

# THE MEANING OF MASONRY

A POPULAR GUIDE TO THE VALUES OF  
ANCIENT AND MODERN FREEMASONRY

*by*

**Lynn F. Perkins**



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## THE MEANING OF MASONRY

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To the memory of

**OUR ANCIENT BRETHREN**

who have gone before us in the great work of the  
builder, and whose lives and achievements we are  
destined to emulate

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THE LORD GOD speaks to all Builders through the Prophet Isaiah: "I will bring the blind by a *Way* that they knew not, I will lead them in paths that they have not known, I will make darkness *Light* before them and crooked things straight."

KING SOLOMON also speaks to the Builder in Proverbs 3:13-17: "Happy is the man that findeth *Wisdom*, and the man that getteth understanding, for the merchandise of it is better than the merchandise of silver, and the gain thereof than fine gold. She is more precious than rubies; and all things thou canst desire are not to be compared unto her. Length of days is in her right hand; and in her left hand riches and honor. Her ways are ways of pleasantness, and all her paths are peace. *She is a TREE OF LIFE* to them that lay hold upon her; and happy is everyone that retaineth her."

## INTRODUCTION

THE AUTHOR wishes to make no apology for publishing this book for the benefit of the Freemasons of the English-speaking peoples of the world; but he is under no illusion that more than a small percentage of the Craft will have any interest in it, under the economic and social conditions that prevail at this time. It is his belief, nevertheless, that many younger men now coming into the Lodges want more rational and scientific answers that will enable them to understand Masonry better. They are not content to bypass or ignore what seems difficult to understand. Since it probably cannot be expected that they will devote a great deal of time in pursuit of these answers, a brief glimpse into the meanings or possible interpretations of some of the expressions found in the Ritual of the first three degrees may serve to stimulate them to read and perhaps to study the books that contain more complete answers and throw further light upon the so-called "Mysteries of Ancient Freemasonry."

Of course, he would be naïve indeed who would declare that what Masonry meant to him it would necessarily mean to every other Mason. The author does not know it all, or anywhere near the all of Masonry; his book might well be called *What Masonry Means to Me*. He simply hopes that publication of what Masonry does mean to him will help more Masons to take a long look at Masonry and to want consciously to relate its teachings to their own lives and living.

After more than half a century of studying and thinking in the fields of philosophy, religion, and ethics, and after some forty-five years of Masonic endeavor, the author believes that he has caught some of the meanings and purposes of life and the processes of the Builder, and that his conclusions, though still tentative, should have some value to the Craft. However, he

claims to possess no "authority" because of such studies; if he is right in his conclusions, they are completely valid to him alone. The reader should neither believe nor disbelieve, agree nor disagree with, these conclusions which comprise his personal philosophy and which he hopes (perhaps foolishly and egotistically) may be of sufficient interest to the Craft to warrant publication. If the book should stimulate some Freemasons of all Rites to take a deeper look at Masonry as the Science of the Builder, they will develop their own authority and their own philosophy of the processes and techniques of the Builder.

But it is not sufficient either to believe or to disbelieve, to agree or to disagree. The reader who simply disbelieves or disagrees *without investigation* may think he washes his hands of responsibility to know the fullness of Masonic Truth; and what he does not try to learn, he will never know. On the other hand, the reader who believes or agrees because he has no convictions of his own will stop the processes of thought and investigation and will stagnate mentally and spiritually. Read not to agree or disagree but *to search for Truth*, as far as you as an individual can ascertain it. Today's conclusions and convictions are based upon knowledge gained yesterday by individual effort, and the enlightenment and unfolding of tomorrow will be based upon the mental and spiritual progress of each today as it comes. Each man and Mason continues to build his own philosophy and is his own best authority.

The writer will reveal no secrets—because he can reveal no secrets! How can anyone reveal a secret to someone who has not tuned his mind to perceive it as Truth? If and when the Mysteries of Ancient Freemasonry are revealed to any man or Mason, they will be because he has prepared himself to receive them, not because someone else has tried to show and teach him the way to Masonic light.

Look through a high-power microscope; if you have no words to describe what you see, you will not *know* what you see. Look through a high-power telescope into the starry heavens; if you have no words to describe what you see, you will not know what you see. Look at the mystifying words and phrases of the

Masonic Ritual; if you have no words by which to define them in terms of thought valid to you, you will not discover or bring to Light the True Word, and no secret will have been revealed to you. The hidden Mysteries of Ancient Freemasonry are not revealed to the initiate in the degrees of Speculative Masonry merely because he hears them alluded to in the ritualistic work of the Lodge. If the philosophy of Masonry is to be understood, if the arts of the Builder are to be applied in erecting a spiritual edifice, the aspirant will need to search out the meanings and learn the definitions of the words, phrases, and sentences that comprise or describe the signs, symbols, glyphs, enigmas, and allegories of the Ritual.

Inasmuch as there are no explanations or interpretations in the Ritual itself, the search for the truths of the Builder, for the revelation of the so-called "secrets of Masonry," will lead the seeker to study the great volume of literature that is available in the library of every Grand Lodge in the world and that can be obtained from many other sources. "Seek and ye shall find," and "all that is hidden shall be revealed unto you."

In reading and thinking, search not for the differences of opinion or interpretation but for the similarities and the fine threads of unity that run through all philosophies of all times. Be not dismayed by disagreement among those who pose as authorities; disagreement in interpretation or understanding is inevitable, and merely represents the more or less blind gropings of the unsatisfied human spirit after Truth and reality. Many illusions must be pursued until they are ultimately dispelled by the reality of illumination. Know that there are many paths to the Sanctum Sanctorum of ultimate Truth. Even thinking men will stray from the strait and narrow path of Truth into the devious and mistaken ways of error, but the bypaths, blind alleys, and dead ends of error will always turn them back into the right path and direction. They learn to see because they have been in darkness, and the light of Truth shines the more brilliant and lovely because it follows the darkness of error.

So never mind disagreement among the authors of your inspiration. Let your own thinking and understanding prevail. Re-

member that no one can tell you what you are not ready to receive. Rely upon *yourself* and upon the interpretation you are capable of making that seems best to you, wherever you are along the path. If what you had come to believe or thought you knew is error, it must have been a step on your path to Truth in Masonry.

Thus error serves the pursuit of Truth as it appears in Masonry—the Builder's art. *It is by error and the consequences of error that we learn the Truth, and achieve the liberation of Truth in action.*

L. F. P.

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## MODERN FREEMASONRY

FREEMASONS declare that they have received the hidden Mysteries of Ancient Freemasonry. All of them have been exposed to a series of symbols and allegories which, although purported to reveal the hidden mysteries, really served to conceal them; and it can be said fairly that the words of the Ritual conceal more than they reveal to the minds of most Masons. Initiation into Masonry and participation in its forms and ceremonies leave most Masons, so far as the meanings of the Ritual are concerned, in a state of perpetual bewilderment and perhaps frustration. In self-defense most Masons end by ignoring the whole thing, apparently satisfied to let the ritualistic work of the degrees "pass in one ear and out the other," and to participate in the fine fellowship of the Fraternity. The mysteries concealed in degree work and in the ceremonies of opening and closing a Lodge thus remain hidden and "lost" from year to year and generation to generation. On the surface this fact may seem deplorable; the reason for it will be discussed elsewhere.

The Builder's art down through the ages has been based upon an arcane science, secret methods of self-improvement that have been withheld from the many and revealed to the few who have made themselves worthy and well qualified to receive them. Ancient Operative Masonry and modern Speculative Masonry have charted a narrow highway up the rugged heights to Masonic illumination and destiny, and declare that Masons are in the process of "fitting our minds, as living stones, for that spiritual building, that house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens."

If this marvelous idea has any meaning or validity to a Mason, and if he wants to know more about the process of erecting a "spiritual building," he will have to make individual effort to learn and apply the meanings of Masonry. No Master

of a Lodge, no writer or Masonic philosopher, no man on earth can reveal to him any more than he is ready to receive; but anyone can take courage and self-assurance in the thought that he has a much greater capacity to receive and apply Masonic teachings than he probably thinks he has. *Feed* your capacity for Light in Masonry, and you will be amazed to find that its potential for more light has expanded; and as there is no limit to Light, there is no limit in growth of capacity to perceive it.

The wisdom of anyone is *potentially adequate* to the task, although the path to Masonic illumination is no easy one to follow. The will required for its achievement is often weakened and thwarted by preoccupation with demands of the physical body and with worldly affairs and responsibilities. But since (as Masons declare they believe) our souls are immortal and death is the ultimate portal to immortality, it would seem logical and provident to give more than a passing glance to preparations for our eternal sojourn in that immortal spiritual body that Masons believe will be ours at the death of our physical body. Practical masons pay much attention to and make elaborate preparations for the erection of any building, which will endure a few centuries at most; but most Speculative Masons pay almost no attention to, make almost no *conscious* preparations for, that "great change," after which they will be living in that spiritual building for an eternity of centuries (as they believe). It seems fair to say that the effort they put into the "uprearing of that spiritual fabric" could and should be greatly increased if they wish to step up their rate of progress toward the great goal of Masonry.

What are we waiting for—the wisdom of future generations to reveal what we should think and do? No; the truth is that the wisdom of any Mason is potentially adequate to the task—can make a beginning toward its achievement. The wisdom of past generations *has* discovered and brought to light the hidden meanings of Masonic science, but those meanings remain hidden and obscure to every Mason until he has expanded his mind and soul diligently and resolutely to become worthy and well quali-

fied to receive and emit the Light. The wisdom of future generations can reveal no more to anyone than the wisdom of past generations has revealed to those who wanted to know, or than the wisdom of this generation can reveal, or than one's own wisdom can reveal, if one really wants to know what Masonry means.

Light in Masonry will therefore continue to be "lost," hidden from us and from all future generations of Masons, until each Mason tries to find out for himself the esoteric (secret) meanings of the symbols and allegories of the Ritual. The "Light" is always here and now, shining brilliantly behind the symbols and allegories of the beautiful Ritual, its riches within the reach of anyone who wishes to grasp them. Each of us is always in the "now" and "here" of time; there is no need to wait for a future generation to reveal the methods by which the Builder improves himself in Masonry.

The hidden Mysteries of Ancient Freemasonry—revealed to men in all ages who have proved themselves worthy and well qualified to receive them—are therefore not withheld from any Builder today who makes the effort to learn and to know. But we should remember that anyone can be a man and a Mason for a million years, in the here and the hereafter, and still not know much about the mysteries of his Craft unless somewhere along the level of time he takes time to discover and bring to Light the true Masonic wisdom.\*

The ideas concerning the hidden Mysteries of Ancient Freemasonry are here addressed only to the Brethren of the Craft because they, having been exposed to Masonic Light, have a right of access to and understanding of them. This wisdom is not hidden from any man in the world; but the men who theoretically should have the greatest interest in it are those who have taken the degrees in Masonry and have demonstrated,

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\* It is also suggested at this point that what one does not learn here in this life one is not likely to learn in the hereafter in the life to come. If you will read to the end of this book, you will learn why this is true—or why the writer thinks it is true.

sometimes for a lifetime, their undying respect for and unswerving loyalty to the Craft and its marvelous teachings. This book is a call to them, a plea to take greater interest in the hidden meanings of the Mason's art and in the development of a stronger "trestleboard," a better preparation for that immortality to which all aspire. Loyal Freemasons should have the high incentive to open the doors of their minds to let in the beams of Masonic Light, which they have *three times* symbolically declared they most desire. This is the basic purpose of Masonry, and sooner or later, in time and eternity, the Builder cannot and will not escape the destiny of its fulfillment.

In any case, the Builder in Masonry will make some progress in the Builder's art, whether conscious of it or not; but he will make more rapid progress if he makes conscious effort to perceive the Light of Masonic Truth, to expand his conscious understanding of the hidden Mysteries of Ancient Freemasonry. There is evidence both in philosophy and logic and in common sense that, sometime during that eternity that stretches out before each of us, as immortal souls we shall discover and bring to light the True Word, that we shall receive the rich reward of Master's Wages, and that we shall ultimately be admitted into "that Celestial Lodge Above, where the Supreme Architect of the Universe presides."

*This is destiny*, but we need to know what these expressions and others like them mean, as they appear in the Masonic Ritual, before we can consciously set our feet upon destiny's path. Many loyal Masons think that that destiny is so theoretical, so speculative, so sublime, so dimly remote, so unrealistic for them as individuals that it is foolish to give much thought to it. But in spite of its difficulties, in spite of how frail a hold such sublime claims may have upon our conscious minds, the fulfillment of that destiny nevertheless is the real object of Masonry and the ultimate goal of the Masonic Quest. There is no escape from that conclusion. That is the purpose to which we commit ourselves, speculatively, when we join the Masonic Order, participate in its work and ceremonies, and set our feet upon the path of Masonic illumination. Be it ever so slightly, Masons in the here

and now *have* set their feet upon the path of illumination—the “way to everlasting life,” as it is expressed in the Ritual.

There can be no doubt that this is the real and ultimate object of an eternal Quest for each of us, either consciously or unconsciously, whether we will or no. It was this Quest, this desire, this inner longing, that prompted Masons in the first place to seek membership in the Masonic Order. It is this same Quest that keeps them loyal, each in his own way, to the tenets and interests of the Fraternity. They must not be disrespectful of this Quest and of loyalty to the Craft by acting as if they are not consciously interested in its purposes and functions. These purposes (believe it or not, as you choose) are more real and fundamental than the demands of mortal flesh, than the demands of the material world in which we live!

If one Brother could help another in the pursuit of this Quest, the path to the heights of Masonic illumination would be less rugged and easier to climb. But in interpretation of the symbols and allegories, no Brother can reveal to another any Truth beyond his mental and spiritual capacity to perceive it as Truth. All one Mason can do for another is to explain the symbols and allegories of Masonry *as far as he understands them*. However well versed in Masonry he may be, no Brother who knows its transcendent character would declare that he has exhausted the meanings of Speculative Masonry; if he did so declare, then we would know that he does not understand the infinite nature of Truth as it appears in Masonic science. Therefore the help that one Brother can obtain from another is strictly limited both by the partial Light that any Brother may have and by the lack of capacity of another Brother to receive such Light, or any Light. Responsibility for Masonic progress lies entirely with each Brother.

As “good men and Masons,” all stand humbly and reverently before the mountain of Masonic Truth and achievement. They do not pretend to know it all. All they can hope is sometime to catch a glimpse of the heavenly Light, the “Brahmic Splendor.” It has not yet illumined their souls, and they know that it will not until they have made themselves worthy and well qualified

to receive it. Every Mason therefore writes his own trestleboard, plans his own Masonic life and progress, and builds his own spiritual fabric; and nobody else can do it for him.

One of the transcendent glories of Masonry is that it permits and encourages each to be steadfast in the faith of his acceptance, but it does not impose upon any man a particular interpretation of a symbol or an allegory. It leaves each Mason free to bring his own Light to the Builder's art and to build his spiritual fabric in his own way and in his own good time, even if it takes an eternity to do it.

For this reason alone we should love Masonry mightily! Freemasonry is the Light of free men. It does not chain the mind and spirit with preconceived interpretations or crystallized analyses, or attempt to dictate what its devotees should think about its so-called "hidden mysteries." It does not seek to impose any authority in interpretation to which every Mason is expected to bow. But it does urge upon each that he faithfully direct his steps through life by the Light he shall find in Masonry and *as he* there shall find it. This, it seems to me, is the transcendent glory and beauty and power of Masonry. It assumes that the highest and noblest state of man is freedom to think, to grow in mental and spiritual stature, to progress in the Builder's art, in such ways and as fast as the individual Builder chooses. Masonry enslaves no man; it ultimately frees any man who will bestir himself with diligence and perseverance to develop his own interpretations and learn to live his own Masonic life according to the dictates of his conscience. Every Mason receives from Masonry that Light and those lessons that he needs, and no more than he has the mental and spiritual capacity to perceive and understand. But he will not see the Light in Masonry until the Light of his own mind and soul illumines it. This "inner Light" in every man is the creative, regenerative power that dispels the darkness of ignorance, error, sin, and death: know this as eternal Truth, and you have power to recognize yourself as one of the Sons of God.

## THE NEEDS AND ROLE OF MASONRY TODAY

THERE is no body of men in any community who should be more interested in the so-called "mysteries of life" than the Masons. Every Mason makes a solemn declaration, as a condition of being made a Mason, that he believes in the existence of One Ever-living and True God and in the immortality of the soul and that he is in search of Light in Masonry and the way of everlasting life. No good man and Mason wishes to ignore these solemn purposes by neglecting to try to understand what Masonry means insofar as it throws light upon them, or by regarding these ideas as mere words or phrases that can have little or no concrete meaning for him.

It must be admitted that it is not easy to relate these sublime concepts to life as we know it in an earthly environment which tends to preoccupy our minds to the exclusion of everything else. Most men appear more devoted to the process of earning a living and enjoying life than they are to learning how to live a fuller and richer life. Freemasonry ministers to the whole man. It bids man pay attention to his secular and earthly interests, which are intended to promote his harmony and happiness, but it also enjoins him to a duty to cultivate his moral and spiritual character as an "immortal spirit." In the Light of the "eternal verities" a Mason's progress in character is more important than his success in the world. How few believe this! Or, if they do believe it, they do not find it easy to act upon their faith.

Besides preoccupation with material interests, one important factor seems to arise from Masonry itself that sets up an apparent barrier to efforts to understand its meanings. The very nature of Masonry, the science of the Builder of that "spiritual

fabric," the transcendent "other-worldism" of its Ritual, causes men to view it as they do the Golden Rule or the Sermon on the Mount: it appears too far removed from reality, from the practical affairs of life, to warrant much attention. Men who do not allow ethics to interfere with their business interests are not mentally and spiritually geared or conditioned to take the moral and spiritual teachings of Masonry more seriously.

Some Masons, however, take the moral and spiritual teachings seriously and in their hearts would like to know more about its "mysteries"; but they keep their thoughts so much to themselves that they appear reluctant to discuss them with one another. Perhaps the Masonic injunction to refrain from the discussion of sectarian matters in the Lodge room also contributes to this seeming reluctance at times. Masons often fear that discussion of what is meant by "God," "the Great Architect of the Universe," "immortality of the soul," "everlasting life," etc., would be in violation of this injunction on sectarian matters and might lead to such conflict of opinion as would interrupt the functions of fraternal relations. It is more fear than ignorance that keeps many silent about their understanding of the meanings of the Ritual. Men wish to tread on safe ground so far as their speculations on Masonic mysteries are concerned. It is safer to remain silent and be thought ignorant than to open one's mouth and remove all doubt, or so men think.

How much do Masons miss because of the fear either that they do not know enough to talk intelligently about such things or that, if they do know something, the other fellow does not care what they think or will ridicule their ideas if they express them! Year in and year out they go to Lodge and listen patiently to the formalities of opening, closing, and the degree work. And year in and year out they keep silent because of their fears, even where they have learned something about Masonic science. Many Masons who hold fifty-year medals and sixty-year palms know no more about the true Masonry they have been loyal to all through the years than they did at the beginning of their Masonic career, and there are also thousands of Masons who do not see enough in the Ritual to hold their interest once the novelty of

participation has worn off. The writer has heard many Masons admit that they had become bored with the monotony of Lodge work. Think of the thousands of men who belong to but never attend Lodge. No matter how much we have contributed to the work of the Lodge, no matter how enjoyable the good fellowship within the Lodge, no matter how much benefit we have derived from our Masonic association, we still miss the tremendous spiritual wealth of Masonry that we *could* enjoy if Masons could only feel free to exchange ideas on the puzzlements and seeming "extravagances" of the Ritual. The words and ideas of the Ritual need not go in one ear and out the other if all could get together in the Lodge room *after*, not during, meeting and exchange ideas based upon reading, research, and thinking. Such practice would bring the whole program and purpose of Masonry to life and significance in our lives, and it would add much-needed vitality to the ritualistic work of the Lodge.

There is no real reason why one should take exception to what any other Brother might say. Masons are not there to argue and fight for their peculiar ideas because one thinks one knows so much. One should know that they are, or may be, more valid to one's self than to others and that they are only *partial* glimpses of true Masonic Light anyway. No one is there to puff up his own ego by pretending that he knows so much about the hidden Mysteries. No one is there to try to convince the other fellow that he is an ignoramus and that he should unquestioningly adopt another's ideas. Each one is there *to exchange ideas* based upon research and the resources of his own mind, and *to search for Truth*. We will go to the master thinkers and Builders of the ages for whatever Light they can shed upon the Builders' art.\* We engage in discussion not to prove anyone right and the other fellow wrong but to enrich all our minds and expose one another to a variety of views. Out of such exchanges of ideas can come additions and subtractions in our thinking from which we can begin to experience the satis-

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\* See also Chapter XVII, "The Ancient Masters and the Ancient Wisdom."

factions that come from Light, More Light, and Further Light in Masonry.

Why do so many Masons fail to attend Lodge meetings? If, after the novelty of joining and attending a few times, their initial interest wears off, is it their fault or the Lodge's fault? If, after taking the degrees, the newly made Brother is not stimulated to learn the real meanings of Masonry, has the Lodge not "let him down"? In his bewilderment the Brother has no one to look to for guidance and instruction; and if the Lodge has no plan to provide them, he is left up in the air and may lose interest. It is the exceptional Mason who, without further help from the Lodge, has the initiative and sustained interest that are necessary to achieve proficiency in Masonry.

I believe that it is the responsibility of the Lodge, under the leadership of its Master, to help the newly made Brother when he needs it most. Should not every Lodge, either by its own action or by requirement of Grand Lodge, set up a School of Instruction that would require all newly made Brothers to read at least one standard work with explanations or interpretations of both the outer and the inner meanings of Masonry? This matter is too important and crucial to be left to caprice or the discretion of the Brother. Regardless of urgency, if left to himself the Brother will tend to postpone his effort to learn and know, even when he is quite interested; with the passage of time his interest will lag and die and his attendance will fall off. The Lodge must develop a well-organized, systematic program of instruction, and it is the Master's duty to see that the program is carried out.

Every prospective candidate for Masonry should be told before he signs his petition that he will be expected to own and study a certain book and that the instruction will be under the direction and leadership of a well-informed Brother appointed by the Lodge or by the Master of the Lodge. I do not believe that the name of a candidate who shows any reluctance to undertake such effort, or who indicates that it is beyond him or that he is not interested in Masonry if it involves effort to

find out what it means at the Blue Lodge level, should be permitted to come before the Lodge. We have tended to take in too many men who have not the mental and/or spiritual capacity to be Masons in more than name only. They make little or no contribution to Masonry, and Masonry can make little or no contribution to them. Perhaps if we expected more of these men some of them could and would measure up to it; but no matter how much is expected of some men, they cannot think beyond the narrow limits of their native endowments and educational background. Unless a man is interested enough to attend Lodge and able to participate in its work, of what benefit is membership to him? Is it sufficient for him to wear the insignia and be known as a Mason?

Is the proficiency of men to memorize the lectures adequate if that proficiency is no more than parrotlike, a mere repetition of words without meaning? Many, many men who are taken into the Lodges never get beyond this degree of proficiency, and they are not mentally alert and curious enough to want to know more about Masonry. Many of these Masons end by losing all interest in the Lodge and its work; although they continue to pay dues for reasons that seem good to them, they are still Masons in name only. Perhaps a more careful screening of the applicants, higher selectivity, would produce better results; and perhaps a School of Instruction in each Lodge would be effective in securing such selectivity.

The theory that men do not care to know what they can learn by reading books on Masonry—that they are more interested in and too busy with other phases of life—is not entirely correct. Many Lodges that do little or nothing to enlighten the newly made Brother may assume that what is true of some men is characteristic of all. Even if we assume that most new members would prefer to be left alone and not be bothered with something they do not care for, what about the responsibility of the Lodge for a growing number of men now receiving degrees who *do* want to know what it is all about? The Lodge should not let them down because of indifference even of the majority.

If good candidates for Masonry would get cold feet when they learned that they would be faced with a School of Instruction (for that was what the ancient Lodges were—schools of instruction and proficiency), the program need not be designated by that term. The prospective candidate could be told that after he had finished with the Third Degree, he with other members of his class would receive help from a well-informed Master Mason in studying a book that would answer all his questions. In almost every Lodge there is some Master Mason who could serve as instructor. He might elect to follow his own outline and methods; if not, he could probably secure from his Grand Lodge headquarters an outline and methods that have proved best adapted to the purpose and most productive of results.

If men's understanding and loyalty could be aroused to a point at which Masonry had greater attraction than their other recreational or intellectual interests, attendance at Lodge would increase. The Masters and officers of many Lodges have wrestled with this problem. They have had programs after Lodge meetings when there was no work of conferring degrees—moving pictures, speakers, refreshments, etc.—but all to little or no purpose in increasing attendance. Often after these officers' efforts to improve attendance have failed, they take the view that Masonry cannot compete with the many other interests that dominate life today, and they give up trying. But how many have tried a program of greater selectivity of candidates coupled with a program of instruction after they have taken their last degree?

The prevailing opinion in Lodges, so far as I can appraise it, seems to be that the Lodge has discharged its full duty by the candidate when it has conferred the Third Degree upon him. The newly made Brother has been introduced into a new world of vocabulary, symbolism, and allegory, a new teaching, a new philosophy—very often with no background of learning and experience adequate to cope with it intelligently. If he is left bewildered by it all (as I believe too many of them are), if the meanings are not made clear to him while his interest is

at its height, his interest wanes after a few Lodge meetings and he fails to attend Lodge at all; pursuit of other interests is more important than his light loyalty to the Lodge. Loyalty to Masonry grows in a man's mind only with experience in the fellowship and associations of a Lodge; it rarely develops in a day. The critical time for nearly all new Brothers is immediately after their Third Degree; if nothing is done at that time to stimulate their interest in Masonry, many are either lost to the Craft or become Masons in name only. Some Brothers who were not very good Masonic prospects in the first place could probably have been reclaimed for Masonry if their Lodge had undertaken to do so immediately after the Brothers received their Third Degree. If they had been obliged to study a book under the leadership of a competent Brother in the Lodge, they could not claim that they never had a chance to understand Masonry better, and the Lodge could properly feel that it had done its very best by each Brother. The fault for lack of appreciation for Masonry would rest with the Brother, not with the Lodge.

Motives for joining the Masons vary greatly from person to person. Some use the Blue Lodge as a steppingstone for admission to so-called "higher" Masonic bodies. Some think that membership in the Order will improve their business prospects. Some like to wear the insignia and be known as Masons among men; they think that membership in the Fraternity gives them prestige that they could not otherwise enjoy. These are not laudable motives, and they do not promise potential loyalty to the Lodge and to Masonry; but some of these might be reclaimed to active interest if efforts were made to sell real Masonry to them.

Those who join because they know something about Masonry that meets with their approval, and because they grasp some of the implications and interpretations of the degree work, find increasing satisfaction in attending Lodge and participating in its support and work; and they tend to remain loyal to Masonry for life. Every Lodge owes a great deal to this type of Mason, and a program of instruction within the Lodge should further

cement interest and loyalty and make Masonry mean more to this group of sincere patrons of the Masonic art. Perhaps it might also attract the interest of other members whose motives were less praiseworthy and constructive.

Different Grand Lodges have various ways of promoting the Standard Work in subordinate Lodges, and they try to stimulate the officers to attain word perfection in its rendition. This is important; but how many Grand Lodges, or subordinate Lodges, attach as much importance to real understanding of the inner meanings of Masonry? There is no doubt that the best Lodges are those that take pride in the word- letter-perfect ritualistic work; but we must remember that this is only half the real responsibility of a Grand Lodge or a subordinate Lodge under the leadership of its Master.

Do not the prerogatives of the Master enable him to assume the leadership in a program of Masonic instruction? The Master undoubtedly has the power, right, and duty to provide instruction for members of the Craft, and if such instruction is provided, it will be the duty of the Master to initiate and promote it in ways satisfactory to him and to the Lodge. The Worshipful Master sits and rises in the East, which is the symbolic source of Masonic Truth and Light; and the newly made Brother journeys to the East in search of that Light that only a Master can help him obtain. This is, indeed, the real function of the Master of a Lodge, as it was of the chief priest of the Eleusinian Mysteries, and this is the real reason why we become Master Masons. Not only the letter, or the word, but *the spirit of Masonry* brings life and Light to members of the Craft.

Therefore do not say: "The Lodges of Speculative Masonry have never given instruction in the deeper meanings of Masonry. Why should they now?" Or: "The Master's Word is lost. Why seek to rediscover it now? Let us be satisfied with the Substitute and wait for future generations to reveal it to us." There was a time when men were taught in the Lodges some of the secrets by which they could, and did, improve themselves in Masonry. The so-called hidden Mysteries of Ancient Freemasonry were progressively unveiled before the minds of men,

who thus became by their deeds worthy and well qualified, duly and truly prepared to receive them. Men not only *learned* a lecture, they had to *live* a lecture, before being advanced in Masonic instruction and experience. But after Masonry became "speculative" it was considered satisfactory if men simply learned a lecture and became able to repeat it like parrots, and the repetition was considered as suitable proficiency. Then, when men were no longer expected to improve themselves in Masonry through instruction and by deeds and conduct, they lost the Master's Word (the science of the Builder of a spiritual fabric) and became satisfied with a substitute that indicated that they had not built a spiritual edifice but were expected to build one in due time, as future generations should pass. The whole symbolism, to whatever extent it was appreciated, reduced Masonry to a mere speculative faith, a farfetched, far-off objective, almost beyond the hopeful reach of men. The soul of Masonry, in its speculative phase of historical development, was lost in the rubble of the temple of modern man's body and mind. This is the time and the generation in which mankind's tragic and critical need should offer a tremendous challenge to revive the ancient teachings and to make them effective as a dynamic force in the main stream of life everywhere on this planet.

Do not misunderstand when I speak of modern Masonry as "a mere speculative faith"; I do not imply an indictment of modern Speculative Masonry, which I regard as the means whereby the hidden Mysteries of Ancient Freemasonry have come down to this generation. Speculative Masonry has performed perhaps the most remarkable historical mission that ever became the lot of any organization of men, since it has brought the inner teachings and philosophy of the Builder down to this day, when Masonry has the potential to establish a world brotherhood and to bring Light and the more abundant life to all men. If Masons do not see fit to seize this marvelous opportunity to revive and teach the ancient wisdom embedded in its Ritual, that will prove to be a reproach to them, not an indictment of Masonry itself.

The ascendancy and domination of an age of materialism—the widespread worship of Mammon—have suppressed to a position of minor importance the real and eternal purposes of Masonry as the art and science of the Builder of a spiritual edifice in the soul of the individual member and as a universal synthesis under which all the nations of the earth might be gathered into a universal brotherhood with world peace as its objective. Rampant, disintegrative, and destructive materialism seems to have penetrated almost every phase of the institutional life of the Republic. The struggle for money and the goods that money will buy has become a dominating passion among men. It is a fearful thought that, in my own lifetime, the respect of youth for the commandment “Thou shalt not steal” seems to have grown less and less. Respect for law and order, for property rights, and for the rights of others in general appear to be on the decline in certain segments of society; and our so-called “superior” Western culture has sunk to a level of sheer sensuous perception and gratification that can be “viewed with alarm” as we ponder the question: “How much more godless can we become and still survive the historical fate of other empires and cultures of the past?”

Millions of people in our “land of plenty” are tied down to an economic treadmill of jobs and work they do not like, from which they try to escape into dubious forms of recreation and surcease from boredom. The secular demands of job, recreation, and home preoccupy the minds of too many men to the almost complete exclusion of consideration of the purposes for which they were born: to improve themselves mentally and spiritually, to know more and learn to do better. This is just another illustration of the hold of materialistic interests on the national mind. Masonry could do much to ameliorate this condition if Grand Lodges and subordinate Lodges in the different states would place themselves alongside other organizations that have this purpose in view. Why has Masonry come down to this day and age unless it is for this very purpose?

We live in most critical and even perilous times. Even as I write, the dark clouds of a third World War loom menacingly

above the horizon. This imminent third World War will clear the earth of those dark forces that have already brought on two World Wars and now threaten a third. The coming holocaust is the last and final phase of the Armageddon foretold in Scripture, which began in 1914; when it is over, we shall live at the beginning of a thousand years of peace among the nations. Here in America we shall begin the second phase of that *Novus Ordo Seclorum*—that New Order of the Ages—which under the guidance of God was inaugurated by the Founding Fathers of this nation in 1776. Has Masonry no part to play in this second phase, equal to the part it played in the first?

During the next forty years tremendous changes are to come in the lives of all the peoples of the world. What shall Masonry do to keep pace with the changing times? How *can* the future of Masonry continue to be like its immediate past? Must membership in the Lodges continue to be characterized by nothing more than a light loyalty to a speculative science? Masonry must change from a speculative to an operative Order to place itself in harmony with the spirit of the new age that will inevitably follow the third World War. It cannot rest upon past laurels or glories. There must come soon a reappraisal of the basic purposes of Masonry and rededication of a substantial part of membership to make the basic teachings a dynamic and potent operative force in self-improvement of the individual and in reconstruction of society in terms of world brotherhood. A New Age of Brotherhood will require Masonry to expand its power to bring the attractive possibilities of soul regeneration to men so that they can have every facility and opportunity to bring to light the True Word and to live it everywhere in the world.

This is not intended to be an academic, fancy-worded peroration. Though the Freemasons of the United States may be unaware of it, Masonry at this very moment is face to face with the stern and stark reality of a world in crisis, and with problems of reconstruction in a new world that is to be built upon the ruins of the old. Masons and Masonry helped mightily to found this Republic, and Masons and Masonry must be alert

and active in its preservation and improvement, rededicated to an endeavor to meet humanity's deepest needs in the coming Era of World Peace.

Masonry as such can never die, as it has always lived in the heart of humanity. Its soul will go marching on forever, but its present body (organization) can fail to comply with the requirements and needs of that soul. When and if it does, it will lose its soul and become a dead organization.

The teachings of the ancient Masters are the same as those hidden in modern Speculative Masonry, and there are several centers in the United States where these teachings are now being revived and disseminated: Astara in California, Soulcraft in Indiana, and several others.

