second Watch.

I. M.:—ooo—Since it is the time of the Second Watch, let us repair to the Holy Altar and offer up our adorations to Deity, for His protecting care and favor.

(Members and candidates remain standing in place.)

(The officers advance and kneel at the altar on the left, right elbow resting on right knee, forehead resting on hand, hats on head, according to Jewish custom. After silent prayer

I. M.: Arise, let each repair to his station. (Done).

I. M.: I now declare a council of S. E. Masters duly opened. o.

RECEPTION

I. M.:—Comp. Recorder, is there any business to come before this Council?

Recorder:—I. M., numerous (or several) Companions, S. Ms., are desirous of being introduced into the Mysteries of the degree of S. E. M.

I. M.:—Companions, you have heard the announcement of the Recorder; if there is no objection we will confer the degree upon them.

I. M.:—Comp. C. of Council, you will present the candidates.

(The candidates are formed into lines on west side of the altar) then:

I. M.:—Comp. C. of Council, whom have you there.

C. of C.:—I. M., numerous (or several) Comps., R. & S. M., who are desirous of being introduced into the mysteries of the degree of S. E. M.

I. M.:—(To Cond.) Why do you come at this time?

C. of C.:—We, R. & S. Masters, having heard tidings that the people of Israel are to be liberated, desire to cast our lot with the S. E. Masters. We have, therefore, presented ourselves so that if it meets your pleasure we may here and now assume the vows of the craft.

I. M.:—How say you, is Jehovah the only and true God?

C. of C.:—He is, and we worship only Him. I. M.:—In what spirit of mind do you worship Him?

C.of C.:— In faith.

I. M.—Have you ever bowed down to graven images or worshiped other gods ?

I. C. of C.:—We have not.

I. M.:—Are all true Masons your brothers.

C.of C.:—They are.

I. M.:—In what spirit of mind do you regard them?

C. of C.:—With Love and Friendship.

I. M.:—Do you acknowledge the vows you have previously taken?

C. of C.:—We do..

I. M.:—How will you observe them and the one of this degree?

C.of C: — With Fidelity.

I. M.:—It is well, with Faith, Friendship and Fidelity may we ever dwell, and under this pledge, advance, kneel at our Altar and assume the vow.

(Candidates kneel on both knees, both hands resting on stone Altar as in M. M. degree.)

I, _____, o m o fr wi a ac, i the pr of A. G. a th C. of S. E. M., do he a he m s a s pr a sw th I wi for K a C th S of ths d an wi nt rvl them ex to him or thm to whm t of ri big.

I f pr th I wi conf to a ab by th reg of this d so fa as t m co t m kno.

I f pr that I wi gv m, drk nd ldgs to p, wrthy C, ac to thr nes and m abil, and wl dfd thm in dngr nd v thr c so fr as T, H, an J' m wrnt.

I f pr that I wi n as or be pr at tli c of tli deg u a on who h n rec th pre d, fr E. A. to S. M. inc, in a ju an la man, to my f a en sat.

I f pr th I wi no bw dw to oth gds, nr pa relig ad to id, that I wl not w th S. M. or S of Hvn, bt in gd fai and con, and to th bst of m aby wl srv nd w th onl lvk nd tr G.

All this I m s a si pr nd sw witho eq, m res, or sec eva in m whtvr bi mys un no le p th that of hav m ths c ff, m e pl out, m b b wi cha of bra, and car to a stra a dist land, sho I kn or wilif v th, m s ob as a S. E. M., so h me G a ke m ste.

I. M.:—Arise.—I wi n invest y with the S's, Grs, an Ws, of ths dgr.

1.—Ths is th e D. G.—H clsd, th extd, crs th, ri up. It al to a prtn of the pen of yr o, and is th si with wh y sal th pres off on ent or ret fron a cou of S. E. M.

2.—Ts is th frst si.—Hds clsd, thbs extd, ar crsh on brst ri ar up; pdt th t ey. Als allu t pen.

3.—Ths is th scd. si.—Ri hnd clsd, frst nd scd fng ext, poi to yr own eye, thn drt thm fowd horizon-tally. Also allu to pen.

4.—Ths is the H. S. Ri ha clsp, th ext. Mk Zi Za mtn from If shl to ri hp, Al t chns of brs.

Wds accompa Za-her-la-her-bon, sig, Rembr th dstrectn.

5—Ths is the P. G. (given.) It i th sm as th P. G. of a M. M. M., esc th thmbs r rai, prsg ea oath altntly.

P. W.—So-lee-mah.

6.—Ths is the T. G. (given.) Tk P. G. with bo hds (ri up) arms crsd. One sa Sau th 1 K of I, the oth Z, the last K. of J

You will now be seated.

PROLOGUE

In the preceeding degree of the Council, that of Select Master, there was exemplified the lessons of justice and mercy. In the degree of Super Excellent Master which you will now witness, we again exemplify them and in addition the lesson of fidelity and far greater than and beyond all these the lessons of divine mercy and redemption. The scriptural basis for the first 4 acts of this degree is recorded in the Old Testament in the books of Jeremiah, Ezekiel and Lamentations.

The scriptural basis of the 5th and final act is in various portions of both the old and New Testament and especially in the book of Revelations of the New Testament. The first 4 acts deal with the capture of Jerusalem by the army of Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon, the destruction of the city and King Solomon's Temple.

The first 4 acts depict the carrying away in to captivity in Babylon of the Jewish people and their King Zedekiah, the punishment inflicted upon him for breaking his oath to Nebuchadnezzar and the sorrow of the Jews in captivity. In these 4 acts the lessons of fidelity and justice are taught in a most impressive manner.

In the 5th act we exemplify repentance and faith and divine mercy and redemption. That however our lot be cast and however great the sorrows of life and the burdens of adversity there is offered and is available to all as a just reward and recompence, divine justice, mercy and salvation.

ACT ONE—EGYPTIAN SCENE

Stage set for Egyptian See

Pharoah to the end and as near front of stage a practical. Princes in a semicircle to the west. Chancellor at west end near front of stage. Space for 3 left between him and front of stage. Twelve soldiers in line back of Princes facing audience.

Pharaoh and company assemble outside of room. Music for one or two minutes (Music No. 3). When curtain is raised then they march in while music continues until all are seated. Pharaoh by himself leads the way followed by Princes 2 and 2 and then by soldiers 2 and 2. Pharaoh goes on the west end of stage and then back and across to east end of stage and then to his position. Princes follow him. Soldiers follow Princes. When Pharaoh and Princes reach seats assigned all take seats together and soldiers form line behind Princes.

At conclusion of act all march out in same order except Ambassador goes with Pharaoh, his 2 Princes immediately behind, then Princes, soldiers, 2 by 2 (Music No.3). Music begins when they cease speaking and continues until they leave the room. Curtain lowered when stage cleared.

