



The Lodgeroom International Magazine

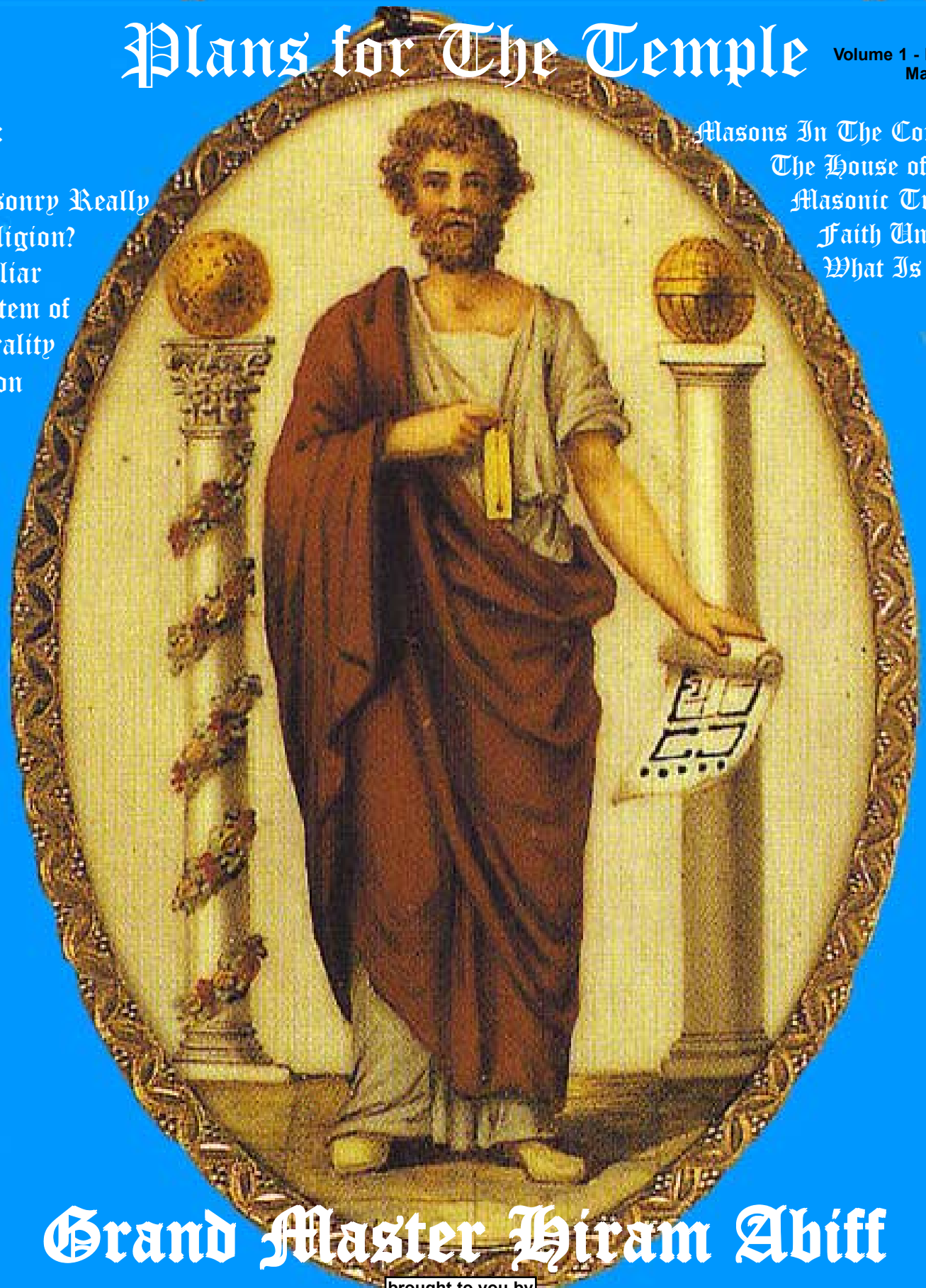
Plans for The Temple

Volume 1 - Issue 5
May 2006

Articles:

Is Masonry Really
a Religion?
A Peculiar
System of
Morality
A Mason

Masons In The Comicbooks
The House of History
Masonic Truthiness
Faith Unto Death
What Is Charity?



Grand Master Hiram Abiff

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Between The Pillars An Editorial What is Charity?



By R. Theron Dunn

This seems a simple question at first glance, it is giving of yourself. But, does charity end there, or truly, does charity even START there?

I want to start with a dictionary definition from MerriamWebster.com:

- 1 : benevolent goodwill toward or love of humanity
- 2 a : generosity and helpfulness especially toward the needy or suffering; also : aid given to those in need b : an institution engaged in relief of the poor c : public provision for the relief of the needy
- 3 a : a gift for public benevolent purposes b : an institution (as a hospital) founded by such a gift
- 4 : lenient judgment of others

Definition number one pretty much sums Brotherly Love. And the lesson we are taught on the five points of fellowship.

A charitable man would never hesitate to go on foot and out of his way to aid and assist a distressed brother, and a charitable man would always remember his brothers when offering up his adorations. A charitable man would always keep the secrets of his brother as his own, crimes excluded, because no Charitable man would gossip about or betray the trust of his friend.

This is a lesson we are taught in part in the first degree, when we are taught to keep secrets, not to betray trusts, and to keep our own counsel. An honorable man keeps silent in all matters that are not his to divulge or share.

A thoughtful man will never say anything in private about anyone that he would not say to their face. Moreover, it is a signal definition of a man that he keeps silent when appropriate and speaks when appropriate.

It is charitable and honorable to hold one's tongue and to keep private matters which are given to us until and unless we are freed to discuss them. Charity requires us to give the best possible interpretation of a brother's action, to consider a brother innocent until time and evidence reveals otherwise. A man is innocent until proven guilty.

Charity requires us to be charitable to our fellow man, to make allowances for their failings and

challenges, to assist them, to extend a helping hand to help raise a fallen brother. And of course, charity calls for us to whisper good council in a brother's ear, gently admonishing him of his errors, and in a most friendly way to seek to bring about a reformation.

To relieve the distressed is of course, a fundamental definition of charity. Whether by giving money, goods, services or time, this form of charity is essential for an honorable upright man, for we never stand so tall as when we stoop to help our fellow human beings.

1 Corinthians 13:1

¹Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, and have not charity, I am become as sounding brass, or a tinkling cymbal. ²And though I have the gift of prophecy, and understand all mysteries, and all knowledge; and though I have all faith, so that I could remove mountains, and have not charity, I am nothing. ³And though I bestow all my goods to feed the poor, and though I give my body to be burned, and have not charity, it profiteth me nothing.

⁴Charity suffereth long, and is kind; charity envieth not; charity vaunteth not itself, is not puffed up, ⁵Doth not behave itself unseemly, seeketh not her own, is not easily provoked, thinketh no evil; ⁶Rejoiceth not in iniquity, but rejoiceth in the truth;

¹³And now abideth faith, hope, charity, these three; but the greatest of these is charity.

Masonry teaches us on three fundamental levels, as youths, learning to subdue our passions as we seek maturity, as adults, seeking to improve the mind that we might improve the spirity and draw closer to g-d, and in age, as spiritual men, our earthy, fundamental natures in control, our minds in comprehension of nature, science and law, and our spirits arranged and all three aspects of our beings in balance.

To be charitable, freely, is to act, in a very samll way, as g-d acts toward us. We are a part of nature and of the universe, as g-d is the nature and breath of the universe, so is g-d a part of, and we all a part of g-d. As children of g-d, it is incumbent upon us all to help the least of us, those in need, whatever that need may be, even if it is just a kind word.

Faith, hope and Charity, but the most important of these is charity.



New Feature: Ask A Brother

Starting in our April Issue, we will begin a new feature called "Ask A Brother". We ask you to email us with your masonic questions, tradition, ritual, tenets, teachings... in a word, anything related to masonry.

Wr. Gary Bond will then find an answer for your question (or make on up...) and we will publish this every month, or until everyone runs out of questions (as IF). So, please email us Wr. Bond at askabrother@lodgeroomuk.com with your questions.

We're making YOU a part of the process.

The Lodgeroom International Magazine

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Restoring The Temple

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The House of History: Part 2

century, who've had significant rolls in the formation of our great state and country have graced the portals of our historic temple.

During the War for Independence tended to put a strain on even the fraternity but not as it did others. There were many stories of brothers meeting in the heat of battle and sharing in good fellowship and brotherly love. However, I shall carry on with more in the next installment.

During the research for this series of articles I've found so many of my forbearers having been raised in Albany and one who I was surprised to find was Major General John Stark of Derryfield, New Hampshire, now Manchester, New Hampshire. He was raised January 9th, 1778 in Master's Lodge No. 2. This was while he and his troops wintered in Albany.

Due to the limits of space in this issue, this second article is of a shorter nature.

Editor's Note: It is hoped that you have enjoyed this installment regarding our Temple in Albany and will join us for the following issues. I should like to credit



By Br. Lansing V. Ten Eyck, III

The leader of the Craft in Albany was the "eminent physician, Dr. Samuel Stringer. A gentleman of some means, Dr. Stringer was most generous in assisting all enterprises of benefit to the community. He was a member and staunch supporter of St. Peter's Episcopal church and widely heralded for the many philanthropic enterprises in which he was involved. Dr. Stringer, almost single handedly, built the first lodge house in America and gave Albany Masonry its first home.

He owned a small piece of property on Maiden Lane; he purchased an adjoining lot from the city for 300 pounds and personally solicited his brothers for enough funds to erect a lodge house. This was Albany

Masonry's first gift campaign, which by today's standards was a mere pittance but, it was enough

Masonry's first gift campaign, which by today's standards was a mere pittance but, it was enough



to tax the resources of those hardy Dutch settlers to the limit. Dr. Stringer was successful and within two months the structure was complete.



May 12th of 1768 saw the first corner stone laid of America's first structure built for lodge purposes, owned by a lodge. Dr. Stringer was master of ceremonies and the Masons appeared in full regalia. Albany Masonry grew so rapidly that the fraternity did not use the building for long. It was to become a parish house of St. Peter's church and with certain additions was used until the present Masonic temple was erected in 1895."

So, we are thankful to Dr. Stringer for his generosity and belief in that fraternity he'd become affiliated with a couple years before and thought so much of it to see that those growing lodges had a permanent home.

In many publications it can be noted that many gentlemen of the era as well as up to this past

Various writers for their publishing's that have helped me compile this for you.

Ossian Lang's "History Of Freemasonry In The State of New York", copyrighted 1922 by Grand Lodge of New York, F. & A. M. -

Ossian Lang and Herbert T. Singer's "New York Freemasonry"

"(A Bicentennial History)" Copyrighted 1981 by The Grand Lodge of Free and Accepted Masons of the State of New York. Also, Stefan Bielinski,



Director of the "Colonial Albany Social History Project," for his short piece on Dr. Samuel Stringer. For without their valuable works this series could not be compiled.



Masonic Truthiness

By F. Roy Dean Schlipp

Fellow brothers in the Craft...

I address you all in the warmth and fellowship of the bonds of Freemasonry. There exists today a blight that threatens to blot out that ember of light that has been entrusted to our care since time immemorial.

Today's Grand Lodges are infested by ruffians, cowards, and those who would use our beloved fraternity for their own personal gain. Those of you in certain states in America know only too well the grumblings of your fellow brothers and the jerk-knee reaction that your Grand Lodges have displayed when met by questioning brethren.

There have been questionable dealings regarding real estate, dues, and monies paid

We cannot lead men when we have not removed our own blindfolds — we only drive them into more profound darkness!

and entrusted to those in power. Money has disappeared with little or no accountability. Brothers who have acted to resolve these issues and bring them to light have been threatened and coerced into ceasing and desisting; or have been removed altogether from the rolls of their home lodges. I have seen such evil since I've walked upon the Earth; but this is far more than the eye can see!

Men who have been free-born and meet all of the qualifications to be a Freemason have been shunned by many in the southern states for the sole reason that they are black. Many will say, "Why not join Prince Hall lodges?" I say, "Why should any man who meets all of the qualifications to be a mason, ever be turned away from our noble order?"

The fraternity of Blue Lodges is dying out! Each year tells a story of declining enrollment from the younger generation while the average age of the existing lodge constituency continues to climb. Many things divide us as humans on this planet; however, Masonry should not be one of them.

I hear those who would say that Masonry is a "Christian" organization; thus further alienating those that believe in a god... just not the Christian god. What of our Jewish brethren? What of those of different faiths? Do you not remember that it was our Masonic forebears that were persecuted by the Catholic and Protestant Churches for supposed heresies against the Faith?

If Masonry is an exclusively Christian organization; then let us simply attach ourselves to an appendent Christian group such as the Knights of Columbus or Promise-keepers. If all you care about doing is holding benefit banquets and functions for charity; then simply ally yourself to one

of these fine organizations. Charity is only part of the Masonic equation and our earliest Masonic brothers were definitely NOT Christian. This is a modern invention.

It is much more than a disaffected view of the modern generation that has caused a decline in enrollment. The younger generation seeks answers that they are not getting from society. They turn to us for leadership and guidance. What do we do? We give them more of the same! We bully them when they ask the hard questions. The dead end, "just because it is!" answer is the death-knell for Blue Masonry in America today.

We cannot lead men when we have not removed our own blindfolds! We only drive them into more profound darkness.

What will cure the blight upon our proud craft? I have a belief that the cure is to un-

burden ourselves of the yoke of shame that is ANY Grand Lodge officer that is found to be acting in a manner that is inconsistent with tried and tested Masonic law. If the affected Grand Lodge will not permit such action, then it is our right; nay... our duty to abolish such a Grand Lodge! Those that truly lead... lead by serving others!

Even now there are organizations that are com-

Continued on Page 13 - Truthiness

Masonic Humor

Atheist College Professor



A Marine was attending a college course between missions in Iraq and Afghanistan. His professor, an avowed atheist, shocked the class one day when he walked in, looked toward the ceiling, and said loudly, "God, if you are real, then I want you to knock me off this platform. I'll give you exactly 15 minutes."

The lecture room fell silent and the professor began his lecture. Ten minutes went by and the professor proclaimed, "Here I am God - still waiting."

It got down to the last minute when the Marine stood up, walked toward the professor and threw his best punch knocking him off the platform.

The Marine went back to his seat and sat down. The other students were shocked and stunned and sat there looking on in silence.

The professor came to, noticeably shaken, looked at the Marine and gasped, "What is the matter with you? Why did you do that?"

The Marine calmly replied, "God is busy today, so He sent me."

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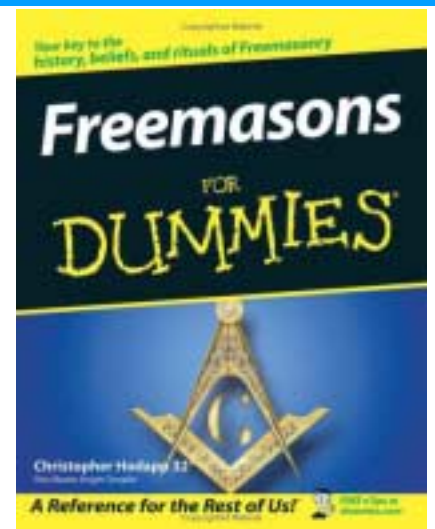
At last, a plain-English guide to Freemasonry - the secret society that's reportedly at the centre of Dan Brown's forthcoming novel The Solomon Key.