These schools are actually spreading the same teachings that the Ritual of Masonry conceals. What is Masonry doing to develop and utilize the vast resources in the wealth and beauty of its sublime teachings and in the perfection of its organization? Can the teachings of the various "mystery schools" that now exist in the United States bring understanding, hope, and "salvation" to men of this generation? It appears that they are doing it and are attracting large numbers of the thinking elite of the country. Then why should not, why cannot, Masonry do it? If we do not move in this direction, these other schools will secure the support of growing numbers of the most enlightened among the population, and Masonry will be left far behind, content with third- and fourth-rate minds. If at the beginning of this new age Masonry does not seize its opportunity to take its place alongside the other mystery schools of the Western World in a joint effort to provide the "leaven of salvation" to lift the whole society to higher levels of knowledge and conduct, Masonry *as an organization* will decline and pass like any other organization that has failed to live up to its principles, and its place will be taken by other brotherhoods that keep abreast of the needs of humanity and the changing times. The spirit and soul of Masonry will pass out of its body—its present body—and, as it already has to some extent, enter the bodies of the various

contemporary schools devoted to the dissemination of the ancient wisdom.

Therefore let Masons become more selective in their choice of candidates for Masonry. Then let us afford them every opportunity to learn as much as possible not only about the apparent rudiments of Masonry but about its inner and hidden teachings as well.

## THE FOUNT OF TRUTH AND SECRECY

THE GREAT encyclopedist of Freemasonry, Albert G. Mackey, declares emphatically: "The real object of Freemasonry, in a philosophical and religious sense, is the *search for Truth*. This Truth is, therefore, symbolized by the Word." He also declares that in Speculative and scientific Masonry "the Word becomes the *symbol of Divine Truth*, the loss of which and the search for it constitute the whole system of Speculative Masonry." As long as the Word (the symbol of divine Truth or wisdom) remains lost, it is the "symbol of death"; but when it is discovered and brought to Light, it becomes the True Word and "is the symbol of life eternal." When applied to the progress of the individual Mason through the degrees, the Word (divine Truth) becomes a symbol of his search for light within the veils that hide the mysteries of ancient Freemasonry. Therefore when we think of the "Lost Word," the "True Word," the "Master's Word," we as Masons (Builders) must also think "divine Truth," "divine science," "divine wisdom," "ancient Mysteries," "ancient wisdom," "arcane science," etc. In short, by "the Word" is meant the whole of Masonic science and philosophy, the discovery and application of which by the Builder in his own life and living are the primary object of Masonry.

Therefore we should always think of the matchless Ritual as the great repository of that divine wisdom that has come down to us from remote antiquity. Hidden deep within the symbols and allegories of the Ritual, that ancient wisdom has been preserved to the present hour. In a magnificent volume, *The Secret Teachings of All Ages*, Manly Palmer Hall declares:

No reasonable doubt remains that the Masonic Order is the direct outgrowth of the Secret Societies of the Middle Ages, nor can it be denied that Freemasonry is permeated by the sym-

bolism and mysticism of the ancient and medieval worlds. This secret society, having re-discovered *the lost wisdom of the ages* and fearing that the knowledge might be lost again, perpetuated it in two ways: (1) by an Organization [Freemasonry] to the initiates of which it revealed [or concealed?] its wisdom in the form of symbols, and (2) by embodying its *Arcana* [its hidden science] in the literature of the day by means of cunningly contrived ciphers and enigmas. . . . The discerning few were thus enabled to find that Wisdom by which a man is "raised" to an illumined life. [Italics added.]

It should be carefully noted that the purpose of the Ritual is just as much to *conceal* as to reveal the secret science that lies behind and within the outward and literal forms and symbols. The true wisdom is concealed, hidden, not only from those who do not join the Masonic Order but also from those who "take" the degrees; and it will remain "hidden" until each Mason seeks revelation and finds the Truth for himself. There are no interpretations in the Ritual; they have to be sought elsewhere. In his *Mystic Masonry* Dr. J. D. Buck quotes from the *Legenda* of Sir Albert Pike regarding concealment of the true wisdom in the Ritual: "What is most worth knowing in Masonry is never very openly taught. The symbols are displayed, but they are mute. It is by hints only, and these the least noticeable and apparently insignificant, that the Initiate is put upon the track of the hidden Secret. . . . It was never intended that the masses of Masons should know the meaning of the Blue Lodge Degrees, and no pains were spared to conceal the fact."

Today the true science of the Builder of a spiritual edifice is lost among the rubbish of man's materialistic and secular interests. Today most men so assiduously cultivate their material interests that little or no time is left for the conscious pursuit and development of their spiritual powers. Today Mammon is enthroned and worshipped in every segment of human life and in every institution of this planet; and though selfishness and greed are not universal in every individual and association, they nevertheless play a dominant role in our materialistic culture.

For this reason modern Masonry cannot openly proclaim the

true science of the Builder but can only declare a symbolic substitute that encourages man to accept his role as a seeker of Masonic Truth and a Builder of his immortal soul. If the full Truth of life is "lost" in the rubbish of materialism (the desires and lusts of the flesh), it must gradually be rediscovered and brought to light in the more or less rapid and developmental processes of the Builder of a spiritual edifice—the soul, or Sanctum Sanctorum—which now is "unfinished" but which will ultimately be completed and dedicated as the temple of the living God. In spite of the ignorance and darkness of the present mammonistic era, the wisdom and Light of a new age will expand and grow in the consciousness of the peoples of the world until—

The common sense of most shall hold a fretful realm in awe,  
And the kindly earth shall slumber, lapt in UNIVERSAL LAW.

(TENNYSON'S "Locksley Hall")

Masonry conceals this universal law, this divine wisdom, in its sublime Ritual. As a secret science, however, unknown to all but a very few, it is protected from attack and possible annihilation by its enemies, and it is perpetuated from generation to generation so that the few in every generation can benefit by membership, participation, and a search for its inner assurances of self-improvement in the Builder's art and of the possibility of erecting "that house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens." The hidden Mysteries of Ancient Freemasonry shall be forever preserved by concealment down to the age when its divine wisdom shall become generally known and be applied by the many, and the whole world can be organized to exemplify its high principles of brotherhood in its everyday life. This is the ultimate goal toward which all individual and social life is moving on the level of time; and when consummated, this will constitute the kingdom of God on earth.

One of the ancient landmarks of Masonry requires of its initiates that they shall maintain secrecy and silence on certain phases of the various Rituals except for the instruction of members of the Craft. This is a source of resentment, objection, and opposition among certain people who do not know or recognize

the character of that ancient wisdom which appears in modern Speculative Masonry as the hidden Mysteries of Ancient Freemasonry. The truth, of course, is that Masonry has no secrets that the ancient mystery schools and every great religion did not, or does not, possess; all deal with the hidden mysteries involved in the search of man for God, for his own soul, and for the powers of the human mind and spirit. Masonry, in common with the inner teachings of every great world teacher, is the science of the Builder of a spiritual edifice, and as such encourages every man, whether Mason or not, to search for Truth and personal power—which all the great teachers of mankind came into flesh to manifest and express for the spiritual uplift of the races. This divine knowledge, this process of achieving personal power, is so deeply mysterious and transcendent, beyond the thinking of the great mass of humanity, that those who possessed it, no matter how much they might yearn to make it known, were compelled to keep it secret.

Why compelled? Because no desirable objective could be attained by trying to reveal to another what would not be understood, appreciated, and used unselfishly. Ignorant man fears and hates the unknown and persecutes and slays those who know the deeper truths of life and nature. The history of the last two thousand years, even in the face of the ameliorating effects of Christian teachings, shows that power, when granted to mankind, has been used for selfish and destructive purposes. If all the secrets of self-development and personal power could be known and used by men today, the power would be used greedily and selfishly, with almost every man's hand against his brother, until the flesh of mankind would perish from the earth. God permitted man, or at least man has been able, to make use of atomic power—and see what terrible use has been and may be made of it! In the hands of ruthless and crazy men it can destroy humanity and make of earth a lifeless, barren rock pile. If most persons today could use the personal power that the great masters of East and West possessed, and do now possess, to blast, exploit, or kill others, inborn selfishness, greed, and savagery would prompt them to do it.

It has been said many times that "a little knowledge is a dangerous thing." Though trite, this is true. Firecrackers in the hands of children, six-shooters in the hands of infantile men, automobiles operated by immature people, atomic weapons in the hands of mad men—all these and many others show how dangerous it is to human welfare to place a *little* knowledge in the hands of men who still have more of the beast in them than the love of God and their fellow men. Men of all races today need not a *little* knowledge but the *fullness* of knowledge. The fullness of knowledge includes the spirit and the will to use it for beneficent purposes. What a great gulf lies between them in the use of the personal powers that all the great masters and teachers of the races have possessed!

Take the Master Jesus for example. He could, and did (1) heal the sick, restore sight to the blind, and raise the dead—but he also could have used this power for destructive purposes, as the black magicians have done throughout history; (2) transmute one substance into another, as water into wine, or the ingredients of bread into bread, and thus feed five thousand from a few loaves—but he never did this to make a fortune for himself; (3) levitate his body to walk on the water, and still the tempest—but his employment of this power was always exercised for the benefit of others; (4) rise from the dead in his light-body and become visible to his mother and his disciples. The Master Jesus had learned to use **these personal powers**, but there is no instance where he used them for self-aggrandizement of any kind. He used them always to help and benefit others. He had the *fullness* of knowledge and the *fullness of love* for humanity to use them for beneficent purposes.

Christians who take a dim view of the so-called secrecy of Masonry should remember that Jesus himself often enjoined secrecy upon his followers. Two or three quotations from the New Testament will suffice:

1. Matthew 16:20: "Then charged he his disciples that they should tell no man that he was Jesus the Christ." Why? No doubt because he knew that, coming from his disciples, no man would believe it; they would not have believed it even if he

himself proclaimed it in public. The rank and file of people do not know what it means to have become Christ; they will not understand it; even Nicodemus did not understand him when Jesus declared: "Ye must be born again." Why proclaim it to the mob?

2. That this was the view taken by Jesus of Nazareth is further shown in Matthew 7:6: "Give not that which is holy unto the dogs, neither cast ye your pearls before swine, lest they trample them under their feet, and turn again and rend you." Do not try to inform profane and ignorant men on such sacred, mysterious, and occult matters as soul regeneration, atonement, resurrection, immortality. These pearls of great price are too transcendent and spiritual to be within the mental and spiritual reach of ignorant, vicious or degraded persons. Why attempt the impossible? If you attempt to reveal the secrets of soul regeneration to men in spiritual darkness, they will laugh in your face or turn upon you and heap all kinds of vilification and even persecution and death upon you. Read the history of the Christian dispensation and learn the truth of this. If you know things beyond the knowledge of most men, keep them to yourself, or reveal them only to those who you *know* are worthy and well qualified, duly and truly prepared, to receive them. Do not write anything down—it may fall into the hands of the profane—but communicate your wisdom to the aspirant from mouth to ear.

3. Matthew 13:10–13: "And the disciples came, and said unto him, 'Why speakest thou in parables?' He answered and said unto them, 'Because it is given *unto you* to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven, but *to them* it is not given . . . because seeing they see not; and hearing they hear not, neither do they understand.'" It is apparent from this that Jesus spoke in parables to the multitude so that only a few who had sufficient knowledge would understand what he meant; but he later explained the real meanings of these parables to his disciples.

Every great teacher and every master and initiate down through the ages both before and since his day have done the

same. The inner or greater teachings or mysteries have been handed down from a remote past in this way, and they have thus come down to us today in our Great Light and in the allegories (parables), symbols, and working tools of modern Speculative Masonry. The real object of the true Christian teaching was the establishment of the kingdom of God on earth (as it is in heaven, within the mind and potential spirit of man), and this is the real object of Freemasonry. The science and philosophy of Masonry, when applied and expressed by the individual mind and soul, are a continuing and expanding process, the object and end of which are the attainment of personal powers to be used for the benefit of mankind. This is true Masonic illumination and is the same thing as the philosophic initiation of the ancient mystery schools, the soul regeneration of the Rosicrucians, the self-realization of the Eastern yoga schools, the kingdom of heaven and "second birth" of the Christians, and the "Brahmic Splendor" alluded to in the Masonic Ritual.

Jesus declared with finality: "Ye must be born again," "born of the Spirit," for the development in time and eternity of the same personal powers that all the great masters and teachers of a blind humanity came to possess and use for the benefit and instruction of mankind. When a person has attained this level of soul development he does not have to be reborn into a mortal body; he then can dwell permanently in the Celestial Lodge Above, that "bourne from which no traveler returns." He has completed his human evolution; he has attained "salvation."

"Many are called, but few are chosen" from any generation. What the few attain is a beacon light to illuminate the path that leads to the destiny of the many. This is a cosmic and eternal process for the whole of humanity, but the techniques and methods of soul regeneration are always practiced by the few in silence and secrecy; and since this is the hidden object of modern Speculative Masonry, the initiate is strictly enjoined to preserve the sanctity and integrity of the teachings within the tiled Lodges of the Craft. With the rise of political and religious freedom during the last two centuries, the secrecy of the dis-

senting few has not been so much a matter of life or death, for modern republics and churches do not burn people at the stake because of differences in religious or philosophic beliefs; otherwise, the reasons for silence and secrecy today are the same as they have always been.

There is, however, a sense in which there is nothing hidden in the Masonic Ritual that is different from the ancient wisdom that can be found in the books of any good library, that can be discovered from reading the works of Plato and the Greek Gnostics, from what is known of the teachings of the ancient Egyptian masters, particularly Hermes, and of the Pythagorean School, that cannot be learned from Manes and the Manicheans, from the great medieval alchemists and Rosicrucians, from the modern Theosophists—to name just a few examples of the transcendent philosophy of modern Masonry. Moreover, much of this ancient wisdom appears in the New Testament of the Great Light, where it is summed up in the brief statement of the Galilean Master to Nicodemus when he declared: “Ye must be born again . . . of the water and the Spirit.” (Read the third chapter of the Gospel according to St. John.)

The central theme of all these similar philosophies deals with the origin and destiny of man, his relations in nature, his search for his own soul through conscious self-development and self-realization, his rise to masterhood and liberation. Since the rise and domination of the Roman Church from the opening of the fourth century A.D. to our own time, the Church has regarded these schools of thought as heretical and has done everything in its power to stamp out and suppress them. Read the history of the Inquisition, and you will get a glimpse of what the Church has done to people whose thoughts and revelations differed from the prevailing theology. During this period of the so-called “Christian dispensation” the divine gnosis was persecuted, outlawed, and driven underground; the power of the ancient and medieval Church and State was employed to prevent the dissemination of the ancient Truth among the people; they burned both books and people as heretical; and those who persisted in loyalty to it were forced to adopt every

possible device of secrecy to preserve and pass it along down through what are properly called "the Dark Ages."

The "secrecy" enjoined in the Masonic Ritual, therefore, rests *partly* on the traditional policy of the various men and schools of thought who preserved, perpetuated, and transmitted the ancient wisdom down through the centuries until the proper time came when it could be incorporated into the Masonic Ritual in the early eighteenth century. Of course, in the twentieth century Church and State do not combine to "tear a man limb from limb on the rack" or burn him at the stake because he is adjudged a "heretic," but there are other reasons why it is still considered necessary or expedient to enjoin secrecy upon those who take the Masonic degrees.

Any man, whether Mason or not, can learn what the best thought of the ancient masters was as to the purpose of life in a body; but the techniques and methods of self-improvement and self-realization, though they are not a part of the Ritual, are the inner secrets that all Master Builders have used to acquire transcendent personal powers and attain to cosmic consciousness and masterhood, or "adeptship." Not so much *what* was expected of an aspirant, or neophyte, but *how* he was to achieve it has always been the most secret, and has been withheld from people of every generation. Few in any generation avail themselves of the knowledge of the techniques and disciplines of self-realization that make for cosmic consciousness or soul regeneration; few could profit by such instruction; the disciplines are too exacting and even dangerous, except under the expert guidance of a competent teacher. However, *when the pupil is ready, the teacher will appear*, if one becomes worthy and well qualified, duly and truly prepared, to make progress in such instruction. Thus in Masonry secrecy is enjoined *to prepare men for that great work of the conscious Builder of a spiritual edifice.*

## MASONRY: SPECULATIVE AND/OR OPERATIVE?

IN THE monitorial part of the Middle Chamber Lecture, “operative masonry” is defined as “a proper application of the useful rules of architecture, whence a structure will derive figure, strength and beauty and whence will result a due proportion and a just correspondence in all its parts.” An “operative mason,” then, is the builder of a material edifice; but this definition must be qualified by the fact that his operations are confined to such parts of an edifice as are constructed of stone and mortar. Mackey declares: “The operative art is that which was practised by the Stone-Masons of the Middle Ages”; but he later appears to qualify the implication that the freemasons of the Middle Ages worked only with stone by implying that they used other materials in “the construction of edifices for private and public use, houses for dwelling places of man, and Temples for the worship of Deity.”

The monitorial part of the Middle Chamber Lecture also declares that “By Speculative or Free Masonry we learn to subdue the passions, act upon the square, keep a tongue of good report, maintain secrecy and practice charity.” By these processes, especially the process of learning to subdue the passions, a man, as a Masonic Builder, erects in due course of time “that spiritual building, that house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens”—the purpose of development as it applies to every individual that was ever born.

The conscious efforts of individual men and women toward self-mastery throughout the known history of the world were performed in utmost secrecy. The science of the Builder has always been and is today an “arcane science,” a secret science, that is concealed from the many and revealed to the few who

are worthy and well qualified to receive it. There is no mystery of life that is deeper and less easily understood than the fact that the great mass of humanity on this earth have not progressed far enough on the path of illumination to be found worthy and well qualified, duly and truly prepared, to receive this secret instruction in the true science of the Builder. In all ages only a few have succeeded in attaining a level of psychic development at which they could be safely entrusted with these secret methods of self-mastery. We learn to realize that all men, as "children of God," or as "children of nature," make a little progress by coming to live even one lifetime in a mortal body; but among the great mass of the people of any generation the process is more or less unconscious, or casual and sporadic. Only a few in every generation devote themselves with conscious perseverance and great labor to learn to know and apply in their own lives the secret methods of self-improvement that the Masonic Ritual declares to be the purpose of all truly Masonic endeavor. The very fact that only a few find this "way to everlasting life" and that the many would not benefit from it discloses the reason for the concealment of the philosophy of life in the Ritual.

The makers of the Ritual chose to use the whole terminology of the stonemasons for this purpose. That is the reason why Masonry, as the art of the Builder of a spiritual edifice, is termed "speculative." To the newly "initiated" the terminology of the Ritual tends to be like a closed book; it is so far from the background of their lives, education, and experience that it is more difficult to understand it than it is to learn a foreign language. Even when the candidate is enabled to catch a glimpse of the inner content of the Ritual, he begins to realize that it is deeply hidden in the terminology of the builder or mason or architect and is behind various other symbols, where it tends to remain a "dead letter" to the great majority of the Craft. In many instances the Masonry of the Brethren does not rise even to the level of its "speculative" aspect, for by "speculative" is meant "contemplative," "reflective," "theoretical." It is a well-known fact that many Masons spend too little time

contemplating and reflecting upon the beauties and glories of Masonry as it applies to them as Builders of a "Temple more glorious than that of Solomon, a Temple of honor, of justice, of purity, of knowledge and of truth."

There can be no question that in modern Speculative, or symbolic, Masonry the purpose of coming into a Lodge of the body is subjugation (control and transmutation) of the passions and attainment through works of self-mastery. Referring to the "Lodge of the body," "Know ye not," said Paul in our Great Light, "that ye are the temple of God and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you?" The intention of the makers of the Ritual was undoubtedly that a majority of those who attain the rank and title of Free and Accepted Masons could and would give some time to contemplation of this sublime truth. The esoteric meanings of Masonry might be "lost" to succeeding generations, but the founders of the Ritual must have hoped that sometime the majority of the Craft would begin the process of rediscovery of the Truth in Masonry by giving time to its "speculative," or contemplative, phase. The seeds of inner Masonic Truth are planted in the fertile soil of contemplation. The thinker must think before the knower can know the Truth in Masonry. Masons must not despise or depreciate the present status of Masonry as a "speculative art"; in the upward longings and strivings of the soul, "speculation," "contemplation," and "meditation"—much reading and thinking—must be the initial step toward understanding of the inner content of the Masonic Ritual and its relations to individual lives and conduct. Thank God for the truly speculative Mason! He begins to become the Son of God. He will soon catch a glimpse of that "hieroglyphic Light that none but craftsmen ever saw."

*True* Operative Masonry arises out of speculative Masonry. The ancient Brethren who have gone this way before us were true Operative Masons. They had gone far on the way of "spiritual regeneration" and "self-mastery"; the seeds of contemplation and meditation had sprung into fuller growth and borne more fruit in relating their speculations to their own lives and conduct. We may declare, if we wish, that "by 'operative

masonry' we allude to a proper application of the useful rules of architecture," but let us realize at the same time that this is a symbolic and secret way of declaring that, as truly operative Masons, "we allude to a proper application" in our lives and conduct of the inner philosophic content of the Builder's art that is concerned with the "uprearing of that spiritual fabric wherein his soul shall find rest forever, and forever more." The truly "operative" Mason in all times and places has applied in his own life those secret and hidden methods of self-mastery that "raised" him to a degree of consciousness and wisdom far beyond the achievement of most men but not beyond the possible achievement and destiny of all.

In order to obtain a correct perspective regarding the relationship between what may be called "practical masonry" and "Speculative Masonry" as compared with Operative Masonry, the earnest seeker for Masonic Light should read Chapter VIII, "Freemasonry," in *The Great Message* by J. E. Richardson.\* The writer maintains that an "Operative Lodge" was one in which the candidate-neophyte had to show by severe tests his mental and spiritual proficiency in one degree before he could be advanced to the next, and that, prior to A.D. 1717, when the "Mother Grand Lodge of the present Speculative Order was organized and established in England," there were individual Lodges dating back to the beginning of the Christian Era in which Operative Masonry has been designated variously as "spiritual Masonry," "scientific Masonry," "esoteric Masonry," "mystic Masonry," and in which the philosophy and practice of the ancient teachings were taught, inculcated, and made effective in the life of the aspirant.

Though we do not wish to emphasize this definition of "operative" as a matter of supreme importance here, in the coming age, which we are even now entering, the Masonry that we now think of as "speculative" will develop, or should develop, into a more "operative" and implemental form in which the

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\* Distributed by the National Metaphysical Institute, 1238 West Pierce Street, Phoenix, Arizona.

Lodges will endeavor to teach and practice the principles of self-improvement in Masonry.

Richardson says (page 95): “‘Operative’ Masonry has been designated also as ‘Spiritual’ Masonry, in that it embodies an accumulation of exact and definite knowledge concerning the unfoldment of the spiritual nature of man, which inspires the individual Mason to the development of his faculties, capacities and powers, until he becomes personally conscious of himself as a *Spiritual Being* inhabiting a physical body.” Not only does this introduce to the reader what is perhaps to him a new concept of the meaning of “operative” as it applies to him as the Builder of a spiritual fabric, but it reiterates the emphasis that should be placed upon the real purpose of Masonry. In Speculative Masonry we learn *what* Masonry is, but in Operative Masonry we perform the disciplines that enable us to apply what we learn and to work consciously toward the status of the “Perfect Ashlar,” as did the Brethren in the operative Lodges that existed before the establishment of the Grand Lodges that drew together into the various Masonic Jurisdictions the modern Speculative or symbolic Lodges.

## THE BENEFITS OF MASONRY

Modern Masonry, therefore, confers two kinds of benefits upon members of the Craft: first, the benefits derived from association in a universal brotherhood in which men help one another in a great variety of ways; second, the benefits that can be derived from a study of the philosophy of Masonry. The first set of benefits may be described as available to the rank and file of members who come to Lodge meetings and participate more or less actively in the work of a Lodge; the second set accrue only to those who are willing to look beneath the outer teachings and forms and seek to become more familiar with the so-called “mysteries” and “secrets” concealed in the Ritual. Loyalty to Masonry can be explained and justified by the first set of benefits conferred by that Masonic fellowship, but the power that has perpetuated the Order from time im-

memorial is found only in the second set of benefits, derived from study of its deeper and less obvious meanings. The men who formulated the Ritual knew much about the science of the soul, about the ancient wisdom, or they would not have concealed it in the Ritual, where it has remained "lost" for generations and will remain "lost" until every man discovers it for himself. That was the reason why the ritualists of the order placed this "wisdom" in the Ritual; they hoped and expected that it would become a light to all generations. If it were not for the Ritual of Masonry, how long would the outer benefits and advantages of membership in the Order continue? Whether men know it or not, recognize it as a fact or not, the urge, the longing, for Masonic fellowship and its more obvious benefits will *ultimately* lead the Builder to a careful consideration of the deeper meanings of Masonry.

Masonry deals with the *whole man*, not only with his outer interests and satisfactions but his inner life and longings—the secret though unconscious promptings of his soul. Amid the noise, confusions, pleasures and pains, joys and sorrows, of life few men appear aware of the existence of these more or less unconscious, secret promptings of the soul that cause men to be, or to become, discontented with what they know, and to want to know more about the hidden meanings and purposes of life. This eternal Quest of the soul, this fundamental desire to find happiness, harmony, security, serenity, and peace, has sometimes been called a "divine discontent," as if it emanated from God as an evidence of the divinity that resides deep within the soul of man. If this indeed is a correct appraisal, it makes every one susceptible, sooner or later in the life of his soul, to a conscious pursuit of the meanings and purposes of life. This is the real and dynamic purpose of Freemasonry, which is emphasized in the declaration that a Mason is a Builder of a spiritual fabric on the level of time and of eternity.

Let us therefore as individual Masons grasp the opportunities and challenges of membership in the Order to become aware of and to understand the meanings and purposes of life as portrayed in the secret teachings of the Ritual. It is from the

vantage point of the present membership in the Masonic Order that we should develop an incentive to expand our minds to delineate the broad outlines of the past history of the soul and to explore its future—in other words, to learn more about whence we came and whither we are traveling. The curious and inquiring mind naturally asks: Who am I? What am I? Whence came I? Why am I as I am? How can I become better? Whither am I going? What are the purpose, plan, and meaning of life? Rational answers to these questions will immeasurably enrich our thinking, doing, and living and will enable us to see reason and purpose in many of life's experiences that otherwise would seem unexplainable and impossible to understand.

The mind of man is a marvelous instrument even when it functions in and through a mortal body. It has tremendous powers to ascertain more truth, to perceive more light, on any of these questions, although there are millions upon millions of people who, it seems, never get around to consider their answers. They are not intellectually or spiritually curious enough to want to know whence they came or whither they are traveling. Many ridicule any suggestion that they try to find out for themselves. Regardless of the motives that impel men to seek admission to the Order, regardless of the seriousness with which Masons pursue the purposes of Masonry, still no man can pass through the degrees, continue to attend Lodge meetings, and participate in the work of a Lodge *without deriving great benefit from it*. Read what one competent commentator\* (though not a Mason himself) says about participating in the forms and ceremonies of Masonry:

By going through these forms over and over they are engraved by sight and sound upon the breath-form ["living soul"] and cause *passive* thinking along the engraved lines. *Later active* thinking results along the same lines, and with it comes the Light by which the particular Truth concealed in the form is seen. *After death*, the lines made on the breath-form [Soul] by Ma-

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\* H. W. Percival, *Masonry and Its Symbols* (1951), p. 5.

sonic thinking and Masonic thoughts play an important part in shaping Destiny.

If this is true—and as a student of psychic science the author thinks it is true—how little is one consciously aware of the extent to which one's future is being shaped by Masonry! This effect has to do with the soul's growth, and no one has a way of measuring it within the limitations of his body and mind unless he pays prolonged attention to the laws of psychic development as discovered and brought to Light by the great thinkers and teachers of the past. The effect of Masonic activity plays a tremendous part in the long future of our souls.

This benefit of participating in the work of a Lodge, or even of hearing the Ritual, may not be fully realized in this life, but there are many tangible benefits that the minds of Masons can appreciate in the here and now, if they will stop, look, and listen as the years of their Masonic careers go by. It is indeed quite stimulating and heartening sometimes to read what non-Masonic friends say of Masonry. To quote again from *Masonry and Its Symbols*:

The Brotherhood of Freemasons is the largest of the bodies in the world which are outposts to prepare possible candidates for an inward life. . . . The Order existed under one name or another as a compact, well-organized body long before the building of the oldest pyramid. It is older than any religion known today. It is the extraordinary thing among organizations in the world. This organization and the system of its teachings, with the tools, landmarks, emblems and symbols, have always been substantially the same. . . . There are no better and no more advanced teachings available to human beings than those of Masonry.

Another contemporary writer, a prominent expositor of philosophy, declares: "The leading Masonic scholars of all times have agreed that the symbols of the Fraternity are susceptible of the most profound interpretation and thus reveal to the truly initiated certain secrets concerning the spiritual realities of life." (Manly P. Hall, *The Lost Keys of Freemasonry*.)

But so far as the conscious mind is concerned, unless you

bring your Light to Masonry, Masonry will bring no Light to you; but if your conscious mind learns to discern its Light, Light shall be added to the coming Light until your whole body, mind, and soul become illumined and you experience satisfactions you never dreamed were possible. In Chapter XVII, "The Ancient Masters and the Ancient Wisdom," which pursues this theme further, you will discover that Masonry is the deep well of living water that springs from the inexhaustible fountainhead of Truth—which, if you drink deeply, will quench your thirst for Truth and bring you into the presence of the Mason's God. You will realize that Masonry is the bread of life, that heavenly manna which will assuage your spiritual hunger and render you worthy and well qualified to enter the Celestial Lodge Above, where the Supreme Architect of the Universe presides. You will recognize that Masonry is that "pearl of great price" which exceeds in value all the wealth and riches of the material world, the sight and Light of which will bring unimaginable illumination, calm, tranquility, peace, and happiness to your mind and spirit. Not only is Masonry the Light of the soul; it is the sacred fire that burns upon the altar of the soul, whence comes that divine urge to learn to subdue the passions and to make progress in the Builder's arts.

That these ideas are here introduced does not mean that you can, or will, entertain them *now*, but there is value and benefit in merely introducing them because, even if you reject them now, *ultimately* in the here or the hereafter you will meet them again and again and sometime will be more inclined to examine them on their merits. This is one of the benefits of being introduced to what may at first seem silly and inconsequential. Sooner or later you will begin to think about them. Thinking must always precede action, motivation, and the benefits of thinking, just as cause is followed by corresponding effect in both the visible and the invisible worlds. Sooner or later, while traveling on the level of time, you will stop, look, and listen for the higher echelons of Masonic Truth and teachings concerning the destiny of your own soul.

Masons who tend to place a literal interpretation upon the

symbols and allegories of the Ritual sooner or later to their great surprise will come upon unexpected revelations of Masonic Truths, even though they do not seek to discover such Truths. Every Brother has within himself the possibility of serendipity—"the gift of finding valuable or agreeable things not sought, or the discovery of things not sought." He may not be aware of it, but he has mental and/or soul power to ascertain Truth even though he does not diligently search for it. Masonic truths tend to "creep up" on a Mason who attends Lodge and participates in its work. Sooner or later he will arrive at an appreciation of Masonry that he never dreamed possible. The Light of these sudden revelations, as we said, will not come from conscious pursuit or study of Masonic science.

The writer does not wish to emphasize serendipity as a reliable and expeditious means of arriving at Masonic Truth; it is too unconscious, too purposeless, too casual, too slow, to suit the mind of a dynamic and diligent thinker and Builder. Serendipity may be all right for some, perhaps most, Masons, but some want to make a conscious study of the meanings and teachings of Masonry. They do not want to wait for fitful flashes and glimpses of Masonic Light that may appear unexpectedly by chance and without conscious searching; they find great stimulation to conscious effort at discovery in the truly Masonic injunction: "Ask and it shall be given you; seek and ye shall find; knock and the door will be open unto you." "Ask," "seek," "knock," are not qualities implied in "serendipity."

## HIRAM, CHRISTIC HERO OF MASONRY

MASONS should have an incentive to know more about the Doctrine of Avatars\* because modern Speculative Masonry, in common with every great world religion, has its legendary hero, Grand Master and Exemplar Hiram Abiff. No doubt many sincere Christians who become members of the Masonic Order wonder if there is any place in the Masonic program of the Builder for him whom they call Jesus Christ. The answer to this question can be covered in a twofold manner.

1. So far as the writer knows, the Grand Lodge and the subordinate Lodges of every state in the United States make the Holy Bible, with both Old and New Testaments, "the Great Light in Masonry"; it is the Book of the Law in Western Countries. No Masonic Lodge can be opened without opening the Holy Bible on its altar.

The prophets of the Old Testament, particularly Isaiah, foretold the advent of a savior about seven hundred years before it took place; the prophet makes reference several times to the "Holy One of Israel," and the reference is undoubtedly to Jesus of Nazareth, who, regardless of what view anybody may take of him as Saviour, was *the great world Teacher and Way-shower*. Jesus of Nazareth had attained a level of consciousness, of perfection, that has been called by various names: cosmic consciousness, soul regeneration, philosophic initiation, spiritual illumination, Brahmic Splendor, Christ-consciousness.

Masonry as the art and science of the Builder of a spiritual edifice therefore urges upon each votary that he diligently study the Book of the Law to "*learn the way to everlasting life,*" that he remain steadfast in the faith of his acceptance," and that

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\* An "Avatar" is the incarnation of a divine messenger, like Jesus and Buddha and others.

“he faithfully direct his steps through life by the Light he there shall find and *as* he there shall find it.” The searcher for Masonic Light is enjoined to go not only to the Old Testament but to the New for the religious instruction and Light that seem best to him. There he will learn something about the life, philosophy, teachings, and works of one of the great Avatars, whose advent was foretold hundreds of years before it took place. The fact that his name is not mentioned anywhere in the Ritual need not be an affront and an offense to him, because the purpose of Masonry and the real purpose of Christian teachings are one and the same thing: *soul regeneration*, the building through faith and works of a spiritual fabric. “I am the Light of the world,” said Jesus; “he that followeth me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the *Light of life*.” Masonry also proclaims that the most desirable thing a man can wish for himself is Light, More Light, Further Light, and ultimately *All the Light* that man can perceive while living in a mortal body. In both cases this is the Light of faith, knowledge, wisdom, and works, all in harmony and co-operation to bring a soul back to the Father’s house, to the Celestial Lodge Above. This is the purpose of life in a physical body for every Christian Mason as well as for every non-Christian Mason; and it is a never-ending, a cosmic process in which Masons are taught to emulate the greater Brethren who have gone this way before them.

