

THE  
NEWSLETTER

OF THE COMMITTEE

ON  
MASONIC  
EDUCATION

SUMMER 1995 (4th Quarter) VOL. 15 NO. 2

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c/o Robert A. Barnett—Editor

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**Size of Articles:** Material submitted for The Newsletter should reflect consideration of both the physical size of the publication, and the readability of the piece. Our pages run 300-325 words per page, so a maximum of about 1200-1300 words is the limit. Articles can also be one-paragraph notes of interest, or any length in between. Longer articles of special merit should be printed in sections over several issues.

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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 this grand Jurisdiction. Because of the inter-est 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 to complete only one - or all four - you may take as many, or as few, of the programs as you wish and in the order your wish

Upon the completion of each program a certificate will be awarded, but to become a member of THE COLLEGE OF FREEMASONRY, you still must complete all four programs.

The cost for each program is \$20.00 payable in advance to:

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A supply of the new Application Forms has been for-warded to your District

Education Chairman. Be sure to contact him. Good Luck!

## **SURPRISED BY JOY**

*By: Walter M. Macdougall*

*Pro. Walter M. Macdougall is a member of Piscataquis Lodge #44 and also serves the Grand Lodge of Maine as Deputy Grand Master. Bro. Macdougall is a faculty member at the College of Education, University of Maine where he teaches philosophy*

*This STB is filled with inspiration and pride for all Freemasons. A wonderful story is told linking our ancient operative Masons to the Masons of today. It will paint a picture" of what our order is truly all about!*

*Editor, The Short Talk Bulletin - The Masonic Service Association of the United States.*

Freemasonry is about life. It is about living our lives with a special responsibility and with a certain joy.

Brother Johan Wolfgang Von Goethe wrote that:

The Mason's ways are  
A type of Existence,  
And his persistence  
Is as the days are  
Of men in this world.

Freemasonry was for Goethe a grand, earnest, solemn business. It was about making a Choice" which he says is both "brief and yet endless," a choice which is made be-fore "regarding eyes... in eternity's stillness." Goethe's words strike us where we live. It is difficult to be nonchalant about the living situation in which we find ourselves. We are bumped and shoved into an awareness that we have entered upon a perilous journey-both "we" individually and "we" as neighbours. We find ourselves dwelling upon upheavals and between crises. Brother Goethe was right. Life is a matter of making a choice which is brief yet endless-brief in terms of our little lives, endless in human significance. As all Freemasons must know, the choice of which Goethe speaks is between the Light and the Darkness.

Freemasonry is about life and about the all important choice of how a life shall be lived and spent. Freemasonry is serious business. It involves a special moral



responsibility to the well being of the whole community, but there is more. As our ritual puts it, our Masonic responsibilities are to be both our *duty* and our *happiness*. Above and beyond the sobering concerns of our Masonic practice, we find ourselves (to use C.S. Lewis's wonderful phrase) continually "surprised by joy!" Such experiences most often come not in exceptional, epiphanic events but rather amidst our daily and ordinary lives. In fact, it is in these moments when the commonplace and the usual are suddenly made extraordinary, when there is suddenly revealed new significance or new beauty, or when a new empathy between human beings smiles that we find our-selves surprised by joy.

Surprised by joy! Recently I had such an experience. Browsing in a book store, I came across David Macaulay's delightful book of sketches and commentary entitled: *Cathedral, the Story of its Construction*. As I turned the pages, there came one of those moments when concepts long in the making suddenly coalesce and meanings converge into a new wholeness. I was filled with a renewed awe at the enormity of the Medieval masons' endeavour and thrilled with their accomplishment. How did they dare such an impertinence against gravity? Who had the courage to work on the lashed pole standing more than one hundred feet above the ground? What faith gave heart-beat to this stupendous engineering and endurance? Above all there came a new realisation of the marvellous extent to which the older operative-practices still en-lighten our speculative endeavour.

Macaulay chronicles the construction of Chutreaux Cathedral, and his sketches give a vividness to the whole building operation.

Here for instance, built between the buttress piers and against the cathedral wall are depicted the lodges where masons laboured, planned, and looked after the needs of their brethren. In these lodges those freshly come to the labour were entered as apprentices, those who had learned their trade were made fellows of the craft, and the masters of the work drew details upon the trestle boards.

There must have been problems aplenty in those operative lodges-even grimness and despair. For eighty-six years these masons, generation on generation, laboured through exciting moments and discouraging times. For five years there was no work at all until more money could be raised. The original master of the work grew too old to oversee the operations. The master who took his place died of a fall from the vaulting scaffolding before the cathedral was dedicated. This is a story of human vision, sacrifice, tragedy and persistence.

One fact is dear, for those who laboured in these lodges built against the cathedral walls there could have been no doubt as to their mission nor the importance of their work. The building itself defined their worth in their own eyes and in the opinion of the community. To them there must have come moments of joy when what had been so carefully crafted was hoisted into place and became part of the growing fabric when stone by stone the magnificent nave enclosed the space where a multitude of people would look up and feel themselves in the very presence of God.

Surprised by joy! I was having one of those Masonic moments when one feels a sense of the builder's vision and of purpose shared. How closely the parallels run between ourselves and those builders of the cathedrals! From their lodges built against the cathedral walls, they came forth trained in the use of their working tools, united in a network of belonging and shared purpose, and directed by a vision made manifest in well laid plans. They would build a high place of worship which let in the Light. In a harmony of parts, in soaring lines which lifted the spirit heavenward, and with a moral geometry they consummated their choice, their purpose and their reason for being. Nor was this their vision alone. It found reality in the need of the community-the felt need to create a glorious place of connection between the dimness of this world and God's resplendent kingdom.