With Freemasonry featured prominently in The Da Vinci Code as well as the hit movie National Treasure, it's no wonder that more and more people are curious about this ancient organization, and interest is sure to intensify when Dan Brown's new blockbuster appears. This eye-opening guide demystifies Freemasonry, explaining the organization's origins in medieval Europe, its philosophy and purpose, and, of course, the elaborate rituals, secret signs, and cryptic symbols that set Freemasonry apart from other fraternal orders. The book profiles famous Freemasons throughout history including many of America's Founding Fathers, as well as prominent politicians and business leaders and offers a balanced assessment of the many controversies and conspiracy theories that continue to swirl around Freemasonry. For anyone who wants an evenhanded overview of Freemasonry's past, present, and future, this guide is the key.

Christopher Hodapp (Indianapolis, IN) is a Mason who has travelled extensively reporting on Masonic practices in Great Britain, France, and elsewhere. He is currently a Past Master and a Master of his Lodge. Hodapp edits the Lodge newsletter and has written for the Grand Lodge magazine, the Indiana Freemason.

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Lewis Masonic Order code: L97965



Freemasonry in the Comic Books and Funny Papers

Ok, so admit it, you read the funny papers or comic books. If not now, when you were a teenagers. Well, below is a SHORT series of examples of freemasonry as it has appeared in the comic books and funny papers in the past hundred years.

Fable of Venice



Created by a freemason, this comic book casts Freemasonry in the usual conspiratorial light. Several panels can be viewed on the Grand Orient of Italy's website, www.grandoriente.it/studi/Pratt.htm. Fable of Venice, Hugo Pratt. Rome : Lizard Editions, 1989.

Batman

According to Eclipse Path. Bible Prophecy Research, August 11, 1999 the first Shriner temple in New York was named Gotham Temple and "it is alleged that the stories of Batman and Robin from Gotham City are based upon the Gotham Shrine Temple's alleged war against evil-doers."

In fact, Mecca Temple—founded on 26 September 1872— was originally called New York Temple.

Bruce Wayne visits Rosslyn Chapel and the legend of the Apprentice's Pillar is told. Batman: Operation Scotland. Written by Alan Grant, drawn by Frank Quitely. DC/BTMSO 01: 1998. p. 27.



Neon Vincent's Massage Parlor

American social commentator, cartoonist and artist "Skip" Williamson (1949-) was art director of Playboy magazine in the 1970s and 1980s where he created "Playboy Funnies" featuring "Neon Vincent's Massage Parlor". This reference to the Shriners is more a reflection of their image in the early decades of the century than the reality of their charity-focused parades and conventions of the 1970s and 1980s. A casual, and incomplete, review of the work of Skip Williamson, and the cartoons appearing over the years in Playboy (1954 -), show no other references to Shriners or Freemasonry.



The League of Extraordinary Gentlemen

A series of, to date, three graphic novels in which Ms. Wilhelmina Murray, Captain Nemo, Dr Henry Jekyll, Allan Quatermain and the invisible man, Hawley Griffin are recruited by Campion Bond, acting as intermediary for a mysterious "M" who is later revealed to be the villain, Moriarity.

The offices of Her Majesty's Military Intelligence Division 5 are adorned with numerous square and compasses insignias, Bond wears a square and compasses watch fob, military personnel wear square and compasses over their rank insignia and many wear masonic-style aprons with an eye in a triangle marking.

Alan Moore, Kevin O'Neill, Ben Dimagmaliw, Bill Oakley. America's Best Comics. La Jolia, CA. Vol 1, No. 1-6, 1999-2000. Vol 2, parts 1 and 2, December 2002. Vol 2, parts 3 and 4, April 2003.

The story, complete with masonic references was made into a feature movie starring Sean Connery in 2003.



Reference is made to the Hiram Abif legend with the suggestion that Batman is a freemason. Batman: Conspiracy. written by Doug Moench, drawn by J. H. Williams. DC: 1988. Part 1, p. 23.



Get Fuzzy

A daily newspaper comic strip, Get Fuzzy depicts a selfish, violent cat named Bucky, a child-like dog named Satchel and their bemused owner, Rob. From April 14 to 19, 2003

Bucky (a one-fanged arrogant Siamese cat) explained that he belonged to a masonic lodge, announcing that he would kill anyone who tried to stop him from attending, and noting that a lot of cats belonged to his lodge: "They're orange."

Drawn and copyright by Darby Conley, Distributed by United Features Syndicate, Inc., USA.

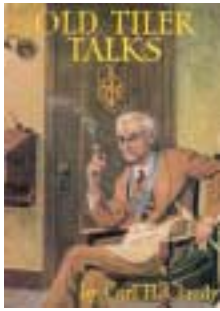
Superman

Was Superman a Freemason? Illustration reprinted from "Superman Adventures 34." Fighting Fate. August, 1999.

DC Comics New York, NY. Mark Millar,writer; Mike McAvennie, editor; Frank Berris, Asst. editor. p. 21.colour, 24 page plus gloss cover.



A Mason



By Carl Claudy

"I am much disappointed," announced the New Brother, sadly, sitting down beside the Old Tyler during refreshment.

"Disappointed in what?" asked the wielder of the sword.

"Why, Masonry in general, and this lodge in particular," answered the New Brother. "Neither are what I thought they were."

"That's too bad," sympathized the Old Tyler. "Tell me about it."

"My dad was a Mason. He told me how helpful Masonry was and how a lodge stood back of a fellow, and how one brother would go out of his way to help another, and if you were in trouble, a brother would help you out of it.

"I believed it. But I have been a member here now for some time, and I have seen none of that."

"Been in trouble, son?" asked the Old Tyler.

"I suppose everyone has some troubles."

"Have you been in any real trouble, in which you could have been aided by the lodge had the lodge known of it?"

"That isn't the question," answered the New Brother.

"No, I agree it isn't. So I will ask you the real question," said the Old Tyler, and his lips lost their smile. "How many brothers have you helped since you have been a member? How many shoulders have you slapped? How many men have you gone to and said," Jim, I know you are in trouble, count me in to help because we both belong to the same lodge?"

"Why, how you talk!" replied the New Brother. "I hardly know anyone in the lodge, yet. How would I know whether they were in trouble?"

"The same way they would know if you were in trouble, of course!" answered the Old Tyler. "I am a old man and I have had a lot of trouble, most of which never happened. You complain that Masonry is a failure because you have not personally experienced its helping hand. You admit you haven't needed it. And you also admit you haven't held it out.

"Brotherhood means the relation between two brothers, not the relation of one brother to another and no comeback. If you can't be a brother, how do you expect a man to be a brother to you? You ask me how you would know if a brother is in trouble. How does anyone know?"

"Here are some stories I heard last week. Brother A, of this lodge, lost his wife two weeks ago. It was in the papers. Two brothers of this lodge sent their wives to his house to look after his children until he could make arrangements for a nurse. Another brother of this lodge failed in business. Lodge action wasn't necessary, but two bankers and a business man went to the poor failure and staked him, and put him on his feet.

"A brother of this lodge has a boy who is wild. Last week the boy went joy riding with too much hooch in him and smashed up a car which didn't belong to him. The owner wanted to put the boy in jail, where he belonged, but a brother of this lodge took the responsibility on himself, sent the boy to a farm during good behavior, saved the father from a broken heart and maybe society from a criminal. The home of a brother of this lodge burned down last month. It wasn't insured. He had just paid for it. Ten brothers of this lodge financed his new house; he will pay a dollar a week for life, or something, but he had fraternal help. Three brothers in the lodge tonight are out of work, and with little money. Before they go away someone will see that they get a chance."

"But how do brothers know other brothers are in trouble? They don't get up in lodge and tell it!"

"How did you expect people were going to come and help you if you didn't let them know you needed help?" countered the Old Tyler.

"Why, I just thought maybe someone would have enough interest in me to know..."

"Have you had enough interest in your brethren to know when they were in trouble?"

"I...er...why..."

"You needn't answer. In every lodge are the 'gimme's' and the 'lemme's.' The 'gimme's' are those who want things done, and the 'lemme's' do them. In every lodge are the 'have's' and the 'haven'ts.' It's up to the 'have's' to share with the 'haven'ts.' I take it you are naturally a 'have.' You have money, clothes, a good position. You are not in need of help from your brother. But some brethren are in need of help from you. It may be a dollar, advice, a word to an influential friend, a loan, it may be some of the things I have told you about. If brotherhood is to mean what you hoped it won't be because you get it, but because you give it. A Masonic lodge should never be an organization from which a man expects to get something. If everyone was disappointed because no one did anything, it would be a failure. It isn't a failure because most real Masons look for the chance to do something for some brother who needs help."

"Some brethren do a lot for idiotic new brothers, just by talking to them!" responded the New Brother remorsefully. "Do you suppose you could slip a dollar to each of those three who haven't any and tell 'em you found it on the floor?"

"Could be," answered the Old Tyler.

"And please believe I don't think it's a failure and the only thing about it which is disappointing to me is myself."

"Could be," answered the Old Tyler.



The Religion Of Masonry



By Albert Gallatin Mackey, 33

Those that are opposed to Masonry have made the, to Masons, ridiculous assertion that Masonry is a religion, in the traditional understanding of the word, that is, an institution that offers a philosophical and actual means of addressing and interacting with the supreme being(s). With that in mind, I looked in the Encyclopedia of Freemasonry by Albert Mackey. Those opposed to Masonry are fond of quoting Albert Pike's Morals and Dogma, without reading it, as well as this volume, with the same lack of cogent, rational examination.

The following was found in The Encyclopedia of Freemasonry by Albert G. Mackey, 33° and Charles T. McClenachan, 33°, Vol II M-Z, Page 617 - 619, © 1924, Revised Edition by Edward L. Hawkins, 30° and William J. Hughan, 32°

There has been a needles expenditure of ingenuity and talent, by a large number of Masonic ora-

tors and essayists, in the endeavor to prove that Masonry is not a religion. This has undoubtedly arisen from a well-intended but erroneous view that has been taken of the connection between religion and Masonry, and from a fear that if the complete disseverance of the two was not made manifest, the opponents of Masonry would be enabled successfully to establish a theory which they have been fond of advancing, that the Masons were disposed to substitute the teachings of their Order for the truths of Christianity. Now I have never for a moment believed that any such unwarrantable assumption, as that Masonry is intended to be a substitute for Christianity, could ever obtain admission into any well-regulated mind, and, therefore, I am not disposed to yield, on the subject of the religious character of Masonry, quite so much as has been yielded by more timid brethren. On the contrary, I contend without any sort of hesitation, that Masonry is, in every sense of the word, except one, and that its least philosophical, an eminently religious insti-

Continued on Page 13 - Religion

A Peculiar System of Morality....



By Jeffrey J. Peace

Many modern Freemasons have come to the organization in search of certain deep mystical and spiritual truths. More often than not they find only a group of old men who have memorized

the Masonic ritual and know little about Masonry. Most of these new Masons simply leave and never return, but a few stick around and continue to search for the "lost secrets."

This is no small task indeed as the secrets lie hidden away in the remote past and most of the old Masons are upset when these "seekers" go digging around for them. Another obstacle faced by the seekers is the fact that the ritual itself has been corrupted over time by men who knew little or nothing about the intent of the founders of the fraternity. Starting with an incoherent set of rituals and symbols they begin their search only to be led down one tangent after another while realizing that none of them seem to be connected in any logical way.

The vital importance of these secrets to 21st century civilization cannot and should not be underestimated. They may ultimately prove to be the key to saving mankind from total extinction. This short talk is meant to shed a little "Light" on the darkness that has fallen like a veil around modern Masonry, and to help Freemasonry recover what it has lost over the centuries.

In Brotherly Love and Light,
Bro. Jeffrey J. Peace
Past Sovereign Grand Master of Light
Rose Cross of Gold
United Grand Lodge of America

"The least initial deviation from the truth is multiplied later a thousandfold."

Aristotle

One of the earliest known definitions of Speculative Freemasonry given to the newly made Mason is that "Freemasonry is a Peculiar System of Morality Veiled in Allegory and Illustrated by Symbols." The key words here are –

- Peculiar
- System
- Morality
- Veiled
- Allegory
- Illustrated
- Symbols

What is Morality? According to the Meriam-Webster dictionary Morality is:

- 1: A moral discourse, statement, or lesson b :

a literary or other imaginative work teaching a moral lesson;

- 2: A doctrine or system of moral conduct b plural : particular moral principles or rules of conduct
- 3: Conformity to ideals of right human conduct
- 4: Moral conduct : VIRTUE

What is Peculiar? Again, according to the Meriam-Webster dictionary Peculiar is:

- 1: Characteristic of only one person, group, or thing : DISTINCTIVE;
- 2: Different from the usual or normal: a : SPECIAL, PARTICULAR b : ODD, CURIOUS c : ECCENTRIC, QUEER

synonym see CHARACTERISTIC, STRANGE

As one begins to study Freemasonry they must keep in mind that the usage of language has changed since the founding of Speculative Freemasonry in 1717. I believe that a better and more accurate modern rendering of the statement should read like this:

Freemasonry is a unique system of morality hidden within allegories and illustrated through the use of symbols.

According to this early definition Freemasonry is a Unique, Different, Curious, Eccentric, Queer, Strange, Odd, Distinctive, Special System of Conduct, Principles, Rules of Conduct, and Virtue.

I was reading a speech the other day that was being prepared for a Masonic open-house where the public would be invited into the Lodge to learn about Freemasonry. In the speech Freemasonry was defined as "a system of morality veiled in allegory and illustrated by symbols." What happened to "Peculiar"?

A little further into the speech the author says, "The goal of Freemasonry is to take a good man, and by reinforcing those great moral lessons that he has learned from his parents, from his church, from life, and giving him a place and a means of acting on those lessons, make him into a better man, a better father, husband and citizen." What is so peculiar or unique about moral lessons learned from parents, church, etc.?

This gets right to the heart of the secrets of Freemasonry and why they were kept a secret. Common moral lessons are taught to school children, but Freemasonry was teaching a Peculiar System of Morality, a system altogether different from what would be considered common. Unfortunately, most modern Masons are never exposed to this Peculiar System of Morality because it has been removed from the rituals and teachings of Freemasonry. Surely you didn't become a Free-

mason to learn that it is wrong to lie, steal and murder, did you? Albert Pike, in chapter 20 of his monumental Masonic tome *Morals & Dogma* offers some insight into what a Freemason was truly meant to be.

The true Mason is a practical Philosopher, who, under religious emblems, in all ages adopted by wisdom, builds upon plans traced by nature and reason the moral edifice of knowledge.... Masonry and Philosophy, without being one and the same thing, have the same object, and purpose to themselves the same end, the worship of the Grand Architect of the Universe, acquaintance and familiarity with the wonders of nature, and the happiness of humanity attained by the constant practice of all the virtues.

Notice how Pike refers to "religious emblems" and not to religion(s). He goes on to say that a Mason "builds upon plans traced by nature and reason the moral edifice of knowledge." At no point does he suggest that Masonic philosophy is based on any particular religion, but instead points to nature and reason as the foundations of Masonic thought. When Pike published this in 1871 he was clearly concerned that the "secrets" were being lost or forgotten even then. He goes on to say -

As Grand Master of all Symbolic Lodges, it is your especial duty to aid in restoring Masonry to its primitive purity. You have become an instructor. Masonry long wondered in error. Instead of improving, it degenerated from its primitive simplicity, and retrograded toward a system, distorted by stupidity and ignorance, which, unable to construct a beautiful machine, made a complicated one. Less than two hundred years ago, its organization was simple, and altogether moral, its emblems, allegories, and ceremonies easy to be understood, and their purpose and object readily to be seen.