Now, therefore, why is Jesus the Christ not mentioned in the Masonic Ritual of the first three degrees? Those who ask this question should remember that Masonry has been, and is now, attempting to promote the idea of a universal brotherhood, a dwelling-together of all peoples on earth in harmony and peace. Though Avatars have come to all people at different times with the same essential message, nevertheless the Christian Avatar is still not acceptable to some peoples. The brotherhood of man, however, can be established upon the Fatherhood of God, which could and should be a universal unifying synthesis of sufficient power to draw all men together. Masonry proclaims the universal sovereignty of the All-Father, for it is He, the “I Am

That I Am," who has sent every divine messenger into the world of humanity to teach men the way, the Truth, and the Light. The ancient teachings were projected on the earth plane by the great teachers—"Avatars," "divine messengers," "messiahs," "way-showers," "exemplars," "elder Brothers," who at the behest of the Great Architect came into flesh from the Celestial Lodge at different times and to different races of men. Jesus of Nazareth was sent to be a light to the world to some branches of the human race, but other branches have had, and do now have, their Buddha, their Krishna, their Zoroaster, their Confucius, their Mohammed. Masonry declares that all these peoples, of whatever religion or creed, are "children of God" born into a particular race, religion, or creed to derive whatever benefits and self-development they need, or are capable of, on their long journey back to the Celestial Lodge. As all men "live and move and have their being" in the Creator, all men are potential Brothers. Hence Masonry emphasizes no one Avatar in its Ritual more than another; and Masons all over the world express their first allegiance to God, as the Universal Father, and as Builders of a spiritual fabric follow as best they can the teachings in their own peculiar Book of the Law. The Christian Mason can, and should, fraternize with Masons of every race, color, or creed if the ideal of world brotherhood of all peoples is ever to become a fact. And, we might add, unless some way can soon be found to implement this concept of world brotherhood, the peoples of the world, motivated by the evil spirit of world-wide selfishness and mammonism, will use the powers of atomic energy for universal destruction, perhaps to the point where our earth will be unfit for human habitation. We have quite definitely come to the point where the alternative to universal brotherhood is universal destruction.

It is the undoubted purpose of Masonry to promote brotherhood among *all* races and classes of men. The truths of the Builder have been, and now are, just as applicable to the yellow Mongolian as to the white European or American, just as applicable to the Indo-Aryan as to the Semitic Moslems or Jews, just as applicable to the enlightened Negro as to the en-

lightened Nordic. Regardless of what Avatar or religious leader founded or perpetuated the religion of a people, the Truth, or Truths, underlying every great religion of whatever name or faith are the same; and Masonry has concealed these Truths in its Ritual, so that men of all races might ultimately come to understand them and be drawn together in universal brotherhood because of them. Masonry does not, cannot, countenance or magnify the disunity and divisiveness of particular creeds, external religious beliefs, or faiths, or cults, or sects, or of any particular interpretation of an Avatar's teachings. Nor can Masonry express partiality to any one Avatar, as if there have been no others who have come to other branches of humanity at various times. Masonry minimizes the moral and religious differences among human beings that produce disunity, hostility, and weakness; and it magnifies likenesses that promote understanding, reconciliation, and brotherhood among all peoples. Masonry is the synthesis of all Truth which reconciles, in its great moral and religious teachings, the age-long antipathies between faith and science and which dispels the misinterpretations and superstitions that have always arisen to becloud, pervert, suppress, institutionalize, or theologize the original teachings as they have come from the lips of an Avatar. Masonry is both the art and the science of the Builder of the spiritual fabric of the individual of *every* race, clime, and time. This fact makes of the Masonic Order a universal brotherhood, or invests it with the potentiality of becoming a universal brotherhood.

In no age of a developing humanity have more than a few of any generation learned to subdue passions and improve themselves as Builders of a spiritual fabric. Few, indeed, are they who find the strait and narrow way that leads to the richer and fuller life of soul regeneration, the so-called second birth. But these few disciples in every age and race in turn became the leaders of the people in their upward quest and strivings for Light and righteousness.

That the great mass of the population in every epoch has failed to perceive, or has ignored or repudiated, this Light and

has persecuted and slain the Light-bearers is not to belittle the magnitude of the divine mission of the Avatars and their true disciples. Without them humanity never would have learned to exhibit cohesiveness and unity sufficient to draw men together in associations and fraternal relations for the common good and for the self-development of the individual. Without their divine teachings the innate selfishness and savagery of men would have no ameliorating antidote to enable men to rise above the level of beasts of prey. Right now, after nearly two thousand years of Christian teachings in the many sectarian churches in the Western world, many men in every so-called "enlightened," "cultured," "civilized," "progressive" nation have not risen above the status of savage beasts of prey. One can imagine what nearly all of mankind would have been for the past two thousand years without the ameliorating and regenerative influences of Christian teachings. The slowness with which men mend their ways from one generation to another has its mysterious implications; and we have come now to a state of international relations and domestic problems in which we could hope for the re-advent or descent of "the Redeemer of Israel" to fulfill and complete his divine mission to humanity.

The golden thread of Truth and unity runs through all these teachings of the great ones from the Celestial Lodge back to the remotest ages of humanity on earth. The essences of this Universal Truth are hidden in the Ritual of the first three degrees of modern Speculative Masonry, where it has remained "lost" to all who do not take time to learn or to seek more Light. But these Universal Truths are perpetually on record for all to see who ask with hope that some facets of the Truth be revealed, who seek with the certainty that they will find, and who knock that the door of understanding, wisdom, and right action may be opened for them. The universality, the unifying Truth of Masonry, makes it possible to develop on earth a universal brotherhood of men devoted not to the weakness and disunity of sectarian doctrines and teachings but to religious and humanitarian purposes in every field of human activity.

The elder Brethren who have gone this way before us con-

stitute a working nucleus of Brothers in the Celestial Lodge; and the patterns and characteristics of their brotherhood will sooner or later appear as a universal brotherhood among men on earth, regardless of race, creed, or color. "As above, so below," declared the Thrice-Great Hermes. As this constitutes the kingdom of God that Jesus said is within every man, latent, at least, so this will become the kingdom of God on earth, for which we now so futilely pray in the Lord's Prayer: "Thy kingdom come, on earth as it is in heaven." Even so—and may that kingdom *come quickly*, ere the suicidal madness of the peoples decimates or destroys humanity on the face of the earth!

2. Now we come to the second phase of the answer to the question concerning the place of Jesus the Christ in modern Speculative Masonry. Do not think that because no savior appears *as such* in the Ritual, modern Speculative Masonry does not countenance the advent of divine messengers (Avatars). The Great Light describes the advent, life, and teachings of one, the last Great One, of the long succession of divine incarnations. The divine matrix of the ancient wisdom (the secret Mysteries of Ancient Freemasonry), which held the knowledge of a Lodge of divine Brethren who come to humanity from time to time as teachers and way-showers, was concealed in the Ritual of the first three degrees, where the *symbolism* associated with the legend of Hiram Abiff represents Masonry's esoteric allegiance to the eternal teachings that have come from every divine messenger who ever came to humanity from the Celestial Lodge through the outpouring love of the Great Architect, our Supreme Grand Master.

Grand Master Hiram Abiff was and is but a *symbol* of masterhood, Avatarhood, a man whose spiritual illumination and life should be a beacon light and a way-shower for all Masons, who are bidden to represent and emulate his great virtues of fidelity and integrity, and a man whose life and death should exemplify for us those great moral and religious principles that form the inner essence and outer meanings of Masonry. No correct appraisal of the inner content of Masonry can exclude

consideration of the validity of the doctrine of Avatars. The scope of Masonry as the speculative and applied art and science of the Builder is so remote and universal in time and space that, in its philosophy and esoterics, it includes the fundamental teachings of *all* great Avatars. Therefore in its Ritual it does not mention any one of them but develops the theme and pattern of their teachings in the symbolism incorporated in the legend of Grand Master Hiram Abiff.

If the legend of Hiram Abiff does not mean that much to you as a Mason now, perhaps you will be challenged some day to study the secret teachings of all the great Avatars and see for yourself how the legend of Hiram Abiff embodies and conceals these same teachings. The serious student of the philosophy of Masonry should have a great interest in what is known about the great teachers and divine messengers that have come to humanity from time to time, because the occult and speculative phase of Masonry is derived from their teachings regarding the origin, development, and destiny of the soul of every man and woman on earth.

**BY WHOSE AUTHORITY?**

THE TEACHINGS of Masonry recognize and impose no "authority" upon the members of the Craft. Masonry leaves each man free to search and find his own way to everlasting life. Each Mason's trestleboard is a product of his own thinking, planning, and doing. True, the broad and apparent landmarks of the Order do lay down certain principles or rules of action which every Mason is expected to follow; but conformity to them imposes no restraints upon his freedom to think, search for, and find his own way to everlasting salvation. Each Mason follows the way to Masonic illumination as best he can, and no other man or Mason can properly declare that he has the last word on any phase of Masonic Truth and that, therefore, his Brother Mason should rely on the "authority" of his interpretations without objection or question. Masonry itself imposes no authority, no compulsion to think and reason in definite patterns in the interpretation of its symbols and allegories. And what Masonry itself does not seek to impose upon its members no individual member should presume to undertake.

There is probably no human foible so futile and fruitless as the erroneous belief that any organization, either ecclesiastical, political, or private, or that any individual, however wise, can impose any lasting authority that usurps a man's inalienable and divine right and duty to think, search, and find his own way to Light and salvation. The hidden Mysteries of Ancient Freemasonry, like the mysteries of our lives, our minds, our bodies, like the mysteries of Nature and her marvelous works and powers, are so transcendent, so illimitable, so sublime, that it would be the height of presumption and folly for any organization or individual to attempt to impose a particular interpretation upon a member of the Craft. We always have to be on the alert to protect ourselves against unthinking acquiescence

in what some other person or organization presumes to reveal to us and asks or expects us to accept on authority, without question. We always have to guard ourselves against an egoistic presumption that we know so much that the other fellow should accept our judgment without question.

The responsibility to improve one's self in Masonry rests entirely with the individual Mason. It is not a free gift from God or from anybody who presumes to represent God. If the individual member of the Craft does not think and act to improve himself in the Builder's art, no one else will ever succeed in doing it for him or imposing it upon him from without. There is really no such thing known to Masonry as "authority" to compel conformity to definite interpretations or definite processes of improvement. Every Mason is his own "authority" within the established landmarks of the Order. The landmarks were anciently set up to allow the greatest possible freedom to the individual Mason, and they recognize his individual and inalienable right to improve himself in Masonry as he sees fit and in his own way and time.

With this view in mind of the place of authority in Masonry, let us find out what help we can derive from what other competent thinkers and witnesses have said about the great purpose of Masonry and the attitudes of mind that will pave the way for a clearer insight into the meanings of its mysteries.

To individual Masons groping more or less in the dark for Truth in the "eternal verities," appreciation of the meanings of the symbols and allegories of Masonry will depend almost entirely upon the degree of development of the spiritual insight and the breadth and depth of their reading and thinking. The understanding of Masonry takes each into the realm of the subjective mind, or spirit, or soul, where it is difficult for any other person to enter. Each is aware that what seems to be valid as "the living Truth" to one person may appear as only meaningless patter to another. There is much in Masonry that seems to many minds too extravagant, too transcendent, too farfetched, too sublime, too celestial, too "other-worldly," for them even to *try* to understand; and, in self-defense (so to speak) they

let it pass in one ear and out the other, uttering the words of the ritual as if they were mere words without much, if any, meaning. They never admit them into the stream of consciousness and thought. It is therefore often futile for anyone to try to convince another of the validity of his own spiritual concepts, ideas, or ideals as they purport to explain Masonic science. It is true that not all the mysteries of Masonry can be revealed at one time to everybody in the Lodge; it would be a waste of effort to attempt to do so, even if it were possible. But it would not be possible, for no matter how much we know we are all only humble searchers for Masonic Truth, not purveyors of personal views, however enlightened. At the rate of progress of many Masons in Masonry it would take a million years to achieve all that Masonry declares it exists for.

Regardless of where one is on the ladder of achievement of Masonic Truth, all are climbing, or attempting to climb, some on one rung, some on another, some slowly and some more rapidly. Thus also all are brothers in a common endeavor—the pursuit of the Builder’s art—who, being tolerant of and sympathetic toward one another’s efforts to climb to a position of higher vision, should reach down helping hands and attempt to raise themselves and one another to higher levels of faith, understanding, and wisdom in personal adjustment, freedom, happiness, and security. Yes, you can do this for Masonry, and Masonry can do this for you!

How shall we help one another up the rugged path toward the heights of Masonic illumination? Can we rely on our *unaided* efforts to understand the mystic symbols and allegories of the Ritual? If the Ritual gave us particular interpretations of what is meant by such terms as “Masonic Light,” “traveling in foreign countries,” “working and receiving master’s wages,” “the secret word of Master Mason,” “one ever-living and true God,” “the immortality of the soul,” “the uprearing of that spiritual fabric,” that “house not made with hands,” “that undiscovered country from whose bourne no traveler returns,” “eternal in the heavens” . . . then we could probably rely upon such explanations. But so far as I can determine, the Ritual offers no particular

interpretations of these expressions, and the individual Mason is left entirely to his own mental and spiritual resources as to what interpretation, if any, he finds most acceptable to himself.

Therefore, in our search for true Masonic Light, we find it desirable, perhaps necessary, to rely more upon what the great thinkers and teachers of the past have said than upon our own unaided reflections and knowledge. In other words, *at the beginning of our search*, at least, we have to go to the books—the writings and teachings of The Masters, the “wise men,” adepts, seers, and saviors of every era in human history—for whatever illumination we can find and comprehend. “It’s all in the books,” and everybody has equal access to the great storehouse of Masonic scientific and philosophic literature. This literature will put us in possession of a form of riches the satisfactions of which will eclipse all the gratifications of the material world.

As autonomous thinkers, we may not understand all that we read. We do not need to agree without question with what we read, or with what someone else says, without knowing why we do so. But we should always hold our minds open and be willing to give a fair hearing to the thoughts and inspirations of others. Well-trained minds do not reject a new concept merely because they do not grasp or understand it in a moment. It is the ignorant who proclaim a new idea as error or foolishness *before* they give any thought to its possible Truth for them. It is often much easier to dismiss an idea without investigation and be done with it than to spend much time and mental or spiritual effort to discover its Truth.

Thinkers of the past have searched for and found a path of illumination that gave them great insight into the mysteries of life and brought them unimaginable satisfactions and fulfillments of their life purposes. What others have achieved in the work of the Builder’s art, every one of us can achieve—yes, is *destined* to achieve. Do not say, “It’s too much for me”; just start the process of discovery of new light. Get a good hold on an interpretation even of just one Masonic phrase, like “Master’s Wages.” Go to town on it; give it all you have. See what satisfactions you get from this one experience. One such experience

will bring you a long way on the path of improvement in Masonry. Then think of other Masonic expressions that mystify you. Start on them; all will yield to the Light you can bring to them. After several years of studying the thoughts of others that have come down to us, you will have laid at least a partial foundation for even further Light; and the process will bring you mental and spiritual satisfactions that are now beyond your imagination.

From cradle to grave, so long as we retain our power to think and reason, we are forever pushing outward the frontiers of our knowledge of ourselves and our environment. However much or little we may know, our minds can be thought of as centers of spheres, the radii of which extend outward in all directions toward the infinity of limitless space. There is no Truth that we cannot aspire to learn if we are willing to pay the price in mental and spiritual effort. The truths, the science, of ourselves and our universe, mysterious as they may be, exist about us and within us as an illimitable cosmic ocean. Tennyson expressed this thought wonderfully well when he wrote in "Locksley Hall," "Boundless inward in the atom, boundless outward in the whole." Surely mind and spirit are themselves boundless. There is no limit to their activity and power to penetrate the hidden mysteries when mind is driven by a will to know and use knowledge with wisdom.

Now, if it is true (and I should not want to be responsible for proving it untrue) that we have come into bodies for the purpose of expanding the scope of our knowledge of ourselves and our relations to the world in which we live and to use that knowledge to build our spiritual body, our soul, then the implementation of that purpose will arouse our interest and challenge our curiosity and our desire to learn to the limit of our potential at all times in the progress of our immortal souls.

Many of us have undoubtedly settled back into a stage of apathetic hope, waiting for that form of happiness or satisfaction that we believe comes from outside ourselves through gratification of the senses. A new dress, a new car, a television set, even a new wife or husband, more money, a great variety

of *things* that produce agreeable sensations—such are what most of us rely on for achieving happiness and contentment. But if possession and use of mere things necessarily bring us happiness, why is there so much unhappiness, frustration, sorrow, insanity, disease, and untimely death in our world? It is more probable that whereas of necessity things must play their part in our lives, we are in error if we place too much dependence upon their possession and use *as ends in themselves*. People who live to eat and drink, to wear gaudy and extravagant clothes, to search for gratifying pleasures, to make money, etc., etc., will probably spend most, if not all, of their time frantically and anxiously pursuing happiness but never catching up with its elusive spirit.

Our Great Light tells us through the words of Jesus, the great Way-shower and Master Builder: “Seek ye *first* the kingdom of heaven, and all these *things* shall be added unto you”; and the Master Builder also said, “The kingdom of God is within you,” and “You cannot worship both God and mammon.”

The kingdom (the power) of happiness *is* within us, and does not inhere in mere things or in our sense response to them. If we worship mere things we shall end with frustrations and the loss of the very happiness for which we have vainly struggled. Let us not rely upon anything or anybody outside our own minds and spirit for the achievement of tranquility and contentment, inner peace and unity, the joys of living. The power to be joyful and happy resides within each one of us; but it must be awakened and understood and *used*.

But if we would find it, let us search for it within. What does it mean to “search within”? Learn to find satisfactions and joys in expanding the mind and building character. The more we know, the happier we will be *in the long run*. Masonry teaches that each one of us can build that “house not made with hands” only through the acquisition of constantly expanding *knowledge* and application of Masonic science and the Builder’s art. Do we want to be happy? Then let us seek first to increase our knowledge and wisdom as it can be discovered in Masonry. Regardless of how difficult the path to Masonic wisdom may

be, in the long run and as soon as one of us is worthy and well-qualified, he shall hear "the welcome words: 'Well done, thou good and faithful servant; enter thou into the *joy of thy Lord.*'"

If for the moment we thrust aside the seeming extravagances of the Masonic Ritual and its logical interpretations and come right down to where most of us are in our thinking and acting, the same idea still holds true. Even though we pay little or no conscious attention to the sublimities of the Ritual, regarding them as mere ceremonies or words without significance to us as individuals, yet common sense and experience teach us that reliance on mere things as ends in themselves does not necessarily bring happiness, and that happiness is a state of mind arising from a source of power within a person. "Ye shall know the truth, and the truth will make you free." And being free, you will be happy.

Regardless of the comparative qualities of our minds, all of us have the power to think and know more and to transform our thinking into knowledge and the wisdom of right action. There is not a single member who, by thinking and learning, could not "improve himself in Masonry" more and faster than he does. We do not need to fear the impact of thinking, knowledge, and wisdom; in them inhere poise, calmness, and true happiness of life; from them spring those enduring satisfactions that make for personal progress toward the fulfillment of life's purposes for all as "men and Masons."

Masonry deprecates the "invidious distinctions" that arise in secular life, distinctions of worldly wealth or honors, because Masonry teaches that "it is the internal, and not the external, qualifications" that bring lasting happiness to a man and enable him to be and become "a better man and Mason."

As Masons we all know that this is Truth, but our problem is to make Masonry a more dynamic and powerful force in our lives. What a wonderful thing it would be to be able to say to one's self at the end of one's life: "I know that I have made progress in Masonry; I know that I am a better man because I learned more about the Builder's art and consciously

put it into practice to the best of my ability.” If a man can honestly say that at the end of his career, *all* other worldly achievements will fade to insignificance, all material wealth or honors will be left behind. The attainment of worldly wealth and honors is only incidental to the implementation of the real purposes of life as taught in the rituals of Masonry, and from experience and observation we know that we lose them in death. But if we succeed in improving our immortal soul, we take it with us beyond the grave, and it is ours forever and forever. The *enduring* values are not houses, lands, goods, and the gratification of the senses, but the moral and spiritual qualities we build into our souls. We should never lose sight of this fundamental Truth.

By whose authority and power? Yours.

## C H A P T E R   V I I

# THE DESTINY OF HUMAN NATURE

### MASONIC PERFECTIBILITY

As we know ourselves and observe others, it sometimes seems difficult to hold faith in the perfectibility of human nature. All the ancient religions in their pristine purity, however, and the Master Builders of all ages have proclaimed the divine perfectibility of man; indeed, if man is not a perfectible creature, why should he be born in a human body and why should he be encouraged and permitted to earn immortality? Modern Freemasonry often refers to this teaching as the supreme purpose of the Builder's art. You may be sure that, if this teaching did not represent the best that the ancient masters of the wisdom thought concerning the status and destiny of man's soul, it would not have been incorporated into the Ritual as the great goal of Masonic endeavor.

Faith in and a better understanding of the divine perfectibility of the individual are destined to play a most significant part in any synthesis of thought, aspiration, and experience that can emerge during the next century of human development. Ancient and modern Freemasonry is the repository of the most exalted and inclusive synthesis, or system of Truth, known to man. Within it has been brought together (synthesized) the wisdom of all the ages; and as an inexhaustible reservoir of divine Truth, it is available to every man who wants to know more about his origin, his purpose in life, his divine destiny and the general pattern of achieving it.

Regardless of the skepticism and doubts with which we may view the perfectibility of the minds and conduct of men, Masonry demands that we not only credit this teaching but strive to make it effective in our lives. This faith must be encouraged to grow in the consciousness of the race, especially

among Masons. We are now standing upon the threshold of a new age in which this great concept will become more universally understood and applied. Masons must begin now not only to build their own faith in the purposes of Masonry as they apply to them but also to dispel others' doubts and misgivings as to the potentiality for improvement of the human mind, body, and soul. In support of faith in man's capacity for self-improvement, Sri Aurobindo writes in his *Essays on the Gita*:

We of the coming day stand at the head of a New Age of development which must lead to such a new and larger synthesis. . . . We do not belong to the past dawns but to the noons of the future . . . we have to take full account of the potent though limited revelations of modern knowledge and seeking; and, beyond that, the remote and dateless past, which seemed to be dead, is returning upon us with an effulgence of many luminous secrets long lost to the consciousness of mankind but *now* breaking out again from behind the veil.

Though he was not speaking of Freemasonry and its sublime Ritual as such, his words are strikingly descriptive of the function of Masonry in the new age now emerging.

Of these "luminous secrets . . . now breaking out again from behind the veil" Dr. R. Swinburne Clymer in his *The Mysticism of Masonry* says:

The mystical side of Masonry is not alone the "Key" to the various religions taught to all men in all ages . . . but it is in fact the repository of religion itself. The Ancient Mysteries of the Secret Schools are so-called because under that title was, and yet is, conserved *all that men have believed and do now believe*, all that men have been taught and have experienced through obedience to a super-life, and these Secret Schools therefore conserve the secrets of all inner mystical or occult Initiation.

Thus Masonry as the science and art of the Builder down through the ages from the remotest antiquity, as the great synthesis of the Builder's art, was the fruitful mother of all religions. Man has always been taught the concept that, as he

comes from God, he is capable of working his way back to God. The authority of such teaching does not emanate alone from the conclusions of all the great thinkers and teachers of the past but also from the knowledge and experiences of the relatively few of humanity who found this way and who could show others how to find it. The fact that some men of past generations have found this way should encourage the millions who have not and who may aspire to find it either in this life or in the life to come. The fact that millions of people over the world appear not to want to find this way does not alter the truth that, somewhere and sometime during the eternity that lies before them, the inner longing and Quest of the immortal soul will become a directive and purposeful force in their conscious minds and conduct. At this moment in our long journey back to God, just about all that most of us can do is develop what faith we can in our own and our Brother's potentiality for that improvement in Masonry as envisioned by the Ritual, to which we have paid lip-service but in too many instances fail to understand.

Therefore as modern Masonry proclaims its faith in the divine perfectibility of man as an individualized immortal soul on his way (the path of illumination) back to the Celestial Lodge, it asks (and can ask) no more of men today than the mystery religions back to man's remotest antiquity on this planet have proclaimed and asked of their initiates. What is more, there have been hundreds, nay, thousands, in the long history of mankind who have proved by their lives that it is possible for men to advance to the stage of true initiation (Masonic illumination) while in a mortal body—men who knew both the lesser and the greater mysteries of life and consciously used this sublime knowledge toward self-improvement and achievement of the divine goal of a Mason. In all ages, by self-discipline and the transformations resulting from the conscious use of the Builder's arts these men have become the exemplars and way-showers for all men in all times, and have taught men that the achievement of Masonic illumination and perfection is not an impossible goal for anyone. Therefore

let everyone look up with faith and courage, sustained by the certainty that what the true initiates of the past have achieved each can achieve and is destined, ultimately, to achieve. Hard to believe? Yes, but remember, each one proclaimed his faith in God and in his own immortality when he was made a Mason and was formally introduced to Masonry's great philosophy and work. *He is one of the neophytes of the Widow's Son!* If he has not this faith, or cannot develop it, in the end he will have nothing.

No matter what happens to the body, the professing, progressing, achieving, and growing mind of man as an instrument of the immortal soul cannot die. The soul, coming from God as a spark of the divine fire, is perfect as God in heaven is perfect. For some mysterious reason, it became necessary for that perfect soul to take on a body and a mind in a body—yes, a whole series of bodies over thousands, perhaps a million, of years of time—and, as a divine wanderer from the Celestial Lodge, manifest in physical form within the limitations and imperfections of the carnal mind and body. But as he comes from the Celestial Lodge, he is destined to return thither as, by a long and arduous process of learning to subdue the passions and improve himself in Masonry, he overcomes and conquers all the vices and superfluities of life, unfolds and reveals the true soul within (the perfect God within) and becomes worthy and well qualified again to sit in the Celestial Lodge, that bourne from which the divine wanderer need never return. Having erected that spiritual fabric, that house not made with hands, he has arrived at a stage in his divine destiny—the degree of perfection symbolized by the white leather apron which he received from the hands of the Master of a Lodge when he was told that it was “an emblem of innocence [purity] and the badge of a Mason.” This was the *conscious* goal of all the ancient priest-initiates and Master Builders; this is the sublime goal set before Master Masons in their marvelous Ritual; and this is the divine destiny of every Master Mason who gives serious consideration to the meanings and applications of both the superficial and the esoteric teachings hidden in the Ritual.

## A DILEMMA

The divine imperative to improve one's self in Masonry and complete the process of perfection presents no problem to the man who says, "There is no God," and declares that "death ends everything." Such a man is concerned only with the gratification of the senses, not with the fate of his immortal soul. If he denies that he is an immortal soul, he will not cultivate and develop concepts of moral responsibility to himself or others or be concerned with preparations for building his spiritual fabric either here or hereafter. For him death ends all; nothing survives beyond the grave except the elements of which the body is composed; when the body dies, the thinker perishes along with it. He faces no dilemmas, no complicated metaphysical alternatives, no need to ascertain the unknown, to prepare for any hereafter, to heed the pricks and mandates of conscience; it is enough for him to live simply, to follow the promptings and impulses of human nature. "Eat, drink, and be merry, for tomorrow ye die" appears to be the summary of the philosophy of atheism.

But if a man declares, "I am an immortal soul, an individual part of the Universal Soul," his life and thinking become much more complicated. He is faced with dilemmas, disagreeable alternatives, in thinking and conduct; he is confronted with the stings of conscience; his mandate is to subdue the unruly, natural passions and soul-destroying emotions. The laws of God and the imperatives of religion and morality must enter his mind and conscience, sharpen his powers of discrimination and choice of alternatives, modify his thinking, and improve his conduct. Whether such a man realizes it or not, however unpleasant at the time his choice of alternatives may be, this is the process of self-development, the way to ultimate happiness on earth and the "bliss" of heaven, the great goal of Masonic endeavor.

Perhaps the greatest and most difficult or disagreeable dilemma of all is associated with the concept that we have but one life on earth in a physical body. When thoughtful men

observe how far along the path of illumination the great way-showers of the past have come, and they realize how comparatively little progress most men make in one lifetime, they are confronted with the need to understand how and why a Confucius, a Buddha, a Krishna, a Christ, became the great teachers and saviors of mankind. There have also been thousands of superior men down through the ages whose moral and spiritual achievements have far eclipsed those of average humanity; from the primal source of light they have received and reflected more light than the great mass of humanity. What these men attained we are all destined to attain; all of them achieved a kind of consciousness toward which all of us are striving on the level of time. It is undoubtedly this form of consciousness, as exhibited in the superior men of the past, that it is the purpose of Masonry to develop.

As we have said, the assurance of man's perfectibility would not have been incorporated into Masonic teachings unless, in the judgment of the makers of the Ritual, the ancient masters were right that the ultimate goal or destiny of *the whole of mankind* is the development of a much higher form of consciousness than what men now possess. All men, regardless of how far they are along the path that leads to this destiny, have within them the latent power to achieve it. As immortal souls emanating from the Universal Spirit they have within them the potential powers to improve themselves in Masonry until they too shall achieve all that the ancient masters achieved. This is the great teaching that has come down to Masonry from the earliest times; this is one of the Mysteries of Ancient Freemasonry.

But this very teaching presents a problem, or dilemma, to the thoughtful Mason who is not grounded in the philosophy of the ancient masters, whose teachings form the background of modern Speculative Masonry. Every man who knows anything about the lives of these great teachers realizes how far he is from the qualities of mind, character, and spirituality that they possessed, and he cannot help but wonder why he was given only one lifetime to learn to exhibit these qualities.

His dilemma is only deepened when he reflects that, if men could become perfect in heaven, being "children of God" they would be born more perfect than the majority of them seem to be. We must believe that if heaven could send us perfect men, heaven would. We are forced back to the conclusion that whatever progress toward perfection we make must be made on earth and in a body: that is undoubtedly the reason why we are here now. The dilemma is eliminated only when we conclude that we *do* have more than one life on earth in which to arrive at that degree of perfection already achieved by the ancient masters. Schooled as we have been in the partial truths and falseness of theology as it has come down to us from the fourth and fifth centuries of the Christian era (though not as they came from the lips of the Nazarene himself), we do not easily think *outside* the limitations of that theology and are not willing to go back to the teachings of the ancient masters, including Jesus, from whom modern Speculative Masonry was derived. If we are to resolve this dilemma, however, that is just what we shall have to do, because there is nothing in the sectarian teachings of the Christian churches that will *adequately* explain how man can arrive at his divine destiny. (Other chapters of this book go into the reasoning on these problems of human destiny, particularly Chapters XV and XX.)

## “LEARN TO SUBDUE THE PASSIONS”

“PASSION” means “intense desire.” Since there are both constructive and destructive passions, the expression “subdue the passions” as used in Masonry can refer only to those passions that stop or impair the development and manifestation of the souls of men and women enveloped in mortal bodies. It cannot refer to such desires that show themselves in human conduct as love, compassion, calmness, poise, generosity, altruism, temperance, hope, courage, etc.—all those noble qualities of the mind that build the spirit and soul of man toward its divine status as a Christ-conscious Son of God. The destructive passions we are enjoined to subdue; the constructive passions we are enjoined to keep in mind and exemplify in practice.

It is my firm conviction that those who incorporated this expression into the Masonic Ritual were thinking in terms of its esoteric, or hidden, meaning; otherwise they would not have phrased the expression as they did—“*learn* to subdue the passions”—thus emphasizing it as a learning process ultimately resulting in a “taming,” a “toning-down,” a “control,” an “overcoming” of the baser, more destructive forms of expressions. But here again, as in other points emphasized by the Ritual, regardless of how extravagant it may seem, the expression “subdue the passions” would not have been incorporated in the Ritual *unless it was intended to become meaningful to the individual* at some time in his long career as a Builder of a spiritual fabric. This expression is probably the most important of all the cryptic allusions found in the Ritual (as the reader will see if he reads this chapter thoughtfully). The fact that at this time it does not mean anything to most men is not necessarily a sign that at some time in the life of every man as a conscious being, the “occult,” or unknown, phases will not be revealed to him. The fullness of Truth is arrived at not in one tremendous illumina-

tion in one lifetime but only after many lifetimes of experience. During them we *slowly* learn to connect effect with cause, and we realize that many of the sorrows, ills, diseases, and deaths we experience are due to ignorance and perversions of the sex function, and that many of the joys, exaltations, and powers of life and living are caused by the proper use, conservation, and transmutation of the sexual energy and function. When we read and think about the conservation and transmutation of the sexual energies, we shall learn that there are many mysteries involved in the process known in Masonry as "subjugation of the passions." Even though Masons may not now be able to put into practice the teachings of the ancient masters regarding this matter, yet it is good that they begin to know segments of the Truth that will become useful and beneficial as they progress on the level of time. For this reason the expression appears where it does in the Ritual and is esoterically implied in the apron presentation. Its position in the Ritual and the tremendous emphasis placed upon it indicate its paramount importance in the teachings of Masonry.

The proper expression of the sexual energy in conjunction with the other phases of Masonic progress *ultimately* leads to that second birth emphasized by the Nazarene Master, who had learned to control the matter of all the worlds. By his own example he taught that all men have deep within themselves the divine power to control their own thoughts and, by thought, the matter within their own bodies. Every man knows that without this control of thought and desire there can be no control of the secretions, the *elixir vitae* (the essences of life itself), within his own body. Every man is at his own peculiar stage of evolution in this process of learning to subdue the passions and developing life-giving temperance and wisdom in expression. The objective of this book is to point out that the ultimate result of this cosmic process is the attainment of Christic power which could, and perhaps should, be the conscious objective of every person who calls himself "Christian" or who becomes a follower of any of the ancient masters or is a neophyte in any of the mystery schools of the present day.