As our operative brethren came forth from their lodges trained as builders, so we emerge from our speculative lodges inspired and fitted for our task. We come forth as heirs to a rich tapestry of allegory-that ancient under-standing in which we have received our preparation. What an essential, inspired and ongoing training it is -filled with the human adventure and a reverence for that which lies beyond our understanding and within the glory of God. Under a constellation of symbols, we have seen a vision and acquired an art. It was Thomas Carlyle who put the essential nature of such an education in these words: "It is through symbols that man unconsciously and consciously lives, works and has his being." Through such a language of symbols we have received our skills as builders, and it is through this vital medium that we continue to learn. How often here in our lodges of preparation we are surprised by joy when a new under-standing, like a burst of creative light, emerges from the ritual.

Surprised by Joy! I was talking to a group of new ma-sons about our working tools and endeavouring to explain how the square enlightens moral truths. In an effort to illustrate its operative use, I was applying the square, which I had in my hand, to the edges of the-podium. In that instant, it was I who was illuminated. I saw anew how the square tests a right relationship between two different surfaces and how the moral square of virtue speaks to a right relationship between individuals. There in a moment's

understanding was expressed that "I and Thou" relationship which is so desperately needed in our world. There was an expression of what we as Freemasons have a responsibility to build- and build not only between individuals but between every segment within our communities if there is to be a cohesion and an environment of "just relationships". Here from this ancient symbol of the Craft spoke the urgency of just correspondences - the relationships of the square, the right angle, between level of equality and the plumb of rectitude. Thus does our Masonic education continually enlarge our understanding, give us our calling and in joy send us out to labour.

Today our Masonic lodges stand close by the human community in which we are to build. Moreover, as in the case of our ancient brethren, the urgency of our calling arises not only in our Masonic vision but in the needs of our communities. In this response to needs both challenging and sobering also lies our happiness.

In the installation charge to the master of a Masonic lodge there is the following perennial and wise admonition which needs to be kept fresh in our minds:

*Charge the brethren to practice outside of the lodge those virtues they have learned in it; so that when a man is said to be a member of it, the world may know that he is one to whom the burdened heart may pour out its sorrows, to whom distress may prefer its suit, whose arm is straightened justice and whose heart is expanded by benevolence.*

This is our calling to be responders to the needs of our communities in the midst of darkening times, to be choosers of the Light, "restorers of peace to troubled minds" forgers of partnerships in purpose, practitioners of a moral geometry whose axioms are tried and unfailing principles, to be demanders of equality based upon the dignity of all human beings, to be voices with instructive tongues, seekers with attentive ears, searchers after wisdom, and believers in the possibility of a better world.

With such responsibilities and vision, we Freemasons come forth from our symbolic lodges. And in the morning of a new century, we shall find our strength and our prosperity-our reason for being. We shall find all these things in the consummation of our building. Goethe was right. Freemasonry is a grand, earnest, solemn business, but as he also knew, our happiness lies in our response to the serious duties of Freemasonry. For that eternal Light does run through all that we do and shall experience in the name of brotherly love, relief and truth, and over and over again and most often when we least expect it, we shall be surprised by joy!

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## **THE ENDURING MYSTERY OF ROSSLYN CHAPEL**

*Dr. S. Brent Morris. 33°*

*Book Reviews Editor for the Scottish Rite Journal*

One of the enduring themes in Masonic Ritual is the influence of the Knights Templar. The idea first appeared in the celebrated 1737 Oration of the Chevalier Ramsay, which referred only to "our ancestors, the Crusaders," and not to the Templars. (Ramsay's oration and a biography can be found in volume 1 of *Heredom*, the transactions of the Scottish Rite Research Society.) Knighthood legends can be found in the York Rite, the Ancient and Accepted Scottish Rite, the Rectified Scottish Rite, and the Swedish Rite.

The late John Robinson, 33□, Masonic researcher and author, created much of the current interest in the Templars and the Craft with his popular book, *Born in Blood*. Brother John and I talked and corresponded about his research, and ultimately agreed to disagree about the influence of the Templars on the Craft.

My personal opinion is that Templar themes represent gradual, rather modest accretions to our ceremonies by successive ritual writers and rewriters. We may never know the truth, but studying the evidence can be fascinating. Rosslyn Chapel near Edinburgh provides some intriguing data on the Templar issue, and there are new guidebooks to help those interested in this area of Masonic research. Rosslyn Chapel is perhaps best known for its Apprentice Pillar." This is a magnificently ornate pillar that stands with the "Master Mason's Pillar" and the "Journeyman's Pillar." According to the legend, which seems to be nearly as old as the chapel, the master mason left Rosslyn to study the design of other churches. While he was gone, an apprentice carved a fluted pillar with vines entwining it, "a perfect marvel of workmanship." When the master mason returned and saw the pillar, whose beauty exceeded his skill, he asked who had dared build it in his absence. He was told it was his own apprentice. In a fit of jealous rage the master mason struck the apprentice with a mallet and killed him on the spot. Carved within the chapel are the heads of the master mason and the

apprentice, the latter with a large gash on its forehead.

