

THE
NEWSLETTER

OF THE COMMITTEE

ON
MASONIC
EDUCATION

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An Invitation: The Newsletter is published by The Grand Lodge Committee on Masonic Education. We welcome responses from all our readers. If any of our contributors or subscribers have access to historical information about their District, or Lodge, or special individuals, please forward it to the editor. Much of our Masonic History is also linked to the history of our country through members who have been community, business, professional, religious or political leaders. Careful research of material made available should provide some interesting information for newsletter readers. It would also help to educate us all about the contributions of individual members, Lodges and Districts ...to the history of our country, provinces, and our villages, towns and cities. We need to know more about each other and about the part that Canadian Masons have played in our history. Can you help?

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•••NOTICE•••
THE COLLEGE OF FREEMASONRY

BRETHREN: The Committee on Masonic Education is still offering its challenging Correspondence Course throughout the Grand Jurisdiction. Because of the interest that continues to be shown, it now is being offered in a new format. That same twinge of excitement, that same challenge, that same desire to delve into and find out more about the Craft is there-all we have done is to separate the four programs so that YOU may now choose in which order you wish to complete them. You may choose to complete only one-or you may choose to complete two of the four offered-or all four-you may take as many, or as few, of the programs as you wish and in the order you wish.

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A supply of the new Application Forms is being forwarded to your District Education Chairman. Be sure to contact him. Good Luck

THE ANCIENT ORDER OF THE ESSENES

*By Norman Pearson, Ph.D., D.B.A.
Fellow of the College of Freemasonry
Member of the Philalethes Society
P.M., P.T.P.G.M.*

MASONIC INTEREST IN THE ESSENES

The ancient Order of the Essenes is of great interest as a possible progenitor of Freemasonry. There are several grounds for this. In the first place, they used builder's tools both practically and symbolically. Their structure had at least three, and possibly four Degrees. The Order was likely founded to interpret Pythagorean symbolism. In due time they became the custodians of what can be termed Mystic Christianity. When the Roman Church made its political compact with Imperial Rome, to become a state religion and a temporal power in the first global totalitarian state, all of the secret traditions, including the Essenes, were vigorously persecuted. However, because in both Syria and Egypt, Essenes were selected as tutors in leading Roman families, their traditions became part of mainstream Western civilization. With the rediscovery of the Dead Sea Scrolls at Qumran, their presence became more real to us.

THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE ESSENES

Aside from that interest, the Essenes are worth consideration in their own right. They are the most famous secret society of the Holy Land. In her book *SECRET SOCIETIES*, Nesta Webster stated:

"The Essenes are of importance...as the first of the secret societies from which a direct line of tradition can be traced up to the present day."¹

The Essenes were the most prominent of the sects which organized in Syria. The name is apparently derived from an ancient Syrian word meaning 'physician'. Some authorities derive their origin from Samuel the Prophet, but most are agreed on an origin in the Orient or in Egypt. Their two great centres, where they had important communities and colleges, were lake Moeris in Egypt, and Engaddi near the Dead Sea in Palestine.

The Essenes were an Order of pious men and women who lived lives of asceticism, spending their days in labour and scholarship, and their evenings in prayer and contemplation. Josephus, the great Jewish historian (circa 40-80 AD) thought highly of them. He says:

"...they teach the immortality of the soul, and esteem that the rewards of righteousness are to be earnestly striven for...yet is their course of life better than that of other men, and they entirely addict themselves to husbandry..."²

They were also respected as physicians in what would now be called wholistic medicine, treating mind, body and soul. They never became merchants or city dwellers, but based their lives on agriculture, raising sheep for wool, crafts such as pottery and carpentry, artificers and engineers, and scholarly pursuits. They were regarded as the best educated group in Syria, Judea and Egypt. Their significance is that they were secretly engaged in building a spiritual and philosophical temple as a fitting dwelling place for the eternal living God.

MELCHIZEDEK & PYTHAGORAS

A further linkage to our interest is by way of Pythagoras and the Order of Melchizedek³. Some time around 540 BC, Pythagoras traveled in the Near East and was initiated into the Ancient Mysteries in the tradition of Melchizedek. Two hundred years later, Pythagoras influenced Euclid and so both traditions were transmitted into our legends. In the Near East, the Essenes some six-hundred years later, carried forward the Pythagorean tradition. They also combined it with the Kabbalah. This is one reason they sound so familiar to us.

KNIGHTS OF THE TEMPLE

There is, another link. The Essenes are first mentioned by Josephus as existing in the time of the Maccabees, about the 166 BC. Pliny said that Moses himself instituted the Order. Josephus asserts the Order existed since the time of the Fathers of Mankind (Melchizedek is sometimes identified with Shem, the son of Noah). Scaliger argued that they were "...an Order of KNIGHTS OF THE TEMPLE OF JERUSELEM" and architects.

"who bound themselves to adorn the porches of that magnificent structure, and to preserve it from injury and decay..."⁴

The prominent matters dealt with in their assemblies were the Tetragrammaton and the ineffable name.