Apparently, this Peculiar System of Morality was so different from that commonly accepted at the time that it was necessary to Veil (hide) it in Allegory.

Veil:

Transitive senses : to cover, provide, obscure, or conceal with or as if with a veil

Allegory:

- 1: The expression by means of symbolic fictional figures and actions of truths or generalizations about human existence; also : an instance (as in a story or painting) of such expression.
- 2: A symbolic representation.

If you step back from the rituals for a moment and look closely you will see that they are actu-

Continued on Page 16 - Peculiar

Faithful Unto Death

A Tale of Anti-Masonry

By Robert Morris

It was in the year of light, 5789, the same year and month that witnessed the inauguration of George Washington as first President of this Republic, that Mr. Oliver Lanceroy was installed pastor of the church at Weeconnet. He was then a young man. He had just graduated at the well-known school, even then venerable for its age and character, Harvard University at Cambridge. Many anticipations were formed concerning him; for his boyish promise had been brilliant, and his career at college was with the foremost both for scholarship and good conduct.

Add to this the fact, that Washington himself acknowledged an interest in his success, having stood by the dying bed of his father wounded to death at Trenton, and at that solemn hour pledged his Masonic faith to exercise a supervisory care over the son. When, therefore, the lad arrived at sufficient age to enter the University, it was with a warm recommendatory letter from the General's own hand. And when, with the sand yet fresh on his diploma, he visited Weeconnet, preparatory to meeting of the vestry, it was with a second letter more than sustaining the praises of the first.

So it was not strange that the young minister, pious, learned and coming so well recommended, should have been unanimously called to the pastorate amidst the most confident expectations as to his future usefulness. Nor were any of those

hopes falsified.

While Mr. Lanceroy never was a popular idol (he had none of the qualifications of a demagogue) and was never run after as a clerical wild beast or a reverend monster, yet he always contrived to secure the attention of his hearers at home, and a welcomed place in the pulpits of those congregations abroad with whose pastors he exchanged. His pews were rarely vacant. His church membership regularly increased. He received his moderate stipend with punctuality and subsisted on it with frugal comfort.

In due season, he offered his hand to the daughter of one of his own parishioners, and was accepted. The union was in every respect a fortunate one, for he found womanly virtues as permanent, and love as sincere, as the heart of the fondest husband could desire. Sons and daughters were born to them. The stipend was increased from year to year to correspond with the increased demands upon it, and while there was but little hoarded up in the treasury at home there was never any real necessary of life in which they lacked.

There is but little in the life of a pastor wherein the superficial observer can find an interest. It seems but a routine of ministerial duty, arduous enough yet practicable, demanding the whole time, the whole attention; but it is a routine whose results, though they may appear scanty and insufficient to the unobserving, are in reality, among the very highest blessings of society. The marriage bond; the baptismal rite; the consolations of religion in hours of spiritual conviction, in

hours of earthly trial, and in hours of death; the settlement of disputes; the oversight of education; the calls of popular charity; — these and other charges press from day to day upon the pastor's attention, and in the well-ordering of these, lies the public weal.

Such, for thirty-seven years was the life of Rev. Oliver Lanceroy, in charge of the church at Weeconnet. Such is the life of hundreds who oversee the flock of Christ throughout our broadly-extended States. May their reward not be lost in the day of reckoning, when each craftsman shall receive his lawful wages.

The lapse of thirty-seven years, though imperceptible in the estimate of an eternity, is a large hiatus in the life of a mortal. It removes one generation into darkness and dust, and places another in their seats. The lapse of thirty-seven years brings down the history of Rev. Mr. Lanceroy — now by the favorable judgment of a neighboring Theological school. Doctor Lanceroy — to the year of 1826, year of light 5826, year of darkness 1; that period so rife with anti-Masonic stratagems and discoveries. It was the time when a large political party made the grand discovery that Freemasonry is an institution established in opposition to all laws human and divine! It was the period when the cunning sought to snatch away her richest jewel, secrecy, that they might expose her, unchaste and unbefriended, to the scorn and contempt of the world.

Too well did malice and detraction succeed, and
Continued on Page 14 - Faithful



While all Masons and non-Masons alike are welcome to visit us and frequent our forum, to be a member of the Masonic Pride group, one must not only be an active internet Mason, but also making a difference in their Lodge and Community, showing that they are proud to be a Freemason.

In April of 2006, we launched The Masonic Pride Project. The Masonic Pride Group is a small group of writers and speakers who's common goal it is to bring out the best in internet Masonry, for the common goal of moving the fraternity forward in the most positive way possible. We feel that there are several

The goal of masonicpride.org is very simple. We want to provide a home focusing on what makes us proud to be Freemasons, and serve as a portal to all of the wonderful resources that internet Freemasonry has to offer.

What we are is a group of Freemasons that love the Fraternity. We are comprised of writers, speakers, and Masons interested in the progressive growth of Freemasonry.

challenges in today's Masonry, and are ready to help tackle these big issues, but will simply not do it by attacking an individual brother or a specific Grand Lodge.

Simply put, the Masonic Pride group is interested in personal responsibility and accountability, and how we as individual Masons can impact the fraternity at the local level, impacting our communities and our families.

Our work will be complete with a monthly podcast and access to the most excellent Masonic publications available on the web today.

The reasoning behind this project is really very simple. There is much work to be done, and we want to send the message, and tackle these problems in a positive way. By doing it this way, we hope to build credibility. To be a part of The Masonic Pride Group, we can be visited on the web at www.masonicpride.org.

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Antimasonic Slander



By Galen Dean

I've written before about the anti-masonic attitudes and groups around the world; but, it really came to light the other day when I read a newspaper article from an Italian newspaper reporting on a infamous kidnapping that led to the death of the kidnapped infant.

The authorities had indicated that they had captured 3 of the 4 suspects and were continuing to search for the 4th known suspect, whom they specifically identified as a Master Mason.

There was no mention if the other three suspect in custody were Masons or not, nor was there any mention if any of the suspects were members of any other organization, such as the Knights of Columbus, the Elks Lodge or even the neighborhood gardening club. Ok, so maybe they don't have KC or Elks in Italy, but I'm sure there are other fraternities and social clubs that a person might belong to.

The paper was very specific to identify the 4th suspect as a Master Mason. I can only assume that it was an intentional reference to help discredit the Masons.

In recent years the Vatican had softened their stance towards the Masons; not to the point of allowing Catholics to join, but to the point of not actively slandering us. This has changed with the new Pope who is adamant that the Masons are an evil empire; a cult, Satan's lodge.

I can't help but think that either the paper is trying to curry favor with the Vatican by smearing Masons, or that the Vatican has put out the word that we are again "persona non grata".

Although, here in the United States we have some fundamentalist religions and hate groups that malign us, I can't help but feel sorry for our Masonic Brothers in Italy. In a predominately Catholic country, the seat of Catholicism worldwide, being a Mason can be very difficult on our Brothers and their families.

This brings home the point that we need to educate the public on what Masons are about. We don't need to go out and blow our own horns or stand on the street corner extolling the virtues of Masonry. We need a more visible presence in the communities in a way that associates us with good works, high morals and sterling values.

Masons are thinking men. Let's put our minds

together and come up with ideas to make ourselves more visible in the communities and yet stay within the guidelines of the Grand Lodge. I would like to hear your ideas.

By the Plumb,
Galen Dean, Junior Warden
Fellowship Masonic Lodge #668
Yucaipa, Ca 92399
galenrd@aol.com



The Masonic Trinomial



By Giovanni Lombardo, PM
Lemmi # 400 lodge
Grande Oriente d'Italia

Italian Freemasonry adopted the French 'Trinomial', *Liberté, Egalité, Fraternité*.

Unfortunately, it has always been politically interpreted where in my opinion, it should rather be interpreted in an esoteric way.

I will start with *Liberté*, Liberty. Liberty is not the ability to do everything man wants, but rather an interior liberty. This word stems from Sanskrit: *leud*, elevation. So man is freer the closer he is to the GAOTU, the Absolute, i. e. *solutus-ab*, free from any contingency.

Socio-political liberty is just the other face of the same coin, since everything can be regarded either from this side or from the esoteric one, but it is not the main aspect. Man can be inwardly free even inside a prison, the only true liberty is in the soul, for the soul, the spirit cannot be shackled or enslaved, only the body.

Let's now turn to *Egalité*, equality. Masonry being hierarchically ordered, then to speak about equality *tout-court* would be a true blasphemy. Freemasonry's scope is to work on individuals: each master should take care of the EAs and FCs. I am reminded that the word *Upanishad* means, literally, to seat beneath: The pupil sits in a lower position so he can better hear and receive the master's teachings.

The master's challenge is to help the pupil to raise himself to his height, so that they are equals: Freemasonry is not, therefore, a fascist organization because it does not crash people, but rather works to favour their growth, in every respect. Equality is considered as a point of arrival, a goal. Of course, this needs time: this is the reason for which Masonic teachings are given by layers.

Freedom and Equality are quite opposite.

If one man is stronger than another, or can run faster, he should be free to show his ability, with-

out handicaps. To avoid human society becoming a jungle, rules were set up. But rules can be easily skipped, as we already know, unless they are interiorized and made a part of the morality of the person. To work, these interiorized rules must be considered values, rather than rules that have been imposed by outside.

This Freemasonry did. *Liberté* and *Egalité* are the twin plates of *Libra* the balance; *Fraternité*, Brotherhood is the axis, the central pillar which balances the other two. Brotherhood means to recognise that all men are descendant by a common root: *Our Lord, thou art in Heaven*, "our" meaning "of us" (in Greek: *hemòn*).

As result of this, we must help one another. From here the concept of Relief. Most Anglo-Saxon Grand Lodges intend this as giving money for charity. In Europe, especially in Latin countries, it was intended in a "political" sense. Bro. Gottlieb Lessing, German philosopher, interpreter of Enlightenment, said the very good action of Freemasonry is to make needless good actions. In other words, the law, the public authority would have provided welfare, taking care of the citizens.

Both conceptions are wrong if interpreted radically. Charity is important indeed as well as active citizenship, but Masonically speaking, the true Relief consists in taking care of those dependent upon us, especially the young. A younger Brother shall be instructed in working, to prevent spoiling the Materials for want of Judgment, and for increasing and continuing of Brotherly Love. (Old Charges 1723, V section).

In other words, primary scope of Freemasonry is to make better good men. How can we reach this goal?

The greatest inconvenience of Anglo-Saxon freemasonry is the Brethren work 'liturgically'. They are keen ritualist, but few of them read books on the ritual. An even smaller number are accustomed to discussing the ritual, the secret meanings within it. It is a vicious circle: no discussions, no stimuli to read and to deepen the esoteric aspects of Freemasonry, which are hidden in the rituals.

In Italy, it is just the opposite, but as far as I know in Continental Europe, Brethren are 'forced' to present a paper of symbolic and/or philosophical nature which they will first read and then discuss. Lodges usually conduct business in the first-degree and Apprentices are expect to attend. They must however be silent as long as they are Apprentices – usually one year from their initiation – they cannot speak. The silence they are constrained to will act as filter, to separate 'chaff from wheat', when they shall think over what they have heard.

Papers on ethics are obviously welcome, but this

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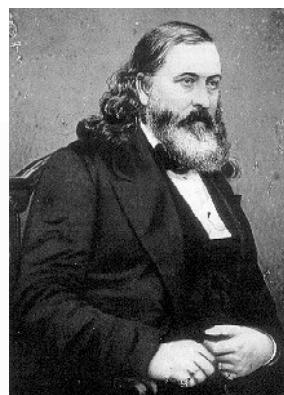
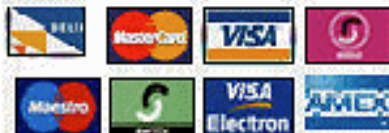
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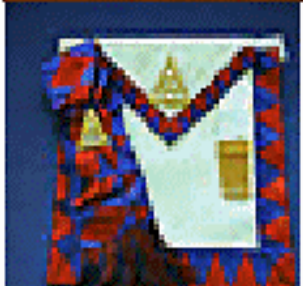
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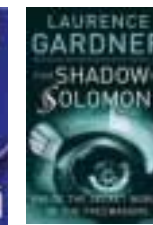
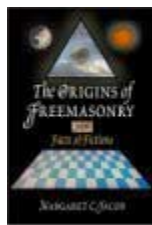
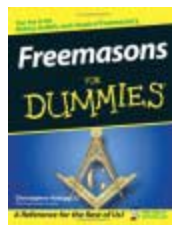
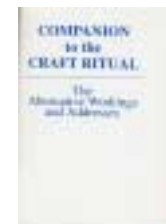
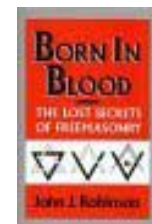
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Truthiness

Continued from Page 3

ing into existence that are returning to the old ways. They are going back to the true source of Masonic light and are peeling away at the layers of superfluous and useless skin of the onion that has become the Blue lodge. SEEK OUT THESE ENTITIES! Let your heart guide you in what is right. If you are questioning the veracity of the actions of your lodge or its leadership... then your heart will serve well to guide you.

I leave you with this thought. "Precious is this path we walk. If we walk as Percival le Galois did in the Arthurian legend; then no truth shall be hidden from our Light."



Religion

Continued from Page 3

tution – that it is indebted solely to the religious element which it contains for its origin and for its continued existence, and that without this religious element it would scarcely be worthy of cultivation by the wise and good.

But, that I maybe truly understood, it will be well first to agree upon the true definition of religion. There is nothing more illogical than to reason upon undefined terms. Webster has given four distinct definitions of religion:

1. Religion, in a comprehensive sense, includes, he says, a belief in the being and perfections of God – in the revelation of his will to man – in man's obligation to obey his commands – in a state of reward and punishment, and in man's accountability to God; and also true godliness of piety of life, with the practice of all moral duties.
2. His second definition is, that religion, as distinct from theology, is godliness, or real piety in practice, consisting in the performance of all known duties to God and our fellow-men, in obedience to Divine command, or from love to God and his law.
3. Again, he says that religion, as distinct from virtue or morality, consists in the performance of the duties we owe directly to God, from a principle of obedience to his will.
4. And lastly, he defines religion to be any system of faith or worship; and in this sense, he says, religion comprehends the belief and worship of Pagans and Morammedans as well as of Christians – any religion consisting in the belief of a superior power, or powers, governing the world, and in the worship of such power or powers.

And it is in this sense that we speak of the Turkish religion, or the Jewish religion, as well as of the Christian.

Now, it is plain that, in either of the first three senses in which we may take the word religion (and they do not very materially differ from each other), Masonry may rightfully claim to be called a religious institution. Closely and accurately examined, it will be found to answer to any one of the requirements of either of these three definitions.

