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# Some thoughts on the history of the Tracing Boards

PRESENTED AT THE VANCOUVER GRAND MASONIC DAY, OCTOBER 16, 1999  
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I first gave a variation of this particular talk in May, 1996. I have given it a number of times since. Every time I've given the talk the analysis, although not the facts or the substance, changes slightly. As I have now had time to once again reconsider this and am now obligated to present the talk in written form, I also feel somewhat obligated to explain not so much my research, as meandering as it might have been, but rather the various pieces of Masonic history that are linked to Tracing Boards. The history of Tracing Boards actually is fairly easy to describe, but how it fits into the larger context of Masonry and why it is that we are now required, in the Canadian work, to actually use Tracing Boards is quite a complex story. I must assume that the majority of readers of this paper will be in the same state of darkness that I was when I approached this topic however, for those of you who already know much or most of what I am about to describe, I hope you do not mind a refresher course, and to those to whom some or all of this is new, I trust you will find it as intriguing as I have.

When I refer to the *Canadian Ritual* that is used in this Province the reference is to the *British Columbia Canadian Work as authorized by Grand Lodge on June 23, 1955 and amended to 1983*. When I refer to the *Antient Ritual* it will be to *British Columbia Antient Work*, approved by Grand Lodge June 2, 1962. When I refer to the transactions of the Quator Coronati, I will use the abbreviation *AQC*. I'm going to present some conclusions right now, so you can better understand where the topic is going:

1. Much of what needs to be known about Tracing Boards is known. The people who made them and the Lodges that use them are all fairly well documented. This part of Masonic history does not fall into "from time immemorial."
2. The time frame when the Tracing Boards came into being is roughly at the very end of the Eighteenth Century and the first decades or so of the Nineteenth Century. The contents of them reflects the reality of Masonry at the time, just prior to and through the process of and after the Lodge of Reconciliation.
3. While we think of the rise of the two rival Grand Lodges in the Eighteenth Century as a time of conflict, in actual fact it was a time of the greatest Masonic growth where the Brethren in the Lodges were experimenting with different methods of communicating the Masonic message to each other and perfecting new rituals.
4. The Tracing Boards are teaching aids. They have taken on a life of their own, which has had some startling repercussions in Ritual work.
5. To understand where Tracing Boards came from, you have to understand where Floor Cloths came from, but that does not necessarily mean that Tracing Boards are an evolution from Floor Cloths. Many Lodges that use Tracing Boards still use Floor Cloths, and some Lodges that use Floor Cloths do not use Tracing Boards, &c. While I am discussing primarily the Tracing Boards that are used in our jurisdiction in the Canadian, Emulation, and Australian Lodges, I do not mean to overlook the Degree charts and Floor Cloths used in the Antient Lodges.

6. The Tracing Boards that we use ought not to be called Tracing Boards, and this has been recognized by commentators for the last 80 years, but the chance of renaming them even 80 years ago was zero and is certainly less than that now.
7. The Tracing Boards were originally designed to lie flat on the floor of the Lodge, and the Tracing Boards that we use now have used the same artistic perspective as did the original Tracing Boards.
8. While the Tracing Boards as a teaching aid can also be an adornment of the Lodge, it is generally agreed by the writers on this topic that the ones that are most commonly in use, particularly in British Columbia, are the least artistically interesting.
9. There appears to be no rule in terms of Ritual that requires the Tracing Boards for the Degrees that are not being worked to be hidden—*i.e.*, if you are in Third Degree, First Degree and Second Degree Boards must not be shown, or conversely, that the Third Degree Board must not be shown while you are in the First Degree.

To understand specifically why these issues were of importance to me, you have to understand why I did the research in the first place. Two years prior to giving the talk on Tracing Boards, I had given a talk at my Lodge on art and imagery in Masonry. While I was doing research on that, specifically reviewing the wonderful colour reproductions in *Freemasonry A Journey Through Ritual and Symbol* by W. Kirk McNulty, two groups of questions arose in my mind.

The first question group was, why the Third Degree Board is almost always on display, and why the First Degree Board, which to me is the most interesting, is only seen briefly during a typical meeting when we are going into the First Degree. Because we are in British Columbia we are obliged to do our business in the Third Degree, but that is really not much of an answer.

The real question is why that Board needs to be tucked away when we were not in the First Degree. The obvious answer, of course, is that in a functional basis there is no place to display all three Boards at the same time. There does not appear to be any particular ritual requirement for the lack of display of one Tracing Board or another. The only requirement is for a Tracing Board of the particular degree to be displayed specifically when the degree is being worked.

In the Canadian Ritual the Senior Deacon displays a Tracing Board and the working tools of each degree separately. First Degree, (pages 6 & 17); Second Degree (pages 15 & 16) and Third Degree (page 13). There is no requirement for the placing of the Tracing Board for the First Degree Tracing Board Lecture, rather the Candidate is taken to the Junior Warden Station and the Junior Warden delivers the lecture on the Tracing Board (page 38). Similarly, in the Second Degree, the Candidate is taken to the West, where the Senior Warden delivers the Tracing Board Lecture (page 70). In the Third Degree the Deacons conduct the Candidate to the Master Mason's Tracing Board and the Worshipful Master points out its features, which are limited to the ornaments of a Master Mason's Lodge *i.e.* the porch, the dormer and the square pavement (page 100).

I will be touching on certain issues regarding ritual, but this talk is

not about Tracing Boards and the ritual; that is a somewhat separate topic which has been dealt with by VW Bro. Jim Bennie in a talk he delivered to the Vancouver Lodge of Education and Research about two years ago. I did not include a copy of his paper because it did not necessarily deal with some of the issues that I have raised, nor should I expect anyone else to deal with my singular concerns.

The second question group deals with something on the typical First Degree Tracing Board, that is on the “Jacob’s Ladder,” the images for the three cardinal virtues—that is, Faith, Hope and Charity—typically had a cross for faith. As I looked into the pictures of the early Tracing Boards, I realized that none of them had a cross for the Faith; in fact, the cross did not appear in the Tracing Boards until the 1860s.

The question then raised was why, if Freemasonry is inclusive not exclusive—that is, if it is designed to include all religions and not exclude any religion—why the symbol of Faith was a cross?

I must admit I pondered this for a long time because I knew that if I had gone to my Brethren and raised this issue the matter would have been resolved very quickly, as it was in fact when I did raise the issue, by simply pasting a large F over the cross. In some of the earliest Tracing Boards Faith, Hope and Charity were represented with the capital letters “F”, “H” and “C”. But there was an intellectual, not just a religious, problem here, and that was figuring out why it was that Freemasonry was nondenominational, save and except the belief in a Supreme Being.

The Jacob’s Ladder with the symbols being a cross for Faith, an anchor for Hope and a heart for Charity, has taken on a life of its own apart from its Tracing Board significance. It is one of the few pieces of Masonic symbolism, aside from the square and compasses (with or without the G) that is known worldwide. I’ve seen it in publications as far afield as an Argentinian Masonic magazine.

With that in mind when I first gave this talk, a great portion of it dealt with why religious topics were precluded from the Lodge hall, including any sign of one religion being better than another. I must touch on this briefly now, because the issue of the Lodge of Reconciliation and the Rituals that came from it is an important part of this talk. When the Lodge of Reconciliation was concluded, a number of compromises had been reached between the two Grand Lodges. For example, Deacons were to be admitted; there were to be yearly installations; there were to be no more painted aprons; the Craft Ritual was limited to three degrees; and in those three degrees there was to be no reference to any Christian religion.

The Royal Arch, which was a separate degree, could have reference to Christian religion, but the first three degrees were to have no external references to Christianity, and the reference to the Volume of the Sacred Law would be limited to the Old Testament.<sup>1</sup> This issue of “de-Christianizing” Masonry has not gone away. It crops up from time to time in articles in the *AQC* and it is really not my business to go into the arguments, save and except to say that by talking about “de-Christianizing” the authors are mis-describing the issue.

The issue is that what the Duke of Sussex did was quite extraordinary not just in terms of Masonic history but more importantly in terms of English history at that time. By insisting that Masonry be completely inclusive, he was out of step with the body politic in England. It is understandable why there were revolts against the Duke of Sussex over this issue of “de-Christianizing” because those who were opposing the Duke were reflecting their society at large, in the specific context of Masonry. We take for granted that the ideals of Freemasonry were

accepted by everyone, this is not correct. We assume because so much of the American *Declaration of Independence* and so many other parts of early American history (the New Secular Order) are related to Masonic ideals, that these ideas were current in England. This is not correct. I don’t wish to give a full-blown course on 19th Century English politics but for those who are interested I’ll give one recent reference, *Poisoning The Minds Of The Lower Orders* by Don Herzog, Princeton University Press, 1998. Also, it took three separate Reform Acts of 1832, 1867 and 1884 to allow every man in England to have the vote.

Up until 1854, unless you were an Anglican, it was almost impossible to attend either Cambridge or Oxford and it wasn’t until 1871 that legislation was passed making all offices, and professorships at Cambridge, Oxford, and Durham (except for certain clerical and theological positions) open to anyone who was not an Anglican. We forget that religious tensions in England and the social tensions and the class tensions were not as we would perceive it now being as between Christians and Jews and Muslims, but rather between Anglicans, Non-Conformists, Methodists, and everyone else including Catholics, Eastern Orthodox, Jews, Muslims, &c. I am spending some time on this point because secularizing the message of Masonry and focusing on universal and fundamental beliefs of Brotherly Love, Relief and Truth didn’t make the Craftsman any less Christian. To do so would have been to have them change their skins. No one wanted to do that, in fact, our opening Ode is taken right from the Anglican Hymnal. There is no concern as to where the Hymn came from, after all it was well known to the Craftsmen and the message is perfectly Masonic. It is no wonder that when the Chaplain is installed he is charged with the obligation of promoting tolerance.

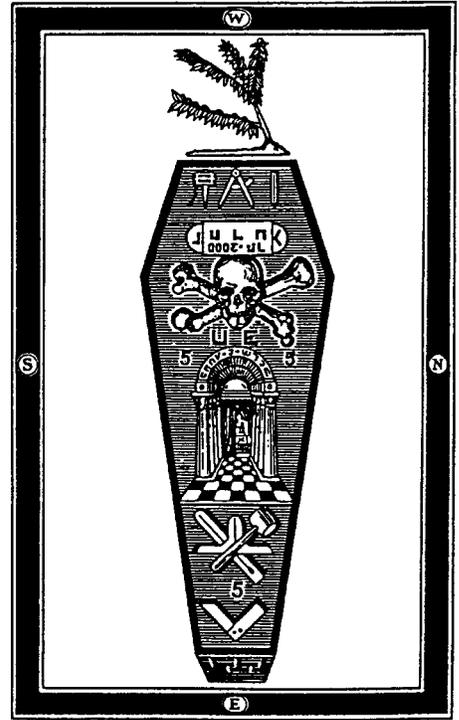
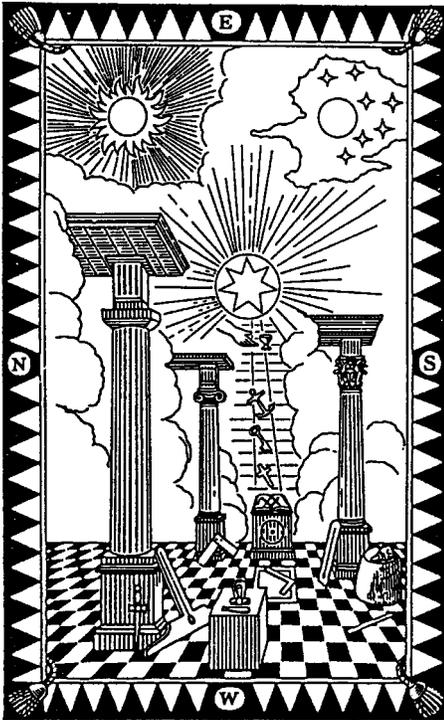
Something else that came out of the Lodge of Reconciliation, and I am getting ahead of myself but this is as good a time as any to bring it up, is the clear fact that there was never an authorized ritual. In fact, the first query that came up to the Grand Lodge after the Lodge of Reconciliation had finished its work was whether or not the Emulation ritual was the correct work as compared to the Stability work, and the Duke of Sussex as the Grand Master was not even interested in entertaining the question. In England, as long as the Ritual includes all the landmarks agreed upon and worked at the Lodge of Reconciliation, whatever Ritual that is used is acceptable. Emulation became one of the best known rituals because it was the first one which had an unauthorized version of its Ritual published.

As for the history of Tracing Boards, there are a number of strands of Masonic history and Ritual all tied together, and I’ll deal with them in turn. This analysis I am giving follows the example of the two articles in *AQC*, the first being “The Evolution and Development of the Lodge or Tracing Board “ by E.H. Dring in *AQC* 29(1916), and the second being “Tracing Boards—Their Development and Their Designers” by T.O. Haunch in *AQC* 75(1962). The Dring article is absolutely marvelous and covers a tremendous amount of territory as he set out to recapture what was, even in 1916, being lost. He tried to photograph every Tracing Board he could find still in existence, and to explain where they came from and how they fit into the history of Masonic Ritual. I certainly could never hope to duplicate the quality of his research or of his insights. The second article by Haunch was meant to be a short talk to be given in Lodges, and it is a first rate overview of the topic. Where my analysis may differ is that there are certain points I believe both English authors took for granted that *we* cannot take for granted and must analyze. Of course, whatever I write is completely my responsibility.

The issues that are tied into the history of Tracing Boards involve

1. “It is not in the power of any man.” T.O. Haunch. *AQC*. 85 (1972).

# DEGREE CHARTS



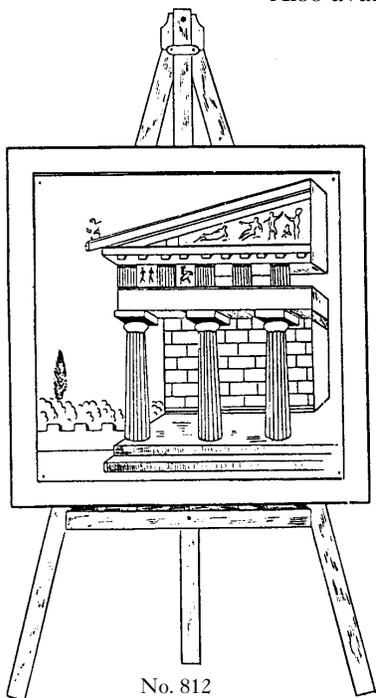
No. 800

THE ONLY CORRECT CHARTS FOR CANADIAN OR ENGLISH WORK

Separate chart for each degree, approximately 24 x 36 inches, lithographed in FULL COLOUR, mounted on cotton backing with wood roller at top and bottom.

To avoid wear and costly replacement, we recommend framing like a picture.

Also available, Sherer's charts for American Work.



No. 812

## MASTER'S TRACING BOARD

No regulation design is required. Any illustration of a portion of ancient architecture is appropriate. Usually a black and white drawing by one of the skilled members of the Lodge. Art work supplied on request. We suggest mounting drawing on plywood or masonite.

Because of the size and shipping costs of the easel, it may be more convenient to obtain this from your local school supply house.

many of the major Masonic research problems, such as confusion over language, change over language over a length of time, the history of Lodge halls, the history of Masonic Rituals, and the history of Masonic symbolism. All of this has to be touched on, otherwise the history of Tracing Boards is taken so far out of context that it doesn't lead to any worthwhile discussion.

The best example I can give of this is the following quote from the First Degree lecture given while the candidate is looking at, or being directed to look at, the First Degree Tracing Board in the Canadian work: "The immovable jewels are the Tracing Board, the Rough Ashlar, and the Perfect Ashlar. The Tracing Board is for the Worshipful Master to lay lines and draw designs on." Interestingly enough, the Tracing Board being referred to in that quote is not the Tracing Board that the Entered Apprentice is looking at—it is in fact a blank slate, or a blank piece of paper, that the Worshipful Master will draw on to show some architectural or geometrical model which is the basis of the moral lesson.

A clear example of this confusion is found on page 28, of the last *Dominion Regalia* catalogue which outlines two items for sale: first, something called degree charts (which we would typically call Tracing Boards), and second, something called the Master's Tracing Board. (see fig. 1.) The *Dominion Regalia* has the correct description of a Master's Tracing Board, specifically when it says that no regulation design is required. In fact, there is no regulation design for any of these items, specifically the degree charts or what we would call the Tracing Boards. For that reason I point out the absolute incorrectness of the statement below the pictures of the Degree Charts: "The only correct charts for Canadian or English work." There is no authority for that statement; there is no Body in either England or Canada, to the best of my knowledge, that has ever authorized the designs of any Tracing Boards to be used. Whether the Grand Lodge should require the use of Tracing Boards (as they do in this jurisdiction) is a different question.

The easiest way into the topic is to discuss the premises in which Masonic meetings took place. You will notice I didn't use the word "lodge," because that word has a variety of different meanings—even now, we interchangeably use the word to mean the place where we hold Masonic meetings and the unit of Freemasonry that we belong to. These are recent developments for the word, because the word has gone through a number of changes.

When talking about the Lodge, the best starting place is a very thorough history such as *The Lodge, An Essay in Method* by R.J. Meekren. *AQC*, Vol. 61 (1948). This gives a lot of history about the original "lodges" but to make it brief, and to be specific, our concerns deal with the 18th century and onward. We know that Freemasons met in rooms that were not designated solely for the purposes of Freemasonry—that is, they met in back rooms of pubs, or hotels or private residences. The room, therefore, had to not only be made to look different during the meeting but also everything about the room had to go back to normal, or at least non-Masonic. It was not a problem to move chairs and candlesticks around, but those pieces of furniture did not make a room into a lodge—that is, something that related to the original "form of the Lodge."

Typically what was done was to draw on the floor (and this was the Tyler's job) either an oblong or a slight variation of an oblong that represented the form of the Lodge or the original enclosure of the original outdoor Lodge meetings. This original shape was typically called an oblong square. It got renamed in the 18th century to a word that has bedeviled us ever since: "parallelepipedon." There's a remnant of earlier language used in the Senior Warden's lecture in the First

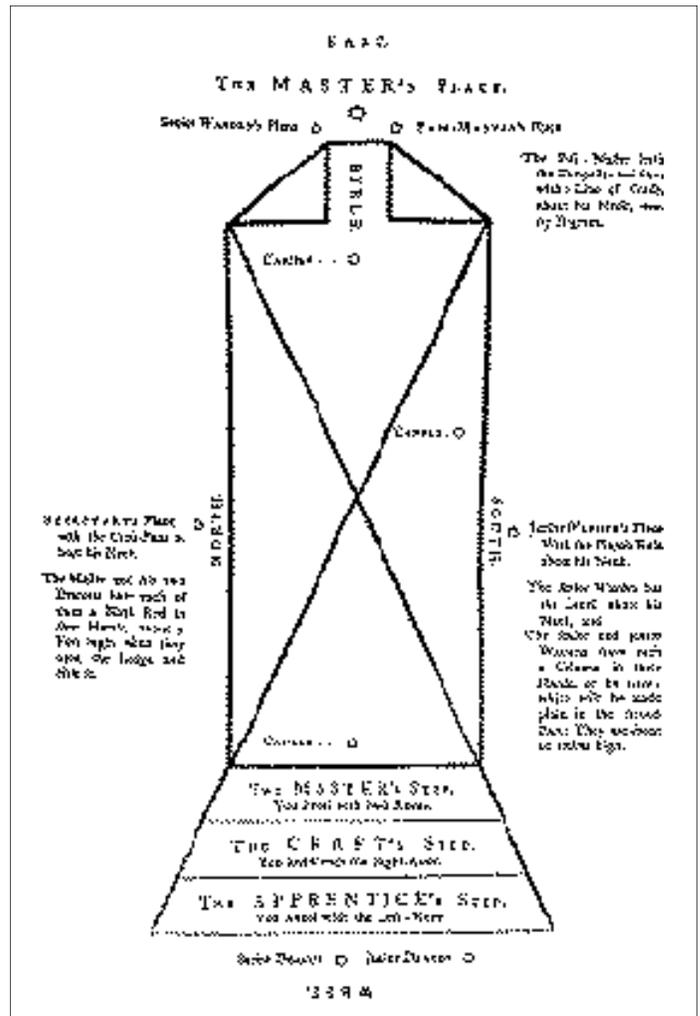


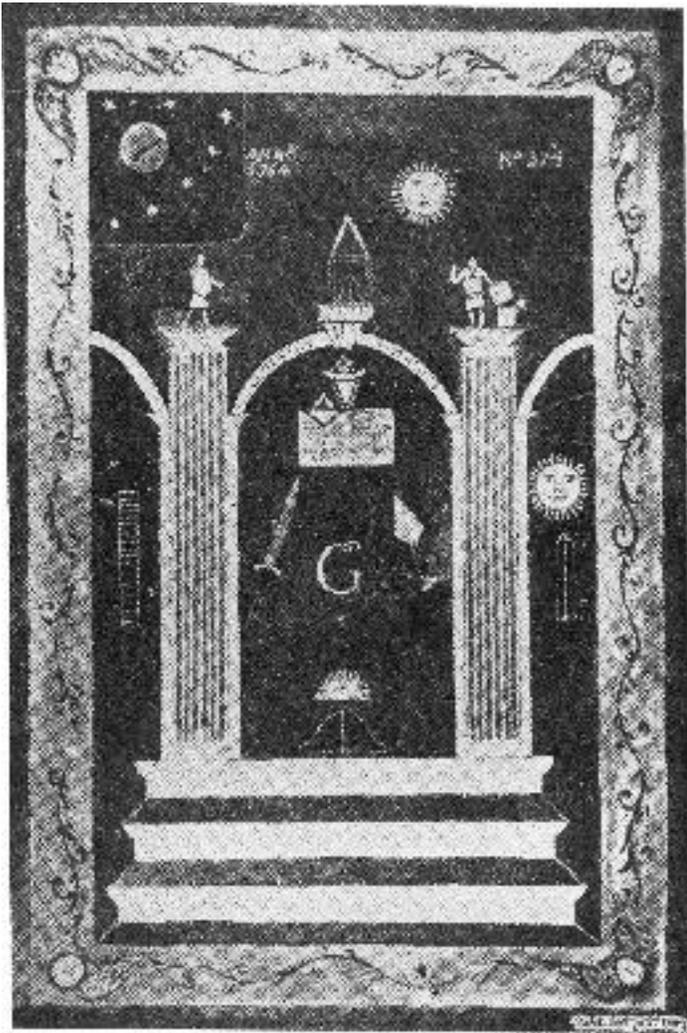
fig. 2. Floor diagram. "The Three Distinct Knocks." London: 1760.