THE ORDER

The Order's structure also has a familiar ring. The candidate was required to pass through a two-stage novitiate, extending over three years, before admission. Upon admission to the first grade, as an 'Aspirant', he cast all his possessions into the communal treasure and was issued with a spade, an apron and a white robe. At the end of a probationary year he was then termed an 'Approacher', in which he was taken into closer association and some further mystical instruction given. From this, after a further period of probation, he was then made a member of the Order as an 'Associate', the conclusion of the second Degree. Finally, he was admitted to the third Degree as 'Disciple' or 'Companion'. At this stage there was a full revelation of the teachings. After a solemn oath to love God, to be just to all men, to practice charity, to maintain the truth, and particularly to conceal the secrets of the society and the mysteries connected with the Tetragrammaton and the ineffable names of God.⁵ thus the Degrees were:

- 1—ASPIRANT
- 2—APPROACHER
- 3—ASSOCIATE
- 4—DISCIPLE or COMPANION

Certainly, there is a similarity between the Pythagorean School, the Essenes and Freemasonry, at least indicative of the survival of a common tradition of truth, brotherly love, and charity from the most ancient times. That the highest ideals of humanity were driven underground and to secrecy bespeaks volumes about the human condition, and the dedication of those who preserved and transmitted these persistent principles. We share the Degrees of initiation, the oaths of secrecy, the apron, and certain signs. We also share the solar and stellar symbolism of the Craft Lodges.⁶

THE KABBALAH

There is also a shared tradition in the strong Kabbalistic element in Freemasonry. Here we must distinguish between three versions of the Kabbalah. The first embodies the ancient secrets of the patriarchs, handed down from the Egyptians and the Greeks and Romans and thence into the mediaeval world. The second is the Kabbalah of Judaism, descended from Moses, David and Solomon to the Essenes, the message for all humanity. The third is a perverted Kabbalah, mixed with magic and barbarism, which even has echoes in our own day in Satanism and some evidence of twisted witchcraft. Masonry at the time of the Crusaders belonged more to the second Kabbalah than the first, and that is the same Kabbalah perpetuated in the Order of the Essenes. Here we are on common ground.

THE MYSTIC TRADITION

Carrying forward this pure form of the Kabbalah, the Essenes were in that sense emanationists^{7,8}. They strove to re-interpret Mosaic law and to be, in effect, universalists. Thus they stood in contrast to the Pharisees and the Sadducees. Many of the Essene precepts are now found in the New Testament. Thus they became the logical carriers of what has been called Mystic Christianity, in the sense of carrying forward those precepts which lie behind the structures of religion, and avoiding what we call 'religiosity'. In other words, a tolerance of inquiry and its consequences, and a broad respect for human differences of perception about the true nature of the Cosmos.

Here we find another link. The true story of early Christianity, and of the ties between the Jewish, Christian and Islamic beliefs, were eventually re-discovered by the Templars, and that was obviously a key factor in their destruction. Both the Essenes and the Templars were essentially persecuted for the same reason: they understood the truth. Thus, centuries later, the Templars gave a fresh infusion of essentially Essene beliefs into the Craft in those areas such as Scotland where they escaped complete destruction. This is a common thread between the Druzes, the Nazarenes, the Essenes, the Johannites, and the Templars. Early Church Fathers such as Irenaeus and Justin, writing about 80 AD, speak to a continuity of certain principles from pagan to Christian times. Sprigett, a Mason, writes of an ancient ritual book which affirms that Mary and Joseph were Essenes. There are early Christian records in Tibet, and a Buddhist monastery in Ceylon preserves records of a sojourn there by the Master Jesus. He is also referred to in the New Testament as being '...called of God as a high priest of the Order of Melchizadek' (certain Masonic ceremonies preserve this).⁹

It appears that the pure ancient mysteries had, in the time of the early Christian era, decayed and been virtually destroyed by the profane. Orders such as the Essenes carried forward the old knowledge; and the broad message of Mystic Christianity, as a further development of the Pythagorean and Kabbalistic strands, would fit well.

A.E. Waite commented in his *NEW ENCYCLOPAEDIA OF FREEMASONRY* that while the temporal power of the new Church was entrusted to St. Peter in Rome as the visible Holy See, so the spiritual or invisible body of the faith was entrusted to the 'Secret Church of the Holy Grail', through apostolic succession from Joseph of Arimathea. This leads to the elusive legend of the Holy Grail itself.

The Essenes thus bear careful study.

THE PERSECUTION

We may ask, what then happened? The answer lies in the advance of the visible or temporal Christian Church.

The Essenes left behind them the documents we know as the Dead Sea Scrolls, in Qumran, where they were hidden until rediscovered in 1947.

Here we discover that there are in *their* ancient documents innumerable anticipations of what we now term Christian concepts, teachings, demands and even rules and regulations.¹⁰ Here we find the white baptismal robe, the Beatitudes, the Last Supper, and a familiar community organization, well before modern Christianity. The Essenes had a community council of 12 men and 3 priests, with elders and bishops. They called themselves 'the children of the light'.

What occurred is that the State Church decided to suppress the old mystery schools in all their forms. In 323 AD, there was official recognition of the Christian Church by the Roman Empire, after the Battle of the Milvian Bridge and the triumph of the symbol of the cross. In 325 AD the council of Nicea established Church doctrine within the Empire and thereafter both Church and State set about extirpating the ancient mysteries and indeed much of what we now call Mystic Christianity, including the Essenes. This began as the struggle between the Niceans

and the Arians, then became persecution of the older mysteries, and then finally to persecute all unorthodoxy, so that all Christianity was later engulfed in what came to be known as 'The Dark Ages'.