So much does it "include a belief in the being and perfections of God," that the public profession of such a faith is essentially necessary to gain admission into the Order. No disbeliever in the existence of a God can be made a Mason. The "revelation of his will to man" is technically called the "spiritual, moral, and Masonic Trestleboard" of every Mason, according to the rules and designs of which he is to erect the spiritual edifice of his eternal life. A "state of reward and punishment" is necessarily included in the very idea of an obligation, which, without the belief in such a state, could be of no binding force of efficacy. And "true godliness or piety of life" is inculcated as the invariable duty of every Mason, from the inception of the first to the end of the very last degree that he takes.

So, again, in reference to the second and third definitions, all this practical piety and performance of the duties we owe to God and to our fellow men arise from and are founded on a principle of obedience to the Divine will. Elsewhence, or from what other will, could they have arisen? It is the voice of the G.A.O.T.U. symbolized to us in every ceremony of our ritual and from every portion of the furniture of our Lodge, that speaks to the true Mason, commanding him to fear God and to love the brethren. It is idle to say that the Mason does good simply in obedience to the statutes of the Order. These very statutes owe their sanction to the Masonic idea of the nature and perfections of God, which idea has come down to us from the earliest history of the Institution, and the promulgation of which idea was the very object and design of its origin.

But it must be confessed that the fourth definition does not appear to be strictly applicable to Masonry. It has no pretension to assume a place among the religions of the world as a sectarian "system of faith and worship," in the sense in which we distinguish Christianity from Judaism, or Judaism from Mohammedanism. In this meaning of the word we do not and can not speak of the Masonic religion, nor say of a man that his is not a Christian, but a Mason.

Here it is that the opponents of Freemasonry have assumed mistaken ground, in confounding the idea of a religious institution with that of the Christian religion as a peculiar form of worship, and in supposing, because Masonry teaches religious truth, that it is offered as a substitute for Christian truth and Christian obligation.

Its warmest and most enlightened friends have never advanced nor supported such a claim. Free-

masonry is not Christianity, nor a substitute for it. It is not intended to supercede it nor any other form of worship or system of faith. It does not meddle with sectarian creeds or doctrines, but teaches fundamental religious truth – not enough to do away with the necessity of the of the Christian scheme of salvation, but more than enough to show, to demonstrate, that it is, in every philosophical sense of the word, a religious institution, and one, too, in which the true Christian Mason will find, if he earnestly seeks for them, abundant types and shadows of his own exalted and divinely inspired faith.

The tendency of all true Masonry is toward religion. If it make any progress, its progress is to that holy end. Look at its ancient landmarks, its sublime ceremonies, its profound symbols and allegories – all inculcating religious doctrine, commanding religious observance, and teaching religious truth, and who can deny that it is eminently a religious institution?

But, besides, Masonry is, in all its forms, thoroughly tinctured with a true devotional spirit. We open and close our Lodges with prayer; we invoke the blessing of the Most High upon all our labors; we demand of our neophytes a profession of trusting belief in the existence and the superintending care of God; and we teach them to bow with humility and reverence at his awful name, while his holy law is widely opened upon our altars. Freemasonry is thus identified with religion; and although a man may be eminently religious without being a Mason, it is impossible that a Mason can be "true and trusty" to his Order unless he is a respecter of religion and an observer of religious principle.

But the religion of Masonry is not sectarian. It admits men of every creed within its hospitable bosom, rejecting none and approving none for his peculiar faith. It is not Judaism, though there is nothing in it to offend a Jew; it is not Christianity, but there is nothing in it repugnant to the faith of a Christian. Its religion is that general one of nature and primitive revelation – handed down to us from some ancient and patriarchal priesthood – in which all men may agree and in which no men can differ.

It inculcates the practice of virtue, but is supplies no scheme of redemption for sin. It points its disciples to the path or righteousness, but it does not claim to be "the way, the truth, and the life." In so far, therefore, it cannot become a substitute for Christianity, but its tendency is thitherward; and, as the handmaid of religion, it may, and often does, act as the porch that introduces its votaries into the temple of Divine truth.

Masonry, then, is indeed, a religious institution; and on this ground mainly, if not alone, should the religious Mason defend it.



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although in the goodness of God it was but for a little while, and the wings of Jehovah were even then sheltering her, yet many a true heart despaired, and many an honest though weak one endeavored for the sake of peace, to untie the indissoluble bonds of Masonry. Some of the symbols on the tracing board temporarily lost their value. The slipper, that earliest and most impressive reminder of allegiance was erased; the brilliant star, quintuple-rayed, followed it into darkness and disuse; the daytime labors on the highest hills, nearest heaven, gave place to the toils and self-denial of the unwearied twenty-seven.

We have in another work given at some length a sketch of the evil consequences that resulted from the introduction of Masonry as a religious test. The question of Masonry and Antimasonry in churches and among the pious, proved very detrimental to the craft. The shade that bigotry and superstition gave to the operations of pure morality as displayed in Freemasonry, was well nigh a fatal blow.

Ignorance, and a lust for an unlawful knowledge, had wielded the gauge against her, and thereby inflicted a severe wound; political ambition, that hydra of all republics, had followed up the stroke until the very heart of the aged victim palpitated beneath it; but when the voice of the church cried out crucify, crucify, a crusade against Masonry at once commenced, as if the Holy Temple were in the Infidel's hands and must be redeemed at all hazards.

During the closing term of Gen. Washington's administration he had presided at the conferring of Masonic honors upon the son of his old friend, and thus Mr. Lanceroy had become a Mason. We have often observed that the most enthusiastic lovers of the royal art, those whose zeal the longest endures, whose fire goes the most reluctantly out, are those who were the slowest to appreciate the full beauties of Masonry. Such men ponder; they compare; they reflect. They anticipated much from their knowledge of the character of the membership and from the published code of Masonic morals. They were sufficiently conversant with human nature not to look for a perfect development of Masonic principles in any one man this side of the grave, yet they were prepared to judge the tree by its fruits, by all its fruits considered in one cluster. In time their judgments become convinced. If the Lodge in which their membership commenced is a working Lodge, prompt in ceremonies, in explanations, in landmarks and in morals, they become zealous as a furnace of charcoal, and their zeal burns as long as the fires beneath a mountain

It was so with Dr. Lanceroy. The earliest East of his Masonry was glorious with light. A succession of enlightened officers in his Lodge at Weeconnet followed up and fixed the impression,

and it was not strange, therefore, that a few years witnessed the reverend gentleman himself at the head of the order, not only in his own village, but in all that Masonic district.

Years stole noiselessly, almost imperceptibly, upon him, until he numbered nearly half a century. Then the shafts of death flew suddenly around him and struck down his wife, beloved by all as a mother in Israel, a married daughter and two sons, the staff of his declining years.

The patriarch gathered up the remaining sheaves of his harvest, and from that day withdrew his active participation in the management of the Lodge, declaring that a higher duty now awaited him at home.

It was only a few years after this afflictive dispensation of providence, that the storm of Antimasonry began its ravages. Churches, formerly as harmonious as the Christmas angels, now became like unto heathen temples dedicated to the goddess of discord. The sound of ax, hammer, and many other unlawful weapons rang through the sacred chambers, disturbing the peace and harmony of the workmen. Amongst others, the old congregation at Weeconnet caught the infection.

Hence it started, in whom it originated, none could tell. What wonder in that! what wisdom has traced the cholera to its source! What quarantine was ever efficient to wall out the plague! There was a Judas somewhere among the twelve, an Arnold among the patriots, and that was enough.

But in whatever source it originated, its course was rapid and violent, and the cry of Down with all secret societies! Death to the mother of serpents! soon became popular. Ah! but the wrath of man is a fearful judgment in the hands of God.

By the side of the numerous evils inflicted on Masonry through this persecution, there was nevertheless one advantage that grew out of it. It brought back the decaying lights of the last generation into the Lodge; it called back such retired Masons as Dr. Lanceroy from their hermitage, and placed them around the old altar once more, in the east, and in the south, and in the west.

This was the case with many an aged brother, and of Dr. Lanceroy among the rest. When the first list of renouncing (and denouncing) Masons was presented to him, as he sat in his library preparing his Sabbath discourses, he construed it as the second Cincinnatus had construed his country's summons to the field. It aroused the force of remembered vows; it called back cherished hours, and festive nights, and linked professions. Shadows of the dead, memories of the living, seemed to group around him as he read the perjured catalogue. A voice as from one who had authority, seemed to command him, Comfort ye my people.

The veteran crumpled the foul sheet in his hand and hurled it from him, as he turned around to write a petition for membership in his old Lodge. Hence forth he was punctual to every meeting, whether stated or special, nor neglected a single opportunity of expressing in public places, as well as in the tied chambers of the temple, his indebtedness to Freemasonry.

As his congregation received the shameful impulse of Anti-masonry from without, they began one by one to withdraw from Dr. Lanceroy's ministry. The unaccustomed sight of empty pews began to pain his eyes, the murmurs of alienated friends his ears. His doors, once like the city gates for publicity, were deserted. Letters from those whose parents had sat beneath his ministry, and who had themselves cherished his ministrations until chilled by this cruel blast, letters always disrespectful, often violent, sometimes insulting, were placed in his hands. He wept over them in his retirement.

The All-Seeing Eye, whom the sun, moon, and stars obey, and under whose watchful care even comets perform their stupendous revolutions, that Eye which pervades the inmost recesses of the human heart, that Eye beheld the drops of mingled mortification and grief that showered from his eyes; but still he endured patiently and he made no complaint.

But when on a certain Sabbath morning as he endeavored to fulfill an engagement to exchange pulpits with an old friend, gray-haired like himself, and was publicly forbidden by the vestry to raise his voice in that church, the cup of his sorrow was full, and Dr. Lanceroy returned home to throw himself on the charity of God, seeing that the hearts of men were embittered against him.

That very week a summons from the officers of his own church was presented him, citing him to appear and answer certain charges of official misconduct that had been preferred against him. The motives that prompted this course were sufficiently obvious. The charges that had been trumped up were intended only as a blind, and whether sustained or not, it mattered little with the persecutor, for reasons enough would be found for declaring his pulpit vacant, and that was the main thing sought for.

With this painful prospect in view Dr. Lanceroy, accompanied by a legal adviser, and the remaining members of his family, took his way to the vestry room at the appointed hour, prepared for the worst.

He anticipated wisely. The scene that presented itself at the place of trial was one that offered some remarkable features. The room was the same in which the church officers had Assembled thirty-seven years before, to give the young graduate a

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unanimous call to the pastorship of that church.

All the old members of that official board, with one exception were dead. That exception consisted of Elder Drane for the last fifteen years in his dotage, favored only with occasional returns to sanity. It was in one of these lucid intervals that, hearing of the pastor's trial, he had demanded to be conducted to the vestry, that he might be a spectator; but long before he reached the door his imbecility returned, and he was now lying at full length in one of the pews, apparently unconscious of all that was passing around him. Besides Elder Drane, there was not one of the church officers present, who had not received baptism at the hands of Dr. Lanceroy, and bowed beneath his heartfelt pleadings with God, and been joined by him in the bonds of matrimony, and shared with him in the happiness of revival seasons, as well as in the distress of spiritual dearth.

As he took his seat with the board there was a marked contrast between the youthful locks of the judges and the gray hairs of the accused.

Before him in the body of the house, a large old fashioned square room, was a crowd densely packed, comprehending not only his own flock (banded against this gentle shepherd) but the residents of the surrounding farmsteads gathered together, some in sympathy, more in curiosity, many, alas! in derision, to witness the trial. Amongst the former his aged eye could see several of his Masonic brethren from the various Lodges in the district, and there was a gleam of hope in the glance.

The charges were read. They were wordy and diffuse, but involved only these propositions: "that the accused had contumaciously resisted the advice both of official and lay members, and had stubbornly published his attachment to Masonry by conducting the members of that order in public processions as well as in their secret meetings; that in this act he had fallen behind both the spirit and light of the age; that the church pews were fast becoming vacant on account of his obstinacy; that spiritual revivals had ceased; that his usefulness in the administration of the word was destroyed, the interest of Christ's kingdom retarded" — and much more of the same sort.

The legal gentleman who had volunteered to aid Dr. Lanceroy (since become a Grand Master of Masons in the same State) arose now to speak to the technical points. He answered the charges in a dry business way that while it proved how illegal and unchristian would be the action of the vestry in ordering Dr. Lanceroy's dismissal, it failed in touching any chords of sympathy, or turning the popular current that had set so fatally against his client.

A rejoinder from the lawyer selected by the vestry on account of his violent Antimasonic prejudices, smothered the law and the gospel under a mountain of words that denoted one idea very clearly: "Antimasonry is about to rule the land and it shall rule it with a rod of iron!"

After some further altercation between the professional gentlemen, the presiding officer enquired of the accused if he desired to say anything for himself, before the vote on the charges was taken. A dead silence of considerable duration followed, and as no response was heard, the chairman had again risen, preparatory to putting the question, when Dr. Lanceroy at length arose.

It was with strange difficulty that he gathered himself erect, he had never felt so weak in body before, and he was compelled to place his hands upon his chair for support, even as Jacob in his death-bed injunctions, leaned on the top of his staff.

It was with still greater difficulty that his tongue performed its office. A weight clogged it heavily at the very time when its eloquence was most needed. He had succeeded however in stammering a few incoherent words, and was collecting his ideas into a more rational channel, when he suddenly caught the eye of Elder Drane, the superannuated church officer, the friend of his youth, one of the working Freemasons of the last generation.

This old man had arisen from his seat, and was standing upright with superhuman strength, staring full upon him. His eye was filled with a strange meaning.

A quick gesture came from his hand, to the casual observer? it might have seemed as the movement of an idiot. But there was method in that madness, and a gleam of acknowledgment passed over the minister's face as he beheld it. Dr. Lanceroy sat down.

Every eye was now turned in the direction of the Elder, and great was the sensation in that large audience when the veteran, with more than ninety years upon his head, and for nearly a score of them a second child both in body and intellect, opened his pew door and walked with firm strides up the aisle.

The crowd deferentially gave way, and closed behind him. A seat upon the platform was proffered to him, the seat in which he had presided long before. But steadily rejecting every offer, and making no other acknowledgment of the general courtesy, gave a dead stare, he at once began to speak.

Never will that strange oration be forgotten while one of its hearers remains alive. In this latter half of the century there abides a tradition

among the elderly portion of the population that has preserved the leading points and much of the peculiar language used.

"Vile pack!" shouted the frenzied Elder with a voice stern and threatening as when it thundered in front of the forlorn hope at Stony Point; "vile pack, that has joined in the howl of Antimasonry as dogs bay the moon, and know her not as their source of light, what would ye of this man! has he ever defrauded any of ye! or stricken ye with his hands! has he fallen away into base doctrines that endanger your soul! Lo these thirty-seven years he has gone in and out before ye and your fathers before ye, and served at the table of the Lord, and has one accusing voice ever been raised against him! but he is a Freemason! and has the fraternity of mystics cajoled him to join them in his declining years! I tell you, base descendants of an honored stock, he was a Freemason before ye had any being, and such as he are Masons wherever dispersed around the world, though they may never hear of a Mason's Lodge.

He was a Mason in heart, in life, in practice, in aims, though the mystic rites had never been performed upon him. Ye would have him to renounce Masonry! Fools, do ye know what ye would have him renounce! what shall he recant! ye know not what ye ask! Would ye have him to declare himself the friend of the Serpent and the foe of the Trampler! the opponent of Temperance, Fortitude, Prudence and Justice, and the servant of Drunkenness, Cowardice, Indiscretion and Fraud. Shall he quench the bible-light and fall back upon the book of nature! repudiate all yearnings for immortality and, like yourselves, all charity to suffering humanity! I tell you, insensate pack, as I told your granthers, (grandfathers) before ye— well that they did not live to see the generation of vipers that from their loins have sprung — I told them as I tell ye, that an honest man cannot renounce Masonry though a hypocrite may!"

