

The Architect

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INTRODUCTION

Call for Papers

Papers are selected from those which have been sent to the Editor, either directly, or via the Grand Secretary. The Editor will attempt to select the better papers but also include a representative sampling of papers from as many Councils as possible.

The papers are accepted from members of Councils within Canada without regard to which jurisdiction that Council belongs.

The submission of papers is encouraged to be on 5 1/4 or 3 1/2 inch computer disks. For obvious reasons, there will be a greater chance of a paper being included if it doesn't have to be completely retyped.

On IBM formats, WordPerfect files, or ASCII (unformatted) files are preferred but other formats can also be handled.

Please send a paper copy as well, particularly if tables or formatting was used, as some of this information is lost in the computer translation.

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ORGANIZATION OF PAPERS

The papers are grouped under 3 categories as an aid to selecting the type of paper which you may want to read. The Categories are:

- those primarily conveying facts,
- those primarily conveying opinions and
- those primarily conveying facts or opinions but also containing references, an index and/or a supporting bibliography.

The first category is called "Information" and includes those which appear to have been prepared to inform the readers on some subject.

The second category is called "Stimulation" and includes those which appear to be intended to persuade or inspire the readers.

The third category, called "Research", is like the Information group but the author has also gone to the trouble of including detailed references, and index or bibliography. This type of paper is very valuable to other researchers by enabling them to start from your facts and sources, and to continue or to branch off in other directions.



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Information



THE MASONIC APRON

By Terry Tutte

Keystone Council No.172

Never disgrace this badge
for you may rest assured
it will never disgrace you.

With those words ringing in his ears he stood before the Lodge, the youngest of all the brethren the newcomer, the apprentice. Unpretentious and unassuming, anxious to serve the lodge and his fellow men he stood alone-wearing a plain white apron-and emblem of truth and passive duty.

As time passes and the brother progresses in his masonic career insignias of office and of rank appear on his apron. These are worn with pride, but underneath there still remains the plain white apron-the badge of innocence and the bond of friendship.

The action date of the introduction of the apron as part of the masonic clothing is not known. It is probably about 1720,(AD) a newspaper reported on an installation of a Grand Master,
"many persons of quality and gentry being masons,
clothed in white aprons and gloves worn.

In March 1731, the Grand Lodge minutes mention, Masters and Wardens may line their white leather aprons with white silk, this was most likely to prevent clothing from staining by skins which were not properly cured or tanned.

At the same time, the Grand Master and His Wardens were permitted to line their white leather aprons with blue silk, the choice of dark blue was in keeping with the highest order of chivalry the order of the Garter.

Statues unearthed by archaeologists in the middle east, Greece and Amalcer, have been found adorned with aprons, the



aprons, therefore, was truly long before the Roman Eagle or the golden fleece to which it is compared in our ritual.

The upside down apron:

In 1751 a body which styled itself the Antients emerged and began to challenge the jurisdiction of the existing Grand Lodge which they mockingly termed Moderns, alleging they had departed from the old institutions.

In the ranks of the Antients there were a number of immigrants from Ireland, and the members were described as 'men of some education and a honest character but in low circumstances'.

Verbal rivalry and friction developed between the two organisations, and derogatory remarks about the apron worn by the Moderns were made.

It is difficult to say if the following was true but the statement is certainly humorous, Lawrence DERMOTT first Grand Secretary of the Antients made these remarks in an article, he proposed that they should be turned upside down, in order to avoid appearing mechanical. The Moderns followed this proposal, the article went on to say: "Agreeable as the alteration might seem, to the gentlemen, nevertheless it was attended with an ugly circumstance: for, in traversing the lodge, the brethren were subject to tread upon the skins, which often caused them to fall with great violence, so that it was necessary to invent several methods of walking, in order to avoid treading upon the strings.

Points on the apron:

In some lodges the newly-made mason is told that the five points of the apron, one at each corner and one at the peak of the flap, allude to the five needed to form a quorum, I prefer to thin of them as reminders of the basically vital five points of fellowship.



The Securing clasp on the apron takes the form of a serpent. Why the serpent, a reptile which inspires instinctive fear in most humans? The devil is associate with the serpent in reference to both his subtlety and malice. Yet in some countries the serpent has been regarded as an emblem of power. It is also seen as an emblem of wisdom and healing.

A mark of the Master's favour,
Records from early minutes of Grand lodge,

it is therefore, the highlight of the ceremony and when the Master commands the Senior Warden to invest the candidate with an apron, it should be offered to the Warden on a cushion by an officer of the lodge and he should not have to stoop and pick it up from the floor of his pedestal as so often happens.

A Truthful Song Composer unknown.

This piece of pure lambskin more ancient by far,
Than the fleece of pure gold, or the eagles of ear,
Tis the badge of a Mason more noble to wear,
than the Garter of Britain or order so rare.

Yet kings wear this purple and to their crown's
Which may fall from their brows when their thrones tumble down,
But this white leather apron has much more to give,
than a kindness so paid that it cannot long live.

Tis the shields of the orphan, the emblem of love,
Tis a charter of faith from the Grand Lodge above,
The high and the low in its whiteness arrayed,
One blood and one kin by its magic made.

Cities fall back to earth, nations crumble to dust,
Man was born but to die, swords were made but to rust,
But this white leather apron through the ages passed on
Was enriched in the lodge of Holy St. John.

Source from: **The Masonic Apron its Origin and Symbolism, By Ron CHUDLEY.**



HISTORY OF THE ORDER OF THE SECRET MONITOR

by Glenson T. Jones
Capital City Council No. 154
Council of Nine Muses

The beautiful ceremonies of the Order of the Secret Monitor appear to have been derived from an earlier Brotherhood of David and Jonathan. The earliest records state that such an organized brotherhood was founded in Holland around 1770. The Brotherhood then spread to other countries and especially to the United States by settlers to New Amsterdam.

William Peacher (Ref. 1, p. 4) states that the rituals of the first 3 degrees of this early order were printed in Holland in 1773 and that they resembled an early and developmental form of the present British Order of the Secret Monitor.

Many references (Ref. 1 p. 16-20) have been found to the existence of the Order of the Secret Monitor in the USA from 1820. Several simple rituals have been published (Refs. 3 & 4).

The degree in the USA was very simple, consisting of a single degree. In its earliest form, it was a true side degree which was conferred from one Master Mason on another by the acceptance of an obligation and the communication of the secrets of the degree. The degree was one of those taken into the Sovereign College of Allied Masonic and Christian Degrees for America which was founded in 1892. This Sovereign College united with the Grand Council of the Allied Masonic Degrees of the USA in 1933.

The first Grand Conclave of the Order of the Secret Monitor was formed in England in 1887 and it is now over 105 years. It is this three degree system which was introduced into the USA at Washington, D.C. in Feb. 1892 and is being introduced into Canada in September 1994.

- Ref. 1 **Order of the Secret Monitor** by William G. Peacher, Collectanea, Vol. 13 part 1, 1988
- Ref. 2 **Order of the Secret Monitor, or Brotherhood of David & Jonathan, in the British Isles and in Territories Overseas** by William G. Peacher, Collectanea Vol. 13 part 2 1989
- Ref. 3 **Allyn's Ritual of Freemasonry** (1830)
- Ref. 4 **Richardson's Monitor of Free-Masonry**



Stimulation

THE LODGE, THE WORK AND THE TRADITIONS

by Alan M. Tibbetts

Boundary Waters Council U.D.

In Masonry, as in life, each man tends to find his own place or level over time. Some Masons join the Lodge, but never get involved in it, becoming inactive members. Many of these men stay members of our Fraternity for a long time, even for the rest of their lives without taking any active part in the affairs of the Lodge.

But many men do choose to become very involved in our Order. These are the ones that go to the meetings, attend social events sponsored by their own or other Lodges, go visiting on a regular basis, take a part in the degree ceremonies when called upon, serve as Lodge officers or participate in Lodge administration.

In order for a Lodge to grow and prosper, to bring men out for meetings, degrees and activities, the active members need to be encouraged to find their particular niche within the labours of the Lodge, and then to proceed to fill that niche. It takes a balance of men working together, each within his own area of interest or expertise, to make a Lodge successful. Although at one time or another, members are asked to help out for the good of all in an area where they may not be particularly interested or adept, the willingness to assist in any and all areas of Lodge activity is what demonstrates the true Masonic virtues of friendship and brotherly love. The successful operation of any Lodge, I believe, depends on a mix of men, specializing in three different areas of Lodge life. I call these three areas The Lodge, The Work and The Traditions.

By The Lodge, I mean the administrative affairs of the organization. This includes taking a leadership role as an officer, serving actively on a committee, organizing degree work, assisting with social or other out-of-Lodge events, keeping an eye out for good new prospective members and cultivating them, assisting candidates in their progress through



the degrees; in other words, making sure the Lodge as a structured entity moves ahead in an orderly fashion.

The phrase The Work refers to the ritual part of our Order. Doing a lecture, whether taking a particular piece in a degree on a regular basis or being willing to fill in for an absent member. Taking on an occasional lecture for the first time; filling in by taking a chair for an officer who cannot make it out; and coming out for practices in order to assist younger brethren with the floor work or to better learn and deliver a particular piece with the dignity it deserves to make it more meaningful to the candidate.