ACT ONE

King:—Princes and offices of the Court, I have summoned you for the purpose of determining whether or not the special ambassador of King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon shall be given an audience. He is in waiting and has requested that he be permitted to deliver his message at the earliest possible moment so that he may the sooner return to his barbarous master with our reply. I would like for any of you to express your opinion on the matter so that we may the better determine the proper course to pursue.

(Alarm at the door.)

Captain of the Guard:—Who comes here to disturb our master, the Great Pharaoh, and princes and councilors while they are deliberating upon affairs of state and matters of great importance?

Ambassador (without the door):—We are an embassy from our sovereign Lord and King Zedekiah, the renowned King of Judah, and desire an audience with Pharaoh upon matters of great importance.

Captain of the Guard.—Your request will be communicated to his Majesty and you will await the pleasure of the Great Pharaoh.

(Closes the door and advances nearly to the stage.)

Your Majesty, the alarm at the door was caused by a special embassy from the King of Judah desiring an audience with Your Majesty upon what they claim to be matters of great importance.

King:—We will consider the request of these men and inform them of our decision. Bid them wait without until we shall have determined our pleasure in the matter.

(Captain of the Guard returns to his post.)

Princes and Counselors, today we witness an example of the great power and influences of Egypt in the fact that the ambassadors of both the King of Babylon and the King of Judah desire an audience with us. These two countries are at war with each other and, no doubt, each desires our support. While they continue to weaken and destroy each other with war which is regarded by both as the chief aim of the state, we here in Egypt dwell in peace and security and are engaged in the practice of the peaceful virtues that ennoble a people and make for their growth and advancement in civilization and a nobler and more satisfying life. We will not receive the ambassadors from either of these warring states.

Captain of the Guard, you will communicate this first to the ambassador from the King of Babylon and then to the other.

Captain of the Guard:—Our most August Master, the Great Pharaoh, declines to have an audience with you. Go in peace to your home.

Ambassadors—Please communicate to your Master the fact that our embassy is composed of members of the Royal House and Nobility of Judah befitting the importance of our mission and the exalted position of your master, that we have journeyed with the utmost speed and have not taken time for refreshment or rest as our mission is one concerning life and death not only as concerns our country but also Pharaoh and his people.

Captain of the Guard:—I will inform the Great Pharaoh of your wishes.

(Closes door and Advances nearly to stage).

Your Majesty, the embassy from Judah implores that you receive them composed, as it is, of members of the Royal House and Nobility of Judah. They affirm that their mission is of the utmost importance to you, declaring it is a matter of life and death not only to Judah but also to Egypt. They implore you to receive them that they may impart their tidings and receive your instructions.

King:—Prince Chancellor, you will conduct the embassy into our presence but see to it that they remain standing as it is not fit and proper that they be seated with the princes and counselors of Egypt or in my presence.

Prince Chancellor (retiring to door):—It is the order of the Great Pharaoh that you be conducted into presence, and while standing briefly state the purpose of your visit. (Music No. 2)

(They advance to the stage and in front of the King.)

Your Majesty, I present to you Prince David of the House of Judah and his companions sent by the King of Judah as his embassy to communicate to you his message.

King:—We are well aware of the purpose of your mission but, in order to gain admission, you made the declaration that your mission involved life and death, not only to your country but also to Egypt. We do not believe you spoke the truth. You are a stiff-necked and stubborn people. Your priests are fond of teaching your people that you dwelt in Egypt and defied the power of the Pharaoh, that plagues were inflicted upon the Egyptians by your God, that He is greater than the Gods of Egypt, that the Temple of Solomon at Jerusalem is more glorious and magnificent than the Temples of Egypt which, as you know is a manifest falsehood, for our temples to our Gods are the greatest and most magnificent on the face of the earth. Our pyramids will outlast the Temple of Solomon, defying alike the forces of nature and man's puny efforts to destroy them. Your Temple of Solomon is, at this moment, in great danger of destruction. You also prate of your wisdom and that you have all the learning of the Egyptians and more. Yet with all these proud boasts, the invader is at your door and you are facing utter destruction while Egypt has no troubles or fears. Do I speak truly, O Ambassador ?

Prince David:—Among all civilized people the place of Egypt is secure as the cradle of civilization and all the blessings it brings to mankind.

Here in this fair and lovely land where nature has lavished her choicest gifts in profusion, civilization and culture had their origin and development. From the land of Egypt has come the arts and sciences that bring material values and advancement to mankind. From Egypt has come the spiritual values of ethics, Philosophy and Religion, that ennoble man and makes him a loyal and devoted servant of the most High, serving him not only for his day and generation but for the illimitable future when he has long since departed into the mystery from which he came and his name has perished from the earth. It was men of such lofty and heroic character, your noble ancestors, who came out of the night of time and built your lofty and inspiring pyramids; those silent sentinels of the centuries in whose presence their greatness and grandeur compels the mind to contemplate time and eternity, the origin and destiny of man and the great Creator of Heaven and earth. They are living witnesses of the faith of the builders in the one True and Living God and of their hope of eternal life. You are proud of them and rejoice in the greatness of their achievements. While we at Jerusalem cherish the memory of our Fathers who with the same faith and hope built the splendid and glorious Temple of Solomon, which nestles like a diamond on Mount Moriah, a veritable Holy Place where all men, the children of our one Common Father, join in praise and adoration to him. Thus your country and mine are the teachers of mankind seeking to bring peace and happiness to all men everywhere. Thus we labor, seeking neither territory or wealth, and having as our only object and reward the advancement of mankind in the nobler and higher things of life, a knowledge of the one God and the faith in and the practice of the brotherhood of man. While thus serving and pursuing the pathway of peace, suddenly the horizon grew black with the clouds of ruin and destruction by the oncoming power of Babylon. This savage and cruel power has swept like a pestilence over many small countries. Death and destruction now reign where only a short time before a happy people dwelt in peace, being guilty only of weakness to repel the savage invader. Other states with a blindness surpassing stupidity made no effort in behalf of the weak, seeming to believe the result would not be of any consequence to them. States like individuals do not live to themselves alone. The destruction of civilization anywhere menaces their own continued existence. The march of destruction has been arrested by my country. My people, mindful of our fathers and the debt of gratitude due them and the future, defied this savage power. For more than a year the flag of Judah with its Lion upon it has floated in triumph over Jerusalem, defeating with tremendous loss every assault of our enemies. Whether we will finally be victorious or fall in the struggle only time can tell. It is certain with your help a complete victory will be won and this cruel power will not longer threaten the peace of the world. It is likewise certain if we fall the last barrier protecting your country

will be swept away and the death and destruction that we will receive will in far greater measure be inflicted upon you. Thus civilization and its glorious works will be obliterated and in their stead cruelty and barbarism will rule the world. Time will be turned back and every man will be the foe of his brother. That such a fate can be averted rests only with you. The destiny, not only of the present but of the future, is yours to decide. We have made our decision and are supporting with our lives and all we hold dear. Every man owes to the past, whose blessings he enjoys, to do all in his power to promote the cause of righteousness and thus in some measure pay for his stay on earth. Certainly he can not in good conscious fail so to do. Duty and honor call you to join us in our battle for the right against the wrong. If departed intelligence is permitted to know of the things of this world then I am certain your noble ancestors are anxiously awaiting your decision and will greatly rejoice if you answer the call of duty and honor and join us in the battle to preserve the works of their hands. I entreat you to consider well your decision and may it bring honor and glory upon you.