The eyes of the veteran here flashed as the eyes of a basilisk, upon Lawyer Savin, the renouncing Mason, the rabid editor of an Antimasonic sheet; and the time-serving lawyer cowered beneath the glance.

"The wolf may cast off the sheep's clothing," pursued the old man in a still higher key, "the sheep's clothing that concealed his marauding errand, and he is a wolf again as he was all the time a wolf, a prowling, marauding, murderous wolf. But the lamb cannot lose its gentle heart, its spotless robe, its meek and loving character, to become a wolf. Masonry in my day was taught as a system of morality, vwidled in allegory and illustrated by symbols. Shall he renounce the morality as ye have done! or is it that ye would have the allegory expounded and the symbols explained. Ah, pitiful wretches! there were fifteen like ye in the Wise Man's day who could not wait for the word, and well did they despair,

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for they found that obstacle in their own hearts which forbade all hope of their ever being recipients of so great a trust. And ye like them would snatch at that of which you are so thoroughly unworthy! but thank God, your unholy efforts are in vain, for from the days of Sanballat Masonry has withstood such as ye. .

“Dr. Lanceroy, Pastor, Dear Brother beloved—” the pastor of well nigh forty years experience, stood up and meekly bowed his head before the veteran who laid both hands, withered, trembling and cold, upon it; “Brother beloved, I warn ye, as a voice from the grave, BE YE TRUE! By the memory of the immortal Washington, by the virtues of the holy Saints John, by the inspiration of Solomon wisest of men, by the strength and beauty of the Tyrian twain, and in the name of the whole fraternity, I warn you let this great trial that is come upon you, fail to shake your integrity. Be fortitude yours. Though your column may be broken in the midst, soul to heaven, dust to earth, yet the remembrance of you, only continuing faithful, shall be treasured in the hearts of faithful brothers, while the name of the righteous shall flourish there as a green bay tree.”

Headlong, prone to the floor, the Elder fell, all the powers of nature having given away at one instant. The meeting was of course dissolved in confusion. Upon the next Sabbath the pastor stood at the head of a newly-opened grave, around which was grouped a band of Masons, the last beheld in Weeconnet for twelve years, and there they honored the resting spot of Elder Drane by the significant emblem of the resurrection.

Upon the Pastor’s table at home lay the order of dismissal, passed by unanimous vote of the officers of his church.

A few more weeks and he was seen to leave the parsonage with his remaining family. His furniture and effects followed after him, and then the old brick house was tenantless for his successor, a brisk, finical gentleman, up to the spirit of the age, declined residing there, and took his boarding at a more showy place.

Reports were soon circulated that Dr. Lanceroy was removing to a considerable distance westward.

A few months more and the newspapers of the day announced his death by a sudden stroke of apoplexy.

Twelve years afterwards the Deputy Grand Master of that Masonic district, with a noble train of brethren and surrounded by an honored band of officers, spoke an eulogy, well deserved and eloquently declared, upon Dr. Lanceroy, the

Mason who was faithful unto death.

And then the craft, joining together their means as God had dealt bounteously with them, reared a tombstone, stamped with the symbols of Masonry, to remind coming generation of one well worthy to be their standard in the aims of the order.

And beneath the name and age of the departed, they engraved these solemn charges deduced from the history of the dead; to sustain a failing cause; to fly to the relief of a distressed principle, to prop the falling temple or to fall with it, to support the adherents, to cherish the endangered secrets, and to honor the flighted virtues of Freemasonry.



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ally an allegory within an allegory. The first allegory is about the Stone-Masons while the second is about ancient Stone-Masons at the building of King Solomon’s temple. We, as Freemasons, are not really Masons at all. We are merely portraying Masons in an allegory. Too many Masons get lost in the allegory and never get past it to uncover the true secrets. In our search for the truth we will remove the allegory completely to reveal that which has been lost from underneath the veils of the allegories.

It is interesting to note that within the definition of “Allegory” we find a reference to “symbol(s)”.

“the expression by means of symbolic fictional figures and actions of truths or generalizations about human existence; a symbolic representation.”

Symbol:

- 1: an authoritative summary of faith or doctrine : CREED;
- 2: something that stands for or suggests something else by reason of relationship, association, convention, or accidental resemblance; especially : a visible sign of something invisible <the lion is a symbol of courage>;
- 3: an arbitrary or conventional sign used in writing or printing relating to a particular field to represent operations, quantities, elements, relations, or qualities;
- 4: an object or act representing something in the unconscious mind that has been repressed <phallic symbols>;
- 5: an act, sound, or object having cultural significance and the capacity to excite or objectify a response.

The Peculiar System of Morality is thus hidden in stories that utilize symbols which have purposefully obscured meanings.

Why would the early Speculative Freemasons have had a need for a Peculiar System of Morality? Morality is usually at the base of a culture, society, or religion. Were they attempting to create something different (new?) within society? Perhaps this is the reason why their “secrets” are now lost to modern Masonry – they were too far outside of what would be considered commonly acceptable. Professor Margaret C. Jacob, in *The Enlightenment: A Brief History with Documents* states -

Most of the major philosophers of the seventeenth century were devout Christians. Many of the people who read them were not. When we speak of the populist origins of the Enlightenment, we inevitably speak about the clandestine and the heretical, about the deist, the pantheist, and even the atheist.

Did the founders of Freemasonry leave us any clues as to the nature of this “Peculiar System of Morality”? Absolutely! But they aren’t just lying around on the surface for any passerby to discover. In the old books and manuscripts you see Freemasonry continually described as a “Natural Philosophy,” but what exactly is a Natural Philosophy?

Sir Isaac Newton offers the following in *The Mathematical Principles of Natural Philosophy*:

The Rules of Reasoning in Philosophy

RULE I

We are to admit no more causes of natural things, than such as are both true and sufficient to explain their appearances.

To this purpose the philosophers say, that Nature does nothing in vain, and more is in vain, when less will serve; for Nature is pleased with simplicity, and affects not the pomp of superfluous causes.

RULE II

Therefore to the same natural effects we must, as far as possible, assign the same causes.

As to respiration in a man, and in a beast; the descent of stones in Europe and in America; the light of our culinary fire and of the sun; the reflection of light in the earth, and in the planets

RULE III

The qualities of bodies, which admit neither intension nor remission of degrees, and which are found to belong to all bodies within reach of our experiments, are to be esteemed the universal qualities of all bodies whatsoever.

For since the qualities of bodies are only

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known to us by experiments, we are to hold for universal, all such as universally agree with experiments; and such as are not liable to diminution, can never be quite taken away. We are certainly not to relinquish the evidence of experiments for the sake of dreams and vain fictions of our own devising; nor are we to recede from the analogy of Nature, which is wont to be simple, and always consonant to itself. We no other way know the extension of bodies, than by our senses, nor do these reach it in all bodies; but because we perceive extension in all that are sensible, therefore we ascribe it universally to all others, also. That abundance of bodies are hard we learn by experience. And because the hardness of the whole arises from the hardness of the parts, we therefore justly infer the hardness of the undivided particles not only of the bodies we feel but of all others. That all bodies are impenetrable we gather not from reason, but from sensation. The bodies which we handle we find impenetrables and thence conclude impenetrability to be a universal property of all bodies whatsoever. That all bodies are moveable, and endowed with certain powers (which we call the forces of inertia) or persevering in their motion or in their rest, we only infer from the like properties observed in the bodies which we have seen. The extension, hardness, impenetrability, mobility, and force of inertia of the whole result from the extension, hardness, impenetrability, mobility, and forces of inertia of the parts: and thence we conclude that the least particles of all bodies to be also all extended, and hard, and impenetrable, and moveable, and endowed with their proper forces of inertia. And this is the foundation of all philosophy.

Moreover, that the divided but contiguous particles of bodies may be separated from one another, is a matter of observation; and, in the particles that remain undivided, our minds are able to distinguish yet lesser parts, as is mathematically demonstrated. But whether the parts so distinguished, and not yet divided, may, by the powers of nature, be actually divided and separated from one another, we cannot certainly determine. Yet had we the proof of but one experiment, that any undivided particle, in breaking a hard and solid body, suffered a division, we might by virtue of this rule, conclude, that the undivided as well as the divided particles, may be divided and actually separated into infinity.

Lastly, if it universally appears, by experiments and astronomical observations, that all bodies about the earth, gravitate toward the earth; and that in proportion to the quan-

tity of matter which they severally contain; that the moon likewise, according to the quantity of its matter, gravitates toward the earth; that on the other hand our sea gravitates toward the moon; and all the planets mutually one toward another; and the comets in like manner towards the sun; we must, in consequence of this rule, universally allow, that all bodies whatsoever are endowed with a principle of mutual gravitation. For the argument from the appearances concludes with more force for the universal gravitation of all bodies, than for their impenetrability, of which among those in the celestial regions, we have no experiments, nor any manner of observation. Not that I affirm gravity to be essential to all bodies. By their inherent force I mean nothing but their force of inertia. This is immutable. Their gravity is diminished as they recede from the earth.

RULE IV

In experimental philosophy we are to look upon propositions collected by general induction from phenomena as accurately or very nearly true, notwithstanding any contrary hypotheses that may be imagined, till such time as other phenomena occur, by which they may either be made more accurate, or liable to exceptions.

This rule we must follow that the argument of induction may not be evaded by hypotheses.

“Natural Philosophy” is the name by which “physics” was known in the time of Sir Isaac Newton, and well into the 19th century. By its very nature it tears away the underpinnings of theological ethics and morality and leads one to Deism, Pantheism, Panentheism or Atheism.

Since both Deism and Atheism are mentioned in Anderson’s Constitutions of 1723 as being an incorrect view of Freemasonry, it would appear that we are left with only one alternative: Pantheism. The term “Pantheism” would not be appear in publications until 1720, and would not come into common usage until many years later.

Pantheism: God is the sum of all the energy in the Cosmos

In the chapter of the Constitutions entitled The Charges of a Freemason we find -

I. Concerning GOD and RELIGION

A Mason is oblig’d by his tenure, to obey the moral Law; and if he rightly understands the Art, he will never be a stupid Atheist, nor an irreligious Libertine*.

*(The term “Irreligious Libertine” was commonly used at the time to refer to Deists.)

The question that must be asked here is what

“moral Law” is Anderson referring to? Consider the fact that Anderson’s Constitutions were written after the formation of the Grand Lodge in 1717, and that they are actually an outgrowth of the allegories and myths presented in the rituals. Anderson clearly isn’t expecting anyone to take his historical account of the lineage of Freemasonry seriously. Thus, the Constitutions, like the rituals, must have their mythical and allegorical veils removed in order to uncover their true meaning.

In the eighteenth century Pantheism was growing in popularity thanks to works such as The Pantheistikon by John Toland. Toland’s involvement in Masonic circles is well documented by the modern historian Professor Margaret C. Jacob. These views worked quite well with Newton’s Natural Philosophy, but neither Toland nor Newton expounded upon the ethical questions related to their Natural Philosophy.

Are there any clues regarding the moral foundations of this Peculiar System of Morality? We need look no further than the immortal words of Thomas Jefferson to discover a few key components of the morals suggested by the new Natural Philosophy.

... to assume among the Powers of the Earth, the separate and equal Station to which the Laws of Nature and of Nature’s God entitle them...

We hold these Truths to be self-evident, that all Men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the Pursuit of Happiness...

At first glance this Peculiar System of Morality may appear to be nothing more than humanism, but this would be to avoid the Pantheistic implications of “Nature and of Nature’s God.” The Pantheism of the early eighteenth century is best described by its chief proponent: John Toland. In describing nature and the universe he sounds very reminiscent of the ancient Greek philosopher Heraclitus, or the Chinese Master Lao Tzu. The following is from the Pantheistikon (1720).

The universe is infinite, with infinite stars and inhabited worlds.

There is an infinite number of other worlds similar to the earth we inhabit, circling around their suns (which we call the fixed stars).

The Universe (of which the world we know is only a very small part), is infinite in extent as well as in potential. By the continuity of all and by the contiguity of its parts it is one. In its totality it is immobile, having no space outside of itself, but in its parts it is mobile by infinite intervals.

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*The universe is a unity.
Every material thing is in all things.
All things come from all, and all is in all things.
The Universe is divine.*

The power and energy of All, which has created all and which governs all, having always the best goal as it aim, is God, which you may if you wish call Spirit and Soul of the Universe. This is why the Socratic Associates have been called pantheists, because according to them this soul cannot be separated from the Universe itself. (See Lao Tzu)

There is an ethereal fire. (Compare with Heraclitus). The ethereal fire (is) supreme because it surrounds everything, intimate because it penetrates everything. This fire is the only thing that can traverse nerves.

These views were heresy in 1720, and to some extent may still be considered so by some in the 21st century. His Pantheism, however, fit well with Newton's Natural Philosophy and the implications of the Laws of Mechanics, so much so that many modern Physicists are beginning to reevaluate these ideas alongside those of Heraclitus and Lao Tzu. But did the Masons of 1717 really give any consideration to Newton's Laws of Mechanics? Again, we shall return to Anderson's Constitutions of 1723:

ADAM, our first Parent, created after the Image of God, the great Architect of the Universe, must have had the Liberal Sciences, particularly Geometry, written on his Heart; for ever since the Fall, we find the Principles of it in the Hearts of his Offspring, and which, in [the] process of time, have been drawn forth into a convenient Method of Proportions, by observing the Laws of Proportion taken from Mechanism: So that as the Mechanical Arts have Occasion to the Learned to reduce the Elements of Geometry in Method, this noble Science thus reduc'd, is the Foundation of those Arts, (particularly of Masonry and Architecture) and the Rule by which they are conducted and perform'd.

Pantheist ethics are a core requirement for Newtonian science since without them mankind will be led down the path of an objectified materialism by the philosophical implications of Newton's discoveries and those of Descartes and Bacon before him. Newton was well aware of this potential but could not openly propose a system of ethics outside of that which was acceptable to both church and state. Freemasonry, however, would be the vehicle through which a new system of morality could be conveyed while cloaked in secrecy.

James Burke wrote an interesting book in the 1980's entitled "The Day the Universe Changed," in which he discusses the significant events of human history that have changed our view of the universe. In the middle ages Europeans viewed the earth as flat up until the time of Copernicus and Galileo. The ideas presented by these two men would literally change the universe for mankind. We would no longer logically perceive reality in the way we did prior to these discoveries. The earth was not the center of the universe, but a small planet moving around a star. In other words, perhaps we were not as special as we had once believed.

Sir Isaac Newton (1642-1727) was the next to change our view of the universe and reality. His theory of mechanics along with his development of calculus allowed us to be able to accurately predict the motions of heavenly bodies and their effect on one another. It was during this period of change that speculative Freemasonry was born.