The Traditions means keeping the Light of Masonry and of our particular Lodge that comes from the past and can be dimmed by time and circumstance burning brightly as a beacon lighting our way into the future. From the past, we can learn valuable lessons for the present and future. It is true that nothing really new ever happens on this earth; everything has happened somewhere before if we just have the inclination to see it. In a Lodge the age of our own - over 95 years - you can be sure that most situations facing the current membership have faced our predecessors. We just have to look back to find out when it happened, and see if the solutions (or lack of them) applied then can give us some guidance in our present situation.

This function of looking to The Traditions of the Lodge is often fulfilled by the senior members, with their store of knowledge and experience situated in their memories. But it does not fall entirely on these "old-timers" to assist in carrying on The Traditions. Anyone who can read can take an active interest in this function. Our Lodge is fortunate in that our By-Laws, given to every initiate on taking his Entered Apprentice Degree, contain a section entitled "Traditions of Granite Lodge". Every new member is urged to read these to get a sense of where we have come from. We also have an excellent Masonic Library available free to all, to enable every member to get a broader view of the traditions of Freemasonry, and thereby make his "daily advance in knowledge". The easiest way to get involved in this third area of Lodge life is to spend some time



talking to the senior active members who come out to Lodge functions.

While there are these three distinct areas necessary to the successful operation and growth of any Lodge, it does not preclude a member from dabbling in all of them; in fact the truly well-rounded Mason will involve himself in all three to a greater or lesser extent. But I believe it is human nature (not to say the restrictions of time) to tend to specialize in one area over the others. What I am saying is that for a Lodge to be a healthy and vital entity, it takes men of different interests and specialties working together as a team to make it grow and prosper.

In conclusion, you may say that many brethren are interested and involved in all three aspects of Masonry - The Lodge, The Work and The Traditions. You would undoubtedly be right, as there are and have been many well-rounded Masons in our Lodge. However, if you take a few moments to think back to Masons you have known in the past, and those of today too, their specialization will immediately come to mind, and we are all today the better for them having specialized. For it takes a blending of all three of these aspects by many men to make a successful Lodge.

So if you hear a brother say, "I could never do all that book-work", or "I have never pretended to be a great ritualist" or "I'm not interested in history" please exercise some of your Masonic charity and understand that he most certainly will have much to contribute to this Lodge in particular, and to Masonry in general, in another area where he feels himself more expert and more comfortable.

And finally, to the younger brethren especially, do not be afraid to specialize in an area of Lodge work that you find most interesting and comfortable. Whatever you choose to do, as long as you remain an active member, you will be ensuring that Granite Lodge is passed on in good condition to those who will come after you.

ON BEING MORAL
 by Donald G. Cookson
 Arcana Council No. 215

There are several lines of inquiry that may be followed in the study of Masonic topics. Some students may pursue the discovery of historical facts about the various bodies, others may look for themes and parallels within and between different branches or over time, still others may look to the exemplification or interpretation of ritual practises.

The present article focuses upon the relationship between what we do, as Masons, and what we say; between the things that we learn and teach, on the one hand, and the applications of that knowledge in daily activities. In other words this article examines aspects of the relationship between understanding morality and being moral; between knowing and doing.

There are many myths and misconceptions concerning morality, what it is, how a person goes about adopting moral behaviour and what constitutes a moral life. There seems to be a notion that it all happens if a person makes a decision to follow the path of "being good" from some point onward and finds, within himself, the will to abide by the decision with steely determination. Oh, if only it were that simple.

Morality often is conceptualized in narrower terms than it should be, with the result that the task of being moral is made much simpler. For example, if morality is thought of as describing sexual conduct only, all a person would have to do is to control or limit the ways of satisfying that appetite alone, while pursuit of satisfactions in other departments of life could go unbridled. Murder, theft, cheating at cards and clubbing the competition in the knees could be viewed as mischievous, but not immoral.

There is a notion that morality can be taught, in the way that Mathematics or Bookkeeping are, as subjects in a school or school-like setting. In fact, schools have formed courses that present the facts about morality in an orderly way. These

courses have included exercises expected to develop clear and approvable values in the students and to provide models for the students to follow in resolving those inevitable conflicts that arise between one person's values and those of others with whom he must deal.

By and large, however, schools have learned that the students are able to perform the exercises and answer the examination questions that are posed, all without much alteration in their daily lives or even in the way they appraise situations that are studied in the context of other courses.

As Plato said: "To know the good is not necessarily to do the good." If simply knowing the facts about something were to mean that the person rationally would follow the wisest course of action, we would have few smokers, almost no immoderate drinkers, no new cases of AIDS and marriages of necessity would occur only between persons who discovered sex through random experimental, not purposeful, activity.

There is a passage in Masonic ritual that is known to us all. Abstractions from that passage capture the essence of Masonic notions of morality:

If you see a man who moves quietly in his sphere of life, who fulfils his duties, is pious without hypocrisy and benevolent without ostentation, who sees the finger of the Eternal Master and adores the higher destination of man, and to whom Faith, Hope and Charity are not mere words without meaning, who opposes error without arrogance and, without proclaiming what he has done or will do, will lay hold where there is need until he has accomplished his work, then will retire into the multitude having done the good act, not for himself but for the cause of good, then you have seen the ideal of a Freemason.

We speak of such a person as one whose "heart beats warm" with kindness and concern for others, implying our awareness that this man or woman views the needs and concerns of



others as a natural part of his or her own basic personal existence.

The notions of what constitutes morality and a moral life are embedded within the description given above. Even a casual examination of the above description reveals that morality, in its essence, is built upon respect for and conscious concern for the needs and reasonable expectations of others. We now need to examine notions of moral thought and behaviour in the context of their applications and in the circumstances that seem to place limits upon them.

Whose needs are worthy of our concern and respect?

First the ancient Greeks, then the ancient Romans, set us on a course of thinking from which we still are trying to escape to this day. The Greeks defined people in two rather clearly separate groups, those who were capable of sensitive feeling and abstract thought, and those who were essentially workers with only animal instincts and brutish purposes to motivate them in life. Few among the barbarians (those who spoke with "bar-bar" sounds, not pure Greek) and few slaves (who practised the "banasic" or materially productive arts such as cooking or fishing) ever could be worthy of respect and consideration to the extent that culturally appreciative folks naturally deserved.

The "us" and "them" dichotomy established by the Greeks was more clearly defined and enforced in terms of civil rights, mutual obligations and access to benefits in society, by its being the basis of admission to citizenship in the city-state structure of ancient Greece. A person who was not a citizen of one of the several city-states could command little right or respect anywhere in the land. "WHOM THE GODS WOULD DESTROY, THEY FIRST MAKE MAD." Greek gods were more human in character than anything we now think of as a god. Those gods involved themselves in human life and affairs to an extent not now imaginable by us, often showing what we would call ungodly greed, envy, lust and capricious conduct. It was much easier to attribute god- thoughts to humans and human



thoughts to gods in those times, whatever seemed best to make a point more easily understood or more acceptable to the audience before the speaker.

The quotation above does not imply that the person to be destroyed actually became "mad" or changed in any way; it simply means that it is much easier to treat a person in harmful or destructive ways if you first find a way to think of him as faulty and unworthy of responsible behaviour by you. You first must declare him "mad" then your destruction of him can be portrayed, to yourself and others, as righteous and justified. We even can justify the process we are following by saying that we only copy the gods when we do it.

At various times in our history, we have declared quite a few groups as less worthy than others. Usually, the declaration of less-worth has justified denial of some important benefits so that the worthy (who were the only ones capable of understanding what real human qualities could be) enjoyed some excess while the "great unwashed" or "plebeian masses" suffered in want, supposedly unable to really feel pain or to be aware of the existence of injustice because their "brutish" nature did not admit of such abstract notions or sensitivities.

At times, we have included among the insensitive and unworthy, all of: women, new-world indigenous peoples, orientals, children, east Indians, negroes, eastern Europeans, dogs, cats, dolphins, whales, hardwood trees (when the land was being cleared for farming), and just about anything or anybody that could be identified as a "them" by "us" in our drive to rid ourselves of troublesome responsibility as we pursue our changing forms of gratification.

During the last four centuries at least, masons have been exhorted to view in every son of Adam, a brother of the dust. We might wonder whether we can be sure that masons, so admonished, always were able to see brothers of the dust in the groups noted above.

We, as a society, have learned that children are able to knowingly experience pain and deprivation, as can women,



negroes, Indians, Inuit, cats, dogs and dolphins. Some people even suggest that other life forms can too. Yet less than 50 years ago, following World War II, our hymns and other songs of inspiration referred to "lesser breeds without the law" as not so deserving of our responsible thought and concern. Can we be so sure that no pious mason, informed as he would have been, lustily and patriotically joined in the singing?

How do we interpret it when the Prime Minister of Canada proceeds toward reducing Unemployment Insurance benefits by first referring to unemployed workers as "sitting home, drinking beer and watching TV" in a public speech? Could this be a case of declaring them to be unworthy so that they can be denied compassion and responsible consideration? Perhaps he never has heard of the Greeks.

What does respect and concern mean? If a tree falls on a person and the person dies, is the tree morally responsible for the death? Most of us would say no, since the tree falls as a result of outside forces acting on it; it cannot be held responsible for failing to foresee the consequences of its actions and moving to prevent harm to the person. Likewise, the tree could not be thought to have acted out of malice toward the person because of memory of the person's past misdeeds.

