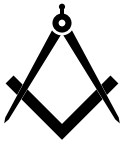
The Religion of Masonry

Joseph Fort Newton



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American Freemasons

The Religion of Masonry

An Interpretation

Joseph Fort Newton

Creeds arise, have their day and pass; but Masonry remains.
—Sir John Cockburn

With an introduction by
John V. Piccone

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American Freemasons

The Religion of Masonry: An Interpretation
Joseph Fort Newton

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To

W. B. Newton,

My Brother

In the Home and in the Lodge,

With

Love and Honor.

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Editor's Introduction

Joseph Fort Newton (1876–1950) was a minister by calling and a Freemason by conviction, and much of his writing is an attempt to say how the two belong together. He was raised a Master Mason in Friendship Lodge No. 7 at Dixon, Illinois, in 1902. For the Grand Lodge of Iowa he wrote *The Builders* (1914), the history of the Craft for which he is still best known, and in January 1915 he became the first editor of *The Builder*, the journal of the National Masonic Research Society. When this book appeared he was minister of the Memorial Church of St. Paul at Overbrook, Philadelphia, where he signed its foreword, and editor of *The Master Mason*, the magazine of the Masonic Service Association of the United States. The Association published *The Religion of Masonry* at Washington in 1927. At least one chapter, "The Builders," had first appeared in its magazine.

The book asks a question every lodge meets sooner or later: is Masonry a religion, and if it is not, what is its relation to religion? Newton begins by surveying the answers given in his day. Grand lodges in English-speaking countries required faith in God, the German and Scandinavian grand lodges required a Christian profession, and French and Belgian Masonry required neither. Among Masons themselves he found some who saw the Craft as a purely social and charitable society, some who called it "the handmaid of religion," and critics who treated it as a rival church. His own answer is that Masonry is "not *a* religion but Religion—not a church but a worship, in which men of all religions may unite." By religion he means less a creed than a bond: the tie that unites a man to God, to his fellow men, and within himself. Seven chapters then take up that bond, the Lodge as builders, faith in God as the corner stone, the Bible on the Altar, geometry as an image of moral law, the Temple of Brotherhood, and the hope of immortality, which he calls the last landmark.

Three cautions will help the modern reader. First, Newton's use of the word *religion* is broader than the language of grand lodges today. The United Grand Lodge of England's statement on Freemasonry and religion, approved in 1962 and confirmed in 1985, begins: "Freemasonry is not a religion, nor is it a substitute for religion." Newton does not contradict it, since he too denies that Masonry is a church or a creed, but his book should be read in the sense he gives the word. Second, his history of the Craft's religious outlook, from the Catholic masons of the cathedral age to the Protestant Old Charges and the Constitutions of 1723, is a broad sketch of the kind written in the 1920s, and later historians have drawn a more careful and more qualified picture. Third, some passages reflect opinions of his time: his remarks on the Catholic Church, which he calls "the Latin Church," and his talk of race and of "the racial ideal of English-speaking peoples." They are printed as he wrote them. His account of the practice of grand lodges at home and abroad describes 1927, not the present, and nothing in these pages is the teaching of any grand lodge.

This edition gives Newton's complete text, newly transcribed from the first printing and read page by page against it. His foreword, which he called "The Tiler," and his Invocation stand before his Introduction, as in the original; his notes are at the foot of the page, numbered as he numbered them. At the back are a summary and analysis of the book, a life and chronology of the author, a note on this edition, notes on the people and works he cites, suggestions for further reading, and an index made for this edition, all placed after his text so that nothing interrupts his pages. The book is published in print and as an ebook that carries the page numbers of the printed edition, and it may be read free of charge in the American Freemasons Library at americanfreemasons.org/library.

JOHN V. PICCONE
GENERAL EDITOR, THE AMERICAN FREEMASONS LIBRARY

Sources for the introduction. *An Episcopal Dictionary of the Church*, "Newton, Joseph Fort" (episcopalchurch.org); Allen E. Roberts, "Joseph Fort Newton, D.D.," *Short Talk Bulletin* (Masonic Service Association), February 1994; Joseph Fort Newton, *The Builders* (Cedar Rapids: Torch Press, 1914), "The Anteroom"; *The Religion of Masonry* (Washington, 1927), title page and text; United Grand Lodge of England, Board of General Purposes, "Freemasonry and Religion" (1962; confirmed 1985), as reprinted by the Grand Lodge of Iowa.

The Tiler

It is with a deep sense of regret that I send this little book upon its way devoutly praying that it may be a blessing to the men of our gentle Craft, and to others who may read it. A deep regret, I say, because it has been a joy to write about the deeper meaning of Masonry, its faith, its philosophy, its fellowship; and I am sorry that my labor is ended. But that is not the only reason for regret; the chief reason is that any words of mine seem so halting, so stammering, so unequal to the vision as I see it.

A book ought to be judged not alone by what it records, but also, and much more, by what it tries to tell—and fails. To me Masonry is one of the Great Poetries of the world, if indeed we may not say that it is a keeper of a holy faith, a high tradition, as simple as it is profound, upon which the highest life of our race rests; and he is unwise who leaves it out of account in reckoning the spiritual possessions of humanity. A kindly critic, in reviewing *The Builders*, saw what for more than twenty years I have been trying to do, though, alas, he described a dream, not its fulfilment:

> To understand the pith and point of his interpretation of Masonry one must first know his general outlook on life, which is that of a Christian mystic, bred in many schools of letters, who looks out of the eyes of the poet on a world too marvelous for words to describe, save those of ecstasy and wonder. To him man is neither a clod nor a clown, but a being with divinity in his soul and eternity before him; and our race, though its tale is pathetic enough, and the way dim, is a pilgrimage of souls on the Great Quest for that which abides amid the flying years. Freemasonry is a part of that Quest, with its own manner of lighting man on his journey, and no

> quarrel is to be had with other Aiders and Helpers by the way.

Such is the Ideal by which my Masonic life has been lighted and led; and if to realize it has been denied, it means much to have seen it afar and to have toiled in its service. It must be that George Eliot was right when she said that "the spoken is but a ripple upon the bosom of the unspoken"; with which I love to join the words of Patmore: "In love and divinity, what's most worth saying can't be said." There are things, and they are the things most important, for which words were never made; and that is why Masonry, in its wisdom, uses symbols, parables, and dramas, in its effort to make real, after a similitude, those white truths which human words discolor.

The pages following do attempt to describe the spiritual faith and philosophy underlying and over-arching our Craft, to sketch, in outline, the world of moral reality which Masonry is trying to reveal. Of course they fail; it could not be otherwise. What Shelley said of life is true of Masonry: it is a dome of many-colored glass which stains the bright radiance of Eternity. If the glass were not stained the Light would blind us, yet still we seek clearer lenses to look upon the Reality which makes all other reality real. For Masonry is the thin shadow of something very great, the full meaning of which we may not know until we pass beyond these shadows into the Light.

By rights another chapter ought to be added to this little book, entitled A Chamber of Imagery, in which the symbols of Masonry are studied more in detail. Yet I leave it as it is, because I have dreamed of a little book dealing with the spiritual suggestions of Masonic symbolism, if the Grand Master will grant me the insight and understanding to write it. Of course, it will be a failure too—inevitably so—because our old and simple symbols tell the untellable, yet we cannot help trying to tell it. To all my Brethren, in whose fellowship I have found joy and inward sustaining, I send blessing.

Memorial Church of St. Paul, Overbrook, Philadelphia. JOSEPH FORT NEWTON

Invocation

Eternal Father, as the sons of men and Thy children we gather in a House of Light, erected to Thee and dedicated to Thy Holy Name, humbly invoking Thy Blessing. Hallow the Lodge with Thy holiness; overcome our evil with Thy goodness; help us to do justly, to love mercy, and to walk humbly before Thee. Unite our minds to know Thee, our hearts to love Thee, and our hands to serve Thy Holy Will, that we may be worthy workmen on Thy Temple.

Lord, by Thy faithfulness keep us faithful to the vows of chastity and charity we have taken upon the Book of Holy Law at the Altar of Obligation—let us not fail or forget. Make us men of Brotherly Love in an unbrotherly world; give us gentle and skillful hands in the practice of Relief; lead our minds in the quest of Truth—even the truth of Eternal Life in the midst of our fleeting days. Here may youth find Thy consecration, and age Thy consolation.

Merciful God, to all weakness which our Brothers bear as a burden from the past, make us merciful; to their faults make us forgiving, as we would be forgiven. Teach us to be gentle in our thoughts, just in our dealings, and generous in our judgments. May the Spirit of Masonry dwell in us, casting out all envy, all uncleanness, all unkindness. At the end of the day when our labor is done, admit us into the Great White Lodge, in the House not made with hands. Amen.

Introduction

What is Religion? What is Masonry? What is the relation, if any, between them? Is Masonry a religion? If so, what religion is it? What is a religion as distinct from Religion? If Masonry is not a religion, what is its attitude toward Religion? That is to say, what is the Religion of Masonry, and how are we to interpret it?

Such questions, and others of a sort similar, have been more discussed than almost any other questions connected with the existence and study of Masonry. They are asked by friends and foes alike, often from different motives and with widely differing answers. Nor is it to be wondered at, remembering the confusion of thought in the minds of men regarding Religion and what they mean by it. By the very fact that the things of Religion are so important, so decisive, and touch life so deeply, men want to know how Masonry is related to the chief interest of human life. In what mood or from what motive soever the question is asked, it is fair and proper to ask it.

As a clearance of issues, if nothing else, there is need of a careful, reverent, discriminating, sympathetic study of the matter, in order to clarify our own thought and to set it forth in a manner worthy of its importance. Obviously, if we are to study the question to any profit, we must know what we mean by the words we use and the realities with which we have to do. But first, by way of introduction, it may be well to survey, in swift glance, the situation as it stands in the Masonry of our day in its formal attitude to Religion.

I

In the organized Masonry of the world one discovers at least three different attitudes in respect to the relation of the Craft to Religion. They are far apart, as will presently appear, and it is difficult to see how they can

be reconciled, in view of the sentiments which Religion evokes and its essentially conservative spirit. Each of these attitudes, it need hardly be said, is due to differences of race, as well as of religion, to say nothing of the different environments in which they developed; and here we have to do with forces hard to manage. For the same reason, it behooves us to invoke all our powers not simply of toleration, but of insight and understanding, if we are not to lose ourselves in a tangle of racial prejudices and antipathies, to say nothing of the unholy confusion which Religion, by the strangest freak of fact, has the power to create.

(1) In English-speaking lands, as we know well enough, our Masonry is essentially and nobly religious, both in its faith and its practice, and we are quite well agreed as to what we mean by the Religion of Masonry. To enter our Lodges a man must confess—not merely profess—his faith in God—though he is not required definitely to define in what terms he thinks of God—in the principles and practice of morality, and in the immortality of the soul; though here again the exact nature of the future life, whether it be a physical resurrection or a triumph of spiritual personality, is not usually defined. In some Grand Lodges, however, the Monitors do specifically state that they mean "the resurrection of the body."

The most elaborate statement, so far as I am aware, is that adopted by the Grand Lodge of New York, as a preamble to its Constitution and Laws. It is an expression of "the simplest form of the faith of Masonry, not exhaustive, but incontrovertible and suggestive," to which is added a brief exposition intended to utter, so far as such things can be uttered, the atmosphere of thought and attitude of heart implied in the statement of religious truth, which is quite as important as the statement itself. It is as follows:

"There is one God, the Father of all men.

"The Holy Bible is the Great Light in Masonry, and the rule and guide for faith and practice.

"Man is immortal.

"Character determines destiny.

"Love of man is, next to love of God, man's first duty.

"Prayer, communion of man with God, is helpful."

Recognizing the impossibility of confining the teaching of Masonry to any fixed forms of expression, yet acknowledging the value of authoritative statements of fundamental principles, the following is proclaimed as the Masonic teaching:

"Masonry teaches man to practice charity and benevolence, to protect chastity, to respect the ties of blood and friendship, to adopt the principles and revere the ordinances of Religion, to assist the feeble, guide the blind, raise up the downtrodden, shelter the orphan, guard the Altar, support the Government, inculcate morality, promote learning, love man, fear God, implore His mercy and hope for happiness."

Such is the statement of Masonic faith and teaching in English-speaking lands, lucid, concise, noble in its simplicity and comprehensiveness, in all ways worthy of the Craft and of the Grand Lodge which put it forth.[1] Others would go even further into detail, but a majority, perhaps, prefer a statement less detailed, content to leave much of what is here stated specifically to be assumed as implied and understood, by virtue of the religious and racial environment in which we live. Still, it is well to have an authoritative and detailed pronouncement of a great Grand Lodge, if only to prevent any possible misinterpretation and misunderstanding as to the attitude of the Craft.

(2) In German lands, as well as in the three Scandinavian Grand Lodges, it is demanded that a man be definitely Christian—that is to say, trinitarian—in his religious faith before he can be admitted into the fellowship of the Craft. In consequence of this attitude—quite uncompromising, so far as the old Prussian Grand Lodges are concerned—Jews are refused admission even to the Craft Degrees. Howbeit, in late years there has grown up in Germany a "Humanitarian" Masonry, as it is described, which does not require a strict Christian, or trinitarian, faith as a basis of fellowship. There has been some friction between the two kinds of Masonry in Germany, but a tacit treaty of understanding seems to have been

[1] It is interesting to compare this statement by the Grand Lodge of New York with the famous Creed of a Mason, as set forth by Albert Pike:—"For this is the Masonic Creed: Believe in God's infinite Benevolence, Wisdom, and Justice; Hope for the final triumph of Good over Evil, and for perfect Harmony as the final result of all the concords and discords of the Universe; and be Charitable as God is, toward the unfaith, the errors, the follies, and the faults of men: for all make one great brotherhood." (*Morals and Dogma*, p. 531.)

reached by which they can live together in mutual, if rather formal and distant, good will. It ought to be added, however, that even the old Prussian Grand Lodges found no great difficulty, in pre-war days, in meeting French Masons, who take a very different attitude.

(3) Of Masonry in Latin lands it is enough to say that—excepting that part of it which lives under English obedience or in affiliation with the Grand Lodge of England—it is frankly Agnostic in its attitude toward the fundamental faiths of Religion. Neither French nor Belgian Masonry requires faith in God as a condition of fellowship, much less do they forbid such faith— though in Belgium such faith is required in some of their higher degrees, with which we have not to do here. They simply refuse to ask what faith a man may hold on the subject, and avoid retaining anything in the Ritual which implies that Masonry rests upon or seeks to cultivate faith in God. It is not my wish to discuss, here and now, the wisdom or unwisdom of this attitude, still less to recite the historical reasons why French Masonry took and maintains its present position. It is sufficient to indicate the wide gulf between the Christian Grand Lodges of Sweden and Germany and the Agnostic Grand Orient of France; and the almost equally wide gulf between both of them and the Masonry of our English-speaking lands.

II

By the same token, one finds among Masons in English-speaking lands the widest differences of opinion in regard to the relation of Masonry to Religion. First of all, there are those who hold that Masonry is a purely social and philanthropic fraternity and has nothing to do with Religion at all, except to acknowledge its existence, accept its fundamental ideas, and respect its ordinances. Having done that in a formal manner, its duty to Religion is done, and it is free to take up its work of "Brotherly Love, Relief, and Truth"—the truth being the moral truth and teaching set forth in its symbols and its Ritual.

For example, in the *Royal Masonic Cyclopedia* we find these words: "But, above all things, let it be clearly seen as a purely social institution, having no political or religious tendency at all, tending to make men friendly upon vastly different grounds than those of agrarian and political rights." It is astonishing how widespread this attitude is, both in spirit and in

practice. Many Brethren, more, perhaps, than express themselves, object to—though they are good enough to tolerate as a kind of weakness or folly —emphasis upon the religious aspect of Masonry and the high spiritual meaning of its symbols. Indeed, it is much to be feared that the Order—which word Dr. Johnston defined as "a religious fraternity"—is actually in danger of becoming what they hold it to be, merely a social order devoted to fellowship and philanthropy. If such is to be the future of Masonry, it will assuredly lose what some of us hold to be its distinctive quality and tradition, and become one more society among so many—useful and valuable, to be sure—but in nowise the Masonry by which our fathers set so much store.

How anyone can so interpret Masonry is rather difficult to understand, in view of the facts of initiation and the spirit of the Lodge. Nor does it help matters to say that Craft Masonry is ethics, and the Royal Arch, Religion, as Waite is wont to do. Others are content to say that Masonry is "the handmaid of Religion," a well-worn phrase which, if it means anything, implies that our Craft is a kind of servant to do the menial work of Religion; as if Religion were some haughty Dame too proud and arrogant to stoop to the common tasks of life. Whereas Religion, if it has any worth or beauty, is the faith and spirit in which we do the humblest work of the world. As George Herbert put it, writing in his little rectory at Bemerton, as the birds nested in the eaves:

> Who sweeps a room as for Thy laws
> Makes that and the action fine.[1]

It is the business of Masonry to cut, carve, polish, and place in order of wall, pillar and arch the stones of a Temple of Brotherhood, founded upon spiritual faith and moral truth, built in accordance with the laws of God, by His aid, and in His holy name. As such it is manifestly more than a mere social order inculcating ethical ideals and practicing philanthropy. As Arthur Edward Waite put it picturesquely: "It is possible and is true to affirm that Masonry was born in a tavern, but it belongs to God Almighty; it began to make the life of the tavern like a vestibule for the life of the church."[2]

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[1] *The Temple*.

[2] *Emblematic Freemasonry*, in which we also read: "I bear my witness, in the sight of God and His mystics, to a fact in the nature of things. Morality is a Gate, and in the symbolism

At the other extreme, we find those, both friends and foes, who regard Masonry as a sufficiently organized system of spiritual thought and practice to be entitled to be called a religion. By a religion they mean a definite creed and certain distinctive rites expressing its faith and spirit, and both of these they find in Masonry. Such is the position of the Catholic Church, and of a section of the High Church Party of the Church of England, which is Catholic in all respects except in actual allegiance to the Roman See. They really regard Masonry as a rival religion of a naturalistic kind, to which, by all the obligations of their own faith in Divine revelation, they must be opposed; and it must be confessed that French Masonry, with the Bible off the Altar and the name of God omitted from the ritual, does justify such a description. Other elements, of course, enter into the Catholic and Anglo-Catholic opposition to Masonry, but on the distinctively religious side this is the basis and sum of it.

What, then, is the truth of the matter? Is Masonry a religion? The leaders and students of the Craft, as well as the rank and mass of its members, in English-speaking lands at least, do not regard Masonry as a religion—though, as has been said, it has certain features which, in the strict technical sense, might lead those to regard it as such who wish, from whatever motive, so to regard it. As some of us prefer to put it, Masonry is not *a* religion but Religion—not a church but a worship, in which men of all religions may unite, unless they insist that all who worship with them must think exactly and in detail as they think about all things in the heaven above and in the earth beneath. It is not the rival of any religion, but the friend of all, laying emphasis upon those truths which underlie all religions and are the basis and consecration of each. Masonry is not a religion, but it is religious.[1]

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of our subject the Quest is beyond the Gate. Morality is a Path, and those who follow the Path should attain its reward, passing beyond the ethical region." To this fact all the writings of Brother Waite bear witness, and no wiser guide beyond the Gate has lived among us in our generation.

[1] "Masonry is not a religion. . . . But Masonry teaches, and has preserved in their purity, the cardinal tenets of the old primitive faith, which underlie and are the foundation of all religions. Masonry is the universal morality." (*Morals and Dogma*, by Albert Pike, Chapter X.) The conception of religion set forth in the following pages includes morality, and to my mind is clearer because it is more comprehensive. The two must be kept together: To keep human life from rotting we must have morality; but to keep morality we must have faith in God and the life to come. Two instructive discussions of the relation of Masonry to Religion may be found in *The Masonic Initiation*, by W. L. Wilmshurst (Chapter 1), and *Freemasonry, Its Aims and Ideals*, by J. S. M. Ward. Chapters XIV and XV.

III

If we look at the matter historically, we find an interesting development in the attitude of Masonry to Religion. The oldest extant document of the Craft—the Halliwell MS—known as the Regius Poem—dated about 1390, is not only Christian but definitely Catholic. Its discoverer held it to be such a document as a priest might have written, opening with an invocation to the Trinity and the Virgin Mary, and including instruction as to the proper way to celebrate the Mass. The early Craft Masons were loyal churchmen, and so far as we have record remained so throughout the cathedral-building period.

With the advent of the Reformation all was changed. Masonry became allied with the movement, or group of movements, out of which came the freedom of the peoples, the liberty of conscience, and the independence of manhood. At any rate, from the time of Edward VI on the Craft was emphatically Protestant in its affinities, as is shown by the invocations of the Old Charges of the period, of which the Harleian MS is a notable instance.[1] But, while Masonry became Protestant in its spirit and principles, it still remained Christian, and continued to be distinctly so until a much later time. Just what happened at the time of the "revival" in 1717, and in the period of the formation of the first Grand Lodge, is hard to know accurately. The background is dim and the facts are few, much as we should like to know details of the influences which played upon the men who devised the Constitutions of 1723, which Gould said, "may safely be attributed to Anderson."

The "revival," as we describe it, not only gave Masonry a new form of organization in the Grand Lodge, but a new attitude toward the Church and Religion—an attitude the full import of which was not understood until years afterward, and then it made a schism which lasted for half a century. The article on "God and Religion" in the Constitutions of 1723,

[1] It was under Edward VI, in 1549, that the *Prayer Book* was first published; and the story of its making and its various revisions is a record of the Reformation in England—the long, thrilling struggle of the English mind to throw off the yoke of the Latin Church, which was and is essentially alien to its genius. Indeed, if the English Bible is the warp the Prayer Book is the woof of the fabric of faith in which the Christian Gospel was woven with the racial ideal of English-speaking peoples. The same influences had much to do with shaping Freemasonry in England, and, later, in America; for, as I have tried to show, our Masonry has a quality of its own, setting it apart from Masonry in Latin lands. See also my brief study of *Modern Masonry*, in the Little Masonic Library.

if read in the setting of that time, is an extraordinary pronouncement, at once revolutionary and prophetic. In a word, just as in the Reformation Masonry severed its connection with Catholicism, so in 1723 it severed itself, once for all, from any one church or sect, making itself henceforth free from any system of theology. It proposed to unite men upon the common eternal Religion "in which all men agree," asking Masons to keep "their peculiar opinions to themselves," and not to make them tests of Masonic fellowship.

Only a few, however, realized how far-reaching such a platform really was, but by the middle of the century its meaning was discovered, and a rival Grand Lodge was organized in 1751—using the religious issue as a pretext, if nothing more, because other motives and influences mingled—calling itself "Ancient," on the ground that the "Modern" Grand Lodge had departed from the faith.[1] The two Grand Lodges existed side by side for fifty years and more, not without friction, but the "Moderns" finally won, disengaging Masonry from specific allegiance to any one religion, to the exclusion of others. In the Lodge of Reconciliation, in 1813, the universal religious character of the Craft was finally affirmed, and the last definite trace of dogmatic theological influence vanished from our Fraternity—let us hope forever.

Howbeit, not all Masons were satisfied with the situation, and Hutchinson, a gifted and gracious man, in *The Spirit of Masonry*—a little classic to this day—made plea for a definitely Christian Masonry; as did Oliver and others.[2] Even as late as 1885 the late Brother Whymper repeated the plea very persuasively in an able book, *The Religion of*

[1] Later research makes it quite clear that what we call the "schism" in the Mother Grand Lodge was really not a schism at all, because the two factions had never been united. The rival Grand Lodge of the "Ancients" was made up, largely at least, of Lodges which had not entered into the organization of the Grand Lodge of 1717. In fact they resented the authority assumed by the Grand Lodge, and refused to submit to it; refused also to be excommunicated by its edict. Brethren from Ireland, coming to London, joined the "Ancients"—among them Laurence Dermott who has been described as "the most amazing Mason that ever lived"—and widened the breach between the two Grand Lodges. A colorless but carefully documented account of the facts may be found in *The Birth and Growth of the Grand Lodge of England 1717–1926*, by Gilbert W. Haynes.