In the seventeenth century Freemasonry was a hodge-podge of operative guild masons, alchemists, cabbalists, and "scientists". Around the year 1700 this would be reorganized by Newton and his long-time friend John Desaguliers, along with certain members of the Royal Society, into a scientific-mystical school. This school was at the cutting edge of human understanding in the eighteenth century. It not only contained the most advanced scientific theories but cutting-edge social and religious ideas. Scientifically Freemasonry viewed the universe through Newtonian eyes. Socially and politically it brought the ancient Greek ideas of democracy into its organizational model. (A threatening idea to both church and state at the time.) Religiously it combined the many views of God into a single natural concept that it called the Great Architect of the Universe. In a sense Freemasonry was the first universalistic religious organization.

Newton's Freemasonry broke with the old guild system's organizational structure and replaced it with that of the Pythagorean school at Croton. Pythagoras' Akousmatikoi became Entered Apprentices, his Mathematikoi became Fellow-Crafts, and his Politikoi became Master Masons. Remnants of this structure can be found throughout the old materials. The name of the Candidate in written copies of the rituals is "Peter Gower" (In old English this name often appears instead of the more proper "Pythagoras"). The 47th Problem of Euclid (the Pythagorean Theorem) appears on the cover page of Anderson's Constitutions. The secret word of a Master Mason is Pythagorean in origin.

Newton's Freemasonry was an attempt to fuse science with a system of spiritual morality. On the one hand it presents the universe through empirical eyes, while on the other it says that this view is imperfect (the replacement Word), and that the true Word (Heraclitean Logos), while of a mystical nature, is but another imperfect re-

flection of the deity and the creation. In other words, the true nature of the universe (reality) cannot be defined in written or spoken words, but only symbolized.

What then is the meaning of the Logos or Word? According to the ideas of Heraclitus, as expressed by James Hillman -

[Heraclitus] brought language into the game of cosmological thinking. Declarations will always be self-contradictory, relative, subjective. "People dull their wits with gibberish, and cannot use their ears and eyes." "They lack the skill to listen or speak." You cannot know the world in the manner of natural philosophy or mathematics or deductive logic. Because: "By cosmic rule... all things change." "The sun is new again, all day." "The river where you set your foot just now is gone - those waters giving way to this, now this."

His name for this changing flux, or process, in today's terms, is "fire," a metaphor for the shifting meanings of all truth. Therefore, the verbal account, or logos, of the world is also fire. Truth, wisdom, knowledge, reality — none can stand apart from this fire that allows no objective fixity.

When the logos is merged into Newton's Natural Philosophy an obvious paradox is created, but an eternal truth is also revealed. Just as Copernicus, Galileo and Newton had changed our view of the universe, so their views would also be brought down and replaced by the "fire". It then follows that our view of reality is relative to what we believe is true at any given point in space-time.

At first we are led to believe that Freemasonry and its Peculiar System of Morality is, therefore, of a Pantheistic nature. This theory, however, has its own problems. If it were true then why didn't later generations of Freemasons simply apply the new term "Pantheism" to their Natural Philosophy? At first the answer may not be obvious but it becomes readily apparent when you bring the symbol of the Great Architect of the Universe into the equation. Pantheism presumes that the sum of all of the energy in the Cosmos is God, but that the energy is not sentient or self-aware, and, therefore, not in control of anything.

Newton's views of the nature of deity were similar to Einstein's. "God does not play dice with the universe," is an often quoted remark of professor Albert Einstein. Both Newton and Einstein believed that the Cosmos was sentient and self-aware. Pantheism, as it was understood in the eighteenth century, simply didn't clearly define the philosophy of Freemasonry and, therefore, was never used to describe it. The philosophy of Freemasonry was simply "Freemasonry" because

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there were no other terms to describe it accurately.

As Freemasonry wandered farther and farther away from its scientific roots and merged with the occult schools of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, it ceased to be the definition by which one could describe this unique system of Natural Philosophy. Modern scientists have a new term that accurately describes the Natural Philosophy of Freemasonry: Pantheism.

Pantheism: God is the sum of all the energy in the Cosmos and the whole of the energy is self-aware and sentient.

Pantheism and Freemasonry are one and the same philosophically. Both are a Natural Philosophy and both recognize the sentient nature of deity. The only thing that separates Pantheism from Freemasonry is the Peculiar System of Morality that Freemasonry possesses and Pantheism lacks.

Many will now point out that these views are not to be found in present day Masonry. This is indeed true of the modern Craft, but not so of the Freemasons of 1717. In order to understand why this is true we must venture back to the earliest Masonic rituals and note the many differences between them and what exists at the present time. As Brother Preston pointed-out:

Many of the fraternity's records of this and the preceding reigns were lost at the Revolution: and not a few were too easily burnt in our times by some scrupulous brothers, from a fear of making discoveries prejudicial to the interests of Masonry. – Preston

Preston was aware that much of the original material had been destroyed to protect the secrets from the unworthy who would only use them to destroy the Craft.

Of the early symbols it isn't difficult to discover their meaning. Albert Pike, in chapter 20 of *Morals and Dogma* discussed the need for Masonry to return to this primitive simplicity whereby the symbols could be more easily interpreted.

...it is your especial duty to aid in restoring Masonry to its primitive purity.

In a way the purpose of this essay is to do just that. Let's begin with a look at the Point within a Circle between two Parallel Lines and see how it is related to the two columns (Jachin & Boaz).

The definition given in the ritual to the Point within a Circle is a part of the Allegory and must

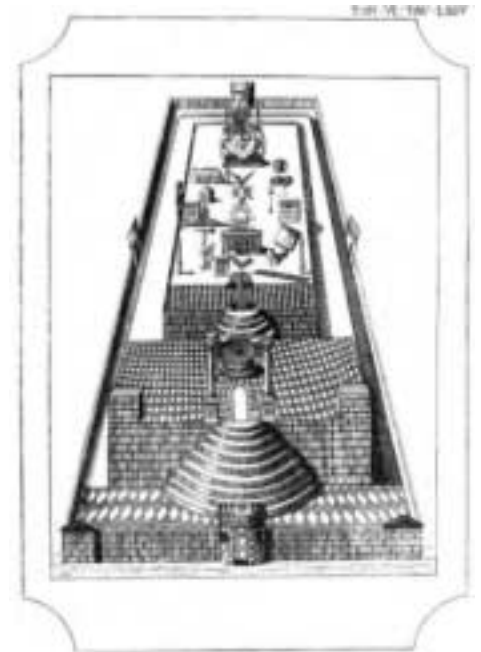


not be confused with its intended hidden meaning. If we strip away the Allegory, but use its symbolism, we can discover the true meaning behind this symbol. First we must take the Parallel Lines and move them from the flat two dimensional Euclidian plane into the third dimension. Now we have a circle suspended between two poles. The two poles are marked by the Holy Sts. John whose feast days fall respectively on the summer and winter solstices. Thus, the point in the middle becomes the Sun and the circle the orbit of the Earth around it. The poles mark the solstices. It isn't difficult to see why this symbol would be important in a Newtonian lodge because it is the starting point to understanding Newton's laws of mechanics.

The pillars Jachin and Boaz work similarly to the Point within a Circle. If we strip away the allegory of the bronze pillars of the allegorical Solomon's Temple all we have left are the celestial and terrestrial globes suspended in space. Each Fellow-Craft must pass between them before ascending the winding flight of stairs. This whole section of the Fellow-Craft ritual is about knowledge. As he passes between the two suspended globes he symbolically learns the relationship of the earth to the cosmos. While this may seem like child's play from the modern perspective it must be considered that many people in 1717 still believed the world was flat, and the few that were educated remained ignorant of Newton's discoveries. This all goes back to what Anderson says in the Constitutions -

ADAM, our first Parent, created after the Image of God, the great Architect of the Universe, must have had the Liberal Sciences, particularly Geometry, written on his Heart...

I would now like to stop for a moment to illustrate to you how much the rituals have changed since 1717, and how that these changes have had a major impact on the philosophical implications of the Masonic system. If we simply consider the winding staircase of three, five and seven steps we can see how the present staircase in the ritual is literally upside-down. As the ritual tells us a lodge of Entered Apprentice Masons consists of seven, a lodge of Fellow-Crafts of five, and a lodge of Masters of 3. The staircase is meant to be a model of the Masonic system but the staircase is now upside-down!



(Observe in this early tracingboard engraving how the steps ascend up into the Masonic temple. The last are difficult to see and are located at the station of the Worshipful Master.)

According to the original Masonic system Entered Apprentices were to study the Trivium and Quadrivium until they were well versed in language and mathematics, the Fellow-Crafts were to study the "architectural" features of the universe symbolically represented by the five orders of architecture, and Master Masons were to continually endeavor to keep the true secrets safe from all but the most worthy. Thus the Grand Master, Hiram Abiff, refuses to give the Word (Logos) to the three ruffians.

This leads one to wonder who or what these three "ruffians" might represent. The answer was obvious at the time the Master Mason ritual was conceived, but has since been lost because of its obscurity. As Masonic historians know the Master's ritual didn't exist in the beginning, but was invented later. The origin of the "three ruffians" in the degree lies hidden away in the works of Jean Rousset de Missy, a leading Freemason in Amsterdam, and his two partners, Charles Levier and Jan Vroese. These three men were responsible for the publication of a secret tract entitled *Traité des Trois Imposteurs* (Treatise of the Three Imposters). The treatise first surfaced in 1710 and then was widely distributed in 1719.

What renders the evil without remedy, is that after having established the false ideas men have of God, they omit nothing to engage the people to believe them, without permitting the people to examine them; on the contrary, they give the people an aversion for Philosophers or the truly Learned, for fear that the reason which they teach should make the people know the errors in which it is sunk. The partisans of these absurdities have

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succeeded so well that it is dangerous to combat them. It matters too much to these imposters that the people be ignorant, to suffer that they be disabused. Thus one is constrained to disguise the truth, or to sacrifice oneself to the rage of the falsely Learned, or to base & interested souls.

If the people could understand into what an abyss ignorance throws them, they would soon shake off the yoke of unworthy leaders, for it is impossible to let reason act without its discovering the truth.

These imposters have sensed this so well, that to prevent the good effects which it would infallibly produce, they have had the idea of painting it to us as a monster which is not capable of inspiring any good sentiment, & although they blame in a general way those who are unreasonable, they would nevertheless be much annoyed if the truth were listened to. Thus one sees these sworn enemies to good sense falling into continual contradictions; & it is difficult to know what they claim. If it is true that right reason is the only light which people should follow, & if the people are not... incapable of reasoning... it is necessary that those who seek to instruct the people apply themselves to rectifying false reasonings, & to destroying prejudices; then we will see eyes gradually opening & minds convinced of this truth, that God is not at all what is ordinarily imagined.

To accomplish this, there is need neither for high speculations, nor to penetrate far into the secrets of nature. One needs only a little good sense to judge that God is neither angry nor jealous; that justice & mercy are false titles which are attributed to him; & that what the Prophets & Apostles have said of him teaches us neither his nature nor his essence.

Traité des Trois Imposteurs (1710)

The Master Mason degree is actually a vivid warning to Masons to never give-up their secrets to the leaders of the three prevailing faiths, or else suffer the same fate as the Knights Templar before them. This, however, must be taken in the context of the time in which the treatise and the Master Mason ritual was written. It was a time when Christendom had ruled Europe for a thousand years with an iron fist, and that all manner of free thought was discouraged by the ever-present possibility of being roasted alive over a slow fire.

Now that you are beginning to see just how much change in the ritual has occurred let's take a look at something that is far more serious, especially from a philosophical and moral perspective. Remember, our purpose here is to uncover the "Peculiar System of Morality".

Modern Masons are continually exposed to the altered Entered Apprentice symbols of the Rough and Perfect Ashlar. The Perfect Ashlar, however, is nowhere to be found in the earliest rituals. How could this be? Who made these changes? Why?

In the old Entered Apprentice degree we find a symbol called the Broached Thurnel.

Q. "What are the immovable Jewels?"

A. "Tarsel Board, Rough Ashlar and Broached Thurnel."

Q. "What are their uses?"

A. "A Tarsel Board for the Master to draw his designs upon, Rough Ashlar for the Fellow-Craft to try their Jewels upon, and the Broached Thurnel for the entered Apprentice to learn to work upon."

Mackey quotes Parker's "Glossary of Terms in Architecture" as follows:

"Broach or broche is an old English term for spire, still in use in Leicestershire, where it is said to denote a spire springing from the tower without any intervening parapet. Thurnel is from the old French, "tournelle," a turret or little tower. The Broached Thurnel, then, was the Spired Turret. It was a model on which Apprentices might learn the principles of their art because it presented to them, in its various outlines, the forms of the square and the triangle, the cube and the pyramid."



The allegorical definition from the old ritual for the Broached Thurnel is –

"the Broached Thurnel [is] for the entered Apprentice to learn to work upon."

Thus we can see that the Broached Thurnel is not just an old term for a Perfect Ashlar, but something altogether different. The higher symbolic meaning of this symbol will be discussed later in this paper.

"...Rough Ashlar for the Fellow-Craft to try their Jewels upon..."

Now we find this curious statement about the Fellow-Crafts (literally Fellow of the Craft, or full member of the Craft). They are to "try" their jewels upon the Rough Ashlar. Note it does not say chip away or perfect, but to "try" their jewels upon it. This is significant because the Rough Ashlar is a symbol of ancient Pantheism where it is referred to as the "Uncut Block". Also worth

noting is a passage from the Bible.

Exodus 20:25 - And if thou wilt make me an altar of stone, thou shalt not build it of hewn stone: for if thou lift up thy tool upon it, thou hast polluted it.

The Fellow-Crafts could learn much about the foundations of the peculiar system of morality from the Rough Ashlar by trying their jewels upon it. These jewels refer to the -

**Square
Level
Plumb**

The Rough Ashlar fails to be Square. It is not Level nor is it Plumb. It is in its rough and natural state, the way the Great Architect of the Universe created it. According to what remains in the modern ritual regarding this stone we learn -

The common gavel is an instrument made use of by operative masons to break off the superfluous corners of rough stones, the better to fit them for the builder's use; but we, as Free and Accepted Masons, are taught to make use of it for the more noble and glorious purpose of divesting our minds and consciences of all the vices and superfluities of life, thereby fitting us, as living stones, for that spiritual building, that house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens.

Vice

1 a: moral depravity or corruption : WICKED-NESS b: a moral fault or failing c: a habitual and usually trivial defect or shortcoming: FOIBLE <suffered from the vice of curiosity>

Superfluities

1 a: EXCESS, OVERSUPPLY b: something unnecessary or superfluous
2: immoderate and especially luxurious living, habits, or desires

Most modern Masons never stop to think about the true implication of this statement because they remain lost in the allegory of the ritual. When a child is born it is in a purely natural state of being (Rough Ashlar) having never been subjected to the "vices and superfluities of life." The vices and superfluities are actually things that we do that take us further away from that pure and natural state of being that we were born into. Thus, the original ritual does not seek to perfect us through the use of the working tools but to restore us to the natural simplicity of a child. This is made clear by the wording "...to make use of it for the more noble and glorious purpose of divesting our minds and consciences of all the vices and superfluities of life." In other words it

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is those habits and beliefs which we have learned through our mind and accepted into our consciences that must be removed before we can experience our true spiritual nature and be restored to our natural state of being.

The Fellow-Crafts, by trying their jewels upon the Rough Ashlar, symbolically learn how to recognize their natural state of being. Human beings are not meant to be Square, Level or Plum, they are living and changing at all times.

