



Scientia Coronati Research Lodge No. 4 F&AM

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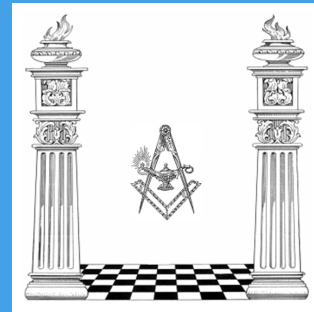
Essays, Papers & Articles

Masonic Topics

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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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*****THE QUALIFICATIONS OF A TRUE MASON ***taken from "THE LOST KEYS OF FREEMASONRY by Bro. Manly Palmer Hall, 1923**

xxxxxxx Italics are informational or comments from the presenter. xxxxxxx

Mystic, Philosopher – Religion, mythology, metaphysics, occult. Wrote over 150 books.

First I believe that we need to get an idea of what life was like in the early 1920's in America. WWI ended in 1918, 5 years before this work was published.

The Roaring 20's: Flappers, Speakeasies, Gangsters, Prohibition.

Presidents in the early 20's: Woodrow Wilson & Warren G. Harding.

19th Amendment giving women the right to vote.

It took 13 days to get from N.Y. to CA.

Motorcars proliferated due to Henry Ford.

State of Arizona was 11 years old when this was published.

The Grand Canyon was established as a National Park in 1919 and horseback or stagecoach was the only way to access it.

Every true Mason has come into the realization that there is but one Lodge – that is, the Universe – and but one Brotherhood, composed of everything that moves or exists in any of the planes of Nature. He realizes that the Temple of Solomon is really the Temple of the Solar Man -Sol-Om-On – the King of the Universe manifesting through his three primordial builders. He realizes that his vow of brotherhood and fraternity is universal, and that mineral, plant, animal, and man are all included in the true Masonic Craft. His duty as an elder brother to all the kingdoms of Nature beneath him is well understood by the true Craftsman, who would rather die than fail in this, his great obligation. He has dedicated his life upon the altar of his God and is willing and glad to serve the lesser through the powers he has gained from the greater. The mystic Mason, in building the eyes that see behind the apparent ritual, recognizes the oneness of life manifesting through the diversity of form.

What do you think of this reference to Solar Man vs Solomon. Symantics? Wordplay? Brotherhood includes all living creatures? Therefore we are responsible for the protection of all things within our lives as men and Masons. Do you remember your interrogation prior to entrance into the lodge for the first time? Did you not seriously declare a ..".sincere wish to be serviceable to your fellow creatures?"

The true disciple of ancient Masonry has given up forever the worship of personalities. With his greater insight, he realizes that all forms and their position in material affairs are of no importance to him compared to the life which is evolving within. Those who allow appearances or worldly expressions to deter them from their self-appointed tasks are failures in Masonry, for Masonry is an abstract science of spiritual unfoldment. Material prosperity is not the measure of soul growth. The true Mason realizes that behind these diverse forms there is one connected Life Principle, the spark of God in all living things. It is this Life which he considers when measuring the worth of a brother. It is to this Life that he appeals for a recognition of spiritual Unity. He realizes that it is the discovery of this spark of Unity which makes him a conscious member of the Cosmic Lodge. Most of all, he must learn to understand that this divine spark shines out as brightly from the body of a foe as it does from the dearest friend. The true Mason has learned to be divinely impersonal in thought, action, and desire.

You must look to put your personal pride, prejudice and material goals aside in relation to Masonry. This is a huge task that I don't know if any one of us can achieve. There will be a time with each and every one of you that we disagree and should just accept this. The effort and strain of trying to force your beliefs or opinions onto someone else is a waste of both parties time and is counterproductive to what we as Masons are supposed to be doing. If your opinion is asked, give it freely. But do not expect your brethren to accept it unconditionally and believe it to be absolutely correct. It may be for you at the time, but not for them. And that opinion may change tomorrow! That last line in regards to the divine spark shining as brightly from a foe as a friend surely requires some direct attention and speculation. How many times have you taken something from a foe and used it to improve yourself? I can say for myself, not very often.