[2] Oliver, in fact, took his cue from Hutchinson, who was "the first Masonic philosopher," in identifying Masonry with Religion; and from that point of view all his books were written, as Dean Pound has shown in his brief, brilliant lecture on Oliver. (*The Philosophy of Masonry*, Chapter 3.) As both Hutchinson and Oliver were Christian men—the latter a clergyman—it was natural that they should identify the Craft with Christianity, and one finds such an emphasis in the books of both men. However, as we have seen above, the

Freemasonry, but to no avail. He even went so far as to urge that Jews, Hindoos, and Mohammedans might be allowed to have Lodges of their own, if they wished, though not within, or not entirely within, the regular fellowship of the Fraternity—a thoroughly impossible suggestion on the face of it. Let us hope that the matter is now finally settled, and that Masonry will never again be the servant—handmaid or otherwise—of one religious dogma or creed, save its own universal creed of fundamental religion, but will continue to be "the center of union, and the means of conciliating true friendship," not only among persons but among faiths "that otherwise must have remained at a perpetual distance."

For, to say no more, Masonry is a system of moral mysticism, expressing faith in God and the eternal life in old and simple symbols of the building art, awakening the better angels in the nature of man and teaching the brotherly life. Its aim is to aid its sons to win a clearer conception of their duty to God and man, to develop their spiritual faculties, to refine and exalt their lives in fellowship and service, leaving each one to add to its profound and simple faith such elaborations and embellishments as may seem to him to be true and beautiful and good, with due respect for and appreciation of the thought and faith and dream of his Brothers and Fellows.

development of the Craft took a different direction, and we think wisely, though that does not mar our appreciation of two such valuable interpreters of Masonry.

CHAPTER I

The Mystic Tie

I

What is Religion? Unless we have some idea of its nature and meaning we cannot go very far in the study here proposed, and yet it is not easy to put it into words. Every great thing opens out upon the infinite and asks for unfenced frontiers. A definition is a wall we build around a reality to bring it within reach and range, and a wall has its limits: it shuts out more than it shuts in. The old farmer in the Robert Frost poem was right:[1]

> Before I build, I would ask to know
> What I was walling in, or walling out,
>
> Something there is that does not love a wall,
> That wants it down.

None of the really great things of life can be shut up within a wall. A man may fence a field, but never the soft winds that blow over it, nor the sunset glow that falls upon it. Yet without the wind, the sun, and the drifting mist that breaks into a blue dust of rain, his field would be of no value. No more can we fence Religion with a definition; it breaks through our net of words and escapes. When all is said there remains a margin of mysticism, a spirit which baffles speech. Religion is the meaning of life and can only be learned by living.

Obviously we must draw a line between Religion and theology. One is the truth of life in its warmth and radiance, its joy and pathos; the other is a system of reasonings and conjectures, symbols, and traditions

[1] *Mending Wall*.

by which man seeks to justify, clarify, and interpret the faith by which he lives. Religion is poetry; theology is prose. It is the difference between a flower garden and a book of botany, a manual of astronomy and a sky full of stars. Theology is valuable but not indispensable. As one need not know the facts of botany in order to enjoy a bed of violets, so we do not have to fathom the mysteries of theology in order to live the religious life. Many a man who has only a dim idea of what it means to love God is really doing it all the time, in the best of all ways, by lending a hand to his fellows along the road.

Still, by the very necessity of his nature, man cannot be content with an impulsive and unreflective existence. He is a thinker, a seeker after truth, a philosopher who desires to analyze the mystery of his life and know its meaning, in order to live with clearer vision and to better purpose. So he has made him many theologies, at times more voluminous than luminous, about which he has debated hotly, excommunicating those who do not agree with him—forgetting that without charity no theology is of any value. Manifestly it is an error to mistake the explanation of Religion for the reality itself, much less to make our dogmas tests alike of fellowship and salvation. For, according to Jesus, with whom our best instincts agree, we are saved not by what we think but by what we are.[1] Our theology ought to be as revisable as are all other human ideas, growing as "the thoughts of man widen with the processes of the suns."

In the same way, temples, altars, creeds, feasts, fasts, and solemn ritual words are not Religion. They are efforts to realize and express the unseen element of thought and yearning which lies at the root of it—attempts to utter by symbol, or to invoke by sacrament, the mystery and meaning of life. Religion is no abstract thing; it is life itself, "the life of God in the soul of man," as Scrougall said three centuries gone by.[2] The Church has

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[1] Yes, our best instincts do agree with the words of Jesus, so full of beauty and surprise—but why? Perhaps it could not be better stated than by John J. Chapman:—"His words and actions appeal to some identity in us with a kind of whirring power, as of a big fly-wheel—not as speculation, but as immediate experience. They operate upon something in us that is below the cortex. Their influence rises and grows of itself and builds itself into a sort of temple within men. He is more than a collection of proverbs, because of His centrality, and the lightning in Him. His sayings are the words of one who retained consciousness in a region where we lose consciousness. It is just above us, and out of reach—a point to which wisdom converges. His words are let loose like birds." (*Letters and Religion*.)

[2] This famous definition of Religion has been attributed to many writers, but it was first used by Henry Scrougall, a lad born in Aberdeen Scotland, who entered the University

no monopoly of Religion, nor did the Bible create it. Instead, it was Religion that created the Bible and the Church, and if they were destroyed it would create them anew.

> Out from the heart of nature rolled
> The burdens of the Bible old;
> The litanies of the nations came,
> Like a volcano's tongue of flame,
> Up from the burning core below—
> The canticles of love and woe.
>
> The word unto the prophet spoken
> Was writ on tables yet unbroken;
> One accent of the Holy Ghost
> The heedless world hath never lost.[1]

II

There is in human nature a spiritual quality, by whatever name it is described, to express which some contrive theologies, others write rituals, and others sing anthems. It is a part of our human endowment, at once the fountain of our faith and the consecration of our labor. It emerged with man, revealing itself in love and birth, joy and woe, pity and pain and death, in the blood in the veins of men, the milk in the breasts of women, the laughter of little children, in the ritual of the seasons—all the old, sweet, sad, happy human things—adding a rhythm and a pathos to mortal life. Older than all creeds, deeper than all dogmas, it is a voice

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at the age of fifteen and was made professor of Philosophy at twenty. He died at twenty-eight, leaving only a tiny book to bear his name, entitled *The Life of God in the Soul of Man*. Two American editions of the book have appeared, one in 1868, containing a remarkable letter telling how he came to write the book; and another in 1910, with an introduction by the late Lyman Abbott—to whom the words have incorrectly been ascribed. Surely it is extraordinary that a young man in a time far gone, in spite of the cloudy theology of his day, should have seen so clearly and expressed so simply what the nature of Religion really is, discovering the essential spiritual unity of the life of man. It recalls the saying of George Macdonald, much later, that "Religion and life are one, or neither is of any worth"; the while it makes us regret the more deeply that one who saw so clearly should have died so young. Such insight is needed today when a bitter, sour cynicism has for so many blighted faith in life, and, naturally, in Religion.

[1] *The Problem*, by R. W. Emerson.

out of the heart of the world; the account which life gives of itself when it is healthy, natural, and free.

Every man shares, in some degree, in the great mysticism of the race. By the very fact of his humanity, each man has a capacity for Religion, as he has a need of it, whether he knows it or not; just as he is potentially a poet, though he may not be aware of it. One doubts the fact of an entirely irreligious person; but if he exists he is, by so much, less than human. In some men the spark may be dormant and undeveloped, but it is there, along with much else. As radium is found only in uranium, and then only a few grains of it in tons of alien matter, so "the light that lighteth every man" may burn darkly; but it does not go out. The religious man is thus of many sorts, according to type, training, and stage of growth; but we ought to be able to know him in any garb.

No words may ensnare this elusive, ineluctable quality in the life of man, lending dignity to his dust and luster to his days. It takes myriad shapes—all the shapes which truth and love and duty take—in all true art, all great literature, in the magic suggestiveness of music, in the quest of beauty and the search for truth, in old and simple and lovable things lifted into light and color; no less than in the many forms of piety, from the crude rites of early man to the life of Jesus. It is a tone, a temper, a grace, like "touch" in a musician, like melody which turns sound into song—something deep, tender, haunting, in the hushed awe of an Agnostic or in the life of a saint; in the grave and kindly Lincoln who walked under a sky as gray as a tired face, and in Francis who went singing through the world. Some men seem not to be aware of this fine thing in their lives, and even deny that they have it, yet they "live by the fact the lips deny, God knoweth why." All of us know men like Hankin in *The Mad Shepherds*, of whom Snarley Bob observes:

> Shoremaker Hankin were a great man. He'd got hold o' lots o' good things, but he'd got some on 'em by the wrong end. He talked more than a man o' his size ought to ha' done. He spent his breath in proving that God doesn't exist, and his life in proving that He does.

The greatest of all Teachers of faith did not use the word "religion" at all, but always the word "life" instead, saying that He had come that men might have life, and have it more abundantly. So far from limiting life, He

sanctifies it, lifts it to a higher octave, sets it free, shakes the poison out of all its wild flowers, and reveals its eternal values in the arts and acts of every day. With Jesus, Religion does not consist of a few acts of prayer, worship, and alms; it is not one thing, but the spirit in which we are to do everything, if it be only to give a cup of cold water to a brother man. Many kinds of life have to be lived, and no one kind has a right to be called religious, to the exclusion of others. The humblest labor, no less than the highest, if done with reference to the whole, has the sanctity of a sacrament. Every task is sacred which offers opportunity for growth and service; all things are holy which draw men together in fellowship and promote justice and beauty in the earth.

Religion, to repeat it once more, is not a thing apart from life; it is life itself at its best—the meaning of life by which we live, the art by which we learn how to live: how to be, how to do, how to do without, and, finally, how to join our fleeting lives with "one vast Life that moves and cannot die," which Jesus called the Eternal Life.[1]

III

By the same token, it may be said that in the view here set forth, if Religion is everything it ceases to be anything. Or else, if all thoughts, all feelings, all acts are, or may be, religious, it embraces what we include under morality, art, and even sport, and we are using more words than we need. Of course, for purposes of study and analysis we may separate Religion from morality, but in actual life they blend, they intermingle, they are interwoven. Indeed, my point is that Religion, as the Latin word for it implies, is the unifying spirit of all life. Cicero preferred the meaning "to think back," to think over again, to reflect on the meaning of life—to recollect. Augustine liked best to define it as meaning "to rebind," to tie together; that which unites man to God and to his fellows. They are two

[1] Of definitions of Religion there are many, but among the less technical the following have helped and enlightened me. Rolla Russell, whose little book *Psalms of the West* is one of my friends, puts it aptly: "Religion is love of God, the union of man with the spirit of holiness, the constant endeavor to do the best and bear the worst." Donald Hankey, whom I met in the summer before his death in the Battle of the Somme, gives us a striking sentence in *A Student in Arms*: "Religion is just betting your life that there is a God." Another has defined it as "the art of living in two worlds at the same time"; and still another as "the realization of the value of life." Nor does one forget the definition of Adolph Harnack: "Religion is one thing and one only: Eternal Life in the midst of time, by the strength and under the eyes of God." (*What is Christianity?*)

aspects of the same thought—the idea of a tie by which things are held together, a thread on which things are strung; a power of cohesion and coherence. Recent studies seem to arrive at the same insight. More and more Religion is regarded, not as a separate faculty or interest or instinct, but rather as a unity of interests—the organizing spirit among the values of life.

If this seems at first a little hazy and fine-spun, a picturesque example of what it means may be seen in the life of Anton Tchekhov, the Russian novelist, to whose art we owe so much.[1] Something happened in him, whether real or imagined, to cut the tie which gives unity and continuity to life, scattering ideas and events like beads in disarray when the thread is broken. It was an appalling experience, as he describes it, leaving him a sad, weary, bewildered man. In one of his letters he writes, giving us a glimpse of his inner chaos:

> In all the thoughts, feelings, and ideas which I form about anything there is wanting the something universal which could bind all these together in one whole. Each feeling and thought lives detached in me, and in all my opinions and in all the little pictures which my imagination paints, not even the most cunning analyst will discover what is called the general idea, or the God of the living man. If this is not there, then nothing is there.

No wonder he is a specialist in hopelessness, a great artist of loneliness—like a tiny island in a vast sea. Each man stands by himself; fraternity is a fiction. Facts pile up pell-mell, without sequence or significance. Things have no relation to one another; they just happen. He knows "the comfortless conglomerate of finite events." He sees each thing clearly; he etches vividly; he can fasten a fleeting impression in a flashing phrase. But life has no plan, no purpose, no meaning; it is just a jumble. Events fall at haphazard, as in the colors of a kaleidoscope. Ideas are deceptive; ideals are a mirage; work is unmeaning monotony; each day is an idle tale, ending in ennui, futility, and the fatigue of despair. So dismal does life become when the mystic tie is cut. What a

[1] For an analysis and interpretation of the great Russian see *Anton Tchekhov and Other Essays*, by Leon Shestov. His letters have recently been published in two volumes.

fate to be thus marooned on a desert island in a world where there is truth to seek, love to win, and beauty passes with the sun on her wings!

Such a man is sick; something has hit him and he goes lame. Yet his experience, if it be only imagined, does show us that the basis of life is a sense, vague or vivid, of the "something universal" which unites things into a whole. As Bruno said, God is the principle of connection in things, and things are connected by the Meaning to which all their partial meanings contribute. Nature and events, as Goethe held, are the language of God, silent and incessant, of which we can read here a line and there a stanza. They are facts, but they are also symbols, and have meaning beyond the facts. That is to say, everything is somehow the voice of God, if we have ears to hear. To find meaning in the world is to begin to live in it and to love it, and where love is there God is.

IV

Two examples will make the idea plainer, one in the field of psychology and the other in the facts of recent history. In his fine, closely packed study of *Man and Culture*, Dr. Clark Wissler finds what he calls two great complexes in human nature, tool-using and ritual-making, which give the clue to the history of culture. The reason why man uses tools is plain enough, but why, from the very beginning, in all ages and all lands, he has made rituals, is a mystery. The writer suspects that at the bottom of ritual-making there is a fact as fundamental, as natural, as the using of tools. Something is there, but he does not know what it is—something profoundly revealing.

What he suspects—he does not set it forth as a dogma—is that ritual is the desire, if we may not call it an instinct, by which man is led to "seek to complete the sequence of cause and effect when an effect is experienced." In other words, in his rituals man is seeking to spin and weave a tie uniting cause and effect; that is, trying to find the connection in things. It is a quest after the sequence of facts, the relation of events, as over against the awful miscellaneousness of mere Chance, in which forces move haphazard. Even Fate is better than Chance; at least it implies order, direction, control in the nature of things which, if men follow it, leads to freedom and power. Ritual, then, is man trying to interpret his experience, flinging across the gaps of life a network of meaning—his effort to escape from the most terrifying of all fears, that his life is at the

mercy of caprice, the sport of whim. In his ritual he dramatizes what he thinks the meaning of life is, acts out its law as he knows it, endeavoring to bring himself into harmony with the order of the world, and thus to be at home in it.[1]

So the history of Religion is the story, more fascinating than any tale told in fairyland, of man seeking for the meaning of his life, setting forth in drama, symbol, and sign the truth as he finds it. Always, by an insight deeper and clearer than he knows, he finds the meaning of his life in spiritual reality and value; in Truth, Love, and "that thread of all-sustaining Beauty that runs through all and doth all unite." In short, he is a mystic, and the essence of all mysticism is a sense, a vision, of the unity of things, of the oneness of all life, of the kinship of man with God, without which life and the world are alike unintelligible and utterly baffling. When, in an hour of madness or sin or blindness the mystic tie is cut, chaos comes again. Of this fact we have had in our own time the most ghastly demonstration in Russia, whereof a great lawyer of Moscow has told us. Writing in the *Hibbert Journal*, in 1920, Eugene Troubetzkoy analyzes Bolshevism in these words:

> It is first and foremost the practical denial of the spiritual. They flatly refuse to admit the existence of any spiritual bond between man and man. For them economic and material interests constitute the only social nexus; they recognize no other. This is the source of their whole conception of human society. The love of country, for example, is a lying pretense;

[1] If we turn from the anthropologists to the psychologists—for example, to such a book as *The Religious Consciousness*, by J. B. Pratt—we find a dual explanation of ritual, casual and functional. Religious rites, in their origin, he holds, were not so much attempts to placate the gods as expressions of communal life, celebrating its various events, such as birth, marriage, death, and securing its sanctities by social safeguards. Man seeks by ritual to establish communion with the Divine power—not fully attained, or broken by some fault of his own—and he seeks that communion socially, through his group life, by repeating in his ritual the order of nature—as we do in the Lodge. Ritual thus appeals not only to the religious nature of man, but to two of his primitive instincts: his desire to do things in common with his fellows, and his desire for self-expression. The latest studies of the psychology of Religion do not find its origin in fear and an effort to placate Deity—though in primitive man those motives were present, especially in his magic—but to a desire to dramatize faith, hope and spiritual dream; an effort to lend a reality-feeling to what otherwise might have seemed abstract and unreal. (*Ancient Art and Ritual*, by Harrison, and *Ritual and Belief*, by Hartland.)

> for the national bond is spiritual, and, therefore, wholly fictitious.
>
> From their point of view the only real bond between men is the material—that is to say, the economic. Material interests divide men into classes, and they are the only divisions to be taken account of. Hence they recognize no Nations save the Rich and the Poor. As there is no other bond which can unite these two Nations into one social whole, their relations must be regulated exclusively by the zoological principle revealed in the struggle for existence.
>
> The materialistic conception of society is their method of treating the family. Since there is no spiritual bond between the sexes, there can be no constant relation. The rule is therefore that men and women can change their partners as often as they wish.

There it is, stripped of fine phrases and clothed in the gray garb of fact, smeared with blood and mud and lust. There we see what life is, what society becomes, and the pit into which man falls when the mystic tie of Religion is cut. Fraternity is as futile as all the vain things proclaimed by the Preacher of Despair. Theology sinks to the level of zoölogy; the home becomes a brothel; all the fair and holy things that lend dignity and sanctity to the life of man are lost in a dark jungle of slimy greed and blind brutality. Atheism, "the practical denial of the spiritual," ends in anarchy, running wild and running red. As Benjamin Kidd remarked in his survey of Western civilization: "The central feature of human history is not reason, but Religion, which has kept progress going when reason would have ended it. *Religion is the real cement of society*."

V

Religion, then, is the bond that binds us, first, to God, Whose is "the something universal" which unites all things into one whole, and gives to the universe meaning and beauty. Second, it is the tie by which we are united to our fellow men in the service of duty, the sanctity of love, and the spirit of fraternal righteousness. Third, it is the thread which gives unity, and, therefore, peace, in our own inner life, without which

we "go to pieces," as the phrase has it, describing exactly the spiritual chaos which foretells a physical or mental or moral collapse. It is the life of God in the life of man whereby, as Dante said, we learn to make our lives eternal.

So interpreted, our religion, as Conrad said of art, is one with our vision of right and wrong, our capacity for joy and wonder, our sense of the mystery surrounding our lives; our sense of pity, and beauty, and pain; our latent feeling of fellowship with all creation, and the subtle but invincible conviction of solidarity that knits together the loneliness of innumerable hearts; the solidarity in dreams, in joy, in sorrow, in aspirations, in illusions, in hope, in fear, which binds men to each other, which binds together all humanity—the dead to the living and the living to the unborn generations awaiting their advent.

> There is an unseen cord that binds
> The whole wide world together;
> Through every human life it winds,
> This one mysterious tether.
> There are no separate lives, the chain
> Too subtle for our seeing,
> Unites us all upon the plane
> Of universal being.

CHAPTER II

The Builders

I

As has been said, it is not the purpose of these pages to deal with the attitude of Masonry toward organized religion, but to study our Craft as itself an expression of religious faith, life, and hope. If Religion, as here interpreted, be a great solidarity, a sense of a vast Kindred-Life, in whose near-neighborliness and far-friendliness we, and all men, live in a fellowship of duty and destiny, then, surely, Masonry is one of its myriad manifestations; a part of the organized spiritual experience of the race, a form of the Divine Life upon the earth.

By the same sign, to know the meaning of Masonry, in any real sense, it must be studied in the context of the universal spiritual history of humanity, of which it is a unique and significant aspect. Otherwise it will remain not a mystery, but a riddle, as unintelligible as if it had been the work of men of another planet, having no place in our estimate of the spiritual possessions of the race. Here lies the value of the work of Arthur Edward Waite, to whose clear vision and rich learning every student of the Craft is so deeply in debt.[1] He sees that the spiritual life of mankind is one quest and conquest, no matter how many forms it may take or what different rituals it may employ—Masonry being one of the three really

[1] Elsewhere I have paid tribute to the insight and interpretative genius of Brother Waite (*The Builders*, Part 1, Chap. 4.); but since that time he has continued his great exposition of spiritual life of humanity—its unity, wonder, and technique—in books of abiding worth to all pilgrims of the way of initiation. Besides *The Brotherhood of the Rosy Cross*—a marvel of research in a difficult field—he has given us *Emblematic Freemasonry*, and, best of all, *The Way of Divine Union*, such a book as no one else in our time could have written.

great rituals in which man has sought to surprise in art and embody in experience the mystery and meaning of life.[1]

Such an insight into the unity of the life of the soul ties things together and gives us not only a wise tolerance, but also a patient sympathy with, and a clearer understanding of, every form the search for God has taken, alike in Christian and in pagan lands. It does not mean that all forms of faith are of the same depth, or degree of development, or value for our guidance, much less does it deny the reality of that revelation of moral law and spiritual truth which shines upon our path, a light to lead our wayward feet, in the Book of Holy Law. But it does help us to see and understand how and why,

> Answering unto Man's endeavor
> Truth and right are still revealed,

lifting our aspiration into realization, making our spiritual dream come true; and that while religions are many, Religion is one—perhaps we may say one thing, to use once more the words of Henry Scrougall who, dying in the morning of life, told us that Religion is "the life of God in the soul of man."

Unless we see Masonry in this setting and tradition, we miss its real beauty and infinite suggestiveness, as well as the wonder of its symbolism. It is unique indeed, not so much in the truth it teaches or the experience it seeks to realize as in the spirit and method in which it leads us in the greatest of all adventures. It is in fact, for those who understand—and, dimly, for those who do not see its full splendor—a thin shadow of something very great, something ineffable and memorable. It holds a certain extremely simple and profound secret, for which words were never made, and which can only be hinted in symbol and drama; and that is why it speaks to us in

> The picture writing of the world's gray seers,
> The myths and parables of primal years.

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[1] The three great rituals of the race are the Prajapati ritual of ancient Hinduism, the Mass of the Christian Church, and the Third Degree of Masonry. Widely as they may differ in detail, and far apart as they may seem to be in externals, yet together they testify to the profoundest insight of the human soul—that God becomes man that man may become God. Each in its own manner embodies and expresses the discovery of that Divinity within us which is at once the proof and prophecy of our immortality in mortality, our eternity in time.