As you can now see the old Natural Philosophy of Freemasonry had no need for, or use of, the Perfect Ashlar. It viewed the whole of the creation as already perfect in its natural state as created by the Great Architect of the Universe. The whole idea proposed by modern Masonry, that through the use of Masonic working tools one can "Perfect" their Ashlar, is an affront to the deity. It is like saying, "Freemasonry can Perfect upon the Imperfect creation of the Great Architect." This represents the ultimate in humanistic arrogance, and the results of such a false and specious philosophy are readily apparent in the Craft today. 'Perfect Ashlar Masonry' requires strict and immutable rules and structure in order to exemplify its "perfection".

These, however, defy the natural order of the creation that is entirely dynamic. Ask any physicist and they will tell you that it is the nature of all things to be in a constant state of change, nothing is static, and exact and perfect knowledge of even elementary particles such as electrons exists only as a probability. Thus, anything that remains static in a changing environment will be swept away by natural forces and replaced by something of equal dynamics to the environment in which it exists.

The creation is such that everything has its use and place. Nothing is imperfect by design, but is perfectly suited to perform its function within the whole of the creation. The concepts of good and evil are but opposite extremes of the same thing. Our tendency to objectify reality into separate parts has given us the false illusion that the creation is the sum of its parts when, in fact, the parts are just different perspectives of the One. The whole of the creation is unified from beginning to end, no part exists separately from any other. In the words of physicist Werner Heisenberg -

[In modern physics], one has now divided the world not into different groups of objects but into different groups of connections ... What can be distinguished is the kind of connection which is primarily important in a certain phenomenon ... The world thus appears as a complicated tissue of events, in which connections of different kinds alternate or overlap or combine and thereby

determine the texture of the whole.

Returning to our discussion of the Peculiar System of Morality we begin to realize that the Panentheistic ethics of the early Freemasons were not wholly unfounded or radical at all. The paradoxical nature of Natural Philosophy and a Natural System of Morality is essential for balance and harmony. The Natural Philosophy of Newton requires that we objectify everything in the creation to understand it from a rational or mental perspective. The Natural System of Morality requires that we view everything as actually being a part of the One. This takes us back to the words of Toland -

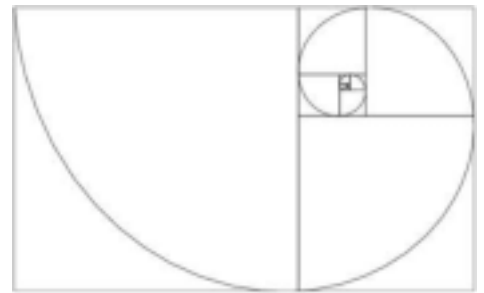
**The universe is a unity.
Every material thing is in all things.
All things come from all, and all is in all things.
The Universe is divine.**

Natural Philosophy in the absence of Panentheistic Natural Morality will, by definition, objectify all of the creation from a single point of view - that of the observer. This makes the observer the god of his reality because everything exists only from his perspective within the whole of the creation. This has catastrophic implications when viewed from the macro level of Einstein's Theory of Relativity that shows that two objects moving at different velocities will perceive the same event at different points in space-time.

In other words the true reality can never be observed by any unique observer because all are seeing it either slightly differently, or in the case of vast distances the difference will be dramatic. Only when the balancing and harmonizing effects of the Natural System of Morality are applied are we reminded of the Oneness of the whole of the creation, and the truly unique perspective of the Great Architect.

The Masonic rituals are replete with symbolism to support this conclusion, but once again we must strip away the allegory to find their true significance. In the beginning, before the advent of physical lodge buildings, Freemasons practiced their ritual work in rented rooms, usually above a tavern. All of the working tools, columns, and tracingboards were carried around in a trunk, or often-times a black coffin, which was commonly referred to as the "Ark of Traditions". The tracingboards were large canvases that were rolled-out onto the floor. On them were painted all of the Masonic symbols related to the specific degree for which they were created. Blue Symbolic lodges utilized three tracingboards, one for each symbolic degree. The dimensions of these tracingboards is of special importance when interpreting their meaning.

They were cut to the dimensions of a Golden Rectangle (shown in the next column).



The significance of this within a system of Natural Philosophy is obvious. A Golden Rectangle is based on the Golden Mean - a mathematical ratio that shows-up throughout all of the cosmos. Everything from the spiral of galaxies to the strands of DNA conform to this ratio.

Later, when lodges had acquired their own buildings the checkered pavement and tessellated boarder came to represent this ratio. Oftentimes modern Masonry mistakes the golden rectangle for the double cube, but as we shall see the Double-Cube has its own special role to play in the symbolism of Freemasonry.



Before we can approach an understanding of the Double-Cube we have to have a better understanding of the people who joined Masonic Lodges in the early eighteenth century. A quick look through the existing membership roles of the early lodges in London shows that they were most frequented by the upper educated middle class which consisted of scientists, antiquarians, philosophers, etc. If we look at some of the personal works of these people and/or their personal letters, we discover that most of them were deists, atheists and pantheists. This of course begs the question as to why modern Freemasonry requires a belief in deity, if it wasn't required by the founders of the fraternity. This is primarily due to a misinterpretation of Anderson's Constitutions. Anderson says -

A Mason is oblig'd by his tenure, to obey the moral Law; and if he rightly understands the Art, he will never be a stupid Atheist, nor an irreligious Libertine.*

A careful reading of this statement results in a

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fundamental question - "How could anyone 'rightly understand the art,' if they were not permitted to become a Mason?" When you consider this along with the fact that many of the early Masons were acknowledged atheists, the logic follows that Anderson isn't creating a prohibition criteria for membership, but is simply stating that Masons who truly understand the "Art" will be neither atheists nor deists. There is additional proof of how misguided modern Masonry is regarding this issue. In Anderson's Constitutions this statement falls under the Charges that are read to every new Entered Apprentice Mason, and not under the Constitutional section regarding membership.

As I'm sure you are now beginning to recognize the need for secrecy in the old Masonic system, let us take a moment to examine a few key parts of the Masonic obligations. In considering the horrific penalties of the obligations it is a curious fact that none of them say something to the extent of "and may God strike me dead if I..." Instead the penalties are clearly to be carried-out by other Masons.

These penalties make sense when you consider the fact that you could be hanged or burned alive for questioning the doctrines of the Church, let alone teaching something that would be considered heretical. The fact that the deity is never invoked to carry out the penalty is related to the Panentheistic view of the universe. In other words we are a part of the cosmos that is composed of energy which is a part of the deity. To ask the deity to destroy a part of itself would be heresy to a Panentheist/Freemason.

Of course modern Masonry has no need for this level of secrecy, and those who have questioned the horrible penalties have done so justifiably. Why do we need to keep its common system of morality a secret?

With this new understanding of the early Freemasons we can now turn our attention to the Double-Cube/Broached Thurnel, Altar, Bible, Square and Compasses. The Bible is the source of the allegory, therefore, it can be removed from the symbolism. This is not to say that some of the Freemasons of 1717 didn't use the Bible for their oaths and obligations, but that it was not central to the underlying symbolism. As a matter of fact many early Freemasons took their oaths and obligations on the Book of Constitutions or the Old Charges. I realize that this goes against the teachings of modern Masonry and everything that modern Masons have been told, but as you will soon see it is none-the-less a fact.

Some of my readers will undoubtedly be disconcerted by the removal of the Bible on the grounds that it was merely a part of the allegory. To illus-

trate the allegorical nature of the Bible and its stories I would like for you to consider the fact that every Masonic lodge is situated in the opposite direction of King Solomon's Temple. The temple in Jerusalem faced East so that the first rays of the sun would enter in through the main doors each morning.

Masonic lodges are situated due East and West and are entered through doors on the western face. If the early Freemasons had wanted us to take the Bible as anything other than a part of the allegory, it would make sense then that a lodge should be situated in the same way as the historical temple of Solomon, but in fact the exact opposite is true.

Another fact that must be considered regarding the allegorical nature of the Bible and its contributions to the rituals is the secret passwords. Most Masons believe that the secret passwords have always been the same, but this is not true. Before we can discuss this, however, we will need to review the two Grand Lodges in England that became engaged in the power struggle that led to the formation of the United Grand Lodge of England in 1813.

The Grand Lodge that was formed in 1717 would later come to be known as the Grand Lodge of the 'Moderns'. Later, in 1751, another Grand Lodge would be formed by Irish immigrants, and it would become known as the Grand Lodge of the 'Antients'. Ironically, the 'Antients' are the more modern of the two! There are considerable differences between these two bodies, so much so that they each considered the other to be clandestine. Below is a list of some of the main differences.

The Grand Lodge of the 'Moderns'

- * Formed in 1717
- * Claimed ancient descent from the old guilds
- * Their Constitutions are still recognized as authoritative
- * Expensive and exclusive membership
- * Membership consisted of members of the Royal Society, Artists, Scientists, Educated middle-class, aristocracy
- * Changed the modes of recognition and passwords to help maintain secrecy as needed
- * Conducted lodge education in the laws of mechanics, calculus and other cutting edge ideas
- * Maintained a peculiar system of morality
- * Eventually taken over by the 'Antients' with the formation of the UGLE

The Grand Lodge of the 'Antients'

- * Formed in 1751
- * Claimed ancient descent from the old guilds
- * Their Constitutions are no longer recognized as authoritative
- * Inexpensive and easy to join

- * Membership consisted of soldiers, mercenaries, uneducated lower class, sailors, etc.
- * Due to military members its lodges spread rapidly around the globe.
- * Quickly grew to outnumber the 'Moderns'
- * Kept the original modes of recognition as put in place by the 'Moderns' in 1717
- * Had special "Marks"
- * Adopted the common protestant Christian morality of the era
- * Added the Royal Arch degree
- * Became what is today the UGLE

The fact that the 'Moderns' felt at liberty to change the passwords (which came directly from the Biblical allegory) at any time in order to maintain secrecy goes to prove that even the supposed sacred secret words were not nearly as sacred to the founders of Speculative Freemasonry as they were to the uneducated 'Antients' and their offspring - modern 21st century Freemasonry. The real Speculatives (the 'Moderns') had a secret between them that was more valuable than any part of the Biblical allegory.

The altar in the center of the lodge is symbolic of the Broached Thurnel/Double-Cube (BTDC). The Square is symbolic of the formation of the lower cubical part of the stone.

This brings us to the Compasses. What role do they play in all of this? Unlike the Square, no lodge officer's jewel is the Compasses. Of the list of weapons that are used against Hiram Abiff they are not among them. The only references regarding them are related to the circumscribing of desires, and the fact that they are dedicated to the Craft. An unmentioned, but observed utilization of the Compasses, is upon the altar where they move step by step above the points of the Square. The Compasses are a tool used mainly for design and not manufacture; they are the symbolic working tool of the Great Architect of the Universe.



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The Compasses are intimately related to the Broached Thurnel. They are a symbolic allusion to its triangular surfaces. When the Compasses are placed on the altar they are always opened to sixty degrees. This is important because sixty degrees is the internal angle of every corner of an equilateral triangle. The sum of all the angles in an equilateral triangle is always 180 degrees which is also equal to half a circle. This pattern continues the theme of the lodge being 180 degrees the opposite of the historical temple of Solomon. The idea being that once a Mason had mastered the art his view of the cosmos would be altered by 180 degrees from that which he had previously known.



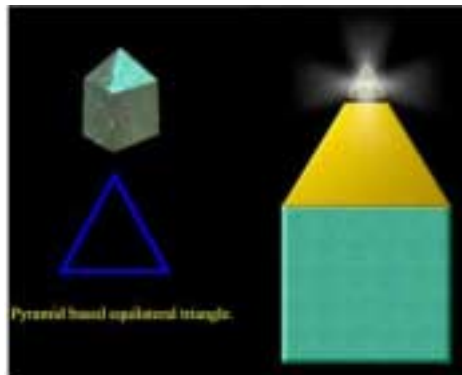
The Square and Compasses when combined in the well-known Masonic logo allude to the design of the creation (Compasses) and the manifestation of it (Square). Thus, the Freemason moves from a terrestrial and mechanical (Square) view of the creation to a deeper understanding of its fundamental unity (Compasses).

The pyramid atop the Broached Thurnel is made up of four equilateral triangles. When it is placed atop the altar and positioned such that its flat polished surfaces face the cardinal directions, then something magical happens. The words of the ritual come to life!

S. W. - As the sun rises in the east, to open and govern the day, so rises the Worshipful Master in the east, to open and govern his Lodge, set the craft to work, and give them proper instruction whereby they may pursue their labors.



As I pointed-out earlier, a Masonic lodge is situated exactly opposite of that of Solomon's Temple, therefore the Worshipful Master could not possibly observe the rising of the sun in the east because he is facing west. Yet, all Masons are repeatedly told that Masonic Light originates in the east. Before we continue we must also consider one other aspect of the Light and its relationship to the altar. No Mason is to ever walk or stand between the Worshipful Master and the altar because the "Three Great Lights" reside there. So where is the real Light?



When the Broached Thurnel is upon the altar and the sun rises in the east the Worshipful Master observes its glistening rays as they are reflected off the polished surfaces of the Broached Thurnel. At first it rises up through the cube and then into the pyramid. Slowly it moves towards the left side of the pyramid and passes on to the Junior Warden who says -

As the sun is in the south, at high meridian,

it is the beauty and glory of the day, so stands the Junior Warden in the south, the better to observe the time, call the craft from labor to refreshment, superintend them during the hours thereof, and see that the means of refreshment be not converted into intemperance or excess; and call them to labor again, that they may have pleasure and profit thereby.

With the assistance of the Broached Thurnel the Junior Warden can truly "observe the time" because High Twelve will always be when the sun's reflection reaches at or near the apex of the pyramid. As the sun travels past the station of the Junior Warden it sets in the west. Note, that at no time is any light reflected to the north off the surfaces of the Broached Thurnel, therefore, the north is literally "dark".* Now all of the ritual nonsense starts to make a little more sense, doesn't it?. Stepping between the Worshipful Master and the altar would block his view of the Light!

*(This is only true for latitudes equal to or north of London. More on this and the mathematics in a future paper.)

The passage of time is of great importance in the ritual and much could be said about the columns that sit at the Warden's stations, and about how it reveals many of the other veiled secrets, but this goes beyond the scope of the present work.

Conclusion

The "Peculiar System of Morality" of the early Speculative Freemasons was based on the universalistic views of the seventeenth century Pantheists.

*The universe is a unity.
Every material thing is in all things.
All things come from all, and all is in all things.
The Universe is divine.*

The great thinkers and philosophers of that era recognized a deep and serious flaw in Descartes' Cartesian model and the objectivist empiricism that had emerged from it. They rightly perceived that the ultimate ends of such a philosophy would be the dehumanization of mankind brought about by the spiritually destitute state that this objectification of the whole of experienced reality would render over time.

The discoveries of Newton would only go to further the value of empirical methodology, and that this would result in the fall of Christendom and its moral code. The future of knowledge and technology appeared limitless, but in its wake a morally deprived civilization would arise.

A new religion was being born - Science. But, this new religion based its doctrines on the empirical

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evidence collected through observation. Science was unlike any religion before it, in that its dogma could and would change as our knowledge of the cosmos expanded. This meant that its morality, like its dogma, would be relative to observation.