*An Illustrated Guide to Rosslyn Chapel*, by Tim Wallace-Murphy, 1993. Paper bound, 37 pp., \$12.00 (US) post-paid, Friends of Rosslyn, Rosslyn chapel, Roslin, Midlothian, Scotland EH25 9PU, telephone: 011 44 131 440 2159, fax 01144 131 4482948.

This is a guide book typical for any tourist site. It gives a brief history of Rosslyn Chapel and points out particularly interesting parts of the building. It is illustrated with seventeen photographs and five drawings. The exuberant splendour of the stone carvings are shown in fine detail.

Mr. Wallace-Murphy seems convinced that there is deep, hidden symbolism in the design of the chapel, and he offers several fascinating interpretations of its details. He has, however, followed the judicious methods of modern historians in recognising what is confirmed fact and what is speculation. He says, "in time rational and measured scholarship will establish the true import of much that Rosslyn was originally and deliberately designed to communicate to future generations by its distinguished founder."

*The Guilds, the Masons, and the Rosy Cross*, by Robert Brydon, 1994. Paperbound, 20 pp., \$11.00 (US) postpaid, Friends of Rosslyn. To order, see above book review.

This is a small, well-illustrated pamphlet describing interesting tidbits about Rosslyn Chapel, Freemasons, and other orders historically connected to the chapel. It does not pretend to be a scholarly work, but it quite successfully intrigues the reader with engaging stories that have grown up around the chapel.

The book's sections are two to three paragraphs each. A brief listing of a few of them gives a good idea of the contents: The Mystery Traditions; The Operative Craft Guilds; The Ancient Rosicrucians; The Rosslyn Manuscripts; Establishment of the Grand Lodge of Scotland, 1736; The Scottish Knights Templar, 1790; The Royal Order of Scotland, and What is a Freemason?

*Born in blood*, by John Robinson, 1989. Hard bound, 376 pp. Available from Grand Lodge of Canada, 363 King St., W. Hamilton, Ont. \$27.00 Canadian.

This is the best exposition of the Templar theory—the book that reignited interest in the Templar Masonic connection. It is a "good read" and has been extremely popular both inside and outside the Craft. III. Robinson's interest in Masonry began

with his study of the Peasants' Revolt in England. He concluded that Knights Templar, who had been "underground" for centuries, guided the revolution.

Later they transmuted themselves into the fraternity of Freemasons. If you want to explore the idea that our modern Fraternity descended from the Knights Templar, then there is no better book.

*Dungeon Fire and Sword*, by John Robinson, 1991. Hard bound, 500 pp. Available from Grand Lodge of Canada, 363 King St. W., Hamilton, Ont. \$32.00.

Brother Robinson gathered much more information on the Templars than he could include in *Born in Blood* (one-half of which was devoted to Freemasonry).

It is a wonderful companion volume to *Born in Blood*, even though it has nothing central to the Templar Masonic connection. The reader is left with a great sense of the origins, organisation, activities, and betrayal of the famous Knightly order. This is the book to read if you want nearly all of the historical details available on the Templars:

## **ROSSLYN CHAPEL A SYMPHONY IN STONE**

*Judith A. Fiskien, Curator*

*All who visit Rosslyn Chapel are entranced by the vision of the operative craft masons who built it to the greater glory of God.*

Rosslyn Chapel near Edinburg is one of the outstanding architectural treasures in Scotland's remarkable heritage and has been a focus of attention for the Masonic Craft since its foundation. Also, for five centuries, it has exerted its mystical appeal to generations of pilgrims and visitors of every denomination, religion, and form of belief, including the Royal Family of Great Britain, Thupton Tushi, the Dalai Lama's archivist, and Cardinal Gray of the Roman Catholic Church. For this small, half-hidden building is a temple to the divine gift of spirituality and mysticism that both pervades and transcends all of the great religions. All who visit here are entranced by the love, veneration, and vision so clearly recorded by the operative craft who built it "*Ad Majorem Dei Gloriam*" For the Greater Glory of God.

We must remember, however, that the people for whom the artwork was

designed would have found them-selves more deeply moved, far more involved in the symbolism of the art, than any modern observer, however learned.

Carvings, paintings, even the *very* buildings *them*-selves, were designed for men and women for *whom* symbolism was *the* breath of a spiritual life. Therefore, we should approach this building in the full and certain knowledge *that it* speaks a language of *its* own, a language only fully known *to* the initiated, and experienced at *the* core of one's being. *Yet the* initiated are not *the* only people *to* be moved by these mystical carvings; they jolt every visitor abruptly back to an earlier age when mankind possessed an entirely different level of consciousness, culture, and belief.

The feelings that arose within me, while standing for the first time in Rosslyn Chapel, had more in common with a spiritual experience than with any formal, intellectual conclusion I ever could have reached. At a profound level, I felt there is more to the innate quality of this quiet place than a craftsman's competence or even architectural skill. Something spiritual, yet almost tangible, is built into *the* very stone itself. Despite the exuberance and profusion of the carvings, nothing stands out to the detriment of the whole. There is an essential unity within which nothing is thrust forward as ostentatiously artistic. The harmony that, paradoxically, arises from the diversity of the carvings, is far greater than the sum of its many parts can possibly suggest. A deep, mystical, symbolic synergy shows its presence here.

The individual carvings are serene and masterly. Apart from the occasional touch of humour, they seem non-personal and more like works of nature. Their coral-like growths seemingly arise as the manifestations of the inner spiritual harmony of mystical men, petrified forever as symphonies in stone.