Degree; I quote from Page 45 of the *Ancient Ritual*: "Our ancient Brn. usually met on a high hill or in a low dale, the better to detect the approach of cowans or eavesdroppers either ascending or descending. The form of a L. is an oblong, its length from E. to W., its breadth from N. to S., its height from the earth to the heavens, its depth from the earth's surface to its center. It is of such vast dimensions to show the universality of Fmy and that M. charity should be equally extensive."

Just to complete the cycle, the first reference to Hiram's grave is from the 1727 *Wilkinson* manuscript, where it is described, in a catechism, as an oblong square. Sometimes the form of the Lodge would simply be this oblong square, and sometimes the form of the Lodge would also include a variety of Masonic symbols. We know this from prints in the early *Masonic Exposures* such as *The Three Distinct Knocks* of 1760. (see fig. 2.)

This process of drawing the Lodge, and mopping up afterwards, is described in *The Three Distinct Knocks* and in *Jachin and Boaz* and *Mahhabone*. The process of cleaning up survives in our present ritual when at the end of the meeting, as per the *Antient Ritual* (Page 167), the following is said: "Nothing further remains to be done, according to ancient custom, except to disarrange our emblems." I believe that this reference to disarranging emblems refers to the cleaning up of the floor to leave no trace of the form of the Lodge or the contents drawn thereon.

Gradually, and there really is no set time frame here, Lodges came up with the idea of having Floor Cloths—that is, something that



Floor Cloth, dated 1764, of the Lurgan Lodge, then No. 394 [G.L. Ireland].

would be painted on and could be used over and over. The first references to these Lodge floorings that are painted occurs in French Exposures in the early 1740s. There are diagrams and examples of these Floor Coverings and also a reference to the fact that while some Lodges were using Lodge floorings, other Lodges refused to and would only use the form of the Lodge that was drawn on the floor rather than this newfangled invention. In fact there is a record of a Lodge Cloth being made in 1812, after many Tracing Boards were already in use. (*AQC* Vol. 64 (1953) p. 79.)

There is a famous quote from 1759 in the Scottish Grand Lodge to the effect that the Lodge St. Andrews had been ordered from ever using again a painted flooring because “a painted cloth containing the flooring of a Master’s Lodge was hanging publicly exposed in a painter’s shop,” and the Grand Lodge considered that some “pernicious consequences to Masonry” would occur if this event occurred again. This is not a particularly accurate expression of Freemasonry in Scotland at the time; there are a great number of records of Scottish Lodges that were using these floorings for each of the degrees, and in fact there are even records of some of these Floor Cloths, because of their expense, being framed to be hung on the wall when the Lodge was in session.

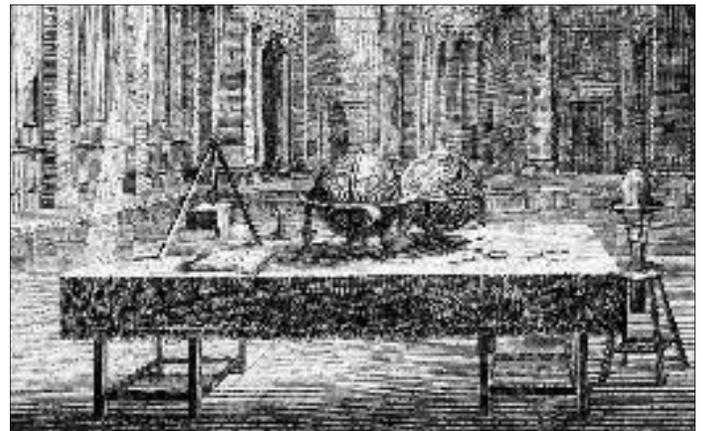
While the Scots may have been quite thrifty or at least very careful regarding the Lodge’s assets, by taking the form of the Lodge from the flooring and putting onto the wall, they inadvertently changed

the nature of Masonic symbolism. You would no longer be standing around the Lodge itself or be part of the Lodge itself but rather looking at the Lodge and all of the emblems emblazoned thereon. This I think is one of the significant leaps away from operative Masonry.

I have to get back to the language issue at this point, because the words are starting to change meanings. While the Lodge, that is those groups of men who were Masons, decided to paint a Lodge cloth or Lodge floorings, what they were doing is representing the Lodge and when they were standing around it or in a room where the Lodge flooring was, then they were in the Lodge or at the Lodge as compared to being members of the Lodge. In any event, the earliest floor cloth that I can find a picture of is from 1764; that of the Lurgan Lodge No. 394 of the Grand Lodge of Ireland. (*see fig. 3.*)

There really was no centralized authority or convergence of information regarding any of this, and all of these matters seemed to have sprung up either spontaneously or contemporaneously in different parts of Europe. I won’t go into European or Irish Floor Cloths because that would make this just too complicated. But the next step is the gradual change from Floor Cloths on the floor to cloths that were designed specifically to be on raised boards. In other words, rather than standing around or standing on a Floor Cloth the Lodge would be formed when the cloth was on a board, which was usually suspended by two trestles, therefore the phrase the trestleboard, or alternately the phrase Lodge Board which also causes some ambiguity. What was put on the trestle board were often at least the working tools in the degree that was to be worked. The frontispiece of the 1784 *Book of Constitutions* shows a trestle board. (*see fig. 4*) You will notice the two globes, the working tools, the Lewis, the Volume of the Sacred Law, &c. I understand that there’s a Lodge in Bristol that still uses a table with a Lodge cloth on it.

Before I get into Tracing Boards there are a number of issues about drawing the Lodge and the Lodge Floor Cloths and the Lodge Boards that need to be addressed.



Detail from frontispiece to Anderson’s “Constitutions,” 1784.

## EXPOSURES

After Freemasonry was established in France in the early 1730s, there were a number of books printed that outlined the workings of a Lodge. These were called *Exposures* because in theory they were meant to expose the workings to the general public, but this is probably an inaccurate description. These books were reprinted, some of them were translated and printed in English, (clearly the market for the information was not limited just to people interested in what Masons did but rather to Masons themselves) to find out how other Masons did

Ritual. Much of the early information we have is from these French and English Exposures. For the longest time they were looked down on by scholars as being inaccurate but, starting, at least, from Dring's paper on Tracing Boards onwards, this has subtly changed where they are now seen as being the only accurate representations of what Masonic Ritual was.

The first pictorial representation of Floor Cloths were found in the French exposures dating back to 1742. We have some of these in the original form in our Grand Lodge Library, unfortunately the diagrams I wish to use were not complete and also unfortunately the Harry Carr book on early French exposures was unavailable when I was making up the diagrams for this lecture. In any event, we know that Floor Cloths, in and of themselves were used as early as 1742, specifically for the Third Degree. This is as good a point as any in my talk to thank W Bro. Trevor McKeown, who, besides wearing many hats including being the organizer of this year's Grand Masonic Day, also made possible the inclusion of all these diagrams and pictures.

## FLOOR CLOTHS AND RELATED MATTERS

Floor cloths and floor coverings are in fact a separate topic but I need to go through them in some detail to tie up some loose ends. In many of our Lodge Halls, for example, 8th & Granville, Marpole, and Kamloops, there is nothing on the flooring that indicates the requirements of the First Degree Lodge, *i.e.* Masonic pavement and indented skirting that surrounds the pavement. This can be found in the First Degree lecture on page 42 of the *Canadian* work and similar wording can be found in the Senior Warden's First Degree lecture on page 47 of the *Ancient Work*. Why the flooring of these Lodge Halls is missing the Mosaic pavement or the indented skirting is not for me to speculate. I know in my Lodge hall in Richmond both these two items are there and in the Langford Lodge hall on Vancouver Island there is an actual Mosaic pavement, and in the newly refurbished Kerrisdale Lodge there is a wonderful carpet with Mosaic pavement and also the four tassels. I raise this because the questions of symbolism and use of Masonic symbols goes to the root of the history of where Tracing Boards come from. If we rely on the Tracing Boards themselves for our sole source of Masonic symbolism we may not only be taking too much for granted but also diminishing the Masonic experience available to our Brethren. I can explain this by talking about Lodges that meet in locations that are not permanent Masonic Lodge halls. Typically, these are church halls or otherwise which the Masons use for their meeting and have to make each hall to be a Masonic Lodge. Usually, the Lodge will have some form of Masonic flooring. I refer you to photographs of the *AQC* Vol.107 (1994) on pages 201 and 205 showing temporary tassels in the four corners and a temporary Mosaic floor cloth of Lamont Lodge No. 94 of the Grand Lodge of Alberta, and also the picture on page 157 of the *AQC* Vol.110 (1997).

I contacted some of the Lodges in our jurisdiction that don't have permanent Masonic homes, and I can report that in Kitimat Lodge No. 169, which is Canadian, they have a carpet that's about six feet by ten feet which on one side has mosaic pavement and tassels, on the other side there's a coffin for the Third Degree work. In McKenzie Lodge No. 168, which is an Antient Lodge, they have a black and white mosaic pavement about six feet by six feet with tassels; and in Queen Charlotte Lodge No.189, which is Antient, they have a Second Degree Floor Cloth about two and a half feet by seven feet. In Light of the Rockies Lodge No. 190, which is Emulation, they have a three foot by six foot painted canvas Floor Cloth which is a mosaic pavement with tassels. This is not meant to be an exhaustive list. I also do not want people to believe that

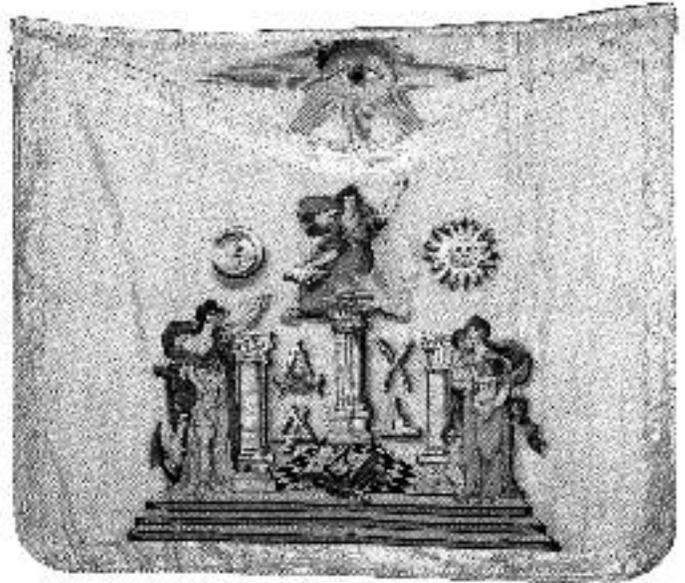


fig. 5 Satin apron, English, c. 1800 [p. 57, MacNulty]

only Lodges that do not have a permanent home would use Floor Cloths. For example, Prince of Wales Lodge No.100 (which meets at the Kerrisdale hall) has a black and white Masonic pavement Floor Cloth which it uses; and Lodge of Edinburgh (Mary's Chapel) No. 1, which just celebrated the four hundredth anniversary of its earliest extant minute dating back to July 1559, also uses a Floor Cloth in what is clearly a permanent Lodge hall. I refer any of you interested, to the following website to see a lovely picture of this <[www.grandlodgescotland.com](http://www.grandlodgescotland.com)>.

This is as good a place as any, to make some simple comparisons between *Antient* and *Canadian* work. In *Canadian* work we typically only use the Floor Cloth in the Third Degree. In *Antient* work there are no Tracing Boards as such but there is usually a chart which is used by the Senior Warden in the First Degree Lecture. In the Second Degree many Antient Lodges have wonderful Floor Cloths, such as Vancouver Lodge No. 68. Richmond Lodge No. 142 lays out the steps on separate pieces of wood marked with the appropriate names for the three, five and seven steps. There are some Lodges in England that have constructed winding staircases that the Candidate is actually guided up. In the Third Degree, there is no specific reference to floor cloths in the *Antient* work except in a wonderful lecture which is listed as Appendix "H"—Alternate Lecture in MM Degree. The instructions in the Ritual are that this lecture is to be delivered with slides or master's carpet. I wish to thank the Grand Secretary for informing me of this piece of *Antient* ritual.

## MASONIC SYMBOLISM

If you were to only have read that Grand Lodge of Scotland reference about the Floor Cloth, you might assume that Masons were opposed to decoration. Far from it. In the Eighteenth Century Masons decorated not just Lodge regalia but everything that could possibly be decorated. The Masonic museums are full of drinking cups and glasses and plates and serving utensils covered in Masonic emblems. Masons used to paint their aprons—in fact, that was one of the compromises I mentioned earlier at the Lodge of Reconciliation that, in English Masonry at least, there were to be no more hand-painted aprons, though this certainly continued in Scotland. I've enclosed a copy of a hand-painted English apron *circa* 1800 because it shows three women portraying Faith Hope and Charity. This was a common portrayal and it shows up on a



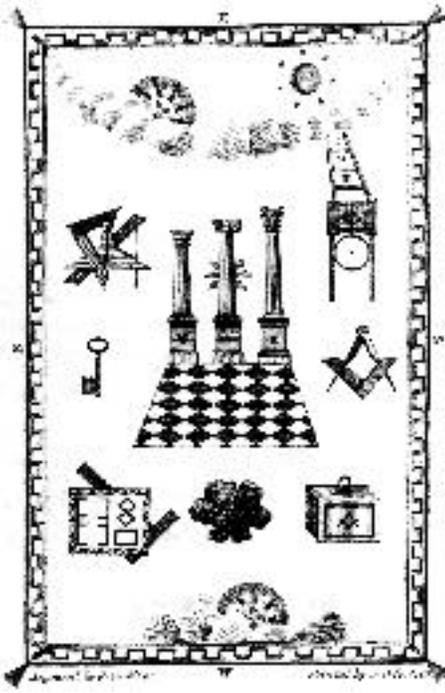


fig. 7. First Degree Tracing Board engraved by F. Curtis, printed by John Cole: 1801. [p. 89, MacNulty].

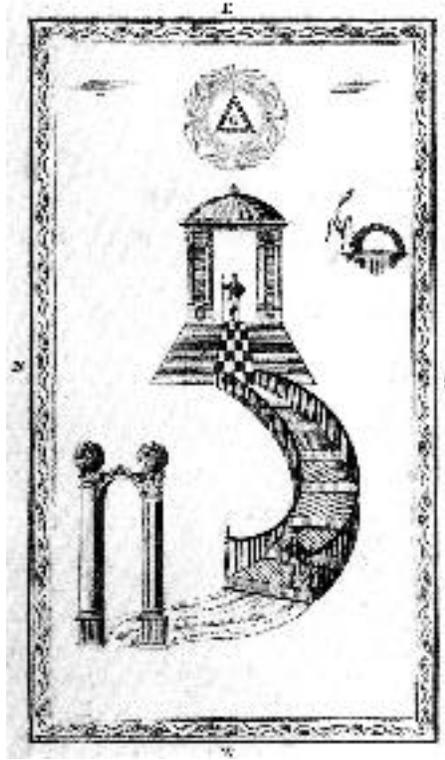


fig. 8. Second Degree Tracing Board engraved by F. Curtis, printed by John Cole: 1801. [p. 78, MacNulty].

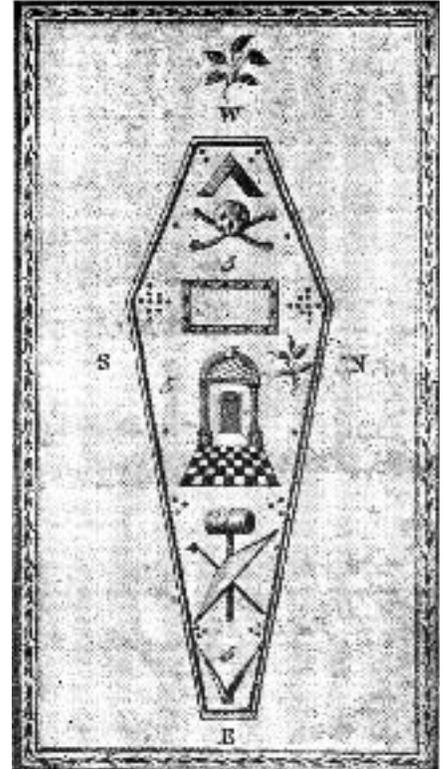


fig. 9. Third Degree Tracing Board engraved by F. Curtis, printed by John Cole: 1801. [p. 280, AQC Vol. XXIX, 1916].

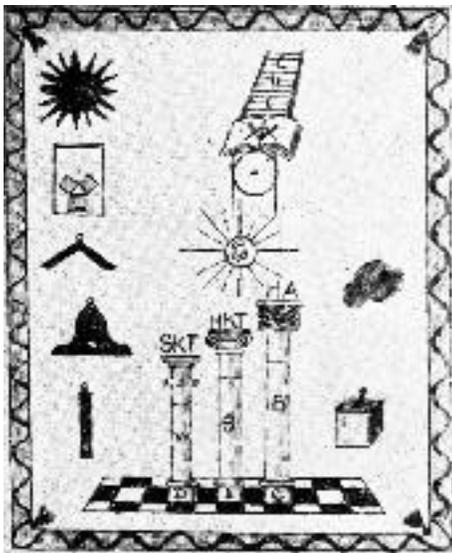


fig. 10. First Degree Tracing Board. John Browne's designs. c. 1800. [p. 192, AQC Vol. LXXV, 1962].

- labelling of pillars [as Cole, but cf. present ascriptions to Doric and Ionic]; master's tracing board.



fig. 11. Second Degree Tracing Board. John Browne's designs. c. 1800. [p. 192, AQC Vol. LXXV, 1962].

- super-arch to entrance; winding staircase springing from south.

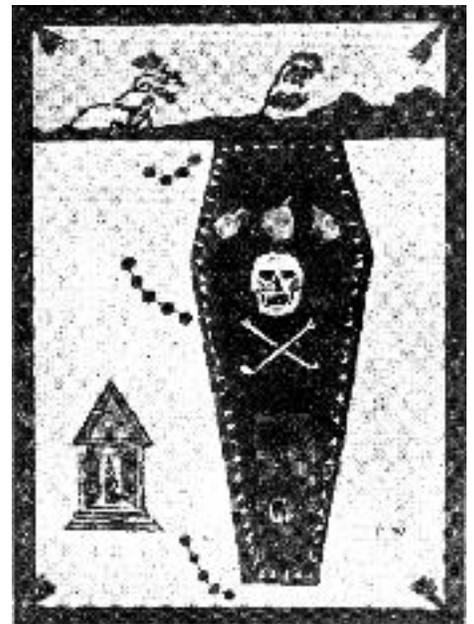


fig. 12. Third Degree Tracing Board. John Browne's designs. c. 1800. [p. 192, AQC Vol. LXXV, 1962].

- objects like strings of beads, possibly representing three lodges of five F.C.s each, topmost "lodge" completed by craftsman shown catching hold of shrub.



fig. 13, First Degree Tracing Board. Jacobs's designs. c. 1800. [p. 192, AQC Vol. LXXV, 1962]

- three sacrifice scenes of Abraham, Moses, Elijah [above setting sun, bottom right]; female figures of virtues on Ladders.



fig. 14. Second Degree Tracing Board. Jacobs's designs. c. 1800. [p. 192, AQC Vol. LXXV, 1962]

- figures of three G.M.s on domed roof of Middle Chamber; landscape with waterfall, bridge, stream, &c.



fig. 15. Third Degree Tracing Board. Jacobs's designs. c. 1800. [p. 192, AQC Vol. LXXV, 1962]

- pentalfa with all-seeing eye; open coffin; speculative working tools and operative implements; date 3000 on inscription scroll.

of course, Masons had to buy books that had the key for the cypher, otherwise they couldn't understand it. In Browne's *Master Key*, the cypher was as follows: Substitute the vowels a e i o u y with the letters of Browne's name; precede most words by meaningless capital letters, and then substitute letters including c for e, and then substitute the words Brethren or Masons with exclamation marks and then run the words together indiscriminately and do not use punctuation. (see figs. 10, 11, 12.)