You may say that you do not believe that any man or woman ever attained the level of human development where the sexual impulses were under such complete control as they appear to have been in the Galilean Master,\* but you would be mistaken in such an assumption. As a matter of historic fact, all the great teachers and exemplars, our elder brothers, who have gone this way before us have learned to subdue (dominate and control) their passions. That is the way that all of us are destined to travel on the level of time; that is the reason the expression appears in the Masonic Ritual. The reader, if he has not already consciously started on this way, must make a beginning sometime. Why not now? Read the book by R. Swinburne Clymer discussed at the end of this chapter and learn segments of the Truth that you never even suspected—the “truth that is . . . stranger than fiction,” the Truth that will free you from bondage to the passions.

Of all the passions, the most unruly and difficult to subdue is probably the sexual passion, which appears as a “racial memory” and by means of which the human race has been propagated for thousands of thousands of years and will be for many thousands or millions more. Yet, strange as it may seem to Freemasons, this is the primary, though *ultimate*, objective that the makers of the Ritual intended to set before men, so that those who became ready to receive the Light could learn to perceive it as they progressed on the level of time.

Hate, anger, jealousy, envy, covetousness, greed, avarice, combativeness, intemperance, gluttony, worry, hopelessness, fear—all are indeed destructive passions, and these too we are enjoined to subdue. It is easy to see this as Truth; but the one great drive that does more than any other to undermine the character of man, to stupefy the functions of brain and mind and to prevent or delay the uprearing of his spiritual fabric, is that of the lust, excesses, and perversions of the sexual passions. This is the passion about which least is said and most is unknown by the vast majority of the men and women of our

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\* Read Chapter 53 of *Levi's Aquarian Gospel of Jesus the Christ*.

day. In the course of our long development and self-improvement in time and eternity, however, this is the one great passion that we shall have to *learn* to subdue, to keep under constructive control, though not necessarily to eliminate at this stage of our psychic development. By "keep under control" is meant the exercise of temperance and understanding in its expression that will build strength of body, mind, and soul so that vibrant health, happiness, wisdom, and length of life may be ours. Again, read good books on this theme for glimpses of the meaning of "control" and "temperance" and the sublime Truth of the matter.

Both ancient and modern Freemasonry has always displayed, and still displays, a symbol that teaches men that for Masons and Builders of a spiritual fabric it will be necessary to subdue the sexual passions. "The lambskin, or white leather apron, is an emblem of innocence [purity] and the badge of a mason." Every Brother who attends Lodge has heard the apron presentation over and over again and is familiar with the sublimity of its language. What does it mean to him? Nothing but nice words? In the Entered Apprentice Degree the candidate-Brother is taught how to wear it as an Entered Apprentice and instructed as to the significance of the manner in which it should be worn. In this connection the words "untempered mortar" are used, which, according to Mackey, are designed to teach him "not to allow his *Soul* to be defiled by the 'untempered mortar' of the unruly passions." As untempered mortar has no cohesive power and allows a structure to fall apart, so will unruly passions prevent the uprearing of the spiritual edifice.

Despite the levity or apathy with which a Mason may be inclined to treat this phase of the Ritual, it is much more sensible to give it the consideration and to ascribe to it the importance that the makers of the Ritual intended it to have in the eyes and minds of men and Masons. The practical mason used an apron to keep his clothes from being soiled by mortar. The ancient operative Mason, one who was engaged in building his spiritual house, wore it and the modern Speculative Mason wears it in a certain position as a symbolic reminder that he is in a process of subduing, or learning how to control or receive

spiritual benefits from the proper use of, the sexual passion. All the references in the Ritual to the white leather apron point to this conclusion, and no other interpretation makes sense.

The white apron symbolizes the cosmic effort of every Builder of a spiritual fabric to achieve a greater degree of perfection in expressing sexual passion until, after much searching for his true soulmate and in innumerable experiences in many lives on earth, he overcomes the lower lusts of the flesh, realizes and experiences the marvels of spiritual love, attains the status of Christ-consciousness, and learns to control matter in all the worlds. Here again, as in other phases of Masonic endeavor and progress, no one lifetime is adequate to encompass and realize the fullness of perfection in expressing sexual power possible to mortal man.

In modern Speculative Masonry the real meaning and the intent of the symbolism of the lambskin, or white leather apron, seems to be ignored or rarely explained. It is a part of the “lost” science of the Builder, the whole philosophy of Masonry. Though the thinking Brother cannot help but wonder about this ever-present symbol, he learns to keep his mouth shut and accepts the form with little or no real understanding of its content or spirit. He certainly finds no explanation in the Ritual itself, and when he looks in the standard texts on Masonry, he will find only casual references or brief explanations of its symbolism, no formal disciplines by which its implied purpose can be accomplished by the aspirant. “When a candidate was initiated into the Ancient Mysteries, he was esteemed *regenerate* and he was invested with a white garment and apron as a symbol of his newly attained purity.” \* But regardless of what meaning can be attributed to “purity,” whether of limited control and expression or of strict continence, we know that it takes time and stern disciplines even for a determined aspirant to achieve the degrees of control that the ancient and modern masters and yogis attained. Masonry indicates the goal to be attained but

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\* Quoted by R. Swinburne Clymer in *The Mysticism of Masonry* from Pierson, *Traditions of Masonry*.

leaves each of its votaries to find his own way to reach it. If he pays little or no attention to the meaning of this sublime symbol as it applies to him as man and Builder, no Brother finds fault with him and no Brother seeks to instruct him; and the whole matter hangs as a mere form without any dynamic or practical purpose.

So far as the writer knows, no expositor of Masonic symbolism has placed the emphasis upon this phase of Masonic endeavor that its relative significance requires—probably because of awareness that it would not be understood by most members of the Craft and would be appreciated only by the very few. But in this book, which sets forth the fact that “improvement in Masonry” is an eternal, conscious process and that mastery of the passions is not attained all at once, it seems desirable to pay more than passing attention to it to try to stimulate the reader to study this important phase of human development and to begin, in however small a way, to apply it in his own life and living. “Ye shall know the Truth, and the Truth *shall* set you free.”

As stated elsewhere, every Mason as man and Builder on the level of time must first know the Truth, or an approximation of the Truth, before he can benefit by it and transform it into definitive action in his daily life. The knower must know before the thinker can think, and the thinker must think and *will* before the doer can do. Therefore at this time in the life of some doers, it is of benefit to know what is meant by “subduing the passions.” Even though such knowledge may to some seem quite transcendental, or out of this world, and impractical, yet if the sublime purpose of Masonry shall ever be carried out in this matter, a beginning of the process must be laid first in the word (knowledge), then in the thought (the mind that strongly wills), then in the science (the formal disciplines), and finally in the achievement (the result of disciplinary action) of that “purity of life and rectitude of conduct essentially necessary to gaining admission into the Celestial Lodge Above, where the Supreme Architect of the Universe presides.” The Builder of a spiritual fabric should learn to recognize himself as an active

participant in this eternal, cosmic process; “for in every man, however fallen and degraded, are contained all the forces, both cosmic and deific, which brought him into being and have nurtured him throughout the vast cycle of generation, in countless incarnations upon earth, while the Logos [the divine Word; Christ] of the Light has taught him the loving lessons of Good and Beautiful, of Truth and Righteousness, and the Logos of Darkness has held before him the dread lessons of the Evil and the False.” (Kenyon Klamonti *Awaken the World Within*, p. 93.)

If it be admitted that the millions of earth’s men and women, both those now incarnate and those that are now discarnate, are destined through a whole series of incarnations to achieve “spiritual regeneration” up to a level similar to that of the Master Jesus, and if it be admitted that millions of discarnate souls are eagerly awaiting opportunities for rebirth in physical form for the same purpose, it is more easily understood why physical men and women must express conjugal love of various qualities, thus affording discarnate souls opportunity to take physical bodies, even as they themselves sought such opportunity from their own parents and as countless generations of mankind have done. The Creator implanted in humankind the sexual instinct and invested it with marvelous potentiality for self-development up to the status of the Christ, or cosmic, consciousness, which is the highest form of consciousness that man can reach in an earthly body.

But man has to *learn* to control and transform the gross animal passion from its expression as mere sensuality to the highest form of conjugal love. There is a long, long way between these extremes of expression; that is the esoteric meaning of the word “learn” as it appears in the Masonic Ritual. As we know when we look about us and when we appraise our own lives, the learning process is not completed in one lifetime on earth; our trials and errors, our sorrows and sufferings, our failures and penalties, should teach us that through many lifetimes on earth and in the heavens men and women search and search with deep and persistent longing for perfection in a soulmate. This eternal

search for the "right man" or the "right woman" is the most important part or phase of "man's long search for his own soul." The "masculine" qualities are not complete in themselves, nor are the "feminine"; each must eternally find fulfillment in the other until, as the ages glide away, through lessons learned while in the flesh the conscious mind of each person perceives the light of his own soul and he knows himself for what he is—a Master in his own right—because he has "overcome" the destructive passions and becomes entitled "to eat of the hidden manna" promised by the apocalyptic seer "to him that overcometh" (see Revelation 2:17).

As Kenyon Klamonti writes in *Awaken the World Within* (p. 110): "The reward of the Conqueror, who, by the dauntless energy of the Will, vanquishes all the evil foes in his own nature and fights his way to the pure region of spiritual light, is that he has imparted to him the secret knowledge, the Gnosis, and is given, as it were, a ballot, being named and naturalized a citizen of the nation of the initiated." This "secret knowledge," this divine gnosis, is the same thing as the hidden Mysteries of Ancient Freemasonry, which will remain "hidden" and "lost" to every man until he becomes worthy and well qualified, duly and truly prepared, to receive them as a reward for the ultimate conquest of the unruly passions, and he becomes entitled to sit in the Celestial Lodge Above, "a citizen of the nation of the *initiated*," whose members are the Master Builders of all the ages who have gone this way before us.

It is easy, with this cosmic view of the destiny of every soul in mind, to see that the main purpose of the sexual function is less the procreation of offspring than a means toward the better and swifter development of the individual, which follows from the expression of more perfect love for an ideal mate and for the children that such ideal mating produces. *Love* perfected to the level of cosmic consciousness (the love of God and the Christ-in-man) is the greatest achievement of earth man; and man learns by love of mate and children to extend his love to God and humanity, even as all the great masters have done. If God so loved His children that He sent Jesus, the Christ, to

show the way to the heights of illumination, the mind and soul of man must rise by the perfection of love and mount to mastery of his human passions and to liberation from the bondage and limitations of mortality.

Therefore it is important to every person to be informed on all phases of the problem and process of subduing the destructive passions. *The Mystery of Sex—Race Regeneration*,\* by R. Swinburne Clymer, may provide some scientific information that ultimately can be practical and useful for motivation to liberate the thinker and doer from bondage to sexual passion and to erect that spiritual fabric upon which the Masonic degrees place so much emphasis. This book discusses the whole range of sexual expression from the “Rough Ashlar” stage of mere animal lust to the “Perfect Ashlar” stage of soulmate love. Learn how far you are from the Perfect Ashlar stage of expressing sexual impulse; let your eternal search for the Lost Word of perfection develop into a more conscious, scientific, and concrete objective; search out the disciplines that will enable you to achieve your high aim. An unimaginable happiness and harmony within and without yourself can be yours if you will work for it hard enough.

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\* The Philosophical Publishing Company, Beverly Hall, Quakertown, Pennsylvania.

**“AS YE SOW”**

EVERY MASON knows that it takes time and effort to take the degrees and pursue his interests in Masonry. Regardless of what it may mean to him to improve himself in Masonry, he knows that his progress through the degrees and his work in the Lodge have not been a free gift from any source outside himself, but have required more or less effort on his part. He spent a great deal of time memorizing the lectures and the degree work. How often has he wished that he might “have it” by reading or hearing it once! But no, it seems as if some power has decreed that he must labor mightily to achieve any desired objective; so he spends hours and hours mastering the words and phrases of the Ritual and becoming proficient in the work of the Lodge.

Now, what is the significance of this commonplace experience of all who take the degrees, attend Lodge, and participate in its work? It illustrates a law of life—that cause must precede effect, that action must precede reaction, that work must precede the fruits of labor, that service must precede reward. Any attempt to reap where one has not sown, to possess where one has not earned, will place the reaper and possessor under a debt which he will have to pay sooner or later “to the last farthing,” as the great Teacher declared. If one wants results, let one set causes in operation; if one wants the fruits of labor, let one work and earn them. This is the normal, just, and manly way of life both within and without a Lodge of Free and Accepted Masons. It teaches us that there is no way to improvement in Masonry but by constant effort. There is no such thing as a pearl without price, and the price is human effort to obtain it. The joys of living, the beauties of life, the glories of nature, the riches of Masonry—any good thing that we can desire is available only to those who are willing to make the effort to

obtain it. The Creator ordained it thus, and it appears as a law of nature that is effective both on earth and in the heavens.

The greater and more remote or sublime the reward we seek, the greater the physical, mental, and spiritual effort we must put forth to achieve it. Do we really want to improve ourselves in Masonry? Are we inclined to take seriously its high purposes and aspire to make them effective in our individual lives? Aspiration to achieve a noble purpose must be implemented by the will to make a great personal effort to become worthy to receive the fruits of labor, the Wages of a Master Builder. The achievements of the great masters and superior men in the past have not come as a free gift from the Creator; those men were not “gifted” men in the sense that their superior powers of intellect, spirit, and soul had been attained by them *without effort on their part*. We know that they exhibited unusual powers of mind, soul, and character, and so have been prone to believe that theirs were “gifts of God,” whereas the possession of such powers is the result of a long, long history of herculean effort to improve themselves in the Builder’s art. Do not be misled by external appearances that they have anything worth while who have not earned it. Also, do not despair in any desire and effort to emulate the masters, for beyond the shadow of a doubt they have traveled the same toilsome path on which you would set your feet. They have gone this way before us, and we shall ultimately follow.

The way to that undiscovered country that, we are told, is by the subjugation of the passions is most difficult and ever perilous to follow. Few there are who find it in one lifetime or, at their present rate of effort and progress, would find it in many lifetimes without much greater constancy of will and effort. Most of us who give it any thought feel that the sublime goal of Masonry is unattainable, too far out of our reach, to warrant any hope that we can ever attain it, or, if we believe it *is* attainable, that perhaps we ultimately enjoy it, in the heavens, without effort on our part as a “gift of God.” Those who think that we achieve mastery in heaven that we have made no effort to achieve on earth, or that we merely hoped for on

earth, are under illusions that will never, never enable them to make much progress on the level of time on earth or in the heavens. Someday on time's level we shall learn the Truth that only as we sow shall we reap, that *only* as we work shall we enjoy the fruits of labor. There is no escape from the operation in our lives of the law of the Master Builder of the Universe; it applies at all levels of existence on earth and in the heavens. Escapism will not in the slightest alter the inevitability of that destiny for each of us: escapism will only slow our rate of progress in the Builder's art. Say, if you want, "Well, I'll take my time at it; right now I do not want to move any faster." That is your high Masonic privilege as a free man, and you are entitled to the respect and fraternal fellowship of all Brothers who are on this same path, regardless how far advanced. But every man and Mason should be made aware of his destiny as an immortal soul, even though he may not have any hope of achieving it or wishes to take more time, hoping to obtain it as a "gift" from heaven.

Let us pause a moment here to consider the function of thinking as a force in shaping destiny. Volumes have been written on this theme, but a few sentences will summarize the conclusions of the writers. The ancient thinkers and masters are in substantial agreement on the basic premise that there has been, and can be, no improvement in human character that did not originate in thinking sometime, somewhere. The qualities of character possessed by an individual today are the results of past thinking, and acting, and their development and improvement will follow only from present thinking. A person must *know* what is right before he can *do* right. The character with which a person is born is the result of past learning and doing right; his present character is the summation of all past experiences and achievements in right thinking and doing. All of us are now in the process of improving character by right thinking and doing, and this conclusion applies particularly to Masons, each of whom is, or should be, a *conscious* Builder of that "spiritual fabric wherein his soul shall find rest forever and forever." Masonry's basic teaching is that we come here in a physical body to *learn* to subdue the passions and to im-

prove ourselves in the Builder's arts. Thinking is basic to learning, and right thinking must always precede right action.

In this process of building the temple of his character through right thinking and right action, great emphasis is placed upon the Mason's duty to himself; the Ritual is replete with references to this duty. Probably there is no large body of men in human society who are making more progress in the Builder's arts than the Freemasons; but how can any Mason be satisfied with himself and his progress when he starts to think about the teachings of Masonry and their sublime goal? Start reading and thinking about these teachings, and endeavor to discover the Light of their meanings and their bearing upon your own life and its real purposes.

Most Masons make no great effort to learn the meanings of the symbols and allegories of the degree work or to improve their characters to accord with the teachings of Masonry. What thinking they do on these matters is passive and inconclusive. The purpose of Speculative Masonry is to "subdue the passions, act upon the square, keep a tongue of good report, maintain secrecy and practice charity"; but regardless of the extent to which many Masons pay attention to these ideas, they never do more than pay light lip-service to them. There appear to be few who get to the stage of active thinking, whose minds are transformed and renewed by it, and whose deeds reflect the transformations of right thinking. Thinking is passive when it leads to no conclusions that change conduct; thinking is active when it results in conclusions that do change conduct from less to more perfect forms; thinking, externalized to change conduct, improves character and fulfills the purposes of Masonry. Passive and casual thinking is better than none at all, but it will never enable the thinker to reap the rewards of Masonic endeavor. Real improvement in the art of building character can come only from *active* and persistent thinking and the desire to change for the better. And the greater the effort to improve one's self in Masonry the greater will be the rewards of such labor, "for whatsoever a man soweth that shall he also reap." He who works is sure to receive the wages of a Master Builder!

## C H A P T E R X

### FAITH AND SCIENCE

WHEN MEN declare their belief in God and the immortality of the soul on being made Masons, what mental and/or spiritual element—faith or knowledge—predominates in their thinking? Probably faith, and probably, no matter how much men may learn and recognize as Truth, faith always will predominate. Far be it from the writer's intention to build an artificial barrier between faith and science, because in reality there is no such barrier. Faith, as an active force to promote human happiness and soul development, need not be depreciated, even if it could be, as a means of exalting the authority and validity of science or exact knowledge. Regardless of how far behind the curtain of reality science has penetrated, or can penetrate, ultimate and infinite Truth will always elude the senses and the mind of mortal man and all the intuition he can bring to bear in scientific research. Reality brought to light by scientific method and by inspired rationalizing of the human mind and spirit is not a fixed but an expanding quantity and quality, and there will always be plenty of room for the exercise of faith—the “essence of things hoped for but not seen.” We know from observation and experience that the scientific intellect of our day has not exhausted the reservoir of truth regarding the phenomenal world. The senses of sight, sound, feeling, smell, and taste, and all the analytical and synthetical powers of the reasoning minds of men of science cannot know all there is to be known in any branch of biological, physical, or psychic science. In whatever direction the searching mind of man looks and however far he may go in this direction, he is always confronted with the great challenge of the unknown. Not a single branch of science today can boast of knowing everything about it; there is probably much more to be learned in every field of science than man knows today.

So science still needs faith to beckon it on to higher vistas of truth; faith will always have its part to play in human development. In times past too much emphasis, especially in the field of psychic science, has been placed upon mere blind faith and not enough emphasis upon works and knowledge and upon the demonstrability by scientific methods of the conclusions of faith. Faith need not be apathetic and static; it can be made dynamic and revelatory by science; if we search, we shall find, and ultimately all that is hidden shall be revealed.

Regardless of the extent to which Freemasons in the past have accepted on faith and without question the fact of the existence of the Mysteries of Ancient Freemasonry, the mysteries of God, and the immortality of the soul, the time has now come when more members of the Craft should be persuaded to examine objectively and scientifically the cardinal principles of the Builder's art. All need to know more about the Great Architect, about the Celestial Lodge Above, about themselves as "sparks of the divine fire," about "soul development," about the death of the body, about the immortality of the soul, about the mysterious implications that arise from these sublime concepts, about Masonic destiny and about the secret means by which one arrives at that destiny.

Mere passing and passive faith in, mere incidental attention to, these marvelous and glorious ideas is no longer adequate to meet the spirit of inquiry that is emergent in the minds and souls of many men and Masons today. The stresses, the fears, the hopes of contemporary life are prompting more people to search without and (particularly) within themselves for some deeper analysis and a more fundamental synthesis that will bring into their lives a greater degree of mental and spiritual security. Men in larger numbers today are seeking more actively some kind of answers to the enigmas and problems of life.

Masons will not hold faith in contempt because it has too often been blind and ignorant and accompanied by intolerance, bigotry, persecution, torture, and death; nor will they deride the scientific method because it has too often been productive of materialism and atheism. Faith and science (organized knowl-

edge) are companions and partners in philosophy; they travel the same path to Masonic illumination, faith in advance beckoning science on, and science following closely to protect and sustain faith by tangible evidence of Truth and reality.

The purpose of Masonry is not to destroy any man's faith. *Masonry magnifies faith.* One might say that Masonry places a tremendous strain upon human credulity by setting before its votaries the most exalted and transcendent objectives known to man. It is not easy to induce the rank and file of Masons to think in terms of the reality and practicality of such sublime concepts as the Celestial Lodge Above, the Supreme Architect of the Universe, that spiritual fabric, that house not made with hands, the brotherhood of man, Masonic illumination. The mind of mortal man, involved and engrossed with self-interests and unfamiliar with the science of the soul, recoils before the extravagances of these ideas as being so far above his capacity to understand and govern his life that he is prone to accept them on mere faith, which always remains blind, passive, and ineffectual as a transforming power in life. It is almost as if he prefers to live and die in darkness and ignorance regarding them, because if he cared enough about learning more about them, there is nothing to stop him from doing so. Let all read and think, so that they too, along with their ancient Brethren, can intellectually and spiritually put form and content and spirit into these marvelous ideas and so partake of the inexhaustible riches of their Ritual. Let the Ritual come alive: *let there be light.*

For example, the Ritual speaks of the Celestial Lodge Above. Is there such a Lodge? If so, let us get some ideas about it that we can get our intellectual and spiritual teeth into. Let our faith in it be backed up with as much knowledge as possible for each of us. Men may say: "How can we know anything about such things?" Why do you think that expression was placed in the Ritual? Just to be mouthed over and over again as a fine phrase without any concrete meaning to have significance in the minds of men? No, the makers of our Ritual placed it there because they knew what they were talking about, be-

cause it had meaning to them, and because they hoped that men would search out its meaning. They never intended that anything they placed in the Ritual should be ignored as too inconsequential for or impossible of understanding to warrant the most careful thought of the Master Mason. The ancient Brethren knew what this phrase meant; they knew a great deal about the Celestial Lodge and they wrote some of the things they knew in books and manuscripts that have come down to the present day. If any Mason wants to know what they thought and wrote, he should go to those books to be lent from the Grand Lodge Library and to other sources which can be discovered by the earnest seeker for Masonic Light.

To whatever extent "ignorance" is a synonym for "blind faith," we must deny that it is a powerful force to increase reverence for God or to understand the mysteries of His wonderful creation; but we affirm with all assurance that the greater a man's knowledge of God, the wider will he open the doors of his mind and heart to the influx of the divine spirit. It is a certainty that God blesses those who struggle to emerge from ignorance into the Light of knowledge, Truth, and wisdom. The more a man knows about the spirit and the works of God, the more Godlike he ultimately becomes. If as immortal spirits we are in essence and in Truth *emanations from the godhead* and have come into mortal bodies to learn how to become "perfect even as our Father in heaven is perfect," then we must *emphasize the learning process* as a dynamic personal responsibility and not as the passive acceptance of the thinking and authority of others. St. James exclaims, "By works was faith made perfect." But works must be preceded by knowledge; the knower must know before the doer can do. God is a spirit and must be worshipped in spirit and in Truth, but "ye shall *know* the truth and the truth shall make you free." It takes mental and spiritual effort—work—to ascertain the Truth, and blind faith has often been a roadblock to the pursuit of the Truth of the wisdom of God for centuries past. And even in this age of so-called enlightenment it is still a roadblock. Blind faith induces passivity, apathy, and indifference, by which

the more fundamental and enduring aspects of reality are entirely ignored or relegated to a position of secondary importance in life. Blind faith tends to produce static and crystallized thinking or feeling that causes men to be satisfied with a mere superficial expression of belief which blocks the expansive powers of thought and spirit. Many men, on being "made Masons," declare that they believe in the existence of One Ever-living and True God, but up to the moment of death they never seek to know more of the meanings and implications of such a belief.

Real desire for Light and More Light all through Life would transform blind faith into active faith, which is dynamic and expanding, as the frontiers of demonstrable truth are pushed back. Man, created in the image of God and possessing a portion of the divine fire (Light), is the more in harmony with the divine purpose when all the marvelous powers of intellect and spirit are growing and expanding toward that wisdom and perfection symbolized by the Perfect Ashlar of Masonry. As knowledge grows, faith grows; knowledge of God does not diminish faith in God. Happier is the man whose active faith in God forever prompts him to seek the wisdom of God. Him will God reward!

Let men avoid the pitfalls of *blind* faith. Too often blind faith has produced those crystallizations of thought called doctrines and dogmas, which became the foundations for rigid creeds and priestcraft. Too often has blind faith been the mother of bigotry, intolerance, and arrogance which—motivated and abetted by ecclesiastical and political power—has promoted the discrimination and persecutions of the early and medieval Church. Too often has blind faith motivated condemnation as heretics of those whose ideas were not in conformity with those of the prevailing ecclesiastical and political authorities. Too often has blind faith prompted the use of torture, imprisonment, the racks and hot irons of the Inquisition, the burning of human beings at the stake for so-called heresy or witchcraft, so as to make men and women recant. Too often has blind faith been a contributing factor behind the terrible religious wars

of the past. Too often, in more recent times, has blind faith scorned the scientific method and spirit and endeavored to perpetuate its crystallizations by condemning and attempting to disprove the proved findings of science and build up an artificial barrier between science and religion.

Our own Scriptures declare emphatically that man is created in the image of God and in Him we live and move and have our being. The Creator is described as giving man the privilege and power of exercising his free will, so that, as mortal man comes from God in a state of "imperfection," \* so will he, in his own good time and way, work his way back to God as a "perfected being." By divine fiat man is free; and no man, no priest, no church, no government, should rightfully interfere with that natural and divine freedom, claiming the power to save a man's soul thereby. What is salvation, that it can be conferred as a free gift by one man upon another? The Truth is that salvation is *earned* by every man; and it is not within the power of any other man to confer it upon him or to take it from him. The Truth is that every man, again by divine fiat (natural law), reaps only as *he* sows, not as somebody else sows and by no other man's authority.

"Am I my brother's keeper?" No, not in the sense that I win his salvation for him by telling him what to think and do or by persecuting him if he fails to obey. The ancient wisdom declares that every man, as an immortal soul, is his own savior, because if he does not save himself he will not be saved. And this is the view of modern Masonry—man is the Builder of his own immortal soul by both faith and works within the Lodge of his own body. All the great teachers and saviors of the past have proclaimed this same teaching; but the authority for its validity does not lie in the fact that it was so proclaimed, but in the fact that it is in accord with the inner, natural constitution of man himself, as the image of his Creator. As the very soul of man cries out for freedom and the exercise of free will toward complete liberation, the soul of man also proclaims that

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\* See beginning of Chapter XVI, on the question "Why?"

the responsibility for personal progress back to God and liberation lies within the mind and conscience of the individual, not in any outside authority whatsoever. It is not the responsibility of any other man, or priest, or minister, or church, or government. No man is his "brother's keeper," so far as that would mean usurpation of an individual's natural, God-given rights, sovereignty, autonomy, and responsibilities.

If man had not the inner power to achieve it, his own redemption could not be achieved. But man, every man in a mortal body, does have this power, which is born with him as a "spark of the divine fire." His redemption, his attainment to cosmic consciousness, philosophic initiation, lie within him in his possession of marvelous powers of mind and spirit, and it is not conferred upon him by any outside authority or power, except the power of God; man can neither take it from him nor confer it upon him. "The kingdom of God is within you," said the greatest of the great teachers. Latent and hidden within the soul of man lies the power to save himself through a process of seeking and working to know and apply the mysteries of the Builder's art and unfolding and manifesting at-onement from within the Sanctum Sanctorum of his own being.

In summary, it is not blind faith and passive thinking, but dynamic faith and active thinking and doing, that will enable a man to consummate this process of regeneration, liberation, and salvation. *Faith will always lead the way*; knowledge and wisdom will always follow closely behind faith to give it substance, reality, and vitality. Thus shall science and religion become reconciled and, as a complete synthesis, shall confer the richest blessings upon mankind. This also is the spirit and purpose of modern Freemasonry.

## WHENCE SALVATION?

MASONRY encourages men to accept their role as Builders of a spiritual fabric, but it also emphasizes that there is a power in every man that will enable him to work toward that sublime goal. What a mockery, what a mummery, if the teachings of ancient Freemasonry had placed before men a goal that they had no power to attain either on earth or in the heavens! The ancient teachings declared—and modern psychology corroborates—that every man, no matter how deeply in the darkness of ignorance and error, has *within himself*, sometimes deep within himself, the marvelous power to lift himself out of darkness into light, out of ignorance into wisdom, out of error into righteousness. Indeed, if this is not the Truth, then the life of man on this earth would be meaningless and devoid of all hope amid the terrible tribulations and predicaments of a world of ignorant lunatics. The Great Architect could not have created men in His own image without endowing all with the inner capacity and potential for redemption through the conquest of self in a long-term process of self-improvement on earth and in the heavens.

Therefore Masonry teaches that redemption and salvation are both the power and the responsibility of the individual Mason. Saviors like Hiram Abiff can and do show the way, but men must always follow and demonstrate, each for himself, his power to save himself, to build his own spiritual fabric in his own time and way. Every man in essence is his own savior and redeemer; for if he does not save himself, he will not be saved. The reader who succeeds in getting back to the real teachings of the masters, including Jesus of Nazareth, will find unanimity of thinking on this matter.

Yes, your fate, your destiny, is in your own hands! It has always been, and it will always be, in your own hands. No

other human being on earth is responsible for your fate. You have the power within yourself to build your spiritual edifice, and having been given the power of achievement, you and you alone have the responsibility. Responsibility always goes with power, and the greater the power the greater the responsibility. The great teachers of all ages, the progenitors of the sublime Ritual, have shown us the way; but if we do not follow in the way, what right have we to expect redemption and salvation as a gift from heaven and without effort on our part? Any man who thinks that he can get something for nothing is dwelling in a fool's paradise and only "kidding" himself. If some men think that the economy of earth is built upon that erroneous concept, how can they be expected to become aware of the fact that the economy of heaven is any different? But man rises by his own efforts both on earth and in the heavens, and there is no power that can confer upon him any gift that he has not earned in his own right. No other concept is in keeping with the dignity and sovereignty of man as a potential son of God, created in His image.

So, regardless of how influential the impacts of your material and social environment may be upon you, you alone are responsible for your reactions to such impacts. If these impacts, these associations, friendships, approbations, and criticisms, these sorrows and pains, are to teach you anything by way of self-improvement, you are responsible to learn what they are designed to teach; no one else can learn those lessons but you. If you do not choose to learn, or if you do not realize the lessons your experiences are capable of teaching at any time in your life on earth, you shall not thereby escape your responsibility and destiny to learn at some other time, even if it takes ten times ten thousand years to learn it. If you do not grasp the meaning of an experience all at once, you can be sure that the lesson it is intended to convey to the mind and soul will *ultimately* be appreciated. This is the reason you are traveling on the level of time and eternity.

The death of your body will release you into the heavenly habitations. Surely you must learn to realize that the process

of growing out of ignorance into knowledge, out of darkness into Light, is an eternal one. It goes on and on, not only while you are on the earth plane in a physical body but while your immortal soul progresses through the heavenly habitations. The predicaments and problems of mortality have to be understood, resolved, and evaluated by your own soul as it makes its way in the heavens. We know that many of the experiences of life in a mortal body seem inexplicable to our finite minds, but we should also know that the disembodied and contemplative soul will ultimately take occasion to find the right answers and improve the essences of faculty and spirit.

You do not stop learning from cradle to grave, and there are no limitations upon your capacity to know the Truth except those you are born with or choose to place upon yourself. Know this also for a certainty: you do not stop the learning process when you divest yourself of your mortal body. There too in the heaven-world, you are subject only to such limitations as you have placed upon yourself. You must come to know that the main purpose of life in the heavens is to find out what you did on earth that was wrong and imperfect; you must know that you shall abide in the superphysical world until you perceive and evaluate your character defects and weave your achievements into the fabric of your faculty and character. This is the great work of the Builder, as proclaimed in the Sublime Degree of Master Mason.

But as one sojourn on earth is not enough to enable a mind to demonstrate perfection in the various phases of personality and character, so obviously one sojourn in the heavens is not enough to enable the ego to adjudge its own merits and demerits and to weave the qualities of self-improvement into the patterns of character and into the texture of the soul. Our life in heaven can accomplish no more for us than we have laid the basis for in our life on earth. If heaven could do more for us than our life on earth makes possible, heaven would send to earth only those perfected spirits who could create a heaven on earth. But we know, from a glance at ourselves and at others around us and at human institutions, that heaven does not send us

perfect men, and so millions of men make a shambles of their personal lives and at times create a veritable "hell on earth" for themselves.

Just as the lessons of childhood in an earthly body have to be learned by many repetitions of experience with matter and mind, so the same lessons of adult life must be taught over and over again by the terrible tribulations and oftentimes bitter experiences in mortal bodies. Millions and millions of people living upon this earth do not seem to know that what they say and do is imperfect and wrong when evaluated in the light of divine knowledge. How shall they learn what is right, how shall they ever become more perfect in their thinking and conduct, unless they have an opportunity to evaluate in heaven the errors of their ways on earth? They do not learn much in one lifetime on earth, and so do not absorb much character essence in heaven. Therefore they come back to earth again and again to repeat the process of ignorance and error, of sorrow and suffering, of reaping and sowing, of penalty and reward, until they learn to subdue the passions and improve themselves as Builders of a spiritual fabric. It is a long, long cosmic process, this becoming perfect even as the ancient masters and teachers became perfect and even as our Father in heaven is perfect.

It is your fate, your destiny, to rear a spiritual fabric. You cannot escape that destiny; even if you are indifferent to it now, the time will come when you will want to rear such a fabric of character and soul. If you think that you are a "victim of circumstances" now, the time will come when you will know that you yourself create the circumstances and conditions of your life on earth and in the heavens by your reactions, your attitudes of mind, as you reflect upon the meanings to you of the circumstances and factors of life that you are called upon to face. In other words, you can allow adversity and ordeal to conquer you; or by the power of your mind and soul, you can rise above adversity by understanding the reasons that brought it into your life, by trying to perceive the lessons it was intended to teach. Seek *the word of power* that liberates.