People, on the other hand, can be held responsible for both the acts that they perform maliciously and the acts that cause harm, if the harmful consequences reasonably could have been foreseen and prevented. That is why we hold adults more responsible than children; adults are assumed to have had more chance to learn, through training and experience, and to be more capable of predicting consequences accurately.

We may be able to predict consequences of our decision not to act in the presence of conditions that are potentially harmful to someone, just as we can predict consequences of a decision to act harmfully. In either case, our moral course is to be sure that our decisions reflect respect and concern for other persons. We enter into a dilemma when we must deny something of value to



ourselves, or even put ourselves into jeopardy, in order to let our decision fully reflect respect and concern for the other person.

Quality of morality is in motivation and selflessness. Lawrence Kohlberg, among others, has studied the motivations from which people proceed when they make moral decisions. Of course, nobody makes decisions always based on the same moral reasoning, but each of us has a basic argument that typically underlies our moral position on things. Kohlberg classifies moral decisions in four general levels of functioning, with progress toward a higher level possible for us as our understanding of moral thought and responsibility advances. Kohlberg's categories are exemplified in the following:

1. Hope of reward and fear of reprisal. In other words: heaven for good behaviour and hell for bad behaviour, with some enforcing agent making sure that both are likely to be delivered;
2. It's duty. It's honourable to fulfil one's duty and dishonourable not to be dutiful. We do not think of why we do it, ours not to reason why, we just do it because it's the right thing to do;
3. Tit for tat. A kind of business arrangement with the group or with society, whereby good behaviour causes others to return with like kindness; what goes around, comes around. Only by being good and kind can you rightfully expect the same in a just society, but you have the right to expect others to fulfil the contract if you hold up your end;
4. Do it because it's right and just, and for no other reason. No justification or rationalization is required for our acts of kindness and thoughtful efforts on behalf of others. It just is the right thing to do.

Practical example number one.

There is a ritual included in almost all of the older church groups, but not always practised in recent years. These



include the Roman church, the Anglican, the United and others. The Liturgy officially is called "The Thanksgiving of Women After Child-birth" and often is popularly known as "The Churching of Women." The idea of this ceremony is drawn from an Hebrew practise required in the Book of Leviticus and followed by the Christian Churches, through the Middle Ages, to the present.

The religious thinking underlying the ceremony is that women are ritually unclean and unfit for sexual activity until the ceremony has been performed in the church, with the woman's participation. As usually is the case, however, there is a very practical benefit for people and, in this way, the church lends canon law to the support and defense of individuals.

Repeated research reveals that the biochemical and physiological readjustments of women following childbirth or miscarriage at advanced term, take about six weeks and this time period coincides with the traditional date following childbirth on which the ceremony is to be performed. During the traditional period, the women was not subject to sexual demands but, in addition, was not expected to perform duties of work for her employer.

As we might expect, the Lord of the Manor might rationalize that the geese desperately needed tending or the kitchen needed the regular scullery services, but the women had a defense against these pressures. Now, we may have a law that demands a period of time after childbirth. How can an employer respond to the situation of childbirth when it occurs?

1. "Come back and bring the baby with you, I am lost without you since only you know how the business works. We'll pay you extra." Only self-service visible here. No moral concern for anyone else.
2. "The law says I must 'give' you the time off so take it, but make sure you notify me officially that you are coming back or I don't have to hold the job for you. See you in exactly six weeks." Employer complies because he is



required by a force outside of himself. Low level of moral thought here.

3. "Sure, take the time you need and a bit more, if you find you need it. We know that doing right by you will come back to us in your loyalty and hard work in the future." It seems to be a fair way to think about the exchange of kindness (although the employer has no other real choice), for future considerations but self-service is a definite thought in this deal.
4. "Take the time you need until you feel ready to return. It's important that your health and the baby's be the first consideration. Call me when you are ready to come back. It's the way we operated long before there was a law that required it. Good luck."

Practical example number two.

Let us suppose that the Council of the Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries in the Gulf of Arabia decides to limit production and to raise the price of crude oil by 15% tomorrow. The producers of crude oil in Western Canada may make the following announcement: "We are committed to sell our product at the 'world price' so our crude now is offered at the price that has just been established."

When pressed for the reason for the price increase, the CEO of the Company may explain:

1. "We are just following the policy established for our industry." This is a mindless kind of procedure, without consideration of consequences when they might have been estimated. If some poor people now cannot afford to heat their homes to a healthy level and they suffer injury to health, the act is immoral.
2. "The Law of Supply and Demand is the economic basis of price in our industry and we really have no choice but to follow the market." The Law of Supply and Demand is not a natural law like the law of gravity, but it simply is an observation of what customarily happens



in a free-enterprise market. The alternative is to tie price to a cost-of-production-plus-fair-percentage-profit formula as happens with telephone service in Ontario or a cost-only distribution as with electric power in Ontario and telephone service in Manitoba. No matter what the label, an "it's no disgrace to grab off all you can get" business practice is not moral if people are hurt by it.

3. "We, the Company Executive and the Board of Directors, are morally bound to be maximally profitable for the stock-holders whom we serve." At its base, this means that jobs are at stake if it appears to the stock-holders that others might replace the directors or executives and make more money. It's a form of "fear of reprisal and hope for reward" morality, morality at its lowest level.
4. "We will maintain our current price which is based on cost of production and distribution of a resource that rightfully belongs to Canadians and should be available to add benefit to their lives. We do not place possibility of windfall profit ahead of our obligation to consider harmful consequences for people." Right after we hear this announcement, the alarm clock awakens us for another day in the real world.

In conclusion.

The study of morality is not just a theoretical exercise or a view from an ivory tower. It is a very practical activity that enables us to see through smoke, fog and other obscuring material. We are better able to smell the coffee in the real world. We also are better able to detect manure, even in a rose-coloured bag bearing a picture of the national flag.

It may be pure idealism to expect our actions to match perfectly with our words but, by being able to see both the ideal and the reality of practise, we may bring them into closer conformity in our own lives and, perhaps, provide resistance to any tendency for a gap to become an abyss in the broader society.



Related Readings

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- James, W., *Essays in Pragmatism*, New York, N. Y.: Hafner Publishing Co., 1948.
- Macpherson, C. B., *Democratic Theory*, London.: Oxford University Press, 1973.

The Perfect Lodge

by Henry Teubel

I think that I shall never see
A Lodge that's all it ought to be;
A Lodge whose members never stray
Beyond the straight and narrow way.

A Lodge that has no empty chair,
Whose Master never need despair;
A Lodge whose members always pay
Their dues on time without delay.

Whose Gossips never peddle lies
Or make complaints or criticize;
Where all men are always sweet and kind
And to all others' faults are blind.

Such perfect Lodges there may be
But none of them is known to me;
But still we'll work and pray and plan
To make our Lodge the best we can



Research

REFLECTIONS ON THE SKIRRET

by Robert F. Gordon

Capital City Council No. 154

Introduction

As I am sure is the case for all of the brethren present, receiving the Master Mason degree was one of the most memorable evenings of my life. I remember well, after having been raised, learning the secrets (well, at least having them imparted to me), and hearing and reflecting on the Traditional History (and wondering why the most central part of the Craft was lost!), I was conducted near the tool box in front of the Secretary's desk.

Naturally, I felt well at home. I already had two sets of tools explained to me, and after the earlier terrors this seemed very straight forward. It had not seemed very difficult to figure out at least one of the tools. After all, the square and compass were the well-known signs of Masonry, and had been explained as part of the Great Lights in the Entered Apprentice Degree. The Square had been explained as a tool in the Fellowcraft. Therefore it seemed very logical that I would get the Compasses as a tool in the MM degree. So when I saw a pair in the hands of the brother about to give the lecture, I was not surprised. The pencil, though the brass representation of it was difficult to identify immediately, was also not surprising.

But it is not the pencil that is the object of these remarks. It is that other implement.

When the brother giving the lecture mentioned that he was presenting me the W.T.s of a MM, and that the first was the skirret, I immediately reacted with puzzlement. The term "skirret" did not mean anything to me. It probably does not mean anything to most of the brethren receiving the degree, even if its use is easy to figure out. That is why I decided to find a bit more about it.

This is a subject about which it is difficult to obtain information, the more so since most of the readily available Masonic books are American, and this tool does not appear in the American workings! This paper certainly does not pretend to be either



original or exhaustively researched. It is based on the information contained in a couple of the most popular and comprehensive English sources. To do more would require original research far beyond my present capacity either to devote the time or obtain the necessary materials.

What Is a Skirret, and When Did It Enter Our Ritual?

The skirret is actually a straight forward tool, a chalk line on a frame that is mounted on a centre pin, so that it will turn freely. One can easily see its use in laying out lines on the ground by sticking the base in the soil, and with a pointed stick or pin at the end of the string, drawing it out and sticking it in the ground at the destination. By snapping the line, a true straight line can be marked. But two questions remain. Where does that funny name come from, and is the skirret a masonic tool?

Indeed, if you went to your local Home Hardware store, and asked for a skirret, do you think you would get one? I have my doubts!!