This spiritual harmony is the tangible result of two simple factors combining. First, there is an all-pervasive, inspired plan which originates in the conception of one supremely spiritually gifted man who exerted total and complete control over design, quality, and construction. Second, a comparatively rapid rate of building left no time for outside influences to contaminate the original conception.

The chapel was founded in 1446 by Sir William St. Clair, third Earl of Orkney and Lord of Rosslyn. Earl William has been described as "one of the Illuminati:", "a man of exceptional talents much given to policy, such as buildings of Castles, Palaces and Churches:" a patron of craft Masonry throughout Europe, and as an adept of the highest degree. He was appointed Grand Master of Ma-sons in Scotland in 1441.

At first sight the chapel appears small, squat, and some-what grotesque with its strange curved roof flanked by lines of buttresses. The original plans were for a cruciform collegiate church, a majestic cathedral which would have outshone all the other churches in Scotland. Within it, thirteen pillars form an arcade of twelve pointed arches around three sides of the building, and three pillars divide the main aisle from the retro-choir. The roof is a stone vault, powdered in diaper work with a profusion of stars, lilies, and roses—symbolism which may contain the keys to the spiritual intent of its founder.

The insight and spiritual vision of the Earl William may tend to explain the importance of many of the carvings for the worldwide brotherhood of Freemasons, for symbolic representations of the links between the Sinclairs and the Templars abound. The legend of the "Murdered Apprentice" is well known, and the carvings of the Apprentice, his Widowed Mother, and the Master Mason on the clerestory walls have important significance to members of both the Templar and the Masonic Orders, as do the three distinctly different and superb pillars that separate the main body of the chapel from the retro-choir, namely the Apprentice Pillar, the Mason's Pillar, and the Journeyman's Pillar between them. In these three magnificent pillars, we have, enshrined in stone, symbolism of the spiritual insight and wisdom with which this chapel is so abundantly blessed.

Restoration and certain additions were made in the last century, thanks to the generosity of Victorian Freemasons. Superb stained-glass windows in the clerestory display symbolism that demonstrates both the history and continuity of spiritual insight among the Masonic Brotherhood while also depicting various saints of importance to the Craft, namely Saints Michael, George, Longinus, and Mauritius.

The experience of this place of beauty demonstrates how inadequate language is when faced with such magnificence. Rosslyn Chapel may now be half-forgotten, but it is still of significance to Freemasons worldwide. Rosslyn Chapel must not be left mouldering and half-forgotten any longer. The Chapel must be preserved for future generations. "The Friends of Rosslyn" is a charity dedicated to this worthy end. Further information and literature is available from: Rosslyn Chapel, Roslin, Midlothian EH25 9PU, Scotland



## **THE NEED FOR SPIRITUAL BUILDING**

*Arthur Levitt 33rd June 1970*

*Reprinted from The Northern Light (Aug. 1995)*

Through mind and spirit man reaches out to seek the true meaning of what we know as life. As our minds are enriched, as we are lifted up in spirit, so do we come nearer to a perception of eternal truth.

I know it is not intellectually fashionable in certain circles these days to speak of the spirit, the soul, or even of things divine. The analyst can't measure them, the biologist can't dissect them, the lawyer can't put them on the witness stand. But some things will remain forever beyond the scope of the computer, the laboratory, or the rules of evidence.

But our spiritual enrichment must not be hidden within us.

Faith is for action, not solely for comfort. Intellect and faith should be part of every walk of life.

It reminds me of something written by LeCompte du Nouy in *Human Destiny*. The author was a French scientist who grew out of a purposeless life, out of an original agnosticism, into productive scholarship and a deep faith.

In the dosing chapters of his book, he dealt with the ancient problem of distinguishing good from evil, not in a moral sense but in an absolute sense. He came to the conclusion that good is that which contributes to the continual progress of man upward from an animal existence, evil is that which pulls man backward from his progress, from his true destiny.

Then he added something, which I oversimplify, but it was to the effect that evil is also that which stands still and does nothing.

It is indeed evil to stand still and do nothing, for we waste the precious gift of mind, of spirit, of freedom. We become parasites on those who care enough to serve humanity; we are not builders in the tradition of our ancient craft, but despoilers.

If we are really to have both persuasion and purpose, we must never stand still for long.

## **EDITOR'S NOTE (MASONRY AND RELIGION)**

Questions about Masonry and religion have been with us since the craft came into being. Anti-masonic zealots often insist that 'true' religion and Freemasonry are incompatible. Many masons whose masonic experience has been entirely with their own lodge, and in their own communities, have no answers for these criticisms. The zealots are quick to state that such regular members have no knowledge of all of the so called 'sinister' secrets, that these secrets are known to their leaders alone. The regular master mason, who has only his own local masonic experience to recall, has no answers for these clever attacks.

There have been excellent responses made on behalf of freemasonry, by experienced religious leaders who have offered answers to help all masons understand the very special relationship between a Freemason, his faith, his religion, and the craft. Some have appeared in previous issues of THE NEWSLETTER. Most masons understand that any candidate for membership must have a strong faith conviction, not just to be eligible to join, but to be able to enjoy the special spirit and fellowship of like-minded men. The following article was written by an experienced Presbyterian clergyman while serving in the office of Grand Prior of the Ancient & Accepted Scottish Rite of Freemasonry of Canada. He offered it as a 'talk' at a regular meeting of Heritage Lodge (of Research) #730 G.R.C. In it, he takes us by the hand and leads us through his well considered thoughts about the important roles that the craft, faith and religion all play in our lives.