Here we must face the problem of secrecy. Are societies like the Essenes and the Freemasons given to secrecy as a founding principle or is it a response to persecution? In one sense, the great truths are too difficult for the great mass of mankind, and it can be dangerous to expound them. In the other sense, the tenets of such organizations are a threat to totalitarianism and to the abuse of power, so the institutions which are so based strike back ruthlessly.

So it was with the Essenes. From their emergence in tolerant and highly enlightened states such as Ancient Egypt, up to the time of Rome, the secrecy of the Essenes was of the first kind. Essentially, they protected the great knowledge and imparted it to the deserving, for its perpetuation, against a day when it might reach all mankind.

In the atmosphere of Roman Imperial totalitarianism, they essentially survived by being non-dogmatic. As we have seen, they were so successful that their finest minds became tutors to the leading Roman households. When the fatal alliance between the Church and the State turned quickly into the imposition of a rigid orthodoxy, their secrecy again protected them, and no doubt their initiatory process was extremely careful and circumspect. When that alliance became the most oppressive system mankind had ever known, their secrecy of the Essenes Order was to no avail. Their communities were attacked by armed force: even so, they hid their critical records, which increasingly today explode like bombshells in the conventional world, and are often regarded as threatening or dangerous again.

This leads to the next stage in secrecy; the underground existence. So, the Essenes were in their visible form dispersed. We may be sure that they went underground, and by certain means of recognition along with knowledge of where, in the edges of the Empire or in adjacent non-Christian lands, there were like-minded schools of thought, they no doubt transmitted and preserved what light they had.

Centuries later, in the Renaissance, such knowledge burst out and transformed the world. The ancient Order of Essenes was part of the roots of that renewal; it still continues.

Who shall say where these threads begin and end?

The great ancient writer Manetho, a high priest at Heliopolis, in the Third Century BC, wrote his history of Egypt, at a time when the ancient hieroglyphics were dying out, and therefore he wrote in Greek. Here, from more than two thousand years ago, we hear his words:

‘Moses, a son of the tribe of Levi, educated in Egypt and initiated at Heliopolis, became a High Priest of the Brotherhood under the reign of the Pharaoh Amenhotep. He was elected by the Hebrews as their chief and he adapted to the ideas of his people the science and philosophy which he had obtained in the Egyptian mysteries; proofs of this are found in the symbols, in the initiations and in his precepts and commandments. The wonders which Moses relates as having taken place upon the Mountain of Sinai are, in part, a veiled account of the Egyptian initiation which he transmitted to his people when he established a branch of the Egyptian Brotherhood in his country, from which descended the Essenes. The dogma of an ‘only God’ which he taught was the Egyptian Brotherhood interpretation and teaching of the Pharaoh who established the first monotheistic religion known to man. The traditions he established in this manner were preserved in the ARCANAS of the societies, the THERAPEUTICS of Egypt, and the ESSENIANS’:

Manetho’s is an authentic voice, powerful even today. For the symbols, we need only look around us. Consider that the Essenes developed so much. Consider that through Plotinus, born in Egypt about 205 AD, this same teaching reached Rome about 244 AD. Consider that the Therapeutics went to Greece to transmit science. Then think about something like twelve-hundred years of oppression, beginning with about five-hundred years of the Dark Ages. Bear in mind the conditions under which these traditions were transmitted. What is amazing is, first, that it evidently survived, and secondly, that it was so little distorted.

We may owe more to the Essenes than we know.

Presented before Arcana Council No. 215, Allied Masonic Degrees of Canada, Lambeth, Ont., Canada

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LET'S IMPROVE OURSELVES IN FREEMASONRY

James E. Sledge
Past Grand Chaplain

Thank goodness! All of the discussion about our Fraternity by the Southern Baptist Convention has just about subsided, but I doubt very much if it has come to a complete halt, for there is always a newcomer in our midst. As you probably know by now, the final vote, by nearly twenty-thousand messengers attending the Convention in Houston, Texas on the resolution prepared by The Home Mission Board of the Convention, demonstrated conclusively that membership in a Masonic Lodge should be a matter of '*personal conscience*'. This overwhelming majority vote means that individuals should give serious thought about this matter and then make the decisions for themselves according to their personal convictions.

As an active Southern Baptist for over sixty years, it was my opinion that this was the only proper course for them, for, Section Fourteen of "The Statement of Baptist Faith and Message" of our Southern Baptist Convention reads in part as follows: "Christ's people should, as occasion requires, organize such associations and conventions as may best secure cooperation for the great objects of the Kingdom of God. Such organizations *have no authority* over one another or over the churches.

Mr. James Holly of Texas, the one who started all the present ruckus within our Fraternity, wasn't even present at the convention. He must have seen the writing on the wall. Mr. Holly probably thought that he was the first individual to 'expose' our Fraternity, but freemasonry has been criticized time and time again over a three hundred year period. In Coil's Masonic Encyclopedia are listed Thirty-

Nine Exposés, all of which have proven of no consequence, for Freemasonry seems to grow stronger and stronger after each exposé, and so it should this time.

The main reason for this article is not to plug our Southern Baptist Convention but to say that now is a good time and I might suggest a "*necessary*" one to *improve ourselves in Freemasonry*. It is possible to create better relations, not only with our Masonic Brothers but with the rest of the community, by learning or as the case may be with our old Brothers (In years of being a Mason, not in age). Re-learning to understand fully the real principles of Freemasonry and endeavoring to apply these principles to a fuller understanding of human relations.