King:—Princes and rulers, what say you to the appeal of the ambassadors from the King of Judah? Prince Chancellor, you being charged with the affairs of State and having always discharged them with ability and zeal, we desire you to speak freely in the presence of the ambassadors so that he may know that whatever is determined will represent the united voice of Egypt.

Prince Chancellor:—The able and eloquent appeal of the ambassador from the King of Judah has deeply affected me. The reasons assigned by him are sound and he has also convinced me that an awful responsibility rests upon us. He has, I think, made clear our duty in defending the cause of justice and right. If all his people are animated by the same spirit that he has portrayed I think that we should join with them in routing the forces of Babylon. I wish to inquire of the ambassador if all the people of Judah have the same opinion and attitude in this matter as he has outlined here to us and if they are prepared to make the necessary sacrifices if we should join with them. It is due us that he speak freely and frankly on this matter as surely he does not desire to secure our aid by any false promise or failure to state the exact state of affairs.

Prince David:—The question propounded by the Prince Chancellor is indeed proper and it should have been discussed by me but in my zeal to fully picture the certain destruction awaiting us, I failed to bring that matter to your attention. Replying to the question, I can in all truth and honor declare that our people are united and prepared to defend Jerusalem to the utmost and so long as one stone of its walls remain, we will defend it.

In saying this, I am not unmindful of an insignificant number of our people who are under the influence of one of our pestilential priests by the name of Jeremiah. He has at all times lamented over the affairs of state, of families and individuals. So long and so constant has been his moans and prophecies of death and destruction that our people regard him as half-crazed. His religious zeal and constant contemplation have made him a fanatic constantly contending that the private lives of the King, his princes and officers and the people are wicked. To illustrate, if our King after the labors of state, should relax—if a dancing girl dance before him or if the King should partake of wine, Jeremiah immediately proclaims the King to be depraved and a drunkard. The King becoming wearied with his continuous clamor, has, with the approval of the people, placed him in prison, so that our energies may be devoted to the affairs of state which the King believes should receive first consideration and then the demands of religion may be freely considered. I trust that this fully answers the question of the Prince Chancellor.

Prince Chancellor:—I thank the ambassador for his frank reply to my question and I believe that we should enter into a treaty of allegiance with Judah.

King:—Princes and rulers, do you concur in the opinion of the Prince Chancellor?

Princes and Rulers (in chorus):—We do.

King:—Prince David, the King of Judah wisely selected you as his ambassador to our court. We have heard and agree with you and we are willing to aid you in every possible way. Our Prince Chancellor will draw up a treaty which we will cheerfully sign so that you may take it back to Jerusalem with you and we will also dispatch our army under most able generals to assist you.

In the meantime while the treaty is being reduced to writing, we invite you to visit our public places, our temples and our palaces and be entertained by us.

Prince David:—Oh, Pharaoh, do not think that I am unmindful of the great honor you have extended to me but our affairs demand immediate action. I could not remain here to be entertained by you nor visit your palaces and temples without being reminded of our palaces and the Temple of Solomon. Jerusalem is besieged and every fraction of time counts. I pray that you will forgive my presumption but I have here with me, a treaty signed and sealed by our king which is in conformity with your statements and agreement. I pray thee. Oh Pharaoh, that it may be examined and, if satisfactory, be executed in order to permit us to hasten our return to Jerusalem so that our King and people may know as soon as possible that we have your aid and support in our behalf.

With the glorious tidings of aid and relief from you. Oh Pharaoh, the arm of the warriors will be strengthened, the patriotic zeal and religious fervor of our people will be aroused and confidence will be inspired and fear vanished.

King:—Our brother, we hasten to comply with your request.

(Reads over the treaty and signs it, then extends right hand.)

With our right hand, we pledge our lives, our country and our sacred honor to faithfully comply with our covenant. We will at once dispatch orders to our Armies to promptly march to the aid of Jerusalem.

We will also furnish an escort that you may not be hindered or delayed on your return to Jerusalem. We, ourselves, with our princes and rulers will escort you to the gates of the city and will then repair to our great temple and invoke the blessing of Heaven that our efforts may be speedily crowned with victory.

(Takes him by the arm and all march out with music.)

Curtain.

ACT TWO

Court of Zedekiah at Jerusalem

Stage arranged with chairs in semi circle. King on platform or at table at east end and near front of stage. Pashur in chair between king and edge of stage. Zepenlah on the right. Gedeliah and three Keepers on west side of stage, facing the King, and 6 or 12 soldiers in line facing audience.

(A trumpet sounds in the ante-room and a Herald enters hastily, approaches Gedeliah and hands him a scroll; then retires. Ged. opens it and reads it hurriedly, then):

King Zed.:—Prince Gedeliah, what news brought the Herald?

Gedaliah:—(Arises and remains standing. That Nebuchadnezzar, King of Babylon, approaches with innumerable forces and fills the city.

King Zed.:—How did they report the enemy ?

Ged.:—That he was formidable and victorious, approaching the King's palace, and within a few furlongs of the Temple, and everywhere is unhallowed ravage and devastation.

Pashur:—Mighty Sovereign, be not discouraged, I pray thee, by these false reports. The King of Babylon shall not prevail against thee. I, myself, have just learned that King Nebuchadnezzar has been completely overwhelmed by your armies and your noble allies, the Egyptians.

(Sound of disturbance at the door.) (Keepers go quickly to entrance.) (Jeremiah forces his way to inside the door)

Jeremiah:—Hinder me not, I will see the King, I will see the King.
(First Keeper advances and addresses the King.)

First Keeper:—Jeremiah has escaped from prison.

King Zed.:—Jeremiah! Why comes he hither ?
(To Jeremiah, who is restrained by Keepers.)

King Zed.:—Jeremiah! Thou didst promise to abide in the court of the prison. Why hast thou come without my consent?

Jeremiah:—I have a message which may not wait.

King Zed. '. Keepers, go hence until you are called.
(Pause while Keepers go to their stations.)

King Zed.:—And now, Jeremiah, thy message.
(Jeremiah advances to center of hall.)