We are fortunate that such religious leaders as R.W. Bro. Wm Fairley have embraced the craft and are willing to dedicate their time and valuable insights to help reveal the distinctions and wonderful opportunities offered by our faith and our gentle craft.

## **MASONRY AND RELIGION**

By R. W. Bro. William Fairley  
Grand Prior A. & A. S. R. of Freemasonry of Canada .

*\* Transcript of a 'talk' presented by R. UC Bro. Fairley at the Regular Meeting of The Heritage lodge No. 730 AF 6 AM G.R. C, held in the Masonic Lodge Building, Lindsay, Ontario, march 24, 1990.*

In January of this year I received the fall copy of "The Canadian Mason" within which is an article concerning "Masonry and Religion" This article does both Religion and Masonry a great disservice and I am very disappointed. It underlines an ongoing problem that is fought within the religious community and masonry. The article is one of confrontation rather than dialogue and mutual understanding. I think it is extremely important that there be dialogue rather than challenging one another, or accusing one another, with counter challenges coming from one side or the other.

There is a distinction, as we know, between Religion and Masonry that can only be defined within the individual human mind. A man's religion is what he does with his own solitude; the silence of his own mind.

At the beginning of the proceedings this afternoon Worshipful sir, when acting on behalf of the Chaplain, you shared with us the fact that there was a practice in The Heritage Lodge, that from the altar you have a meditation and prayer. The Grand Master or his advisors apparently asked you to discontinue this practice. I am trying to read their minds, but I assume the decision was based upon the fact, that such a practice has too much of a religious connotation. If this was their reasoning, they are quite entitled to make such a ruling. However, what they would never think of doing, what they must never try to do of course is, give an order to the effect that while we are sitting in these seats, we dare not in the silence of our own minds and heart offer a prayer to the Deity. So there it is Master. While listening to the beautiful presentation of the meditation today, neither the Grand Lodge nor any other worldly authority can say to any individual, you dare not pray silently in your own seat; therefore do not be hurt or disappointed, we are not a religious organization, we are a fraternity.

Now Worshipful Sir, I want to share some other thoughts. I am not claiming to say anything new, but how I understand Masonry. I hope and pray there is something, in some part of what I have to say, that is meaningful to others.

My sources of information are: The Volume of the Sacred Law; Our Ritual; and two Theological Books. These books are written by eminent German scholars during the Nazi era. One has the title "Creation and Fall": a Theological Interpretation of Genesis 1 to 3 by Dietrich Bonhoeffer; he was a German Theologian who remained in Germany throughout the Nazi regime; was imprisoned during the war, and put to death by the Nazi just a few weeks before the liberation of Germany. He stood firmly by his convictions concerning the power of God in relation to mankind.

Another book from which I gained some of the things I wish to share with you was also written by a German Theologian, Paul Tillich. He was one of the most prominent theologians of the 20th century. He left Germany during the early thirties, taught in Princeton Theological College in the United States, and wrote many books. The book I have particularly in mind is "Morality and Beyond"

First the volume of the Sacred Law. Everyone of us are agreed, what is going on in our mind, the regalia that adorns our body; anything we see on the ceiling, walls or floor; if it is not in harmony with, or reflects the light from the Volume of the Sacred Law, it should not be in the Lodge room. Whether it is our thinking, our dress, the adornments of our lodge, or the proceedings themselves, all must be disciplined by the Volume of the Sacred Law.

I am well aware of the fact that there are certain things that I may say that touch a sensitive part of an individual's personal convictions, either concerning Masonry or their religious beliefs. I am claiming the prayer uttered by the Worshipful Master on behalf of us all, is guiding my thoughts as I share those things that are in my mind and heart this afternoon. That the work commenced in order will be conducted in peace, and I am confident we will close in harmony.

I would like to share with you what I believe is one of the most dramatic aspects of our ritual. It has to do with our installation and is of the utmost importance. Almost everyone of us has attended a board of Installed Masters. If you have not had this privilege, I am not giving away secrets concerning the vision of the Prophet Amos. The prophet was warned by God the people would be punished with a plague of locusts, which would devour all growth during the spring. This would mean absolutely no food by harvest, so Amos prayed the Lord would prevent the locust plague. In response God said He would send fire instead of locusts, a fire that would destroy all things on the surface and so intense, dry up even the subterranean waters. Again Amos pleaded with God who responded, not with locusts or a fire, but a Plumb-Line.

What is a plumb-line in comparison to locusts or fire as a means of judgement? The wealthy and the powerful may endure the locusts and fire until the following spring, or the year after that, but the vast majority would die. Under the Plumb-Line, which is the Law of God, no one who was free and living under the promises of God would escape judgement. The Angel of death passed by the Hebrews when they were slaves in Egypt, now they had the laws of Moses, the history of the Patriarchs, the teaching of the Prophets, so there was no excuse. The newly Installed master is reminded from the West, and all present can hear, the Law of God will not pass by us any more.

What is the Law of God to us? According to the Book of Deuteronomy "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, with all thy soul, and with all thy mind". According to the book of Leviticus "Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself". We all know those quotations from the Old Testament were combined by Jesus of Nazareth as containing all the law and prophets. Think of the obligations and sealing with your lips, did the words and deeds violate your understanding of the above sacred law? We claim of course it does not.