II

What, then, is Masonry? One thinks of the answer of Augustine to a like question long ago, when he said: "I know until you ask me; when you ask me I do not know." There is something unique in Masonry, a tie unlike any other, uniting men of all ranks, types, temperaments into a closely-knit fellowship; something deep and tender—one would call it mystical, if the word had not been so badly used—which all of us feel, but which no one of us can analyze. No one cares to analyze it. We sit in Lodge together, each knowing exactly what will come next; we meet upon the level and part upon the square—old and simple and familiar symbols — and somehow, no one knows how, a tie is woven light as air yet stronger than steel. It is very strange, very wonderful—to attempt to analyze it is like trying to draw a rim round a perfume.[1]

None the less, as we have set ourselves the task of expounding, as best we may, something of the deeper meaning of Masonry, we must attempt some kind of a definition—or, better still, a description—of its spirit and purpose and form. It will help us, perhaps, if we bring together a number of definitions, none of them perfect, as those who made them would be the first to admit, each one emphasizing one aspect or segment of the many-sided, far-ramifying wonder of Masonry; and all of them together showing at once the necessity and the futility of trying to define it. Each man, as will appear, sees in Masonry the thing nearest to his own nature and need, his own heart and thought, but there is much more than he sees, Masonry itself, like its symbols, being a benign and beautiful mystery which many behold, each from his own angle and point of view, but which no one exhausts. Thus we may read:

> The definition of Freemasonry that it is "a science of morality, veiled in allegory, and illustrated by symbols," has been

[1] Why do men love Masonry? What lure leads them to it, what spell holds them through long years. What strand is it that tugs at our hearts, taut when so many threads are broken by the rough ways of the world? Ask what it is in the wild that calls to the little wild things? What secret sacred things do the mountains whisper to the hillman, so silently yet so surely that they can be heard above the din and clatter of the world? What mystery does the sea tell to the sailor, the desert to the Arab, the arctic ice to the explorer, the stars to the astronomer? When we have answered these questions, mayhap we may divine the magic of Masonry. Who knows what it is, or how or why, unless it be the long Cabletow of God running from heart to heart! (*The Magic of Freemasonry*, by Arthur E. Powell.)

so often quoted that, were it not for its beauty, it would become wearisome. This is its internal character. Its ceremonies are external additions, which affect not its substance.—A. G. Mackey.

Freemasonry is an ancient male society, having secret methods of recognition, teaching by symbolism (in part esoteric) a moral philosophy based upon Monotheism and inculcating the brotherhood of man and belief in immortality.—M. M. Johnson.

Masonry is Friendship, Love, and Integrity— friendship which rises superior to the fictitious distinctions of society, the prejudices of religion, and the pecuniary conditions of life; love which knows no limit, nor inequality, nor decay; integrity which binds man to the eternal law of duty.—A. C. L. Arnold.

Masonry is the science of life in a society of men, by signs, symbols and ceremonies; having as its basis a system of morality and for its purpose the perfection and happiness of the individual and the race.—G. F. Moore.

The word carries with it, through all the variants known to us, the idea of unity. From this view it appears that Masonry is the building together of various units, such as stones, bricks, wood, iron, or human beings, into a compact structure. When we apply it to Speculative Masonry, we mean the building morally of humanity into an organized structure, according to a design or plan.—A. S. MacBride.

Life separates man from man; to unite him again with man needs an art; a means to this art, not the art itself, is Freemasonry. Freemasonry is, therefore, the medium of an art which strives to mold people whom life has separated so that they can enter a new communion with one another.—Oskar Posner.

Masonry is an art of the Brotherhood of Man, a code of ethical laws and revelations impressing all men with its candor, justice and faith; commending its members to extend

> justice to all mankind; instructing its students in an open mind, strength in the right and cleanness of heart and body; inculcating love of God, home and country, and respect for the rights of a brother.—R. W. Abbott.

> Masonry is the subjugation of the Human that is in man by the Divine; the conquest of the appetites and passions by the moral sense and the reason; a continual effort, struggle and warfare, of the spiritual against the material and sensual. That victory—when it has been achieved and secured, and the conqueror may rest upon his shield and wear the well-earned laurels—is the true Holy Empire.—Albert Pike.

> Masonry is the activity of closely united men who, employing symbolical forms borrowed principally from the mason's trade and from architecture, work for the welfare of mankind, striving morally to ennoble themselves and others, and thereby to bring about a universal league of mankind, which they aspire to exhibit even now on a small scale.—German Handbuch.

So much for definitions, if indeed they ought not to be called descriptions instead, all except the first which is taken from the *Book of Constitutions*, the second which might stand in a court of law, and the last which entitles us to be called the Builders. The rest are true and beautiful, the words of Pike being a memorable picture of the passion, purpose and prophecy of every religion, the effort of all the higher human life, in nowise peculiar to Masonry, save as we see and interpret Masonry as a part, or expression, of the common spiritual aspiration and endeavor of mankind; one with the old eternal quest of God, however unique its symbolism may be. Once, somewhere down the years, I tried to sum it up in one sentence, to which may be added a like saying by a master Craftsman:

> "Let us rather say that Masonry, as we see it in our dream and seek to realize it in our fellowship, is like one of the Cathedrals which our brethren built in the olden time: Faith its foundation, Righteousness its corner stone, Strength and Wisdom its walls, Beauty its form and fashion, Brotherly

> Love its clasped arches, Reverence its roof, the Bible its altar light, Mysticism its music, Charity its incense, Fellowship its sacrament, Relief its ritual; its Symbols windows nobly wrought, half-revealing and half-concealing a Truth too elusive for words, too vast for dogma, and too bright for eyes unveiled, and only hinted to us until we are ready and worthy to behold it with other and clearer eyes than now we know:—
>
> 'Masonry is not a Temple of Mysteries, nor a Repository of Rituals, nor a Reformatory of the Fallen, nor a Branch Office of a Benevolent Society, but the happy and restful, refined and intellectual home of men of good will and good sense; Brethren not Bondsmen, men of brain and brawn, young men and mature men, drawn and conciliated together by some magnetic affinity of association far more than mere gregariousness; just average men in a world of motion and emotion, of aspiration and purposeful progress, men who discover one another and realize themselves in close and familiar association, and who have realized that the Brotherhood of Man begins with the Manhood of the Brother.' "[1]

There, in one shining sentence, the thing all of us feel, love and try to express, does almost get itself said, giving us a thrill of recognition and joy. It is a perfect description of the atmosphere in which Masons live and the spirit in which they work—a spirit gentle, joyous, free —held together by a magnetic and creative affinity, seeking the truth without envy, discussing it without rancor, and striving to make it effective in private life and public service. For Masonry is Truth, Charity and Service—the Truth by which no man was ever injured, the Charity without which no dogma is worth holding, and the Doing of Good which is the finest art known upon earth and among men.

[1] W. N. Ponton.

III

There is, then, a Religion of Masonry—old, simple, wise—as profound as it is practical; a religion of faith, freedom, and fellowship, taking the truths of faith and revelation, but allowing each man to read and interpret those truths as his heart elects, thus avoiding the envies and debates which so often disfigure the religious life. It is not a theology in the technical sense, nor a philosophy like the philosophy of Plato or Kant, but, rather, a living wisdom, a practical moral mysticism, so to name it, veiled in allegory and illustrated by signs, symbols and dramas. One may take the words of Jesus as describing its Degrees: "The Way, the Truth, and the Life"; the way of moral rectitude and fraternal righteousness, the truth of a moral order and a spiritual law as exact as geometry, and a life everlasting discovered and lived in time.

However, let us remember that the Religion of Masonry, be it ever so simple and profound, just because it is a spiritual interpretation of life, rests upon the same basis and is subject to the same tests as all other such readings of the meaning of life. As such, it is open to denial by sceptical criticism and brute facts, open to persecution by the accidents of life and the menace of death, to say nothing of things darker, by far, than death can ever be. It behooves us, therefore, at least to state the faith by which we live as men and Masons, as over against those blind thoughts we know not nor can name, and the blight of cynicism at whose touch all the finer values of life fade, like flowers in a frost. There is no need to give reasons for our faith, if only because the profoundest faiths of man are deeper than reason, and are the basis of reason itself—as deep as the life and need and nature of man.

Masonry, like all the best life of man, rests upon the faith—which can neither be demonstrated nor refuted by logic—that life has meaning and value, and is not an accident to be lived at loose ends and to no purpose. Such a faith, because it is healthy and sane, makes the venture that life is real, sane, and worth while, and acts accordingly. It is not a mere opinion we hold, but a passion that holds us:

> It is an affirmation and an act
> That bids eternal truth be present fact.

As sparks ascending seek the sun, so this high, heroic faith of man rises above the things that deny and finds its confirmation and its consecration in God and His life of law and love: a truth never stated more nobly than in the words of Richard Hooker, a fellow of Shakespeare and Bacon and Milton, one of the amplest minds of his age, who, dying at forty-nine, left us a passage famous alike for its sweep of thought and its stately, old-world style:

> Wherefore, that here we may briefly end: of law there can be no less acknowledged, than that her seat is in the bosom of God, her voice the harmony of the world; all things in Heaven and earth do her homage, the very least as feeling her care, and the greatest as not exempted from her power; both angels and men and creatures of what condition soever, though each in different sort and manner, yet all with uniform consent, admiring her as the mother of their peace and their joy.

That is to say, Masonry rests upon and lives and builds in the assurance, to which human experience and Divine revelation alike bear witness, of the existence of a universal moral and spiritual world, whose laws are as real, as reliable, as the laws of the physical order in which we live; a vast, potent, living, beneficent order, more radiant than we can yet imagine, of which the symbolism of the race, in the scattered letters of a lofty language, gives us hints and gleams; and the seeker after reality recognizes his own—and understands. Otherwise our symbolism means nothing at all, because there is nothing to symbolize. Nay, more; if this be not so, human life is a flash of glory against a dark background—a flash doomed to fade and be lost in a void. As a protest against so dark a philosophy our Masonic faith stands immovable, a Temple covering the holy things of life with an abiding protection. Its faith may be stated briefly, in more detail, as follows:

(1) *Faith in the universe as friendly to fraternal enterprise*. Our Craft believes that the world in which we live, in spite of facts apparently contradictory, was made for Brotherhood. At first sight it may not seem so. Nature appears to be constructed on contrary lines, "red in tooth and claw," careless of the higher values. For many the seeming indifference of Nature to the higher ideals of man is terrifying, and to dream of a brotherly society in such a world seems futile. It is indeed

a daring act of faith, a challenge to the courage of man, and Masonry accepts the challenge. It affirms, in spite of appearances, that man was made for man. If there is a law of the Struggle for Existence, there is also a law of Mutual Aid, without which man would have perished long ago. Slowly, surely, the higher, gentler law triumphs over the lower, lesser law—includes it, indeed, and fulfills it. Man himself is a part of Nature, and because he has a hunger for fraternity, he believes that the universe is not against his faith.[1]

(2) *Faith in man as a spiritual being*. Man is an animal, but if he is nothing else, Religion and fraternity are thin fictions: he would live by the law of the jungle. But man is more than an animal; he has "thoughts that wander through eternity." He is a citizen of two worlds, and the glory of his life is the art of living in two worlds at the same time. No fraternity built on the baseness of man can endure. Only the spiritual tie can unite men in the bonds of Brotherhood. Nothing else holds, in the end, against the brute forces in ourselves and in the world. Any other tie of fellowship is a rope of sand, weak as water. All fraternity is founded on faith in man as a moral and spiritual being, capable of disinterested fellowship, service, and sacrifice.

(3) *Faith in the power of spiritual ideals.* If man is fashioned by Fate, if his higher ideals are at the mercy of his lower instincts; that is, if self-interest is the only motive strong enough to move him to fight, or serve, or suffer, then fraternity, of the kind we seek, is impossible. The history of human heroism refutes this cynical philosophy. The devotion of man to the great disinterested ideals of liberty, justice, mercy, truth, is overwhelming testimony to the power of spiritual influences over him. These cannot be simply human aspirations; they must be divine inspirations. They sway man in his nobler hours,

[1] The schism in the modern mind which makes men in our day ill at ease is the feeling—the fear—that the universe is not friendly to our highest human ideals. There is an apparent conflict between the noblest values of life and the order of the world as revealed by natural science—as if nature cared nothing for what is holiest to man. One feels this fear keenly in the poetry of Tennyson and Arnold, to name no others; and it finds reflection in much of the religious doubt of our generation. (See *Science and the Modern World*, by A. N. Whitehead, Chapter 5.) On the other hand there is a body of fact, never better arrayed than by Prince Kropotkin, in his great book entitled *Mutual Aid*, which finds the roots of love, sacrifice, and righteousness in the order of nature. There are signs to show that this fear, which so beclouded the last century, is fading and that a clearer and truer insight is arriving, showing us that the universe is our home both of discipline and delight—the House of "the veiled Father of men."

touching his life to finer issues, and shaping him after a Divine pattern. This threefold faith underlies the grand affirmations of Religious Masonry: the Fatherhood of God, the Brotherly Life, the Geometry of Character, and the Life Everlasting.

IV

Such is the faith upon which Masonry builds—the faith which underlies and upholds all the higher life of man—uniting the flickering rays of the old Light-Religion with the brighter revelation of moral law and spiritual truth as it shines in the Book of Holy Law. The three Great Lights of the lodge give us the clue to the Religion of Masonry, the Holy Bible supporting the Square and the Compasses—symbols of Revelation, Righteousness, and Redemption; teaching us that by walking in the light of Truth, and obeying the law of Right, the Divine in man wins victory over the earthly. Thus Earth and Heaven are brought together in the Lodge—the earth where man goes forth to his labor, and the heaven to which he aspires.

Indeed, the Religion of Masonry is Universe Religion, in which all men can unite: its principles are as wide as the world and as high as the sky. Nature and Revelation blend in its faith; its morality is rooted in the order of the world, and its roof is the blue vault above. The Lodge, as we are too apt to forget, is always open to the sky—over-hung by a starry canopy by night, lighted by the journeying sun by day—whence come those influences which exalt and ennoble the life of man.[1] Symbolically,

[1] One of the charms of Masonry is that it uses the oldest and simplest facts of life to teach its truth, and thus brings it home to us so closely and touches us so deeply. Any trade that lies close to nature, like that of the hunter, the herdsman, the husbandman, the builder, has power to thrill our pulses with ancestral instincts and memories, and touch us to poetry. As Stevenson said, these ancient things—the tilling of the soil, the tending of a flock, the building of a house—have upon them the dew of the morning of humanity. For the same reason a road across a desert, a sheltering roof against a storm, or a hearth-fire glowing in the darkness, can stir the human heart as symbols of human fellowship and necessity.

Life has been thought of under many figures of speech, as a battle, as a journey, as a school, as a pilgrimage, as the building of a house; and Masonry, with its instinct for old and simple things, asks us to remember that we are pilgrims seeking a Country, even a City—that we are builders and must lay firm foundations, testing our work by Square and Plumb. It is so simple that it is wise, and 'so wise that it is simple, using emblems as profound as they are familiar. In short, Masonry is one of the Great Poetries of the world. (*The Magic of Freemasonry*, by Arthur E. Powell.)

at least, it has not rafters but the arching heavens, and the business of man is to reproduce in his life the law and order of the far-shining City of God. Of the heavenly side of Masonry the Compasses are the symbol, and they are the most spiritual of all its working tools—the law of Nature and the light of Revelation being the two points of the Compasses within which our life is set under a canopy of Sun and Stars.

While we hold a view of the world very unlike that held by our ancient brethren—knowing it to be round, not flat and square—yet their insight is still true; the whole idea being that man must imitate the order of the world in which he lives. That is also our dream and design, our labor and worship. Any man has a right to build a house to suit himself; but if he expects it to stand and be a shelter of his home, he must obey certain laws of physics in building it. By as much as he obeys those laws his home will stand; if he disobeys, no. Nor is it otherwise with the moral laws which rule the building of character. If the laws of architecture are moral laws, as Ruskin taught us, just so moral principles are laws of spiritual architecture. In short, the basic idea of Masonry is that the moral order, like the physical world, is a realm of law, order and beauty, where obedience is liberty and stability.

Upon this fact Masonry erects its noble and beautiful allegory of human life in all its varied aspects: the Lodge a symbol of the world in which man lives on a checker-board of nights and days, joys and sorrows—overarched by the sky, at its center an Altar of obligation and prayer. By the same sign, initiation is our birth from the darkness of prenatal gloom into the light of moral and spiritual faith, out of a merely physical into a human and moral order; into a new environment with a new body of motive and experience. The cable tow is like the cord which joins a child to its mother at birth, nor is it removed until, by the act of assuming the obligations of the moral life, a new, unseen tie is woven, uniting us with our race in its moral effort to build a world of fraternal goodwill.

In the First Degree we learn morality and charity—two things always to be kept together; if counted worthy, we pass, in the Second Degree, out of youth into manhood with its wider knowledge and heavier responsibilities; and finally, if we have integrity and courage, we discover, in the Third Degree, that we are citizens of Eternity living in time. Thus we have portrayed, in a sublimely simple and eloquent allegory, an ideal world ruled by wisdom, strength, and fellowship, in which we are set to

do our duty, build our character, and win our destiny.[1] It is a great day for a young man when Masonry reveals its meaning to him, unveiling its plan of life, its purpose, its prophecy of a Temple of Brotherhood, into which he may build his life and thought and aspiration, so that whatever immortality this human world shall have his character and personality shall have a share in it.

In its modern form at least, our Masonry is a symposium of symbolism in which three streams or strands of faith unite, by which man is a Builder of a Temple, a Pilgrim in quest of a lost Truth, and, if he be worthy and heroic, a Finder of the sublime Secret of Life. He is, first, a builder, taking the rough stones of the world and shaping them into forms of beauty, building upon the will of God, by His design, with His help, in His name; nay, more, building together with his fellow men, as our Brethren built the cathedrals. He is, second, a seeker, a pilgrim journeying from the West, a land of sunset and death, toward the East, the place of sunrise and life; a pilgrimage of the soul, affected, at least in this state of its journey, in the sandals of Human Nature—a long, weary road. He is, finally, if he be worthy, a finder of the greatest Eternal Life here and now, while walking the secret man may know, whereby he is reborn to dim paths of earth and time. O my soul, remember, strive, persevere, and rejoice!

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[1] For a fuller characterization and exposition of the three degrees as steps in the ascent and unfoldment of man—the first moral, the second intellectual, the third spiritual—see *The Meaning of Masonry*, by W. L. Wilmshurst, especially the first three chapters, in which a gracious and wise teacher sets forth, with clear insight, the deeper symbolism of Craft Masonry. (See also *Symbolism of the Three Degrees of Masonry*, by Oliver D. Street.)

> Man gropes his way in the darkness of ignorance to the door of the Hall of Learning, where he is taught the knowledge of things as recognized by the senses—the certitude born of experiment. Thence, if he is worthy, he passes to the Hall of Wisdom, where he learns meanings—the intuitive apprehension of truth by the finer perceptions of the mind. Finally, if he is brave and clear-seeing, he may pass to the higher degree of Understanding, and become a Master of Compassion. What is understanding? It is the art and insight by which we link the facts of learning with the interpretations of wisdom and find the Truth—that is, the adaptation of the things of form to the life of the spirit. (*Initiation*, by A. A. Bailey.)

> Thus initiation is far more than a ceremony; it is in fact a high, hard path which we must walk to know the truth, of which degrees and dramas are only means and symbols. It is a beginning, as the word means—from the Latin *in*—into, and *ire*—to go; therefore to go into; passing beyond the physical to the spiritual; and that takes time, patience, courage, discipline.

Tell me, Brother Man, if in all the world of wisdom and prophecy, in science or philosophy, you have found a faith more profound, a plan of life more noble, a task more challenging, a hope more enchanting! One thinks of the Sonnet by Carl Claudy, who asked of Masonry her meaning, and answers the question in words that set our souls singing:

> What hath thy lore of life to let it live?
> What is the vital spark, hid in thy vow?
> The millions learned, as thy dear paths they trod,
> The secret of the strength thou hast to give:
> "*I am a way of common men to God.*"

CHAPTER III

The Corner Stone

I

The corner stone of Masonry, at once its first and greatest Landmark, the basis of its plan and purpose and prophecy, is the old and simple Faith in God which finds its purest revelation and clearest interpretation in the Holy Bible—God the Great Architect and Master-Builder of the Universe; God the Father of Humanity, its solidarity and salvation; God the Maker of heaven and earth and all that in them is, before whom silence is eloquence and wonder is worship. Other foundation there is none; upon God Masonry builds its Temple of Brotherly Love, Relief, and Truth.[1]

In nothing is our gentle Craft wiser than in laying its foundation; it begins at the beginning and puts first things first. God is the first Fact and the final Reality—the Truth that makes all other truth true; the corner stone of faith, the keystone of thought, the capstone of hope. Nay, more; God is the meaning of the universe, its rhythm and its reason, the secret

[1] While Masonry has never specifically defined what men shall think about God—leaving such an ineffable matter to each man and his own soul—it is only fair to add that the Craft has been overwhelmingly Theistic in its thought, as over against a dim Deism and a vague Pantheism, to say nothing of the thin theories and arid abstractions which in the modern mind try to do duty for God. By Theism is meant the faith that the ultimate ground of the universe which men call God is intelligent will working out a moral purpose, in the course of which He consciously and beneficently influences human fortunes, and may be sought by man in aid of his high ends and deep needs. No logicomathematical Entity, no Vital Urge such as Bergson expounded, no subsistential values whereof we read in *The New Rationalism*, by Spaulding, meets the need of Masonic faith and life, but a God of moral love, warm, friendly, forgiving, responsive to human appeal, and revealing His will for the life and labor of man. The faith expounded by Oliver in his *Theocratic Philosophy of Freemasonry* is still valid, though we may interpret it in different terms in the new thought-world in which we live in our day.

of its integrity, the source of its goodness, the sign of its sanity; its author and its end. Thought about God is thought in its longest reach; trust in God is the highest wisdom and the deepest joy. Beyond Him human faith cannot go; short of Him it cannot rest.

Everything in Masonry has reference to God, implies God, speaks of God, points and leads to God. Not a degree, not a symbol, not an obligation, not a lecture, not a charge but finds its meaning and derives its beauty from God, the Great Architect, in whose Temple all Masons are workmen. Every Lodge is erected to God and labors in His name, seeking to make His will the design upon its Trestle-Board.[1] No initiate enters a Lodge without first kneeling and confessing his faith and trust in God, whose love is the fountain of fraternity. The greatest symbol of Masonry, the Triangle, is the oldest emblem of God in the history and faith of man. Under His arching sky, upon His friendly earth where man goes forth to his labor, Masonry toils for the glory of God.

Upon the Altar of every Lodge, at which every Mason takes vows of chastity and charity, lies the open Bible, the Book of the Will of God, revealing the sanities and sanctities of life. Its writers were seers who beheld God in the ongoing of nature, in the unfolding of history, and in the yearning heart of man. In a sense unique and overwhelming, it is a book, not about God, but a book of God. Even in its driest chronicles one is aware of the presence of God, as David heard Him moving in the rustle of the mulberry tree. In the "forest of the Psalms," along the dreamy ways of prophecy, in Gospel, Epistle and Apocalypse, God is the one living and blessed reality, the companion of the journeying generations, the atmosphere of the life of man and his everlasting hope.

Truly God is in Masonry—in its faith, its ideals, its labor—and without Him it has no meaning, no mission, no ministry among men. For, when faith in God fades, then falls that "house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens." Then, too, is stultified the prayer of a true Mason, "by patient continuance in well-doing" to be "built us as living stones into a

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[1] In many jurisdictions the Lodge is dedicated "to God and the holy Saints John," as patron saints of the Craft, though it is hard to know why Lodges are not dedicated to St. Thomas, the Saint of Architecture. Our two Saints do, however, embody the genius of the Craft, St. John the Baptist, prophet of righteousness, rebuker of kings, martyr for purity; and St. John the Beloved Disciple, the Evangelist of Love. There are, besides, the Four Crowned Martyrs, hallowed in our history and legend, and rightly so, because saints are to Religion what poets are to literature.

spiritual house," meet for the praise of God. As a great Craftsman said,[1] "I bear my last witness, God willing, and it testifies that of God moveth the great Rite of Masonry."

II

There is no need that any one argue to prove that God exists. No proof is possible; no proof is needed. No vital faith is ever secured, still less maintained, by debate. There is no proof in reason for anything which we fundamentally believe, if only because reason is not fundamental. Men do not believe in God because they have proved Him; they are always trying to prove Him because they cannot help believing in Him. Faith in God is not the fruit of logic, but of experience of life. It is the function of reason to clarify, justify and interpret the truth learned by living. The Bible does not argue; it opens the windows and lets in the light.