The third artist is Jacob, who is only known to us by his last name. (see figs. 13, 14, 15)

The fourth artist is Josiah Bowring. He's generally acknowledged to be the best of all as an artist and the pictures I have included come from a different source than the Haunch article because I think they make better copies. (see figs. 16, 17, 18)

What you will notice in the First Degree, hanging from the Jacob's Ladder right beside Hope—that is, the middle woman on the ladder—is a key. You will also notice a key hanging in the First Degree Tracing Boards of Jacob and Cole. This refers to a catechism which I have chosen to quote from AQC Vol.84 (1971) page 327 because it is so interesting; it also indicates some of the material that was lost, or has gone out of usage, with this reliance on Tracing Board lectures:

Extract from *Lectures of the Three Degrees*, 1st Lecture, 1st Section:-

Q. How do they [the Masons] reveal them?

A. By Signs, tokens and particular words.

Q. As Masons, how do we hope to get at them?

A. By the assistance of a key.

Q. Does that key hang or lie?

A. It hangs.

Q. Why is the preference given to hanging?

A. It should always hang in a Brother's defense, and never lie to his prejudice...

## CHARGE

*"That excellent key, a Freemason's tongue, which should speak well of a Brother absent or present, but when unfortunately that cannot be done with honour and propriety, should adopt the excellent virtue of the Craft, which is silence."*

Finally, I am enclosing probably the most famous of the Tracing Boards, done by Harris for the Emulation Lodge of Improvement dated 1845. It is these and other ones that he did that have been copied and adulterated which we now we use as our Tracing Boards. (see figs. 19, 20, 21)

There's another artist, Thissleton, who I have not included because the quality of the reproduction wouldn't have been very good and there was nothing particularly interesting about his artwork. There are some other unnamed artists that I also cannot reproduce. I have, as much as possible, avoiding dealing with wall hangings and other Masonic wall charts and Royal Arch Tracing Boards &c., &c. Those are subsidiary topics to what I'm dealing with and this is complicated enough.



fig. 16. First Degree Tracing Board. Hand-painted on wood. Josiah Bowring: 1819. [p. 48, MacNulty].



fig. 17. Second Degree Tracing Board. Hand-painted on wood. Josiah Bowring: 1819. [pp. 48-49, MacNulty].

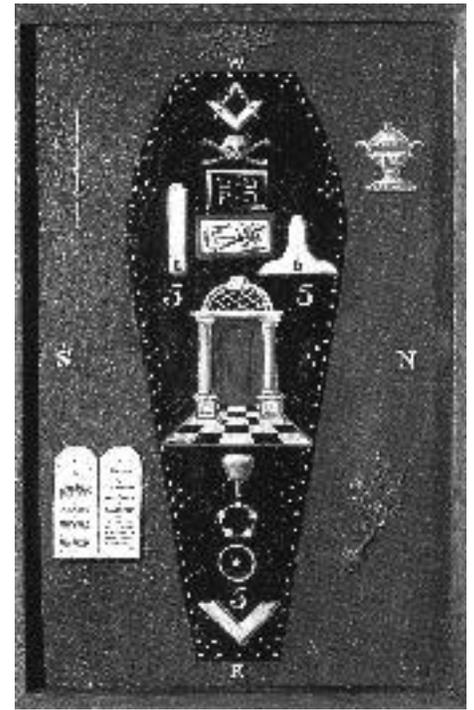


fig. 18. Third Degree Tracing Board. Hand-painted on wood. Josiah Bowring: 1819. [p. 49, MacNulty].

I've also left out references to other similar Tracing Boards (the Harris designs) because frankly they haven't been reproduced by either Haunch or Dring. Both of them decided not reproduce them for particular reasons which I believe are worth sharing. First from Dring and then from Haunch as follows:

*"I have tried to put before you as concisely as possible the Evolution and Development of the Lodge Board, and I have purposely refrained from entering into the later developments made by Harris and the designers of the Victorian era. They form a distinct chapter which would entail little labour for any brother to write, but I must say the subject does not interest me. Erroneous ideas, mistaken conceptions, meticulous details, in fact, all the bad qualities of the Victorian age permeate them, and, to my idea, the sooner we return to the pure realistic designs of Bowring or some of his contemporaries the better."*  
*"In their basic design, Harris' boards owe much to those of his predecessors, particularly Bowring, although they lack the purity of style and balance of the latter's work. The later examples exhibit the florid exuberance of ornament beloved of Victorian taste, especially the Second Degree Board, whose architecture is often a strange amalgam of Egyptian, Assyrian, Moorish and other styles."*

I do not want to spend too much time on the "iconography" of the Tracing Boards, because the use of two hundred years ago is a separate topic completely, especially because some of the symbols have not been

used in English Masonry since the Lodge of Reconciliation although they are still being used in other parts of the world. I cannot however leave this without discussing at least one point of interest in each of the three Tracing Boards. In regard to the First Degree Tracing Board, I refer to Browne Jacob and Harris, because each of them has a Tracing Board for the Master to write lines on and in fact, both Browne and Jacob show the 47th proposition.

In regards to the Second Degree Board, you will notice, if you look carefully, that some of the stairs wind to the right and some of the stairs wind to the left. This has sparked some debate as to which is the more accurate description of the stairs—I haven't even mentioned these references because it is not a topic that I find particularly worthwhile to investigate. There is, however, the issue as to what each Lodge felt was the proper direction for the stairways to go, and if you look at all the Second Degree Tracing Boards, except the first one by Cole, there are no compass points on them; this would allow the Lodge to have the Tracing Boards turned such that the stairs went whichever way the Lodge determined they should be going.

As for the Third Degree Board, what initially strikes one is the coffin. Hiram Abiff would have been buried only in a shroud not a coffin but the visual representation of the coffin has been kept consistent by and large. There was another confusing issue that I must deal with here and that is the lettering on the Third Degree Board itself. On some of the boards there is a little bit of Hebrew lettering but on most of the boards that are used in this jurisdiction, the lettering that is on the coffin or around the coffin is not Hebrew at all but a cypher which typically



fig. 19. First Degree. Emulation Ritual. A. Lewis  
[Masonic Publishers] Ltd. Middlesex: 1976.

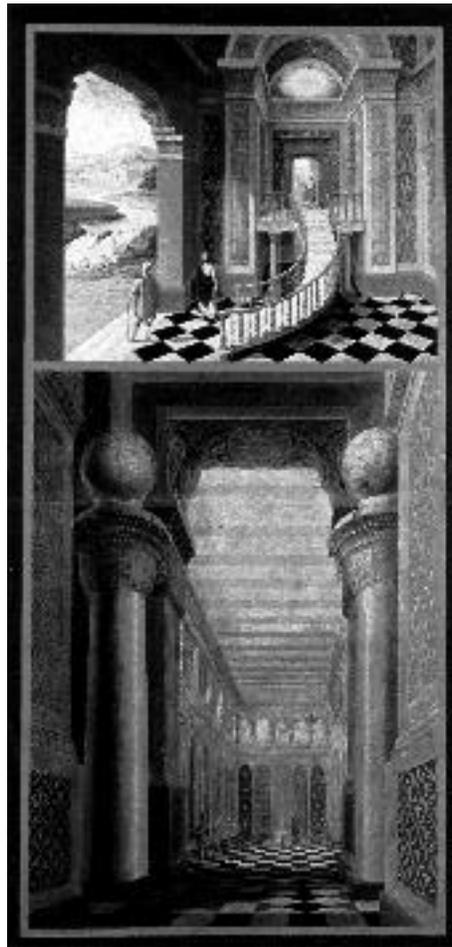


fig. 20. Second Degree. Emulation Ritual. A. Lewis  
[Masonic Publishers] Ltd. Middlesex: 1976.



fig. 21. Third Degree. Emulation Ritual. A. Lewis  
[Masonic Publishers] Ltd. Middlesex: 1976.

includes the Masonic year. As for the Masonic year, if you are interested in tracing this, the best article I could find was "The Dating of the Masonic Records," by Alan Bernheim, *AQC* Vol.99 (1986). As for the cypher, I enclose a copy of part of the Haunch article in which he explains how to read the cypher. (see fig. 22.)

Having said all of that I now enclose a Harris Third Degree Board that does not conform to much of what I just said. First of all it shows an open grave with a body in it, not a coffin, secondly, there is a fair amount of Hebrew on the tombstone (another uncommon feature). In fact, the only cypher on there are the six lines directly below the 47th proposition on the left hand side of the tombstone. The three Hebrew letters that are placed adjacent to North, South and East are identical and each has a numerical value of 5. It is typical to see three 5s on these boards in relationship to the Hiramic Legend. (see fig. 23.)

I believe this covers off the majority of the knowable history of Tracing Boards, and I now deal with the final questions as to why it is that we have Tracing Boards in our Canadian Work and how it is that we use them.

To some extent this can be traced back and through some work done by the Special Committee on Rituals between 1950 and 1954. I quote from the *1950 Grand Lodge Proceedings* (page 131):

*In 1949 Grand Lodge adopted the following resolution on recommendations of the Committee on Education and Research:*

*"That the Grand Master be requested to appoint a Special Committee to investigate the matter of ritual and forms of*

*work now in use in this Grand Jurisdiction and to submit a report thereon to Grand Lodge."*

*We decided first to ascertain three things:-*

- 1. What were the leading facts regarding the rituals being followed in the Lodges of the Jurisdiction;*
- 2. How other Jurisdictions, more particularly in Canada, were dealing with the situation;*
- 3. What Grand Lodge had done in the matter of Rituals to be observed by the Lodges."*

*And from the 1951 Grand Lodge Proceedings (page 142): "And study finally reveals that in British Columbia the spirit of innovation has been abroad in the land. Some Lodges never open or close in due form in the Second Degree. Some never hear of the All-seeing Eye. A bewildering complexity has arisen."*

I further quote from page 147 of 1951:

*"The Canadian system dates from 1859; it has many resemblances to the English, but leans somewhat towards American, Scottish, and Irish practices. The differences are sufficiently pronounced to warrant its consideration as a separate system."*

In 1952, the Committee reported on the different workings in the Province regarding the lectures' explanations of the Tracing Boards. In 1953, the Committee reported the *Proceedings* of the Grand Lodge of Canada in 1859. In 1954, the Committee, on page 150 of the Grand Lodge Report of that year, presented its draft revised form of Canadian

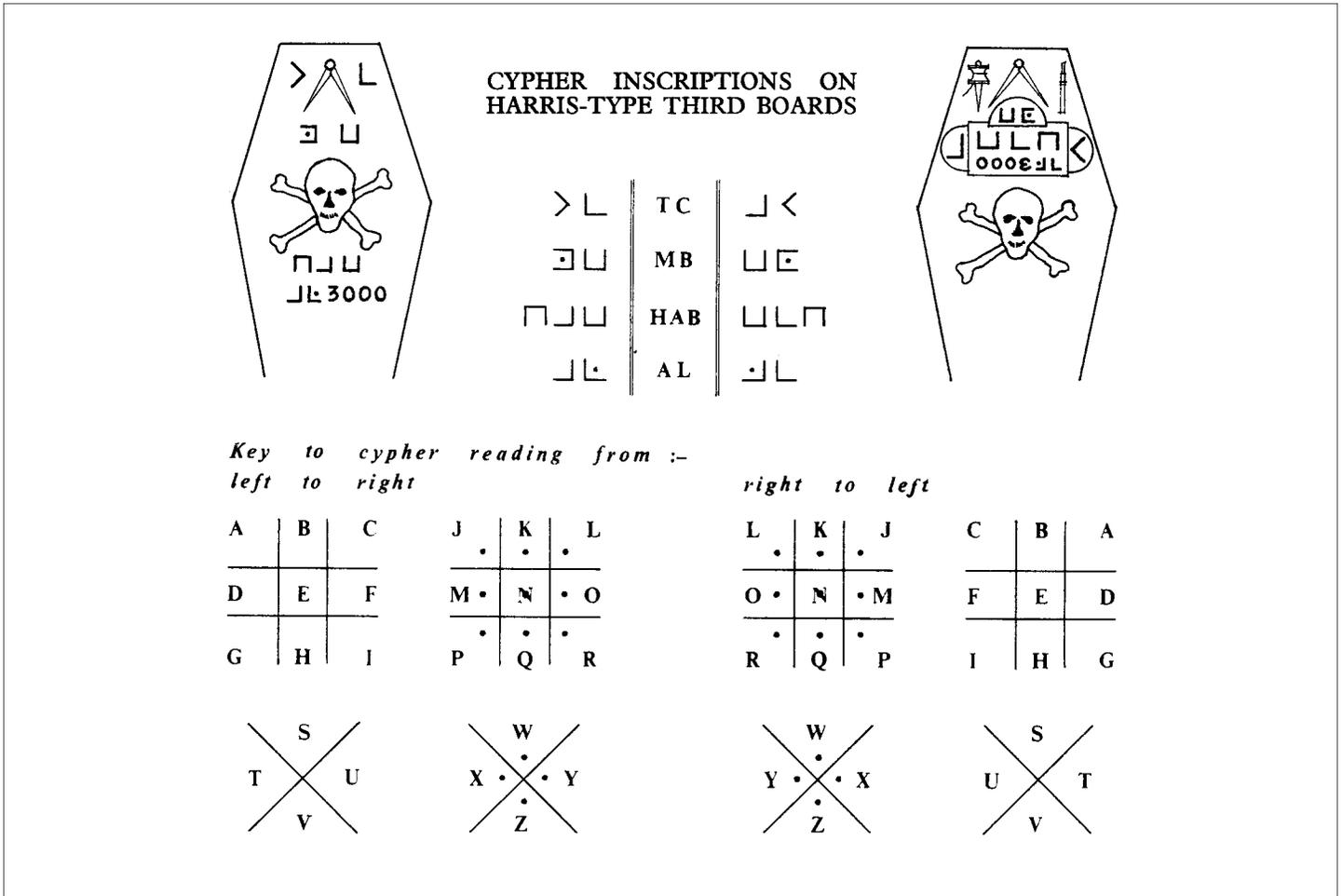


fig. 22. Cypher Inscriptions on Harris-type Third Boards. [p. 202, AQC Vol. LXXV, 1962].

work and presented it to Grand Lodge on the following terms:

*"We propose, in accordance with our 1953 Report, to distribute a copy of this Ritual to each Lodge in British Columbia and Yukon now doing Canadian work, for its comment. We are not asking Grand Lodge at this Communication to pass any resolution confirming this Ritual. The coming year may bring out points which should be dealt with. Our idea is that this Ritual, after approval by Grand Lodge, should be considered as a model and guide for the Canadian work. We believe that no existing Lodge should be required to adhere to it in every respect, but should adopt it, in whole or in part, as and when the Lodge itself sees fit. But because of the prospect of such adoption, perhaps some years hence, it is well to let every Lodge concerned have the opportunity to look over this Ritual in its present form. No considerable alteration has been made in the Ontario plan, but there have been some changes, chiefly of wording."*

This is consistent with all the Reports prior, where there was a real antipathy in the Committee to having one standardized required Ritual. They felt their job was to clean up the confusion, and to make the draft available and let the Lodges agree to a written form of the Ritual as each Lodge saw fit.

That is not quite the way it turned out, because a resolution that was presented in the 1955 Grand Lodge *Proceedings* was to the effect that any Lodge working prior to June 1, 1954, would voluntarily adopt

this Ritual but that any Lodge formed after June 1, 1954, practicing Canadian work had to use this agreed-upon Ritual.

This issue of required Rituals is far too complex for this paper, and it is obvious that people wanted to have some regularity rather than uncertainty. But the consequence, of course, is that it freezes everything in time such that, for example, in my Lodge, we are contemplating using candlesticks as compared to electric lights. There is general agreement that we can do this, and even come up with a piece of floor work that lights the candles in a certain order, but there is some question as to whether we can have any language used for this piece of floor work because it may not be found in the 1954 Ritual.

Seeing as how I'm talking about Ritual, it's best to describe what actually happens in the Tracing Boards lectures in Canadian work. Typically, the Candidate is brought in after he's been through the Ritual Work and has sat down in front of the Tracing Board. Usually in the First Degree this is somewhere between the Junior Warden Station and the Jr. Deacon's position. The Junior Warden then gives the lecture by pointing out all the elements of the Tracing Board. The other lodge members are on the side-lines watching this performance. This is a static and not particularly stimulating or participatory event. I know the Junior Wardens wouldn't describe it that way because of the amount of memory work involved. There are two different ways to deal with this. The first, if the Tracing Board is big enough, is to lay it flat on the ground and have all the Lodge Brethren stand around the Candidate while the lecture is being given. This is done in some English Lodges but it would be impractical for a number of reasons to do it in our Lodges. What has

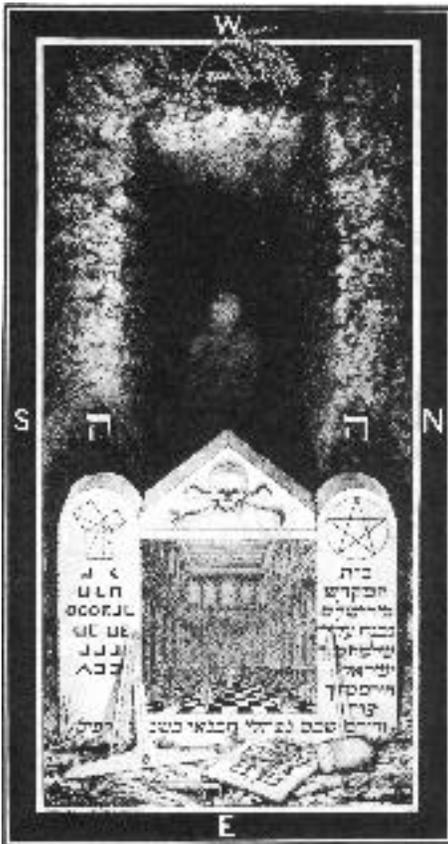


fig. 23. A Fine Board by J. Harris, 1850.

pillars that are usually situated somewhere near the west of the Lodge and all the material on the pillars, rather than referring to the Tracing Board involves the Candidate and shows not just the message of the Second Degree Lecture but also the fact that it is incorporated into the furniture of the Lodge.

happened in a number of Canadian Lodges, including my own, is that when the lecture is given the Candidate is perambulated around the Lodge hall because almost every element of the First Degree Tracing Board is present in the hall itself. So rather than use the Figurative Lodge of the Tracing Board we indicate that the room that we're in represents most of the elements as outlined in that Board.

Similarly, in the Second Degree Lecture, the Candidate has already gone through the winding stairs and every other element of that lecture, by and large, is also in the Lodge hall. Pointing out the

As for the Third Degree, the Tracing Board Lecture is really only three lines long, but there's so much that has gone on that night that it's enough for the Candidate to absorb. I also recommend, speaking of Third Degree Lectures, the alternate *Antient* Lecture to be used for an educational night because it just contains so much worthwhile information and it is possible to re-create a Lodge Board or a Trestle Board and do a lecture that way.

This gets us finally to the issue as to whether or not we have to hide the Tracing Boards for the Degrees in which they are not being worked. There is nothing in our Ritual that requires any such thing. The usual reasons given for not having the Boards on display are reasons that occur *because* we don't have them on display as compared to reasons that would keep them from not being on display. For example, sometimes one hears that you need to keep the right Board out so that a member coming late to the Lodge knows what we are working in. Not a bad argument, except by that logic no one entering an Antient Lodge (where they don't use Tracing Boards) would have any idea of what they are doing. It is actually the Tyler's job to tell the Brethren, and certain old English Lodges have affixed to the outer door a square and compasses, and it is the Tyler's job to move the points of the compasses depending on what Degree you are in—this is a very sensible arrangement.

The other argument is that, by having the Second or Third Degree Tracing Board exposed to view when there is a Mason who has not yet attained that Degree, we are somehow imparting secrets. I think this has the secrecy argument placed on its head. We have the working tools out at all times, regardless of what Degree we are in and, we have both Pillars on display at all times and we don't take the tassels down after the First Degree. When I visited Kamloops Lodge No. 10 a few weeks ago, I noticed that all of their three Tracing Boards are attached to the wall so that as soon as you walk into the Lodge you see them all. I figure if it is good enough for at least one Past Grand Master and the present Deputy Grand Master, it is good enough for me. On that point, I'll leave this topic. I trust that this exposition has been of worth and interest.



# The “We Can Help” Programme

PRESENTED AT THE VANCOUVER GRAND MASONIC DAY, OCTOBER 16, 1999

BY W. BRO. LARRY PARENT

## History

When MW Bro. Clark M. Gilmour was on the Finance Committee it was noticeable that the Masonic Community Charities Fund was developing into a large fund. It was thought that perhaps we should try to select another charity to accompany the Cancer Car Project. In 1994 he learned that the Grand Lodge of Alberta was involved with a project called “We Can Help”. He was extremely interested, mainly because the programme had to do with helping kids. Following consultation with the Grand Lodge of Alberta he received all the information required and thereupon visited St. John Ambulance who were partners in the programme. He was advised, with enthusiasm, that they would look into the matter and get back to him, which they did soon after. Following meetings with administrators of St. John Ambulance, he prepared a recommendation to the Masonic Community Charities Fund and also to the Executive Management Committee, both of whom endorsed the same. In 1995, as Chairman of the Masonic Community Charities Fund, he recommended in his report to Grand Lodge the adoption of the new programme, in partnership with St. John Ambulance of British Columbia. It was accepted on a one year trial basis, following which it would be reviewed.