Understanding and appreciation of the lives of the great

teachers of mankind, including Jesus of Nazareth and the legendary Grand Master Hiram Abiff, will bring you a long, long way on the path of fate, conquest, and destiny. Racked with pain in a hospital bed, William E. Henley wrote "Invictus" ("unconquered"), one of the most glorious poems in any language on earth:

Out of the night that covers me,  
    Black as the Pit from pole to pole,  
I thank whatever gods may be  
    For my unconquerable Soul.

In the fell clutch of circumstance  
    I have not winced nor cried aloud.  
Under the bludgeonings of chance  
    My head is bloody, but unbowed.

Beyond this place of wrath and tears  
    Looms but the horror of the shade,  
And yet the menace of the years  
    Finds and shall find me unafraid.

It matters not how strait the gate,  
    How charged with punishment the scroll,  
I *am* the master of my Fate:  
    *I am the captain of my soul!*

Any man who has the power of mind to understand the esoteric meanings and implications of this marvelous poem and who develops the techniques of using this knowledge in molding his own character will make rapid progress toward that sublime goal that constitutes the destiny of a Mason.

## ETERNAL IN THE HEAVENS

WOULD YOU like scientific proof that you, as an individual identity, will survive the grave? As a young man, you may not be inclined to give much consideration to the question "If a man die, shall he live again?" You know that all men are mortal but think that, for you, death is years away.

And anyway, you say: "What can I do about it before death comes or when death comes? If I am immortal—which, as a Mason, I truly believe I am—what can I do about that now? I will just *wait* for death and the life-everlasting, without thinking much about it. Why should I spend time thinking about it? I am too busy trying to live and get a living. I do not need to know anything or do anything about either death or immortality; they will just happen to me when my time comes.

"How can man know anything about them for a certainty, anyway? They are both deeply mysterious and incomprehensible. There can be no scientific proof of immortality; no man ever came back to remember and relate his experiences in the heaven-world. If I had any such experiences before I came here this time, I do not remember them. The whole question of death and immortality is deeply shrouded and hidden in the fog of the speculative and the metaphysical, and I am too busy to attempt to penetrate there, even if I could. I am quite sure of the things of *this* world that I can see, hear, feel, smell, and taste. It appears foolish and unnecessary to spend time trying to know the unreal and unknowable. Anyway, I will postpone a concerted effort to learn what can be learned, if anything, about it here and now, and will take my chances with and in the hereafter."

This is probably much what you think, if you think at all on the subject. But even if you do not care now to find out what is known, the time will come when you will be more interested

to know as much as possible about it. Much more is known about it as a scientific certainty than you imagine, but you will never ascertain a measure of the Truth until you manifest interest and make an effort to find out what is known. Merely to sit back and wait for death and immortality will confer no benefit upon you, either here or hereafter. You have no reason to hope that you will have any greater opportunity to learn the Truth after death than you see fit to take advantage of before death. No man living can confer this knowledge upon you as a free gift and without effort on your part, either here or hereafter; you have to discover and bring it to light yourself.

If you do not make any effort before death to search and know why you are on earth and how to improve yourself in Masonry, your way in the heavens will be all the more difficult. The clouds of ignorance (lack of knowledge of life and mortality and death and immortality) will be just as thick and dark in the life to come as they are in the life that is. It is what you may learn here and now that is important, not what you may think you will get to know in the hereafter. All the authentic teachings of the past tell in no uncertain language that what we think and do while in a physical body will inevitably determine the quality and pattern of the life to come in the various heavens—the “many mansions” Jesus has reported to exist in the “Father’s house,” the “everlasting habitations” that Masonry mentions.

It is sensible and scientific to recognize the fact that the purpose of life in a human body is self-improvement in a Masonic sense. The more diligently we sow the seeds of self-improvement here and now, the greater and more soul-satisfying will the harvest be both on earth and in the heavens. Do not discount or nonchalantly dismiss this great idea. If you pay some attention to it, it can transform your life, making it richer, happier, and more balanced and self-contained until you come to the end of your toilsome journey and to your proper station in the hereafter. Do not make the mistake of believing that there is no proved or scientific relation between what you do here and what you will enjoy hereafter. Chapter IX, “As Ye Sow,” enlarges somewhat upon this theme. I suggest that you read

that chapter again to stimulate incentive to know as much as possible about the law of compensation as it applies to your life here and hereafter, as a Builder.

Now, if this *is* the law, if this is the Truth, if this law applies to both physical and metaphysical worlds, then would it not be realistic and scientific to make *conscious* preparations to live in that heavenly habitation which is the ultimate destiny of all of us?

How does the practical mason, the architect and builder, go about erecting any physical structure? Does he ignore or neglect the foundations? Has he no blueprint or specification which spells out every detail of foundation and superstructure? Must not the builders follow the plans and specifications with *daily care*, so that the final edifice will conform to the purposes and plans of the designers? With what forethought, care, and assiduity do all perform their various duties in the erection of a physical structure that may last but a few years?

Why should there not be as much consideration, care, and persistent will power employed in the erection of our spiritual edifice that *will live forever and never perish*? Why should we not spend time here on earth during a comparatively few years to learn something about the conditions under which we shall live for an eternity of years? Any teaching that encourages you to ignore what seems difficult to ascertain through the physical senses or by thinking, or encourages you to think that when you vacate your mortal shell, you are projected into a heaven-world you have not earned by your knowledge and conduct on earth, is *false teaching*, not consistent with Masonic science and philosophy. The ancient sages and saviors taught no such doctrine, and modern Masonry teaches no such doctrine. Our Great Light, when properly understood and correctly interpreted, teaches no such doctrine; nor do any of the great world religions in their pristine purity teach so great a falsehood as that man can reap where he has not sown.

Indeed, acceptance of the Truth of the law of compensation as a basic premise connotes, or involves, the further Truth that one lifetime in a body is not enough to exemplify the

fullness of expression of the law, that a "life in the heavens" is necessary to the fulfillment of the law. The necessity for immortality arises out of the problems and failures of mortality, if we acknowledge that the purpose of mortal existence is self-improvement and self-development toward higher and better states of consciousness, such as all the ancient and modern masters possessed and do now possess. Was mortality required for this purpose? So, then, is immortality equally required. Was it necessary and good that you took this physical body? Yes? Then it is equally necessary and good that you give it up! \*

If you want scientific proof of immortality and some knowledge of the conditions of life and living in the heavens, read any or all of the following books: †

*Esoteric Healing*, by Alice A. Bailey; Chapter V, "Process of Restitution"

*Personal Survival*, by F. Homer Curtiss (with physical proofs; 1946)

*Many Mansions*, by Gina Cerminara

*There Is a River*, by Thomas Sugrue

Of course, after you read any of these books (or the many others that might have been named) you may still cry "nonsense," dismiss all the evidence with a wave of the hand, and

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\* See John 10:17-18, where the Nazarene Master is quoted as follows: "Therefore doth my Father love me, because I lay down my life, that I may take it again. No man taketh it from me, but I lay it down of myself. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again." What Jesus said of himself every man can learn to say of himself. The soul of every man takes a body, and we call it "life"; the soul of every man gives up his body, and we call it "death." But the soul is the life, whether in or out of its body. *There is no death*; there is only transition from one "environment" to another. This is said not of the body but of the soul. Learn the science that proclaims the truth of this, and fear not the sting of death!

† These books may be obtained from libraries.

close your mind against any further effort to know the Truth about immortality. This shows that you are not yet ready for the Light that you have declared you most desire. That is your divine prerogative, your privilege to reject or receive the Light in accordance with your natural right of free will. But in view of the overwhelming evidence of personal survival, it would seem arbitrary and capricious to dismiss or ignore it without probing its depths and heights.

Emotionally and inwardly, most people long for survival, continuation of life and consciousness, maintenance of individual and identical existence in time and eternity; and so far as we know, man is the only animal that does. Indeed, this fact can be properly cited as further evidence that man is essentially divine in a sense that the lower animals are not. The very thought of annihilation of individuality at death of the body is abhorrent to the mind, spirit, and soul of man—at least to most men. Life itself, consciousness, is held dear, desirable, and worthy of perpetuation by the vast majority of human beings; to think that it ceases at the grave is a violation of the instinctive desire and knowledge for its continued existence beyond the grave.

What is the "I" that is the source and essence of life, that it can disintegrate and lose its identity merely because it no longer manifests itself on the physical plane in a mortal body? Why should any "I," any "spiritual fabric," be an individual identity just for the brief and fleeting time it is in a physical body or manifesting through a physical body? To the author it is unthinkable that the only power, the power of mind, spirit, and soul, that enables us to say, "I live in a physical body," shall not have equal power to say, "I live," when it leaves its physical personality at death. It is not the body that lives, but the soul that lives and makes the body "alive." If that is not Truth, just what is the purpose of coming to this earth plane *once only*, for a fraction of a second in the eternity of time, then, after a most toilsome journey in the flesh, to disappear and disintegrate into the elements of nature? Of what value to God, the Creator, or to the God-man incarnate, to live in a mortal

body for so brief a time, if annihilation of the soul is the fate of man at the death of the body? No, belief that death is the end of all personal existence presents a greater enigma, a greater contradiction, a more inscrutable dilemma, a more unbearable affront to both reason and desire, than the blindest faith in personal survival and immortality could present or that denial of the existence of the soul could present. Logically and rationally it is much easier to present a case for immortality of the soul than to declare that the soul does not exist or, if it does, that it "dies" when the body dies.

Even if scientific proof of survival is not available, can we not trust our instincts and intuitions, our inner longings, when we recognize them as such? Men are more than vegetables, insects, or animals, even those in whom it is most difficult to recognize anything divine. If their purpose on this earth then is to "improve themselves in Masonry," it is rationally necessary to continue to live after the death of the body and (as I am convinced) to come back to physical-plane manifestation again and again to continue and complete the process of individual development to the ultimate stage of Masterhood.

Fortunately the truth of this statement does not depend alone on blind faith, or logic, or intuition, or the desire to survive the grave. It can be fully—more fully than most of us think—substantiated by the findings of physical and psychic science. There is knowledge of survival that arises from the testimony of the physical senses; there is tangible and sensible evidence of survival of identity, a continued existence of the "I" in more tenuous bodies that are imperceptible to the physical senses. In the books listed above you will discover this evidence; and if you want tangible, personal proof, you may sometime obtain it by contact with those who understand and employ scientific methods in the field of psychical research.

These books rely heavily upon the proposition that there are forms of matter that vibrate at rates beyond the power of the human ear to hear, or eye to see, or other sensory nerves to pick up and transmit to the brain and mind for interpretation. We know that there are infrared rays of light below the visible

red and ultraviolet rays above the visible violet of the solar spectrum, but the human eye is capable of (has been tuned to) receiving only those vibrations of reflected light which we learn to call by the names of various colors, shades, and tints of the solar spectrum. There are whole octaves of vibratory light rays, "cosmic rays" from outer space, that most human beings are not even aware of. There is not a single sense that can make us aware of the passage of electromagnetic waves through our bodies. We know that there is such a thing as an electric current, or an electric impulse, but who has ever seen one? We know that so-called electromagnetic waves of many frequencies pervade the atmosphere, but who has ever seen or felt them? We know that the heat and light of the sun are transmitted through space as energy, but who has seen or felt the substance of the transmitting medium? Scientists have posited as the transmitting medium an "ether" which vibrates or transmits vibrations at rates greatly exceeding those of any solid, liquid, or visible or invisible gas.

From experience we know that the heavenly bodies are held in their orbits by what we call on earth "the force of gravity," but who has ever seen or touched such a force? Surely enough we have felt the effects of such a force, because we are always adjusting our movements to it. As a matter of fact, the very existence of the material world by which we are surrounded, the very existence of our bodies, which we think so real, is dependent *more* upon the impact on them of the intangible and mysterious and unconscious forces of nature than upon the known and measurable factors of life. There is no human chemist who knows as much as the unknown Chemist who guides the metabolism of every human, animal, and vegetable body animated by the life principle (whatever that is). There is no human physicist who knows the last words as to the nature of matter and the laws that govern its existence and manifestation. There is no human biologist who can make a blueprint of the beginnings, functions, and development of the myriad

life forms. There is no physician who knows all the factors that produce disease, or all the science of the prevention of disease, or how to treat or cure disease. There is no theologian who has portrayed all the glories and powers of God or has probed the depths of man's relationship to God. There is no human philosopher who has been able to give a full answer to the question "Why this or that?"

In view of the great volume of Truth that the finite mind of man has not yet been able to perceive through his weak and limited senses, it behooves us to learn the virtue of humility. The chemist, the physicist, the biologist, the physician, the theologian, the philosopher—not one of them knows all there is to be known in his field alone, to say nothing of the other fields of human science. Instead of puffing himself up with pride of superior erudition, as many appear to do, every one of them should humble himself reverently before the unknown and acknowledge how comparatively little he really knows. He should know that no matter how far he may push aside one curtain of Truth, there will always be a succession of curtains that will still hide ultimate reality from his physical senses. Paul the Apostle expressed this idea well when he declared that "spiritual things must be spiritually discerned." If this is true, large volumes of Truth are concealed from the consciousness of the materialistic scientist who does not admit the validity of "spiritual things." What a limited range of scientific truth can be covered by the thinker who is content to rely only upon what the senses can reveal to him!

Therefore, begin to learn what is known about the conditions of immortality. If you learn what to look for in the heaven-world, your path will be beset with fewer dangers and difficulties, and you will the more quickly get to "know your way around." Your dreams of seeing and conversing with your loved ones will become a reality; your consciousness of continued existence will be even keener than it is now when you occupy

a mortal body. Your conscious mind will be freed from the uncertainties and fear of death; your science will strengthen, sustain, and corroborate your faith.

## CONSCIOUSNESS, THE ONLY REALITY

WHAT is "reality"? What makes an object seem "real"? The word may be briefly defined as "The state or quality of being in existence, or of being actual; that which exists or is actual; fact; truth." The mind of man ascribes existence, actuality, "out-there-ness," to the objects of the physical world around him; he says such objects are real because he can see them, or touch them, or hear them, or smell them, or taste them. Because of various sense impressions man can ascribe a great variety of qualities and characteristics to such objects, like form, size, color, composition, weight, and many others. But the evidence of reality as revealed to the thinker by, or through, the senses comes from the mind of man, the thinker, the see-er, the hearer, the feeler, the smeller, the taster. If an object is "out there" and has certain characteristics peculiar to itself, it is so because of the power of the human mind to use words descriptive of the object and its phenomena and to declare that it is "out there." The ball is round; but it would not be "round" if the mind of man did not declare it to be a fact, real. The ascription of reality to objects of the physical world is *a mental act*. (This concept of reality and consciousness is more fully treated in Chapter XIV, "The Real and the Occult Reconciled.")

Now consider the word "consciousness." An organism can be said to be conscious when it is "alive," and it can be said to be "alive" when it is conscious. All living creatures, from the minutest microscopic virus or cell to man, the most complex organism of earth, possess this characteristic which human beings have been taught from childhood to call "consciousness."

"Consciousness" can be defined as "The knowledge of that which passes in one's own mind; the state of being aware of this knowledge; perception, sensation, feeling; the apprehension of

the existence of some object, state, or influence; the sum total of all that one perceives, knows, feels, or thinks; the entire mental life of a sentient being." Although the word "life" is not prominently mentioned anywhere in this definition, "consciousness" is nevertheless synonymous with "life." The life principle, whatever it is in essence, manifests itself in forms in nature that have varying degrees of consciousness. There is no consciousness where there is no life and no life where there is no consciousness. The power to respond to stimuli, to move, to breathe, to sustain life in a physical body by the ingestion of food, to propagate the species, is characteristic of all animate forms. Consciousness, varying from simple response of chemical affinities and response to stimuli of heat, light, and moisture to the infinite sweep of the "cosmic mind" is always associated with the life principle in every form; perhaps it is the life principle itself. In God, the Universal Consciousness, all things "live and move and have their being."

Philosophers declare that the life principle and some degree of consciousness inhere in every particle of matter or assemblage of particles in the Universe from animalcule to man, from atom to cosmos. Life and consciousness are not sustained by what human beings can see, hear, feel, smell, and taste; what human beings can see, hear, feel, smell, and taste is caused and sustained by the intangible, immeasurable, imponderable mysterious forces and activities of consciousness and life. Wherever and whenever consciousness and life appear, they are Cause, of which forms, phenomena, and characteristics of the manifested universe are but effects. Out of the ocean of the unknown comes the drop of the known; out of the infinite comes the finite; out of the macrocosm comes the microcosm; out of the uncreated and unmanifest come the created and manifest; out of cause proceeds effect. Thus has the finite mind of mortal man learned to declare when he rationally views the phenomena of earth and the heavens.

The life and consciousness of man are but an infinitesimal part of the universal life and consciousness. First the Oversoul as macrocosm, then the soul of man as microcosm—as God-in-man—

and finally the created form and body of man and of every other animate and inanimate form known to man. Man ascribes consciousness to himself; he is aware that he is conscious, that he has life. So far as we know no other animal is thus aware. If therefore there were no conscious human beings on this planet to declare the existence, the reality, of Universal Consciousness of which they are but a part, how could there be such a concept as "Universal Consciousness"? Men ascribe reality and universality to the power of which they recognize themselves but a part and of which they feel themselves but a minute and shadowy representation. God exists in the Universe because He first made Himself manifest in man; He created man "in His own image and likeness"; therefore man through consciousness and intellect developed the power to recognize himself as a part of divinity. God manifests Himself in the physical world as *thought incarnate*. If men were not divine in essence, or had no power to recognize themselves as divine, how could they ascribe divinity to Universal Mind? The drop has an affinity for the ocean as the ocean does for the drop, but there could be no ocean without the drop and no drop without the ocean. The finite mind of man (human consciousness) is but a drop in the ocean of Infinite Mind (divine consciousness), but there can be no "ocean of divine consciousness" unless and until the drop of human consciousness becomes aware of it. God is "created" in the image of man, even as man is created in the image of God.

The annals of psychical research do not reveal a single occurrence of an animal below man that has declared either that there is a God or that there is no God. Such a declaration can come only from that form of self-consciousness that characterizes the highest animal, man. Of all the animals man alone has the power to declare that there is a God, or that there is no God, or that man has a soul that is an emanation from God. From infancy, by coming to know the meaning of words, man has *to learn* to make such a declaration. How true is the opening statement of the Gospel according to St. John: "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God"!

Without the Word which enables us to ascribe the criteria of reality to the objects of the physical world and which enables us to declare the existence of the superphysical world, there could be no God, no Creator, no "First Cause," no glories of God, no known or unknown, no phenomena or forces of nature, no mystery or mastery of ancient or modern Freemasonry. If the consciousness of human beings did not have the power to express itself in words that have meaning to *their* own mind and to convey to other minds the thoughts and concepts that have validity and reality in the minds of the thinkers, there could be no Creator and no creation. From the beginning of childhood until we lose consciousness in "death," the most important factor in life in all its motivations and relations is the number of words of which we know the meanings and by which we express the degree of our individual consciousness. It is the Word that makes us human, and it is the Word that invests us with the potencies of divinity. "In the beginning . . . God said [expressed Himself by the use of words], 'Let there be Light' [Let there be consciousness, life, knowledge, wisdom, divine science, on all levels of human existence]: and there was Light [the thought of God made manifest]." In the beginning was the Word of creative power, and the Word was in the divine mind, and the Word was divine intelligence, the Universal Consciousness. But if there were no human beings endowed with the power of the Word, the mind-stuff of thoughts and concepts regarding the phenomenal world, who could declare the existence of a Creator or the realities of a creation? Who has ever heard an imbecile declare the glories of God or the beauties of nature? A dog can see a glorious sunrise but he has no word with which he makes his awareness known to himself or to another dog or to man. It is through the use of words that man has been endowed with the creative power of God. The finite mind of man declares the glories of infinite mind, which in turn are dimly reflected in the marvelous mind of man. Reality is the growing creature of an expanding consciousness. There can be no reality without consciousness.

What is the meaning of this abstract reasoning to Masons as Builders? Simply, if Freemasons wish to know more about

Masonry they can accomplish it by reading and becoming familiar with the meanings of the words that describe the various symbols, glyphs, and allegories that form the basis of the Ritual of Masonic science. It is by words that they will learn to create their own Masonic destiny. Every man and Mason must begin his career, as a Builder, with words, thoughts, concepts that lead to better and better deeds on the level of time. "In the beginning was the Word": and in the end, if there is an end, there will be nothing but the Word, the thought of God expressed through man.

The scope of human mind and consciousness will measure the scope of reality, and the variable of human consciousness is always approaching its limit of infinite consciousness. It recognizes man's age-long search for his own soul and his Quest for the Universal Soul. There is no limit in the finite mind to reality. As our consciousness expands through the use of words and concepts, the limits of what we call real and beneficial to human consciousness and life are pushed back and back, life upon life, until we shall know who and what we are and shall find ourselves in the presence of the Mason's God in the Celestial Lodge Above. At that time in our career as a Builder, we shall perceive the reality of what we have always thought to be unreal and too sublime to be understood or appreciated. That which we dimly sensed as Truth in Masonry will sooner or later become as real as the existence of material objects in our environment appears to be.

Since the ocean of consciousness constitutes the ultimate reality, all things of the physical world, its objects and our own physical bodies, are but ephemeral and transient; all change and die when abandoned by consciousness. But the individual consciousness, the ego entity, which is the causal source and essence of life-in-us, is *immortal* and has existed as an identity during unremembered ages and will exist for endless time. The man who catches a glimpse of this sublime Truth catches a glimpse of the Truth that he is a Son of God. It is for this reason that the teaching of the immortality of the soul is one of the prerequisites of being made a Mason. Let this teaching come alive in your consciousness.

## THE REAL AND THE OCCULT RECONCILED

It is somewhat disturbing to observe among Freemasons almost total lack of appreciation of the inner content of Masonry, but it is even more disturbing to conclude that this same mental and spiritual darkness prevails among the leaders of the Craft. At best one can say that if the majority of the leaders are familiar with the esoterics of Masonry, they appear too fearful and reluctant to emphasize this phase of Masonic instruction in the Lodges. This is not so much an adverse criticism of the leaders of the Craft themselves as it is of the age in which they live; economic pressures, educational defects, and spurious theology have operated to obscure the Light and Truth of that ancient wisdom that appears in Masonry as the hidden mysteries of Ancient Freemasonry.

For hundreds of years before the advent of modern speculative Masonry, the purpose of joining any group, or "society of friends and brothers," was literally to improve one's self in the arts and science of the Builder of a spiritual edifice. Every "neophyte of the Widow's Son," every beginner in the study and application of Masonic science, had to show mental and spiritual proficiency in any one degree before he could be advanced to the next degree of improvement. The process of learning to subdue the passions and of improving one's self in the arts of the Builder was reduced to secret concrete disciplines which the neophyte took to heart and applied consciously and deliberately. The aspirant thus more quickly became a better man because he consciously followed these disciplines to the best of his Light and abilities. Of course, not all aspirants made equal progress, but all learned *what* to do to bring about self-improvement and self-realization and *how* to achieve it.

The methods of self-improvement practiced in the ancient

Lodges were secret, and every beginner in Masonic science was pledged to the utmost secrecy. Because of the necessity for maintaining secrecy, the Mysteries of Ancient Freemasonry were hidden from the many and revealed to the few who had developed mental and spiritual faculties that enabled them to become Builders of a spiritual edifice. Some men of every generation have known more than others about the hidden or "occult" Mysteries of Ancient Freemasonry as well as about the immediate and ultimate realities of life on this earth.

In its broadest sense the word "occult" can be properly applied to the great volume of science (body of possible knowledge) that remains unknown or hidden from the individual. The human mind and spirit concern themselves with the whole range of the known as well as the unknown regarding either the physical or the so-called "superphysical" world. The common belief that the word "occult" applies only to those speculations and "hallucinations" of the mystic enthusiast that cannot be tested and proved by the criteria of science is the erroneous conclusion of those who declare that what they cannot see, hear, feel, smell, or taste does not exist. They do not stop to consider that in the upward development of the race the most important factor has been the mind, intellect, and spirit of man in the progressive apprehension and application of the Truths of nature. In this restless and growing process, it has always been true, and is still true today (in spite of our boasted science), that the volume of the unknown is vaster by far than the volume of the known. And what is unknown today in all fields of possible knowledge can properly be called "occult"—hidden from the senses and mind of man and awaiting discovery, revelation, and technological application. There is no scientific reason for ignoring, depreciating, or ridiculing the "occult" merely because it is unknown; this conclusion applies just as much to the so-called hidden Mysteries of Ancient Freemasonry as to any other field of human knowledge. The occult phases of Masonry should not be ignored by those who can see in Masonry only an outward moral order or by those whose minds are under the influence of the prevailing materialistic philosophy.

Every person born in a body on this earth, each within the limitations of his own heredity and environment, is mentally and spiritually forever confronted with the barrier of the occult or unknown. No matter how much he knows about himself or the phenomenal world, the unknown or hidden realities will always elude his senses and challenge his best thought, experimentation, and intuition. Every man continually, be it ever so little or much, pushes back veil upon veil that hide Truth and reality until, as Jesus proclaimed, "there is nothing hidden that shall not be known" to him. Otherwise, what can be the purpose of existence on this earth?

This process of revelation and perception of Truth is a cosmic one in time and space on this earth and in the timelessness and spacelessness of the heavens. There is no such thing as one sudden illumination that reveals *all* that is occult, hidden, unknown. Ultimate Truth always recedes, as does the horizon in an earthly journey; at every advance we learn that so much is still hidden from our view that what we know is but a minute fraction of the knowable. The occult world of the physical and the superphysical holds a universe of Truth that becomes real and palpable only as we diligently and persistently search for and discover it, each for himself. The ocean of hidden Truth is infinite in space and time; the variable of the drop of Truth in every individual is finite and real and continually approaches its limit of infinity and ultimate reality. Viewed scientifically, there is no conflict between the real and the occult, any more than there is between the verities of science and the verities of religion.

In view of these facts, why should any thinking person raise an eyebrow of doubt or disbelief in what is not understood or is hidden, the so-called occult, and tacitly or volubly accuse those who claim to know the hidden realities of being "tetched in the head"? How easy it is, even for the so-called intelligent, to avoid the trouble of investigating and evaluating the evidence that establishes the reality of what is unknown and may become known. It may exalt one man's ego to declare that the other fellow is a nitwit; there are too many men who try to hide their

ignorance behind ridicule and depreciation of others who attempt to enlighten them. Such people ridicule without investigation, and so remain in mental and spiritual darkness. The man who says, "I do not know whether what you say is true or not, but I will investigate," is on his way to illumination. The writer has observed that the deeper in darkness and ignorance that some men are, the more cocksure they are that they "know it all" and that what they do not know does not exist. Thus even among more intelligent people appears a deep and uncompromising suspicion of anything that smacks of the "occult"; they tend to think that what they do not know scientifically cannot be known and has no semblance of reality.

How puerile such a conclusion! The fact is that the whole of life is full of the occult; much more is still hidden than has been revealed in every branch of science. There is no evidence in science for a static concept of reality; science advances on every front and will always do so. In my lifetime every branch of science has substantially increased its scope and expression of Truth, and new revelations of what was previously hidden and unknown have been made. And there are striking evidences in the current scene that the achievements of new knowledge and technology of the next hundred years will far eclipse those of the past century.

If, for example, half a century ago anybody had revealed to me that the time would soon come when the "science of electronics" would be so far developed as to enable me, in the privacy of my own living room, to see pictures and hear words "projected" into space many miles away and transmitted by no tangible means, perhaps I would then have declared him a nitwit, a dreamer, a miracle-monger. The science behind this miraculous invention was unknown, "occult," at that time, and remains so to this day to most persons. We already take television for granted, though the science of it is still magical and occult to most of us and perhaps only less so to the men whose knowledge and use of electromagnetic waves (whatever they are) made it possible. This is only one of the many marvelous inventions of the past fifty years which give promise of even

more marvelous and miraculous ones of the coming years.

In all ages—and, it seems, particularly in this age—“the occult” becomes “the real” as the hidden becomes revealed and the unknown becomes the known. The following quotation from Sri Aurobindo’s *The Life Divine* throws additional light on this theme and encourages every man in the certainty that, if the occult and unknown present a problem to his intellect, he also possesses undeveloped faculties and powers which, if developed, will enable him to bring this new knowledge into the realm of scientific reality:

The Unknown is not the Unknowable; it need not remain unknown for us, unless we choose ignorance or persist in our first limitations. For to all things that are not unknowable, all things in the Universe, there correspond in that universe faculties which can take cognizance of them, and in man, the microcosm, these faculties are always existent and at a certain stage capable of development. We may choose not to develop them; where they are partially developed, we may discourage and impose on them a kind of atrophy. But, fundamentally, all possible knowledge is knowledge within the power of humanity. And, since in man there is the inalienable impulse of Nature toward self-realization, no struggle of the intellect to limit the action of our capacities within a determined area can forever prevail. When we have proved Matter and realized its secret capacities, the very knowledge which has found its convenience in that temporary limitation must cry to us . . . “Forth now and push forward also in other fields.”

If this is a correct appraisal of the real powers of the mind, intellect, and spirit of every person born into flesh, then no man need despair of his innate ability to discover and comprehend the unknown, the occult, and to make it real to himself in his conscious efforts at self improvement in Masonry. For if man as a “child of God,” born in His image and likeness, is destined to achieve the transcendent goals of Masonry, man must possess the active or potential faculties and powers that are equal to the herculean tasks which life in bodies imposes upon him. Do not recoil from the unknown as if it were unknowable. “Forth now

and push forward"; travel in foreign countries. Apply your divine faculties of mind and soul to search for Truth and learn how to use it toward self-development; and the occult, what you do not know, will yield, to become the realities of what you do know.

Why do Masons recoil from this view of Masonry? Let me cite the main reasons as I have observed them:

1. Because of educational defects, they lack the background knowledge that is necessary for a fuller understanding of and greater interest in the cryptic, or "occult," passages and allegories of the Ritual. They allow the beautiful language of the Ritual to pass into meaningless jargon, which they label "nice" and "fine," but which, like their religion, is "too much to understand."
2. They are too much engrossed and preoccupied with material interests and compulsions to be willing to sacrifice time and effort to try to find out what they do not understand or what they have no interest in. They do not believe that man does not live by bread alone.
3. The ordinary benefits of Masonry that come within experience and comprehension afford sufficient satisfactions and leave no time or incentive for probing deeper into the occult phases of Masonry.

If these reasons explain indifference to the real purposes of Masonry among members and leaders of the Craft, they represent the materialistic characteristics of Western culture. It is probably true also that since the leaders come from the ranks of those who have devoted many years to Masonic service and have received many honors at the hands of the Brethren, we should not expect that they know much more about the real purposes of Masonry than the members of their respective Lodges. However, no matter how much more the leaders may know, they probably can go but little further in spreading such knowledge among the Craft than their Brethren in the Lodges are willing and able to go. The inertia arising from the materialism of our times and from the inadequacies of a traditional theology forms a barrier to the teaching and dissemination of

the ancient wisdom that has been incorporated in the Masonic Ritual and remains there pretty much ignored and unperceived.

In the age that is ahead, this may be recognized as the outstanding weakness of the Masonic Order. The coming era may require that the real purposes of our Order must again be restored to their rightful place of emphasis, just as they were in the ancient Lodges. Perhaps upon this development will depend the perpetuity of the Order as we know it now.

There are, however, those who would claim that the failure of the leaders and members of the Craft to recognize and emphasize the occult character of the Ritual carries no necessary danger to the perpetuation of the Order in its present form. They might even reason that it is better to attract and attempt to hold in a fraternal relation and moral Order many men who will, it is hoped, benefit by its fellowship, its honors and duties, and its charities than it would be to limit membership to the very few who, in an age of materialism, have the interest and ability to profit by its inner and real purposes. It can properly be claimed that a man can improve himself in Masonry by participation in the activities of a Lodge, and that such participation fills a great need among many men.

Modern Masonry is aptly called "Speculative" because it encourages men to ponder and meditate on all phases of Masonic science. But unlike ancient Freemasonry, it does not impose upon any man particular interpretations of the cryptic passages of the Ritual or any particular disciplines whereby a man can learn to subdue his passions and improve himself in Masonry. How can any man assert that the Masonic Ritual has nothing of the "occult" in it? And that men should not of their own accord seek to ascribe significance to the so-called hidden Mysteries of Ancient Freemasonry and discover and make effective in their own lives the lost science of the Builder? Let us, as Brethren in a common cause, openly admit the occult or hidden character of this divine science and proceed to reveal what is unknown and rediscover what is lost.

How regrettable it is that even in this "enlightened age" most men do not admit the priority in their minds and lives of that

ancient wisdom, which can be called the fountainhead of the religious efforts of every race throughout human history, and which is certainly the primitive source of modern Speculative Masonry. Amidst the materialism of our time, it seems a futile gesture to remind men that the spiritual value of paying some attention to those "wisdom teachings" exceeds all material riches which in the name of happiness they so vainly struggle to acquire—only to relinquish them when death strikes. Material riches often fail to bring that happiness that mortal mind ascribes to their possession, and at death they are left behind; their potency for either weal or woe ceases, except as the mind and soul are then free to contemplate their true worth. But if a man by conscious efforts learns more of that wisdom, which will lie hidden from him until he brings it to light, the fine gold of that divine gnosis will be added to his soul essence; and it will remain with him forever during all his sojourns on earth and in the heavens. This was what Jesus meant when he quoted from the Old Testament: "Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God."

Learn to recognize the existence of a vast unknown, a world hidden from your present view; be stimulated to search for segments of it that meet your present needs and capacity. By knowing more you will ultimately learn to do better, and so will progress from triumph to triumph until, at perhaps some distant great day, a final initiation will confer upon you all the Light (spiritual illumination) that can be conferred upon a man in a mortal body, and you will arrive at the same status of spiritual power and expression achieved by all the Master Builders who have gone this way before you.