What really, in your personal opinion, is *the purpose of Freemasonry*. Is it to have more socials, more fund raisers, sell more Masonic Jewelry in our Lodges? Certainly not! For primarily, the great purpose of Freemasonry is its teachings, its symbolism of the moral truth which lies at the foundation of our human society. To build a *Temple of Character*, by the use of our symbolic tools and implements and to live up to the tenets that we profess, Brotherly Love, Morality, and Relief and in learning these principles, it is much better, by far, that a few fundamental facts and ideas be thoroughly mastered and demonstrated in our daily walks of life and conduct.

We, like our operative brethren, should continue to be builders. We should always be ready to discharge public and social responsibilities and as individuals, use our influence for the good of our communities. Remember that whatever good Freemasonry may accomplish will be through the lives of its individual members. It has been said before but it is worth repeating "*Look not at a Brother's failure to live up to our high ideals: Look well to thyself*".

A GRAND LODGE CERTIFICATE

Prepared by R.W. Bro. W.E. McLeod Mizpah Lodge No. 572

As a Master Mason, you are entitled to receive from Grand Lodge a certificate that you have been regularly Initiated. Passed and Raised. I now present to you your certificate, and if you will examine it, I shall explain its symbolism.

At the top is a panel encircled by a floral border, in which the thistle, shamrock, and rose entwine the maple leaf. This recalls to our mind that England,

Scotland, and Ireland bequeathed to Canada not only the basis of our political institutions but also the blessings of our gentle Craft. The panel consists of several distinctive emblems. It is headed by the All-seeing Eye, en rays of brilliant light. This signifies that our lives are illuminated, and our actions are observed, by the beneficent Creator. Beneath this are the Royal Arms of the United Kingdom, surmounted by the Crown and flanked by the lion and the unicorn. They symbolize the loyalty to authority which must characterize every Mason.

Below this is the Great Seal of the province of Canada as it was used from 1841 to 1867, the period in which our Grand Lodge came into being. The Province was formed by the union of Upper Canada (or Ontario) and Lower Canada (or Quebec), and the seal alludes to both. In the centre, in an oval panel, are two classically robed maidens arm in arm, allegorical figures for Lower Canada and Upper Canada. At their sides, partly obscuring them, are two roundels or medallions. To the left is the Great Seal of Lower Canada (1793-1841). It is intended to be a stylized view of Quebec City, with a church on the hill, as seen from across the St. Lawrence River. In the foreground stands a freshly pruned oak tree, and in the river float two sailboats. (Quebec was of course the capital city of Lower Canada. The significance of the pruned tree is now obscure, but it was originally explained by a Latin motto: the province would be stronger and richer after Upper Canada, formerly a constituent part, had been pruned away). The right-hand medallion carries the Great Seal of Upper Canada (1792-1841), which was designed by our first Lieutenant-Governor, Lieutenant-Colonel (and Brother) John Graves Simcoe. It includes an anchor crossing a sword, with a feathered calumet or Indian peace pipe upright between them, all over two crossed cornucopias or horns of plenty; above them are the Royal Crown and the lower left corner of the old Union Jack, as it was before 1801 when the Cross of St. Patrick was added. The whole design points out to us that the colony, with its bounteous agricultural promise, was established by the British Naval and Military Forces, in conjunction with their Indian allies.

To the left of the Great Seal is a stylized view of what seems to be Hamilton, apparently from Burlington Beach, looking towards the Mountain. It was of course in Hamilton, on 10 October, 1855, that the sovereign Grand Lodge of Canada was formed, and the headquarters, the administrative offices, of the Grand Lodge have been situated in the city ever since. In the foreground of the scene, on the shore of the isthmus, is a beaver, the emblem of Canada ever since the early days of the fur-trade. To the right of the Great Seal is a scene that holds a threefold significance-Niagara Falls as viewed from the shore. This natural wonder is recognized all over the world as a landmark of Ontario; moreover, it was not too many miles from here

that Freemasonry was first implanted in our province, in 1780 or before. But even beyond that, it was in Niagara Falls, Canada West, on 19 July 1855, that a group of brethren resolved to call the meeting in Hamilton that resulted in independence.

This panel at the top serves to remind us of our heritage and our faith, and that our Grand Lodge antedates Confederation, and originally covered the whole Province of Canada. For that reason it was at first called simply the Grand Lodge of Canada. Not until after Confederation, when the independent Grand Lodge of Quebec had broken away-in fact not until 1887-were the words "in the Province of Ontario" added.

The emblems in the lower part of the certificate are all familiar to Masons. They derive from the form of certificate which has been issued by the United Grand Lodge of England ever since 1820. Most conspicuous are the three Great Pillars that support a Freemason's lodge. That on the left is Ionic, that on the right is Doric, and that in the centre is Corinthian. In masonry they are called Wisdom, Strength, and Beauty, and represent Solomon King of Israel, Hiram King of Tyre, and Hiram Abif. The pillars rest on square pedestals, adorned with the Three Movable Jewels. On the left is the Square, denoting the Master, on the right, the Level, denoting the Senior Warden; and in the centre is the Plumb-rule, denoting the Junior Warden.

These pedestals rest on the Black and White Mosaic Pavement of the lodge, which represents the Light and Darkness, the joys and sorrows, of our chequered existence on earth. The pavement is approached by three stairs of degrees. Towards the back of the Pavement are the Celestial and Terrestrial Globes, which point our Masonry Universal. Formerly they were a regular feature in the lodge-room, but they have fallen into disuse in this country, although they may still be found on the wardens' columns.