The Sacred Law is beyond the written word. It is the Law of Love of God, placed in the mind and written on the heart. All mankind, regardless of colour, their creed, or background, are created by love and the Creator has made us in the image of Himself Under God we share with one another brotherly love.

This love is experienced in the midst of three great mysteries, The Beginning, that of Evil, and the End. Through our ritual and in our lodges, we try to deal with these mysteries in brotherly love, guided by the truth and light from Holy Scripture. We claim Masonry is the most perfect, moral, human institution, that ever existed. Men just like us composed the ritual, as they understood God in their time, generation, and circumstances. They wrestled with the great mysteries of life, with the law of God written in their hearts. They acknowledged the first great Light of Masonry is the Volume of the Sacred Law.

Note carefully, not the Volume of the Moral Law, but the Volume of the Sacred Law. The moral is written in words, that are subject to the Sacred Law of Love written on the heart. The law to love the Lord thy God with all thy mind, with all thy heart, with all thy soul, and thy neighbour as thyself. The law of love cannot be defined in terms of words. Every situation in life is distinct in itself as it involves the mystery of evil.

Nowhere does the volume of the Sacred Law explain the mystery of evil and the mystery of what is good. Consider Job and his friends. When Job was sitting on the garbage dump scraping his sores and his friends came to console him, they kept insisting he must be guilty of evil. We know of course reading behind it, that the forces of evil were allowed to tempt him. Job, out of his commitment to his trust in what is good said concerning God "Through he slay me, yet will I trust in him. . ." This is living with trust in a good God despite any evidence to the contrary. In his interpretation of Genesis 1 of 3 Dietrich Bonhoeffer writes concerning "In the beginning God..." "The beginning can only be spoken of by those who are in the middle and are anxious about the beginning and end..."

We cannot know the beginning and we do not know the end, therefore we mortals are living in the anxious middle. In the anxious middle between the Beginning and the End we live by faith knowing both good and evil.

We know of the good because the history of mankind on this planet with the beautiful and wonderful things that have been achieved in the arts and the sciences of which we stress in our ritual. Of the beautiful and wonderful attainments of the mind of man over a great variety of circumstances down through the ages.

We also know of the evil of man. Year after year, century after century, evil is expressed, says Bonhoeffer, by desire for power. Man wanted to penetrate or grasp the mystery of the beginning to be his own god. He wanted absolute control over his own being, so he reached out and tried to grasp it.

It is the desire for power in the human mind; power over self, the family, community, fraternity, church, state, in the field of politics, religion, industry, you name it. Any organisation where there is a power that is seen as greater than submission to principles, gives cause for concern. Who amongst us dare say, only the practice of our moral fundamental principles is my goal within the craft? The motive to become a Grand Lodge Officer, is a sense of power greater than a desire to serve my fellow mortals? Each individual is left to his own sense of good and evil to know if it is his ambition to elevate himself above his fellows, or accept the office in order that he may humbly serve both his God and his fellow man.

No one else can judge but the individual himself in the middle between the beginning and the end and his knowledge of good and evil; the mystery of how each individual lives out his life in the anxious middle. We remember the dramatic moment at the altar in the lodge when it is declare - in the beginning God -. This is a theological

statement, it is a religious statement, it is a statement of faith in God from whom we receive the moral law.

Paul Tillich in his book "Morality and Beyond" reminds us that the human condition, the human as a person is made up of Morality, Culture and Religion. No matter which continent he lives on, however advanced or primitive from our point of view, his personality ex-presses morality, culture and religion.

Each one of us are products of our culture however you define it in terms of the family into which we are born, in terms of poverty or wealth, in terms of countless other things. There are those of us at the present time in Canada who are greatly exercised by the manner in which our culture is changing. You are well aware there are different interpretations on how the culture of Canada should unfold. We are also products of our morality. There are those who want a written moral answer for everything. Paul Tillich says there is a love that transcends all moral demands. When we love and respect self, when we love The One who created the person, then together we are part of the expression of the love of the Creator, then we have the standard upon which our morality will develop. This love will find expression in our religious convictions, so that our religion is expressed through our morality within the culture in which we live.

Now I wish to turn our attention to the mystery of the end.

This is a subject that is sensitive and causes a great deal of the tension between organized religion, and I am thinking specifically of Christianity, because the vast majority of us are identified with it, with all due respects for our Jewish brethren and those of other faiths. Most of us by culture and moral standards, were born and raised within the Christian Church. Every denomination of the Church is concerned with the end. Unless you believe in the life, death and resurrection of Jesus of Nazareth, then you are lost when life comes to an end, is the teaching of the Church, therefore salvation is given through faith in Jesus.

Masonry, distinct from religion, does not promise salvation, but masonry also faces the end. The Senior Warden, as I reminded you a few minutes ago concerning The Board of Installed Masters, recites from the writings of Amos about the final judgement. The Senior Warden is situated where by the authority of the Worshipful Master he closes the lodge at the end of the day.

The climax in masonry is the end as exemplified in the legend of Hiram. We

portray his end by his representative being raised, not by salvation from religious sense, but on the five points of fellowship. Each point takes into account the mystery of us living in the anxious middle, not really knowing the beginning or the end except through faith in the Most High who is in the beginning and the end. We live in this anxious middle with each individual personality knowing good and evil, a product of his culture, moral values and religion.