The true Mason is not creed-bound. He realizes with the divine illumination of his lodge that as Mason his religion must be universal: Christ, Buddha or Mohammed, the name means little, for he recognizes only the light and not the bearer. He worships at every shrine, bows before every altar, whether in temple, mosque or cathedral, realizing with his truer understanding the oneness of all spiritual truth. All true Masons know that they only are heathen who, having great ideals, do not live up to them. They know that all religions are but one story told in diverse ways for peoples whose ideals differ but whose great purpose is in harmony with Masonic ideals. North, east, south and west stretch the diversities of human thought, and while the ideals of man apparently differ, when all is said and the crystallization of form with its false concepts is swept away, one basic truth remains: all existing things are Temple Builders, laboring for a single end. No true Mason can be narrow, for his Lodge is the divine expression of all broadness. There is no place for little minds in a great work.

This concept, in my opinion is the hardest thing for someone of any one individual faith, who is not a Mason, to understand. Who among you has not had to explain that all faiths are welcome within the Lodge as long as the individual believes in the one true God? Is the whole world our Lodge room? What are we doing to improve upon it? Or upon ourselves?

The true Mason must develop the powers of observation. He must seek eternally in all the manifestations of Nature for the things which he has lost because he failed to work for them. He must become a student of human nature and see in those around him the unfolding and varying expressions of one connected spiritual Intelligence. The great spiritual ritual of his lodge is enacted before him in every action of his fellow man. The entire Masonic initiation is an open secret, for anyone can see it played out on the city street corners as well as in the untracked wilderness. The Mason has sworn that every day he will extract from life its message for him and build it into the temple of his God. He seeks to learn the things which will make him of greater service in the Divine Plan, a better instrument in the hands of the Great Architect, who is laboring eternally to unfold life through the medium of living things. The Mason realizes, moreover, that his vows, taken of his own free will and accord, give him the divine opportunity of being a living tool in the hands of a Master Workman.

We may curiously trace Nature through her various windings..... Can you see parts of our ritual in the world around you? People following the Golden Rule. Coming to the aide of someone in need.

Numberless worlds are around us.... Have you ever watched bees as they work? Or sat beneath a pine tree and just felt it sway in the wind? How are you working to help in the Divine Plan? We all must continuously make the effort even though we fail on a daily basis.

The true Master Mason enters his lodge with one thought uppermost in his mind: "How can I, as an individual, be of greater use in the Universal Plan? What can I do to be worthy to comprehend the mysteries which are unfolded here? How can I build the eyes to see the things which are concealed from those who lack spiritual understanding?" The true Mason is supremely unselfish in every expression and application of the powers that have been entrusted to him. No true Brother seeks anything for himself, but unselfishly labors for the good of all. No person who assumes a spiritual obligation for what he can get out of it is worthy of applying for the position even of water-carrier. The true Light can come only to those who, asking nothing, gladly give all to it.

Let's discuss the ones posed in this paragraph. How can we take this knowledge and understanding out of the Lodge and into the real world? What do we do as individual Masons to teach this knowledge to our younger or less informed brethren? Unselfish labor, does this correspond to servant leadership?

The true brother of the Craft, while constantly striving to improve himself, mentally, physically, and spiritually through the days of his life, never makes his own desires the goal for his works. He has a duty and that duty is to fit into the plans of another. He must be ready at any hour of the day or night to drop his own ideals at the call of the Builder. The work must be done and he has dedicated his life to the service of those who know the bonds of neither time nor space. He must be ready at any moment's notice and his life should be turned into preparing himself for that call which may come when he least expects it. The Master Mason knows that those most useful to the Plan are those who have gained the most from the practical experiences of life. It is not what goes on within the tiled lodge which is the basis of his greatness, but rather the way in which he meets the problems of daily life. The true Masonic student is known by his brotherly actions and common sense.

Anyone who is trying to improve himself monetarily or materially is here for the wrong reasons and is not working towards the improvement of all and laboring at succeeding as that Mason he should be striving to become. How are you helping mankind or another brother to improve himself? Would you drop everything in your life to help at a moment's notice?