He therefore proposed the programme be supported, at Grand Lodge in June 1995. Grand Lodge set a budget of \$20,000 that year. The money was to come from the Community Charities Fund, also known as the Cancer Car Fund. Teaching materials were first made available to schools in September 1995.

Grand Lodge, under the direction of MW Bro. Alex Reid, continued the programme for September 1996. MW Bro. Alan R. Tomlins endorsed the programme at Grand Lodge for the 1997-99 school year. And MW Bro. Harold C. Nordan offered continued support at Grand Lodge in 1998.

In 1998 St. John Ambulance assumed operations in the Yukon Territory so access to teaching materials was extended to approximately 400 more students by Grand Lodge.

In June of 1999, Grand Lodge, under the leadership of MW Bro. William H. Carter, decided to continue supporting the work of St. John Ambulance in the school system, with a budget of \$35,000.

## What is the “We Can Help” Programme?

It is a course that is designed for 7 to 10 year old children. Its primary purpose is to promote safety awareness.

Its secondary purpose is to teach basic first aid.

Grand Lodge and St. John Ambulance have entered into an agreement to provide teachers with an instructor’s guide, 10 poster masters, and sufficient activity books and certificates for every student.

The instructor’s guide is very self explanatory and eliminates the necessity for in-service training, which is very expensive and time consuming to the school system. It is also written in a form that is familiar to teachers.

The guide includes many optional exercises so the teacher can expand the course as necessary, although none of the course is

considered compulsory. This allows for a very flexible set of instructions that the teacher can manipulate to best advantage.

Each lesson includes the objective, or expected outcome, a list of materials needed, and a description of the preparation required by the teacher before teaching that particular lesson. For each lesson it suggests questions to be asked by the teacher and it even provides the expected answers. A description of each lesson is provided in the form of a flow chart that lists the steps to be performed, in the order of their importance.

- The first lesson is an introduction to safety awareness and first aid.
- The second lesson includes a clear and basic picture of the human airway and shows how air gets into our lungs.
- Symptoms such as a red face on a choking person, are explained as not being serious, but a blue face on a person who is not choking and not talking is considered very serious. So students are taught to discriminate between when first aid is, and is not, required.
- How to place an unconscious person in the recovery position to prevent him from suffocating on his own tongue is fully explained in words and pictures.
- Clear instructions on stopping bleeding from minor and severe wounds are included. The transmission of disease by contact with someone else’s blood is explained and the fact that the severe loss of blood causes weakness and possibly death.
- A poster, that can be photocopied, shows the standard Hazardous Product Symbols so children can be aware of dangerous household items. This likely is the first experience that students have with WHMIS or the Workplace Hazardous Materials Information System.
- Some lessons include skits where the children role play first aid.
- The “stop, drop, and roll” technique of fire control is explained so children know how to extinguish the fire if their clothes start to burn.
- An appendix to the instructor’s guide reviews each lesson and lists the first aid messages and the safety messages the students should learn from each lesson.
- The last page of the instructor’s guide lists other St. John Ambulance First Aid courses.

The Poster Masters are line drawings on heavy paper that can be photocopied and distributed to the students for colouring. The first poster shows people in society who help others, such as firefighters, police, nurses, doctors, &c.. The remaining posters depict key points to be remembered by the students from each of the stories in the activity book. For instance:

- the key points of performing artificial respiration.
- the key points on the Heimlich Maneuver.
- the importance of the recovery position and how to arrange an unconscious person to prevent suffocation.
- the key points of controlling bleeding.
- the local emergency phone numbers in case of poisoning or accidents.
- the key points regarding sprains and fractures.
- the key points in suspected head, neck or back injuries.

- the key points regarding frostbite.
  - and the key points regarding burns.
- The activity book looks like a comic book but the stories in it and the activities between each story are all related to safety.
- The first three pages list the learning outcomes, in pictorial form, and introduce the students to the topics to be covered.
- The first story describes kids playing in the school yard and one chokes on a piece of apple. It teaches the importance of getting help quickly and how to perform the Heimlich Maneuver.
- The second story involves a student getting hit with a ball, which causes him to go into shock—so he faints. It reinforces the importance of getting help quickly and how to place a person in the recovery position.
- The next two pages review the first two stories with puzzles.
- The third story involves a child being cut while visiting a farm. It makes the point that first aiders should wear gloves when exposed to blood, that cuts should be cleaned before bandaging and that bandages should be tight but not so tight that they cut off the circulation. In addition WHIMIS symbols are introduced and it is explained that not all things carry appropriate labels, such as poison ivy.
- The next three pages are a review by use of more puzzles.
- The fourth story involves kids on skate boards and in-line skates. One falls and breaks his arm. A passing newspaper girl assists by using a newspaper as a splint and the bag as a sling. After being bandaged, the patient promptly walks into a telephone pole, and requires first aid for a bleeding nose.
- The next page is a review of the previous story.
- The fifth story describes both frostbite and burns. A father takes some kids onto a lake for ice fishing where one develops frostbite. They all retire to a large tent to get warm by an old stove. On the stove a fish is frying. While the father is out getting more firewood another child touches the frying pan. When the father returns he finds one kid is too cold and the other is too hot.
- The next page is a puzzle page emphasizing safety while playing.
- The last story takes place at a summer camp where a swimmer has to be revived with artificial respiration.
- The last two pages review the entire book.

### Who is involved in the delivery of the course?

1. In Mid-August various press releases are sent to media centres throughout the jurisdiction.
  2. In Mid-September St. John Ambulance sends introductory letters to: all school district Superintendents all elementary school principals and all grade four teachers who had previously ordered materials.
  3. In January letters are sent to grade four teachers who have not responded to the September letter.
  4. During the school year, within the classroom:
    - only the students and the teacher are required for the course to be a success.
    - but some teachers recruit help from:
      - public health nurses
      - local police
      - local firefighters
      - and local paramedics
- The programme has been promoted at trade shows and various other events where St. John Ambulance has participated.
6. Freemasons are involved from the beginning to the end:
    - In the summer, following approval at Grand Lodge, one-half of the

- budget is sent to St. John Ambulance so they can begin their work.
- The second half of the budget is remitted in January.
- At the end of the course Freemasons have been asked by teachers to present the certificates and speak about our gentle Craft.
- In some Districts, interested Brethren have “done the leg work” for the teacher:
  - by making sure the teachers are aware of the offer.
  - by making principals and superintendents aware of the offer.
  - by ordering the number of copies needed by each teacher.
  - by locating first aid materials for practice sessions.
  - and by presenting certificates at the conclusion of the course.

### Why are we involved with this programme?

In North America, between the months of May and August, more than 300 children between the ages of one and four will die, and another 2500 will be injured due to swimming pool accidents alone. These children are often accompanied by older siblings or baby sitters who could help — if they knew what to do. These youngsters are often the first on the scene.

In 1995, 70% of the teenagers who died did so as a result of preventable injuries. Safety education is intended to reduce thoughtless actions that cause many injuries.

More Canadians, between the ages of one and twenty, die as a result of injuries, than all other causes combined.

As children mature they are encouraged to expand their horizons and try new things—some of which are dangerous if done incorrectly. A knowledge of safety awareness and first aid will help prevent injuries and provide assistance when one does occur.

Before we offered this course very few students took a first aid course before grade eleven or twelve. Early exposure to first aid often elicits interest in more advanced courses. Once the interest is piqued the student could become very able with further training.

Upon graduation from school, students who are willing to acquire an Industrial First Aid ticket are more likely to be hired as they are considered more valuable to employers.

The Community Charities Fund is intended to help all communities in this Grand Jurisdiction and the “We Can Help” programme is indeed available to *all* grade four teacher in *every* community in British Columbia and the Yukon Territory. Freemasons throughout the jurisdiction can be assured that Grand Lodge provides for *all* the children of *every* city or town, wherever they may be.

Finally, we can afford it. The Grand Treasurer recommended expanding the Cancer Car Project at Grand Lodge last June. Obviously, the Community Charities Fund, which supports the “We Can Help” programme, is adequate.

To summarize; the history of the coöperation of the Grand Lodge of Ancient Free and Accepted Masons of British Columbia and the St. John Ambulance dates from 1995 and during that period over 100,000 children have been introduced to first aid *via* the “We Can Help” programme. If 0.1% of those kids use the information to assist someone, that means over 100 people will have been helped.

The original budget was \$20,000 and it has increased to \$35,000. St. John Ambulance is now providing materials to over 70% of the eligible students in our jurisdiction. This level of participation is expected to remain relatively constant so the budget is not expected to change significantly.

The course is comprised of four main components. The very understandable *Instructor's Guide*, ten master posters from which copies can be produced for the students to colour, an activity book for

each student and a certificate to be presented to each child at the conclusion of the course.

It is a common belief that old people die and young people do not. That is one of the reasons the death of a child is so shocking. Even to those of us who lay claim to some modicum of wisdom are touched when a child gets hurt. That child may have caused his own downfall but we feel we should have done something to prevent it. Some youngsters have such confidence in that belief that they will engage in life threatening activities, oblivious to the dangers. This safety and first aid course directs the students' attention to the weaknesses of the human body and encourages kids to take care of what they have. It also allows us to say, "I did what I could to prevent injuries to children."

The Community Charities Fund has sufficient monies to support St. John Ambulance in this endeavour. Those monies are earmarked for

community charities and cannot be legally used for any other purposes. This charity reaches into every community in this jurisdiction and is not restricted to a select few. It is a true universal charity.

St. John Ambulance has prepared a kit that can be used by you to "sell" the programme in your locality. It includes a copy of the various components, press releases, letters, &c. If you would be willing to promote the course at your local schools, a kit could be sent to you. I am willing to coördinate the "salesmen" if you are willing to "sell" it. By having one person coördinate the activities it should avoid duplication of effort.

In closing, Brethren, the foundation we lay today within the children of British Columbia and the Yukon Territory will result in an edifice of knowledge with which we and our children can be proud.



# The fundamental reason for the current criticism by anti-Masons

PRESENTED AT THE VANCOUVER GRAND MASONIC DAY, OCTOBER 16, 1999  
BY BRO. GARY LEAZER, MASONIC INFORMATION CENTER, SILVER SPRING, MARYLAND

The hypothesis of this paper is that with the exception of the Roman Catholic Church, a particular kind of theology called dispensational fundamentalism is the driving force behind the current effort by a small number of very vocal people pushing their conservative churches and denominations to condemn the Masonic fraternity as a false, or even Satanic, religion. Most of the current criticisms against Freemasonry are coming, not from members of the Southern Baptist Convention, but from members belonging to independent churches and other denominations.

I do not wish to attack anyone's religious belief or faith, and let me hasten to say that many men who consider themselves conservatives and/or fundamentalists are active and dedicated Mason. I, myself, am a conservative in theology.

I believe I understand the mindset of those individuals who seek to condemn Freemasonry. I seek to explain and not attack.

One recent illustration can be offered. A church in State College, Pennsylvania, has told its members, "It is hoped that those members and adherents... who are Freemasons will choose to disassociate themselves with Freemasonry and inform the Board of Elders and the Pastor of their decision. The Board of Elders along with the Pastor will meet with each member who desires to remain a Freemason and decide on the appropriate action in each case." I and several others from the Masonic Information Center in Silver Spring, Maryland, flew to State College to speak to Masons and critics representing clergy in several churches in the State College area in an attempt to resolve some of the questions being raised about our fraternity. We were extremely pleased with the response and the anti-Masonic rhetoric has subsided, although it has not died out completely.

A number of reasons have been proposed for the current anti-Masonic effort, but I would argue that they are outward signs or symptoms of a much deeper cause. Several reasons being offered, but which miss the real cause are:

- Some Masons have speculated that perhaps some Masonic critics were turned down when they petitioned for lodge membership. While this may be true, I have found no evidence of that. I have found that some Masons, such as Jim Shaw, joined the fraternity for the wrong reasons. He grew up in an abusive home. His father deserted the family when Jim was only a few months old. His mother remarried. His step-father beat him and his mother. Then, his step-father threw him out of the house at age 13. His parents gave him little religious training. Shaw looked to Masonry—he was encouraged to "try to be like your Uncle Irvin" who was a "good man and a Mason." He joined the fraternity and began an active member, eventually becoming a 32° (KCCH). When he became a Christian, Shaw said he found what he was looking for in his newfound faith in Christ. Because Freemasonry had not provided what he had hoped it would, he turned against it.
- James Larry Holly, the Beaumont, Texas physician who was recognized as the leading Southern Baptist critic of Freemasonry between 1985 and 1994 states that one of the reasons he is opposed

to Freemasonry is because it is a religion. Indeed, all Masonic critics begin with the assumption that Freemasonry is a religion. But Holly has a more personal reason for his opposition to the fraternity. His father is a Freemason and an Episcopalian. Holly says his father is not a Christian and blames Freemasonry because he claims his father was told Freemasonry is all the religion he needs.

- Money is a driving force for many Masonic critics. In fact, most of the agitators are people who operate a ministry seeking to condemn not only Freemasonry, but the Roman Catholic Church and other religious groups they have decided are not "Christian." Sensational stories sell magazines and books just as putting a scantily-clad woman on the cover of a paperback sells books. Ed Decker finds streets in Washington, DC that form a five-pointed star or pentagram and a square and compasses. To fire up his readers, Decker calls his diagram an "occult iceberg" with the White House, the Washington Monument and the House of the Temple within his "Masonic conspiracy puzzle." He sees the head and ears of what Satanists call the goat of Mendes in the circle drive and short streets behind the Capitol and associates this with Freemasonry. When he finishes spinning his web, he concludes that the United States is under the control of Masons and assorted other groups.
- In some countries, politics plays an important part in the condemnation of the fraternity. This is a primary reason behind the Roman Catholic Church's opposition to the fraternity. A Mason, Giuseppe Garibaldi, led the successful effort to crush the temporal power of the Pope in Italy, reducing the Roman Catholic Church's holding in Italy to the 109-acre Vatican City. This successful effort was a main catalyst for Pope Leo XII's infamous encyclical, *Humanum Genus*, in 1884. It condemned Freemasonry as a "wicked force" and a "contagious disease" because Freemasons:
  1. call for religious liberty;
  2. call for separation of [the Roman Catholic] Church and state;
  3. call for education of children by laymen rather than the [Roman Catholic Church] and;
  4. believe people have the right to make their own laws and elect their own government.

Cardinal Caro y Rodriquez, Archbishop of Santiago, Chile, was opposed to Freemasonry because he claimed Masons were behind the removal of the crucifix and images from public schools (after the Chilean elections of 1924); were behind the organization of the Boy Scouts "with the concealed purpose of alienating the children from the [Catholic] Church;" were behind the effort to replace the Catechism and influence of Catholic parents with "teachers of lay morality, without religion;" and favors and helps Protestantism, which he defined as "a rebellion against the authority established by His Church by Our Lord Jesus Christ."

Dictatorships such as Nazi Germany and various communist countries drove the fraternity underground during the early part of this century.

I would argue that all of these illustrations are but symptoms of a far more fundamental hatred of the fraternity.

I will present what I firmly believe is the fundamental reason for the attack on the fraternity at this time in history.

A particular kind of theology called dispensational fundamentalism is the driving force for all Protestant evangelical critics of the fraternity. Dispensationalism traces its roots to the early 1800s with Margaret McDonald and John Nelson Darby who began to teach that evil would soon take control of the world under the rule of the Antichrist, who is the beast in the *Book of Revelation*, who will fight Christ in the final Battle of Armageddon. This particular theology found its main followers within rural, less educated Christians, until the mid-1960s when it became increasingly popular among more educated main-stream Christians such as independent churches and then Southern Baptists.

Professor Donald Bloesch of Dubuque Seminary finds that one of the marks of dispensational fundamentalism is its inordinate attention given to eschatology—or an emphasis on the last days of human history.

According to this theology, the world as we know it will last 6,000 years. Since it was created about 4000 BC, or 6,000 years ago, we are living in the last days. According to this theology, we are living in the final church age, called the Laodicean age in *Revelation 3*, which is marked by liberalism and apostasy in the church and moral decay in society.

Signs of this moral decay are said to include the USA Supreme Court rulings disallowing prayers in public schools in 1963 and allowing abortions in 1973, the teaching of evolution, acceptance of homosexuality, the breakdown of the family, drug use, &c.

The creation of the nation of Israel in 1948 is said to be the greatest sign. Hal Lindsey, a leading popular exponent of dispensational fundamentalism, writes in *The 1980's: Countdown to Armageddon*, "And after nearly 2,000 years of wandering through exile, the Jews returned to Palestine and formed the nation of Israel on May 14, 1948. On that day, the prophetic countdown began!"

The creation of the European Common Market is seen as a fulfillment of the biblical prophecy in *Revelation 17* which speaks of ten kings who make war against Christ. Lindsey writes, "When I wrote that in *Late Great [Planet Earth]* in 1970 the only possible successor to the Roman Empire (in my opinion) was the European Common Market."

When he adds the Arabs, Russia and China, Lindsey concludes, "Thus we have all five pieces of the [Old Testament] prophets' scenario for the later days. All the powers—Israel, the Arabs, Russia, China and the revived Roman Empire—are fixed in place.

Conspiracy hunter and author of the book, *The New World Religion*, Gary Kah, in a recent program on Pat Robinson's Christian Broadcasting Network, warned about the coming "One World Government." He lists groups he claims are promoting the "One World Government." They include the United Nations, the Council on Foreign Relations, and the Trilateral Commission. Kah says, "I have found repeatedly, as I have investigated some of these organizations, that the leaders of many of them do belong to one or more of the secret societies, particularly the institution of Freemasonry."

The church and the government have been unwilling or unable to stop the moral decline in our society. It is believed government, religious leaders, church-related academics, and liberal pastors seem to have lost their way and become part of the problem. Fundamentalists see themselves as God's last hope in our world today.

Everyone is believed to be either for or against God. So-called true believers and so-called unbelievers are divided into two camps. These individuals form the extreme right in the religious world; anyone

to the left of them is automatically a part of the other group. Human institutions, civil, political and religious, are inherently defective and doomed.

In the political arena, we see this in the rise of the religious right and the Moral Majority and the candidacy of men such as TV evangelist and Masonic critic, Pat Robinson.

Democracy must be replaced with a theocracy—or rule by God rather than man. Of course, the religious right sees itself as the only avenue through which this can occur. One Southern Baptist leader warned the Republican Party, "evangelical Christians are looking for parties and candidates that endorse their values, not *vice versa*. I add that if you want evangelical Christians to support you, you must adopt and support their values and concerns."

Democracy has allowed citizens to have too much freedom—where all convictions about right and wrong are of equal value. Fundamentalist Ralph D. Winter said, "I recall with chagrin how naïvely in my youth I accepted that famous line from the *Declaration of Independence*—'life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness.' What a poison for any nation to drink."

In addition to the government, the church must be prepared and made pure by purging it of liberalism, false doctrine and unbelievers. The church is called the "bride of Christ" in the New Testament. The church must be a pure virgin when Christ returns. Thus, the purge taking place.

Concerning this purge, there can be no compromise—and the purge is on the fast-track. Total defeat of anyone perceived to be opposed to God is the only goal. Nothing less will do. George Dollar says, "Evil and error must be exposed. It is vital for fundamentalism to resist any tolerance of error and compromise and to maintain its militant spirit." In another book, Dollar defines fundamentalism: "Historic Fundamentalism is the literal exposition of all the affirmations and attitudes of the Bible and the militant exposure of all non-biblical affirmations and attitudes."

Mortimer Ostow says, "Fundamentalists think in terms of black-and-white polarities, finding the intermediate shades of gray inconceivable."

Compromise is not a word in our critics' vocabulary. The hope that Masonic critics will eventually forget about the fraternity is a naïve hope which simply will not be realized.

My replacement at the Southern Baptist Convention's North American Mission Board has referred to himself as the only official heresy hunter in the SBC. I never considered myself a heresy hunter. His attitude points out a major difference between Masons and fundamentalists. Masons seek friendship even with people whose beliefs are not the same as ours while fundamentalists look for evidence of liberalism, apostasy or toleration with the world and seek to isolate or destroy anyone holding a view different from theirs. Masons point out the good they do in society, but the critics are not interested in that good. They do not look for the good, but only for the perceived bad. They look for reasons to condemn and reject.

One fundamentalist pastor recently admitted his philosophy was control. He said, "If I can't control you; I will intimidate you. If I can't intimidate you; I will freeze you out." I experienced all of this during my study of Freemasonry. Our critics will never accept Freemasonry. If Masons refuse to renounce their membership, they will be intimidated and if necessary frozen out of leadership positions in churches at the least—and fellowship withdrawn at the worst.

Pluralism in America has emerged as another enemy. Harold O. J. Brown asserted that if "evangelical Christians are to have any impact for

the transformation of this society... it will be necessary to kill the sacred cow of pluralism.”