As you give your hand to a brother, this implies there are those to whom you would not give your hand as greeting a brother. When you promise foot to foot to form a column of mutual support, this indicates there must be evil forces that require we give one another support. When we refer to the position of our knees, the concern is the trials and difficulties of life with its temptations, with the prayerful hope we are enabled to overcome any evil or selfishness. We promise our breast will be a safe place for another's lawful secrets, indicating there are contending forces of good and evil. We find it necessary to put our hand on a brother's back in defence of those evil forces that would destroy his personality.

We are raised not to salvation, as that is the work of religion, but we are raised in order that brother to brother we share the anxious middle. In our anxiety we are not alone, under the all seeing eye of God, who is the Beginning, while we are in the anxious middle, individually and as a group until the end.

Whether the group is the family, the nation, the fraternity, the church, or whatever, all is under God who understands their anxiety. He shares in their conflict between good and evil and realizes they are a product of their culture, moral upbringing and religion. He oversees not as a judge or spy looking for faults but a God of love, who knows the complexities of the human mind and heart.

Masonry in this anxious middle should be in dialogue not conflict with the Christian Church. We should be seen as assisting one another, but never claiming masonry provides the means of salvation, contrary to the manner in which certain parts of our ritual are interpreted, especially the working tools in the Fellow Craft degree. As you listen to that lecture with Christianity central in your mind, especially the Gospel of Christ, interpret those tools in the light of His teaching.

Coming back to the Volume of the Sacred Law and this time to the writings of the Prophet Micah, he was asked "Wherewith shall I come before the Lord...? to which Micah replied " . . .and what doth the Lord require of thee, but to do justly, to love mercy and to walk humbly with thy God" The Prophet had pointed out, the Lord did



not need the sacrifices of calves, fruit, corn or infants. Sounds beautiful, but everyone must acknowledge, extremely difficult to live.

To do justly, whether it is in terms of our political philosophy, personal convictions on how the laws of the country should be formulated and enforced, are complex issues that are vexing our country at this particular moment. To do justly, whether resident in British Columbia, North West Territory, Newfoundland, or anywhere else in Canada is no easy task. This is especially true in our attitude to South Africa, China, Russia and where systems are falling apart in Europe politically and economically.

To love mercy is easy when we want others to be merciful to us, but how difficult to extend to others while coping with our anxieties over good and evil. In certain masonic bodies in the legend of Hiram, Solomon was not merciful to those responsible for the death of the Master. If we were a religion, we would have tried to reform or convert the Ruffians, show them the true way from a Christian point of view at the foot of the cross, confess and you are forgiven. Masonry looks at the reality of life in Solomon's day, when confession could still mean death, not mercy.

Now we come to the great challenge, to walk humbly with your God. I believe those who formulated our ritual in the culture and environment of 18th Century England, during the struggle between those who said you had to be a Christian in order to be a mason, and others claiming masonry should be open to all men, they realized masonry could only survive if each man is free to walk humbly with God, as he understands Him. Each man is free to learn within his environment, culture, moral standards and religious convictions.

We are each well aware everything of a Christian connotation was not removed from our craft. John The Baptist and John The Apostle are revered by those who hold their annual installation on the 24th of June or the 27th of December. From a Christian standpoint John declared "In the beginning was the Word, and Word was with God, and the Word was God. The same was in the beginning with God. All things were made by Him and without Him was not anything made that was made. In Him was life, and the life was the light of men" Christians believe Jesus was "That true Light which lighteth every man that cometh into the world" we who are Christians believe we are not superior or better than our fellow mortals, be he Jew, Moslem or Sikh, or any other religion.

We believe under God that in His name we seek to bring the light of His Love to

every situation whatever the cost in terms of suffering or otherwise. Not telling others they are lost, but trying to live in obedience to the Divine Law. All of us within the Church and as a mason say to God, be merciful to me a sinner.

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### **INFORMAL DISCUSSION (ON MASONRY AND RELIGION)**

**R.W. Bro. C.E. Drew** - this is a little departure from our normal format and R.W. Bro. Fairley indicated that possibly there may be some questions to him that you may want to approach at this time, instead of our normal reviews that we would have on a paper. Are there or is there any brother who would like to ask any question of Bro. Fairley?

**R.W. Bro. Jack Pos** - since there appears to be some hesitant perhaps my question may encourage others. We in the anxious middle, who do not know the beginning nor the end, would like to speculate a little on the end. That is, a bit of philosophy on immortality. Therefore, I would ask the question. . Where do we go when we die? From writings and paintings, we perceive a glorious ascension through white cumulus clouds and beautiful music from heavenly instruments; but where in the Bible do we find anything that tells or speaks of man's reception by 'St. Peter' at the pearly gates amid the sounds of 'Gabriel's horn'? if there is nothing in the Holy Book, then what is there to look forward to after death?

**R.W. Bro. Fairley** - Well of course Jack knows, as well as the rest of us do, that the spirit shall return unto God who gave it according to Ecclesiastes. The question falls, in terms of geographical location, and there is no geographical location from a Christian point of view. We go into perfect love. Those of us who are committed to the Christian faith, and I made a personal commitment when I was 18 or 19 years of age, worship a Person, not a moral principle. In the Armed Forces, in industry, and in the ministry, I have met all kinds of people, in every conceivable situation, and I am still convinced, to go into perfect love, which I cannot explain, but accept in faith. The imagination of the artist is their conception, arising from writings out of their culture, morality and

religious convictions, set in the times and century in which they lived.