Each age has its arguments for God, but the arguments of one age often seem empty and inadequate to the next—frail ghosts of a time far gone. The arguments pass away but the faith remains. The four historic arguments may still be stated with power, but they do not prove that God exists. They only prove that He ought to exist. As Voltaire said, "If there were no God it would be necessary to invent Him," because He is necessary to the healthful working of the human mind. Ever the quest of man goes on, trying to answer the questions, Who am I? Why am I? Whence did I come? Whither do I go? The only answer is God, and as the mind of man enlarges, as his thought fits more truly into the interstices of reality, his vision is clearer and his faith firmer. Yet, evermore, the horizon lengthens, the vista deepens, and the wonder of God gathers and grows.[2]

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[1] *Emblematic Freemasonry*, by A. E. Waite. Elsewhere, in speaking of the fact that compilers of the modern Ritual of Craft Masonry—Anderson and Preston, whom Sir Alfred Robbins once described as "a pushing parson and a pugnacious printer"—did not for the most part know what they were doing, yet that they wrote "as if guided by a blind though unerring instinct" "which made even the foolish old scholars of the past see through their inverted and scoriated glasses something of what Masonry actually is, and therefore, in the midst of much idle talk, they provided, unconsciously to themselves, a master-key of the Sanctuary." (*Studies in Mysticism.*)

[2] Recently it has been my honor to edit a symposium setting for the form which the thought of God takes in the mind of our day, entitled *My Idea of God*, to which men of all schools of spiritual thought contributed. Other books in the same field are *The Experience of God in Modern Life*, by Eugene Lyman, *The Meaning of God in Human Experience*, by W. E. Hocking,

Often truth is made vivid by its opposite, as night brings out the stars hidden by day. Emerson was wont to say, "If there ever was one good man, there will be another and there will be many"; but without God the life of a good man is a mystery, if not a tragedy. It is an exotic flower growing in the air, without seed or root. There is nothing to suggest it, nothing to sustain it, nothing to fulfill its promise. By the same token, it is not the base man but the good man who is most profoundly bereaved when the vision of God grows dim. There is no keener pain known to man than a loss of the sense of the reality of God, doubly so for a refined and sensitive nature, as witness the words of Nietzsche lamenting the loss of his right, as he felt, to pray—words which move like the overture of a great symphony of despair and chill us like a breath from out the Void:

> Never more wilt thou pray, never more worship, never more repose in boundless trust—thou renouncest the privilege of standing before an ultimate wisdom, an ultimate mercy, and unharnessing thy thoughts—thou hast no constant watcher and friend for thy seven solitudes—there is now no redeemer for thee, no one to promise a better life—no more reason in what happens, no love in that which shall happen to thee—thy heart hast now no resting place, where it needeth only to find, not to seek—man, of thy self-denial, wilt thou deny thyself all this? Whence wilt thou gain the strength?[1]

There is the lonely horror which settles like a pall over man when faith in God fades, and it is no wonder that it drove him mad. Such is the fatality of thought. Men seem to be—often seek to be—Atheists, yet the wildest flight of thought is haunted by the presence of God.[2] Of a truth

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Moral Values and the Idea of God, by W. R. Sorley, and *The Idea of God*, by Pringle-Patterson. These are noble volumes in which we see that our thought of God is the sum of many moods, many insights, many doubts, many affirmations, and through them all we arrive, not at comprehension but at least at consecrating confidence.

[1] Life and Letters of Nietzsche, by his Sister.

[2] Many men have been called Atheists—and thought themselves to be such—when in fact they were only denying some crude and unworthy idea of God; as Socrates was branded as an Atheist because he denied many of the gods of Greek mythology; as the early Christians were called Atheists for the same reason. Others think themselves Atheists—or at least Agnostics—because they cannot "prove" God as they prove a multiplication sum, forgetting that none of the highest values of life can be proved in that manner. As Dr. L.

it has been said, God has made us for Himself, and our hearts are restless, weary and alone until they rest in Him. Jean Paul Richter was right; no one is so much alone in the universe as a denier of God. With an orphaned heart, which has lost the greatest of Fathers, he stands mourning by the immeasurable corpse of nature, no longer moved or sustained by the Spirit of the universe, but growing in its grave; and he mourns, until he himself crumbles away from the dead body. It may be difficult to keep our faith in God at times, but the alternative is far more difficult—aye, it is desperate, and the very denial of God is proof of the sanity of faith.[1]

III

No tale ever told in fairyland is more fascinating than the story of the thought of God in the mind of man. Life is the basis of faith in God—life with its pain and peril, its joy and woe, its pitiful broken beauty, its fleeting fellowships and its long partings; life so brief at its longest, so broken at its best. Older than all arguments, it is a faith deeper than all dogma, as old as the home and the family, as deep as infancy and old age, as deep as love and death. Men lived and died by faith in God ages before philosophy was born, long before logic had learned its letters. If we have ears we may hear Vedic poets and penitential psalmists praising God on yonder side of the Pyramids. In Egypt, five thousand years ago, a great king wrote of the unity and purity of God, celebrating the beauty

P. Jacks put it: "God is God just because a 'proof' that would put Him beyond the reach of all possible cavil cannot be given—and just because He can confirm Himself and does confirm Himself against all denials and contradictions, being Himself the Author of the question that prompts those denials and contradictions." "Or, as the old Freemason in Tolstoy's *War and Peace* said to the Count, 'Whom dost thou deny?' " But absolute denial, as in the case of Nietzsche, is insanity, and ends in obfuscation—he died in a madhouse. Such an experience may be only a passing shadow, as we see in the life of George John Romaine, who lost faith in God but regained it, whereof he tells us in a passage of great, great beauty and impressiveness. (*Thoughts on Religion*.)

[1] No man ever saw life without God with a more terrifying intensity than Dostoevsky—the greatest of the Russians and one of the profoundest minds of modern times—and as a result in his novels we find more terror, cruelty and suffering than in all the literature of the ages which went before him. He was gifted with an insight so penetrating that he seemed to see beyond life, and the vision was unbearable. He was in truth a God-tormented man, as he said, driven to God by the sheer force of facts in himself and in life. The young men in our day who play at being Atheists, and think it very smart, ought to read the stories of the mighty Russian and feel his experience of life without God—a sense of a gray eternity, of suns grown cold, of voices calling without sound across a frozen universe. (*Dostoevsky, A Critical Study*, by J. Middleton Murry.)

of the world. Let me trace, as vividly as possible, the long slow climb of faith in the heart of man:

First, it was an advance *from Nothing to Something*, from a vague, bewildered awareness in man of himself and the world to the sense of a Presence. How little can we realize the earliest musings of man when thought first found a throne in his brain—the dawning of faith out of fear, of polytheism out of animism, his sense of kinship with the world, his worship of spirits in stones, in trees, in flowing waters. Such a book as *The Golden Bough*, by Frazer, shows us man feeling after God, if haply he might find Him, groping his way through a jungle of shadows, following a flickering light. It is an encyclopedia of superstitions, but it does portray the birth and childhood of faith, its growth from magic into mysticism, from polytheism to pantheism. It is a far cry from the early poetic myths to the poetry of Wordsworth—a sweet voice singing among the English lakes—but both were aware, in different degree—

> Of Something far more deeply interfused,
> Whose dwelling is the light of setting suns
> And the round ocean and the living air
> And the blue sky, and in the mind of man.

Second, it was a long step forward when faith passed, slowly, *from Something to Some One*, from gods many to one God, over all, in all, through all; from personification to Personality. In the Abbey painting in the Boston Public Library we are shown the dawning of a nobler vision of God out of the dark night of animal worship; it is like a sunrise in Nature—truth rises and the shadows flee away. For ages the old gods lingered—as lower, lesser deities—haunting places and things; but more and more there grew a sense of one God above all others—an unknown, awful God, whether good or evil man did not know. In none of the early religions—except in Persia—do we find any Devil, because some lesser god fulfilled that function. In our own day a man like Wells sees above our troubled mortal life "a Veiled Being,"[1] whose character and purpose are hidden, and he thinks it a new discovery; it is in fact a primitive idea long since left behind. As the Samoan chief said to the missionary, "We know that at night Some One goes by among the trees, but we never speak of it."

[1] *God, The Invisible King*, by H. G. Wells.

Third, it was a day to divide time into before and after when faith advanced *from Some One to the Holy One*, from a unifying Power to a consecrating Moral Empire. This revolutionary insight we owe to Hebrew genius which dared, once for all, to identify the stupendous Power above with the Moral Law within, giving a new date and depth to the history of faith. The vision made the fame of the Hebrew race immortal, and set apart their ancient shrine on Mount Moriah as the loftiest temple ever uplifted by man—because dedicated to the Unity, Righteousness and Spirituality of God. With the single exception of Indian theism, all the theisms of the world today depend on the Hebrew faith. It made the old polytheisms and pantheisms obsolete; it made the world an orderly place, not the playground of dark Fate and wild Chance; it covered the precious possessions of humanity with an infinite security. For that reason the Temple of Hebrew faith became, as in the imagery of our Craft, the symbol of a moral structure sheltering the holy things of the life of man.

Just because we assume a righteous God who requires righteousness of men, we do not—perhaps cannot—realize the horror which haunted the hearts of men until they became aware and assured of the goodness of God. Man has known, from the beginning, that he is every moment dependent upon a Power other and greater than himself, by whatever name he called it—Fate, Force, Destiny, God. The real question—the crux of all questions—is not as to the fact of such a Power, but as to the nature and character of Him "in whose great hand we stand." For, naturally, our thought of God determines what we think about everything else, about ourselves and our fellow men; about life and duty and destiny. No wonder, then, the vision of a Moral God, eternally and unchangeably pure and true and good, brought relief to the noblest natures, released the finest powers of the soul, and inspired the spacious and magnificent poetry of Hebrew psalms and prophecy.

By a sure and clear insight, our wise and gentle Masonry, in searching the noisy and confused quarry of human thought and faith, found a precious stone—too often rejected by builders hitherto—and made it the head of the corner; the truth of a righteous God who asks of man that he do justly, love mercy, and walk humbly with the Eternal. By an insight equally clear, our fathers opened upon the Altar the Holy Bible, the moral manual of mankind, making it the center of the Lodge and "the master light of all our seeing." As we gather about it, each of us has

a profound quiet deep down inside, just to live under the spell of such a Book and the things it tells; and when we see it on the Altar of the Lodge we know we are not following a dim taper, but the light of God shining through our mortal days.

IV

But the great day of the feast arrived when human faith, divinely daring, was led and lifted *from the Holy One to Our Father*, carrying the sublime adventure forward, keeping all that had been won and lifting it to the highest. If Hebrew monotheism moralized life, Christian faith humanized it. Hints and gleams of this all-transfiguring vision had been seen from the heights of song and prophecy. "Like as a father pitieth his children, so the Lord pitieth," said the Psalmist. "As one whom his mother comforteth, so will God comfort you," said the greatest prophet of old. The ancient seers saw that man lives in God, who is "our dwelling place in all generations"—like an old ancestral home in which a family lived, and one by one passed away; but it remained for Another—standing in their tradition and glorifying their vision—to show us that God lives in man. The idea of God was reborn in the life of Jesus, shepherded by love and joy and wonder—revealing the Everlasting Truth by what is true and everlasting in the human heart.

Jesus revealed the spirit and nature of God through what is deepest, highest, holiest in man, finding in His Father-heart winter, spring, summer, and autumn glory, as on the hills of home. The teaching of Jesus in parable, in sermon, in conversation, in all His incomparable eloquence—bright with color, warm with sympathy, profound as life and death—is so simple that it is startling. "If ye, being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more your Father"—how strange that man finds it so hard to believe that God is as good as man is! Yet that is what Jesus asked us to think and believe, and he enshrined his Gospel of the love of God in the parable of the Prodigal Son, which ought to be named the Parable of God the Father.

The hero of the story is not the boy who went away, wasted his substance in riotous living, and returned ragged, haggard and hungry, nor the boy who stayed at home, faithful, respectable, and selfish—so cold that one could skate all round him. No, the hero of the parable is

the foolishly fond old father, bowed with age, broken with grief—all-enduring, all-forgiving—waiting on the house-top, watching for his lost boy—thinking him dead, but still keeping watch, as love watches beside a grave—recognizing his gait afar off, running to meet him, stopping his confession of sin with a kiss; forgetting all else, except to plead with the elder brother to be brotherly and forgive—wild with a heart-breaking joy: "My son was dead, and is alive; he was lost, and is found!" There is revealed a love that lasts all down the years and beyond; a love that never tires, and has in it the secret of unknown redemptions. Time does not limit it. Death does not end it. Nor height nor depth can defeat it!

What this revelation means, in all its sweep and grandeur, we have not begun to imagine, much less to realize. There are three stages in the growth of unfolding of it in the life of man: First, when he awakes from the wonder of infancy and becomes aware of himself as a person, separate from others, with a moral responsibility of his own. Second, when he discovers that God is the One with whom he really has to do in the adventure of life. God may be to him only a Power, or, as with most of us, a Big Man up in the sky, venerable, grave, sometimes kindly, often stern, always watchful; but that day marks a step toward manhood. Third, when he passes, suddenly or slowly—taught, it may be, by the love of his own father, or by the fact that he himself is a father—from the idea of God as a Power, a Ruler, to the sense of God as Father; that is his real birthday. Happy is the man who has learned this truth, not as a pretty theory, but as the meaning of life—he is free indeed![1]

(1) *Such a faith will determine our reading of the meaning of life and our philosophy of history*. As Tolstoi has said, the most terrible thing to man is not the fear of death—no brave man fears death—but a dread

[1] "You speak of 'Our Father,' " said an old Indian to Egerton Young. "That is very new and sweet to us. We never thought of the Great Spirit as Father; we heard Him in the thunder, saw Him in the lightning, and we were afraid. So, when you tell us that the Great Spirit is Father, that is very beautiful to us. Is he your Father?"

"Yes, He is my Father," said Young, not knowing what else to say.

"Then," said the old red man, "does it mean that he is my Father—an old Indian's Father, too?"

"Yes, that is true," said Young.

"Then we are brothers!" said the old man. "Well, it does seem to me that you, my white brother, have been a long time coming with that Great book to tell that story to your brothers in the woods." (*By Canoe and Dog-Train*, by Egerton Young.)

of the meaninglessness of life. If God is a Father, our days do not ebb out their hours in futility—no, life has meaning, worth, nobility. In the same way, the long human march through the ages is not a blind groping without leadership. Through the centuries there runs an "increasing purpose"—invisible, it may be, in nearby events, but made clear in the long teaching of Time—which is leading humanity to "the far off Divine event."

(2) *Faith in God the Father affects our interpretation of the events of life*. Sorrow, evil, sin, all the tragedy of life—youth blighted in its bud, manhood shattered in its prime, the cup of death forever pressed to the lips of love—all the woe of mortality, in which each of us has his share, or soon or late, becomes bearable if we are assured that it has a reason, and is not the whim of chance, or the freak of Fate. Man can endure much—anything, perhaps, even if his heart breaks—if he knows that an Eternal Goodness rules things, and we are not at the mercy of blind Force.

(3) *Trust in God determines our sense of values*. Life, character, honor, virtue, truth, service, sacrifice, all the high, heroic qualities have new worth and luster in the light of the master truth of the Fatherhood of God. The discipline of life, no less than its opportunity, finds reinterpretation in this faith. Prayer is as natural as the song of a bird.[1] Love turns prophet and foretells a radiant future; hope is triumphant. Life does not dismay nor death terrify, if we are convinced that in all, above all, underneath all, there is the love of a Father who knows and feels and cares; a love, as Dante said, one with "the love that moves the sun and all the stars."

Such, in dim outline, is the story of faith in God in the life of man, rising from lowly, groping, shadow-haunted thoughts to the loftiest truth

[1] In Masonry we are everywhere taught that no one ought to enter upon any great or important undertaking without prayer to God for guidance. It is not a perfunctory exhortation: prayer is both a mystery and a necessity. No one knows how prayer is answered, but he may know that it is answered by the inward sustaining that it brings. As Meredith said: "Who rises from prayer a better man, his prayer is answered." Elsewhere he put it in this way: "Take this for the good in prayer, that it makes you repose on the unknown with confidence, makes us flexible to change, makes us ready for life! He who has the fountain of prayer in him will not complain of hazards. Prayer is the recognition of laws; the soul's exercise and strength; its thread of conjunction with them. Cast forth the soul in prayer, you meet the effluence of the outer truth, you join with the creant-elements giving breath to you." (*Beauchamp's Career*. Chap. 29.)

man may know on earth; and it is all he needs to know. To know God as our Father—to realize that, though He holds the worlds in His hand, yet these wistful, quivering, questioning souls within us are made in His image, and are precious in His eyes—this is life indeed. There is much in nature to appall and affright, much in history to stagger and dismay; but once we know that the heart of "the veiled Father of men" is unfathomably kind, all the world is new. Nature then goes forward to music. Nor is it always a battle chant to which she keeps step. In her song are all things—the shout of victory and the sob of defeat, but also the ripple of the brook over the stones, the murmur of the trees, the laughter of little children, and the thunder in the mountains.

V

Yet, oddly enough at first, if all the teaching of Masonry implies the Fatherhood of God, its ritual does not actually affirm that truth, much less make it a test of fellowship. It is not an oversight, but a bit of deep and true wisdom for which all men must be grateful, if they know what lies back of it.[1] If Masonry made faith in God the Father a basis of membership, it would debar many a noble man who is unable to attain to that faith, much as he wants to hold it and tries, amid the tragedies of life, to win it. Besides, it is only by the practice of Brotherhood that men actually realize the truth of God the Father; and it is the mission of Masonry to lead and lift men to the truth.[2]

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[1] There is such a thing as "a blasphemous familiarity with God," as Matthew Arnold said: "I too would say God if you would not speak of him as if he were a man in the next room." Perhaps he was fastidious, but he had a fine sense of spiritual manners. One feels the same exquisite sense of reverence in Masonry, in that it uses the name of God so rarely; and its wisdom is confirmed by the oldest living religion, as witness the following words from Rabbi Enelow:

"When your mind affirms the existence of God, do not let your imagination conceive of Him in a limited and material form. Your mind must realize only the necessity of His existence, and then turn back. Therefore set a bound to your mind, and do not let it go too far. Affirm His existence, but keep your intellect from trying to comprehend Him. Run toward the affirmation of His existence, and then turn back so you may form no limited image. As we read in *The Book of Creation*, the old Jewish mystical book: 'If thy heart runs, turn back.' " (*My Idea of God*, edited by Joseph Fort Newton.)

[2] The Book of Holy Law speaks plainly in this matter, telling us that the man who says he loves God and hates his Brother is a liar. It is by Brotherly Love that we know God, the Father. (1 John, chapter 4.) Or, as Goethe—himself a Mason—put it in a memorable saying: "God cannot be uttered; He can only be acted." In other words, God is not to be

In nothing is Masonry wiser than in its attitude in regard to the deep and delicate things of the soul, its trust in God, its thoughts about Him, its fellowship with Him. It lays down no dogma about God, it speaks His name rarely, using, instead, the august phrase "the Great Architect of the Universe"—a phrase which is like a chalice into which each man may pour such truth as his insight and experience may win, such beauty as his vision may behold; at the same time allowing his Brethren a like liberty and joy. The life of man with God is a thing so intimate, so inward, so utterly individual, that to violate its privacy, or to invade its sanctity, is a sacrilege, if not a blasphemy. There is, indeed, a truth which no man can learn for another and no one can know alone; and Masonry offers a fellowship in which men may learn together the truth that makes us men.

If only the Church had learned this simple wisdom, it would have been spared the ugly agitations which mar its fellowship and endanger its influence. For, surely, to argue angrily about God, to bandy bitter words about the sacred things of the soul, is not Religion but irreligion. It is the better way of Masonry to be silent, as we well may do in the presence of a Reality so great that all men are one in their littleness, as they should be in their faith and charity. Our Craft does not drive like a despot; it leads like a lover—trusting a Truth which is to faith what beauty is to art, what melody is to music.

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talked or argued about, but to be lived out in lives of fraternal righteousness and service. The purpose of the Lodge, as of the Church, is to lead and lift us to that purity of heart which makes God a reality, since, as the Teacher said, it is the pure in heart who see God. One recalls the striking saying of Coventry Patmore:

"The work of the Church in the world is not to teach the mysteries of life, so much as to persuade the soul to that arduous degree of purity at which God Himself becomes her teacher. The work of the Church ends when the knowledge of God begins." (*The Rod, the Root, and the Flower*.) That is to say, the Science of Initiation, in a real and not merely a ceremonial sense, is a method of discipline and culture by which we are made worthy and willing to receive the highest truth—worthy of mastership. What this means as an experience, set forth in allegory, has never been portrayed with more vividness and beauty than in the third chapter of *The Masonic Initiation*, by W. L. Wilmshurst—a writer whose pages are fragrant with the spirit and meaning of spiritual Masonry.

CHAPTER IV

The Book of Holy Law

I

As faith in God is the corner stone of Masonry, so, naturally, the Book which tells us the highest truth about God is the Magna Charta of our Order, and its Altar light. It is our Volume of Sacred Law and a Great Light of the Lodge, at once the center of its life and the source of its teaching. The Bible opens when the Lodge opens; it closes when the Lodge closes. No business is legal, no initiation is valid, without its Divine guidance. Thus the Book of Faith rules the Craft in its labors, as the sun rules the day, making its work a worship and its Lodge a temple.[1]

No one of us can ever forget that among the first things we discovered, on being brought to light in Masonry, was the Holy Bible open upon the Altar, supporting the Square and Compasses. From the Altar is poured forth upon the East, the South, and the West its white light of spiritual truth, moral law, and immortal hope. Words from the Bible were heard as we entered the Lodge in each of the degrees, and its light added luster to every tool and symbol of the Craft. Upon it we took our obligations as

[1] In one of the Dialogues of Plato there is a noble passage which it will always do us good to recall. Someone had been asking Socrates as to how one in this world might get guidance as to the whole of this great business of living—yea, and beyond. Socrates, with perfect candor and with a good deal of sadness, replies in effect that, just as were one going a voyage he would naturally consult those who have gone the voyage before him, and would pay heed to the words of wise men about to make the venture, so, he says, we should face life with the best wisdom we can secure, and on that a man must make the voyage not without risk; unless," he concludes, "*there be somewhere some word from God*." The whole meaning of the Bible is that we have such a Word from God, so far as the Divine Word can be uttered; and that is the Masonic faith in the Book of Holy Law and Love which lies open upon the Altar of the Lodge.

Masons, sealing our vows with a simple act of affection, and we were exhorted to make the old familiar Book the rule of our faith and our guide in the practice of Brotherly Love, Relief, and Truth.

At each step in our advancement we were reminded that the Bible is the wisest teacher and best friend of man, directing his feet, if he will but follow, to the Temple of Virtue in which alone we can find liberty and peace. To defend, preserve, and obey the Bible is the first duty of every Mason, from the highest officer to the humblest workman. While, as an order, our Craft affirms no set dogma about an infallible Bible, yet in practice it does adopt the spirit of the old Anglo-Saxon word *in-fall-hein*, in the sense in which our forefathers used it in the early English tongue, as meaning "that which will not fall down." No argument is needed; the fact proves it. Ages of experience attest the strength and wisdom of the Bible as the Book of the Will of God in the life of man, outlasting all dogmas devised to defend it.

Of a truth our Craft is wise in the light by which it is led, building its temple square with the moral order of the world and the needs and hopes of man, resting its faith, its philosophy, and its fellowship upon a revelation of spiritual verity. For, however men may differ in dogma, wise men of every creed agree that in the Bible are to be found those truths of faith and laws of morality upon which to build an upright character and a stable social order. Since it is the purpose of Masonry to lead men to righteousness, it opens the Bible upon its Altar, with the injunction to all its sons to study it diligently and follow it faithfully, to learn the duty of man upon earth and his hope of a life hereafter.