The questions are often asked, “Is Masonry Satanic?” or “Is Masonry Occultic?” Several reasons for these questions may be cited. First, the Leo Taxil hoax which falsely claims Albert Pike spoke of Lucifer as the god of Freemasonry. Second, the mention of pagan deities such as Isis and Horus in Masonic writings. Third, dispensational fundamentalists believe that an increase in Satanic or demonic activities is a characteristic of the end times. Therefore, they watch for any signs of this which will confirm their preconceived ideas that Satan and his demons lurk behind every bush.

Williams writes, “One needs only to read one of Frank Peretti’s novels to see how pervasive is this conviction and how committed many fundamentalists are to conspiracy theories.”

The current anti-Masonic craze may end in a few years—after some of the current end-of-the-world craze dies, but it will never go away. There is very little we can do about most of these issues. We can respond to some or the more blatant charges. We must take seriously the criticisms being leveled against the fraternity. We must get back to the basics of what this fraternity is all about. We must educate the Brethren. Promote the fraternity and open it up. You and I know our critics are standing in quicksand with their arguments.

I contend there are very few men who join the fraternity because of our so-called secret teachings. But there are probably many men who would make good Masons but don’t join because of newspaper articles, books, tapes, sermons, &c. which question and attack our organization.

My next-door neighbor is an example. He petitioned a lodge and was accepted. He happened to mention this to his minister, a Presbyterian, who warned him about Freemasonry and the man has now decided not to become a Mason.

So what then should we do? We must not concentrate on what our critics are saying. We must take the high road in all of our efforts as Masons. It is said that actions speak louder than words and this is a case where I believe they do.

I am first of all a theologian and a churchman. I spent more than 6 years in graduate schools and for over 20 years have studied church growth: why some churches grow and some die. There are a number of well-known reasons, some as simply as changing communities. But a key reason found in all studies is that churches which grow move outside their walls into the communities, to identify the needs of the people they are trying to reach and of meeting those needs. Churches that die do not do this. I contend that Freemasonry must move outside our Lodge halls and into our communities, to get involved in helping to solve the growing social problems we face. The men out there are the men we would like to see in here. If I could change one thing about the fraternity, I would insist that every Lodge have at least one hands-on project in its community every year where the men of the Lodge are seen doing something for their community. It might be something as simple as raking leaves in someone’s yard, or painting someone’s house, or sponsoring a youth ball team. The possibilities are endless—and the rewards are immeasurable. Put on your thinking caps and let’s get busy sharing our light in our communities.



# Desaguliers: Freemason and Newtonian Scientist

PRESENTED AT THE VANCOUVER GRAND MASONIC DAY, OCTOBER 16, 1999  
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## INTRODUCTION

John Theophilus Desaguliers, a gifted intellectual, played a prominent role in the early eighteenth century in the establishment of modern Masonry in England during the period of the Enlightenment. Before discussing Desaguliers' contributions we first need to briefly define what the Enlightenment was.

## The Enlightenment

The Enlightenment was a period of real discovery. According to several eighteenth century scholars, the Enlightenment had a number of major aims. Enlighteners believed that reason could be used to investigate and to classify knowledge. Those involved with the physical sciences probed Nature to ascertain her laws, while others attempted to determine laws governing the social sciences or to discover principles governing the humanities.

Promoting the natural sciences became paramount during this period. Many achievements in experimental science were identified with the principles, theories, and models of Sir Isaac Newton and those of his disciples. Pertinent Newtonian ideas led to noted discoveries in astronomy, physics, and electricity during the first half of the eighteenth century and contributed to the evolution of chemistry and geology during the last half of this century. Some Newtonian concepts also were successfully applied to advance the study of medicine during this period.

The Enlightenment centred on efforts to foster the study of the social sciences and humanities. In this regard, we now know that the institutional operations of Masonic lodges were important to the cultural and social life of major cities in eighteenth century Europe, and that the cultural functions of many Masons were involved with promoting the ideas of the Enlightenment. However, what the Enlightenment really needed for the investigation and diffusion of knowledge was a variety of cultural and social institutions. Accordingly, some enlighteners played an active role in learned societies. Salons and coffeehouses, together with Masonic lodges, further emerged as significant urban institutions. Masonry and club life, especially in London, became important for the spread of Enlightenment ideas.

## Newtonian Science

Newtonian science was important to the British Enlightenment. It has been argued that mechanistic principles and theories postulated by Newton in 1667 in the *Principia*, did constitute the first school of Newtonian science. In this work, Newton used mathematics and inductive techniques to demonstrate that celestial and terrestrial objects function in time and space in accordance with the laws of gravity and motion. Many English scientists were advocates of mechanism; they helped to explain principles concerning the Newtonian mechanical cosmology and to repudiate the physical theories of the Cartesians. A few mechanists performed experiments to describe the properties of electricity and to explain how motion applied to the study of steam engines. The rites of modern Masonry embodied explanations of mechanistic concepts, and London lodges provided mechanists with the opportunity to present their ideas.

Numerous institutions were involved with the promotion of the Enlightenment in early Hanoverian London. The Royal Society of London developed into an important cultural hub. The society was identified with discoveries of Newton and published the experiments and findings of the mechanists. Other cultural agencies in early eighteenth century London, such as the College of Physicians, the Society of Antiquaries, and the St. Martins Lane Academy, functioned as important centres for the diffusion of Enlightenment ideas. Many Masons participated in these learned societies. They also frequented London coffeehouses and taverns where they were able to dine and drink with each other and, on occasion, deliver lectures and conduct experiments. Coffeehouses and taverns further served as the aristocratic and bourgeois institutions from which Speculative Freemasonry was to evolve. Functioning as they did as communicative centres and as *penny universities* in London, they helped to spread Enlightenment tenets.

## DESAGULIERS AND THE MODERN GRAND LODGE

Early in his career, Desaguliers was intimately involved with Enlightenment activities in London and was well qualified in 1719 to serve as Grand Master of the Grand Lodge of England and to provide this body with needed leadership.<sup>1</sup> Born in 1683 to a Huguenot family which had left France in 1685 to settle in London, Desaguliers was well educated; he received three degrees whilst at Christ Church, Oxford, including a Doctorate of Laws in 1718. He exuded intellectual versatility with interests in the classics, theology, mathematics, and experimental science. Science especially proved to be significant to his career between 1710 and 1717. He held a Chair of Experimental Philosophy at Oxford, succeeded in establishing ties to the scientific community in London, and became friends with Newton and other proponents of mechanism. Like most apostles of the Newtonian creed, Desaguliers was elected in 1714 to the Royal Society of London and assumed an active part in this organization, serving as curator of experiments for the society.

An Anglican minister, Desaguliers in 1714 became chaplain to the First Duke of Chandos. As a result of this affiliation, he met numerous aristocratic and bourgeois patrons of the Enlightenment, and gave frequent scientific demonstrations. It is also known that he delivered his scientific lectures in coffeehouses and taverns, was active in the club life of London, and met administrators involved with modern Masonry. He was familiar with the ancient teachings of Masonry and believed that the Modern Grand Lodge could be transformed into an effective vehicle for the promotion of Newtonian ideas and other tenets associated with the Enlightenment. To achieve this objective, the ambitious Desaguliers in 1719 took measures to enable the Grand Lodge to flourish and to strengthen the role of the Grand Master. After 1719, most Grand Masters were English nobles who showed an interest in Enlightenment ideas and resided in London. Grand Masters received extensive support from Desaguliers during his tenure as Deputy Grand Master and as a member of several important grand lodge committees.

Several of his friends between 1721 and 1723 provided the Grand

Lodge of London with capable leadership. Of special interest was the appointment, on Desaguliers' recommendation, of John, the second Duke of Montagu in 1721 and again in 1722 to serve as Grand Master of the Grand Lodge of England. During his first term, Montagu established several local lodges in the vicinity of Covent Garden. More importantly, he commissioned a Committee of "Fourteen Learned Brethren" to draft a constitution for modern Masonry. With Desaguliers, Dr. James Anderson, a Scottish Presbyterian minister, compiled the materials for, and wrote this significant work. Both Anderson and Desaguliers perceived themselves as enlighteners and as the high priests of Speculative Masonry. Evidently, they wrote the *Constitutions* in 1722 to explain how Masonry functioned as an important cultural institution in the ancient and modern world. It was published in 1723.

## The Constitutions

The *Constitutions* contains the perceptions of Desaguliers and Anderson concerning the origins and the evolution of Speculative Masonry. In the first sections, both men write as enlighteners, constantly referring to ancient architecture and culture in an obvious attempt to suggest the importance of ancient ideas to Modern Masonry and the Enlightenment. After first tracing the mythical origins of Masonry to Adam, they then claim that the principles of ancient Masonry enabled the building of the Egyptian pyramids and the Temple of Solomon, thereby implying that architectural principles seemed to be meaningful to the ancient Egyptians and Jews. Anderson and Desaguliers go on to explain that architecture also was significant to Græco-Roman Civilization. They argue that the Brotherhood of Pythagoras helped to foster the study of geometry and masonry in the ancient world and that Greek and Roman Masons erected *Civil and sacred edifices* in light of Doric, Ionic, and Corinthian principles. They then devote attention to the development of modern architecture and Speculative Freemasonry and claim that ancient rather than mediæval architecture was of particular importance to the moderns. They maintained that, in its rôle as an Enlightenment institution, the Modern Grand Lodge of London would attempt to promote the study of ancient and modern knowledge relating to architecture, science, morality, and the liberal arts.

## The London Grand Lodge

The office of Grand Master was related to the Enlightenment in other ways. Following approval of Desaguliers' recommendation in 1721, the Grand Master was allowed to appoint members to deliver lectures and speeches during Grand Lodge meetings. As a result of Desaguliers' influence, several aristocratic enlighteners (including the 2nd Duke of Richmond), who also held membership in the Royal Society, served between 1720 and 1740 as Grand Masters of modern Masonry. They were successful in recruiting numerous members from the Royal Society to positions of leadership in Masonry, a notable step in the development of the London Grand Lodge.<sup>3</sup>

The London Grand Lodge between 1723 and 1740 operated as a viable and centralized body. Several major objectives were fulfilled: local lodges were created within the vicinity of London, many enlighteners were recruited, and the operations of these bodies were capably supervised. Officials of the London Grand Lodge developed cordial relations with political leaders and discreetly suppressed the few anti-masonic attacks directed against them.

The Grand Lodge then became involved with philanthropy which, to Desaguliers, was a meaningful secular and ethical concept of the Enlightenment, revolving around the belief that Masons should engage in efforts to improve society and should act to raise the standards of

public morality. In 1730, following a proposal by Desaguliers, a General Charity Committee headed by the Grand Master was established for the purposes of distributing funds to distressed Masons, to their families, and to orphans. Monies were also allocated to several hospitals and schools in London. Once again, on the recommendation of Desaguliers, Grand Lodge leaders in 1733 authorized the Charity Committee to provide financial assistance to those London Masons going to America to start a new life in the Georgia Colony.

## DESAGULIERS: THE SCIENTIST

In addition to his central place in modern Masonry, Desaguliers became the most important Newtonian demonstrator of his day. He made many friendships among whom were many aristocratic and bourgeois patrons of science, though not themselves professional scientists. Desaguliers was different from other prominent Newtonians in that he developed for the London coffeehouse and tavern crowd interesting and simplified lectures. The Bedford Coffeehouse and the Crown and Anchor Tavern were two of his favourite "lecture theatres."

Desaguliers would tell his audiences that only *common sense and undivided attention* were needed for an understanding of his experiments and then would go on to define the major aims and methods of Newtonian science. He stressed that scientists should rely upon empirical and observational methods for the exploration of Nature. All the Knowledge we have of Nature depends upon facts. Without Observations and Experiments, our Natural Philosophy would only be unintelligible jargon. Desaguliers believed that the orderly operations of Nature could only be determined by experimental scientists with the help of precise mathematical instruments. He further maintained that the Cartesians without mathematical evidence took "a few principles for granted without examining their reality" and made "wild guesses about the motion of the planets and comets."

Desaguliers had an extraordinarily broad understanding of many aspects of the natural sciences and the gift to get his knowledge across to scientists and non-scientists alike. In light of ancient scientific ideas, he identified varying attributes of matter. He believed that bodies were endowed with atoms and with attractive powers and were able to move as a result of the force of gravity. Desaguliers claimed that matter can be split into tiny particles, the smallest being known as *atomes*. He argued that atoms were solid and impenetrable, were incessantly in motion, and possessed attractive powers.

He lectured about concepts pertaining to motion and to gravity and applied these concepts to the study of the movements of terrestrial objects. One of his important lectures was devoted to an explanation of Newton's first law of motion: "Every body perseveres in a state of rest, or of uniform motion in a straight line, unless it be compelled to change that state by forces impressed thereon."

Desaguliers extensively dealt with Newton's second law of motion: "The change of motion is always proportionable to the moving force impressed and is made in the right line in which that force is impressed." He further claimed that the second law of motion was valuable to scientists, enabling them to determine the speeds of such descending projectiles as arrows and cannon balls.

In his examination of Newton's third law of motion, he told his audience that to *every action, there is always an equal reaction; or the mutual actions of two bodies upon each other are always equal and directed to contrary parts*. He showed that the third law explains the movement of the tides. As a result of the gravitational force of the moon, the oceans ebb and flow, twice each day, the tides being greatest about the equinoxes, when the luminaries are nearest the earth.

Desaguliers conducted experiments with vacuums to determine the properties of various objects where air is not prevalent and to exemplify Newton's principle regarding the resistance of matter. In one experiment, he dropped a guinea (a gold coin worth 21 shillings on the pre-1971 scale), a piece of fine paper, and a feather simultaneously into a glass-receiver exhausted of air. He found that all three objects descended at the same rate to the bottom of the receiver and that the vacuum provided no medium of resistance for the falling objects.

Unlike other prominent Newtonians, Desaguliers delivered many lectures in London coffeehouses and taverns about topics concerning the application of mechanistic principles to technology. He did so because he knew that the principles of motion helped to explain the operations of steam engines, and that these engines were being used in Hanoverian England to improve transportation and to mechanize production. He also realized that many Londoners attending his lectures had invested capital in industrial enterprises and were thus interested in technology.

Desaguliers commented on the operation of the crane and believed that it could be applied for industrial purposes. He maintained, for example, that a "fixed crane with its moveable gibbet could raise stones from a great depth." He spoke of his mechanical inventions including a pumping machine which was equipped with a crank and with three regulators, to suck impure air from mines and to push fresh air into them. Desaguliers told his audience that the concept of circulating air also explains how his ventilating systems operated, and that these systems were installed in London hospitals and, in 1720, in the House of Commons. He also referred to his invention used by British breweries, a machine which blows warm air upon malt and thus facilitates the beer-making process.

Desaguliers was one of the few British Newtonians interested in electrical studies. He perhaps thought that the corpuscular theory of Newton was related to electrical studies and that the principles of motion, attraction, and repulsion governed electricity. More likely, he probably believed that concepts governing electricity could be fruitfully applied to medicine, to industry, and to technology.

As a result of his experiments, Desaguliers defined the qualities and properties of electricity. He explained that electrical bodies are those capable of exciting electricity either by rubbing, patting, hammering, melting, or warming. He maintained that a non-electrical body cannot be transformed into an electrical object but, in many instances, can receive electrical charges from an electric *per se*. Further, he concluded that electrics *per se* are endowed with the powers of attraction and repulsion and that a body excited by an electrical charge, whether an electric or a non-electric, attracts and repels electrical objects.

Two years prior to his death, Desaguliers in 1742 published *A Dissertation Concerning Electricity*. This essay was considered an important contribution to experimental science as it provided a concise account of major electrical concepts that he had advanced. In 1742, it received the annual prize awarded by the Academy of Bordeaux. In this article, Desaguliers speculates that electrical effluvia seem to be the basis of electrical motion and to be related to the principle of gravity. This speculation and other electrical ideas of Desaguliers attracted the attention of mechanists not affiliated with the Craft and undoubtedly were of special importance to the young Benjamin Franklin and to other Masonic scientists.

Desaguliers died on February 29, 1744, and was buried in the Chapel in the Savoy on March 4, 1744.

## SUMMARY

A brief overview has been given of an exceptionally gifted Freemason and Newtonian scientist who, in the early eighteenth century, during that period known as the Enlightenment, used his extraordinary talents both in the establishment and growth of the Modern Grand Lodge, and in the pursuit and teaching of science. It is hoped that this paper will encourage readers to delve further into the accomplishments of a truly outstanding individual.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

The material in this paper has been extracted and paraphrased freely from the following text: *Speculative Freemasonry and the Enlightenment: A Study of the Craft in London, Paris, Prague and Vienna* by R. William Weisberger. The text was published by East European Monographs, Boulder, CO, and distributed by Columbia University Press, New York, 1993. In spite of several attempts to contact the publisher of this monograph for permission to draw on the scholarship which belongs entirely to R. William Weisberger, it appears that this particular publishing company no longer exists.

## NOTES

The following notes have been taken from an inaugural address: "Life of John Theophilus Desaguliers" by Bro. John Stokes, PGD, WM as published in *Ars Quatuor Coronatorum*, vol. XXXVIII, 285-308 (1925).

1. There is no certain information to be obtained with regard to the date or place or Lodge in which Desaguliers was brought into the Craft. Oliver states that Desaguliers was initiated in Lodge No. 4, but no records of this are available. Gould says: "It is highly probable that Desaguliers became a member of the Lodge at the Rummer and Grapes, in Channel Row, Westminster, because its meetings were held in the vicinity of his dwelling." This is the same Lodge that Oliver mentions—now the Royal Somerset House and Inverness Lodge No. 4. However this may be, we next find on the authority of Dr. Anderson that Desaguliers became Grand Master in 1719. As the Grand Lodge minutes only date from June 24, 1723, we have no means of checking Anderson's statements. Further details of Anderson's account are given in Note C of Stokes' inaugural address cited above.
2. It is, however, not at all likely that Desaguliers took any active part in the composition of the *Constitutions*. His Dedication to the Duke of Montagu is written in the usual manner in which these words of commendation are done and, whilst alluding to the learned author, he says nothing that would, even remotely, serve to connect him with the authorship of any part of that work which, it must be remembered, was Anderson's private property. Bro. Vibert thinks that Anderson may have had the assistance of Desaguliers and other learned Brethren in drafting the *Charges and Regulations*, but of this there is no definite evidence. Again, the scientific and trained mind of Desaguliers, accustomed to write down only what could prove to be correct, is not likely to have anything to do with a series of inaccurate statements such as Anderson indulges in. And, lastly, the style of diction is not the same as Desaguliers wrote.
3. It is certainly of great importance to observe that with the advent of Desaguliers—and of Payne—Freemasonry took on a new and more extensive outlook and became a great deal more than a small body of men living in London who wished to organize London Masonry in a better form. Even more noteworthy is the fact—which cannot be a mere fortuitous coincidence—that, up to the time of Desaguliers' entrance, the majority of the members of the Craft were persons of comparatively little importance and of no great influence, whereas, soon afterwards there was a large influx of men of standing in the domains of society, and science, and letters. Starting from the mastership of the Duke of Montagu we find that most of the peerage and gentlefolk of the country joined the Craft. It is indeed remarkable how many of the Craft were also Fellows of the Royal Society. All these circumstances point to the enormous influence exerted by Desaguliers in improving the status of the Order by bringing into it initiates of the most desirable kind.

# Freemasonry; a public relations nightmare

PRESENTED AT THE VANCOUVER GRAND MASONIC DAY, OCTOBER 16, 1999

BY R.W. BRO. JAMES HARRISON

*Let every mason be shown to be a liar.*

James Holly

*Masonic leaders are immoral, or amoral and libertarian anarchists.*

Wayne Lela

*All masons are guilty of practicing witchcraft.*

Larry Kunk

If you find these statements shocking and deny that these types of statements are being spread about Freemasons, then Brethren, you are not in the real world. The Craft today has a very serious image problem. No longer are the Masons considered the pillars of the community they once were by the public, because the populace knows nothing about the Masonic Order. Those good old days are gone and we must now start rebuilding the status that Freemasonry once held in the communities. Good community relations are a necessity for any organization that wishes to grow, prosper and succeed. Good community relations will foster an atmosphere conducive to the positive recognition and support for Freemasonry. But first before going into public relations I would like to relate to you a remark made by a prominent and well respected member of the community who attained to the highest rank in the business world, on why he is no longer active in Masonry. This Brother is the Chairman & CEO of one of the top ten corporations in British Columbia and the statement echoes the feelings of a number of prominent members of the craft who no longer attend lodge. "I joined the lodge at age 21 and remained active for over 20 years. Subsequently I lost interest in the continuation of dealing with the same problems of membership and the associated cash flow problems when the mood of the governing body was against change. I realize that if I felt strongly about this, I should become more involved rather than less. However, my course of action speaks to that choice."

If, in my capacity as a journalist, I were asked to give a factual opinion as to my observations of the Craft, as the Brother above was, I would have to say quite honestly that; "Although there is a genuine feeling of friendship and camaraderie within the organization itself the organization harbors a lot of negativism in its approach to today's problems within the Craft—apathy is a big commodity in the Craft, and procrastination and the lack vision by the men put into leadership positions have taken the Craft to the position it now finds itself in. That far too often egos are the only incentive for filling leadership positions within the organization."