To address the second question first, it seems that as far as one can tell, the principal users of this type of tool were not masons, but landscape gardeners, although one can see how in the olden days, a building architect or supervisor, in laying out the foundation could use them. But it seems unusual in that there is very little evidence as to its use in masonry in the past, even in the significant number of pictures and woodcuts that are in use! And as we shall see, the name itself does not even appear to have an origin related to the mason's craft.

If you look up the word "skirret" in a good-sized dictionary, you may well find it, and say, "Ah ha! Of course this is a real word, and it has the same meaning as in the ritual." But, if your dictionary is large enough, and contains references to the first recorded use of the term, you will suddenly note that it comes from the early 19th Century, and its origin is linked only to speculative Freemasonry!! So where did Masonry pick up the term?

The use of the line as a tool seems to go far back in antiquity. Pictures at Thebes in ancient Egypt, 3,000 years ago, show the use of the line for setting out measurements for buildings. How



else could the perfect squares of the great pyramids be plotted? The Old Testament has many references to the use of a "line", e.g., Zachariah ii, 1: "The measuring line shall yet go forth over against it," or Jeremiah, xxxi, 39, "he marketh it out with a line." (B. Jones, 1956).

But the earliest picture we have of the skirret as we know it seems to come only from the middle of the 17th Century, in a painting called *The Backgammon Players* by the Dutch painter David Teniers the Younger.

Is the name of ancient Masonic usage, dating from the Middle Ages, then? We do not really know, but the interesting thing is that although we have references to many things Masonic in the late 17th and early 18th centuries, the first references to the skirret do not arise until the Union of the two Grand Lodges in England in 1813. Indeed, it appears that the word was introduced then, and only for Masonic usage. And even then, the word did not appear to have its present form for a dozen or so years after that! Indeed it seems probable that both the tool as a Working Tool of a Master Mason, and the name by which we know it, was introduced in the new working promulgated for the newly united Grand Lodge by the special Lodge of Reconciliation established for that purpose.

The earliest reference to the skirret in writing seems to be in a letter from a member of the Lodge of Reconciliation, Bro. Philip Broadfoot, to a member of the Lodge of Probity, No. 61, Halifax (England), dated 24 September, 1816. In the letter he mentions the "Schivit line" referring to the straight and unbending line of conduct laid down for us. (Carr, 1976)

The second reference we have to the tool was two years later in a book, *The Freemasons' Melody* that contained songs, poems, etc. for use by members of the Craft. In a section on "Toasts and Sentiments", it mentions, "May a master mason never forget the use of the skivit, pencil and compasses."

The lateness at which the skirret was introduced into the English ritual probably explains why it is not used in the United States. American workings seem largely to have been drawn from the workings of the "Antients" Grand Lodge before the



Union of 1813. If the skirret, as seems probable, was only introduced then, it makes sense that it would not be known to our American brethren—all the more reason to suspect its late arrival.

The Origin of the Word "Skirret"

There has been considerable debate about the origin of the word, skirret. According to an official publication of our own Grand Lodge of Canada in the Province of Ontario, it is of Scottish origin. (*Beyond the Pillars*, 1973) But the case for this is speculative at best. It is based on a Scottish dialect word, "skirr", meaning to scurry or rush. It is claimed that this word in fact alludes to a whirring sound, such as that which could be made by a skirret if the line were pulled quickly. While such could be imagined in a tool such as the miniatures contained in our lodge tool boxes, it is hard to see where a practical tool for laying out a chalk line for a lodge building would be so small as produce such a sound! A large, practical skirret, would probably be rather silent as one walked away from it pulling its line, unless of course it needed a drop of oil, and then it would not be a whirring sound that would be heard!

A better idea may be one based on the Old Norse word "Skyrta" which has reference to a boundary or border—the word that gave rise to our word "skirt" meaning to pass around the edges, the word in fact used in to describe the border of the Mosaic Pavement in the Entered Apprentice Lecture. When we recall the principal use of this tool as one in landscape architecture, indeed the tool is used to lay out the edges of flower beds, paths, etc. And "skirret" could well be a derivative of that word. (Carr, 1976). The actual origin, we probably will never know for sure.

The Meaning of the Skirret

But for Masons, these origins and technical questions are not the most important (although it is intriguing to find that some things in our ancient and unchanging ritual appear not to be so ancient or so unchanging after all). It is the allegorical or symbolical meanings with which we need concern ourselves. For we use tools not physically to lay out flower beds, nor the



foundations of buildings, but to moralize on. And for this the skirret indeed gives us a very direct meaning.

Today we need something that forcibly impresses upon us the need to keep to the straight and narrow, to follow the strict morals that we have been taught, and to show some certainty in our beliefs. Too much of what passes for philosophy today tries to convince us that all is relative and that we can throw away all the beliefs and values that built our society, and simply submit to the latest fads.

But here is the real meaning of Freemasons' Working Tools. That the great truths are forever. That the relevant moralities and virtues taught to Mankind by the great religious leaders and sages of the past, be they Christian, Jewish, Islam or of other great faiths, are God-given, not man-given. Man must act towards his fellow man in a moral and upright manners if we are not, far from entering a great, "post-modern" era, to return to barbarism. The future could as easily be such a return rather than the progress for which we hope, if much of what passes for modern morality continues.

It is where lessons, which to Freemasons are inculcated through the Skirret, and which to others are inculcated through religion, history, and general moral teachings, are forgotten that trouble is at its worst in the world. For the great undeviating line of conduct laid down for us is summed up in the Golden Rule, "Do unto others as you would have them do unto you." This is not the spirit that appears at work in places like Bosnia or Somalia. Indeed, it is not the rule that often seems to pervade our own society, our own businesses, or our own politics.

But this is what should raise Freemasons above the average man. We have these lessons taught very forcibly to us month after month in Lodge. They are very impressive when we hear them the first time. The question is, however, do they enter our very souls. Do we make them part of ourselves? Do we impart them to others, whether as mentors to our brethren, parents to our children, or by personal example, to our friends, colleagues and acquaintances at large?



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You Never Can Tell
by author unknown

You never can tell when you send a word,
like an arrow shot from a bow,
By an archer blind, be it cruel or kind,
Just where it may chance to go.

You never can tell what your thoughts will do
in bringing you hate or love,
For thoughts are things and their airy wings
Are swifter than a carrier dove.

They follow the law of the universe,
Each thing must create its kind,
And they speed o'er the track to bring you back
Whatever went out from your mind.



THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE RITUAL IN ENGLAND 1816

by Alan M. Tibbetts
Boundary Waters Council U.D.

PREMIER GRAND LODGE

In 1717 the Grand Lodge of England, the first known Grand Lodge in the world was formed when four old London Lodges, all working since "Time Immemorial" with no warrants as we know them today, came together to form a governing body for the Ancient Craft. There were many Lodges in existence in London and elsewhere at this time, some of which soon joined, and some of which never did join the new Grand Lodge. Three of the original four Lodges still exist. They are The Lodge of Antiquity No. 2, Royal Somerset House and Inverness Lodge No. 4 and The Lodge of Fortitude and Old Cumberland No. 12. They all worked, as did the other Lodges at this time, under the "Old Charges" which were manuscript (or hand-written) copies of ancient documents said to have come down from the operative stonemasons' Lodges.

This Premier Grand Lodge developed the first written Constitution of speculative Freemasonry, Dr. James Anderson's "Constitutions of 1723". The Grand Lodge grew steadily after its founding, with many existing Lodges joining, as well as new ones being created and Warranted by Grand Lodge. These were the golden years of Freemasonry and they lasted until the 1750's when trouble erupted and a rival Grand Lodge was established which styled itself the "Antients", the Premier Grand Lodge being called the "Moderns".

ORIGINS OF THE SCHISM

This split came about in 1751 as a result of difficulties that started in the 1730's. In 1730, William Prichard, who claimed to be a Mason, published the book "Masonry Dissected" which purported to tell all the Masonic secrets. This was the first and greatest "exposure" of Masonry; it went through many printings in a short time and earned Prichard large amounts of money, which was its purpose. It was so accurate, that it soon was being used in Lodges just as we now use the Book of the Work. Incidentally, England at that time did not tolerate printed Rituals, and in fact still does not recognize any such books.

THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE RITUAL: 1816

The reaction of the Premier Grand Lodge to Prichard's book was to change the Ritual, to keep impostors who had read the book from getting into Lodge. The main change seems to have been to reverse the words in the First and Second Degrees. The Third Degree was not involved in these changes as it was only introduced in 1726 and was not being practiced in all Lodges at the time of Prichard's exposure. Many Lodges refused to accept this change as they felt it violated the Ancient Landmarks of the Order. Also by this time, Grand Lodges had been established in Ireland (1725) and Scotland (1736) and the Premier Grand Lodge had no power over them to enforce this change in those jurisdictions.

There was a great influx of Irishmen into London in the 1750's, and finding that the English Lodges would not let them join because of the rigid class system then in force, they formed their own Lodges using the Irish Ritual. It is said that these Irish Lodges, along with those English ones who refused to change their Ritual at the command of Grand Lodge, came together to form this rival Grand Lodge, called the "Antients" because they adhered to the Ancient Landmarks as they knew them.