Leaning against the centre pedestal are the Three Great Lights: the open Volume of the Sacred Law, to rule and govern our Faith; the Square, to regulate our lives and actions; and the Compasses, to keep us within due bounds with all mankind. To the left foreground is the Rough Ashlar, a stone rude and unpolished as taken from the quarry. In order to shape it for the intended structure, the entered apprentice employs the Chisel and the Mason's Maul, which are shown reposing on it. To the right foreground is the Perfect Ashlar, the stone made ready by the hands of the Craftsmen. From its top protrudes a metal ring, part of a lifting device called a Lewis, which is another old Masonic symbol. In the centre foreground are the

twenty-four-inch gauge and the pencil, which are used by the Master to lay lines and draw designs on the Tracing Board.

Between the pillars, in the right hand space, is a printed text stating that the Brother named (that is, you) had been regularly Initiated, Passed, and Raised. A Latin version appears in the right-hand space. In former days Latin was the language of international diplomacy, and even if you went to a land where English was not spoken, men would still know from the Latin that you were a regularly made Mason. Latin had been used on English Craft certificates since about 1766. It was dropped in England in 1964, but we have retained it in Canada

The year of your Initiation is entered twice. It is given as A.D., that is Anno Domini, "in the year of our Lord", the form of dating in general use. Before that it is A.L., that is Anno Lucis, "in the year of Light". This is the Masonic Era, which is calculated by adding 4,000 to the Common Era. Traditionally, it alludes to the date of man's creation. It still serves to remind us that the origins of Freemasonry go back to time immemorial.

At the bottom, by way of authentication, the Grand Secretary has subscribed his name and affixed the seal of Grand lodge. You will find a full discussion of the seal and its symbolism on pages 150-153 of *Beyond the Pillars*. In brief, it indicates that our Grand lodge is the Canadian offshoot of the United Grand Lodge of England; that we revere the Great Architect of the Universe; that the Holy of Holies in Solomon's Temple is at the centre of our symbolism; and that we watch our ceremonies and listen to them but do not reveal them.

Your certificate is not yet complete, for it requires that you sign your name in the space provided in the margin. This space has Latin words *Ne Varietur*, which means "Not to be altered". If you find a certificate in which the signature has been altered you must treat the man who bears it as a Masonic impostor. You will now approach the Secretary's desk and append your signature to your certificate.

Acknowledgements: The general outline of the address and the discussion of the Masonic symbols are taken from the Appendix to the published *Emulation Ritual* as demonstrated in the *Emulation Lodge of Improvement*. For earlier forms of the certificate, see T.O. Haunch, "English Craft Certificates", *AQC* 82 (1969) 169-253. On the Great Seal of Canada, see Conrad Swan, *Canada: Symbols of Sovereignty* (Toronto, 1977), pages 105-112, 163-169; George W. Spragge, "The Great Seals and the Mail" for 25 September, and 9 October, 1976. The writer is grateful to the Grand Secretary's office, for providing copies of two letters written on the subject

by M.W. Bro. W.J. Dunlop, under dates of 27 October, 1948 and 20 May, 1950; and also to R.W. Bros. George A. Revell and James J., Talman for other information and suggestions.

W.E.M.

ALLEGORY

The Concise English Dictionary defines allegory as "a figurative discourse in which the principle subject is described by another subject resembling it in properties and circumstances" or "a narrative in which abstract ideas are personified". The word is of Greek origin and is formed of two words which mean "to speak" and other". In other words "to speak in another form".

Perhaps one of the best known allegorical pictures is that of "justice". I am sure too that you are all familiar with the allegorical representation of "Britannia".

We know that Masonry is a beautiful system of morality veiled in allegory, but as I have pointed out, allegory is not a brick wall through which one cannot see; it is not a steel safe which cannot be opened; it is a story wherein all the meanings are symbolized. Therefore, it logically follows that allegory, far from veiling masonry, actually reveals its truths and tenets to all who seek them. Mark you, brethren, I said 'seek them', they are not dumped in your lap on payment of your dues with the admonition "there you are, brother, you are a good Mason now".

The ancient Egyptians used allegory of symbolism in the teaching of all their mysteries to their neophytes. However, not all of those neophytes reached the higher degrees. While most achieved a certain level of proficiency, only a few were given the right or privilege to advance to the highest degrees and become High Priests. It was from those of the highest degrees or High Priests that the ancient Pharaohs chose their advisers.

The ancient Greeks also used allegory and symbolism and concealed their particular truths by means of numbers and geometrical figures. For instance, the figure '3' which we meet at every turn in the E.A. degree is an allegorical allusion to the Deity. The reason for this is that it signified completion. It signified the 3 dimensions: width, breadth, depth; it also signified the three primary colours, red, blue and yellow; in others words it signified the Trinity.

LAST NIGHT I KNELT WHERE HIRAM KNELT

This item reproduced from the March 1993 Occasional Bulletin of the Texas Lodge of Research.

On November 5, 1992, Brother Charles L. Roblee, Past Master (1991) of Silas H. Shepherd Lodge of Research No. 1843 F&AM of Wisconsin, wrote the following letter to Charles H. Ohrvall, Editor of Missouri Lodge of Research.

"Just received the 1992 issue of The Missouri Lodge of Research entitled Masonic Literary Harvest II in the morning mail.