Herein lies the problem with Freemasonry, the organization. The age-old principles and teachings of the Craft are as relevant today as they were 280 years ago. What is not relevant to Freemasonry is the apathy, procrastination and egos that have come to the forefront of Masonry in the last twenty to thirty years. To acquire good Masonic Public Relations we must first look inward and rethink what Masonry is. We must educate our own members before we go public. We must develop the confidence and knowledge in our membership if they are to be successful in communicating the message of Freemasonry. We must approach the future with an open mind and a vision. Once we take this approach then it will be incumbent upon the leadership of the Craft and

the Community Relations Committee to plan for today and develop a vision for the future. With this in mind I would like you to ask yourself what would you say if someone asked you "What is Freemasonry?" It is not an easy question to answer because Freemasonry has a different meaning to every individual. Also equally hard to answer is the question "What is Public Relations?"

While most people have a pretty good idea of what public relations involves, few will agree on its definition, and it is not easy to search for one single definition from the many available. Like Freemasonry, every individual interprets its meaning differently. However, Funk & Wagnall's *Dictionary* defines it as; "The activities and techniques used by organizations and individuals to establish favorable attitudes and responses in their behalf on the part of the general public or special groups." We should not confuse public relations with advertising and publicity. Masonic Public Relations should not engage in publicity stunts or bizarre activities to secure attention. This we leave to the Shriners, as they have the vehicle to do this type of public relations. Freemasonry should be dignified, and must be communicated with the utmost dignity, although this is not always conducive to attracting the attention of the media. We must not do anything, which is undignified and contrary to Masonic Law or our well-established customs that would tend to bring discredit to the fraternity. Masonic Public Relations should be an educational and enlightening process designed with peripheral benefits in mind. It should reach out to the public and our own members to inform them of the nature of Freemasonry and what activities it is engaged in, other than ritual. Easy enough said, but today we face a major problem with Freemasonry, which makes Freemasonry a Public Relations nightmare. Freemasonry over the last thirty years has slowly devolved from a position of stature in the community to the present day situation where Freemasonry suffers a huge image problem within the community. Perception in public relations can be one of your most useful tools or it can be your worst enemy. Today the public perception of Freemasonry is not good.

Most members of the media and the public have no knowledge of Freemasonry or a limited impression of what Freemasonry is. The most common perception is that the Masons are a secret society or a cult organization. For years now various anti-masonic groups and churches have attacked Freemasonry and, without the response to these attacks on behalf of Freemasonry, they have created a false impression of Freemasonry. The success of these groups and the failure of Masonry to respond to its critics will take years of work to erase. This year alone it has come to my attention that 18 Masonic members of an Anglican Church in British Columbia were asked to leave the church because of their Masonic membership. On one occasion the minister told the Masons that they could not mention a deceased Brother's Masonic affiliations in their eulogies. This type of action is on the increase now in the mainstream churches. Why? Because they receive numerous amounts of information from anti-masonic groups and no information from Masonic organizations. Masonry brings many images to the mind of non-Masons. Their image does not include some of those things dear

to us as Masons—the tyled lodge, the rituals, the warmth of friendship.

Their picture of Freemasonry is drawn from what they see and hear of Masons outside the lodge room. They see what manner of men we are. They note the activities in which we are engaged. They note the caliber of men we attract and the company that we keep. On the negative end of the spectrum they will have received their impressions of Freemasonry from negative news stories, misinformed church leaders and the ongoing attacks of religious zealots. These attacks that have been propagated by these groups have infiltrated some mainstream churches today. This can be attested to by the recent turmoil within the Southern Baptist Church. How as Masons do we combat this situation? The answer—and I stress this—is in educating our membership. Through our ritual we teach our members of moral truths &c. however that is all we teach. We fall far short of properly educating our membership on what Freemasonry is. We have no decisive description of what Freemasonry is.

Often Masonic publications and statements that emanate from various Grand Lodges will state that it is “a system of morality veiled in allegory” or as it is commonly referred to by our American Brethren “it is the fatherhood of God and the Brotherhood of man, the importance of virtue, the need to be patriotic and loyal to our flag and, most of all, our readiness to defend everyone’s right to liberty.” As a member of the media I would read this statement to mean that “Freemasons are a religious militant organization.” By a statement like this you have given to me, as a journalist, the grabber I need to concoct a news story. From this one statement I now have a headline; FREEMASONS READY TO DEFEND LIBERTY IN THE NAME OF THE BROTHERHOOD with a key-in quote stating; “Freemason John Doe said that under the fatherhood of god the Freemasons will defend everyone’s liberty.” The body of the story would be made up of half-truths and pure fiction using terminology such as “reliable sources said” or “this reporter was not allowed in the secret meeting but I have, although not confirmed, been

told that so-so said.” This is the method used by our detractors.

Language and its meanings are crucial in today’s society and one word or statement can take on many meanings. Here in lies one of the major problems with Masonry. We tend to use what we think are poetic terms to describe ourselves and by doing so we fall into many traps set out by our distracters. An example of language misinterpretation is the common mistake made by Masons. Let me ask you: Do Masons take an Oath or do they take an obligation? What is an Oath?

An oath is described as being “a confirmation of truth of statement by naming something sacred.” What is an Obligation? An obligation is described as being “a binding promise; a duty.” To the average person an oath or obligation means somewhat the same thing but, to a religious person, an oath is very sacred. The language and the image of Masonry passed on to us by those who went this way before us is a priceless heritage. May we as Masons always reflect that image in our daily lives and conduct, but let us not use language that is dated from the past to describe ourselves in today’s society. So how do we reverse our present image problems?

First and foremost is the proper instruction of our own membership in what Freemasonry is and what Freemasonry is not. We must develop an easier explanation of Freemasonry that everyone will feel confident in saying when describing Masonry to a non Mason.

In summary, if we are to regain our status in society, we must start responding to negative publicity by using some of the basic tools and rules of business: Don’t ignore criticism. Don’t waste time. Don’t use cosmetic or short term solutions. Don’t overlook the positives. Think long term. Freemasonry is a unique organization, which is selective in its membership, and we do not want to change our product, but we must look for better ways to promote it both within and without the Craft. An improved method of Masonic Public Relations must and will always be a large part of the answer to our current problems.



# The Queen of Sheba's visit to King Solomon

PRESENTED AT THE VANCOUVER GRAND MASONIC DAY, OCTOBER 16, 1999  
BY VW BRO. ART SCOTT, VICTORIA-COLUMBIA LODGE NO. 1

Upon reading the title of this paper, you may well wonder, "what on earth has the Queen of Sheba got to do with Freemasonry?" As a matter of fact, it was when I asked myself this very same question that I began to pursue the story of the Queen of Sheba and her visit to King Solomon following the completion of his famous temple in Jerusalem. Your next question well might be "where in Freemasonry is there any reference to the Queen of Sheba?" The answer: in the Board of Installed Masters. The Board of Installed Masters is a ceremony, not a degree, so I will plead "not guilty" of divulging any secrets when I tell you that during this ceremony the VOSL is opened at *I Kings 10*. After witnessing and participating in the Board of Installed Masters, and having listened to the aforementioned scripture read many, many times, I began to wonder what the relevance of this passage was to the ceremony of installation. Why did the Queen of Sheba come to visit Solomon? Was she the only monarch who came? What was so special about her visit that it is afforded such detail in the VOSL? And what is the Masonic significance of *I Kings 10*? Let us begin by referring to *I Kings 10*:

1. *And when the queen of Sheba heard of the fame of Solomon concerning the name of the Lord, she came to prove him with hard questions.*
2. *And she came to Jerusalem with a very great train, with camels that bare spices, and very much gold, and precious stones; and when she was come to Solomon, she communed with him all that was in her heart.*
3. *And Solomon told her all her questions: there was not anything hid from the king, which he told her not.*
4. *And when the queen of Sheba had seen all Solomon's wisdom, and the house that he had built,*
5. *And the meat of his table, and the sitting of his servants, and the attendance of his ministers, and their apparel, and his cup bearers, and his ascent by which he went up into the house of the Lord; there was no more spirit in her.*
6. *And she said to the king, It was a true report that I heard in mine own land, of thy acts and of thy wisdom.*
7. *Howbeit I believed not the words until I came, and mine eyes have seen it: and behold, the half was not told me: thy wisdom and prosperity exceedeth the fame which I heard.*
8. *Happy are thy men, happy are these thy servants which stand continually before thee, and that hear thy wisdom.*
9. *Blessed be the Lord thy God, which delighted in thee, to set thee on the throne of Israel: because the Lord loved Israel forever, therefore made he thee king, to do judgment and justice*
10. *And she gave the king an hundred and twenty talents of gold, and of spices very great store, and precious stones: there came no more such abundance of spices as these which the queen of Sheba gave to King Solomon*
11. *And the navy also of Hiram, that brought gold from Ophir, brought in from Ophir great plenty of almug trees, and precious stones.*
12. *And the king made of the almug trees pillars for the house of the LORD, and for the king's house, harps also and psalteries for*

*singers: there came no such almug trees, nor were seen unto this day.*

13. *And king Solomon gave unto the queen of Sheba all her desires, whatsoever she asked, beside that which Solomon gave her of his royal bounty. So she turned and went to her own country, she and her servants.*

## WHO WAS THE QUEEN OF SHEBA?

I don't want to spoil my story, but before going any further, I should tell you that no archæological evidence has ever been unearthed or uncovered that suggests or supports that the Queen of Sheba ever visited King Solomon. There are, however, records of the ancient country of Sheba, which date from 715 BC. Sheba was sometimes called Saba, meaning "Host of Heaven," and "peace," and is thought to be what is now the country of Yemen in the South West corner of Arabia where the Red Sea meets the Indian Ocean. The people who lived in Sheba were called Sabæans. The Sabæans have been described as a tall and commanding people, both woolly-haired and straight-haired. Semitic in origin, they are believed to have been descendants of the land of Cush in the Bible. The Sabæan people inhabited most of NW and SW Arabia, some 483,000 square miles of mountains, valley and deserts. Some historians claim that Ethiopia, on the western end of the Red Sea, was also part of Sheba's territory. The Sebæans conquered all of the other South Arabian countries at the start of the Christian era. Sheba was a wealthy country, rich in gold and other precious stones, as well as incense and exotic spices sought by neighboring kingdoms. From ancient times, perfumes and spices were popular commodities in the near East, and the spice trade was a particularly active one. From both the *Bible* and other classical sources it appears that the valuable plants from which the coveted aromatic resins, incense, spices, and medicinal potions were produced, were grown mainly in the kingdoms of southern Arabia. From this area, major land and sea trade routes branched out to all the great trading centers of the ancient world. The Sabæans were both extensive traders and bandits and engaged in the slave trade. Sheba engaged in a lucrative caravan trade. By 1000 BC, camels frequently traveled the 1400 miles up the "Incense Road" and along the Red Sea to Israel. The spices of Sheba were highly prized. Frankincense, an offering to the gods, was heaped on funeral pyres, and given as an antidote for poison, and as a cure for chest pains, hemorrhoids and paralysis. Myrrh, an ingredient in fragrant oils and cosmetics, was used in preparing bodies for burial, for healing ear, eye and nose ailments, and inducing menstruation. Other Sabæan spices were saffron, cummin, aloes and galbanum. The capital of Sheba was the city of Ma'rib. Nearby was a great dam, which may have been as high as 60 feet, which provided enough water to make Sheba an agricultural nation, as well as a land of beautiful gardens. It was a fertile oasis in the desert. There is evidence that this dam burst, and the devastation caused by the ensuing flood, coupled with the loss of water for agriculture, may have led to the demise of several Sabæan cities which no longer exist today. Because of its isolation, Sheba was secure from military invasion for at least 500

years, and was independent and at peace with its neighbors during the 11th and 10th century BC. History reveals that at least five kings preceded the Queen of Sheba. Yet Arabian documents portray all of Arabia as matriarchal and ruled by queens for over 1000 years. In Ethiopia, the *Kebra Negast* refers to a law established in Sheba that only a woman could reign, and that she must be a virgin queen. Rule by queens was not unusual in prehistoric times. Women played a large role in government, especially in the Near East where there is evidence of their prominence in economics, the family, and religion. According to Ethiopian legend, the Queen of Sheba was born in 1020 B.C. in Ophir, and educated in Ethiopia. Her mother was Queen Ismenie. Sheba was known to be beautiful, intelligent, understanding, resourceful, and adventurous. A gracious queen, she had a melodious voice and was an eloquent speaker. Excelling in public relations and international diplomacy, she was also a competent ruler. The historian Josephus said of her, "she was inquisitive into philosophy and on that and on other accounts also was to be admired." Since Sheba was a center of astronomical wisdom and the ruling monarch was the chief astronomer/astrologer, religious life involved worship of the Sun and Moon. Shams was the Sun god. The earliest known Arabian temple was at Ma'rib, the capital of Sheba, and was called Mahram Bilqis, "precincts of the Queen of Sheba." In Arab lore, this queen was named Bilqis or Balkis; in Ethiopia, Makeda (also Magda, Maqda and Makera), meaning "Greatness" or "Great One." Others say Maqda is a short form of Magadhi, and that Magadhi was a long-gone tribal language in which there were sixty-three different ways to say each word. All that can be ascertained now is that it stands for the letter "M"—that's what Maqda means. Years later, the historian Josephus, referred to her as Nikaulis, Queen of Ethiopia and Egypt.

### **WHY DID THE QUEEN OF SHEBA COME TO VISIT KING SOLOMON?**

We are told in the *Holy Bible* that when the queen of Sheba heard of the fame of Solomon concerning the name of the Lord, she came to Jerusalem with a very great train, with camels that bore spices, and very much gold, and precious stones. We are also told that she came to prove him with hard questions. And we learn that when the Queen of Sheba had seen and tested Solomon's wisdom, and the house that he had built, and the splendor of his court, and the number of his servants, and the attendance of his ministers, and their apparel, and his ascent by which he went up into the house of the Lord she was overwhelmed. How did Sheba learn of the wisdom of King Solomon? The leader of her trade caravans, Tamrin, owned 73 ships and 787 camels, mules and asses, with which he journeyed as far as India. Having also traded with Israel, he brought gold, ebony and sapphires to Solomon, for use by his 700 carpenters and 800 masons who were building the great temple of Jerusalem. Tamrin told Sheba about the temple, and how Solomon administered just judgement, and how he spake with authority, and how he decided rightly in all matters which he enquired into, and how he returned soft and gracious answers, and how there was nothing false about him. Each morning, Tamrin related to the Queen about all the wisdom of Solomon, how he administered judgement and how he made feasts, and how he taught wisdom, and how he directed his servants and all his affairs and how no man defrauded another—"for in his wisdom he knew those who had done wrong, and he chastised them, and made them afraid, and they did not repeat their evil deeds, but they lived in a state of peace." And the Queen was struck dumb with wonder at the things that she heard, and she thought in her heart that she would go to him. When she pondered upon the long journey she thought that it was

too far and too difficult to undertake. But she became very wishful and most desirous to go that she might hear his wisdom, and see his face, and embrace him, and petition his royalty. Sheba's desire to encounter Solomon was ardent enough for her to embark on a 1400 mile journey, across the desert sands of Arabia, along the coast of the Red Sea, up into Moab, and over the Jordan River to Jerusalem. Such a journey required at least six months time round trip each way, since camels could rarely travel more than 20 miles per day. Arabian camels were tall and hardy, able to store water and fat for three weeks while living only on desert roughage. Wearing saddles of oak padded with colorful fabric, and hung with gold chains and crescents to win the favor of the gods, camels in a caravan were strung together by ropes made of goat hairs. Baby camels born along the way were carried on the back of the camel ahead to assure its mother of its wellbeing. As Sheba prepared for her journey, her own devotion to wisdom fueled her anticipation. Solomon's commitment to building the Temple reflected not only his love of magnificent architecture, but also his piety. Over 3000 proverbs have been attributed to Solomon, as well as 1005 psalms, the book of *Ecclesiastes* and in the Christian *Apocrypha*, *The Wisdom of Solomon*. Solomon's wisdom was not only political and theological; he was also an expert on natural history. A gardener, he planted olive, spice and nut trees as well as vineyards; he admired and studied spiders, locusts and harvesting ants. According to the *Bible*, he could talk about plants from the cedar in Lebanon to the hyssop growing on the wall; and he could talk of animals and birds and reptiles and fish.

### **WAS IT TO SEE THE TEMPLE?**

It is understandable that any monarch might wish to view such a magnificent edifice, the fame of which was spreading across the civilized world. And according to legend, she was indeed given a first hand tour of the temple while it was being constructed. A gracious host, Solomon showed Sheba his gardens of rare flowers ornamented with pools and fountains, and the architectural splendors of his government buildings, temple and palace. She was awed by his work on the temple, by his great lion-throne and sandalwood staircase, and by his enormous brass basin carried by the twelve brass bulls which symbolized the twelve months of the year.

### **WAS IT TO OBSERVE HIS GOVERNMENT AND THE IMMENSITY OF HIS COURT?**

King Solomon came to the throne of Israel in 965 BC. Solomon had fleets of Phoenician-built ships on the Mediterranean, the Red Sea, and the Indian Ocean. Solomon's empire was so vast that he found it necessary to divide his kingdom into twelve states. To administer his royal cities, Solomon may have been the first to have a "public service" as we know it today. It was the duty of each state to provide one month's supply, not only of food, but also of barley and straw for the horses, and even horses themselves if necessary, for the needs of the royal household. This put quite a burden on the farmers and shepherd of the country, and taxation was very high. To give you an idea of how great this burden was, consider the following: The provisions needed in one day for Solomon's court were: 30 cors (about 188 bushels or 240 gallons) of flour, 60 cors (about 375 bushels or 480 gallons) of meal, 10 fat oxen, 20 pasture-fed cattle, 100 sheep, plus numerous harts, gazelles, roebucks and fattened fowl.

### **WAS IT TO OBSERVE or TEST HIS WISDOM?**

According to the *Bible*, the Queen of Sheba visited Solomon at Jerusalem to test him with hard questions. Not only did Sheba ask Solomon philosophical questions; she also tested him with riddles. Since early Biblical times, it would seem that the posing of riddles was a

standard exercise among people of power. For example, in the *Book of Judges* we read that Samson engaged in riddles with his opponents. (*Judges 14:12, 18.*) The questions she asked were probably riddles commonly used in Arab polite conversations. During the time of Solomon's reign, it became fashionable to set and solve riddles, a kind of game, which opens up wide horizons of knowledge and language. Riddles and riddle-like anecdotes appear to have wandered from one town to another and from one country to another. There was a passion for riddles at the courts of Hiram, King of Tyre and of Solomon, King of Israel. It is not inconceivable that the Queen of Sheba also had a passion for riddles, since she "came to prove him with hard questions." The *Targum Shenii*, *Midrash Mischle*, and *Midrash Hachefez* (Arabic books) describe twenty-two of her riddles. The delight in seeing the point where the generality of a riddle coincides with a specific allusion is akin to the delight in the proverb, which in turn raises an actual case in point into the sphere of generality. This is what was regarded at that time as wisdom—the solving of riddles and the formulating of generalizations. On this, the fame of Solomon's wisdom was originally founded; and when, in later times, wisdom acquired a deeper meaning and was regarded as an insight into the riddle of life and as an attitude of mind that rises above the passionate whirl of life towards the peace of the timeless, Solomon, known to his age as the great solver of riddles and friend of proverbs, remained the model of a man in whom all aspects of wisdom were united. When I first read about this passion for solving riddles, I soon wondered, "what kind of questions would be asked in a riddle?" Upon further investigation, I found some examples of the kinds of riddles Balkis may have asked Solomon. Here are a few:

Balkis: "What is evil?"

Solomon: "The eyes of the Lord in every place monitor good and evil, and in them is the definition."

Balkis: "Are the eyes or the ears superior?"

Solomon: "The hearing ear and the seeing eye, the Lord hath made both. Degrees of deafness and blindness, these are man's province, and measurable."

Balkis: "What is the most powerful organ of the body, Solomon?"

Solomon: "Death and life are in the power of the tongue."

Balkis: "How are body and spirit connected?"

Solomon: "The baseness of spirits is derived from their bodies. The nobility of bodies is derived from their spirits."

Balkis: "What is it? An enclosure with ten doors; when one is open, nine are shut, and when nine are open, one is shut?"

Solomon: "The enclosure is the womb, and the ten doors are the ten orifices of man, namely his eyes, his ears, his nostrils, his mouth, the apertures for discharge of excreta and urine, and the navel. When the child is still in its mother's womb, the navel is open, but all the other apertures are shut, but when the child issues from the womb the navel is closed and the other orifices are open."

Balkis: "Seven leave and nine enter; two pour out the draught and only one drinks."

How did Solomon respond? "Seven are the days of woman's menstruation, nine the months of her pregnancy; her two breasts nourish the child, and one drinks."

Other riddles concerned with common objects and materials. At one point, Sheba asked, "What when alive does not move, yet when its head cut off, moves?"

Solomon's answer: "The timber used to build a ship." Another riddle she proposed was: "It is many-headed. In a storm at sea it goes above us all, it raises a loud and bitter wailing and moaning; it bends its head like a reed, is the glory of the rich and the shame of the poor, it

honors the dead and dishonors the living; it is a delight to the birds, but a sorrow to the fishes. What is it?"