**“WILL I HAVE ANOTHER CHANCE?”**

WE SHALL here develop an idea that should, it seems to me, encourage every Mason who wishes to take the expressed and implied purposes of Masonry seriously and to find out more about the science of the soul as a means of more rapid progress in Masonry. Most men and Masons who pay any attention to them look with despair or discouragement upon the rich promises of the Ritual as something so far out of their comprehension that they would be foolish to spend time in an attempt to understand them and make them more real and effective in their lives. Masonry holds out the hope of heaven (immortality) to every one of its votaries, but it also declares that in order to be permitted to sit in the Celestial Lodge Above, the aspirant must subdue his passions and improve himself in Masonry. There is no short cut or “royal road” to heaven and immortality, a permanent residence in that “undiscovered country”; like every other good thing, it must be worked for, achieved, earned.

Sooner or later in the long life of every true Builder of a spiritual fabric he will have occasion to give more serious thought to these paramount questions: “What have I done to merit the joys of heaven? How much do I know about the Builder’s art? How many of the teachings of Masonry have I woven into the texture of my character and Soul stature? If ‘salvation’ is not a free gift of nature or nature’s God, what have I done to earn it in a lifetime?” And the answer will come from his own conscience: “How little progress toward the ultimate goal have I made in one lifetime! Oh, for another opportunity! Oh, if I could live my life over again I would do differently! I would live a better life. I would treat others better!” etc., etc.

It is a mistaken idea that a man has only one chance, one

brief period of three score and ten years in which he can prove that he is worthy and well qualified to sit in the Celestial Lodge with the Brethren who have gone this way before him. If any Mason holds such an idea, let him look at his Brethren, at himself, and at the people of his world and judge how far away they and he are from the true Masonic goal. If there is only one chance, one life in a human body, and if his whole future in eternal life depends upon what he does while in the body, is this not a most discouraging prospect for the man who cares? Why should a man be committed to a program of self-improvement as a Mason unless he has the fullest opportunity to carry it through while in a physical body? If he does not make substantial progress in the Builder's art in a whole lifetime as a Mason, and this is his last chance, shall he forever be excluded from the Celestial Lodge because he has not subdued his passions and earned "salvation" by wisdom and works? Is not this "where" instinctively in his heart he wants to be when he has passed the portal of death? Is this not the ultimate haven of his eternal Quest?

Let him not delude himself, however, into believing that when he has given up his mortal body his chances of improving himself in Masonry will be any more adequate in heaven than they were on earth. The law of action and reaction, of labor and reward, applies to him in the heaven-world just as it does on the earth plane. If one has made little progress in self-improvement here on earth, his rate of progress will not be substantially greater in heaven. If a man is a devil, or acts as if he were "full of the devil" here on earth, he does not suddenly become an angel when he leaves his mortal body. If a man did become an angel after death, one could properly and logically wonder why he was born into a body at all, or why it was necessary to come here even once. If his whole spiritual evolution could take place in heaven, why be born on earth? If the "angelic" state is the better of the two states of being and could be completely attained in heaven, the need and purpose of life in a physical body on the earth plane would be eliminated. Why then come here at all, only to suffer "the slings and arrows of an outrageous

fortune"? Millions upon millions of people here on earth go through a veritable hell of labor, unhappiness, pain, and suffering in their blind efforts at self-improvement. If heaven could give them the peace, happiness, and the pleasure they seek, they would prefer to remain in that state of being and living forever; they would never choose to be born again on earth.

But heaven cannot grant them more than they have earned on earth. Millions may long for the bliss of heaven; but no man, or even God Himself, will violate the inexorable law of compensation by granting any man more than he has earned either here or hereafter. If he seeks happiness, peace, security, and Light of heaven, let him "divest himself of all the vices and superfluities of life" here on earth and thus *earn* the right and *become worthy* to occupy "that house not made with hands eternal in the heavens."

Masonry recognizes no magic in dying that suddenly transforms an evil spirit on earth into an angelic spirit in heaven, or that suddenly makes a man infallible in knowledge when he, an ignoramus, divests himself of his earthly mantle. If he is in ignorance and spiritual darkness on earth in a physical body, he will still be in ignorance and spiritual darkness in heaven in his "spiritual" body. We know and are what we have achieved by effort both here and hereafter. In our thinking we should never lose sight of this truly Masonic fact.

The ancient masters of the wisdom, including Jesus of Nazareth, taught this sublime truth. The Masonic Ritual emphasizes this truth when it uses the word "Builder." The true Mason is a *Builder* of his "spiritual fabric," and as such must be a thinker, a worker, a doer, an achiever. At no time in the life of his immortal soul, whether in or out of a physical body, can he build without thinking and planning and doing. Our Great Architect has ordained it thus, and only thus can we place ourselves in harmony with His divine law, purpose, and plan as we ascend the heights of Masonic illumination and destiny.

This is the point we are driving at: We have *more* than one chance to achieve life's Masonic goal, the sublimest possibility named in the Ritual, immortality, defined as permanent residence

in that “undiscovered country from whose bourne no traveler returns.” We keep returning to this earth plane, the versatile field of experience, to learn to subdue the passions and to improve ourselves in Masonry, “to erect that spiritual building, that house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens.” Many times through the eternity of the past has each of us, an immortal spirit, a “spark of the divine fire,” a “divine wanderer,” traveling on the level of time, taken a body, been born again, and as many times given it up in death; never, as time stretches into eternity, shall we be other than immortal spirits, continuing to take bodies in births and to give them up in deaths until we achieve that “purity of life and rectitude of conduct so necessary to gaining admission to the Celestial Lodge Above where the Supreme Architect of the Universe presides.” When, by learning more and more lessons in Masonic science and laboring to subdue the passions every time we return to the earth plane, we ultimately become worthy and well qualified to sit with all the Brethren and Fellows who have gone this way before us in the Celestial Lodge and in the presence of the Mason’s God, only then shall we not need to return to an earthly Lodge for further instruction.

The writer is not the first to declare that the teaching of reincarnation, of rebirth into flesh again and again, is implied in the teachings of Masonry. Other commentators, especially those who trace modern Speculative Masonry back to its ancient origins, have found the teaching of multiple rebirths a most important part of that divine gnosis that is designated in the Ritual as the hidden Mysteries of Ancient Freemasonry. One commentator, George H. Steinmetz, wrote a most illuminating book entitled *The Royal Arch, Its Hidden Meaning*, in which he declared without reservation that “an understanding of the Chapter Degrees is impossible” without a background of understanding of the doctrine of reincarnation and karma. He wrote:

These degrees are so largely based on that doctrine, which they symbolically illustrate, that, if the doctrine of reincarnation is withdrawn, or if any attempt is made to interpret the symbols

by any other means, these symbols become meaningless. . . . The doctrine of reincarnation holds that man was first a spiritual being . . . he “fell,” or descended, from his high estate into matter, physical bodies. . . . All the symbology of Freemasonry depicts man’s journey back to his lost perfection and is intended to assist him to accelerate his progress by teaching him how to more quickly accomplish his purpose.\*

To clarify this teaching for the reader it is well to quote Steinmetz at length. The following is one of the best statements I have ever seen on this theme:

According to this doctrine man lives on this earth in a physical body, not once, but many, many times. He learns the lessons needed and intended in one incarnation, he experiences that which is called “death.” After a period of time spent in a spiritual state he again incarnates, starting this next life at the highest level attained in the preceding life and so on, and on, for incarnation after incarnation, always upward, evolving slowly toward the ultimate goal, continuing to work out his evolution from birth to birth in accordance with Immutable Universal Law. His objective is to perfect himself that he may attain that ordained spirituality where no more lessons will need to be learned, no more experiences are necessary. Then he need not again incarnate on this earth. As the Eastern Occultist would say, “He is freed from the wheel.” As Masonry phrases it, “having made of the rough ashlar the perfect ashlar, he takes his place as a living stone in that spiritual building, that house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens.”

Brother Steinmetz has also written a companion book entitled *Freemasonry, Its Hidden Meaning*, dealing with Masonry in general and the first three degrees in particular. The doctrine of reincarnation and karma (pp. 123–24) is mentioned as part of the ancient wisdom from which modern Speculative Masonry is derived in its religious or philosophical aspects. This book is mentioned here for two reasons: first, to prompt the reader to examine it as a splendid Light in Masonry; second, so far as

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\* P. 51. Why this had to be is a great mystery. See also the beginning of Chapter XVI, on the question “Why?”

this teaching is concerned, to emphasize that though it is not expressed outwardly in the Ritual, it is implied by interpretation of the hidden Mysteries of Ancient Freemasonry which are undoubtedly concealed in it.

Steinmetz is not quoted here as an authority to bolster my interpretation of the arcane passages of the Ritual. Regardless of “authorities” and regardless of any interpretation that can be placed upon Masonic symbolism and science, so far as I am personally concerned, this doctrine furnishes the most rational account of the enigmas and mysteries of human life on this earth. See the Chapters XX, “Personal Testimony,” and XVIII, “This Life in a Body” for further elucidation of my own views of what Masonry means to me.

Since this doctrine forms so large a part in my own interpretation of Masonry, let us examine it scientifically and philosophically under the headings, Who or What? Whence? (this chapter) and Why? How? Whither? (Chapter XVI)—taking our cues from the Ritual of the first three degrees.

Masonry is concerned to know what a man is, whence he came, what he came here to do, where he is going, and how he can plan to get there. These questions are answered in the Ritual in such a manner as to conceal the Truth concerning the origin, manifestation, unfoldment, and destiny of the human soul as it exists and functions in time and eternity. The real secrets and Mysteries of Ancient Freemasonry are involved in these simple questions. The *real* answers are not found in the ritualistic or monitorial work of the first three degrees, but any man can find them in books dealing with ancient mysteries and the ancient wisdom.\* There he will obtain such light on these questions as he is capable of possessing. What he learns will immeasurably add to his knowledge of Masonry and its real purpose for him as a man (an expanding soul) and a Mason. He will improve

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\* Go to the library and ask for books on any of the following topics: Ancient Wisdom; Ancient Mystery Schools; Ancient Masters; Manes and the Manicheans; The Magi; The Gnostics; Hermes, or Pythagoras or Plato; The Essenes; The Medieval Alchemists; DeMolay and the Templars; Medieval and Modern Rosicrucianism; The Yoga Schools.

his mind and enrich his life beyond belief and comprehension. He will invest his mind with a knowledge of Truth that will abide with him on earth and be a lamp to light his path in the heavens.

## WHO OR WHAT?

Many contemplative minds want a more complete answer to the question "Who am I?" than, for example, "I am John Jones." As a personality, he *is* John Jones, but that answer refers only to his body and conscious mind and all their external characteristics and qualities. Many people want to know more about themselves than the name whereby their personality is temporarily distinguished; they want to know more particularly who or what they really are mentally and spiritually, as souls. They declare, perhaps from early training or reading or hearsay, that they *believe* that they *have* an immortal soul, but they often conclude that they cannot be sure of its existence or know much about it. So the question "Who am I?" needs to be answered for those members of the Craft who want to look beneath the surface of Masonic symbolism and bring to light the basic Truth hidden therein. "Seek and ye shall find" the Truth in Masonry as it applies to you as an immortal soul. *Who* is it that comes here into the Lodge of this body?

The answers to your fundamental life problems are to be found in the ancient wisdom from which, by various circuitous routes, modern Speculative Masonry is derived and which antedates Christianity by thousands of years. This ancient wisdom was the best thought of many of the great masters who preceded Jesus of Nazareth regarding the origin, evolution, and destiny of man as an individualized soul entity. Though Jesus also taught this same divine wisdom to those of his disciples who could comprehend it, yet with the rise to dominance in the fourth century A.D. of the so-called "Christian Church" this divine knowledge was suppressed as heresy; and it is still regarded as heresy by every Christian Church on earth, whether "Fundamentalist" or "Liberal."

How did the ancient masters, including Jesus, answer the question “Who am I?” They all declared that in essence every man born in a body is a soul that emanated from the Oversoul. Masons acknowledge that the Supreme Intelligence, “the Great Architect of the Universe,” has created and is still creating His Universe. He is regarded as “the All-in-all” containing all that is manifest to man as well as all that is not manifest to man. The next step in this concept of Deity is the acknowledgment that, as a part of the Universal Soul or Divine Intelligence, the real entity of man must survive the death of his body and live forever as a “child of God.” What meaning, otherwise, can you ascribe to your life in a body?

The word “individualized” is used to describe a fundamental characteristic of the soul entity. It means that, though the animating intelligence and spirit of man emanated from, or is a part of, the universal spirit, *at a certain point* in its upward striving and development it began to maintain its identity as an “individual,” a “that which can no longer be divided” or “that which maintains its identity through all its experiences on earth and in the heavens.” The life principle that animates every form that lives on this earth is, for the period of its tenure in the form, “divided off” from the “reservoir of universal life”; and when the form perishes, the life principle (whatever it is) returns to its proper reservoir. It has no individuality of its own; it has “dividuality” in that it can reactivate a succession of such forms that are in nature in the process of evolution. But there comes a time in the process of development of consciousness in bodies when the “consciousness” upon leaving its form (body) does not return to be merged again into the reservoir of consciousness but maintains its identity as a conscious unit in time and eternity. It is no longer “divided off” from Universal Consciousness every time it manifests in a form; consequently it continues to be an “individual,” a continuing identity, in the long (cosmic) process of its human evolution in a succession of bodies. Hence “individuality” is synonymous to the permanent entity, the soul of man, that gives life and consciousness to a human body and then, at the so-called death of the body, with-

draws to its proper "place" in the heavens. This soul as an individual identity in all its bodies, whether on earth or in the heavens, is an eternal entity traveling "on the level of time" back to the "Celestial Lodge Above."

The development of consciousness of the *presence* of this soul-within is the business of every Freemason who wants to understand the real purposes of Freemasonry. The mysteries connected with the unfolding of this inner, divine consciousness in the individual man and Mason are to be found in the ancient wisdom, which has been suppressed as heresy for about fifteen hundred years but which can still be found as part of the teachings of every mystery school of the past that has come down to us of this day and are available to *any man*, whether Mason or not, who wants to know who or what he really is.

Read the books. Let your faith come alive! So far as possible, substantiate your faith with the certainties of science. Test your faith and philosophy in the fiery crucible of experience, and see for yourself the transcendent beauties of the Truth! Learn to "know thyself" as a soul immortal.

### W H E N C E ?

If the soul or any part of it is in the body now and will survive the death of the body, as Masons claim it will, it must have existed *before* it had, or took on, a body. If each "I" is a separate entity now and continues to be an identity *after* the death of its body, it must have been an entity, an identity, *before* it began to live in its present body. Why should we deny or shrink back from the logic of this reasoning? Also, there is scientific evidence of the pre-existence of the soul. The level of time extends not only through the present life in a body and forward forever, but also *backward* forever. If we are now traveling and will always be traveling on the level of time, we must have always been so traveling. The sublime purpose of all our traveling is to reach that "undiscovered country from whose bourne no traveler returns."

In the Gospel according to St. John in the Great Light that

shines upon Masonic altars are many passages that indicate that Jesus regarded himself as having been sent by God to mankind. Read particularly and ponder the significance of the “I came” or “I am come” passages. John 8:56–58, where Jesus concludes by saying, “Before Abraham was, I am,” furnishes heavy testimony that the Master Teacher had existed as a separate entity before “the foundation of the world.” (See also Chapter 17:5 and 24.) What Jesus says of himself *applies to all men in mortal bodies in all the ages of man*. Evidences of acceptance of the teachings of the ancient wisdom appear here and there in the Gospels. Jesus often spoke in parables, and like all other great teachers who had preceded him, he had a secret doctrine that he taught in private to those who had the capacity to understand. It is not sensible to declare that Jesus was subject to a different law regarding the nature of his being. If Jesus existed “from the foundation of the world,” that simply means that he “pre-existed” as a “man made perfect” prior to his last incarnation as Jesus of Nazareth; and what was true of Jesus is also true in principle of every man who is born into flesh. Jesus, it must be added, is “our *elder* Brother.” He came from God *earlier* than any of us did; but we follow the same natural law on the level of time that he did and we have the same destiny that he achieved on this same path. Otherwise (to the writer at least), these “hard saying” passages of Scripture have no meaning at all. If the reader *learns to understand* and comprehend what Jesus has told us in the Great Light, he can place the fullest trust in the Truth of his words, even those words as they have come down to us perhaps garbled and distorted. What logic is there in denying what one does not understand? “Seek and ye shall find” the Truth. The final authority for Truth shall always rest with the thinker and learner of Truth. Jesus said these things of himself; the time will come when each of us shall say them of himself. That Christ shall be born in you, that you shall ultimately achieve the Christ-consciousness, that you shall attain Masonic illumination, is also *your* destiny as a Builder always pursuing it on the level of time.

So Masons ask the traveler: “Whence came you?” And as

usual the answer is enigmatic and serves to conceal rather than to reveal the Truth of the ancient teaching regarding the ultimate source of our being. If the answer to this question is taken literally, it has no meaning at all. I challenge any Masonic thinker to make any sense out of a literal rendition. But when the thinker realizes that it refers symbolically to the sublime Truth that we all come "from the Celestial Lodge Above where the Supreme Architect of the Universe presides," then both question and answer take on tremendous meaning. Jesus repeatedly declared that he came from the Father, and every man will so declare when he is ready to do so. An ancient Scripture declares: "As from fire, sparks, being like unto fire, fly forth a thousand fold, so do we, my Brothers, come forth from the Infinite and return thither also." If we really mean what we say—that the Soul is now in its body, that the Soul will exist forever—then the inquiring mind will naturally ask: "Did the soul exist as a separate entity *before* it took this body?" And if so, where did it come from? If we are individualized entities, or identities, *now in this body* possessing vast differences in qualities of mind and spirit, what logic is there in denying that we were entities and identities *before* we took on this body?

We came (into bodies) as "sparks of the divine fire," as separate entities, or parts, of the universal creative energy, divine spirit. Our original home was the Celestial Lodge Above, the "heavens" of the Great Light in Masonry. It is indeed that "spark of divine fire" within us that illumines our minds and enables us to become Master Masons, or Builders of that spiritual fabric. Without that spark of divinity we would be no more than the clods, plants, and animals of the earth. Masonry teaches clearly that what distinguishes one man from another is the difference in the qualities of his mind and soul, those internal (not the external) qualities upon which Masonry places the major emphasis in the Ritual. Why should one man be different from another in the unfolding and manifestation of these qualities unless it represents different achievements in his past history as a separate identity? Not all of us are on the same rung of the ladder of achievement; not all are at the same place on the

path of illumination; the spirit of Jesus Christ, or of Hiram Abiff, is not at the same stage of unfoldment in all of us. We have been different from one another down through the eternity of the past and we are different from one another today. We have built this present character from past achievements in the same way as we are now building our characters as Master Builders in our present bodies. And as we have come here at this time and place to improve ourselves in Masonry, so have we come here many times before from the Celestial Lodge for the same purpose. The very same creative purpose that brought us here this time in mortal bodies has brought us here many times in the long and unremembered past. We have been exercising the Builder's art all down through the millennia and constantly improving ourselves in Masonry. We have come many times in different ages and among different peoples on this planet to gain the necessary experiences through which we learn the lessons of life; though we do not remember particular instances\* of being in a body before we took our present ones, yet the memory of all past sojourns in different bodies is with us now in the guise of whatever stage of character development we may have achieved. Each of us has therefore always been a Mason in truth and reality, though not always a member of a Lodge of Speculative Masonry.

Thus the question “Whence came you?” takes on scientific and philosophical and logical meaning; and Masons get an answer that will enable them to open to their inquiring minds the windows of the soul for the better ingress and egress of the Light in Masonry that they seek in time and in eternity.

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\* There are on record in the annals of societies for psychical research authenticated instances where a person in a body has remembered a past incarnation—details of environment, parents, relatives, a different language. There are many instances of infant prodigies, mathematical and musical geniuses. The authenticated phenomena of so-called “spirit return” offer some very interesting evidence of pre-existence and re-existence of the soul entity. Read the books listed in Chapter XII.

## THE SOUL'S LONG JOURNEY

## W H Y ?

MASONRY gives cryptic answers to the questions, "Who am I? What am I? Whither am I going?" Glimpses of the answers that Masonry gives to these questions appear elsewhere in this book; but so far as I can determine, the Ritual of the first three degrees is silent on the questions, "Why was I not created perfect in the first place when I appeared in a human body, as a child of God, created in His image? Why all this struggle to attain perfection over, say, a million years of births, lives, and deaths on the physical plane?" Millions of harassed and frustrated people in human bodies ask every day: "Why must I go through all this hell on earth?" Even for the more thoughtful among them, no satisfactory answer comes to finite mind, either from the depths of the human soul or from the pronouncements of the philosophers who have spent years and years pondering this inscrutable mystery of life.

How few human beings, in the midst of affliction, have or develop the capacity to see any relation between such affliction and the development of their own character and soul qualities! They cry out with varying degrees of emotional anguish: "Why should this happen to me? What have I done to deserve this?" If they do not find an answer from their own reasoning and reflections on the purposes and destiny of life in a body, there will be no answer at all. Not knowing the cause of suffering, they find no ways to alleviate it by elimination of its causes. It is no answer to them to declare that it is by tribulation, as effect, that we learn to discover its cause and to act intelligently to eliminate it. Suffering therefore continues until it arouses capacity to cope with it understandingly. Common sense would dictate to any person that there must be some cause

for every effect, so that if he suffers, there must be some reason for it. In many of the experiences of life the causes are quite obscure or difficult to perceive, but diligent and patient searching will reveal them and deliberate and intelligent action can be taken to avoid them and their inevitable effects. Sooner or later all things that are hidden and mysterious shall be revealed to him who acquires the moral and spiritual strength to continue his search for answers to the enigmas of life.

There is no record that before Adam partook of the "forbidden fruit" of the "tree" that stood in the "garden of Eden" he was ever sick, or suffered, or sorrowed; he was perfectly adjusted to his environment and led an angelic and happy life. One gathers that he was quite childlike in his innocence and that, having been created in the image of God, he was a perfect being in the beginning of his earthly career. He was a child of God. For some inscrutable reason God is depicted as placing in the Garden "the tree of the knowledge of good and evil" and forbidding Adam to partake of its fruit; but Adam, childlike and curious, "disobeyed" God and brought upon himself and all his progeny down to the present day all the tribulations, sins, sorrows, and suffering that come from a knowledge of both good and evil, by which knowledge and our herculean endeavors in its use we are in the process of working our way back to God again as perfected men. From Eden and Adamic man, angelic man, perfect man, to imperfect, sinful, sorrowing man and back again to perfect, sinless, happy man in God's garden of Eden at last! This is the \$64,000 question: Why was the "fall of man" necessary? Can the deep meaning of this Adamic allegory ever be deciphered by the finite mind of man? Can the slightest light be thrown upon this mystery by further reasoning? Let us look further.

Human beings have learned to ascribe to the Creator the attribute of "perfection." Jesus on one occasion was moved to exclaim: "Ye, therefore, *shall be* perfect, even as your heavenly Father *is* perfect." If God is perfect and possesses (as we are sure He does) the other attributes of omni-science and omnipotence, if God is all-perfect, all-wise and all-powerful, one may

properly wonder why, since we come from God, we are so imperfect and have to spend so vast a time to become perfect again and thus fulfill the purpose and destiny for which we take mortal bodies and go through such terrible tribulations again and again.

There can be no doubt but that in essence, in regard to the mysterious life principle and in regard to the soul that constitutes the inner potency of every human being on earth, *man is a divine being*, or a being with *the potentialities of divinity*. Man is God made manifest on the physical plane, for "in him we live and move and have our being." God expresses Himself in man even as man expresses himself in God. Jesus declared: "The Father is in me, and I am in the Father"; and in one strikingly significant passage he also declared his approval and verification of the statement of the Psalmist, "Ye are gods," as it applies to all men on earth. Every man has in him the *potentialities* of divinity and of the perfection of divinity.

But what do we see when we look around at the children of God and when we take a good look at ourselves? Ignorance and sin, disobedience to the laws of God and man, vice, crime, disease, sorrow and suffering, unhappiness, frustration, pestilence, war and death—all these make of earth a veritable hell from which some people attempt to escape by suicide and which most people appear to tolerate without enthusiasm or any rational understanding of why they are here and what to do about it. Millions and millions of God's creatures designated as human beings appear to have no clear concepts that enable them to account for either the benefits and rewards or the ills and woes of life on this planet. Poverty of mind and spirit is accompanied by poverty and deprivation in material blessings. They are the "children of God," created in the "image of God"; yet we find many of them sunken and depraved, sinning like the prodigal son, ignorant and perverse, not too far above the animal in moral and spiritual attainment, hostile to society in crime, the enemy of their neighbors in business, wronging, cheating, defrauding, selfish, and avaricious! Yet Jesus is recorded as saying: "Every life, no matter how humble, no matter how tragic, no matter how

broken or thwarted, hath a meaning and an *inner glory*, and is precious in my sight." What a mystery is here!

So far as I can ascertain from a study of Masonic science, *Masonry accepts man as he is* (indeed, of what avail would it be if Masonry did not accept man as he is?), and no Masonic philosopher has attempted to explain *why* he is as he is. That, indeed, is a mystery which no thinker of the past has attempted to reveal to mankind. At one place in the Ritual men are referred to as "weak, frail mortals" who should rely upon the Great Architect of the Universe for support, protection, and deliverance. Masonry accepts a man as he is at any time in his soul's development and does not ask the question: "Why were so many men created so much lower than the angels that they appear to be but little higher than the apes?"

Masonry asks not why I come here a sinner, but for what purpose I came here as I am, at this time. Masonry looks to the future of men as Builders of a spiritual fabric. And the Masonic neophyte answers clearly and unmistakably: "I came here to subdue my passions and improve myself in Masonry." The question is not why men have passions or why men are so much like devils, but what Masonry can do to subdue the passions and to save men from deviltry and help them build their spiritual edifices and *become* worthy and well qualified to sit in the celestial Lodge again. It is undoubtedly more logical and scientific to accept, or recognize, men as they are than to attempt to explain why they are that way. There appears to be no rational answer to the question, "Why ignorance, sin, and death in a potentially perfect man created in the image of God?"

In a wonderful book, *The Science of the Soul*, Dr. R. Swinburne Clymer makes the following statement that should have significance to Masons who are searching for the Lost Word:

In the beginning of time all Souls were with God [in the Celestial Lodge] and were purely spiritual . . . they took upon themselves bodies, they no longer remained purely spiritual or all good [as they were before they took bodies], because they took upon themselves the desires and weaknesses of the body. . . .

As a consequence . . . the Souls of men *must work* upwards to the Perfection that was theirs before "the word" took on flesh,—the Souls *fell* into flesh. But this Soul . . . is [now] in search of that which it lost when it moved into the House of Clay. [Italics added.]

If this is true, it prompts a question to any thinking mind: "If Souls were 'perfect' in the first place, then *why* did they have to take bodies and bind themselves on the wheel of an interminable succession of births and deaths of such bodies and be compelled to pass through this 'vale of tears' unnumbered times? *Why* the necessity to go through the terrible travail of body, mind, and spirit in life after life on this earth plane, only to get back in the end where they started from?" There is a mystery here, and the inquiring mind, the Godlike mind and soul of man, needs to penetrate the veil, or veils, that hide it. The Creator, according to our reason, must have deemed it necessary to create man's body from "the dust of the earth," or no soul, no "spark of the Divine fire," could have become involved in matter. If souls as sparks of the divine fire were "perfect" in the beginning of time, why did the creative power in the soul of man have to create a body through which lusts and weaknesses predominantly express themselves and have to perform this "fall" into flesh thousands of times in order to evolve back again into that "perfection" that enables him to become again a "Son of God," *to rise to cosmic consciousness* above the necessity of taking physical body?

Sensitive persons, viewing the bloody, cruel, and inhuman trails winding through history, the awful woes and sufferings of humanity, which have scarcely abated even to this day, like Gautama, could properly cry out against the irrationality, the inhumanity, the injustice of such a futile process. From "perfection" to "imperfection" as a means to get back to "perfection" again! The idea is an affront to a logical mind. Do we not declare that the Lord God formed man's body from the materials of the earth and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, whereby man became a living soul? Was it not an act of the Creator that man "fell" into flesh? What was the reason for this

act of creation, if man was a perfect being before he took on a physical body? *Why* was man, the image of God in the beginning, as we declare, permitted to "disobey" God while in the body of Adamic man, be "born in sin," live a thousand sinful lives and die a thousand more or less fearsome deaths, before he could get back to God and become as perfect as he was before he fell into flesh?

That is *the* question, probably the most important question that the finite mind of man can ask. Millions upon millions of human beings, the "sons of man," have never even thought of the question, to say nothing of searching for a rational answer. Where they give such a question any consideration at all, they deem any rational answer so far beyond their capacity to think that it would be futile and foolish to undertake a search for it.

Indeed, why should the ordinary thinker seek an answer to this enigma, when the trained philosopher, if he knows the answer, will not reveal it in his writings? The author has sought the answer in the pronouncements of great teachers of the past and in the public statements of contemporary philosophers and thinkers, but to no avail. Man's puny intellect seems incapable of comprehending and encompassing the inscrutable mystery in which the doctrine of the sinful nature of physical man is enshrouded, and there appears to be no answer to the question "Why?"

Perhaps a gleam of Light can be thrown upon the problem, or enigma, of imperfection and sin among God's human creatures by taking a more profound, a more tolerant and perhaps truthful view of the nature and function of sin as a stimulant to the progress of the soul. The best thought I have discovered in the reading of many years is to be found in Sri Aurobindo's *The Synthesis of Yoga*:

Our sins are the misdirected steps of a seeking power that aims, not at sin, but at perfection, at something we might call a Divine Virtue. Often they are the veils of a quality that has to be transformed and delivered out of an ugly disguise; otherwise, *in the perfect Providence of things*, they would not have been suffered to exist or to continue. The Master of our works is neither a blun-

derer nor an indifferent witness nor a dallier with the luxury of unneeded evils. He is wiser than our reason and wiser than our virtue. Our nature is not only mistaken in will and ignorant in knowledge but weak in power; but *the Divine Force is there* and will lead us if we trust in it and will use our deficiencies and our powers for the Divine Purpose. . . . If we fail in our immediate aim, it is *because He has intended the failure*. . . . The Master of our Works knows the thing to be done, and we must allow Him to do it in us by His own means and in his own manner.

This view appears to give sin a purpose and a function that may develop toward the higher forms of consciousness. The Creator, being the Giver of life, is the divine Author-in-us of every phase of manifestation in the nature of man. Man, as an individualized identity, possessing absolute freedom of will, be his will weak or strong, must learn to be good by the punishments that naturally follow his actions that are not good, or as good. At the time of the commission of the "not good" acts, they are or may be ignorantly deemed "the good" by the doers. But though ignorance may be deemed the cause of sin, ignorance of the laws of good (God) cannot avoid the punishments that inevitably follow their violation. "Offenses must come," said Jesus, "but woe unto that man by whom they come." It appears that human beings in the kindergarten stage of development must ultimately learn to be good only by "sinning" and experiencing the sorrows and punishments that naturally follow the violation of the laws of God. Satan and God are not antagonists, each striving for control of human beings. God, the Universal Spirit, the Creator-in-us, the Originator and Builder of our souls, encompasses everything that is on all the planes of nature, and we must come to know that He would not create or tolerate an evil except as a means of promoting His divine purpose in the building of the soul qualities of every one of His human creatures.

Admittedly, this tolerant view of the function of sin does not account for the fact that corporeal man is, or tends to be, a sinful creature or an "imperfect creature": it does not answer

the question, "Why was sin necessary as a means of soul development and perfection?" We learn ultimately to look upon sin in ourselves and others with a degree of abhorrence that causes us to wonder why we had to go through all these trials on earth in bodies to learn to become better, happier, and more perfect people. In our sense of guilt we shall ultimately cry out: "Why did not God not only create us in His own image but keep us always in that angelic state of perfection and bliss which was ours at the beginning and is destined to be ours at the end?"

The "fall of man" into flesh and the weaknesses of mortality are still an incomprehensible mystery. Our cry for Light goes out, but there is no convincing or adequate answer from the silence. So we leave the puzzle for the present, thus following Buddha's sage advice: "Sink not the string of thought into the fathomless," \* temporarily satisfied to press on from where we are until we reach a state of spiritual illumination adequate to enable us to learn the truth.

## H O W ?

The question "How?" is worth answering, but there is nothing in the ritualistic work of a Lodge that tells the Master Mason *how* to subdue the passions and improve himself in Masonry. The secret methods by which our ancient Brethren built their spiritual fabric are not named in the Ritual. If any man, or Mason, wishes to make more rapid progress in the Builder's art, he would need to study the methods from books and lessons that are now available from the various "schools" and associations located in this country. These schools are trying to disseminate the teachings and methods of self-improvement enunciated and employed by the ancient masters but which were suppressed and repressed by Church and State during the Dark Ages and by the Church right down to this day. The hidden Mysteries of Ancient Freemasonry, particularly in respect to the disciplines necessary to achieve self-improvement, are not

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\* From *Great Systems of Yoga*, by Ernest Wood, p. 82 (1954).

to be found in Masonic texts but in the literature and lessons put out by contemporary schools that are providing a service for the people of the United States that, I think, every Grand Lodge Jurisdiction in the country *should* provide. (I have referred to three of these centers in Chapter II.)

In the whole process of soul development, however, whether one is dealing with the secret methods or the more common methods of self-improvement, the function of words and thoughts should be stressed as a basis for improvement in action and deeds. A man must learn to *think* good before he can *do* good. If a man *is* good and does good without thinking, he does so because he is born with a "naturally good" character; the principle of "good thinking, good acting" still applies because in previous lives he had learned the lessons that both good and bad thinking and acting always teach. The qualities that good thinking and right action have woven into the fabric of his soul are brought over in the form of good character which intuitively expresses itself in right human relations in any lifetime in a body. But at some time or other in the course of the life of the eternal soul there must be right thinking in the intellect as a basis or condition of right action. Chapter IX deals with the theme "As Ye Sow" and emphasizes this concept of the function of thinking and knowing. A conscious effort to improve one's self in Masonry will always be a potent force to bring one to true Masonic Light, the ultimate goal of the Builder.