Jeremiah:—The fate of Israel, her city and Temple, hang trembling in the balance. This day—nay, this hour—must decide if the Kingdom founded by Jehovah, and the Temple erected by Solomon his servant, shall together and forever cease to be. Ere the cock crows shall it be decided if thou be indeed the last King of Judah. For this reason, therefore, I have come to thee, O King. I have come to conjure thee to leave off thy impieties and transgressions and to take care of that which is right, and neither to give ear to those wicked advisers, nor to yield credit to their false prophecies who have deluded thee. They told thee that the King of Babylon would no more make war against thee, and that the King of Egypt would make war against him and conquer him. They told thee after Nebuchadnezzar had laid siege to our city, that the King of Egypt came with a mighty army to drive the Babylonians away and that the army of Nebuchadnezzar had given up the siege, having been driven away by the Egyptians. And then they steeped thy soul in forgetfulness. They filled thine ears with unholy music. They catered to thy pleasures with wine and to thy lust with harlots and concubines. They told thee not that the Egyptian Army had been routed and destroyed, but I tell thee that the Babylonian Army has again renewed the siege, that even now they make a passing breach in the walls, and that they may be upon us at any moment. Lo, I prophesy.
(Keepers drop to knees in attitude of fear.)

Jeremiah:—Before another dawn shall lighten the Eastern sky the soldiers of Nebuchadnezzar shall throng the courts of the Temple and everywhere shall be unhallowed ravage and devastation.

Keepers:—Lord! have mercy.

Jeremiah:—I see thee, O King, a fugitive upon the Plains of Jericho.

Keepers:—Lord! have mercy.

Jeremiah:—I see thee caught like a skulking dog, thy sons slain before thine eyes.

Keepers:—Lord! have mercy.

Jeremiah:—I see thee bound in chains of brass and carried a Captive to Babylon.

Keepers:—Lord ? have mercy.

Jeremiah:—I see the Holy Place defiled by the soldiers of Nebuchadnezzar, and the Shekinah departed from Israel forever.

Keepers:—Lord! have mercy.

Jeremiah:—All this must be unless thou repent. (Keepers arise and approach Gedeliah.) (King confers with courtiers.)

Pashur:—Heed him not, O King. His troubles have made him mad.

Zephaniah:—The old man's mind wanders.

Pashur:—Long confinement in prison has unsettled his reason.

Zephaniah:—It was ever his wont to prate of naught but woe and lamentation.

King Zed.:—Jeremiah, I long have loved thee and have often listened to thy words. I have heard and believed agreeing to that which thou has said as true, yet now do I recall that ever thy sayings were heavy with tales of woe. Naught else hast thou ever dinned into mine ears. Thy soul was surely begot 'neath gloomy shades. For thee the sun never shines, lovers do not love, birds do not sing, nor flowers bloom. Canst thou not, O Priest, prophesy pleasant things?

Jeremiah:—Wouldst thou have me merry while death hangs over our people? Wouldst thou have me speak lightly when destruction broods over our city and Temple? Yet, fain would I prophesy pleasant things—yea, verily, I bring thee good tidings if thou wilt but repent. Repent and I will pray the Lord God of Israel for thee. The hosts of Nebuchadnezzar are thundering at our gates, yet if thou wilt repent, even now, the God of our Fathers will deliver thee out of his hands. Listen to the promise:

(Music No. 4.)

Thus saith the Lord God of Israel: "Then will I build thee up and not pull thee down; then will I plant thee and not pluck thee up for I repent me of the evil I have done thee. Be not afraid of the King of Babylon. Be not afraid of him, saith the Lord, for I am with thee to save thee and to deliver thee from out his hands, and I will show mercies upon thee, that thou and thy children shall dwell in the land forever." (Music ceases.)

Then shall the prophecy spoken by Ezekiel be turned back.

Zephaniah:—Ha! He speaks of the prophecy of Ezekiel.

Pashur:—I pray thee, judge this matter with an even mind. Yon prophet did say that thou shouldst go bound to Babylon, Ezekiel did say thou shouldst never see Babylon.

Zephaniah:—Here are the rolls. I pray thee compare them.

Pashur:—They cannot both be true. (King examines rolls.)

King Zed.:—(To Jeremiah.) How sayest thou of Ezekiel? Is he a true prophet?

Jeremiah:—Ezekiel is a Priest and Prophet of the living God.

King Zed.:—And thou, art thou also such ?

Jeremiah:—Yea, Oh, King, I am also such.

King Zed.:—Ezekiel did say that I never should see Babydon.

Jeremiah:—Yea.

King Zed.:—And thou sayest I shall be taken bound to Babylon?

Jeremiah:—Yea.

King Zed.:—But how shall I believe you both?

Jeremiah:—Barest thou juggle with the words of prophecy ?

King -Zed. Thou hast not answered my question.

Jeremiah:—Once more answer thou my question, and take heed to thine answer. Wilt thou repent and become obedient?

(King confers with his courtiers.)

King Zed.:—Jeremiah! Go thy way.

Jeremiah:—(Kneeling before King.) Oh, King, thou seest that which no mortal man ever saw before. A Priest and Prophet of Israel kneeling to any save his God. Dear Prince, relent.

King Zed.:—Go thy way.

Jeremiah:—I go (rises).

(Turns to go). Yes, I go. Farewell. Henceforth thou shall see my face no more forever. (Starts to go out, hesitates, then turns and speaks to Zedekiah.) And now will I read to thee the riddle, the answer to which thou dost not guess. Bound thou shalt go to Babylon. Babylon thou shalt not see, for after the King of Babylon shall have wreaked his vengeance upon thee, thou shalt go sightless. (Exit Jeremiah.)

(Gedeliah and Keepers follow Jeremiah to the door and stand, looking out.) (King examines rolls.)

King Zed.:—Gedeliah, take these rolls and place them in the archives. (Gedeliah still looks off.)

King Zed.:—(Loudly) Gedeliah.

(Gedeliah turns slowly and approaches throne. Takes rolls.)

King Zed.:—How now, Gedeliah; why this rueful countenance? Thou art as cheerless as yon woe-begotten old man.

Gedeliah:—Oh! King, my soul is full of heaviness, even unto death.

King Zed.:—Wherefore?

Gedeliah:—Thou hast refused to hearken unto the voice of God speaking through his Prophet.

King Zed.:—Thou holdest in thy hands the rolls and knowest their testimony is not alike.

Gedeliah:—Yea! Oh, King, I know; but my soul quakes with the fearful import of his words.

King Zed.:—Dost thou then believe he spoke true?

Gedeliah:—Yea, Oh, King. I would stake my life upon his words of prophecy.

King Zed.:—(Hesitatingly) Go.

(As Gedeliah starts for the door, a High Priest enters.)

High Priest:—The soldiers of Nebuchadnezzar have defiled the Holy of Holies and the Shekinah has departed. The courts of the Temple are filled with carnage.

King Zed.:—Gedeliah! is there no way of escape?

Gedeliah:—None, save by way of the King's garden between the walls, by the private entrance leading out to the Plains of Jericho.

King Zed.:—By that way we will make our escape. (The King, guards, courtiers and H. P. rush out.) (Gedeliah and Keepers remain. Gedeliah on east side and keepers on west side of stage.)