In 1987, I finally found time to take the degrees at our Scottish Rite Valley of Milwaukee. One of my classmates presented each of us with his card on the back of which was printed the poem "Last Night I Knelt Where Hiram Knelt". He, too, credited it to the famous author, anonymous. It is a beautiful poem. When we are closing our Lodge and the Senior Deacon is "securing the Three Great Lights", someone reads it aloud to the Lodge. It is a beautiful and impressive part of the closing.

On page 5 of your Masonic Literary Harvest I discovered the poem. That brings me to what I discovered earlier this year. I was going through my library--sorting, filing and discarding. Low and behold, in my June 1945 copy of the Panama Grand Lodge publication, La Fraternidad, I found the same poem, 'Last Night I Knelt Where Hiram Knelt' on page 28. And there was the credit to the author, Pat M. Armstrong, Member, Texas Lodge No. 8, San Antonio, Texas in The Texas Grand Lodge Magazine.

I acquired the June 1945 issue of La Fraternidad while I was stationed in the Canal Zone in the Navy during World War II. I was exalted to the Royal Arch Degree in the Cristobal Chapter # 2, Cristobal, Canal Zone on 8/13/1945.

Hope this will help you keep your records and credits correct. Just think, it took nearly 50 years to uncover this information again and then it was by 'accidental research'.

Brother Roblee's letter eventually found its way to your editor of The Occasional Bulletin who is also Librarian for the Dallas Scottish Rite, whose curiosity was aroused and began searching back issues of The Texas Grand Lodge Magazine. Sure enough, it turned up on page 142 of Volume XV, No. 4 March 1945, word for word as published in – Masonic Literary Harvest II – only the punctuation had been altered over the years.

The poem is repeated here using the original punctuation.

Last night I knelt where Hiram knelt
And took an obligation
Today I'm closer to my God,
And I'm a Master Mason
"Tho' heretofore my fellowmen
Seemed each one like the other,
Today I search each one apart,
I'm looking for my "Brother"
And, as I feel his friendly grip
It fills my heart with pride,
I know that while I'm on the square
That he is on my side.
His footsteps on my errand go
If I should such require.
His prayers will plead in my behalf
If I should so desire.
My words are safe within his breast
As though within my own.
His hand forever at my back
To help me safely Home.
Good counsel whispers in my ear
And warns of any danger.
By square and compass, Brother Now!
Who once would call me stranger.
I might have lived a moral life
And risen to distraction
Without my brother's helping hand
And fellowship of Masons.
But God who knows how hard it is
To resist life's temptations
Knows why I knelt where Hiram knelt

And took that obligation.

PAT M. ARMSTROING, MEMBER TEXAS LODGE NO. 8, SAN ANTONIO, TEXAS

Brother Patrick M. Armstrong affiliated with Texas Lodge No. 8, San Antonio in 1945. The June issue of The Texas Grand Lodge Magazine carried a tribute to the late Franklin Delano Roosevelt, by Bro. Armstrong, and the November 1945 issue included a poem titled, "The Master Grip".

QUESTIONS & ANSWERS

The Questions & Answers section includes excerpts from a list of over 100 Q. & A. compiled and prepared by R.W. Bro. Frank J. Bruce. These questions were collected by the Education Committee of Toronto District # 3 from 1976 through 1978. The answers were supplied by W. Bro. Harry Carr (past secretary and editor of Quatuor Coronati Lodge # 2076 U.K.). Our thanks to R.W. Bro. Frank Bruce for making them available for use in the NEWSLETTER.

Question 69: What is the significance of supporting the L...A... in the angle of a Square during the Obligation of a F.C.?

Answer 69: Primarily, I suggest that this detail is a direct reminder of something which he learns *later* in the ceremony, i.e. the incident in Exodus, XVII, verses 11 and 12, when Moses prayed fervently to the Almighty that Joshua might complete the overthrow of His enemies. If you read that chapter, you will read how Moses became weary and his arms were supported until the Amalekites were defeated.

There is another aspect of the question that may appeal to you, especially if your ritual on this point is the same as ours in England. Early in the ceremony the W.M. asks, "How does he hope to obtain those privileges?" and the I.G. answers, "By the help of God, the assistance of the Sq., and the benefit of the...". From this point onwards, the Sq. plays a considerable part in the ceremony, e.g.

1. At the moment of admission
2. Posture during the OB.

3. Posture during the entrusting with Sns. etc. (There are five squares in this section alone.)
4. At the S.E. corner
5. In the explanation of the Tools.

As to the symbolism, I know nothing better than the simple words we use in the ritual: The Sq. teaches us to regulate our lives and actions according to Masonic line and rule... The Sq. teaches morality...

Question 70(a) While this could pertain to all degrees, what evidence is there on the use of five steps in approaching the altar in the F.C. degree?

(b) Why does the Candidate approach counter-clockwise?

(c) Why does his approach begin in such a peculiar manner?

Answer: 70 (a): Our earliest ritual documents, 1696-c. 1714, show that the Craft's first interest in numbers began with the problem of how many brethren would form 'a true and perfect lodge'. There was also some attention to 'three lights', but no mention of steps at all.

In 1724 and c. 1725, we have the first two texts that mention steps in a question:

Q. How many Steps belong to a Right Mason?

A. Three.

This apparently referred to the E.A., but no details are given and there is no mention of steps for any other grade.

In 1730 we have two documents that show definitely that three steps were taken by the Candidate in approaching the Master prior to the Obligation. Still no steps relating to the F.C. or M.M.