Very wisely, too, Masonry adopts no one system of dogma, beyond the basic truths of faith in God, loyalty to the moral law, the duty of brotherly living, and a hope of life beyond the shadow of death.[1] Nor does it permit

[1] A clear-sighted teacher of our Craft put it aptly in a phrase worthy of remembrance, when he said: "Masonry is factual religion with a simple creed." (*Builders of Men*, by John G. Gibson.) For that reason we are justified in calling it a Science, since it deals with the facts of the moral and spiritual life. Faith in God, the moral law, and the hope of eternal life are as much facts in our human world as mountains and rivers and seas are in the natural world. They are here; they are a part of human nature; they must be reckoned with as human assets. Our interpretation of them may differ according to temperament, environment, training, and experience; but the facts remain, and upon them Masonry builds—unity as to fact, liberty and toleration as to meaning and application. As I put it years ago and do now repeat for sake of emphasis: "Beyond the facts of faith Masonry does not go. With the subtleties of speculation concerning those truths, and the unworldly

the discussion of sectarian issues within its Lodges, "as what never yet conduced to the welfare of the Lodge, nor ever will," to use the words of the old Constitutions. Instead, it encourages each man to be steadfast in the faith his heart loves best, wherein he finds help for today and hope for the morrow; and to allow all his fellows the same right. Like a wise mother, it takes us by the hand, leads us to the Altar, and points to the open Bible, urging each to be true to the light he there shall find, and as he there shall find it.

II

The history of the Bible in the life of Masonry needs to be retold in brief, if only to reveal how the Holy Book came to its place of command in the Lodge. As has been said, in the Middle Ages our Craft was a Christian order toiling in the service of the Church; and this fact finds reflection in its oldest extant documents, such as the Regius Poem. Like other guilds of the period, our ancient Brethren had their own patron saints, and observed the religious festivals when candles were burned and prayers offered at a shrine. There were, to be sure, many cults or schools, within the Church and outside, devoted to occultism, mysticism, and various kinds of symbolism, and these may have influenced the Craft to some degree. But, as a whole, the Masons were loyal to the only Church then in existence, and remained so while the cathedrals were a-building.

Let it be remembered that in the Church of that time, as in the same Church today, the Bible was not the supreme authority and source of light in matters of religious faith and practice. The Church, not the Book, was the final court of appeal, and this fact is reflected in the documents of the Craft. While the Bible is mentioned in the old manuscripts of the Order, and had a place of honor in the Lodge as the Book on which the oath of a Mason was taken, it is nowhere referred to as a Great Light of the Lodge. For example, in the Harleian MS dated about 1600, the obligation of an initiate closes with the familiar words: "So help me God, and the holy contents of this book." In an ancient Ritual, a copy of which from the Royal Library in Berlin is given by Krause, there is no mention of the Bible as one of the Lights of the Lodge.

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envies growing out of them, it has not to do. There divisions begin, and Masonry was not made to divide men, but to unite them." (*The Builders*, pp. 152, 155.)

As soon as the stupendous upheaval of the Reformation shook the religious world, the center of gravity was shifted. For whole nations, as well as for a large section of the Church, the scepter of religious authority passed from the Church to the Bible, and this fact may be traced in the history of Masonry. As in the Protestant Church, so in the Lodge, the Bible became supreme, its slow elevation being not unlike the elevation of the Square in our Ritual, giving a basis of faith to the Craft, color to its rites, and consecration to its labors. Amid records so scanty and scrappy we are unable to trace the many influences which must have been at work leading up to and converging in the transformation of Masonry in 1717, which was in fact a revolution. Some of us would give much to know the story, especially on its religious side.

Howbeit, if the Bible is not mentioned in the Constitutions of 1723—not even in the article on "God and Religion"—save in footnotes added by Anderson, we know that it was present in the Lodge. Instead, it was so securely enthroned that its existence and authority were assumed, and did not need to be armed. None the less, as a fact, not until we reach the Rituals of 1790 do we find the Bible described as one of the Great Lights of the Lodge. Yet all the while, in the midst of the Great Schism which rent the Craft for more than fifty years, the Holy Book held its place of honor on the Altar of the Lodge, its light shining the brighter as sectarian rancors were removed. Today it is central, sovereign, supreme, a source of light, a focus of fellowship; and its power has grown until it has become itself a symbol of the ever-unfolding Revelation of God in the life of humanity—a pillar of Cloud by day, a pillar of Fire by night.

III

So much every Mason of every rite ought to know of when and how the Holy Bible came to its throne in the Lodge, and why it lies open upon the Altar. Also, what is not less important, such facts help us to understand the attitude of Masonry toward the Bible, and the use which it makes of it. In nothing is our Craft more unique, more strategic, than in its wise and happy art of uniting men in honor and love of the Bible. For, as every one knows only too well, there has been more dispute about the Bible than about any other book, making for division and debate, in which good men bandy bitter words and brand each other as enemies of God. How then does Masonry take the same Holy Book and make it

"the center of union, and the means of conciliating true friendship," as the old Constitutions tell us?

The answer is that Masonry knows a certain secret, almost too simple to be found out, whereby it avoids both sectarianism and intolerance. For one thing, it takes the fact of the Bible, its light, its power, its moral law, its spiritual vision, its inherent majesty and might over the soul of man, leaving each man to interpret that fact in such terms as he can.[1] In other words, it takes the truth that is holier in usefulness, and does not stay to deal with theories of how the truth came to be. It has to do with realities, not with dogmas. For example, it offers no theory of the inspiration of the Bible. Therein it is wise, since no theory is equal to the facts. How could it be? To form an adequate theory of inspiration a man would have to be inspired, and then he would not need it.

Take the plays of Shakespeare and attempt to account for his amazing genius, its depth and power, its fertility and splendor. Follow the path back into the hills of his ancestry, and try to find the spring from which so bright a stream could flow. Make strict search and due inquiry, but you will not find it. No one can tell whence came the creative magic by which he touched an old, crude tale of lust and murder and evoked the majestic and mournful figure of Hamlet—symbol of our humanity with its haunting hesitation, and its wistful perplexity. No one knows by what secret he gave shape to the divine Desdemona, whose soul was as white as snow, as delicate as a flower, as tender as a prayer. No one can find along the banks of the Avon the birthplace of Miranda—that sweet daughter of wonder. Genius is a mystery. God breathes it.

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[1] Here is further proof—if proof were needed—of the wisdom of Masonry in emphasizing "factual religion." Every age must interpret Religion anew in a new world: it was so in the days of Abraham, and it is so today. But, though the forms and expressions of Religion change, Religion itself remains—renewing itself in each generation. Today we do not see the stars as Ptolemy saw them—his astronomy has passed away—but the stars still shine, as they shone in the Garden of Eden. Just so, while the Bible comes to us in a new binding, so to speak, and we read it in the context of the universal literature of the soul, it is the same old Bible. (*Understanding the Bible*, by W. G. Ballantine.)

How Religion is being reinterpreted in our time, and the difficulties of adjusting its ancient faith to the new and vast world which science unvails, is a matter of profound interest to all thoughtful men. (*Religion in the Making*, by A. N. Whitehead.) But Religion abides, as eternal as the soul of man—its facts as real as they have been in all ages. By building upon the facts of Religion, and allowing the widest liberty of interpretation and exposition, Masonry conserves its precious values and avoids entangling and estranging debates.

If we are unable to explain the genius of Shakespeare, how may we ever hope to fathom the deeper mystery of the Bible, whose thoughts are revelations and whose words are deeds? One man may hold that God dictated it, word by word, to the men who wrote it. Another may hold that God so lived in their hearts, and moved in their lives, that when they wrote in song what they had learned in sorrow it is a revelation to us, because it helps us to turn our sorrow into song. Nor does it matter which theory we hold, since both agree that God is in it, moving to and fro through its great rhythms as the wind breathes through the mulberry tree, as David heard it long ago. The Bible is a mystery, but one thing we do know: its old familiar words people the vacuity of Time with shapes of truth and beauty, filling drab days with Divine worth and meaning; and that is all we need to know in these our mortal years.[1]

At last a day will dawn, or soon or late, when the simple secret of our Craft will become the wisdom of the world so torn by angry debates, as useless as they are endless. It is enough to know that if we are in the dark about God, the Bible tells us what He is and what He asks of us. If we lose our way in the labyrinth of this world, its light is a lamp to our feet, however far-wandering. If we are bowed low beneath those swift and terrible blows which strike us betimes, shadowing our dreams and breaking our hearts, the old Book speaks to us in the accents of an infinite sympathy. At the end of the day, when the Shadow falls, and we betake our way along a dim path into the greatest of all Adventures, the Bible is the one light that does not fail. Surely it is enough just to open the Bible with reverent hands, and let each man read it as his heart may desire and his insight direct, the while we gather about it in one need, one hope, and one enduring friendship.

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[1] Eulogy of the Bible is not needed; but the following words from one of the greatest living scholars ought to be remembered:—"The varied music of the Bible, solemn and awful even in triumphal chants, has gone rolling on like tidal waves of ocean round the globe, following and fore-running the sun, omnipresent as the air, swelling to heaven from hill and dale, from lowly kirk and from high-arched cathedral shrine, wherever the Anglo-Saxon has set his foot, and, still more, murmuring peace and joy and hope and surcease from grief and pain in the hearts of countless millions that fleck the earth with the foot-prints of toil. It has flooded the Anglo-American world as no other book past, present, or future. Deep-dyed in the thought and speech of the Bible, for three hundred years we have cherished the sacred volume as the authoritative standard of style and of literary excellence as well as the divinely inspired guide of life and well-head of faith and doctrine."—Benjamin W. Smith.

For the same reason Masonry attempts no detailed interpretation of the Bible. To do so would involve it in endless exegesis and exposition, to the confusion of the Craft and the confounding of fellowship. As it is, however widely religious teachers may differ in their doctrines, in the Lodge they meet with mutual respect and goodwill. At the Altar of Masonry they learn not only toleration, but appreciation. In its kindly air of fellowship they discover that the things they have in common are greater than the things that divide. It is the glory of Masonry that it teaches Unity in essentials, Liberty in details, and Charity in all things; and by this sign its spirit must at last prevail. Its purpose is to bring men together, man to man, to remove the hoodwinks of prejudice and intolerance so that they may know each other and work together in the doing of good.[1]

IV

Like everything else in Masonry, the Bible, so rich in symbolism, is itself a symbol—that is, a part taken for the whole. It is a symbol of the Book of Truth, the Scroll of Faith, the Record of the Will of God as man has learned it in all lands and all ages—the perpetual revelation of Himself which God has made, and is making, to mankind. Thus, by the very honor which Masonry pays to the Bible, it teaches us to revere every Book of Faith in which man has found light and help and hope. In a Lodge consisting of Jews the Old Testament alone may be placed upon the Altar, and in a Lodge in the land of Mohammed the Koran may be used, according to the law of the mother Grand Lodge.

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[1] The spirit of toleration is the very essence of Masonry, of every rite and rank, nowhere interpreted with more insight and eloquence than by Albert Pike in his exposition of the 15th Degree of the Scottish Rite. (*Morals and Dogma*, pp. 160–175.) In Craft Masonry, no less, it was affirmed in the Constitutions of 1723, and has been a crowning glory of the Fraternity in all its history. Every American ought to read and ponder the great plea and argument of Jefferson in behalf of toleration, which lay back of his long fight for a free Church in a free State—it is one of the noblest documents in our annals. (*Life and Letters of Jefferson*, by F. W. Hirst.) There are six great books on Toleration, between 1640 and our own time; but they are all summed up in one golden little book, *Tolerance*, by Phillips Brooks—a God-illumined preacher, whose name is like a fragrance of faith, freedom, and fellowship. That little book—so clear in its analysis and so eloquent in its appeal—ought to be read today when intolerance has returned to torment our Craft and our country, and Brethren are tempted to use Masonry as a weapon of battle instead of a wand of blessing. To do so means the destruction of the Craft, or its injury beyond recovery. (See also *The Essential American Tradition*, by Jesse Bennett.)

But whether it be the Gospel of the Christian, the Book of Law of the Hebrew, the Koran of the Mussulman, or the Vedas of the Hindu, it everywhere Masonically symbolizes the Will of God revealed to man, expressing such faith and vision as he has found in the fellowship of the seekers and servants of God.[1] Such a fact, such a spirit, helps us to see what the Religion of Masonry really is, prophesying an order of fraternity not yet attained, a spirit of fellowship not yet realized; a distant but slowly dawning day when man will discover that humanity is one in nature, in need, in faith and duty and destiny, and that God is the Father of us all. Not in our day, not in many days, perhaps, but as surely as suns rise and set this vision will grow and abide; and it means much that we can see it, however remote it may be. It glows in the Bible, it lives in our hearts.

Still, though we honor every Book of Faith in which man has found comfort and command, for us the Bible is supreme, at once the mother-book of our literature and the master-book of the Lodge. In depth, in wonder, in richness of moral truth there is no book like it; none near it. Its presence in the Lodge is proof against pettiness, against all low aims and unworthy ideals, and a prophecy of the moral manhood we seek to attain. Its truth is wrought into the symbolism of the Craft and into the very fiber of our being, with whatsoever else of the good and the truth which the past has given us. Its very words have in them echoes of voices

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[1] Readers of *The Prince of India*, by Lew Wallace—a Master Mason—can never forget the scene where the Prince, with an open Bible before him, remarked: "This is the Bible, the most Holy of Bibles. I call it the rock on which your faith and mine are castled. . . . These are Bibles also, Bibles sacred to those unto whom they were given as that imperishable monument to Moses and David is to us; for they too are revelations from God—aye, the very same God! This is the *Koran*, and these the *Kings* of the Chinese, and these the *Avesta* of the Magians of Persia, and these the *Sutras* well preserved of Buddha, and these the *Vedas* of the patient Hindoos, my countrymen. Your Majesty, these are secondary matters; yet there is such light in them with respect to my main argument, that I think best to make them good by proofs, lest my reverend Brethren dismiss me as an idler in words." (Book I, chapters 1, 2, 3; also Book IV, chapters 15, 16. This is the true Masonic doctrine; since God is Light no age has been left in utter darkness and no land without its Divine Word and witness.

For a brief, authentic story of the six sacred books of the race, when, where, how and by whom they were discovered, wherein they are alike and unlike, what they teach concerning the great issues of life, duty and destiny, and the unity of faith underlying all, see *Comparative Religion and the Religion of the Future*, by A. W. Martin—a book as noble in its spirit as it is thorough in its scholarship, yet simple withal and charming in its style.

long hushed. Its pages are holy, its laws are binding, its spirit is the breath of God.

In a little study of *The Great Light in Masonry*, my effort was to describe the literary wonder of the Bible, its spiritual grace, its moral majesty, its Divine beauty, and its human pity. No words of mine are equal to such a task; they stammer and falter and fall. Far better than any words about the Bible are the words of the Bible itself—so simple, so searching, so sublime, alike in the flaming splendor of its poetry and the granitic solidity of its prose—to read which is to know whence we came, why we are here, and whither we go. Read it, Brethren; follow it faithfully, obey it honestly, trust it utterly, and learn that the Religion of a Mason is to do justly, to love mercy, and to walk humbly with his God.

CHAPTER V

The Geometry of Character

And thus was the syence grounded there, and that worthy Mr. Euclid gave it the name of Geometrie, and now it is called through all this land Masonry. Dowland's MS.

These seven liberall Sciences are found under Geometry. Neither gramar, rhetorick, logick nor any other of the said sciences can subsist without Geometry. Harleian MS.

I

After such manner the Old Charges speak of Geometry as the first of the sciences and the basis of the Masonic art. Of course, we do not have to accept the fantastic history which they relate as to the origin of Geometry. It is a tissue of legends, as interesting as they are impossible, in which Euclid is said to have been a close kinsman of Abraham! But it requires little insight to discern behind the rather crude records of the old documents of the Craft a memory, if nothing more, of the service of Geometry first to the physical and then to the spiritual life of man.[1]

[1] It is not the purpose of these pages to expound in detail the religious suggestions of the symbolism of Masonry—that task must wait. Elsewhere, in a little book entitled *Brothers and Builders*—published in America under the title, *Degrees and Great Symbols*, in the Little Masonic Library—I have tried to interpret some of the major symbols of the Lodge. If half my dreams come true I hope to carry the study further, seeking to interpret the symbolism of the Craft in the context of universal symbolism, as hinted to us in such a book as *The Migration of Symbols*, by Count D'Alviella.

Meanwhile, we have noble books in this field, such as *The Symbolism of Freemasonry*, by Mackey, *The Symbolism of the Three Degrees*, by O. D. Street, *Symbolical Masonry*, by H. L. Haywood, *Foreign Countries*, by Carl H. Claudy, *An Interpretation of Masonic Symbols*, by J. S. M. Ward; and of a more mystical kind the writings of Waite and Wilmshurst, especially *The Masonic Initiation*, the while we look forward to the lectures on symbolism by Dean Roscoe Pound, and particularly his lecture on "The Mysticism of Masonry."

In the Old Charges, as in our Ritual, we read of Pythagoras, who was the first thinker to raise mathematics to the level of a Divine Science, making it the foundation of a mystical philosophy. He held that Arithmetic is number at rest, while Music is number in motion. In the same way, Geometry is magnitude at rest, and Astronomy is magnitude in motion. These formed the four liberal arts in his system. In the thought of Pythagoras, God was "the Great Geometrician," and in his hidden schools in Greece he taught his pupils that "all things are in numbers." He was concerned, as Proclus tells us, only with number and magnitude—in short, with mathematics and music.

Plato, following the path of Pythagoras, added three other arts, Grammar, Rhetoric, and Logic; and if a man knew these seven subjects he was held to be a man of learning. Plato, too, based everything upon numbers. Over the portal of his Academy in Athens he wrote the words: "Let no one who is ignorant of Geometry enter my doors." For him Geometry was a revelation of the Eternal Mind, a path to the knowledge of God, and as such a sacred and profoundly important art.

"What does the Deity do all the while?" one of his pupils asked.

"God is always geometrizing," was his reply.

With which agrees his other famous saying: "Geometry must ever tend to draw the soul towards the truth." That is to say, what all the sciences are to our modern thinking—unveiling a world of law, order, and beauty—mathematics was to the early thinkers; and it is not strange that they regarded it with reverence and awe.

Three hundred years before our era, Euclid wrote his treatise in which he recorded all that was known of Geometry in his time; and his work still stands as the basis of the art of numbers. Better methods of proving problems have been developed, and new propositions have been discovered, but his initial insight is still valid. During the Dark Ages the science of Geometry was lost, along with much else of grace and value, in the inundation which buried classic culture; and men felt again the terror of chance, as primitive man had felt it long before. The rediscovery of Geometry by Simon Grynaceus, in the days of Luther, paved the way for modern science, and it no doubt had its influence on the documents of Masonry.

II

It is perhaps impossible for us at this distance to realize the service of the Science of Numbers to the faith and thought of man in his early thinking. It was almost his first hint of law and order in life when he sought to find some key to the mighty maze of things. Living in the midst of change and seeming chance, at the mercy of forces he did not understand, he found in the laws of numbers a path by which to escape from the awful sense of caprice and whim. Where there is no order, no stability, life hangs in the air, incalculable and terrifying. No wonder an art which revealed glimpses of unity and order in the world was held to be a Divine disclosure, and imparted its form to human faith.

"Cannot the problems be made simpler?" King Ptolemy asked, after Euclid had shown him his treatise on Geometry.

"There is no royal road to Geometry," the mathematician replied.[1]

True enough, as we learned in days gone by when we pondered over its problems; but Geometry itself became a royal road by which men discovered that Nature has certain attributes—First Truths, as they may be called—which lie at the foundation of all reasoning and research, and which may be assumed and acted upon with confidence. By following

[1] The 47th Problem of Euclid served as the frontispiece of Anderson's *Constitutions*, issued in London in 1723, accompanied by the word *Eureka* in Greek. In the text of the *Constitutions* the problem is declared to be, "if duly observed, the foundation of all Masonry, sacred, civil and military"—whatever that may mean. In the second edition of the *Constitutions*, in 1738, it is spoken of as that "amazing proposition which is the foundation of all Masonry, of whatever materials and dimensions." After that it is rather tame to read in our ritual that "it teaches us to be general lovers of the arts and sciences." No wonder Speth remarked that "while our medieval Brethren may have been familiar with its symbolic meaning, we are not."

What did Pythagoras mean by the Great Symbol? Evidently the symbolism was not in the figure but in the numbers three, four, five—especially three and four, the sum of which make the sacred number Seven. Why was seven sacred? Seven what? Perhaps the seven Divine potencies of the theology of Median Magi, under whom he studied. Of the seven three were feminine and four masculine—the female powers forming the base of the right-angled triangle, the male forces the perpendicular; the two combining to make the *Father-Mother God*, the discovery of which was indeed a revelation! What may the problem mean to us? What, indeed, if not that the reality of God is revealed only to the total powers of man, the sum of his perceptive and receptive faculties—intuition and intellect, heart and reason; and that to find God in a satisfying manner requires the fusion of all our powers of thought, will, action, love in a mystical experience—whereof our Ritual is a dim and faded shadow for most Masons!

the laws of numbers men learned to trace the regular motions of the heavens, the periodicity of the seasons, as well as to measure the earth—as in the valley of the Nile Geometry was used to find the lines and landmarks erased by the annual inundation. So, naturally, as numbers had won order out of the chaos of their earliest impressions and misgivings, men exalted mathematics to the level of Divinity, as an inspiration of God. So, also, triangles and squares were engraved on their monuments and hung in their temples.

Having revealed so much, numbers naturally came to wear spiritual meanings, in a way quite alien to our prosaic way of thinking. No doubt that was what Plato meant when he said that by measurement the soul is saved—meaning that by ordering our lives in harmony with the eternal order of the world we are redeemed from futility. Hints of this science of numbers are found in the Bible, in which certain sacred numbers recur, indicating words, suggesting thoughts, revealing truths. The last book in the Bible, instead of being a series of clouded and confused visions, is in fact a book of spiritual mathematics. Three is the signature of Deity; Four indicates the world of created things; Seven denotes peace and covenant; Ten, completeness. Even numbers symbolize earthly things, odd numbers heavenly things; and the odd and even added unite the two—as they are united in the vision of the City of God, "according to the measure of man, that is, of the angel."

It is easy enough to say that such musings are mere fancies, but that is not so. To me one of the most impressive facts in the history of human thought is the way in which the first, fresh, creative ideas of the earliest thinkers have been confirmed by the research and experience of the race.[1] For example, when Pythagoras said, "All things are in numbers;

[1] At the same time we ought to remember that the universe, as science reveals it, is a very different universe from anything the early thinkers imagined. The universe as seen by geometry is not unlike what William James called a "block universe," whereas the real universe is a living universe, not so much a mechanism as an organism. Science knows nothing of "dead matter," in the old sense of the word; indeed, it does not know what it is at all, except that it is alive with energy. Anyway, the universe in which Einstein works is very unlike the universe in which Isaac Newton lived and wrought. If any reader wishes a popular discussion of the matter, he may find it in *A Living Universe*, by L. P. Jacks, a most delightful and inspiring book, seeking to interpret the new universe—new to us—in which we live in spiritual terms. The laws and truths of geometry remain, only it is a living geometry—living laws, not dead rules—as Masonry should be. If Masonry is "a progressive science," as we read in the Ritual, it must take account of the swiftly changing vision of the universe, and interpret its teaching accordingly. Indeed, one sometimes

the world is a living arithmetic in development—a realized Geometry in repose," it was a daring insight of pure genius. Today we know that it is literally true. Take a snowflake and look at it under a magnifying glass, and you see as a fact what that mighty thinker saw as a vision. It is an exquisite example of the Geometry of God—squares, circles, triangles, pentagons, hexagons, parallelograms, more exact than the deftest hand could trace. Then look at the chart of an astronomer, and you will see writ in large letters in the sky what you read in small print in the snowflake. A dew-drop and a star are fashioned in the same way, and are ruled by the same laws.

Truly, God is always geometrizing, as Plato said; and these signs and designs, everywhere present in nature, must be the thought-forms of the Eternal Mind, else they would not be the self-sought forms of matter and motion. Ages ago Socrates tried to show Aristodemus, the Atheist, that as a statue by Polycleitus could not emerge from the quarries by mere chance, no more is it possible to imagine that the world—vaster and infinitely more intricate—came into being by chance. We take up a book like *The Life of the Spider*, by Henri Fabre, and read these words, which would be understood by Pythagoras:

> Geometry, that is to say, the science of harmony in space, presides over everything. We find it in the arrangement of a fir-cone, as in the arrangement of an Epeira's living web; we find it in the spiral of a snail shell, in the chaplet of a spider's thread, and in the orbit of a planet: it is everywhere, as perfect in the world of atoms as in the world of immensities. And this universal geometry tells us of a Universal Geometrician, whose divine compass has measured all things.
>
> Is it the ideal of a supreme Lover of Beauty, which would explain everything? Why all this regularity in the curve of the petals of a flower? Is that infinite grace, even in the tiniest details, compatible with the brutality of uncontrolled forces? One might as well attribute the artist's exquisite medallion to the steam-hammer which makes the slag sweat in the melting.