(Silence and a pause.) (Trumpet sounds.)

Third Keeper : (Rising) A Herald.

(Second and First Keepers repeat.)

(Heralds enters.)

Gedeliah:—What tidings of the King?

Herald:—The King, with his household and all his men of war, fled by way of the gate between the walls, which is by the King's garden, and the army of the Chaldeans pursued after him and overtook him upon the Plains of Jericho and all his army were scattered from him.

Gedeiah:—Oh, Jeremiah, Jeremiah! bring Jeremiah hither.

(1st Keeper goes out and returns with Jere. on right passing by the 2 and 3 Keepers who fall in behind them and all four mount the stage, or go to the front where the stage should be. 1st K. passes to Ged. left to a position just behind him faces inward; 2d and 3d Keeper stop opposite Ged. & 1st Keeper and face them. Jere. steps in between and faces the audience. Ged & Keepers should quarter-face the audience and Jere.)

Jeremiah:—Why sendest thou for me ? Why art thou so cast down? What news of the King?

Ged.:—(Repeats the report of the Herald and continues) Alas! our young men are captive, our old men are slain; the sword of the enemy has prevailed. (Ged. and Keepers kneel and bow heads, depressed.)

Jere.—(As if soliloquizing, reflectively) Verily, verily, the prophesies of the servants of God are fulfilled. JEHOVAH reigneth! THUS shall the wicked come to destruction. Judah is vanquished and her people must suffer in captivity. (Then with firm voice and gesture) : but the Lord God of Israel (Ged. and Keepers look up quickly at Jere.) will not forsake his people. “I will raise up mighty men among them,” saith the Lord, “and they shall return to the land of their fathers.” It is for us who remain to keep alive the voice of God until their coming. Arise (Jere. motion. them up and Ged. and Keepers arise to their feet, looking intently at Jere.): ye servants of the Most High renew (Jere. raises his right arm to form a triangle and others do likewise) your pledge of fidelity to the Lord God of Israel. Plant deep (all place right hand on left breast and drop arms) in your hearts the terror of infidelity. Go forth and aid the worthy poor and lead the faltering to a higher devotion. “Make ready for the day of their coming for they shall return,” saith the Lord. I, Jere. (Ged. and Keepers drop on left knee, bring palms of hand together in front of neck, ends of fingers level with chin to perfect tableau) have proclaimed the prophecy. Let your children’s children greet them with God’s promise on their coming in that day: ISRAEL LIVES. (Jre. Steps forward on the right foot and thrusts his right arm as high as he can and says “ISRAEL LIVES” and holds that position until):

(Curtain)

ACT THREE

Court of Nebuchadnezzar at Riblah.

Stage arranged as in Act 1. King at east end near front of stage, vacant chair beside him. Princes in semi- circle, 12 soldiers in row at back facing audience, 6 on each side of east and west ends of stage. When act concludes all march out, King, then Captain of Army, Princes, Solders, Zedekah. Music begins and continues until all out of room. Curtain lowered when stage cleared.

(Nebuchadnezzar and Courtiers seated, vacant chair next to kings. Curtin Rised.)

(Trumpet sounds.)

(Sentry inside door; opens door and asks?)

Sentry: Who approaches?

Sentinel:(Outside) Nebuzaradan, Captain of the Guard, desires an audience with the King.
(Sentry advances to center of hall.)

Sentry: Nebuzaradan, captain of the Guard, desire; an audience with Your Majesty.

King Neb.:(To his councilors) How fortunate that Nebuzaradan has come to Riblah so soon after our arrival from Babylon.

King Neb.:(To Sentry) Let him enter.

(Sentry salutes, goes to door, opens it for Nebuzaradan with escort to enter.)

(Nebuzaradan enters with escort of soldiers. Marches to west side of Hall and halts. Soldiers right face; Nebuzaradan advances and salutes. The escort under the C. of G. remain standing.)

King Neb.:—Nebuzaradan, I am indeed glad thou hast come to Riblah, for I did come up from Babylon to speak to thee concerning that Jewish King, Zedekiah. Surely thou dost remember the many great wars in which my armies have been victorious under thy command. All the great Kings from the River of Egypt to the River Euphrates have been made to pay homage and tribute therefore, I ask thee, Nebuzaradan, why hast thou for eighteen long months permitted this weak vassal, Zedekiah, to withstand our mighty army, our chariots and horsemen? Hast thou lost thy cunning? Hast thou become less a warrior, that this weakest of rulers hath put thee to naught? Remember, Nebuzaradan, nearly two years have passed since I commanded thee to bring this wicked King Zedekiah before me.

Nbusaradan:—Mighty Sovereign! hear me, I pray, thee. Since thou didst make me Captain of thy Guard I have led thy armies in many fierce conflicts to victory, but never to defeat. I swear to thee that my arm is as strong, my nerve as steady, and my brain as clear now as ever before, but this wicked King is full of subtlety, and as thou knowest. did enter into alliance with the King of Egypt and secure the aid of Pharoah's army, which for a time diverted my attack upon Jerusalem, but we did overwhelm them, and returned again to the siege upon Jerusalem, and I now come to thee with good tidings of victory. Our assault has been successful. Jerusalem is taken, and their last stronghold is in our hands, but King Zedekiah and all his men of war fled by night by way of the gate between the walls, which is by the King's garden, leading out upon the Plains of Jericho, and thus escaped—

King Neb.—Zedekiah escaped! He whose capture I most desired! Speak! Nebuzaradan—sayest thou Zedekiah escaped?

Nebuzaradan:—Yea, Oh, King. But our army pursued after him and overtook him on the Plains of Jericho, made him prisoner, and he is now without and awaits your commands.

King Neb.—(To his councilors) At last, then, the conquest of that city is again accomplished. Twice before, when our armies invested Jerusalem, did their King submit tamely, opening his gates without resistance; but this Zedekiah, whom I myself placed upon the throne and who swore to me an oath that he would keep his kingdom for me and make no league of friendship with the Egyptians, hath despired his oath and defied our armies.

Surely will I now make desolation in the place of that proud city, but, until I have poured out my punishment upon the head of its wicked ruler, my vengeance will not be complete.

King Neb.—(To soldier of Nebuzaradan) Bring the captive before me.

(Soldiers salute and Under command of the C. of G., retire and bring in King Zedekiah. who is in chains, his clothing in disorder, etc.)

(As soldiers retire, King Neb. addresses Nebuzaradan as follows.)

Most noble Nebuzaradan, accept our commendation and grateful thanks. Thy faithfulness shall not go unrewarded. Captain of. our Guard thou hast been. I now make thee Grand Captain of all our Armies. Be seated near the throne.

(Nebuzaradan is seated next to the King.)

Nebuchardnezzar:—Aha! thou base and perjured Zedekiah, thou wicked covenant breaker, at last I have thee in my power! Did not I set thee on thy throne, in the room of Johoiachin, after that I had taken him captive?

King Zed.: Yea, sir.