The Nazarene Master declared: "Ye shall *know* the Truth, and the Truth shall make you free" (John 8:32). How else can this be interpreted except that knowing something must come before doing something, that knowledge as cause precedes action as effect? If it is the Truth that will make us free, it must be that ignorance is what keeps us in bondage, and that the Light of Truth dispels the darkness of ignorance. However free we may be in other respects—political, religious, or economic—we are still in bondage if we are under the sway of the "unruly passions"; in other words, we must come to know that according to the teachings of Masonry, freedom, *real* freedom, is something that a man confers upon himself when he learns to subdue his

passions and improve himself in Masonry. *Real* freedom, then, arises within a man and is not conferred upon him by any outside authority or power. This implies self-discipline, self-control, self-mastery, self-realization, all of which lead to soul unfoldment and spiritual regeneration, the "spiritual rebirth" enunciated by the Galilean Master in his conversation with the Pharisee Nicodemus (see John 3:1-21).

Masons should *know* that soul regeneration is the real object of Masonry, the art and science of the Builder of a spiritual fabric. Masons should learn and know *what* ought to be done before they can learn *how* to do it; this is all that this book recommends that Masonic Schools of Instruction attempt to do. If Masonic Schools of Instruction were established, one in every Lodge, they could teach certain Masons *what* ought to be done, *what* Masonry really is in respect to its real purposes. "Ye shall know the Truth."

Further, if Masons come to know the Truth in Masonry, the problem of its application in the individual life of a member is an individual matter. One man can choose one method and another man quite a different method. The problem of *how* a man shall improve himself in Masonry is the responsibility and right of every man, who will find the right path for himself, each one in accord with his capacity, power, and will to learn how to do so. At this stage of the development of Western man, when the Lodge has taught the member what ought to be done, it has performed its whole duty by him. This leaves each member on his own initiative to discover how to make this knowledge effective in his own life and how to arrive at that application of Masonic Truth that shall make him free from bondage to the unruly passions.

"And the truth *shall* make you free." As has been said many times in these chapters and will be said again, this process of how to apply Masonic Truth, this process of soul regeneration, is a long, long one. The great Teacher who spoke these words did not imply that a mere knowledge of the Truth would make us free at the very moment that we ascertained it as Truth. No; the Truth *shall* make us free, if—mark well, *if*—we can learn

*how* to apply it in our own lives. Freedom from bondage to the passions is something that every human being has to *earn* by the strongest possible effort and over a long period of time; it is not a free gift of God to be appropriated by the individual without effort. Soul regeneration, "salvation," must be earned by effort, "works" (as well as by faith; see Chapter XI).

There are many paths and degrees of proficiency that lead to soul regeneration. Read the books and choose your own path, if indeed you are equal to any conscious effort toward the achievement of that freedom from bondage to the unruly passions that is most certainly the ultimate goal of a Mason.

If you are not so much interested in making sustained and conscious efforts to find out how to improve yourself in Masonry as you are to know *what* Masonry is, write to the librarian of the Grand Lodge of any state in the Union and ask for books dealing with *both* the exoteric and esoteric phases of Masonry. It is suggested that as a beginning you read at least one of the standard works dealing more particularly with the outer and more obvious phases of the Ritual; but remember also that Masonry, as the art and science of the Builder of a spiritual fabric, is an arcane (esoteric or secret) science. The most advanced among the ancients knew much more about a "spiritual fabric" than we moderns know, in spite of, or perhaps because of, our materialistic science and sensate culture that has tended to deny the existence of anything that could not be perceived and measured and tested by the human senses. Therefore in trying to find out what Masonry is do not neglect to look into the books dealing with soul science (see Chapter XII).

So that the reader may have something definite by way of reading material in addition to those books mentioned in other chapters, the names and addresses of at least four schools in this country that are engaged in the dissemination of knowledge and/or methods of self-improvement that many of the ancient masters pursued are listed here. It is well to know about these methods of self-improvement, even though we delay acting upon this knowledge for a thousand years. If you are searching for Light in Masonry, that "hieroglyphic Light that none but crafts-

men ever saw," you could read the literature published by—

1. THE SELF-REALIZATION FELLOWSHIP (3880 San Rafael Avenue, Los Angeles 65, California) was founded in 1925 by Paramahansa Yogananda to bring the teachings and practice of yoga to America. If you will read Yogananda's book, *The Autobiography of a Yogi*, you will get a clearer concept of what the yogis of India have achieved and of what almost any man can do if he is willing to pay the price of various disciplines of self-improvement. Go to any good library in your own community and ask for their latest book on yoga.
2. ASTARA FOUNDATION (261 South Mariposa Avenue, Los Angeles 4, California) publishes books and tracts on every phase of the ancient wisdom emphasized in Masonry as "the hidden mysteries." This school is spreading the same teachings and philosophy that are contained in the symbols and allegories of the Masonic Ritual and that, I think, should also emanate from every Grand Lodge Jurisdiction in the world.
3. THE AMERICAN PHILOSOPHER SOCIETY (P.O. Box 1228, Chicago 90, Illinois) publishes a set of paper-bound books of less than a hundred pages each that contain the most modern and scientific approach to that same ancient wisdom that is hidden in the Masonic Ritual. Perhaps the titles would be intriguing to some readers: *The Measure of Man; Yoga and Meditation; The Story of Race; America; Our Vibrant Universe (ancient and modern physics); Toward Salvation; In Quest of Health; Always Living.*
4. SOULCRAFT FELLOWSHIP (P.O. Box 192, Noblesville, Indiana) is perhaps the most active and popular organization in the United States engaged in the scientific demonstration of the realities of post-mortem conditions and circumstances of living. Its method of investigation of the facts of life in the world beyond the physical level is inductive; that is, its conclusions are reached by the logical method of generalizing from particular instances. Of course, deductive logic is also employed; that is, conclusions are arrived at by reasoning; but such conclusions are tested and retested in the light of

scientifically ascertained facts. William Dudley Pelley is the leader of this organization, and he is the author of some thirty books dealing with the origin, works, and destiny of mankind, the problems of mortality, and conditions of Immortality.

Some of these books have been mentioned in Chapter XII, "Eternal in the Heavens." The philosophy of Masonry is in all of these books, in that they deal realistically with the esoteric phases of the Ritual.

There are also several other schools in the United States that are worthy of mention in this list; but if you get the literature of any one of the above and set yourself to read it, you will not only learn *what* the hidden Mysteries of Ancient Freemasonry are but *how* to apply this divine wisdom in your own life and living. You will learn what is meant by the statement attributed to Solomon, King of Israel, one of our three Grand Masters, who praises wisdom (Proverbs 3:13-17) and concludes: "She is a tree of Life to them that lay hold upon her; and happy is everyone that retaineth her."

## W H I T H E R ?

Masons answer the question "Whither?" by a declaration that the soul of man will "never, never, never die." At least that is the answer for any Mason who declares that he is searching for the light and is desirous of improving himself in Masonry. The question comes, "Whither are you traveling?" and the answer given is just as enigmatic as before; it conceals a mystery, and the words of the answer are not to be taken literally. If they are, they have little or no meaning. We as Builders travel east to the rising sun of knowledge, wisdom, Light, and Truth so that we too, along with those of our elder Brethren who have traveled this same path, shall be worthy and well qualified to return to the Celestial Lodge Above, whence we came in the first place.

We are suspended, one might say, in the present between two eternities, the eternity of the past and the eternity of the future. There is every logical reason to believe that we have

come as individualized entities, egos ("I's," if you please) out of a limitless past from the Celestial Lodge as emanations of God the Creator. There is just as much reason to declare that as divine spirits created "in the image of God" we shall endure as separate identities in the limitless future. The human soul has been and always will be immortal, so long as it works toward the fulfillment of the law of divine being, the law of growth in the direction of divine power and perfection, which is the purpose of living on all planes of existence. If a man continues to improve himself in Masonry, he continues to fulfill the purpose of God, and his soul shall endure forever.

It takes great effort on the part of each one of us to become worthy and well qualified to fulfill his Masonic destiny. It is a very slow process; and, it appears, he must learn the lessons of life, like a child, over and over again. What we have achieved in past lives has cost us dearly in effort and spiritual zeal; it has not been a free gift of God. It has been, is now, and will continue to be a long and difficult road "back to God," in whom we "live and move and have our being." If we succeed in attaining what Masonry declares to be its ultimate objective—that is, the subjugation of the passions, which means the control of all the emotions—it may take many more lives in a succession of bodies to achieve that destiny. There have been men who have done it, but they are comparatively few out of the whole mass of humanity, and we can properly wonder why Masonry sets so remote and difficult a goal to be achieved by mortal men unless, indeed, that is the true and ultimate goal for all individuals on this planet. Perhaps it appears as an integral and prominent feature of Masonic teaching because, as the learning process of the individual began thousands of years ago and has brought each of us to whatever degree of perfection he has attained to this hour, so must the learning process continue for thousands of years toward the completion and perfection of the Master Builder. When we shall have subdued the passions, we shall have reached that "undiscovered country," the true haven of our wanderings in the gross matter of mortal bodies; we shall have attained that "perfection" in "purity of life and rectitude of

conduct" symbolized by the lambskin, or white leather apron, which we wear in the Lodges to teach us not to allow our souls to be defiled by the "untempered mortar of the unruly passions."

But it must be emphasized again and again that—because it *is* so sublime and to some so impossible a goal, because most of us are so far from its achievement, and because the process of achievement means quite radical changes in thinking and conduct, in character and abilities—its attainment will require many lives in a physical body. When we stop to think how long we have taken to get where we are now, to achieve the degree of perfection we have earned in past lessons, it becomes clear to any logical mind that these teachings of Masonry will require many lives to enable us to build them into our character and soul. It *is* a slow process as seen through the finite mind of mortal man.

No thinking man and Mason can rightly say that he has but one chance to reach the goal of the Builder and despairingly conclude that it is too remote for him to be troubled with its disciplines. As a man and Mason he has many chances; if now he is unwilling to express active faith in Masonic teachings and to strive to make them effective in his own life, let him be encouraged because he too inevitably and ultimately will be drawn into the great work of improvement in Masonry, and by exposure after exposure to its sublime teachings in a vast series of lives, he shall arrive at that destiny, the Perfect Ashlar which is the final product of the Builder's art.

Do you want to progress more rapidly? Then first study the meanings of Masonry, practice the teachings to the best of your ability, and ultimately, be it ever so near or ever so far from here and now, you will catch a glimpse of "that moral and intellectual Light which emanates from the Great Architect of the universe," and you will become worthy and well qualified to receive the "glorious reward in the revelation of that hieroglyphic Light which none but craftsmen ever saw."

## THE ANCIENT MASTERS AND THE ANCIENT WISDOM

**THE IDEA** of repeated births and deaths while traveling on the level of time, past, present, and to come, may come as a shock to many of the Brethren of the craft who are not familiar with what has been called the "ancient wisdom" or "divine gnosis." This ancient wisdom and the hidden Mysteries of Ancient Freemasonry are one and the same thing. The central theme of these ancient mysteries was self-knowledge and soul development, and this is the central theme and purpose of modern Masonry. Down through the ages in their long careers as Builders of their immortal souls, the true initiates, adepts, and masters who possessed this wisdom knew that the way of man "back to God" was through recurring births and deaths. But this teaching, as a clear-cut interpretation, is nowhere *incorporated as such* in the Masonic Ritual, any more than any other interpretation is. If any Freemason says that it is "hidden" there, he does so only because he as a Masonic thinker declares that that appears to be the only logical way whereby he can fulfill his Masonic destiny as he understands it.

I would humbly suggest that before rejecting this ancient teaching, you take a good look at what the ancient Brethren, the great teachers and initiates of antiquity, have said about it. Let not the fact that this teaching does not appear as a part of modern sectarian theology discourage you or lead you to conclude that the doctrines of the churches contain *all* the Truth about life on this earth and about the origin and destiny of man. If we look behind Buddhism, Christianity, and modern Speculative Masonry we shall find the "esoteric matrix" out of which all the great religions of the world have sprung; we shall find the divine gnosis, the ancient wisdom. As Builders of our spir-

itual fabric we cannot ignore what the ancient teachers taught. The inquiring Mason will look to Gautama and Krishna of India, to Hermes of Egypt, to Pythagoras of Krotona, to Plato of Greece, to Jesus of Nazareth, to Origen, Giordano Bruno, Paracelsus, and Jacques de Molay—to name just a few down through the ages. Do not fear or hesitate to peer behind the curtains that hide you from the Light of Truth. Do not fear to tread the narrow, rugged, and precipitous path that leads to the heights of Truth and illumination, where the glories of heaven are revealed.

If a man knows what is meant by his “Masonic destiny” and what it involves, he looks around at his Brethren, he looks at men as they are everywhere, and most of all he looks at himself. And he realizes that neither they nor he have attained the great goal that Masonry has set for all . . . that they are still far from it . . . that if they had attained it, they would not have been born in physical bodies . . . that it was therefore necessary to take mortal bodies and to profit by experiences and achievements therein and improve themselves in Masonry . . . that though the death of such bodies is inevitable, they as individualized spirits of God will survive the grave and never, never, never die . . . that therefore the very same cyclic necessity and purpose that caused them to be born in their present bodies will cause them to be born again and again in other bodies—and thus through a succession of profitable and progressive lives and experiences they will, by active thinking and doing, erect that spiritual building to the point where no more lessons in physical bodies will be profitable, beneficial, or necessary, and they will have made themselves worthy and well qualified and duly and truly prepared to sit in the Celestial Lodge Above where the Supreme Architect of the Universe presides, and they will have reached that undiscovered country from whose bourne no traveler returns. Rely upon it as a scientific fact that because every man is a “child of God” he has within himself the power to learn to recognize himself as such. Go back to the ancient Brethren, the great masters of the wisdom, and learn from them. Nothing is “lost” to him who wants to search and know.

Even when an individual Mason is inclined to pay considerable attention to a working understanding of the meanings of the cryptic passages of the Ritual, the Masonic thinker may conclude that, when he dies, he will make more rapid progress in the erection of his spiritual building and that he has an eternity to achieve the sublime goal of Masonry in the heaven-world. But he must realize that if, after he leaves his mortal body, he began an eternity of immortality during which he built his spiritual house, there would be little or no point or need to have been born in a physical body even once—only to put it aside in a few brief years between the eternities, when only a little progress had been made in the Builder's art. Why come here at all, if we pass this way but once, spend so little time, and make so little improvement in Masonry? Compared to what it is our ultimate destiny to achieve, what we can achieve in one lifetime is a mere step on the path to Masonic illumination, a mere drop in the ocean of Masonic Truth. During the untold millennia of the past our ancient Brethren traveled the same road and received the same Light that we are destined to travel and receive on the level of time. The great masters and teachers of antiquity, having traversed this road before us, are well qualified by experience to show us the way; they tell us how they achieved Masonic illumination and freedom from the cyclic necessity of recurring births and deaths; they tell us how to become true initiates, adepts, seers, and masters like themselves. "Ask and *ye* shall receive, seek and *ye* shall find, knock and the door shall be opened unto *you*."

Let us be as objective and "scientific" as possible about this matter. By "scientific" is meant "realistic," "logical," "free from prejudice and lack of knowledge." Most of us in these times have a great respect for science and the scientific method of arriving at Truth. Therefore before we condemn an idea because we do not understand it, let us take time to read what our ancient Brethren have told us about the ancient mysteries upon which modern Freemasonry is built; let us learn from them how they reached the great goal of improvement in Masonry and became the Master Builders and way-showers for all of us who

are now on the same path they trod. Let us first take an objective look at the minds and spirits of those great men and thinkers of the past who have traveled this same Masonic path and have received all the Light that can be perceived in any Lodge of the Builders. These men, though not all of them Master Masons in the modern sense—but true Master Builders among our ancient Brethren—attained the same kind of illumination that it is the object of Freemasonry to stimulate good men to discover for themselves. To cite but a few names of the hundreds of illumined men of whose lives we have record as we look back over the pages of human history: Confucius of China, Gautama of India, Jesus of Nazareth, Apollonius of Tyana, Francis Bacon of England, Balzac of France, Dante of Italy, Behmen of Germany, Whitman of America.

What did these men have that we have not? What qualities of mind or soul did they possess that raised them so far above and beyond other men and that set the goal and charted the path for us to follow? As we get into this phase of Masonic illumination (Light in Masonry) we shall see that these men had attained a level of consciousness that appears beyond the experience of most men and that we can hardly imagine in our most exalted moments in life. The writer has never experienced such illumination and has never personally known a man who has, but readily admits that it is desirable, attainable, and destined for each of us, *if* the Truth of the ancient teaching of the pre-existence and re-existence of the soul be admitted.

The records of the lives, teachings, and soul qualities of all these men are available to any man who wants to learn and know. Dr. Richard Maurice Bucke might have been named with those mentioned above; he experienced this inner Light himself, and he assembled in one wonderful book, *Cosmic Consciousness*, excerpts from the teachings of some fifty men and women who had arrived at varying degrees of spiritual illumination. It is clear from reading this book that, regardless of when and where such people appear on the human stage, they all say about the same things, and there is a strong thread of unity and a definite pattern of thought and spirit that runs through what

they all say about life, nature, God, man, and destiny. This unity and singleness of pattern in outward manifestation indicates a hidden source of knowledge, *a divine gnosis*, from which all true teachings emanate. Outer unity, inward universality! It is apropos to declare that modern speculative Masonry sprang from the same source, the ancient mysteries, the divine gnosis, which is as old as humanity.

What were the characteristics of mind and soul that are common to all of these men and women? They may be enumerated and described as follows:

1. When they were around thirty-five years of age, all had an experience in which they thought themselves suddenly *immersed in a flame of rose-colored light*. If that were all that happened, the phenomenon might be attributed to delusion, delirium, or hallucination, because in no instance was this Light an objective reality but in every instance was sensed inwardly and subjectively as imaged by the mind and/or soul. The Light of illumination emanated *from* them and was not shed upon them from any outward source; but it was accompanied by other phenomena of consciousness that showed that a great change had suddenly come over the mind and soul of the illuminated one.
2. At the same instant of the perception of this inner Light, these men *experienced feelings of joy, assurance, triumph, and "salvation"*; they became keenly aware of a moral exaltation and intellectual illumination. Emotionally, the happiness of such men knew no bounds; and when they wrote about this transcendent experience, they used the words "joy," "bliss," "ecstasy," "rhapsody"—feelings to which we all aspire but perhaps rarely experience to any extent, if at all. Morally and intellectually these men quite suddenly became aware of truths and ideas and powers of mind far surpassing anything they could previously have imagined and for which they were incapable to find adequate words for utterance. No language was adequate to describe what they saw and felt both "in heaven" and "on earth." Walt Whitman's description is characteristic:

When I undertake to tell the best, I find I cannot,  
 My tongue is ineffectual on its pivots,  
 My breath will not be obedient to its organs,  
 I become a dumb man.

Gautama exclaimed:

Yet, O soul supreme! knowest thou the joys of pensive thought?  
 Joys of the free and lonesome heart, the tender, gloomy heart?

Jesus, answering the question of some of his disciples who asked, "Why speakest thou in parables," replied: "Unto you it is given to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven, but to them it is not given." That seems to indicate that Jesus had an inner teaching that he gave in private to a few of his disciples. He could not attempt to reveal the hidden mysteries to those not worthy and well qualified to receive them, "because seeing they see not, and hearing they hear not, neither do they understand." This same idea of secrecy made effective by "speaking in parables," symbols, and allegories appears strongly in the Masonic Ritual. This teaching of the "kingdom of heaven," which is but another phrase for "divine gnosis," "ancient wisdom," "hidden Mysteries of Ancient Freemasonry," is of such a transcendent character that it is beyond the power of most men even to glimpse. But it is hidden in the Masonic Ritual, and he can discover and bring it to light who has the will and power to do so; to him its inexhaustible glories and riches will be revealed as he opens his mind and soul to its Light.

Dante declares: "The Glory of Him who moves everything penetrates through the Universe and shines in one part more and in another less. In the Heaven that receives most of its Light I have been, and have *seen* things which he who descends from there above neither knows how nor is able to recount."

Many more testimonies could be cited to describe the moral and spiritual exaltation of those who experienced this sudden illumination. If you are interested, read Bucke's *Cosmic Consciousness*. Now, to proceed with other characteristics of Masonic illumination:

3. These men at the time of their illumination *acquired the*

*knowledge and certainty of the presence of a soul within and of its immortality.* This sense of immortality was not something to be hoped for or believed in as a *future* event or condition; it was something already achieved in the here and now, and though they were still in a physical body, they knew for a certainty that their minds and souls were not identical with their bodies and that their souls had always existed and would survive the grave and live forever.

4. With this certainty of the presence and perpetuity of the soul came *complete loss of the fear of death.* The fear of death, where it existed at all, fell away not as a result of reasoning and logic or science but simply vanished with illumination.
5. These men at this moment *lost any sense of sin* that had existed prior to illumination. This does not mean, of course, that they were perfect, or considered themselves perfect, "even as the Father in heaven is perfect," but simply that they had ceased to have a sense of guilt; they were at one with their consciences. This is the true meaning of "atonement"; and "illumination," the possession of all the Light of Masonry, is and means the same thing as atonement; it is the final result of the great work of the Builder—to become "at one" with the Father of all, and competent to sit in the Celestial Lodge.
6. It must be noted, however, that all those who experienced this sudden illumination *were remarkable people* anyway. Their emotional, intellectual, moral, and spiritual powers greatly exceeded and excelled even those of the elite among the masses, and all were exceptionally earnest and sincere people who had spent years in search of Light on the path. They were born with the achievements and soul development of their long past. When they became thirty to thirty-five years of age, at the height of their physical and intellectual powers and *in a moment of spiritual exaltation*, they suddenly and without warning experienced subjective illumination and all the transformations of mind, intellect, and soul that accompany it. These people were not abnormal or insane, even in their mo-

ments of spiritual exaltation, in which they recorded in poetry, parable, and allegory the thoughts that they could not reveal to those who were not duly and truly prepared to receive and understand them. It is so easy for the ignorant to cry "crazy" at those who think differently from the mediocrity of the mass. The language they use appears extravagant and obscure to most of us, whose thoughts are on a lower plane of what we choose to call "reality" or "normality"; but we must remember that the thoughts they uttered had just as much validity, reality, and normality to them as any other man's thoughts have to him. Instead of brushing aside their recorded declarations as the ravings of lunatics, we should try to raise ourselves to an intellectual and spiritual level that would enable us to catch revealing glimpses of what they meant. It is this tendency of men that causes many millions to regard the teachings of Jesus of Nazareth as too farfetched and extravagant to warrant a belief in them as valid for so-called "practical men of affairs." Many professed Christians even take this same view of the practicality of the teachings of Jesus and becoming lukewarm or indifferent, make little or no progress in the Christian virtues; they regard Jesus as an impractical dreamer—to be candid about it, another name for lunatic. The Truth, however, is that we can place the fullest confidence in the validity of the teachings of Jesus and of every other great initiate and adept who has reached a stage in the development of consciousness which has been variously called "the second birth," "regeneration," "true philosophic initiation," "cosmic consciousness," or "the kingdom of heaven."

I am convinced that the illumination of these men is the same thing as the "Light," "More Light," "Further Light," and "All the Light" that Masons symbolically seek on being made Builders. We seek the Light as if it could be conferred upon us from without, little realizing that if and when we perceive the Light, it will manifest itself from within our minds and souls. We bring our Light to Masonry. Masonry can bring no Light to us until we open the windows of our minds and spirits. Masonic Light is within a man, not without. This is one of the mysteries of Masonry. This Light-within is the same things as the nirvana

of Gautama, The kingdom of God of Jesus, the cosmic consciousness of Bucke and other writers, the regeneration and philosophic initiation of the Rosicrucians, and the hieroglyphic Light and Brahmie Splendor referred to in the Masonic Ritual.

This is the Light all must ultimately experience and radiate as Builders; but since we are so far from an appreciation and understanding of its appearance and function in our own lives, it may require many lifetimes in a body before we are ready for such illumination, as is implied in the symbols and allegories of the Ritual. Every time we as Masons seek to learn more about the "hidden mysteries" of the cryptic passages of the Ritual, the power and force of the Light-within is increased, and as we learn to *apply* Masonic teachings in our own lives, the intensity of this Light-within increases until that great day will arrive when we too shall perceive that glorious illumination that our ancient Brethren experienced, as all Brethren and Fellows have done who have gone this way before us. During the preliminary stages of Masonic illumination the aspirant is not aware of the existence of this Light as it permeates his body, mind, and soul; but the time ultimately comes when its intensity is so great that his own eyes behold it and his conscious mind interprets it as the Light glorious and illuminating. The Builder then knows himself for what he is in essence and in Truth, a divine and immortal spark, a part of the Father-in-him and the Father-in-nature, the cosmic soul, God the heavenly Father. This is the "Christ-consciousness," and it is the highest form of consciousness that the mind of mortal man can conceive or imagine or express, and even here (as has been said) language fails to describe or portray its reality or its glories.

Masonry expects much of us who have put our shoulders to the Masonic wheel—so much, in fact, that most Masons believe that they are unequal to the task, and they sidestep the whole issue and remain content with the benefits of its fellowship and brotherhood, its degree work, its honors, and its charities. Far be it from the writer's intention to minimize the importance of these services to the craft and to the Masons' God, but he wishes to point out that *in the long run* this will prove to be *not enough*

to comply with the fullness of the sublime purpose of Freemasonry. If this erection of a spiritual fabric is that far-off goal toward which all are traveling, then let us pay more attention to it in the here and now and try to hasten the day when we too shall be found worthy to receive that subjective illumination that brought joy, happiness, inner peace, and security to all the great teachers, initiates, and adepts who have gone this way before us and whose lives and works we hope to emulate, someday if not now.

*This is Masonic destiny!* How long will it take to achieve it? One life? Ten lives? A hundred lives? It is up to each of us to determine how fast he wants to go toward this great goal. The Great Architect gave us the power of free will to hasten or delay the process of subduing the passions and improving ourselves in Masonry and becoming worthy and well qualified for Masonic illumination. Think what we will, say what we will, be what we will *now*, the time will ultimately come as the ages roll by when on earth and in the heavens we shall conceive the desire and develop the will to emulate those who have preceded us on the path of illumination. This is what we know as the Builder's destiny, and no true Builder can escape it.

## THIS LIFE IN A BODY

As a MASON you do not have to recognize, as an important factor in your progress in Masonry, that your soul has taken or will take other bodies on the earth-plane. If this idea is not on the trestleboard of your thinking and life, it is apparent that you are not ready to entertain it and profit by it. If you once recognize the fact that you are here to improve yourself in the Builder's arts and that your life on earth conditions and determines your life in the heavens, you will discover and use the techniques of self-development, consciously or unconsciously, minute by minute, hour by hour, day by day, year by year, until you leave your mortal body at death. If the immortality of your soul does not mean that much to you, it would matter little whether or not you as a Master Mason believed in God or immortality or in the ancient teaching of recurring births and deaths in mortal bodies. A mere passive and blind belief in immortality is not sufficient as an incentive to self-improvement on earth; one must know what is to be known about immortality before this sublime concept can have meaning and enrich one's life. One must know not only what the great teachers of humanity have said about it but what modern scientific research has found out. Thus can passive faith be sustained and verified by active knowledge and understanding which influence conduct and enrich life.

You are searching for happiness and harmony, peace and poise of mind and soul, as a predominant condition and achievement during your life on earth. Will you not continue to pursue your search when you leave your mortal body and find yourself in the heaven-worlds? Your life in the heavens, if it is eternal, as you think, can be only as active and dynamic in self-realization as your life on earth has been in preparation for it. If you know this for a fact and learn some of the techniques of self-de-

velopment while on earth, you do not need to know the truth of, or believe in, the ancient teaching of reincarnation; you will make the most of your one chance on earth and trust that your soul will be safe in eternity.

I have declared that the belief in only one incarnation on earth may discourage the earnest Builder; but may it not also be that, if the Builder knows that he has an eternity in which he may improve himself in Masonry during many incursions upon the earth plane, he *may find excuses* to procrastinate in his efforts at self-improvement? He may be inclined to think, "Oh, I have plenty of time; I can put it off for a while"; and this erroneous thinking may become as deadening and disastrous a factor in the soul's development and unfoldment as discouragement can be when one realizes how little one knows and how much there is to learn and do in one lifetime on earth. Therefore, if your belief in immortality and in only one advent in a human body does not stimulate you to want to know more and do better, there may be some question as to whether a belief in many incarnations will be a better stimulant to self-improvement in each new incursion into matter.

However, if you are consciously anxious for self-improvement in Masonry and find yourself failing to live up to the best that you can think, it should be encouraging to know that you will have additional chances in further embodiments. But if you have no working philosophy of life that is practical and dynamic toward the realization of the best that is in you, no mere passive belief in God or immortality or in the one-chance theory will suffice to awaken you to conscious efforts to make the most of your capacity and power to improve yourself in Masonry. If you believe in the one-chance doctrine and are aware of the implications involved in a belief in God and immortality, you are not stopped from achieving whatever you have capacity to achieve in one lifetime. So I repeat, forget, or ignore, if you want to, the many-chance idea and make the most of your single chance to improve yourself in Masonry.

Of course, if you take a good look at yourself and at what is going on among human beings around you, it must be obvious

to you that many men, perhaps most men, make comparatively little progress in soul development in one lifetime on earth. The weight of the world, their world, can and does fall on them with crushing force, and their cries of anguish and sorrow resound around the world. Millions upon millions of the children of God have not developed a working philosophy of life adequate to meet the challenges and adversities of life in physical bodies. Not grounded in the teachings of the masters of the ancient wisdom, no satisfactory answer comes to their agonized cries: "What have I done that this should happen to me, that I should suffer so?" The pains and distresses of life in a mortal body prompt the question, and someday in the long history of the soul they will be entitled to an answer. And if men do not find an answer while in a mortal body, they will never find it; if they do not find it during one embodiment, they must have other chances to find it in a succession of embodiments in mortal flesh. What they fail to achieve in one lifetime in a body they must achieve in other lifetimes in other bodies; they must all, somewhere on the level of time as it stretches into eternity, ultimately rise to the heights of the Master Builders of all ages who have gone this way before them. This is the esoteric teaching implied in Masonry, both ancient and modern, and this is a scientific fact which, when recognized as such, makes life on earth meaningful, purposeful, and developmental.

This teaching that the purpose of life is self-improvement is paramount and is applicable, regardless of a belief in the one-chance theory or the many-chance theory. I am prompted to add, however, that if you believe in the one-chance theory you should probably get busy right now and get prepared for that eternity during which, you say, your soul is to endure in the heavens. Have you ever considered that the past stretches back probably billions of solar years and that the future will be equally eternal? What are your plans for that eternity that you say your soul will inherit upon the death of your physical body? Millions of people appear to have no more active and purposeful plans than do the beasts of the field; what is more, they tend to ridicule anybody who does and who makes his plans known to others. It is

no wonder secrecy is enjoined in Masonry, as the art of the Builder of a spiritual fabric that appears to everyday observation and experience to take millions of years to accomplish. Life in one body on earth is short and fleeting. If you lived a thousand years on earth in a physical body, it would still be but an infinitesimal fraction of a second in the eternity of time, measured in solar years, that you will be living in your spiritual body in the heavens. Are you not a little interested in what you will be doing during the next million years? Do you not wish to make some preparation for it?

## THE BUILDER'S BLOCKS

**EVEN IF** Freemasons have reason to recoil from the deeper meanings of Masonry, they have much less reason to treat its moral teachings as lightly as many of them do. The erection of a spiritual building and the facts and circumstances of living as an immortal spiritual entity both on earth and in the heavens may seem impossible, or incredible, or vague and remote, to most members of the Craft; but how can any man escape his daily responsibility to grow in his powers to express right human relations and thus improve himself in Masonry?

It is one of the redeeming qualities of human nature in us all that, regardless of how we treat others, we still want others to like us and to treat us well. We want others to have a good opinion of us, but sometimes we give little thought to the qualities of our words and deeds upon which we must know that others will form their opinion of us. Much can be said about this matter, but suffice it to say at this point that the very best way of meriting the good will and favorable opinion of others is to treat others as we would prefer that others treat us. Do we want others to be honest in their business dealings with us? Then let us be honest in our dealings with others. Do we want others to express friendliness toward us? Then let us express friendship to others. Do we want others to be kind and companionable to us? Then let us be kind and companionable to others. That some men repay honesty with cheating, friendship with animosity, kindness with meanness, and every other good quality with its opposite is no reason for failing to express the good qualities of character that we admire, or should admire, in others.

The moment a man says, "I could improve myself and my conduct," and deliberately sets about doing better, at that very moment he sets himself on the path that leads to a better, more

abundant, and happy life. It is human and commendable to seek the approbation and appreciation of others when we are conscious of doing something good, but the inner consciousness of being good and doing right is a greater reward in itself. We should try to ascertain what is good and right and to live in accordance with our understanding of right, not mainly to secure the approbation of others but to conform to the natural requirements and approbation of conscience. Do not rely upon others for appreciation and approval, for others may fail to recognize the good that you do; but your own conscience can be trusted to appraise the doing of right at its full value. Happiness comes more from the approbation of conscience in the individual than from the approval of others for the performance of good deeds. Do not expect too much of others but expect much of yourself, and your path through life will be pleasanter and happier.

If a man becomes conscious that he could improve himself in Masonry by learning the meanings of certain words expressive of qualities of character and intellect, by recognizing that he does not express these qualities as well as he might, and finally, be it ever so little, *by changing his conduct daily* to accord with his understanding of the quality, he would make as much progress in Masonry (soul-building) from day to day as could be expected of him. For the time being he need not be concerned with the building of "that house not made with hands," because he would know that if he did his best by himself and his neighbor each day, he would be using the blocks out of which that house must be erected. True, time and labor are involved, and that is the reason why Masons are reminded that they are traveling on the level of time to an undiscovered country. Regardless of how long it may take to erect that spiritual edifice while traveling here in time and space, Freemasons may have the absolute assurance that if they use the building blocks (of character) that lie at hand from day to day, they will ultimately succeed in completing that glorious structure.

Now, what are these building blocks with which we build daily and eternally our ultimate spiritual fabric? Simply, *words* and *deeds* to express them. The English language is rich in words

expressive of qualities of mind and character. "In the beginning was the Word," and the Word is the point of beginning of improvement in Masonry, the Builder's art. The Mason who wants to improve himself in the Builder's art must begin with the meanings of the words that describe the different phases and processes of improvement. If he learns the meaning of these words, he is enabled to evaluate his own shortcomings and his own relative position on the path of improvement. Active thinking must always precede action, and modification of conduct toward himself and others will ultimately follow.