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wishes that a new Preston might arise and use Masonry as a means of teaching the truth about the world as we now know it through science, as the first Preston did in days of old.

III

Yes, God is always geometrizing—in the making of a man no less than the making of mountains and stars; in the fashioning of character as in the weaving of a spider's web. In other words, as Euclid had a mind deep enough and clear enough to discern and give first, if not final, expression to the laws of physical Geometry, so Moses, and the mighty moral seers, had minds lucid enough to discern a moral order. Nay, more; as in the mind of Euclid one attribute of the universe was made manifest, and in the moral insight of Moses another, so in the mind of Jesus—deep, sane, lucid, pure—the laws of the life of the spirit were most clearly revealed, and found their most perfect expression in His words.

These are but three forms of Geometry, physical, moral, and spiritual; and in each realm the vision is valid—moral and spiritual laws being as universal, as inescapable, as the laws of physics. Every movement of matter appears to conform to and be controlled by the laws and principles of mathematics. Not an atom curves anywhere in the universe that does not obey Geometry. When life entered, when mind and moral experience emerged, a new fact, a new force appeared, but the eternal laws ruled it. What we call spiritual values were revealed—truth, beauty, goodness, dedication, sacrifice. The universe produced these precious things as certainly as it produced pig-iron and potash—which means that it is a moral and spiritual, as well as a physical, universe. The laws and principles of Geometry which control the forms and movements of matter are laws of our own minds, inevitable principles by which we do our thinking and living. In a recent book of *Sermons of a Chemist*, by E. E. Slosson, a man of science and a man of the spirit, there is a chapter entitled "The Geometry of Ethics," in which are these words:

> Truth is one; falsehoods are infinite. Nine-tenths of the ideas that come into our heads are wrong. The object of education is to select the one that is right. Nine-tenths of the impulses that beset us are wrong. The task of civilization is to suppress the nine.
>
> No matter how complex the problem, there is never more than one right answer, one right way out, one straight and

> narrow path, hard to find and hard to follow, one road leading out of the maze of many false turns; all the others are blind alleys or paths that return upon themselves.
>
> It is an axiom of plane geometry that there can be only one straight line connecting two points. From the point where we are to the point where we wish to go, there is only one straight road; all other possible paths are more or less divergent and devious.
>
> The rules of conduct are as invariable and absolute as the rules of geometry. The only difference is that we cannot see so clearly in ethics as in mathematics. The falling of a fog makes our road obscure, but does not alter its length or direction.
>
> There is only one best move in a game of chess, whether we know what it is or not. There is only one wisest action in any emergency, whether we know what it is or not.

Such is the kind of world in which we are set to find our way—an honest world in which law rules. Nothing moves haphazard: in atom and star Geometry reigns, by the will of the Eternal Geometrician. No wildest comet goes flying through space but obeys the laws of numbers. Truly did the Psalmist say of old, "He hath set His compass upon the face of the deep." Fortuitousness is a fiction. The laws of Geometry hold as true in the arts of man as in the art of God. A building is a geometrical demonstration. Painting is colored mathematics. Music is Geometry that has found wings and a voice. A good life is a geometrical life, fashioned by laws as universal as the laws of numbers.

IV

Emerson said in a great address that "the main enterprise of the world for splendor, for extent, is the upbuilding a man"; and that is the purpose of Masonry. As an old English Ritual tells us, "Geometry, or Masonry, originally synonymous terms, is of a divine and moral nature, and enriches the student with the most useful knowledge, and, whilst it proves the wonderful properties of Nature, demonstrates the more important truths of Morality." If we wish to put it so, Masonry is moral Geometry,

and all its teaching rests upon the truth that the inner life of man—the life of faith, hope, duty, love—is a realm of law, where liberty and power and beauty are the trophies of faithful obedience and disciplined effort.

To put it plainly, order holds in the innermost places of the soul as much as in the heavens where the astronomer thinks the thoughts of God after Him. Character is no chance product, but is built according to laws as immutable and ascertainable as any law to be found in the laboratory. Freedom of soul is not capriciousness, least of all, lawlessness, but voluntary obedience to fixed laws of mind and spirit. He who builds according to the principles of righteousness will erect a character as stable as the house which the wise man built upon a rock. Storms do not shake it, floods do not undermine it. Happy is the man—memorable is the day for a young man—when he learns the Geometry of the heart, and vows to square his thought and action by the laws of the moral life, as he is taught in every lecture and obligation of his Lodge.

Let us consider, in a brief and vivid manner, the Geometry of character, its proportions and dimensions. Like the City of God which the Seer saw descending from heaven, it is foursquare, its length and breadth and height equal. The basis of the cube of character—that is to say, the length of a man, the extent of his influence and worth—is a matter of simple morality. Purity is the first measure of a man. Lacking a certain sturdy moral quality—truthfulness, honor, cleanness—he is a man only by accident of his shape, though he have the learning of Bacon, the grace of Chesterfield, and the eloquence of Webster. Morals are the boundaries of liberty and the primary fact of manhood. Nothing can take their place, since without a real moral life Religion is either a superstition or a sham. Morality is the foundation of character as it is the First Degree of Masonry.

But morality is not enough; a man may be both moral and mean—clean but cruel, righteous but uncharitable, truthful but narrow, honest but hard. If there is anything worse than the wrongs wrought by wicked men, it is the evil done by good men. That which gives breadth, beauty and mellowness to life, melting morality into goodness, is sympathy; and so to purity we must add pity. Justice runs lengthwise of life, but mercy is width, and is an evidence of nobility, of refinement, of graciousness of spirit. Lacking it, we have a Calvin in the Church consenting to the death of Servetus because of a difference of dogma, and in fiction a Javert pursuing like a sleuth hound the weary, tangled, sorrowful feet of Jean

Valjean, in the Victor Hugo story. Out of sympathy grows not only toleration, but understanding and appreciation—like a precious ointment healing the hurt and hardness of humanity. No one can forget how this is taught us in the Rite of Destitution, in the First Degree of Masonry.

In the Second Degree we are urged to use and develop our power of mind, by such study of the arts and sciences as may "lie within the compass of our attainment"; a necessary qualification, as otherwise it would set a task outside the range of human possibility. It is an exhortation to that intellectual culture without which manhood is rudimentary, a challenge to seek what Emerson called "the great freedoms of the mind," whereby we are lifted above narrowness and prejudice. It invites us to breadth of view, balance of judgment, and beauty of mind made rich by the treasures of truth stored up for our use and joy. To purity and mercy must be added "the moral obligation to be intelligent," skillful, and wise. Clear-thinking is as much a duty as kindness of heart. A noble sincerity may be dangerous if devoted to error and unwisdom, and as much a deformity as the mind of a philosopher attached to the appetite of a pig. Both betray a lack of symmetry, a flaw in the art of life.

There is yet another dimension of manhood, so often forgotten today, which we may call by the old word, piety. Some, to be sure, think it a kind of fourth dimension, a thing which you may argue exists, but which we can never realize. Not so. It is a natural, normal development of man, without which his life lacks its crown, and is a thing unfinished. Man must be tall of soul as well as broad, if he is to see life in the large, much less "see it steadily and see it whole," as the wise ones enjoin us to do. Altitude of mind gives us new proportions and perspectives, and shows us that many things of which men are wont to make much are insignificant; and that other things, like a cup of cold water offered to a brother, are of eternal moment. It is when we add this dimension that we see what man really is, measured by what is immeasurable in him. In how many ways Masonry appeals to this "better angels of our nature," seeking to evoke that within us akin to the Eternal, and which can only be uttered in symbol and sanctity and song!

Such is the spiritual Geometry of Masonry; and upon this earth there is nothing finer or more precious than the quality of character which it creates. Our kindly earth, with its swiftly flowing nights and days, knows nothing greater than a great life, founded upon moral worth, lighted by the truth, warmed by a gentle fraternal spirit, touched to tenderness by

the beauty and pathos of mortal things, busy in the service of the best causes, erect, unafraid, reverent, happy, faithful—it is the consummation of all the world, and a bright star in the glory of God.

V

In the symbolism of all peoples, in the dream of all seers, there is a vision of a Temple, of which the Temple on Mount Moriah was a parable and prophecy, slowly rising without the sound of hammer or chisel, a "Temple not made with hands, eternal in the heavens." Into that Home of all Souls, at once a shrine of faith and a shelter of the holy things of life, each of our lives is builded as living stones, by the same laws of moral Geometry. So that whatever immortality of worth or beauty may be won out of our piteous, passionate and prophetic life on earth, will be shared by all who sought the truth and served the will of God in purity of heart and fidelity of purpose.

There, on the Trestle-Board, is the plan of the Great Architect, and our business is to build together by the light of the ideal shown us in the Book of Holy Law. Out of the rough and noisy quarries of the world we are to bring the stones, polished and finely wrought, and build a Temple of Faith and Friendship, of Brotherhood and Truth. The Temple is the great Landmark—the great aim and ideal of Masonry. To build, to strengthen, to beautify it is our duty and dream, each one adding a stone to its loveliness. Nobler work is not given man to do. Happy is he who, as a faithful craftsman of the soul, can say in truth at the end of the day, "Thank God, I have marked well."

CHAPTER VI

The Temple of Brotherhood

One God and Father of all, over all, through all, and in all.—St. Paul.

The universe is rightly regarded as one commonwealth of men.—Cicero.

The men of the four seas are kinsmen.—Confucius.

Arise, tune the harp of brotherhood.—Iphal.

I

If one were asked to define Masonry in a single sentence, it would be to say: Masonry is the realization of God by the practice of Brotherhood. Or, remembering a familiar but profound phrase in our Ritual, it is Brotherly Love, Relief, and Truth; and it is by the practice of Brotherly Love and Relief that we learn the Truth. Otherwise the Supreme Truth, by which we know the meaning of life, remains a faith to be held, a philosophy to be argued, or else a mere fiction.[1]

[1] The faith and philosophy of Brotherhood, from the Masonic point of view, I have tried to state in *The Great Light in Masonry*; and do not wish to repeat here what was written there—save in outline and for sake of the record. First, the Masonic view of life obviously means that we are here in the world to build something, to do something, to become something. God made the earth, the sea, the sky, but He made no roads, built no houses—man must build these. Second, if man is to build with any hope of permanence he must build upon the Will of God. Otherwise his house rests upon sand and the floods will sweep it away. Third, he cannot know the Will of God, much less do it, without the help of God, which every degree of Masonry teaches him to invoke by prayer and also by keeping himself within the midst of it by obedience and fidelity. Fourth, the manifest Will of God is for the unity of mankind, and His purpose is Brotherhood—history being the record of "the desperate struggle for fraternity against the solitariness and selfishness of man," as Conrad put it. Fifth, thus we must learn to build together, if the Temple of Brotherhood

Such is the genius of Masonry and its wise art in all ages. It knows that we cannot know the truth until we live it, win it, and show ourselves worthy of it. For that reason, in olden times everything was not told to everybody, as if truth were a treasure to be received rather than a trophy to be achieved. No man was entrusted with the truth until he was deemed worthy to receive it. For truth abused is a terrible thing and makes for disaster and tragedy, as history has taught us many times. Not all men are capable of receiving the highest truth, much less of using it aright. Therefore, at the risk of seeming to deny its own faith, to the truth of the Brotherhood of Man, Masonry adds another truth: *the Brotherhood of Man depends on the Manhood of the Brother*.

At first sight, this may seem to be a contradiction, but it is not so in fact. These two truths must be held together in balance, and either alone is imperfect. The truth that all men are Brothers, if taken alone, often ends in a vague, dreamy sentimentalism, of which we have had so much in our day. In the same way, the truth that man must be capable of Brotherhood may easily lead to something hard to know from aristocratic vanity. It is the wisdom of Masonry that it unites the two, treating each of us as a Rough Ashlar to be cut, squared, polished, and made ready for the Temple of Brotherhood.

II

Evermore, in our noblest dream, dimly or clearly, there rises the vision of a Temple upon which we work together as Brothers and builders. It is a necessity, an inspiration, and a prophecy. One of the supreme needs of man is a sense of the common good; a perception that the good of humanity as a whole actually exists, and that the good of any race or class can be realized in a community of interest and obligation.

The ancient word is as true today as it was ages ago: "Who seeks his own loses the things in common"; nay, he loses what is rightly his own, because no man liveth unto himself.

In one of his poems William Morris speaks of the problems of man as a "tangled wood," until they are seen in the light of the meaning of life as a whole, and when,

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is ever to be completed and dedicated—the Temple being "the Great Landmark of the Craft." (*Speculative Masonry*, by A. S. MacBride.)

. . . looking up, at last we see
The glimmer of the open light,
From o'er the place where we would be:
Then grow the very brambles bright.

From the first the great seers of our race have looked up, seeking the meaning of life and its plan, the goal of its uprising passion and desire, the purpose of its organization in the home, in the state, in industry, in moral fellowship and spiritual faith; and thus they have tried to point the way out of the "tangled wood" in which men wander.

Plato dreamed of an ideal Republic, but his vision no longer satisfies us, because of its stratification of society into castes. There is the vision of the City of God by Augustine, written when Rome was reeling to its ruin, not to name other modern Utopias of many kinds, in which we see the human mind trying to form a worthy conception of the goal of human effort and aspiration.[1] But all these dreams are dwarfed by the vision that shone in the mind of the Teacher of Galilee, to whom we owe an ideal equal to our need. In nothing did the gentle Teacher reveal his greatness more truly than in his amazing faith in the communal redemption of mankind; his vision of humanity living by the law of love in a beloved community on earth. He called it the Kingdom of Heaven, to describe which he taxed the resources of his incomparable speech, trying to make the truth real and vivid to men.

If we translate his ideal into the symbolism of Masonry, it is the vision of a Living Temple—noble, stately, sheltering the sacred possessions of man—slowly rising in the midst of the ages; a Temple "building and built

[1] While all the great religions of the world teach the Brotherhood of Man as a basic tenet of faith, yet the *basis* upon which they set it forth differs in every case. Buddhism, for example, bases the doctrine on the belief that all men are so entangled in the sufferings of life that they must be Brothers out of sympathy—a Brotherhood of Pity. Zoroastrianism held that all men are Brothers because all are summoned to soldiery in the great cosmic war of light against darkness—a Brotherhood of Battle. Confucianism based the doctrine on the sense of a common task in developing mankind—a Brotherhood of Service. Christianity bases the truth of Brotherhood upon the larger, profounder truth of the Fatherhood of God. It is possible to arrive at a synthesis, in which all these deep and beautiful truths are gathered up into a more inclusive vision—as the different instruments of an orchestra blend—if we remember the word of the Seer in the sacred book of China: "Humanity is the heart of man, and justice is the path of man. The broad-minded see the truth in different religions; the narrow-minded see only the differences." (*Comparative Religion and the Religion of the Future*, by A. W. Martin. Chap. 3.)

upon," each workman not only a builder, but himself a living stone, four-square and finely wrought, to be built into the whole; each generation of builders adding an arch, a pillar, or a spire—as the grey old cathedrals were uplifted by the labor of many hands, matching the masonry of the mountains in their grandeur; each race of Masons building upon the foundations laid by their vanished comrades. In its breadth, beauty and splendor it is the noblest vision that has come within sight of our groping human mind, and it flashes before even the dullest intelligence a sense of something immortal—a sequence of aim and obligation in which each life has prophetic meaning.

Such is the ideal and outline of the Temple of Brotherhood, the design drawn upon the Divine Trestle-Board; and we ought to interpret all human institutions and activities as they are related to it. Not alone the Lodge, but the Church, the state, the home—art, industry, and the moral life—have here their sanction and consecration. Here we have hope of realizing, by anticipated attainment,

> The dream, the wondrous dream
> Of a world without a seam!
> Man being one, as God is one,
> Brother's brother and Father's son,
> All Earth, all Heaven, without a seam.

Here, too, each of us finds the worth of his own life. Not otherwise may we know the meaning of our individual lives—so brief, so broken, and often so beshadowed—save as we see them as they are related to the large purpose of the Master Builder. By such an ideal we are redeemed from insignificance and futility, and our fleeting days are endowed with epic meaning and prophecy. For, it is only when we are enlisted as fellow-workers with the Eternal that our life reveals its eternal quality and promise.

III

As has been said, the basis of our Temple of Fraternity rests back upon the reality of the Divine Fatherhood. Inevitably so, because our thought of the spirit and character of God determines our thought of our fellow man and our relation to him. If God is a mere Power, men are not necessarily Brothers. If He is a Monarch, men are only subjects, and may or may not

be Brothers. But if God is "our Father," as the Teacher taught us to pray, then all men are Brothers, to the last man of us, whether we will or no. By the fact of a common Sonship we are bound by a common Brotherhood, from which we may not escape.

The words of Jesus gathered up and glorified the wisdom that went before; and his teaching, in turn, may be summed up in a simple manner: the fatherly love of God, the brotherly love of man, and the Kingdom of Heaven on earth.[1] God the father of all, over all, in all, through all; God in the far depths of Whose Fatherhood all men of all ages and all races were conceived in love, having one nature, one need, one destiny—upon this immutable foundation Jesus rested all His teaching. The genius of His religion was the extension of the idea of the family to include all humanity, its law love of God and man, its ideal and goal a Fraternity in loyalty to which human life, both personal and social, finds fruition and fulfillment. That is to say, Brotherhood is not a mere detail of Religion, but its essence and glory, and the Golden Rule is the principle by which it may be realized.

No matter to what page we turn in the record of the words of Jesus, we find Him saying that though we have the eloquence of an angel, and even give our bodies to be burned, and have not a brotherly heart, we are nothing. In the parable of the Prodigal Son the elder brother is shown in an unlovely light, not because he stayed at home, but because he was unbrotherly to the wanderer who returned ragged and world-broken. In the parable of Dives and Lazarus the rich man lifted up his eyes in hell, not because he was rich, but because he passed by a Brother man in dire plight at his door, smitten with disease and attended by dogs; and the neglect of a suffering Brother man made the memory of his life a red

[1] What lay back of the teaching of Jesus—His profound and joyous experience of the Divine Fatherhood, His identification of Himself with humanity in its joy and woe, even in its sin, His emancipating vision of the Kingdom of Heaven—all these ineffable teachings may be read and studied in "the book of white samite, mystical and wonderful," which tells the story of His life. Of books in our time—simple, helpful, and full of beauty—the following may be named: *The Jesus of History*, by T. R. Glover, which shows us His Teachings in the setting of his life; the anonymous life *By An Unknown Disciple*, one of the best ever written; *The Young Man From Jerusalem*, by W. G. Ballantine, an exquisite story of profound meaning; *Toward the Understanding of Jesus*, by V. G. Simkhovich, one of the most searching essays of our generation; and, by no means least, the first Chapter of Part Two of *Jesus Man of Genius*, by Middleton Murry—an extraordinary piece of interpretative intuition and writing.

and blazing hell—more terrible by far than literal fire, because it burns within our own souls.

In like manner, in the parable of the Good Samaritan the priests were rebuked, not because they were priests, but because they thought that God stayed in the temple listening to prayer and song, aloof from the woes of life, whereas He is out on the rough highways of the world, the unseen companion of every man fallen by the way—His true priest a despised Samaritan who helped a man in need regardless of his race or religion. It is the same in the great Judgment Parables, in which the spirit and truth of the Teacher find focus. There men stand condemned not for their theology, or their lack of it, but because they did not visit the sick, the prisoner, and those in distress: in one word, because they were unbrotherly. So it is everywhere in the teaching of Jesus, to Whom, as to a gentle poet of our Craft,

> The crest and crowning of all good,
> Life's final star is—Brotherhood.

Such must be our insight and understanding, and still more our practice, if our fraternal sentiment is not to evaporate in misty eloquence, or else be only a rope of sand. Its roots must run down into the profound fact that men are the sons of God, and therefore are made to be Brothers; made to share the large innocence of nature and the unfailing love of God, Who cares more for a Brother than for all possessions. By the same fact, if we do not live after the law of our own nature, a veil falls over the beauty of the world, leaving us to walk alone or to struggle together in confusion. If we are to have a philosophy of fraternity, we must learn that goodness is not simply some form of similar activity of self and neighbor, but is an attitude of each to the other; a tie uniting man to all men in spiritual kinship and unity; that life is fellowship, mutuality, service—in short, that it takes two men and God to make a Brother.[1]

[1] An analysis and exposition of the metaphysics of Brotherhood, as scholarly as it is illuminating, may be found in *Self and Neighbor*, by E. W. Hirst, which deals also with the psychology as well as the philosophy and ethics of fraternity. The last chapter interpreting the application of the principle of fraternity to the complex issue of life shows us how easy it is to use fine phrases, and how difficult it is to work them out in actual conditions. Truth may be simple—though that is open to debate—but its application is intricate. Those who like strong meat for the mind ought to read, along with this book, *The Reconstruction of the Spiritual Ideal*, by Felix Adler, who shows that we have no group morality, and must

IV

Surely it is in order to ask: Since fraternity is manifestly the will of God for humanity, what basis does it have in the facts of human nature and actual life? First of all, *fraternity is a physical fact*. Humanity is essentially the same in physical structure; men are cast in the same mold, and wear the same familiar shape. St. Paul, in his address on Mars Hill, put it in forever memorable words: "God hath made of one blood all nations of men"; and that is literally true, shocking as it may be to our vanity. If we go back twenty generations, each of us will discover more than a hundred thousand ancestors; if we go back fifty generations, we find five million foresires. There is not in Western Europe a neolithic relic that is not a family relic of every one of us. The blood in our veins has handled it. Truly we are akin, and our blood is mixed beyond tracing, but ties of flesh do not hold the world together in the stress of life.

Also, *fraternity is an intellectual fact*. Socrates made the discovery—one of the greatest ever made—that human nature is universal. By his searching questions he found out that when men think round a problem, and think deeply, they disclose a common mind and a common system of truth. So there dawned upon him, from that fact, the truth of the kinship of mankind and the unity of mind; the deepest conclusions of the wisest minds are harmonious, if not identical. Here lies the clue to the fact that the same symbols have been used by widely separated peoples, and it makes them intelligible while adding to their picturesqueness and philosophic interest.

What is true of the earliest intimations of thought is equally true in the realm of science and letters: it is universal. A fact found in Egypt is verifiable in England, if it be a fact. There is no German chemistry, no British astronomy, no Russian mathematics. What is most excellent in Russia—its Tolstois, its Kropotkins, its musicians, its painters—is not Russian, but human. Goethe and Schiller, Koch and Kant are kinsmen of Shakespeare and Darwin, of Hugo and Pasteur, in the same kingdom of the mind, in which every seeker after truth is a citizen, every singer a sovereign, every teacher a leader. In the country of the mind no boundaries are known, and if there is contest without conflict, and rivalry without rancor, it is because the trophy of each becomes the treasure of all.

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carry our moral and social thinking forward another dimension, so to speak, if we are to have a living religion of Brotherhood. It is one of the great books of our generation.

Higher still, *fraternity is a spiritual fact*. Down below all sects that separate, above all dogmas that divide, there is an essential oneness of mankind spiritually. Religions are many; Religion is one. The fundamental faiths and hopes of humanity are the same, albeit differing in interpretation and expression, as men differ in degree of moral and spiritual development. The same great truths overarch men of all ages and all races. The same moral obligations command us, according to our clarity of insight to see, and our courage to obey. It is in morals as it is in music—the tom-tom and the symphony are far apart, but each, in its degree, must obey the laws of melody. As William Penn said, all devout men, all just men, are everywhere of one religion, and when death has taken off the masks they will recognize one another—only, happily, we are learning that we need not wait for death to disclose our fraternity, if we have an understanding heart and the will to fellowship. Remembering such a fact, one thinks of the words of Albert Pike:

> Had mankind from the day of the flood, steadily followed some of the lessons taught them by the industrious bees, had they associated themselves together in lodges, and taught and faithfully practiced Toleration, Charity and Friendship; had even those of the human race done so who have professed the Christian faith, to what imaginable degrees of happiness and prosperity would they not have attained—to what extreme and now invisible heights of knowledge and wisdom would not the human intellect have soared!