King Neb.:—And didst thou not then solemnly agree and covenant with me, swearing by the name of thy God, that thou wouldst be faithful unto me, and hold thy kingdom unto me? Answer me.

King Zed.:—Yea, sir, but thou didst demand of me the impossible. I am a man in whose veins runs blood as royal as thine own. Take off these chains, array me in my own pomp and glory, and I will show thee that I can play the Monarch as well as thou.

King Neb.:—(Interrupting) Silence! Wouldst thou flout me to my face? Thou hast well said, that thou canst play the King, but thou canst not be a King, thou canst not even be loyal to a friend—and I was that friend. Thou canst not be faithful to a trust—and I trusted thee; and how hast thou repaid me? The chief glory in the crown of manhood is fidelity, the brightest jewel in the diadem of a Monarch is fidelity, and behold, there is not one of thy promises that thou hast not broken, for thou didst enter into alliance with the King of Egypt, and didst make rebellion against me, so that thou hast twice compelled me to come up against thee with all my armies, my chariots and my horsemen—

King Zed.:—(Interrupting) Hear me, pray, I did no more than thou wouldst have done, hadst thou been placed in my situation. Couldst thou blame me if I would free my people from thy yoke? Pashur and Zephaniah did counsel me to throw off thy rule. I know thee to be a hard and cruel man, reaping where thou hast not sown and gathering where thou hast not strewn—

King Neb.:—(Interrupting) It may be all true that thou hast said, but my bitterest foe hath yet to say that Neb. ever betrayed a trust, or was false to a friend. Thou wert false to me. And surely it is thine own God that has delivered thee into my hands, because thou didst mock his messengers and practice cruelty towards his prophets, placing them in prison, and in the stocks, and even in the pit of mire, and hast more and more hardened thy heart and stiffened thy neck until there is no remedy except thy complete destruction. Therefore, this is the judgment that I pronounce upon thee and upon thy people.

Nebuzaradan, Captain of our armies, shall utterly destroy thy city of Jerusalem.

The Temple shall be burned with fire, the remaining remnant of its vessels and ornaments shall be broken and carried to Babylon, thy palaces and the houses of thy great men shall be destroyed and the walls of the city thrown down even to the ground, and all the people that have escaped the famine and the pestilence and the sword, shall be taken captive to Babylon.

And as for thee, it is my order that thy sons be slain before thine eyes, that none of thy perjured race may remain after thee, and that thou mayest see and know that thou art indeed the last King of Judah, and then that thou mayest know that the words of the prophets of thy God were true when the one said that thou shouldst be taken to Babylon, while the other said that thou shouldst not see Babylon, thine

eyes shall be put out and thou be taken in chains of brass unto Babylon. (Laughs.) King Zed.:—Have mercy! Have mercy!

King Neb.:—(Arises) I, Nebuchadnezzar, have spoken the judgment. Let it be executed with speed. Away with him.

(Guards remove Zedekiah in half fainting condition, walking backwards. Guards return.)

King Neb.:—Most noble Captain of our Armies, it is my order that the captive Jews, together with their King, be taken forthwith to Babylon. See that the remnant of the poor left under Gedeliah, are supplied with seed for their planting, and that no harm befalls Jeremiah. Form the lines for our march to Babylon.

(Music No. 5.)

(Capt. of Guard forms a column of twos. Zedekiah's eyes are bound with a cloth. He is led by chain and other guards hold him by his arms. King, Capt. of Army, then Prince, then soldiers, then Zedekiah.)

(Curtain)

ACT FOUR

Captives form outside of room. Ezekiel in rear. Music begins and they march in when curtain rises and take places on the stage. In conclusion of act curtain lowered.

The Captives in Babylon.

The Sanctuary in a Grove.

March in to Music No. 6.

(The scene is laid in a grove, an altar of stone with a scroll of the Sacred Law in center of stage. The twelve companions lying on the floor about the altar. All participants except Ezek. are clothed in black. The singing should be in a soft and plaintive manner. The Hall to be in semi-darkness.)

(The following should be sung or recited by one of the twelve Comps.):

How shall we sing the Lord's song in a strange land?

If I forget thee, O, Jerusalem, let my right hand forget her cunning.

If I do not remember thee, let my tongue cleave to the roof of my mouth, if I prefer not Jerusalem above my chief Joy. Ps. 137:4-6.

Ezek.:—(Sitting, reads) How doth the city sit solitary, that was full of people! how is she become as a widow! she that was great among the nations, and princess among the provinces, how is she become tributary!

She weepeth sore in the night, and her tears are on her cheeks. Among all her lovers she hath none to comfort her; all her friends have dealt treacherously with her, they are become her enemies.

Lamentation 1:1-2.

SING

By Babel's stream we sit and weep;
Our tears for Zion flow;
Our harps on drooping willows sleep;
Our hearts are filled with woe.

Ezek.:—(Reads) By the rivers of Babylon there we sat down; yea, we wept when we remembered Zion. We hanged our harps upon the willows in the midst thereof. For there they that carried us away captive required of us a song, and they that wasted us required of us mirth, saying, sing us one of the songs of Zion.—Psalms 137 :1-3.

SING

Our walls no more resound with praise;
Our Temple foes destroy;
Judea's courts no more upraise
Triumphant songs of Joy.

(Reads.) Judah is gone into captivity because of affliction, and because of great servitude; she dwelleth among the heathen; she findeth no rest; all her persecutors overtook her between the straits. The ways of Zion do mourn, because none come to the solemn feasts; all her gates are desolate; her priests sigh; her virgins are afflicted; and she is in bitterness. Her adversaries are the chief, her enemies prosper; for the Lord hath afflicted her for the multitude of her transgressions; her children are gone into captivity, before the enemy.—Lam. 1 :3, 4, 5.

SING

Here, mourning, toil the captive bands;
Our feasts and Sabbaths cease:
Our tribes, dispersed through distant lands,
Are hopeless of release.

(A courier enters hastily and presents a scroll to Ezekiel. The courier retires and Ezekiel exclaims):

Ezek.:—A message from Jeremiah!

(The Comps, rise hastily and crowd around Ezekiel to hear the message.)

(Reads.) Thus saith the Lord of Hosts, the God of Israel, unto all that are carried away captives, whom I have caused to be carried away from Jerusalem unto Babylon, build ye houses, and dwell in them, and plant gardens and eat the fruit of them.

Take ye wives and beget ye sons and daughters, and take wives for your sons and give your daughters to husbands, that they may bear sons and daughters, that ye may be increased there, and not diminished.

For thus saith the Lord, that after seventy years be accomplished at Babylon, I will visit you, and perform my good word toward you, in causing you to return to this place.

For I know the thoughts I think toward you, saith the Lord; thoughts of peace, and not of evil, to give you an expected end.—Jeremiah 29:4, 5, 6, 10, 11.

SING

Then shall the ever gracious power
To us propitious be,
Chaldeans shall our race restore,
And Kings proclaim us free.