Take one illustration at this point. The word "integrity" represents one of the great purposes of Masonry. The more a Mason knows about the meanings of this *one* word (to say nothing of many others), the easier it will be to evaluate the extent to which his character and conduct express the qualities described by the word. And if he finds that he could improve his conduct with respect to this word, he could go about it deliberately to change for the better, and so improve himself in Masonry. No man can have more integrity unless he is stimulated to think that he needs to have more. One opposite of "integrity" is "viciousness," which represents the lowest development, even as "integrity" represents the highest development of man's character. There is a long and hard road, or way, between them in the life of any soul on earth. Every Mason who is interested in self-development must be stimulated to think about the meanings of this word as it applies to him and his happiness and progress, to recognize where he is on this hard road, and to see what he can do to build a character that will better express and manifest the wonderful Masonic word "integrity."

The English language contains scores of such abstract "character words," as they may be called; but if a Mason would learn the meanings of just ten of the most common of them that appear in the Ritual of the first three degrees, he would possess a liberal education in character-building. If he consciously applied the meanings to modify his conduct from day to day, he would not only improve himself in the Builder's art but would endear himself to most of his associates, Brothers, and Com-

panions; and he would secure the approbation of his conscience and a happy frame of mind.

The meanings of ten such words (or groups of synonyms) and their opposites are therefore given here to help Masons evaluate the relative position of their own characters on the scale, or road, or level of time, that represents their progress in the Builder's art. It is necessary to start with the opposite of every good character, or quality of mind, because the human nature of every one of us is at a stage of development somewhere between low and high. Low development above the level of the beast is Masonically symbolized by the Rough Ashlar, "a stone in its rude and natural state, as taken from the quarry," unshapen, uncut, and unpolished; "by it we are reminded of that rude and imperfect state which is ours by nature." The highest development is Masonically symbolized by the "Perfect Ashlar," which is one "prepared by the workmen," *shaped by conscious design* and polished to high and beautiful brilliance; by it "we are reminded of that state of perfection at which we hope to arrive by *education, our own endeavors, and the blessing of deity.*"

Let every thoughtful Mason pause to consider where he is on the steps, scale, or ladder between the state of the Rough Ashlar and of the Perfect Ashlar of human development in each of the ten character-building blocks defined in this chapter. Some of all generations of men have already attained development much beyond the Rough Ashlar stage of each of these building blocks of a Mason; even so, they may have a long way to travel before they arrive at the stage of the Perfect Ashlar in any or all of these character qualities. So the level of time stretches back perhaps through eons of time during which each of us has made himself what he is in character and ability, and it will also stretch forward into the future perhaps through eons of time before the "divine traveler" will be able to express the fullness and best of each quality. Hiram Abiff is the legendary symbol of the true initiate who expressed the fullness of these qualities of mind and soul, and he was the symbol of the Perfect Ashlar, who is our great exemplar and way-shower whom we,

as Builders, are enjoined to emulate by using the same blocks he used to build his spiritual house. Hiram Abiff is the *symbol* of the "stone which the builders rejected," but which shall become "the head of the corner" in all our lives as we manifest Masonic illumination and soul regeneration through the acquisition of Christic power.

It is indeed a long, long way that most of us have yet to travel; but each of us has already traveled a considerable distance upon it and is destined to travel a still greater distance in both time and eternity. There are few men who are so depraved, so ignorant, so deep in spiritual darkness, that they exhibit *all* the lowest traits of the Rough Ashlar. Most men have some redeeming qualities and show that they have made some progress on time's level; and there are many men and women who have made a great deal of progress in some or all of these qualities. The perfections they have attained point the way for themselves and the rest of us and encourage us to believe that what they have achieved we too can, and some day will, achieve. But no one needs to be fully convinced that this is a valid hope for all humanity in order that he may make a little progress each day in manifesting the qualities of character that he recognizes as meaningful to him.

Therefore no matter how many lifetimes in a body we may have, whether one or many, any man or Mason can say at any time in the long history of his soul: "What can I do *now* from day to day to improve myself in the various qualities of character that are represented by the character words emphasized in the Masonic Ritual? Masonry asks me where I came from, what I came here to do, and where I am going, but I know that I can not answer these questions intelligently unless I take the little steps every day to build the fabric of my character by consciously evaluating my own defects and striving to correct them. Then, perhaps, as my mind expands, my insight increases, and my conduct becomes better, the correct answers to these questions will be partly revealed. At this moment, however, it appears that the ultimate goal of Masonry is lost in the mazes of metaphysical speculation where the certainties of science cannot

penetrate; but I do recognize that the realities of the present include a loyalty of thinking and action to the moral principles of Masonry insofar as they represent or emphasize my duty to improve myself daily in the Builder's arts."

Let's look at the ten groups of Masonic words that may be called "the Builder's blocks"—"those principles of morality which lay the foundations upon which to build a righteous life." The average mind, regretfully to say, slides over these words without ascribing much meaning to them. It should be pointed out that the achievement of moral superiority provides only the "foundations" of good character; the superstructure is that form of soul development and regeneration which comes when the Builder discovers and brings to light the true science of the Builder and makes it effective in his own life and living.

In order to get a clearer idea of the long way between the status of the Rough Ashlar and the Perfect Ashlar of human development in each of the ten qualities, the words representing low development appear at the left of those representing high, or perfect, development, which appear on the right. Imagine a line between them symbolizing the level of time that stretches forward into eternity, during which you will live always as an individual immortal soul and be responsible for your continuous moral development. Brief definitions will be given of all of these words, and some will be followed by comments based upon the Ritual and by quotations from the *Monitor* (New York State)—all hopefully designed to give them greater force and meaning to the reader.

- |                        |          |             |
|------------------------|----------|-------------|
| 1. Hate .....          | (a)..... | Love        |
| Malevolence .....      | (b)..... | Benevolence |
| Uncharitableness ..... | (c)..... | Charity     |

HATE: thorough dislike

LOVE: strong feeling of affection, kindness, toward others, sympathy, friendship

MALEVOLENCE: a form of hatred; wishing evil or bent on injuring others

**BENEVOLENCE:** the desire to do good; an act of kindness; good wishes for the welfare of others

**UNCHARITABLENESS:** lack of generosity toward the needy, or harsh in judgment of others; utterly selfish and greedy

**CHARITY:** generosity toward others in need; a disposition to think well of others or to be lenient with the faults of others

Billions of words have been spoken since man became a thinking and reasoning creature, and have been recorded since the invention of a written language and printing, to prove that high development in these virtues makes for the highest happiness, harmony, and adjustment in all human affairs. If men could be redeemed by simply hearing the words of right thinking and action, the race would have risen long before this generation to much higher levels of righteousness than it exhibits today. But apparently it takes more than merely hearing the word "Truth" to cause most men to obey its mandates and live according to divine laws. Whether we understand it or not, it appears that men must reap in sickness and sorrow, in frustration and disappointment, in weakness and death, where they sow in *hatred*, *malevolence*, and *uncharitableness*. In other words, men seem to respond more quickly, figuratively, to a "rap on the head" or a "kick in the pants" than they do to the auditory perception of the moral precepts of Masonry. I do not think that you really want it that way in your lives; you do not like to be "kicked around" or to suffer the "slings and arrows of an outrageous fortune"; but this will be your "fate" until you learn by experience or by precept that these virtues represent the highest development, the Perfect Ashlar, of human character. For this purpose you are traveling on the level of time to that undiscovered country of moral excellence envisioned by the superb Ritual as the destiny of all men.

The Masonic Ritual is full of the ideas indicating a Mason's duty to his neighbor. To take just a few from the *Monitor*: "By the exercise of Brotherly Love, we are taught to regard the hu-

man race as one family, the high, the low, the rich, the poor, who, created by one Almighty Parent and inhabiting the same planet, *should* aid, support and protect one another. . . . Universal benevolence you are always to inculcate. . . . A Mason's charity *should* extend beyond the grave through the boundless realms of Eternity." Judge for yourselves how far from these ideals of human conduct we are now and how far we must travel to make them a reality in our thinking and conduct.

2. Disunity ..... Unity

DISUNITY: a state of separation or disunion; want of unity; lack of harmony and co-operation

UNITY: harmony, agreement, uniformity; a complex whole; a systematic totality

In Masonry, this fine quality of human character is probably best expressed by the following from the *Monitor*: "The cement of brotherly love and affection . . . *unites* us into one sacred band or society of friends and brothers amongst whom no contention should ever exist save that noble contention, or rather emulation, of who best can work and best agree."

But it must be pointed out that this *unity* among the Brethren is not obtained by welding all the Brethren into one intellectual and spiritual pattern laid down as an authoritarian teaching. Every Brother is left free to develop his own trestleboard of life and living within the framework of the landmarks of the Craft; and this perfect liberty of thought is not intended, and it does not need, to interfere in any way with such a feeling of a common purpose, such a sense of human brotherhood, as would encourage men to emulate those who "best can work and best agree."

3. Immorality .....(a).....Morality  
 Evil .....(b).....Goodness  
 Vice .....(c).....Virtue  
 Impurity .....(d).....Purity

**IMMORALITY:** wickedness, depravity, a low expression of the human passions

**MORALITY:** the teaching or practice of the duties of life; a high expression of human feeling

**EVIL:** sinfulness, wrongdoing

**GOODNESS:** uprightness, benevolence, chastity, purity, integrity, virtue, rectitude, worth, kindness

**VICE:** any debasing practice or habit

**VIRTUE:** strength, merit, moral excellence, charity

**IMPURITY:** state of being morally unclean

**PURITY:** innocence, virtue, freedom from evil or improper motives

From their definitions it is apparent that these two groups of words are synonymous and do not require further definition. However, it is hoped that a definition of each word with its opposite (antonym) may be of greater help to the reader.

There are many allusions in the Ritual that enjoin Masons to maintain control of the unruly passions which afflict men in a "crude and natural state" but which must be subdued if men are to rise "by education, our own endeavors and the blessing of Deity" to the status of the Perfect Ashlar of human development. Among the many such allusions one is outstanding: the apron presentation, which declares (see *Monitor*) "that the Lamb-skin or White Leather Apron is an emblem of innocence and the badge of a Mason" and which enjoins the newly-made Brother to "let its pure and spotless surface be to you an ever-present reminder of a purity of life and rectitude of conduct, a never-ending argument for nobler deeds, for higher thoughts, for greater achievements." Wonderful words, are they not? Shall we ignore them, or try to apply them consciously to our own problems?

4. Infidelity .....(a).....Fidelity  
 Disobedience .....(b).....Obedience

**INFIDELITY:** disbelief in some religion; breach of trust; disloyalty

**FIDELITY:** faithfulness; careful regard for duty; reliability, allegiance, loyalty, devotion

**DISOBEDIENCE:** failure to comply with orders or commands; disregard of the laws of God or man

**OBEDIENCE:** yielding willingly to command or control of others; submission to authority or law; dutifulness

There can be no question that Masonry inculcates fidelity and obedience. No good Mason betrays the trust that has been reposed in him when he was made a Mason; he is faithful to himself, his country, and his God.

5. Error .....(a).....Truth  
Ignorance .....(b).....Wisdom

**ERROR:** false belief, wrong opinion, departure from duty, moral fault, sin

**TRUTH:** according to fact, real and actual, rightness, godliness, reality, genuineness

**IGNORANCE:** uneducated, uninformed, lack of knowledge

**WISDOM:** faculty of forming sound judgments; knowledge digested by thought; learning, erudition

Real Masonry involves an active search for the Word of Truth as the means of self-improvement and the acquisition of the wisdom required to make such Truth effective in the life of the Builder. How many more times will you have to be born in a body before you begin in real earnest to learn the deeper Truth concerning Masonry? How far is it from ignorance, error, and half-truth to fuller truth and wisdom? A long, long way, because the fullness of Truth seems never revealed; for as we ascertain more Truth (Light in Masonry) concerning any particular phase or phenomenon in life or nature, our minds sense the greater possibility and scope of Truth, until we learn to declare: "Truth is infinite." But the capacity of mind and

spirit to ascertain Truth is also infinite; and the alert mind is always expanding its capacity for a larger encompassment of Truth in all the worlds.

Most Masons today are more or less indifferent to an active pursuit of the Truth in Masonry. This fact has been mentioned with regret many times in this volume, which is a plea to the Brethren to take Masonry more seriously and to use their minds and talents to make the most of their opportunity to get revealing glimpses of Masonic Light and to improve their working knowledge of the Truths of the Builder.

The *New York State Monitor* declares: "Truth is a Divine Attribute and the foundation of every virtue. To be good and true is the first lesson we are taught in Masonry."

6. Cowardice .....Fortitude

COWARDICE: want of courage, faint-heartedness, dishonorable fear, timidity, baseness

FORTITUDE: spiritual strength to endure suffering or adversity with courage, resolution, bravery

Fortitude is indeed a truly distinguished Masonic cardinal virtue. It teaches us that we make greater progress through the labyrinths of life if we can summon the mental and spiritual strength to meet life's trials, sorrows, and suffering with patience and courage. The man who can meet adversity with a smile has won one of the greatest of all victories. If men deliberately set about it with determined will, many adversities could be overcome, many sufferings ameliorated or eliminated. "Fortitude is that noble and steadfast purpose of the mind, whereby we are enabled to undergo any pain, peril or danger."

7. Imprudence .....(a).....Prudence

Talkativeness .....(b).....Silence

Carelessness .....(c).....Caution

Indiscretion .....(d).....Secrecy

IMPRUDENCE: wanting in caution or discretion; carelessness of consequences; lacking in foresight

PRUDENCE: quality of being discreet, careful, or cautious

**TALKATIVENESS:** given to much speaking; chattering; gossipy

**SILENCE:** state of keeping still or mute; deliberate abstinence from speech

**CARELESSNESS:** recklessness; without due consideration

**CAUTION:** heedfulness; care in avoiding risk or peril

**INDISCRETION:** rashness; a thoughtless and unwise act

**SECRECY:** ability to keep things to one's self; fidelity in keeping secrets

The words in each of these groups of four are synonymous, and definitions are given in order to bring out the meanings. As Masons we are enjoined to weigh their meanings carefully; and if we find ourselves lacking in those listed at the right, we should endeavor to build our mental powers to the heights attainable by the Perfect Ashlar. "Prudence" includes "silence," "secrecy," and "caution" and "teaches us to regulate our lives and actions agreeably to the dictates of reason and is that habit by which we wisely judge and determine all things relative to our present, as well as to our future, happiness."

8. Gluttony, drunkenness .....Temperance

**GLUTTONY:** the act or habit of eating to excess

**DRUNKENNESS:** the act or habit of drinking intoxicating beverages to excess

**TEMPERANCE:** moderation; avoidance of extremes; moderation or abstinence in the use of intoxicating beverages or in eating; self-restraint in conduct, in expression, in pleasures

"Temperance," according to Masonic teaching, "is that due restraint upon the passions which renders the body tame and governable and frees the mind from the allurements of vice. This virtue should be your constant practice, as you are thereby taught to avoid excess and the contracting of any licentious or vicious habit, the indulgence of which might lead you away

from the path of righteousness and cause you also to disclose those secrets which you have promised to conceal.”

9. Injustice .....Justice

**INJUSTICE:** the quality of being unfair; disregard of another's rights; injury; wrong

**JUSTICE:** the principle or practice of dealing uprightly and equitably with others; rectitude; integrity; absolute fairness

“Justice is that standard which enables us to render to every man his due without distinction. This virtue is not only consistent with Divine and human Law, but is the very cement and support of society.”

10. Irreverence, profanity .....Reverence

**IRREVERENCE:** lack of respect or veneration toward sacred things; disrespectful act or speech; contempt for holy things.

**PROFANITY:** swearing; using the name of the Deity or the Saviour in vain

**REVERENCE:** deep respect together with awe and affection; veneration; respect and honor for the names of God and of Jesus Christ

If there is one thing in Masonry that is more mandatory than another, it is the inculcation of reverence for God; but because of associations and habits developed in secular life, too many Masons use profanity—a sin of low development in the Rough Ashlar stage of progression. Masonry does not mention the name of Jesus Christ as an object of veneration or reverence; but our Great Light, as the source of sacred things, contains the commandment “Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain.” This applies with equal force to Jesus Christ. The God of Masonry is the Great Architect of the Universe, for whom our love and respect should be too

deep for a profane and light use of His sacred name. The *Monitor* declares that "the Mason who acknowledges God in the Lodge-room and ignores or blasphemes Him out of it *sins and violates his oath.*" The utmost of reverence for God is stressed in the Middle Chamber Lecture; and the Charge to an Entered Apprentice (see *Monitor*) includes the following admonition: "Your Masonry must be proven by your real attitude toward our Supreme Grand Master. The tongue which takes the obligation of the Mason should not demean the Mason's God."

## PERSONAL TESTIMONY

I, AND I ALONE, am responsible for my own interpretations of Masonic teachings. Masonry does not proclaim any particular techniques whereby the Builder shall construct his spiritual edifice. The earnest Builder will find, develop, and apply his own techniques. So far as I know, there is no evidence that Masonry proclaims the concept of pre-existence and re-existence of the soul in mortal bodies. If I declare that, to me, the idea of repeated comings and goings, births and deaths, is *implied* in the teachings and philosophy of Masonry, that is the one great interpretation that enters into *my own* trestleboard and that, as I understand life and its mysteries, throws revealing light upon some of the seemingly extravagant, esoteric, and far-fetched passages of the Masonic Ritual. Sometime in the long development of each earnest and faithful builder's soul, he will prove the truth or falsity of this teaching for himself.

Logic teaches us "how to think and reason with propriety"; and this is what I have attempted to do in this book: "thought and reasoned with propriety" in trying to understand what the Ritual seeks to teach. I do not claim that I have any direct or scientific evidence of the truth of re-existence in mortal bodies beyond the evidence of logic and reason and beyond what most of the greater thinkers and wise men of the past have proclaimed—although several modern experimenters and writers, employing scientific methods of investigation and research, claim to have direct and scientific evidence of the immortality of the soul and recurring births and deaths, and their conclusions are available to any person who wants to know the truth regarding them (see Chapter XII).

If the sublime aims of Freemasonry were attainable by the members of the Craft in any one lifetime in a body, or if I could know that they could be attained by the immortal soul

in eternal life, I could logically conclude that there would be no need for a thousand lifetimes in a body, or even one lifetime. But I believe I know that, here and now, we are in character and aptitudes what we have achieved in past bodies; that we have come here in this body to build a better character, that is, to improve ourselves in Masonry; that when we leave this body we still are what we have achieved and no more; and that therefore we need to come back again into the Lodge of the body for further instruction, for further Light and achievement in character-building. The logic of this, it seems to me, is inescapable if we are to understand the symbolism of the Ritual and the enigmas of life on this earth.

At this stage of my thinking and feeling, the concept of an eternal life in some vague heaven of rest and inactivity, with its "golden streets" and "heavenly music," does not offer an entirely agreeable and reasonable prospect to my mind; it lacks vitality and the immediacy of dynamic action and achievement. If a million years have elapsed in the eternity of the past during which my soul has existed as an individualized identity, and/or if a million more years of heaven life are to come and go, during which I am to continue to achieve my divine destiny, I ask, "Why did I have to come here at all, just to spend a few years, an infinitesimal fraction of a second between the eternities, in a mortal body in this so-called 'Vale of Tears'?" Why come here at all to start a process that cannot possibly be completed in one lifetime? Why come here to improve myself in Masonry, if during the eternity that I existed in the past and that I will exist in the future I have been and will always be improving myself in Masonry? It must be understood and admitted that, as a matter of both experience and logic, the purpose of living in a body is self-improvement to the heights attained by the great teachers and wise men of all the ages, including Jesus of Nazareth. That is why we take a body and that is the reason we are endowed with powers to beget children, so as to enable others to take similar bodies for the same divine purpose.

If this is not the truth, and if heaven is the only condition of the soul in which self-improvement is possible, why did

I not remain where I was, in whatever condition I was? If I could make greater progress in heaven, why not remain there, in that condition forever, especially since that is said to be our Masonic haven or destiny anyway? And especially since life on earth is so full of tribulation for millions of souls?

Furthermore, if this is not the Truth, what meaning can life in a physical body have? Just to live like a vegetable or animal for a few fleeting years does not enable the individual to fulfill his inner longings or his Masonic destiny. Why come to earth to suffer in a physical body? Even if men are but a "little higher than the apes," there is in them all a conscious and/or unconscious "force" or power that makes for self-development, and it is this eternal Quest for Truth and the great work of applying it toward self-development that give meaning to life. If it were not for the need to learn the lessons of life in a physical body, we would not come here even once; and that same necessity that brought us here *once* has brought us here many times before this advent and will bring us here many times after this exit.

To me there is such a thing as a "science of the soul," just as there is a science of physics or chemistry. Just as there are laws and principles that govern the matter of the physical world, so there are equally scientific and similar laws that govern the forces of the psychic world—the world of soul and spirit, whatever it is. As from birth and childhood we learn how to act in harmony with the law of universal gravitation, the law of compensation, the laws governing heat and light, the change of seasons, the principles of health and nutrition—all the laws of nature—so we must and ultimately will learn to recognize and adjust ourselves to the laws of the spiritual realm. We can no more escape the necessity to obey, even by the trial-and-error method of living, the laws governing our spiritual nature than we can the laws governing our physical nature. "As above, so below," and "as below, so above!"

We have freedom to think and act within the bounds of nature and nature's laws as they apply both to the physical and to the psychic worlds. Life in a physical body is a continu-

ing process of adjustment to nature, a never-never-ending process of recognizing and applying the laws of all the worlds in one's own mortal and immortal existence. Each individual makes such progress as he can within the limitations of his past achievement, and he is free to become one of the Sons of God as rapidly as he desires and can master the lessons of living in mortal bodies. The children of God learn slowly, like the children of men. The lessons of life have to be repeated again and again.

But no one lifetime in a body is adequate for the achievement of all that is involved in becoming a Son of God. It has taken many lifetimes in a body to develop what powers we have to date, and it will require many more lifetimes to achieve all that we are destined to learn, do, and become. We know from experience that we have made and could make even more progress in the body we have now; but for the most part, I think, those who write about the conditions of life in an etheric or spiritual body are agreed that the heaven-world is not the main locale for spiritual progress. If it were, there would be little point in leaving it for the limitations of earth life, and incarnation and reincarnation would not be necessary. I therefore come back to the facts of life as we experience them in a physical body. We *know* that we can make as much progress as we wish to make in a physical body, and that therefore we should make the best of our present opportunity for self-development.

The great thinkers and masters of the past have declared that we reap as we sow in all the worlds. I gather from reading their pronouncements that the heaven life is devoted largely to the "reaping" process after the "sowing" in the physical world. In the heaven-world, they say, we stand in court before the only judge who can help us rectify the sins, errors, and wrongs we have committed while in the body; and that just judge is *our own soul*. In mortal life the soul of man manifests as that "*still small voice of conscience*"; but in the heaven-world after we are divested of the gross body through which it must act while on earth the still small voice of conscience becomes

the eloquent, inexorable though utterly just judge who teaches us what we did that was wrong, if we do not already know, and decrees what payments we must make to balance the account and clear the way for the Soul's progress and development toward its divine destiny.

At this stage in my soul's progress, I therefore declare that I want to come back again in a new body, for I know that—

1. I can improve upon the appearance and conditions of a body, its health and vitality;
2. I can make it, and the mind that functions in it, a better instrument and opportunity for self-development—the “improve myself in Masonry” phase of life;
3. I can make a better contribution to universal welfare and perform a better service to God and humanity.

To me it seems that it would be more interesting and developmental to enter a new body and perform services to mankind than to spend an eternity in the heavens, *unless* indeed the heavens offered equal opportunity to help humanity in its efforts at self-improvement. There is undoubtedly much constructive service a soul can perform, whether in the heavens or on earth; and so, since I find earth life pleasant and profitable as an opportunity to improve myself in Masonry and perform services to mankind, I shall probably in due time after this exit take a new body and continue the process of improvement in the Builder's arts and in the service of God and humanity.

I speak merely for myself. My purpose in bringing my personal philosophy to the attention of Masons and others is to bring encouragement to the members of the Craft who may wonder why the makers of our Ritual incorporated and secreted in it the ancient wisdom for future generations to discover and bring to light, and to apply and manifest in their own lives. What I think may or may not be important to a reader. The ideas set forth here are not important because *I* gave expression to them. If they are significant and meaningful to any reader, they are because they logically explain some of the mysteries

of life and because they have been enunciated by every great teacher who has ever been sent to humanity as a way-shower and divine messenger. What I have said is not *my* message, but the message of the perfected Brethren who sit in the Celestial Lodge and represent the will of the Father. I am "inspired" to give expression to this divine message in the hope that more Masons will become actively interested in it and be stimulated to seek out its hidden meanings and so to put spiritual content into the outer forms of the Ritual.

I must declare also that I have no direct commission from or conscious connection with any of these ancient masters and Brethren—that I am aware of. I claim no authority whatsoever. What I have said is but a summary of what I have read and an expression of my own mental and spiritual reaction to it. It may be that I am foolish to think that it will have any appeal to the majority of the members of the Order; but if a few can read it with appreciation, the work will prove worth while. No thinking Mason can interpret the Masonic Ritual without reference to what the great Master Masons of the past have said as to the origin, purpose, and destiny of man as a created being. So never mind me as a messenger; I am not important. But search out, study, and apply the message; *that is important!*

## CONCLUSION: CARPE DIEM

THE PURPOSE of this book is not to induce anybody to accept without question any idea or logic presented by the writer, who asks only that the reader study the facts insofar as they appear in the records and secret teachings that have come down to us from ancient times, and that he spend more time in analyzing and organizing these facts into conclusions that are valid to him. Let him ignore everything, reject everything, if he wishes; but in view of the quantity of philosophic literature dealing with Speculative Masonry and the spiritual competency of the ancient masters and modern commentators, it would appear arbitrary and capricious for any man to want to remain in darkness even while the great lights were directing their illuminating rays upon him. It is pitiful and tragic that so many men seem to prefer darkness and ignorance to Light and knowledge; this pessimism has given rise to the pithy observation that "fools deride, philosophers investigate." While we know that no true Mason derides Masonry, yet we could wish that more Masons would start being philosophers.

The writer knows that the Masonic reader should not and will not take what he has said "on authority"; on the other hand, he hopes that the reader will not dismiss it summarily as ravings but will read what others through the centuries have written, and above all do his own thinking and *try to understand*. All the writer claims is that what he has written here appears logical and right to him; but it may not, probably will not, be as logical to anybody else. The whole purpose is to get a case before Masonic readers, hoping that, if they will devote more time to reading and thinking about the ancient teachings, the answers or partial answers to many of the enigmas, mysteries, and problems of life may arise in their thinking minds and that thereby more men and Masons may be helped up the ladder of Masonic achievement.

Interpretations vary with the background of reading, study, thinking, experience, and mental and spiritual capacity of the individual. I never have experienced, and I do not know that there could be, a complete revelation of Truth, either in the Masonic Ritual itself or in any interpretation of its mysteries or in the ancient mysteries upon which modern Masonry is based. All that any member of the Craft can do at any stage of his development in spiritual wisdom is to seek to know more and as much as he is capable of learning—this for the sake of his own satisfaction on earth and the good of his immortal soul on the level of time and eternity.

The trouble with most of us is that we do not exhaust our individual potential to know more about Masonry. It should offer a greater challenge to all of us to learn as much about it as possible in a lifetime. True, the conscious or unconscious Quest of the soul will always be to seek more Light; and if at any time in the life of the eternal soul a man has learned all he is capable of perceiving, he need not be disappointed because he cannot at the moment penetrate further behind the veils that hide the Truth. He will not condemn himself, nor will his Brethren condemn him, if he has done his best. As an immortal soul in time and eternity he will continue his great Quest, and what he cannot understand *now* will ultimately be revealed as he moves along the path of Masonic illumination and achievement and becomes worthy to receive the divine revelation. Each of us, regardless of how much he may know about the Builder's art, can always learn more and thus keep his mind and spirit open to new Truth. Thus never in the long history of his soul's life on earth or in the heavens does he stop growing, developing, and unfolding the inner potencies of being.

The haven, the ultimate goal, of that great Quest is always hidden from his aspiring gaze by the veils that shut out an eternal future. How can he, as a mortal mind, know the undiscovered Truth that the future will reveal in all its glories? As a "divine wanderer" from the Celestial Lodge, he knows in his heart and mind only what he has learned in the past, the eternal past, which stretches from this present moment

backward into unremembered eons of time. What he knows and learns in the present will be a base, or springboard, from which he will project his future progress in the Builder's art. *This is eternal Truth!* The fullness, the richness, the glories of the ultimate scene need not, indeed cannot, be mentally and morally encompassed now for any of us. The temple of our bodies, minds, and spirits must be completed *and dedicated* before we can be worthy and well qualified to receive the Master's Word, enter its Sanctum Sanctorum, and be entitled to Master's Wages while traveling in foreign lands. Seek not to seize the glories of heaven before you have mastered the mysteries of earth and the problems of living in a human body! Indeed, the way to Masonic illumination and the manifestation, the unfoldment, of soul regeneration (the so-called "second birth") will require all the power of will, determination, perseverance, and the exercise of all the faith and enthusiasm that we can bring to the successful pursuit of our Quest. We shall need all the integrity, fidelity, and courage of our illustrious Grand Master Hiram Abiff, who died rather than reveal, or attempt to reveal, the secret science of the Builder to any who had not been found worthy to receive it.

Therefore do not despair of your power to pursue the Quest; do not hope for the fullness of revelation all at once. Seek to discern a little Light clearly; this is the way to More Light and ultimately to All the Light of Masonic Truth. The ruffians of our frail human nature may prompt us to want to seize upon more Masonic Truth than we are worthy and well qualified to receive; but we should know that we *cannot* and *will not* receive it until we have taken the necessary preliminary steps on the way, and our temple is completed and *dedicated*.

So courage, Brother! Regardless of where you are on the path of Masonic achievement, look up with faith, hope, perseverance, and a will to pursue the great Quest *consciously* to the limit of your ability. When the hand of death strikes, as it will again and again down through the millennia of the future, each such time you will be able to say: "I have done my best according to the Light I had and the Truth I learned. I shall

not cease to pursue the Quest until my weary feet shall have come to the end of their toilsome journey, and I shall have reached 'that undiscovered country from whose bourne no traveler returns' and have *earned* the right to sit in the Celestial Lodge Above with the Brethren who have themselves thus worked and won and preceded me on the path of Masonic illumination and true initiation into the mysteries of God. And may the power and help of God the Father sustain me in this great work!"

This is the great work of each and all of us; this is the grand goal toward which we strive with strong and persistent will. But the consummation of this great work, inevitable and destined though it be for each of us, is not the achievement of one lifetime but of many. It is the long-term objective of all lifetimes. The scope of our change, growth, unfoldment, transformation, and illumination runs into eternity; it is a program of the ages in which one lifetime is but a single step toward the far-off goal. Thus every soul fits into the cosmic plan and through time and eternity works its divine way back into the presence of the Mason's God as one of the Sons of God and co-workers with Him to help humanity on earth and in the heavens.

This program of self-development on earth and in the heavens is quite unreal to most of us now. Very few of us are even aware of its Divine imperatives. Life as we know it on earth seems vastly more real and compelling. We are under the habits and routines of living in a physical body, the joys and sorrows, the pleasures and pains, the fulfillments and frustrations, bondage to and conquest of the passions, the struggle to live and the enjoyments of living. Our homes, our families, our possessions, our jobs, our thoughts, interests, amusements, our associations—all these assume the shape of reality and occupy our minds to the exclusion of the more enduring values and purposes of life. Indeed, in these everyday attitudes and experiences are the real purposes of life *unconsciously* fulfilled. Each day brings its infinitesimal increments to the totality of what we are in character and faculty at any one time. But such unconscious

learning and achievements are slow and halting, a sort of groping in the dark, with many a forward and backward step, with many a sense of defeat, frustration, and inferiority, with many a "sin" and payment for sin, with few feelings of exaltation and victory. Sooner or later as time stretches into eternity we shall learn how to step up the tempo of achievement by becoming aware that we could make more rapid progress by *conscious* effort to improve ourselves in Masonry. We come face to face with the problems of living every day, and they seem more pressing and real than the distant goal set for us by the great thinkers, saviors, initiates, and philosophers of the past, who knew the purposes and plans of the Great Architect as they apply to man and nature in an ordered and harmonious Universe.

For this reason, *this day, and each day* as it comes, is of the greatest importance to us. As the eternity of the future unfolds day by day, so the steps to progress and fulfillments of the abiding purposes of life must be taken *day by day*. It would perhaps be better if each of us *could* think in terms of the cosmic objective of life and being; but probably not one in a million people on this earth has been vouchsafed a vision of the glories of God, the splendorous cosmic scope of the divine plan and the certitudes and beatitudes of each person's position and relations in this plan. It is perhaps sufficient for the time being to know that each of us is now in a body not mainly to obtain a preview of the Celestial Lodge Above but to prove what kind of man and Mason he is, from day to day.

So if we cannot now envision the glory and beauty of the universal plan and the reality of our individual position and relations in it, let us try to find out what is best for us to think and do each day so that profitable and beneficial experiences can predominate over frustrations, sorrows, and disappointments, and so that we can realize and evaluate the reasons and purposes of all our experiences. If we can be somewhat successful at this daily effort to profit by our experiences, we shall not need to be greatly concerned about the cosmic or long-term purpose of life. The future will take care of itself, if we learn how to profit most by the present. If we can learn how to make /

the most and best of each day, the sum of all days as they come from the future and recede into the past will witness the fulfillment of the great work and ultimate purpose of life on earth and in the heavens.

So, Brethren, let us—

Look to this day, for it is Life—  
The very Life of Life!  
In its brief course lie all the verities  
And Realities of your Existence:  
The Bliss of Growth,  
The Glory of Action,  
The Splendor of Beauty;  
For yesterday is but a Dream,  
And tomorrow is only a Vision;  
But today well-lived  
Makes every yesterday a Dream of Happiness  
And every tomorrow a Vision of Hope.  
*Look well, therefore, to this day.*

*(“The Salvation of the Dawn,”  
from the Sanscrit)*

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