



Scientia Coronati Research Lodge No. 4 F&AM

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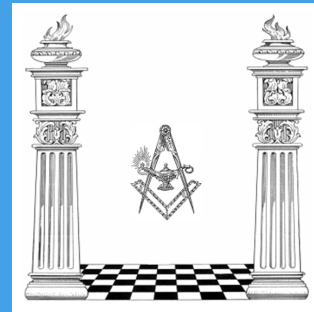
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## And the Earth was without

form and void, and darkness was upon the face of the deep. And the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters, and God said, 'Let there be light'



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# **HOW DO I KNOW YOU TO BE A MASON?**

**By George E. Weil**

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My Honored Brethren,

Freemasonry is often thought by the uninitiated and misinformed to be a secret study occupying the minds of elitists. But the secret study or "secrets" of Freemasonry aren't the typical kind in which information is revealed but to the few. Freemasonry (rightly so) has perplexed outsiders throughout the ages. Our Craft's arcane symbols and mystical doctrines have seemed impenetrable at times.

The rituals, customs, laws, and activities of our honored Order is one that is stingy. It is only revealed to those who are ready to receive such a gift. If a person holds on tightly to the ideas and beliefs that he currently has, it's usually impossible to let new ones in. But, the biblical view...first do and then understand is a useful approach. In Freemasonry, students have found that by participating in a little study, and some ritual observance that the doors begin to slightly open, and true learning can take place.

Like the Kabbalah which means "to receive." Freemasonry is an art that cannot be read in any book and fully understood or captured by internet mystics that self-proclaim themselves to be experts in all things Masonic. Our Order allows each man to begin with a step, followed by another step, followed by another and so on. We are traveling through that level of time searching for further light and exploring the arts and sciences of Freemasonry. Our Order proclaims the fact that there exists a higher and more secret path of life than that which we normally tread. When the outer or profane world and its pursuits and rewards lose their attractiveness and prove insufficient to our deeper needs, as sooner or later they will, we are compelled to turn back within ourselves, to seek and knock at the door of a world within.

Is Freemasonry that world which answers that knock? I say, that for every Mason it is not. There are Masons who have not recognized fully that path of self-perfection and do not care or dare to follow it. Is it beyond our reach? Or, are the thoughts of pursuing this path one that most are not ready to travel?

We are but ordinary men of the world sufficiently occupied already with our primary civic, social and family obligations and following the obvious normal path of natural life. Our Order is a philosophy that incorporates its wisdom into each Mason's life and provides us with tools to receive clues to a further light. It promises light, charts the way, and indicates the qualifications and conditions of progress.

However, let's be clear. This enlightenment is not to be acquired by the formal passage through three degrees in as many months; it is a knowledge impossible of full achievement until knowledge is granted through self-study, self-reflection and self-improvement.

To state things briefly, Masonry offer us, in dramatic form and by means of dramatic ceremonies a philosophy of the spiritual life of man and a diagram of the process of regeneration.

The very essence of Masonic philosophy is that all men in this world are in search of something in their own nature which they have lost, but that with proper instruction and by their own patience and industry they may hope to find. No one can communicate the deeper things in our Craft to another. Every man must discover and learn them for himself. Although, a friend or brother may be able to conduct him a certain distance on the path of understanding.

Perhaps, it should be emphasized by our leaders that to meet in our Lodges regularly, to perform our ceremonial work, to repeat our catechism night after night is not the be-all and the end-all of the Masonic tapestry that many members signed up for. Sadly, it remains almost entirely outside the consciousness of many of our members that this is not the case.

How do I know you to be a Mason? Is it the apron you wear? Is it the ring and different pins and hats that announce who you are and what you are a member of? Or, is it your idea of being merely connected with a body which seems to be something combining the natures of a club and a benefit society? I submit to all Masons that it is far more than all these things. The definition of what a Mason is, is difficult to put into words.

The shape and richness of our Craft cannot be diluted and its relevance to society as a whole cannot be discounted by the mere essence of “going through the motions.” What will our legacy be to the next generation of Masons? Assuming there is another generation of Masons. It almost goes without saying that we are the future builders of these living essays that enter our Order.

It is up to all of us to continue in our own personal ways to elevate the Craft and make it successful. The elements of leadership, management, active participation and idea building cannot be overlooked in the forward evolution of our Order. To close our eyes to new ideas and changes in our thoughts in the Masonic Arts and Sciences is similar to condemning our Order to walk in the path of the Dodo and fade quickly into the shadows of obscurity.