GRAND LODGE RIVALRY

From 1751 to the end of the century there was a constant rivalry between the two Grand bodies. This rivalry spread overseas, to the Americas and Asia, where both Grand Lodges warranted many new Lodges in the same colonies. These differences are still with us today, as many American Colonial Lodges who worked the Antient Ritual and formed independent Grand Lodges after the revolution, never participated in the revision of the Ritual that took place at the eventual union in 1813 of the two Grand Lodges in England. These American Grand Lodges thus hold to the old work of the Antients, and now call it York Rite Work. The Ritual in Canada, by contrast, comes from the unified one developed by both sides in England at the union where The United Grand Lodge of England was founded.

THE UNION OF THE GRAND LODGES

THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE RITUAL: 1816

The events leading up to the union produced the Shadbolt and Williams-Arden manuscripts that were mentioned at the beginning of this paper. The two Grand Lodges finally got serious about resolving their differences in the early 1800's. The Moderns in 1809 formed the Lodge of Promulgation, whose job it was to change the Ritual to a form more in keeping with pre-"Masonry Dissected" practice, and thus more acceptable to the "Antients". It also demonstrated these changes to individual Lodges to get them accepted by their own Brethren.

Finally, on November 25, 1813, Articles of Union were signed by the two Grand Masters, the Duke of Sussex (Antients) and the Duke of Kent (Moderns) who were Royal Brothers, the sons of King George III. To effect the Union, both Grand Lodges accepted the Articles separately on December 1, 1813 and then convened together on December 27 to elect the Duke of Sussex as the Grand Master of the new United Grand Lodge of England.

THE LODGE OF RECONCILIATION

After the Union was accomplished, Grand Lodge had to come up with a unified Ritual acceptable to both sides. They did this through the Lodge of Reconciliation which had two functions. One was to actually write the Ritual as a committee, taking parts from both Grand Lodge's Rituals, plus new elements. The other was to demonstrate the Ritual to Lodges so that they could learn it and put it into practice. This Lodge of Reconciliation operated from December 1813 to June 1816. It began its work by re-obligating all Brethren in the Third Degree at the December 27 meeting. The Third Degree was, as mentioned earlier, the newest one and the least affected by the split and therefore the easiest one to agree on. By June 1816 all three Degree ceremonies as well as the Installation Ceremony had been settled and all were finally approved at a Special Communication of the United Grand Lodge. The following sections deal with two Masons who were instrumental in the development of this united Ritual, one from each side of the schism. Each was an experienced Mason, no doubt arguing strenuously for his own side, and each made a copy of

the Work, which has come down to us and shows us the Ritual as it was actually being developed.

WILLIAM SHADBOLT

William Shadbolt was one of the most outstanding and active Masons of his time. He was born in London in 1777 and initiated in Corner Stone Lodge No. 26 (Moderns) on December 8, 1800. He was a dealer in imported wood and ivory in the East End of London and later in Southwark, south of the River Thames. He joined the Lodge of Moral Reformation No. 353 (Moderns) in 1801 and served as Master until 1810. In 1802 he joined the Old King's Arms Lodge No. 21 (Moderns) which became his principal Lodge for many years, and he served as its Master for 10 years. On joining this Lodge, he was part of a concerted "take-over" of the Lodge by affiliating Masons. He was a regular attendee at both of his two main Lodges, rarely missing a meeting. In 1808 he was instrumental in forming a Lodge of Instruction attached to Old King's Arms and Moira Lodges, and spent much time exemplifying the ceremonies and giving lectures.

In 1809, he was elected a member of the Lodge of Promulgation to change the forms of the Moderns' Ritual and develop the Installation Ceremony, which they had practiced only in a short form, and thus to prepare the way to Union with the Antients. They installed many Moderns' Masters using the new ceremony, which Shadbolt himself went through in December 1810. This Lodge also recommended the adoption of Deacons as Lodge officers, which the Moderns had not had up to then.

In 1810, Shadbolt became Old King's Arms Lodge's nominee to the Grand Stewards' Lodge, a singular honour. He served as Senior Warden on several of their "public nights" which were held twice a year to demonstrate the Ritual to London Lodges by means of lectures and catechisms, which were a major part of the Ritual in those days. He became Master of the Grand Stewards' Lodge for 2 years starting in 1814.

When the Lodge of Reconciliation came into being in 1813, Shadbolt, as Right Worshipful Master of the influential Old King's Arms Lodge was nominated to be one of the "Nine

Worthies* who would write the new Ritual. He served as Reconciliation's Junior Warden until it was disbanded in 1816, having settled the Degree Ceremonies and demonstrated them far and wide.

In 1818 Shadbolt, probably as thanks for his efforts with the Lodge of Reconciliation, was invited to join the Royal Alpha Lodge, the Grand Master's personal Lodge at Kensington Palace. He also took a renewed interest in Royal Arch Masonry at its Union in 1817. He remained very active in several of his Lodges until 1825 when he gave up all Masonry because of a "particular and distressing event", which, it is speculated, was a catastrophic business failure. It was not until 1830 that he came back to Masonry, attending Grand Lodge regularly. He died at age 76 in 1854 at his residence at Greenwich.

THE SHADBOLT MANUSCRIPT

It was during his time with the Lodge of Reconciliation that Shadbolt made his manuscript copy of the new Ritual. It was discovered in the Grand Lodge Library in 1966, having been there since 1944, bequeathed by a Mason who had received it from Shadbolt's grand-daughter in 1907. This manuscript is supposed to have been made by Shadbolt as an aide-memoire as different drafts of the Ritual were worked on. The good copy of the Ritual appears to have been written in August 1816 after all three Degrees were finally accepted by the United Grand Lodge.

The following is an example of one of the smaller papers in the Shadbolt collection, which deals with wording of the Obligations in the First Degree:

"letter mark or character"... "secrets and hidden mysteries"... "unlawfully obtained by or through my unworthiness"... "or until this P(enalty) be inflicted the equally effective punishment of being branded as a wilfully perjured individual void of moral worth and totally unfit to be admitted into this or any other Lodge of Masons or other respectable(?) society of men who prize virtue and honour above the external advantages of rank and fortune"

WILLIAM WILLIAMS

Williams was born in 1774 in Hertfordshire and lived his early life in Essex. He was educated at Cambridge University and became a Barrister in the Inner Temple in London. He married in 1797 and had two sons (both of whom became Masons) and a daughter. In 1797 his father purchased the estate Brideshead near Dorchester on the south coast, which began Williams' association with the county of Dorset and his association with the Duke of Sussex, Grand Master of the Antients' Grand Lodge.

He was initiated in All Souls' Lodge No. 226 (now No. 170) in Weymouth Dorsetshire on April 13, 1810 at the age of 36. He became Master of this Lodge in December 1811, having already served as Junior and Senior Warden in 20 months. He continued as Master until 1815. In May 1812, he was appointed Provincial Grand Master for Dorset by the Duke of Sussex, a position he held until 1835. In London, he joined the Lodge of Antiquity No. 2 (Antients) in May 1811, where Sussex was permanent Master. From 1811 to 1818 he lectured as a Clause holder (where a part of the Lectures was his to give permanently) at Antiquity's Lodge of Instruction, and served as Antiquity's Orator from 1815-21.

He joined the Lodge of Regularity (Antients) in 1811, serving as Master from 1813-16, and was its nominee to the Grand Stewards' Lodge in 1811. Belonging to the Grand Stewards' Lodge was a prerequisite to achieving Grand Lodge Rank prior to the Union. It was Williams' personal influence with the Grand Master that preserved many of the Grand Stewards' privileges after the Union, and for which he received a medal from the Grand Stewards' Lodge in 1818 for services rendered. His Province of Dorset included five Antient Lodges, at Poole, Weymouth, Bridport, Dorchester and Shaftesbury. In December 1813 he was appointed a member of the Lodge of Reconciliation to help effect the Union of the two rival Grand Lodges. He attended most of the meetings both for the re-writing of the Ritual and for demonstrating it to the Brethren. In 1814 he was rewarded for his work by being asked to join Sussex's Royal Alpha Lodge.

Several times from 1812 to 1817 he faced attack and was brought up on Masonic charges by rivals, but all were eventually dismissed, being put down to his "stern inflexibility of character".

He was attacked by several Masons in 1816, being accused of stopping a motion of 1815 that would have given United Grand Lodge sanction to the Ritual work at that point completed. He was also charged with causing the Lodge of Reconciliation to fail to meet from April 1815 to March 1816. As it turned out, the Lodge re-started its meetings, and Grand Lodge sanction of the Ritual came in June 1816. United Grand Lodge countered these attacks by passing a motion of thanks for his work, which was personally delivered to him by the Grand Master. By August 1816, Williams was in Dorset demonstrating the Ritual to his Provincial Lodges.

He served on the Board of General Purposes from 1812 to 1835, serving as President in 1818. When the post-Union Book of Constitutions was drawn up in 1815, he published it at his own expense and was given the copyright. In 1835, on his retirement from most of his Masonic offices, he presented to the Provincial Grand Lodge of Dorset, a candelabrum which is now in United Grand Lodge's Museum in London. R.Wor.Bro. William Williams died in February 1839.

THE WILLIAMS-ARDEN MANUSCRIPT

The longer sections of the Obligations which will be quoted later came from the Williams-Arden Manuscript, owned by All Souls' Lodge in Weymouth, on the south coast of England. The document, hand written by Williams Williams, Provincial Grand Master, was presented by him to the Lodge on August 23, 1816, within two months of the Ritual developed by the Lodge of Reconciliation being given United Grand Lodge sanction. The minutes of the Lodge show that it was immediately put to use by the Brethren to ensure that their Ceremonies conformed to the new Ritual.