Solomon replied, "Flax, for it makes sails for ships that moan in the storm. It provides fine linen for the rich and rags for the poor, a burial shroud for the dead, and a rope for hanging the living. As seed it nourishes the birds, and as a net it traps the fish."

Some of Sheba's questions were related to the Hebrew *Bible*. For example, "The dead lived, the grave moved, and the dead prayed. What is it?" The answer: "The dead that lived and prayed was Jonah; the fish, the moving grave." In one theological riddle, she asked: "What is the ugliest thing in the world, and what is the most beautiful? What is the most certain, and what is the most uncertain?"

Solomon replied, "The ugliest thing...is the faithful turning unfaithful; the most beautiful is the repentant sinner. The most certain is death; the most uncertain, one's share in the World to Come."

Solomon is said to have collected over 3,000 proverbs or folk sayings filled with practical advice from around the Near Eastern world. The proverbs dealt with a variety of subjects. The book of *Proverbs* in the *Holy Bible* are thought to have originated from Solomon, as are the *Song of Solomon* and even the book of *Ecclesiastes* is attributed to some as Solomon's wisdom in his declining years. In addition to riddles which required a verbal answer, Sheba tested Solomon's ingenuity in action. Dressing five boys and girls identically, she asked him to detect their sex. When he handed them bowls of water for them to wash their hands, the girls, unlike the boys, rolled up their sleeves. Sheba also brought Solomon two flowers alike in appearance, but one was real while the other was artificial; he distinguished them by noting how bees swarmed to the flower with the genuine fragrance. Then, giving him a large emerald with a curved hole in the middle, she asked him to draw a thread through it; he sent for a silkworm, which crawled through the hole drawing with it a silken thread. The *Midrash Hachefez* reports still another test of Solomon's cleverness. Sheba presented Solomon with the sawn trunk of a cedar tree, the ends cut off so that they looked the same; she asked Solomon which end had been the root, and which the branches. Solomon ordered the tree stump to be placed in water. When one end sank while the other floated, he said to her, "The part which sank was the root, and that which floated on the surface was the end containing the branches." According to the *Kebra Negast*, the questions and tests were mutual; Solomon also challenged Sheba. Sadly, existing legends describe only a few of the artful strategies he used to outwit her. During Sheba's six month visit with Solomon, she conversed with him daily. The *Kebra Negast* informs us that "the Queen used to go to Solomon and return continually, and hearken unto his wisdom, and keep it in her heart. And Solomon used to go and visit her, and answer all the questions which she put to him ... and he informed her concerning every matter that she wished to enquire about." Frequently, they roamed Jerusalem together, as she questioned him and watched him at work. She sought astronomical knowledge, for which he was known; Solomon had developed a new calendar that added an extra month every nineteen years. But historians believe there was more to the Queen of Sheba's motives than simply to see the temple or to satisfy her curiosity about Solomon's wisdom.

## THE MOST LIKELY REASON FOR THE QUEEN'S VISIT

According to the ritual of the Masonic ceremony pertaining to the installation of a Worshipful Master into the Chair of King Solomon, we are told that when the temple at Jerusalem had been completed, by the wisdom of King Solomon and assisted by the strength of Hiram, King of Tyre and the beautifying skill of Hiram Abiff, the monarchs of the

neighboring countries sent their ambassadors bearing precious gifts to King Solomon to congratulate him upon the completion of his great and holy work. But the sovereign of a more distant country—the Queen of Sheba—was not content to send an embassy. She, herself, would go up to Jerusalem, so that her own eyes might see the magnificent Temple, and her own ears might hear the wisdom of King Solomon, whose fame was spread abroad throughout the then known world. It is most likely that the Queen of Sheba's mission was for the purposes of trade and the gifts exchanged were to open up trade relations. One must realize that the kingdom over which Solomon ruled was far more extensive than the Israel we think of in today's world. King David, Solomon's father, had won from the Edomites a strategic port and a great tract of surrounding land where the desert stopped at the narrow waterway leading to Arabia and Africa. This port at the head of the gulf of Akabah was called Ezion-geber, and provided access to Ophir, the port of the great Arabian or East African gold land. David ruled from Syria to Egypt. For four hundred miles north to south, and 100 miles inland from the Mediterranean Sea, David's sovereignty connected the three continents.

When Hiram, King of Tyre, learned of the seaport on the southern gulf, he sent a message of congratulations and friendship to David. This friendship was a boon. Tyre and Sidon and the other Phoenician city-states controlled world trade from India to the Sea of Atlantis. But the island Tyre was incapable of feeding itself, and gladly bought the Hebrew's grain, oil, honey, and wine. In return, the Phoenician king sent David technical advisors in stone, metal, wood, cloth, and dyes. David sent Hiram oak for his oars, and Hiram sent the Jews hardwoods from the mountains of Lebanon and stone from his quarries, out of which the royal city might be constructed. King Hiram's friendship extended to King Solomon when he succeeded the throne from his father. He gave Solomon a fleet of Phoenician-built ships, which sailed the Mediterranean, the Red Sea, and the Indian Ocean. Soon word of Solomon was being carried around the world on Hiram's ships. News of conquests and culture reached the far outposts and colonies. Caravans from Egypt and Arabia passing through Israel's toll cities along the Sea Way or King's Highway picked up information about the monarch and his court and household. When the Sabæans learned that Solomon had established a merchant ship navy and was stepping up commercial activities in southern part of Red Sea, he caused Sheba to negotiate an agreement preventing competition with her own traders. Sheba had been in touch with all the cities of the world, in a great whirlwind of trade. She was even known to the Chinese.

The Sabæans quickly realized that opening new sea-lanes would decrease use of overland routes and various oases from which Sheba's court derived revenue. Natural historian Pliny records: "...all along the route they keep on paying, at one place for water, at another for fodder or the charges for lodging... so that expense mount up to 688 denarii per camel before the Mediterranean coast is reached" It was necessary to consolidate commercial ties, thus there was a mutual exchange of presents, which was a well established diplomatic procedure at that time. This is thought to be the real motive of the queen of Sheba's visit to King Solomon, which was both political and economic. The spices, gold and gems were probably a tribute paid for commercial favours and treaty concessions. Thus, when it says the King gave her "all she desired," this may have included satisfactory political agreements. Balkis brought with her 120 talents of gold to give to Solomon. Given that one talent was equal to 3,000 shekels and that there are 11.5 grams in a shekel, when one does the arithmetic we find that 120 talents of gold are about 360,000 shekels or 4,140 kilograms of gold! For those who are

more familiar with Imperial measure, this amounts to just over 146,000 ounces of gold, or 9,120 pounds. Can you imagine—more than 4.5 tons of gold! She also gave Solomon more spices than had even been seen at one time in Israel, no small feat inasmuch as spices were almost worth their weight in gold.

## THE QUEEN'S JOURNEY TO SOLOMON'S ROYAL CITY

There are 1500 miles of desert and mountains between Sheba and Jerusalem. Although most history books claim Sheba traveled by land, one historian claims she made the voyage by ship. The queen may have employed as many as 75 ships to travel from Sheba to Solomon's Gulf Harbour, a trip which could have taken as long as three years because of the monsoons. Then she rode on a white camel of prodigious size and exquisite poise into the city of Jerusalem. She observed the gates of the city of Jerusalem. By contrast, she recalled how her cities, palaces, even fortresses had many open doors of access. Sheba's caravan of 797 camels, mules and asses was laden with provisions and gifts for Solomon. Since a camel's saddle could carry 300-600 pounds, the wealth she brought was vast—gold, precious stones, furniture and spices. Throughout the day, she rode on an extravagant gold palanquin, like a four-poster bed, richly cushioned, with a roof shielding her from the sun and draperies she could close for privacy. Her handsome white camel was laden with gold and precious stones. Most likely, she was also accompanied by an armed guard to protect her from desert brigands, and by her devoted servants. Imagine the sight as Sheba's train raised up dust in the distant desert. Around her swayed giraffes that had been transported by way of the west, and hippopotami. Six hundred camels in her entourage each held nearly 500 pounds of goods. Fifty elephants followed, four royal Numidian lions, uncountable mules. In the camel's heavy waterskin sacks were pots of the gum of the frankincense tree. Myrrh leaves and its red resin. Gold. Pink pearls from the sea of reeds. Ivory tusks. Nard (ointment made from plants) and ambergris. The black resin of rockrose. Moon coriander. Myrtle and oilban (balsam used in medicine and perfumes). The endangered storax. Hops. Smell the scents too sweet to describe. The pungent yet aromatic smoke of her incense.

And in return, King Solomon had assembled an array of gifts for her arrival. Great caskets of sticky Nubian millet beer awaited her party. The gifts were staked on mules outside Solomon's palace, ready for her people to take to their camp and enjoy. Silks and linens from Gaza, Assyria, and Lebanon. Tapestry from Ma-Wara-Mnar. Dresses, sweet fruit from Iraq, Mongolistan winter melons. And basins of water from the spring at Siloe. Following the queen's arrival, Solomon gave her a luxurious apartment in a palace next to his, and provided her with fruits, rose trees, silks, linens, tapestries, and 11 bewitching garments for each day of her visit. Daily, he sent her (and her 350 servants) 45 sacks of flour, 10 oxen, 5 bulls, 50 sheep (in addition to goats, deer, cows, gazelles, and chicken), wine, honey, fried locusts, rich sweets, and 25 singing men and women.

## WHAT HAPPENED AFTER SHE ARRIVED?

History has given way to legend and fable. As I mentioned earlier, (1) there is no evidence to support the story that the Queen of Sheba ever visited King Solomon; and (2) according to the *Holy Bible*, King Solomon gave unto the queen of Sheba all her desires, whatsoever she asked, beside that which Solomon gave her of his royal bounty. So she turned and went to her own country, she and her servants. Yet consider the imagery and romance that have been conjured in some of these alternative endings, which come from Arabic and Ethiopian legends and folk tales:

## The Marriage of Solomon and Sheba

When she arrived in his court, Sheba found Solomon arrayed in a cloth of gold, so that at first he looked like a statue of gold with hands of ivory. Solomon received her with every sort of festive preparation. He led her to behold the works of his palace and then the grand works of the temple. Balkis was lost in admiration. The king was captivated by her beauty and in a short time offered her his hand. Balkis was pleased to have conquered his proud heart, and she accepted his hand. Their troth was solemnized by the presentation of a ring by the Queen of Sheba to Solomon. Sheba took out from inside the plaiting of her black hair, a golden ring and handed it to Solomon. He receives it with a gasp. For it resembles in many ways the breastplate of twelve engraved gems worn by the high priests of Israël for the purpose of divination. But it is more precise, more pristine. Four gems only shine from the four sides of the circle, and these, Sheba explains in a whisper so perfect Solomon hardly recalls her speaking, signify writing and numbering (the blue stone), the equality of male and female (the green stone), blood (the red stone), and light (a dull reflecting metal). This alleged love affair has been captured both in poetry and in the movies (*Solomon and Sheba*, a 1959 Hollywood spectacular about the famed reign of King Solomon over ancient Israël in which the voluptuous Queen of Sheba plots his overthrow, starring Yul Brynner and Gina Lollobrigida).

## Sheba Falls for Hiram Abiff

The Queen of Sheba was overwhelmed by the splendor and beauty of the magnificent edifice created by Solomon. On one of her visits to the temple, Balkis repeatedly requested to meet the architect who had wrought such wondrous things. Solomon delayed this meeting as long as possible, but finally he found it necessary to accede to her request. At the command of the king, Hiram Abiff, the mysterious artificer, was brought into the presence of Balkis, Queen of Sheba. Hiram looked deeply into the soul of Balkis and cast on the queen a look that penetrated her very heart. Upon recovering from this unforeseen occurrence, she regained her composure and questioned as well as defended Hiram from the ill-will and rising jealousy of Solomon. When Balkis requested to see the countless host of workmen that had created the temple, Solomon protested the impossibility of assembling them all at once; (there had been 70,000 involved in his projects) but Hiram, leaping on a stone to make himself more visible, with his right hand described in the air the symbolic Tau, and immediately the men hastened from all parts of the work into the presence of their master. Seeing this, the queen wondered and secretly repented her choice of a husband. She felt that she was in love with the mighty architect. Seeing the affection of Balkis for Hiram Abiff, Solomon set out to destroy it. He prepared for the humiliation and ruin of his rival. To this end, Solomon employed three fellowcrafts who were envious of Hiram. The reason for their envy was that Hiram had refused to raise them to the degree of a master mason due to their lack of knowledge and their idleness. They arranged to sabotage the pouring of the molten bronze for the great brazen sea. When the molten metal was poured in the presence of Solomon and Sheba, the liquid escaped its containment and flowed like lava over the adjoining places. The observers panicked into a terrified crowd. Hiram attempted to arrest the flow with a great quantity of water, but without success. The dishonoured artificer could not remove himself from the scene of the disaster. He was called into the flames by Tubal Cain (the first artificer in metals). After being promised that he would have a son whose descendants would perpetrate his race and rule the world for many centuries, he was given a hammer by Tubal Cain and returned to the earth. Hiram did not hesitate to test the efficacy of the

hammer, and the dawn saw the great mass of bronze cast. Hiram was filled with joy and the Queen of Sheba was exulted. The people came running up to admire this secret power which in one night had repaired everything.

## Sheba Falls For Hiram Abiff (version 2)

One day Balkis and her maids went beyond Jerusalem and there encountered Hiram. The two confessed their love, and deliberated how Balkis could retract the promise she had given to King Solomon to marry him. It was their decision that Hiram would be the first to leave Jerusalem. Balkis would meet him in Arabia after eluding the vigilance of the king. She would accomplish this by removing the ring from his finger when he was overcome by wine. By this means, she could withdraw the troth that had pledged her to him. Solomon, meanwhile, hinted to the three fellow craft that the removal of his rival Hiram Abiff would be acceptable to him. The three fellowcraft assailed him in sequence and the third ruffian killed him with a setting maul. Immediately before his death, Hiram managed to throw the golden triangle about his neck into a deep well. The master architect was dead. In due course the Temple was completed without Hiram Abiff.

## Yet Another Hiram Abiff Romance

The masons were a breed near invisible to all others. By far the greater number of the sacred builders (some thought to have worked on the pyramids of Egypt) the masons were unbound spirits who fled the unjust and immoral regimes of the Nile delta after building the pyramids. They rowed to all ports of the Great Sea (Mediterranean) They scattered overland with their families in horse carts. They moved like nomads, in small groups resembling tinkers and smiths with their tools and aprons. Sometimes they put a T-shaped cross on their foreheads as a sign for "god" and "iron". They found a more favourable climate for their work in Phoenicia, and laboured on several projects in Tyre. All the time they preserved faithfully the secrets of stone, brick and engraving, and of the care of the dead. They settled in the Holy Land as well. At the time of Solomon, brother masons usually wore beards but no mustaches, and their wives worked along side them. They lived by geometry. They knew their tools and their materials and they knew the uses of silence. Thus, when Solomon was anointed king in 965 BC, he did not know of the masons until introduced into their order by Hiram, King of Tyre. Now they had gathered again, stonemasons, hewers of wood, drawers of water, philosophers, sawyers of the underground lime, smelters of bronze, architects, smiths in silver and gold, apprentices, journeymen, astronomers, masters —skilled craftsmen in the thirty-nine kinds of sacred work. They focused their energies on the Temple mountain, feeling that this assignment from Hiram and Solomon was worthy of the brotherhood. They worked a month at a time, then rested for a month, then returned for another month's labors. The conifers from Lebanon were cut, smoothed and finished far from the temple site because Solomon did not consider it good to have the loud sound of iron tools in the near workings. Iron was the hand of war. In the temple precincts, white stones as heavy as a thousand men were set into immaculate row upon row with an effortlessness known only to the masons. Solomon was called the Grand Master of the work when the temple was being built. Hiram, King of Tyre, controlled the overseas sources of wealth that made the work possible, and at least half of the work force; he was called the Grand Master of the Work. And the "other" Hiram of Tyre, the architect, was the third of the Grand Masters. Hiram had done good work in Tyre. But his preeminence in the building of Solomon's temple was not due to his reputation. Nor had it been granted by his patron, the King of Tyre. It had come to him by his merit, on a specific day. On the

morning that the foundation stone was being laid, Hiram drew a diagram on his trestle board of a certain three sided figure, and he observed that the squares drawn up on the short sides summed up exactly equal to the square drawn down the longest side, and he cried out "Eureka!" And Solomon appreciated this accomplishment, and appointed him Grand Architect of Jerusalem. Some of the masons said that this Hiram, son of the widow, was an artist wiser than the world had ever seen. Others argued that the work of the men of a hundred nationalities was the key, and that unless each one of these men—every last one—felt and continued to feel that his agreement was sacred, they could do nothing, but so long as the decision to cooperate was made again and again every morning by every man, then the boundaries of their work would continue to amplify. There was, however, certain work that the masons did not do. No free man worked in the iron and copper mines of the Arabah. This wet, dirty and dangerous job was done by slaves, both male and female. One day, there was dissension amongst the workers. Hiram, chief architect and paymaster, felt the stirrings most. The different pay grades of workmen announced to the paymaster at what level they worked, and were paid accordingly. The ranks were specified in code. For example, burden bearers might say "servitude" and the journeymen masons and carpenters might say "worker's pool," and the overseers said "the way." And in the old Semite tongue, all these three phrases sounded almost exactly alike, but for an accent or an inflection. But the men began to say different words. Hiram King of Tyre recognized immediately that this was the signal of worker unrest, a bad omen. One day, as Hiram stood before three huge drums of gold ingots facing his 150,000 men he motioned them to begin to approach. One by one they stepped forward and pronounced a word according to their hierarchy of their functions and were paid. To Hiram's shock, one man rudely grabbed for his payment. Suddenly the orderly line gave way and the troops burst into the Temple in a great surge. There was shouting. Three men in an extremity of tension and anger confronted the grand master, demanding money, satisfaction, the truth. Hiram staggered and went down slowly. He was bleeding from the head and side. There was a point of a compasses stuck in his heart. Then there was chaos and riot. Loyal masons fell upon Hiram's attackers, but the guilty escaped. Finally, at twilight, there fell stillness. Hiram had been left for dead in a rubble of gold. But he was still alive. He rose and left the temple, still bleeding. He knew the blood would never stop. He pressed towards the tents, to Sheba. And he found her, she found him, she loved, they loved, with love as intense as death, passion as incomprehensible as the grave. Sheba mobilized her thousands. The body of the queen's last love lay buried in a grassy knoll outside Jerusalem, underneath an Egyptian gum acacia with mud around its roots. The long line of men and animals from the land of women gradually disappeared into the horizon. Sheba fled south through the Gulf of Aquaba.

### **The Origin of the Ethiopian Monarchy—Sheba and her son Menyelek.**

The *Bible* says nothing about a marriage between Solomon and Sheba, but states simply that she returned to her own land. However, the Abyssinians (the country now known as Ethiopia) have adopted some of the Arab tales and trace the lineage of their royal house to the Queen of Sheba. The Ethiopians claim that their rulers are descended from Menilek, son of King Solomon and Queen of Sheba, thus giving rise to the imperial title "Lion of Judah." The *Kebra Negast* is regarded as the final authority on the early history of Ethiopia, and its origin in the Solomonic lines of kings, which "descends without interruption from the dynasty of Menelik I, son of Queen of Ethiopia, Queen of Sheba and King

Solomon of Jerusalem." This idea exists in the folk lore of many Jewish, Moslem and Christian countries. The relationship between Ethiopia, Lion of Judah, and Israel is apparent in Ethiopia's national emblem, the six pointed star, which corresponds to the Shield (Seal) of David on Israel's flag. Here is the tale of how Solomon's son became the King of Ethiopia: When her visits to him multiplied, he longed for her greatly and entreated her to yield herself to him. But she would not surrender herself to him, and she said unto him, "I came to thee a maiden, a virgin; shall I go back despoiled of my virginity, and suffer disgrace in my kingdom? Swear to me by thy God, the God of Israel, that thou wilt not take me by force. For if I, who according to the law of men am maiden, be seduced, I should travel on my journey back in sorrow, and affliction and tribulation."