PRAYER FOR THE FOURTH ACT

O Lord, according to all thy righteousness, we beseech Thee. Let thine anger and fury be turned away from the city of Jerusalem, Thy holy mountain, because of our sins and for the iniquities of our fathers. Jerusalem and Thy people are become a reproach to all about us.

O my God, incline thine ear, open thine eyes and behold our desolation and the city which is called by Thy name for we do not present our supplications before Thee for our righteousness but for Thy tender mercies. O Lord, hear! O Lord, forgive! O Lord, hearken and do defer not for Thine own sake. O my God, for Thy city and Thy people are called by Thy name.

O send out Thy light and Thy truth, let them lead us, let them bring us into Thy holy hill and to Thy tabernacles. Deliver us, O our God, out of the hands of the wicked, out of the hand of the unrighteous and cruel man.

The day for Thy walls to be builded, that day the time hasteneth on when we come to thee. Harken to the prayer of Thy servants according to Thy grace toward Thy people.

That the ends of the earth may know that thou art the everlasting God. Amen.

Now follows the song “Jerusalem, the Golden,” or “For Thee, O Dear, Dear Country. (Change the stage for the song to show Jerusalem or some appropriate selection.)

Curtain

ACT FIVE

Stage arrange Woodland Scene as in Act 4

When curtain rises King and Pashur enter and seat themselves on log and begin dialogue. At conclusion they lie down on ground. Reading begins. They leave when stage darkened. (There was light.) Water scene. Resume reading down to “and the works therein shall be burned.”

Stage set for Woodland scene. Zedekiah and Pashur enter and seat themselves on stump or logs.

Pashur:—From the beginning of the captivity you have at all times been deeply concerned about our people. I am happy to report to you that your fortitude under all the afflictions of adversity and the example of your life in which you are superior to all the frowns of fortune, have excited the admiration and the confidence and affection of our people to you.

King:—It may be that my condition may have excited their sympathy which you have mistaken for affection.

Pashur:—Not so, my King. In their concern for you they forget their own adversities. Many have asked why you have received evil from God, others say if not from God why then did He permit it.

King:—The existence of good and evil has long been and will no doubt continue to be a subject of intense study so long as mankind shall live upon this earth

The great Patriarch Job gave the answer in these words, “What shall we receive good from the hand of God and shall we not also receive evil.” Why this is true no man knoweth and is beyond our human understanding. We should therefore put our trust in God for He is good and His mercy endureth forever. I have perfect trust in him and have the assurance as did Job when he declared I know that my Redeemer liveth.

Pashur:—Your life and mine proves the correctness of your statement and it has also been true in the life of Moses for the Lord refused to permit him to enter into the Land of Promise but only to view it. Likewise your great ancestor King David of glorious and blessed memory when the Lord refused to permit him to build the Temple. Yet they never lost faith in God.

King:—I can, like King David, declare, “Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death I will fear no evil. Thy rod and Thy staff they comfort me. Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life and I will dwell in the House of the Lord forever.” As for all other things they are as nothing.

Pashur:—Your trust has had its reward for the Holy Prophet has declared that our people shall return to the land of our fathers and rebuild Jerusalem and its Temple and that you will die in peace in Babylon and be buried with the burnings of thy fathers the former Kings which were before thee and so shall they burn odors for thee and they will lament thee. Also that they will look back upon thee as the breath of their nostrils the anointed of the Lord of whom they will say under his shadow we shall live among the heathen.

King:—Have I not then received good only from the Lord? Through His mercy I will be received into His Holy City, the new and eternal Jerusalem.
I am weary, let us rest.

Curtain

In the beginning God created the Heaven and the Earth. And the earth was without form and void and darkness was upon the face of the deep; and the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters and God said; Let there be light and there was light. (Here show water scene.) And God saw that the light was good and God divided the light from the darkness and God called the Light day and the Darkness he called night. And God said: Let there be a firmament in the midst of the waters and let it divide the waters from the waters.

And God made the firmament and divided the waters which were under the firmament from the waters which were above the firmament and it was so. And God called the firmament Heaven and God said: Let the waters under the heaven be gathered together unto one place and let the dry land appear and it was so; And God called the dry land the Earth.

And God said let us make Man in our image, after our likeness and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the fowl of the air and over the cattle and over all the earth. So God created man in His image, in the image of God created He him, and the Lord God formed Man of the dust of the ground and breathed into his nostrils the breath of Life and man became a living Soul.

O Lord our God how excellent is Thy name in all the Earth. Who has set Thy glory above the heavens.

When I consider Thy Heavens, the work of Thy fingers, the moon and stars which thou hast ordained; What is Man that Thou art mindful of him? and the Son of Man, that Thou visitest Him For Thou hast made him a little lower than angels, and hast crowned him with glory and honor. Thou madest him to have dominion over the works of thy hands and Thou hast put all things under his feet.

Behold the day of the Lord cometh, cruel both with wrath and fierce anger, to lay the land desolate and he shall destroy the sinners thereof out of it. For the stars of heaven and the constellations thereof shall not give their light; the sun shall be darkened in his going forth, and the moon shall not cause her light to shine.

I will make a man more precious than fine gold; even a man than the golden wedge of Ophir. Therefore will I shake the heavens and the earth shall remove out of her place, in the wrath of the Lord of hosts and in the day of his fierce anger. And all the hosts of heaven shall be dissolved, and the heavens shall be rolled together as a scroll; for my sword shall be bathed in heaven; behold it shall come down upon the people to judgment. And the streams thereof shall be turned into pitch and the dust thereof into brimstone, and the land thereof shall become burning pitch. Lift up your eyes to the heavens and look upon the earth beneath; for the heavens shall vanish away like smoke, and the earth shall wax old like a garment and they that dwell therein shall die in like manner; but my salvation shall be forever and my righteousness shall not be abolished; In a little wrath I hid my face from thee for a moment; but with everlasting kindness will I have mercy on thee saith the Lord Thy Redeemer—For the mountains shall depart and the hills be removed but kindness shall not depart from thee, neither shall the covenant of my peace be removed said the Lord that hath mercy on thee—The sun shall be no more thy light by day; neither for brightness shall the moon give light unto thee, but the Lord shall be unto thee an everlasting light and thy God thy glory.

The day of the Lord is near, it is near and hasteneth greatly, even the voice of the day of the Lord; the mighty man shall cry there bitterly. That day is a day of wrath, a day of trouble and distress, a day of wasteness and desolation, a day of darkness and gloominess, a day of clouds and thick darkness.

But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night, in which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat; The earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned.

Music, then volcano, with music after the volcano, music, then reading resumed.

Music: Bach—Toccatta and Fugue in D Minor, to be played while volcano is erupting. At the end of volcano, while the stage is being changed, music: Les Preludes—Liszt, for 2 or 3 minutes. Then reading resumed.