Realizing that Judeo-Christian ethics would soon collapse under the weight of scientific inquiry these men sought desperately to find a system of morality that would at once be compatible with the new 'religion,' while at the same time being able to transcend its narrow empirical view of the whole of the creation. Therefore, Freemasonry, has always rightly claimed that it is not a religion, nor is it for or against any religion, but that it is a peculiar system of morality. I might add - a system of morality that is needed more today than at any other point in human history.

Unfortunately, the same empirical scientific methodology that it was originally envisioned to harmonize with humanity, has finally arrived at its modern era successor's doorstep, pointing-out its many present incongruities and inconsistencies. This was inevitable due to the fact that modern day Masonry is politically clinging to Judeo-Christian ideology, when a close inspection of its allegories and symbols lead in an entirely different direction. On the other side, the Christian fundamentalists have replaced its old detractors - primarily the Catholic and Anglican churches. The failure of the Grand Lodge of the 'Moderns' to succeed in its original mission, combined with the philosophical failures of the 'Antients', has left mankind entirely destitute of a complimentary system of morality that should have formed the basis of a system of ethics for empirical science.

The catastrophic effects of this moral vacuum may not, at first, be readily apparent to those unfamiliar with the issues that have evolved out of uncontrolled objectivist empiricism. Through the knowledge we have attained we have been able to harness the power of nature and the atom, utilize natural resources on an unprecedented scale, manipulate genetics, and preserve and lengthen human life. While many of these advances have had an overall positive impact on us as a species and on our environment, the lack of any meaningful moral restrictions has led to some of these advances spiraling out of control and leading us ever closer to the brink of destruction. In short, our knowledge has expanded beyond our wisdom to utilize it properly.

Freemasonry is often referred to as a "Progressive Science". Natural philosophy, by necessity, requires a progressive science in order to become a practical and reasonable world-view. Unfortunately, if mankind were to adopt the purely Cartesian logic of Descartes or Bacon we would quickly discover that it has the potential to de-

stroy the spiritual nature of man, and perhaps even the earth. Thus, the pressing need for a peculiar system of morality to act as a system of checks and balances.

It is the human mind that sets us apart from the animals. While at first it seems to be a blessing, it can also be a curse. Because of our mind we develop perspectives of reality that may not be accurate. Only through natural philosophy and progressive science can these delusions be taken away and the true nature of the deity and the creation revealed.

The 'Antients' among others after them reinterpreted the concept of speculation. Under their system a Mason was to speculate on the meaning of the symbols presented to him and Freemasonry could mean whatever the Mason was capable of imagining. Under the 'Moderns' Freemasonry had a very specific meaning and its implications on our perspective of reality and the future were a cause for speculation; one was to speculate on the implications of the changes in one's perspective of reality, the nature of deity, and the cosmos.

Speculate

- 1a: to meditate on or ponder a subject : REFLECT b : to review something idly or casually and often inconclusively
- 2: to assume a business risk in hope of gain; especially : to buy or sell in expectation of profiting from market fluctuations

Transitive Senses

- 1: to take to be true on the basis of insufficient evidence : THEORIZE <speculated that a virus caused the disease>
- 2: to be curious or doubtful about : WONDER <speculates whether it will rain all vacation>

Science

- 1: the state of knowing : knowledge as distinguished from ignorance or misunderstanding
- 2a: a department of systematized knowledge as an object of study <the science of theology> b : something (as a sport or technique) that may be studied or learned like systematized knowledge <have it down to a science>
- 3a: knowledge or a system of knowledge covering general truths or the operation of general laws especially as obtained and tested through scientific method b : such knowledge or such a system of knowledge concerned with the physical world and its phenomena : NATURAL SCIENCE
- 4: a system or method reconciling practical ends with scientific laws <culinary science>

For far too long Freemasons have wrongly be-

lieved that they were to speculate about the meanings of the symbols, when they should have been speculating about the meaning and implications of their Natural Philosophy, Progressive Science and Peculiar System of Morality. If we just begin to speculate on the basic definitions of the Great Architect -

The universe is a unity.

Every material thing is in all things.

All things come from all, and all is in all things.

The Universe is divine.

then we begin to realize how all is one and one is all. With this, the meaning of the old Freemason's statement that "Freemasonry is an ancient order dedicated to the brotherhood of all mankind under the All-Seeing Eye of God," becomes very clear. All of humanity is, by the very nature of the creation, one great brother/sisterhood. We are all linked together by primordial indissoluble bonds. The All-Seeing Eye and the "Light" are one and the same. The Light is the divine spark that enters the great void - the nothingness, and shattering into ever smaller units forms the basic building blocks of the creation. God is in everything, God is everything.

What does this imply about Freemasonry's Peculiar System of Morality? Based on this primary belief everything we do affects the whole to some greater or lesser extent. It's like the "Butterfly Effect" where a butterfly flapping its wings in Brazil has the potential to setoff a series of events in Texas. The Peculiar System of Morality goes beyond just mankind and reaches into the far corners of the universe. Everything is a part of the One and what we do can have far reaching effects.

The Peculiar System of Morality forces us to acknowledge moral responsibilities that extend far beyond the scope of the systems taught by Judaism, Christianity, and Islam. Not only are we responsible for our actions towards one another as human beings, but also for those that impact every part of the whole of the creation. This beautiful, strong, and wise system of morals is all that stands between us and objectifying everything in the universe. It applies wisdom to the advances of science, and keeps us aware of how intimately connected we are to the all which is One.

Today, modern Freemasons politic among themselves over meaningless Masonic titles and silly colorful hats. They attempt to bring value to the organization by bragging about their many charities. For all of the good modern Freemasons have accomplished, they have ultimately failed mankind. No amount of charity can makeup for their failure to promote the one thing of greatest value they had to offer humanity - the Peculiar System of Morality.

The Future of Freemasonry

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Freemasonry, as an institution, is intimately related to its peculiar system of morality. It is not a static entity nor can it be and survive. Its true nature is systemically related to changing external conditions to which it responds by filling moral voids. These voids occur over the course of time as human understanding and knowledge shift from one point to another along a natural line of development and improvement.

The present Masonic system represents an archaic view of reality altogether incompatible with the present level of human understanding and thought. The notion that “the teachings of Freemasonry are timeless” is only true so long as Freemasonry progresses alongside human thought.

While it was designed to be “timeless” through its dynamic approach to reality and change, this advanced concept has been utterly lost by the present generation of Freemasons. At first we see this problem arising out of the conservative attitudes of the organization’s elderly membership, but upon closer inspection we see the new generations of Masons caught in the same ideological trap.

Freemasonry was designed to be a self-organizing (re-organizing) system. Its initial design was entirely cellular with only a weak central authority to settle internal disputes. It has now shifted to a centrally controlled network that restricts its natural tendency toward change and evolution. It is important that we understand the nature of these original self-organizing principles, if Freemasonry is to continue to exist in the future.

The first concept of self-organization is the creation of new structures and new modes of behavior in the self-organizing process. All possible structural changes take place within a given variety pool of structures, and survival chances of the system depend on the richness, or requisite variety, of that pool. These include the creation of novel structures and modes of behavior in the process of development, learning, and evolution.

The second common characteristic of this system of self-organization is open systems operating far from equilibrium. A constant flow of creativity and energy through the system is necessary for self-organization to take place. The striking emergence of new structures and new forms of behavior, which is the hallmark of self-organization, occurs only when the system is far from equilibrium.

The third characteristic of this self-organizing system is the nonlinear interconnectedness of the system’s components. Physically this nonlinear pattern results in feedback loops.

Of these three concepts it is perhaps most difficult to comprehend the nature of the feedback

loops that can, and will, occur in developmental stages of Masonic organizations. Before I address the mechanism of these feedback loops it is necessary that we first understand the law of survival that is directly related to the first concept.

Early Freemasonry progressed through a highly dynamic process of development that, like all living natural systems, tended to be out of equilibrium. The further from a state of equilibrium it moved the more dynamic and radical the changes within the organization became, thus, allowing for a multitude of diverse systems that met the needs of a wide variety of people. Over time the system began to move back towards a state of static equilibrium, and as a result of this multiple new organizations were formed outside of the formal Masonic structure.

In other words Freemasonry became too rigid to contain the dynamics represented by these other systems, and they were forced to split away. By 1775 the dynamic growth of Freemasonry was halted by its increasingly rigid structures that prevented it from moving away from a state of static equilibrium. Needless to say over the course of the last two centuries Freemasonry has broken free of the rigid structures imposed upon it and returned to states further from equilibrium, allowing for continued growth and dynamic change. A good example of this type of behavior is the Scottish Rite under the leadership of Albert Pike. Pike completely redefined the Scottish Rite, and along with it Freemasonry. And, as could be anticipated Freemasonry experienced a period of phenomenal growth and expansion. Again, we see this same type of behavior beginning again around 1949 with the Shrine. The Shrine redefined Freemasonry as a social club. Unfortunately, since that time Freemasonry has remained in a static state of equilibrium that has again resulted in its present decline.

Freemasonry expands and contracts based on naturally occurring feedback loops. There are two types of feedback loops: self-amplifying and self-regulating. Self-amplifying feedback loops amplify or reinforce the same thing over and over again until the system in which they exist self-destructs. Self-regulating feedback loops amplify or reinforce something until a certain state is achieved, at which point they change direction. At the present time Freemasonry is caught in a self-amplifying feedback loop that continually reinforces the processes of a dying system that causes the rate of decay to rise at an ever increasing rate. If we were to look back at history we would discover that when Freemasonry was expanding it was through self-regulating feedback loops.

Self-regulating feedback loops work best in living systems where they act to keep things always in a state outside of static equilibrium, and as I pointed-out earlier it is in this state that Freemasonry expands rapidly.



Trinomial

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is, however, just the first layer. Moral can vary from time to time and from place to place: Brethren should rather strive to investigate metaphysics, which is immutable and eternal.

Symbols are the key which opens the metaphysics’ door, thus revealing the true ‘secrets’ of Freemasonry, those about spirituality, which are intrinsically incommunicable, since they are relevant to a non-human domain which cannot be expressed by words: *Passing beyond the human cannot be worded*, wrote Dante in the Divine Comedy.

I think I can finish by drawing on a great English Brother, Walter Leslie Wilmshurst. In his masterpiece, “The meaning of Freemasonry”, he wrote:

We have now established that Freemasonry has synthesized the essence of different religions, which it teaches through its symbolism. Each of its symbols and allegories was culled from the wisdom of many faiths, and had a definite background and meaning when it was conceived. But while being handed down over centuries they have been mutated and modified gradually, till their original purpose and purport were forgotten.

Freemasonry has the potential to become a great unifying force, which can to demolish all barriers, and destroy all differences that keep men apart. Brethren of all faiths can empathize with it, if only they can understand and practice its teachings. However we are more concerned with becoming expert in the punctilious observance of the ritual, than with its message. Should we continue to thus prefer form over substance, preserve the husk and discard the kernel, we shall be retaining only empty symbols and reducing Freemasonry to a mechanical rendering of the ritual. Symptoms like dwindling attendance and declining membership are already in evidence, and if left untreated much longer, could well result in the end of the order.

Freemasonry is too priceless a heritage to be permitted to perish through sheer apathy. It has to be nurtured and preserved. We have all been charged with making daily advancements in Masonic knowledge; a duty seldom discharged. We owe it to the institution, and to ourselves, to delve into the meaning of the symbols and the emblems, that the true beauty of Freemasonry may once again be unfolded to us.

Throw wide open the shutters of your minds and imagination. Learn to see in Masonry something more than a parochial system enjoying elementary morality, performing perfunctory and meaningless rites and serving as an agreeable accessory to social life. Look to find it in a living philosophy... realise that its many and valuable secrets are deep and that its mysteries are eternal ones of the Spirit...



Valuable Links To Masonic Works

If you have any links to masonic works, please send them to us and we will publish them here every month.

These are clickable Links.

Ahmon Rezon
Ahimon Rezon
Ancient Charges
Book of the Ancient & Accepted Scottish Rite of Freemasonry (1884)
Book of the Words by Albert Pike
The Builder Magazine 1915 - 1930
Ceremonial Explanation of the Entered Apprentice Degree
Ceremonial Explanation of the Fellowcraft Degree
Concise History of Freemasonry
The Craftsman and Freemason's Guide; Cornelius Moore; 1851
David vs. Goliath?
The Dionysian Artificers
English Speculative Freemasonry
Focusing on What Matters Most
General Regulations Of Freemasonry
The History of Freemasonry; James William Mitchell; 186?
**Illustrations of Masonry, By One Of The Fraternity, Who Has Devoted
Thirty Years To The Subject; Captain William Morgan; 1826, 1851**
Initiation, Mystery and Salvation
Is It True What They Say About Freemasonry?
Landmarks and Old Charges
The Lights and Shadows of Freemasonry; Rob Morris; 1852
The Lost Keys Of Freemasonry by Manly P. Hall
Masonry and Religion
**The Masonic Manual, A Pocket Companion For The Initiated; Robert
Macoy; 1867**
Masonry CAPT. WILLIAM. MORGAN'S
The Meaning Of Masonry by W.L. Wilmshurst
Misrepresentation of Freemasonry
Morals and Dogma by Albert Pike
More Light
My Ideal Mason
Mysticism of The Royal Arch
Opinions on Speculative Masonry; James Creighton Odiorne; 1830
The Principles of Masonic Law; Albert Gallatin Mackey; 1858
The Regius Manuscript
Richardson's Monitor of Free-Masonry; Jabez Richardson; 1860
The Secret Teachings Of All Ages by Manly P. Hall
The Symbolism of Freemasonry; Albert Gallatin Mackey; 1869
Symbols
Tales of a Masonic Life; Rob Morris; 1860
The Taxil Confessions
**The Theocratic Philosophy of Freemasonry, In Twelve Lectures; George
Oliver; 1866**
The Truth About Freemasonry
The Virginia Text Book; John Dove; 1866
Webb's Freemason's Monitor; Thomas Webb Smith; 1865

The Last Word Pancakes



Six -year-old Brandon decided one Saturday morning to fix his parents pancakes He found a big bowl and spoon, pulled a chair to the counter, opened the cupboard and pulled out the heavy flour canister, spilling it on the floor.

He scooped some of the flour into the bowl with his hands, mixed in most of a cup of milk and added some sugar, leaving a floury trail on the floor which by now had a few tracks left by his kitten.

Brandon was covered with flour and getting frustrated He wanted this to be something very good for Mom and Dad, but it was getting very bad. He didn't know what to do next, whether to put it all into the oven or on the stove and he didn't know how the stove worked!

Suddenly he saw his kitten licking from the bowl of mix and reached to push her away, knocking the egg carton to the floor. Frantically he tried to clean up this monumental mess but slipped on the eggs, getting his pajamas white and sticky.

And just then he saw Dad standing at the door Big crocodile tears welled up in Brandon's eyes. All he'd wanted to do was something good, but he'd made a terrible mess. He was sure a scolding was coming, maybe even a spanking. But his father just watched him.

Then, walking through the mess, he picked up his crying son, hugged him and loved him, getting his own pajamas white and sticky in the process!

That's how God deals with us. We try to do something good in life, but it turns into a mess. Our marriage gets all sticky or we insult a friend, or we can't stand our job, or our health goes sour.

Sometimes we just stand there in tears because we can't think of anything else to do. That's when God picks us up and loves us and forgives us, even though some of our mess gets all over Him.

But just because we might mess up, we can't stop trying to "make pancakes" for God or for others.

Sooner or later we'll get it right, and then we'll be glad we tried...