V

From this point of view, the only history really worth the writing is the story of the growth and spread of brotherliness among men. How has the ideal fared amid the rough forces of human nature? How much has it attempted and wrought in behalf of humanity? What have been the conditions of its victories, the causes of its failures, and how does it stand in the thought and life of man today? These are the questions most worth answering. Yet, strangely enough, no such history has ever been written, in detail at least, and we must await the advent of the true historian of

humanity. The history of the past, so far as recorded, is largely the story of kings and conquests—the story of man exploiting man.[1]

In the future we must write a new kind of history, telling the story of man understanding and serving his fellows; and Masonry must write one chapter of it. This new history is now in the making, as the world draws closer together and man learns to know mankind. The greatest discovery of our age is not radium or radio, but the discovery of the oneness of humanity—a truth forced upon us by the facts of the modern world, in annihilating distance and drawing together the ends of the earth. By the same fact, we are faced by five great and urgent issues if our civilization is to endure, much less to advance, in the days ahead. Each of these issues is a challenge to the practical brotherliness of humanity, and if we are to meet them we must unite insight and acumen, clarity of thought and charity of heart—nor lose "the glimmer of the open light."

First, and chiefly, we must in some way organize the moral intelligence and practical capacity of the world and make an end of war. Otherwise war will make an end of us, bringing the Temple of Man down in a charred and smoking ruin, as it came so near doing in our own generation.

Second, men must meet the threat of a corrosive anarchy with a profounder sense of fraternal fellowship and obligation, in which each man counts for one, and nobody counts for more than one, joined with a sense of the sanctity of the common will expressed in law, order, and the humanities of society.

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[1] Oddly enough, no detailed history of Brotherhood has ever been written, so far as I am aware, unless we may so regard *The Outline of History*, by H. G. Wells, and *The Human Adventure*, by Breasted and Robinson, to name no others, the intent of which is to show, indirectly, the unity of the human race, and the necessity of Brotherhood. They are attempts, at any rate, to obtain recognition of the fact that the good of the race as a whole does actually exist; and that fact must be the basis of any world-fraternity. There is a noble little book entitled *The Growth of Brotherhood*, by A. T. Dakin, put out by the Brotherhood Movement in England, which does trace the slowly developing sense of solidarity, first, in a falling civilization (Rome A.D. 50–430); second, in a rising civilization, the Middle Ages (405–1500), and third, in an expanding civilization (1500 and onwards). It is the only book of the kind with which I am familiar, to which I love to add *The Challenge of Brotherhood*, by Tom Sykes—not Bill, mind you—my dear friend with whom I went over England preaching Brotherhood in a day when the Brotherhood of the world was blighted by war and dark with woe. There is need of a really great History of Brotherhood, but it is among the things awaited—the story of Masonry being one chapter of it.

Third, so long as distances were great and races lived far apart, friction was not keenly felt; but today the world has shrunk to the size of a neighborhood, and many races mingle. The relations of races will be an acute and vital problem in the future. As a welter of irritations it is hopeless; only brotherliness can solve it.

Fourth, the menace of industrial strife is hopeless if its issues are left to be fought over by extremists, and the struggle may shatter society. Here, again, our only hope is in a gradual deepening of communal interest and responsibility, until, at last, private interest and group interest learn to serve the Common Interest.[1]

Fifth, if brotherliness is the fourth dimension of every problem confronting us, plainly our deepest need is for a spiritual renewal, a rediscovery, of a common faith in God, the Father, by which truly to serve man as our Brother; a purer flame of moral vision to enable us to see the truth and do the right.

For, manifestly, tasks so far-reaching ask for faith in the righteous order of the world, the faith that steadies, strengthens and sanctifies. But efforts so vast demand, no less, a faith in the righteousness that is in the world and in mankind. Unless we have faith in man as actually or potentially equal to the feats which the tasks before us require, our hopes will end in defeat and despair. As we have learned to use nature to surpass nature, so we must refuse to make the past of man the measure of his future. Just as he has discovered new potencies in nature, so we must have faith that he can evoke new powers in himself. In short, by an uncommon sense man must lift his life out of the insanity of conflict into the common sense of coöperation.

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[1] History has never known such an opportunity for Brotherhood as that presented today, in a world drawn together, jammed together, where men must learn to live together. Once a fine sentiment, fraternity has become a necessity—a vast inflowing tide of facts and the pressure of reality the might of which no man can measure. But fraternity must pass from a sentiment to a science, if the sense of solidarity—which was the most deeply felt truth learned from the World War—is to reach its full development. In such a world Freemasonry, the oldest and greatest fraternity known among men, must do its work.

How will Masonry meet this marvelous age and measure up to its opportunity? Is it a Progressive Science, as it claims to be? Can Masonry itself unite in a common undertaking for the Common Good, in the service of mankind? What is to be the future of Masonry? This question I have discussed in an article on "The Future of Masonry." (*The Master Mason*, vol. 2, p. 43.) In short, will Masonry become the mausoleum of an ideal, or the center of creative fraternal enterprise?

VI

To such an undertaking the Craft of Masonry is committed by its genius and history and labor—only, to the romance of Brotherhood it adds a clear-eyed realism of insight and method. Its first command is, "Let there be light"; and to walk in the light means that we are to see things as they are and deal with realities. No one can rate the possibilities of man too high; but we may easily rate the attainments of man too high, and suffer disillusionment. It is the wisdom of Masonry that it sees that the first condition of Brotherhood is to have no illusions about it. Otherwise our dreams will be dashed, as has happened to so many who deserted the camp of Brotherhood in disgust.[1]

That is to say, Masonry is wise in that it does not attempt universal Brotherhood all at once, but begins nearby. It knows that in order to have Brotherhood we must first have Brothers, and it labors to that end. For that reason, it selects out of the mass of men such as desire Brotherhood and seem to be capable of its adventures and obligations and seeks to train them to live the brotherly life in an unbrotherly world. In other words, it takes the world as it is and men as they are—always imperfect, often unattractive—and finds the struggle for Brotherhood worth while, not because of what men have become, but because of what they have it in them to be. By faith in the good within us, beneath all superficial evil it seeks to bring out the best—seeks to make us stones worthy of use in the Temple.

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[1] Here are words to make us think:—"Perhaps the people who have what is called a low opinion of human nature are really more tolerant of it, more in love with it, in fact, than those who, looking to what human nature might be, are bound to hate what human nature is." (*Fraternity*, by John Galsworthy.) With which let us join the words of Felix Adler:—"What is the radical evil of the world? As I see it, it is the cheap estimate men place on themselves. It is their animality in contrast to their spirituality. It is that they think of themselves as animals—animals, it may be, of a higher order, but not spiritual beings. Man is an animal undoubtedly, but he is more than that. A hieroglyph of eternal value is inscribed on his brief day. He is not a mere product of nature, a mere wave on the stream of time that rises and sinks, leaving only a ripple on the surface." (*The Ethical Standard*.)

There is no conflict between these two statements; each is in fact a complement of the other. The tragedy of our day is that we are deadlocked between a cynical realism and a sentimental idealism—one expecting nothing of human nature, and the other everything—both are wrong; and Masonry is wise in that it avoids the falsehood of extremes. Man is capable of Brotherhood and a candidate for it, though he is at present far from its realization.

How it is done need not here be told, except to say that Masonry has a fine art all its own whereby men are trained in fraternal righteousness. In the kindly light of the Lodge we see life as it is, stripped of rank and pomp and power, moving on a level of time and death. It shows us our fellow man very clearly, his faults, his limitations, his incapacities, but also his needs, his struggles, his hungers for satisfaction, his desire for truth and beauty—the pathos of his life. It shows us ourselves no less clearly, our errors, our selfishness, our disagreeableness; and to be rid of illusions about ourselves is the first lesson of wisdom. Such knowledge makes men wise and kind, patient with one another, willing to forgive, ready to help, since all alike need the mercy of God and the love of man. By such simple arts, aided by old and eloquent symbols, in an air of truth, charity, and friendship, Masonry trains men to be workmen on the Temple of Brotherhood.

In the noisy clamor of the world our wise Masonry does not strive and cry aloud, indulging in agitations and the making of programs. It works in quieter, gentler ways, teaching men the religion of the brotherly life, knowing that by as much as the world fills up with men of "the larger heart and the kindlier hand," by so much will our dreams of a juster, gentler, happier world come true, and the final hope of the Kingdom of God on earth be fulfilled. Slowly the Temple rises, builded by the love of many hearts and the loyalty of many workers; and at last it will be completed and dedicated.

The New Age stands as yet
Half built against the sky,
Open to every threat
Of storms that clamor by.
Scaffolding veils the walls
And dim dust floats and falls
As, moving to and fro, their tasks
The Masons ply.

CHAPTER VII

The Last Landmark

I

Slowly the Temple rises without the sound of axe or hammer, the monument of many lives, the ideal and goal of the Craft, the Last Landmark—but what of the builders? They pass away, since all that live must die, passing through nature to eternity. The Temple stands, but its builders fall, save as they live as stones in arch or Altar; generation follows generation, each age leaving the work unfinished, each workman his mark. Each does his work, or well or ill, lays down his kit of tools, and vanishes—wearing his little white apron.

Each goes alone, unaccompanied; no one can go with us. Friends and brethren may follow us to the edge of the darkness, but they turn back, and their faces fade. The father leaves his son, the master his workmen, the Craftsman the kindly light of his Lodge. We work together, but we die in unshared solitude. Soldiers march into battle shoulder to shoulder, but each dies by himself; no one shares the last, ineffable, homeward sigh of his soul. The soldier dies, but the army marches on, drums throbbing and banners flying, to victory or defeat. The workman falls, but the Temple rises; its pillars leap, its arches clasp hands, its dome takes dim shape in our dreams.

The Temple rises, but the builders who wrought their dreams into its beauty, shaping its stones with love and care on the Level by the Square—where are they? What though Solomon reign in all his glory, and dream and plan and build a Temple, dedicating it with sacrifice and song to the holiness of God—if he himself fall into dull dust that knows not nor thinks! What though the Master Builder lavish upon it his genius and his love, employing all the skill of his art, toiling in patience and prayer—if

he himself is choked in his own blood, and never sees the Temple standing stately in the sunlight or touched by the soft mysticism of the night!

But there is another question to be asked, answer to which involves the profoundest moral issues, affecting alike the honor of God and the moral order of the world. Solomon knew the delight of dreaming and planning the Temple, and to the Master Builder was given the keen joy of putting forth his fine powers in the building of it. But what about the multitudes of humble workmen who toiled to make a dream come true, polishing stone, bearing burdens, doomed to the drudgery which is the only life which the mass of men ever know? Did they die and cease to be, sinking into an indistinguishable blur of dust, unknown and unremembered, leaving only a tiny mark to tell that such faithful toilers ever lived at all—mere rubbish of the Temple swept away?

No! Masonry will not have it so! By the character of God to Whose praise the Temple is built and consecrated, by the worth of every man who added his love and labor to its building, by the faith that God is just, Masonry affirms that the builders are immortal, too. They live as living stones in the Temple, but as they toil there is built in their own being a temple as deathless as the Temple they build. Nay, more; the Temple and its Ritual are not ends in themselves, but a Divine means to the end that every workman, however humble, may be a sanctuary of faith, a shrine of love, an altar of purity, pity, and truth. Evermore the Temple rises and its builders rise with it, sharing its beauty and its prophecy.

> Sometimes the work goes on in deep darkness; sometimes in blinding light; now under the burden of unutterable anguish, now to the tune of great laughter and heroic shoutings like the cry of thunder. Sometimes, in the silence of the nighttime, one may hear the tiny hammerings of the comrades at work up in the dome—*the comrades that have climbed ahead.*[1]

[1] *The Servant in the House*, by C. R. Kennedy.

II

If a man die, shall he live again? To this old, aching question, asked since ever the first man saw his fellow die, Masonry answers, Yes: because God is God, and man is man, and life is what it is.[1] Once we see what it is that gives dignity, worth and meaning to life, argument for immortality is not needed. Until we do see it, argument is useless. Faith affirms that life has value. Religion is the realization of the value of life. At bottom, faith in immortality is faith in the conservation of the highest values of life. Since the highest values of life are personal, it requires faith in personal immortality; a moral trust in the immortality of love. If life is worthless, so is immortality; if life has real value it will abide. As Emerson put it, thinking of his little boy:

> What is excellent,
> As God lives, is permanent;
> Hearts are dust, heart's loves remain.
> Heart's love will meet them again.

At the beginning as at the end, everything depends upon the character of God. If God is a God to whom the moral and spiritual values of life have worth, we cannot doubt immortality. If God is not such a God, nobody wants immortality. It would be too terrible to talk about, much less to endure. In other words, the whole question is as to whether the world is a moral world, by which we mean, as defined by Kant, *a world in which individual persons are treated as ends in themselves, and not as means or instruments to an end other than themselves.* In short, for me to use a fellow man merely as a means for the furthering of some purpose of my own, however high my purpose, is for me to act immorally. By this test much

[1] Of course, for those who hold the Christian faith these three are fused into one and function in Christ—the Life that interprets life. Still, faith cannot be confirmed too much, least of all when it has to do with the fate of those whom we have loved and lost; and some of us have found help in *The Little Book of Life After Death*, by Gustav Fechner, with an introduction by William James, if only because it keeps the continuity of life, here and hereafter. Another helpful book—one out of many—is *Faith in a Future Life*, by A. W. Martin, which asks and seeks to answer the question: What satisfying foundation is there for faith in a life after death? He examines a series of foundations, each of which has made appeal to millions of our fellow men. Then he takes up the modern "occult" bases of belief, the spiritualistic hypothesis, the dogma of the subliminal self, and finally the Karma-reincarnation theory of the Theosophists. After analysis these bases are laid aside in favor of Moral Experience, as offering the most satisfactory basis of faith.

of our daily life is immoral; but that only states a fact; it does not alter it by one iota. It is one of the first laws of morality that no man is a good man who uses his fellow man merely as a means or an instrument, in disregard of his absolute value—as if a human soul existed to be used like a tool and cast aside.

By the same token, if such use of human souls is immoral for man, it is equally so for God, if He is bound by His own moral laws. If, for example, God is making use of us as instruments for His own glory, or as means to bring about some "far-off Divine events," in which we are not to have a share, or even as workmen to build a temple in which we have no place of prayer; that is, if He is sacrificing us for even so high a purpose, and not caring how many of us He sacrifices, then He is violating His own moral order. If such a thing were imaginable we could not say, "The great soul of the world is just"; and any moral man would dread to be doomed to immortality in such a world. Here is the rock-bottom of faith in immortality, and nothing can shake it, except such a denial as ends in horror and chaos and makes God other than God.

There are those who say that personal immortality is not needed to conserve the highest values of life. God is eternal, and such values as our little lives have return to Him and are absorbed into His life, as a candle fades into the sunlight, as a dew drop slips into the sea. Thus no moral worth is lost. Such an idea sounds very lofty and profound, but the poet who wrote the line—

> The forces that were Christ
> Have taken new forms and fled—

wrote words without meaning. Those forces were personal forces, and if personality ends in death they end, too. The notion of love as a quality in God, of which Jesus was a fleeting form, and the value of which He, dying on the Cross, surrendered, is absurd. Such qualities are not entities to be abstracted from persons and absorbed by another. They cannot be transferred. The goodness of Jesus was His own, created by His life and woven into the very fabric of His being, and can never be taken from Him. Such an idea makes God a moral monster, an infinite vampire, crushing the souls of men for their sweetness and casting them away. At last we have the vision of a God just, but just to no one, loving no one but Himself, His throne a universal cemetery!

No, if the bells are tolling a march to everlasting death in which Jesus and Judas sleep together in the dust, all moral values erased, let us face the fact and not attempt to muffle their tones with seductive phrase. Stately, grave and noble are the lines of George Eliot, who, when she lost faith in God and personal immortality, prayed that she might join the Choir Invisible.

> Of those immortal dead who live again
> In minds made better by their presence;

but her prayer is delusive. Our influence lives, not we, save as the ancestral traits we transmit may be said to be the pale immortality of us in our sons. Our example may impress our fellows for good or ill, becoming a part of the body of law by which the race is ruled—but what is the nature of that influence? It is not that our spirit passes into others, but that it evokes in them like qualities of their own. Not even that would be possible but for the fact of a moral order in which we and they are citizens. Wherefore the lives of saints, martyrs and moral heroes, if it be only that in a dim far time a few may be utterly good and wise? Then what? At last the earth will grow cold, the race will vanish, and the Choir Invisible will no longer be "the gladness of the world." Death will reign supreme and every moral value will be as though it had not been.

What of it? some will ask. Is not virtue its own reward, its own sweetness and satisfaction? Is not morality worth while, even if pity be the root of it? Assuredly; but what is the reward of virtue if it be not the opportunity of more virtue, the glory, as Tennyson said, of going on and still to be that we may be better? Else it were better if the earth had remained like the moon, a mass of slag, idle and without a tenant. No; think it all through, up one side and down the other, and personal immortality is the only imaginable way of conserving the precious values of love, mercy, justice, character—values which the universe has toiled through long eras to achieve, and which humanity has aspired so long to realize. Across the ages sounds the cry of Job, speaking in the desert, as challenging as it is thrilling:

> I know that my Redeemer liveth, and that He will stand at the latter day upon the earth; and though after my skin worms destroy this body, yet in my flesh I shall see God; *whom I shall see for myself, and mine eyes shall behold, and not another.*

There is something in man more than man, something which will not let him rest, much less die, until his manhood is lifted into divinity—its ideal and goal. As Fechner said, we should not need religious faith if the objects of it did not exist, since we did not create the facts that have given rise to the need. Life is brief at its longest and broken at its best; but by all the higher promptings of our nature we are commanded to live for immortal things—for truth, justice, love, purity—qualities which belong to the eternal life. Manifestly the soul is as immortal as the moral order which inhabits it, else morality were a mockery. Frail we are and fleeting, but in their outworking the laws of the moral life reach far beyond life and time and death, and become prophets of a life that shall endless be. Here our faith rests, founded upon the character of God, the value of man, and the worth of life—and nothing can shake it.

III

But Masonry does not set forth its faith in a syllogism; it employs a symbol. It shows us a picture, a parable, a drama, the oldest and profoundest known upon earth and among men, revealing a truth for which words were never made.[1] For depth, vividness and heart-shaking power, no drama can surpass the Third Degree of Masonry, and its appeal is felt by all who see it, whether it be in the Grand Lodge Temple in London or in a Lodge of cowboys on the frontier. Starkly simple, gritty with the very stuff of life, it gathers up into a black shadow the pity and terror of life, using the things which seem to destroy all faith to teach the highest

[1] There is no doubt of the Egyptian origin of the myth which is the *motif* of this most ancient of dramas; there is no trace of it, apparently, in Hebrew lore. (*Jewish Encyclopedia*, article on "Freemasonry.") Clearly it goes back to the great God-man of the Egyptian Mysteries, whose martyrdom and resurrection was dramatically represented in those venerable shrines. Just when, why, and by whom this old cosmic myth was linked with the life of the Master Builder of the Temple of King Solomon it seems fruitless to inquire; but it was long before the advent of modern Masonry. Oddly enough, Origen, one of the Fathers of the Church in the second and third centuries of our era, in his *Commentary of the Gospel of John* (Book 10, Chap. 25) links the Osirian myth with Hiram, but breaks off suddenly, as if arrested by some inhibition. He was an Egyptian and no doubt knew more than he felt that he had a right to tell. (See an interesting article on "Freemasonry in Ancient Egypt," by Edward Gilchrist, *The Master Mason*.) From that time on, throughout the Middle Ages down to our time, the two have been blended, as in our oral tradition. Thus our Masonic tradition tells us something very old and profound, going back into the morning of time, when the virgin insight of the human soul made its first interpretations of the meaning of life, which later philosophies and theologies have only elaborated and expounded.

faith of all. Like all great tragedy, it purifies and exalts, transfiguring dull death with an unconquerable hope.

No one is permitted to describe the scene; no description is needed. It flashes before us, leaving its meaning for such as have eyes to see and the insight to understand; and one may study it a lifetime without fathoming all its depths. It portrays the black tragedy of life at its brilliant worst; the forces of evil, so cunning yet so stupid, as they come up against the soul, tempting it to treachery—even the degradation of saving life at the sacrifice of all that makes life worth the living. When the shadow is at its darkest, and all the high values of life seem helpless, if not worthless, in face of brute force and foul fact, leaving us dismayed and appalled—heroic integrity stricken down and buried in the rubbish—there rises that in man most akin to God, his willingness to die that virtue may live. Hear these words:

> We see Hamlet fall, and Lear and Cordelia die, and Othello murder Desdemona. As we watch we do not ask for a philosophic justification for things happening so. For we are left with an impression that the heroic being, though in one sense and outwardly he has failed, is yet in another sense superior to the world in which he appears; is, in some way, which we do not seek to define, untouched by the gloom which overtakes him; and is rather set free from life than deprived of it. And this impression really implies an idea which, if developed, would transform the tragic view of things.
>
> For it implies that the tragic world, if taken as it is presented, with all its error, guilt, woe and waste, is no final reality, but only a part of reality taken for the whole, and, when so taken, illusive; and that if we could see the whole, and the tragic facts in their true place in it, we should find them, not abolished, of course, but so transmuted that they had ceased to be strictly tragic—find, perhaps, the suffering and death counting for little or nothing, the greatness of soul for much or all, and the heroic spirit nearer the heart of things than the small, more circumspect, and perhaps more successful beings who survive.[1]

[1] *Shakespearean Tragedy*, by A. C. Bradley.

This, greatly said, describes the solemn, uplifting, cleansing impression which comes over us when the curtain falls on Hamlet, or when the Third Degree of Masonry is ended. It is the faith that looks through death, a vision that finds death of little account because it sees into the life of things. Only, Masonry goes further and acts out before our eyes the triumphant truth, helping us to realize the reality of the immortal life—that is, makes each of us tell the truth to himself. Something else happens in the Degree, the import of which is not told in the drama or recited in the lecture.[1] We are not left with the noble surmise of Arnold at the grave of his father, lines which blend in our minds with many a holy memory:

> O strong soul, by what shore
> Tarriest thou now? For that force,
> Surely, has not been left in vain!
> Somewhere, surely, afar,
> In the sounding labor-house vast
> Of being, is practiced that strength
> Zealous, beneficent, firm!

No, Masonry does not stop with a vague surmise; it gives us a divine surprise—it shows us the eternal life in the midst of time, if we have hearts to understand. Nay, more; it initiates us into it, symbolically, and we make the discovery that God is here and eternity is now—as the sky

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[1] Mention should be made of a very brilliant book, *Who Was Hiram Abiff?* by J. S. M. Ward, in which the theory is set forth with great acumen that the Master Builder was offered as a willing sacrifice, his blood consecrating the Temple he had created, after the ancient custom, Solomon and Hiram of Tyre reluctantly officiating. Some of us cannot accept such a theory, because, first, human sacrifices had long been given up among the Jews, whereof the story of Abraham and Isaac tells us. Second, even if we admit that Solomon was profoundly influenced by the heathen environment of his time, we cannot think that a man of his wisdom and power yielded to the hideous custom to the extent of participating in "ritual murder." Third, the facts brought forward with such skill by the author are susceptible to an alternative interpretation, both adequate and luminous, which I have tried to state. *The Master Mason*, March, 1926.