And he carried me away in the Spirit to a great and high mountain, and showed that Great City, the Holy Jerusalem, descending out of heaven from, and having the Glory of God, and I saw a new Heaven and a new Earth, for the first Heaven and Earth were passed away, and there was no more sea, and I saw the Holy City, the new Jerusalem, coming down from God out of Heaven, and I saw no Temple therein, for the Lord God almighty and Lamb are the Temple of it, and the City had no need of the Sun, neither of the moon, to shine in it; for the Glory of God did lighten it, and there shall be no night there, and they need no candle, neither the light of the sun for the Lord God giveth them light and the gates of it shall not be shut at all by day, for there shall be no night there and they shall bring the glory and the honor of the nations in it. And he showed me a pure river of Water of Life, clear as the crystal proceeding out of the Throne of God—In the midst of it, and either side of the river was the Tree of Life—and behold I heard a great voice out of Heaven saying; Behold the Tabernacle of God is with men, and he will dwell with them and they shall be his people and God himself shall be with them, and be their God and God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes, and there shall be no more death, neither sorrowing or crying, neither shall there be any more pain, for the former things are passed away—I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end, the end, the first and the last. Blessed are they that do

His commandments, that they may have the right to the Tree of Life and may enter in through the gates into the City.

(Now follows the song "The Holy City. And it is shown on the stage during the song. At its end the curtain.)

CLOSING

I. M.:— Comp. Marshal, form the Circle of Friendship.

(The Marshal then forms the Circle of Friendship. The officers take positions in the Circle immediately in front of their several stations and the candidates and members complete the Circle.)

I. M.:—We have learned that this Circle is emblematical of Friendship. Let us now close our ranks, standing shoulder to shoulder, with arms crossed, and hands warmly clasped, thus welding the Circle of Friendship into an unending chain of fraternal union. While the segments of which this Circle is formed will shortly be dispersed, never to be again so united, still the experience through which we have all passed, to arrive at this place, which none but the Select may enter, ought to bind us together forever and make this Circle stronger and more enduring than bands of steel.

Then let us, my Companions, labor diligently and fearlessly in the cause of Truth our allotted time, doing with our might whatsoever our hands find to do, so that, when at the time of the third watch our work is finished, we may be greeted as Super Excellent Masters, and be released from our captivity in the flesh, to return over the rough and rugged way of the valley of the Shadow of Death to our abiding place, eternal in the heavens, there to erect our last and perfect moral and Masonic Temple and adore the Holy One of Israel throughout the endless cycles of eternity. Amen.

(Sing one verse of "God Be With You Till We Meet Again," "Auld Lang Syne," or "Blessed Be the Tie.")

I. M.—Waiving further ceremony, I declare this Council of S. E. M. closed. Companions, you are dismissed.

SUPER EXCELLENT DEGREE MUSIC

Number 1—

ARIA—Bach (Suite No. 3 in D Major)—Victor Record No. 1843.

To be played just prior to the opening of the council.

Number 2—

GRAND MARCH from Aida—Verdi—Victor Record No. 11,885.

To be played at opening and closing of Act I as participants march on and off stage.

Number 3—

FEST MARCH from Tannhauser—Wagner—Victor Records Nos. 12,448; 36,169; 7,386. To be played as Ambassador marches in during Act 1.

Number 4—

MEDITATION from Thais—Massenet—Victor Records No. 11,887 or 35,858.

To be played during Act II—Cue: Begin music when Jeremiah says “I, listen to the Promise. Thus saith the Lord of Israel—” and continue until “—dwell in the land forever.”

Number 5—

PERSIAN MARCH—Johann Strauss (Op. 289) Victor Record No. 10-1019.

To be played at the end of Act III as participants march off stage.

Number 6—

EVENING SONG—Schumann (Op. 23, No. 4) Victor Record No. 36,166.

To be played at beginning of Act IV as captives march in.

Number 7—

ARIOSO—Bach (From the Church Cantata No.156)—Victor Record No. 18,498,

To be played between Acts IV and V.

Number 8—

TOCCATTA AND FUGUE IN D MINOR—Bach—Victor Record No. 8,697.

To be played while volcano is erupting. Cue: Begin music when he says “And the works that are therein shall be burned up.”

Number 9—

LES PRELUDES—Liszt—First Record of Victor Album No. 453,

To be played following No. 8 while stage is being changed.

Number 10—

THE HOLY CITY To be sung from stage during Second Section of Act V.

PRONOUNCING VOCABULARY

ADONIRAM—Accent on “NI.” I as in “Die.”

AHISHAR—Accent on “HI.” I as in “Die.”

AZARIAH—Accent on “RI” I as in “Die.”

CHERUBIM—Accent on “CHER.” E as in “Cherry.”

GEBAL—Accent on “GE.” G as in “Give.” E like EE in ‘Feet.’ A in second syllable very short, almost Silent.

GIBLIM—Accent on “Gib.” G as in “Give.” I in both syllables, as in “Liberty.”

ISH SODI—“ISH” as in “Wish” “SODI” as if spelled “SOD’EE.”

PHOENICIAN—As if spelt “FEE-NISH-AN” Accent on second syllable.

SHEWBREAD— As if spelt “SHOW-BREAD.” Accent on “SHOW.”

ZABUD—Accent on “ZA.” A as in “Hay.”

ZEREDATHA—Accent on “DATH.”

PRONOUNCING VOCABULARY

Artaban (Ar’ta-ban)

Assyria (As-syr’i-a)

Babel (Ba’bel)

Babylonians (Babiy-lo~ni-ans)

Belteshazzar (Bel/te-shaZ’ar)

Chaldea (kal-de’a)

Euphrates (yu-fra’téz)

Egypt (E’jypt)

Ezekiel (E-ze’ki-el)

Gedaliah (Ged’a-li’ah)

Isaiah (I-za/ya)

Jehoiachin (Je-hoi’a-kin)

Jehoiakim (Je-hoi’a-kim)

Jehovah (Je-ho’vah)

Jeremiah (Jer/e-mi’ah)

Jericho (Jerli-ko)

Jerusalem (Je-rulsa-lem)

Jonathan (Jonla-than)

Jordan (Jorldan)

Judah (Ju’dah)

Judea (Ju-dela>

Media (Me’di-a)

Nebuchadnezzar (Neb’yu-kad-nez~zar)

Nebuzaradan (Neb-yu-zar~ad’ati)

Palestine (Pal’es-tine)

Pashur (Pash’ur)

Pharaoh (a’ro or fa’ra-o)

Riblah (Rib’lah)

Samaria Sa-ma’ri-a)

Satrap (Sat’ rps))

Seraiah (Se-ri’a)

Shekinah (She-ki’ ah)

Sissinna (Sisin’na)

Solema (So-le/ma)

Zedekiah (Zed’e-ki’ah)

Zaherlaherbon (Za-her-la’her-bon’)

Zephaniah (Zefa-ni’ah) Zion (zi’on)