The original manuscript came into the possession of George Arden, Master of All Souls' Lodge in 1818, who signed the inside front cover, hence it became the Williams-Arden Manuscript. This small brown book was discovered on the

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Lodge premises in 1974, along with a typed copy made in 1911 by Bro. John Sherrin, Provincial Grand Secretary, who had found it in that year. It had once again been lost from 1911 to 1974.

The book is written in a type of shorthand, using abbreviations. It is put together like a small ring-bound notebook, bound on the shorter side. The writing goes from front to back of the book on one side of each page, then can be turned over and continues back to front on the opposite sides of the pages. It starts with the prayers of the three Degrees, then the Obligations of each, followed by the Ceremonies in full.

The pages from the back forward cover the Lectures of the three Degrees, divided into Clauses as they then were. These Lectures were from pre-Union times, and did not technically form part of the Ritual. It was decided by the Duke of Sussex, Grand Master at the Union, that the old Lectures would be optional, and used according to the customs of each individual Lodge. The three Degree Ceremonies had become quite long when revised and left little time for the working of the Lectures on an evening. These thus fell out of favour quite quickly, and are seen now in England in short form as examinations of the candidates before the next Degree, or when done for the purposes of demonstrating the old forms of Work for the interest of members. In 1816 these Lectures were very extensive, covering the whole of Ceremony of the Degrees in question and answer format, recited by members of the Lodge in turn around the Lodge. For example, the First Degree Lecture had six Clauses of 43, 59, 45, 31, 12 and 25 questions and answers, for a total of 215. The Second Degree totalled 111 questions and answers, the Third Degree 119 questions and answers.

THE OBLIGATIONS

Bro. Dyer's paper outlines the actual wording of the Obligations in the first two Degrees from the Manuscript, which are written twice, in draft form and as a clean copy, leading Dyer to speculate that the writing was done while the Lodge of Reconciliation was deliberating. It shows the amendments being made as they came to the final form of the Ritual. It is

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known that the Obligations were discussed first, in 1814, and that there was then a period of time set aside for comments and complaints about their form by the Lodges. Final acceptance of the Ritual came in 1816, and the Manuscript reflects this process taking place.

It should be noted that even after the Ritual was accepted by the United Grand Lodge in 1816, other changes were made in wording, procedure etc. which led to the great variety of Ritual forms today in England and elsewhere. Ritual books were then and are now forbidden to be published for Brethren to use, and thus it could change through innocent error as well as deliberate revision. Lodges also adopted parts of the Ritual as it was being worked on, and did not necessarily see the final version at all. This was the one great attempt in England to form a standard Ritual, and it did not succeed. In Ontario, with our approved Book of the Work, it is virtually impossible to make innovations, as long as a Lodge conforms to what is actually written.

The conclusion of this paper illustrates two pieces of text from Bro. Dyer's paper which show the revision process taking place from 1814 to 1816, as the Lodge of Reconciliation was writing the new Ritual. It will also show the Brethren how the Ritual, written almost 180 years ago, compares to what has come down to us, as a daughter Grand Lodge of England, in our Ceremonies.

CONCLUSION

Thus was the process by which the Ritual as we know it today developed, and why it had to be developed in the first place owing to the division of English Masonry into two rival camps for over fifty years. The men who wrote these manuscript documents were truly making Masonic history, and were giants amongst their Brethren of the time. We as late 20th Century Masons owe to our 19th Century Brethren that Ritual which we now practice in our Ceremonies, and which we, and all succeeding generations of Master Masons are able to enjoy.

ORIGINAL VERSION

1. I, AB, in the name and presence of almighty God and in this

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2. worthy and warranted Lodge of Masons duly and regularly assembled and
3. properly dedicated to King Solomon, of my own Free Will and Accord
4. do hereby and hereon most solemnly promise vow and swear
5. that I will hele conceal and never reveal any of the
6. Secrets or Mysteries belonging to a Mason to anyone in the World
7. Except it be to a true and lawful Brother or Brethren or in the
8. body of a Lodge, just perfect and regular and not unto
9. him or them until after due trial and strict
10. examination or an assurance that they are in my Confidence.
11. And I further swear that I will not write them, mark
12. them, strike them or indite them upon any thing
13. moveable or immovable under the canopy of heaven whereby the
14. Secrets of the royal Art might be made known.
15. All these points I promise faithfully without hesitation or mental
16. reservation of any kind under no less a Penalty than
17. that of having my throat Cut from Ear to Ear
18. across, my Tongue plucked out by the Roots and then
19. buried in the Sands of the Sea at least a cable tow
20. from the shore where the tide regularly ebbs and flows
21. twice in the natural day. So help me God.

AMENDED VERSION

1. I, AB, in the name and presence of the grand architect of the universe
2. and in this worthy worshipful and warranted Lodge of free and accepted
3. Masons regularly assembled and
4. properly dedicated of my own Free Will and Accord
5. do hereby and hereon most solemnly swear
6. that I will (forever) always hele conceal and never will reveal any
7. part or parts, point or points of the Secrets or Mysteries of or belonging
8. to Freemasonry
9. which may now have been made known to me or which shall at that or
10. at a future time be communicated to me
11. Except it be to a true and lawful Brother or Brethren
12. and not even to
13. him or them until after due trial and strict
14. examination or a certain information thereof (had) from him or them
15. whom I shall know to be Worthy
16. or in the body of a just perfect and regular Lodge of a Free (and
17. Accepted) Masons.
18. I further solemnly swear that I will not write, indite, carve, mark or
19. engrave
20. those Secrets or cause them, if in my power to prevent it, on any thing
21. moveable or immovable under the canopy of heaven whereby the
22. lawful Secrets or Mysteries may be made known to me or any other
23. person.

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15. These several points I solemnly swear to observe without evasion
16. equivocation or mental
17. reservation of any kind under no less a Penalty than
18. that of having my throat out
19. across, my Tongue plucked out by the roots and
20. buried in the Sands of the Sea a least a cable tow
21. from the shore where the tide regularly ebbs and flows
22. twice in the normal day.
23. or under the equally effective punishment of being branded a wilfully
24. perjured individual devoid of all moral worth and unfit to be (admitted)
25. into the order and any Lodge. So help me God.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

This paper is based on two papers by Bro. Colin Dyer presented to Quatuor Coronati Lodge No. 2076 in 1974, and a paper by Bro. John Cooper on William Williams given in the same Lodge in 1973. Bro. Dyer's papers concerned two inter-related topics—the life of William Shadbolt and the Shadbolt Manuscript, and the Williams-Arden Manuscript. Both these documents are Masonic Rituals, in handwriting said to be that of Shadbolt and Williams, who were two distinguished Masons of the early 19th century. These papers contain a record of the Obligations of the First and Second Degrees as they were being developed. Some history of the time previous to that in which the Ritual was written will give context to this discussion.

We Will Remember

by Henry Wadsworth Longfellow

They never quite leave us, the friends who have passed
From the shadow of death to the sunlight above;
A thousand bright memories are holding them fast
To the places they blessed with their presence and love.



LIFE AND THE TWIN PILLARS

by Norman Pearson
Arcana Council No. 215

A COMPELLING SYMBOLISM

Of all the symbols of Freemasonry, perhaps the most compelling for true initiates is the symbolism of the twin pillars. They are a duality. They are impressive in the way they are presented to us. We realize that there are the Solomonic pillars of the Temple, and the antediluvian pillars of Enoch, so that we have two sets of pairs. Their physical presence in the Temple is a constant reminder of the dramatic times of our first encounter with them. Symbolically and physically, they compel our attention. Their constant presence keeps us aware of them. Life itself, with the passage of time, confirms their true meaning.

THE ENIGMA

Here, at once, we encounter a fascinating enigma. To the ancients, the middle way between the pillars, reconciling and resolving their apparently eternal opposition and contradictions, was the most important direction that life could take. However, our modern and brittle society has denigrated that wonderful Latin term for that choice - *MEDIOCRITAS*, to make it our current term 'mediocrity', meaning neither good nor bad, lacking in commendable qualities. It reminds us of the story of the Welsh cleric who had some difficulty with the English language, and urged his congregation to walk the straight and narrow path between good and evil!

But *MEDIOCRITAS* means, literally, "half way up the mountain" (from *MEDIUS*, middle; and *OCRIS*, mountain or peak). We think of Francis Bacon's heraldic motto *MEDIOCRA FIRMA* - "the middle way is sure" (1). We also think of Virgil's "Aeneid": *MONTI MELIORA SEQUAMUR*, or "let us, being instructed, strive after better things". This is the enigma. Perhaps the significance is that, having passed between the ritual pillars, and having been instructed, we must daily strive to reconcile life's opposites in accordance with those teachings. This is, in effect, the middle way, not inclining to excess or extremes. Further, because we are still extant here on earth, we are

Life and the Twin Pillars



indeed half way up the mountain in our searches and struggles. Thus we face the twin enigma: that of daily life, and that beyond our transition from this world.

Truly, in denigrating this meaning, "the twentieth century hates the good simply because it is good" as the Objectivist Philosopher Ayn Rand so clearly said. She also said "all that is proper to the life of a rational being is good; all that which destroys it is evil" (2).