If this drama is but an historical staging of a cosmic myth or allegory, the profounder question still remains: Why did man feel from the first, as if by instinct, that such supreme sacrifice was needed and demanded? What is the meaning of the red law of sacrifice running through nature and history, whereby life feeds on life, and humanity advances by the sacrifice of the best? Is the Cross rooted in the nature of things, "a Lamb slain from the foundation of the world?"

begins at the top of the ground. Such an experience, if it be actual and not merely dramatic, adds an altogether other dimension to the life of a man, making him victor over life and time and death. What have we to fear, though world on world decay, for we are citizens of a city that hath foundations, whose Maker and Builder is God. Alas, the drama of the Degree does not tell us this truth directly, nor does the lecture expound it, though it is there—the one secret most worth knowing—for all to learn, as each becomes ready and worthy to receive it.

For, if we are immortal at all we are immortal now—here upon the earth. To discover that truth and live accordingly—laying out our plans and forming our fellowships as citizens of eternity—that is life indeed; and that is the religion of Masonry. As Augustine said: "Join thyself to the Eternal, and thou shalt be eternal"; and that is what Masonry does for each of us, symbolically and with profound impressiveness. In short, it shows us a way of living which reveals immortality to us here, making it as real as the earth, the sea, and the sky. Jesus called it the Eternal Life, which we enter into when we discover who we are, give ourselves to Him whose we are, and live for the service of His holy will. It is what Whitman called the Heavenly Death—the death, that is, of all that is unheavenly within us, and the discovery of the things which time does not tarnish nor death destroy. Deeper truth we may not learn upon this earth; higher truth we do not need to know.

> Old Past, let go and drop in the sea!
> Till fathomless waters cover thee!
> For I am living but thou art dead;
> Thou drawest back, I strive ahead
> The Day to find.

IV

It is the fashion in our day to be Agnostic in regard to immortality, and the results of this mood are seen in the life of our time. Toward the end of his life Dostoevsky—the greatest of the Russians—divided men into two classes, those who know the Eternal Life and those who do not. The fate of civilization, he held, will rest with those who are citizens of eternity; and it is true. Materialism is anarchy. Pessimism is poison. Cynicism is a form of death. All the dear interests and institutions of humanity have

their basis in the Eternal Life, else they cannot abide. Our human world is kept in its place and urged along its orbit by unseen forces. Thence come those impulses to progress, those insights and inspirations which impel man to vast issues—they are the pressure upon him of the Endless Life.

Liberty, justice, love, truth, are things of the Eternal Life, without which customs are cobwebs and laws are ropes of sand. It would be easy to delude ourselves and suppose that society is held together by outward forms; but these no more cement it than the tortoise in the old fable upheld the earth. No, the power of an endless life is the creative and constructive force of social life; and Masonry renders its highest service to men when it makes the Eternal Life real and vivid—makes it something more than a visionary scene suspended in the sky.

What is true of social life is equally true of the making of character and personality—the two loveliest flowers grown in these short days of sun and frost. A great physician said recently that subconscious health cannot be obtained in one who has lost faith in immortality. Without it the noblest powers of the soul are inhibited, the divinest instincts are frustrated, having no happy release and no promise of fulfillment. They are driven inward, and make a restless ache in the heart, an anxiety which nothing can heal, as multitudes can testify when they lay in the grave the loves of life and the fellowships of years.

Once we know the Eternal Life, both as a present fact and a future adventure, all doors are open and the great aspirations of the heart take wings. The impingement of Eternity upon man gives to the moral sense an august authority, and makes Religion not a dogma but the life of God in the soul of man. Life everywhere grows in dignity, meaning and worth when it is lived in the fellowship of eternal things. Then we know what life is, what it means, and what it prophesies, eager only to do the will of God, whether tomorrow find us toiling here, or out yonder with the dwellers of the City on the Hill.

> Nothing walks with aimless feet,
> And not one life shall be destroyed,
> Or cast as rubbish in the void,
> When God hath made the pile complete.

—The End—

Bibliography

It is rather difficult to arrange an adequate bibliography of the relation of Masonry to Religion. Aside from debatable questions involved—such as, Is Masonry a Religion, or Is Masonry the Handmaid of Religion?—no two writers agree on the subject as a whole. For example, *The Religion of Freemasonry*, by H. J. Whymper, 1888, contains a foreword by W. J. Hughan who disagrees with the author, and was edited by G. W. Speth who was not in accord with either. It serves as an admirable example of the tolerance of the Craft.

Another difficulty lies in the fact that many excellent articles on the subject of Religion and Masonry are hidden away in the files of old Masonic journals, and are not available except in libraries where such treasures are kept. Other items are in the form of sermons and addresses issued years ago, published as ephemeral pamphlets. It is hardly worth while to include these in a list, except two or three of special value, such as:

- *The Relationship Between Masonry and Christianity*, by F. C. Ewer. New York, 1862.
- *Freemasonry Regarded as the Holy and Universal System of Religion*, by Henry Hopkins. St. Paul's Lodge. Birmingham, 1851.
- *Masonry, Past, Present and Future; Evidence that Masonry and Religion are the Same*, by F. H. Johnson. Buffalo. 1871.

As both Masonry and Religion are interwoven with philosophy and ethics, books of these topics might be included in a bibliography; but books of this kind are indicated in the footnotes—to which one may add *The Nature of Religion*, by W. P. Patterson, as worthy of special mention. One ought perhaps to include all the works of Dr. Oliver, who always considered Masonry in its relation to Religion; and the lecture by Dean

Pound interpreting his work, *The Philosophy of Masonry*. Two books of unique value are:

- *Freemasonry, Its Symbolism, Its Religious Nature, and Law of Perfection*, by C. J. Patton.
- *Freemasonry, Its Two Great Doctrines, the Existence of God and a Future State*, by C. J. Patton.

Only one Grand Master, so far as I am aware, ever set about deliberately to establish the relation of Religion and Freemasonry, and that was Brother John W. Vrooman, now the venerable senior Past Grand Master of the Grand Lodge of New York. For the results of his inquiry one need only turn to the *Proceedings of the Grand Lodge of New York*, 1890 and 1891: it is a most interesting symposium.

Every Masonic book of the right sort—whether dealing with philosophy, symbolism, or history—is rich in the spirit and truth of Religion. A perfect example of this fact is *Speculative Masonry*, by the late Brother A. S. MacBride: the spirit of Religion is in his book as color is in a rose. Indeed, I thought he was a clergyman until he gayly rebuked me for so addressing him when I had the honor of sitting with him in his own Lodge—Lodge Progress, Glasgow—in 1916. Even grave historians do not omit the religious element in Masonry:

- *The Evolution of Freemasonry*, by Delmar D. Darrah. Chapter XXV, "The Religious Element."
- *Antiquities of Freemasonry*, by G. F. Fort. "The Lost Word."

On the mystical side of Masonry we have had many valuable books from varied points of view, such as *Mystic Masonry*, by J. D. Buck, setting forth views shared by Theosophists; and *Masonic Symbolism and the Mystic Way*, by Arthur Ward. Also the works of J. S. M. Ward, especially *Freemasonry, Its Aims and Ideals*, which contains a forthright chapter on the reasons for the opposition of the Latin Church to the Craft. Howbeit, the books of a mystical kind nearest to my heart are the following:

- *The Meaning of Masonry*, by W. L. Wilmshurst.
- *The Masonic Initiation*, by W. L. Wilmshurst.
- *The Secret Tradition in Freemasonry*, by A. E. Waite.
- *Studies in Mysticism*, by A. E. Waite.
- *Emblematic Freemasonry*, by A. E. Waite.

Summary and Analysis

The Plan of the Book

The book opens with two short pieces in Newton's own voice. "The Tiler," his foreword, explains what he set out to do and why he thought words must fall short of it. The Invocation is a prayer for the opening of a lodge. The Introduction then surveys how Masons of the 1920s understood the relation of their Craft to religion, first across the Masonic world and then within English-speaking Masonry, and closes with a sketch of how that relation changed from the medieval Old Charges through the Reformation, the Grand Lodge of 1717, the Constitutions of 1723, and the union of the rival Grand Lodges in 1813.

The seven chapters build on one another. "The Mystic Tie" defines religion as the bond that holds life together. "The Builders" places Masonry within the religious history of mankind and gathers definitions of the Craft. "The Corner Stone" treats faith in God as the first landmark and traces the growth of that faith from early man to the teaching of Jesus. "The Book of Holy Law" explains how the Bible came to lie open on the Altar, and why the Craft can honor it without taking sides in quarrels over its meaning. "The Geometry of Character" follows the Old Charges in treating geometry as the root of the Masonic art, and reads it as an image of moral law. "The Temple of Brotherhood" turns to the Craft as a fellowship and a school of the brotherly life. "The Last Landmark" ends with the hope of immortality and the meaning of the Master Mason degree. A short Bibliography, in the form of an essay, closes the book.

NEWTON'S ARGUMENT

Newton's central claim is stated in the Introduction: Masonry is not a religion among others, with a creed and a church of its own, but "Religion—not a church but a worship, in which men of all religions may unite." He supports it by defining religion broadly. Religion, he argues, is not a separate faculty or a set of doctrines but the unifying spirit of all life, the tie that binds a man to God, to his fellows, and to himself. Theology is the attempt to explain that experience, and men divide over theology; Masonry keeps to the experience and leaves each member to explain it as his own faith directs.

Two features of the Lodge carry most of the weight of the argument. The first is the Lodge's refusal to define God beyond the phrase "the Great Architect of the Universe," which Newton compares to a chalice into which each man may pour his own faith. The second is the place of the Bible, which lies open on the Altar as a symbol of the will of God revealed to man, and which may be joined or replaced, in lodges of other faiths, by their own sacred books. Throughout, he treats the Craft's symbols as moral teaching rather than as hidden doctrine, and he quotes the poets and philosophers more often than Masonic writers.

THE BOOK IN ITS TIME

Newton wrote in the years of the organized movement for Masonic education in the United States, in which he had a leading part. He was the first editor of *The Builder* (1915), and in the 1920s he worked for the Masonic Service Association, the voluntary body of American grand lodges formed after the First World War, which listed him in 1925 as its Educational Director. The Association's books and pamphlets, among them the Little Masonic Library of 1924 and this book, were meant for the ordinary lodge member as much as for the student.

The book also belongs to its moment in American Protestantism. Newton had been a Baptist, then the minister of liberal and Universalist congregations, and in 1926 was ordained in the Episcopal Church. He wrote as a liberal Christian who valued the faith that churches share over the doctrines that divide them, and the book's argument for a fraternity "free from any system of theology" reflects that outlook. The same outlook explains his sharpness toward the Catholic Church, whose opposition to

Freemasonry he describes in the Introduction, and his warmth toward mystical writers such as A. E. Waite and W. L. Wilmshurst.

reading it today

The book's questions have not gone away. Lodges are still asked whether Masonry is a religion, and grand lodges still answer, as Newton did, that it requires faith in God but prescribes no creed. His chapters on the Volume of the Sacred Law and on the Great Architect of the Universe remain a clear account of why the Craft can unite men of different faiths, and his reading of the Master Mason degree as a lesson in hope will be familiar to most Masons.

Other parts belong to 1927. His history of the Craft's religious outlook is a broad sketch, his account of foreign grand lodges describes the Masonry of his day, and some of his opinions on churches and on race are of his time. Read with that in mind, the book offers a statement, by one of the most widely read Masonic writers of his generation, of what American Masons of the 1920s believed the religious meaning of their Craft to be.

Sources: Joseph Fort Newton, *The Religion of Masonry* (Washington, 1927); *An Episcopal Dictionary of the Church*, "Newton, Joseph Fort"; *The Builder*, April 1925, list of contributors ("Joseph Fort Newton, Educational Director M. S. A."); Allen E. Roberts, "Joseph Fort Newton, D.D.," *Short Talk Bulletin*, February 1994; United Grand Lodge of England, "Freemasonry and Religion" (1962; confirmed 1985).

About the Author

Joseph Fort Newton was born at Decatur, Texas, on July 21, 1876, the son of Lee Newton, a former Baptist minister who had become a lawyer. (Masonic reference works give the year of his birth as 1880.) He used to tell how his father, a Mason who had been taken prisoner during the Civil War, was nursed back to health by a Union officer who learned that he was a Brother; the story led him to seek admission to the Craft as soon as he could. He was ordained to the Baptist ministry on April 20, 1895, studied at the Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in Louisville from 1895 to 1897, and was pastor of the First Baptist Church of Paris, Texas, from 1897 to 1898.

Newton soon left the Baptist ministry for independent and liberal pulpits. He was associate minister of the People's Church in St. Louis and then founder and pastor of the People's Church at Dixon, Illinois, until 1908; minister of the Liberal Christian Church, a Universalist congregation, in Cedar Rapids, Iowa, from 1908 to 1916; minister of the City Temple in London from 1916 to 1919; and minister of the Church of the Divine Paternity, also Universalist, in New York from 1919 to 1925. In 1925 he went to the Memorial Church of St. Paul at Overbrook, Philadelphia, and he was ordained deacon and priest in the Episcopal Church in 1926. He was co-rector of St. James' Church, Philadelphia, from 1930 to 1935, special preacher to the Associated Churches of Philadelphia from 1935 to 1938, and rector of the Church of St. Luke and the Epiphany, Philadelphia, from 1938 until his death. He received degrees from Coe College (1912), Tufts College (1918), and Temple University (1929).

He was raised a Master Mason in Friendship Lodge No. 7 at Dixon on May 28, 1902, and later affiliated with Mt. Hermon Lodge No. 263 at Cedar Rapids. He was Grand Chaplain of the Grand Lodge of Iowa from 1911 to 1913. For that Grand Lodge he wrote *The Builders: A Story and Study of Masonry* (1914), intended as a gift to every man raised in

the jurisdiction. He was the first editor of *The Builder*, from its first issue in January 1915, and later edited *The Master Mason* for the Masonic Service Association, for which he also wrote *The Religion of Masonry* and *Short Talks on Masonry*. Denslow's *10,000 Famous Freemasons* records that he received the thirty-second degree of the Scottish Rite in Iowa in 1909 and the honorary thirty-third in 1933, and served as Grand Prelate of the Grand Encampment of Knights Templar. He told his own story in *River of Years* (1946). He died in Philadelphia on January 24, 1950.

Chronology

1876	Born July 21 at Decatur, Texas (Masonic reference works give 1880).
1895	Ordained to the Baptist ministry, April 20; at the Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, Louisville, to 1897.
1897	Pastor of the First Baptist Church, Paris, Texas, to 1898.
1902	Raised a Master Mason in Friendship Lodge No. 7, Dixon, Illinois, May 28, while pastor of the People's Church there.
1908	Minister of the Liberal Christian Church, Cedar Rapids, Iowa, to 1916.
1911	Grand Chaplain of the Grand Lodge of Iowa, to 1913.
1914	*The Builders: A Story and Study of Masonry*, written for the Grand Lodge of Iowa.
1915	First editor of *The Builder*, journal of the National Masonic Research Society, from the January issue.
1916	Minister of the City Temple, London, to 1919.
1919	Minister of the Church of the Divine Paternity, New York, to 1925.
1925	Goes to the Memorial Church of St. Paul, Overbrook, Philadelphia; Educational Director of the Masonic Service Association.
1926	Ordained deacon (January 16) and priest (October 28) in the Episcopal Church.
1927	*The Religion of Masonry* published by the Masonic Service Association, Washington; Newton is editor of its magazine, *The Master Mason*.
1930	Co-rector of St. James' Church, Philadelphia, to 1935.
1938	Rector of the Church of St. Luke and the Epiphany, Philadelphia, until his death.
1946	*River of Years*, his autobiography.
1950	Dies in Philadelphia, January 24.

Sources for About the Author and the Chronology: *An Episcopal Dictionary of the Church*, "Newton, Joseph Fort" (episcopalchurch.org); Allen E. Roberts, "Joseph Fort Newton, D.D.," *Short Talk Bulletin* (Masonic Service Association), February 1994; William R. Denslow, *10,000*

Famous Freemasons, entry "Joseph Fort Newton"; Joseph Fort Newton, *The Builders* (Cedar Rapids, 1914), "The Anteroom"; *The Religion of Masonry* (1927), title page.

A Note on This Edition

This edition follows the first printing of *The Religion of Masonry* (Masonic Service Association of the United States, Washington, D.C., 1927), newly transcribed from a scan of the Princeton Theological Seminary Library copy (Internet Archive item religionofmasonroonewt). Each page was read by machine, the reading checked against the scan, and every doubtful line compared with the page image; a final check confirmed that no line of the printed text was dropped.

Newton's spelling, capitalization, and punctuation are kept, including the archaic spellings of the old manuscripts he quotes. Twenty-four obvious printer's errors have been corrected, among them a note on pages 88–89 of the first printing whose opening line was set below its continuation. A few names, titles, and quotations have been corrected against their sources, and several doubtful readings, such as "Universe Religion," have been left as printed. Every change is listed in the edition's record of corrections, available from the American Freemasons Library.

The 1927 contents page (Newton's "Trestle-Board") and the short title before the Introduction are replaced by this edition's Contents. Newton's foreword, "The Tiler," and his Invocation keep their place before the Introduction. His notes are printed at the foot of the page and numbered from 1 on each page, as in the first printing; one note whose reference mark was not printed has been placed at the passage it explains. The first printing had no index; the Index in this edition was made for it, and covers Newton's text and notes.

The editor's notes that follow are keyed to the page and to the word or phrase they explain. Nothing has been added to Newton's pages. In the ebook the notes link to their passages, the Index entries link to theirs, and the pages of the printed edition are marked, so that readers of either form can cite the same page.

Notes

Notes are keyed to the page and to the word or phrase they explain.

xii *Patmore* Coventry Patmore (1823–1896), English poet and essayist.

xii *What Shelley said of life* Percy Bysshe Shelley, *Adonais* (1821), stanza 52: "Life, like a dome of many-coloured glass, / Stains the white radiance of Eternity."

2 *Grand Lodge of New York* The statement Newton quotes stood in the Grand Lodge of New York's Constitution of his day. Such statements differ among grand lodges and have changed since; the reader should consult a grand lodge's current constitution for its present wording.

3 *old Prussian Grand Lodges* The three old Prussian grand lodges, based in Berlin, admitted only Christians. Like all German Masonic bodies, they were forced to dissolve under the National Socialist government in 1935.

4 *French nor Belgian Masonry* In 1877 the Grand Orient of France removed from its constitution the requirement of belief in God; the next year the Grand Lodge of England ended relations with it. Masonic bodies that do not require that belief are not recognized by the United Grand Lodge of England or by the grand lodges of the United States.

4 *Royal Masonic Cyclopedia* Kenneth R. H. Mackenzie, *The Royal Masonic Cyclopaedia* (London, 1877).

5 *George Herbert* George Herbert (1593–1633), English poet and priest. The lines are from "The Elixir," in *The Temple* (1633).

5 *Arthur Edward Waite* Arthur Edward Waite (1857–1942), English writer on mysticism and Freemasonry; author of *The Secret Tradition in Freemasonry* (1911), *A New Encyclopaedia of Freemasonry* (1921), and *Emblematic Freemasonry* (1925). Newton quotes him often and with warm regard.

7 *Halliwell MS* The Regius Poem, a verse manuscript in the British Library, is the oldest of the Old Charges. It takes its common name from James Orchard Halliwell, who first published it as a Masonic document in 1840, and is now usually dated to the late fourteenth or early fifteenth century.

7 *Harleian MS* The Old Charges are manuscript histories and regulations of the masons' craft, of which more than a hundred copies are known. Two in the Harley collection of the British Library, Harleian MSS 1942 and 2054, are among the best known.

7 *the "revival" in 1717* The Grand Lodge of London and Westminster, later the Grand Lodge of England, is traditionally dated to a meeting of four London lodges on June 24, 1717. That date rests on James Anderson's account of 1738, and some historians now question it.

7 *Constitutions of 1723* *The Constitutions of the Free-Masons*, compiled by the Rev. James Anderson and published by the Grand Lodge in London in 1723. Its first Charge, "Concerning God and Religion," obliges a Mason only to "that Religion in which all Men agree, leaving their particular Opinions to themselves."

8 *rival Grand Lodge ... 1751* The Grand Lodge of the "Antients," formed in London in 1751, largely by Irish Masons. Its long-serving Grand Secretary, Laurence Dermott, compiled its book of constitutions, *Ahiman Rezon* (1756).

8 *Lodge of Reconciliation* The lodge set up to agree a common ritual after the two rival grand lodges united, in December 1813, as the United Grand Lodge of England.

8 *Hutchinson* William Hutchinson (1732–1814), English antiquary; his *The Spirit of Masonry* (1775) gives the degrees a Christian interpretation.

8 *Oliver* George Oliver (1782–1867), Church of England clergyman and the most prolific English Masonic writer of the nineteenth century.

8 *Brother Whymper* H. J. Whymper, *The Religion of Freemasonry*, edited by G. W. Speth with an introduction by W. J. Hughan. Newton gives the year here as 1885 and in his Bibliography as 1888.

11 *the Robert Frost poem* "Mending Wall," in Robert Frost's *North of Boston* (1914).

16 *Anton Tchekhov* Anton Chekhov (1860–1904), Russian writer of stories and plays.

17 *Clark Wissler* Clark Wissler (1870–1947), American anthropologist at the American Museum of Natural History; *Man and Culture* (1923).

23 *Augustine* Augustine of Hippo (354–430). Newton applies to Masonry what Augustine said of time in the *Confessions*, book 11.

24 *A. S. MacBride* Andrew Somerville MacBride, of Lodge Progress, Glasgow; his *Speculative Masonry* was first published at Glasgow in 1914.

27 *Plato or Kant* Plato (c. 428–348 b.c.), Greek philosopher; Immanuel Kant (1724–1804), German philosopher.

28 *Richard Hooker* Richard Hooker (1554–1600), English theologian, author of *Of the Laws of Ecclesiastical Polity*.

37 *Voltaire* Voltaire (1694–1778), French writer. The line comes from his verse *Épître à l'auteur du livre des Trois imposteurs* (1769).

40 *The Golden Bough* Sir James George Frazer (1854–1941), Scottish anthropologist; *The Golden Bough* first appeared in 1890 and was much enlarged in later editions.

57 *Euclid* Euclid (fl. c. 300 b.c.), Greek mathematician. In the legend of the Old Charges he teaches geometry in Egypt; Dowland's MS is one of the Old Charges, printed in 1815.

61 *Aristodemus* The conversation of Socrates with Aristodemus is in Xenophon's *Memorabilia*, book 1, chapter 4. Polycleitus was a Greek sculptor of the fifth century b.c.

61 *Henri Fabre* Jean-Henri Fabre (1823–1915), French naturalist; *The Life of the Spider* appeared in English in 1912.

63 *Emerson* Ralph Waldo Emerson (1803–1882), American essayist and poet.

64 *Servetus* Michael Servetus (c. 1511–1553), Spanish physician and theologian, was burned for heresy at Geneva in 1553 with the approval of John Calvin.

83 *the Choir Invisible* From George Eliot's poem "O May I Join the Choir Invisible" (1867).

84 *Fechner* Gustav Theodor Fechner (1801–1887), German physicist and philosopher, a founder of experimental psychology.

86 *Arnold* Matthew Arnold (1822–1888), English poet and critic. The lines are from "Rugby Chapel" (1867), written in memory of his father, Thomas Arnold.

87 *Dostoevsky* Fyodor Dostoevsky (1821–1881), Russian novelist.

90 *Dean Pound* Roscoe Pound (1870–1964), dean of the Harvard Law School from 1916 to 1936; his *Lectures on the Philosophy of Freemasonry* (1915) discuss Oliver among other Masonic philosophers.

90 *J. D. Buck* Jirah Dewey Buck (1838–1916), Cincinnati physician and Theosophist; *Mystic Masonry* (1896).

90 *J. S. M. Ward* John Sebastian Marlow Ward (1885–1949), English writer on Freemasonry and comparative religion; *Freemasonry: Its Aims and Ideals* (1923) and *Who Was Hiram Abiff?* (1925).

90 *W. L. Wilmshurst* Walter Leslie Wilmshurst (1867–1939), English Masonic writer; *The Meaning of Masonry* (1922) and *The Masonic Initiation* (1924).

Further Reading

Newton's other masonic books

Joseph Fort Newton, *The Builders: A Story and Study of Masonry* (Cedar Rapids: Torch Press, 1914).

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AFL-1026 *Symbolism of the Three Degrees*, Oliver Day Street

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