This is their concept of that which is beautiful. The pearly gates, the streets paved with gold, is in contrast to the poverty of the people who had nothing at all. There were those who had mental images of running water, of pure water, while living in a desert, or they had to go miles before they got water. Whatever is in contrast to the poverty or poor conditions in which they lived was Paradise. To mention Paradise is to express that which is beautiful, where the mind is free from the tension caused through knowing good and evil, is living in a state of perfect love. It is not a geographical vision, it is a state of being in relation to the Creator. From a Christian point of view, perfect love is a gift through faith in God's Son.

**R. W. Bro. Drew** - What a marvellous answer, I promise you that this was not rehearsed. Does any other brother have a question?

**R W. Bro. John Boersma** - R. W. Bro. Fairley, I too am sometimes disturbed and I have a question: is masonry a vehicle to make a good man better? I think the answer is Yes. I think I detect here a distinction between improving himself on a physical plane. I firmly believe that our Order, as Bro. William Mercer Wilson said when he was M. W. the Grand Master. He referred to the final charge. "The purpose of Masonry is the cultivation and improvement of the human mind" and I think that makes a good man better. I think of a mason improving and cultivating his mind. I agree it is only morality that sits behind it, and I agree that from a moral sense, he could very well be compared to the Pharisee and so on. In the last instance we owe it to ourselves, and to our youth, and to the people outside of our lives, to say, the cultivation and improvement of the human mind is our purpose and goal.

**R. W. Bro. Fairley** - I think we would all agree that to improve the human mind is our purpose and goal, but there is a spiritual dimension that cultivates this, and that is what I am stressing. Yes, of course we try to make good men better, but we must define our terms on what we mean by good. Scripture states that there is no one good except God. Each of us are under the tension between good and evil and no matter what we think or say or do, we are constantly dependent on a spiritual force behind us. Our ultimate destiny is not to be perfect in the human condition; our ultimate destiny is to enter into the perfect love of God. I am not in any way trying to put down the desire to improve the human mind in any area of endeavour, whether it be in the field of medicine, the arts, or any other way. It is an acknowledgement that the source of our goodness is not in man himself or human philosophy. We have the Volume of the Sacred Law open, this is to acknowledge that the truths that are inculcated in that Book are the source

that enables us to be good. Masonry is a human institution, but we draw on spiritual values in order to inspire our human institution.

William Fairley

## **QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS**

The following Questions and Answers are excerpts from Summons' of Quatuor Coronati Lodge #2076 U.K.

### **DARKNESS VISIBLE**

**QUESTION:** What is origin of the phrase 'darkness visible'?

**ANSWER:** it appears in Milton's Paradise Lost (Bk. 1, 1.63):

A dungeon horrible on all sides round  
As one great furnace flam'd, yet from those flames  
No light, but rather darkness visible  
Serv' only to discover sights of woe. . .

This great work was begun in 1658 when Milton was already blind, and the sombre gloom of these lines may well be contrasted with the many beautiful passages in which the poet was able to conjure up his visions of light, in words which seem to acquire a greater strength and majesty because of the perpetual darkness in which he lived.

The same phrase, 'darkness visible' was used, far less effectively, by Alexander Pope in the Donciad (Bk. iv, 1, 3) and by Gilbert White, in his Natural History of Selborne (Letter xxvi).

### **THE PRIEST WHO ASSISTED AT THE DEDICATION OF THE TEMPLE?**

**QUESTION:** Why did the High Priest entrust the dedication of King Solomon's Temple to his Assistant instead of doing it himself

**ANSWER:** There is a dreadful confusion in this question, largely caused by some of the compilers of our ritual who were never content to leave well enough alone.

Determined to dot all the i's and cross all the t's, whenever they came to a problem they could not solve they invented - with disastrous results.:

First, let it be clear that, according to the Bible neither the High Priest nor 'his Assistant' played any part in the dedication of the Temple and, indeed, they are not mentioned at all in that context. Solomon presided alone; he spoke and he prayed. (I Kings, viii, and 11 Chron., vi and vii).

The pillar Jachin, appears in I Kings, vii, 21 and II Chron., iii, and it was named, according to custom in Bible lands, with an allusive or commemorative name which means 'He [God] will establish'. Neither the pillar nor its name had anything to do with Jachin, the wrongly styled 'Assistant High Priest: That name appears at the head of the 21st division of Priests, among the twenty-four divisions listed in I Chron, xxiv. It must be emphasized, however, that no Priest is named in the accounts of the dedication of the Temple, either in Kings or Chronicles.

Having established the facts of the Bible story, we may now turn to the offending phrases in the ritual, where, at the relevant point in the S.W.'s examination of the Candidate, we are told that the pillar, Jachin, was: so named after Jachin, a priest who assisted at its [the Temple's] dedication.

There are numerous versions of this statement, all in the same vein. Some rituals say 'who officiated'; some call him the 'Assistant High Priest' and every one of these attempts to fill in the details of the story simply adds to the confusion!

To summarize:

- (a) The two pillars were completed and named before the dedication of the Temple and each of the names was designed to symbolize or express Solomon's gratitude to The Almighty. Neither of them was named after a Priest!
- (b) Jachin certainly did not officiate at the dedication. If he assisted at all (and he was certainly not mentioned in that connection) he assisted only by his presence, in the same way as guests are deemed to 'assist'- by their presence alone - at a wedding.
- (c) The Masonic use of the pillar name belongs strictly to the pillar alone. The introduction of the 'priest who officiated' is an error arising from the excessive zeal of the compilers of the ritual.

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