Fortunately, another century lies ahead, with hope for a different and a better orientation. It is to the age which is to come that these words are addressed.

THE ANTEDILUVIAN PILLARS and the PILLARS of the LODGE

There is also an evident confusion between those pillars which survived the Flood and those in the porch of the Temple.

Perhaps the confusion in modern times began with mixing up the idea of the twin antediluvian pillars of Enoch, with the other pair which are pillars of the Lodge. It may be that they are simply different aspects of the same task in life, but if we can examine the two sets we may thereby make some degree of progress.

Somewhere in the Old Charges, these two sets were mixed up. Let us call the one set the Antediluvian Pillars and the other set the Solomonic Pillars. In the *DUMFRIES MANUSCRIPT* No. 4 (circa 1710) they are spoken of in sequence as if they were at least similar and possibly identical. However, while there are certain similarities in the legends, there is a vast span of time between the two, and apparently different purposes for each pair.

THE SOLOMONIC PILLARS

The large twin pillars, befitting the originals in our Masonic Legend, have their positions in many different places in various jurisdictions. In a publication called *JACHIN & BOAZ* (1762) they have a further parallel in the miniatures used by the Senior Warden and the Junior Warden. Suffice it to say that there were precisely opposite meanings in the practices of the Ancients and the Moderns, and that subsequently the various



architectural versions which now adorn those chairs were added. This, in the older Lodge rooms, gives us three sets of these twin columns to think about: one set by a door, one set at the various stations, a third set in the miniatures. Our evolution has given us three sets of the Solomonic columns, whether we name them so or not. In all cases, the names in the lectures have persisted, wherever the columns migrated, or whatever their size.

THE ANTEDILUVIAN PILLARS

By contrast, legend has it that the antediluvian pillars of Enoch or Noah were attributed to the work of Jabal, the brother of Jubal and of Tubal Cain, according to the COOKE MANUSCRIPT. One was of marble and the other of some form of laterite, so that between them they could survive fire and flood. They were also said to be hollow, to hold all the knowledge of mankind, in the many books of Enoch; and to have had inscribed upon them all the keys to the seven liberal arts and sciences, so that all this ancient knowledge might survive global disasters. This is a distinct and different purpose from the Solomonic columns. The Royal Arch and the Royal Order of Scotland have helped to preserve these legends, as have other Rites.

THE PILLARS AND THE ROYAL ARCH

Scholars have noted that the antediluvian pillars have a linkage to the Royal Arch and indeed to the threshold of Rosicrucian thought as well, as we find in the Scottish Rite. For example, Alcial's EMBLEMATICA 1564 (3) shows an emperor seated at a table in a tabernacle, the opening of which is supported by two pillars, and is attended by two noblemen on either side. These three are clearly intended to represent the three principals of the Royal Arch (which means that noble Order antedates 1564!). In the distance the blazing sun rises as the Morning Star signifying resurrection into eternal life, which is the meaning of the Royal Arch. The three principals face a boar, the symbol of spirituality, as opposed to temporality, which is also equivalent to the offering of the lamb, which is symbolically correct.

THE PILLARS OF THE TEMPLE



A later (1577) version of the same book gives a totally different plate, in which a Temple is shown, being built by Freemasons. It shows a boar rooting in the ground with a curiously dressed swineherd pointing. His left hand points to the boar and his right hand points to two pillars of a ruined Temple standing solitarily above its crypt. Wrapped around the columns Boaz and Jachin is the motto PLUS OLTRA. The boar is labelled ULTERIUS. This is clearly a Masonic allusion, exhorting the viewer to go beyond the great Pillars, otherwise called the Pillars of Hercules, and to explore the Holy Royal Arch.

There was thus no confusion in the Craft prior to the Revival, as to the separate and distinct significance of each set of pillars, and about their inter-connection.

Leaving aside the more esoteric and spiritual implications, what else does the persistence of these symbols tell us?

THE PERSISTENCE OF PAIRS OF COLUMNS

On the face of it, the persistence of the legend of the importance of two major sets of columns suggests two significant points at least:

- (1) That very early in human evolution there was a realization of the means by which mankind could advance to a better form of existence; and a further realization that human life is subject to sudden and drastic shifts of catastrophic proportions, raising the difficult problem of how to transmit critical knowledge across such disjunctions; and also raising the obvious issue that to certain entrenched interests which exploit and denigrate mankind, such essential and critical knowledge is highly dangerous and threatening. This seems to me to lead to arrangements for direct physical transfer via the Enoch columns, and ritual envelopes to safely transmit key information for use at some future time when it will be essential.



- (2) The other realization that the very idea of picking twin columns to act as the symbols of this first important discovery can be a persistent reminder of a fundamental fact about the universe and how it works, and what life is about, and how to live it. This is the deeper purpose. It is fascinating in its simplicity and its power. It means nothing to those who think literally and materially: all porches and entrances have some kind of supports on either side of the door. To those who incline to philosophy, however, it has much more direct meaning. The doorway or entrance, which we call initiation, is the passage from the uninformed life to the informed life. The columns or pillars point to a deeper meaning: that the universe in all its multiple manifestations, from the outermost start to the innermost part of Earth, is simply the result of an infinite range of harmonic variations on two basic universal forces, one being positive, the other being negative. The basic powers of the universe are binary: the manifestations are triune: the third point of the triangle. Suddenly we realize that life is full of apparently senseless and contradictory sets of opposites, but that we only make progress when we wrestle with them, harmonize them, and advance on this new trajectory. This is a constant daily challenge! This is walking between the pillars.

It also suggests to me that human nature is essentially the same in all ages and in all places: we truly are brothers, with all that implies. In our time, this is currently dramatically represented by the struggle between inclusive and universalist values, such as those we believe in; and the divisive, tribalist, racist, brutalist values with which we contend.

These were surely astonishing discoveries and realizations at a very early time in human development, at a time when people



believed in illogical magic, animism, scapegoating and victimization, and all manner of irrationalism.

It also, to me, tends to bear out the idea of an evolution of consciousness.

It also says to me that what is termed mystical is at root a perfectly understandable process of enlightenment which is really rational, logical, integrated thinking, honest thinking, leading to a powerful inner-guided self-directed personal evolution. We term this the brotherhood of man under the Fatherhood of God, in whatever way each of us sees that term. It is very much an individual one-on-one evolution based on the infinite differentiation of humanity, and the idea that the earth is a school. It also means casting aside illusions and delusions.

In connection with the spiritual messages of the Craft, it leaves open the interpretation of the meaning of eternal life beyond the grave. Each of us can believe what we like, in perfect harmony, whether that future is in the form of light and energy; or some continued existence in another plane; or a form or reincarnation on earth as a kind of recycling through the great school of earth until we learn the great lessons and need return no more.

Viewed in this way, Freemasonry is thus a ritual envelope for transmitting, amongst other things, the possibility for each of us to work out our own destiny. It is, therefore, a way for mankind as a whole to advance to a better future: truly a life of strength and beauty in which God will, through our endeavours, eventually thereby establish a new way. Yet that new way is apparently unbelievably ancient. Perhaps the true meaning of the legend of the fall of mankind is simply the story of our sad departure from some basic truths. We now preserve them as keys to the future when they will be needed by means of both our ritual and our inner tradition.

THE EVOLUTION OF CONSCIOUSNESS

Here I can only give you my view of what the evolution of consciousness means.

At some point in human evolution, mankind operated with the left and right sides of the brain working separately. This is, in



effect, an unconscious way of behaving, and it no doubt suited very primitive societies where the tribe was, effectively, the universe, and there was no individuality: only the potential for individuality. Today we would likely term such people schizophrenics, and we still find manifestations of this kind. They may be reversions to a very ancient form of mental organization.

Mankind made the transition to agriculture and then to urban society, very early in areas such as the Indus Valley, Mesopotamia, Egypt, Phoenicia, the Yellow River, and the Mayan, Aztec and Inca cultures. Particularly among the Jewish people and the Ancient Egyptians, there came the special sense of "I"-ness, individuation, and the realization of the idea of the one universal God.

Julian Jaynes, in his book *THE ORIGIN OF CONSCIOUSNESS IN THE BREAKDOWN OF THE BICAMERAL MIND* argued that all civilizations before 1000 BC were essentially run by the unconscious mind. In the moderate complexity of these early societies, the bicameral mentality became prevalent. The creative and intuitive part of the brain produced inductive solutions to more complex problems which were transmitted to the logical, rational, deductive part of the brain as if they were voices from the gods, the oracles, or visions from the hidden worlds of the dead, or the past, or the future. He then argues that as human problems became so complex that this solution could work no longer, the integrated consciousness which we now have, evolved. This seems to have happened about the time of the Trojan Wars. Thereafter, the voices of the gods, the mythologies and the visions fell silent. Now we would call them hallucinations, and in the disintegrated personality they are quite common: again, a possible throwback to an ancient form of mental organization.

It also means that while ritual can still appeal positively to that part of our evolution, unscrupulous external authorities can encourage us to regress and be outer-directed by manipulating that part of our lives.

Thereafter came Greek science, Judaic monotheism, and Egyptian philosophy, all strongly oriented to reason.



As science continued to evolve, the Cartesian approach gradually dethroned philosophy, belittled religion, and fragmented human understanding.