In 1742 there are three steps for the E.A. in *France* and another text, '*Le Catechisme des Francs-Macons*' in 1744, which contained a fascinating description of the third degree, showed three zig-zag steps for the approach in the third degree; there are still no details for the second.

In 1760 and 1762, two English texts give only three steps to the F.C., i.e. the first single-step of an E.A., plus two more for the F.C. These brief notes can

only be taken as examples of the numerous variations that must have existed throughout the 18th, century, when there was no official rule or standard procedure on the subject of the steps.

The first official step towards standardization was taken by the premier Grand Lodge (the 'Moderns') in October 1809, when 'The Special Lodge of Promulgation' was warranted. Its duty was to instruct the Craft 'in all such matters and forms as may be necessary to be known to them...' as a preliminary to the hoped-for union with the rival Grand Lodge, the 'Ancients'.

The minutes of this short-lived Lodge began on 21 November 1809 and ended on 5 March 1811, and they are necessarily curt. On 12 January 1810.

'The modes of advancing to the Master in the first and second degrees...according to the Ancient Forms...were finally resolved on' (AQC 23, p. 40).

Although this minute is certainly the final Promulgation record on the subject of the steps, there is one later minute which indicates the possibility of subsequent modifications. On 28 December 1810, after a rehearsal of the work in the three degrees, the R.W.M. announced to the brethren that '...he should afterwards summon them to go thro' the (three) degrees...taking only the parts which would be understood better by action than expectation'.

Allowing that three steps for the E.A. degree had been established practice for about 120 years, we may feel sure that *action* implied rehearsal of the physical movements in the 2° and 3°, including the steps.

The Union of the Grand Lodges took place on 27 December 1813. On 7 December 1813, The Lodge of Reconciliation was warranted 'to promulgate and enjoin the pure and unsullied system, that perfect reconciliation, unity of obligation, law, working, language and dress may be happily restored to the English Craft'. They worked for some 2 ½ years, and on 20 May 1816 'the Ceremonies and Practices recommended by the Lodge of Reconciliation were exhibited and explained; and, alterations on two points in the Third Degree, having been resolved upon, the several Ceremonies, & c., recommended were approved and confirmed'. No details were given of the 'two points', but this was the final confirmation of the Craft ceremonies and procedures as we have them today.

Answer 70(b): Why does the Candidate approach counter-clockwise? Probably because the most popular illustrations of the second degree Tracing Board since 1800, and those in use today, show the 'winding stairs' rising from left to right, i.e. counter-clockwise. The candidate is supposed to be copying our ancient brethren who, according to Masonic legend, ascended the winding stairs to approach the 'middle chamber'.

But the difficulty with this question is that the Bible does *not* indicate whether the winding stair rose clockwise or anti-clockwise and nobody knows the answer. The most popular T.B.s show counter-clockwise, but that does not make them correct. There are indeed a number of designs going back to c. 1800, which have the stairs rising clockwise.

On this point I will only add that in the U.S.A. and other jurisdictions that have their Altar in the middle of the floor, many of the workings begin the Candidate's approach at a point in front of the S.W., and his approach to the Altar is clockwise, a half-circle.

Answer 70(c): Why do the steps towards the altar begin in such a peculiar manner? Frankly, I do not know. It may have arisen because the authorities, in 1809-1816, had approved that starting posture for some practical reason, e.g. the L.F. Pointing in the right direction, but I must admit that the posture seems downright absurd to me. I must add, however, that the most popular English 'workings' prescribe that position although their Lectures, which are supposed to explain all such procedures, make no mention of this point. Personally, I see it as one of those trivial aberrations which have survived in our ritual and which add nothing at all to the beauty of the ceremonies or to their teachings.

Question 71: What would happen if a Candidate for the second degree 'through a defect in aspiration' was unable to pronounce a certain word properly?

Answer 71: Nothing would happen, except that he would be taught the correct pronunciation and would doubtless try his best to use that when required. Fortunately, the dangers that existed when that word was used as a test no longer arise today.

Incidentally, many of the Hebrew names and words in Craft rituals (and in other degrees) have become sadly debased through loss of the correct

pronunciations. We habitually follow the forms taught in our Lodge, simply because we do not know any better.

BOOK REVIEWS

These titles are referenced here from book reviews prepared by our own Grand Historian R. W. Bro. Wallace McLeod for use by our Grand Lodge Library.

Thousands of books have been written on the subject of Masonry. Any selection is bound to cause disagreement. This list includes many publications which were prepared in Canada, as well as some other works which are regarded as standard. Readers should remember that books published outside the borders of Ontario need not reflect in detail the views and practices of our Grand Lodge. Brock University has one of the largest library collections of Masonic books and material in North America. Our own Grand Lodge Library has a wealth of printed material available for your use and reference.

ILLUSTRATIONS OF MASONRY

by William Preston

William Preston (1742-1818), more than any man, was responsible for the nature of our modern speculative ritual. Up to his time, what ritual there was, consisted of rather shallow questions and answers used at convivial meetings. Preston was convinced that something more thoughtful and challenging was needed. His book, *Illustrations of Masonry*, first published in 1772, is the second most important book ever published. The word *Illustrations* in the title is used in the old sense of "Enlightenments". It is, if you like, "More Light on Masonry". Many of the phrases and paragraphs now used in our Work appear for the first time. Pages 151-156 are supposed to be taken from an old document on Masonry written by King Henry VI (1422-1461) and discovered by the philosopher John Locke in 1696; we know now that it is really a later forgery (see A.O.C. vol.15, 1937, page 128). Certainly a book worth looking at.