Every Mason knows that a broken vow brings with it a terrible penalty. Let him also realize that failure to live mentally, spiritually, and morally up to one's highest ideals constitutes the greatest of all broken oaths. When a Mason swears that he will devote his life to the building of his Father's house and then defiles his living temple through the perversion of mental power, emotional force, and active energy, he is breaking a vow which imposes not hours but ages of misery. If he is worthy to be a Mason, he must be great enough to restrain the lower side of his own nature which is daily murdering his Grand Master. He must realize that a misdirected life is a broken vow and that daily service, purification, and the constructive application of energy is a living invocation which builds within and draws to him the power of the Creator. His life is the only prayer acceptable in the eyes of the Most High. An impure life is a broken trust; a destructive action is a living curse; a narrow mind is a strangle-cord around the throat of God.

Does this paragraph border on stepping over the line into fanaticism? Or is it leaning towards the Christian faith instead of all faiths? Does it represent the intolerance of the 1920s? The parallel with the Masonic oaths and their symbolic penalties is obvious. But if one is trying, but not succeeding (which some believe we will never accomplish), is that a complete failure? Our lessons also tell us that our days are to be divided into 3 parts. Only one of those to be dedicated to God and our Masonic duties.

All true Masons know that their work is not secret, but they realize that it must remain unknown to all who do not live the true Masonic life. Yet if the so-called secrets of Freemasonry were shouted from the housetops, the Fraternity would be absolutely safe; for certain spiritual qualities are necessary before the real Masonic secrets can be understood by the brethren themselves. Hence it is that the alleged "exposures" of Freemasonry, printed by the thousands and tens of thousands since 1730 down to the present hour, cannot injure the Fraternity. They reveal merely the outward forms and ceremonies of Freemasonry. Only those who have been weighed in the balance and found to be true, upright, and square have prepared themselves by their own growth to appreciate the inner meanings of their Craft. To the rest of their brethren within or without the lodge their sacred rituals must remain, as Shakespeare might have said, "Words, words, words." Within the Mason's own being is concealed the Power, which, blazing forth from his purified being, constitutes the Builder's Word. His life is the sole password which admits him to the true Masonic Lodge. His spiritual urge is the sprig of acacia which, through the darkness of ignorance, still proves that the spiritual fire is alight. Within himself he must build those qualities which will make possible his true understanding of the Craft. He can show the world only forms which mean nothing; the life within is forever concealed until the eye of Spirit reveals it.

Any questions or comments in regards to this paragraph? I find it to be one of the most prolific within the article. And I especially appreciate the comments in regards to the exposures from the time the Fraternity was still in its infancy. Any opinions on why the Fraternity chooses to not address any of the conspiracy theorists and fanatics that believe that we are either taking over the world or undermining Christianity?

The Master Mason realizes charity to be one of the greatest traits which the Elder Brothers have unfolded, which means not only properly regulated charity of the purse but charity in thought and action. He realizes that all the workmen are not on the same step, but wherever each may be, he is doing the best he can, according to his light. Each is laboring with the tools that he has, and he, as a Master Mason, does not spend his time in criticizing but in helping them to improve their tools. Instead of blaming poor tools, let us always blame ourselves for having them. The Master Mason does not find fault; he does not criticize nor does he complain, but with malice towards none and charity towards all he seeks to be worthy of his Father's trust. In silence he labors, with compassion he suffers, and if the builders strike him as he seeks to work with them, his last word will be a prayer for them. The greater the Mason, the more advanced in his Craft, the more fatherly he grows, the walls of his Lodge broadening out until all living things are sheltered and guarded within the blue folds of his cape. From laboring with the few he seeks to assist all, realizing with his broader understanding the weaknesses of others but the strength of right.

Charity. This is a big one. In today's day and age everyone seems to think that this means throwing money at a worthy cause. Charity doesn't just mean giving money. What about helping out those in need? Giving your time to help or even just sit and listen? What else is charity? If a brother is trying to learn something or improve himself and you fail to assist him are you denying him the charity of your personal knowledge or experience? And shouldn't that charity extend to all living creatures? Mankind should always care for all of God's creatures!

A Mason is not proud of his position. He is not puffed up by his honor, but with a sinking heart is eternally ashamed of his own place, realizing that it is far below the standard of his Craft. The farther he goes, the more he realizes that he is standing on slippery places and if he allows himself for one moment to lose his simplicity and humility, a fall is inevitable. A true Mason never feels himself worthy of his Craft. A student may stand on the top of Fool's Mountain self-satisfied in his position, but the true Brother is always noted for his simplicity.