If this is so, we have, and have had for many thousands of years, the co-existence of several types of human consciousness:

- (1) The primitives who are essentially tribalist and collectivist and largely unindividuated.
- (2) The bicameral minds who respond to external suggestions and can be readily manipulated.
- (3) The integrated minds who can use both left and right brains to run their own lives.

The third category in our society appears to be a clear minority. If we now go back to the time of Enoch, they must have been an extremely tiny number, in a largely hostile world of closed societies, where their idea of universalist values would be viewed as extremely dangerous.

Thus, it seems to me, the ritual envelopes such as Freemasonry were invented very early. It was and is an ingenious solution to the problem. Such rituals can be understood at many levels, from the literal to the most esoteric. They can fit easily into closed societies by the use of secrecy and careful initiation. In open societies they can flourish and embellish the basic truths.

A wonderful illustration of this in our time is that the market system took seventy years to destroy Communism. Somehow Freemasonry survived underground. Now those lands are openly colonized by Freemasonry.

So what were these basic truths all about?

THE LOST KEYS TO FREEMASONRY (4)

Manly Hall argued that the modern Mason is to Freemasonry as a child plays with a chess set. We have forgotten the lost keys. Freemasonry is much more than a mere social organization a few centuries old, and more than just a way of teaching simple ethical precepts. The inner tradition of the Craft says that it is the perpetuation of very ancient knowledge.



That which we seek lives in our souls. But is manifest both within and without.

We are basically the trustees of a kind universal and timeless wisdom, which contains the keys to a sublime science or art dedicated to the regeneration of man and reformation of human society.

Each of us must provide the meaning of those lost keys for ourselves. But in terms of the practice of life, certain things are evident:

- (1) Our values are universalist, not tribal: the Fatherhood of God and the brotherhood of man.
- (2) Ignorance is man's enemy: each person has a right to a proper education.
- (3) Mankind has a right to the protection of lawful constitutional government.
- (4) We can live in harmony if we look behind the divisiveness of forms of religion, politics and social mores.
- (5) Living in harmony we learn mutual respect.
- (6) In mutual respect we unite in a fraternity of good works and service.
- (7) In some way our essential being is eternal.
- (8) The dignity of man derives from the dignity of the soul.
- (9) Enlightened ethics have the practical utility that they work.
- (10) All men who believe in these things must stand up and be counted. We must live our innermost convictions.

BACK TO PHILOSOPHY

Those pillars invite us back to philosophy: they point to a world in which philosophy is not an idle argument about semantics but central to the whole pattern of life.



Reality impinges on our minds and senses. We construct from these perceptions as close a match as we can to that reality. These concepts need to be constantly checked against reality, or they become deceptions and delusions.

"At the gates of the temple of wisdom, bound with the cable of limitation, poor in spirit and body, man seeks admission to the University of Understanding." In the Ancient Mysteries the steps were seven, five and three: "...the seven liberal arts and sciences, the five senses and emotions, and the three steps symbolic of the triune power of God in Man" (5).

So we walk between the pillars and continue to do so for the rest of our lives. Manly Hall continues (6):

"The spirit within the body awaits liberation and this freedom of the rational part from the irrational form must be achieved in one of two ways. The ignorant are liberated through necessity, the wise through choice."

The key is that through Masonic wisdom the reasonable nature is liberated from its bondage without the need for physical decay. This is the meaning of the legend of Enoch, who was translated without tasting the bitterness of death. The true philosopher is thereby liberated from his darker part like the phoenix, and thereby may do much good. As was said in the Egyptian BOOK OF THE DEAD: "He has come forth by day"

Such is my interpretation of the meaning and significance of the twin pillars.

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THE ANCIENT ORDER OF THE ESSENES

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MASONIC INTEREST IN THE ESSENES

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

THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE ESSENES

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

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

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

The Ancient Order of the Essenes



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

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

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

MELCHIZEDEK & PYTHAGORAS

A further linkage to our interest is by way of Pythagoras and the Order of Melchizedek (3). Some time around 540 BC, Pythagoras travelled in the Near East and was initiated into the Ancient Mysteries in the tradition of Melchizedek. Two hundred years later, Pythagoras influenced Euclid and so both traditions were transmitted into our legends. In the Near East, the Essenes some six-hundred years later, carried forward the Pythagorean tradition. They also combined it with the Kabbalah. This is one reason they sound so familiar to us.

KNIGHTS OF THE TEMPLE

There is, however, another link. The Essenes are first mentioned by Josephus as existing in the time of the Maccabees, about 166 BC. Pliny said it had continued "...for thousands of ages...". Philo said that Moses himself instituted the Order. Josephus asserts the Order existed since the time of the Fathers of Mankind (Melchizedek is sometimes identified with Shem, the son of Noah). Scaliger argued that they were



"...an Order of KNIGHTS OF THE TEMPLE OF JERUSALEM" and architects

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

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

THE ORDER

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

- 1 - ASPIRANT
- 2 - APPROACHER
- 3 - ASSOCIATE
- 4 - DISCIPLE OR COMPANION

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



and certain signs. We also share the solar and stellar symbolism of the Craft Lodges. (6)

THE KABBALAH

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

THE MYSTIC TRADITION

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

Here we find another link. The true story of early Christianity, and of the ties between the Jewish, Christian and Islamic beliefs, were eventually re-discovered by the Templars, and that was obviously a key factor in their destruction. Both the Essenes and the Templars were essentially persecuted for the same reason: they understood the truth. Thus, centuries later, the Templars gave a fresh infusion of essentially Essene beliefs into the Craft in those areas such as Scotland where they



escaped complete destruction. This is a common thread between the Druzes, the Nazarenes, the Essenes, the Johannites, and the Templars. Early Church Fathers such as Irenaeus and Justin, writing about 80 AD, speak to a continuity of certain principles from pagan to Christian times. Spriggett, a Mason, writes of an ancient ritual book which affirms that Mary and Joseph were Essenes. There are early Christian records in Tibet, and a Buddhist monastery in Ceylon preserves records of a sojourn there by the Master Jesus. He is also referred to in the New Testament as being "...called of God as a high priest of the Order of Melchizedek" (certain Masonic ceremonies preserve this). (9)

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

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

The Essenes thus bear careful study.

THE PERSECUTION

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

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

Here we discover that there are in their ancient documents innumerable anticipations of what we now term Christian concepts, teachings, demands and even rules and regulations. (10) Here we find the white baptismal robe, the Beatitudes, the Last Supper, and a familiar community organization, well before



modern Christianity. The Essenes had a community council of 12 men and 3 priests, with elders and bishops. They called themselves "the children of light".

What occurred is that the State Church decided to suppress the old mystery schools in all their forms. In 323 AD, there was official recognition of the Christian Church by the Roman Empire, after the Battle of the Milvian Bridge and the triumph of the symbol of the cross. In 325 AD the Council of Nicea established Church doctrine within the Empire and thereafter both Church and State set about extirpating the ancient mysteries and indeed much of what we now call Mystic Christianity, including the Essenes. This began as the struggle between the Niceans and the Arians, then became persecution of the older mysteries, and then finally to persecute all unorthodoxy, so that all Christianity was later engulfed in what came to be known as "The Dark Ages".

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

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

In the atmosphere of Roman Imperial totalitarianism, they essentially survived by being non-dogmatic. As we have seen, they were so successful that their finest minds became tutors to the leading Roman households. When the fatal alliance between the Church and the State turned quickly into the imposition of a rigid orthodoxy, their secrecy again protected them, and no doubt their initiatory process was extremely careful and circumspect. When that alliance became the most



oppressive system mankind had ever known, their secrecy in the Essene Order was to no avail. Their communities were attacked by armed force: even so, they hid their critical records, which increasingly today explode like bombshells in the conventional world, and are often regarded as threatening or dangerous again.

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

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

Who shall say where these threads begin and end?

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

"Moses, a son of the tribe of Levi, educated in Egypt and initiated at Heliopolis, became a High Priest of the Brotherhood under the reign of the Pharaoh Amenhotep. He was elected by the Hebrews as their chief and he adapted to the ideas of his people the science and philosophy which he had obtained in the Egyptian mysteries: proofs of this are found in the symbols, in the Initiations and in his precepts and commandments. The wonders which Moses relates as having taken place upon the Mountain of Sinai, are, in part, a veiled account of the Egyptian initiation which he transmitted to his people when he established a branch of the Egyptian Brotherhood in his country, from which descended the Essenes. The dogma of an 'only God' which he taught was the Egyptian Brotherhood



interpretation and teaching of the Pharaoh who established the first monotheistic religion known to man. The traditions he established in this manner were preserved in the ARCANA of the societies, the THERAPEUTICS of Egypt, and the ESSENIANS."

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

We may owe more to the Essenes than we know.

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The Builder

I saw them tearing a building down,
A gang of men in a busy town.
With a ho-heave-ho and a lusty yell,
They swung a beam and the side wall fell.

I said to the foremen, "Are these men skilled;
And the men you'd hire if you had to build?"

He gave a laugh and said, "No indeed!
Just common labour is all I need,
I can easily wreck in a day or two
What some have taken a year to do."

So I thought to myself as I went my way
Which of these roles have I tried to play?
Am I a builder who builds with care?
Measuring my life by the rule and square?
Am I shaping my deeds to a well-formed plan,
Patiently doing the best I can?
Or am I a wrecker who stalks the town,
Content with labour of tearing down?"