THE HISTORY OF FREEMASONRY IN CANADA

by John Ross Robertson

John Ross Robertson was Grand Master of our Grand Lodge from 1890 to 1892. He was a newspaper- man and philanthropist, and a tireless collector of information. His Masonic history looks rather forbidding, with its two heavy brown volumes; and at that, it only covers the period up to 1858. It contains hundreds of early documents, warrants, certificates, minute books, plans and drawings of long gone lodge rooms-things which would otherwise have been lost. It is a treasury of details for the evolution of the Craft in Canada. But it is not suitable for the beginner; it is hard to read, because the vast wealth of material is not well digested or organized. And yet, if you persevere, you will find many fascinating tales and vignettes of the early years.

THE POCKET HISTORY OF FREEMASONRY

by Fred L. Pick and G. Norman Knight

For a concise, reliable, well written history of Masonry, this book is hard to beat; and every successive revision brings new improvements. It covers the whole span, from the earliest records right up to the present; and it prefers authentic facts to fanciful legends. Inevitably England receives the heaviest emphasis because the Craft evolved there; but there are chapters on Ireland, Scotland, the U.S.A. and the rest of the world, including even a brief section on Canada. The concordant orders too receive their due.

It is a small book, only about four inches by seven inches, but has a wealth of fascinating detail. The short sections make for easy reading. Altogether a fine book, which should be in every Mason's home.

FIRST GRAND MASTER

by Bruce M. Pearce

William Mercer Wilson (1813-1875) was a great Mason. You will find a brief appreciation of his Masonic activities on page 44 of *Beyond the Pillars*. But in other respects as well he lived a full and useful life, as lawyer, newspaper editor, public servant, municipal official, county judge, and colonel of militia. This convenient pocket-sized book draws all the details together. Its author subsequently served as D.D.G.M. of Wilson District in 1940-41. He included many

exciting stories: how William Mercer Wilson helped set fire to the rebel steamer Caroline above Niagara Falls in 1837; how, during the height of the American Civil War, he journeyed through the battle lines to the southern states; how, as a County Sheriff, he broke up a heavy-weight championship boxing match near Port Dover. And in passing, the biography gives some notion of the breadth, scope, goodness, and grandeur of the man. A must for every Mason in Ontario.

THE MEDIEVAL MASON

by Douglas Knoop and G. P. Jones

Professor Knoop taught economics at the University of Sheffield. He was also a Freemason, and a distinguished Masonic historian. His colleague, Dr. Jones, though not a Mason, collaborated with him in a number of fundamental articles and books dealing with the operative craft. This book is the standard work on the life of our operative forebearers during the period from 1200 to 1700: their organization, their administration, the conditions of their employment, and much else. It is not easy reading. If you are interested in the nature of the lodge in the 1300s, or wages, or tools, or apprentices, or any of the other details, this is the book. Nothing but the facts, man.

MASONIC SPEECH MAKING

by J. Walter Hobbs

Here are some hints about how to prepare and deliver a speech, whether it be in the lodge room or at the banquet table. Here also are 175 brief specimen addresses-welcomes, toasts, presentations, farewells, responses. Much of it concerned specifically with English institutions and practices; but there is still enough left to provide ideas for the aspiring speaker. Certainly worth looking at.

FREEMASONS GUIDE AND COMPENDIUM

by Bernard E. Jones

This is probably the best single book there is on English Masonry, and is well worth buying for your own reading and reference. The first chapter, a potted history of architecture, is tedious and superficial. If you persevere past it, or ignore it, you will find a wealth of information on the history, the ritual, the degrees, the lodge, the officers, the clothing, and many other matters. It is too rich to absorb at a

single reading, but is the sort of book you want to come back to again and again. It is pleasantly written, and its facts are dependable and up-to-date. The chief criticism, somewhat unfairly, is that the book is too heavy to hold comfortably in your hands for long.

DESIGNS UPON THE TRESTLEBOARD

by Arthur R. Herrman

Bro. Herrman was Past Master of a Lodge in New York City. He wrote this book to help guide future Masters in planning how to discharge the duties of their high and important office. Though the book is geared for American Masons, many of his ideas on stimulating attendance, administering the lodge, and setting the Craft to work might be worth trying here. It is specifically aimed at those who are, or who soon will be, Masters and Wardens.

WHAT MASONRY MEANS

by William E. Hammond

A small, unpretentious book, which will fit easily into your pocket. It has ten chapters, each one a meditation or sermon, with such titles as "The Supreme Architect", "Building Materials", and "The Eternal Temple". Bro. Hammond writes out of a town called Walker, Minnesota; but his material is universal in appeal, and not tied to time or place. If you are interested in Masonry as moral instruction, try this.

ONE HUNDRED AND ONE QUESTIONS ABOUT MASONRY

by Carl H. Claudy

How old is Masonry? Why is it Free? Why is there no solicitation? What is allegory? A cowan? A dispensation? Is the story of Hiram Abif true? These, and many others, are discussed in a pocket-sized "Masonic Digest". Useful for every brother to read.

LET THERE BE LIGHT

by Alphonse Cerza

There have been men who were opposed to Freemasonry from the very beginning. In this "Masonic Digest", W. Bro. Cerza traces the history of such movements, notes the arguments they have used against the Craft, and attempts to refute them. This book should be read by every brother.

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