Humility! This is the greatest strength of any leader. And we should all strive to accomplish this. Remember the term servant leader? Any accomplishment or accolade should be looked at as an honor but also you should feel that it is undeserved, just a part of what you should do as a Mason and a man. But it should always be remembered that humility in a leader is not weakness, but something we should all strive for.

A Mason cannot be ordained or elected by ballot. He is evolved through ages of self-purification and spiritual transmutation. There are thousands of Masons who are brethren in name only, for their failure to exemplify the ideals of their Craft makes them unresponsive to the teachings and purpose of Freemasonry. The Masonic life forms the first key of the Temple, and without this key, none of the doors can be opened. When this fact is better realized and lived, Freemasonry will awake, and speak the Word so long withheld. The speculative Craft will then become operative, and the Ancient Wisdom so long concealed will rise from the ruins of its temple as the greatest spiritual truth yet revealed to man.

That ballot for membership is just your acceptance into the Craft. From that point it is up to you to grow. Have you formed yourself into that key to open the Temple? I like to think of this in terms of opening the library or university to begin your journey of knowledge and growth. Any other thoughts?

The true Master Mason recognizes the value of seeking for truth wherever he can find it. It makes no difference if it be in the enemy's camp; if it be truth, he will go there gladly to secure it. The Masonic Lodge is universal; therefore all true Masons will seek through the extremities of creation for their Light. The true brother of the Craft knows and applies one great paradox. He must search for the high things in lowly places and find the lowly things in high places. The Mason who feels holier than his fellow man has raised a barrier around himself through which no light can pass, for the one who in truth is the greatest is the servant of all. Many brethren make a great mistake in building a wall around their secrets, for they succeed only in shutting out their own light. Their divine opportunity is at hand. The time has come when the world needs the Ancient Wisdom as never before. Let the Mason stand forth and by living the doctrines which he preaches show to his brother man the glory of his work. He holds the keys to truth; let him unlock the door, and with his life and not his words preach the doctrine which he has so long professed.

The first part of this paragraph is, to me, very profound. How many of you are secure enough in your shortcomings to actually be able to learn from that enemy? To set aside your passions or prejudices and actually see the truth behind the enemies thoughts. In your studies or even witnessing of the degrees have you ever changed your mind? Learned something new? Or looked at things in a different light? Maybe we need to couch our thoughts in the fact that this is the correct answer, to us, right now! Any Mason who thinks he has all of the answers or refuses to debate a difference of opinion not only is preventing another brother from growing, but has stunted his own growth and is no longer attaining additional knowledge. I am not saying that he must change his views or stance, just be willing to accept the different opinion and hopefully learn from it.

The Fatherhood of God and the Brotherhood of Man were united in the completion of the Eternal Temple, the Great Work, for which all things came into being and through which all shall glorify their Creator.

MASONS, AWAKE!

Your creed and your Craft demand the best that is in you. They demand the sanctifying of your life, the regeneration of your body, the purification of your soul, and the ordination of your spirit. Yours is the glorious opportunity; yours is the divine responsibility. Accept your task and follow in the footsteps of the Master Masons of the past, who with the flaming spirit of the Craft have illumined the world. You have a great privilege – the privilege of illumined labor. You may know the ends to which you work, while others must struggle in darkness. Your labors are not to be confined to the tiled Lodge alone, for a Mason must radiate the qualities of his Craft. Its light must shine in his home and in his business, glorifying his association with his fellow men. In the Lodge and out of the Lodge, the Mason must represent the highest fruitage of sincere endeavor.

What are the footsteps that we should follow in from our learned and distant brethren? Do we look to the founders of our country? To the times of the enlightenment? To our forefathers in the stone masons guilds? The ancient mysteries? King Solomon and the building of the Temple? Or do we search even further back in time to find the beginnings of our labor? This is your task and duty as a Master Mason. To learn and improve yourself so that you may not only improve the Craft, but to improve the whole world and all things that live within it!

Questions?

Comments?

Thoughts?

Thank you.

Presented by Boyd Robertson at the Scientia Coronati Research Lodge #4 stated meeting on June 22, 2012.