And Solomon said unto her, "I will only take thee to myself in lawful marriage—I am the King, and thou shalt be the Queen. Strike a covenant with me that I am only to take thee to wife of thine own free will. This shall be the condition between us: when thou shalt come to me by night as I am lying on the cushions of my bed, thou shalt become my wife." And behold she struck this covenant with him, determining within herself that she would preserve her virginity from him. But the ingenious King Solomon was not to be deterred by her refusal. After she had visited him for six months, the Queen of Sheba chose to return to her own country. The day before her departure, the palace servants busily prepared a festal banquet in her honor. Solomon arranged a great feast for her, beautifying his tent with purple hangings, carpets, marbles and precious stones, and burning aromatic powers and incense. "Follow me now and seat thyself in my splendor in the tent," he told her, "and I will complete thy instruction, for thou has loved wisdom, and she shall dwell with thee until thine end and for ever." When she agreed, he rejoiced. He prepared highly seasoned meats that would make her thirsty, fish cooked with pepper, and drinks mingled with spices. Then they dined and conversed until late in the night. Makeda attempted to retire to her own quarters. Solomon wouldn't hear of her departing at so late an hour. Wasn't his residence as comfortable as the one he had arranged for her? Makeda was the virgin queen of Ethiopia, her throne pending on that condition. Solomon swore to take nothing from her by force on terms that she would take nothing of his by force. Sheba slept in Solomon's tent, and awakened in the middle of the night thirsty and craving water. All the water fountains accessible to the public were shut off. The queen went to Solomon's chambers to procure a cup of water, but was only able to find a water in a jar by Solomon's bed. Solomon had, of course, asked his servants to hide all other sources of water. Believing him to be asleep, she reached across his bed for water, but he opened his eyes, seized her hand and said: "Why hast thou broken the oath that thou hast sworn that thou would not take by force anything that is in my house?" And she answered and said unto him in fear, "Is the oath broken by my drinking water? Be free from thy oath, only let me drink water." Solomon replied: "As you see, nothing is more valuable than water. Release me from my vow and be released from yours and I will give you all that you desire." And he permitted her to drink water, and after she had drunk water she gave herself into his embrace willingly. Sheba may have been Solomon's lover, but she did not become his wife or remain with him much longer. After she had visited him for six months, she chose to return to her own country. Before she left, she gave Solomon 120 talents of gold (10 million dollars), precious stones and spices in great abundance, and highly prized sandalwood for his temple. In the Biblical story, "Solomon gave to the queen of Sheba all her desire, whatsoever she asked...besides that which Solomon gave her of his royal bounty." Likewise, Josephus states, "Solomon also repaid

her with many good things...bestowing upon her what she chose of her own inclination, for there was nothing that she desired which he denied her; and as he was very generous and liberal in his own temper, so did he show the greatness of his soul in bestowing on her what she herself desired of him." Unlike the *Bible* and Josephus, the *Kebra Nagast* provides details of Solomon's gifts—beautiful apparel, 6000 camels, wagons laden with luxurious goods, and vessels for travel over desert, air, and sea. Because she was now pregnant with his child, he also gave her a ring, for he hoped that she would bear him a son, who might in time visit Jerusalem and prove his identity to Solomon. And the Queen departed and came into the country of Bala Zadisareya nine months and five days after she had separated from King Solomon. And the pains of childbirth laid hold upon her, and she brought forth a man-child, and she gave it to the nurse with great pride and delight. And the child grew and she called his name Bayna-Lehkem (Menelik), which means "son of the wise man." When he was twenty-two years old he was skilled in the art of war and horsemanship, in the hunting and trapping of wild beast, and in every thing that young men desire to learn. And he said unto the Queen: "I will go and look upon the face of my father, and I will come back here by the will of God, the Lord of Israel." When King Solomon saw his son, he rose up and moved forward to welcome him, and he embraced and kissed him, and said unto him: "Behold, my Father David hath renewed his youth and hath risen from the dead." And Solomon the King turned around to those who had announced the arrival of the young man, and said unto them: "Ye said unto me, 'He resemblenth thee,' but this is not my stature, but the stature of David my father in the days of his early manhood, and he is handsomer than I am." And Solomon the King rose up and went into his chamber, and he arrayed his son in apparel made of cloth embroidered with gold, and a belt of gold, and he set a crown upon his head, and a ring upon his finger. Having arrayed him in glorious apparel, which bewitched the eyes, he seated him upon his Throne that he might be equal in rank to himself. Then he said unto the nobles and officers of Israel: "O ye who treat me with derision among yourselves and say that I have no son; look ye, this is my son, the fruit from my body, whom God, the Lord of Israel hath given me when I expected it not." And his nobles answered and said unto him: "Blessed be the mother who hath brought forth this young man, and blessed be the day wherein thou hath union with the mother of this young man. For there hath risen upon us from the root of Jesse a shining man who shall be king of the posterity of his seed. And concerning his father none shall ask questions for verily he is a Israelite of the seed of David, fashioned perfectly in the likeness of his father's form and appearance; we are his servants and he shall be our King." And they brought unto him gifts each according to his greatness. Menelik along with the Elders of Israel took the Ark of the Covenant and established the Kingdom of David in Ethiopia, this Kingdom remained up till the time of Haile Selassie I, the Last Solomonic King of Kings of the Earth.

## CONCLUSION

The paper I have presented today is for entertainment and enlightenment. Remember this is a light-hearted compendium of tales, stories and legends from various sources. It may not be factually correct. Nonetheless, I hope it has given you some insight into the life and times of King Solomon, our first Grand Master. It was natural that imaginative stone masons long before speculative masonry should have felt a kinship with the great builders of all ages. It was natural that they should have acknowledged a peculiar attraction to the most famous and glorious of all building enterprises, King Solomon's temple. Without a doubt, King Solomon's temple was the grandest most costly structure

ever erected. Thus it follows that Solomon's temple should come to be regarded as the ideal prototype of a spiritual temple, which explains its prominence in our ritual. However, it is better to pattern ourselves after the building than after Solomon himself. After the departure of the Queen of Sheba, the completion of his luxurious Temple became more important to Solomon than the practice of his religion. Then his luxurious Palace "built for personal rather than collective use" took precedence over the Temple. Finally, his writing and preaching of wisdom became increasingly divorced from experience. Solomon no longer lived by the humane principles for which he had become respected and honoured. Some historians even view him as a tyrant who became devoted to his own glory, and whose greed and extravagance led him to build his kingdom on injustice, oppression and misery. All this for the love of a woman?

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## APPENDIX:

Although I could not find a detailed account of one of Solomon's feasts, the following account of King Ashurnasirpal's Banquet gives some idea of the enormity of preparation and quantity of foodstuffs required for a royal feast: When Ashurnasirpal, king of Assyria, inaugurated the palace of Calah, a palace of joy and erected with great ingenuity, he invited into it Ashur, the great lord and the gods of his entire country. He prepared a banquet of 1,200 fattened head of cattle, 1,000 calves, 11,000 stable sheep, 16,000 lambs, 1,000 spring lambs, 500 stags, 500 gazelles, 1,000 ducks, 1,000 geese, 2,000 indigenous birds, 20,000 doves, and 10,000 other assorted small birds. Also 10,000 assorted fish, 10,000 jerboa (small, rabbit like rodents) 10,000 assorted

eggs, 10,000 loaves of bread, 10,000 jars of beer, 10,000 skins of wine, 10,000 small bottom vessels with seeds in sesame oil, 10,000 small pots of condiments, 1,000 wooded crates with vegetables, 300 containers of oil, 300 containers of salted seeds, 300 containers of grapes, 100 mixed zamru fruits, 1700 pistachio cones, 100 jars with "mixture", 100 with arsuppu grain, ten homer of shelled luddu nuts (one homer = 75 gallons or 11 bushels), ten homer of shelled pistachio, ten homer of the uru tree, ten homer of fruits of the habbaququ tree, ten homer of dates, ten homer of the fruits of the titip tree, ten homer of cumin, ten homer of sahhunu, ten homer of uriana. ten homer of andahsu bulbs, ten homer of sisanibee plants, ten homer of the fruits of the simburu tree, ten homer of thyme, ten homer of perfumed oil, ten

homer of sweet smelling matters, ten homer of the fruits of the nasubu tree, ten homer of zimzimmu onions, ten homer of olives. When inaugurated, the palace treated for 10 days with food and drink 47,074 persons, men and women, who were bade to come from across the entire country, also 5,000 important persons, delegates from the country Suhu, from Hindar, Hattina, Hatti, Tyre, Sidon, Gurguma, Malida, Hubuska. Gilzana, Kuma, Musasir, also 10,000 inhabitants from Calah, 1,500 officials of all the royal palaces, altogether 69,574 invited guests from all the mentioned countries including the people of Calah. They were furthermore proved with the means to clean and anoint themselves.



# The Chamber of Reflection

PRESENTED AT THE VANCOUVER GRAND MASONIC DAY, OCTOBER 16, 1999  
BY W. BRO. HELIO L. DA COSTA JR.

Brethren, the tenets of Freemasonry are universal, however, the way in which they are presented to the profane, as he knocks on the doors of our temples, varies according to the ritual used at any particular temple. Although the lessons presented in these rituals may be similar, the way in which they are transmitted to the prospective initiate may be quite different from one area to another. Therefore, in order to acquaint the Brethren of our Grand Jurisdiction, the Grand Lodge of Ancient Free and Accepted Masons of British Columbia, with a piece of ritual widely practised throughout the world, but absent here, I propose to expound on the Chamber of Reflection.

Most of the Brethren who received their initiations in Mexico, Central and South America, Europe, Middle East and Africa will be acquainted with the Chamber of Reflection. It is used in the first degree in the Ancient and Accepted Scottish Rite, the French Rite, the Brazilian Rite and other rites derived from the ones just mentioned. The word *chamber* is an archaic term for *room* and the word *reflection* means, according to the Oxford Dictionary of Current English, "reflecting or being reflected; reflected light or heat or colour or image; discredit or thing bringing discredit; reconsideration (or reflection); idea arising in the mind, comment (on or upon)." Albert G. Mackey in his *Encyclopedia of Freemasonry* explains that the Chamber of Reflection is:

...a small room adjoining the Lodge, in which, preparatory to initiation, the candidate is enclosed for the purpose of indulging in those serious meditations which its sombre appearance and the gloomy emblems with which it is furnished are calculated to produce. It is also used in some of the advanced degrees for a similar purpose.

This small room or chamber, which does not necessarily adjoins the Lodge room, is dark, with the walls painted black, or, as in one case I saw, imitating a rocky underground cave. It contains the following: a simple rough wooden table on which we find: a human skull, usually on two crossbones, a chunk of bread, a pitcher with water, a cup with salt, a cup with sulphur, a lighted candle or lantern, an hourglass, paper, ink and pen, a wooden stool or chair painted on the wall: a rooster, a sickle, the acronym V.I.T.R.I.O.L.(U.M.) and various sayings.

Before commenting on these symbols, let us follow a candidate's journey into the Chamber of Reflection on the day of his initiation. The profane, dressed in a black (or at least dark) suit and tie, is brought to the Lodge building by his sponsor. He must not meet any of the other Brethren. The Treasurer and the First Expert, an officer, who in the rituals we observe here would be equivalent to the Senior Steward, both dressed without any Masonic insignia, meet the candidate. The Treasurer collects the necessary fees and returns to the Lodge room. The Expert stays with the candidate, while the sponsor also goes into the Lodge room. The Expert blindfolds the candidate and introduces him into the Chamber of Reflection and gives him a piece of paper with questions that the candidate must answer. He also indicates to the candidate that he must also write on the paper his moral and philosophical testament. The Expert also instructs the candidate that when he has finished this task, he should ring a bell to manifest that he

is ready to proceed with the rest of the initiation. He is also told that once the door is closed he should remove the hoodwink. Once our profane does that, he sees the chamber and the objects described earlier.

## The chamber

The chamber reminds one's self of the caves where primitive men lived. In psychoanalysis, it is a symbol of regression. It is also a symbol of the maternal womb. The profane is regressing to a time of innocence and to a state in his mother's womb. When he emerges from the chamber, it shall be as if being born as a new man. Contrariwise, the cave can also be the symbol of a sepulchre, as the tombs of the ancients in biblical times. Thus, the chamber indicates, at the same time, a beginning and an end: the end of one's life as a profane, and the beginning of a new life as an initiate in search of light, truth and wisdom. This can also be interpreted as a form of resurrection. This motif of death and resurrection is mentioned in Plutarch's *Immortality of the Soul* thus:

The soul at the moment of death, goes through the same experiences as those who are initiated into the great mysteries. The word and the act are similar: we say *telentai* (to die) and *telestai* (to be initiated) .

## The skull

Together with the crossbones, sickle and the hourglass, the skull naturally refers to mortality and is linked to the alchemical references also present in the Chamber. The alchemists aimed at transmuting base metals into silver and gold through the process of *putrefaction*. So must the profane transmute his nature, through a symbolical burial in the chamber, into a new transformed man in the form of an initiate. In alchemy this is called *the great work*. Indeed, man's refinement, transmutation and transformation from a brute base metal into gold requires great work! The skull in alchemy, named *caput mortuum*, is the epitome of decline and decay. The crossbones are usually tibias, the weight-bearing bones of the lower legs.

## Bread and water

The chunk of bread and the pitch of water are symbols of simplicity, pointing to the future initiate how he should conduct his life. Bread is made of wheat, an element connected to the goddesses Isis and Demeter. Isis is the Egyptian mother goddess and also the goddess of the dead, again, two of the aspects of the Chamber of Reflection. Furthermore, according to the ancient description of an initiation into the Mysteries of Isis by Apuleus, the candidate was placed in a secluded cell and subsequently participated in a ceremony in which he had to overcome trials. Demeter was celebrated at the great festival at the Temple of Eleusis, which became known as the Eleusinian mysteries. The bread and water represent the elements necessary to life, but even though food and the material body are indispensable, they remind the candidate that the physical aspect should not be the main objective in one's existence. Moreover, these elements remind us of the biblical narrative regarding the prophet Elijah, who is also connected with these

elements and a cave (see I Kings 17: 8-11). He established a school of prophets in a cavern on a mountain. Furthermore, Elijah after eating bread and water, climbed the mount of G-d, in the same way that our future initiate nourished by these symbols can withstand the trials ahead and climb his own mountain. Elijah, once on the mount, also heard G-d as the still small voice, just as our candidate should follow his inner voice throughout his life, as we can read in I Kings 19: 5-13.

## Alchemical elements

Three of the alchemical elements used in the *great work* were sulphur, salt and mercury, all of which are present in the Chamber of Reflection. Sulphur is symbolical of the spirit, being a masculine principle, referring to enthusiasm and corresponding to the virtue of Faith. Salt is a symbol for wisdom, being considered neutral, as far as gender is concerned, referring to pondering (something the candidate does in the Chamber of Reflection) and corresponding to the virtue of Charity. Mercury appears as the rooster drawn on the wall of the Chamber of Reflection. This animal is connected to the deity Hermes, that is, Mercury. It is a feminine principle, referring to Vigilance and it also corresponds to Faith. As the rooster sings at dawn announcing the light of day, so it announces to our future initiate, the Light he may receive.

## The hourglass

This object is a reminder of mortality. It also brings to mind that time runs fast, just as the sand runs through the hourglass. It also conveys the meaning that we should make good use of the time given us. Moreover, our candidate is reminded that therefore, he should write his answers and philosophical testament within the allotted time.

## V.I.T.R.I.O.L.(U.M.)

Vitriol is a sulphuric acid or a sulphate used in the alchemical operations of yore. This word is the origin of the adjective *vitriolic*, meaning caustic or hostile, referring to speech or criticism. However, in the esoteric sense, it is an acronym for the Latin phrase: *Visita interioraterrae, rectificandoque, invenies occultum lapidem*, which means: "visit the interior of the earth, and rectifying it, you will find the hidden stone." Some times this acronym appears with the addition of U.M. at the end, which means, *veram medicinam*, the true medicine. If one takes this advice metaphorically, the meaning conveyed is that, one must search within oneself, as the truth is hidden there, and this truth is the real solution to our problems. Again, a very appropriate acronym to be placed on the wall before the future initiate, while he has to write his philosophical testament.

## Perseverance and vigilance

In some rites these two words are also placed on the wall. The word perseverance is placed under the hourglass, if one is not physically present but painted on the wall, while the word vigilance is placed under the figure of the rooster. These two words intimate to the candidate that he must possess these qualities in order to succeed in his Masonic life. The symbols, allusions, allegories and metaphors of the rituals are not plain. The Freemason must scrutinise them persistently in order to appreciate their richness and deep significance, and be vigilant that the lessons learned therefrom be not forgotten.

## Various sayings

Besides the profusion of symbols in the Chamber of Reflection, as our candidate removes the hoodwink, he will read various sentences on the wall. Most often he will read the following sayings: *If you think we will find out your defects, you will feel uncomfortable among us. If curiosity spurred you towards us, go away. If you are capable of*

*deception, tremble, you will be found out. If you take notice of human differences, leave, we do not know them here. If your soul is fearful, do not proceed! If you persevere, you will be purified, you will overcome darkness, you will be enlightened.*

In some rites, such as the Brazilian Rite, other sentences may be found on the wall, such as: *Think of G-d, with humility. If you want to live well, think of death. Serve your country with devotion. Remember the great citizens who were Freemasons. Know thyself. If your heart is well intentioned, go on and you will have our support.*

## Questions

As mentioned earlier, our candidate was given a piece of paper with questions, which he must answer in order to proceed with the initiation. The questions are the following: [Questions are read here]

## Philosophical testament

The answers to the questions asked of the candidate become the initial point towards the elaboration of his philosophical and moral testament. The philosophical testament provides a glimpse of the attitude and character of the future initiate and is unique to each individual. The candidate's true nature will be shown in his answers to the proposed questions as well as in his philosophical testament. On the other hand, it can also bring him discredit, depending on his answers. In the Chamber of Reflection, he has time to reconsider his request for admission in our Fraternity. If his motives are not pure as admonished by the writings on the wall, or if he is fearful and not courageous enough, then he might not be able to keep inviolate the secrets of Freemasonry. Furthermore, solitary in the Chamber of Reflection, our prospective initiate can ponder on the questions presented to him, on his life, and future. Therefore, the *reflection* to which the title of this Chamber refers, is not just the pondering of the candidate, but primarily the reflection of his own inner being. This could bring him discredit in certain cases. Note that all the dictionary meanings of the word *reflection* invoked at the beginning of this exposition are represented in the Chamber and obey the same hierarchical order.

## Mirror

In another ritual of French origin, the Rectified Scottish Rite, during the first degree initiation, the concept of reflection expressed in the sense of giving back a likeness as in a mirror, is revealed in another way. At the moment the hoodwink is dropped from the candidate's eyes and he sees for the first time the faces of his Brethren around him, the WM says: "It is not always before oneself, that one finds his enemies. That which is to be feared the most is many times behind oneself. Turn around!" When the candidate turns he sees himself in a mirror! This means that the enemy can be also within! Incidentally, the word mirror is in Latin *speculum*, deriving from the verb *specular*, which means, to scrutinise. That is exactly what one does in the Chamber of Reflections, as he scrutinises himself and the symbols around him.

## Brazilian Rite

In the Brazilian Rite, the candidate in the Chamber of Reflection also receives another piece of paper that he must read. In it are found the articles I and II of the *Constitution* of the jurisdiction, dealing with Freemasonry and its Principles. Moreover, he must also sign the following declaration: [Declaration is read here]

## Trials

After the candidate leaves the Chamber of Reflection, he is conducted into the Temple to be subjected to certain trials. Traditionally, the ancients and the alchemists believed that the universe

was composed of four elements: earth, air, fire and water. Traditional initiatory societies, such as Freemasonry, have preserved this teaching. Furthermore, one of the marks of these esoteric initiatory organisations was a series of trials through which the candidate was subjected. The Chamber of Reflection, being a cave, becomes then, the first trial, that of the earth, and it is followed later by other trials, as it is made plain by the words of the ritual itself in the Ancient and Accepted Scottish Rite. [Read ritual section here]

### **Magic Flute**

As you can notice, Brethren, the rituals performed in the first degree in our Grand Jurisdiction are not similar to the ones I have been describing. To a Freemason only acquainted with the local rituals, the opera *The Magic Flute* by our Brother W.A. Mozart is not as clearly intelligible as to those who have received their initiation in a Continental European rite or one derived from it. That opera was first performed at the Theater auf Der Wieden in Vienna on September 30, 1791 and it is in a certain way a re-enactment of a first-degree initiation with all its alchemical and Masonic allusions. The protagonists, Tamimo and Pamima are left alone in the darkness and required to keep a vow of silence. A scene at a vault, and tests of fire and water follows this.

### **Conclusion**

Brethren, even without going beyond the scope of this exposition, and presenting the rest of the first degree ritual as performed in most countries of the world, you can imagine what an impression this initial part of the ritual makes on a candidate being ushered into our

honourable institution. The Chamber of Reflection teaches, indeed, powerful lessons. True initiation is an individual internal process. Nobody can transform a man but himself. Others may guide and help, but ultimately, the individual alone is the only one who can perform the *great work*. The Chamber of Reflection truly epitomises this process. It is my hope, that those of us, who have not experienced this ritual in our Masonic life, have at least derived some small benefit, although vicariously, from this allocution today.

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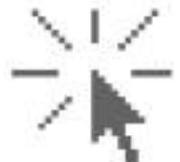


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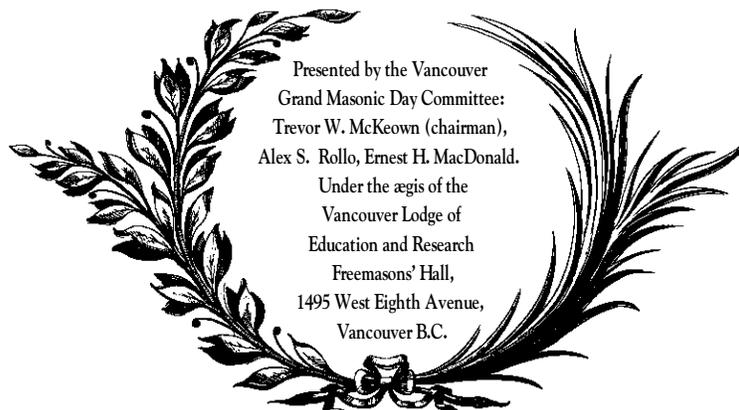
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